

PRIME MINISTER, SHRI CHARAN SINGH'S SPEECH  
AT BANGALORE ON 4TH NOVEMBER, 1979

Mr. President, ladies & gentlemen,

Time was, when our country was prosperous and enjoyed respect throughout the world, But owing to the weakness of our social system, that is, a system of caste, based on birth, which led to differences in our society, the country fell a slave. The Britishers occupied it. They had come here for the purpose of trade, but (achchha you will translate it? .....) The Britishers had come here for trade, but stayed on to rule over us. During the days of the British regime, when we were fighting for national liberation under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi men of my generation, used to entertain various dreams for the future of our country. We wanted to make our Motherland once again great, powerful in the military sense, prosperous in the economic sense, in fact in every sense, to seat it on the highest peaks of Himalayas. But it must be sorrowfully admitted that our dreams have almost all been shattered. While it is true that in the industrial sphere, we have now attained the status of eighth or ninth position in the industrial world. The necessary infrastructure for rapid development has already been laid down. Our agricultural production has been doubled, by more than double, during these years. Still we face serious problems in the economic sphere. For example, we are still a very poor country. Secondly, unemployment is mounting fast. Thirdly, the disparities in incomes are widening and widening from the point of view of per capita income.

India today occupies the hundred eleventh position out of hundred twenty five countries in the world. So that we are poorer than hundred ten countries and are richer only than fourteen countries which are very minor. It is not that we are almost the poorest of the poor countries, but the shame of it is that we are getting poorer and poorer as time passes. Ten years ago, we had occupied the eighty fifth position, in 1973 we occupied hundred fourth position and three years later, in 1976, we slid to the hundred eleventh position as I have just told you. Forty eight percent of people are living below the poverty line. Living below the poverty line means that they are not able to get food in order to maintain their health. Inasmuch as India lives in the villages, most of the poor will be found in the villages; still forty one percent of the people even in the big cities are living in slums, below the poverty line. So far as unemployment is concerned, only 2 years and a half ago, that is, when the Janata Party took over, in March 1977, the number of the job seekers who had got their names registered with the employment exchanges, stood at a number of 104 lakhs, one crore four lakhs. Educated young men who graduated themselves in various kinds of sciences, who have become doctors and engineers, electrical engineers, mechanical engineers, civil engineers; well they are going unemployed and most of them are going to foreign countries, mostly to America and England, This is so far as urban employment is concerned. So far as unemployment in rural areas is concerned, no statistics are available. But it is well known to all of us that with the passage of time and increase in our population, the area of our holdings is reducing ... reducing, that is, getting smaller and smaller. And according to the Agricultural

census population of 1971, 33 percent of our so-called cultivators possess lands of a size less than half an acre half a hectare. How so much these cultivators, so-called cultivators might strive on their little patches of land, they cannot simply maintain themselves out of the production of these patches. So that one third of our so-called cultivators are today recruits, if not actually recruits, they are potential recruits to the unemployment army.

When the Britishers left our shores, the percentage of agricultural labourers or landless people stood at about 17. Now this has gone upto 26. So far as income disparities are concerned, during the British days, we had always dreamt of narrowing down these disparities, those differences in income on attainment of Swaraj, but just the contrary has happened. In 1950-51 the ratio of income between a villager and a city dweller stood at one to 1.75. And now 28 years after attainment of Independence or 30 years after attainment of Independence, the ratio has, now stands at one to 3.5. One to 1.75, it has just doubled, it has become one to 3.5. The number and wealth of the big houses or big capitalists has also gone up. I will give you only the example of Birlas, whose name is known all over the country. In 1950-51, they possessed assets worth only Rs. 53 Crores. Now their assets are worth eleven hundred Crores of rupees.

The Lok Dal-Congress alliance has decided to pay more attention to agriculture and encouragement of cottage industries and other labour intensive enterprises to solve all these three problems. Of course, heavy and large-scale industries are inevitable in certain spheres. For example, we cannot build an aircraft with the aid of small-scale industry. Nor can we produce power. Nor can we produce steel. Nor can we manufacture railway engines. Nor can we manufacture other vehicles with the aid of small-scale machines. So, we propose to avoid establishment of heavy industries in the sphere where manufacture can be carried on small scale. As technology improves, automation takes place. Then more and more capital investment is necessary but lesser and lesser numbers of workers are employed. Our problem is that of finding more employment and more production per unit of investment and lesser and lesser differences or disparities between incomes of our people. And all these three objectives are served for by small industries rather than by large industries. Perhaps many of you may be surprised to know, when the Britishers arrived in our country, 60 percent were engaged in domestic industry and only 15 in trade, transport and other industries. If our country has to become prosperous, the number of the agriculturists must come down. Instead of that, during the British rule, it increased by 12 percent, so that our people are today poorer then what they were 200 years ago. Whereas the percentage of agriculturists has gone up, that of those people who are engaged in industry has come down from 25 to 10 percent in spite of the establishment of 95,000 factories in the country and investment of thousands and thousands of Crores of rupees.

The Britishers who had acquired political power in our country, destroyed our domestic industries, our cottage industries in the interest of their own

factory products. That is why Mahatma Gandhi, born in a rich home and a practicing barrister, he took to 'Charkha' and 'Kargha' - handloom, in order to prove to our people that in our country where the number of people as compared with natural resources is high, we must take to labour-intensive enterprises. We cannot copy America, Australia and other European countries where natural resources in the form of land, iron, coal, petroleum as compared with the population are very high. They can afford to have large, very large firms having an area of even one lakh of acres and very large factories. Well, not we. We must necessarily have small economic units both in the field of industry and agriculture. So, in the future, as I have already hinted, the Lok Dal Alliance does not propose to establish large-scale industries in spheres where production can be had on small scale or cottage scale. For manufacturing matchboxes, we need not have big factories. For manufacturing soap, for manufacturing our shoe, for manufacturing cloth, there are a thousand items, which can be manufactured with hands as they were manufactured before the Britishers came here. So, we propose to put a ban on the establishment of big factories for production of consumer goods which in the future will allow to, will be allowed only to be produced on small scale in our villages, in their cottages and only small scale (*clapping*).

Now I would like to come to agriculture. Only 55 years ago, that is till 1925, India was an exporting country. It used to export wheat and rice to other countries. Till 1976 and from 1943 onwards, that is, the days of the Bengal Famine during the British period, we have been importing food and in 1975-76, we imported 19 million tonnes of wheat from America. In the early period of our planning, agriculture did not receive the attention it should have deserved, it deserved. But now, things are changing. We have proposed to pay more and more attention to agriculture because my friends, I would like to tell you, without agriculture, production- increase in agriculture production to the extent that it is surplus to the needs of the farmer who produces agricultural goods, there can be no industrial development either. Till 1976, we have been importing food every year so that thousands of Crores of rupees have gone out of our country simply for purchasing food and keeping our country alive. Agriculture does not only produce food without which man cannot live, but it produces raw materials without which consumer industries cannot thrive. It is not only, agriculture produces not only food and raw materials, but it also provides purchasing power to the masses with which to purchase non-agricultural goods and services. Without increased agricultural production, my friends, trade, transport and industries cannot thrive at all, cannot come into being at all. And this purchasing power can be acquired only by producing more and more so that the farmer sells more and more to the trader and with the aid of the money which he gets for his produce, then he will be able to purchase necessary for his life and in order to produce those necessary or necessary goods, industries will come of themselves without a government, having to do anything at all. Without fertilisers, without improved seeds and without irrigation, agriculture cannot simply be carried on. Now, of these three inputs, irrigation is the most important. When the Britishers

went away from our country in 1947, only 17.5 percent of our arable area was irrigated. Today, the percentage has gone up only 24 to 25 percent. Since attainment of freedom, we have spent thousands of Crores of rupees in importing food as I told you just now, but we did a -- we followed a policy which was in fact suicidal. Instead of spending money in importing food, we should have spent it in putting irrigation works so as to improve the productivity of our own agriculture.

Now, friends of Bangalore, while I am laying so much stress on increase in agriculture production, you will be surprised to know that a country where the percentage of agriculturists is high, that country is poor. Only that country is rich where the percentage of agricultural population is low and that of non-agricultural population is high. Now, lowering down the proportion of agricultural workers and increase in the proportion of industrial or non-agricultural workers can come about only by shifting of agricultural worker to non-agricultural occupation and this can be done only when the production per acre goes up. So that there is only one formula of prosperity of our country or its economic development. That is we produce more and more per acre with fewer and fewer men on the soil.

Now to make matter short, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that there are three political parties in the field which seek your vote. The Lok Dal-Congress alliance, the Janata Party and the Congress (I) Party, i.e. Congress owned by one individual, that's our sister Smt. Indira Gandhi, owned by one person. Now, so far as the Janata Party is concerned, its two leaders, Sh. Jagjivan Ram and Sh. Morarji Desai do not believe in increasing production of agriculture. Nor do they believe in encouragement to small industries and cottage industries in the villages. It was my self and my friends of the Bhartiya Lok Dal, who felt years ago that unless there are two equally balanced parties in the country, democracy cannot become successful in India. So I wanted all these small opposition parties which believed in democracy, to come together in order to provide a national alternative to the Congress. All these small parties, like our own party, Bhartiya Kranti Dal, Swatantra Party, Utkal Congress, Samyukta Socialist Party and one or two other parties came together to make the Bharatiya Lok Dal, but the socialist Party, a very small party in this and the Jan Sangh and the Congress (O) led by Morarji Desai chose to stay out. My friends and I went several times to the leaders of these three parties and argued with them that unless we come together, Congress rule will continue forever and if one party remains in power for decades and decades, it will become corrupt, corruption will thrive and democracy will fall. I told the friends of these parties, that i have only one condition; so far as the name of the party is concerned, you may choose anyone of you may become its leader. So for as symbol is concerned, you may have any sort of symbol you like. My only condition is that the new party should adopt the programme of Mahatma Gandhi without which a country cannot become prosperous as all. When we had all been thrown into jails, the leaders of the socialist party and also of the Jan Sangh came round to my view but Sh. Morarji Desai could not budge an inch. When in January, 1977, Indira Ji at least

decided to lift emergency to rid -- the prisoners and to announce the elections, then Sh. Morarji Desai was also released and when he saw chances of becoming the Prime Minister, then alone he agreed to join the new party. However, Morarji Desai was elected the Chairman of the new party, to be known as the Janata Party, and I as Vice-Chairman. All the southern States, including Gujarat and Maharashtra etc. given under his charge to fight the elections against Indira Gandhi and all the Northern States from Amritsar to Calcutta were entrusted to me, you know the results of that election. Congress was in a way wiped out completely in the North but so far as South was concerned Morarji met with little or no success at all. Immediately after the poll was over, I became critically ill and had to be admitted in a hospital. There, Sh. Atal Behari Vajpayee, leader of the Jan Sangh, and Sh. N.G. Gore, leader of the Socialist party came to discuss things with me, about the prospects of a new Prime Minister. They proposed the name of Mr. Jagjivan Ram for the Prime Ministership of India. I said, I cannot agree to having a man as Prime Minister, one, who has proposed the resolution of emergency in 1975. I told them that Jagjivan Ram Ji left the congress party after our party had come into being and --30<sup>th</sup> January, inauguration campaign of the Party was attended by lakhs and lakhs of people all over the country. Then alone he left the Congress party with a view to becoming the Prime Minister of the future. I said, I would prefer Morarji Desai to him because he had at least 19 months in jail at know that on removal of poverty, on removal of unemployment i am not to agree with his views. So, from my sickbed in the hospital I wrote a letter to Acharya Kripalani and Jayaprakash Narayan Ji that I would like Morarji to be elected the Prime Minister of the country and my vote was with him. That is now -- he was elected, otherwise he had no power at all. But as soon as he was elected the Prime Minister, he became a dictator and he did not consider it necessary even to consult me who had -- him to that pedestal in regard to the formation of the --. Because I stood in the way of election of Jagjivan Ram and the Prime Minister, I was declared enemy number one of the Harijans. Now, this allegation is a lie. Perhaps I have done more for these poor people who have been downtrodden for hundreds of years in our country, these Harijans -- perhaps than any other politician of my status in the country.

I would not go into further details, but only point out two or three matters alone. When Morarji Desai had to resign, he could ask for a fresh poll. But he could not face the people, so he did not ask the President for a fresh election at all. When I resigned, because I could not agree to the condition of Smt. Indira Gandhi for cancelling the notification, according to which the case against "Kissa Kursi Ka" case against her son had been transferred to the Supreme Court. Then when I realized that she is going to vote against us, then two friends of mine asked me where is the harm if you cancel that notification so that you may continue to remain the Prime Minister. I said, no there are certain values in the world, in the life, which are higher and more important than mere Prime ministership. when the President agreed to a fresh election, then Sh. Chandra Shekhar Chairman of the Janata Party and Sh. Jagjivan Ram Ji abused the President in offensive language, publicly abused him, publicly abused. All the

other parties welcomed the fresh poll against the Janata Party. Why? were they afraid to face the elections, that is for you to consider. Again the question of a Harijan and non-Harijan was raised. Jagjivan Ram Ji told the press so many times that he was not invited to make, form the Government because he was a Harijan. He may have been born in the house of a poor man, a poor Harijan, but today he is perhaps one of the richest men in the country, my friends. So far as Indiraji is concerned, ..well, you should not forget her deeds or misdeeds so easily, she was never accepted that she had committed a mistake in imposing emergency -- that if she considers necessary, and she be elected again, she will again become a dictator. With these words I would like to close my speech but would request you to raise two slogans along with me. Bharat Mata Ki -- Jai, Bharat Mata Ki -- Jai, Mahatma Gandhi Ki --- Jai, Mahatma Gandhi Ki --- Jai.----  
Namaskar.