



English rendering of text of PM's Speech at 3rd Anniversary of Swachh Bharat Mission

Posted On: 02 OCT 2017 4:57PM by PIB Delhi

All the Swachhagrahi brothers and sisters present here,

Today is 2nd October; it's the birth anniversary of venerated Bapu, and also the birth anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri. How far we have come in the last three years? I still remember that I was in the United States to attend a meeting at United Nations and I came back very late in the night of the 1st October and in the morning of the 2nd October I came out to clean with a broom. However, at that time all the news papers, media and all our friends from allied parties, I mean all political parties, all of them criticised me so much saying: the 2nd October was a holiday and we had spoiled the holiday of kids. Whether the kids will go to school or not? Why kids were engaged in this work? Lot of such things happened.

And it's my nature that I tolerate lot of things silently because my responsibility is such that I should tolerate and gradually I'm also improving my capacity for forbearance. However, today after three years; we kept working on this thing without wavering, without any reluctance and we persisted on this thing because I had full faith in the teachings of Bapu, because the path shown by Bapu can never be wrong.

I still have the same belief, however, it doesn't mean that there are no challenges. There are challenges but can we allow the country to remain like this just because there are challenges. Just because there are challenges, shall we only take up those things that will ensure regular praise for us? Shall we run away from this kind of work, shall we? And I feel that, today, those citizens who have been saying this thing in one voice. It's not like that there was no dirtiness in front of our eyes. It's not like that we too were not responsible for spreading the dirtiness in some way and it's not like that we don't like cleanliness either. There cannot be a human being who doesn't like cleanliness.

If you go to a railway station and there are four benches but two of them are not clean then you don't sit there, you sit on a good place. Why? Because our basic nature prefers cleanliness. However, the only gap that remains in our country is the lack of feeling that I myself should do this thing. There are no differences in the country over the issue that there should be cleanliness. The problem was always like that who should do it? And let me tell you one more thing and I have no hesitation in saying this thing, and it's possible that tomorrow I may face even more criticism but why should we hide anything from our countrymen? Even if a thousand Mahatma Gandhis come, even if a lakh Narendra Modis come, all the chief ministers come forward, all the governments join hands even then the dream of cleanliness can never be realised, it can never be realised. However, if 1.25 billion Indians come forward then this dream can be realised in no time.

Unfortunately, we have made plenty of things the responsibility of the government, we take them as the government's duty. As long as these are considered the responsibility of common man till then there will no problem. You see, Kumbh fair is being organised. Every day the people equal to the population of a small country of Europe gather on the banks of river Ganga. However, they manage all these things themselves, they do their own things and it is going on from centuries.

If we move forward by accepting the strength of the society, move forward by accepting the people's participation, move forward by reducing the government's role and increasing the society's role; then this movement will continue to succeed despite questions being raised. I'm confident of this thing. And today I'm happy that there are some people those still make fun of it, those who criticise it and they are the ones who never came forward to participate in the cleanliness campaign. It's their choice, they may have some reservations. And I'm confident that by the time of completion of five years the country's media will not publish this thing that who were working, who have been participating in the cleaning programme. The photos of those people are going to be published who were running away from this campaign, who were against it. Their photos are about to be published because when the country accepts something then you may or may not like it but you are forced to associate yourself with the issue.

Today, this cleanliness campaign, it no longer belongs to venerated Bapu, it no longer belongs to Government of India or state governments or municipalities. Today, the cleanliness campaign has become this country's common man's own dream. And whatever success has been achieved so far, it's not my slightest claim that that success belongs to the government. This success doesn't belong to Government of India or to the state governments, this success belongs to those countrymen who crave for cleanliness.

We have got self rule, and the tool for this self rule was passive resistance. The tool for great India is cleanliness. If Satyagrahi was at the centre of self rule then Swachhagrahi (who insists on cleanliness) is at the centre of a great India. And we too know this thing that whenever we visit some country of the world and when we see the cleanliness of that place then after coming back we discuss this that how clean it was, I was so impressed by the cleanliness. And when people tell me these things then I ask them: You must have felt good after seeing the cleanliness of that country. Did you see anyone throwing the garbage? They reply that we didn't see any such thing. Then I tell them precisely that is our problem.

And that is why we did not discuss the issue openly, I don't know why were we afraid to discuss this thing. Politicians and governments did not discuss the issue as they were apprehensive in case it becomes their responsibility. Oh brother; if it becomes your responsibility then let it be so. What's the problem? We are accountable people, our accountability is there.

And today what is the situation due to cleanliness? This ranking for the cleanliness that is taking place: which city is cleanest of all, which ones are the second and the third? And when their rankings are declared then it is being discussed in every city. A pressure is being created on the politicians, on the governments from the bottom that look that city got good marks in terms of

cleanliness. What are you doing? Then civil society also comes in the picture saying: look, this was behind us, it has beaten us; let us do something. A kind of positive, competitive atmosphere is being created. And a positive result of that thing is also being reflected in this entire system.

It's true that the toilets were constructed but they were not used. But when these kind of news come in then it's not something bad. They wake us up, we should not get angry due to them. Yes, it would have been better if they mention this thing that: look, this is the responsibility of the society, of the family, of the individual that they stress upon using the toilets.

I'm always there, earlier I used to work with a social organisation, I joined politics very late. I was working in Gujarat, there was an accident involving Machu Dam in Morvi, thousands of people were killed, the entire city was submerged in the water so I was deployed for service, for cleaning the city. All the work related to cleaning the city were going on, they went on for nearly a month. Later, we people, some members of the civil society and also through the NGO it was decided that we will construct houses for those whose homes have been destroyed. So we adopted a village. We collected the money from the people and we wanted to rebuild the village; it was a small village, there might have been some 350-400 houses. When we were designing the layout then I insisted a lot on this thing that in any case there must be a toilet. Then the villagers used to say that: we don't need toilet, we have a big open field here, please don't construct the toilet, instead just increase the size of the room little bit. But I told them that I would not compromise on this thing. We will construct a room as per the funds available with us but the toilets will be constructed in any case. So, in any case they were going to get it free of cost therefore they did not argue much and it was constructed.

And when I again visited that area nearly after 10-12 years then I felt the need to meet old associates as I had worked in that area for several months, so I went to see them. And after visiting that place, I regretted a lot as goats were kept in all those toilets constructed by us. So this is the tendency of the society. It's not the fault of that person who constructed it, neither it is a fault of the government if it insists on this thing. The society has its own nature. We are required to bring about the changes while understanding these limitations.

Can anyone tell me that whether all the schools in India have been constructed as per the requirement or not? Whether teachers have been employed as per the requirement or not? Whether all the facilities, books etc. have been provided to the schools as per the requirement are not? They are there in large quantities. However, given the status of facilities the status of education is low. So the government after making all these efforts, after spending the money and constructing the buildings, after appointing the teachers; and if it gets the cooperation of the society then it won't take much time to achieve 100% literacy. The same infrastructure, the same number of teachers can achieve 100% literacy but it is not possible without the cooperation of society.

If the government thinks that the task will be accomplished if we construct the buildings, if we pay salary to teachers. Yes, we can take satisfaction that earlier it was this much and we have done that much. But if there is people's participation, if a kid takes admission in a school then it stops attending the class. And now even parents don't ask him to go to school. The issue of toilet is also similar to this. So cleanliness as a responsibility, the more we create this kind of atmosphere then everyone will also think 50 times before doing something wrong.

And you see, our kids, small children, the households that have sons, grandsons and granddaughters. In a way they are the biggest ambassador of my cleanliness mission. These kids, if grandfather throws something somewhere then these kids ask them to remove it, they tell them not to throw those things there. This kind of atmosphere should be created in every household. If kids accept something then why can't we do the same?

How many kids have been dying just because of not cleaning their hands, because of not being able to clean their hands with soap before having their meal? But as soon as you mention this topic, people will say: how can we buy soap; how can we get water; Modi will only deliver lecture; how the people will wash their hands? Oh brother, if you can't wash your hands then leave it, but those who can wash their hands, at least, let them do that.

Look, there may be thousand reasons to criticise Modi. Everyday, I give you some or some other reason, you should utilise that. But we should not make fun of such things or do politics over the need to bring about the change in the society. We should follow a collective responsibility and you will see that things will change.

You see, these kids have done a great job. I had been posting the pictures of these kids on social media on daily basis, I used to post them with a lot of pride. I, personally, don't not know these kids. But when I saw the picture of that kid who has shown enthusiasm for cleanliness, I used to post them and they used to reach to millions and millions of people. It's okay brother! Why is he doing that? This essay competition, whether the cleanliness can be ensured through essay competitions? An immediate response would be that it can't ensure cleanliness. Cleanliness can be ensured through drawing competition? No.

Ideological movement is also necessary for cleanliness. Development does not take place by mere development of the system unless an ideological movement is also being launched. So this effort to produce films, the efforts to bring creativity, essay writing; all these things are an attempt to provide an ideological basis to cleanliness. And when something finds a place in our minds in the form of an idea, finds a place as an essence then it becomes very easy to follow that thing. So this is the reason behind associating these activities with this campaign. And I would like; you see, there was a time when I felt a lot of pain; and it's not the fault of those who were doing those things therefore I don't blame them. However, it's a commercial world, everyone has a tendency to push those things where there is a possibility of making some money and everyone will be interest in making some money.

If you watch the television programmes that were produced four-five years ago in which if some kids were shown performing the job of cleaning in a school then it used to become a news story; teachers were criticised for making the kids to do the cleaning job in the schools. And it used to provide the opportunities to parents; they used to rush to the school asking: 'Will you educate our kids or will you make them to do the job of cleaning?' Today, this has brought about such a big change that if kids are doing the cleaning of a school then it becomes the headline of TV news. It's not a small thing.

And I think what would have happened if the media had not made this entire movement its own agenda? It's three years since then and the print and electronic media of this country has completely associated itself with the cleanliness programme; and at times they are two steps ahead of us.

And I have seen that these kids, the films about these kids have been given regular slots by some TV channels. This is the issue: how to involve all the people? The more they get involved, and you see that now we got that opportunity for the progress of our country, we must take our country to that destination by 2022. We don't have to remain silent like this. And if want to do this thing then it's a big thing.

Any person, if our house is not clean and some guest visits us; even if they come for some marriage proposal but if things are scattered here and there then he will think that everything else is fine, the boy is also well educated but the house is in such a poor shape; so why should we marry our daughter in this family? And he will go back. If someone comes from outside and visits India, sees Agra, Taj Mahal, what a wonderful places, but if he looks around the monuments then he will be puzzled. So how can we tolerate such a situation?

Who is at fault? My point is not this. And it is possible if all of us work together; this thing has been demonstrated by my countrymen in the last three years; it's been demonstrated by the civil society and by the media. And if there is so much support and even then if we are not able to build momentum in these things then one day all of us will have to hold ourselves accountable.

I want that all of us should stress upon these things, we should take them forward. With the help of data, we just explained our progress to you people, but even now, despite building the momentum this is something which must be done on regular basis only then it will succeed.

There are temples in the villages but not everyone goes to the temple. It's human nature, some don't go to temples. Despite a temple being there in the villages, some people don't go. Same is true about mosques and gurudwaras. People may attend one or two functions there. So this is the tendency of the society, the life goes on and such people move on in their own world. We have to involve them, we have to make efforts. And when we make efforts then things will happen.

As per the data, it appears that the speed is fine, direction is fine too. A campaign to construct toilets in the schools was launched. And when our daughters go to school then they are mindful of these things. They ask questions, they check the facilities and after that they take admission. Earlier it was not like this, it was like that: we will manage. Why should we manage? Why should our daughters tolerate these things?

And you can never realise the power of cleanliness unless you look it from the point of view of a woman. You think about that mother in whose house everyone has a right to throw waste material and other things here and there. That mother does it all alone, when all other go out for work or go to school, she keeps cleaning the house for two hours, she keeps doing this back-breaking work for hours, two hours. You should ask that mother: how do you feel when we put our things in order before going out? That mother would certainly say that it was back-breaking work, it's good that you put your things in order so I'm able to finish the work in 10 minutes. You please tell me, be it a mother of middle class, higher-middle class or lower middle class or be it a poor mother whose half a day was spent in cleaning; if all the members of the family keep their things at right place, they may or may not help that mother in cleaning the house but if they just keep their things in order then what a big relief it will be for that mother? Whether we could not have done this thing earlier?

And that is why I have only one yardstick about cleanliness in my mind. You can imagine this thing. I want to ask the men. You urinate on any intersection. Please forgive me for using this kind of language. You must have seen the situation of those mothers and sisters who sometimes go out to market to buy something. They too will have to face nature's calls. But they don't relieve them in the open, they suppress these things till the time they get back home. What are these values? And if these values are there in her daughter, in her sister in her family then how it is that men don't have them? Because, as a man we believe that we have all these liberties. And unless these changes take place we cannot understand the cleanliness in real terms.

You see that those mothers and sisters living in the villages, even the mothers and sisters living in slums in cities, they wake up early and go out, go into woods to relieve themselves. Since there are risks then they go out in a group of 5-7 people and if they feel the nature's call after the day break then they wait till the evening; you just imagine what kind of suppression of the body it is. What will happen to the health of that mother who needs to defecate at 9-10 in the morning but she is not able to go out due to daylight, who continues to wait till 7 in the evening thinking she would go out to relieve her in the dark. You tell me, what would be the situation of that mother? If you have this kind of sensitivity then you don't have to watch TV channels, don't have to listen to a TV anchor, you will not need a Prime Minister or a state government to understand cleanliness; this in itself will become a part of your responsibility.

And that is why I'd like to call upon the countrymen. Unicef has released a report recently, it has conducted a survey of nearly 10,000 those households who have constructed toilets, they compared the present situation with the earlier one. And it is their estimate that on an average it entails the expenditure of 50 thousand rupees per annum over treatment of diseases per family due to lack of toilet or lack of awareness about cleanliness. If the head of the family falls ill then all other things just stop. And if the ailment is severe then two members of the family are required to look after him. He needs to borrow money at a high interest from a money lender for the treatment. So in way, a burden of nearly Rs. 50 thousand falls on a poor family.

But if we adopt cleanliness as our religion, if we accept cleanliness as our own responsibility then we can save the burden of Rs. 50,000 on a family and also lessen the burden of those difficulties that fall on the family due to that disease. We may or may not put money into his pocket but these fifty thousand rupees are of great help to him in his life. So these surveys, this information that is given to us, all of us should follow that as a social responsibility.

A lot of people meet me after becoming the Prime Minister. Political workers, retired officers and also some of those who work in the social sector meet me. They are very polite and very affectionate. At the time of leaving, they politely hand over their bio data and ask me to get back to them if I need their assistance for anything. They say: 'I'm always there for anything.' They are so polite that I also ask them politely to spare some time for cleanliness. And they don't come back again.

You please tell me, they had come to me seeking some work, they came with nice bio-data but after considering all these things if I just asked them to do this thing then they don't come back again. See, no work is small or big, no work is lowly. If we lend our support then it will become big so we should give it that respect.

I'd like to heartily congratulate all those who have worked hard in these 15 days to once again provide momentum to this thing. However, all these things, and I still say that it's just a beginning, a lot still needs to be done. Those kids who have participated in this thing with enthusiasm, those school teachers who encouraged them – some would have produced films, some would have written essays, some of them dedicated themselves in the cleaning, some schools even went out, spent up to half an hour in the morning to create atmosphere in different parts of villages.

I'm surprised; some people; statues of great souls; we, all the politicians, all the political parties fight so much for installation of the statues of great souls. However, after the installation no one is willing to take the responsibility of cleaning that statue. Everyone feels that he or she follows those leaders and their statues should be installed. However, the people from the same community, their own followers are not interested in cleaning the statues; and then it is open for any bird to sit on top of it and do whatever it feels like.

These, these are the evils of our social life. And that is why it is responsibility of all of us. It is not my point of view that someone is good or bad. We all have to think this thing. And if all of us will reflect then results will be certainly there. And that is why I convey my best wishes to all the countrymen, to all the Satyagrahis and Swachchagrahis. We should once again dedicate ourselves to the nation on the occasion of the birth anniversaries of venerated Bapu and Lal Bahadur Shastri; we should give priority to cleanliness; and cleanliness is something that can be done by anybody who may not be capable of, who cannot do anything else for the service of the country. This is such a simple thing. As Gandhi Ji had said during the freedom movement: 'If you can't do anything else then you just spin the wheel, this is your contribution towards freedom.'

I feel that every Indian can do such a small thing to make a Great India (Shreshtha Bharat) that I will spare 5, 10, 15 minutes, half an hour, I will do something. And you will see that there will be a natural change in the country and one thing is very clear that in the world we will have to look at India through the eyes of the world. We must do that and in any case we will accomplish that.

Thank you very much.

AKT/SH/SK

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