



# English rendering of PM's Speech at the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF) at Pune via video conferencing

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Today, the 24<sup>th</sup> August, you people celebrate your institution's founding day as a day of pride.

I congratulate you people for the role played by BAIF in nation building.

Today, if I had been able to join you in your happiness in person then it would have been a great personal pleasure. I'd have heard your personal experiences, and I'd have learnt something new from you people.

I still remember that when the Wadi program was initiated then I had closely observed your work in Navsari and Valsad. So at an emotional level I feel very closely associated with BAIF. And, it's a matter of great satisfaction for any institution with the kind of mission your institution is working in several states.

Today, several awards have been given in this program. Some self help groups are among those who have been awarded and some of the winners have been awarded due to their personal endeavors. Somebody is from Karnataka, somebody is from Gujarat, somebody is from Maharashtra and from Jharkhand. I congratulate them as well and I hope that they will continue to work in the interest of the society in the same manner.

Friends, this year is also centenary year for the establishment of Sabarmati Ashram and also for the Champaran Satyagrah. This is also the 125<sup>th</sup> year of public celebration of Ganeshotsav. In the history of our country, all these three milestones have been known for giving a new direction to the freedom movement. These are the symbols of the realisation of a solemn pledge through people's participation.

This vision of people's welfare through people's participation has been the basis of Bhartiya Agro Industries Foundation. It may be completing fifty years today but its foundation was laid the same day when Mani Bhai had reached Uruli Kanchan village with Gandhi Ji in 1946. Mani Bhai had taken a pledge to transform the entire region due to an inspiration from Gandhi Ji and started this thing by bringing some cows here from Gir in Gujarat.

Your institution has successfully demonstrated this thing that how farmer's income can be supplemented by combining the modern science with the traditional knowledge available in our villages.

Friends, empowerment of our country's farmers living in villages is extremely important for the balanced development of the country. The dream of a New India cannot be realized without an empowered farmer and that is why the government has been working to achieve the target of doubling the farmers' income by 2022. That is why the approach of agriculture schemes have been changed from being production centric to income centric. Today, the government is with farmers from the seed to the market. Emphasis has been placed on the proper use of every single drop of water. Organic agriculture and crop diversification have been encouraged. More than 9 crore soil health cards have been issued to the farmers for giving them information about their land's health.

More than 500 agriculture bazaars of the country are in the process of being linked under the e-NAM scheme. Recently *Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada scheme* has been launched. The aim of this scheme is to solve the problem of lack of storage in the country and to encourage the food processing.

It is being ensured with the help of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) that farmers' lives are not devastated if their crops are destroyed due to some reason. The loans to the farmers are being provided at the lowest interest rate in order to set them free from the clutches of usurious money lenders. You would notice that these efforts of the government are directed to reduce the farmers' expenditure, boost their income and to bring them out of the worries related to agriculture. The country will attain new heights of development when those who feed the country are free from tension.

BAIF has been working in this direction for several years with a sense of service but today I would like sow the seeds of some new ideas in you. It's not like giving advice or knowledge to an expert but it's like asking the expert for something.

I'm aware that how BAIF has been empowering millions of women through women self-help groups. However, can it be made more focused?

As per a report, nearly 70% women of the country have been collectively taking care of the animal husbandry sector of the country. Be it arranging fodder or water for cattle or be it the work related with milk production or treatment of cattle, these things have been primarily done by women.

So in way the country's animal husbandry sector is totally dependent on the skills of women. So today it is extremely essential to impart the special training to women self-help groups about the veterinary education, research and service delivery system. The more women are trained in this field the more it will strengthen the animal husbandry sector of the country and it will also benefit the women themselves.

An institution like BAIF can inspire the maximum number of women for this purpose. It can start programmes to impart training to them.

Friends, every year we incur the loss of nearly Rs. 40 thousand crores in our country due to the diseases of cattle. In some states, cattle health care fairs have been organised to deal with this problem. Things like, from the cataract operation of animals to the cleaning of their teeth are being performed in these fairs. However, there is a need to increase the number of such cattle health care fairs. Organizations like BAIF can play an extremely important role in organising cattle health fairs in cooperation with state governments.

I'm especially urging you as your organization has already been working in the 15 states and you have the capacity to expand in the entire country. The north-eastern states of the country have been waiting for the establishment of BAIF's footprint in them. The north-eastern states of the country, I call them Ashta-Lakshmi, there is plenty of scope for organic farming. Your experience can immensely benefit them.

Similarly, it is necessary to increase the awareness about the farming of medicinal and aromatic plants among the farmers. Our country has thousands of species of medicinal and aromatic plants, and they are in demand across the globe. However, there is a huge gap between the demand and supply. The government, the progressive farmers and the organizations like BAIF can very well provide the knowledge about the farming and about entire supply chain of these plants.

Friends, the country is very well familiar with the green revolution and white revolution. Time has come to bring about the changes in the lives of our fishermen brothers through blue revolution and to supplement the income of our farmers through honey-bee keeping and honey production.

We have been working to bring blue revolution, sweet revolution and water revolution along with green revolution and white revolution.

Farming is not all about only producing wheat, rice and mustards. The more attention is given to all the sub sectors of agriculture along with traditional farming, the more it will help to supplement the farmer's income. For example, take the case of honey bee keeping. According to a research, a farmer engaged in the traditional farming can earn extra Rs. 2 lakh per annum by having a small unit of 50 bee colonies. Honey bees play an important role in pollination along with honey production.

Be it honey-bee keeping, fisheries or be it production of ethanol through the residue of sugarcane and crops, the demands of the modern society is being met through these things, and that is why BAIF can very well do the job of making the traditional farmers aware about these sub-sectors and help them.

Friends, be it Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, or be it some areas of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana-Andhra Pradesh or be it Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh, these are some of the areas where the farmers continue to face the problem of water shortage.

The government is continuously trying to tackle the shortage of water. Under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) 99 such projects are being completed that were stuck from a long time. Out of these, twenty one projects have been completed this year. Emphasis has been placed on the better use of every single drop of water along with this thing. Drip irrigation, micro irrigation and crop diversification is also a means for this thing. Government is spending more than 60% budget of MNREGA on water conservation and water management.

However, brothers and sisters, we cannot make this thing a success unless all the farmers join in this initiative. I have been told that Shri Popatrao Pawar from Hivare Bazaar is also present in this function. Hivare Bazaar is good example of how we can properly utilize water by working collectively while taking care of each other's interest so that the efficiency of our water usage goes up and our ground water resources are being used in a sustainable manner. I have hopes from BAIF that they will set examples of 'people's movement' and 'water movement' in those village where they are active.

In addition to this you can also help in making the farmers' lives easier by encouraging them to borrow money only from banks and about *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana* (PMFBY).

Brothers and sisters, national saint Tukodji Maharaj has written this thing in Gram Gita:

'Gram Sudharnecha Mool Mantra, Sajjnani Whave Ekatra!

Sanghthan Hechi Shaktiche, Gram Rajya Nirman Kari"!!

It means that the basic formula for reform of the villages is that everyone collectively works through an organisation only then the village-state will be created. This was the same formula given by Mahatma Gandhi and the same thing was followed by Mani Bhai Desai. Today, the collective power of your organisation can open a new door of development for the villages. Today, it is necessary that we take pride in our villages, the villagers should celebrate the founding day, they should have a vision and they should move forward as per that vision. The leadership of those 80 thousand villages where you are active should move forward with a vision. This will be a medium in making a New India.

Friends, the government has continuously been working to bring down the input cost of farming. Today, farmer's expenditure on farming has come down due to soil health management, due to Neem coating of Urea and due to thrust given to the drip irrigation.

Farmers have been saving the money spent of diesel by increasing the use of solar pumps. Crop production has increased due to use of these modern technologies. The BAIF has long experience in this field that is why your suggestions about what should be done to bring down the cost of farming are always welcome. The more farmers you associate with this movement, the more it will help them save and increase their profits.

Friends, waste to wealth is such a topic which is relevant to the contemporary needs and the challenges of future.

Be it the recycling of agricultural waste or be it use of compost, these things can supplement farmers' income and benefit the entire village.

Today, nothing is a waste in agricultural farms, everything can be used and it can be converted into wealth.

Similarly, entire village can be made self-dependent in terms of electricity by encouraging the solar power.

There is enough space on the sides of farms and farmers can be encouraged to produce electricity by installing solar panels there. As there are milk-cooperatives across the country, similarly electricity can be produced and sold by having solar-cooperatives.

Friends, now days, you would have seen a small dish installed on almost every house in the villages. This is digital technology that has made things so easy. Earlier there used to be one or two channels, now days, there are hundred or two-hundred channels. Remote is no longer a difficult instrument for them. Even a two-three year old kid changes the channels by using remote.

This kind of likings for the technology will realize the dream of a digital village. It should be a village where most of the transactions take place digitally, all the forms from the loan to scholarship should be filled online, education in schools should be imparted through digital technology and the health services should be connected to digital technology.

In order to realize this dream of a digital village the government is connecting every village body in the country through optical fibre. However, just providing resources and tools will not be enough. Only organizations like yours can make the people capable of using those tools. So can your organization develop at least 500 villages every year into the villages of 'less cash'? You will see that if you convert 500 villages into 'less-cash villages' then a thousand or two thousand nearby villages will automatically start to adopt this system. It will spread from one village to another like a chain reaction.

Friends,

Gandhi Ji's formula of empowering the country was based on achieving this thing through the empowerment of villages. The BAIF's desire to serve has brought about the changes in the lives of millions of farmers by following the same formula, it has taught them self-employment. Your organization is a living example of how to get things done by making a solemn pledge.

I'd like to urge you to make some new pledges from the ideas that I've placed before you. When India will complete 75 years of its independence in 2022 then the realization of your solemn pledges will lead to the success of millions and millions of farmers.

Thank you.

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