

## Women Workforce

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS) is a demand driven wage employment scheme which provides for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

As per the Para 15 of Schedule-II of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, "Priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work. Efforts to increase participation of single women and the disabled shall be made".

To encourage women to participate in the works under the Scheme, features like separate schedule of rates for women, no discrimination in the wage, women caretaker for looking after children up to five years of age, if there are 5 or more children of such age, encouragement to women SHG members as mate, worksite facilities exist under the Scheme.

Project 'UNNATI', launched in December 2019 by Government of India, is a skilling project that intends to upgrade the skill base of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS workers, and thereby improve their livelihoods, so that they can move from the current partial employment to full employment. This includes women member of the selected households.

The rate of participation of women (percentage of women person-days out of total) and the computed women person-days in Mahatma Gandhi NREGS during the last two financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22 is given below:

As per Schedule I of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, "the schedule of rates of wages for various unskilled labourers shall be fixed up so that an adult person worked for eight hours which include an hour of rest will earn a wage which is equal to the stipulated wage rate and the working hours of an adult worker shall be flexible but shall not spread over more than twelve hours on any day".

The welfare measures to workers at the worksite under Schedule II of the Act are If any personal injury is caused to any person employed under the Scheme by any accident arising out of and in the course of his employment, he shall be entitled to such medical treatment as required, free of cost; where hospitalisation of the injured worker is necessary, the State Government shall arrange for such hospitalisation including accommodation, treatment, medicines and payment of daily allowance which is not less than half of the wage rate; If a person employed under the Scheme meets with death or becomes permanently disabled by accident arising out of and in the course of employment, he or his legal heirs, as the case may be, shall be paid by the implementing agency an ex gratia as per entitlements under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana or as may be notified by the Central Government; and If any personal injury is caused by accident to a child accompanying a person who is employed under the Scheme, such person shall be entitled to medical treatment free of cost; and in case of death or disablement of the child due to the said accident, ex gratia shall be paid to the legal guardians as determined by the State Government.



## For Kids' Sake, Be Mindful

Doctors and therapists spend up to ten years to get a license to practice. But anyone can become a parent without any training or preparation. We need to create an 'Institute of the Family' where young people, before they get married, can go for one year to practice looking deeply into themselves to see what kind of seeds in them are strong and what kind are weak. If the positive seeds are too weak, prospective parents need to learn ways to water them in order to make them stronger. If the negative seeds are too strong, they should learn ways to transform them, to live in a way that those seeds will not be watered too much.

Mothers-to-be can learn how to sow seeds of happiness, peace, and joy, and avoid sowing unhealthy seeds in their babies' store consciousness. Fathers-to-be also need to be aware that the way they act sows seeds in the store consciousness of their unborn child. Severe words, a reprehending look, or an uncaring action, the baby in the womb receives it all. The store consciousness of the foetus receives everything that is going on in the family. A thoughtless word or deed might stay with a child the rest of her life. We have received seeds of suffering from our parents. Even if we are determined to do the opposite of what our parents did, if we don't know how to practice and transform these seeds, we will do exactly the same as they did. During our lifetime, we continue to receive seeds from our parents. Their joys and their suffering continue to penetrate us. If our father says something that makes our mother happy, we receive seeds of happiness. If our father says something that makes our mother cry, we receive seeds of suffering. You can protect your child from the beginning.

Living mindfully is very important during the nine months that the baby is growing in the womb. And after the baby is born, parents should continue to be mindful. The baby may not understand the words of your conversation, but your voices convey your feelings. If you say something with love, the baby will feel it. If something is said in irritation, the child will receive it. Don't think that because your baby is in the womb or still very tiny, he does not understand. Many children cannot bear the heavy atmosphere of their homes, and they hide in the bathroom or another room in order not to hear the words that create wounds in their hearts. Sometimes children get sick because of the way their parents talk to each other. They may then be afraid of adults and those in authority the rest of their lives. I have seen babies who play naturally and happily when no adults are in the room, but as soon as the door opens and an adult walks in, they become limp and silent. The seeds of fear in them are already so great. Suffering begins before we are born. And some seeds are present in us even before that, transmitted by our ancestors.

Mindful living — awareness that our children are a continuation of ourselves — is extremely helpful. Looking deeply and living mindfully, we see that our children are our continuation. They are nothing other than ourselves. If we have suffered because of our parents, we know that the negative seeds of our parents are already within us. If we aren't capable of recognising those seeds in ourselves and practicing to transform them, we might do to our children exactly what our parents have done to us. This cycle of suffering can be put to an end through the practice of mindful living.

-Thich Nhat Hanh

## Modi - The Alchemist &amp; Catalyst

■ M R LALU

What makes India's electioneering a monumental surprise is its unpredictability. You do not know what will happen the next moment. There are no permanent friends and enemies and nobody knows who would be the next stowaway comfortably hiding to cross jump ships. But when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President Rajnath Singh announced Narendra Modi as its prime ministerial candidate on 13 September 2013 it was not unpredictable.

There was already the mist of speculation emanating from the ravines of India's political landscape. Everybody in the BJP and in the opposition camps began to sense the emergence of Modi as a contender for the post of Prime Minister and brand Modi's Gujarat model was deliberately made a topic of discussion.

The only confusion that persisted was about his ability to drag the country's population into 'the new thinking, new hope' version of new politics that he declared in one of his press meets.

But later, India was to march with the 'Modified' version of Indian politics and administration; perhaps you would call it the most articulate period of India's electoral politics.

The surprise element is seemingly getting more pronounced, at least for his opponents, who failed to cut paths to bypass Modi's popularity.

He is the most popular outsider in Delhi who hailed from humble beginnings and successfully captured the minds of the electorate by winning all popular parameters of political superstardom and still unstoppable for a decade.

The anti corruption crusade setup by the Anna Hazare camp came as a drizzle

in the desert as Modi prepared for the elections 2014 and his political prominence began to grow enormously nationally when all the narratives failed to demonise him for the 2002 Gujarat riots. Any leader in his place could have been emotionally crippled, ideologically paralysed and socially alienated. But Modi withstood the political storm which blew westward when he was engrossed in building his state Gujarat that had choked under the ravages of a deadly earthquake.

When the earthquake shattered the hopes of the state in 2001, a few months later, the new Chief Minister of the state was struggling to build it brick by brick and then came the gruesome Godhra train carnage and the aftermath tremor of violence throwing the state into a deep turmoil.

Restructuring of Gujarat was a tough task that the Modi regime had handled effortlessly. His victories since then have been historical and the spiteful narratives his opponents began to shriek louder against him have been blissfully swallowed and he waited for appropriate occasions to react and intelligently turned the wind in favour of him.

To his ideological parent, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the emergence of the Modi persona beyond its restricted flying space was not a subject of adulation. But Modi's popularity as a leader of mass support has been a helping factor for the Sangh to establish its lost base in various areas.

This was because Narendra Modi was the only Prime Minister, who in many occasions proudly spelt out vocabularies venerating the Sangh. He never hesitated to narrate his umbilical connection with the Sangh.

This has attached more respect, acceptance and accolades to the Sangh

which otherwise was normally prosecuted in the media for its heavy Hindutva philosophy.

Ever since the coronation of the first Modi regime, thousands of Sangh shakhas were revived and many units were newly formed across the country. The Modi incarnation in the national politics could catapult its prospects manifold to a spectacular extent with more people idolizing its efforts and workers.

Modi's audacity in building the world's largest statue, a dedication to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who banned the Sangh after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, was probably a step to establish his personal brand of ideology that he must have thought to launch outside the Sangh Parivar framework.

The present scenario is evocative of the fact that more than anyone, it is the Sangh, the machinery that would seek to tap fortunes from the Modi regime. The Sangh has obviously been a force that toiled hard to establish its political wing the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) since 1951.

The political transition of the BJS to BJP had been an awesome creation that the Sangh with its cultural intelligence had managed to chisel out.

Systematically highjacking Mahatma Gandhi from the Congress camp, Modi began to launch governmental initiatives in the name of the Mahatma and his demeanour to focus on the Gandhian way of societal progress was a brilliant move to belittle the Congress' stake on the Father of the Nation. Prioritising nationalism as its initial plank to progress, the BJP with the Sangh stretching its helping hands has progressed to its enormous stature of the day but the imagery that the Modi persona could transform the saffron ideolo-

gy into, should be seen as an outcome of his ideological transparency, organisational expertise and personal humility. Sliding away from its aggressive Hindutva, the party under Modi could now transform the emotions of a large chunk of the Indian voters in its favour.

Emerging as a serious contender to thwart the dominance of the Congress, the BJP since 2014 could almost nullify the coalition form of power politics. Effectively redefining the Hindutva philosophy by allocating enough space to accommodate nationalistic principles, the consistent transmutation of the saffron party under the Modi regime makes it an immortal phenomenon.

To counter the narratives that the BJP sets to materialise its electoral success before every election, its detractors would need substantial and convincing ideological stuff.

To present itself as a serious contender to the Modi fiefdom, the Aam Aadmi Party's efforts to frame saffron narratives lack sincerity and so far, the emergence of the AAP as a distant shadow doesn't trouble the BJP's prospects. Modi has already scaled the unshakable heights of the Hindutva's political legacy leaving maximum parties far behind.

A third term for Modi in 2024 is almost certain and the colossal makeover of the Modi phenomenon would be a subject of study for the world community when leaders fall into perils without being able to garner the popular public support in countries where almost one tenth of India's population determines their political fortunes.

Modi's indomitability is an unpleasant challenge to many in India which they never hesitate to hide.

But the Modi magic is on, mainstreaming the country's cultural heritage and popularising India's political might.

## Biowaste to mushroom cultivation

■ GOURAV SABHARWAL

Agriculture wastes are rich in nutrients which provides major concern in today's world because their disposal without Pretreatment can cause leaching in field which can cause environmental pollution. To overcome this problem, mushroom cultivation on these agricultural wastes is the most ecofriendly method to reduce the level of nutrients at acceptable range to be used as manure. Besides overcoming this problem defined combination of agricultural wastes also gives high yield of mushroom in a cost effective manner.

Agricultural wastes are rich in lignocellulosic components which are difficult to breakdown, but can effectively be done mushroom cultivation. Mushrooms are fleshy fungi, sporebearing fruiting bodies which are produced above ground on soil. They often refer to fruiting body of the gill fungi, which do not contain chlorophyll like green plants and as a result cannot manufacture food by their own.

They are very nutritious products that can be generated from lignocellulosic waste materials. The bioconversion of agricultural wastes into a value added products is a good mean of their use. The property of edible mushroom fungi to convert complex organic compounds into simpler one's is used to transform the useless agricultural waste into valuable product.

Various edible mushroom strains are cultivated worldwide. Some of them are given below:

- o Button -Agaricus
- o Oyster -Pleurotus
- o Shiitake -Lentinula Edodes
- o Straw -Volvarella volvacea
- o Chinese mushroom - Ganoderma

Besides having many nutritional values they are also useful in waste management. The choice of species to cultivate depends on the availability of growth media. Oyster mushroom is the third most cultivated edible mushroom in the world. Oyster mushrooms are easiest to grow as they can grow on many substrates but their cultivation has one drawback as some people are allergic to their spores.

In these cases, air-cleaning equipment or respirators are necessary in order to safely work in the production facility. Because of the short shelf life this species offer a special advantage to the local grower who markets directly and can continuously deliver a fresh, high-quality product.

Two mycorrhizal mushrooms, morels and truffles are commercially cultivated. Mushroom cultivation offers benefits to market gardens when it is integrated into the existing production system. Mushrooms are rich in various nutrients such as:

- o Protein- Protein content of dry weight is between

18% and 37%.

o Fat- Fat is present at low rate, content between 1-8%. The high content of linoleic acids is one of the reasons why mushrooms are considered healthy food.

o Vitamins and minerals - Mushrooms are a good source of vitamins such as thiamine (Vitamin B), Riboflavin (vitamin B2) and ascorbic acid (vitamin C), folic acid. They also contain significant amounts of phosphorus, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron and Zinc.

Protein content of mushroom in paddy was significantly higher than in wheat straw while lipid content of mushrooms was higher in wheat straw than paddy straw. Mushrooms have medicinal values as they contain substances which lower the cholesterol level in serum and liver which in turn makes it good for those suffering from heart diseases.

Some of them contain substances, which suppress the growth rate of tumors.

Free radicals can damage body cells and induce cancers. Free radicals are the result of specific transformation process. Many bio active compounds protect the body against these radicals.

These substances are often called anti oxidants and are present in many mushrooms. In other words, the body immunity is boosted. This will be a relief to those suffering from HIV/AIDS.

## Allow Parliament to function smoothly

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Indian Parliament is the supreme institution of the country and is rightly called the temple of democracy. It is the responsibility and duty of the parliamentarians to allow smooth functioning of this august house in the interest of the people and democracy. It is the common Knowledge and experience of the people that parliament functioning is often disrupted, obstructed and hindered by the parliament members and it is a very serious issue and it is important to allow the functioning of the parliament smoothly and frictionless so that the business of both houses of parliament is carried without any obstruction disruptions and frictions are minimum. It is very disturbing and unbecoming that the parliament functioning is marred by the pandemonium's, disruptions and frictions which results in indiscipline and obstruction in framing laws and affects the smooth functioning of the parliament.

All the parliament members of various political parties should cooperate with the government so that the parliament functions in normal manner without any obstructions and hindrances as well as disruptions. The members of the parliament should revere and respect the discipline and decorum of the parliament and not make the parliament to resemble a fish market and a talking shop only but lend their cooperation in making the smooth functioning of the parliament a success. Parliament functioning costs corers of rupees to the national exchequer and the parliamentarians should as such make it sure that the proceedings of the parliament are not washed away without transacting any business.

It is very unfortunate that many man days of both the houses of the parliament are lost in the din and disruption of the parliament proceedings which badly affect the functioning of the parliament.

The disruptions and indiscipline and unwarranted obstruction of the parlia-

ment functioning results in enormous loss to the countries exchequer and to the public and economy and the sincere efforts should be made for the smooth functioning of the parliament. The opposition parties and that too strong opposition and criticism is the very soul and essence of democracy and without strong opposition and positive and constructive criticism, democracy becomes a meaningless proposition and it loses all its sheen and importance.

Therefore strong and constructive criticism and opposition is the hallmark of a successful democracy and so in parliament functioning positive and constructive criticism and opposition should be encouraged and allowed as it makes the government to function in the best interests of the people who are real sovereigns in a democracy.

It is the duty and responsibility of the opposition political parties to raise the public issues and problems as well as the deficiencies of the ruling party and the government so that it pays required heed and attention towards meeting and fulfilling of the demands and solving the genuine issues and problems of the people.

Thus the positive and constructive criticism and opposition is the san-e-quodam of the smooth and frictionless proceedings of the parliament. Therefore constructive and positive criticism and opposition should be encouraged and blind criticism and opposition should be done away with so that the business of the parliament is carried and laws and bills are passed in the interest of the democracy.

The parliament members should ensure that the parliament is not disrupted on the flimsily grounds and so often as to hinder the smooth running of the parliament.

What is required is that the parliament should be allowed to function and transact the business of legislating so that the laws and acts are passed to further the democracy and to achieve public good.

In our country there is live telecast of the parliament proceedings and thus the conduct of the parliament members is viewed and observed by the people and so the parliament members should conduct themselves in best possible manner and contribute to the functioning of the parliament and provide a helping hand to the government in fruitful proceedings of both houses of the parliament. Nothing should be done during the working of the parliament by its members who will lower their prestige and status and make them a laughing stock and so the parliament members should maintain discipline and decorum of the parliament at all costs and never indulge in indiscipline and chaos and confusion. The proceedings of the parliament should be carried smoothly and in the best interests of the people and democracy so that democracy is strengthened. The parliamentarians should know and realize that they are sent to parliament to transact the business proceedings and they have to make and frame rather pass laws to govern the country and they have no right to disrupt and hinder the proceedings of the parliament. Obstructing and hindering the proceedings of the parliament is un-parliamentary and this should not be allowed to mar the functioning of the august parliament.

It is the right and duty of the parliament members to raise the public issues and problems in the parliament and attract the attention of the executive/government towards these so that the government resolves these public issues and the governance is carried as per the needs and demands of the people who are the real sovereigns in a democracy. Few days before the winter session of the parliament has begun and before its commencement the PM Narendra Modi and the parliamentary affairs minister had convened the meeting of the parliament members of the various political parties so that their cooperation is enlisted and sought for smooth running of the parliament.

Mallik Arjun Kharge congress president and other heads of the political parties who are also the parliament members have pledged their cooperation and support for ensuring the smooth functioning of the parliament and a consensus has been arrived at to ensure the disruption free and frictionless proceedings of the parliament in public interest.

It is thus hoped that the parliament proceedings will be carried on without any obstruction and hindrance so that the objective and functioning of the parliament are held smoothly and the maximum business is transacted and laws and acts are passed for executive so that the government conducts the governance of the country as per the laws in force. Indiscipline, making of very noisy scenes and rushing often to the well of the parliament and tearing of the papers in front of the speaker or chairman should not be allowed.

However the constructive and positive criticism should be welcomed and encouraged so that the government acts in the best interests of the public. We have seen loss of many and enormous man days and it has resulted in huge loss to the exchequer and now the parliament members should resolve to uphold discipline, decorum and pledge to work for the public and not to resort to unwanted pandemonium and ruckus in the parliament which hinders the smooth running of the parliament. Parliament members are representatives of the people and they are required to conduct themselves in proper discipline and decorum and work in the best interests of the people who have voted them. In short, Parliamentarians should a helping hand to ruling party in transacting business of Parliament and enact laws, which later on help in the governance of the country.

The smooth working of the parliament should be ensured and indiscipline and disruptions should be a thing of past.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).