

'MAKE IN INDIA' PROJECTS IN DEFENCE

The "Make in India" initiative, launched by the Indian government in 2014, has been a transformative strategy aimed at promoting domestic manufacturing, reducing dependency on imports, and bolstering the country's position in global supply chains. One of the sectors where this initiative has shown remarkable progress is the defence industry. Over the last decade, India has made significant strides in developing indigenous defence capabilities, from manufacturing advanced weaponry to the establishment of cutting-edge defence research organizations. The shift from being a major importer of defence equipment to focusing on self-reliance has fundamentally changed the landscape of India's defence sector.

The overarching goal of the "Make in India" programme in defence is to reduce the reliance on foreign suppliers for weapons, ammunition, and technology, thus strengthening India's national security while boosting local industry.

Self-Reliance-Encouraging the production of critical and high-tech defence systems locally, such as fighter jets, tanks, and naval ships.

Innovation & Research-Development of indigenously designed and developed defence technologies through collaboration between public and private sectors.

Economic Growth-Generating employment and fostering economic development by expanding the domestic defence manufacturing ecosystem.

Export Potential-Enhancing India's position as a major exporter of defence products to other countries, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

India's defence production capacity has evolved significantly in recent years. Key projects such as the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, Arjun Main Battle Tank (MBT), and INS Vikrant, India's first indigenously built aircraft carrier, are prime examples of how the nation is developing its own advanced military hardware. The LCA Tejas, for example, has reached the stage of full-scale production, with the Indian Air Force (IAF) having inducted several units of this indigenous multirole fighter jet. The Arjun Tank, another achievement of the Make in India programme, has undergone extensive testing and has been inducted into the Indian Army, becoming an important asset in the country's ground warfare capability. The government has increasingly encouraged private sector participation in defence manufacturing. This has created a thriving defence industrial base with the involvement of private companies such as Tata Advanced Systems, Larsen & Toubro (L&T), Mahindra Defence Systems, and Bharat Forge. These companies have made significant contributions to manufacturing key components for tanks, aircraft, and naval ships. Additionally, several joint ventures (JVs) between Indian and foreign companies have been established, further boosting India's defence manufacturing capabilities. The government has also taken steps to encourage foreign direct investment (FDI) in defence manufacturing, with up to 74% FDI allowed through the automatic route in the defence sector. The role of research and development in the growth of India's defence sector has been pivotal. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), a key player in India's defence indigenization efforts, has made significant breakthroughs, such as the development of ballistic missile defence systems, advanced radar technologies, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The BrahMos missile, a joint venture between India and Russia, is one of the world's fastest supersonic cruise missiles, and it has significantly enhanced India's deterrence capabilities. The Indian government has taken steps to establish defence industrial corridors in key states like Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. These corridors aim to enhance defence manufacturing by creating a robust supply chain, supporting innovation, and creating employment opportunities. These industrial hubs will provide a platform for private and public players to collaborate and focus on producing a wide range of defence equipment, including small arms, ammunition, and precision-guided munitions. A key component of the Make in India initiative has been the focus on expanding India's defence exports. The country has increasingly been exporting defence systems to countries like Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Indian government has made substantial efforts to reduce the barriers to defence exports by easing the export approval process and ensuring the quality and reliability of the products.

■ MOHD. YASEEN



Today, on World Theatre Day, we come together to celebrate one of the most powerful forms of art that has stood the test of time, called 'Theatre'. Theatre is an art form that not only entertains but also educates, challenges, and shapes the society we live in. Through its performances, theatre brings attention to social evils, offers a critique of prevailing norms, and attempts to create a more harmonious social structure. Over the years, theatre has earned its place as a medium that transcends boundaries, influencing minds and hearts alike. It is the only art form that has found a space in educational institutions, contributing to the intellectual and cultural development of students.

However, it is not just in academic spaces that theatre thrives; even in the most developed countries, the importance of theatre has been recognized. In many such nations, theatre is seen as a vital tool for community participation and intellectual growth. The role of theatre in shaping the cultural and intellectual landscape cannot be understated. The origins of World Theatre Day date back to 1961, when the International Theatre Institute (ITI) and UNESCO, Paris, established it as an annual celebration of theatre and its power to bring people together. Celebrated on March 27th every year, World Theatre Day serves as a reminder of the universal significance of theatre, with various national and international theatre events organized in its honor.

Yet, as we celebrate the global significance of theatre, there are some regions and languages where the importance of theatre seems to be waning. One such example is Dogri theatre, which, despite its rich history, is struggling to retain its prominence in modern times. As we reflect on this decline, we must ask: How can we revive the traditional arts of our region through theatre and ensure that they continue to thrive?

Jammu, like the rest of India, has a deep-rooted history of theatre. In the past, theatre in Jammu played a central role in the cultural life of the region. About thirty years ago, theatre in Jammu was at a significant level, offering both entertainment and enlightenment to the public. Back then, theatre was viewed with reverence, but also with a certain degree of detachment by some. Yet, the roots of Dogri theatre go back much further in time, and it was the patronage of the Dogra kings that gave this art form a solid foundation. Theatre troupes from outside the state would travel to Jammu to perform, showcasing their skills and providing much-needed entertainment to the people. The staging of the Ram Leela, a prominent theatrical tradi-



tion, also found its way into the cultural fabric of Jammu.

However, over time, the prominence of Dogri theatre began to decline. As Hindi and other languages grew in popularity, Dogri theatre found itself relegated to the margins. The vibrancy that once characterized the Dogri theatrical scene started to fade, and the focus shifted towards more mainstream languages. Despite this, some theatre institutions continued to champion Dogri theatre. Their efforts have ensured that Dogri theatre remains relevant, even if it is no longer the dominant form of theatre in the region.

While celebrating World Theatre Day is an important gesture to honor the legacy of theatre, it is crucial to ask: Does this celebration alone guarantee the welfare and promotion of theatre? Is the decline of traditional arts like Dogri theatre being adequately addressed? The simple answer is no. While the establishment of World Theatre Day helps raise awareness about the importance of theatre globally, it does little to stem the tide of cultural erosion that is affecting regional theatre forms.

In recent years, with Jammu and Kashmir becoming a Union Territory, there was hope that traditional folk arts would be revitalized. However, the reality has been different. There has been little focus on promoting traditional arts, especially Dogri theatre, despite the promise of support. One significant issue is that very few Dogri plays are being performed in the traditional folk style. While many theatre institutions are working on Dogri theatre, there is little emphasis on reviving and promoting traditional folk theatre forms. Folk theatre, such as Dogri Hern and Geetru, plays a critical role in preserving the cultural identity of the region. These forms of theatre reflect the region's rich cultural heritage, and yet, they are being overshadowed by more contemporary theatre styles.

A popular saying suggests that in order to gain something, one must be willing to lose something. However, when it comes to preserving our cultural heritage, we should not be losing everything in the pursuit of modernization. The loss of traditional forms of theatre

cannot be justified in the name of progress. In fact, it is crucial that we recognize the value of preserving our cultural roots, especially in the face of globalization and cultural homogenization.

Furthermore, the government has a crucial role to play in supporting the growth and development of Dogri theatre. It is essential that new opportunities are created for artists working in this field. These artists, though perhaps unaware of the significance of their work, are preserving the essence of Dogri culture through their craft. It is the duty of the government to provide them with the resources and recognition they deserve, so they can continue to thrive and contribute to the cultural fabric of the region.

Another important aspect of reviving Dogri theatre is the need to emphasize the traditional folk styles that are the heart and soul of Dogri performance. The Dogri language, with its rich literary and cultural traditions, is best expressed through these folk theatre forms. For instance, Hern, Geetru, and Karak are the traditional Dogri theatrical and singing forms that have been a part of the region's cultural expression for centuries. These forms are unique to the Dogri-speaking community and have played a central role in conveying social and cultural messages to the people.

Hern, for example, is a traditional form of theatre in which the actors perform in a stylized manner, often incorporating dance and music. It is a form that has historically been used to tell stories from mythology, history, and folklore, and it continues to resonate with audiences because of its dynamic and engaging style. Similarly, Geetru is another traditional form that blends folk songs, dance, and drama, creating a lively and colorful theatrical experience. It often focuses on social issues and is used to convey moral and ethical lessons to the audience. Karak, too, is a highly ritualistic form of performance that blends singing, often depicting stories of valor, heroism, and sacrifice. These traditional theatre forms not only serve as a medium of entertainment but also as a vehicle for preserving and transmitting the region's cultural values. They offer a

rich tapestry of stories, emotions, and artistic expression that connects the past with the present. Yet, these forms are in danger of being forgotten, as contemporary theatre takes precedence over the traditional styles. If we do not make a concerted effort to revive and promote these forms, we risk losing a significant part of our cultural heritage.

While the government's support is crucial, the youth also have an important role to play in reviving Dogri theatre. Today's young generation is passionate about preserving and promoting their cultural heritage, and many are already working tirelessly to uplift Dogri theatre. They are keen to explore and experiment with new forms of theatre while also ensuring that traditional styles are not forgotten.

The youth must take it upon themselves to explore and incorporate the traditional folk theatre styles into their work. They should not shy away from performing plays in Dogri, even if the audience may not always be large or enthusiastic. It is only through consistent effort that Dogri theatre can be revitalized and given the recognition it deserves.

Moreover, the government must also support the efforts of young theatre artists by providing them with platforms to showcase their work. They should be given the tools and resources to develop their craft and bring the rich traditions of Dogri theatre to the forefront. As we celebrate World Theatre Day, it is important to remember that theatre is not just a form of entertainment but also a powerful tool for preserving and promoting culture. The decline of Dogri theatre is a reflection of broader cultural changes, and it is up to all of us - artists, institutions, and the government - to ensure that this important art form is not lost. By reviving traditional Dogri theatre, particularly its folk styles like Hern, Geetru, and Karak, we can ensure that future generations will continue to connect with their cultural heritage. The youth, with their passion and creativity, can lead the charge in this revival, but they need the support and encouragement of the wider community. Together, we can ensure that Dogri theatre continues to thrive for generations to come.

Tree Talks: Empowering Community Greens

■ DR RAKESH VERMA

The Tree Talks initiative, championed by OP Sharma Vidyarthi, is a proactive approach aimed at enhancing environmental awareness through community-driven tree plantation activities. Launched in [Year of Inception], this initiative emerged from a growing concern over the detrimental effects of climate change, urbanization, and the loss of biodiversity. It reflects a commitment to fostering a sustainable future for both local communities and the planet. Since 2010, he has delivered 1600 Tree talks at various venues, including schools, colleges, research institutes, and public parks. The tree talk raised awareness among environmental activists.

Objectives of the Initiative

The primary objectives of the Tree Talks initiative include Environmental Education: To educate community members and participants about the critical role of trees in ecosystems and the importance of preserving biodiversity. Community Engagement: To create a platform for residents to actively participate in green initiatives, strengthening their bond with nature and each other. Sustainable Practices: To encourage the adoption of sustainable practices that contribute to environmental health and combat climate change.

Motivation Behind Tree Talks

The motivation driving this initiative stems from the belief that informed and engaged communities are essential for effective environmental stewardship. By instilling a sense of responsibility towards nature, Tree Talks aims to inspire individuals to take action, whether it's through planting trees, conserving existing green spaces, or advocating for sustainable environmental policies. Tree Talks transcends mere tree planting; it serves as a catalyst for environmental education. Participants gain firsthand experience in understanding the significance of trees and their impact on climate resilience. Workshops, interactive sessions, and hands-on activities ensure that knowledge is not only imparted but deeply ingrained, promoting lifelong eco-consciousness. The initiative presents a unique opportunity for all stakeholders-including environmental activists, students, and local government bodies-to come together, fostering a collaborative spirit in the pursuit of sustainable

ity. Through Tree Talks, OP Sharma Vidyarthi aims to plant not just trees, but also the seeds of change in community attitudes toward environmental conservation.

Background of OP Sharma Vidyarthi

OP Sharma Vidyarthi is a retired officer from Indian Forest Services, who retired as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, J&K. He authored number of books on environmental conservation, he is a renowned figure in the field of environmental advocacy, whose work has significantly inspired the Tree Talks initiative. With a rich background in community service, he has dedicated his life to cultivating knowledge and promoting awareness about pressing environmental issues. Throughout his career, OP Sharma Vidyarthi has held various posts, emphasizing the importance of integrating environmental studies into academic curricula. He has spearheaded numerous outreach programs that encourage students to engage in ecological studies, thereby fostering a generation of environmentally conscious individuals. His belief in education as a transformative tool has empowered countless students to take initiative in their communities, illustrating how academic knowledge can translate into real-world impact. Recognizing the urgency of climate change, Sharma has become a vocal advocate for sustainable practices. He has organized workshops and lectures aimed at instilling ecological values among community members, from young children to local leaders. His commitment to environmental causes is not only theoretical; he has led numerous tree plantation drives, often collaborating with educational institutions and NGOs to amplify his message. Sharma's diverse experiences-ranging from educational reform to grassroots environmental activism-directly influenced the creation of the Tree Talks initiative. By combining his botanical background with a passion for environmental stewardship, he envisioned Tree Talks as a platform that marries knowledge with action. This initiative not only addresses environmental degradation but also aims to cultivate a spirit of community engagement, ensuring that the legacy of ecological awareness resonates across generations. The Tree Talks initiative is underpinned by a set of clearly defined goals and objectives that aim to create a lasting

impact on both the community and the environment. These objectives focus on cultivation, awareness, and sustainable practices, ensuring that the initiative resonates with individuals of all ages.

One of the primary goals is to educate the community about the importance of trees, their role in combating climate change, and the necessity of biodiversity. This is achieved through workshops, seminars, and hands-on activities designed to engage participants actively.

The initiative seeks to foster a sense of community by inviting local residents to participate in tree plantation drives. Through collaboration, residents can cultivate a deeper connection with their environment and neighbors, fostering a spirit of teamwork and mutual respect. Tree Talks encourages adopting sustainable environmental practices, such as organic farming and waste reduction. By highlighting the significance of responsible ecological behavior, the initiative nurtures future generations of eco-conscious individuals. The effective execution of the Tree Talks initiative relies on a multifaceted approach that incorporates various strategies to ensure maximum community engagement and education. Key implementation strategies encompass workshops, community involvement, the creation of educational materials, and collaborations with local organizations.

Workshops and Educational Sessions

Tree Talks hosts a series of workshops designed to provide participants with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills regarding tree planting and environmental conservation. These workshops typically include Engaging activities that allow participants to directly partake in discussions about the ecological significance of trees and biodiversity. Guided sessions demonstrating proper planting techniques and care for saplings, ensuring that participants feel equipped and confident in contributing to tree plantation efforts.

Community Engagement Initiatives

Community involvement forms the backbone of the Tree Talks initiative. Efforts to foster this engagement include: Organized events where residents come together to plant trees in public spaces, schools, and community parks. These drives serve as rallying points for community spirit and collective action. Creating partnerships with educational institutions allows stu-

dents to directly participate, transforming the initiative into a lively experiential learning platform.

Creation and Distribution of Educational Materials

To enhance the educational aspect of Tree Talks, various informational materials are developed and distributed, including Brochures and Pamphlets: These offer information about the significance of trees and steps individuals can take to support their environment. Interactive Online Resources: Utilizing digital platforms to offer easy access to information, webinars, and resources related to environmental conservation and sustainable practices.

Collaboration with Local Organizations

The success of Tree Talks is augmented through strategic partnerships with a range of local organizations and governmental bodies, allowing for: Combining expertise and resources with NGOs focused on environmental conservation amplifies the initiative's reach and impact. Inviting ecologists, environmentalists, and local leaders to share their knowledge during workshops encourages a broader understanding and commitment to environmental issues.

Volunteer Engagement and Training

To maintain momentum, Tree Talks emphasizes the recruitment and training of volunteers who play a pivotal role in the initiative's execution: These programs equip volunteers with necessary skills related to environmental advocacy, tree care, and community service which fosters a dedicated and knowledgeable: Acknowledging volunteers through certificates or public appreciation helps to motivate ongoing involvement and cultivates a positive culture around environmental stewardship. Through these comprehensive implementation strategies, Tree Talks not only facilitates tree planting efforts but also weaves a fabric of awareness and commitment among community members, ultimately aiming to create sustainable ecological behaviors that endure over time.

Community-Driven Impact in Local Areas

The Tree Talks initiative has fostered a variety of successful outcomes through its community-driven efforts, showcasing the tangible benefits of enhanced environmental awareness and engagement. Below are notable case studies highlighting the initiative's effectiveness:

Green Campus at ABC School

In partnership with Schools, Tree Talks organized a large-scale tree planting event, which resulted in the planting of number of saplings. Testimonies from students revealed newfound enthusiasm about environmental stewardship. One student remarked, "After planting trees, I understand how vital they are for our planet. I want to take better care of my environment." This event not only beautified the school campus but also integrated environmental education into the school curriculum.

Community Park Revitalization

A series of events held at Local Community Park led to a dramatic transformation. Feedback from families and park visitors indicated a resurgence in park usage, with one community member stating, "Our park feels alive again! Thanks to Tree Talks, we also have a space for community gatherings." This revitalization has fostered stronger community ties and encouraged residents to participate in maintaining green spaces.

**Reduction in Air Pollution:** Community narratives from neighborhoods engaged in Tree Talks have highlighted changes in air quality. Residents reported feeling healthier since the introduction of new greenery, reinforcing the correlation between increased tree canopies and cleaner air.

**Local Biodiversity Growth:** Through targeted plantations of native species, many communities have observed a resurgence in local wildlife. A community leader stated, "We've seen more birds and butterflies, and it's wonderful for children to witness nature flourishing."

**Youth Activism:** High school students describing their participation in Tree Talks mentioned an awakening of civic responsibilities. One participant shared, "Becoming involved in Tree Talks made me realize we can make a difference. I want others to join our cause!"

**Resilient Communities:** Adults from various neighborhoods recounted how Tree Talks created platforms for collaboration, fostering a sense of collective action. A local resident noted, "It's more than trees; it feels like we're in this together, hand-in-hand for our future." Engaging social media campaigns and local media outlets were utilized to increase awareness of environmental issues, successfully turning apathy into

action. This was complemented by testimonials from participants who experienced the benefits of the initiative. Forming partnerships with local businesses, NGOs, and government bodies allowed for the pooling of financial and material resources. This not only expanded the initiative's reach but also reduced dependency on limited funds. Implementing weather-appropriate strategies, such as scheduling backup dates and planning indoor activities, ensured that events remained on track even in unpredictable conditions. Conducting specialized training sessions for volunteers equipped them with essential knowledge about tree care and maintenance. This increased their confidence and effectiveness, leading to better outcomes during plantation drives. Future efforts will include expanding the initiative to neighboring regions, fostering a broader community engagement and environmental consciousness. This can amplify the positive outcomes seen in areas currently involved. Introducing various projects that focus on native species, urban greening, and community gardens will diversify the initiative's offerings, encouraging more participants to get involved. Establishing ongoing workshops, clean-up drives, and eco-friendly events will keep community members engaged throughout the year, rather than limiting participation to battery installation events. Creating a structure where enthusiastic volunteers are trained as ambassadors can help sustain momentum by promoting environmental education in their local networks and schools.

Lessons Learned for Broader Initiatives

The successes and challenges faced by Tree Talks offer valuable insights. Implementing the following strategies can enhance similar initiatives. Engaging local members in decision-making processes fosters ownership over projects and improves attendance and involvement. Building relationships with educational institutions and NGOs can provide mutual benefits-shared resources, expertise, and a wider audience. These future directions aim to solidify Tree Talks as a cornerstone for sustainable community development, demonstrating that collective action can lead to lasting environmental change.