

November 2024

A group of NCC cadets in black and khaki uniforms with red plumes on their caps, marching in a parade. They are wearing white gloves and have their right arms raised in a salute. The background shows other cadets and a hazy sky.

NCC: Fostering Patriotism and Pride

A portrait of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, wearing a white kurta and a light green Nehru jacket, with a white beard and glasses.

MANN KI BAAT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address to the Nation

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Prime Minister's Address

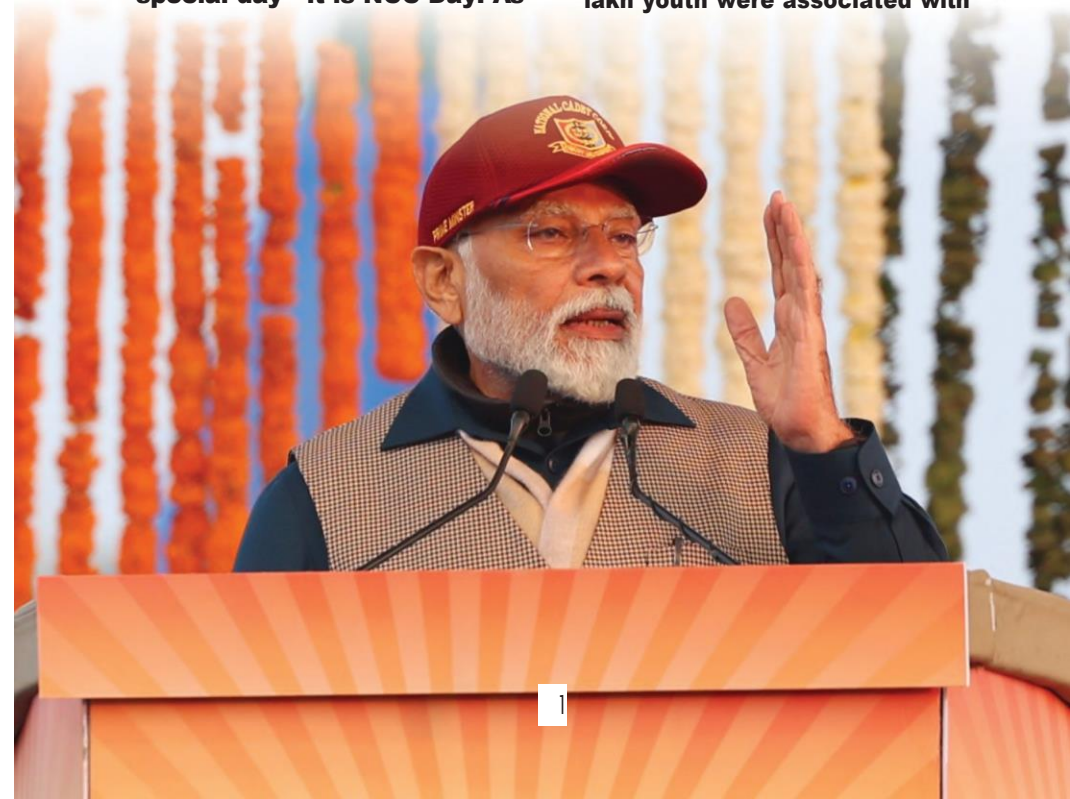


My dear countrymen, Namaskar

'Mann ki Baat' means touching upon the collective efforts of the country, referring to the achievements of the country, discussing the strength of the people. 'Mann ki Baat' means touching upon the dreams of the youth, the aspirations of the citizens of the country. I wait for 'Mann ki Baat' throughout the month so that I can communicate with you directly. There are innumerable messages! My earnest endeavour is to read as many messages as possible, to brainstorm on your suggestions.

Friends, today is a very special day—it is NCC Day. As

soon as the name of NCC comes up, we remember our school-college days. I myself have been an NCC cadet, so I can say with full confidence that the experience gained from it is invaluable for me. 'NCC' instills a spirit of discipline, leadership and service in the youth. You must have seen around you that whenever there is a disaster, be it a flood, an earthquake or an accident, NCC cadets unfailingly make themselves available there to help. Today, efforts are being undertaken continuously to strengthen NCC in the country. In 2014, about 14 lakh youth were associated with





Fostering Fellowship, Fueling India's Future

NCC. Now in 2024, more than 20 lakh youth are associated with NCC.

Compared to earlier times, provision for NCC has been made in 5,000 new schools and colleges... and the biggest aspect is that earlier the number of girl cadets in NCC was just around 25%. **Now the number of girl cadets in NCC has risen to almost 40%.** The campaign to connect more and more youth residing along the borders with NCC is also going on continuously. I would urge the youth to join NCC in maximum numbers. You will notice that no matter what career you choose, NCC will help you a lot in personality development.

Friends, the role of the youth in building a developed India is very significant. When young minds come together and deliberate upon the country's future journey, surely, concrete paths emerge. You know that on the 12th of January, on the birth anniversary of Swami

Vivekananda, the country celebrates 'Youth Day'. Next year is Swami Vivekananda's 162nd birth anniversary. This time it will be celebrated in a very special way. **On this occasion, a Maha Kumbh of young minds is going to be held at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi on 11-12 January, and the name of this initiative is 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue'. Crores of youth from all over India will participate in**



विकावेत भारत Young Leaders Dialogue

it. Two thousand such youth selected from villages, blocks, districts and states will gather at Bharat Mandapam for the 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue'. You might remember that from the ramparts of the Red Fort, I have urged such youth to join politics, none of whose family members or even the entire family have had a political background.

To connect 1 lakh such youth, new youth, to politics, many special campaigns will be run in the country. 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue' is also one such effort. **Experts from the country and abroad will grace this. Many national and international personalities will also be there. I will also be present in it for as much time as possible. The youth will get an opportunity to present their ideas directly before us. How can the country take these ideas forward? How can a solid roadmap be made? A blueprint**

will be prepared for this. So you too get ready; this is a great opportunity for those who are going to build the future of India, who are the future generation of the country. Come, let us build the country together and make the country developed.

My dear countrymen, in 'Mann ki Baat', we often talk about such youth. There are many youth who are working selflessly for the society and are engaged in finding solutions to numerous minor problems of the people. If we look around us, we see so many people who need some kind of help or information. I am happy to know that some youth have formed groups and addressed such issues as well. For example, Virendra, who lives in Lucknow, helps the elderly in the matter of the Digital Life Certificate. **As you know, as per rules, all pensioners have to submit a Life Certificate once a year. Till 2014, the process was**



such that the elderly had to go to the banks and submit it themselves. You can imagine how much inconvenience it used to cause to our elderly. Now this system has changed.

Now, by enabling the Digital Life Certificate, things have become very simple; the elderly do not have to go to the bank. Youths like Virendra have a major role in ensuring that the elderly do not face any problems on account of technology. They keep making the elderly of their neighbourhood aware of it. Not just that, they are also making the elderly tech-savvy. Today, with such efforts, the number of people receiving Digital Life Certificates has crossed the 80 lakh mark. Among these, more than 2 lakh are such elderly people whose age has crossed even 80.

Friends, in many cities, the youth are also coming forward to make the elderly a part of the digital revolution. Mahesh from Bhopal has trained many elderly

people of his locality to make payments through mobile. These elderly people had smartphones, but there was no one to tell them its correct usage. The youth have also come forward to save the elderly from the risk of Digital Arrest. Rajiv from Ahmedabad warns people about the risk of Digital Arrest. I had discussed Digital Arrest in the last episode of 'Mann ki Baat'. The elderly are the most common victims of such crimes. In such a situation, it is our responsibility to make them aware and help them stay safe from cyber fraud. We have to explain to people again and again that there is no provision of digital arrest in the government; this is a blatant lie, a conspiracy to trap people. I am happy that our young friends are participating in this work with full sensitivity and are motivating others as well.

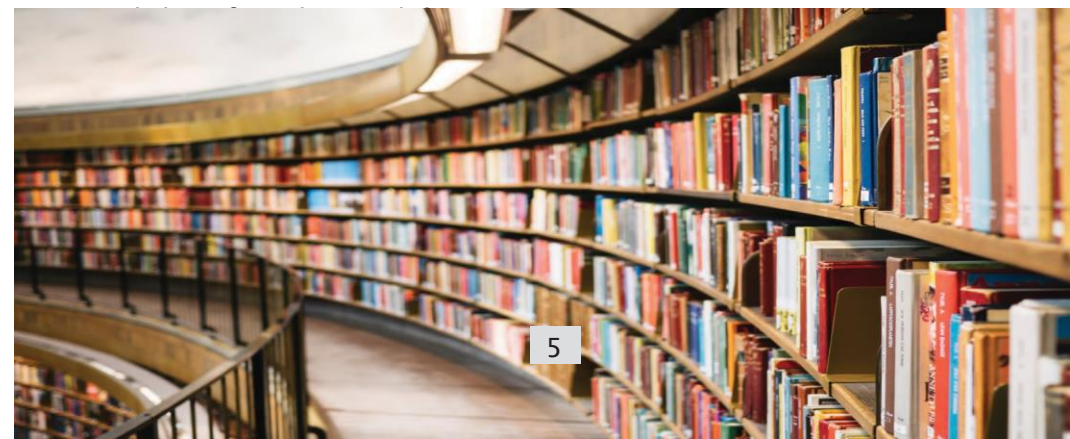
My dear countrymen, these days many experiments are being conducted for the



education of children. The effort is to enhance the creativity of our children and their love for books. It is said that 'books' are humans' best friend, and what better place than the library to strengthen this friendship. I want to share one such example from Chennai with you. Here one such library has been set up for children, which has become a hub of creativity and learning. It is known as Prakrith Arivagam. This library is the brainchild of Sriram Gopalan ji, who is associated with the world of technology. During his work abroad, he remained connected with the world of the latest technology. But he also kept thinking about developing the

Arivagam. It has more than 3,000 books, which children eagerly wait to read. Apart from books, different types of activities being organised in this library also attract children. Be it storytelling sessions, art workshops, memory training classes, robotics lessons or public speaking, there is something or the other to the liking of everyone.

Friends, The Food 4 Thought Foundation has also established many wonderful libraries in Hyderabad. It's their endeavour as well to ensure that children get books to read with solid information on as many topics as possible. The Prayog library of Gopalganj in Bihar has started being talked about in many

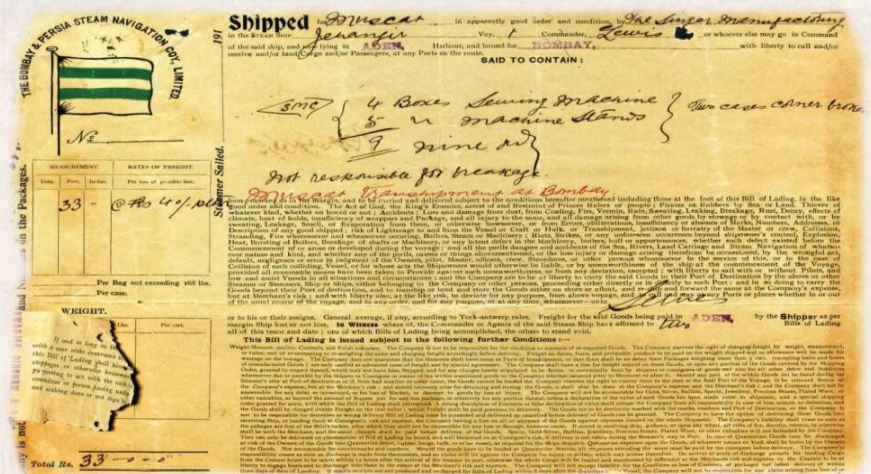


read books from this library, this library is also providing other important facilities to the people. Some libraries are such that they are very useful for students in preparing for competitive examinations. It is indeed very heartening to note that the library is being used in the best possible way to strengthen the society. **You too should develop a friendship with books and see how it brings a change in your life.**

My dear countrymen, I have returned from Guyana, a country in South America, the night before yesterday. Thousands of kilometres away from India, a 'Mini India' dwells in Guyana too. Around 180 years ago, people from India were taken to Guyana to work in the fields and for other tasks. Today, people of Indian origin in Guyana are leading the country in every field...be it

politics, business, education or culture. The President of Guyana, Dr. Irfaan Ali, is also of Indian origin and is proud of his Indian heritage. When I was in Guyana, a thought struck my mind, which I am sharing with you in 'Mann ki Baat'. **Just like Guyana, there are lakhs of Indians in dozens of countries across the world. Their ancestors have their own stories of decades, even those over 200-300 years ago. Can you be on the lookout for such stories of how Indian immigrants made their mark in different countries? How they took part in their freedom struggle! How they kept their Indian heritage alive! I want you to find out such true stories, and share them with me. You can also share these stories on the NaMo App or on MyGov with #IndianDiasporaStories.**

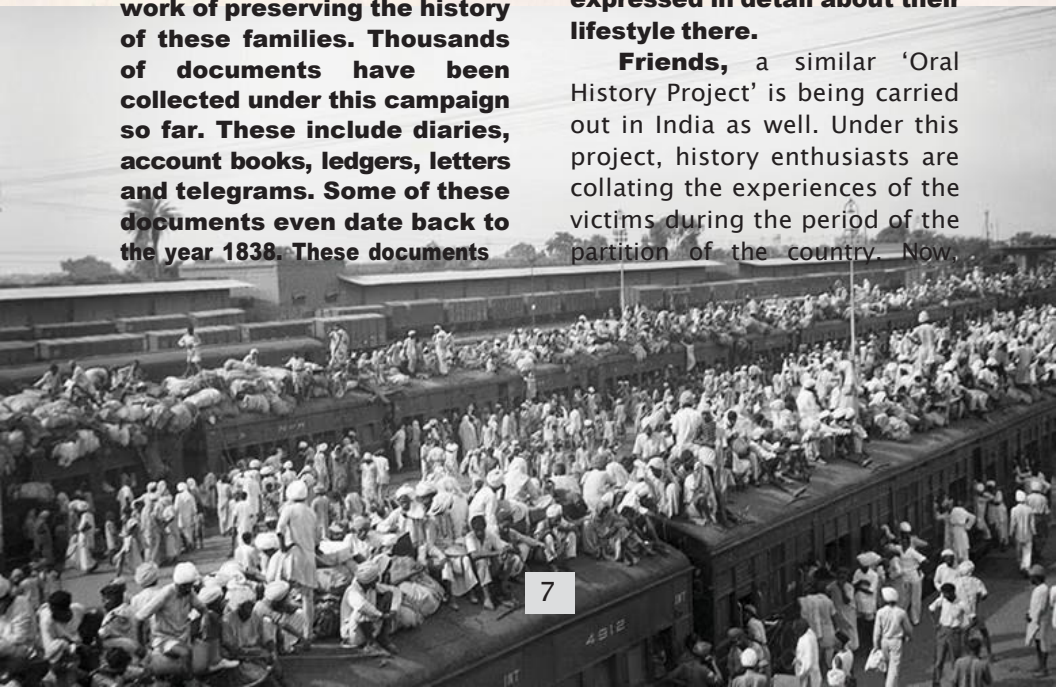
Friends, you will also find an extraordinary project going on in



Oman very interesting. Numerous Indian families have been living in Oman for many centuries. Most of them who have settled there are from Kutch in Gujarat. These people had created important trade links. Even today they have Omani citizenship, but Indianness is ingrained in their personae. **With the support of the Indian Embassy in Oman and the National Archives of India, a team has started the work of preserving the history of these families. Thousands of documents have been collected under this campaign so far. These include diaries, account books, ledgers, letters and telegrams. Some of these documents even date back to the year 1838. These documents**

are full of sentiments. When they reached Oman years ago, what kind of life they lived, what kind of joys and sorrows they faced and how their relations with the people of Oman progressed. All of this is a part of these documents. The 'Oral History Project' is also an important basis of this mission. In this mission, senior people from there have shared their experiences. People have expressed in detail about their lifestyle there.

Friends, a similar 'Oral History Project' is being carried out in India as well. Under this project, history enthusiasts are collating the experiences of the victims during the period of the partition of the country. Now,





there are very few people left in the country who have witnessed the horrors of Partition. In such a situation, this effort has become even more significant.

Friends, the country, the place that preserves its history, its future is also secure. With this very thought in mind, an effort has been made in which a directory has been created to preserve the history of villages. A campaign is also going on in the country to preserve evidence related to India's ancient maritime capability. Under this series, a very big museum is also being built in Lothal. Apart from that, if you are aware of any manuscript, any historical document, or any handwritten copy, you can preserve it with the help of the National Archives of India.

Friends, I have come to know about another such effort being undertaken in Slovakia that is related to conserving and promoting our culture. **Here, for**

the first time, our Upanishads **have been translated into the Slovak language. These efforts also underscore the global influence of Indian culture.** It is a matter of pride for all of us that there are crores of people across the world who cherish India in their hearts.

My dear countrymen, I now want to share with you one such achievement of the country that will make you happy and proud, and if you have not done it, you will probably regret it. A few months ago, we started the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign. People from all over the country participated in this campaign with great enthusiasm. **I am very happy to tell you that this campaign has crossed the important milestone of planting 100 crore trees. A 100 crore trees, that too, in just five months.**

This has been possible only due to the tireless efforts of our countrymen. You will be

proud to know one more fact related to this. The 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign is now spreading to other countries of the world as well. **When I was in Guyana, I witnessed this campaign there as well. There, Guyana's President Dr. Irfaan Ali, his mother-in-law, and other family members joined me in the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign.**

Friends, this campaign is going on continuously in different parts of the country. **A record of tree planting was made in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, under the campaign 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam'—more than 12 lakh trees were planted here in 24 hours. On account of this campaign, the barren area of Revati Hills of Indore will now turn into a green zone. A unique record was made through this campaign in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan—here a team of women planted 25 thousand trees in one hour.** Mothers planted trees in the name of their mothers and inspired others too. Here, more than five thousand people planted trees at one location. This too is a record in itself.

Under the campaign 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam', many social organisations are planting trees according to local needs. Their effort is that wherever trees are planted, a complete ecosystem should develop in an environmentally friendly manner. Therefore, these organisations are planting medicinal plants

in some places, and in other places, they are planting trees to facilitate nesting for birds. In Bihar, the women of the 'Jeevika Self Help Group' are running a campaign to plant 75 lakh trees. The focus of these women is on fruit trees, so that income could also be generated in the future.

Friends, by joining this campaign, any person can plant a tree in the name of one's mother. If the mother is with you, you can plant the tree along with her; otherwise, you can become a part of this campaign by carrying her photograph with you. You can also post a selfie with the tree on www.mygov.in. We can never repay the debt of what our mother does for all of us, but by planting a tree in her name, we can keep her presence alive forever.



Bringing back the chirp

Rekindling the Sparrow's song

My dear countrymen, all of you must have seen sparrows chirping on rooftops or trees during your childhood. Sparrows are known as Kuruvi in Tamil and Malayalam, Pichuka in Telugu and Gubbi in Kannada. Stories about sparrows are told in every language and culture. **Sparrows play a very important role in maintaining biodiversity around us, but today sparrows are hardly visible in cities. Due to increasing urbanisation, sparrows have gone away from us. There are many children of today's generation who have seen sparrows only in pictures or videos.** Some unique efforts are being made to bring back this lovely bird in the lives of such children. Chennai's Koodugal Trust has involved school children in its campaign to increase the sparrow population. The people of the organisation go to schools and tell the children

how important sparrows are in everyday life. This organisation trains children to make sparrow nests. For this, the people of the organisation taught the children to make a small wooden house. In that, arrangements for food and shelter are made for the sparrows. These are homes that can be placed on the boundary wall of any building or on a tree.

Children participated in this campaign with enthusiasm and started making nests for sparrows in large numbers. In the last four years, the organisation has prepared ten thousand such nests for sparrows. With this initiative of the Koodugal Trust, the sparrow population has started rising in the surrounding areas. If you too make such efforts in your surroundings, sparrows will certainly again become a part of our lives. Friends, an organisation in Mysuru, Karnataka has started



a campaign called 'Early Bird' for children. This organisation runs a special kind of library to tell children about birds. Not only this, it has prepared a 'Nature Education Kit' to create a sense of responsibility towards nature in children. This kit contains storybooks, games, activity sheets and jigsaw puzzles for children. This organisation takes children from cities to villages and introduces them to birds. On account of the efforts of this organisation, children have started recognising many species of birds. The listeners of 'Mann ki Baat' can also develop a different perspective in children to see and understand their surroundings through such efforts.

My dear countrymen, you must have noticed that as soon as someone mentions a 'government office', a picture of a pile of files emerges in your mind. You must have seen

something similar in films too. So many jokes are made on these piles of files in government offices; so many stories have been written. These files used to gather dust after lying in offices for years and years and would start accumulating dirt.

A special Swachhata Abhiyan was launched to remove such decades-old files and scrap. You will be happy to know that this campaign has brought amazing results in government departments. Cleanliness has freed up a lot of space in offices. This has also brought in a sense of ownership among the people working in the offices. They have also become serious about keeping their workplace clean.

Friends, you must have often heard elders say that where there is cleanliness, Goddess Lakshmi resides there. **The concept of 'waste to wealth' is very old in our country. In many parts of the country, the 'youth' are**



transforming items considered useless, that is waste, to wealth. They are innovating in different ways. They are earning money from that, generating avenues of employment. These youth are also promoting a sustainable lifestyle through their efforts. The effort of two daughters of Mumbai is really very inspiring. These two daughters, named Akshara and Prakriti, are creating fashion items through fabric scraps. You also know that the scraps that come out during the cutting and stitching of clothes are considered useless and thrown away. Akshara and Prakriti's team transforms the same fabric scraps into fashion products. Caps and bags made from cuttings are literally flying off the shelves.

Friends, a good initiative is on in Kanpur, UP, as well, pertaining to cleanliness. Here some people go for daily morning walks, picking up plastic and other

garbage spread on the banks of the Ganga. This group has been named the 'Kanpur Ploggers Group'.

This campaign was started by a few friends collectively. Gradually, it became a big campaign of public participation. Many people of the city have joined this campaign. Its members have now started collecting garbage from shops and houses as well. Tree guards are made from this garbage in the Recycle Plant, i.e., people of this group also protect the plants with tree guards made from garbage.

Friends, Itisha from Assam too is an example of how tiny efforts can lead to big success. Itisha has studied in Delhi and Pune. Itisha left the glitz and glamour of the corporate world and is engaged in cleaning the Sangti Valley of Arunachal. A lot of plastic waste had started accumulating there because of

tourists. The river there, which was once pristine, had become polluted because of the plastic waste. Itisha is working with the local people to clean it. People of her group spread awareness among the tourists there and put up bamboo dustbins all over the valley to collect plastic waste.

Friends, such efforts lend momentum to India's Swachhata Abhiyan. This is a perpetual campaign. This must certainly be happening around you as well. Do keep writing to me about such efforts.

Friends, that is all for this episode of 'Mann ki Baat'. I eagerly await your feedback,

letters and suggestions throughout the month. Your messages every month inspire me to do even better. We will meet again next month in another episode of 'Mann ki Baat' with new achievements of the country and countrymen. Until then, my best wishes to all the countrymen. Thank you very much.

Scan the QR code to listen to 'Mann ki Baat'.



MANN KI BAAT

Special Mentions by Prime Minister



From Uniforms to Unity

NCC's Role in Strengthening India

“'NCC' instills a spirit of discipline, leadership and service in the youth. You must have seen around you that whenever there is a disaster; be it a flood, an earthquake or an accident, NCC cadets unfailingly make themselves available there to help. Today, efforts are being undertaken continuously to strengthen NCC in the country.”

-Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(in 'Mann ki Baat' address)

“The NCC brings together youth from every corner of India, transcending barriers of language, culture, and geography.”

Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh
Director General, National
Cadet Corps

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) has long been a cornerstone of youth development and national integration in India. Since its inception in 1948, the NCC has served as a bridge between the country's youth and the ideals of discipline, patriotism, and service to the nation. Through its structured training programs, the NCC has contributed immensely to strengthening India by fostering unity, developing leadership, and preparing the next generation to serve the country in various capacities. The transition from 'uniforms' to 'unity' encapsulates how the NCC has been instrumental in bringing diverse segments of Indian society together and contributing to the nation's growth.

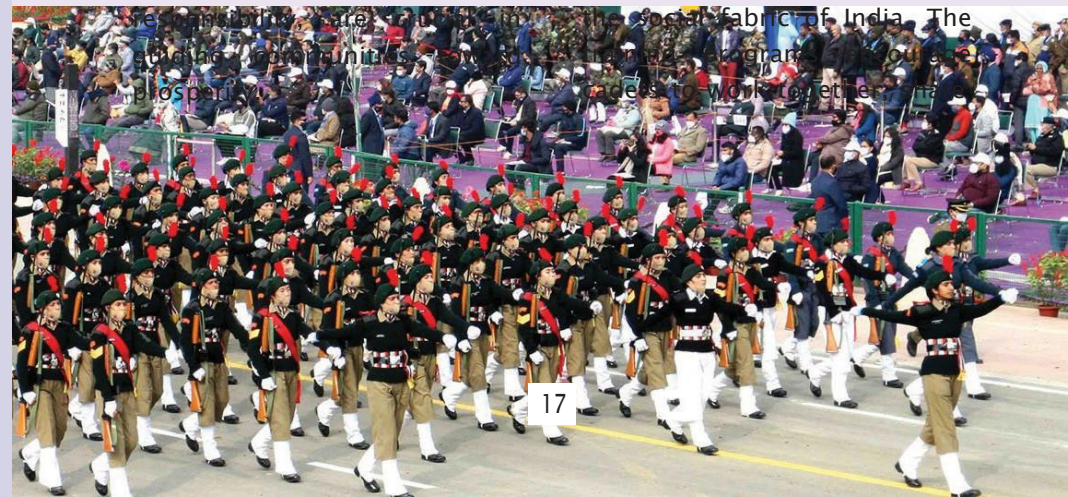
A Symbol of Discipline and Leadership: The core of the NCC's influence on Indian society lies in its ability to instill discipline and leadership among young people. Wearing the uniform of the NCC is not just a matter of pride; it symbolises the values of duty, respect, and

responsibility. Cadets undergo rigorous training that includes physical fitness, drills, leadership exercises, and community service. These activities are designed to teach the youth the importance of hard work, teamwork, and resilience. Through this, the NCC shapes individuals who can shoulder responsibilities and lead others with confidence.

Leadership development is a key focus of the NCC. Cadets are encouraged to take on leadership roles within their units, helping to develop skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. These skills are not only beneficial for personal growth but also for nation-building, as effective leadership is essential for addressing the complex challenges a nation faces. In India's rapidly growing and diverse society, leaders who understand the values of unity, discipline, and social

Promoting National Unity Amidst Diversity: India's vast diversity—spanning languages, cultures, religions, and regions—has often been seen as both a strength and a challenge. The NCC plays a pivotal role in promoting national integration by fostering unity through shared experiences. Young cadets from different parts of the country come together for training camps, adventure activities, and community service projects. These interactions allow them to transcend cultural and regional differences, forging bonds of friendship and understanding.

By bringing together young people from various backgrounds, the NCC helps build a sense of national identity. Cadets learn that despite their different backgrounds, they are all part of a larger national framework. The NCC's emphasis on unity plays a vital role in strengthening



experiences, and engage in collective action, which leads to a deeper understanding of India's pluralistic society.

Bridging the Gap Between Youth and National Security: Another significant contribution of the NCC is its role in preparing young people for national defense. As a paramilitary organisation, the NCC provides military training that is not intended to make cadets soldiers but to cultivate a spirit of service, discipline, and patriotism. Through basic military training, cadets learn essential skills such as first aid, weapon handling, and survival techniques. While only a few cadets may eventually join the armed forces, the overall exposure to defense-related activities helps develop a sense of responsibility toward the nation's security.

The NCC also contributes to India's defense preparedness by serving as a talent pool

for the armed forces. Many former cadets go on to serve in the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force, bringing with them the values and skills learned during their time in the NCC. These individuals often serve as ambassadors for national unity, spreading the ideals of discipline and patriotism to their peers and communities.

Empowering Social Responsibility: Beyond the defense sector, the NCC plays an active role in shaping the youth's understanding of social responsibility. Cadets are frequently involved in community service activities such as disaster relief, blood donation drives, environmental conservation projects, and awareness campaigns on health and hygiene. These activities not only provide cadets with practical experience in addressing social issues but also instill a sense of empathy and duty toward fellow citizens.



The NCC encourages its members to actively contribute to society, making them more aware of their roles in improving the quality of life for others. This sense of social responsibility is critical in fostering an ethos of civic engagement, where individuals take ownership of their surroundings and work together for the betterment of society. Whether it is during a natural disaster or an environmental crisis, NCC cadets have been instrumental in providing support and relief to affected communities.

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) has played a crucial role in strengthening India through its focus on discipline, leadership, unity, and social responsibility. By taking young

individuals from diverse backgrounds and instilling in them the values of service and patriotism, the NCC has contributed to building a more unified, cohesive nation. As the country continues to grow, the role of NCC becomes ever more significant in ensuring that the youth are equipped with the values and skills necessary to guide India into the future. From wearing uniforms to fostering unity, the NCC remains an enduring force in shaping India's destiny and nurturing the leaders of tomorrow.

Marching Towards Progress

Youth as the Torchbearers of Progress



“ In 2014, about 14 lakh youth were associated with NCC. Now in 2024, more than 20 lakh youth are associated with NCC. Compared to earlier times, provision for NCC has been made in five thousand new schools and colleges... and the biggest aspect is that earlier the number of girl cadets in NCC was just around 25%. Now the number of girl cadets in NCC has risen to almost 40%. ”

-Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(in 'Mann ki Baat' address)

WHAT

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) is the youth wing of the Indian Armed Forces with its headquarters in New Delhi, India.

WHEN

The NCC in India was formed in 1948. The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru presided over the function of raising the first NCC Unit in Delhi on the last Sunday of November 1948. This day is traditionally celebrated as the 'NCC Day'.

WHY

The need for having a motto for the Corps was discussed in the 11th Central Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting held on August 11, 1978. The mottos suggested were 'Duty and Discipline', 'Duty,

Unity and Discipline', 'Duty and Unity', 'Unity and Discipline'. The final decision for selection of 'Unity and Discipline' as motto for the NCC was taken in the 12th CAC meeting held on October 12, 1980.

HOW

The NCC is a responsive, learning and continuously evolving organisation. Its activity is guided by certain core values that they endeavour to instill among all ranks of the NCC.



National Cadet Corps

Yuva Shakti For Viksit Bharat



Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh
Director General
National Cadet Corps

serves as the guiding force for the youth and instills in them a deep sense of commitment towards the nation.

The Role of NCC in Leadership Development :

The NCC has a well-structured curriculum that blends discipline, adventure, and social service. It creates an environment where young individuals can discover their strengths, overcome challenges, and develop qualities necessary to lead in diverse areas of life.

Core Principles: Discipline, Unity, and Service

The bedrock of NCC training is rooted in three core values: Discipline, Unity, and Service. These values are not mere words; they are principles that guide every action, decision, and activity within the NCC framework.

Discipline: Discipline is the foundation upon which leadership is built. Our

cadets undergo training that emphasises punctuality, self-control, and adherence to instructions. This teaches them how to act with integrity and resolve, even in the face of adversity.

Unity: The NCC brings together youth from every corner of India, transcending barriers of language, culture, and geography. In fact, NCC has a footprint in almost every district of our country. Through joint training camps, cultural exchanges, and shared experiences, cadets learn to appreciate each other's differences and work towards a common goal—the progress of the nation. By conducting camps like 'Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat'

which unite youth from different regions, the NCC promotes the spirit of 'Nation First'.

Service: The principle of service to the nation, to society, and to the community is at the heart of NCC. Cadets are actively involved in various social welfare activities such as blood donation camps, environmental conservation initiatives, and disaster relief operations. These experiences not only enhance their sense of social responsibility but also cultivate empathy, teamwork, and the ability to make a difference in the world around them.

Holistic Training: Preparing for the Future

The training provided by



the NCC goes beyond mere academic learning. The range of activities available to cadets ensures that they acquire essential skills that are critical to both personal and professional success.

Physical and Mental Health: Cadets undergo regular drills, parades, and physical exercises, which help not only in building strength but also improve mental toughness, which is crucial for leadership roles in any field.

Leadership Camps: NCC camps serve as platforms for honing leadership skills in real-world settings, teaching cadets how to manage teams, make quick decisions, and lead with confidence under pressure.

Adventure and Exploration: The NCC places a significant emphasis on adventure activities, which include para jumps, trekking, mountaineering, rock climbing, and camping. These activities not only promote physical fitness but also teach resilience, problem-solving, and risk management.

Community Service: Service to society is a key aspect of the NCC experience. It instills in them a deep sense of responsibility and an understanding of the importance of contributing to the welfare of others.

The NCC Alumni: Once a Cadet, always a Cadet

The impact of the NCC is evident in the remarkable contributions made by its

alumni in all walks of life and is a major contributor to uniformed forces. NCC cadets have gone on to make significant marks in their respective fields. They carry with them the qualities of resilience, strategic thinking, and the ability to lead diverse teams, all of which are essential for success in any professional domain.

The Path Forward: Empowering the Youth of India

The NCC continues to evolve with the times, adapting to the changing needs of the youth while staying true to its core values. In an era of technological advancements

and global connectivity, it is crucial that the Gen Z leaders are equipped with the skills to navigate these challenges. The NCC is committed to preparing youth who not only excel in their careers but also uphold the values of service, integrity, and unity. NCC is an institution that builds leaders, fosters national integration, and contributes to the well-being of society. As we continue our journey, we remain steadfast in our mission to develop young individuals into leaders who will guide India into a prosperous and developed nation. Together, we are building the Yuva Shakti of Viksit Bharat.



Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue

A Call to Action for India's Youth



Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya

Minister of Labour and
Employment & Minister of Youth
Affairs and Sports

Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji spoke about the 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue' during his 'Mann ki Baat' address on 24th November, 2024. He highlighted the key role of youth in achieving Viksit Bharat, stating that their unity and effort will lead to success. He mentioned that 12th January 2025, marking the 162nd birth anniversary of Swami

Vivekananda, will be celebrated on a grand scale, featuring a Maha Kumbh of youth thoughts and vision at Bharat Mandapam as part of the reimagined National Youth Festival, 2025.

Viksit Bharat Challenge is a key component of the Dialogue and is a merit-based, four-stage competition designed to empower youth to become leaders of the developed India. The challenge has already begun with the Viksit Bharat Quiz on the MY Bharat portal from 25th November, testing participants' knowledge of India's significant achievements over the past decade. Shortlisted candidates will then submit essays on identified themes important for Viksit Bharat such as Tech for Viksit Bharat, Vikas Bhi Virasat Bhi, Making India the Global Manufacturing Powerhouse, among others. At the state level, shortlisted participants representing various villages, blocks, districts, will present their vision for a Viksit Bharat through compelling pitches. The qualifying youth from each state will have the unparalleled

opportunity to present their ideas directly to the Prime Minister at Bharat Mandapam on 11-12 January 2025.

The 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue' also offers participants a unique opportunity to engage with pathbreakers from varied domains whose experiences have profoundly impacted the world. Collaborating with some of the brightest minds, the youth will contribute to charting a comprehensive plan for a Viksit Bharat. In addition to this, the participants will have the chance to explore exhibitions showcasing youth-centric initiatives from various States and Central ministries. The event includes insightful plenary sessions with distinguished leaders and opportunities to immerse in India's vibrant cultural heritage, making it a holistic platform for learning, collaboration, and nation-building.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, in his 'Mann ki Baat', also reiterated his call from the

Red Fort on Independence Day, where he urged 1,00,000 youth from non-political backgrounds to engage in politics and leadership. He highlighted that the 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue' is one such initiative to link young leaders to this vision. He stated that India would explore ways to implement these ideas, with a roadmap and blueprint being developed based on the dialogue. The Prime Minister urged the youth to seize the opportunity to unite and contribute towards building a Viksit Bharat.

As India strides confidently towards its centenary of Independence in 2047, this initiative serves as a clarion call to the youth—the torchbearers of tomorrow. Let us answer the call of our Hon'ble Prime Minister and unite to transform our dreams for India into a tangible reality. The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue is more than an event; it is a movement to empower, inspire, and catalyze change.



Swami Vivekananda's Birth Anniversary

“You know that on the 12th of January, on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the country celebrates 'Youth Day'. Next year is Swami Vivekananda's 162nd birth anniversary. This time it will be celebrated in a very special way. On this occasion, a Maha Kumbh of young minds is going to be held at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi on 11-12 January, and the name of this initiative is 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue.’”

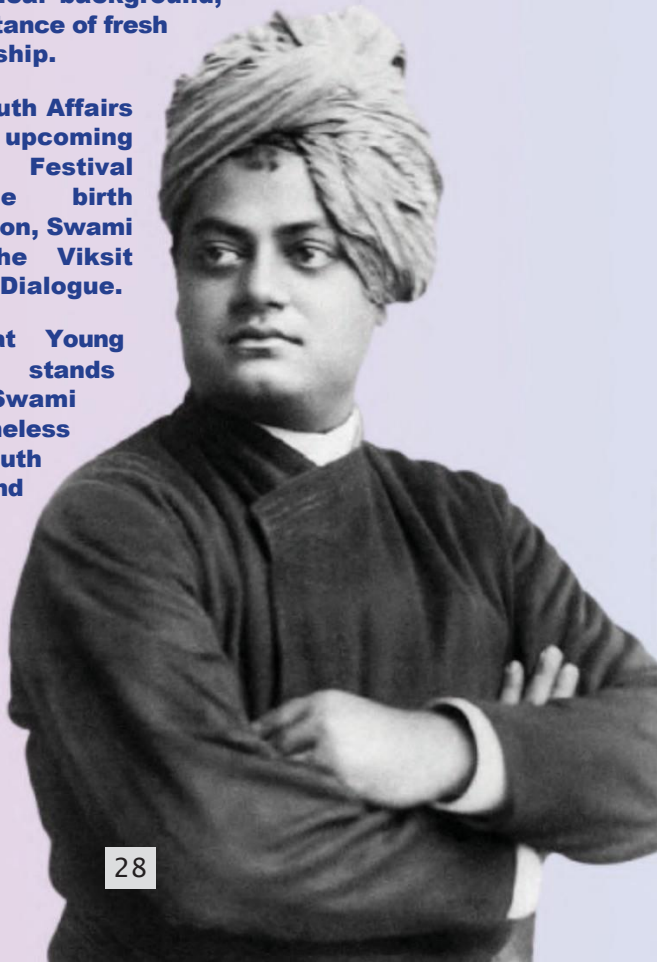
-Prime Minister Narendra Modi (in 'Mann ki Baat' address)

Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his 'Mann ki Baat' address, has invited the youth to take an active role in shaping the nation's future. He urged them to join politics, especially those from families with no political background, emphasising the importance of fresh perspectives in leadership.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs has reimagined the upcoming National Youth Festival commemorating the birth anniversary of youth icon, Swami Vivekananda into the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue.

The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue stands as a testament to Swami Vivekananda's timeless ideals of youth empowerment and nation-building.

Through dialogue, collaboration, and contribution, India's young minds will not only honour Swami Vivekananda's legacy but also lead the nation to a brighter future.



A Maha Kumbh of Youth at Viksit Bharat

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VIKSIT BHARAT YOUNG LEADERS DIALOGUE

- ◆ The Viksit Bharat Challenge
- ◆ Plenary Session & Panel Discussions
- ◆ Viksit Bharat Exhibition- Vision @2047
- ◆ Viksit Bharat- A cultural Extravaganza

By leveraging the collective potential of India's youth, this initiative aims to empower them to actively contribute to the nation's holistic development. The initiative aligns with Swami Vivekananda's vision of empowering the youth to lead the nation towards progress.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND HIS VISION

- ◆ Swami Vivekananda emphasised the power of self-confidence and self-reliance. He believed that every individual possesses immense potential and inner strength, which can be harnessed through discipline, self-awareness, and spiritual practices.
- ◆ He encouraged the youth urging them to overcome fear, weakness, and self-doubt and to cultivate virtues like honesty, integrity, compassion, and dedication to serve society selflessly.
- ◆ For the youth, he advocated unity, teamwork, and working beyond individual interests to build a cohesive and inclusive society.



Empowering Communities

through Youth-Led Innovations and Digital Inclusion

“In many cities, the youth are also coming forward to make the elderly a part of the digital revolution. These elderly people had smart phones, but there was no one to tell them their correct usage. The youth have also come forward to save the elderly from the risk of Digital Arrest. I am happy that our young friends are participating in this work with full sensitivity and are motivating others as well.”

-Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(in 'Mann ki Baat' address)

“Today, India’s youth continue to embody the spirit of the Guru-Shishya Parampara as ‘gurus of technology’, empowering not only their families but also communities across the country to embrace the benefits of digital inclusion.”

-Lalitha Nataraj

CEO, NPCI BHIM Services Ltd.
(NBSL)

In the bustling lanes of Lucknow, Virendra, a young enthusiast, has become a beacon of hope for the elderly in his community. His mission? To simplify the lives of senior citizens by assisting them with Digital Life Certificates.

Similarly, Mahesh’s efforts in Bhopal highlight another critical area of digital inclusivity—cashless transactions. While many elderly people possess smartphones, they often lack the knowledge to utilise features like mobile payments.

Meanwhile, in Ahmedabad, Rajiv works diligently to educate the elderly about the dangers of cyber fraud, cautioning them about scams like ‘Digital Arrest.’ These stories from Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ‘Mann ki Baat’ reflect the incredible

potential of youth-led initiatives in bridging the digital divide and empowering communities.

A Revolution in Digital Inclusivity

In a world increasingly driven by technology, it is essential to ensure that every segment of society can access and benefit from digital advancements. The Digital Life Certificate (Jeevan Pramaan) initiative is one such step in this direction. Launched in 2014, the scheme allows pensioners to submit their life

certificates online, sparing them the ordeal of visiting banks. With over 80 lakh pensioners using this service, including 2 lakh individuals aged above 80, the initiative has made life significantly easier for senior citizens.

Government initiatives for Digital Literacy and Inclusion

The Government of India has implemented various schemes to promote digital literacy among all sections of society, targeting not only the



elderly but entire communities and families for enhanced digital inclusion. The National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) aims to empower at least one person per household with basic digital skills, offering training on using mobile phones, tablets, and computers. Similarly, the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) focuses on rural households, providing 20 hours of training in areas like operating digital devices, internet usage,

communication, and cashless transactions. Under PMGDISHA, over 7.35 crore individuals were enrolled, and 4.78 crore were certified, significantly enhancing digital literacy in rural India.

Platforms like DigiLocker and the UMANG app further simplify access to government services. DigiLocker allows citizens to securely store and share important documents, such as Aadhaar, PAN cards, and educational certificates,



eliminating the need for physical copies. The UMANG app acts as a one-stop solution for various government services, from filing taxes to accessing pension details, making everyday tasks more convenient. These initiatives collectively empower citizens, enabling them to navigate and benefit from India's growing digital ecosystem effectively.

Youth Driving Change

While the government lays the foundation, it is the youth who breathe life into these initiatives. With their technological fluency and energy, young people are uniquely positioned to mentor the elderly. Teaching an elderly person to navigate a smartphone, make a digital payment, or recognise a

phishing attempt might seem like small steps, but they contribute to a larger vision of inclusivity and empowerment.

Moreover, these interactions foster inter-generational bonds, bridging the gap between the young and the old. They also instill a sense of purpose and community among youth, making them active participants in nation-building.

As we celebrate such efforts, let us also recognise the potential of every young individual in making a difference. After all, empowering one person can inspire a ripple effect of change across communities, ensuring that no one—young or old—is left behind in India's digital revolution.

From Tradition to Technology

Youth Driving India's Digital Inclusion Revolution



Lalitha Nataraj

CEO, NPCI BHIM Services Ltd.
(NBSL)

epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata to Mathematics, Astronomy and Ayurveda. These teachings were shared orally and through dialogue, fostering trust, learning and growth, long before they were recorded in writing.

Fast forward to 2024, and the ethos of teachings has seamlessly transitioned into the digital age. Today, India's youth continue to embody the spirit of the Guru-Shishya Parampara as 'gurus of technology', empowering not only their families but also communities across the country to embrace the benefits of digital inclusion.

Digital Inclusion: A Pathway To Societal Growth

Digital inclusion means ensuring that every individual, regardless of age, gender, location, or socio-economic background, has access to and the ability to use digital technology effectively. For groups like the elderly, small-

scale farmers, and semi-skilled labourers, digital inclusion is not just a convenience; it's a lifeline.

In recent years, India has truly set the benchmark for digital payments worldwide. Innovations like the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) have democratized financial tools. Initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) have trained over four crore citizens to use digital devices and services, accelerating India's journey towards a more equitable economy. Yet, barriers remain, particularly for those unfamiliar with technology. This is where India's youth have emerged as changemakers.

Across the country, young people are bridging the gap between technology and

vulnerable communities. Their role is key in enabling hesitant users to embrace digital payments with increased confidence by providing security, safety, convenience and ease of use. There are multiple innovative products that have been introduced in the recent past to promote financial inclusion.

Payment apps like BHIM are making payments accessible to Indians through a simple user interface and multiple languages.

As changemakers, the youth carry a significant responsibility in equipping their families for the future. However, to truly enable total financial and digital inclusion, they must expand their sphere of influence to include vulnerable

WIRE1



communities in rural areas. In these areas, trust and hands-on assistance is critical for driving adoption of digital payments. The government's PMGDISHA has laid a solid foundation, and youth-led initiatives must continue to build on it by addressing the unique needs of their communities.

Technology as a partner in inclusion

Digital inclusion requires both education from the youth and the creation of convenient and user-friendly touchpoints to simplify access to digital payment tools. UPI-enabled apps like BHIM play a pivotal role in this process. For example, the BHIM app has made digital payments accessible to a

diverse population through features such as multilingual interfaces and Aadhaar-based onboarding. Aadhaar-based onboarding has reduced barriers for users from remote and underserved areas, enabling easy registration and leveraging digital payment platforms without any paperwork. Once users are comfortable with digital payments, they are more likely to explore e-governance portals, online education platforms and digital marketplaces, enhancing their financial and social independence.

Moreover, stakeholders in India's digital journey must proactively invest in educating users about potential fraud

risks. It is important to prioritise customer protection, especially for those new to technology, to build trust and foster a secure digital ecosystem. Unified dispute resolution to make a quick turnaround to take care of customer complaints is an important move to reinforce trust and customer protection.

The road to digital inclusion is paved through collaboration. Achieving true digital inclusion requires collaboration among youth, technology platforms and the government. India's journey

towards digital inclusion is a testament to the transformative power of technology when combined with human efforts. It is this spirit of selflessness, innovation and leadership that will drive India towards becoming a truly inclusive and digitally empowered nation. A sustained push will propel India as the benchmark for digital inclusion. Together, we can make sure no one is left behind and build a society where technology is the equaliser.



Libraries

Gateways to Knowledge and Creativity



Sudha Murty

Rajya Sabha MP, Author &
Philanthropist

A couple of years ago, I was invited to some village for an event. It was the early part of the year. Throughout my village tour, I observed a lot of young children sitting on the parapet walls of compounds, wandering on the streets, sitting in groups and playing some games, etc. I felt they were just wasting their precious time. The village head showed his concern regarding the children, who are our future. He said, “We have tried to tell

them, but they don’t listen. If we point out too much, they will run away. After school hours it is difficult to hold them and particularly during holidays, parents are tired.”

I asked casually, “Do you have a library in your village, with a variety of books and a nice ambience to sit there and read?”

He was surprised by my question and said, ‘Oh, all our schools have a library and each class gets a reading period, every week. So, why do we need another library?’

‘What about young adults who are not in school?’

He thought for a moment and said, ‘They don’t read.’

I smiled and continued, ‘One of the solutions will be building a library with a conducive environment. It will attract both children and young adults.’

‘Why should we waste money by duplicating it?’, he was curious.

“A library is just not a building with four walls and a set of books. It is an abode of

the goddess of knowledge and learning, Mata Saraswati. You learn, you create and you can really enjoy it. It is a laboratory for young creators. It is an abode of knowledge because books are never-failing friends. We should keep books of different types for different age groups. Everybody has a different taste. All experiences will not happen to one person in one’s lifetime. But people should be able to visualise when they read a book about any subject.

For instance, I have not climbed Mount Everest. But when I read a book about someone who has climbed and written a book about it, I understand and experience half their journey.

So, that itself is great knowledge. Every book shares

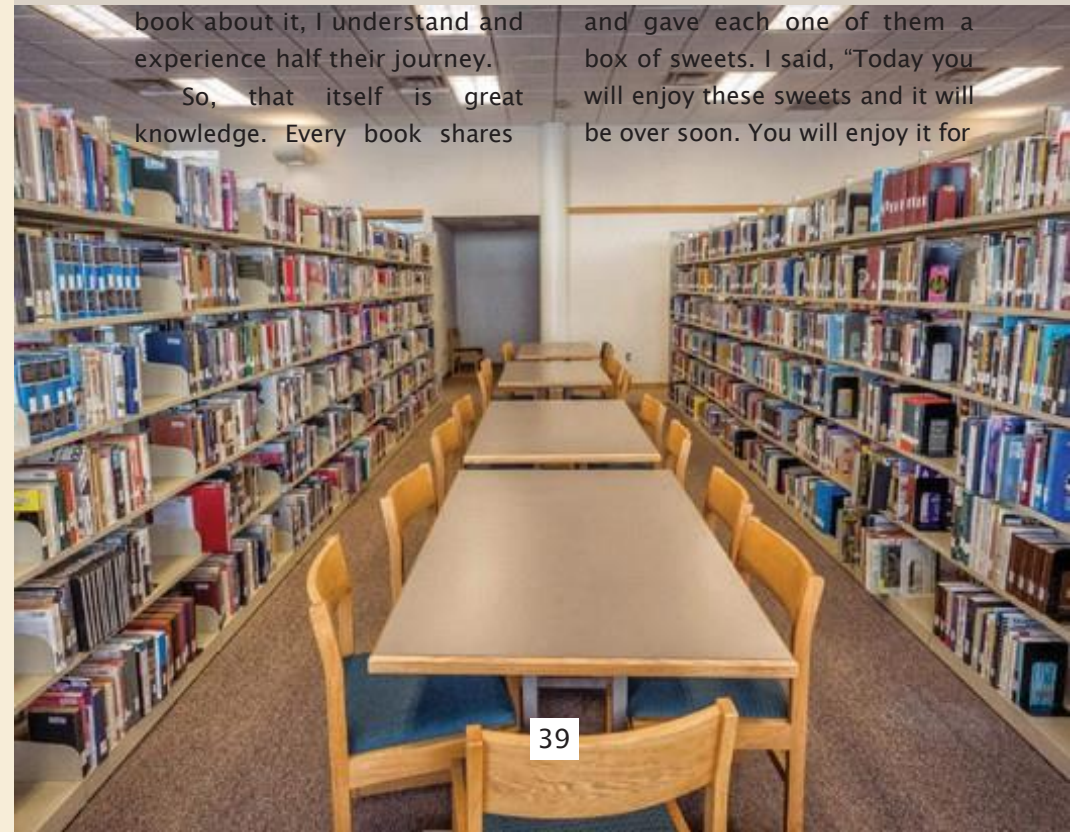
some or the other subject. Hence a library is called an ocean of knowledge.”


He agreed.

I wanted to talk more, but I refrained as some other plan was already running behind my mind. Within a few months, a small, good building was constructed, with ideal furniture and a big garden.

To begin with, I had personally chosen all the books and it covered many topics—adventure, creative activities, puzzles, stories on Indian history, etc.

On the inauguration day, I gathered all the young children and gave each one of them a box of sweets. I said, “Today you will enjoy these sweets and it will be over soon. You will enjoy it for





some time and forget. But if you create sweet memories, they will be there with you forever. So use this space to create those moments that you will cherish even after you grow up.”

The summer was setting in, and reluctantly, children started to use the library to escape the heat. As the temperature soared, more children were lured to use these facilities. The writing desk, creative reading and other facilities were all being used.

The library was always full of children and at the end of summer, I saw that new books had become old, the writing desk was more occupied and activity books were in great demand.

I revisited during early monsoon, and some children came up and told me, “Amma, please don’t close the library. We love it. Even after school hours we want to come. Get us more books. In three months, we have learnt a lot.”

I was pleasantly surprised when these youngsters gifted me a pile of storybooks. One said, ‘Even I want to be an author’, the other said, ‘I want to join the marine service’. Some also said that they wanted to be a soldier, and some wanted

to be a teacher. The list went on, and I was glad that the books had made them think of different avenues.

I smiled back and told the village head to understand the importance of the library: “Now we also have digital media. We will gradually introduce it to these children as well. Some books are also on Kindle, so that they can access that. Let us expose them to learning from digital media but under supervision.”

Reading is a great habit, provided we elders read first. Eventually, I want the parents to also drop in and read for some time. That will be a great model for children too.

Using digital information all the time will affect their children, but it can be used as and when required. I left the village, satisfied.

I congratulate our Honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji, for choosing such an important topic, Library & Creativity, in his 'Mann ki Baat' series. When he talks, the whole country listens. His advice will be a great moment for libraries in our country.

Libraries of Hope

Cultivating a Love for Reading Across India

In his 'Mann ki Baat' address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the vital role of books in enhancing creativity, calling them "human's best friend" and describing libraries as spaces that nurture this friendship. Libraries like Prakrith Arivagam in Chennai are fostering a love for reading among children, while initiatives such as The Food 4 Thought Foundation in Hyderabad and Prayog Library in Bihar ensure access to knowledge for students and children across diverse topics. These efforts are making learning inclusive and accessible to all. The Doordarshan team spoke with the founders of these libraries, and their insights are shared below.

“Prayog Library is dedicated to promoting children's literature and revitalising the library culture. Launched in 2013 with the support of friends, our primary goal is to provide children access to diverse and age-appropriate literature, encouraging a love for reading. With support from the local government, we have successfully expanded our library network to 24 government schools.

Library educators play a crucial role in engaging children, making books a source of joy and learning. Libraries remain highly relevant today, as books serve as a true reflection of society while inspiring young minds to imagine and contribute to building a New India.



Surya Prakash Rai
- Founder member, PRAYOG



“Recognition of our small initiative by Prime Minister Modi on such a national platform is not only an honour but also an affirmation of our mission. We started this library with the aim of reducing the screen time of kids and cultivating a habit of reading. We hope that through our library we are able to attain our objective.

-Sri Ram Gopalan
Co-founder, Prakrith Arivagam



“We thank PM Modi for praising our work and discussing this with all citizens of India through 'Mann ki Baat'. We believe that this country should be known not only by GDP but also by GGP, i.e., 'Ghar Ghar Pustakalaya'. We started this campaign by making books available in some government schools and today we have been able to reach more than one lakh children.

-K Srinivas Rao
Co-founder, The Food 4 Thought Foundation



Indians in Guyana – 186 Years of Struggles and Successes



Dr. Seeta Shah Roath

Educator, Author, and Cultural Anthropologist

The self-identity of Indians in Guyana has undergone little change over the last 186 years, even with the loss of their languages. Indo-Guyanese represent the largest ethnic group in Guyana with an estimated 40% of the population. A recent survey showed that

over 98% of Indo-Guyanese self-identified as Guyanese first and have a name that indicates Indian origin.

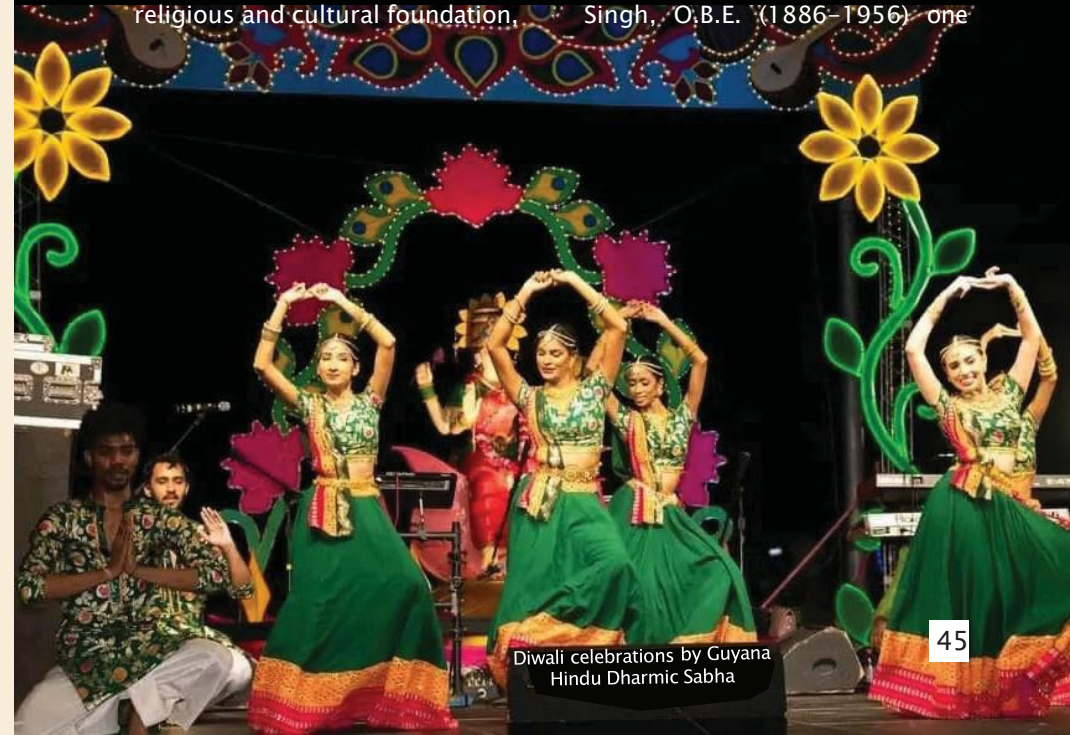
Further, over 96% either practice most Indian traditions or know major Hindu and Muslim customs and lifestyles (Shah Roath, 2024).

Indo-Guyanese historian, Tota Mangar (2014) on East Indian Immigration, stated that hardships, loss, and defiance characterised the experiences of the Indian indentured immigrants, where many persisted mainly through their strength, endurance, customs, traditions, and obligations leading to thrift, commerce, and pride in their accomplishments. Indo-Guyanese have retained their names, cuisine, religions, music, rituals, festivals, and natural healing – ayurvedic and spiritual. They have also mostly retained and revived aspects of folk theatre such as the Ramlila, musical traditions, folk dances, and aspects of Indian fashion.

Historian James Rodway (British-born Guianese, 1848–1926) acknowledged the importance of East Indian immigration for the survival and growth of the sugar and rice industries, as well as the cultural enrichment of Guyana. Rodway noted that their unique customs and religions added a new and interesting element to the population. Although sugar and rice cultivation are still thriving industries with new advances in methodologies, the contributions of Indo-Guyanese to the economy and nation-building go beyond agriculture.

Education and business acumen, supported by a religious and cultural foundation,

from the late 1800s allowed the Indian diaspora to excel in all aspects of Guyana's society. Writing on the centenary of the emancipation of African slaves (1938), Joseph Ruhomon, an intellectual and journalist and one of the founders of the British Guiana East Indian Association (BGEIA), called for an Indian-African 'combine' in the society. His brother, Journalist Peter Ruhoman, soon after wrote on the centenary of the arrival of the Indians to British Guiana, noting that those who remained in British Guiana had decided to make the colony their home, building themselves a new community. Dr. Jung Bahadur Singh, O.B.E. (1886–1956) one



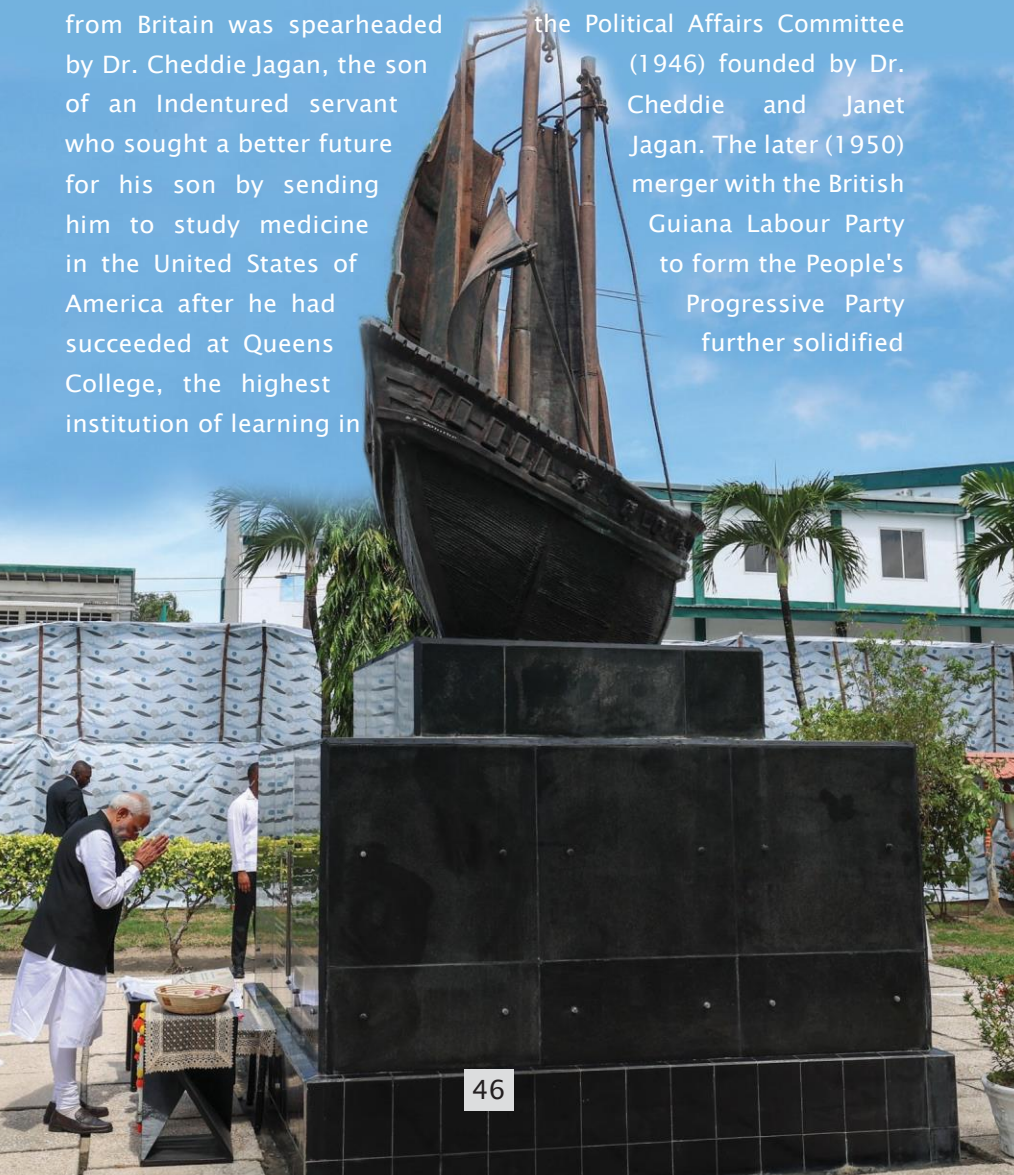
Diwali celebrations by Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha

of the first medical doctors in British Guiana, was a second-generation Indian who fought for the rights of Indentured servants, was seven times elected President of BGEIA, and was a pioneer in the fight for universal adult suffrage in British Guiana.

The fight for Independence from Britain was spearheaded by Dr. Cheddie Jagan, the son of an Indentured servant who sought a better future for his son by sending him to study medicine in the United States of America after he had succeeded at Queens College, the highest institution of learning in

British Guiana at that time. It was Cheddie Jagan who, upon his return from his studies, started what became Guyana's highest institution of learning – the University of Guyana.

The realisation of Ruhomon's African-Indian 'combine' could be seen in the early history of the Political Affairs Committee (1946) founded by Dr. Cheddie and Janet Jagan. The later (1950) merger with the British Guiana Labour Party to form the People's Progressive Party further solidified



Joseph Ruhomon's dream of an ethnic 'combine' to produce a society with dynamic ethnic relations which is still evolving today.

Indo-Guyanese Clem Shiwcharan in his PhD thesis pointed out that the Indians arriving in British Guiana (1838-1917) mostly originated from similar geographic areas in India, notably from the United Provinces and Bihar with a composition of over 83% Hindus and less than 17% Muslims. Mandirs and Mosques exist in almost every village across coastal Guyana, and the festivals of Phagwah and Diwali are national holidays with major celebratory activities that have the participation of all ethnic groups, nationwide. Rangoli exhibitions and contests in schools, performing arts stage shows, and Indo-Guyanese song and dance competitions are among the many ways the Indian presence permeates contemporary Guyanese society.

Oral History Projects in India

Preserving Memories, Voices, and Identities

“Friends, a similar ‘Oral History Project’ is being carried out in India as well. Under this project, history enthusiasts are collating the experiences of the victims during the period of partition of the country. Now, there are very few people left in the country who have witnessed the horrors of Partition. In such a situation, this effort has become even more significant.”

-Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(in 'Mann ki Baat' address)

Oral history refers to the practice of collecting, recording, and preserving personal narratives, memories, and experiences of individuals through interviews. Unlike written historical accounts that often focus on political, military, and economic aspects of an event, oral histories give voice to those whose personal stories and experiences might otherwise be overlooked or marginalised.

While written records are essential for historical research, oral history allows for a more holistic view of the past by emphasising personal stories, emotions, and experiences that may not be captured in official documents or archives. These personal accounts often offer a more intimate and nuanced perspective of history. Oral histories allow people from different generations to share their memories, connecting the past with the present and creating a deeper sense of collective memory.

Over the years, India has

witnessed a number of significant oral history initiatives, driven by both academic institutions and grassroots organisations. Few of the key projects include:

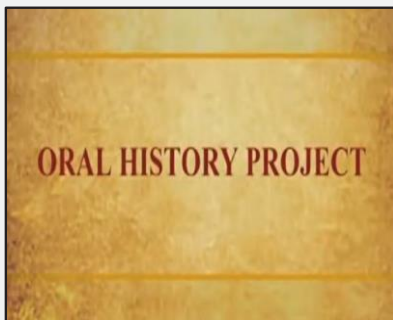
The Oral History Project of the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML).

The Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML) in New Delhi has been a major contributor to India's oral history initiatives. The library's oral history project began in the 1970s and is focused on preserving the memories of people who played significant roles in India's freedom struggle and during the post-independence period. This project includes interviews with prominent political leaders, bureaucrats, and intellectuals who shaped the country's modern history. The interviews cover diverse topics such as the partition of India, the creation of the Indian state, and the evolution of democratic institutions.

The National Archives of India (NAI) Oral history Project

NAI has undertaken an Oral History Project dedicated to preserving the invaluable stories of India's freedom struggle, cultural heritage, and diaspora experiences for future generations. This initiative involves collecting firsthand accounts from individuals who have witnessed or participated in significant historical events, ensuring that their personal narratives are documented and accessible for research and educational purposes.

Through this project, NAI aims to enrich the nation's historical records by incorporating diverse perspectives, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of India's past. The Oral History Project is part of NAI's broader mission to safeguard the country's documentary heritage, which includes digitising millions of pages of archival documents to facilitate easier access and





preservation. By preserving these oral histories, NAI ensures that the voices and experiences of individuals who have contributed to India's rich history are not lost, but instead serve as valuable resources for future generations.

Oral histories also safeguard traditions, languages, and practices that face erosion in the modern era. For instance, efforts to document storytelling practices like Dastangoi or Patachitra underscore the importance of oral narratives in understanding regional art and

philosophy.

Another campaign is also underway in the country to preserve evidence of India's ancient maritime prowess. As part of this effort, a large museum is being constructed in Lothal.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, during the 116th episode of 'Mann ki Baat', emphasised the significance of Lothal in India's maritime history. Known as the site of the world's first dockyard, Lothal is now witnessing the construction of the National Maritime Heritage Complex



(NMHC), under the Ministry of India. This pivotal site is poised for a transformative journey. With the foundation stone

showcasing India's 5000-year-old maritime history that began with the Harappan civilisation.

The ancient city of Lothal, dating back to 2400 BCE, grew into a bustling trading port within the Indus Valley Civilisation. Archaeologists believe that Lothal was strategically placed along a major river system that formed part of the old trade route linking Sindh to Saurashtra in Gujarat. The excavations at this site have unearthed an impressive array of artifacts, making it one of the richest archaeological finds in modern

laid in March 2019, the NMHC is envisioned to be one of the largest maritime complexes in the world.

Oral histories and preservation projects humanise historical events, fostering empathy by bringing individual experiences to the forefront. They challenge monolithic representations of history, enriching scholarly discourse with diverse perspectives. By capturing voices omitted from written records, oral histories democratise history-making.



The Vanishing Songbirds

Sparrows and Urbanisation

“ My dear countrymen, all of you must have seen sparrows chirping on roof tops or trees during your childhood. Stories about sparrows are told in every language and culture. Sparrows play a very important role in maintaining biodiversity around us, but today sparrows are hardly visible in cities. Due to increasing urbanization, sparrows have gone away from us.”

-Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(in 'Mann ki Baat' address)



In the bustling heart of Delhi, where traffic jams hum like a living organism and neon lights flicker in an endless dance, the song of our beloved 'Goraiya' (sparrows) once provided a familiar, comforting backdrop. It was the gentle chirping that filled the morning air, weaving through the city streets and echoing across the ancient monuments of Old Delhi. Yet, as the years rolled by, this harmonious melody has grown quieter.

There was a time when the sight of sparrows flitting across city streets and the sound of their cheerful chirps filled the air from dawn to dusk. Families living in the traditional havelis of Old Delhi often had sparrows nesting in their courtyards, their songs mingling with the aroma of chai and the sounds of busy markets. The sparrow was a symbol of resilience, a tiny survivor navigating the complexities of urban life.

Sparrows, particularly the house sparrow (*Passer*

domesticus), are hardy birds that have adapted remarkably well to urban environments over centuries. These small birds once thrived in cities around the world, nesting in the nooks of buildings, foraging for food scraps, and enlivening cityscapes with their distinctive calls. However, as cities have grown and changed, so too have the conditions that support these creatures.

In India, sparrows, known by different names like Kuruvi in Tamil and Pichhuka in Telugu, have long been a cherished part of cultural stories and daily life. However, due to urbanisation, these birds have become increasingly rare in cities, with many children today only seeing them in pictures or videos. Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the issue in the

116th episode of 'Mann ki Baat', emphasising the importance of efforts to bring back sparrows into our lives.

The reasons for the decline of sparrow populations in urban areas are manifold. One of the primary contributors is the reduction in available natural habitats. As cities expand, they often swallow up the small pockets of greenery that once provided a crucial source of food and shelter for birds. Parks and gardens, once teeming with plants and insects, have become rarities, replaced by concrete, asphalt, and manicured lawns that do little to support wildlife.

Delhi, like many Indian cities, has grown exponentially over the past few decades.

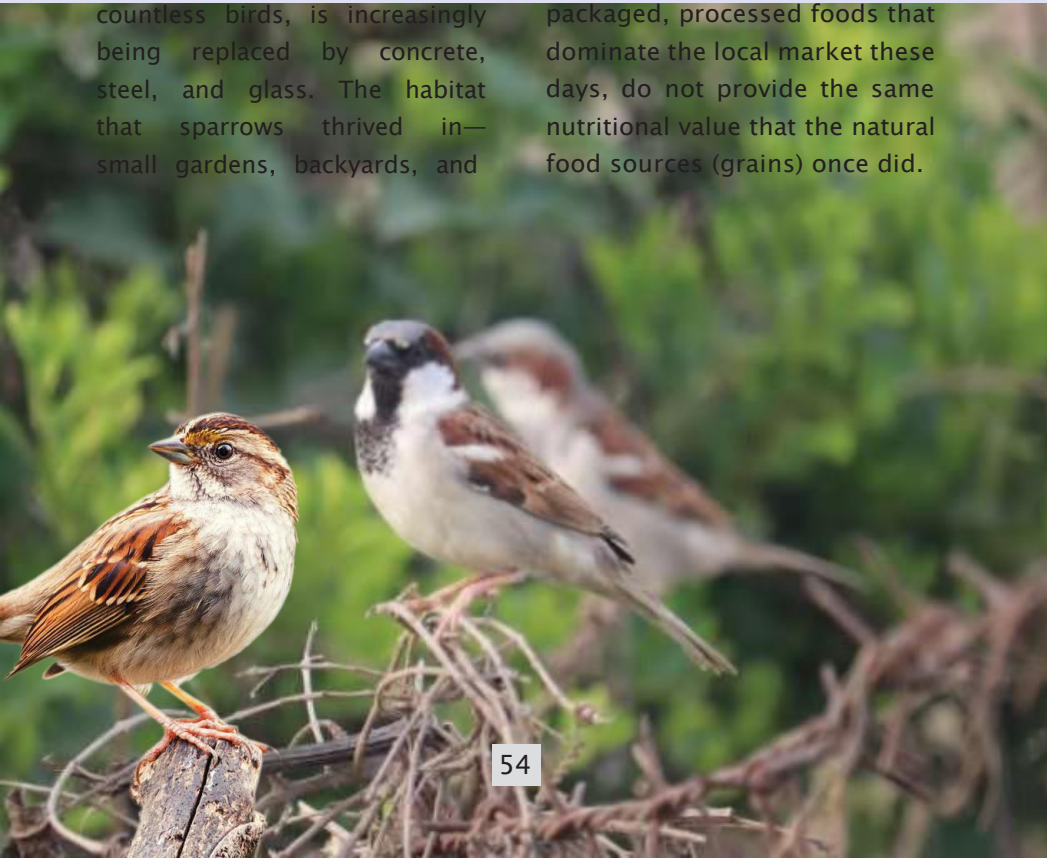
The once-tangled lanes lined with old, colonial-era buildings and tree-shaded courtyards have given way to towering apartment



rooftop spaces—has become an endangered feature in the urban sprawl.

Another significant factor is the shift in food sources. Sparrows are opportunistic feeders that thrive on seeds, insects, and scraps of human food. However, the modern city has changed its food supply dramatically. Pesticides and chemical fertilisers used in urban landscaping limit the availability of insects, which are a primary food source for young birds. Moreover, the pre-packaged, processed foods that dominate the local market these days, do not provide the same nutritional value that the natural food sources (grains) once did.

complexes and shopping malls. The cityscape, once dotted with green spaces and ancient banyan trees that supported countless birds, is increasingly being replaced by concrete, steel, and glass. The habitat that sparrows thrived in—small gardens, backyards, and



Further, rapid urbanisation also affects Sparrow's ability to communicate. Sparrows and many other birds rely on their songs for mating, territory defense, and social interactions. However, the noise pollution of city life—created by traffic, construction, and industrial activities—interferes with their ability to hear one another. Studies have shown that sparrows are forced to sing louder and at higher pitches to be heard over the noise, which can lead to stress and disrupted mating behaviours.

In response to these challenges, there have been various efforts to address the decline of sparrow populations in urban areas. Community-driven initiatives like 'bird-friendly' urban planning have gained traction. These include creating

rooftop gardens, planting native trees and shrubs, and reducing pesticide use. Even simple steps like adding bird feeders or creating 'wild corners' in public parks can make a significant difference.

For sparrows to once again fill the city with their songs, urban dwellers must act with intent and compassion. By fostering environments that prioritise biodiversity, creating green spaces, and promoting eco-friendly practices, we can rekindle the harmony that once thrived in the cityscape. The challenge is not just to bring back the sparrows, but to recognise the interconnectedness of all living things and nurture a future where cities are as alive with nature as they are with people. Only then will the city, in all its concrete glory, truly sing.



Reviving Nature's Harmony

“All of you must have seen sparrows chirping on rooftops or trees during your childhood. Sparrows are known as Kuruvi in Tamil and Malayalam, Pichhuka in Telugu and Gubbi in Kannada. Stories about sparrows are told in every language and culture. Sparrows play a very important role in maintaining biodiversity around us, but today sparrows are hardly visible in cities. Due to increasing urbanisation, sparrows have gone away from us.”

-Prime Minister Narendra Modi (in 'Mann ki Baat' address)

In the heart of India, sparrows have been more than just tiny birds fluttering through the sky. They are symbols of home, community, and resilience, woven into the cultural fabric of the country. The decline of the sparrow population is not just a fleeting curiosity—it's a pressing issue, signaling deeper environmental shifts and the challenges of urban growth. Thus, consistent conservation efforts are essential to ensure that sparrows remain more than a nostalgic memory.



“We have been working for Sparrow Conservation since 2014, when I was a student. So far, we have distributed around 10000 nest boxes all over Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Kerala, and Karnataka. In North Chennai itself, we have distributed 8000 nests across 40 schools. We're thrilled to hear that our Honourable Prime Minister, Narendra Modi ji, mentioned Koodugal Trust in the 116th episode of 'Mann ki Baat'. This is a testament to the Trust's hard work and dedication.”



-Ganesha and Kishore, Koodugal Trust, Chennai

“Early Bird is a 10 year old initiative. In these ten years, we've created nature education materials in more than 10 Indian languages. We've trained educators across the country, and we also do a lot of outreach directly with children. At Early Bird, we believe that children have an innate curiosity about nature, and we want to nurture this and help them to grow this curiosity and connect to the natural world around them.”



Ganna Bhat, Team Lead, Early Bird Initiative of Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru, Karnataka

“...As a pilot, we have worked with 500 libraries initially where we curated 'nature education kit', which was given to these 500 libraries. The idea is to teach children about words and nature through a lot of games and activities. And for this we have developed several art activities and games about earth and nature.”



Abhishek, Program Manager, Early Bird Initiative of Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru, Karnataka

For the Love of Mother Earth!

Heroes Who Rejuvenate the Nature

In the 116th episode of 'Mann ki Baat', Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi shared inspiring stories of people and groups passionate about bringing unprecedented change in the country and society, whether it is the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' or the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign that united the whole country and inspired people abroad, or the innovative efforts to convert waste into useful material.

These stories reflect the strength and courage of Indian society—Akshara and Prakriti from Mumbai stitching fashion items from small pieces of fabric, cleaning of the Ganga and recycling waste by Kanpur Ploggers, the women of Bihar planting trees on a large scale, and Ishita from Assam joining hands with locals to clean the Sangi Valley in Arunachal Pradesh. Each one of these initiatives is not only improving the environment but also setting an example for others. The mention of these heroes by the Prime Minister in 'Mann ki Baat' highlights their contribution towards building a Viksit Bharat and an inclusive and sustainable society.

"At 11:00 am, we learnt that Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji mentioned our group in his 'Mann ki Baat' programme. It was like a dream coming true because we started this group after seeing PM Modi's tweet. I also became aware of the term plogging through his tweet. A person so great as the PM of this country, when he can pick up garbage, why can't we do the same?"



Kanpur Ploggers have a mission: we should make Kanpur the Indore of Uttar Pradesh. Following this practice, India can dispose of its garbage. India should be immaculate, and everyone should know about waste management and sustainable habits. This is our dream."

-Sanjeevani Sharma, founder of the Kanpur Ploggers Group



Tisha Kumari, Reena Devi, and Sunita Devi are associated with the self-help group 'Jeevika.' They say, "We have received mango, jackfruit, litchi, jamun, and many other trees from Jeevika in thousands. These trees have been planted. The benefit of this initiative is that we will eat their fruit, and the children of our society will also savour them. Also, these trees will protect us from scorching sun and heat."

"Till now, Jeevika has distributed 6,87,500 trees, which have also been planted. Fifteen 'Didi Ki Nurseries' are currently in operation. There are three clusters in each block. We plan to have a 'Didi Ki Nursery' in every cluster. The sisters are benefiting a lot from this. Along with water, the environment is also getting cleansed."



-Rajesh Kumar Ranjan,
'Jeevika' Official



Being recognised by the Prime Minister of India is a tremendous honour and a testament to the dedication of our team and the community of Sangti. This acknowledgment inspires us to work harder to further improve the system and reach out to other communities to share our learnings and replicate our efforts. We work with the children of the village to make creative and thought provoking signage and wall art to capture attention. We conduct engaging awareness sessions in the village in collaboration with travel companies, where self-help group women and children share insights about the community-led waste management system in Sangti with tourists. Our work is directly contributing to preserving the natural beauty of Sangti Valley by tackling the increasing waste generation from tourism. Today, thanks to the community's efforts, dumping and burning have been stopped, and waste is now properly managed, helping to protect the valley's natural beauty for future generations.

-Ishita from Assam, Cleaning Sangti Valley, Arunachal Pradesh





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