

Need to extend reservations for women in Parliament and Assemblies on lines of Panchayats: Vice President

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Addresses function 'Building a New India' organized by FICCI Ladies Organization

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that we need to extend reservations for women in Parliament and Assemblies on the lines of Panchayats. He was addressing the function 'Building a New India' being organized by the FICCI Ladies Organization, in Hyderabad today. The Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana, Shri Shri Mohammad Mahmood Ali and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that India today is on the threshold of transforming into a major economic power. For this all Indians will have to work with renewed passion and commitment towards building the New India and the India of the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay and several other freedom fighters, he added.

The Vice President said that the New India will be fully literate, free of corruption with shelter to every family, provide power on demand, best healthcare, meet the employment aspirations of the youth, empower women, double farmers' income and convert India into an economic powerhouse with IT, Agriculture and Industrial sectors contributing significantly to its economic growth.

The Vice President said that our ethos and values always respected women and it is unfortunate that abhorrent tendencies of atrocities are taking place in modern times. It needs no reiteration that the most stringent action has to be taken against perpetrators of atrocities on women, he added.

The Vice President said that educating a woman means educating an entire family. He further said that ending gender disparity, ensuring safety, healthcare, imparting job skills, creating more job opportunities and ensuring safe work places are all aimed at empowering women. The Vice President quoted UN report, saying for every one additional year of education for women in reproductive age, child mortality is reduced by a huge 9.50 per cent. The Government has launched various schemes, including 'Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao' which seeks to reverse the trend of decline in Child Sex Ratio, he added.

The Vice President also interacted with the Members of the FICCI Ladies Organization. Responding to a question on what needs to be done for the women empowerment, the Vice President said that education is very important for the empowerment of women. He further said that financial security is also an important factor for women empowerment. They should be given equal opportunities, equal rights and health facilities, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am happy to share my thoughts on the building of a 'New India' with you all, who are working towards women's empowerment and trying to be change agents. I am glad to know that FICCI Ladies Organization is working on its own and also partnering with the Government of Telangana on various initiatives to empower women, especially those from the marginalized sections.

India today is on the threshold of transforming into a major economic power. For quickening this process of transformation, all Indians will have to work with renewed passion and commitment towards building the New India and the India of the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay and several other freedom fighters.

Friends, we cannot any longer adopt a "chaltha hai" attitude or accept things with a 'destined-to-happen' shrug and remain indifferent to the happenings around us. As the Father of the Nation famously said: "Be the change you wish to see"—to start with let everyone work at his/ her own individual level—be it a housewife, a budding entrepreneur or an employee must actively fight against social evils like gender discrimination, atrocities on women, infanticide, malnourishment, corruption, casteism, communalism and illiteracy. Terrorism is the biggest threat to India's unity and integrity

Somehow over the years, we Indians have developed a rather strange attitude or belief that every problem has to be solved by the Government and the individual or the society at large need not do anything. "Sab kuch sarkaar karega, hum bekar baitega" - this premise must change and every citizen must contribute in making India unleash its full potential.

For this to happen and the envisioned New India to take shape, all sections, particularly youth and women, who constitute almost half the country's population will have to be in the forefront.

The New India will be fully literate, free of corruption with shelter to every family, provide power on demand, best healthcare, meet the employment aspirations of the youth, empower women, double farmers' income and convert India into an economic powerhouse with IT, Agriculture and Industrial sectors contributing significantly to its economic growth. Of course, politicians and political parties need to be exemplary in their conduct.

From times immemorial and in our scriptures women have been accorded positions of power and leadership. Our ethos and values always respected women and it is unfortunate that abhorrent tendencies of atrocities are taking place in modern times. It needs no reiteration that the most stringent action has to be taken against perpetrators of atrocities on women. Here I would like to recall what Swami Vivekananda had said: "The best thermometer to the progress of nation is its treatment of women". Our scriptures have said "Yatra Naryastu Pujoyante, Ramanta Tatra Devata", meaning where women are respected, Gods will dwell there.

While women achieved tremendous success in different fields from space to sports, political empowerment is the most critical aspect in the overall empowerment of women. I hope that more and more women would be seen in various bodies—from panchayats to Parliament in the years ahead. It is also necessary to remove all hurdles that come in the way of socio-economic empowerment of women. We need to extend reservations for women in Parliament and Assemblies on the lines of Panchayats.

Needless to say that education forms the foundation for empowering girls and women. As had

been most aptly said educating a woman means educating an entire family. Ending gender disparity, ensuring safety, healthcare, imparting job skills, creating more job opportunities and ensuring safe work places are all aimed at empowering women. On the advantages of educating women, a UN report based on data from 219 countries, said that for every one additional year of education for women in reproductive age, child mortality is reduced by a huge 9.50 per cent.

The Government has launched various schemes, including 'Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao' which seeks to reverse the trend of decline in Child Sex Ratio.

I am happy to know that FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO), Hyderabad chapter has taken up various programmes to empower and uplift women, particularly from the weaker sections. I compliment FLO for acting as a facilitator to impart training for women to become drivers, tailors and security personnel in schools.

FLO's Swayam, a consultancy and mentorship cell for women entrepreneurs is also a laudable initiative.

Finally, I would like to conclude by calling upon every citizen to strive for building New India where the aspirations and dreams of every Indian are fulfilled and where nobody is left behind.

Thank You and Jai Hind!"

KSD/BK

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