

**RAJYA SABHA**

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**\*SUPPLEMENT**

**TO**

**SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE**

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**(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)**

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**Thursday, February 02, 2017/ Magha 13, 1938 (Saka)**

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**MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS -**  
*Contd.*

**SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR:** This Government enjoys self appraisal. They don't like questions so now nobody is allowed to ask them any question about surgical strike or judiciary. I have objection on it. This is not an good example for our coming generation. In this Address there is mention of Swachh Bharat. Under this scheme Government have made toilets but nobody knows that in the absence of water facility how many of such toilets are actually working. It is evident that this scheme is not conceptualized properly. India won't become clean by symbolism. There has to be a reality check by visiting the villages. There has been much of sloganeering but little has been done in reality. One fails to understand that when crude oil was costly, petrol was costly and now that crude oil is cheap, the rate of petrol remains the same. Prices of all commodities are linked to prices of petrol and diesel. It needs to be known what the number of zero balance accounts is at present. On the one hand it is said that

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\*This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

corruption has to be eradicated and on the other, people are advised not to return the money deposited in their Jan Dhan accounts. The amount of counterfeit money recovered under demonetization drive is not known. It was said that there would be no enquiry about old currency deposited in RBI by 31st of March 2017. But now it is being said that it would be enquired into. Even the money deposited by housewives in banks would be enquired into. There has to be transparency about the money deposited during demonetization. Peace loving people of this country did not resort to rioting during demonetization. Import duty on wheat has been abolished. This is against the interest of our farmers. Gas is not free in Ujjwala Yojana. Incidents of cross border infiltration have increased after noteban. For digitalisation to succeed, people of the country have to be educated first. People who used to talk about principles have the maximum security now.

**SHRI A. NAVANEETHAKRISHNAN:** It is good to note that our India is making progress. But no mention has been made of a very popular leader, Dr. M.G. Ramachandran. The Central Government is urged to celebrate the centenary year of MGR in an appropriate and befitting manner. The Government is thanked for intervening appropriately and taking all legal steps to see that Jallikattu is conducted very smoothly in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu must be exempted from NEET permanently. Cauvery Management Board must be constituted by the Central Government and water must be released from Karnataka and flown into the river to give relief to the farmers of Tamil Nadu. For a permanent solution of the fishermen issue, Kachchatheevu must be retrieved permanently from the hands of Sri Lanka. GAIL gas pipeline must be realigned so as not to affect the farmers of the Tamil Nadu. Central Government is urged to release the funds as early as possible to give relief to the Vardah cyclone affected in Tamil Nadu.

**SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN:** We wish happiness and good health to the hon'ble President. We have been focusing on the pains of demonetization. The media has this list of 120 deaths. Have Government expressed any condolences for these deaths? What

measures did Government take? In a situation like this, it cannot be business as usual. We are asking for withdrawal of deposit limits. Parliament was ignored. Are the Government only trusted custodian of the public money because it is not allowing the public to withdraw their private money for which they pay tax? So we urge upon this Government to please stay away from platitudes. The good thing, at least, which the Government has confirmed is that demonetization has not worked because if it had worked then they would have shared as to how much has been collected and how much has been given out. We are opposing because we think that this is anti-people. There are plenty of reasons from terrorism to boost real estate market as to why demonetization took place. Our belief from the Trinamool Congress is, at the core of this Government's policy is the PM. The informal sector accounts for 45 per cent of the GDP and about 80 per cent of employment. The unemployment has increased by double percentage in the last few weeks and months. About 25 crore daily wage workers have lost their employment. About 12 lakh power looms were shut down. The leather industry in West Bengal is headed towards trouble. We all know what is happening to tea gardens. Cooperative Banks were not allowed to exchange demonetized notes therefore no money to buy seeds and fertilizers. The APMC says prices dropped by 40 to 46 per cent.

Auto sales reduced by 19 per cent for four wheelers and 9 per cent for two wheelers. Overall decline in MSMEs has been to the extent of 50 per cent, with 35 per cent job losses in this sector. There is a 40 per cent drop in FMCG sales. They are saying MNREGA numbers have gone up. You can check it. MNREGA numbers didn't go up; they went down. The average days of employment under MNREGA per household last year were 34.84 days. Para 55 talks about the evils of black money, corruption, counterfeit currency, and so on. There is not a word about offshore accounts! No action on SIT. We have been talking about the Panama Papers. There are 11095 Indians; 25,000 in a single HSBC's account in Switzerland. Please bring this money back to India and prescribe a time limit.

Then they talk about the Non- Performing Assets. There are six lakh crores of Non Performing Assets in your banks and you gave Rs. 10,000 crores yesterday for capitalization of banks. They spoke about Beti Bachao Beti Padhao. I want to speak about Kanya Shri scheme because in my State West Bengal, lakhs and lakhs of young girls have benefited from this Scheme. They saw the scheme of the State; rebranded it and used it. The budget for that scheme for the whole country is Rs. 200 crores. West Bengal is one State where the budget for this purpose is Rs. 1,000 crores. Then, I come to women reservation. There is not a word about women's reservation today in the speech. Have you mentioned even once in the President's Address the ICDS? You have not mentioned ICDS in your entire document. Para 37 talks about communal harmony, and both the speakers from the Government side were all praise for their hon. Prime Minister.

Where the Head of the Government attacks its own citizens for holding divergent views? It is only, sadly, our democracy. Twenty-six Twitter handles give out rape threats, communal threat. We are mainstreaming hate. This is bad. As far as the digital economy is concerned, four out of five villages in India don't have a bank. Out of seven per cent of debit card transactions in India, only six per cent have transactions and the rest are used only to withdraw money. Eighty per cent of women today in India don't have a bank account. The targets of national optic fiber network have not been met. So, it is not about digital. It is very good that Jawans can book their tickets on line but in some places the Jawans are getting food which we would not even give to our pet animals at home. GST is a very, very good example of 'operative federalism'. It was made possible through this operative federalism.

The great grand design to merge the Rail Budget with the General Budget was to mask all the deficiencies in the Rail Budget. Freight earnings are lower than last year and it happened for the first time since 1968. Odisha has contributed in two railway line projects in the state. It is good that in Jharkhand also, there are three projects of 2,150 crores of rupees and in Kerala, you are doing a suburban railway

section. But, nothing has been done for the debt stressed States and the States of the North-East.

**SHRI SWAPAN DASGUPTA:** Today, there are 950 Central Government schemes whose Budget takes up five per cent of the GDP. I think, this is an issue which not only affect the Centre, but it affects the States as well. The Economic Survey has highlighted certain schemes, which have been efficiently executed particularly in Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu. We must take a look at the schemes which have not been so successful. It is today the inability of the State to deliver. Bureaucracy is the very same today who earlier may have been inefficient. There are people who have done sterling work during the demonetization crisis and they have helped the ordinary people in their difficulties. But there have also been people who allowed the backdoor to be opened and enhanced the sufferings of the common people. For the first time, through the methods of direct money transfer, through other imaginative uses of technology, etc., they have added the word 'efficiency' as a necessary obligation of governance and this is an important step.

If we are to get out of the syndrome of being a permanently deprived, poor, under-developed, and helpless country, which we are not, it is very important that the entire machinery has to be looked at far more rigorously. There have been certain actions taken against inefficient officers and I am sure that there were really some rotten apples in the barrel. The demonetisation was a step forward because it did what no one else was willing to do. If we have to make India ethical, if we have to take Swachh Bharat, out of physical thing, make it a part of our spirit. We can criticise the Government for its shortcomings, but to have a permanently negative attitude is not proper.

**SHRI D. RAJA:** The democracy in the country is in distress. The United States of America declared strategic partnership with India. One of the purposes of this strategic partnership is that China needs to be reined in. India and US have entered into many defence cooperation agreements also but I do not think that the Government has taken this Parliament into confidence. Today, the Foreign Policy

of the country is under pressure. India's Foreign Policy has always been on the basis of a national consensus but the present Government has broken this.

India should pursue an independent sovereign policy free from any imperial power. I think that demonetization has a context. We should not compromise on our sovereign, foreign and domestic policies. India should also take a proactive role in world affairs. Sri Lankan Tamils are waiting for justice. We are compromising on independent foreign policies. There should be some policy on the issue of growing water disputes in the country. Government should be attentive to the youth of the country. Atrocities against dalits and tribals are on the rise. Sub-plans meant for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are not in proportionate to their population. Denying equality on social and economic front will jeopardise political democracy. India needs to emerge as a great inspiring modern Republic in the world by being mindful of Right-wing Fundamentalist forces which pose a threat to our democracy.

*Discussion not concluded.*

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