



# English rendering of the text of PM's address at the launch of Interactive Digital Exhibition, marking 100 years of Champaran Satyagraha

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Today we have gathered to commemorate the celebration of one of the greatest events of 20th century. 100 years ago on this very day Gandhiji reached Patna, and started his journey to Champaran. The land of Champaran where the blessings of Lord Buddha's discourse were received, which was a part of the territory that belonged to Mother Sita's father Janak; The farmers of that land were in distress. Gandhiji did not just show the way to the farmers, the exploited people and the victims, but made the whole country realize the power of a peaceful Satyagraha.

Friends, the history of our country are not limited to just a few persons or families. Our country's history is broad, comprehensive; a history that re-emerges in new forms and forces us to open our eyes and recognize the glorious cultural tradition of our nation. Some pages of history are such that whenever you come across them, you make something new out of it. It is called the mystical touch - the mystical touch of history. Champaran Satyagraha is such a turning point. Therefore it is imperative that we know such historical events, be connected to them and if possible make an effort to live them.

An exhibition was inaugurated here today; an online interactive quiz was introduced, and a dance drama has also been presented. Such programmes are not just formalities. It is a sacred occasion for us wherein we shall get this opportunity to be inspired by the ideals of Bapu, for dedicating oneself for the cause of the country.

Friends, we should not only pay our homage to Mahatma Gandhi but also dedicate our work to him. The greatest means of doing it is through 'swachhagraha' - just as stayagraha which literally means 'insistence on truth', swachhagraha means 'insistence on cleanliness'.

Friends, in the year 1917, while going to Champaran Gandhiji never thought of staying there for long. He did not even know much about the situation in Champaran. However, when he reached Champaran he stayed there for months instead of few weeks. 'Champaran Satyagraha' itself transformed Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi into Mahatma Gandhi. He was well versed with the impact of Satyagraha before reaching Champaran. But he knew this very well that just being a satyagrahi was not going to bring the desired results. He wanted to bring the masses under the fold of Satyagraha.

When the Magistrate ordered him to leave Champaran, he disobeyed the order saying that he was disobeying the orders of the Magistrate not to contempt the orders of the court but to uphold the honour of his soul. The entire British government was taken aback when Gandhiji informed about his decision to go to jail instead. The British never had thought of it. The people were witnessing these developments - a barrister who had recently returned from South Africa had readily agreed to go to jail. Moreover, he was happily taking the pain of moving around barefoot or sometimes in bullock cart or by horse-driven cart in the scorching heat.

Notice how Gandhiji was trying to awaken the thought process of the people. The statements of the indigo peasants were being recorded and investigations were being conducted. In the process, Gandhiji was getting connected to the people as well as linking the people among themselves by setting an example himself.

Gandhiji used to say, "My life is my mission". And this is what we have seen in Champaran. Gandhiji wrote in his autobiography how people realized their power and a time came when changes could take place. He wrote that the rule of the British planters, who had been forcing the 'Tinkathiya system' of indigo cultivation on farmers, finally had come to an end. The hitherto suppressed masses realized about their internal strengths.

Gandhiji said that it was a misconception of the people, who had lost all hopes that the scars of indigo could never be washed away. He broke all those myths and misconceptions of the people and made them realise about their hidden strengths.

Brothers and sisters, Gandhiji primarily was a 'Swachhagrahi'. He used to say - "Cleanliness holds far more importance than independence". He was extremely distressed by the fact that people used to live in unhygienic conditions because of ignorance. During a programme in 1917, Bapu had said that, "Independence will be of no use till the time we don't change the conditions of the villages and cities, liberate ourselves from bad habits and build better toilets."

In a way Champaran campaign can be considered as the principal centre for the cleanliness movement. He made cleanliness and hygiene an integral part of Gandhian life-style. His dream was complete cleanliness.

Friends, the efforts at Champaran provided us with the 'Panchamrit' or the five nectars. The freedom movement got an impetus by the five nectars derived from unity of the people and their immense struggle.

If we look closely at the efforts made by Gandhiji at Champaran, five nectars can be segregated. These five nectars are significant even today.

The first nectar - the people became acquainted with the power of Satyagraha;

Second nectar - People became familiar with the power of manpower;

Third nectar - A new awakening emerged in the Indian public about cleanliness and education;

Fourth nectar - An attempt was made to improve the status of women;

And the fifth nectar - the thought of wearing the clothes woven with own hands emerged. These are the essence of Panchamrit of Champaran movement.

Friends, when I talk of Champaran, young Mohan or Lord Krishna comes to my mind. On one hand we have Mohan - the holder of Sudarshan-chakra; and on the other hand we have Charkha-spinner Mohan.

We all know that story when Mother Yashoda was very worried because her child had eaten the dirt. With this concern, when she asked Bal Mohan to open his mouth, He had shown the entire universe to Mother Yashoda. By doing this Bal Mohan liberated His mother from anxiety.

When I talk about Champaran, I am also reminded of Mohan in his teenage. When Lord Krishna or Mohan was a teenager, He used to play the flute and used to engage in Rasleela. When Mohan lifted Govardhan Mountain to protect the villagers from the rains, He told the villagers to stand there with their sticks, only then can the Govardhan be lifted. When the mountain was lifted, everyone felt that it was raised because of his own strength. By doing so, young Mohan familiarized the people with their own strengths and collective power.

In this campaign of 'awakening the people of their strengths', Bapu made women as equal partners. Seeing the conditions of women in Champaran, he was forced to think that why can't people themselves make the garments that they wear. He considered it a way of empowerment too. Mahatma Gandhiji's stay at Champaran has also been a major reason behind the development of Khadi.

Friends, Satyagraha under the leadership of Gandhiji gave us freedom, but even after Independence, Gandhiji's dream of a clean India remained incomplete. Even after seven decades we have not been able to get rid of this evil. So, in 2014, when I talked about building toilets in every house from the ramparts of Red Fort, people were surprised that why was I talking like that.

Friends, Swachh Bharat Mission is the mission to fulfil Bapu's incomplete dreams. This dream has remained incomplete for almost 100 years and we have to complete it together. I am happy that today people of the country have come out to fulfil Bapu's dream through this mission. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, in true sense, has been transformed into a mass movement. Every section of the society is getting connected to this 'swachhagraha'. When Swachh Bharat Mission was started, only 42 per cent of the rural population used toilets. Today it has increased to 63 per cent.

In the last two and half years, more than one lakh 80 thousand villages and 130 districts have declared themselves open defecation free. Now a competition has started among the states to declare themselves 'Open Defecation Free states'.

Today Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala have been declared as ODF states. Gujarat, Haryana, Uttarakhand and some other states are also moving very rapidly towards declaring themselves as open defecation free. Very soon we will get this news too.

Villages along the Gangetic coast are being made Open Defecation Free on a priority basis. I am glad to announce that the 5 states through which Mother Ganges flows viz. Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, 75 per cent of villages located on the banks of the river have been declared open defecation free. Plans for waste management in the villages located along the river are being implemented so that garbage from the villages is not thrown into the river. I hope that soon the banks along the Ganges will be completely open defecation free.

Brothers and sisters, today there are separate toilets for boys and girls in all government schools. Now chapter on hygiene and cleanliness is being included in their syllabus to teach them about its advantages and disadvantages so that they make hygiene a part of their habits and lives.

Friends, Swachh Bharat Mission has given us another new mantra for our 'karyanjali' or work which is Waste to Wealth. The garbage that comes out from the houses, the garbage that is generated during construction work, can also be a way of earning. This can be used to make electricity, manure; it can be recycled and used for construction work. And hence the emphasis is on the Wealth from Waste and we should strive for that.

Different departments of the government are also taking innovative initiatives keeping in mind the convenience of the people to increase sanitation. Technology is also being used for this. You must have seen how fast railways respond as soon as there is a tweet complaining about dirt. Think of the earlier times when dirt on the platform and inside the coaches of the trains was considered part of the system.

Recently, the Petroleum Ministry has launched a mobile app called swachhta@PetrolPump. If the toilets at the petrol pumps are not clean then a complaint can be lodged immediately through this app. This facility will be available for about 55 thousand petrol pumps in the country.

A National Hygiene Centre is also being set up in Delhi now. This centre will help in disseminating all the information related to the cleanliness drive and modern techniques to the people.

Friends, at different levels, from the government to the village, the campaign of Swachhagraha is now spreading in the country, which is unprecedented. Now the mind-set of the people is changing and the realization is dawning on them that the filth should not be spread. Children are pulling up the elders and complaining and taking this campaign forward. The sense that we should not litter and keep the house, the office, road and the city clean around us is emerging. This expression of hygiene itself is 'Swachhagraha', the work done for cleanliness is the only 'karyanjali' of Bapu.

Friends, Gandhiji wanted to change not only the system but also the values of the system. He has written in his autobiography - "I want India to recognize that she is not a body, but an immortal soul, which is beyond every single physical weakness and can challenge the combined physical force of the whole world".

We have to recognize the soul of the country. We have to move forward with this belief that transformation will come. The stronger this thought will be, the more the foundation of New India will be strong. We have to set our goals related to cleanliness and have to make constant efforts to achieve them. There is no reason India's identity should remain as an unclean country. There

is no reason our country cannot be clean. There is no reason we cannot fulfil the objectives of the cleanliness campaign. The dream of Mahatma Gandhi's clean, healthy and happy India should be a dream of every Indian. The success of this mission will be a true tribute to Bapu and will be a true work or 'karyanjali'.

In 2019 Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary will be celebrated. After Gandhiji returned to India in 1915, within two years i.e. by 1917, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi became Mahatma Gandhi in Champaran. In the Satyagraha of Baradoli, Vallabh Bhai Patel became Sardar Patel. The whole country had followed them. For us Champaran Satyagraha was the turning point that gave impetus to the freedom movement. Today, when we are celebrating the centenary of the event, our resolution for cleanliness is also a journey from Satyagraha to Swachagraha; and both are Gandhiji's contribution. At that time Satyagraha was necessary for freedom, and today Swachagraha is essential for the liberation of the country from filth. And liberation from dirt means the welfare of the poor. If we really want to serve the poor, save them from diseases, and bring changes in their lives, then countrymen, we have to move ahead by taking this mantra of hygiene forward.

Once again, on the centenary of the Champaran Satyagraha, I wish that it is celebrated the whole year. Sabarmati Ashram is going to be of hundred years, where Mahatma Gandhi, in my opinion, practiced austerity. In 2019 Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary will be celebrated. It is that period, when we will get to live and experience the 20th century Gandhi in the 21st century in a modern form, with new thinking, new resolutions, and with a new hope. I believe that if we move ahead with this new opportunity, it will be 'karyanjali' in the true sense. We have been paying tribute and will pay tribute, but now there is a need for paying tribute to work i.e. 'karyanjali'. Our resolve, our hard work is to make those dreams come true. I wish that we are able to see the India which Bapu dreamt of, through our tireless efforts and 'karyanjali'. With this very sentiment on this great occasion and with the expectation that this great opportunity shall be utilized by the countrymen; I would like to thank you all very much.

Vande Mataram! Long live Mother India!

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