

Developing excellence in the police force in a secular democratic society

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I am honored to be invited to participate in this joyous function of honoring the heroes of the police force who have demonstrated courage, character and commitment in the service of the society. Congratulations to the honorees and the organizers. In this speech, I will use the terms *policeman* and *man* to mean policepersons of both genders.

The police force in a democracy has four functions. They are: *enforcing laws, preventing crime, responding to emergencies, and providing support services in training and helping citizens to ensure a safe and crime-free society*. What are laws? Laws are basically a set of legislature-approved norms for behavior of the members of a community to ensure an orderly, harmonious, safe, conflict-free, egalitarian and confident environment that provides each member of the community confidence about the correct behavior and actions of the other members of the community. Laws guarantee liberties and rights for every individual and deter abuse of power by the powerful against the weak in a community. Obviously, the police have an important role to play in fostering such a society.

A secular democracy, as defined by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, has four freedoms guaranteed to every one of its citizens – *freedom of faith, freedom of expression, freedom from fear, and freedom from want*. The objective of India at this time is to accelerate our economic growth so that the poorest of the poor can have decent access to nutrition, education, healthcare, shelter and better opportunity for their children, and to lead a productive and happy life. Without enhancing the confidence, hope, trust and enthusiasm of every one of the 1.3 billion citizens of our country whether they worship Vishnu, Brahma, Siva, Allah, Jesus, Abraham, Buddha, Mahavira, Guru Nanak, Zarathustra or other deities and messengers, I do not see how this country can create a happy, harmonious, peaceful, sustainable and prosperous India, and fulfill the dreams of our founding fathers. Therefore, at this critical juncture in the history of our country, protecting the first three freedoms –

freedom of faith, freedom of expression and freedom from fear - for every citizen is the most important responsibility of the police force. This is your sacred duty, one that, I hope, you will shoulder with unflinching commitment and be ready to make the ultimate sacrifice to protect these freedoms.

Let me take a variant of the Infosys value system (CLIFE), call it CCLIFE, and articulate my understanding of the value system of a good policeman. CCLIFE stands for *courage, citizen focus, leadership by example, integrity and transparency, fairness and excellence in execution*. Let me dwell on each of these attributes.

Courage is the first attribute essential for any human being to do anything worthwhile. Without courage, no other attribute can find an expression in any human being. Courage to do the right thing in the face of adversity, courage of conviction, courage to go against the vast majority of naysayers, courage to enter a dangerous situation, courage to fight against the evil forces risking even one's own life, courage to sacrifice immensely to achieve the plausibly impossible, and the courage to walk the untrodden path are necessary if you want to become a highly-respected policeman.

Citizen focus means putting the interest of a law-abiding and innocent citizen ahead of one's personal interest or the interest of the powerful vested interests or the interest of the government in everything a policeman does. Dilip Kumar, acting as a police officer in the movie *Shakti*, demonstrated this attribute unambiguously against his own dear but errant son, a character played by Amitabh Bachchan. Being ready to be disturbed at all hours to come to the aid of victims of crime, being away from the loved ones to work long hours to fight the evil forces and save the innocent in arduous situations, being on duty even when one is not totally physically fit, and working in dusty and hot climate to bring order to traffic and crowds are the attributes of a citizen-focused policeman.

Mahatma Gandhi taught us the importance of leadership by example. This is one attribute that enhances the trust of your juniors in becoming model policemen because you demonstrate by your actions that you are a model policeman before you demand the same of your junior colleagues. Values like honesty, hard work, perseverance, deep thinking, good work ethic, integrity, discipline, courage and sacrifice are best inculcated in your juniors by your demonstrating your commitment to these values by your actions first before

you request your juniors to show their commitment to these values. Actions speak louder than words. Leading from the front, practising the precept, and walking the talk are the only ways of earning the confidence, credibility, enthusiasm and trust of your juniors.

Integrity is about unfailingly sticking to your moral and ethical compass and doing the right thing in every situation even if no one is watching you. It is about demonstrating consistency of values, actions, methods, principles and expectations. It is about being honest and shunning corruption. It is being true to yourself. It is about building your own confidence through good values to face your children and grandchildren to say to them that they should cultivate good values. It is about being truthful even if the truth is unpleasant, harmful to yourself, and even if nobody has watched your action. Integrity is the strong foundation on which the character of good policemen is built.

Transparency is the foundation on which trusted relationships are built. It is the channel through which honesty flows without friction. Policemen are the agents of the state to ensure proper conduct of people. As Patrick Henry once said, *“the liberties of a people never were nor ever will be secure when the transactions of their rulers are concealed from them.”* Therefore, transparency in the conduct of policemen is very important to enhance the confidence and trust of people in the laws of the society.

Fairness is what gives you a clear conscience and makes you sleep well at night. Fairness in dealing with citizens of various religions, castes, education levels, accomplishments, economic classes and regions is absolutely essential for a secular democracy like India. Fairness is following the golden rule – *Do unto others what you expect them to do unto you in a similar situation if the roles were reversed.* Fairness enhances the confidence of the minority, the weak and the poor in the police force. Fairness enhances respect for you even from criminals that you punish. Without fairness in every government action, let alone the actions of the police force, I do not think India can claim to be a secular democracy.

Excellence in execution is what brings rapid advances in every dimension of progress to any society. A mindset of excellence enhances productivity of policemen, improves their accountability, raises their prestige and self-confidence, and earns respect for them from the citizens. Such excellence comes from learning from productivity standards, methods, systems, processes and tools of countries that have performed better than our country in

your area. A project gets completed on time, within budget, and with the expected quality by following project management methodologies - listing all tasks; creating a critical path for the tasks; assigning proper talent and financial resources to each task; using tools, processes, systems and technologies appropriate to each task; announcing a target date for completion of the project; reviewing the progress of the project periodically; documenting any mistakes to avoid repetition of such mistakes by oneself or others; learning from mistakes; and taking timely action to set right these mistakes; completing the project ahead of schedule; and revising the productivity standards for future.

For those of you who are officers, please remember the words of General Patton that the duties of an officer are the safety, honor, and welfare of your society first; the safety, honor, welfare, and comfort of the men in your command second; and your own ease, comfort, and safety last.

Well, you are all successful, productive, fair, honest, value-based, courteous, patriotic and well-meaning policemen. I have no doubt at all that you will continue to serve this country with devotion and values. We will cheer you from the sidelines as you run the marathon of making this country a safe and conflict-free nation. I am confident that you will make us proud of our country and you.

THANK YOU