



# English Translation of the Text of 'Mann Ki Baat' programme on All India Radio on 26.03.2017

Posted On: 26 MAR 2017 12:44PM by PIB Delhi

My dear countrymen, Namaskar. Parents in most parts of the country must be busy with their children's examinations. There would be a sense of relief where the examinations are over, but where the examinations are still on, there certainly would still be some amount of pressure. However, at a time like this I would only say that students may listen again to what I had said in my 'Mann Ki Baat' last time. I am sure that my suggestions there will be of substantial help while they sit for their examinations.

Today is the 26th of March. 26th March is the Independence Day of Bangladesh. It was a historic war against injustice, which was fought under the leadership of "Banga-Bandhu" and led to the unprecedented victory of the people of Bangladesh. I extend my heartfelt greetings to the brothers and sisters of Bangladesh, on this significant day. And I hope that Bangladesh marches ahead on the path of progress. I also assure the citizens of Bangladesh that India is a strong partner, and a good friend, and we will continue to work together shoulder to shoulder to contribute towards the peace, security and development of this entire region.

It is a matter of great pride for all of us that Rabindranath Tagore and his memories are a shared heritage. The National Anthem of Bangladesh too, has been composed by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. There is a very interesting fact about Gurudev that in 1913 he was not only the first Asian to receive the Nobel Prize, but Knighthood was also conferred upon him by the British. After the Jallianwallah Massacre by the British in 1919, Rabindranath Tagore was one of the legendary figures, who raised their voices in protest. And it was at the same time, that this event left a very deep impact on a twelve-year-old boy. The inhuman massacre at Jallianwalla Bagh, provided a new inspiration and mission in life to that young teenager, who until then had spent his days playing merrily in his fields. And Bhagat, that 12-year old boy in 1919, evolved to be the martyr Bhagat Singh, our dear hero and inspiration. On the 23rd of March, Bhagat Singh Ji and his comrades, Sukhdev and Rajguru, were hanged to death by the British, and we are all aware of that. There was a sense of fulfillment on the faces of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru for having served Mother India - - there was no fear of death. They had sublimated all their dreams for the freedom of Mother India. These three heroes inspire us to this day. It would be impossible to express in words the story of the supreme sacrifice of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru. And the entire British Empire feared these three young men. They were in jail, certain to be hanged, but still the British remained anxious about how to deal with them. That is why, though the scheduled date was the 24th, they were hanged on the 23rd of March. This was done clandestinely, which is not the usual practice. And later, their remains were brought to present day Punjab, and were secretly cremated. Many years ago, when I first got the chance to go there, I could feel a certain vibration in that place. And I would certainly urge the youth of our country to go to Punjab, whenever they get the chance, and visit the 'samadhi' of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru, Bhagat Singh's mother and Batukeshwar Dutt.

That was the period when the desire for freedom, its intensity, and spread were on the rise. On the one hand, brave hearts like Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru, were inspiring the youth towards an armed revolution. And on the other hand, exactly one hundred years ago on the 10th of April, 1917, Mahatma Gandhi had launched the Champaran Satyagraha. This year marks the centenary of the Champaran Satyagraha. In India's struggle for freedom, Gandhian thought and Gandhian practice became manifest for the first time in Champaran. This was a turning point in the entire journey of India's freedom struggle, especially in the context of the methodology of the struggle. This was the period when, in the Champaran Satyagraha, Kheda Satyagraha, and the mill-workers' strike in Ahmedabad, the deep impact of Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts and practices was amply and clearly visible. Gandhi returned to India in 1915, and in 1917, he went to a small village in Bihar and gave the country a new inspiration. We cannot evaluate the Champaran Satyagraha on the basis of the image of Mahatma Gandhi that we cherish in our hearts today. Just imagine that one man, who came to India in 1915, and had been in the country for barely two years. The country didn't know of him, he bore no influence then; it was just the beginning. We can only imagine the hardships that he must have endured, how hard he must have had to toil. And it was the Champaran Satyagraha that brought to the fore, Mahatma Gandhi's organisational skills, and his strong ability to gauge the pulse of Indian society. Mahatma Gandhi, through his demeanour and deeds, could inspire the poorest of the poor, the most illiterate, to unite and come together out into the open for the struggle against the British Rule; this was a manifestation of an incredible inner strength, through which we can experience the vastness of Mahatma Gandhi's great persona. But if we reflect upon the Gandhi of a hundred years ago, the Gandhi of the Champaran Satyagraha, that would be a subject of deep study for anyone about to enter public life. We can all learn from Gandhi Ji what it means to begin a life of public service, how hard one has to work, as Gandhi did. And that was the period when all the stalwarts, that we hear about today: Rajendra Babu, Acharya Kripalani Ji, and others were all sent to the

villages by Gandhi Ji. Ways and means to connect with the people and lending hues of freedom to their day to day work were taught. And the British were simply unable to comprehend Gandhi Ji's unique style of working, which encompassed both struggle and creation together. In a way, Gandhi created two sides of the same coin; one being struggle and the other, creativity. To get themselves arrested voluntarily to fill jails, on the one hand, and on the other to immerse themselves in creative work. Gandhi's style of working had an incredible balance. What the word, 'Satyagraha' means, what disagreement can mean, what Non-Cooperation in the face of such a vast Empire could be - Gandhi Ji established a completely new vision of resistance, not through mere words, but through a successful experiment.

Today, as the nation observes the centenary of the Champaran Satyagraha, the immense power of the common man, so visible in the struggle for freedom, manifests again in the journey from Swaraj to Suraaj, the resolve, the perseverance of the 125 crore countrymen, following the tenet of 'Sarvyajan Hitaay, Sarvajan Sukhaay' i.e. for the benefit of all, for the happiness of all, and the ceaseless enterprise to achieve something for the country, the society, would bring about the realisation of the dreams of the great souls who laid down their lives for the sake of Freedom.

Today, as we live in the 21st century, which Indian wouldn't want to see India change, which Indian wouldn't want to be a partner in the transformation of the country! This desire of 125 crore countrymen for change, the effort to change, is what will lay a strong foundation of a 'New India'. 'New India' is neither a government programme, nor is it the manifesto of a political party, nor is it a project. 'New India' is the clarion call of 125 crore countrymen. It is the essence of the emotions of the 125 crore Indians wanting to come together and create a magnificent India. 125 crore Indians nurture a hope, a zeal, a resolve, a desire.

My dear countrymen, if we, for a moment, pause to look with empathy at the happenings in society around us, and if we try to understand these, we would be amazed to see that there are lakhs of people, who besides their own personal responsibilities are working selflessly, for society - the exploited, victimised, deprived; for the poor and the oppressed. That too silently, and with devotion, as if they are performing 'tapasya' or 'sadhana'. There are many who regularly go to hospitals to serve patients. There are many who rush to donate blood, when required. There are many who try to provide food to the hungry. Our country is a many splendoured land. The belief that Service to humanity is service to God, is innate to us. If we look at it in its collectiveness, in an organised manner, it comes across as a major force. When there is a talk of 'New India', its criticism, its analysis, its counter views, are but natural, and that is a fundamental of democracy. But it is true that if 125 crore countrymen resolve, and decide to walk step by step on a path to realise that resolve, the dream of 'New India' can be fulfilled in our lifetime. And all these things are not necessarily achieved through the Budget, government projects, or government money. If every citizen resolves to obey traffic rules, if every citizen resolves that he will discharge his duties honestly, if every citizen resolves that he will not use petrol or diesel one day in a week - - these are not very big things. But these will contribute to the realisation of the dream of this country, this 'New India', that is being nurtured by 125 crore countrymen, and this realisation will be achieved before their eyes. In essence, every citizen must discharge his civic duties and responsibilities. This in itself would be a good beginning to the New India.

As India gets ready to celebrate 75 years of Independence in 2022, come let us remember Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru. Let us remember the Champaran Satyagraha. Why don't we too, be a part of this journey from 'Swaraj to Suraaj' by making our lives disciplined, and filled with resolve. Come, I invite you.

My dear countrymen, today I want to express my gratitude to all of you. Over the last few months the country has witnessed a certain atmosphere in which people in large numbers have participated in the digital payment, 'Digidhan' movement. There has also been an increase in curiosity about cashless transactions. The poorest of the poor are making an attempt to learn, and people are gradually moving towards doing businesses without cash. There has been a surge in various modes of digital payment after demonetisation. The BHIM-App was launched just about two to two and a half months ago, but approximately one and half crore people have downloaded it.

My dear countrymen, we must take our fight against black money and corruption to the next level. Can 125 crore countrymen resolve to undertake 2500 crores digital transactions during this year? We have made an announcement in the Budget. Our 125 crore countrymen, if they wish to do so, they need not wait for a year; they can do it in six months. 2500 crore digital transactions - - - if we pay school fees, we shall do so not by cash but digitally, if we travel by train, travel by air, we shall pay digitally, if we buy medicines, we shall pay digitally, if we run fair price shops, we will use the digital mode. We can do this in our day to day lives. You can't imagine how you can serve the country in this way and become a brave soldier in the fight against black money and corruption. Recently, several Digidhan-mela programmes were organised to educate the people and to increase public awareness. The resolve was to organise 100 such programmes all over the country. About 80-85 programmes have already been conducted. There was also a reward scheme. Close to 12 and half lakh people have won prizes. Seventy thousand traders also won the prizes instituted for them. Each and every one of them also resolved to carry this mission forward. The birth anniversary of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar is on the 14th of April. And as was decided much earlier, the Digimela will be brought to a culmination on the 14th of April, the birth anniversary of

Baba Saheb Ambedkar. On the completion of a hundred days, a grand closing ceremony will be held. There is a provision of a bumper draw also in that. I believe that in whatever time that is left before Baba Saheb Ambedkar's birth anniversary, we should popularise and promote the BHIM-App. We should contribute towards ensuring reducing the use of cash, of currency notes.

My dear countrymen, I am glad that every time, I request people for suggestions in Mann Ki Baat, numerous suggestions pour in. But I have seen that there is always an emphasis on the topic of cleanliness.

Gayatri, a young girl from Dehradun, who is a student of class 11, has phoned in with a message: -

"Esteemed Principal, Prime Minister Sir, my respectful greetings to you. To begin with, heartiest congratulations on your victory in the elections, with a huge margin. I wish to share the issue close to my heart with you. I want to say that people will have to be made aware about the importance of cleanliness. Every day I pass by a river, in which people dump a lot of garbage and pollute rivers. The river flows under the Rispana Bridge before passing by my home. For the sake of this river we went to settlements on its banks, spoke to people and took out rallies too, but to no avail. I want to request you to kindly highlight this issue by sending a team there, or through the newspapers. Thank you."

Brothers and sisters, look at the agony of this young daughter, the 11th class student. How enraged she is by seeing the river strewn with trash. I consider this to be a good omen. This is exactly what I want - - that 125 crore countrymen be angered by filth. Once there is anger, dissatisfaction, rage, we will be compelled to act against this scourge. The good thing is that Gayatri is expressing her own anger, and giving suggestions to me, but she also goes on to say, that she has made several efforts but could not succeed. There has been an awareness ever since the launch of the Cleanliness Movement. Each person has become associated with it in a positive manner. This has now truly taken the form of a movement. There has been an increase in the disgust towards squalor. When there is awareness and active participation in the movement, it has its own significance. But cleanliness is more about a habit than a movement. This movement is geared towards bringing about a change in the habit, a movement to inculcate the HABIT of cleanliness. This movement can be accomplished collectively. It is a difficult task, but we have to do it. I am sure that this resolve that has arisen in the younger generation, in children, in students, in the youth, augurs well for achieving good results. I would urge my fellow countrymen, who have heard Gayatri's message in my 'Mann Ki Baat' today, that it should be a message to all of us.

My dear Countrymen, right from the beginning since I have started the programme 'Mann Ki Baat', I have been receiving a lot of suggestions on one issue, and in most of those, people have expressed concern about food wastage. We know that at home and at feasts and social gatherings, we tend to serve ourselves more food than we need. We put each and everything on offer, on our plates, but we fail to finish what we have taken. We can't even finish half of what is on our plates and then leave it uneaten. Have you ever thought about how much food we waste? Have you ever thought how many poor people can be fed if we don't thus waste our food? This is not something that needs to be taught. As it is, in our families, mothers always tell their children to take only as much food they can eat. There is always some effort made in this direction, but still the apathy on this issue is a crime against society. It is an injustice to the poor. On the other hand, if we are able to avoid wastage, the family too benefits economically. So while it is good to care about society, this is beneficial to the family as well. I am not urging too much on this issue, but I would like this awareness to spread. I do know some young persons, who are active in such campaigns. They have created Mobile Apps. And when people call them about there being leftover food anywhere, they collect it and put it to good use. They work hard, and these are our own young people. You will find such people somewhere in each and every state of India. The lives of these people can inspire us not to waste food. We should take only as much as we can eat.

See, these are the pathways leading towards change. And those who are health conscious always say that, there should always be some space left both in the stomach and on the plate. Now that we are talking about health, 7th April is World Health Day. United Nations has resolved to provide universal health coverage for all by 2030. This year on the occasion of World Health Day on the 7th of April, United Nations has focused on Depression, which is the theme this year. We are familiar with this word, depression. According to one estimate, more than 35 crore people in the world suffer from depression. The problem is that we are unable to fully comprehend it even amongst those around us, and perhaps we also hesitate to talk about it openly, with our family and friends. The person suffering from depression too doesn't speak out himself as he feels a sense of shame about it.

I want to tell my countrymen, that depression is not incurable. There is a need to create a psychologically conducive environment to begin with. The first mantra is the expression of depression instead of its suppression. Share openly what you are going through, with your colleagues, friends, parents, brothers, and teachers. Sometimes one is overcome by a sense of loneliness - - - students living in hostels are particularly vulnerable to it. We are fortunate that we have been raised in joint families, large families, where there is communication, which eliminates the chances of getting into depression. But I would still like to tell parents that if you notice your son or daughter or any other member of your family - - - earlier the entire family used to dine together. But if someone in

the family says, "No, I will eat later." He doesn't come to the dining table. When the entire family is going on an outing, he just says, "No, I don't want to come today." He professes a desire to be alone. Have you ever wondered why he does so? You can be sure that this is the first step towards depression. If he prefers to stay away from a group, and tends to be all by himself, do make an effort to ensure that this does not happen. He should be given an opportunity to be amongst people with whom he speaks openly. Try to encourage him to express himself, to reveal and bring out his insecurities and complexes while engaging him in light-hearted happy conversation. This is a very good way of dealing with it. Depression can be the root cause of many mental and physical ailments. Just as diabetes can be the root cause of all sorts of diseases, depression too, destroys all our abilities to sustain, to fight, to display courage and to take a decision. Your friends, your family, your surroundings, and environment, all these can prevent you from going into depression and if you unfortunately has gone into it, they can also pull you out of it. There is another way. If you are unable to express yourself to your family and friends, then do one thing, go out in society with a sense of service. Devote yourself with all your heart into helping others and sharing their joys and sorrows. You will find that along with it your own inner sufferings will go on disappearing. If you try to sympathise with the sufferings of others with a sense of service, a new self-confidence will be born within you. By connecting with others, serving them and serving them selflessly, you will easily be able to shed the weight oppressing your own heart and mind.

Yoga too is a good means for mental wellbeing. Yoga helps in relieving tension and stress, and leads one towards a happy state of mind. 21st June is the International Day of Yoga. This will be the third year of its observance. You all should start preparing for it right away. Collective Yoga festivals should be celebrated with the participation of millions. If you have any ideas for the Third International Yoga Day, please do send me your suggestions and guidance through my mobile Application. You could compose as many songs and poems on Yoga, as possible, as these can be easily understood by the masses.

Today I would like to say something especially to mothers and sisters also, since health and wellbeing have been a major part of our conversation today. Recently, the Government of India has taken a very important decision. The working-class women in our country - their numbers are increasing day by day, their participation is increasing and this is a welcome trend. But women also shoulder certain special responsibilities. They look after the family. They also have to share the financial responsibilities of running the household, and because of that sometimes, the newborn has to bear some injustice of neglect. The Government of India has taken a very important decision. These working women will now be given maternity leave of 26 weeks, instead of the earlier 12 weeks, for their pregnancy and delivery. There are now only two or three countries in the world that are ahead of us in this matter. India has taken a very important decision for these working women sisters of ours. The basic aim is to ensure proper care of the newborn, the future citizen of India, from the time of birth. The newborn should get the complete love and attention of the mother. That is how these children will become true assets of the country when they grow up. Mothers too will remain healthy. And that is why, this is such a landmark decision, and this will benefit 18 lakh women working in the formal sector.

My dear countrymen, we will celebrate the auspicious day of Ram Navami on the 5th of April, Mahavir Jayanti is on the 9th of April, and on the 14th of April is the birth Anniversary of Baba Saheb Ambedkar. May the lives of all these great luminaries inspire us, and give us the strength to resolve ourselves to the cause of New India. My heartiest new year greetings for Chaitra Shukla Pratipada, Varsh Pratipada, and Nav Samvatsar, which are two days from now. After Vasant Ritu or the season of Spring, it is now the time for the ripening of the crops, and the time for the farmers to reap the benefits of their hard work. The new year is celebrated in different ways in different parts of our country. New year is Gudi Padva in Maharashtra, Ugadi in Andhra and Karnataka, for the Sindhi it is Cheti Chand, Navreh in Kashmir, Samvatsar Pooja in the Awadh Region, Jud-Sheetal in the Mithila region of Bihar and the festival of Satuvani in the Magadh region. India is a country blessed with rich diversity. My heartiest greetings and best wishes to you all on this New Year. Many thanks.

\*\*\*\*

AKT/AK

(Release ID: 1514199) Visitor Counter : 221

