

MANN KI BAAT

The 114th episode of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Mann Ki Baat" marked another significant milestone in this popular monthly radio address, where he connects directly with citizens across India. This episode, broadcast on [insert date], continued the tradition of sharing inspiring stories, highlighting grassroots initiatives, and addressing key national issues.

In his opening remarks, Prime Minister Modi reflected on the spirit of unity and resilience that characterizes the Indian populace. He acknowledged the ongoing challenges faced by the nation, particularly in the context of economic recovery and public health, but emphasized the collective strength that has emerged from these trials. The Prime Minister's message was clear: together, as a nation, India can overcome obstacles and achieve greater heights.

One of the central themes of this episode was the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in driving economic growth. Modi spotlighted several startups and entrepreneurs who have made remarkable contributions in various sectors. He shared the story of a young innovator from a remote village who developed a low-cost agricultural tool, revolutionizing farming practices in his community. This narrative served as a powerful reminder of how innovation can arise from even the most unexpected places, transforming lives and enhancing productivity.

Additionally, the Prime Minister discussed the role of technology in empowering citizens. He spoke about the success of digital platforms that have made it easier for people to access services and information. Modi urged citizens to embrace digital literacy, emphasizing that understanding technology is crucial for participating in the modern economy. He encouraged individuals, especially the youth, to harness their skills in technology to create solutions for everyday challenges.

Education was another significant topic during the episode. Modi reiterated the importance of quality education in shaping the future of the nation. He applauded initiatives aimed at improving educational infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, and stressed the need for inclusive education that reaches marginalized communities. The Prime Minister called for collaboration between schools, communities, and parents to foster an environment conducive to learning. He also encouraged listeners to share their experiences and suggestions for enhancing the education system.

The episode also highlighted the significance of mental health awareness. Modi shared insights into how the pandemic has affected mental well-being and the importance of seeking help. He stressed the need to break the stigma surrounding mental health issues and encouraged individuals to support one another. The Prime Minister's candid discussion on mental health resonated with many listeners, fostering a sense of community and compassion.

Cultural heritage and environmental conservation were interwoven into the narrative as well. Modi praised various local festivals and traditions that showcase India's rich cultural diversity. He emphasized the need to preserve these traditions while also promoting sustainable practices. The Prime Minister highlighted the importance of preserving natural resources and protecting the environment for future generations. He urged citizens to participate in local conservation efforts, reinforcing the idea that everyone has a role to play in safeguarding the planet.

Listeners were also treated to anecdotes from citizens who have taken extraordinary measures to uplift their communities. Modi shared stories of individuals who initiated cleanliness drives, provided food for the needy, and organized educational camps for underprivileged children. These stories not only inspired hope but also reinforced the idea that collective action can lead to significant change.

In line with the government's push for self-reliance, the Prime Minister encouraged citizens to support local businesses and artisans. He spoke about the "Vocal for Local" initiative, urging listeners to prioritize products made in India. Modi emphasized that buying local not only supports the economy but also fosters a sense of national pride.

As the episode drew to a close, Prime Minister Modi invited listeners to share their thoughts and stories for future broadcasts. He reiterated that "Mann Ki Baat" is a platform for all citizens to voice their ideas and concerns, underscoring the importance of dialogue in a democratic society.

The 114th episode of "Mann Ki Baat" was not just a radio address; it was a celebration of the spirit of India. Through inspiring stories, a focus on innovation, and a call for unity, Modi's message resonated with millions, reinforcing the notion that each individual has the power to contribute to the nation's progress. As listeners tuned in, they were reminded of their shared responsibility in shaping a brighter future for India, echoing the enduring spirit of togetherness that defines the nation.

UPHOLDING INTEGRITY

Upholding the integrity and efficiency of the electoral process is fundamental to the functioning of any democratic society. An electoral system that is perceived as fair and transparent fosters public trust and engagement, while ensuring that the will of the people is accurately reflected in governance. To achieve this, several key principles and practices must be adhered to.

Transparency is a cornerstone of electoral integrity. Voters need to have confidence that the electoral process is open and that they can verify the legitimacy of the outcomes. This can be achieved through various means, such as public audits of election procedures, the availability of information regarding candidate qualifications, and the publication of detailed electoral data, including voter turnout and the breakdown of results. Independent election commissions should oversee these processes to minimize bias and ensure accountability. Effective voter education is crucial for fostering an informed electorate. Citizens must understand their rights, the voting process, and the importance of their participation. This involves not just educating voters about how to cast their ballots but also informing them about the candidates and issues at stake. Governments, civil society organizations, and independent bodies should collaborate to create comprehensive voter education campaigns that reach diverse populations, including marginalized groups. To uphold electoral integrity, elections must be accessible to all eligible voters. This includes providing adequate facilities for individuals with disabilities, ensuring language accessibility for non-native speakers, and removing unnecessary barriers that may deter participation. Implementing measures such as online voting or mail-in ballots can also enhance accessibility, particularly for those who may find it challenging to vote in person due to health or mobility issues. The security of the electoral process is paramount to maintaining public trust. This includes protecting against fraud, cyber-attacks, and intimidation. Secure voting technologies, such as electronic voting machines with verifiable paper trails, can help mitigate the risks of tampering. Furthermore, robust cybersecurity measures must be in place to protect electoral databases and voter information from unauthorized access. A fair electoral process is one that treats all candidates and voters equally. Anti-discrimination laws must be rigorously enforced to ensure that no group is marginalized based on race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status. Additionally, political parties and candidates should be held to high ethical standards, and measures must be in place to prevent corruption, such as campaign finance regulations that limit undue influence by wealthy individuals or special interest groups. Independent electoral commissions play a critical role in safeguarding the electoral process. These bodies must be empowered to enforce electoral laws impartially and without political interference. Their responsibilities should include overseeing the conduct of elections, investigating complaints, and ensuring compliance with established regulations. The credibility of these commissions can be further enhanced by appointing members from diverse backgrounds, including civil society, academia, and professional organizations.



The Amarnath Yatra witnesses a large number of devotees every year, who travel to the holy cave in South Kashmir between July and August. However, the floating population leads to a considerable amount of waste generation, necessitating effective waste management strategies to maintain the sanctity of the pilgrimage site. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0, initiatives are taken to ensure a clean and waste-free environment for the yatrīs. Robust waste management systems are implemented along with clean sanitation facilities and awareness campaigns promoting cleanliness and responsible waste disposal. These measures have significantly enhanced the cleanliness standards of the Amarnath Yatra, transforming it into an environmentally conscious

pilgrimage for devotees.

During Amarnath Yatra in 2022, the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) installed and maintained a total of 127 toilet seats, 119 urinals, and 40 bathing units along the route to improve sanitation. Additionally, the ULBs maintained over 780 toilets installed for the yatra. To achieve 100% waste collection, the ULBs utilized 10 twin compartment vehicles daily. They also installed 145 twin bins at all camps to facilitate waste segregation. Designated black dustbins were placed at female toilet facilities for the disposal of sanitary waste. Nearly 150 MT of wet waste, 130 MT of dry waste and 10-12 MT of plastic waste was generated during the yatra last year. To handle the generated waste, the ULBs deployed 14 de-sludging vehicles daily

during the Yatra with additional vehicles on standby for emergencies. A total of 2596 KL of septage was successfully desludged and disposed of by the ULBs.

To maintain cleanliness and sanitation, the ULBs deployed 231 sanitation workers in the lodging areas, adjoining roads and other establishments. These workers were provided with appropriate uniforms, PPE kits, gloves, gum boots, masks, and brooms.

As part of the TULIP (The Urban Learning Internship Programme) program, many Swachhagrahis were deployed in the lodging areas during the Yatra. They monitored the overall cleanliness and sanitation, facilitated solid waste collection and segregation, advocated non-use of SUPs, and spread the message of swachhata. Through QR codes

on toilets, langars, and camp facilities, the TULIP interns gathered feedback from yatrīs. Special selfie points were installed for the yatrīs. As part of the Amarnath Yatra, several unique activities were undertaken to enhance the pilgrimage experience.

With an aim to ensure efficient waste processing, 9 Solid Waste Management facilities have been inaugurated on May 12, 2023 in 10 ULBs located in Jammu and Kashmir. Notably, three of these ULBs, Qazigund, Sumbal, and Ganderbal fall along the Yatra route. These facilities will process 40 tonnes of waste daily. Each centre has a Material Recovery Facility for dry waste which includes segregation, bailing and shredding facilities. Compost pits are also provided for processing of wet waste.

Attracting and Retaining Youths in Agriculture:Challenges and Opportunities

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

The global population may reach 9 billion by 2050 and youth would represent about 20 per cent. Most of the young people (about 85 %) live in the developing nations. India is a land of the youths. As per India's Census, the total youth population increased from 168 millions in 1971 to 422 millions in 2011. India's population has been observed to remain young longer than China's and Indonesia's. India also enjoys a demographic dividend with more than 60 per cent of its population of working age. Youths are our greatest asset. Youths have creative minds and are capable of achieving seemingly impossible tasks such as monsoon management, climate change adaptation, mitigation and enduring malnutrition. Average size of land holding in our country is small. Hence, group cooperation is important to harness the value of scale both in the production and post-harvest phases of farming. Rural youths can play a significant role in shaping the future of agriculture in India. There is dire need of agri-business centres and agri-clinics centres on a big scale. Farm schools need to be established in the fields of young farmers so as to promote the farmer- to-farmer learning. Value addition in agriculture is needed in order to increase the income and employment. New agricultural technologies need to be introduced after careful consideration of risks and benefits so that their adoption rate can be enhanced. Youths are the primarily productive human resource for socio-economic development of the nation. Thus, there is need to divert their role in mainstream development. The Indian youth is diverse in ethnicity, religion and socio-economic backgrounds. Such diversity necessitates customized initiatives to meet the needs and activate their untapped potential. There is need to work on biotechnology, biodiver-

sity, ecotechnology, food security, education and information and communication technologies. The strategic and participatory research, capacity building, networking and partnership building should be adopted including the principle of social inclusion in access to technologies which further can enhance the income and conserve natural resources. The research and outreach strategies need to be devised to bridge the rich-poor and gender divides in the areas of information, knowledge and skill empowerment. There is dire need to make agriculture more attractive and rewarding for the younger generation.

Agriculture is the backbone of India. Till now agriculture continues to be at the mercy of the monsoon and the markets in our country. It is imperative for the nation to produce food not only to feed its 1.32 billion population but also for an equal number of livestock. It is fact that if farmers work in the field, the non-farmers are able to eat. It is expected that for the next two decades the agriculture sector in India will undergo significant transformation which will result in both challenges and opportunities for the youths. In order to achieve food security, India must change from extensive production systems, characterized by minimal inputs and low yields to intensive systems which require greater investments in external inputs and labour saving technologies, but hold the potential to greatly increase yields and provide decent incomes and employment for the rural youths now and in future. The agriculture sector has the potential to provide numerous employment opportunities in food production, marketing, processing, retail, input sales, research and extension etc. In order to attract youths in agriculture Govt. has launched a project namely Attracting and Retaining Youths in Agriculture (ARYA). In Reasi and

Kathua districts of J&K, this project is being run by the respective KVKs in Reasi and Kathua districts. There is need to work towards the goal of sustaining and aiding youths engaged in agriculture.

Now-a-days rural areas in India today are undergoing a phenomenal transformation. In place of individual effort, machines are taking over the hard labour and the government subsidies for mechanization of agricultural fields have brought on a renaissance, changing the face of Indian villages and farmers. Recently grain production in India has jumped highs. Many villages in India are endowed with rich resources to cultivate cereals, vegetables, fruits and grain. Individual per capita income must be raised through development of grain production aligned with information technology. So agriculture and allied sectors must work together to accomplish this feat. Presently, youngsters constitute only 13-19% of farmers. It is imperative to make agriculture a lucrative and profitable occupation in order to increase that number. Income and employment among the rural youths can be increased by combining hard work with modern technologies. Youngsters play a major role and duty in conserving the natural resources. The day is not far when we shall have to pay for oxygen, when water will be rationed and grave bodily disorders will be rampant. Climate change is the burning issue and avertable disasters will create havoc everywhere. According to Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam said, "The duty to protect natural resources begins from oneself, then family, society and to the country". Technology needs to be technically accessible, culturally acceptable and environmentally feasible. There is need to create opportunities in seed industry for the young generation. We need to have a

high-yielding/hybrid seeds and proper seed inputs for another Green Revolution. Availability of seeds must be ensured for seasonal crops. In India, we require 86 lakhs quintal seeds every year. We meet only 30% of this requirement through Central Seed Forum and Seed Production Forum. In abroad seed related technologies are given more importance. Rural youths should possess honesty, talent, value added technologies, warehousing and storage facilities. It is predicted that by 2050, we have to produce at least double to our productivity.

Currently, climate has become highly unpredictable. Hence we need to consider these facts while we plan to improve agricultural productivity. There is need to develop new resistant drought varieties of different crops. Farmers must cooperate by rotating crops to achieve the best results. Alternate Cropping Pattern based on water and rainfall availability must be focussed under watershed management programmes. Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Green Manure usage, cow urine, Panchgavya, beejamrit, fermented butter milk etc. can be practiced by farmers. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) forecasting market situations can also help farmers tremendously. Rural youths of the country can play the significant role in the second Green Revolution brought about by the youths of this country with the new technologies and innovations. All the fallow and barren land in the villages can be leased and put into good use too. In present era youths of the country are coming to farming only for two reasons- either they don't get any better job or because they are genuinely interested in making a profitable affair out of it.

Farming requires full commitment and dedication. Adoption of

micro-irrigation methods can significantly solve water issues. There is strong link between industry and agriculture. There must also be a marketing interface between agriculture and industry. This can be facilitated by eliminating middlemen in every village. Policy changes need to be put in place to curb the rampant indiscriminate sale of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Farmers need to be educated on export chances and Farmers Producers Organisations (FPOs) need to be formed for this purpose. But this can be possible only by institutionalising good cold storage and warehousing facilities for the agricultural produce. Agricultural colleges must also include life sciences and cultivation practices in their syllabus. Kitchen-gardening practices need to be encouraged. Vaccination of goats and sheep by government veterinary hospitals should be instituted and the veterinary doctor needs to visit the goat and sheep farms. Deworming medicine should also be provided to the dairy farmers. Rain guns and sprinkler equipments should be provided to the farmers at the subsidized rates. Integrated farming, including poultry farming, dairy farming and organic farming will prove to be resource-effective and environmentally viable. Vermicomposting and soil-testing at appropriate intervals must be done for the soil health management. The best agricultural practices can be combined with the traditional agricultural methods reinforced by modern technology and innovations. There is need to sow the seeds of creativity and enthusiasm among the youths. Entrepreneurship in agriculture would not only empower youth to become knowledge agents but also attract and retain them in agriculture.

(The writer is Chief Scientist & Head of KVK Reasi SKUAST-J).

The World wants to Make in India

■ PIYUSH GOYAL

On Sept 25, the country observed 10 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's game-changing 'Make in India' initiative that is transforming India's industrial landscape by encouraging job-creating investments and giving many ordinary citizens the confidence to become wealth creators.

It's been a remarkable 10-year journey, which gave renewed vigour to industrial sectors turning these into engines of growth, meeting domestic demand as well as contributing to exports. The exciting journey began at a difficult time, when domestic investors were despondent because of the policy paralysis and poor governance by the indecisive Congress government. The economy was down, confidence was shattered, headlines were dominated by a regular dose of corruption scandals, inflation was soaring, interest rates were high and the rupee had an uncertain outlook.

To end the feeling of doom and gloom, the Indian voter decisively voted for PM Modi. Our Prime Minister came with a vision for India. He wanted to ensure that India becomes a global superpower. He wanted India to provide jobs and opportunities to our youth, recognizing that manufacturing was critical to India's success story. That is when the PM launched the 'Make in India' initiative.

Ten years have been a remarkable journey, but it would not have been possible but for the multidimensional and transformative changes done by the Modi government. Initiatives include GST, the Bankruptcy Code and a multitude of other reforms. To improve the ease of doing business, as many as 42,000 compliance requirements were done away with, and 3,700 provisions which provided for criminal penalties for minor offences were removed from various statutes with a view to protect small businesses from harassment. India sharply improved its rank in World Bank's Doing business

report from 142nd in 2014 to 63rd in 2019.

Government's Startup India initiative has encouraged many job seekers to become job creators with the help of Startup India initiative. This has helped the number of recognized startups increase to 1,40,803 in June this year; bringing in investments, and creating more than 15 lakh jobs. These Startups are driving the innovation ecosystem in the country, working on solutions to pressing issues in areas such as sanitation, space navigation, reducing food wastage, improving access to healthcare, and empowering women.

The development of 11 Industrial Corridors is another focus area of the Government. There are 20 industrial smart cities being developed under the program, which would help make these corridors the backbone of India's manufacturing growth. Four of these smart cities have already become magnets of investment with infrastructure and clearances available for manufacturing units to be set-up. Potential investment of Rs. 1.7 lakh crore is already committed which will provide direct employment to 80,000 persons and indirect to many more.

The Government's PLI schemes focus on critical sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, textiles and medical devices to create the eco-systems in these sectors for sustained growth and ensure their global competitiveness. PLI schemes have resulted in Rs 1.32 lakh crore in investment and a significant boost in manufacturing output of around 11 lakh crore. More than 8.5 lakh jobs have been created directly and indirectly through this initiative.

The Prime Minister's initiatives on infrastructure have been another shot in the arm for Indian manufacturing, apart from generating demand for goods and services, infrastructure development is a major facilitator of industrial activity. Today, India has a huge,

and growing, network of expressways and highways. New, world-class railway stations are being built, while new freight corridors are coming up.

India is increasingly being seen as a very attractive destination for investment. The country provides the 4D advantage - Decisive leadership of PM Modi; Demographic dividend of our youthful, talented, skilled Indians; Demand that 140 crore Indians generate in the economy; and Democracy that ensures the safety and security of investors, and the rule of law which will never allow discrimination against one or the other. The 4-D is a very, very compelling case to attract manufacturers to India. Domestic and international investors today find a golden opportunity to grow their business.

There is a flurry of activity in the investor community. A series of delegations is visiting India, hungry for opportunities to invest and participate in the Indian growth story. Foreign governments and global CEOs are keenly eyeing opportunities in India. Many countries are keen to sign trade deals with India.

The world is now looking at India as a manufacturing destination. And the key reason of this interest is India's own competitive advantage, and robust economic fundamentals. Today, inflation is under control, economic growth is strong and the Modi government is following strict fiscal discipline. This is all the more commendable in the current global situation marked by conflict and uncertainty. The initiatives of PM Modi have helped India rise from the unenviable situation of being regarded as one of the "Fragile Five" in the world in 2014, to being one of the Top Five in the world.

In effect, PM Modi's initiatives like Make in India have contributed to making the last 10 years a transformational decade - a quantum jump over the lost decade of Congress rule.

(The writer is Union Minister of Commerce and Industry)