English rendering of PM’s remarks in the Lok Sabha

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Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

Discussion on this important bill began this morning. Many colleagues here have touched upon various issues, and they will certainly provide the House with facts and arguments. Therefore, I do not wish to go into those subjects.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

There are certain important moments in the life of a nation, and the mindset of society and the capacity of leadership at that time capture those moments and turn them into a national legacy, creating a strong heritage. I believe this is one such moment in the history of India’s parliamentary democracy. Ideally, when this idea first emerged 25–30 years ago, when the need was felt, we should have implemented it then and brought it to maturity by now. Improvements could have been made from time to time as required, and that is the beauty of democracy. We are the Mother of Democracy. Our democracy has a developmental journey of thousands of years, and today we have the auspicious opportunity to add a new dimension to that journey. As I said at the beginning, we are fortunate that we have the privilege of making half of the nation’s population participants in the policy-making process of nation-building. This is our good fortune, and I want all my honorable Members of Parliament to not let this important opportunity slip away. Together, we Indians are going to give a new direction to the country. We are making a meaningful effort to fill our governance system with sensitivity, and I am confident that the nectar that emerges from this churning will not only shape the form of the nation’s politics but also determine the direction and condition of the country. We stand at such a crucial turning point.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

In the 21st century, India is moving forward with new confidence. Today, we all feel the recognition of India in the world, and this is a moment of pride for us. A time has come, and we have linked this time with the resolve of a developed India. I firmly believe that a developed India does not mean only excellent railways, roads, infrastructure, or some economic progress figures. We do not have such a limited imagination of a developed India. We want a developed India in which the mantra of “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas” is embedded in policy-making. It is the demand of the time that 50% of the country’s population becomes part of policy-making. We have already delayed, whatever the reasons, whoever was responsible, but we must accept this truth. When we meet individually, we admit it, but when we meet collectively, things change. I remember when this process was going on, meetings were held with all parties. Except for one party, everyone agreed in principle. Later, whatever

happened, political directions were taken. But those who think only in political terms, I would like to advise them as a friend, and this advice will be useful to all. Since the discussion on women's reservation began, in every election that followed, those who opposed granting this right to women were never forgiven by the women of the country. They were dealt with harshly. But look at the 2024 election-it did not happen then. Why? Because in 2024 everyone agreed to pass it, so it was no longer an issue. No one gained politically, no one lost politically. Elections were fought on other issues because in 2024 everyone was together. Some are here, some are not, but all were together. Even today I say, if we all move forward together, history is witness that this will not go in favor of any one political party. It will go in favor of the country's democracy, in favor of the nation's collective decision-making power, and we all will be entitled to its glory. Neither the Treasury Bench nor Modi will be entitled alone, everyone sitting here will be entitled. Therefore, those who see politics in this, I would like them to look at the results of the past 30 years. Their benefit also lies in this, I am showing the path that benefit lies in this, that you will be saved from the losses. Hence, I believe there is no need to give this a political color.

Hon'ble Mr Speaker Sir,

I remember, at that time I was not in governmental politics, I was working as a worker of an organization. At that time, one often heard discussions in the corridors that when it came to giving reservation in Panchayats, they gave it very easily. Because in Panchayats they did not fear losing their own positions. They felt secure, so they said, give it there. This was a common discussion in the corridors then-that they would never do it here in Parliament, because here they would lose something. That is why Panchayat reservation went up to 50%.

Politically, I want to explain another point, friends,

25–30 years ago, whoever opposed it, the opposition did not go below the political surface. Today, do not make the mistake of thinking the same. In the last 25–30 years, sisters who have won Panchayat elections have developed political consciousness. They are opinion makers at the grassroots level. Thirty years ago, they remained silent, they understood but did not speak. Today, they are vocal. Therefore, now whatever the position, those millions of sisters who have at some time worked in Panchayats, represented, seen the joys and sorrows of the people deeply, they are agitated. They say, you push us into sweeping and cleaning work, which we did earlier in families, but now include us in the decision-making process. Decision-making happens in Assemblies and Parliament. Therefore, I say to those who want progress in political life, whether MPs or MLAs, not speaking of any party, if you want to move forward successfully in political life, you must accept that in the last 25–30 years, millions of sisters have become leaders at the grassroots level. Now they will influence your decisions not only here with 33% but also there. Therefore, those who oppose today will have to pay the price for a long time. Hence, political wisdom also lies in considering the political leadership of women that has emerged at the grassroots level. I heard, since the time of Mulayam Singh ji, this subject has been raised, and his family continues it. Trust the women of the country, trust their wisdom. Allow 33% of sisters to come here, let them decide whom to give, whom not to give, which class to give, which class not to give. They will make decisions. Why do we doubt their capability? Let them come once! Let them come once! When they come, then in 2034… and Dharmendra ji, I am very grateful to you for introducing me. It is true, I come from an extremely backward society. Dharmendra ji, I am very grateful to you, and Akhilesh ji is my friend, so sometimes he helps me. It is true that I come from an extremely backward society, but my responsibility is to take everyone along, and that is what my Constitution shows me. For me, the Constitution is supreme. And it is the

strength of the Constitution that a person from such a small, extremely backward society has been given such a great responsibility by the country. Therefore, I am indebted to the people of the country and to the framers of the Constitution, because of whom I am here today.

But Hon'ble Mr Speaker Sir!

Hon'ble Mr Speaker Sir,

Today, in every field of life, if we look, women are not behind in raising the nation's pride and waving the flag. We can be proud that in different fields of life, our mothers and sisters are making great contributions, our daughters are excelling in every field! Such great strength-why are we spending so much energy to stop them from participation? Their joining will only increase strength. Therefore, I have come today to appeal to you not to weigh this in the scales of politics. This is a decision in the national interest.

Hon'ble Mr Speaker Sir,

Today, this opportunity before us is to sit together, think in one direction, and openly decide to accept the participation of our women power in building a developed India. As I said earlier, today the whole country, especially women power, will watch our decisions, but more than the decisions, they will look at our intent. Therefore, if our intent is flawed, the women power of the country will never forgive us.

Hon'ble Mr Speaker Sir,

In 2023, in this new House, we unanimously accepted this Act. A joyful atmosphere was created across the country, no political color was attached, and therefore it never became a political issue. That was a good situation. Now the question is, how long do we delay it? Those who raise issues of population, do you not know? I would like Amit Bhai to mention in his speech all the details of when we conducted the census, what difficulties arose later due to Covid, what obstacles came. All these matters are before us, there is no issue in that. But when we discussed in 2023, the broad consensus was to do it quickly, everyone was saying do it quickly. In 2024 it was not possible because of the short time. Now in 2029 we have the opportunity. If we do not do it in 2029, then what situation will arise, we can imagine. Then we will not be able to convince the mothers and sisters of the country that we can truly make this effort. Therefore, the demand of the time is that we do not delay further. In the meantime, discussions have been held with political party members, constitutional experts, women activists, and many others. Some have voluntarily given suggestions. Continuous discussions have been held with all parties, both structurally and informally. From all this churning, we must finally find a way to harness the strength of our mothers and sisters.

Hon'ble Mr Speaker Sir,

I would certainly like to say one thing. Sitting here, none of us has been given the right by the Constitution to think of the nation in fragments. The oath we have taken obliges us to think of the nation as one. Whether it is Kashmir or Kanyakumari, we cannot think in pieces, nor can we decide in pieces. Therefore, baseless storms raised only for political gain, without a shred of truth, I want to say with full responsibility from this sacred place in the House: whether it is South, North, East, West, small states or big states, I say with responsibility that this decision-making process will not discriminate against anyone, it will not do injustice to anyone. Whatever delimitation happened in the past under previous governments, whatever ratios have been followed since then, there will be no

change in those ratios, and any increase will also be in the same proportion. If the word “guarantee” is needed, I use the word guarantee. If you want the word “promise,” I use the word promise. If there is a good word in Tamil, I am ready to use that too, because when the intent is clear, then we do not need to play with words.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

I also want to tell all colleagues in the House that we should not remain in illusion, we should not remain in arrogance. I am using the word “we.” I am not speaking of “I” and “you.” We should not remain in the illusion that we are giving something to the women power of the country. No, it is their right; and we have withheld it for many decades. Today, by repenting, we have the opportunity to free ourselves from that sin. We all know how every time tricks were played, cleverness was used. We always said we were in favor, but every time some technical excuse was added to stop it. Every time such things were brought. No one had the courage to oppose 33% reservation for women, that era has passed, you cannot do it, but you did not even have the courage to say it. Therefore, technical excuses-do this, do that, add this-now you will not be able to explain this to the women of the country. The numbers game in the House will be decided by time, but it is certain that now, by entangling matters with various excuses and technical issues, we have blocked it for three decades. You achieved whatever you wanted, now let it go! Are three decades not enough to block it? For three decades you stopped it, yet you could not achieve anything, so now do it.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

Some people here feel so.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

Some people here feel that somewhere in this there is Modi’s political self-interest. Let them speak, poor fellow’s mouth is locked there, in Bengal no one lets him speak.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

See, if this is opposed, naturally I will gain political benefit. But if we move together, then no one will gain, write this down. No one will gain, because then it becomes a different aspect, then no one benefits. Therefore, we do not want credit. As soon as this is passed, I am ready to give an advertisement tomorrow thanking everyone, ready to publish everyone’s photo. You take the credit! If you are worried about credit, take it. Whoever’s photo you want published, we will do it at government expense. I am giving you a blank cheque of credit from the front.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

Women’s participation in our parliamentary democracy is not just a numbers game or a limited improvement in democratic arrangements. As the Mother of Democracy, this decision is India’s commitment, it is a cultural commitment. Because of this commitment, this arrangement was made in Panchayats, and now in more than 20 states it has reached 50%. We have experienced it. For a long time, the people gave me the opportunity to serve as Chief Minister, and during that period I saw women’s leadership at the grassroots level. My experience is that their commitment to solving problems with sensitivity was very effective, it gave momentum to the journey of development. Based on that experience, I say that their voice in this House will become a new strength, a new thought will be added, sensitivity will be added to the country’s direction. When experience joins with facts and arguments, its strength increases manifold, and the House becomes enriched.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

There is no shortage of experienced women power in our country, no shortage of capable women. Let us trust them, they will contribute, they will contribute very well. Even today, whenever our sisters here have been given the opportunity, they have expressed themselves very well, enriched the House.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

Today, in the country, there are more than 650 district Panchayats, nearly 275 of them are led by women, and they have more responsibility, funds, and arrangements than central cabinet ministers, and they work. Out of about 6,700 block Panchayats, more than 2,700 are led by women. Today, in more than 900 cities, in urban local bodies, whether as mayors or as heads of standing committees, our sisters hold power. I believe that in the progress the country is making today, their contribution is also significant, and this is the opportunity to acknowledge that debt. When this experience is added to the House, it will increase the strength manifold.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

A long wait has created a question mark for all of us, and we ourselves have created this situation. This is the opportunity to come out of whatever limitations or difficulties existed in the past, to move forward with courage, and to ensure women’s participation in the nation’s development. I firmly believe that if we decide together today, and I urge that we should move forward unanimously, then when it moves forward unanimously, there is pressure on the Treasury Bench too. They also feel that everyone has a right in this, everyone’s voice must be considered, there is no harm. Collective strength gives us many good results.

Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

Without taking much time, I will only say this: do not weigh this in the scales of politics. Whenever we make a decision, half of this great nation’s responsibility lies with those we are bringing here. They also have a right to come here, we should not stop them. And regarding numbers too, earlier there was discussion that their number should not be reduced, increase it, then it will be quicker. That subject has now come, that the earlier number of 33% should be increased, so that no one feels their right has been taken away. A new strength will be added, additional strength will be added, and the composition of the House will also be adjusted, as we had already thought and prepared space for it.

And Hon’ble Mr Speaker Sir,

In a lighter vein, I must say, everyone has their own political reasons, and fear of defeat is somewhat surprising. But in our tradition, whenever a good work is done, to ward off the evil eye, we apply a black mark. I thank you for applying the black mark!

Thank you very much!

DISCLAIMER: This is the approximate translation of the PM's speech. The original speech was delivered in Hindi.

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