



Mr. P. V. Narsimha Rao
Hon'ble Home Minister or HRD of India
Chief Guest-1986
(Read in absentia)

The Foundation has been doing a great service by giving these Awards in recognition of the work of such selfless persons. In a sense, through these Awards, the entire society is expressing its deep gratitude and appreciation for the services of these Awardees. I congratulate the promoters of the Foundation for initiating this scheme of recognition. The memory of Jamnalal Bajaj has been appropriately sought to be perpetuated. Jamnalalji was a great son of India. He was truly a complete product of the Gandhian era in Indian history. Like so many others of his age, he was attracted by Gandhiji's magnetic personality. But there is something special to the relationship between Gandhiji and Jamnalalji. I am really fascinated by the depth of their trust for each other. Gandhiji knew for certain that Jamnalalji would whole-heartedly and unhesitatingly give anything he would ask of him - whether time or money or a cadre of dedicated workers. Jamnalalji was not a mere business man. He was an inspired person, always wanting to do something good, always eager to serve others. He was a man of principles and tried to consistently apply those principles to his business, personal behaviour and social work.

Ramkrishna Bajaj was right when he said that there is an identity between the aims of these Awards and the work which is being done by the Ministry under my charge. It is my conviction that Human Resource Development holds the key to the future of our country. There was a time when progress of mankind was considered to be primarily the result of economic development, i.e. improvement in the material means of life. And economic development was supposed to be the consequence of investment of capital in the form of machinery and materials and also the money which bought them. Economists were totally pre-occupied, in fact obsessed, with models based on input of more capital. It was thought, rather mechanically, that countries like India were economically underdeveloped and poor precisely because they were deficient in capital. The achievements made by Western countries and the USA were cited as proof of the integral and inevitable cause-and-effect nexus between capital and development.

1. These beliefs were so strongly held that, while developing the capital base of a country the human resource was neglected. In fact human resource was considered to be subservient to the projected targets of capital formation. The history of development of several countries shows that human resources were even sacrificed in the process. There are instances galore of lives, dislocation of people's places of sojourn due to forced migration, turbulence in social and moral values, ruthless destruction of institutions and so on. Much that was good was also destroyed; there is no scope for judicious selection in this process. These were unfortunately considered as either inevitable costs of growth or the incidental by-products of economic development.
2. It is only now that these grave misconceptions have been ruefully realized. There is a rethinking about the very concepts of economic development, progress and the like. There is a search for the alternative. A holistic view of development has taken roots; a world-wide protest against the horrors caused by the over-emphasis on industrialization based on a heavy capital structure has been lodged.

A sober realization has dawned that it is not the machine as such but the man behind the machine who is more important. That is how human resource development has been brought to the frontline of the development strategy and made the core objective of various programmers of action. Many thinkers took up cudgels on behalf of the saner elements in the society. It is significant to note that the sub-title of Schumacher's world famous book "Small Is Beautiful" is: " A whew Of Economics As If People Mattered".

3. Yes! If all that is being done in the name of development is for human welfare and progress, then it is the people who matter. This is humane economics. And the same applies to all other disciplines including Industrial & Business Management. That is why education, health and social welfare become so important. Together they constitute what is termed as investment in human capital. But what is to be deeply regretted is the wanton and wholesale destruction of natural resources and the pollution in environment which is the result of sheer insanity. Whereas 30-35% of outland should be under forest, actually we have only 11-12%. The great Himalayas, whose forests were once our saviours have now posed a great danger in the form of floods and soil erosion. The Holy Waters of the Ganges are no longer as pure and clean as they used to be. It was Shri Bahuguna who rose against this madness. He is a modern 'Rishi', a lover, nay a worshipper, of forests, not only for their own sake but for what they signify in terms of environmental protection and ecological balance. By virtue of the Chipko movement initiated by him, Bahugunaji has attained the stature of a colossus in the field of environment, not only in India but the world over. Bahugunaji, your achievements have made every Indian proud.
4. Shri Salunke's experiments have a very vital bearing on the problem of drought-prone areas. Vast tracts of our land suffer from inadequate rainfall. Farmers take this in their stride somehow, regarding it as their destiny. They regard farming as a gamble in monsoon and resign to a state of starvation and misery calling it a curse of nature. Our earlier efforts for agricultural development relied too much on construction of huge irrigation dams. Although they did benefit large areas in different parts of the country, the dry land areas have continued to suffer. It is really amazing to find a Voluntary Agency like Pani Panchayat tackling the problem of scarce water effectively. What is done under Salunke's leadership reveals the indomitable will of Man. I say this because you need strength of mind and confidence in your abilities of a rare genre to overcome the severest basic limitations set by nature. Ever heard of a variety of rabi crops or availability of water in summer in traditional famine areas? But that is what the Pani Panchayat has done. Here is a shining example of what our scientists and Civil Engineers can do. Let me again bring to your attention that the basic emphasis in Salunke's approach and strategy has been on people, i.e. human resources.
5. Smt. Vasanti Roy symbolizes the inner strength of the Indian woman. Having made the bold decision to settle down in the distant tribal area of Bihar and work the multi-faceted improvement in the lives of the Adivasis, she struck to the task with courage. To such people, adversity is at once a challenge and an opportunity. The tribal tracts of Bihar brought heaps of problems to her and her husband, Shri Subodhkumar Roy. But she could succeed in bringing about enlightenment, better health and employment for the Adivasi women and children because of her faith in the Gandhian way of life.

6. The work being carried out by the social workers and voluntary agencies in the country is a helpful supplement to the Government's own efforts at development with social justice. I am waiting to see the day when Government itself would be seen as playing a supplementing role while the main initiative and responsibility are entirely in the hands of the Community operating through voluntary organisations. I would like to assure you that, whatever may be our shortcomings as individuals, the Government is sincerely trying to provide a better natural and social environment to the citizens and we are harnessing the services of all resources human and material - including scientific knowledge and technology for this purpose. But, in a true democracy, the role of voluntary agencies is extremely important. Fortunately, India has a long tradition of voluntary work. What it needs is a greater relevance to the pressing problems of modernization and an adaptability to the complex emerging situation and organizational and behavioural patterns. Adoption of a professional and problem-solving approach without sacrificing the basic urge for service to others, is the prime need of the hour. I am aware that the thinking of voluntary agencies cannot be identical with that of the government. I must make it clear that the intention of the Government is not to throttle voluntarism. If there are any misgivings about the matter, we can dispel them by a continued process of frank exchange of views across the table.

