



# English rendering of the text of PM's address at Indian Community Reception in Washington DC, USA

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All members of our family settled here in the USA!

Whenever I meet you I feel the same pleasure and delight that one experiences after meeting with his family members. My meetings with you people give me unique enthusiasm and I always return with renewed energy. Today I am fortunate to have that opportunity once again.

In the last twenty years, I had the opportunity to visit the USA on several occasions. I did visit about thirty US states when I was neither the chief minister, nor the Prime Minister of the country, but every time I got the opportunity to meet the Indian community settled here.

After assuming the office of Prime Minister of India, you people have organized such big events here in America that their echo can still be heard world over. Whenever, the American leaders or even the leaders of other countries meet me, they associate me with those mega events organized in the USA.

This is all because of wonderful people like you. I know how hard it is to organize these things while living in the USA, how many issues needs to be sorted out but despite all that, you people make it successful.

During this visit, may be, I'm going to disappoint many people. A lot of suggestions were made to organize mega events, responding to those advices, I said I would certainly participate in such big events but this time I wanted to meet those who have worked extremely hard for my last programs. They had spared their time, spent their money, made adjustments to their schedules and worked hard for my earlier programs. Therefore, this time I felt that I must meet them and I am fortunate that I am able to meet them today. I can see that a mini-India as well as a mini-USA is present here today.

People from almost all Indian states are present here and same is true for the USA. Wherever you may be, in whatever condition you may be, you could be engaged with in any work, and no one knows under what conditions you left the country but if something good takes place in India then your joy knows no boundaries. And if something bad happens then you people are concerned a lot and you are the first ones to lose your sleep, this happens because in your heart you are eagerly waiting for India to move forward and to become developed.

I can assure you that you people will see all your dreams being fulfilled in front of you and the reason for that is very simple. You are the same people who were in India who are now here in the USA; but once your Indian capabilities and potential got a conducive environment, not only all of you prospered but in the process you also helped the USA to become more prosperous.

The Indian talent when it gets conducive atmosphere here in USA they flourished like anything and along with them USA also prospered. Just like you, 1.25 billion capable and intelligent Indians are there in India. Just the way your world changed due to the conducive environment, similarly Indians back in the country are now getting the same supportive and conducive atmosphere and you can see very well that how fast these 1.25 billion Indian will change the face of India.

The greatest change that I experience in India is that every Indian wants to contribute in the progress of India and has been doing something or the other with that resolve only. And when one can feel that this resolve of 1.25 billion Indians, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Atak to Cuttack, then my dear friends, I can assure you that our nation is moving forward at a pace which was not there earlier.

The real reasons for the replacement of the earlier government was not that the people were not getting what they wanted; the major reason was not the dissatisfaction. Indians inherently believe in the virtues of being content, believe that the things are fine. Even if a young son dies of some illness, the parents accept it as God's will. This is the basic nature of our thinking.

Governments in India have been changed because of only one thing and that is corruption, dishonesty. Common man of India hates this, what is this? Today, I would humbly like to mention that during the last three year's tenure of this government not a single allegation of corruption has been levelled on us. We are also trying to develop an inbuilt system of governance where honesty becomes a natural process and it should not be the case that we have to vigilant all the time to stop corruption. Technology is playing a very big role in that as it brings transparency and integrity comes from the principles of leadership and governance and since common man is basically honest so they prefer to move in that direction.

Whatever benefits a common person gets from government, we have converted them to Direct Benefit Transfer scheme with the help of technology. To improve financial conditions of common people in India we give them subsidy on LPG cylinders so as to lessen their financial burden which will enable them to spend more money on health, education etc. But this subsidy on LPG cylinder is given to all and sundry, from the poorest of poor to the richest of rich. A person earning in billions also get subsidized cylinder.

So I requested people that if you are well off then why do you avail subsidy on LPG cylinder. What's there to benefit from availing a subsidy of mere 1000-1500 rupees, this is even less than your daily pocket money. So what is the example when I say that ordinary citizen of India has a very indomitable spirit to take India forward? It is an example that out of 250 million households in India, 12.5 million families surrendered their LPG subsidy saying Modiji since you have requested, we will not avail subsidy on LPG cylinders from now on.

This serves as an evidence that common man of India is eager to do something, to participate in the development journey of India. After so many people surrendered their subsidy, what did we do, we did not put that subsidy in the coffers of our government. What we did was that we decided that we will transfer this subsidy to the needy, to the poor who still use woods to cook. They get up very early in the morning at 3 or 4 am to collect wood and then they come back, cook food and later go to work.

Scientists say that the smoke generated from cooking on a wood stove is equivalent to the smoke of 400 cigarettes. So a mother who cooks on such kind of wood stove inhales smoke equivalent to 400 cigarettes a day. This smoke is also inhaled by small children playing in the house. You can imagine physical condition of that mother or those children who inhale smoke of 400 cigarettes daily.

If I dream of a healthy India then it is imperative that Indian child and mother both must be healthy. So I took up the task that those 12.5 million subsidies surrendered by our citizens will be transferred to poor families. This is not all, those who had surrendered their LPG subsidy got a letter informing that you have surrendered your subsidy in Gujarat; your subsidy has been transferred to such and such person in such district of Assam. It takes hard work but this transparency creates a new kind of hope.

When you were in India you must have witnessed how difficult it was to procure a LPG cylinder, people had to go round and round local politicians to get a gas connection. We have taken up a task that in the coming three years we will provide gas connections to 50 million poor families and I am happy that it has just been 11-12 months but we have given LPG connections to around 10 million families.

We have made fundamental changes in the way subsidy is given. Earlier the seller used to get subsidy, we have stopped that and now the person who receives cylinder gets the subsidy directly in his bank account. Six months back when I started the campaign for opening bank accounts for ordinary citizens and poor of India, 40 percent Indians did not had access to banking, they did not had any bank account, we were being accused the bank accounts have now been opened but there is no money. When we started Direct Benefit Transfer scheme the subsidy started flowing directly to the bank accounts. You would be surprised to know that after this transfer of subsidy to bank started, we found that there were thirty million clients who were untraceable. No one knows that every year the subsidies worth thousands of crores of rupees were siphoned off by whom. Thirty million ghost clients were removed because of Direct Transfer of Benefits resulting in saving of subsidy which is now being used to build schools in villages.

Technology is playing a very big role in bringing transparency and the younger generation knows the power of technology. Today India is developing its systems with great emphasis on technology.

Those who follow things in India must have noticed that when the crop seasons came it used to become very difficult to get fertilizers. When I was Chief Minister I also used to continuously write to Central Government that we have shortage of urea, farmers are worried that how can they get fertilizers etc. When I became Prime Minister I also started getting such letters from Chief Ministers. All the letters that I received in the first month were on this topic. You would be happy to note that from the last two years not a single Chief Minister has written any letter to me for urea. Right now there is no shortage of urea; nowhere people are queuing up for urea otherwise earlier people used to sleep under the sky to remain in the queue to get urea when the shop opens in the morning.

Did we start urea factories overnight? No. Did we increase the production of urea overnight? No. We just did a very simple thing, we coated urea with Neem, from the oil which is derived from the seedpod of Neem tree and which anyway goes waste, we just did that. Earlier what used to happen, urea produced in factories used to come out of these factories at very cheap prices and after coming out of factories it used to go inside chemical factories. Urea was very cheap as farmers get a lot of subsidy on urea, the subsidy worth around eighty thousand crores of rupees every year. Urea was a raw product in those chemical factories and after processing urea they used to make new products and sell in the market earning huge profits.

Because of Neem coating not even a single gram of urea could be used in any other way so it stopped going to chemical factories and instead started to flow to fields and because of Neem coating, the urea also became more powerful which started to improve the quality of soil thus resulting in enhanced production by 5-7%. Pilferage of urea also stopped so the subsidy expenses came down, hundred percent of urea started to flow to fields which stopped difficulties of farmers and because of Neem coating of urea its productivity also increased, how, just with the help of technology.

I can give many such examples where India is making new achievements because of technology. India has earned its name in the world of space, just two days back India has launched 31 Nano Satellites together. Last month we created a world record by launching 104 Satellites at once. Whole world started to ponder, what powers do they have that they are launching 104 satellites together. Recently a satellite was launched by India which was not weighed in kilograms; its weight was compared with weight of elephants that a satellite was launched by India whose weight was equal to so many elephants. What I mean to say is that to fulfill the dreams of a modern day India we are focusing on technology driven governance, technology driven society and technology driven development and pleasant result of which can be seen rapidly today.

It's not like that no development was taking place in our country earlier, work was taking place, in the end, the governments are formed to do some work and no government wants to waste its tenure and lose the election, no one wants this; however, some work taking place is a different thing than fast paced, result oriented work taking place in the right direction as per the requirement, as per the expectation of the country; it's a different thing altogether. Therefore, it is imperative that decisions are taken in a fast paced environment, in a time bound and result oriented manner, you can assess the country's progress on these parameters.

What was the pace of construction of roads earlier and what it is today, what was the speed of laying the rail tracks earlier and what is the growth rate today, what was the average daily electrification of railway tracks earlier and what is the average today, you take any parameter, today, the work is taking place at an unprecedented speed for creation of infrastructure is essential for sustainable development. Our thinking with regard to infrastructure is in the context of modern India, in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and global benchmarks.

Things won't work as usual, there was a time when during the famine people used to write letters to the government that this is the situation in our village please carry out some work here and the government used to dig land, used to lay dirt roads and it was considered a big achievements of the government, that was the time.

Then this changed to demands for roads, pucca roads and then demands were raised for double lane roads and today they demand express roads, they don't settle for anything less. The rising expectation is the biggest source for India's development. When there is a rising aspiration among the common man then under the able leadership, under the proper governance and appropriate policy response, then this aspiration itself becomes achievement.

We decide our policy response, our speed and priorities to convert people's aspirations into achievements and fully dedicate ourselves then it starts to give positive outcome.

Today the world is suffering due to terrorism; this terrorism is enemy of mankind. When India used to raise the issue of terrorism twenty, twenty-five years ago then some big countries of the world used to take it lightly. Those countries used to think that it was our law and order problem for they themselves had not suffered, did not experience it. Today, there is no need to explain to anybody what is terrorism; terrorists themselves have made them realize it; however, when India carries out surgical strike then the world recognizes India's strength that India restrains itself but it can also demonstrate its prowess.

We abide by global conventions as these are our inherent character, it is our trait. We consider the whole world as one family, for us these are not hallow words, this is our inherent character, our inherent (intrinsic) approach. We are not a country that would destroy the global order by wielding power; we are a country that is capable of taking tough decisions to protect our sovereignty, to protect us, to protect peace, happiness and progress of our people while following global norms and international law, and we have been taking tough decisions when required and no one in the world can stop us.

Surgical strike was such an action that if the world was not convinced then it would have raised questions, they would have cornered us, we would have been criticized by the world; however, for the first time you would have seen that no one has questioned the tough decision taken by India. It's a different thing for them who experienced India's might, therefore, we are able to convince the world this was the true nature of terrorism that was destroying the normal life in India, we succeeded in convincing the world about that.

India is successfully marching ahead in the economic field to emerge as the country of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Financial progress is not the only criteria for a country's development; the biggest strength of a country is its human resource, its natural resources. A country where 800 million people are below the age of 35, an young country dreams like an young person, is capable like an young person and we stay ahead with them in terms of policies, in terms of foreign direct investment. Today, India has been receiving more FDI than what it got since independence.

Global credit rating agencies consider India as a bright spot whether it is the World Bank or IMF, everybody has acknowledged India's prowess. The world reckons India as a top destination for investment, that situation is there, but innovation, technology and talent play extremely crucial role in it. Indian Diaspora has that power, it has that exposure and it has its achievements as well. If this knowledge power of India, this know-how of our country that is present all over the world, I invite them that if you feel that your strength, your know-how can be of some use to our country then there could not be any better opportunity than this to fulfill your obligations towards the country that helped you succeed in life.

People from all the countries have settled here in the USA, however, it would be rare for any global leader to receive so much love and respect that I have received that Indians have received. However, sometimes I feel that what would happen after you, whether the next generation will have the same feelings as you have, therefore, it is important to maintain that relationship with India.

It's essential for you to continuously strive to maintain the relationship of your next generation with India. Almost all the states have some or some other departments to cater to the overseas Indians. The government of India has built a fabulous Pravasi Bhartiya Bhawan in Delhi, and I urge you people that you must visit there whenever you come to India, it also provides accommodation facility, all these facilities are for you people only.

Despite my being in public life, for the ordinary citizen, the image of external affairs ministry was that of suited booted people meeting with big shots, travelling all over the world, that was the image of foreign ministry. However, you would have noticed in the last three years that India's foreign ministry has acquired new heights in terms of humanity. Government of India has proactively rescued more than 80,000 Indians from wherever they had been stranded in the world; they have been safely taken to their homes. 80 thousand, it's not a small number.

Around twenty years ago, you people used to live safely around the world, however, due to the changing circumstances in the last twenty years, every Indian living outside the country is apprehensive lest something happens to him; but from the last three years they have become confident that he can face anything as our embassy is here. You would be aware that an Indian girl had gone to Malaysia, thereafter she went to Pakistan due to some contacts she developed there. She went to Pakistan with lot of hopes, however, her life was devastated there. She was a Muslim, she had hoped for a happy life in Pakistan. However, when she was trapped then she realized that she would be rescued if succeeds in reaching Indian embassy in Pakistan. She was able to come back to India after she somehow succeeded in getting to Indian embassy, and Sushmaji herself greeted here.

Earlier when I used to come here, I used to hear a lot of complaints from our brothers here. They made complain about taxi drivers, about custom officials, about the filth, I used to hear all that that people want to come back to India due to all this. And today, I'm happy to note that whatever letters we receive from abroad, they are full of praise of the changes in Indian embassy in that country, they are about the changing environment of that embassy, that Indians are respected there, our embassies have become pro-people, most of the letters praise these changes. We have brought big changes in our policies. You would be aware about the difficulties faced by you when you had obtained your passport. And today, we are opening passport centres in every post office and the passport that was difficult to obtain in more than six months, that passport is being issued in just 15 days.

Social media is extremely powerful these days, I'm also very active in social media. You would be aware about Narendra Modi App, if not then I urge you to download it. However, how Social Media can be utilized in strengthening a department it has been demonstrated by in the best possible manner, it has been demonstrated by our foreign ministry.

Today, any Indian can notice that the foreign ministry that was associated with coat-pant-tie, the same foreign ministry has been able to reach out to the last man, and this thing has happened for the first time. Our foreign ministry, even if a victim tweets at 2 O' clock in the morning then Sushmaji responds within 15 minutes, the government takes action within 24 hours and delivers results. This is the good governance, this is pro-people governance and this is the sentiment.

Friends, we've been doing our best to measure up to the responsibility given by you people. These three years have been wonderful and we will dedicate every single moment to achieve a new height for the country. I've been fortunate to get your support. You have turned up in such a large number; I once again express my gratitude. I've been told that there would be a photo session, I'd certainly join you people in that, please be comfortable. Once again, I express my gratitude.

Thank you.

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