



English rendering of PM's address to Young CEOs at the "Champions of Change" initiative organized by NITI Aayog

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Since yesterday, you all were putting your precious time on the question of what should be there in the country and how. Based on your experiences in your field, you were viewing different aspects of the country from a different perspective.

You must have seen that the government's decision making team or the policymakers are present among us. And I have tried to understand the nuances of the things that you have told me. And I believe that these efforts will be successful. One can understand the way of thinking of the government by being a part of the government structure. We get a 360 Degree View of every subject, problem or any suggestion due to this interaction. And when policies are made, a road map is created to execute these policies, where these things are very useful. Obviously all the things that come to the mind of the Prime Minister cannot be implemented. If this happens then the governance machinery of the country will go haywire. The prime minister also has to do away with some of the ideas. You also know very well, that some of the things that you have suggested shall be used while the rest may not be used. But whatever shall be used will definitely help to transform the earlier mechanisms, policies and laws. You have a different way of presenting your views. You are different in your development. Your activities emphasise upon 'result oriented outcomes'. The government by and large focuses upon human welfare and public interest. You focus upon what the target was and how much was achieved and how far the progress was made. This is quite natural. But for the government it's not the progress of the government which matters but of the country. It is the government's responsibility to see where the poorest of the poor of the country has reached.

We fully understand what everyone thinks. They say - "the Government does not understand what we are seeing every day"; but they are the very people who are not contributing anything. It is in the mind of every citizen. But if you take the person along to solve their problems then you may have noticed that even the way of providing suggestions change. If the government was your client, your way of dealing would have been different. But when the government becomes your partner in business then you would have thought of ways to accomplish tasks in a more serious manner. I only wish that every citizen of this country should feel that this country is his. This country has to move forward with my contribution. There are problems. May be God has not given the people in the Government as much intellect as has been given to me. So he should feel, 'wherever I am, I should do something about it and contribute to it'.

During our struggle for independence, there wasn't a single year when a voice of protest was not raised. Constant efforts were made in every era whenever there was an attempt to suppress the people. In those thousand years, there were thousands of people who were ready to die for the country's freedom. If one was hanged that day, another would be ready to face the gallows the very next day and so on. An environment was being created through these ceaseless efforts for the freedom of the country. And everyone thought that by sacrificing his life he was serving the country and how Mahatma Gandhi had transformed everything. If we understand these things then we can easily understand the way to utilise the years from 2017 to 2022 in the right earnest. And so what did Gandhi ji do? There were lakhs of people who had died for the country. There were thousands who had spent their youth in the Andaman & Nicobar prisons. But Gandhi instilled the desperate feeling to get freedom in every Indian. For example, even if the teacher was teaching, he had to teach with the purpose of attaining freedom. Similarly, if you are engaged in the sanitation job, you should have this feeling that you are doing it for the country's independence; if you are a farmer, you should think that this work is for the country.

Throughout India, this sentiment was aroused in everyone's heart by Gandhi ji that whatever he was doing was for the country. It was difficult for the British to understand this thing. It was easy for the British rulers to shoot a person who took to roads; it was easy to put a person in the prison. But it was difficult to stop a person who was working at his home with this feeling of freedom in his heart. Gandhiji converted this into a mass movement in this manner. And you all know the great results that we got out of it. Every government has tried to carry our country forward. Each government has tried in its own way. But after independence, development could not be transformed into a mass movement. We have to take the country there. We will continue to do this. If every doctor works with the spirit to work hard to solve the problem of malnutrition, to improve child health care, to reduce the Maternal Mortality Rate, Infant Mortality Rate to global standards then no one can stop the country from transforming. Who needs the government then? The government works only as a catalytic agent. The country can progress on its own. Today we are in the year 2017. Seventyfive years have passed since Quit India Movement and 70 years since independence. In 2022 we shall celebrate 75 years of independence.

The country can be elevated to new heights. I want to create such an environment. You can also become a soldier of a modern and prosperous India. You can become a powerful soldier whose name will shine in the world. But we have to do it together by touching upon every issue one after another.

We should have the conviction that we can find a solution to the problems. I was watching your presentations on how to double farmers' incomes. You have presented very well.

I consider you as my team. I want to take my country forward and I need your help in the process. Let us work together. Your ideas should become a part of my plan and my ideas should help you. In this way, we can bring about a great change.

Now look at a small issue in the Agriculture Sector. Now, we are the people who are always engaged in the discussion of Export and Import. So tell me, our country where agriculture is the mainstay of the economy; whose soul is the rural India; why we are still importing timber? Can the law be changed by the government to double the income of the farmers by encouraging them to plant timbers along the borders of his farm land? He should have the right to cut and sell it. Will my country's timber imports stop or not? Unfortunately we waste so much of land between the two fields by planting useless thorny plants as fences. But if we replace those with timbers then tell me whether the country's timber imports will reduce or not? The land will be utilised to its maximum potential. We can bring about a great change.

We want to double farmers' income. But we will not be able to do that if we don't consider Animal husbandry, Poultry farming, fisheries, ornamental fishing in the process. We need to have value addition and need to think of how our agricultural products can capture the world market. The population in the Gulf countries is growing. They have oil but scanty water. No matter how much oil is there, water is essential for survival. And so they have no choice but to import agricultural products. Can't we study their needs for agro-products? The people associated with agro-economics can provide guidance for value addition of agricultural products and make that product available in those countries in the way they want. If we can give assurance to the Gulf countries of their agricultural requirements, they will give us assurance for our energy requirements. In a way, a win-win situation will be created. I have such a team in front of me which can come out with such new things. The Indian government is organising a global event in November in which food processing will be the focus. We have opened up food processing industry to 100% FDI. Doubling Farmers' income is not just a slogan; we are trying to develop the infrastructure in farm sector keeping that in mind. Annually about one lakh crore rupees worth of agro products like fruit, vegetables or grains, is getting wasted because we do not have proper infrastructure. Now the infrastructure development in itself is a great opportunity to open up employment opportunities. Please tell me whether there will be multiple benefits or not if financial Institutions, private players, people in the real estate and everyone come together for this purpose? So with this approach we are trying to address the requirements of the country. We should expand our business and bring about a change in the country's Quality of Life.

If these things are taken into consideration in the journey of our development, I believe that the desired results will definitely follow. You must have been listening to the discussions since yesterday; this government has taken many important decisions and revolutionary changes have been made.

You must be aware that our farmers had faced a lot of trouble because of delays in getting Urea and if the farmer does not get urea on time then it is useless for him. I remember when I was the Chief Minister I used to write to the Prime Minister about the delays in getting Urea, the quantity required and so on. When I became the Prime Minister, even I received several such letters from the Chief Ministers in the initial 3 months. The police used to even Lathi Charge for urea. Farmers had to queue up for three days for obtaining urea. You must have seen in your televisions long queues outside the banks for 3 days after demonetization but unfortunately our farmers standing in similar queues for getting urea were not shown on televisions. This is where the difference lies in looking at the problems. This government has taken some initiatives. One of the biggest initiatives is rationalizing the price of obtaining gas for production of Urea. Earlier the prices were diverse. Someone used to get the gas at one price and someone else would get it at different terms and conditions. We made similar batches so that everyone could get the benefit through competitiveness.

Secondly, you will be surprised to know how things used to be. If the production capacity was 10 million metric tons and five per cent more was produced, the government used to provide a certain sum of money. So depending on the production the government used to give the money. We came to power and changed all the rules. As a result, today, not only is the government's money saved but the productivity has also increased just because of policy intervention. We later started the concept of Neem-coated urea. There was never any shortage of Urea but it hardly reached the fields. Most of the Urea used to go to the chemical industry because it was subsidized and the industry used to sell the product after value addition around the world. We added Neem coating to Urea. Neem coated Urea will be of no use to the chemical industry, except its use for the soil. Thus, the diversion of Urea for other purposes has stopped. Thus we brought an end to end solution for this problem. I don't view things in isolation but as a whole. Today if I say something, people won't have the slightest inkling as to what exactly I intend to do.

When I say that if you have unaccounted money with you, the government has started a scheme, kindly declare your wealth, but even after repeated requests when the declarations are not made, the event like that of 8th November 2016 happens (demonetization). And so we do not do anything in bits and pieces. It is clear in my mind that after one step what the next step should be. Everything is well planned. Therefore, I say that the government has taken many initiatives.

Now tell me whether you want to move towards Digital India or not? We are working on the Optical Fibre Network under Digital India. You will be surprised to know that when I came to power only about 360 villages were connected to the optical fibre network. Now this has reached close to lakhs of villages within 3 years. The changed approach has brought results. Now we want to move towards a less-cash society. It's not that you make e-payment to your employees and the employees are clueless about going cashless with that money. They need to be taught about the BHIM app. There will be small businessmen who should also be taught. Help them to download BHIM app and there will not be anybody who will still be using cash for transactions. Tell me whether the country will be served or not? Thus, I want your partnership in this work.

Now, there is a culture of exchanging gifts among companies during Diwali. Can we change this approach? Can we make it a habit of giving that gift, which will help illuminating the house of the poor during Diwali? You provide coupons to people for purchasing various products like offering a package of Rs 2000 for buying your products. Why not give coupons for purchasing khadi clothes? I am not saying that the person who receives khadi should wear only khadi clothes. But if you have fifty types of fabric, then let one of the fabrics also be khadi. I am addressing the poverty of the country in a way. I am positively addressing the poor of the country. You will be able to see the change in yourself by doing this. This does not mean that you have to compromise on the quality or your happiness. I will not make any such request to you. But let us create an environment where we also think about the poor people. Now you will be happy to know about our new scheme. Now, if the government wants to make a purchase then there is a long procedure - it is taken on paper; the tenders will be floated, the terms and conditions of the tenders will come out, and then it is to be seen whether the minister's nephew's tender has come or not. The country has experienced several malpractices. Transparency is the need of the hour. Now, any person shall have the ability to supply his product to the government. The government has created a small platform called GeM. I request you to go to that portal and see how all the government departments have put their requirements on the site - 25 napkins, two dustbins, Waste paper baskets, 25 brooms, 100 chairs etc. The full details of the goods along with the standards are put up on the portal and the supplier can be anybody.

The rule of the government is that for any product the departments should go for the cheapest product without compromising the quality. Now we have done away with tenders and everything is available online. You will be surprised to know that only four to six months have passed since the launch of this experiment. Despite this, the government has already made a purchase of about 1000 crore rupees through this GeM portal. And you will be surprised to know that the number of suppliers are 28,000 who have given things worth one thousand crore rupees. Meaning, even small time suppliers were able to supply their goods. By the old system, probably the payment would have been Rs. 1700 crore and the quality of products we would have got, could be anybody's guess! What I mean to say is that things are changing.

How can we use technology to bring in transparency? Now you might know some people. Suppose the son of your employee is producing some item. You can ask him to get registered in the GeM portal where he could sell his product to the government. This is how we can promote entrepreneurship. How can we change the tourism sector? I have seen that most of your presentations contained this topic on tourism. What is the biggest challenge to the tourism sector? The question is a bit shocking to me. Did we ever think that our psyche is doing so much harm to us? I am not holding you responsible for anything. I am just expressing my thoughts. Last year in my programme 'Mann ki Baat', I asked the children going on vacations to upload photos of the places they were visiting with this Hash tag. I was surprised to see millions of photographs on my website. Whenever I get time I go through those photographs. There are so many places in our country which people are getting aware of because of the Hash tag. What is the psyche of the people? Whenever they go to a good place, the first sentence that comes to their minds is that - this place doesn't seem like India! Now tell me how the tourism will grow? If you do not love your children, then how can you expect the neighbours to love them? Similarly, if we do not take pride in the things we have then what do you expect the others to do? Businessmen come to our country; you might be dealing with the Global Community. How many of you have asked them to stay for 3 more days to savour the beauty of our country? Tourism cannot grow just with the advertisement by the Government. If someone says that he had been to a place and you should also visit it, you would definitely go. There is usually an inbuilt 'Fear of the Unknown' in the minds of the tourists. When someone tells him about his experience then that person visits that place fearlessly. We Indians do not have this nature. Now the pharmaceutical companies here offer special tours to Doctors. Is there anyone here linked to a Pharmaceutical company? Well, these companies take them to Singapore or Dubai and other places abroad. They never feel that tours can be made to say a place called Hampi in our country in Karnataka or to Rajasthan. We do not promote our things. Unless we realize that instead of providing artificial enjoyment we should present before the world our heritage. I remember clearly when I was the Chief Minister of Gujarat; I had my interests in touring. Sometimes I used to wander in jungles and sometimes in the desert. About 40-45 years ago, when I saw the White Rann of Kutch, it had a great impact on my mind. When I became Chief Minister, I decided that I would make this desert a Tourist Destination. I urge you to visit the Rannotsav website sometime. This festival starts after Diwali and continues for three months. A tent city is formed. You cannot even imagine how the deserts of my country can adorn with such beauty. There is so much rush in this season to visit the White Desert and these days there is a lot of trouble in bookings. Many people plan the board meetings of the company to coincide with Rannotsav. Could anyone ever think that the White Desert could also become a Tourist Destination? As a result the handicraft of Kutch, and a lot of things found a huge market. People started preparing themselves professionally, learning packaging, serving food etc. Tourism is like the riddle - whether the chicken came first or the egg. If tourists come then tourism develops and if the Tourist Destination Develops, it will draw tourists. I used to work in Himachal many years ago. There is a place in Himachal, near Manali. I went to see the place of a very great artist, I am forgetting the name; he was a foreigner - yes it's Roderick. He was a foreigner but had participated in the movement for freedom. No one visited that place. At that time it was the government of my Party in Himachal Pradesh, so I requested them. I asked them to make it mandatory for the schools to visit this place during their tour programmes. So school buses started coming. Gradually, the tea seller, the water seller, the snack seller started showing up in that place and infrastructure started developing. Later this spot found a place in the Tourist Maps as well. I believe that as the government is taking steps to develop tourism, we all should develop a temperament for the growth of tourism sector. We should insist upon promoting it. And trips to India are not new. Today we have developed the concept of Tourist Circuits which has become very popular. It has been there for a long time now. We had 'Char-dham', '12 mahadev Jyotirling', '9 Ganesh' - all similar to the Circuit concept. Our ancestors were well aware of the circuit concept. The infrastructure was also available. We can move ahead with these things. And hence, I believe that tourism has a great potential in job creation. But if we add to these things, our contribution will definitely bring results. I have received several ideas from you and those ideas will definitely be used. But I urge you to not confine the ideas within this room but try these things in your individual capacities, within your industrial circle, within your seller-buyer circle. You can also organise an event there. Together we will do something for the country. Even if I am running this Swachh Bharat campaign, your cooperation is indispensable. The

chamber you sit in is excellent, but we don't feel like stepping inside the industrial area due to unhygienic conditions. Yet we are reluctant to take collective responsibility. That is why it is not cleaned. Wealth from Waste has a great potential for developing it into a full-fledged industry. How can we encourage new entrepreneurs in developing this sector? This will also be a solution to our environmental problem. You must have seen how the farmers in Haryana and Punjab that burn the crop waste after the cultivation of crops. This impacts the quality of air in Delhi. Thus, the farmers of Punjab and Haryana are blamed for Delhi's pollution problem. Now a young man from Nagpur bought the same Waste, cow dung and made small blocks out of it and sold those blocks for using in the funeral. 20% less wood is now needed to burn the body. The Waste was thus put to best use. The time required for burning the body was reduced. So, how to encourage such things?

The second problem in our country for which we need a solution is that we are only focused upon the Global requirements and ignore the domestic needs. Then we say that a particular product is available for Rs5000; but mine costs only Rs4000; so you should buy my product. We really need to change this approach. Rather can't we think of providing a product that fulfils the needs of our country? The day we come up with that product you will see the huge market here and later we can also entertain the same in the global market.

Have we ever thought of how many things our country has to import? Can I save my country's revenue by stopping imports of at least five things by 2022? I will not allow the import of these five things to my country. This is my devotion to country that I will make these five things within my country so that the money does not go out. Why not? You can definitely do this. You tell me, you were discussing about electronic imports etc. We have to make health care in India cheaper. Can't we make equipment required for health care for say kidney patients, the dialysis machine indigenously? Can't our entrepreneurs come up with these things? If we try to develop things keeping in view the present day problems, the market will automatically develop. And we should think in this direction. And I believe that the suggestions given by you will be helpful for the government. Gradually, we want to institutionalize these thoughts and ideas. You can add even more people to it. We can think of more outcome oriented suggestions. But this is just the beginning. By sitting with this group I would like to add the people interested in any particular field to the concerned department of the government so that the permanent interaction continues. Let's get together for the country. I am happy that in your presentations there was no such suggestion that contained the interest of the industry or the trader. All suggestions were in the interest of the country. This fulfils my dream of 2022. Therefore, we want to emphasize on these things.

There are many new attempts to bring change and with your greater involvement, I think the results will come sooner. I want to congratulate Mr. Arvind Panagaria, Vice Chairman of the Niti Aayog. Now see, how things work in mission mode. He lived in the United States for 45 years and had never thought of coming to India. The family was also settled there. He is a great friend of mine so I requested him to come here and at once he agreed to head the NITI Aayog. He has developed the NITI Aayog over the three years and today has changed the earlier Planning Commission. His contribution was huge. And although he is leaving the country next week but still he is doing this work diligently. He is present among us. This is not a small thing. Otherwise when one has to leave, one needs to start packing one month before. So even though he has to leave for America, he is still engaged in this work with his heart and mind into it. I think there is no shortage of such people in our country. And trusting such people, we are moving ahead with the dream of 2022. Now Arvind ji is leaving so I want to convey my best wishes to him. He has done an excellent work. This country will always remember him and his service. Arvind ji was the core of this programme. He has been with you for two days. He has an introvert nature so he doesn't give his introduction to anyone so early. This is also a quality. He doesn't keep himself in the forefront. But I think that a good effort gives a good result and you will always be associated with it. You must have a direct connection to the government. Your suggestions should come. You might have seen the presentation yesterday. I can connect with anyone anywhere with technology. I always use technology. Once again I express my gratitude to you for your contribution.

Thanks a lot.

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