



Speech by the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee at the presentation of CII president's Award for Lifetime Achievement and CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Award

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I am delighted to be amidst you, particularly for this special event. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has been closely partnering government and industry in boosting economic and industrial growth in the country. I compliment you for conceptualising the CII Awards which provide an opportunity for recognising outstanding performers and achievers in industry and women entrepreneurs.

2. I would like to congratulate all the awardees – Mr. Rahul Bajaj, Chairman, Bajaj Auto Ltd who has been selected for this year's CII President's Award for Lifetime Achievement; Ms. Jayamma Bandari from Telangana for Education & Literacy; Ms. Monika Majumdar from West Bengal for Health and Ms. Kamal Kumbhar from Maharashtra for Micro Enterprise. The institution of the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Award in 2005 is a welcome initiative to promote women's empowerment at the community level by discovering and recognizing those who have, against all odds, excelled and contributed significantly to the development process in India. I am sure that this will be a great encouragement for the countless number of women who are contributing in different ways to strengthening our nation and its economy.

3. I am aware that Indian industry has displayed tremendous zeal and initiative in contributing to the betterment of this country. The reach of industry in India touches lives of our citizens through different ways such as jobs, entrepreneurship, consumer goods or social development goods including education and healthcare. An inclusive growth process requires Indian industry to assume the mantle of responsibility and corporate citizenship. Our country needs visionary business leaders to manage India's transition to a knowledge economy and catalyse the growth process. The CII awardees exemplify this conviction and I congratulate all of them once again for their very valuable contribution. I hope they will ignite the minds of others.

4. With the CSR legislation, the scale and scope of social programmes that can be undertaken by Industry has been further enhanced. I am given to understand, that as per data maintained by CII, about 1270 companies have spent more than Rs. 8000 crores on CSR activities over the last year which is as much as 27% higher compared to the previous year. The range of CSR programs is extensive and includes education, healthcare, and rural development, amongst others. Special outreach is made for gender empowerment, differently abled citizens, and children's issues. This is indeed satisfying and I look forward to more such engagements from Indian corporate sector.

5. I would like to remind Industry that just as much as the funds, the country also needs your ideas, energy and drive. I urge you to leverage CSR to re-imagine interventions and transformative solutions to address the higher developmental challenges in India. I would also request you to have a pan-Indian outlook and not limit yourself to a few geographies for CSR development. Given the magnitude of the challenges before our country and the relatively short time available to address them, partnerships will play a very crucial role. It is important to collaborate for achieving scale, developing solutions to complex social problems and for technology development.

6. To herald a new dawn in our nation, we must leverage the strengths of all sectors: the resolve, resources, and convening power of governments; the compassion, will and outreach of non-profits; the innovation, know-how, and capabilities of the private sector; and the determination and aspiration of communities as a whole. I expect CII as an industry association to reinforce and converge the initiatives of corporates in this sector. I am delighted that this is being undertaken through a dedicated CII Foundation set up for this purpose.

7. I compliment CII and the CII Foundation in their efforts aimed at inclusive development. I am delighted to have presented the CII Foundation Woman Exemplar Awards to the extraordinary women transformers. My compliments to the women leaders - both the winners and the finalists amongst us today. They represent the true power of India, having overcome extraordinary challenging circumstances and becoming real leaders in transforming their lives as well as that of others. I cannot overstate the singular stellar contribution of Mr. Rahul Bajaj who has played a major role not only in the development of Indian Industry but also in the overall development of the country. I know him for decades and congratulate him for this unique distinction conferred on him.

8. With these few words, I wish all of you the very best and Godspeed in your endeavours.

Thank You!!

Jai Hind!!

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