

Salient points of the address by Shri L.K. Advani ji, Leader of the Opposition (Lok Sabha) while flagging off the Dalit Chetana Rath Yatra for Elections 2009

My aadaranjali to Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar on his 118th Jayanti.

Dr. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, was a votary of equality (samata), social justice (samajik nyay) and social transformation (samajik parivartan).

The Constitution that he drafted, along with others, is one of the finest Constitutions in the world.

Dr. Ambedkar's speech on 25 November 19 1949, in the closing session of the Constituent Assembly, was a masterpiece. In this, he exhorted the newly independent nation on two points:

- 1) That our hard-won freedom must be safeguarded by strengthening national unity and not repeating the follies of the past that helped foreign invaders and rulers.
- 2) That political democracy is incomplete without social democracy and economic democracy.

The BJP commits itself to adhering to this teaching.

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The Congress party never gave Dr. Ambedkar his due.

It defeated him in the first Lok Sabha elections in 1952.

A new book by Dr. H.V. Hande, a senior leader of the BJP in Tamil Nadu (***Ambedkar & The Making of the Indian Constitution***, published by Macmillan) throws light on how Dr. Ambedkar could not find a place among the 296 members initially sent to the Constituent Assembly. A Dalit leader from East Bengal withdrew himself, paving the way for Dr. Ambedkar to enter the Constituent Assembly as a member in his own right.

Again, it was Mahatma Gandhi who prevailed upon Jawaharlal Nehru to include Dr. Ambedkar in his Cabinet.

I may also point out that it was only in 1990 that Dr. Ambedkar was given the Bharat Ratna. This was done by the V.P. Singh government, which was supported by the BJP.

Again, it is the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh that built a befitting memorial for him in Mhow, his janma bhoomi. I had the honour of inaugurating it last year. The Congress, which had governed the state for 50 years, had never bothered about this.

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BJP's RESERVATION-PLUS approach

In the BJP's manifesto, we have pledged:

In addition to continuing with reservations in jobs and education for SCs, STs and OBCs, the "BJP will boost opportunities for entrepreneurship and commerce among Dalits, tribals, and OBCs and other deprived sections of our society **so that India's social diversity is fairly reflected in its economic diversity.**"

Thus, Dr. Ambedkar's dream is strongly articulated in our manifesto.

We have also proposed a Development Bank for the "Extremely Backward Communities" for promoting skill enhancement through learn-and-earn schemes.

This is a NEW APPROACH TO achieving Dr. Ambedkar's dream of economic democracy. I would call it **THE RESERVATION-PLUS APPROACH**, meaning that we will continue the policy of reservations and also launch ambitious new initiatives to bring SCs, STs and OBCs in the mainstream of entrepreneurship, trade, commerce, professions, and remunerative employment.

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Appeal to voters in UP

There is a party in Uttar Pradesh that has come up in the name of Dalits. Sadly, its performance in government is such that many sections of Dalits feel neglected.

This government had promised to bring an end to crime and corruption that had plagued Uttar Pradesh under the previous government.

Sadly, one corrupt and crime-ridden government has been replaced by another in UP. Not only Dalits, but all sections of society are feeling betrayed.

The people of UP have an opportunity to take the right decision in the coming Lok Sabha elections. I appeal to the people of UP to support the BJP and its ally, RLD, and elect our candidates in big numbers. I assure them that, **if a BJP-led government is elected in New Delhi, we will put UP in order.**

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I heartily congratulate the BJP's Scheduled Caste Morcha for taking out two Dalit Chetana Rathas for a yatra covering many states and commencing on Ambedkar Jayanti. I congratulate Dr. Satyanarayan Jatia, Shri Ramnath Kovind, Shri Dushyant Gautam and other office-bearers of the SC Morcha for launching this important programme in the context of the party's campaign for the Elections to the 15th Lok Sabha.

***Jeetegi Bhajapa
Jeetega Bharat.***

Thank you.