

Prime Minister Narendra Modi : Reply on Motion of Thanks to the President's Address (11-06-2014)

Honorable Speaker, I am new to the Parliament and I have got an opportunity to address the Parliament for the first time.

The dignity and traditions of this House have always been of the highest order. We also have experienced, senior dignitaries in the house who have been raising and solving issues of national importance for the past 3-4 decades. I believe that when a new person like me, by mistake fails to uphold the dignity and traditions of the House in any way, I will be pardoned considering I am new to the House. More than 50 members have expressed their views in the Lok Sabha on His Excellency, Mr. President's address. I have heard almost all of them, some while in the House and some in my room.

I have heard respected Mallikarjun ji, Mulayam Singh ji, Dr. Thambidurai ji, Bhartuhari ji, TMS leaders and all senior dignitaries. It is right that a question has been asked in unison that you have shared so many plans, how will you execute them and when. I agree that the right subject has been touched upon and it is natural to think so. Let me share an experience of mine. I was newly chosen as the Chief Minister of Gujarat and once I announced in the House that I want to provide 24X7 electricity to the villages and houses of Gujarat. There was much applause from the Treasury Benches but there was silence towards the front. However, our Leader of the Opposition, Choudhary Amar Singh ji, a senior Congress leader, was a much enlightened leader. He took time to meet me later. He said, "Modi ji, are you missing the point? You are new and inexperienced, it is impossible to provide 24X7 electricity here. How will you do it?" He had expressed his concerns in a friendly spirit. I told him that I have thought about it and I feel we can do it. He said, "It is not possible"? If there is a deficit of 2000 MW, how would you meet it?" It was very natural for him to think so but I am glad that this task could be accomplished in Gujarat. So, now it is pretty natural for the senior dignitaries sitting here to question how something that has not been done until now will be done now? Since it has not been done until now, it is natural to doubt it. But I want to assure the House that we will not leave any stone unturned to accomplish the way forward, shown by the President. The president's address is not just a tradition and ritual for us. Everything said through him is sanctity, a sacred bond which we are making efforts to fulfill and this feeling becomes our inspiration to work. Therefore in the coming times we should treat the President's address with dignity and seriousness and we should all make united efforts to fulfill it.

We were all contenders until elections but after coming to the Parliament we are ambassadors of the hopes of the people. We were contenders then, after coming to parliament we are guardians and protectors of the hopes of the people. Someone's responsibility would be to fulfill the hopes as an

ambassador while somebody's responsibility would be to raise concern if the hopes are not fulfilled duly; this too is a supreme responsibility. Together we will shoulder this responsibility.

I am satisfied that barring minor differences of opinions which are necessary, majority of the issues which have been raised in the House reflect a positive atmosphere. There was a hope in all the issues which have been raised here. I believe, this means that the hope with which the 125 crore citizens of the country have chosen their representatives, seated on either sides of the house, has echoed in everyone's conduct.

It is a good sign for the fortune of the country. The President has appreciated the election, voter and the result in his address. I would also like to compliment my countrymen and congratulate them for electing a stable government after many years, for development and good governance, for ensuring a journey of development for 5 years by their vote. We have to fulfil these concerns of the Indian voters and the responsibility they have given us. We need to think that India is just seen as a big democratic nation in the world. It is high time we showed the world how big we are as a democratic power, how grand are our democratic traditions, how even the most common and illiterate citizen has boundless faith in the democracy! How he is aware of fulfill the all his aspirations through the medium of our democratic traditions! Has this strength of ours ever been presented in the right manner to the world? After this election it is our common responsibility to show the same to the world and impress them. The number of voters in our country outnumbers the voters of Europe and America combined. This is India's such a big strength. Have we ever presented this powerful side of India to the world? I believe it is our common responsibility to do so. It is true that there is some vacuum. 1200 years of slave mentality is troubling us. Many a times we feel intimidated in speaking to someone who is at a higher position. Sometimes we even get influenced by the colour of skin color. It is high time that a strong democracy like India rises above these issues and presents itself as a powerful country. It is time that we see the world eye to eye, raise our head, broaden our chest, show the power 125 crore people and move forward with this agenda. We can raise the honor and dignity of the nation this way.

Honorable Madam Speaker, who should have the first right over the country? The government should be for whom? Should the government be only for educated people? Should the government be for the benefit of only a few people? I believe that government should be for the poor. If a rich person wants to educate his child, he can hire any teacher in the world. If someone is unwell in a wealthy home, thousands of doctors are ready to attend to him but where will the poor go? The poor only have government schools and government hospitals in their fate. Therefore, it is the first duty and

responsibility of all the governments to live for and listen to the poor. If we do not work for the welfare of the poor then the people of the country will never forgive us.

Honorable Madam Speaker, this is the first priority of our government. We have grown up with ideals of Pandit Din Dayal Upadhyay who taught us the philosophy of integral humanism. We take inspiration from the ideals of Gandhi, Lohia and Din Dayal Ji, the three great political legends of this century, to work on a priority basis for the welfare of the person at the lowest rungs of the society. This is our commitment. Welfare is our commitment. To bring the poor out of poverty we need to give the poor the strength to fight poverty. The biggest weapon to fight against poverty is education. The biggest solution for poverty is freedom from blind devotion. The country's poor do not want to live at anyone's mercy, all we need to do is free them from blind devotion and illiteracy. He is ready to build a world of his own by himself. It is in the nature of the poor to live with dignity and respect. The government schemes need to empower the poor to come out of poverty. We can ensure the welfare of the person at the lowest rung of the society by aligning the entire governance set up to work in this direction.

We have been saying for centuries that ours is an agrarian nation, it is a nation of villages. These slogans felt good, sounded good but can we say even today that we have been able to transform life in villages or we have been able to transform the life of our farmers? I am not standing here to criticize any government. It is our common responsibility to make it a priority to transform rural life and to bring about a change in the life of farmers. We have tried to do the same in President's address. The question arises as to how will we do it? We have used a word 'Rurban'. The President's address envisions rural development as one with urban amenities and rural spirit. Rural spirit is the identity of villages. There is still a sense of belonging and affinity. Even today when a wedding procession comes to a village, the whole village welcomes it. If a guest visits the village, the whole village receives him warmly as their own. This is the priceless heritage of our country. We have to make and preserve it but should we keep our rural population deprived of modern amenities? I speak from experience that if villages are provided with modern amenities then they will contribute more towards the progress of the country.

A village kid can also avail the best education if there is 24X7 electricity and broadband connectivity in rural areas. Let us assume for a moment that there may not be good teachers in the village but Science has empowered us today to avail long distance education. The best teachers from the cities can teach the children sitting in a distant rural school through internet. Why shouldn't we use satellites and modern technology for the education of these poor kids? If we are able to bring about this change in the

rural way of life then no one would wish to leave their villages. What does the rural youth want? If employment opportunities are available he wants to stay in the village with his parents. Can't we establish a network of industries in the villages? At least we can focus on one point, agro-based industries. If we focus on value addition then we can transform the economic life of the village and it will naturally benefit the farmers.

Sikkim is a small state with very low population but it has accomplished a significant feat. In the near future Sikkim is going to make India proud by becoming an 'organic state'. All the produce from the

state will be organic. There is a huge demand of organic farm produce in the world. There is a whole section of people in the world who care for holistic healthcare and are willing to pay any amount of money for organic stuff. If we are able to combine this scheme with the efforts of the farmers from Sikkim then the state nestled in laps of Himalayas will emerge stronger. Shouldn't we dream of developing the entire North East into organic states? If the entire North East emerges as organic state and captures the global market with the aid of the government, the lives of the people in the hills and the lives of the farmers will get transformed. We have a number of agricultural universities. A lot of research is being done but it is unfortunate that what is in lab is not on land. We need to focus on the journey from lab to land. It is imperative to bring agriculture out of the traditional ways to modern agriculture. Gujarat had done a small experiment, 'soil health card'. In our country, a man does not have a health card of his own but we took an initiative to provide him with a health card of his land. This helped him understand that he was spending his money on growing a crop which was not suitable to grow on his land; he was using fertilizers and buying insecticides which were not needed. He was ending up wasting almost Rs. 50000 to 1 lakh in a year. Soil health card helped him understand how to use his land better for agriculture. Can we achieve the mission of providing every farmer in India with soil health card? Yes, we can. We can give soil testing a new dimension with an opportunity to make money along with research. I am explaining in detail to those who are asking how we will achieve this.

The students of our agricultural universities visit villages in the months of April, May and June and 10+2 schools in the entire country have a laboratory. Can't we convert these laboratories into 'soil testing laboratories' during vacations? When agricultural university students visit the villages during vacations they can use the school laboratories for soil testing. The schools can make money this way and it will

incentivize them to build good laboratories. Can this be turned into a revolution or not? What I mean to say is that we can change things with small experiments.

What do our railways always do? They follow the written codes. The code says that if they receive a consignment on Monday it should be dispatched within a week. Suppose if a station received marble on Monday to be dispatched to Mumbai and tomatoes on Tuesday then it dispatches the marble first and the tomatoes later. Why? If marble reaches 4 days later it would not make any difference but if the tomatoes are sent first then at least they will not perish. We need to sensitize our entire system.

It is unfortunate that despite being known all over the world for information technology and software engineering being our identity, we do not have a system in place to get real time data on agro products. Can we use information technology network to collect real time data on agro products? We have promised to bring down inflation and we are making efforts on a priority basis to fulfill our commitment.

This is not because this was an election promise but this is our thinking. We feel that the stove in a poor man's house should burn at night. We need to change the situation where the children of poor sleep on empty stomachs. This is our duty whether it is the central government, state government, ruling side or the opposition. It is our common responsibility that no poor remains hungry. To fulfill this responsibility we want to do this. Real time data can help us manage the stocks of grains. It is not that we do not have grain stocks but there is a lack of system in place. If the government has information of where the requirements are and warehouses can be made at the railway stations to store the stocks and more during lull period then this problem can be solved. The structure of Food Corporation of India has been in place for years. Can't we modernize it? If the entire structure and responsibilities are divided into procurement, preservation and distribution then I can say with confidence that the situation will change.

It is the need of the hour that our agriculture sector, agricultural universities and farmers focus on technology. The faster we bring technology into agriculture the more we will benefit from it because the size of the families is increasing while the size of agricultural land is decreasing. We need to increase the productivity of land and for this we need to increase research work in our universities. For years no research has been done on pulses. Pulses are a big challenge for us. Pulses are the only option for poor to get protein and proteins play an important role in building the body. We need to address these issues if we want to fight malnutrition. We have neither been able to increase the productivity of pulses nor have we been able to increase the content of protein in pulses. We have succeeded in increasing the sugar content in sugarcanes but we have not been able to increase the content of protein in pulses. It is a major challenge. Will our scientists inspire our agricultural universities? The way out is to make

cumulative efforts to address these issues, then I am sure we will be able to resolve them.

Our mothers and sisters who form 50% of our population need to participate in the journey of India's growth. We need to connect them to economic progress. If we want to attain new heights of growth and development then we need half of our population, that is, woman power to participate actively. We need to care for their honor and safety. Few incidents that have happened lately, pain us deeply irrespective of the fact whether we are in power or not. Murders in Pune, UP, youths drowned in Manali, rapes, make us all introspect. The government needs to take firm action. The country won't wait for too long, the victims won't wait for too long and our souls won't forgive us. Therefore I humbly request all the leaders of the country to at least stop doing 'psychiatric analyses' of rapes. It is unbecoming of us and it ridicules the dignity of our mothers and sisters. At political level, does it suit us to make such statements? Can't we maintain silence? Safety and honor of women should be the priority of our 125 crore strong population.

65% of the country's population is below 35 years of age. We are so fortunate to be alive during this age cycle. We are so lucky that we are sitting in the Parliament in an age cycle when India is the youngest

country in the world. We need to recognise the power of this demographic division. In the coming days there will be a huge demand for labour force, man power and skilled manpower in the entire world. Those who have knowledge of this prudence, know that the whole world needs skilled manpower. Our neighbor, China is getting older while we are getting younger. This is an advantage. This is why even the most developed country of the world has a single agenda; skill development. Skill development should be our country's priority. In addition to this we need to follow the mantra of 'shramev jayate' and do justice to it. Labor plays an important role in nation building. He is Vishvakarma. How do we honor him?

Brothers and sisters, today the world perceives and identifies India as 'scam India'. We need to make an identity for the country as 'skilled India' and we can achieve this dream. This is why for the first time we have set up a separate Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Ministry to focus specially on this issue.

It is unfortunate that when anyone in the country is asked, whether he is educated he answers that he is a graduate or MA or double graduate and we feel good about it. As a child, I had read a book by Dada Dharmadhikari ji. He was a great Gandhian thinker and lived with Vinova Bhavne. Dada Dharmadhikari ji had shared an anecdote where a youth came to him seeking job. He asked him about his education. The youth answered that he was a graduate and was looking for a job. Dada Dharmadhikari ji then asked him

what all he could do? He answered again that he was graduate. Dada ji told him that he understood that he was a graduate but he wanted to know what all he could do. He again answered, "No no I am a graduate". For the fourth time he asked what could he do? The youth again answered that he was a graduate. What we can learn from this anecdote is that to survive we need skills, only holding a certificate is not enough. This is why we need to stress on skill development and we also need to accord the right social status to the skilled worker. A person drops out of school in 7th grade because of poverty, goes ahead and undertakes a skill development course but people don't give him due respect and importance because he has studied only till the 7th grade. For him we need to build an equivalent system. I had done an experiment in Gujarat. Those who attended ITI for 2 years I made them equivalent to 10th pass. Those who had come after clearing 10th I made them equivalent to 12th pass. This opened up ways for them to pursue degree or diploma courses further. This opened up ways for a 7th grade school drop out to pursue and complete a degree. We need to take such new initiatives and decisions with courage.

If we want to stress on skill development then we will have to associate social respect and recognition with it. The world needs work force. Today, the entire world needs teachers. Can't India export teachers? If a businessman goes abroad the maximum he can bring back with him are dollars but if we export Maths and Science teachers then a teacher will bring back with him an entire generation. We need this strength. These are the ways to establish ourselves as a powerful nation in the world. Can't we

prepare our youth for this? These are all possibilities. If we are ready to move ahead with these possibilities then I am sure we will achieve results.

Dalits should not suffer, get exploited or be deprived. Can we say with confidence that after years of independence we have been able to bring about a change in the lives of our Dalit and tribal brothers and sisters? It is not that budgets have not been spent or governments were not serious. I am not blaming anyone but the reality is that the situation has not changed. Are we ready to come out of our old set ups? At least we can converge government schemes for the upliftment of these social classes. Why can't their lives be transformed? As a kid I used to notice a Muslim brother running a cycle repair shop. Today, even his third generation does the same work. What caused such a plight? How can their lives be changed? We need focus activity to bring about this change. We need to come up with such schemes. I do not look at these schemes as mere appeasements. I look at them as transformation in the lives of

people. If a part of the body is handicapped then the entire body can not be seen as a healthy body. Only if all the parts are healthy and strong the body can become healthy and strong. Similarly if one part of the society remains weak, the society as a whole cannot become strong and empowered. All the parts must be strong and empowered. We need to take inspiration from this basic spirit and work towards it with commitment. I felt the need for moving towards a new definition of development in the country. During the entire 1200 years of struggle for independence there was never a time when there were patriots not willing to lay down their lives for the country. The entire history of the freedom struggle post 1857 is for us to see. There was no part of the country from where martyrs did not come forward to sacrifice their lives for the nation. The chain of martyrs getting hanged for the country went on and did not stop.

Brothers and sisters many amongst you would have been born after independence while many senior dignitaries would have been born before independence and would have also participated in the freedom struggle. I was born after independence. A thought comes to my mind that I did not get a chance to die for the country but I do have a chance to live for the country. How do we spread this message to the people of the country that we have got a chance to live for the country and we can use this chance to accomplish one task? Other tasks also need to be executed but at least we can achieve this one task on the 75th anniversary of independence by the year 2022 to pay homage to the great sons of the country who laid down their lives for its freedom that there should be no family in India without its own house. A house with water in taps, electricity and toilet. This is the minimum requirement. If we members, the central and state governments together give this a form of a revolution, make programs of 8-9 years, spend money and give houses to people on the 75th anniversary of independence in the memory of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru, Mahatama Gandhi and Sardar Patel then this can be done. If we can fulfill this resolve then we can fulfill the dreams of the country.

I know that after coming to power it gets very difficult to take up a program which can be measured. Respected Mulayam Singh ji said that he has run a government and that is why I ask "how will you do this, how will it happen?" I am grateful for his goodwill. He has expressed his concerns but we will sit together and find a way out. We have seen a dream and we will try and achieve it. If any difficulties come along the way then experienced people like you will guide us. We have to step forward to work for the poor.

Here it was also mentioned that it is all old wine in a new bottle. It is natural for them to recall wine. It was also said that these are all our ideas which have been presented in a different way and there is nothing new. This means that they also knew what we are saying now. Since yesterday Mahabharat is being discussed and I would like to say that once Duryodhan was asked if he understood dharma,

adharna, satya and asatya. To this Duryodhan replied, "I know what dharma is but it is not my nature. I know what is truth and I know what is good but it is not in my DNA." So you all knew it and thought about it, I do not have any objections to this but even Duryodhan knew it. We have been grown up hearing about Mahabharata but the age of Mahabharat is over. Neither the Kaurvas are left nor Pandavas but even today the people always wish for the victory of Pandavas. People have never wished for the Pandavas to be defeated.

Brothers and Sisters, victory teaches us many things and we should learn also. Victory teaches us to be humble. I give my trust to this Parliament, I believe that the seniors here, from whatever group they may be, with their blessings we will get that strength which will save us from arrogance.

It will teach us every moment to be humble. Whatever be the number here but I will not move forward without you. We should not move on the basis of numbers, we should move on the basis of power of community, that is why we want to move ahead with the feeling of community.

Now-a-days there are discussions on models – Gujarat model, Gujarat model. Those who have listened to my speech, I want to tell them what is Gujarat model. In Gujarat also, model of one district is not applicable on another district, because this country is full of diversity. If my Kacch is a desert and if I apply its model to an evergreen district of Walsaad, it will not work. Gujarat is ahead because of this understanding.... (Pause) This is the model in which there is this understanding..... (Pause) The second model of Gujarat is this, any party of India which is good, we learn from the good things, and we accept the good things. In coming days also, we would like to take this model ahead. Whatever good happened

in any corner of India, which is good, that belongs to everyone and we should try to apply it in other places as well.

Yesterday from Tamil Nadu's side, it was said that Tamil Nadu's model is better than Gujarat's model. I welcome that in this country, atleast this competition of Development model has started..... (Pause) One state started saying that my state is moving ahead of your state. I believe that this is the biggest

contribution of Gujarat model that earlier we did not compete, now we are. We want that in coming days there should be competition for development between the states. There should be competition for development between state and Centre. Everybody should say that Gujarat is left behind and we have moved ahead. My ears are longing to hear this. If this happens in the country then only there will be change. Small states are also doing very good. As I have said that Sikkim has become an Organic state. What Tamil Nadu has done for rain water harvesting in urban areas is like a lesson for us. Living amidst the cruelty of Maosists, Chattisgarh has given a new system for P.D.S. and given a new plan to the poorest of poor man to fill his stomach..... (Pause)

Our sister Mamtaji is working so hard to bring West Bengal out of 35 years of evils; we respect her because of these things. That is why in every state..... (Pause) from Kerala too.... (Pause) You will be happy to know that I had called an officer from Kerala. He was a very junior officer and there was government of the Left. He was very young. I organized a Thought Seminar at my place and I and my whole Council of ministers sat as students. I learned about the 'Kutumbshri' plan from him. He taught us for two hours.

I called the Chief Secretary from Nagaland to come and teach me. There was a very nice plan for the tribals of Nagaland. This should be the model for this country. There may be government of any principle in any corner of India, we should respect the merits and accept the merits..... (Pause) This model will be of use to country. Behaving like big brother and asking who are you? Take two-four pieces; we don't want this; we want to take our country forward together. That's why we talked about 'Cooperative Federalism'. We have talked about taking along this collective form of cooperation and this is our effort to move forward. We will be moving forward with this effort, this is my belief.

Respected Madam Speaker, the motion which has been moved, I am thankful to all senior leaders for it and I can say that overall it was a fruitful discussion. The discussion was favorable and if at all there was any criticism it was in the context of expectations. I consider this as very healthy and I welcome it.

Today, if I receive any good suggestion from any party, I do not consider it as criticism but guidance.

We will use it too and we will use it for good. In a democracy, criticism is for good and it must happen. Only accusations are bad, criticism is not. Criticism gives strength. It is the best medicine in a democracy. We are ever ready for criticism. I would want all the policies to be studied in detail and criticized so that

the end result can be put to use for the good of country in coming time. We want to move ahead with this spirit.

Today I got an opportunity to present my point of view in the new House. Respected Madam Speaker, if I said something wrong or overstepped the rules then I hope the House will forgive me. But I believe that with full support of the House, as I had said, earlier we were contestants after elections we have become protectors and ambassadors of the aspirations of 125 crore countrymen, and should make efforts to their. In the end I would like to say again that I expect your support in this effort. Thanks a lot!