



English rendering of PM's reply to 'Motion of Thanks' to the President's address, in Rajya Sabha

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Hon'ble Chairman,

I am here to offer my thanks for the President's address in the joint sitting of both the Houses. About 40 respected members have participated in this discussion - Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, Neeraj Shekhar, Shri A. Navnathakrishnan ji, Mr. Derek ji, Mr. D Raja, Mr. Sharad Yadav, Mr. Sitaram Ji, Mr. Ahmed Bhai and Mr. Anand Sharma. I am very grateful to you all. I am grateful to the other honourable members who have also discussed the subject. Most of the discussions have been around Demonetisation. We cannot deny the fact that this evil of corruption and black money is present in our country and is deeply rooted in our economy and social system. We cannot deny this and therefore the fight against corruption and black money is not a political battle. It is not a fight to harass any political party and there is no reason to think so. Therefore, there is no reason why anyone should associate this issue with himself. In this House, we all have the obligation to do things within the framework of the Constitution and whatever our wisdom permits. It is also true that the poor have incurred greatest loss due to the parallel economy. The poor is deprived of their rights and the middle class is exploited. It is not that efforts have not been made before! Efforts were made before. But even more efforts are required. If these efforts lead to more efforts, we should move towards it. Ultimately, we cannot continue to brush aside the problems under the carpet.

Therefore one of the significant issues in this regard is that of the fake notes. The statistics show the percentage of fake notes that have reached the banks. A particular system ensures that most of the fake notes do not reach the bank. It is also used to promote terrorism and Naxalism. Some people were saying with a great excitement that a few 2000 rupee notes were found from a terrorist. We should be aware of the fact that post demonetisation cases of bank robbery were reported from Jammu and Kashmir. This is because the business of counterfeiting notes faced a lot of hurdles after this. Some of the terrorists who were killed after this incident of bank robbery were found with some of these notes. There is a direct link between these incidents which we should understand. So there is no reason to side with these people and there is no reason that we should not raise our voice or fight against them. The honest persons will not feel empowered until the dishonest ones are dealt with a heavy hand. Ultimately we believe that these steps will benefit the honest.

Hon'ble Chairman,

Several years ago Wanchoo committee was formed. He had given his recommendations in his report submitted to Mrs Indira Gandhi ji. Yashvantrao Chavan had accepted the recommendations and wanted to proceed with it but Indira ji had said that we are in politics and we keep contesting elections. This is mentioned in Godbole ji's book. It would have been better if you had shown a little awareness regarding this book and raised your voices against its publication. Were you sleeping? What were you up to? Were you sleeping when this officer raised such a big allegation against Indira ji? If I were in your place I would have filed a case against Godbole ji. But you did not. But today this situation has progressed a little bit. When Wanchoo committee had submitted its report the problem was limited only to black money. Today the issue of black money has spread to other issues like terrorism, counterfeit currency, drugs, Hawala business.

When the decision of demonetisation was taken on November 8, there was no question of the counterfeit notes returning to the banks. If at all some note had entered any small bank the Reserve Bank would have caught hold of it. But the fake notes should have been neutralized at that very moment. Therefore it is surprising to note how the statistics of the fake note is available if at all is available to anyone. The counterfeit currencies are neutralized at that very moment. You must have come across television news which was going on for a long time about how the people running the business of counterfeit currency in enemy nations had to commit suicide.

Now see in our country for the first time more than 700 Maoists surrendered within 30 to 40 days between the months of November and December. This process is continuing even after that. Who will not be relieved in this House to know about the surrender of the Maoists? If some are not satisfied that would be due to some other reason.

Similarly, it is true that money in the formal system is necessary for the country. Thousand rupee notes were hardly used in day to day activities and 500 rupee notes were used at a very low rate. Bundles of these notes were going into this business. This is the reality and we cannot deny that. Now that such a huge amount of currency has come into banks, it is natural that the power of banks in lending money to the common man will increase. For the first time in our country all the banks simultaneously have reduced the interest rates. The general public has benefitted out of it. People like Sitaram Ji and his party will expect that workers of unorganized sector should get wage security. It is the reality that all that is promised is not given. Whatever is provided, half the people even don't get that much. These things are well known. So if we create a system where those workers will be linked with the EPF and the ESIC Scheme, the workers will get wage security. We are putting efforts in that direction.

I want to give the example of Assam Tea gardens. The Assam government took a little initiative. They opened around seven lakh bank accounts for the workers working in the tea gardens and taught them to do business on mobile app. Earlier, the trade unions opposed the move and wanted transactions in cash because certain things were associated with it. However, due to this move the workers of these tea gardens started getting full payment, wage cuts stopped and their business in that area were secured. It is a great experience.

Similarly, if you quote 10 foreign newspapers or economists, I can quote 20. If you quote 10 great men I can quote 20. This is because the initiative is unparalleled. Nowhere in the world has such a great step been taken. Therefore, the economists around the world have no yardstick to account for this. It can become a case study for the universities and the economists of the world.

India has taken a big decision. This is the strength of the common man. I want to tell the dignitaries present in the House that the sociologists will also research the impact of Demonetization. For the first time, a horizontal divide has emerged in the country. When I say horizontal divide, I mean the divide between the general public on one side and the politicians on the other. The politicians are usually cut off from the general public. Whenever a decision is taken by the government, be it any government, the public used to oppose it. But satisfactorily, this is first such instance when by and large the government and the general public were together even though some were against.

Similarly, we should be proud of the fact that despite some hurdles, the 125 crore Indians, some of whom are illiterate (as pointed out by you), are desperate to get the country rid of these evils and are fighting for the same. Be it any political leader or political party, we should be proud of the fact that the people of our country are ready to take the pain in order to fight the evils plaguing the country and they are searching for the paths to accomplish this. Therefore, we should also understand this.

The Chairman Sir,

In the previous session, Dr. Manmohan Singh ji had presented his thoughts. It is true that you have published a book recently whose foreword page was written by Doctor Sahib. While reading the report I was wondering that since he is such a great economist, his contribution would be there in the book. But I came to know that the book was written by someone else and he wrote only the foreword page.

After hearing his speech I felt that for last 30-35 years, the word that I didn't even utter was understood by him. This is incredible! Dr Manmohan Singh ji, the former Prime Minister is a very respectable personality. He has been associated with the India's economic decision making and he himself has been in decision making for the past 30-35 years. There would hardly be anyone other than him from the field of economics whose predominance could be seen for about half of the period in the past 70 years since India's independence. Several scams have come to the forefront; but the politicians could learn a lot from Doctor Sahib. Even after so much (controversy) his image was not slurred. The art of bathing with the raincoat on is only known by Doctor Sahib and no one else!!

Respected Chairman,

A person of such a great stature had used words like 'loot' and 'launder'. One should think 50 times before crossing the limits. So, one should be ready to face criticism. We have the strength to pay back in the same coin. But we do it within the framework of the constitution. We respect democracy; but if somebody is not prepared to face the truth, how long will it continue?

Respected chairman, it is a fact that there have been attempts to incite the general public. Today we see that even in cases of minor accidents people set 2-3 cars on fire; even if a bus arrives late then also buses are set on fire. The impact of these incidents by and large needs to be analysed but these incidents have become a daily

affair. We are committed to fight the internal battles. Therefore, despite these challenges we didn't allow such incidents to occur. We should proudly present the capability of the people of India before the whole world; we should talk about it and only then I believe the world will understand our thoughts.

I want to mention one more thing today. It is natural that my and Sitaram ji's ideologies differ. Therefore, the presentation of arguments also differs. But when I was thinking of this topic I knew it well that Sitaram ji and his party will be with us in this work because one of the senior leaders of your party, Mr. Jyoti rmoy Basu, in 1972, had made a great demand of placing the Wanchoo Committee report in the House and had fought a lot for it. The government was not accepting the demand and was not presenting it. Ultimately he himself brought a copy of the report and placed it on the table. Jyotirmoy Basu ji on his own had placed the report on the table as a private member. The speech he had delivered that day is available today. He had said that on August 26, 1972:

"Sir, on 12 November 1970, one of the primary recommendations of a powerful and prestigious committee was that of demonetization. Sir, Mrs. Indira Gandhi is surviving on black money. Her politics is alive only with the help of black money. That's why this report was not implemented and it was also kept suppressed for one and a half years. Jyotirmoy Basu ji, speaking again on 4th September 1972 in Lok Sabha, had said, "I had recommended demonetization and other measures. Now I do not want to repeat them. The government should cooperate with the people honestly. But the character of Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi and her government is a government of black money, by black money and for black money." This is the incident of September 4, 1972. Not only that, senior CPI (M) leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet Ji had said in the same House on August 27, 1981, "Does the government really want to take any serious step to curb black money? Can the decisions like that of demonetization of hundred rupee notes be taken?" This question was raised by Surjeet ji in the same House in 1981 and therefore I urge the Left in particular to join us in this fight and I hope you will. You are always open to new thoughts and you cannot keep yourself aloof from such work. Such is your character. Even then, the time will tell. It is true that while taking such tough decisions in the democratic setup, a perception develops that these are populist measures. It becomes the nature of democracy. A perception develops regarding short-term goals. So it takes a little time to understand the importance of such big decisions. Therefore, we cannot blame anyone for it. Gradually the people who are opposing it will understand that such a big decision was for the welfare of the country and that we want to take it forward.

Discussions are going on regarding setting up of a digital system. There were several complaints regarding unavailability of some or the other things in all the speeches till now. For example, toilets are there but there is no water supply. They said what not! I was wondering what they were saying! The report card that they were providing was for the Governments of the 70 year old India. In the past seventy years, my contribution is only two and a half years old. Have we locked the toilets that were constructed by you? Have we demolished the roads that were laid by you? Did we cut the supply line of the water taps installed by you? It is a reality and nobody can deny the fact that the digital system has not completely penetrated the entire country. The question is whether there is a possibility to change the mind-set? Can we make efforts in the areas where it's possible?

Suppose there is a possibility in the city of Delhi, then why can't we start from Delhi? We can make some positive contribution there. It's a matter of Behavioural-change. If people in Calcutta have mobile phones and digital connectivity then we should start from there even if it is not available in remote villages. And secondly, we keep blowing our trumpet regarding the new schemes or facilities but when it comes to implementing them why should we have any trouble?

Secondly, we have a habit of playing with the words. Now if we ask any child, even your child, "do you go to school daily?" He will say, "Yes, I go daily." But all of us know that Sunday is an off day when no child goes to school. Everyone knows this. Similarly, turning the country into a cashless society means, carrying the nation gradually towards digital payment system. Even today several developed countries in the world conduct elections with the help of printed ballot papers. India, the largest democracy, which is considered as an illiterate nation, votes by pressing the buttons. The day this system was put in place could anyone think that the poorest of the poor in our country would also adopt such technologies?

This means that we should not underestimate the strength of our country. Yes we might think that this path is not correct. But despite discomfort and troubles, giving up is not a right step. There will be inconvenience and the system may not be up to the mark but we have to keep moving forward.

Some people say that several countries in the world are way ahead. Anand Sharma ji was saying that there are several such countries. I am surprised! You will be surprised to know that Korea came up with an incentive scheme at such a large scale in order to go digital. But he is complaining that we are spending crores of rupees to promote digitalization. There is no cost involved in using the Bhim app. Transactions can be made without any extra cost. Not a single penny goes as Commission to the banks and therefore the world is moving towards paper-less and premises-less banking. So, I do not see any reason why India should remain behind. In the beginning we may be lacking in several areas and it might take two or five years but we should at least begin our efforts in that direction. We should keep making efforts to promote it in our localities. We should move in that direction.

Now, the common man travels by the Railways. Today 60% of the railway bookings are made online. The refunds on the cancellation are also made online. Several families that live in cities used to face hurdles for paying electricity bills. They have to take half a day leave from work in order to pay the bills. Today they can pay the bill

at 12 in the night after coming from work with the help of their mobile phones. The benefits are expanding. We should worry about the shortcomings of the technology since it is increasing our comfort levels and benefitting us. We should rectify the problems in the technology but we can never progress if we have this negative attitude towards the use of technology.

RuPay Card - right now Arun ji was saying that 21 crore people have been given RuPay cards along with Jan Dhan bank accounts. You cannot even imagine the power of this card. Normally for one section of the society, owning a card has become a matter of prestige. They make payments with the card. A perception has been formed that the poor people cannot own such cards. Just now Anand Kumar ji was telling me that while he was coming here from Bangalore one IT professional was travelling along with him who told him about his driver. He said that his driver was extremely happy with demonetization. He asked him the reason. So in his reply the driver said that just like a rich person who keeps a card with him even he carries one. He started showing his card. He was extremely happy. You can imagine that this is such a big transformation in the life of a common man. It builds a new self-confidence. A person, who had never seen a cycle in his home, is on the ninth cloud, when he gets a motorcycle in his house. So in such a scenario a person feels extremely proud even if the scooter is a small or even an old one. Our efforts should be in the direction of fulfilling those aspirations of the common man in our society.

Direct Benefit Transfer- it has brought so many benefits. I had talked about that in detail in the other House. We could save 50000 crore rupees that was lost to leakages every year and we can also save more in the future as well by the Direct Benefit Transfer. For example, sometimes one person used to take the scholarship from 6 places; in case of widow pensions, sometimes a daughter who was not even born was made a widow on records and cheques of widow pension were drawn on her name. In this way we can prevent the middlemen from taking these benefits due to such leakages with the help of Direct Benefit Transfer scheme. Now we can cease the loot of the Government's treasury with the help of this scheme. This is how Direct Benefit Transfer scheme has benefited the country. We should keep trying to promote digital payments.

The government has developed a system. The number of POS machines is being increased at a rapid pace. We are making efforts towards promoting e-wallets for mobile payments. We are working towards internet banking and Aadhaar based payment. If technology keeps developing in this way, that day is not far when one will be able to make payments only on the basis of Aadhaar card even without the need for mobile phones. Therefore, we should try to understand these mechanisms and to engage our teams in their implementation. Bhim app is an excellent system. This was developed under the Government of India. The more it is popularised the lesser these traders will have to deal with outside agencies. There is this directly enabled platform whose benefits can be availed. We should do this.

Now, the drivers who drive on the highways have to wait for paying the toll tax. We know that so much money is spent on petrol and diesel every time the vehicle halts. After 8th November we looked into the matter and now the drivers can use Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to pay the toll tax. Earlier very few people had access to this technology. In such a short span of time about 20% of the traffic is now using RFID for the payment of toll tax. As the car passes, it gets registered automatically and the amount is deducted from the owner's bank account. He is not required to halt. A lot of petrol can be saved across the country with the expansion of this technology. This is the situation for the toll tax on one hand. Similarly about 29 to 30% of the people at petrol pumps are using digital mode of payment. We had set up a committee under the chairmanship of Chandrababu Naidu ji. We have received the interim report. The report is being analysed. The final report is yet to come out. We should make preparations for the change.

Another important topic which I would like to mention is that of the banking system. Your comments are like a report card for me. It is the report card of the previous governments. This government established a Debt Recovery Tribunal. There were no proper rules for the appointment in banks. There was a total mismanagement. The government established an independent recruitment agency called Bank Board Bureau for appointing the Chairman, the Managing Director, and the Director etc. We have tried to incorporate professionalism in the banking system.

A two-day round table conference was held for the Banking and Finance sector and the economic world. They discussed upon the ways through which our country's banking sector can be elevated to global standards. They discussed, debated and brainstormed on this issue and tried to understand their shortcomings in order to find solutions.

The dignity of the Reserve Bank- it is very natural for you to attack me, my party and our government. But there is no reason to drag the Reserve Bank in this. There is no reason to drag the RBI Governor into this. We must make efforts to protect the values and dignity of such institutions. Some people had spoken against the previous Governor as well. I had protested against that too as it was not right. Such things should be kept out of controversies. The rest are government systems and will continue like that. The Reserve Bank plays a significant role in regulating the country's economy. We should have a positive approach towards maintaining its credibility. And I want to tell the people, who accuse the government and question the dignity of the Reserve Bank, with a lot of disappointment that the former RBI Governor Dr Subbarao had written a book in 2008- 'Who Moved My Interest Rate?' where he said that he was angry and upset with the government's decision to appoint a Liquidation Management Committee under the Finance Secretary. "Chidambaram had clearly infringed upon the

subject of the Reserve Bank of India. Not only did he not consult with me on this matter but he did not even tell me about the issue of the notification. How would I have known that this decision would set the tone for an uncomfortable relationship between the two of us in the last year of my tenure?" The ex- Governor of the Reserve Bank had thus, raised serious allegations against the old government. This has been published in the book but no one has replied to it yet. If someone replies to it now it altogether will be a different matter. Today I want to advise them that they also should realise their faults. I believe that we should keep politics out of it and strive towards preserving its dignity and pride.

This government has taken steps to increase the strength of RBI. We have established a Monetary Policy Committee by making amendments to the RBI Act. This was being discussed for several years but was not coming into force. So now we have established it. This committee has been entrusted with the complete responsibility of monetary policy operations. In addition to the two RBI officials three experts are its members. There is no member of the central government in this committee. The monetary policy committee has been given such a great autonomy. No one can imagine that the government has given such a great autonomy to the RBI. This has strengthened the RBI.

It is true that several issues have been discussed here. No government comes to power and sleeps. The previous governments have also made several efforts. I am not saying that they have not done anything. Unlike any other Prime Minister, I had praised the contributions made by all the former governments and Prime Ministers since Independence, from the ramparts of the Red Fort. We usually hesitate in mentioning about the contributions made by someone else. The history is a witness to this fact. But it is true that this government has done a lot of work in improving the governance. Even though we take small decisions, these decisions have empowered the common man.

We have started the practice of affidavit. The people had to queue up in front of the houses of the MPs, MLAs and others for their stamps. But he never bothered. Either the peon or some worker would make the attestations. Now we have changed that system to self-attestation. Now the common man has got rid of that trouble. Now he can go with the original copy for his final appointment. This is an era of Xerox. There is no need for all those cumbersome processes.

We have ended the system of interview. The merit of the people will be decided by the technology. Jobs will be provided on the basis of merit. Corruption has ended due to this. The two Houses have done away with more than 1100 laws. Several newspapers flashed articles regarding the appointment in the senior posts. For the first time appointments were being made on the basis of merit. We have ended all the age old practices. Several neutral newspapers have written excellent articles on this.

DBT or Direct Benefit Transfer scheme - leakages were plugged by direct benefit. Earlier it used to take 7 days or 15 days and even 2 months for registering a company. Today a company can be registered within 24 hours. We have established such a system. Earlier it used to take months to get a passport. Today passport can be obtained within a week. Now we are planning to convert the Postal Head Office into a Passport-Office. The common man will avail the benefits of this endeavour and we are working in that direction.

We know that the issue of coal auction is a big deal. The government has easily implemented a scheme to bring transparency in the process. We have taken an important decision which has not been discussed much but I want to inform this House about it. We have launched GeM for the process of purchases made by the government. Government e-Market place or GeM has been awarded the South Asia Procurement Innovation Awards of the World Bank. Now whoever wants to supply his goods to the government can upload the list of products online and the government can choose from them. It has also saved money. One can make payment through GeM if the transaction is more than 5000 rupees. We have made efforts in that direction.

We have been successful in bringing transparency with the use of Technology and good governance for fighting against corruption.

This government has brought many new schemes for the empowerment of women.

Ujjwala Yojana - we know that there was a time when the MPs used to get 25 coupons for providing gas connections to the people and the people had to queue up for those 25 coupons. The 2014 elections were fought on the issue of providing gas cylinders; whether one should get 9 or 12 cylinders. The way of working of this government is very different. The poor women who could never think of getting a gas oven have been provided with gas connections. About 1 crore 65 lakh poor households have been provided with gas connections till date. Our target is to make it available to 5 crore families. Of the 25 crore families of the country we want to provide it to at least 5 crore families.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - it has been made mandatory to register the houses in the name of the female member of the family. Earlier about 40 to 45% of the women used to work under MGNREGA but now this figure has increased to 55%.

Under Mudra Yojana loans are provided from the bank without guarantee. About 70% of the borrowers are women. This means the country's women are coming forward as entrepreneurs.

Pandit Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - work through Self-Help-Groups was in operation to some extent in Southern India. We have made efforts to encourage it in the entire country especially in Eastern India.

Rs. 6000 is being provided to the poor pregnant women to reduce IMR and MMR at the time of deliveries. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign has been recognized everywhere and has become a social movement. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana - about 1 crore accounts with 11 thousand crore rupees have been opened in the name of girls which guarantees a secured future for these girls. Mahila Shakti Kendras have been established in 14 lakh Anganwadi centres at a cost of 500 crore rupees.

Mission Indradhanush - children were not vaccinated even though the government used to organise vaccination programmes. About 55 lakh children were not covered under vaccination. Such children were identified under Mission Indradhanush. Efforts were made to save the lives of those children.

In rural areas - I was surprised at the mockery of sanitation here. I could not understand the reason. None of us wants to live in dirt. We all know that hygiene is largely an issue of behaviour. However, infrastructure is also linked with it. Sometimes even the role of politicians is not enough in this regard. I want to congratulate the media of this country for giving an impetus to the cleanliness movement. Today the media is being rewarded for its role in cleanliness drive. It is natural for the media to negatively report about any programme of the government. But the programme on cleanliness is an exception to that. The media was two steps ahead of the government and the politicians for making efforts in transforming the issue of cleanliness into a movement. I congratulate them from this House. But some of the people here say that toilets are there but without water supply. Mahatma Gandhi was its proponent. I am afraid if Mahatma Gandhi was alive today and propagated cleanliness would we have used the same language as this? Isn't it our responsibility? Shouldn't we take positive steps in order to bring a transformation in the society? Why should we protest against everything? I am delighted that sanitation coverage which was 42% has now increased to 60% after this movement. You can imagine the pain of the women in the villages and slum areas of the cities. They cannot go to relieve themselves till it is dark. This pain should be felt. This is not a matter of argument but it pains a lot when it is being mocked at. It cannot be a subject of joke.

Universalization of women helpline 181- a 24 hour emergency service has been started for the security of women. 18 states and UTs have carried forward this system of women's helpline. Some of the states have accepted the provision of 33% recruitment of women in the police force. It has been made compulsory in the UTs. Haryana has come up with a new experiment which I have presented before you. They have formed a network of police volunteers for helping out the people. They have started a new scheme. They are doing it with the help of panic button Technology. We are going to present it before you in the coming days.

Empowerment of the farmers - the government has taken several steps in this regard. The most important one is Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. We like it or not but in order to secure the farmers' income we have to link it with income assurance. Here, the irrigation facility is lacking. He is dependent on the natural resources only.

In such a situation even if he cannot sow the crops and the harvest is destroyed then insurance provided to him can come to his rescue. I am happy that in some States about 40 to 50% farmers have opted for insurance. The government has made great efforts in order to encourage Crop Insurance Scheme for the farmers on a large scale. There has been a lot of increase in crop insurance in some States but some states are far behind. This is a matter of concern. There is a need to expand its coverage.

New Fertilizer policy - production of urea: see, there are two benefits of Neem coating. Firstly, the land is getting benefited due to increase in productivity. Earlier the subsidy bill was drawn in the name of the farmer but it was diverted to the chemical industry in the form of raw material. Urea was used even in the preparation of synthetic milk. With hundred per cent Neem coating it is not possible to use urea for any other purpose than its use for the land. The theft is no longer possible. Black-marketing of Urea has stopped. Today no Chief Minister writes any letter regarding unavailability of urea. Now no one queues up for urea. Today no one is facing any problem because of urea. You can see how small steps can bring about a big transformation.

Production of pulses in our country - the government has tried to promote it. Consequently, today we have a possibility of 50 to 60% increase in the yield. The farmers of our country have accepted the government's appeal and they have done this work by breaking all records.

e-NAM- now the farmer can sell his produce at the highest price through technology in 500 electronic markets. The situation was not favourable for my farmers to trade using mobile phones in 500 Mandis. Today this work has been completed in 250 Mandis. The states have modified some of the laws. We know that the farmers will be highly benefited by food processing. Therefore, we will emphasize upon food processing. The government has allowed 100% FDI so that the food processing industry gets a boost and with value addition the income of our farmers can increase. We are making efforts in that direction.

Empowerment of tribal population - nearly 28 departments are in some of the other way related to Tribal Affairs. For the first time under Tribal Sub-plan we have not only increased the amount but have made a successful attempt to make a comprehensive plan under Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana so that the outcome is well reflected.

Forest Rights Act- we are working to strengthen it. In our country most of the mining activities and minerals like coal and iron are confined to the tribal belts but the locals are not deriving the benefits out of it. The government has created a District Mineral Foundation and imposed a tax on the amount that comes from mining for the first time. The Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh was saying that there are 7 districts in his state that produce minerals. Because of this scheme and the Foundation, he is not required to allocate separate budget for the development of these districts. The amount coming out of the scheme is going to benefit the poor tribal people. We have worked in that direction.

We have launched the Rurban Mission and it is largely going to benefit the tribal areas. The tribal market should develop into a big market. If such a market develops then the education system, health facilities and entertainment sector will also develop. Gradually it becomes a focal point for the surrounding 50-100 villages. We are working towards developing 300 new cities in the tribal belts through this Rurban Mission. This will be a great initiative for the development of tribal areas.

Similarly, I have been saying that sanitation should become a mass movement. In order to make it a mass movement the contribution of each one of us is required. Since we started ranking the cities for cleanliness through an independent agency, the cities have started competing with each other. If one city moves ahead then the other cities try to beat that city. This is trickling down to lower levels. We should emphasize on that and I want all the political parties in the country that are in power at some or the other levels and have got the opportunity to govern in Nagar Palikas or Zila Panchayats or in any state to compete with each other. For example, all the communist ruled cities can compete with each other; the Communist ruled district Panchayats can compete for cleanliness. Nagar palikas of BJP ruled states can compete with each other. If we push this competition further, I believe, the sanitation campaign will succeed. This is not a government programme but a mass movement. Behavioural change is the need of this era. According to the World Bank report, lack of cleanliness creates a burden of 2.5 lakh crore rupees for health care. This is the World Bank report with reference to India. The poor people have to spend around 7000 rupees annually. It is very natural to contract diseases from unhygienic conditions. We can prevent it.

Everyone believes that children should eat their meals after washing their hands. But when we say this, someone will complain about unavailability of water, taps and so on. Is it right to think this way? Such way of thinking has been suppressing the country. At least one should think of something new. There will be difficulties on the way but only then can we find new paths. We are asking our children to wash hands but keep complaining about unavailability of something or the other. The country cannot transform this way. Therefore, we have to change this harmful and regressive mind-set. The small neighbouring countries such as South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore have given about 15 years to cleanliness. They are the model countries for us. Can't we do this in India? This should be our dream that if small countries can do it then why can't we? We should make efforts in that direction. But sometimes I feel that a different kind of atmosphere has been developed. As one poet had said - 'the city is yours, you are the murderer, you are the martyr and you only are the ruler'. But I believe that we should come out of this mind-set.

I will end my speech with another topic. Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat- we had launched this on 31st October on the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel. We have been forming sister states and sister cities with that of the other countries of the world but we do not have the habit of interacting with the people of our own country. Several States began to feel that they were being neglected. It is essential that we utilise our country's potential. We have made an attempt with Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat and I wish that the people of this House help us to carry it forward. For example, now 12 States have signed MoUs among themselves such as Haryana and Telangana. The people of Haryana should learn 100 sentences of Telugu - 'where is the hospital? Where can I find a rickshaw? Where is the hotel? Where is the Police Station?' They can learn these. Similarly the people of Telangana should learn Haryanvi. Haryana should conduct film festival of Telangana. Similarly, the film festival of Haryana should be organized in Telangana. Quiz competitions should be organized. The children of Haryana should participate in the quiz competition of Telangana. In a way this is a campaign to know and connect with the country. We should encourage it. Sometimes we are short of words in Hindi language but for expressing the same thing we have a brilliant word in Tamil language. However, we are not familiar with it. Similarly, there are beautiful words in Marathi or Bengali languages but we are not familiar with them either. Our country has a lot of strength. Efforts are being made to strengthen this further with the 'Ek Bharat shreshtha Bharat' campaign.

Once again I express my gratitude to all the Honourable members who have placed their opinions and thoughts. I express my gratitude for giving me the opportunity to express my thoughts. I would like to end my speech by showing my support to the President's address. Thanks a lot!

AKT/AK/IG/MG/AK

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