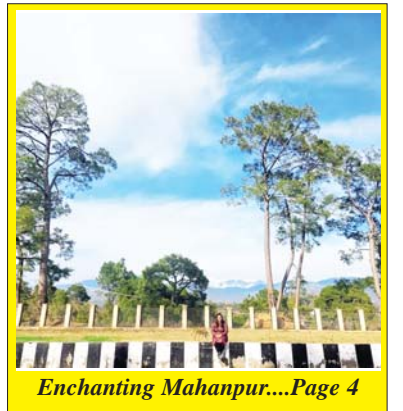


Ram Mandir Kaikooth ... Page 3



Enchanting Mahanpur....Page 4

F. Sheheryar

In an 1895 article "Brunch: A Plea" in Hunter's Weekly, British author Guy Beringer defines 'Sunday brunch' as "cheerful, sociable and talk-compelling. It puts you in a good temper, it makes you satisfied with yourself and your fellow beings, and it sweeps away the worries and cobwebs of the week."

We had watched the man speak in a high-octane election campaign for months in 2014. We also saw how he pulled crowds from across geographical entities of India which was ample indication for us at All India Radio (AIR) that here was a broadcaster worth his salt.

On 20 May 2014, as he bowed and touched his forehead on the steps of the entrance to Parliament House as the BJP's Prime Minister-designate, we saw a person risen from the ranks and attaining heights in a big and complex democracy proudly calling himself a 'sevak' rather than a 'ruler'. It occurred to us that he could (what in broadcasting parlance is called) "make good radio" as broadcasters like us, primarily for public service broadcasting, search for nothing but a captive audience.

Dynamic changes have taken place at a dizzy pace on the audio-visual landscape. While these changes are by and large technology-driven and global in their sweep, one revolutionary change occurred nearer home in India when the Prime Minister, for the first time in the history of Indian broadcasting, gave the nod to the nation's public service broadcaster, for Mann Ki Baat, his informal, intimate exchange of ideas and thoughts with his fellow countrymen. Today as the 100th episode of Mann Ki Baat draws near, it is time to look back at the unique monthly radio address which started in October 2014 and has had a memorable run. It began as a curious communication phenomenon where a leading, tech-savvy politician indulges, ironically, in a strictly apolitical conversation on a seemingly obsolete medium.

It is tempting to ask "In today's world, why did the Prime Minister choose radio?" The reasons are not far to seek. Radio is an intimate, story-telling medium. There cannot be a more potent instrument than radio for such a candid, /warm/intimate uninhibited exchange of ideas between the country's Prime Minister and his people. And AIR's reach is stupendous, with about 600 channels carrying the programme. As broadcast followed broadcast, attracting applause not only at home but abroad, we saw BBC and NPR chasing me to permit dissemination in those parts of the world where most other modes of broadcasting are second to radio.

Many world leaders have realised the power of radio - Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt (with his popular radio addresses called Fireside Chats) and successive Presidents of the United States of America. The erstwhile US President Barack Obama was more than happy to partner our Prime Minister in this special broadcast when he touched down in India for Republic Day 2015. This special edition in which the



MANN KI BAAT @100 The man the message and the medium



The Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with the author and the team members of All India Radio

Indian Prime Minister and the US President talk about their humble beginnings and their concern for people especially the youth had an indelible impact. Both emphasized on youth

power saying "Communists used to say earlier, 'workers of the world unite.' I think today it should be youth -- unite the world". This gave a new fillip to the country's youth, prompting them to

come forward to partner the Government in the task of nation-building. This was also America's tribute to the people's Prime Minister in India.

Mann Ki Baat, far above the terrestrial transmission, reached Indian and global audiences alike through live streaming supported by AIR's official mobile app - 'All India Radio LIVE'; through megaphones in Panchayats as a narrowcast for a clustered audience through Direct to Home (DTH) devices. And most recently, through Amazon's Echo Dot where Alexa takes command and you get the AIR service of your choice.

Most of all, Indians in different parts of India, speaking regional languages, and those that form the Indian Diaspora and those too who are not Indians at all but have deep interest in Indian affairs all get versions of Mann Ki Baat in their language including English and Sanskrit.

That has made Mann Ki Baat the most widely disseminated radio broadcast in the world, making it an example of what is best in public service broadcasting. Every time I travelled abroad in the last four years, many professionals in the Asia Pacific region and European Broadcasting Union echoed my view that radio in a democracy needs to cement different segments of audiences which can hardly be done unless the Chief Executive of the country knocks at their doors every last Sunday of the month at 11 am. And wanting any and all among his audience to send in their views, so that he replies and wherever possible, remedies. The idea of Mann Ki Baat attracted commercial radio and radio and television news in private sector and it is broadcast not merely for its intrinsic news value but also for it bringing a healing touch to those sections lacking access to counselling and redressal. Mann Ki Baat is unique in many respects. First, it is an unexpurgated broadcast - spontaneous, candid, uninhibited and straight from the heart - from the Prime Minister. Secondly, it is digitally created spoken word disseminated through terrestrial mode, DTH and internet platforms. Thirdly, the programme is designed to invoke reciprocity, leading to a deluge of letters and feedback on the MyGov portal from people sharing their trials, tribulations, concerns and aspirations with their Prime Minister. Yet another feature is crowd sourcing to elicit suggestions and inputs for subsequent episodes in a self-effacing gesture by the Prime Minister.

A rewind to some of the milestones: In December 2014, the Modi government had launched 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', a programme aimed at bringing about a societal transformation in the way the girl child is treated, with a special focus upon more than a 100 gender-sensitive districts which had a skewed sex ratio. A few months later, a sarpanch clicked a selfie with his daughter in a Haryana village. By itself, this would have meant little more than a happy moment for the father-daughter duo. Little did they know that they would end up creating a world-wide trend. Taking a cue from the Haryana village sarpanch, the Prime Minister spoke about BetiBachao and appealed to people to put up a #SelfieWithDaughter on social media and tell everyone how proud they were of their daughters. There was such tremendous positivity generated by this worldwide trend that each picture of a daughter basking in the love of her proud parents was a sight to behold. Commoners, cricketers, celebrities, international diplomats, politicians, media persons and even people from other countries from all walks of life tweeted and posted their #SelfieWithDaughter.

The atmosphere of love and pride it created was lauded universally, not only by people from across the world but also by at least one politician from the Congress. In a single stroke, the constant negativity around a sensitive but important matter had been turned into a positive, 'can do' atmosphere that resonated with the message that nothing is more precious than a daughter. Mann Ki Baat and Swachh Bharat are connected in more ways than one. For starters, while Swachh Bharat was launched on October 2nd 2014, the first episode of Mann Ki Baat went on air on October 3rd 2014, the very next day. The next connection is that Mann Ki Baat, for the Prime Minister, has been one of the important platforms in strengthening the cleanliness mission and making it a more people-driven movement.

(The author is former Director General of All India Radio, President of the Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development & Member, Prasar Bharati Board.)

A summer vacations lesson for students

Col Shiv Choudhary (Retd)

Summer vacations are an essential part of a student's academic life. They are the perfect opportunity for students to take a break from their daily routine and engage in activities that they had no time. However, how do the students make best use of summer vacations has always been debatable. Some argue that students should use the time to relax and recharge their batteries, while others believe that they should use the time to prepare for the new classes, learn new skills, volunteer, or pursue their interests.

One of the most obvious benefits of summer vacation is the opportunity it provides for students to rest and relax. During the school year, students have to follow a strict routine that includes waking up early, attending classes, completing homework, and studying for exams. This can be stressful and exhausting, and summer vacation offers a much-needed break from this routine. It allows students to sleep, take naps, and spend time doing things they enjoy without worrying about academic commitments, evaluation and results.

One of the best uses of summer vacations by students is to engage in activities that promote personal growth and development. Learning a new skill or pursuing a hobby, taking up a short certificate or a diploma course, attending few workshops or seminars, and enjoying or pursuing creative abilities or act of design and design thinking are worth giving a thought to.

Students can use summer vacations by volunteering or standing for a cause which they are passionate about and could not during regular classes. Pursuing such interests not only helps students give back to their community but also helps them develop valuable skills such as teamwork, communication, cooperation, collaboration and leadership. There are plenty of volunteering opportunities available during the summer, holidays including working for needy juniors, local populace, socially, mentally and financially challenged and stressed out people within your easy reach. A clear focus in this approach will be more impactful rather enlarging your sight seeking dimmed space.

Exploring by using new interests is equally satisfying and rewarding during summer holidays. This could involve traveling to new places, attending cultural events or festivals, or simply reading books on new topics. This way, students can gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. Pursuing numerous interests and keenness to engage in activities that provide broader insight of what is normally not part of regular school curriculum is undoubtedly great for multiple benefits.

It is equally important for students to plan some time to relax and recharge. After a long and stressful academic year, students need time to unwind and rejuvenate. This could



involve spending time with friends and family, calling on some teachers, engaging in anything constructive and productive, writing and taking a break from intrusive and intimidating technology and social media. One must never ever lose sight of time management, a precious source for much higher returns later in life.

Students would understand that they may pursue any passion and dream for the duration of summer vacations or otherwise, but that would be incomplete without setting goals for themselves. This could involve creating a list of activities they want to do, setting a budget in consultation, or creating a schedule for their days off. By setting smart goals and sticking to their achievements, students can stay focused and motivated throughout the summer.

There is a common tendency amongst students and at times grown up professional too to switch off from all activities and routines including health care. Staying active and maintaining healthy lifestyle, daily exercise, walk and playing sports must not be pushed on to the back seat. This could lead to serious health issues thereby disturbing studies and forcing long absence. It is of paramount importance that one continues to engage in physical activities, swimming, hiking, or playing sports, or simply eating a healthy and balanced diet. This will ensure good mental and physi-

cal health, and well-being.

Summer vacation also offers students the chance to explore and discover new things. Students can use this time to pursue their interests, learn new skills, and broaden their horizons. This can include attending summer camps, traveling, or taking up a new hobby. These experiences can help students develop new perspectives, gain confidence, and discover new passions.

These vacations can also help students develop their social skills. They have more time to interact with their peers and family members, which can help them improve their mutual understanding, communication skills, develop empathy, and learn to work in teams. This way they can develop positive relationships with their peers and family members, and also prepare them for the social demands of adulthood.

How much could possibly be lost in a summer? A research indicates 2 months of reading skills and 2 1/2 months of math skills are lost over a single summer during summer slide in certain countries. Plus, summer slide is cumulative, so those lost months add up over time. Combined over the years, by the time a student reaches middle school, they've lost the equivalent of 2 years of learning

to summer slide. And the loss is greater at higher grade levels. Only 48% of parents (with children ages 6-17) have heard of summer slide, while just 38% of lower-income parents have heard of it. Only 9.2% of students attend a summer learning programming to combat summer slide. According to estimates, it costs the USA educational system more than \$1,500 per student to reteach materials. Over the course of a K-12 education, that can equate to more than \$18,000 per student.

Summer vacation may seem like a time to take a break from academics, but it should actually help students improve their academic performance. Students can use this time to review and reinforce what they learn during the school year, read books, and participate in educational activities. This can help prevent going blank with prescribed syllabus which is the tendency for students to lose some of the academic gains made during the school year. By staying intellectually engaged during the summer, students can improve their academic performance and be better prepared for the next year.

Participation in a specialized high school program, taking a college class, finding some summer programme, getting involved in research work, creating own project, taking a free online course, get a job, may become an entrepreneur, volunteer in your community, applying for internships, finding a job-shadowing opportunity, starting your SAT or ACT test prep, online prep course, test preparation, making college visits, use your imagination, should be given a serious thought too.

Summer vacation also offers an opportunity for students to reduce stress and burnout. By taking a break from the academic routine, students can rest, recharge, refit and return to school with renewed energy and enthusiasm. This can help prevent burnout, boredom and fatigue, which can have a positive impact on academic performance and overall well-being.

Students must restart their routines to make a head start. About two weeks before school starts, all must get into full mood, make bed time earlier, dust off the clock, relook at the study table and eating at the school timings. All will need to look at the time management, social reduction, revisiting the syllabus and homework, do up uniforms, replace certain foot wares and clothes and feel fresh. May also require to discuss goal setting and skills needed. There are many ways for students to make the best use of their summer vacation. Whether it's learning a new skill, volunteering, pursuing their interests, or simply relaxing and recharging, students should use their summer vacation as an opportunity for personal learning, preparing for the new challenges, planning and consultation, and overall growth and development. By setting goals, staying active and healthy, and exploring their interests, students can make the most of this time and prepare themselves for better future and anticipated competitive examinations. In life success, each moment counts.