

Prime Minister Narendra Modi : Reply on Motion of Thanks to the President's Address (10-02-2021)

Respected Speaker Sir,

I will present a few things to participate in the discussion of the Motion of Thanks and extend a note of gratitude to the Hon'ble President for his inspiring speech. The President's speech is a reflection of the determination and resolve of 130 crore citizens of India; even in this difficult and challenging period, how does this country choose its path, tread on this path and marches ahead while achieving its goals. The President has mentioned all these things in detail in his address. Every single word in his address instills a new faith in the countrymen and inspired every citizen to do something for their country. For this no number of words will be sufficient to express our gratitude. There has been more than 15 hour discussion in this house. Almost until 12 in the midnight, all our honorable MPs have kept this consciousness awakened. They engaged in robust and lively discussions with utmost ownership. I sincerely extend my heartfelt thanks all the honorable members who participated in this discussion. I would especially like to express my gratitude to our women MPs because they had more involvement in this discussion, and demonstrated sharp intellect with an effort to back every idea with careful research. I am especially grateful to all these women MPs, and congratulate them for their wisdom and the way they had prepared and presented themselves. Their valuable logical insights enriched the house and the discussion immensely.

Honorable Speaker sir,

India is, in a way, at the threshold of 75th year of our independence. Reaching such a milestone of 75 years is a matter of immense pride for every Indian. It is a celebration of our future progress. Hence, despite belonging to any social community or corners of Indian geography, being anywhere in the social or economic strata, we all have together been inspired by our Independence and have resolved to reach 2047 with new fervour when India will celebrate 100 years of its freedom. We have 25 years in front of us to achieve a century of Indian independence. In these 25 years, how far the nation should progress and where should the country be positioned on the global map should be in the vision of all Indians. It is the responsibility of the parliament, the divine earth and this conglomeration to provide this ecosystem for development.

Honorable Speaker sir,

When our country achieved independence, the last British Commander, while leaving, had said that India is a large continent of many countries and no force can ever make it a unified nation. But Indians crushed all such doubts and premonitions. We eventually shut all such doubting minds. With our resilience, cultural unity and traditions, today, we achieved a compelling position in the world as an integrated nation bringing a ray of hope for the world. We could achieve this in the journey of 75 years. Many termed India to be a miracle Democracy. We shattered this illusion too. Democracy is in our DNA and every pulse reverberates with this spirit in a way. Spirit of democracy is assimilated in our thoughts, initiatives and efforts. We have been upholding and consolidating this spirit despite several elections and changes in the regimes. The country has wholeheartedly embraced and advanced every new regime.

This has been a sequence of 75 years. We are a country of diversity and hence honour our democratic values. We have more than 100 languages and dialects, varieties of attire and diverse cultures, yet we kept a unified goal and tread together on a common path to achieve this. Today as we talk about India, I would like to remember the words of Swami Vivekananda. He had said that "Every nation has a message to deliver, a mission to fulfil, a destiny to reach" During the Corona outbreak, the way India played a pivotal role in not only handling itself but also helping the world has indeed been a turning point for us. We have grown up imbibing feelings and sacraments from the Vedas to Vivekananda viz., सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः। ये सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः। सर्वे संतु निरामया। i.e., "May all sentient beings be at peace, may no one suffer from illness". India has proven this during the corona pandemic period. Our country and the citizens have taken adequate solid measures to build India into a self-reliant aatmanirbhar nation. How can we not recall the time when World war II had just ended, and the two wars had left the world shaken and shattered? Humanity and human values were both in jeopardy. Situation was grim and post second world war a new world order was took shape across the globe. Pledges were taken to reinstate peace, and the mantra of non-military cooperation was strengthened across the world. United Nations was instituted. Various such agencies and mechanisms were constituted so that nations could be brought onto the path of peace and progress in a concerted manner. However, the experience had other outcomes. While on the one hand every country started talking about peace, many countries which had the power also started enhancing their military infrastructure in the midst of peace talks. Post formation of UN, their military prowess enhanced multifold. Even small nations emerged in the competition of military strength. Peace talks no doubt happened a lot, but one cannot ignore the fact that meanwhile several strong forces pooled in all their efforts to develop their military prowess. It was during this period that all innovations and research happened to advance and strengthen military forces. Post corona also, one can see a new world order has emerged. A new ecosystem of cooperation and relationship building has shaped up across the world.

We have to now decide if we want to remain a mute spectator as in post world war scenario or make efforts to adjust and adapt ourselves to the new emerging world order. That period was such for India. But now a new world order is emerging post corona, and it is inevitable. Only time will tell what form it will take and who will initiate this. The way the world has endured the crisis, this world is forced to think on it and is compelled to. In the wake of this, India cannot afford to remain alienated from the world. We cannot afford to remain in a silo. We have to also emerge as a strong player now. We cannot establish our credential in the world only on the basis of our large population. It is our strength but this is not enough. In the new world order India has to strengthen itself and become self-reliant and the answer to this is Aatmanirbhar Bharat. We are already self-reliant in the pharmacy sector. We can play a pivotal role in the well-being of the world. The more self-reliant and capable India becomes, the more important role it will play in serving for the well-being of humanity and the world. After all we have the mantra of सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः in our blood. Hence, it is crucial that we make the clarion call for aatmanirbhar bharat stronger. And remember, this is not the voice of any politician or government. Nowadays, every nook and corner of India is reverberating with "vocal for local" slogan. It is great to see that every next product we lay hands on is local. This sense of self-pride is very useful for a self-reliant India, and I believe that our thinking, our policies, our decisions should be towards bringing whatever changes that are necessary to make India self-reliant. This is my opinion.

During this discussion, almost every member mentioned corona. This topic is a matter of satisfaction as well as pride for us. The world was anticipating the humongous scale of the crisis posed by corona outbreak, and several great experts were engaged in predicting the impact of the pandemic. Several attempts were made to spread fear in India as well. Since it was an unknown enemy so nothing could be claimed or done with confidence. The war was against an unknown enemy. It was natural to doubt the capabilities of such a huge nation, thickly populated country, deficient in many facets of infrastructure. Several big nations had already succumbed to the pandemic, how could India have faced the challenge.

It was also being assumed that if condition worsens in India, then it would be impossible to save the world. In such a situation, this Discipline of 130 crore countrymen, their dedication, has saved us today. Credit goes to 130 crore Hindustani and we should all sing its glory. This also provided an opportunity for India to make a mark. It will never be possible to make the world accept us by constantly cursing ourselves. We must make efforts to fight against our circumstances and work on our limitations. We should also gain experience to face the world with self-confidence. Only then world will embrace us. If you will not accept your own child but expect your community to accept them then it will never be possible. This is the rule of the world and we must talk about it.

Mr Manish Tiwary ji had said one thing that it was gods grace that we got saved form corona. I would certainly say something on this. Indeed, it is the blessings of the almighty. While the world was in a turmoil due to this, by the grace of god we were saved. It was in fact the reincarnation of god in the garb of doctors and nurses. These doctors and nurses would assure their children that they would be back in the evening, but could not go back for over a fortnight on several occasions. They were the almighty in person taking care of us. We could defeat the corona pandemic because of the tough fight put up by our sanitation workers despite the fact that it was a matter of life and death for them too. While no one could attend to the patients, it was our sanitation workers who appeared like god and kept them in clean and hygienic conditions. of the Ambulance drivers were not literate. Still, they were very much aware that they were transporting corona positive patients, but still they served humanity selflessly, and hence were no less than the god who saved us. The more we proudly share their glorious stories of commitment and dedication, the more we will feel empowered within. There are many who are still gripped in despair, I would like to tell them to reflect upon the strife and might of 130 crore other countrymen. You will surely feel more energised.

Hon`ble Speaker Sir,

This corona outbreak has been the real touchstone. The real acid test is when you face a crisis. In normal days one is ignorant. Even the world's biggest nations could not remain untouched by this disaster. The first effort of everyone was to ensure that financial and medical aid reached every citizen directly during the crisis. You will be appalled to know that several countries despite having coffers filled with dollars and pounds could not provide adequate aids to their citizens due to uncertainty caused due to corona outbreak, lockdowns and curfew. Banks, post offices and all other facilities had to be shut abruptly. Intentions were strong and announcements were also made. But it is in a country like India, that during the pandemic period, approximately more than 75 crore Indians received ration at their doorstep for eight months. It is this India which ensured that financial aid to the amount of two lakh crores were successfully disbursed through Jandhan accounts, Aadhar card and mobile banking transfers. Today it is these facilities that came to the rescue of the poor people of our nation. How unfortunate it was that at some point of time some adversaries had reached the supreme court to stop issue of this Aadhar. I am often shocked and today I will say this again and again, Hon`ble Speaker, pardon me. I am very grateful to you for giving me a minute's break. Sometimes ignorance create major trouble in this house.

Hon`ble Speaker Sir,

This effort was done to provide financial aid and relief measures to street vendors during the corona pandemic. I am glad that this was successfully achieved. Hon`ble Chairman Sir, even during this crisis we continued to bring series of economic reforms. We moved ahead with an intent that to rescue and develop an economy like India, we would have to take some landmark decisions. You must have noticed that since day one we introduced several reforms due to which there have been record sale of tractors and automobiles. GST collections have been highest ever. These statistics are infusing vigor in our economy. It is indicative of the fact that Indian economy is emerging with great enthusiasm. World over, experts are predicting a double digit growth with conviction. Many pundits have forecast the possibilities of a double digit growth. I am confident that even during the pandemic period despite the crises the country will witness growth and meet the expectations of the citizens.

Hon`ble Speaker Sir,

During the corona period we also introduced three farm laws. These agricultural reforms were the need of the hour and crucial to resolve the challenges being faced by the agricultural sector since ages. To revive them we would definitely have to make concerted and relentless efforts. In this direction we have made an honest attempt. The future challenges in agricultural sector brought to light by eminent experts, and its not my saying, have to be dealt with at war footing. And hence we made an attempt without any delay. While the discussion was on here, I was observing my worthy opposition, especially my friends from Congress, debating the colour of the law whether it is black or white. It would have been great had they also discussed its content and intent so that the farmers of the country would have received correct picture.

I trusted that 'dada' my brother shall also deliberate on meaningful things, which I assume was presented after careful rehearsal, but sadly he confined his talk mostly to whataboutery and indulged only in questioning the PM and his teams visit to West Bengal as to why, where and how are we travelling across their state. Hence, sadly dada we were bereft of your wisdom this time. Anyways, maybe after the elections if you have the opportunity. This state is so important hence we are leaving no stone unturned during our visits. Unfortunately, you all have neglected is so much thus far that we have to give it its due importance now. In the context of the protest going on let us try to understand. The farmer brothers and sisters who are protesting at the Delhi borders are victims of wrong assumptions and rumours which were spread around. When I finish my speech you may do all this. You were also given a chance. You may speak such words for them but not me. (Responding to the call outs from opposition) Dear Shri Kailash Chaudhary ji look how much I care for you. Wherever you had desired to register, it was done.

Hon`ble Speaker Sir,

This house respects the sentiments of all the farmer friends who are agitating, and this government too will continue to respect them. And hence, senior ministers of the government have been constantly in a dialogue with them ever since their Punjab agitation as well as afterwards. We are doing this in honour and solidarity for our farmers. With deepest regards.

Hon`ble Speaker,

There have been continuous dialogues. Even during the days when the agitation was only in the state of Punjab. It continued even when they moved to Delhi. Several efforts were made to understand the doubts in the minds of these farmers. The farmers were continuously encouraged to spell out each and every concern of theirs during these discussions. Narendra Singh Tomar ji has mentioned this in detail in Rajyasabha. They were even invited for a clause by clause discussion. We believe that if this law indeed has such deficiencies/loopholes which are seriously damaging to the farmers, then there is certainly no harm in modifying it. It is for the citizens of the country. If some decisions are taken, it is for the welfare of the farmers. We have been waiting and shall still continue to wait. In case they point out something specific which is also

convincing then we have no hesitation in revisiting the law. We have been reiterating this ever since their earliest days of protest in Punjab. These three laws were enforced only by ordinance. Later it was passed in Parliament. After the implementation of the law, no mandis have been closed in the country, neither the MSP has been stopped. This is the truth that we don't speak about. This has no meaning. Not only this, the purchase on MSP has also increased and infact this has increased after the new legislation.

Hon'ble Speaker,

This ruckus, noise and creating roadblocks seems to be a pre meditated effort and a political game plan. But a planned political strategy is that the lies and false rumours being spread shall soon get busted and truth shall rightfully prevail. It will get difficult for them to stay. Hence, continue to create chaos here like you did outside. Continue with the gameplan. Rest assured you will never win the trust of people this way.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

I would like to ask any of the farmers if they have been robbed of any of their previous rights, privileges or facilities post the ordinance or passing of the bill and framing of the new law in the parliament. No one answers or disusses this. Everything is as was in the past. Except that a new alternative has been recommended and which is not even compulsory. Protesting against a law is justified only when it is compulsory. This is optional. You are free to choose your options. Through the ordinance and law, we are enabling a farmer to freely opt for that infrastructure which will be more profitable to him. (Adhiranjan ji please... it is getting too much now... I am the kind of person who respects you.) I have already said earlier, whatever you have done has been registered here. You will surely get more publicity than TMC in Bengal. Whats the point? Yes, dada, brother, look I have informed, do not worry. Adhiranjan Ji please. It doesn't become of you. I do have high regards for you. Wonder why are you behaving so. Why are you going beyond limits.

Speaker Sir, this law is such that it is not binding for any one. They do have an option and hence there seems no reason for any protest. Of course had this law been imposed, then the agitation would have been justified. That's why I tell people that we are witnessing a new way of agitation. True agitationists do not resort to such methods. Only andolanjivis adopt such ways of protests. They are the ones who misinform and misguide by spreading false apprehensions. Why create fear about something that's not going to happen at all, and instigating riot across the nation on something that is subjudice and judgement is awaited, from the Supreme Court. It should be a matter of deep concern for all those who have faith in democracy and non violence. Please have patience. You will surely get time later.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

There is no restriction on old mandis as well. Not only this, this budget has provision for funds which have been allocated for the modernisation of their infrastructure. Hon'ble Speaker Sir, this decision was based on the vision of welfare and equity for all "sarvjan hitaye, sarvjan sukhaye". Hon'ble Speaker Sir, members of this house surely realise that Congress and other big allies have strongly voiced their viewpoints here but evaded the real matters. One would expect them to have studied the matter deeply. I am surprised to hear a new logic here that why give what was not asked for. First of all, it is entirely your choice to avail it or not. No one has forced you. It is optional. It is a system for such a huge nation. Some parts of the country would surely be benefitted from it. Maybe some may nor, but let it be known clearly that it is not compulsory. Hence there is nothing about being offered without being asked for. But still I would like to reiterate that no one had asked yet the law was enforced against dowry. No one had asked for it but this law was introduced for the development of our country.

Hon'ble Speaker, it may be noted that no one had demanded, but for a progressive nation it was important for us to bring laws against Triple talaak. We had to curb the malpractice of child marriage, and hence it was imperative for us to bring a law to stop child marriages. Such laws are required for the nation to progress and prosper. Did anyone demand for equal rights in property for daughters? Or right to education? But such reforms and laws are necessary for the country's development and change. Has the nation ever seen so many reforms? The world is aware and haven't they accepted it too?

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

We believe that the oldest political party in India is the Congress Party. They had been single handedly ruling the country for nearly six decades. Sadly, this party is so fragmented that their clans tread opposite paths in Rajyasabha and Lok Sabha. Such a divided and confused party can do nothing for the good of the nation nor can they think about resolving several crises faced by the country today. Can there ever be a bigger misfortune? The senior Congress leaders in Rajyasabha engage in very enriching and stimulating debates and voice their opinions in detail, however, about those seated in Lok Sabha.... its best left to time.

Hon'ble Speaker,

I draw your attention to EPF pension scheme. During my tenure after 2014, on many occasions it came to light that there were many cases where some folks was receiving a meagre pension of Rs 7 or Rs 25 or Rs 50 or rs 250. This was the practice in our country. I realised that a higher amount would get spent in an auto to reach the office to receive their due pension. No one came up with the demand nor did I receive any application from any worker's unions Speaker Sir. We brought amendments and guaranteed a minimum pension of Rs 1000. This decision was not enforced due to any request. No farmer's union ever reached out to me for the cause of small farmers requesting for a minimum financial aid. Yet, we offered guaranteed financial support to them under the PM Kisaan Samman Nidhi Yojana.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Change is very necessary for any modern society. We have witnessed how there were protests even during that period, but great leaders like Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar, Jyotiba Phule, Baba Saheb Ambedkar and several other such revolutionaries fought against the tide and led huge social reforms in the society despite all odds. Initially there is always opposition when you take up the cudgels to enforce any change in the existing system. But soon they accept the new norm when they realise the truth behind it.

India being such a large country, it is nearly impossible that the entire nation can ever come at a consensus over some decision. This country is rich in diversities. In some parts it may bring a lot of benefit, whereas in some it may seem less beneficial, and maybe in some areas many would have remained deprived of the earlier beneficial schemes. We believe in the larger interest and hence all decisions taken are inclusive with the vision of social welfare "sarvjan hitaye, sarvjan sukhaye" .

Hon'ble Speaker,

I refuse to buy this thought of "did anyone ask for this?" Are we autocrats that our countrymen have to plead for something? Why should we compel them to demand? This kind of thought process is not in tandem with our democratic ways Hon'ble Speaker. Government needs to be compassionate. The government should come forward by taking responsibilities for the welfare of the people in a democratic way. The citizens of India did not request for Ayushman Bharat Scheme but we realised that it was needed to protect poor people from medical crises. The countrymen did not take recourse to protest marches or filing memoranda to get their bank account. We announced Jan Dhan Scheme under which they got their personal accounts.

Did anyone demanded Swachh Bharat? The country willingly embraced and took the Swachh Bharat mission forward. When did anyone tell us that they needed toilets in their homes... no one ever said... but we went ahead and initiated construction of toilets in 10 crores households. This is democracy not autocracy. We realised the emotions and needs of our people and took proactive measures to meet their expectations. We cannot instil self confidence among citizens by making them request for what is their right. We must encourage this thought of ownership and rights to develop our nation. The citizens lose self confidence if we force them to demand for facilities. We have taken adequate steps to enhance the competencies and self confidence among our citizens. Dada...just listen for a minute... I am saying the same. He can continue to use the older facility if he so wishes. There is no compulsion to adopt new schemes. The old provisions have not been discarded. He can very well continue with it, is what I am trying to explain

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

We are all aware of this fact that stagnant water causes several diseases. Flowing water enriches lives and brings joy. Whatever was relevant, let it continue. Its not done that when someone asks for something only then we shall take some steps. We must take responsible decisions according to the need of the hour. Status Quo... this mindset plays a big role in devastating any nation. The world is changing. How long should we stick with status quo. With this fixed mindset we cannot transform ourselves, and hence youth of the nation cannot keep waiting.

Today I want to share an anecdote which will surely highlight what happens when we stick to status quo. This is a story of 40-50 years back. Since I had also heard it from someone hence the dates may not be sure. I am sharing what I had heard then and can recall today. In the sixties a commission was constituted in Tamil Nadu to enhance the wages of state workers. The Chairman of the commission received a confidential envelope which had a top secret. He found an application inside it. The person had mentioned that despite working honestly for several years in the system he had not received any raise, hence he requested for a higher salary through this letter. The Chairman replied to the person seeking his details like name and designation etc. This person replied again stating that he is the CCA in the office of the Chief Secretary of the Ministry. The Chairman was clueless about the role of CCA and hence wrote back asking for more information about the job role. But the person replied that he cannot share now since he is bound by rule that he can mention this detail only after 1975. Hence the Chairman replied that in that case why are you annoying me now. Rather you should meet the commission which will be functional in 1975. The person realised that the matter is going out of hand and hence agreed to share. Then he replied again saying that I have been working as CCA since many years in the office of the Chief Secretary and CCA stands for Churchill Cigar Assistant. The fact was that in 1940 when Churchill became PM of Britain, cigar used to be delivered to him from Trichy and this CCA was responsible to ascertain the delivery of these cigars. Hence the post of CCA existed to ensure the supply of Cigars from Trichy. In 1945 Churchill lost the elections yet the post continued and the supply continued too. India attained freedom. Yet the post continued Speaker Sir. The position of responsibility to ensure supply of cigars to Churchill continued in the office of Chief Secretary, and hence this man rightfully demanded increase in his salary and desired a promotion.

Now look. Such is the consequence of status quo. There cannot be a bigger example of why we need to question the status quo and relook the system. When I became the Chief Minister, I used to receive a report accounting that no balloons or slips were hurled today. Probably this had been started during World War II and was still in practice. Imagine such practices are still somewhere rooted in our systems. We just feel happy cutting ribbons, lighting lamps and indulging in photo ops. And that's enough. We should make every responsible effort to change the country. Mistakes may happen, but if the intention is good, the results are bound to be good. Maybe we lose an odd one once a while. I am sure you would have noticed that to get a certificate attested there would be a long queue outside the Corporators house. Unless he would stamp the document... infact best part was that he would not even do it himself. There would be a lad doing it for him and this system was continuing since long and nobody ever questioned. When I took over, I said that let us trust our citizens and hence abolished the practice of attestation. People were benefitted. We should work towards transformation and reforms.

I am seriously still amused with our interview process. A guy would enter the door, three people would be seated as panellist. They will read the mood of the person, would not even ask for the name properly and a panellist simply walks out. Such is the interview call. Hence this is how orders are passed. I mean come on. Why such a gimmick? Why not create a database of his education and other qualifications? Let the computer generate a merit list. This was the fiasco reported in selection process of Class 3 and 4 employees. And people had a misnomer that jobs were available on commendation only. We did away with this practice too.

In my opinion we must bring changes in our country. It doesn't augur well for the country to have people accepting status quo due to fear of failure. We must make efforts to transform the system. We must bring about change according to the time.

Hon'ble Speaker,

Agriculture and farming in our country is an age old tradition and a part of our culture. It has been a mainstream activity. Hence our farmers play a crucial role in sustaining our rich cultural heritage. Our sages have chronicled many aspects of agriculture in several scriptures. A lot of excellent experiences have been documented. Even our kings have been known to have plowed fields. Who hasn't heard of the tales of Lord Janak or Lord Krishna and his brother Balram. Every affluent family has engaged in agriculture and farming. It is not just about cultivation of crops. Agriculture has been a crucial part of the Indian culture and its social structure. And that is why we are reiterating that it is inherent in our culture. Our festivals, victory and all other auspicious occasions are linked to reaping of crop and the harvest cycle. This has been our tradition. Our folk songs and music are based on farmer's life and his crops. Our festivals are celebrated as per the seasonal crops. Such is the specialty of our country that even while we shower our blessings and greetings we use the words "dhan-dhaanya" meaning wealth and prosperity. These two words are inseparable. Such is the value and importance of our crops. It is an integral part of our social fabric. Currently the situation is derailed and we have to reinstate decorum with utmost priority.

On the floor of Rajya Sabha, I had deliberated in detail about the issues of small farmers. They constitute 80-85 % of our countries population. We cannot progress any far by eliminating them from the development. We have to think about them with great humility. I have highlighted point wise how this segment of small farmers has faced discrimination in the garb or farming communities. This sector requires huge transformation. And you all will be accountable the day these farmers will raise their heads. I am very mindful of this. The rise in population is diminishing the size of land holdings and which gets further divided within the families. Chaudhary Charan Singh had once said that we have so many farmers but their land ownership is decreasing. That day is not far when they would not be left with enough land to even manoeuvre their own tractors. Their lands would have shrunk so much. Mark the words of Chaudhary Charan Singh himself. When such luminaries raise concerns then it is our moral obligation to find solutions to this glaring problem.

Post independence, in our country we had 28% farm labourers. In the census of the last decade this number rose to 55%. It definitely should be a matter of serious concern for any country. Due to diminishing land size the returns have reduced considerably and these farmers have had to face a lot of crisis. The dismal circumstances compelled them to become bonded labourers in some others agricultural land.

It is rather unfortunate that our agricultural sector is not receiving the magnitude of investment it requires. Government is unable to do enough, and sadly neither our state governments nor the farmers themselves are in a position to do as much. The farmers are barely able to make ends meet and fulfil the requirements of their families with whatever they earn. Hence there is dire need of investments in this sector. We cannot aspire to modernise our agricultural infrastructure until and unless we encourage huge investments in this sector. It is crucial to the development of advance infrastructure such that small farmers may reap benefits. It is high time we strengthened our agricultural sector. It is important to make our farmers self reliant and give them freedom to sell their own produce. We have to make efforts in this direction now. Research is being done on the current trends in the market. We must produce what the market needs and thus create a space in global space for ourselves. We have our specific needs and we should not encourage imports of these items. I remember, when long back I used to work for the Sangathan, I got an opportunity to work for the northern part under Farooq Sahab. A farmer from Haryana took me to his field once. Since he had requested a lot I obviously couldn't turn down his invitation. He had a small land of about 1 or 1.5 acres. But he had progressed a lot. Upon his insistence, I became really curious. He was also excited to share, and hence I eventually agreed to visit. This was about 30-40 years back. Maybe 30 years or so. He had researched on the consumption of exotict varieties of vegetables imported by 5 star hotels of Delhi. If they required baby corns or cherry tomatoes, he would grow them in his small land in restricted environment with the help of some specialists and very soon started supplying to these 5 star hotels of Delhi. We just need to change the system a bit. Had we ever imagined that we would one day grow strawberries in Kutch desert? We thought that strawberries could be cultivated only in cold regions.

It is encouraging to see that strawberry is being cultivated even in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Even in places like Bundelkhand where there is water scarcity farmers have been successfully cultivating it. It only reflects our immense capabilities. We simply need to guide the farmers and motivate them to experiment with new breed of crops. I have strong conviction that our farmers will soon come to the forefront and reimagine their agricultural practices. Indeed, having burnt their fingers in the past it will not be easy to win their trust. We should instil in them self confidence, and with some hand holding and mentoring they are bound to go along the path of development. Its just a matter of their first step. Once convinced they can bring miracles. In the same way, the more we increase investment in the agriculture sector, the more employment can be generated. We can create a space for ourselves in the global markets.

In order to transform our rural economy, agro business industry will also get the necessary boost. Hence, all our efforts and focus should be in this direction to make this sector totally self reliant. Even in several adverse situations our farmers have had record produce. Even during Corona phase several farmers have recorded phenomenal produce. It is the responsibility of each one of us to ensure that the problems of farmers are resolved. We must take adequate steps to cope with the challenges they are posed with. These agricultural reforms are small steps in the right direction. We need to provide the farmers with equal opportunities and advanced technology. This will instill self belief and confidence in them. We need to address these issues proactively and optimism.

If these obsolete thoughts and yardsticks could have improved the situations of the farmers' then it would have been achieved ages back. We have spoken about Second green revolution. We must introduce new strategies for growth and we all must ponder over this. It should not be a matter of politics. It is the need of the hour for the betterment of our nation. And we should all unite for the cause. It is the collective responsibility of ruling as well as opposition. We cannot achieve success and advance our agriculture sector in 21st century with our 18th century thinking. We have to come out of this limiting thought process.

No one wants that our farmers to remain trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty. That they remain deprived of the right to live a quality life. I feel that they should not remain dependent and enslaved. They should not be compelled to live a life on government doles. This is the responsibility of all of us. We must all shoulder this and make our farmers prosper and contribute more in some way or the other in the development of the nation. They are bound to achieve if we provide them all possible growth opportunities.

Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel used to say that if an independent nation continues with the stench of slavery, then the spirit of freedom will not spread far and wide. Until and unless our small farmers get their new rights we cannot boast of complete freedom. Hence we must together bring landmark changes and give the required push to these farmers and prepare them for the long impending race of development. The effort should be to do something good for the welfare and not with any malicious intent.

Our government has supported the small farmers at every steps. We have brought in several such small and big interventions over the last six years to provide support to the farmers from seed to market. For example the dairy and cooperatives sector are robust as well as have strengthened their value chain.

With the interventions by the government this sector has witnesses compelling growth. We can gradually shift focus to fruits and vegetables as well as horticulture and eventually strengthen the grains and cereal segment. These sectors can become very powerful. We have a successful business model and we should implement it. We need to provide them with alternative markets.

Another vital step taken by our government is the formation of ten thousand farmers producers organisation. This will make small farmers emerge as a strong force. Maharashtra has experimented with formation of FPOs, and so has the communist state of Kerala which is working hard

to create FPOs in big numbers. Many other states have also followed suit. Due to this, the farmers will emerge as a unified force to create a market of their choice. After the formation of these 10 thousand FPOs, you will see the power of these small farmers in their villages. Farmers will dictate the market and emerge powerful is my conviction. Through these FPOs, farmer is slated to receive seamless financial aids from banks as well as small warehousing infrastructure support too. If they become bit more powerful, they can also afford their own cold storage facility. Government has allocated one lakh crore worth of fund to empower seven crore sisters associated with Self Help Groups. They are all after all daughters of farmers. In some way or the other they are also associated with farming families. This network is being utilised for the welfare of the farmer's community. They are emerging as big centres of economic activity. I recall once in the Bhalsad tribal region of Gujarat with the support of the SHGs we did a project on the land owned by these tribals which were really small and uneven.

It was an honour that Dr A P J Abdul Kalam had once visited this place to celebrate his birthday. He had said that there is no protocol and he simply desired to spend sometime with these farmers. It was a very successful project and women used to work very hard in that tribal belt. Here they were cultivating mushrooms and cashews here which were of the quality grown in Goa. They had even created a market for themselves. They were small farmers. They had really small land but their hardwork paid dividends and Dr Kalam even wrote about their success story having witnessed it himself. That's why I say that we should surge ahead with new ideas and projects.

We were facing challenges in procurement of pulses. We made a request to farmers in 2014. They worked hard and freed us of the problems and even created a market for themselves. These days I am also noticing how the small farmers are directly selling their produce through online-offline platform eNam. We experimented with Kisan rails and Kisan flights during corona phase. It directly opened up big markets for the small farmers and helped them achieve value for money for their produce. These trains were in a way cold storage on wheels. I would like the ministers in this house to note maybe it seems that these Kisan rails simply were a transportation facility but it connected small farmers from even remote villages to big markets of other states. See the impact. A farmer from Nasik got connected with a businessman of Muzaffamagar. He business was not very big. But, he could send his 30 kgs of pomegranate to a bigger market all at a frugal cost of 124 rupees. Even a courier would have denied transporting a small amount as this. But due to this infrastructure facility a small farmer is now capable of selling his produce in a bigger market directly.

I have seen that someone could send eggs at a minimal cost of 60 rupees. He could send it safely in time and all his product got sold as well. In Devlali, a small farmer could sell Kiwi in Danapur. At a minimal cost of 62 rupees he could get a bigger market in another state for his 60 kgs Kiwi. The Kisan Rail is a small innovation but is facilitating huge transformation. We have seen examples of its success.

Hon'ble Speaker sir,

Chaudhary Charan Singh had written a book on economics of India. In this book he had written and suggested that to provide food entire nation should be considered as one area. In other words, and I quote from this book that there should be no restrictions on transporting goods across state boundaries. Agricultural reforms, Kisan rail, eNam, getting electronic plates for mandis and wholesale marts are small steps to provide bigger opportunities to our small farmers.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

These naysayers have run the nation for past so many decades. I refuse to buy the fact that they were ignorant of the problems of these farmers. They were very much aware, had an understanding too and hence I am reminding them of their own words today. They are not present here I know but in the interest of the nation it is crucial that I must explain.

I am reading a quote—"the state took initiative to amend their state APMC Act in the year 2005 itself providing for direct marketing contract farming setting up of a private market, consumer, farmer markets, e-trading and notified the rules in 2007 to implement the amended provision infact 24 private markets have already come up in the state." Whose were these words? Who is proudly announcing that we have amended this APMC Act? In all 24 such markets are already functional- who is taking pride in this achievement? These are the proud words of Mr Sharad Pawar, Minister of Agriculture in the government of Dr Manmohan Singh. But today they are conveniently refuting it. Hence, I am doubtful of their intentions towards the farmers whom they are now misleading.

The various mandis are fully operational. When they were questioned on the nexus which influences the price of syndicates which is suspected to be created by mandi owners and middlemen, then Mr Sharad Pawar had a very interesting answer. He himself mentioned that APMC reform is being prompted to protect the farmers and give them an alternative market. He had further said that if more businessmen will register then due to increased competition the nexus in the mandi will automatically get destroyed. Hence it is important that we understand things deeply.

All these friends from different states sitting here, have also made small and big efforts to introduce agricultural reforms. We are the ones who have done away with 1500 such laws. We are advocates of progressive politics. We do not want to indulge in regressive politics. There is a saying in Bhojpuri "na khelab, na khelan deb, khel bhi bigadat" meaning that we wont play nor will we allow you to play and over and above will spoil that game too.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

To enhance the capabilities of the nation we require unified contribution of all. Country progresses when all our citizens from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Kutchh to Kamakhya put in their sweat and blood. I would like to remind my friends from Congress Party if public sector is necessary for the country, then participation of the private sector in th national development is equally important. The government encouraged mobile manufacturing. Private parties came, manufacturers came. Today smartphone has reached the poorest of poor families. Competition was encouraged in Telecom sector and today our mobile call cost is reduced to nearly zero and data in India is now cheapest in the entire world. Even our pharmacy or vaccine manufactures, are they all government ventures? If, today India is proving useful to humanity, private sector has a huge role in that. Private enterprises have brought us on the world map and our nation needs to trust its youth. We should repose faith in them rather than demoralising them. We cannot afford to demean them or negate the private activities. The days are gone when only government was responsible for national development.

The world has changed. The country is strengthened by its own society. Everyone should have opportunities. It is old ways of vote bank politics to use derogatory language and declare someone nefarious. I had spoken from the ramparts of the Red Fort that nation needs wealth creators.

How else we generate wealth to distribute for the needs of the poor. How will employment be generated? Is it that bureaucrats will do everything in this country? An IAS will run fertilizer factory? Once he becomes an IAS he has to run a chemical factory or fly the aeroplane? What kind of power have we created? What are we going to achieve by handing over the reins of the country to only bureaucrats? If they are citizens of this country so are the youth of this nation. The more we open up opportunities for them the more we are bound to gain.

Hon'ble Speaker,

What we are witnessing now is because there is no logic to support their stand. They create a wave of apprehensions and flare up the environment thus producing this breed of andolanjivis.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

I honour the sanctity of the farmer's protest and I am using this word with great responsibility. I consider this farmer protest pure. Andolan (protest) is and shall forever remain important in the Indian democracy. But what is the fate of such protests when few agitators use it for their vested interests? Can someone explain to me that in a protest on Three Farm Laws what is the role of marching with photos of convicts and demanding release of rioters, terrorists, naxals and communal forces who are in jail. Isn't this an effort to malign the protest?

Hon'ble Speaker,

Toll plazas in this country are a system unanimously accepted by all governments. Vandalising the toll plaza, capturing it and making it non functional, aren't these attempts to tarnish the ongoing agitation? When several telecom towers were damaged in the land of Punjab was it in consonance with the farmers' demands? It is the andolanjivis who are out with the intention to damage the sacred protest not the protestors. High time our country should realise the difference between andolanjivis and andolankari. We must save the country from these traitors. They engage in spreading lies and rumors, mislead the nation and try to take the country under siege. Our nation is big and so are the aspirations of the common citizens and we should remain focussed in developing ourselves in this direction. There is a large class in our country which can be identified by the trait of always talking the right things that is speaking right. There is no harm in speaking right. But this class detests those who believe in the vision of doing the right things. The advocates of "talking the right things" themselves come in the way when it comes to "doing the right things". We need to be mindful of this difference. They only speak, and rarely believe in doing something meaningful. Those who talk about electoral reforms, themselves protest against One nation one election. These are the same people who speak loud from platforms about gender justice but protest when we try to end Triple Talak. On the one hand they cry loud for environment, but on the other they are the first to flash flags of protest at the site of hydro power or nuclear power. They fuel protests across the country. Tamil Nadu is a victim of this.

In the same lines, first they file a writ, PILs and appeal on the rising pollution in Delhi, while they are same folks of Delhi who stand in solidarity of the defaulters of Parali burning community. Is it not evident that these are attempts to mislead the countrymen and its time we woke up to this and take cognizance of their malefied intentions.

I have been noticing how the agenda of the opposition has changed in the past six years. We have also been in the opposition. You must have noticed then that we were raising voice on the matters of the nation's development, and corner the corrupt leaders of the ruling party. We would strengthen our voices and we would make honest efforts. I am shocked that today opposition is least interested in discussing matters of national development. I keep waiting that they will raise their concerns and I will get a chance to share about the good work we are engaged in. But they rarely give us this opportunity. Since there is no such concern now. They have nothing left to say on these crucial matters. Hence they have stopped asking how many roads or bridges have been constructed, nor do they ask anymore for the status of border management or about the railway lines. They are least interested in discussing these issues now.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

In this 21st century infrastructure is playing a significant role. If India has to progress then it is going to be very important that we strengthen our infrastructure. To ensure robust implementation of Aatmanirbhar Bharat road map, we must all accept that this is the need of the hour.

Only if we have a strong and advanced infrastructure, will our nation have a fast paced all round and broader development. Our efforts should be in this direction. Implications of advanced infrastructure would mean providing new growth opportunities and an enabling environment for the development of the deprived and middle class. It would open up amazing possibilities of employment as well. It has the potential to bring a multiplier effect in the economy. Hence our prime focus should be on ensuring state of art infrastructural development in the country. It is not a mere agenda for enhancing the vote bank, by announcing on paper that a new road will be built to win an election. On another occasion win the elections why painting white strips on the same road. Third time just put some soil there. This infrastructure development is not for the purpose of manipulating peoples mandate. It is to honestly to improve our standards of living. Hence we are asserting the importance of infrastructure. With a special provision for schemes worth 110 lakh crore, we have made an ambitious allocation in the current budget to lead the nation towards growth and development.

With Metro trains in 27 cities of the country, fast internet in more than 6 lakh villages, One Nation One Grid in the field of electricity, we have been successful in realizing this vision. Today, India has taken its place among the top five countries in the world in terms of renewable energy including solar power. India will soon have the world's largest solar and wind hybrid power. We are seeing a new boom in development, as per the new standards.

We have noticed unequal growth in different parts of the country especially Eastern India. If we want to develop the eastern India then we have to bring it to the level of economic development of western India. This way together the country will enhance its internal capabilities. Therefore, we have laid special emphasis on development of our Eastern states to bring them into the mainstream. Be it laying of gas pipeline, construction of roads and airport, railway lines, providing internet connectivity in the and even a humongous project of water ways to connect north east to other states. And I am hopeful we are focussed to lead the nation to a balanced growth. We are ensuring that no part of the country remains untouched in this journey of growth development.

Such is our idea of achieving a progressive and developed nation. Therefore, we are paying more attention to eastern India and working on a mission mode. We have successfully established a network of CNG, PNG, City gas Distribution across a dozen districts. This network of gas

pipeline has given push to the fertilizer manufacturing sector in these states. Many fertilizer factories which had to be closed down earlier have been revived. We were determined to once again open up opportunities for these factories by enhancing the gas and pipeline infrastructure.

Honorable Speaker Sir,

Since past several years we have been hearing about a dedicated freight corridor. What was the state of the dedicated freight corridor when we took charge? Work was complete for only about one kilometre. Today approximately 600 kilometers have been made functional within the last six years and loading of goods are being done in that section. During the UPA days border infrastructure was completely ignored and handled irresponsibly. For the security of any country this is critical. Such matters cannot be discussed publicly in the country as it is related to security of the nation. It is a matter of deep concern. They did not deem it important and did not bother as there is no population or potential vote bank there. Just the army men there hence will see later. Unfortunately, even a defence minister once said in the Parliament that border infrastructure needn't be enhanced lest the enemy country use it for their benefit. It cannot get more shameful than this. We stood against this thought process and have met the expectations and targets set for development of our border infrastructure.

Bridges have been constructed on LAC. My estimate is that work on more than 75 bridges are speeding up. We have already constructed several hundreds of KM of roads for this. We have already accomplished approximately 75% of our commitments and we will continue to do so in other parts of the country. We all are aware of the dismal state of Atal Tunnel in Himachal Pradesh. This was a dream project conceptualised during Atalji's lifetime. Sadly, the project got stuck in red tapism and remained unfulfilled. For a brief period, a small part was achieved but got stuck again. For one reason or the other this project did not see the light of the day. In the last six years we pursued and persevered and today the tunnel is functional for public use. Country's army as well as citizens are freely moving there. The roads which used to remain closed for traffic for over six months are now free for travel and the Atal tunnel has come as a boon for them.

In the same way, I would like to clarify that when the country faces any crisis, we are capable of handling it ourselves. Our armed forces are fully capable of tackling the worst of threats. Our army is committed to uphold the pride of our nation and I trust that they will never bow down to adversities. They have been rendering their services with utmost dedication and integrity. In the most adverse climatic conditions also they proactively fulfil their duties. We are very proud of our highly competent jawans and armed forces. With confidence and grit the nation makes crucial decisions for the progress and development of the country. I had once heard a ghazal. Though I am not much inclined towards this but these lines resonated with me. The lines were –“main jise odhta- bicchata hun wo ghazal aapko sonata hun”. Meaning to say I shall sing you the tales of the life I have lived. I feel that those friends who left us, they told us tales of the days they have lived, in the things they have lived and grown up with. They keep sharing those anecdotes of what they did during their lifetimes. So I think now it is time to move on and march ahead with a lot of courage and grit. In the wake of the new world order post corona, I once again reiterate that we have to shun the regressive mindset of “nothing can change” and “its Ok”. We are marching ahead with the confidence in the capabilities of 130 crore Indians. Sure there will be millions of problems but then there are billions of solutions too.

We are a strong nation and we have to trust our constitutional framework while treading on the path of growth and development. I have faith that we will move ahead with this in mind. It is true that middle class culture is over now. The middle class of the country is going to play a pivotal role in this journey of development. Hence the government is working at a fast pace for its betterment. For this the government has introduced all kinds of pertinent judicial infrastructure.

Hon'ble Chairman,

Government is confidently making constant endeavours to establish an ecosystem of growth and progress in the country. I am deeply indebted to the Hon'ble President for presenting his points clearly on many of these issues. Those with a political agenda, my best wishes to them. But we are marching ahead with a national agenda. And we shall continue to do so. Once again I would like to invite the farmers of this country to a dialogue with an intention to resolve the issue together. With this expectation I once again conclude with a note of gratitude for our Hon'ble President for his speech.

Thank you!