



Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar (FRS)
Former Director General, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
Chairman, National Innovation Foundation
Chairman, Council of Advisers, Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation
Chief Guest-2022

Respected Shekhar bhai Bajaj, distinguished trustees of the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation, distinguished chairpersons of the awards' committee, proud award winners - more correctly, awardees who have made us proud, Madhur bhai, Minalji, distinguished members of the Bajaj family, ladies and gentlemen.

This is the first occasion since the institution of Jamnalal Bajaj Annual Awards that we are meeting without Rahul bhai among our midst. Although Rahul bhai is no more, I am sure that each one of us feels that he is everywhere.

To us, Rahul bhai was not an individual. He was an institution. Individuals go. Institutions remain for ever. And so will Rahul bhai, through the amazing impact that he has made with his human values, his spirit, his inspiration, his courage, his compassion, and his commitment.

His commitment to give back to the society has been seen by all of us, and again and again.

He had expressed his commitment in his speech in the 1994 awards function, which was held soon after the sad demise of revered Ramakrishna ji.

Rahul bhai had then said and I quote "The light lit by Jamnalalji and nursed with care by Ramakrishnaji will not be allowed to be dimmed and the traditions of constructive work, which are the hallmarks of the Bajaj Group will be carried on equally vigorously through the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation, the various Trusts and the Companies belonging to the Group."

If Rahul bhai was to express his wish from his heavenly abode today, we are sure he would have exhorted all of us by asking us to a commitment "not to dim the light that Jamnalalji, Ramakrishnaji had lit and that I had carried on till the last day of my life. And after me, you must carry on our noble traditions with even greater vigour".

Following this message in letter and spirit is the best tribute we can pay to our legendary Rahul bhai.

On this occasion, I must say something personal. And that is about the bonding between me and Rahul bhai, and also between me and the Bajaj family.

In the 2019 awards function, when I spoke in my capacity as the chairman of the council of advisors, which I had taken over from revered Justice Dharmadhikari, I had said that I had accepted it with all humility but also with lot of trepidation, since I was sitting in the chair that had been previously occupied by a legendary Gandhian, making it a special chair, a sacred chair.

I feel even greater trepidation today because the previous chief guests for our awards functions have been the Presidents, Prime Ministers, Nobel Laureates and several other iconic figures from around the world.

I am grateful to Rahul bhai and the Bajaj family for the trust that they have reposed in me for decades.

My personal friendship with Rahul bhai goes back to 40 plus years. We came especially close, when both of us worked together as members of the Indo-German Consultative Group that was formed by Chancellor Kohl of Germany and Prime Minister Narasimha Rao of India in late nineties. My respect for Rahul bhai grew exponentially as I saw not only Rahul bhai's visionary thought leadership, but also action leadership.

Rahul bhai was an embodiment of courage, commitment and compassion.

His compassionate acts are too many to describe but I remain grateful to him that he was kind enough to make me participate in some of these.

I remember his asking me to inaugurate the Bajaj Science Education Centre at Wardha in 2009. I remember his asking me to inaugurate the Rupa Rahul Bajaj Centre for Environment and Arts in Pune in 2019. In 2020, I remember his asking me to inaugurate the Women's Hall of Residence in IISER in Pune that he set up with a generous donation of Rs.50 crore. Equally, I remember his agreeing to my request for this donation instantly, when I explained to him the difference this will make to education of girls, whose parents were reluctant to send them to IISER due to their concerns about the safety of these girls. It showed he thought from his heart.

Rahul bhai left us for his heavenly abode on 12 February 2022. The Bajaj family, asked me to inaugurate the Rahul Bajaj Technology Innovation Centre in IIT Bombay on 10 June 2022.

And just five months later, the Bajaj family has given me this honour of being the Chief Guest for the Awards function today. I have no words to express my gratitude to the ever-gracious Bajaj family.

Let me now turn to the celebration today of our great Gandhian warriors as we call them.

I want to congratulate all the award winners heartily. To me this is not an award. It is our grateful felicitation of your noble work. So it is our hearty congratulations as also heartfelt thanks. You are exemplars. You are lighthouses. You illuminate our minds and show us the path forward.

We salute you all. Ladies and gentlemen, let us give them a thunderous applause.

Let me turn to the significance of our awards in India of today. India, very proudly, is celebrating India@75. We are now talking about India@100. What worries me is that during these celebrations, we rarely talk about Bharat@75.

The pandemic hit the poor of our Bharat the most. Millions of our brothers and sisters moved from poverty to extreme poverty. The levels of deprivation, divisiveness, joblessness, human suffering have increased. How can we talk about India@100 without talking about Bharat@100?. Let's not forget that 70% of India lives in rural areas. 17% of India lives in slums.

What should be the Bharat@100 of our dreams?

To me, it has to be based on seven tenets.

These include Santulit (balanced), Susanskrit(cultured), Suvidhya (educated), Samruddha(Affluent), Sushasit(well governed), Surakshit(secured) and Swanandi(happy).

First, Santulit Bharat, that is balanced. Can we dream of Bharat which balances economics, ecology, environment, equity and ethics? Bharat that achieves complete gender balance? And why not have an ultimate dream? Can we dream of a Bharat that is class-less and caste-less?

Second, Susanskrit Bharat, which is cultured. Bharat that preserves, protects, and proudly promotes our rich culture, heritage, and values, especially that of liberalism and tolerance. Bharat that respects other religions as well as its own. I am sad to see that we seem to be losing on some of these in recent times.

Third, Suvidhya Bharat, that is endowed with education that is value based, that is holistic, that focuses on creating a better human.

Fourth, Samruddha Bharat, that is affluent. Bharat that avoids the middle-income trap and becomes a \$40 trillion economy, but does this while achieving accelerated inclusive growth, so that no one is left behind.

Fifth, Sushasit Bharat, which governs with consensus, rule of law, transparency and accountability. Where all democratic values are preserved. Where citizens have freedom of expression and don't have to worry about freedom after expression.

Sixth, Surakshit Bharat, that is secured in terms of both external and internal dimensions such as food security, health security and energy security. Rising inequalities, marginalisation of minorities will lead to social disharmony and insecurity for those who are left behind. So, let's take a holistic view of Surakshit Bharat.

Seventh, Swanandi Bharat, happy Bharat. But a happy Bharat with a smile on the face of each one of our 1.4 billion citizens and not that of just a privileged few. Happiness that is derived from both peace outside and peace within.

If you go through each of the above tenets carefully, you will see that we cannot build Bharat@100 without following the Gandhian principles.

Just as an example, take our first tenet on Santulit Bharat. Gandhi's fight against untouchability and the notions of superiority and inferiority by birth are well known. Inspiration for our proposal for classless society. His quest of emancipation of Indian women is also well known. Inspiration for our proposal for gender balance. He had said that there is enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed. Inspiration for our proposal on balancing 5Es.

One can show that each of the seven tenets will succeed, only when the Gandhian values are preserved, promoted and practiced.

And therefore, our awards that achieve precisely these will be most critical in building Bharat@100 of our dream and much beyond.

All our awardees today have embodiment of the spirit of these seven tenets.

Nilesh Desai's amazing work that started with Bhil communities and spread to 2000 villages will lead to a Santulit and Suvidhya Bharat. Sophia Shaik's work on women empowerment and gender rights will

lead to Santulit Bharat. Mansukhbhai Prajapati's work on his Mitticool products will lead to rural employment and Santulit and Samruddha Bharat. And finally, the great work by Ogarit Younan and Walid Slaybi has embodiment of majority of our seven tenets.

All good things have to be repeated. So, let's again give a thunderous round of applause to our awardees, who have followed the Gandhian principles of selflessness and service all their life, and who will remain our beacon of hope in building Bharat@100 of our dreams.

Thank you.

