

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY PROF Dr M.BHATTACHARYYA

You have been listening so long from Mr. Majumdar who is known in his field and from Dr. Ray who is now looking after the management college. I think they have covered all the fields that we would have liked to discuss over here. I am the third speaker and naturally there is some disadvantage in that probably I thought to say something, they have been covered. But there is also one merit of becoming a later speaker. That means, I get points from the previous ones too. Now, actually one thing I would like to think loudly and that is about productivity.

Really I do not understand, being an engineer, what people mean by productivity. Is it the machine productivity, or the man productivity or it is the total productivity which we are to consider?. Any way if the productivity increases the price should fall. Let it be so that productivity in W. B. is very small, but W. B. is just only a part of India and the productivity in the rest of the country is very high. Should we not get the benefit of that productivity percolating to the society at large? Is the price going down? So that's why when people talk of productivity, I am at confusion.

Now again who contributes to productivity? If we are frank to admit it, it is the small sectors who contribute to productivity, not the bigger sectors. The government sectors, the well organised sectors have organised Trade unionism, we know their work culture. I happen to have worked in Burn & Company for quite a few years and I knew what was productivity over there. To whatever productivity we had in Burn & Company that was due to the fact that we used to sublet 90% of the components to Baltikuri area, then supposed to be the Ruhr of India. They used to supply the majority of the components at meager prices and we used to enhance the prices. assemble them and charge the Government.

That is one way of thinking about productivity, Another way is when we go for modernisation, a very good term and let it not be a catchy one. If we modernise then we must get benefit

out of it. Say, as for example, we have modernised the railway ticket booking system, the booking system of plane tickets. Well, tickets are available at lesser labour but if you look at the train and aeroplane services well you know what they are, Has it improved ?

If we want to modernise shall we go on indiscriminately importing machines from foreign countries ? Even for the spare parts shall we look to them ? After 2-3 years, it is my personal experience, they say this machine is outmodelled. So no spare can be supplied. It is at this juncture of time one feels that prior to modernisation we have to make our base for modernisation. Modernisation cannot modernise you. You have to make the foundation first and then have to go on stepwise.

I think about revitalisation about which we are concerned now at this moment, particularly in this conference. I mean there were some companies who had vitality earlier, now they have lost their vitality, we want to revitalize them. I do not think there is any need of constituting any committee. We have to be very frank to our heart. We know what it is now, as for example, if we more or less divide the industry into one type, manufacturing concrete products, the other type, rendering services. Mr Majumdar has said that the trade unions in W. B. were behaving responsibly now. Well, I am a little bit sorry to have to disagree with him on this count, particularly in the service sector.

I happen to come from one of the leading educational institutions and I have connection with so many educational institutions as well. There everything is present except what is known as work culture. Probably Mr. Majumdar might have mentioned about other sectors, not educational institutions.

But, about engineering goods areas I am with him in part. I had the opportunity to visit many industries for the last few years and somehow I am connected to the industries like Burn, Braithwaite and Jessop and I ask their management, 'Well, you cannot

make breakeven, so what is the reason therefor? Is it because of the non-cooperation from the workers? Have you supplied all the matching materials to them on time? Have they refused to deliver the goods?' At least three companies have said, 'NO. They are invariably good. When we have given them matching materials they have given the production.' That is one side of it, another side Dr. Ray has pointed out—no gherao, no lockout; no strike or even if gherao is there, police must interfere before 5.30. That means, they must not wait. Now on this count I have got some question—Have we got one set of laws for all? If I commit some crime, I am punished. If one managing director commits some crime is he punished the same way? If I embezzle some account say by 1 lakh I might be imprisoned. But if you embezzle by crores, who is going to punish you? Well, probably some committee will be constituted and I have got my way of thinking about a Committee.—comm-iff-tee (come eat tea). What is important is that the workers must have the feeling that the same set of laws is valid for all sets of people irrespective of rank and file. Now, as the spokesman of the Association of Engineers, when we have convened this type of conference of this topical interest, what are we thinking of revitalization of Industries in W. B.? As an association we are very small. But, our members are experienced. We have got sincerity and we are there to help industries with our technical expertise, whatever we have, should the agencies approach us. It is not that we go to sick industries on our own offering help. They have to come and approach you, then and then only your instructions, your consultancy, your advice will be of some value.

And last but not the least, we are aware about the danger of today's industries getting sick and sicker. Now, in this connection we must introduce one word, skill; there are two types of skills: one is machine-skill, another is man-skill. The machine skill may be obtainable provided you have got appropriate machines, but man is the best machine which no machine has excelled. So, though machine can do so many things, man has to use his brain to

Keep the machine in order. The man-skill is destroyed by discouraging and then naturally even if we have all the sophisticated instrumentation in our workshops we will go wrong and we cannot keep them in order. The good pieces of machineries could probably be sent to museum and then one hundred years hence they can be sold in the auction. That we don't mean it certainly.

I would like to mention particularly about Braithwaite, Burn & Jessop; when I was in Burn, we used to produce one wagon an hour, that means 24 wagons a day. They are all equipped for that. Now, for reasons best known to them who matter the wagons are being imported from Poland. I do not know why. Mr. Ray has rightly pointed out that here the steel price is going higher everyday. Yes, I add, why steel price, even the price of gram and wheat, all prices are going up everyday. That is because of what? Because of no work culture not only on the part of the workers but also on the part of the management. They do not work. I have seen personally, if you convene a meeting in Grand, Great Eastern, Taj, then we get wide participation from the top most management and for the same thing in a modest venue we get poor participation. But we discuss the same subject. Participation is poor because we don't provide you that type of comfort, that type of sumptuous dish, that type of delicacies over here. So, I think it is high time that we should not distinguish between management and worker. Manager is also a worker. Worker is also a manager. Days are fast changing. So, therefore, all of us have to work sincerely and we don't have to work in the interest of foreign nations. Sometimes, I come across the recommendation: You purchase this, this, this... All these have to be imported from some particular country and one particular company. This is to clear up the excess of goods in godown, we must not act as their stock clearance sales agencies and it is in this zone where petty workers cannot play any vital role. It is the top management who plays. You know recently about the Scam, share scam. Were small workers involved? Definitely not.

I am completely aware that many of you may not be with

me, with my thought but I am very sincere about what I think I again thank Dr. Roy and Mr. Mazumdar for giving me all these points.

SRI V.N. VARMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR, BALMER LAWRIE

Today, West Bengal has to market itself. It is in competition. The Govt. of India's industrial policy during the last three years has undergone, if I may be permitted to say so, a sea change and under the circumstances there is a tremendous amount of opportunities emerging for new business, business outside India and on Global scale exports. India has today attracted entrepreneurs from all over the world. China had occupied this position during the last fifteen years, but today the entrepreneurs all over the world are looking towards India as perhaps the most suited country. Notwithstanding the fact that they had not yet upgraded the graded rating of India, India is attracting multinational players, India is attracting high technology. India has recently attracted financial Institution, foreign institution and is looking at the capital market. Under these circumstances, every state of the country is vying with each other to attract such entrepreneurs and we are pitted against Maharashtra, Gujrat, Karnataka, Haryana to name a few. Some of the recent statistics is eye opener. During the last two and half years, Gujrat today has 69000 crores of rupees worth of projects under implementation. In Maharashtra, 101000 crore-rupee projects are under implementation.

In the entire eastern region, if we take all the seven north eastern states inclusive of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal we will not reach 1,000 crore rupees. In a recent survey which was presented in the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, 39% of the investments have gone in the Western region, 31% of the investment have gone in the northern region, 19.% in the southern region and only 11.% in the entire eastern region of which West Bengal's contribution is 2.5%. This is the reality and the fact of life and how do you deal with