

Standard Bio-introduction of Shri Nitin Gadkari**NITIN GADKARI**

President, Bharatiya Janata Party, Maharashtra (Since November 2004)

Leader of the Opposition, Maharashtra Legislative Council (1999-2005)

Minister for Public Works, Maharashtra (1995-99)

Member of Maharashtra Legislative Council (Since 1989)

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Born - 27 May 1957 Nagpur, India.

Educational Qualification:- M. Com., L.L.B., D.B.M.

Elected to Maharashtra Legislative Council in 1989 from Graduates' Constituency, Nagpur Region. Reelected 1990, 1996, 2002 (Unopposed), 2008.

Maharashtra's Minister for Public Works 27 May 1995.

Member, High Power Committee for Privatisation,
Government of Maharashtra (1995-99).

Chairman, Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (1995-99).

Guardian Minister for Nagpur District (1995-99).

Chairman, Mining Policy Implementation Committee, Government of Maharashtra (1995-99).

Chairman, Metropolis Beautification Committee, Government of Maharashtra (1995-99).

Chairman National Rural Road Development Committee and Chairman, Review Committee of CPWD, Government of India.

Visited Israel, Italy, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, United States, Canada, Brazil and Sri Lanka as part of various delegations.

Shri Gadkari has been pursuing the Agenda of Development by displaying remarkable dynamism with his unceasing crusade for uplifting the downtrodden through industrial and commercial development.

Rather than just talking about development, Shri Gadkari has displayed his entrepreneurial skills, too. A keen agriculturist with an active interest in water management, solar energy projects and modern techniques of agriculture, Shri Gadkari is now a successful sugar factory chairman.

A sports enthusiast, Shri Gadkari has particular interest in Cricket. Married to Kanchan, he has two sons, Nikhil and Sarang and daughter Ketaki.

Shri Gadkari has never indulged in petty politics. For him, development and progress are supreme. Uplifting the downtrodden is his mission. The affection showered upon him by public on the occasion of his 50th birthday was unbelievable. Chitins Park, the popular social venue in Nagpur, had been overflowing with his admirers, most of whom were poor people from rural areas, who had come on their own, spending their own money. An all-party committee had organized the celebration, a unique event in Nagpur's history. No wonder, awards like Vidarbha Bhooshan and Nag Bhooshan were conferred on Shri Gadkari, who was their first laureate.

As soon as he took over as Minister in 1995, Shri Gadkari started reshaping the Public Works Department (PWD). He declared that he had full confidence in the competency of the department's engineers. This made the engineers work hard and produce miraculous results like never before and never again.

The first task Shri Gadkari planned was to provide all-weather road connectivity to the 13736 villages in Maharashtra. He noted that they had remained unconnected even after 50 years of independence. He remarked that it would take 350 years to complete the work through annual budgets. As finances could not become available from government coffers, he persuaded NABARD officials and obtained a soft loan of Rs. 700 crore for rural connectivity. Simultaneously, he pursued the concept of Privatisation in Infrastructure, charting a new path in infrastructure development in India. Many projects were taken through Privatisation. By securing adequate funding, within 4 years, almost 98 percent of the rural

population was presented with round-the-year road connectivity. This achievement attracted the attention of Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who asked him to head a committee to prepare a similar action plan for India.

Shri Gadkari approached Naxalite-infested areas where no road work was allowed by Naxalites. He secured the assistance of the Border Road Organisation (BRO) to construct roads and bridges, thus providing the tribals with easy and permanent road access.

Shri Gadkari applied the innovative solution of constructing roads to tackle the problem of tribal malnutrition in Melghat - Dharni belt of Amaravati district. With no access available, the tribals were deprived of medical aid, rations and education. Shri Gadkari took the challenge and provided all-weather connectivity to the 91 remote villages of the belt. This connectivity has changed the socio-economic profile of this belt with the incidence of malnutrition coming down dramatically.

With state funding shrinking for infrastructure projects, Shri Gadkari hit upon the Privatisation model. The Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model introduced by him is now a norm in infrastructure development in India. He campaigned tirelessly for investments in infrastructure projects by addressing investor meets, associations of contractors and builders as well as various trade organisations. The campaign was so successful that now contractors and investors compete to complete BOT projects.

Shri Gadkari formulated scientific methodology for BOT projects. He initiated traffic surveys, worked out IRRs (Internal Rates of Return) and determined concession periods (of toll tax) for them. He prevailed upon the Maharashtra Government to change existing rules and to formulate a toll policy. While doing this, he found that it was very difficult to convince bureaucrats. Finally, his perseverance paid off. Maharashtra became the first state in India to embrace Privatisation on this scale. Committed to quality and speed, Shri Gadkari appointed a committee to adopt International Standards in bridge construction technology. Based on its recommendations, he changed the age-old bridge code. His other important decision was to employ the latest technology in construction. For the first time, vibrating rollers, electronic sensors, pavers, ready concrete mixers, piling rigs or pre-fab material were seen in India. This bold step upgraded the construction industry as a whole.

A fact noticed by Shri Gadkari disturbed him. For major projects, hardly any Indian firms were seen in the bidding process. This was because they could not take on giant multinationals, flush with funds. To enable Indian contractors to bid, Shri Gadkari started extending them with 10 per cent machinery advance and

another 10 per cent as mobilization advance. Soon, Indian contractors were seen in competitive bidding for large projects.

In fact, there was enthusiastic response to Shri Gadkari's zeal. Contractors brought imported high skilled computerised machinery worth crores of rupees. Construction industry experts made a beeline to Maharashtra to witness such machines work. In a time of economic recession, the mega infrastructural projects like the Mumbai-Pune Expressway or the 55 flyover bridges in Mumbai undertaken by Shri Gadkari gave a new lease of life to cement, steel and bitumen industries in India.

Shri Gadkari insisted that fast track projects must be completed in a specific timeframe. To create footprint in this direction, he established the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), a fully government-owned company with its capital of Rs.5 crore. Trusting Shri Gadkari, MSRDC's maiden approach to the capital market raised a whopping Rs. 1180 crore. Crisil gave "AAA" rating to the MSRDC in no time. Had he continued as a Minister, Mumbai and Maharashtra would wear an altogether different look today.

It was his initiative whereby the MSRDC was able to undertake works costing Rs.4000 crore. The mega projects of the 55 flyover bridges in Mumbai at a cost of Rs.1500 crore and the Mumbai-Pune Expressway with an investment of Rs.1500 crore have been its highlights. MSRDC also took up many other bridge, road and bye-pass projects in various parts of Maharashtra. He initiated integrated road development projects in major cities like Pune, Thane, Aurangabad and Nagpur at a cost of Rs.2000 crores. Shri Gadkari was instrumental in the establishment of a Multi-modal International Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur, now called MIHAN. The Mumbai-Nasik, Mumbai-Talasari and Mumbai - Sawantwadi Expressways were planned in his tenure but have remained on the drawing board after his exit from the government.

Shri Gadkari has been decorated with the firstever "Mumbai Bhushan" (Pride of Mumbai) Award for changing the face of the metropolis by constructing many flyover bridges, widening several arterial roads, building underpasses and rail over bridges (ROBs) for a smoother traffic flow in Mumbai. Multi-storey parking lots in crowded areas were conceived by him. The Worli-Bandra Sea Link project is his brainchild. The flyover bridges at Love Grove junction and Mahim, which are vital parts of the Link, were nearing completion at the time of Shri Gadkari laying down office. Concreting of the approach roads had started, too. Shri Gadkari was pursuing environmental clearance for the Nhava Sheva - Sewri Sea Link Project, which is dormant from the day he bid adieu to Mantralaya. Making life in Mumbai easier was his obsession. Unfortunately, the situation is turning the other way.

Shri Gadkari revamped the PWD, which became the first Governmental department to use computers. His office staff started operating like a multinational company. Concerned over the large number of fatal accidents on roads, Shri Gadkari appointed an expert committee to study the accident-prone spots in Maharashtra. It identified around 25000 such spots where precious human lives were being lost. He implemented the recommendations of the committee with an initial budgetary provision of Rs.20 crore. The incidence of accidents came down immediately. Such work was done for the first time not only in Maharashtra but in India. By spending over Rs.250 crore, the PWD has rectified many of these chronic danger spots.

In a bid to generate opportunities for unemployed engineers, Shri Gadkari implemented a scheme under which they were registered as contractors and the PWD entrusted them with works estimated to cost up to Rs.15 lakh without inviting tenders. Under this scheme, nearly 30000 civil engineers could start independent ventures.

While Shri Gadkari does not spare any negligence, he believes in rewarding performance. Thus, he launched a scheme to felicitate the best achievers in the PWD by the state governor. This generated a healthy competition among the engineers in the department. The awards are distributed every year on the birth anniversary of the legendary Sir M. Visvesvaraya.

As Guardian Minister for Nagpur District, Shri Gadkari changed the complexion of Nagpur and the district. A huge flyover bridge and a network of concrete roads, sprawling gardens and playgrounds made Nagpur one of the most liveable cities of India. Besides developing an efficient drinking water supply system and finalizing plans to meet the requirements of water of Nagpur till 2020, Shri Gadkari ensured good roads and streetlights in slum areas, low cost housing schemes for economically weaker sections and markets for hawkers. Development and beautification of prominent places like Deekshabhoomi, where B.R.Ambedkar embraced Buddhism, was a landmark of his efforts. An integrated sports complex (Kreedha Prabodhini in Nagpur), a processing plant for handloom and powerloom textiles and a software technology park are some of the landmark achievements of Shri Gadkari as Guardian Minister.

In view of his vast experience, the Union Government appointed him Chairman of the National Rural Road Development Committee. Shri. Gadkari submitted his report to the Government and gave a presentation to the Prime Minister. His report was accepted and gave birth to the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (Prime Minister's Rural Road Scheme). Works of around Rs.60000 crore were completed

under the scheme. As Chairman of the Review Committee to monitor the functioning of the CPWD, Shri Gadkari made many valuable recommendations.

While working for the government, Shri Gadkari continued to pursue his mission of generating employment and bringing consumers closer to the producers. As Chairman of the Purti Group of Industries, Shri Gadkari inceptioned the process of uplifting farmers of Vidarbha. Purti Sakhar Karkhana (sugar mill), established under his leadership at Khursapar (Bela) near Nagpur, is a successful venture. Incidentally, every cooperative sugar mill in the region is in the red for decades. Against this dismal background, Shri Gadkari has shown that a sugar mill can operate profitably in Vidarbha, too. Farmers around the mill started growing sugarcane in an increasing number and are happy that they have been getting a guaranteed handsome return. The sugar mill, besides, produces 24.5 MW of power from methane, thus reducing carbon emissions and contributing its share of environmental protection. Ethanol, which can be mixed with petrol, can reduce dependence on oil import, saving valuable foreign exchange. After Purti's gainful experience, farmers from nearby areas prevailed upon Shri Gadkari to set up another venture. Now, Shri Gadkari heads the Mahatma sugar mill, too.

As Leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra legislative council, Shri Gadkari kept the government constantly on its toes. He exposed several mega scams while highlighting the major issues of the day in the house. He was elected President of the Maharashtra unit of the BJP in November 2004 and reelected in December 2006. Rebuilding the party organization from the bottom to top was his first challenge. Shri Gadkari infused a confidence in the rank and file by the dint of his hard work and transparent functioning. Under his leadership, the BJP spread its wings to every nook and corner of Maharashtra. Shri Gadkari's insistence that every worker of the party must associate himself or herself with at least one social/voluntary service project in his region has paid good dividends. By reaching out to the masses, the process of strengthening the party has gained momentum.

Shri Gadkari's contribution is immense in terms of empowering the deprived. His commitment to the party ideology is next only to his love for India. The leadership is confident of his capability to steer the party through the present times to a glorious future. A true leader of the masses the party will be proud of.