

English rendering of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address at inauguration of Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra

Posted On: 08 AUG 2020 6:01PM by PIB Delhi

Today is a historic day. This date i.e. 8th August played a crucial role in India's freedom struggle. In the year 1942, on this day itself, a mass movement for independence was launched under Gandhiji's leadership. The slogan of 'Quit India' was raised against the British. On such a historic day, the launch of Rashtriya Swachhta Kendra near Rajghat is very relevant in itself. This centre is a tribute of 130 crore Indians towards Bapu's Swachhagraha.

Friends,

Pujya Bapu used to see the reflection of Swaraj in cleanliness. He also considered sanitation to be a way of fulfilling the dream of Swaraj. I am delighted that the name of a modern monument dedicated to Bapu's insistence on cleanliness and sanitation is now associated with Rajghat.

Friends,

The Rashtriya Swachhta Kendra holds Gandhiji's ideas of swachhagraha or cleanliness and the immense determination of the Indians dedicated to the same idea into one single place. A short while back when I was inside this centre, looking at the efforts of crores of Indians, I felt like saluting them. The memories and the image of the journey started six years ago, from the ramparts of Red Fort flashed before my eyes.

Just like crores of friends have broken every boundary, crossed every limitation and have united in emulating the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan together, the same spirit has been incorporated in this centre. In this centre, our journey of Swachhagraha with the inspiration of Satyagraha is depicted through modern technology. And I have also observed that the Swachhta robot has become very popular among the children who come here. The robot talks to them just like a friend. Now, every person in the country and the world will experience the same connection with the ideals of sanitation and will frame a new image of India, drawing a new inspiration.

Friends,

There cannot be a greater inspiration than Gandhiji for today's world. The whole world is coming forward to adopt Gandhiji's principles and philosophy. Last year,

when Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary was celebrated in a grand manner all over the world, it was unprecedented! Gandhiji's favorite song, 'Vaishnav jana to tene kahiye' was sung by singers and musicians from many countries. These people have created a record by singing this song in Indian language in such a beautiful way. Gandhiji's teachings and ideals were remembered in the major countries of the world and a special event was organized at the United Nations headquarters. Gandhiji seemed to have tied the whole world in a thread, in a single bond.

Friends,

The acceptance and popularity of Gandhiji is beyond time and place. One of the reasons for this is his ability to bring unprecedented change through simple methods. Could anyone in the world have thought that the path to independence from a very powerful ruler could also be in cleanliness? Gandhiji not only thought about it but also connected it with the spirit of freedom, making it a mass movement.

Friends,

Gandhiji used to say that - "Only the courageous and people devoted to cleanliness can bring in Swaraj". Gandhiji was convinced about the link between cleanliness and Swaraj because he believed that if unhygienic conditions cause the greatest harm to someone, then it is to the poor. Unhygienic conditions drain away the strength from the poor, both physical as well as mental strength. Gandhiji knew that as long as India is kept in filthy conditions, the Indian public will not be able to build self-confidence. If self-confidence is not built in the public, how could they stand for freedom? Therefore, from South Africa to Champaran and Sabarmati Ashram, he made sanitation a major medium of his movement.

Friends,

I am happy that through Gandhiji's inspiration, lakhs of Swachhagrahis in every corner of the country have made the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan a mission of their lives. This is the reason why in 60 months, nearly 60 crore Indians are taking the facility of toilets and are confident now. As a result, the sisters of the country have received respect, security and convenience; crores of daughters of the country are now confident to study non-stop; lakhs of poor children are now able to prevent diseases. Moreover, crores of Dalits, deprived sections, exploited and tribals have also got the confidence of an egalitarian society.

Friends,

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has boosted the self-confidence of every countryman. But its greatest advantage can be seen in the lives of the poor of the country. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has brought in a permanent change in our social consciousness and our behavior as a society. We have to wash our hands frequently, avoid spitting indiscriminately, throw garbage in the right place - we have been able to convey all these things easily, very fast to the ordinary Indians. The country is coming out from the mind-set of being comfortable even after seeing dirt everywhere. Now those who litter at home or on the road are sure to get rebuked. And who does this work in the best way? Our children, our teenagers and our youth!

Friends,

We are getting a lot of benefit from the consciousness that has arisen in the children of the country about personal and social hygiene in the fight against Coronavirus. Just imagine, what would have happened if a pandemic like Corona had struck before 2014? In the absence of toilets, could we have prevented the spread of the infection? Would lockdown-like arrangements be possible when 60 per cent of India's population was forced to defecate in the open? Swachhagraha has given us huge support in the fight against Corona.

Friends,

Cleanliness campaign is a journey, which will go on continuously. After getting rid of open defecation, the responsibility has increased now. After ODF, the country is now working on the goal of ODF plus. Now we have to improve the management of waste, be it in a city or a village. We have to speed up the work of making wealth out of waste. What better day than the day of Quit India movement could have been chosen for this resolution?

Friends,

What could be better than the fact that the evils that make the country weak leave India? With this thinking, a comprehensive Quit India campaign has been going on in the country for the last 6 years. Poverty - Quit India! Compulsion of open defecation - Quit India! Compulsion to wander for water - Quit India! Single Use Plastic - Quit India. Trend of discrimination - Quit India!

Corruption - Quit India! Terror and Violence - Quit India!

Friends,

All these resolutions of Quit India are in keeping with the spirit of Suraj moving from Swaraj. In the same spirit, all of us have to reiterate our resolve to quit littering. Come, Let us start a week-long campaign in the country from today till 15 August i.e. Independence Day. The week of Swaraj's honour i.e. 'Dirt and filth Quit India Week'. I urge the responsible officers of each district to undertake this campaign to build community toilets in all the villages of their districts in this week. This should be done on priority basis in those places where the labourer friends from other states are living. In the same way, be it making compost from garbage, or cow dung, water recycling, or getting rid of single use plastic, we have to move forward together in this direction.

Friends,

Just as we are getting encouraging results about the cleanliness of Ganga ji, similarly we have to free the other rivers of the country from the pollutants. Yamuna ji is nearby here. We have to speed up the campaign to free Yamuna from the dirty drains. For this, the support and cooperation of the companions living in every village and every city around Yamuna is very important. And yes, While doing this, social distancing and mask is necessary. Do not forget this rule. The corona virus spreads and thrives through our mouth and nose. In such a situation, the rule of mask, social distancing and no spitting in public places must be strictly followed. Keeping ourselves safe, we will all make this massive campaign a success! With this same belief once again, many congratulations to the Rashtriya Swachhta Kendra!!

Thanks a lot!!!
