

CONNECTING INDIA

It will not be wrong if one says that radio programme by Prime Minister 'Mann Ki Baat' introduces 'unsung builders of modern Bharat' to the whole nation. A special study conducted by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) found that 76 per cent of the Indian media persons believe that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popular radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat' has played a significant role in introducing the real Bharat to the countrymen. The programme has initiated a trend where people are now more aware of the things in other parts of the country and they have started appreciating them. 75 per cent of the respondents feel that 'Mann Ki Baat' has emerged as a platform, which introduces grass roots innovators working selflessly to ensure a significant difference in the lives of people living in remote areas of India. According to IIMC Director General Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, the study was conducted by the Outreach Department of the Institute between April 12 and 25, 2023. A total of 890 persons associated with the media-media persons, media faculty, media researchers and media students-from 116 media houses, academic institutions and universities across the country participated in the study. Of these, 326 were women and 564 were men. 66 per cent of the respondents were between the age group of 18 and 25 years.

According to the respondents, 'Knowledge about the Country' and 'PM's Vision about the Country' are the two important reasons which motivate them to listen to the programme. When the respondents were asked how they listen to the programme if they miss any episode, 63 per cent said they prefer YouTube over the other mediums. 76 per cent of the respondents feel that they are a participant in the democratic process by listening to PM Modi on various issues in 'Mann Ki Baat'.

Prof. Dwivedi pointed out that the study also tried to understand which issue discussed by the Prime Minister in 'Mann Ki Baat' influenced the people's most. In response, 40 per cent of respondents mentioned 'education', while 26 per cent said 'information about grass roots innovators' as the most influential topic.

The study also tried to understand with whom the people share information about the topics discussed in 'Mann Ki Baat'. 32 per cent respondents said they share their thoughts on the issues discussed in the programme with their family members, while 29 per cent people said they discuss the topics with their friends and colleagues. Another interesting fact that emerged in the study was that 12 per cent people use radio, 15 per cent television and 37 per cent use Internet based platforms to listen to 'Mann Ki Baat'.

Uterine Cancer: A growing concern

■ DR V S N RAO

Cancer rates in India are on the rise, with some types linked to lifestyle choices. Among them is uterine cancer, which has traditionally been less common in India than in Western countries. However, the trend is changing due to factors such as urbanization, a rise in metabolic disorders, shifts in lifestyle patterns, and a delay in childbirth. This has led to an increase in the incidence of uterine cancer, affecting not only postmenopausal women but also younger women.

Gynaecological cancers, including uterine cancer, are a significant public health concern as they are prevalent among women, especially in developing countries like India, where limited cancer awareness, varying pathology, and inadequate screening facilities result in women presenting at advanced stages, leading to unfavourable prognosis and clinical outcomes.

Uterine cancer is a kind of cancer that starts in the womb or uterus, called the endometrium. It is the most common type of cancer that affects the female reproductive system. While the exact cause of uterine cancer is unknown, but certain factors may increase a woman's risk, such as:

Age: The risk of uterine cancer increases as women get older, with most cases occurring in women over age 50.

Hormonal imbalances: Women with higher estrogen levels or lower progesterone levels may have a higher risk of developing uterine cancer.

Obesity: Women who are obese have a higher risk of developing uterine cancer, likely due to the increased estrogen levels in their bodies.

Family History: For women with a family history of uterine or colon cancer may be at a higher risk of developing the disease.

The most common early symptom of uterine cancer is abnormal vaginal bleeding, particularly bleeding between periods or after menopause. Other early symptoms may include:

Vaginal discharge: Women with uterine cancer may experience a watery or bloody discharge from the vagina, which may have a foul odour.

Pelvic pain or pressure: Women with uterine cancer may experience pain or pressure in the abdomen, pelvis or lower back.

Pain during intercourse: Women with uterine cancer may experience pain during sexual intercourse.

Changes in bowel or bladder habits: Women with uterine cancer may experience changes in their bowel or bladder habits, such as constipation or frequent urination.

Gynaecological exams are an important part of a woman's overall health care and should be a routine practice. These exams are designed to detect any potential problems with the reproductive organs and can help to identify conditions like uterine cancer, among many other underlying health concerns.

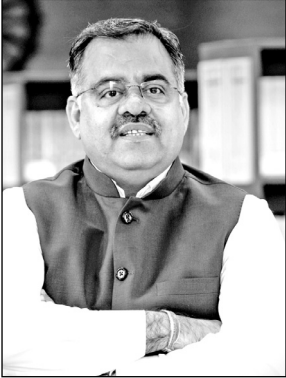
Treatment for uterine cancer is usually with surgery to remove the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. Another option is radiation therapy. Drug treatments for endometrial cancer include chemotherapy with powerful drugs and hormone therapy to block hormones that cancer cells rely on. Other options might be targeted therapy with drugs that attack specific weaknesses in the cancer cells and immunotherapy to help your immune system fight cancer. There are various types of treatments which can be best decided with an oncologist best suited for the patient.

Prevention: There's no definite way to prevent endometrial cancer. However, there are things one can do that may help lower the risk of developing this disease. Most of them are based on reversing risk factors. A few habits one can change include maintaining a healthy weight. Women who are overweight have a higher risk of developing uterine cancer as time passes, hence keeping a check on one's weight is crucial, being physically active- higher levels of physical activity lowers the risk of uterine cancer and getting regular check-ups with your doctor. It is also important to note that other conditions may also cause the symptoms listed, and not all women with uterine cancer will experience symptoms in the early stages of the disease. That is why it is extremely important to have regular gynaecological exams and to report any unusual symptoms to your doctor.

(The author is Chief Radiation Oncologist & Director Medical Services, HCG Cancer Centre, Vijayawada).

Badal made Punjab prosperous and capable

■ TARUN CHUGH



in the country's electoral politics, began in 1947 when he became the 'Sarpanch' of Badal village in Bathinda district, which rose to the pinnacle. In his long political journey, he fought in the election season 13 times.

In the year 1947, Sardar Prakash Singh Badal became the sarpanch of his village and from there he started giving steps to the dream of making Punjab a capable state along with his passion to serve the country and the state.

Whether it was the partition of the country and Punjab, or the period of Emergency to terrorism, Punjab had to give repeated examinations in all these times, Parkash Singh Badal stood as a sensible and strong leader in this period of examinations.

With the death of Prakash Singh Badal, one of the politicians who did not give up easily in the politics of the country and the state of Punjab, a light beam of Indian politics was extinguished and a long era of politics of the state of Punjab came to an end. The political journey of Parkash Singh Badal, who entered his name in the record books as the oldest person to contest elections

Parkash Singh Badal, who fought for the rights of Punjab, had to go to jail several times. At the same time, he had to stay in jail for about one and a half years during the Emergency along with the threats posed to democracy in the country. Sardar Parkash Singh Badal, who commanded Punjab several times, always defended the principle of Miri and Piri of Sikhism. Where on one hand he was taking the state forward at the political level, on the other hand he always took religion along with him. Many such remarkable works were done in the Sardar Parkash Singh Badal-led government, which became an example not only for Sikhism, but also for other religions.

Monuments like Chhaparchidi War Memorial, Virasat-e-Khalsa, Ram Tirtha and Jang-e-Azadi, which will keep the heritage and history of Punjab alive for centuries. This is the glory of Sardar Parkash Singh Badal's government. During his tenure from 2007 to 2012, Parkash Singh Badal realized his dream of changing the image of Punjab and making Punjab prosperous through hundreds of projects like road network, new government buildings, bypasses, meritorious schools, etc. Did.

Badal, a veteran of Punjab politics, became the Chief Minister for the first time in 1970 and led a coalition government, which unfortunately did not complete its term, but Parkash Singh Badal's political acumen did come to the fore. As a result, he was also the Chief Minister of the state in 1977-80, 1997-2002, 2007-12 and 2012-2017. Born on December 8, 1927, in Abul Khurana village of Bathinda, Punjab, Parkash Singh Badal did his graduation from

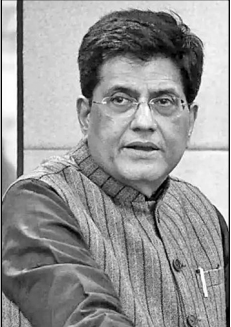
Forman Christian College, Lahore. In 1957, he entered the Punjab Legislative Assembly as an MLA from Malot. In 1969, he won from the Gidderbaha assembly seat.

Akali Dal leader Parkash Singh Badal strongly opposed the idea of the Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) canal, which was intended to share river water with the neighboring state of Haryana. He was arrested in 1982 for leading an agitation over the project. It is noteworthy that the Akali Dal has been one of the oldest allies of the BJP. Prakash Singh Badal made many notable contributions for the welfare of farmers and other weaker sections of the society in his long political and administrative career, playing an important role in the politics of Punjab for many decades. Due to the death of Prakash Singh Badal, who understood the good and bad of the country and the state very well, who had love and affection for all the people of Punjab, it is not possible to make up for it. Prakash Singh Badal was a man of great personality, great experience, a witness to a long political journey, and a man with a noble and big heart. Expressing deep condolence on his death, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that Parkash Singh Badal not only worked tirelessly for the progress of Punjab, but also contributed a lot in the development of the country. It is clear from the respect given by the Central Government by declaring two days mourning on his death, that the Prime Minister has a sense of respect for Punjab and Parkash Singh Badal. His great personality can never be forgotten. Humble tribute on the demise of such a great man.

(The author is the National General Secretary of BJP).

Mann Ki Baat @100-a chronicle of care and compassion in UT's growth story

■ PIYUSH GOYAL



The Prime Minister's deep connect with the masses, who regard him as a caring, compassionate and decisive leader who is transforming the country to improve the lives of the people. Since the first episode of Mann Ki Baat on October 3, 2014, the Prime Minister has struck a rare chord with our countrymen, who have responded enthusiastically and reached out to him month after month to share their accomplishments, joys, concerns, moments of pride, and their valuable suggestions for the New India.

This regular outreach to countrymen has no parallel in terms of reach and popularity - a fact that has been globally applauded. The Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni recently described Shri Modi as the world's most loved leader, while the US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo observed that the Indian Prime Minister was an "unbelievable visionary" and the world's most popular leader with the commitment to move India forward as a global power.

Mann Ki Baat captures the pulse of the nation in its progress towards becoming a developed country, in the Amrit Kaal. Mann Ki Baat has attracted and inspired crores of

Indians. The number of listeners has risen with each episode, testifying to the remarkable success story. Modi ji has sought to educate, guide, mentor and motivate fellow-Indians to work for social change and national development beginning with their communities. Importantly, as Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah pointed out, Mann Ki Baat has been completely apolitical in nature.

Modi-ji's regular communication evokes a powerful sense of pride in the motherland. He has highlighted local art and artisans, giving them much-needed recognition and brand value to help them reach out to buyers in India and abroad. It has also promoted Khadi, which boosts the rural economy. The impact of the programme can be comprehended from the fact that since Modi ji's mention of domestic toy-making and support for local toy industry in Mann Ki Baat, import of toys fell sharply by 70per cent from \$371 million in 2018-19 to \$110 million in 2021. Exports grew to \$326 million from \$202 million.

During the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted lives and economies across the world, the Prime Minister's monthly address lifted the spirit of the nation and infused a sense of positivity and cheer. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi reached out to truck drivers and pilots through this programme and boosted their morale. He also had a word of appreciation for all the COVID warriors combating the deadly pandemic at the time.

Another important dimension of Mann Ki Baat is that it gave a huge impetus to a

number of flagship initiatives of the government and transformed them into mass movements. These include Swachh Bharat, Beti Bachao and Beti Padhao, among several others. Another eloquent example is the resounding success of 'Selfie with Daughter.' Domestic tourism has got a huge boost. Apart from widespread social awareness on cleanliness thanks to the Swachhta Abhiyaan, the message of water conservation was disseminated nationally with a sense of urgency. Similarly, protection of the environment has now evolved into a movement.

Mann Ki Baat acknowledges the strength and power of 140 crore people and motivates them to give their best in the mission of nation building. It is now being broadcast in 23 Indian and 11 foreign languages recording the nation's developmental journey under Modi ji's extraordinary leadership. In these 100 broadcasts, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has covered and highlighted a wide array of topics, including weather, environment, cleanliness, social issues, indigenous crafts, examinations, clean India, fit India, saving and educating the girl child, water conservation, being vocal for local products, self-reliant India and celebrating the cultural diversity of our great nation.

Interestingly, these episodes of Mann Ki Baat feature inspirational stories about unsung heroes, grassroots champions and changemakers across India, who are transforming the nation and bringing about societal change through their silent, inspiring work. Mann Ki Baat weaves several social

and cultural strands which bind our great nation together and also paints a vivid picture of New India in Amrit Kaal, envisioned by PM Modi.

While drawing our attention to a host of burning topics, change-makers and grass-root heroes, the Prime Minister's monthly dialogue also outlines the roadmap for the future. The spirit of Jan Bhagidari with which this journey of development is suffused, harnesses the creative energies of the entire nation, notably its youth.

To mark 75 years of Independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted the national flag for the ninth time from the ramparts of the Red Fort and spelt out his vision for the future, predicated on "PanchPran". In line with this futuristic vision, he took a pledge along with 140 crore fellow-countrymen to rid the country of the colonial mindset in Amrit Kaal. As Modi observed with great clarity, "Today, our pathways are our own, our symbols are our own."

In the course of these 100 episodes, Modi touched upon a number of patriotic, social and cultural causes which people have embraced wholeheartedly and adopted. This includes the call for celebration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, commemorating 75 years of independence and his popular campaign to hoist the national flag in every home - Har Ghar Tiranga.

Mann Ki Baat is an authentic record of the extraordinary development journey of Bharat over the last nine years under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. His monthly interface with the nation reinforces his image of a down-to-earth, sensitive, visionary, and powerful mass leader.

(The author is Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles).

Preserving Natural Resources

■ G L KHAJURIA

With around 330 million hectares of the geographical area, India ranks seventh largest landmass globally. The systems and types of land use have been conditioned by multifold factors such as climatic conditions, temperature, air, precipitation so on and so fourth. And of these, the climatic conditions are primarily expressed in terms of precipitation, rainfall received in various parts of the Country. Rainfall in India is unequally distributed in spaces. The mean annual rainfall ranges from less than 10 mm in parts of Rajasthan desert to more than 4000 mm in the western Ghats.

The intra-annual distribution of precipitations is also uncertain and seasonally skewed. The bulk of rainfalls is received during the South-West monsoons (mid-June to September). However, during this season there are periodic spells or drought which are frequent in the arid and semi-arid areas/zones of the country covering the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat and partly some portions of Madhya Pradesh located in the central India. Consequently, the Crop yield of rainfed sorghum-Millet of the arid and semi-arid areas of India are subjected to periodic fluctuations.

The spatial difference in the availability of precipitation reflecting the relative differences in the amount of per unit area runoffs from the various rivers of India both in inter and intra annual terms. The central water commission (1988), places the average annual natural runoff available to India at 1880 million cubic meters. The water storage structures created or under construction are able to store only 13.5per cent of the mean annual runoff, insofar as ground water resources are concerned.

The estimates are that the replenishable ground water resources in India excluding North-east is 420 BCM per year of which 35.7 BCM per year is utilizable for irrigation against actual utilisation of only 106 BCM per year.

The unusual distribution of precipitation and water resources have conditioned agricultural cropping system and other systems of farming, though irrigation has successfully transformed the water-starved areas of Punjab, Haryana and western parts of Uttar Pradesh into the food bowls of India. However, there are sufficient indications that the agricultural front has stopped expanding. This is quite evident from the fact of net areas having increased from 119 million hac in 1950-51 to 140 million hac and stabilized at that level.

In any case, an expanding agricultural front was not essentially and environmentally conducive, since extension of cultivation to marginal lands had produced in its wake of the problems of soil and water erosion. And when this fact is related to the agricultural area subject to double or multiple cropping; the area of agricultural land some more than once increased from 25,524000 hac 1971 to 36,77000 hac in 1986-87, resultantly increase in food grains production by 42 million tones in the period 1970-71 to 1985-86.

As a consequence, it can very conveniently be concluded that agricultural production in India has had been on intensive margin i.e. modern technologies of production initiated during green revolution

of late 1960's. But spatial width of the intensive agricultural operation is narrow since the green revolution has been evident mainly in the northern western portions of India and portions of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu in South India.

India is as well endowed with large areas of non-agriculture production. And these areas are having expanse and diversified forest cover ranging from temperate vegetation in the sub-Himalayan and Himalayan region of moist-ever green forests in the North-east, the western coast and the Andaman and Nicobar islands. The forest cover of our country as per survey of India's latest report (2015), reveals that we continued to have 21per cent of forest despite population explosion, increased biotic pressure accruing from grazing, encroachments and diversification of forest areas for multidisciplinary purposes. As a result, therefore, there have been a marginal increase of 1per cent forest cover.

The overall situation is that the total green cover now stand for 697888 sq kms (12.23per cent) of the geographical area and upto 5871 sq kms (10.92per cent) from 92,027 sq kms as had earlier from existing during the year 2011 survey report. As such there has been a marginal increase of just 31 sq kms in very dense forests, whereas moderately dense forest went down to 1991 sq kms and open forests accounts for 7831 sq kms.

As per Anmol Kumar; the Director General, Survey of India, the carbon stocks of the country have increased by 4.07per cent whereas regeneration capacity is around 48per cent of the total forest area.

Broadly speaking, the forests of India have been divided into 16 major groups comprising into 221 types. Tropical deciduous forests form the major percentage of forests cover in India (37per cent of total forest cover) followed by tropical dry deciduous forest (29.6per cent). The tropical wet evergreen forests comprise only 8per cent of total forest cover. Of the total area around 63.91 million hac & dense forests (crown dense Cover) account for only 38.50 m. hac. There is no tree cover over 11.27 M. Hac forests are under stocked. About 52.8per cent of forests don't have adequate regeneration. The per capita forest area has astonishingly decreased drastically. Apart from natural forests, manmade forests area also increased on account of afforestation programmes initiated by government of India as well various state governments under various schemes. The lands so afforested have substantially been increased. Despite this progress in afforestation, the target of 33per cent land area under forest cover as laid down in the National Forest Policy 1988, will be a remote goal at the moment. The reasons are the tendency towards deforestation and diversion of forest land towards non-forestry activities by the multi-disciplinary departments of all hues. And apart from meeting up fuelwood and fodder requirements, the increasing incidents of authorized as well as unauthorized felling.

In so far as forest conservation measures are concerned, these are not well in place, whereas the trend of deforestation is more severe compared to that which had been over the years.

With rising consciousness and the apprehensions involved allow-

ing it to degenerate, there is an urgent need to build the methods for the protection and preservation of our natural resources. However, considering that the forests are the bedrock for the economic growth and development and also support the need of much of the population, these must be put to optional use. This involves integrating environmental concerns with all activities and making of correct choices and treads off.

To ensure that the best choices are being made and the value of protecting the environment is not being ignored, adequate human resource development, especially through proper training programmes, needs to be promoted.

In so far as training aspect is concerned, the imparting of specific skills are warranted to be inculcated. And these involve such sort of persons who are either experience as a part of work to perform certain tasks which require skills or those who would like a citizens of voluntary groups or organizations perform such tasks and such persons can be classified as civil servants who are required to assist in the formulation of policies and plans, and to carry out development projects or activities so associated with such programming. Two; professionals both technical (engineers, scientists, lawyers, Judges or Social scientists and managers, both within and outside the governmental organizations. These persons are needed to be involved in designing, assessing and managing projects activities having potential impact on the environment. These all educators or trainers who educate and train other people need, therefore, be trained initially themselves. Fourth; environmental activists who are basically involved in fighting for the environment often against government or corporate interests should qualify the skills to effectively carry on this coveted job on broader spectrum.

As a corollary, therefore, different categories of people need training to effectively perform the tasks related to the conservation, protection and regeneration of environment and to use one or more of the available strategies for which training needs to be imparted.

Special emphasis should be laid to retraining environment implementation assessment (EIA). The need for sustainable development involves, among other things, the ability to assess the impact of development activities and the projects on the environment.

This enables the making of correct choices so that only those projects that are environmentally viable are given the green signal, and even their environmental impact is minimized. The EIA also gives a direction for the development of new processes and technologies which help in determining the real social costs of products and services and highlights the need for conserving resources and finding or developing substitutes scarce ones.

The rapid rate of economic growth in India means that there are at any given time, a large number of development projects in planning and implementation of environmental boosting. There is, therefore, a dire need to build trained human power for environmental implementation assessment (EIA), especially among independent institution and within the government.

(The author is former Dy Conservator of Forests, J&K).