

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST COPY OF THE
BOOK ‘MAKING OF NEW INDIA – TRANSFORMATION UNDER MODI
GOVERNMENT’**

New Delhi, November 27, 2018

1. It is with great pleasure that I have received the first copy of the book “Making of New India”. I congratulate the editors of the book, who are present on the dais, and also the distinguished economists, analysts and scholars who have contributed chapters on various themes.
2. The book endeavours to elaborate on how the government has set out to realise the vision of a New India. India is a land of immense diversity. We are a mix of diverse states, regions, religions, backgrounds, languages, cultures, lifestyles, traditions and much more. We are young and vibrant. We are modern, and at the same time we nurture our ancient heritage. The dream of “New India” encompasses such diverse expectations of 1.3 billion citizens of our country.
3. It is therefore perfectly natural to imagine that different individuals may visualise their New India differently. But despite differences, all of us have one cardinal expectation from New India. And it is that all our fellow citizens, particularly those less-privileged and less-fortunate, are not left out from this journey of development. I remember the wise words of Gandhiji in this context: [QUOTE] “I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life

and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melt away.” [UNQUOTE]

4. As members of the government or of civil society, or simply as responsible citizens, we have to see our policies and actions from the lens of the needs and aspirations of the most vulnerable. And indeed the gender of the deprived person is often female, not male.
5. It is in this respect that contemporary governance has played a vital role in giving shape and form to this all-inclusive idea of “New India”. “Inclusiveness” is more than just a slogan. The government has taken this philosophy to the centre of its policy making. Numerous measures have been taken to ensure that socio-economic groups, communities and regions that had so far been left behind in the India growth story are mainstreamed in a holistic manner. This government has begun some foundational programmes and made a determined attempt to decisively defeat poverty and lift the lives of millions who have hitherto not got the facilities and services that they deserved.
6. Several initiatives aim at providing traditionally deprived sections with safety nets. They aim to universalise access to basic essentials. The services delivered include pension and insurance schemes, electricity and cooking gas, healthcare and toilets, housing and bank accounts. At the same time, it has been seen as important to not only protect the less-privileged but also to enable and empower them. Innovative interventions such as the Mudra Yojana and the outreach to micro, medium and small enterprises are examples of programmes that have enabled millions of individuals. They have enabled job seekers to become job creators.

7. Bold measures have been taken against chronic challenges such as corruption and complex government procedures. The path has been opened to transparent, rules-based governance; cutting regulatory flab; removing unnecessary laws; and making the business environment simpler, easier and cost effective. Taken together, these efforts are helping to create an efficient and accountable governance ecosystem in the country – a trigger for fast development.

Ladies and Gentlemen

8. It would, however, be incorrect to say that the development journey has been that of the government alone. The zeal with which ordinary citizens have participated also needs to be acknowledged. It has been heartening to see people voluntarily let go of subsidies and financial benefits so that the deserving and the truly needy can avail and access a life of dignity. It is common to see people selflessly doing *shramdaan* to change the status quo. It is this enthusiastic contribution by citizens of our country that is enabling rapid transformation. Such a change gives me great hope for the future of our country.
9. Several decades ago, it was the collective passion for a common cause that had helped India realise the near impossible dream of freedom from colonial rule. Our history has repeatedly demonstrated that whenever we have channelled our diversity and individualism to collaborate for a common good, we have achieved incredible feats.
10. The fruits of government efforts and people's collaboration or *jan bhagidari* are now visible. From an economic perspective, we are among the fastest growing major economies. Our macro-economic indicators are sound. Infrastructure such as roads, railways, airports and ports are being constructed or upgraded at a quick pace. All villages in the country are now electrified. Soon, all households will have electricity. Common citizens can access

medical insurance for their families. Most have mobile phones and access to banking services. The global community is upbeat about the India story. Foreign Direct Investment is rising. Our relations with developed economies and strategic partners are strong and robust. We are seen as a country that is rapidly simplifying the environment for doing business. As a nation, we are set to take off.

11. With so many parts moving dynamically, it is often difficult to put all these pieces together. And to comprehend the bigger picture. It is here that the value of a book such as the one released today becomes clear. By weaving together an assessment of various policies and programmes, it provides its readers a multidimensional view of the national development journey. I am sure that the analysis and papers presented in the book would be helpful reference for both citizens and the government. Citizens can benefit from the perspectives in various chapters to arrive at an informed opinion. And the government and its arms can benefit as this book provides them independent, well-researched views on things that are going right – and things that may need further attention.
12. As I conclude, I once more congratulate the editors and authors for their contributions. I wish them success and hope they continue their efforts in promoting informed and well-researched policy debates.

Thank you
Jai Hind!