

Aahaar Kranti

UTTAM AAHAAR, UTTAM VICHAAR

AAHAAR KRANTI

The Journey Begins

Glimpses of the inaugural function
and the panel discussion



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EDITORIAL

Aahaar Kranti New Revolution on the Horizon

Nakul Parashar

Our glorious past has witnessed two major revolutions --- first, the green revolution and then the white revolution. Both have left behind an indelible mark on Indian populace. Then very low on the international scale, these revolutions helped us to rise high to produce more than our consumption. Kudos to our scientists and farmers who worked together and rose to the call!

Years after the successful launch and culmination of these two revolutions, scientists, nutritionists, and dieticians have come to realize that, despite high crop yield, we are yet to meet the actual dietary requirements. Malnutrition still exists. It is a serious issue that needs immediate attention. A group of senior scientists of the Global Indian Scientist and Technocrats (GIST) Forum have come forward to launch a revolution in this regard. Aahaar Kranti was formally launched on 13 April 2021, when a number of Indians celebrated their new years. Logo, website, newsletter, and with a panel discussion with world-known celebrities, Aahaar Kranti was launched successfully.

For any revolution of such a mammoth scale, it is important that its planning and execution are very well thought of in advance. Thus, a three-phase implementation was put forth. It is most important to create awareness in the masses or the end users at the very outset. Thereafter, once the basic understanding about Aahaar Kranti is communicated to the masses, roping in other stakeholders to meet the aims of the revolution would be the next step. Once the tipping point of general awareness is reached, creating techniques to improve nutrition and establishing the balance in the diet and nutrition of the citizens of the country would become the second step to implement.

As with the earlier ones, the implementation strategy continues to involve agricultural scientists and farmers. This is where the revolution enters its next phase of well-planned production of crops that would deliver balanced diet and nutrition. Regular workshops would be organised where subject matter experts would discuss the importance of required research & development and its extension or outreach have to be planned.

I hope that this revolution would turn out to be a humongous one, benefiting the entire country. Finally, malnutrition has to go!

Meanwhile, COVID-19 has suddenly taken an ugly turn in the country. While prevention is better than cure, breathing exercises like prona breathing may be strong alternatives to provide immediate relief. We wish you all stay safe and stay happy. ■



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Aahaar Kranti The Journey Begins

On 13 April, 2021 Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Dr Harsh Vardhan launched Aahaar Kranti, a mission dedicated to spreading awareness about nutrition and to understand the importance of economically accessible, local fruits and vegetables in India. The virtual ceremony was attended by eminent personalities from across the world including Prof Sudhir Singh Bhadauria, Secretary General of Vijnana Bharati; Dr Sekhar C Mande, DG, CSIR; Dr Srinivasa Rao, Entrepreneur; Ambassador Gyaneshwar Mulay, Chairman of PRABHASS; Dr Yelloji Rao Mirajkar, Convener, GIST USA; Dr Tanuja Nesari, Director, AIIA; Mr Praful Krishna, a Silicon Valley Executive in AI; Dr Vijay Bhatkar, President, Vijnana Bharati and internationally acknowledged scientist and IT leader; Shri Jayant Sahasrabudhe, National Organising Secretary of Vijnana Bharati, and Dr Nakul Parashar, Director, Vigyan Prasar.

The launch event received 88,300 impressions through Aahaar Kranti social media channels, not counting

the multi-fold impact with GIST, Vijnana Bharati and Vigyan Prasar's social media. More than 13,200 viewers watched the event live or near live. The event led to more than 1,100 registrations, about 400 of which are in the form of an Aahaar Mitra - an active volunteer for the Kranti. It had extensive coverage by English and Hindi print media.

Background of GIST

In his welcoming address Dr Mirajkar informed how GIST, PRABHASS, Vijnana Bharati and other organisations, and diaspora of scientists and technologists residing outside India came together so that their shared expertise and experience can be constructively used to strengthen the Aahaar Kranti Mission. He explained that GIST (Global Indian Scientists and Technocrats) Forum an initiative of Vijnana Bharati. The idea is to connect the scientific and technologist diaspora residing outside India to the economic progress of the country and identify challenges and opportunities to strengthen it. The solutions should reach the population and make them self-reliant. Experts, scientists

and technocrats, academicians, institutions, entrepreneurs, philanthropists attached with the GIST are expected to come forward and collaborate with NGOs, subject matter experts, academics, research and government agencies and individuals to make a comprehensive body. In totality, it would be complementing and supplementing efforts in terms of talent and time. Their expertise, achievements and experience can be collectively used in India to replicate their journey, success, and impact. The experts from the domains of education, nutrition, agriculture sustainability, technology implementation, etc. can come together for the Aahaar Kranti Mission to make it impactful. GIST has presence in the US, UK, Qatar, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Resources from all these places can be brought in to make Aahaar Kranti successful and impactful.

Background of PRABHASS

Ambassador Mulay in his address explained the functioning of PRABHASS (Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark)



and how the motto of Aahaar Kranti can be implemented at the ground level with the inputs from GIST members and VIBHA. He informed that CSIR developed this virtual platform called PRABHASS portal to connect with the global Indian Science and Technology diaspora for jointly addressing societal challenges and public problems. The portal has been facilitating topical mapping, knowledge sharing and building collaboration among institutes and individuals. The portal also provides opportunities to post information on individual experts, scientific challenges to be addressed and solutions to these challenges. Within four months of its existence, PRABHASS has a data base of over 6000 S&T diaspora members from 47 countries and around 300 registered diaspora and India-based S&T professionals for collaborating and working towards this mission. It has presence of 50 societal challenges, 10 national programmes, and public projects inviting participation from registered experts. It has categorised 266 Indian R&D institutions in 20 specific areas or public domains aligned to national missions. The motto of PRABHASS closely matches that of GIST and its initiative, Aahaar Kranti. Further, as a member of the Human Rights Commission, he explained how the Right to Food can be aligned with Aahaar Kranti's functioning. He stressed on the need of coordination and development of a well-functioning model so that supply and demand are

properly adjusted, and the hunger problem is completely eradicated from the country.

Aahaar Kranti as a Revolution

Dr Srinivasa K Rao in his address mentioned how 1960s Green Revolution was needed to solve the hunger and malnutrition problem of a newly independent nation. Likewise, the White Revolution in 1970s made the country a global leader in milk production. As this trend of social revolution continues India is producing more than twice the calories needed for its over 1.3 billion population. However, India is still at a life expectancy of less than 70 years. Our healthcare burden has remained significantly high mainly because of our highly imbalanced, starch-heavy diet. India has greatly reduced communicable diseases and infections, but the lifestyle diseases have doubled since 1990s. This creates enormous economic burden as well. The estimate shows that by 2030 it will be creating more than \$450 billion economic loss; 17.9 million years of productivity loss and the poverty may go above 20%. The solution is to introduce diversity in

crop production and in food consumption and increase in awareness about both. That is the main goal of Aahaar Kranti. It hopes that the



agricultural domain meets all the required production properly so that a good balanced diet can be designed for the Indian population. He also mentioned that they have a database of 10,000 edible plants of which they are focusing now on 200 crops to increase the micronutrient requirements in the diet. Aahaar Kranti hopes to reduce malnutrition and increase life expectancy, increase cognitive and academic performance, have nutritious crops, meet all domestic needs and be ready for exports.

Good Food – Good Cognition

Prof Sudhir Singh Bhadauria who is working as the Professor and Head, Dept. of Civil Engineering, Rajiv Gandhi Technological University, in his message emphasised on the importance of consuming local fruits and vegetables and a balanced diet so that good food leads to good cognition, *uttam aahar se uttam vichaar*.

Food and our Cultural Diversity

Dr Vijay Bhatkar ji expressed his pleasure to be part of a 'delicious'



discussion on food as it also an especially important part of our culture. He also emphasised on the aspect of diversity on every part of our culture. Just like the languages we speak, our food is also diversified, and every festival is celebrated with a different kind of food. He then emphasised on the scientific aspect of food that has been highlighted by VIBHA while planning Aahaar Kranti as a vehicle of delivering awareness of balanced and nutritious diet to people. He also talked about the traditional wisdom that has been handed down by our rishis as they knew how the food impacts and shapes the vichaar we develop. They classified foods as Saatvik, Rajasik and Tamasik. He stressed on the importance of food in treating lifestyle diseases like diabetes and expressed his hope to have solutions with the help of the Aahaar Kranti.

Aahaar Kranti: The Framework

Dr Nakul Parashar, Director, Vigyan Prasar explained how it has been planned to take Aahaar Kranti to the people of the country.

It will be extended as a mass movement. In its second phase the aim will be to inform people on the importance of balanced diet and nutrition. It is now time to improve agricultural processes with the help of IoT and AI-based technologies and introduction of Precision Engineering. All these need to be planned and efforts should be placed for its inclusion in mainstream studies to develop mass awareness among people. With the help of Instructional Design, easy-to-understand material must be developed. The material should be popularised with the help of Print, Electronic and Social Media and in all Indian languages so that people from every corner of the country can be a part of the Revolution. To start with, a monthly newsletter is planned in Hindi and English that was later released during the programme. He invited people from Government organisations, NGOs, Aanganwadi workers and others to be a part of the Mission so that it reaches its intended audience. He also hoped that corporate entities, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibilities, would come forward and be a part of Aahaar Kranti. The Mission would be considered a success only when it reaches everyone and brings in a holistic effect by developing a society free of malnutrition. This will be done with the help of Aahaar Mitra (friends of diet), Aahaar Prerak (diet motivators) and Aahaar Sancharak (diet communicators).

Aahaar Kranti as an Appropriate Action

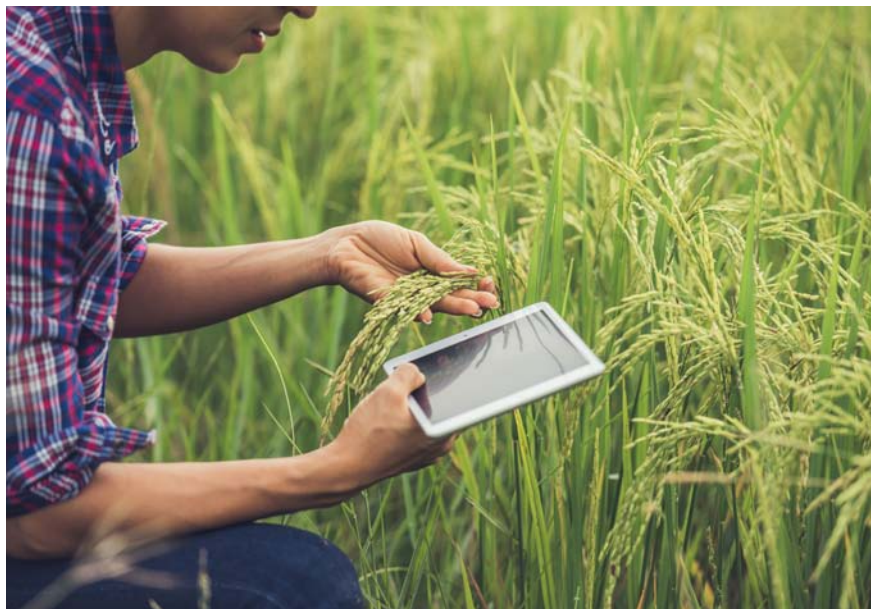
Shri Jayant Sahasrabudhe, Organizing Secretary, VIBHA welcomed everyone in the journey of Aahaar Kranti and thanked the

participants for taking interest in the Movement. He mentioned that Aahaar Kranti is going to create scientific awareness on food in the country. This is going to be a long journey. The very first action would be to initiate the young children, the future of our country. To reach them, it would be important to connect to their teachers, and then to their parents. Social workers and organisations engaged in such welfare activities are going to play an important role in connecting the masses with the Programme. VIBHA is also working on modalities to connect the producers with the programme, i.e., our farmers. While the country would be celebrating the 75th year of its independence, Aahaar Kranti is going to play an important role in this, making the country healthy and well nourished.

Dr Harsh Vardhan announces inauguration of Aahaar Kranti

Finally, it was the time to inaugurate the Programme when the Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan delivered his message. He said that it was apt that a programme for welfare of the society like Aahaar Kranti is being launched as a public movement on the first day of Ma Annapurna's Chaitra Navaratri. "Today when the country is reeling under the onslaught of a pandemic like COVID-19, a balanced diet serves as a special tool to reduce the impact of the pandemic. At such a time, the need to create awareness about the importance of a



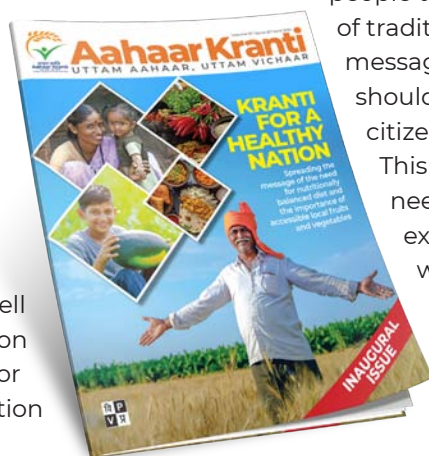


balanced diet has become more vital than ever before”, he said. He appreciated that overseas Indian scientists are in the forefront of the campaign. “It is a noble effort to take the message of balanced diet to every Indian. The Logo you have created for the programme is commendable and a slogan like Good Diet – Good Thought brings all the country men together”, said Dr Harsh Vardhan. He thanked the participants, particularly Indian scientists from overseas under the banner of GIST who had taken out time from their busy schedule and dreamt of the programme and implemented it successfully. He especially mentioned the contribution of Dr Yelloji Rao, Dr Srinivaji Rao and Shri Prafulji Krishna who came together and initiated a discussion to give shape as a public campaign.

He mentioned that it was quite well known that nutrition is the foundation for good health. Nutrition

helps in development of human beings and helps in optimum performance at different stages of life. Only healthy individuals can lead to a prosperous society. Indian Ayurveda has been a guide to the entire world. It was time that the knowledge is utilised to meet the various health and social challenges of today. Dr Harsh Vardhan also mentioned that United Nations has declared 2021 as International Year for Fruits and Vegetables. Aahaar Kranti is an effort to create awareness about the nutritive values of locally grown and available fruits and vegetables and promote the benefits of a balanced diet and to attract

people to the values of traditional diet. The message of good diet should reach every citizen of the country. This information needs to flow from experts to social workers and teachers, from teachers to students and from students



to their families in a harmonious manner. It is an opportunity for every Indian to make India a symbol for health Atmanirbharta. He proposed to seek help of science communicators, broadcasters and government and non-governmental organisations. He also appreciated the participation of Vigyan Prasar and PRABHASS in the movement. “The movement has been close to my heart from the beginning, and I assure you for all necessary support,” he mentioned.

Vote of Thanks

Several promotional videos developed by India Science, India’s only 24x7 OTT channel dedicated to science and technology, were shown. The website of Aahaar Kranti was formally released and the monthly newsletters in Hindi and English were also presented. The Vote of Thanks was presented by Shri Praful Krishna.

Unique Aahaar Calendar

After the formal inauguration of Aahaar Kranti Dr Mirajkar introduced Dr Arvind C Ranade, Scientist F, Vigyan Prasar, who along with his team has developed a calendar based on the lunar system. Dr Ranade explained some features of the calendar and informed that it has a close connection with the Aahaar Kranti Mission since the calendar tells us how our everyday diet helps us in attaining good health. The calendar is an initiative of Vijnana Bharati. It was formally dedicated to the nation earlier that day in the presence of Dr Shekhar C Mande, DG, CSIR and Dr Somak Raychaudhury, Director of the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune. ■

Panel Discussion Concepts, Roles and Roadmap



It was time for the formal Panel discussion that was moderated by Dr Mirajkar. He introduced the panellists: Dr Shekhar C Mande, DG, CSIR, Shri Ram Mohan Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Additional Secretary, GoI and Development Commissioner, Ministry of MSME; Prof. Trilochan Mohapatra, recipient of National Bio Science award for Career Development by Department of Biotechnology, GoI; Prof. Tanuja Nesari, Director, (All India institute of Ayurveda) AIIA; and Shri Hanumantrao Gaikwad CEO of the Bharat Vikas Group.

Shri Ram Mohan Mishra discussed how nutrition is the core of health and people who are not well nourished can never be healthy. At the same time, malnourished people lose their productivity and efficiency. They fall sick, weakening the nation. Huge amount of money is spent on treating them, on medicines, etc. In this regard, Aahaar Kranti has national importance. He also said that the work of Poshan Abhiyaan on nutrition campaign would become easy with Aahaar Kranti when awareness on how to remain well-nourished reaches

everyone. Next would be to connect those who are malnourished due to lack of awareness. Our shastras say that those who gain knowledge are liberated. So, knowledge can liberate people from malnutrition. He hoped that Aahaar Kranti comes up as a big revolution in our country.

Dr Mohapatra elaborated how India has made tremendous progress in agriculture and moved much beyond the begging bowl to an agricultural surplus and exporting country. He mentioned that there are deficiencies in certain items like edible oil and pulses but it would be substituted in few years. The country needs

“Uttam Aahaar – Uttam Vichaar is something we should practice ourselves. Then it can be extended to everyone around us.”



nutritional security now. The culinary diversity of the country must be revised. He also felt that nutrition education is probably not adequate even today and it should start from school levels. Dr Mohapatra emphasised the importance of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in this Mission and suggested to make them a part of Aahaar Kranti. He shared the concept of nutri gardens and training of Aanganwadi workers so that seeds can be distributed for those gardens. Family farming systems are being promoted through Krishi Vigyan Kendras. Nutri smart village concepts have been built and promoted through farm science centres. He talked of bio-fortified food, diversified food and systems supported by Ayurveda. Spices that have immunity boosting properties are also being exported to the tune of Rs. 20,000 crores. At the same time consumption has also increased. Growth in the consumption rate is around 24% for fruits and 20% for vegetables. Still the country faces nutritional deficits.

Prof. Tanuja Nesari elaborated that ayurved is a knowledge system of healthy and happy life. It is also

important for mental health and spiritual bliss. Through Aahaar Kranti the concept of satvik or wholesome diet needs to be promoted to each person. Food is needed for attaining happiness too. It is a misconception that ayurvedic food is bland. There are thousands of recipes which are tasty and at the same time healthy. Just like the vast cultural biodiversity of our country, India has a great diversity in its food as well. It is important not only to know what to eat but also how to eat and when to eat. She informed that Ministry of Aayush with FSSAI have developed 'Aahaar regulation', which is under the process of submission and works on traditional food with the support of technology. People must be made aware about food, its consumption, nutrition etc. through Aahaar Kranti. This is the platform where ideal diet about pregnant women and their diet during postpartum should be propagated. Ministry of Ayush, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with FSSAI, Ministry of Women and Child Development have joined hands in such efforts.

Shri Hanmantrao Gaikwad stressed that the food we eat should be residue free. The agricultural farms should be free of poisons. The fruits and vegetable grown should be residue free and cost effective. He also narrated that he worked with 10,000 farmers in Maharashtra for whom cost of cultivation reduced and the yield increased by 50-200% in one season. The quality of the production also increased with this organic agriculture. With food processing value-added products can be developed, for example, tomato puree from raw tomato. He has started working



Ayurveda says that processing of food is also very important. There are differences in how to consume the same thing during different seasons.

on Ayurveda as well and has fingerprinted 700 plants till now. Healthy food can be promoted at lesser cost. Initiatives like selling fruits at the airports can help the cause. He hoped that Aahaar Kranti does the job to promote that awareness.

The last speaker of the discussion was Dr Shekhar C Mande, DG, CSIR and recipient of Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award. He discussed how the concept of Vishwa Guru (the world leader) can be promoted through Aahaar Kranti. He said that *Uttam Aahaar – Uttam Vichaar* is something we should practice ourselves. Then it can be extended to everyone around us. Dr Mande also stated that

this inclusivity was propagated by Swami Vivekananda at the world parliament of religions and was practiced by him in his life. Bharat for ages have led the world towards that philosophy and it had earned the place of Vishwa Guru. He said, "When we lead the world with principles, it would be by friendship and not by hate, by cooperation and not by exploitation, not a big brother but an equal brother, by mutual success and not success at the expense of others." This goal though sounds ambitious but not far away. He urged everyone to take this goal very seriously and make Aahaar Kranti one of the vehicles towards reaching that goal. Along with fulfilling the needs of the country, Aahaar Kranti may also guide us in developing friendship with the whole world. As the Vishwa Guru Bharat would be guiding the spirit and the soul of the world all over once again.

At the end Dr Yelloji Rao shared some images relevant to the presentations of the speakers. Shri Praful Krishna summed up the session by thanking the panellists. He also announced the winners of Aahaar Kranti Digital Champion along with unveiling the website and newsletters and a chart containing information about 200 fruits, vegatables, spices, and other crops. ■