



English rendering of the Text of PM's remarks during the welcome of Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu, in the Rajya Sabha

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Hon'ble Chairman, heartiest congratulations and good wishes on behalf of the House and on behalf of the countrymen!

Today, the 11th August, reminds us of a significant event in history. On this day, a youngster aged 18 years, Khudiram Bose, was sent to the gallows. It tells us about the struggle for independence and the sacrifices and reminds us of our responsibility towards the nation.

Respectable Shri Venkaiah Naidu has become the first Vice President of the country, who was born in independent India. I think maybe he is the only Vice President who has been associated with this environment for so many years and knows the nuances of the House. The Country has got a Vice President who is familiar with everybody and everything - from the members to the committees, to the proceedings of the House.

His public life started with the JP movement. During his student days, Jayaprakash Narayan led a nationwide agitation for good governance; and he proved himself as a student leader in Andhra Pradesh. Since then he started developing his personality, be it in the Vidhan Sabha or the Rajya Sabha, and had also expanded his field of work. And today we all have elected him and handed him over the responsibility for this position.

Venkaiah ji is the son of a farmer. I have had the privilege of working with him for many years. Be it for a village, for the poor, or for the farmers, he had been providing his inputs all the time while studying these topics very closely. He was the Urban Development Minister in the Cabinet too. But I always felt that during the discussions in the cabinet he used to talk more about farmers and the problems of rural areas than the subjects related to urban areas. This topic was close to his heart probably because of his family background and childhood which was associated with villages.

As Venkaiah ji has taken over the office of the Vice President, it is our responsibility to familiarize the whole world with it. There are also responsibilities which should be viewed in isolation from the politics. India's democracy is very mature. Indian constitution is very powerful. The significance of the constitution that our great men had bequeathed to us is such that the people who have the constitutional posts in India today are those who were born in rural areas or had poverty stricken family background; they have not come from any rich family. The presence of people from humble background in the highest posts of the country for the first time itself demonstrates the dignity of the constitution of India and the maturity of India's democracy and this pride is the pride of the 1.25 Crore people of India. Thus, I can clearly see the inheritance that our forefathers have given us. Once again I would like to bow down those constitution makers.

Venkaiah ji is a great personality with austerity and great oratory skills. He possesses these rich endowments in his personality and we are familiar with his debating skills. And sometimes when he makes speeches in Telugu, it seems that he is running super-fast. But for that there should be clarity in thought and the ability to connect with the audience. It is not about playing with words; those who are associated with the world of oratory are well aware that just playing with words can never touch anybody's heart. But when one expresses his ideas with conviction which are based on a vision and beliefs, then the person touches the heart of the people. And Venkaiah ji has always been successful in this regard.

It is also true that there is no such MP today, who doesn't appeal to the government for the development of rural areas day in and day out - be it the Government of Dr. Manmohan Singh ji or mine. One such demand is for the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in their respective areas. It is a matter of pride for all the MPs that the idea of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was envisaged by our very Vice-President, the Venerable Venkaiah Ji. This can only happen when one can empathise with the poor, the farmer, and the oppressed and is determined to take them out of their problems.

Today, while Vankaiah ji is amongst us as the Vice President, we might face a little problem in adjusting in this House for some time because just like the lawyers in the Court feel strange when a lawyer from the Bar becomes a judge; a similar feeling may develop that he used to argue and debate with us in the House till recently, but now he is there as the Vice President! So some of us, especially for the Members of this House, who have worked with him as a friend and a colleague for so many years, may feel odd but it is the uniqueness of our democratic system that we develop our style of working within the system.

I believe that a person like him who has come from within the system and has been in the Rajya Sabha for so many years shall show us the path and guide us in the House as the Chairman of the House. I have full faith and I believe that a positive change is to come. And today as Venkaiah ji is accepting this dignified post, I would quote a few lines:

‘अमल करो ऐसा अमन में,

अमल करो ऐसा अमन में,

जहां से गुजरे तुम्हारी नज़रें,

उधर से तुम्हें सलाम आए।”

And I would like to add -

“अमल करो ऐसा सदन में,

जहां से गुजरे तुम्हारी नज़रें,

उधर से तुम्हें सलाम आए।”

Heartiest congratulations and thanks a lot!

AKT/SH

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