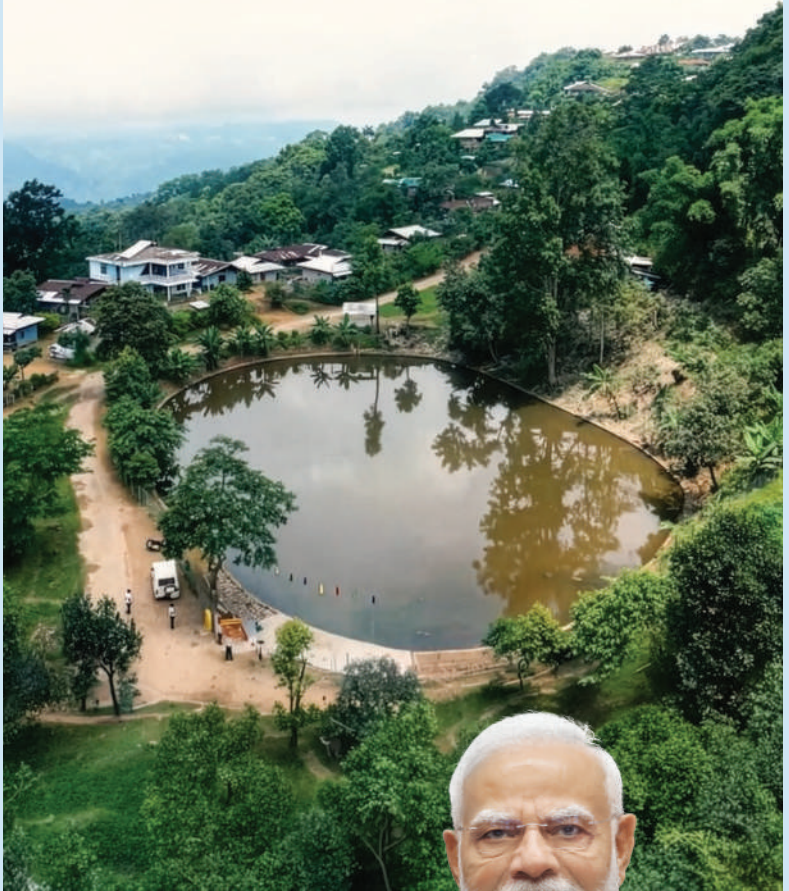


MANNNKI BAAAT

Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Powering India's Water Security



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's
Address to the Nation

Prime Minister's Address



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MEDIA SCAN

My dear Countrymen Namaskar

Welcome once again to 'Mann ki Baat'. This month of March has been full of turbulence globally. All of us remember that the entire world faced myriad problems for a long time on account of COVID. Indeed, all of us had expected that after emerging from the Corona crisis, the world would move forward on the path of renewed progress. However, situations of war and conflict have continuously kept arising in different parts of the world. Presently, a fierce war has been going on in our neighbourhood for a month. Millions of our family members, near and dear ones, live in these countries, especially working in the Gulf countries. I am deeply grateful to the Gulf countries, who are providing all kinds of assistance to more than 1 crore such Indians there.

Friends, The region where the war is currently going on is a major centre of our energy needs. On account of that, a crisis is emerging around the world regarding petrol and diesel.

Our global relations; the support we receive from various countries, and the strengths the country has built over the past decade have enabled India to bravely confront these circumstances.

Friends, these certainly are challenging times. Today, through 'Mann ki Baat', I would once again urge all my countrymen that we must unitedly overcome this challenge. Those who are politicising even this issue should refrain from doing so. This is a matter concerning the interests of 140 crore countrymen; there is no place for self-serving politics. Therefore, those who are spreading rumours are causing a major harm to the country. I would also appeal to all citizens to remain vigilant and not be misled by rumours. Trust only the continuous information provided by the government and take action based only on that. As always, I am confident that just as we have overcome past crises with the strength of our 140 crore countrymen; this time too, we will

together emerge victorious from this difficult situation.

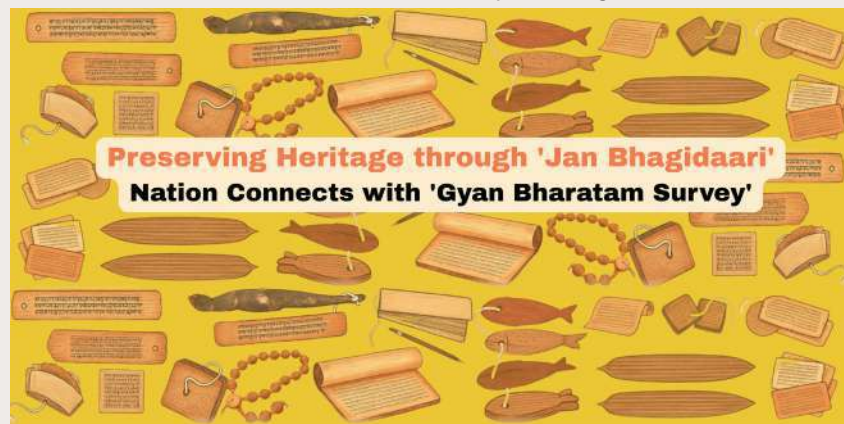
My dear countrymen, India's strength lies in its crores of people. Today, in 'Mann ki Baat,' I want to tell you about an initiative that reflects the spirit of public participation among our countrymen. This initiative is the Gyan Bharatam Survey, which is related to our great culture and rich heritage.

Its objective is to collect information about manuscripts across the country. One way to participate in this survey is through the Gyan Bharatam App. If you have a manuscript or information about it, do share its image on the Gyan Bharatam App. Information related to each entry is being verified before it is recorded. I am glad that thousands of manuscripts have been shared so far. For example, Chao Nantisindh Lokang ji of Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh,

has shared manuscripts in the Tai script. Bhai Amit Singh Rana of Amritsar has shared manuscripts in the Gurmukhi script. This is a script associated with our great Sikh tradition and the Punjabi language. Some organisations have provided manuscripts written on palm leaves. The Abhay Jain Library in Rajasthan has shared very old manuscripts inscribed on copper plates. The Hemis Monastery in Ladakh has provided information about valuable Tibetan manuscripts.

I have cited just a few examples here. This survey will continue until mid-June. I urge all of you to uncover and share aspects of your culture.

My dear countrymen, India is the youngest country in the world. When the strength of the country's youth is involved in nation-building, it is of immense help. The organisation MY Bharat,



is playing a major role in fulfilling this responsibility of nation-building. This organisation is connecting the country's youth with various positive activities. Recently, MY Bharat organised a budget quest. Its aim was to connect the youth across the country with the budget process and policymaking. Nearly 12 lakh youth from across the country participated in the quiz. After the quiz, approximately 160,000 participants were selected for the essay competition. I had the opportunity as well to read some of these essays. They demonstrate the eagerness of my young friends to contribute to the country's development. Kotla Raghuvver Reddy from Suryapet, Telangana, Saurabh Baiswar from Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh and Sumit Kumar from

Gopalganj, Bihar, have written on the topic related to farmer welfare.

Aanchal from Mohali, Punjab, and Om Prakash Rath from Kendrapara, Odisha, expressed their views on ways to advance women-led development. Pratham Barar from Yamunanagar, Haryana, has written that a green and clean India is the only path to a prosperous India. This reveals their deep thinking. Shankh Gupta from Delhi suggests that more efforts should be made to identify sports talent in rural areas. Our young friends have also shared their ideas on skill development and ease of doing business. I commend all the young people who are sharing their ideas. These ideas are crucial in taking the country forward.

My dear countrymen, this month has been full of excitement and enthusiasm for cricket fans across the country. When India achieved a historic victory in the T20 World Cup, a wave of joy swept across the country. We are all very proud of our team's thumping success. Late last month, a thrilling match was witnessed in Hubli, Karnataka. By winning this match, the Jammu and Kashmir cricket team secured the Ranji Trophy for themselves. It is most heartening to note that after a long wait of nearly seven decades, the team achieved its first Ranji Trophy title.

This unprecedented success is the result of years of continuous efforts by the players. Team captain Paras Dogra displayed extraordinary skills. Through his leadership, he played a

significant role in this victory. The performance of young Kashmiri bowler Aaqib Nabi, who took 60 wickets in the Ranji Trophy, is being talked about nationwide. This victory has thrilled the players and coaching staff, as well as the people of Jammu and Kashmir. This impressive performance on the cricket field has further increased the enthusiasm for sports among the youth there. In the future, it will inspire many young people to take up sports. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have a tremendous passion for sports. I am glad that it is now becoming a hub for major sporting events. Gulmarg has already established itself as the host of the Khelo India Winter Games. Sports like football are also very popular among the youth there. I hope this winning



streak of Jammu and Kashmir sports persons continues in the future.

My dear countrymen, I often say, 'The one who plays will blossom.' I am happy to see that our country's youth are now embracing sports that were not as popular before.

Gulveer Singh, a talented athlete from Uttar Pradesh, has done wonders in one such sport. Just a few weeks ago, he created history by finishing third in the New York City Half Marathon. He became the first Indian athlete to complete a half marathon in under an hour. Squash player Anahat Singh, won a major international title in the Squash on Fire Open. She achieved this success at just 17 years of age. With this, she has become the youngest Asian female player to make it to the top-20 in the PSA World Ranking. I also came to

know about the Asmita Athletics League. In this, many sporting events were organised on the occasion of Women's Day on the 8th of March. Around 2 lakh daughters participated in the league. It is good to see that the woman power of India is playing an important role in this sporting transformation taking place in the country.

Friends, I have always urged all of you to certainly pay attention to your fitness. Now less than 100 days are left for International Yoga Day; the attraction towards yoga is also rising continuously all over the world. Almis ji is promoting yoga through his Arvind Yoga Centre in Djibouti, Africa. He also teaches yoga to people in many other places there.

Many of you have commented on Instagram Content Creator Yuvraj Dua's post

pertaining to my reply. He had requested me to ask his father to reduce his sugar intake. I am happy that my request has had a positive impact on his father. I would urge all of you to reduce your sugar intake also... and, as I have said earlier, we also need to cut down on cooking oil by 10 per cent. These small efforts will keep you away from obesity and lifestyle diseases.

My dear countrymen, there is an old saying 'Karat Karat Abhyas Ke, Jadmat Hot Sujan' which means that the more we practice continuously, the more intellect we keep acquiring. People also learn best when there is active participation on their part. I have come to know about a unique initiative related to education in Bengaluru. A team here is running Prayog Institute of Education Research. This team

has a special focus on research projects. This team is engaged in popularising science education at the school level. They have launched an experiment called Anveshan, which provides students from 9th to 12th standard the opportunity to innovate in areas like Chemistry, Earth Science, and Wellness.

This provides students with a very good research experience and a platform to publish their projects.

Friends, during our 'Pareeksha Pe Charcha', some students told me that they wanted to study science but were also intimidated by it. The efforts of the Prayog team in this direction are commendable. This initiative gives students the opportunity to engage with science and demonstrate practical experience. When we



try something firsthand, curiosity and interest are generated. Who knows, perhaps one of these young friends of mine might be a great scientist of the future.

Friends, the Naga community is also making an effort to preserve the past and prepare for the future through education. The people of this community deeply respect their tribal traditions. They are proud of this and simultaneously also maintain a modern approach. The Naga tribes had a traditional system of Morung learning, in which elders would share traditional knowledge, history, and life skills with the youth through their experiences. Over time, this system has evolved into the Morung concept of education. Through this system, interest in children in subjects like mathematics and science is instilled.

In this, elders in the community teach them life skills

through stories, folk songs and traditional games. In this way, our Nagaland is advancing children's education while preserving its cultural heritage. If you learn about such efforts in your area, please share them with me.

My dear countrymen, Summer has begun in many parts of the country, which means it's time to renew our commitment to water conservation. Over the last 11 years, the 'Jal Sanchay Abhiyan' has created a lot of awareness among the people. Under this campaign, nearly 50 lakh Artificial Water Harvesting Structures have been created across the country. I am happy to see that community-level efforts are now underway in every village to address the water crisis. At some places, old ponds are being cleaned; at others, efforts are being made to conserve rainwater. Under the Amrit Sarovar Abhiyan as well, nearly

70,000 Amrit Sarovars have been made across the country. The cleaning of these lakes has also begun before the advent of the rainy season. Today, I would also like to share some inspiring examples with you. These examples demonstrate how widespread water conservation can be with public participation.

Friends, Wangmun village, located in the Jampui Hills of Tripura, is situated at an altitude of 3,000 feet. This village had been facing a severe water crisis. During the summer, villagers would tread long distances for the sake of water. Finally, the villagers decided to conserve every drop of rain.

Today, almost every household in Wangmun village has a rooftop rainwater

harvesting system installed. The village, that was once struggling with water scarcity, has become an inspiring example of water conservation.

Friends, unique initiative was also observed in Korea district of Chhattisgarh. Farmers there worked on a simple yet effective idea. They made small recharge ponds and soak pits in their fields, allowing rainwater to remain in the fields and gradually seep into the ground. Today, more than 1,200 farmers in this area have adopted this model, and the groundwater level of the village has improved significantly.

Similarly, in Mudhigunta village in Telangana's Mancherial district, people have come together to address the water problem. 400 families made soak



pits at their homes and created a mass movement for water conservation. This has improved the village's groundwater level and significantly reduced diseases caused by polluted water.

My dear countrymen, our fishermen brothers and sisters are not just warriors of the sea; they are also a strong foundation of a self-reliant India. Battling the waves of the sea even before dawn, they set out to strengthen their families and the country's economy. The lives of these hardworking fishermen are being made easier in many ways today. Whether it's port development or insurance for fishermen, many such initiatives are proving extremely helpful. We know that weather patterns greatly impact their activities at sea. Keeping this in mind, they are being fully supported through technology.

I am extremely happy that such efforts are not only enriching our fisheries sector; it is also instilling the spirit to innovate. Today, ever new innovations are taking place in the fields of fisheries and seaweed, and our fishermen are becoming self-reliant.

Sujata Bhuyan of Sambalpur, Odisha, was a homemaker, but she wanted to do something new and further help her family. So, a few years ago, she started fish farming in the Hirakud reservoir. The early days were not easy for her. Numerous challenges such as weather changes, arranging food for the fish and balancing household responsibilities were there, but her spirit remained unwavering. Within just two or three years, she transformed her endeavour into a thriving business. Today, her success has become a new ray of hope for

the women of the community.

Friends, the story of Havva Gulzar ji of Minicoy in Lakshadweep brings to the fore the incredible determination of our mothers and sisters. Actually, she used to run a fish processing unit. But she felt she could do even better with a good cold storage facility. Therefore, she decided to set up a cold storage unit. Today, this has become her strength. Now, she is able to do business with better planning.

Friends, such efforts are being undertaken everywhere in the country, which are inspiring. Shivling Satappa Huddar of Belagavi chose a path different from traditional farming. For this, he created a pond farm.

He also received training for this business. Now, he is earning a good income by selling fish from his pond. Whereas, looking at the demand for seaweed,

many people have also adopted seaweed cultivation. They are also getting huge benefits from it. I once again commend all those associated with the fisheries sector. Their efforts to strengthen our economy are highly commendable.

My dear countrymen, when society itself steps forward, even small efforts become the foundation of big change. Many such examples are emerging in different parts of our country which teach us that. Recently, an inspiring effort was witnessed in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. Over 251,000 saplings were planted there in a single hour, setting a new Guinness World Record.

The most remarkable aspect of this effort was the involvement of thousands of people. Students, youth, volunteer organisations, and various institutions all joined together to make this possible.



This same form of public participation is also visible in the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign. Under this campaign, millions of trees have been planted across the country.

Friends, a very inspiring effort has come to fore from Chizami village in Nagaland. The women of Chizami village are collectively preserving over 150 varieties of traditional seeds. These seeds are being preserved in a community seed bank, run by the village women themselves. These include rice, millet, maize, pulses, vegetables, and a variety of herbs. This is an effort that preserves knowledge, keeps traditions alive, and lays a strong foundation for future generations.

Friends, today, when the world is facing challenges like climate change, such efforts show us that solutions are not always far away. Sometimes, our

own traditional knowledge and community efforts offer us the strongest path forward.

My dear countrymen, if you visit any city, big or small, today, you will surely notice a change. You will see solar panels installed on the rooftops of a large number of homes. Until a few years ago, this was only seen on a few homes. But **today, the impact of the "PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana" is being observed in every corner of the country.** This scheme has brought about a profound change in the life of Payal Munjpara of Surendranagar district, Gujarat.

She received training in solar power technology through the Surya Initiative and completed a four-month Solar PV technician course. She has now become a skilled solar technician. Payal is making a name for herself as



a solar entrepreneur. She works on solar rooftop installations in nearby districts, earning thousands of rupees every month.

Friends, Arun Kumar from Meerut has now become an energy provider in his area. Recently, Arun Kumar participated in a programme in Delhi and shared his experiences. He had shared that he is not only saving on his electricity bills but also selling his excess electricity.

Friends, Muralidhar ji from Jaipur has achieved similar success. Earlier, his farming was dependent on a diesel pump, which cost thousands of rupees every year. When he adopted a solar pump, his farming system transformed. Now, he no longer has to worry about fuel; irrigation is timely, and his annual income has also increased. Most importantly, his family is now

living a better life with clean energy.

Friends, the benefits of the 'PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana' are also being obtained in areas of the Northeast. In Tripura, there are many villages of the Riang tribe which faced electricity problems. Now, through solar mini-grids, their homes remain illuminated. Children there are now able to study even after dusk. People are able to charge their mobile phones, and the social life of villages has also changed.

Friends, there are countless such examples of the solar energy revolution in the country. Do join this revolution and connect others too.

My dear countrymen, every month I receive numerous messages from different parts of the country for 'Mann ki Baat'. These messages also reveal how enthusiastically people

in remote areas listen to this programme. When I read your suggestions, I feel that this is not just a programme; it has become a shared dialogue between all of us. Your thoughts, Your experiences inspire us to continuously improve this programme.

Do keep sharing inspiring stories from your surroundings. Maybe a small effort of yours will bring a big change in someone else's life; giving someone new courage to move forward – this very is the true power of radio.

It connects people in different corners of the country with one thought, one feeling, and one

purpose. We'll meet again next month, with some new inspiring personalities; with some such initiatives that will infuse us with new energy to move forward. Until then, take care of yourselves and your families – stay healthy, stay happy. Thank you very much.

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



MANNNKI BAAAT

Special Mentions by Prime Minister



Signatures of Time: Manuscripts

A Digital Map of Indian Heritage



"India's strength lies in its millions of people." These words of Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi have become the foundation of a new nationwide mission to preserve India's great culture and rich heritage. This initiative is called the 'Gyan Bharatam Survey'.

Today, across the country, there exist millions of invaluable manuscripts that carry the knowledge of our ancestors, written on palm leaves, birch bark, copper plates, and paper. Now, through a remarkable blend of modern technology and public participation, these are being digitally preserved via 'Gyan Bharatam App'.

People from every corner of the nation are sharing photographs of manuscripts on this app and collectively creating a 'visual map' of India's knowledge.

How is this initiative bringing together the diverse scripts and ancient knowledge of the entire country onto a single digital platform? Let's take a look at some inspiring examples:

Buddhist Philosophy Being Preserved in the Himalayan Valleys

The ancient Hemis Monastery in Ladakh is a vast and rich treasure trove of Tibetan manuscripts. It preserves knowledge ranging from



Buddhist philosophy to medicine and science, but protecting these from the harsh forces of nature has long been a major challenge.

Assistant Professor Stanzin Mingur from the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies explains this challenge:

"In the Ladakh region, most houses have mud roofs, due to which these ancient documents are gradually getting damaged by rain and moisture. In such a situation, an initiative like 'Gyan Bharatam' is proving to be extremely important for the digitisation and preservation of these valuable heritage materials."

Deputy Secretary Tsewang Paljor of the Art, Culture and Language Academy spoke about its long-term impact:

"These manuscripts contain valuable knowledge on a wide range of subjects. Through the 'Gyan Bharatam' initiative, these priceless treasures will be preserved in digital form, ensuring that this historical

knowledge remains safe and continues to be passed down from generation to generation."

India's History Engraved on Copper Plates

Abhay Jain Granthalaya in Bikaner, Rajasthan has actively participated in this historic survey by sharing details of more than 2 lakhs manuscripts, including extremely rare copper plate inscriptions of great historical significance.





Rishabh Nahata of Abhay Jain Granthalaya explains the importance of technology in managing this vast collection:

"Copper plate inscriptions are invaluable primary sources that provide insights into governance systems, economic structures, and society. Technology is playing a transformative role in preserving these rare manuscripts. It enables systematic data management of over 2 lakh manuscripts and provides easy access to researchers without causing any damage to the original documents."



The Digital Avatar of the rare 'Tai' Script of Northeast India

Chao Nantisindh Lokang from Namsai in Arunachal Pradesh, has taken up the responsibility of preserving rare manuscripts written in the 'Tai' script. This script is truly unique within India's cultural landscape.

Speaking about this initiative and the involvement of the younger generation, he said:

"The Tai language and its manuscripts are extremely precious and rare. It is very important to uncover this knowledge hidden in the boxes of the older generation and digitise it. Today's younger generation has grown up in the technological age and, in such a scenario, the



'Gyan Bharatam' app is the most natural and accessible medium to popularise these ancient scripts and pass them on to future generations."

Scientific Preservation and the Gurmukhi Script

In Amritsar, Punjab, expert Amit Singh Rana is strengthening this national mission at the grassroots level by working on the scientific preservation of historical artefacts and manuscripts in the Gurmukhi script at the Golden Temple, in collaboration with Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee.



Explaining the purpose of his work, he said:

"My primary work is to preserve and conserve manuscripts using scientific methods. The tradition of knowledge that our sages and scholars have documented and passed on to us in the form of manuscripts, our goal is to safeguard it through technology and carry it forward to the future."

Digitising the Past, Building the Future

'Gyan Bharatam Survey' is not just a government initiative; it is a "cultural renaissance" of India. This survey teaches us how modern technology can be used to preserve our centuries-old roots. Every photograph uploaded on the app is becoming a testament to India's commitment to safeguarding its treasure of knowledge. The combined power of public participation and technology is ensuring that these manuscripts, 'signatures of time' become immortal in the digital world.

Young Minds Reimagining India



India is the youngest nation in the world by demographic profile, and the strength of its youth has long been recognised as a cornerstone of national progress. The MY Bharat Budget Quest 2026, organised by Mera Yuva Bharat under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, emerged as a unique initiative that brought the Union Budget closer to the youth of the country, enabling them to understand its priorities and actively contribute ideas for India's development journey.

The first stage of the Budget Quest witnessed over 12,00,000 youth participants from all states and Union Territories. After the quiz, approximately 160,000 participants were selected for the essay competition. The initiative produced more than policy engagement – it was a window into how young Indians, from agrarian heartlands to rapidly growing towns, are thinking about the future of their nation.

Among the themes that resonated most strongly was farmer welfare – a subject that is not merely academic for many participants, but deeply personal.

Kotla Raghuveer Reddy, an agriculture student at Professor



Jayashankar Agriculture University, Telangana, wrote on Government of India initiatives for agricultural development. Concerned deeply about the plight of cotton farmers and the problem of farm suicides, he called for the establishment of agricultural hubs to bring modern technology closer to farmers, advocated the direct supply of organic manure, and highlighted the potential of

drone-assisted cultivation – an innovation he noted has created new avenues of financial empowerment for women farmers.

Saurabh Baiswar from Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, wrote from lived experience, having witnessed in his own family and village the disproportionate gap between a farmer's effort and his earnings: "Our farmer works so hard. However, he is not getting





community-driven model of sustainable agriculture requiring no electricity, serving the dual purposes of flood management and irrigation. His essay reminded readers that the wisdom of the past and the science of the present need not be in conflict.

as much profit as his hard work." His prescription was forward-looking — the introduction of AI-based farming and organisation of agricultural technology camps at the tehsil level. For Saurabh, making agriculture profitable is the only credible way to draw young Indians back to farming.

Sumit Kumar from Gopalganj, Bihar, approached the same theme differently. Writing as both a researcher and a citizen, he drew attention to Bihar's traditional water conservation systems — a

The theme of women-led development was taken up with equal seriousness. Om Prakash Rath, a first-year political science student from H.N.S. Mahavidyalaya, Chandol, Kendrapara, Odisha, brought to his essay the dual lens of academic study and social observation. As a student of governance, his engagement with women's participation in development reflects a broader consciousness among young Indians that inclusive growth is not a policy option — it is a prerequisite for sustainable progress.



Perhaps the most publicly recognised essayist was Pratham Brar from Yamuna Nagar, Haryana, who wrote on Green and Clean India. His essay argued that environmental sustainability and national prosperity are not competing goals but the same goal viewed from different angles — green India leads to prosperous India, and prosperous India is built when every young person is educated, employed, and engaged. He proposed that tree planting become a social norm at auspicious occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries, so that individual celebration becomes collective ecological contribution. On cleanliness, Pratham called on youth to form teams, organise cleanliness drives, and make public hygiene a matter of civic pride: "When every youth will clean his village, his city, then our dream of green India and developed India will be fulfilled."

What is notable about these essays, taken together, is not merely their subject matter but their texture. These are young people writing not from the vantage of detached commentary but from the ground up — from villages in Bihar, fields in Barabanki, and classrooms in Odisha. Their proposals — AI in agriculture, traditional water conservation, tree gifting as cultural practice,



youth-led cleanliness drives — are neither borrowed nor abstract. They are rooted.

The MY Bharat Budget Quest 2026 Grand Finale witnessed the participation of 750 selected youth, who actively engaged with experts and policymakers, reinforcing the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 and showcasing the energy, ideas, and commitment of India's young generation towards nation-building. India's path to 2047 will be shaped by investment, infrastructure, and governance. But as the Budget Quest has demonstrated, it will equally be shaped by the quality of its young citizens' engagement with public life. The essays of Saurabh Baiswar, Sumit Kumar, Om Prakash Rath, and Pratham Brar are not footnotes to that journey, they are early chapters of it.



Dr Mansukh Mandaviya

Union Minister for Labour and Employment;
Youth Affairs and Sports

MY BHARAT

The MODIFIED Vision of
Youth for Viksit Bharat

Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) represents a transformative shift in how a nation engages with its youth. It is rooted in the principle that empowering citizens builds great nations by giving them access to and ownership of nation building. Civilisations advance not merely through policies or institutions, but through the active participation of their people, especially their youth, who carry both the energy of the present and the vision of the future.

This vision is deeply anchored in Bharat's civilisational ethos, where dialogue and collective wisdom have always guided progress. The ancient maxim 'वादे वादे जायते तत्त्वबोधः' reminds us that deeper understanding emerges through continuous dialogue and exchange of ideas. In many ways, MY Bharat reflects this spirit by creating a platform where youth can engage, express, contribute, lead, serve, and volunteer. It also nurtures a sense of seva among young citizens along with a spirit of responsive leadership.

In Bharat, this aligns with the belief that youth power is nation power, where the aspirations of the next generation are connected with national purpose. Today, Bharat stands at a historic demographic moment, with one of the largest youth populations in the world. This includes Gen Z and Millennials aged 15 to 29, who are not just beneficiaries of development but potential architects of the nation's future.

Recognising this immense potential and the need for a unified platform that caters to the aspirations of young people, the idea of MY Bharat was conceived. MY Bharat was launched on 31 October 2023 on National Unity Day as a national platform dedicated to youth engagement and youth led development. It is designed as a next generation phygital platform

that integrates digital and physical engagement through district centres. This creates a seamless environment where young individuals can learn, contribute, grow, and participate in policy making through access to meaningful opportunities.

MY Bharat serves as an umbrella platform and a comprehensive solution for the aspirations of youth. It provides a structured pathway for young citizens to connect directly with the government, participate in national initiatives, and engage in policy making processes. It acts as an effective bridge between governance and citizens, enabling meaningful two-way engagement. In doing so, it contributes to the larger national vision articulated by the Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi of creating one lakh new youth leaders, without any political background, who can actively participate in democratic processes and



nation building.

At its core, MY Bharat functions as a platform for engagement, participation, and capacity building. It is synonymous with learning by doing, offering thousands of experiential learning programs across diverse areas along with a vast number of volunteering opportunities. The platform also encourages peer learning and networking by enabling youth to create credible profiles and document their experiences and contributions.

The success of MY Bharat is reflected in its growing volunteer base, with over 2.15 crore registrations across the country. This scale highlights both its reach and its increasing





acceptance among the youth of Bharat.

One of the defining strengths of MY Bharat lies in its ability to host large participatory initiatives that combine engagement with national purpose. The reimagined National Youth Festival, known as the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue, exemplifies this approach. It provides a platform for youth to present their ideas directly before the Honorable Prime Minister. Through a four step multi-level selection process, ideas are gathered across diverse themes such as sports, women led development, infrastructure, agriculture, and sustainability. From around fifty lakh participants, the process identifies three thousand individuals whose ideas are evaluated by experts and



policymakers before being presented directly before the Prime Minister.

Such initiatives create a vibrant ecosystem where ideas are generated, refined, and aligned with national priorities. While presenting the Union Budget, the Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman acknowledged the importance of youth participation, noting that ideas shared during the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue inspired several proposals, making it a truly youth driven budget.

Building on this vision, MY Bharat Budget Quest 2026 represents another significant step in participatory governance. It aims to increase awareness and encourage informed dialogue around the Union Budget. Structured as a multi stage competition, it began with a national quiz to assess awareness. Successful participants progressed to an essay stage covering nine thematic areas, allowing deeper analysis. In the final stage, selected participants will engage with the national and state stalwarts on the Union Budget,

creating a direct connection between youth and leadership.

The scale of participation in the Budget Quest reflects the enthusiasm of Bharat's youth. Over twelve lakh participants took part in the quiz, and nearly 1.6 lakh advanced to the essay round. More than fifty thousand essays were submitted within just six days, demonstrating remarkable engagement.

Equally significant is the inclusivity of participation. Women accounted for nearly half of the participants, reflecting their growing role in national policy engagement. Representation from every state and Union Territory, along with a mix of sixty per cent urban and forty per cent rural participation, highlights the initiative's broad and inclusive reach.

This level of engagement demonstrates the readiness of yuva shakti to participate in democracy and decision making processes. It reinforces the idea that youth are prepared to take responsibility for shaping a developed Bharat. This enthusiasm was also highlighted in the Prime Minister's 'Mann ki Baat' address, where he appreciated the diversity and depth of ideas shared. Contributions covered areas such as farmer welfare, sustainability, clean energy, entrepreneurship, skill development, and ease of doing business, reflecting both



awareness and a strong sense of responsibility.

In the long term, MY Bharat has the potential to catalyse a true Yuva Bhagidari, where nation building becomes a shared responsibility between citizens and the government. It reinforces the idea that great nations are built not only by governments, but by active participation from their people.

As Bharat progresses towards the vision of Viksit Bharat, the role of youth will remain central. MY Bharat ensures that young citizens are not passive observers but active contributors to this transformation. It equips them with the platforms, opportunities, and confidence required to participate meaningfully in national development.

By channeling the energy, aspirations, and ideas of young citizens into constructive action, MY Bharat is nurturing a generation that is informed, responsible, innovative, and deeply connected to the nation's future. It stands as a powerful instrument in shaping a more inclusive, participative, and forward looking Bharat.



Paras Dogra
Cricketer

FROM CRICKET GLORY TO SPORTING EXCELLENCE

The J&K Success Story

Jammu & Kashmir's Ranji Trophy triumph marks a historic milestone—not only for the team but for the region's sporting journey. For the first time in its cricketing history, J&K has emerged as a formidable force in domestic cricket. This achievement is not just about lifting a trophy; it reflects years of resilience, transformation, and belief finally coming to fruition. The significance of this victory lies in what it represents. For a long time cricket in J&K operated with limited visibility and opportunities. This win has redefined perceptions, placing the region firmly on India's cricketing map. It is a moment of pride for players, administrators, and supporters who stood by the team through challenging times.

The path to success, however, was far from smooth. In earlier years, the team struggled with inadequate infrastructure and limited access to high-quality training facilities. Opportunities to play competitive matches were few, restricting exposure and growth. Players often had to rely on personal determination to progress, with minimal systemic support. Logistical challenges and inconsistent structures further added to the difficulties faced both on and off the field.

A turning point came with renewed administrative focus and vision. The involvement of key figures such as Jay Bhai, along with the appointment of Mithun Bhai and Brigadier Anil Sir, brought structure, discipline, and direction to the setup. Their efforts played a crucial role in strengthening the foundation of cricket in the region. Infrastructure began improving, and players started receiving

the support they needed to perform with confidence.

One of the most significant contributors to J&K's rise has been the consistency of its support system. Over the past four to five years, the team management, coaching staff, and administration have worked cohesively, creating a stable and encouraging environment. This consistency has allowed players to focus entirely on their game. Regular practice matches and participation in prestigious tournaments like the Buchi Babu Invitational have enhanced match readiness, particularly in red-ball cricket.

Equally important has been the discipline and dedication of the players. Their commitment to continuous improvement has translated into strong performances on the field.

The emergence of young and dynamic talent has further strengthened the team. Players like Sunil Kumar, Vanshaj Sharma, Qamran Iqbal and many more have made notable contributions, showcasing skill, temperament, and the ability to perform under pressure. The rise of such players reflects the growing depth of talent in Jammu & Kashmir. Structured talent identification programs and annual talent hunts across age groups have created pathways for young cricketers to showcase their abilities. These initiatives have ensured that emerging players are nurtured and prepared for higher levels of competition, building a strong pipeline for the future.

Beyond cricket, Jammu & Kashmir is steadily evolving into a hub for sporting excellence. The





region is witnessing increased activity in hosting tournaments and developing multi-sport facilities. Improved infrastructure and better organisation of events are attracting attention from across the country, positioning J&K as a promising destination for sports. Infrastructure development has been a key driver of this transformation.

Continuous efforts to build and upgrade stadiums, training centers, and academies have provided athletes with access to modern facilities. Alongside this, policy support and administrative initiatives have strengthened the overall sports ecosystem.

Grassroots development has also played a vital role. By focusing on early identification



and training, authorities have ensured that young athletes receive the right guidance at the right time. School and district-level competitions are becoming more structured, encouraging wider participation and fostering a strong sporting culture.

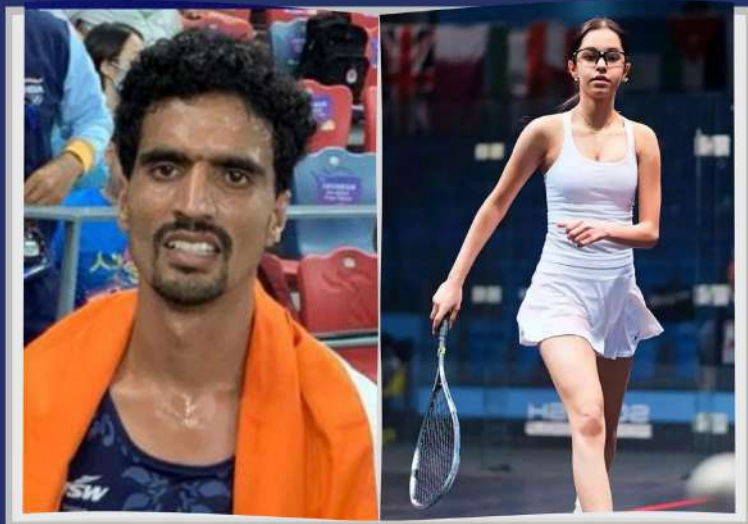
In conclusion, Jammu & Kashmir's Ranji Trophy victory is more than a sporting achievement—it is the story of

a region's transformation. From challenges and limitations to national recognition, the journey reflects vision, perseverance, and collective effort. With continued investment in infrastructure, talent development, and administration, J&K is not just celebrating a moment of glory but building a future of sustained sporting excellence.



THE ONE WHO PLAYS BLOSSOMS

India's sporting culture is witnessing a quiet, yet powerful transformation. Across the country, young athletes are stepping forward with confidence, supported by better opportunities and growing awareness about the importance of sports.



Athletes like Gulveer Singh and Anahat Singh are leading this transformation with their inspiring achievements.

Gulveer Singh has steadily risen in long-distance running.

- Won a bronze medal at the 2023 Asian Games
- Double gold medals at the 2025 Asian Athletics Championships.
- In 2026, finished third at the New York City Half Marathon becoming the first Indian athlete to complete a half marathon in under one hour.



"I started playing both squash and badminton at the same time, but I knew I wanted to take up sports professionally and to do that I had to stick to one of them. Over a period of time, I just started playing a few more squash tournaments and started competing more and practicing more towards squash and it was just something which happened very naturally."

-Anahat Singh



Anahat Singh has established herself as one of India's most promising squash players at the global stage.

- Represented India at the 2022 Commonwealth Games at 14. Won two bronze medals at the 2023 Asian Games.
- In 2025, became India's No. 1 women's squash player
- Won multiple titles at the PSA (Professional Squash Association) Tour.
- In 2026, won the 'Squash on Fire Open' in Washington, her first PSA Bronze-level title, breaking into the top-20 of the PSA World Rankings at 17.



"I grew up in Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh with limited resources but a lot of fire. There were moments I questioned whether I was good enough. But I kept showing up. That has surely made me tough, and that toughness has carried me everywhere."

-Gulveer Singh



Stories Driving India's Sporting Transformation



Supporting this transformation at the grassroots is the ASMITA (Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action) Athletics League, a nationwide initiative to promote women's participation in sports. So far, nearly 3 lakh women have participated across over 2,600 leagues in 33 disciplines. On 8th March (International Women's Day), events were organised across 250 locations nationwide, with nearly 2 lakh girls participating in track events such as 100m, 200m, and 400m races across age categories under-13, 13-18, and 18-plus.





Dr H S Nagaraja

Founder and Chief Mentor
Prayoga Institute of
Education Research

ANVESHANA

**Why Practical Science
is the Future of
Schools**

The year was 2015. A group of like-minded academicians constantly brainstormed over bringing innovation in the learning systems on a broader canvas, and drive policies towards action and get predictable outcomes. India, with its vast and diverse population, needed more research institutions that would change the education landscape. And these strong and constructive discussions took a bigger form when the cohort decided to launch an initiative. That is Prayoga Institute of Education Research. The small steps led to serious research, made strides in the education sector and in a decade, Prayoga has transformed into a niche education research organisation, working in the not-for-profit sector.

With the objective of helping every child in the country learn science experientially, a major research project called Kriya was undertaken. Presently, we have reached out to 112 schools with 11 800 students, spanning the socio-cultural spectrum of the society, experientially learning science through this intervention. This is an experimental study that envisages how competencies in children must be built and the data derived from these projects can help policy makers.

In most educational institutions, learning is based on completely well-defined systems – curriculum, reference books and examination patterns are set, and the students are not exposed to uncertainties. On the contrary, competency for research requires the ability to handle these uncertainties. This can be achieved by introducing students right at the high-school level to scientific research aimed at solving real-world problems. This idea led to the inception of Anveshana – Prayoga's flagship

programme that gained national spotlight through honourable PM Narendra Modi Ji's 'Mann ki Baat'.

Anveshana is a summer research program for students from Grades 9 to 12. In this program, students are selected from across the country based on their curiosity, analytical, reasoning abilities, passion towards science and not on their marks scored in examinations. They work under the guidance of experienced researchers and conduct innovative scientific research projects across 6 different areas, namely, Green Chemistry & Technologies, Wellness, Food & Agriculture, Advanced & Functional Materials, Earth Sciences, and Computational Sciences with sustainability as the guiding principle.

This programme comes with no cost to the students – travel, accommodation, food, and lab-work is borne by Prayoga. It begins with coursework classes in research methodology and





domain knowledge, followed by familiarisation with the labs and instrumentation set-up at Prayoga. Students then work on projects over a period of two months at the Prayoga campus and continue to work from their respective schools for the next three months, culminating in a project defence in August.

A project titled “Nature to Nanotech: Saponin-capped Green Nanoparticles for Environmental and Biomedical Applications”, undertaken during 2024 was the first instance in India where four girl students from rural and tribal backgrounds conducted niche research and published their findings in an internationally peer-reviewed journal. This was one of Anveshana’s most notable success stories among many others.

Several other projects demonstrate how curiosity-driven inquiry leads to meaningful

innovation. A project on “Generating Sustainable Leather Alternatives Using Natural and Eco-friendly Resources” explored a sustainable alternative to animal leather using natural, fibre-rich renewable materials.

Another project focused on the development of nanocomposites for biodegradable piezoelectric devices. These biocompatible and biodegradable composites are expected to exhibit improved sensing capabilities, making them suitable for eco-friendly applications such as biomedical devices.

In the thematic area of life sciences, a project on “Isolation and Screening of Bilirubin Oxidase (BOX)-Producing Microbes from Rotten Wood Samples for Industrial Applications,” was undertaken which demonstrated the potential of UV-induced mutation to enhance BOX production, offering insights into

their industrial applications.

In materials science, an Electromagnetic shielding material project investigated varying amounts of zinc and cobalt in ferrites embedded within a polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) film. This demonstrated the ability to block electromagnetic radiation across specific frequency ranges.

In the past four editions of Anveshana, 37 projects have been completed out of which 11 have been published so far as research articles in internationally peer-reviewed journals, showcasing the depth and diversity of student-led research. The fifth edition of Anveshana has presently begun with participation of 57 students, including a young girl from Ladakh, selected from a group of 900 applicants spanning across 16 states.

Apart from Anveshana, Prayoga undertakes research projects aimed at both advancing scientific knowledge and addressing real-world challenges. Work on engineering nanoparticles has led to the development of superhydrophobic surfaces,

with potential applications in high-altitude and underwater conditions, and trials underway with a defence-focused company. Such efforts reflect a broader vision of creating holistic solutions to pressing challenges. In this manner, Prayoga intends to become an institute of national importance.

Prayoga’s Social Innovation and Partnership Initiatives also include Krida, which aims to enable learning of science and math concepts through sports; Dhatu, which aims to nurture a deep conceptual learning of math, and YUGA, which aims to re-imagine and advance Earth Sciences education and foster planetary stewardship in young learners.

Prayoga is grateful to the Hon’ble Prime Minister for his encouragement by speaking about us in his ‘Mann ki Baat’ address. Our aspiration is to have a few hundred more such institutions across the country that may enable national-building by nurturing young scientific minds. Prayoga would be glad to collaborate with interested individuals and organisations.



The Lively School of Nagaland 'Morung Heritage'



Perched in the high hills of Nagaland, the "Morung" is not merely a structure made of bamboo and wood, but an ancient center of knowledge that has kept the identity of the Naga community alive for centuries. Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 'Mann ki Baat', praised this traditional system and described it as a unique bridge between cultural heritage and modern education.

Confluence of Tradition and Education: The "Morung" is a traditional social institution of the Naga tribes, where young people are given foundational education about their tribe's history, social structure, and customs.

Learning Through Experience: In this system, the elders of the community share their life experiences, teaching the youth traditional knowledge and life skills through stories and folk songs.

Art and Handicrafts: In the Morung, along with intellectual knowledge, practical education is also imparted. This includes teaching skills such as wood carving, bamboo weaving, and making traditional tools.



Symbol of Unity – The "Log Drum": The massive wooden drum placed outside the Morung serves not only as a means of communication but is also regarded as a symbol of unity and collective spirit of the entire village.

Interest in Modern Subjects: With changing times, the Morung has now evolved into the "Morung Concept of Education." Here, traditional stories are used to spark children's interest in subjects like mathematics and science.

Center of Awareness: In modern Morung, discussions are now held on government schemes, health programmes, and important aspects of village development. This helps the younger generation become more aware of their civic responsibilities.

Character Building and Human Values: Earlier, the focus here was on self-defense and warfare skills, but today's Morung emphasises on teaching the youth about human values such as peace, love, and respect for others.

Preservation of Cultural Pride: The Naga community takes pride in its tribal traditions. Through the Morung, they are safeguarding their ancient heritage while preparing future generations.

The "Morung" is a fine example of how we can stay connected to our cultural roots while preparing for the challenges of a modern future. It is a lively classroom that harmonises ancient wisdom with contemporary progress, proudly showcasing the intellectual and cultural depth of Nagaland to the world.

Every Drop Counts

Stories of People-Led Water Conservation across India



To deal with the challenge of water scarcity in the water-stressed regions of the country, in 2019, the Ministry of Jal Shakti launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA). In 2021, Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain (JSA:CTR) with the tagline “Catch the Rain – Where it Falls When it Falls” was launched by the Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The 2025-theme for JSA:CTR was “Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB): Jan Jagrukta Ki Or” with Jan Bhagidari (People’s participation) at its core. Back in 2022, Mission Amrit Sarovar was also launched with an aim to construct and rejuvenate 75 water bodies in each district across the country, thus promoting water conservation, strengthening sustainability, and rejuvenating traditional community water bodies through collective public participation. As a result, over 68000 Amrit Sarovars have been created across the country. What makes these programmes impactful is the way they are being adapted locally.

Rooftop Rainwater Harvesting Structure in Vanghmun, Jampui Hills, Tripura

Vanghmun village in Tripura stands as a remarkable example



of how collective action can turn water scarcity into water security. As informed by the Block Development Officer of Jampui Hills, R.D. Block, North Tripura, Mr Debabrata Roy, Vanghmun village is the only village in the entire Northeastern region with 100 per cent rooftop rainwater harvesting structures. This has



been possible with villagers’ active participation. Before the installation of the harvesting structures, villagers had to walk 4-5 kms to reach the local water bodies to fetch water for their daily use. Women and children suffered the most. But now, the village has become a ‘water-sufficient village’. The BDO shared, “With the help of Vanghmun village committee, we conducted a survey and found that 58 per cent of the houses had a proper rainwater harvesting structure; 22 per cent had no structures at all; and the rest of the houses had poor and weak structures. We ran awareness campaigns with regular meetings with the villagers, and by the end of July 2025 were able to achieve the 100 per cent installations.”



5% Water Soak Pit Model in Korea District, Chhattisgarh

In Korea district, a locally evolved and highly replicable model has emerged as a practical solution to groundwater depletion. This approach encourages farmers to dedicate a small portion (5%) of their land for creating recharge structures that help retain rainwater within their fields. What makes this model particularly effective is its simplicity and zero-cost nature. Built using local materials and



farmers' own labour, these small structures work collectively to improve groundwater recharge. The Collector & District Magistrate of Korea, Chandan Sanjay Tripathi highlights, "Korea district falls under a recharge zone which has a hilly tract. The most problematic thing is that the surface run-off here is very much, which means that rain water can only be retained only if small soak-structures are made. Keeping these factors in mind, farmers thought that if they create small soak pit structures in the fields, it would lead to more water conservation. In this drive, the District Administration supported them." She also shared that till date, around 26000 structures have been built and 300-400 structures are being made every day, resulting in an increase of groundwater level to approximately 5.5 meters in the region.

Telangana's Mudigunta: A Community Approach to Water and Sanitation



In Muhigunta village of Jaipur mandal in Telangana's Mancherial district, water conservation efforts have been closely linked with improving sanitation. The village adopted a community-driven approach, where households collectively implemented simple yet effective measures to manage wastewater and prevent water stagnation by creating small soak pits attached with the houses. All 400 houses in the village have these structures installed. Ravi Kumar, Sarpanch of the village informs, "Earlier, due to water logging on the roads, there was a sanitisation problem in

our village. Diseases like Malaria and Typhoid were spread in the village. It all went away after the construction of soak pits. We conducted an awareness program in the village, as a result of which all 400 families created soak pits. Groundwater level has also risen. Before the construction of soak pits, while digging borewells, water used to come on 70-80 feet, now water comes on 30-40 feet. Thanks to all the officers and villagers."

Jan Bhagidari: The Real Force Behind Change

While government schemes provide direction and support, the real momentum comes from people's participation. Jan Bhagidari has transformed water conservation from a top-down programme into a shared responsibility. Whether it is contributing labour, spreading awareness, or adopting sustainable practices, citizens are at the centre of this movement. This collective effort is also fostering a sense of ownership. When communities take charge of their water resources, the outcomes are more durable and highly transformative.



'Water is life'. This is not merely a statement but is, in fact, the very basis of human existence. Presently with growing heat in many parts of the country, water crisis is also deepening and water conservation has become our collective responsibility. "50 lakh water conservation structures" is India's ambitious and motivating initiative to ensure water conservation. Specially, summer season is a vital period to strengthen our efforts to conserve water. During this time, levels of water resources go down, increasing our dependence on ground water and we also realise the true value of water in human life. That actually is the time when awareness for conserving water must be the guiding factor to translate the idea into reality. For centuries, there has been a tradition of building tanks, stepwells (bawdies), drains and streams. We find a mention of these water structures in our ancient scriptures like Ramayana and Mahabharata also. Historians have described about the kings, queens, saints and nomads who built water tanks for the benefit of the common man. There has been a tradition to undertake cleaning and preservation of these water resources during festivals and fairs.

Comprehensive efforts have been made to address the challenge of conserving water. Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has constantly been stressing on increasing awareness about conserving rain water. 'Water Conservation Campaign' is an important initiative in this direction wherein the objective is to conserve rain water and restore ground water. This campaign was started in the year 2022 with an aim to construct tanks throughout the country and to

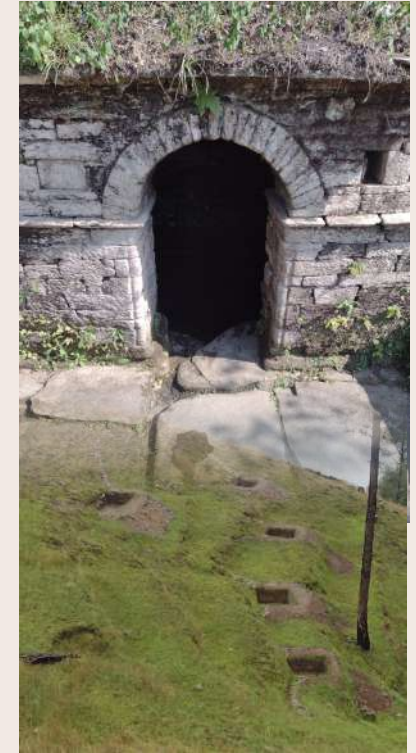


Mohan Chandra Kandpal
Coordinator
'Pani Bowo, Pani Ugao'
Campaign, Recipient,
National Water Award, 2025

India's Super Mission for Water Conservation

rejuvenate them. As of now, more than 68 thousand Amrit Sarovars have been completed to achieve this goal and these sarovars are proving very helpful in rain water conservation. The most important factor behind the success of this mission is public participation. No scheme can produce desired results unless the whole society feels that water conservation is a collective responsibility of every citizen. People in various parts of the country voluntarily undertake are playing an active role to cleanse water tanks to conserve rain water and to rejuvenate the traditional water sources. These collective efforts ensure long term success of these projects.

My personal experience is a testimony to the fact that





big changes become possible only when public participation and local initiatives join hands. Keeping this objective in mind, I started "Pani Bowo, Pani Ugao" campaign in 2012 in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand. My aim was to hold the water on the farm land itself so that the ground water level increases. The main idea behind this campaign is to sow every drop of rain water, considering the same as a seed. Under this campaign, small water tanks are raised on the dry and barren agriculture land to collect rain water. Many water sources in hilly areas which had gone dry got a fresh lease of life through these tiny tanks built on dry farm land. Thousands of such small tanks, called "Khaav" in regional language, have so far been built there. Riskun River had almost dried at one time and had turned into a seasonal river in 2005 but now it has started flowing again. This is the proof

enough of the success of this campaign.

Children, youth and women have equally and actively rendered their support in this campaign. Efforts have been made to organise hikings (pad yatras) and trekkings along with other pilot projects with an aim to connect school children with nearby water structures and smaller rivers. Besides this, thousands of leafy plants have been planted with the help of villagers which actively help in conserving water. Raising of such small forests has helped in raising ground water levels in lower areas significantly.

Considering the importance of "Pani Bowo, Pani Ugao" campaign, the Jal Shakti Ministry of the Government of India gave me the National Jal Puraskar, 2025. Honourable President Smt. Draupadi Murmu

conferred the coveted award. I am very grateful to the Jal Shakti Ministry and to the Government of India for this recognition. This has been a moment of pride for a teacher from the far flung hilly areas who actually attained this success with the help of local villagers.

Let us all adopt the projects of constructing Amrit Sarovars and also follow the efforts to conserve water and take a resolve to sow each drop of water in the soil like a seed. If we consider our soil as a piggy bank and deposit drops of water, we surely will get results. Our villages will become green with plenty of water flowing in our rivers. This resolve of the people will give a new direction to the Amrit Sarovar Yojana and will prove very helpful in making the country self-reliant in water resources.



Warriors of the Sea

Modernising India's Blue Economy



India's relationship with its water resources has always been integral to its economy and culture. Today, that relationship is being reimagined – not merely as a matter of sustenance, but as one of strategic national ambition. Across reservoirs, coasts, and inland waterways, a quiet but consequential transformation is underway, driven by policy, technology, and, increasingly, by individual enterprise.

India is the second-largest aquaculture producing country in the world and among the top fish-exporting nations. The fisheries and aquaculture sector has exhibited strong growth of about 8% per year on average, with aquaculture growing at an annual average of about 11%, accounting for approximately 7.28% of Agricultural GDP. Recognising the sector's transformative potential, the Government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in 2020 – the largest scheme in the history of India's fisheries sector, implemented with a total investment of ₹20,050 crore over five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25. Its ambition was clear: to make the fisheries sector ecologically healthy, economically viable, and socially inclusive. Five years of PMMSY have turned Intent into Impact delivering record

fish production of 195 lakh tonnes, creating 58 lakh livelihoods, and empowering 99,018 women.

Central to this transformation has been the modernisation of production techniques. Technologies such as cage culture, biofloc, recirculatory aquaculture systems, and seaweed cultivation – all actively promoted under PMMSY – are opening new avenues for fishers, entrepreneurs, and fish farmers alike, while reducing post-harvest losses and strengthening value chains from catch to consumer. The scheme's vision extends further: the government aims to enhance aquaculture productivity from 3 to 5 tonnes per hectare, double seafood exports to ₹1 lakh crore, and generate 55 lakh employment opportunities.

It is within this larger national



effort that individual stories of enterprise find their most powerful expression. Sujata Bhuyan of Sambalpur, Odisha, is one such story. A homemaker turned cage culture fish farmer, she first encountered the technique during a family visit to the Hirakud Reservoir in 2022.

"I saw cage culture fish farming for the first time," she recalls. "I became very curious and started observing how it was being done. I realised that such a vast water resource had so much potential." Acting on that moment of recognition, she approached the Fisheries Department, underwent technical training, and launched her own venture with the support of a government subsidy and a bank loan. Early challenges – the unpredictability of reservoir weather, the cost and availability of fish feed – only deepened





her resolve. "Today, I don't see challenges as obstacles," she says. "I see them as opportunities to learn and improve." Her message to other women in Sambalpur is unequivocal: "Don't wait for the perfect moment, just take the first step."

Sujata's journey is emblematic of a broader shift in who participates in the Blue Economy. Hundreds of miles



away, in Belagavi district of Karnataka, Shivaling Stayappa Huddar arrived at fish farming through a different path – years of seeking employment, before deciding to build something of his own. He spent a year and a half taking training and guidelines from experienced farmers across Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Tumakuru, and Mandya before committing to the field. "Classes or guidelines are necessary in any work," he reflects. "While doing business, it should be done in the right way and with good habits." Having identified strong market demand – particularly from Hyderabad – he now runs a sustained fish farming operation, built on knowledge, discipline, and a willingness to learn systematically before acting.

From the remote island of Minicoy in Lakshadweep comes another such story. Havva Gulzar



ran a fish processing unit but recognised that without reliable cold storage, her potential was limited. Under PMMSY, she set up a cold storage facility – a decision that transformed her business entirely. Before it, processing was restricted to fresh fish alone. With cold storage operational, her unit, Minmas, could function daily using stored fish, supply products without interruption, and manufacture value-added Tuna products in a hygienic manner. The cold storage also expanded



employment in Minicoy.

These accounts reflect a defining feature of India's fisheries transformation: it is not being driven from above alone. PMMSY provides financial assistance to fishers, fish farmers, fish workers, fish vendors, Self Help Groups, fisheries cooperatives, and entrepreneurs – widening the circle to include those previously outside the formal economy. The National Fisheries Development Program portal has crossed 2.7 million registrations, enabling access to institutional credit, aquaculture insurance, and performance-linked incentives.

The Blue Economy's modernisation is, at its core, a story about expanding who gets to participate – and on what terms. From Odisha's reservoirs to Karnataka's farmlands and the shores of Lakshadweep, men and women are not waiting to be invited into the future of Indian fisheries. They are building it, one cage, one cold storage unit, and one calculated risk at a time.

Seeds of Change

The Power of Collective Action from Varanasi to Nagaland

In Varanasi, the city set a Guinness World Record by planting 2,51,000 saplings in a single hour, turning a riverbank into a future forest.

In Chizami, a group of women have quietly built a living archive of over 200 traditional seed varieties, ensuring that ancestral knowledge is never lost to a commercial shelf.

Together, these stories reflect that conservation is not the work of governments alone, but of every citizen who chooses to act.



01

2,51,000 Saplings planted in a single campaign

02

60 minutes Time taken to set the World Record (actual completion: 20–25 minutes)

03

350 bighas Total area covered

04

400 sprinklers + 50 rain guns
Continuously irrigating the plantation

05

3 large ponds Developed for water conservation

06

2,000 recharge pits Under construction to raise the water table

Kashi's Green Wall: A World Record in 60 Minutes



58



59

On 1 March 2026, the banks of the Ganga in Varanasi made history. In a single hour, 2,51,000 saplings were planted across 350 bighas of land – breaking China's previous world record and earning a mention from the Prime Minister in 'Mann ki Baat'.

Here, in their own words, are the people who made it happen.



"CRPF, Municipal Corporation, Police Department, local bodies, tree lovers, environment-loving organisations, people of the village and students – we planted on the theme of 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' and a world record was made by planting 2 lakh 51 thousand saplings within 60 minutes. This was also mentioned by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in 'Mann ki Baat'."

~Commandant R.S. Balapurkar 95 Battalion, CRPF, Varanasi



"In just 20 to 25 minutes, the entire plantation programme was completed. The entire area of 350 bighas was divided into 60 sectors – each given to a different institution. Now it is our responsibility to protect that area. About 400 sprinklers and 50 rain guns are continuously irrigating the plants. This green area will act as a green wall – the first developed forest inside your city, working as the lungs of Kashi and an oxygen bank. About ₹7 crore per year will be the income of the Municipal Corporation from its fruits, and ₹3 to 4 crore per year from carbon credits."

~Himanshu Nagpal Municipal Commissioner, Varanasi



"I have taken a pledge to make the banks of Ganga green in Uttar Pradesh. We went to schools, colleges, CRPF and NDRF a month ago and trained everyone on how to plant saplings. That's why the work was done so well."

~Anil Kumar Singh Brand Ambassador, Ganga Haritama Abhiyan



Guardians of the Seed: Chizami's Living Archive

In the misty hills of Phek District, Nagaland, the women of Chizami village are quietly safeguarding something irreplaceable — their ancestors' seeds.

The Chizami Women's Society runs a Community Seed Bank that today holds over 200 traditional varieties, built on a simple but powerful conviction: that no community should ever have to buy back what it once grew freely.



150+ Varieties documented at the time of founding

200+ Traditional seed varieties preserved

1 community Seed Bank serving farmers across Nagaland and beyond

2x Seeds returned for every quantity borrowed (the repayment rule)





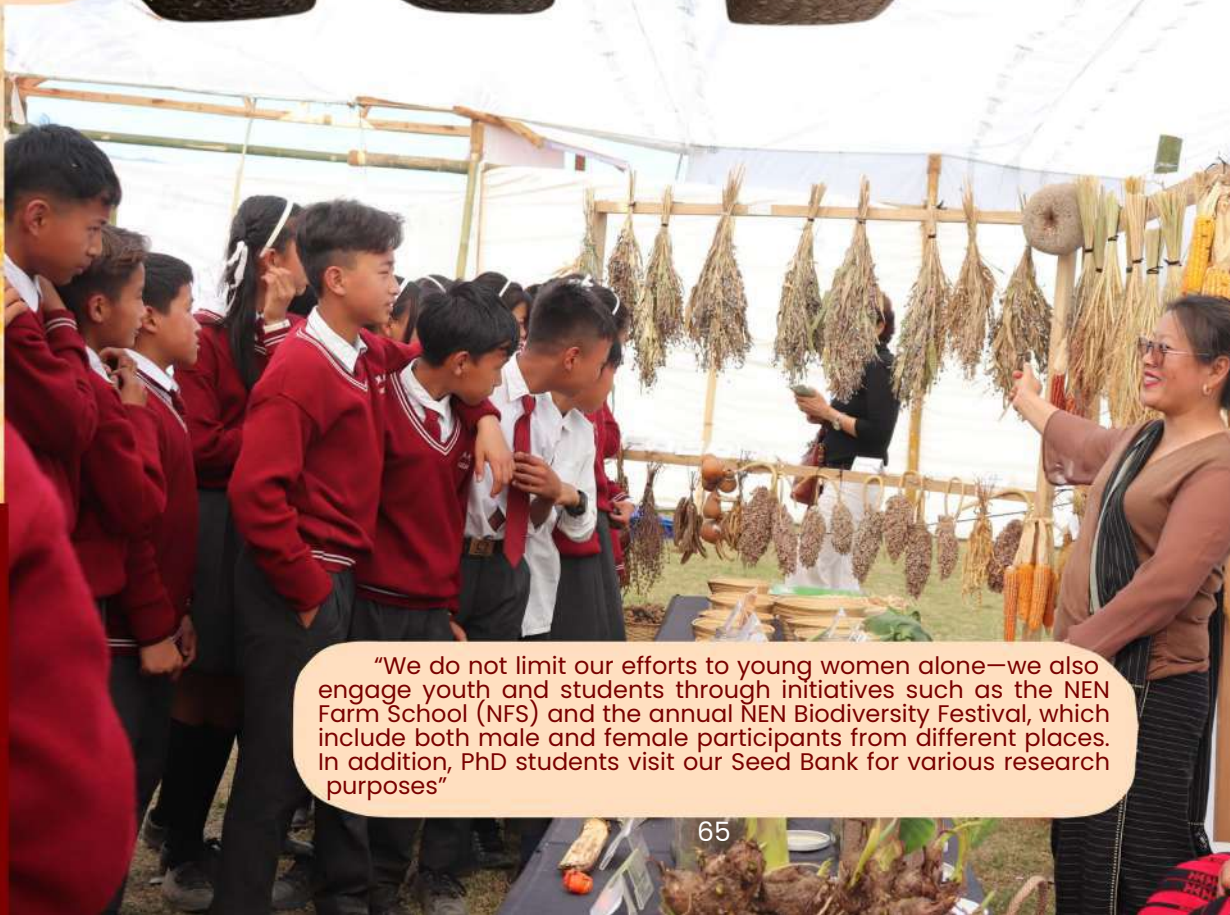
"When we heard news from other states about people having to buy seeds from shops due to the complete loss of their traditional varieties, we realised the risk of losing our own seeds. Before such a situation could arise, we took the initiative to collect and conserve them."
 "Indigenous seeds are naturally adapted to local conditions and are more resilient to environmental stress. Traditional maize seeds last longer, are tastier, and have a good aroma. Commercial maize typically lasts only 2-3 months, as it is often damaged by maize worms."

-Kezunypeu Tsuhah Chairperson, Chizami Women's Society



On how the bank sustains itself:

"We followed a "borrow and return" system...If a farmer takes 100g of paddy, he or she returns double – 200g – selecting the best quality and mature seeds. This borrow and return system benefits both the farmer and the Seed Bank."



"We do not limit our efforts to young women alone—we also engage youth and students through initiatives such as the NEN Farm School (NFS) and the annual NEN Biodiversity Festival, which include both male and female participants from different places. In addition, PhD students visit our Seed Bank for various research purposes"

Solar Energy Revolution

New Voices of India Transitioning From Consumer to Entrepreneur



Today, the appearance of rooftops across India's cities and villages is changing. Where there once only empty terraces, now blue and black solar panels are converting sunlight into electricity. Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in 'Mann ki Baat' called this transformation a "revolution." The 'PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana' is not just a means to reduce electricity bills; it has become a massive movement to turn ordinary citizens into 'energy providers' and 'skilled entrepreneurs.' This is the story of those technicians and entrepreneurs who have made sunlight the foundation of their livelihood and identity.

Payal Munjpara: From the paths of fields to the heights of rooftops

The story of Payal Munjpara from Surendranagar district of Gujarat is a vivid example of how the right training can transform a person's life. There was a time when Payal worked in the fields, but a three-month training programme as a "Solar PV Technician-cum-Helper" showed her a new path. Today, Payal has established herself as a skilled solar technician and entrepreneur. Sharing her experiences of struggle and success, Payal says:

"If we hadn't joined the service organisation and received this training, we would still be working in the fields today. Because of this training, we have come so far. In the beginning, when we went to install solar panels, people didn't even believe that girls could do such work! Once, a woman even refused to let us enter her house. But when she saw us operating a hammer drill and installing panels, she was amazed."

Today, Payal and her group have installed solar systems at around 150 sites. She feels deeply proud of being mentioned by the Prime Minister in 'Mann ki Baat'. She also shares that her father, who is an electrician himself, has been her greatest support.

SEWA Organisation: A Confluence of Women's Power and Solar Power

Behind the training of



thousands of women like Payal, organisations such as SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) have played a major role. Hina, Vice President of SEWA, explains that the organisation's goal is to make women in the unorganised sector self-reliant. Especially for women working in Surendranagar and the Rann





of Kutch, they have envisioned the 'Shakti Solar Park.' Speaking about this unique initiative, Hina tells:

"This 2.7-megawatt 'Shanti Solar Park' will be the first of its kind in the world, where our women themselves will be the owners and managers, and the income generated from electricity production will be shared among them. So far, we have trained 1,250 women as Solar PV technicians. We want thousands of women like Payal to become entrepreneurs and stand on their own feet."

Hina believes that the changing environment and the growing adoption of solar energy have brought a new ray of hope for these women, ensuring that they no longer have to feel helpless or dependent on anyone.

Arun Kumar: An Ordinary Farmer from Meerut Turned 'Energy Provider'

The solar energy revolution is not limited to technical jobs alone; it is also creating a path to financial freedom for middle-

class families. Arun Kumar, a resident of Sardhana tehsil in Meerut, is a small farmer. Once troubled by monthly electricity bills of ₹2,500 to ₹3,000, Arun is now known in his area as an 'energy provider.'

Speaking about his transformative journey, Arun Kumar says:

"My wife is a teacher. With her support, I adopted the 'Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana,' and now my electricity bill has come down to zero. With these savings, we are able to easily manage other household expenses. I am also selling my surplus electricity now. So far, I have received files from more than 50 people who want to join this scheme. It feels very good to see that people listen to me and trust me."

Today, Arun has become a strong advocate of clean energy in his area. He explains how solar panels have freed him from the burden of heavy electricity bills and empowered him as a self-reliant citizen.



'Solar Light' in the Hills of Tripura: A New Dawn for the Reang Tribe

This revolution is not limited to the plains; it has reached the remote hills of the Northeast as well. In Tripura, where it was difficult to extend grid power due to geographical challenges, solar micro-grids have pierced the darkness and brought new light.

Debabrata Sukla Das, Director General of TRENDA (Tripura Renewable Energy Development Association), explains the significance of this project:

"Providing electricity to the hilly regions of Tripura was economically challenging. Under the PM-DevINE scheme, we installed a 15kW solar micro-grid in Khabasyakami village, which is now supplying continuous electricity to 45 families. Earlier, children could not study at night and artisans involved with bamboo handicrafts too were

unable to work at night. Now, with solar power, their lives have become easier and healthier than before. We are striving to illuminate every corner of Tripura in the same way."

Towards a Self-Reliant and Green Future

This story is not just about machines or solar panels, but about the dreams that have been given wings through technology and the right training. The unwavering courage of Payal Munjpara, the collective resolve of the SEWA organisation under Hina's guidance, and Arun Kumar's new identity as a conscious energy provider, they all stand as living proof of how the 'PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana' is paving the way for transforming ordinary citizens into empowered entrepreneurs.

In the Prime Minister's own words, this solar revolution is now crossing boundaries and topography, spreading its light to the farthest corners of the country. From Jaipur, where Mr Murlidhar's farming is reaching new heights with the support of solar pumps and has become free from diesel expenses, to the remote villages of the Reang tribe in Tripura, where solar mini-grids have opened new opportunities for children to study even after sunset— this transformation is remarkable. This confluence of technology, training, and public participation is laying a strong foundation for a modern, self-reliant, and green India through hard work, trust, and prosperity.





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I would urge all of you to reduce your sugar intake also... and as I have said earlier, we also need to cut down on cooking oil by 10 percent.

There are countless such examples of the solar energy revolution in the country. Do join this revolution and connect others too.

I would also appeal to all citizens to remain vigilant and not be misled by rumours.



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I am happy to see that community-level efforts are now underway in every village to address the water crisis. At some places, old ponds are being cleaned; at others, efforts are being made to conserve rainwater.

– Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi



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