

Annual Lecture organized by  
National Commission for Minorities  
New Delhi  
5 July 2010

**Evolution of a Prosperous, Peaceful, Inclusive and  
Happy Society**

*PURA is a tool for sustainable development*

I am delighted to deliver annual lecture organized by the National Commission for Minorities. I am happy to know that the National Commission for Minorities through its various efforts have been working towards educational, nutritional, healthcare empowerment and promoting justice and self-respect to the needy. My greetings to all of you. I would like to share my views on the topic “***Evolution of a Prosperous, Peaceful, Inclusive and Happy Society***”.

Friends I would be discussing about :

- a. National Development and Challenges
- b. Distinctive profile of the nation and Integrated Action for developed India
- c. Principle of sustainable development
- d. PURA (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas) as a Sustainable Development tool
- e. Nation needs 7000 PURA and an example of Loni PURA

---

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam  
[www.abdulkalam.com](http://www.abdulkalam.com)

- f. Tolerance is the foundation of sustainable development and peaceful society
- g. Evolution of Enlightened citizens
- h. Missions for the National Commission for Minorities
- i. And in conclusion, I would like to share with you a memorable experience from my childhood.

First let me talk about the national development and challenges ahead.

### **National Development and Challenges**

Number of transformations have taken place in the society during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. India has made considerable progress in many areas: Science and Technology have revolutionized agriculture and we are producing over 230 millions tonnes of food-grains from ship to mouth condition in the 1960s. Our space scientists have provided space communication and space remote sensing for societal application of the country. Apart from this they have successfully placed the Chandrayaan in the Lunar Orbit. Our pharmaceutical industries are producing large quantity of drugs competitively. Our ICT and Pharmaceutical industry has built a national strength with large export potential. Our judiciary and legal system are rising to the challenges of time. Of course the pendency of court cases have to be addressed and brought down within the next 5 years. We have made considerable progress in transportation, our tele-density is

over 30% and there is qualitative improvement in healthcare, education and justice delivery system.

India also is focusing on bringing sustainable development through rural and urban infrastructure, quality education, healthcare, environmental up-gradation, bringing vibrancy in the public institutions for better and enhanced delivery of essential public services on time, reforming the financial system for better global integration and a proactive regulatory system is critical to the success of India becoming a Global player. More than 6 decades of democratic vibrancy in providing leadership to the nation gives confidence to manage the socio-economic needs and providing the leadership to the one billion people in a democratic, multicultural, multi-linguistic and multi-religious environment.

Now, let me give my visualization of India during the year 2020.

**Distinctive profile of the nation**

1. A Nation where the rural and urban divide has reduced to a thin line.
2. A Nation where there is an equitable distribution and adequate access to energy and quality water.
3. A Nation where agriculture, industry and service sector work together in symphony.

4. A Nation where education with value system is not denied to any meritorious candidates because of societal or economic discrimination.
5. A Nation, which is the best destination for the most talented scholars, scientists, and investors.
6. A Nation where the best of health care is available to all.
7. A Nation where the governance is responsive, transparent and corruption free.
8. A Nation where poverty has been totally eradicated, illiteracy removed and crimes against women and children are absent and none in the society feels alienated.
9. A Nation that is prosperous, healthy, secure, devoid of terrorism, peaceful and happy and continues with a sustainable growth path.
10. A Nation that is one of the best places to live in and is proud of its leadership.

### **Integrated Action for developed India**

To achieve the distinctive profile of India, we have the mission of transforming India into a developed nation. We have identified five areas where India has a core competence for integrated action: (1) Agriculture and food processing (2) Education and Healthcare (3) Information and Communication Technology (4) Reliable and Quality Electric power, Surface transport and Infrastructure for all parts of the

country and (5) Self reliance in critical technologies. These five areas are closely inter-related and if progressed in a coordinated way leading to food, economic and national security.

### **Principle of sustainable development**

While pursuing the action to achieve the distinctive profile, it is also important to analyse, how is it possible to reduce the societal gaps in education, employment potential and unity of minds? I have studied many programmes in the country in the last five decades after independence. All the programmes proposed or initiated, present a picture to me of: a heavy downpour of rain resulting in many small streams of water gushing on the ground. When the rain ceases after a few hours, all the water streams disappear because there is no reservoirs or water ponds to collect and preserve rain water. Similarly, all the developmental efforts in different areas do not sustained. All the initiatives thus have to be integrated towards a common mission and be result oriented.

With these aspects in mind, I would now like to talk about integrated sustainable development model of PURA (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas).

### **PURA as a Sustainable Development tool**

Friends, this year India will turn 63 years old as the largest democracy in the world and we witness a defining

period for the nation and its people. We stand ten years away from the goal of achieving the vision for a developed India by 2020, and there has been significant progress in all directions. Each step we take towards a developed nation also opens a fresh challenge to overcome. The need of the hour is the evolution of sustainable systems which act as “enablers” and bring inclusive growth and integrated development to the nation.

One such sustainable development system is the mission of Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA). It means that:

1. The villages must be connected with in themselves and with main towns and metros through by good roads and wherever needed by railway lines. They must have other infrastructure like schools, colleges, hospitals and amenities for the local population and the visitors. This is **physical connectivity**.
2. In the emerging knowledge era, the native knowledge has to be preserved and enhanced with latest tools of technology, training and research. The villages have to have access to good education from best teachers wherever they are, must have the benefit of good medical treatment, and must have latest information on their pursuits like agriculture, fishery, horticulture and food processing. That means they have to have **electronic connectivity**.

3. Once the Physical and Electronic connectivity are enabled, the knowledge connectivity is enabled. That can facilitate the ability increase the productivity, the utilization of spare time, awareness of health welfare, ensuring a market for products, increasing quality conscience, interacting with partners, getting the best equipment, increasing transparency and so in general **knowledge connectivity**.
4. Once the three connectivities viz Physical, Electronic and knowledge connectivity are ensured, they facilitate earning capacity leading to **economic connectivity**. When we Provide Urban Amenities to Rural Areas (PURA), we can lead to upliftment of rural areas, we can attract investors, we can introduce effectively useful systems like Rural BPOs, Micro Finance.

**Thrust areas for PURA:**

Thrust areas for PURA would be the following:

1. Creation of employment opportunities for all the employable people.
2. Capacity building in education – school, value added employable skills and knowledge.
3. Provision of quality health and timely health care, safe drinking water, quality reliable electric power, energy and water efficient pucca houses.

4. Typical examples of PURA connectivities – physical, electronic, knowledge and economic to be included in the PURA project.

### **Nation needs 7000 PURA**

The number of PURA for the whole country is estimated to be 7000 covering 600,000 villages where 700 million people live. There are number operational PURA in our country initiated by many educational, healthcare institutions, industry and other institutions. Some examples are: Periyar PURA in Tamilnadu, Chitrakoot PURA in Madhya Pradesh, Warana PURA and Loni PURA in Maharashtra, Baktara PURA in Chhattisgarh. Government of India is already moving ahead with the implementation of PURA on the national scale across several districts of India.

Let me now discuss another element of sustainable development which is tolerance in the society.

### **Tolerance is the foundation of sustainable development and peaceful society**

It will be appropriate to have an introspection by all of us about the social awakening needed for the national development. Every civilized society exists not for day-to-day, but lives with a clear perception for the future and the generations to come. Such a situation would pre-suppose that each individual in such a society would cherish and translate into practice noble ideals of constructive tolerance, positive

fellow-feeling and a total commitment to live and let live. Albert Einstein could not have expressed this better, when he said: *“Laws alone can’t secure freedom of expression; in order that every man presents his views without penalty, there must be spirit of tolerance in the entire population”*.

We have to evolve a society that will respect differences and celebrate differences. What are the various issues on tolerance?

1. Tolerance for people’s opinion
2. Tolerance for people’s culture
3. Tolerance for people’s belief system
4. and Tolerance for people’s styles

In fact, such an attitude, be it that of an individual or a collection of them *i.e.* society, is the hallmark of civilization and that is what characterizes and differentiates life from sheer existence. Honesty and integrity - both in thought and action, independence and inter-dependence – in their wholesome and positive manifestations, would distinguish a civilized society in its true sense. It is for each individual to strive to inculcate these eternal values in him or her, and that alone would be the surest path and unfailing guarantee for a civilized society and its future.

How can we create citizens with the qualities of tolerance honesty and integrity? This would require evolution of enlightened citizens.

### **Evolution of Enlightened citizens**

The evolution of enlightened human beings is indeed a big challenge for the world community. I was asking myself, what will be the components of such a mission? There are three components to that. The first component is education with value system, second is religions graduating into spiritual forces to bring universal brotherhood and the third is poverty eradication by attaining economic prosperity through a national vision.

#### **A. *Education with Value System***

The best part for a person is his or her learning period in childhood at School. The prime learning period is 6th to 17th year of age. Hence, the school hours for children are the best time for learning, and need the best environment and mission oriented learning with value based educational system. This reminds me the echo from Bestolozzy, a great teacher's saying, "Give me a child for seven years, afterwards, let the God or devil take the child, they cannot change the child." That is indeed the power of the teacher. For parents and teachers, school campus and home have to have an integrated mission: education with value system. Twelve-year value-based education of 25,000 hours in the school campus

is essential to establish an open and transparent society or a society with integrity. Up to the age of 17 years, the father, the mother and the teacher lead a child to become an enlightened citizen.

The Nations will target development milestones in a spirited environment instead of spending tremendous energy and time in problems initiated by small aims. This is the essential environment need for transforming India into a developed nation.

### **B. Religion transforming into spirituality**

A message, I have received is that most Indians experienced and old, energetic and middle-aged, young and innocent, they all look to religion for solace and safety. I have also visited great many religious places and houses of worship throughout the length and breadth of this great country and I have met many of our religious leaders. The religions are like exquisite gardens, places full of surpassing beauty and tranquility, like sacred groves filled with beautiful birds and their melodious songs. I truly think that religions are beautiful gardens. They are enchanting islands, veritable oasis for the soul and the spirit. But they are islands nevertheless. Religion has two components; they are theology and spirituality. Through spirituality religions can be connected. How can we connect them so that the fragrance engulfs the whole universe? If we can connect all the islands with love and

compassion, in a 'garland', we will have a prosperous India and prosperous world.

The economic development has to be based on sustained development. We have discussed the PURA as a sustainable development model. Here I will indicate only one example.

### **C. Development through entrepreneurship**

The feeling of minority should not instill in their mind and autosuggestion of being weak in the society. Recently I came across a book "Creating job creators: 101 representative Success Stories of I Create Entrepreneurs. In this book, I came across the story of a young man, Samad from Rasulpur village of West Bengal. He belongs to economically deprived section of the society and because of money constraint could not study beyond middle school. He used to take care of a grocery store until he came across an entrepreneur programme sponsored by NABARD and taught by various experts. After the training, Samad noticed a market potential for jute bags for the agriculture produce of the region. He submitted his business plan to the local cooperative bank and availed the loan of ten lakh. As business expanded, he also decided to start a seed farm. At present his business volume is in excess of 10 crores with 200 families directly or indirectly livelihood from his enterprise. This case highlights two unique aspects which would be critical for development of all sections of the society. First, we need to create job generators like Samad who could

generate multiple employment opportunities for the deprived sections. Second, entrepreneurship incubation institutions need to be developed all over India and the NCM can be instrumental in doing so.

### **Missions for the National Commission for Minorities**

I would now like to suggest the following missions for the consideration of the National Commission for Minorities:

1. Friends, before coming here I browsed the website of NCM. I have few suggestions for making the website more effective. A well defined mission of NCM, should be put on the website. Also, the NCM website should be link with other related websites for Ministry of Minority Affairs.
2. The website should be updated and latest information on the commission's working and contribution should be readily available on the website. The website may also have dynamic features by which the people can raise their queries in a user friendly manner and a time bound reply.
3. Awareness about NCM and its performance should be known to all the stakeholders and website can be a prominent medium to be do so.
4. NCM may like to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the educational and vocational qualifications of all minority groups, sub-classified according to economic status.

- Further NCM may like to evolve strategies for overcoming the shortcomings in literacy and higher education. For this NCM may like to partner with the best educational and management institutions of the nation.
5. The NCM may like to evaluate socio-economic parameters which could be critical towards an integrated development and inclusive growth of the minorities. The NCM should also evolve a strategic road map towards generation of employment potential, its impedances and ways to overcome them.
  6. The NCM may like to embark on strategic research on how the sustainable development inclusive of all societal elements of the nation, can be achieved. For this, the share of budget for research may be progressively achieved from 1% to 10% with the three years.
  7. The NCM may like to conduct workshops at district level where it can establish awareness in the people about NCM and its utility.
  8. The NCM may like to establish objective parameters for annual evaluation of its own performance based on the speed, efficiency and quality of services to the people. This performance evaluation matrix can be passed on to the state level as well.

## **Conclusion**

Friends, when I am here with participants of this event organized by NCM, a childhood scene comes to mind. In 1937

-1944, it was the just IIInd world war time in British India. The war had reached our territory and Andaman and Nicobar Island was captured by Japanese. My birth place is Island Rameswaram which is near Sri Lanka. There was the risk of war reaching our Island. It was indeed difficult time for families and societies. Something unique I experienced in my childhood in Rameswaram which I am very happy to recall it.

I studied 1<sup>st</sup> class to 8<sup>th</sup> class in Rameswaram Primary School. My best friend Ramaswamy Iyer also was my classmate upto 8<sup>th</sup> class. We both of us always used to sit together. Our teacher was Muthu Iyer upto IIIrd class, and after that Shri Sivasubramania Iyer. Ramaswamy and myself, the two friends used to alternate between the top two rank in the class. Education and friendship were the dominating factor in our young age. We did not bother which religion we belong to, we were just thick friend.

Now, I am going to narrate an email received from successful tribal youth. The youth says, in the class, he is brilliant and he stands the best, he does not need any categorization through reservation for education or employment. But his parental environment and government system is forcing him to accept the system. Friends, any categorization should not come in the way of the self esteem of the youth. All the connected commission may like to ensure that additional privileges do not hamper the initiative of the ignited minds of the youth of the any society.

For success in all the missions of upliftment of the societies, it is essential to have creative leaders. Creative leadership means exercising the vision to change the traditional role from the commander to the coach, manager to mentor, from director to delegator and from one who demands respect to one who facilitates self-respect. Higher the number of creative leaders in a society, definitely the society will be empowered, tolerance will be higher and above all self-esteem will be provided in the society.

My greetings and best wishes to all of you in your endeavor to promote a prosperous, peaceful, inclusive and happy society.

May God Bless you.