

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi : Felicitation to the Speaker (19-06-2019)**

Hon'ble Speaker sir,

It is a moment of immense joy and pride for all the members of this House to see you occupying this position. The old members are already very well familiar with you. Even as a legislator, you have played a proactive role in Rajasthan and people related to politics are familiar with the same.

It is a matter of pride for all of us that we are approving of such a personality for the Speaker's post unanimously today, who has been engaged in public life without any break in some way or the other since student life by joining the student organizations and leading the university's student activities. Also as a worker of the Bharatiya Janata Party, he came out of the student movement and worked in the Yuva Morcha organization for nearly 15 years at the district, the state and the national levels. I had got the opportunity to work for the organization for several years. Therefore, both of us got the opportunity to work together as colleagues.

The land of Kota has in a way become the Kashi of education. Those prioritizing career have Kota in their minds - living in Kota, studying in Kota and earning a livelihood in Kota. This small city of Rajasthan has in a way become a mini India. And this transformation of Kota has been brought about by the leadership, contribution and initiative of Shri Om Birla ji.

Usually an image has been created in public life for politicians, as if we keep on playing politics and engage in arguments and fights all the time to defeat each other! However, there is a truth which sometimes doesn't emerge. Recently, the nation has realized that the more the percentage of social service is in the political life, the more is the acceptance in the society. The era of hardcore politics is fading away. Om Birla ji is such a personality for whom association with politics was quite natural as a public representative, but instead his entire work life has revolved around social service. Whenever there is any problem in social life, he is the one to reach out first. I clearly remember that during the Gujarat earthquake, he had been in Gujarat for a long time. He had brought the young colleagues from his area. Without using any local facility, he served the people by using his own available resources for a long period of time. During the calamity in Kedarnath, once again he was there with his group to serve the people. Even in Kota, during winters, if someone didn't have a blanket, all night he would roam about in Kota and arrange blankets through public participation and distribute to the needy. He had a mission in his public life that would inspire all the MPs like us. His mission was to ensure that no one in Kota should go to bed hungry and hence he had started a scheme called 'Prasadam'. It is still in place. Under the Prasadam scheme, he used to feed the hungry people through public participation. Similarly, he had started a Paridhan scheme to provide clothes to the poor and the destitute. Through the Paridhan movement he also used to collect shoes for the poor. If someone is ill, if blood donation is to be arranged or any other service is required in hospitals he will do that through public participation. In a way, more than anything else his political focus has been public service rather than public movement.

Now that such a sensitive personality is occupying the position of the Speaker, I believe that because of leading a life of social compassion for years together and being in a responsible position, as a catalytic agent he will discipline us, inspire us and this House will provide its best to the country. He will be able to deliver in a better way.

We have seen that even within the House, he has an extremely polite way of smiling and speaking. Sometimes I feel scared that someone might take advantage of his humility and conscience. Earlier the Speaker of the Lok Sabha had to face a lot of challenges while the challenges before the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha used to be comparatively lesser. However, now the scenario has become the opposite. If we recall the previous session, everyone would agree that our Speaker Madam was always jolly and smiling. Even if she had to pull up someone, she would laugh after rebuking. But she had developed a new tradition. I assure you, Speaker sir, on behalf of this House and Treasury bench that we will put 100% of our efforts to make your work simpler. In case rules are being flouted or obstacles are being created in running of this House by this bench, you will have every right to tell them, to point out to the people of our stature and we will welcome this. This is because it is the responsibility of all of us to maintain the dignity of the House. Earlier the first three-four years used to be peaceful; only the election year used to be a little problematic. But now that there is an election in every 3-4 months, people want to give out messages from here. Such situations might give you stress. Yet the House will try to ensure that there is a good quality debate and discussions over important topics and the decisions are taken collectively. With this hope, my best wishes to you on behalf of the House and the Treasury bench. Thank you!