



छत्तीसगढ़ विधानसभा  
CHHATTISGARH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

भारत में विधायी निकायों के पीठासीन अधिकारियों का  
70 वां सम्मेलन

70<sup>th</sup> Conference of Presiding Officers of  
Legislative Bodies in India

माननीय श्री प्रेम प्रकाश पाण्डेय  
अध्यक्ष

द्वारा

स्वागत उद्बोधन

WELCOME ADDRESS

by

Hon'ble Shri Prem Prakash Pandey  
Speaker

मंगलवार, दिनांक 15 नवम्बर, 2005  
Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2005

रायपुर  
Raipur

**Hon'ble Chairman, and Chief Guest,  
of the Conference,  
Shri Somnath Chatterjee;  
Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha  
Shri K.Rahman Khan;  
Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha  
Sardar Charnjit Singh Atwal;  
Hon'ble Fellow Presiding Officers from State  
Legislatures;  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh Dr. Raman Singh;  
Hon'ble Ministers;  
Hon'ble Members of Parliament;  
Hon'ble Legislators;  
Learned Secretaries-Generals of Lok Sabha and  
Rajya Sabha; Secretaries of State Legislatures;  
Journalists;  
Ladies and Gentleman.**

I welcome you all to Chhattisgarh – the pious land of Rishi Jamadagni surrounded by Maikal Sihava and Ramgiri mountain ranges, the sacred land of Lord Rama's mother, Kaushalya.

Chhattisgarh, the land of the author of Ramayana - the great poet Valmiki; the place where Lord Rama, Laxman and Sita took shelter during their exile, the birth place of Luv and Kush and the sacred land of sage Shringi (who performed Kameshthi yagna for King Dasharatha so as to be blessed with the birth of a son) welcomes you all. I welcome all of you to the forests, mountains, and fertile valleys of the sacred land of Chhattisgarh, the vibrant tribal dominated land enriched with life infusing cultural consciousness of its own and on behalf of two crore people of the State of Chhattisgarh.

Our heartiest greetings to you in the land that has imbued the proverb "Atithi Devo Bhavah" and the land of King Moradhvaj who sacrificed his progeny for the sake of hospitality.

We are pleased and overwhelmed to see such great dignitaries among ourselves from all over India in this ascetic grove of saints and seers like Agastya, Lopamudra, Pravarsen, Pushpadant the great poet Kalidas, Sutanuka Devdasi, Vallabhacharya, Nagarjuna and the likes in Dandakaranya.

I once again welcome and extend my hearty gratitude to all the invitees for having come to this sacred land nurtured by the sweet murmuring of rivers like Shabari, Indravati, Mahanadi, Shivrath, Kharun, Hasdo, Mand, Eev, Pairi, Kelo, Udanti, Maniyari, Arapa, Rihand and kanhar; fertile and fragrant land of Chhattisgarh resting in soothing

natural surrounding; a home to numerous aromatic varieties of rice and rightly known as the 'rice bowl of India'.

On this historic occasion, I am not able to resist the temptation of going into the brief history of Chhattisgarh which is full of glory and rich cultural heritage.

We can trace the roots of history of Chhattisgarh to South Kausal as defined in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Ashtadhyayi of Panini (6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.), Astrological books of Varahamihir, the Vishnupurana, the Vayupurana, the Gupata period inscriptions, the Vakatak period inscriptions and the inscriptions of Pandava's period (4<sup>th</sup> Century to 10<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.). South Kausal was Rama's maternal home. The history of Chhattisgarh finds a place in the annals of several dynasties rich in glorious traditions such as Saatvahan, Meghvansh, Vakatak, Nal, Sharabhpuriya, Panduvanshi, Nalvanshi, Somvanshi, Kulchuri, Nag, Chalukya etc. As far as the nomenclature of Chhattisgarh is concerned, we can trace it to title of Chedishwar in Kulchuris and 36 dwellings or fortresses (Durgs) of Avrajaks. This nomenclature has been adopted since 1497.

Chhattisgarh has made its own unique contribution to the freedom movement. There are glorious legacies of extraordinary valour and supreme sacrifices by martyrs such as Veernarain Singh, revolutionary Surendra sai, Gundadhur, Lal Kalindra Singh, Gazi Khan, Pt. Sunderlal Shrama,

Pt. Ravishankar Shukla, Madhavrao Sapre, Thakur Pyare Lal Singh, Dr E. Raghavendra Rao, Dr. Khoobchand Baghel, Barrister Thakur Chhedilal and the likes.

You are well aware of the struggle of the people of Chhattisgarh aimed at establishing their distinct identity and dignity. The culmination of the struggle was in the form of blissful outcome when the Lok Sabha passed Madhya Pradesh Reorganisation Bill on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2000 and our long cherished dream was realized when our dream State of Chhattisgarh came in to being on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. 2000 as the 26<sup>th</sup> State of the Indian Union.

Hon. Guests, Chhattisgarh is known for the living majesty of Siddha Peeth of Mahamaya Devi of ancient town of Ratanpur, Bamleshwari Mata of Dongargarh and Godly grace of Mother Danteshwari of Dantewara. Chhattisgarh is also known for religious preachings of Lord Buddha and the birth place of Vallabhacharya. Chhattisgarh is known for the inspiring couplets of saint poet Kabir. World famous folk art-forms of Sua, Dadaria, Karma, Panthi, Pandwani are rich in cultural consciousness and they bestow a distinct identity to Chhattisgarh.

Chhattisgarh has produced theatre artists of international fame like Padma Bhushan Habib Tanveer, Shri Satyadev Dubey and Late Dr. Shankar Shesh who have

represented India abroad in the field of art and culture and brought glory to Chhattisgarh State. Chhattisgarh is known to be State nurturing peace, devoid of violent fundamentalism and bigotry. I would like to tell you that Chhattisgarh has its special identity as a vibrant, awakened and energetic state which integrates and adapts itself to the core to the current of time and homogenizes all outside influences in the respective fields.

Chhattisgarh is widely known for the cultural contribution of Raja Chakradhar, a great soul dedicated to art, literature, Babu Rewaram, Pinglacharya Bhanukavi, Late Pt. Lochan Prasad Pandey, Padma Shri Late Mukutdhar Pandey, Late Padumlal Punnalal Bakshi, Baldev Prasad Mishra, Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh and Late Shrikant Verma who have given us excellent works in Literature. Chhattisgarh is basically a state of villages and towns. It exhibits a Kaleidoscopic world of different customs, festivals, values, conventions, lifestyles, languages and dialects, folk songs and music, crafts and paintings. The Father of Chhattisgarh's folkart, Dau Ramchandra Deshmukh, famous pandwani singer Padmabhushan Teejanbai and 'Panthi' dancer Late Devdas Banjare are names so famous which need no introduction. The pioneer of social revolutions and founder of 'Satnami Samaj' Guru Ghasidas is one of the greatest sons of Chhattisgarh.

Chhattisgarh commands a special identity for itself in the course of evolution of civilizations. There are still vibrant links between the present and past of Chhattisgarh's 5000 year old civilization. The Buddhist Mutths of Sirpur, Construed by Ashoka the Great, tells the tale of a glorious past. The tradition of drama and folk-theatre is very rich here as evident in the form of old cave-theatres of Raigarh. Be it the Ganesh Utsav or dance of Raigarh or the only Music University in the Asian Continent devoted to art and dance-Khairagarh Sangeet University, be it the Dussehra festival of Bastar or the 'Prayag of Chhattisgarh' Bhagwan Rajeev Lochan temple in Rajim, be it the 'Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh' Bhoramdev or the Buddhist-Vihars of Turturiya – all of these are the vibrant examples of historical archaeological heritage and rich architecture of Chhattisgarh.

There is evidence to suggest that the rivers of this area have produced diamonds and gold. The State has hidden in her crest the treasure of diamonds, gold, boxite, iron-ore, coal, dolomite and other minerals. The quest for diamond and gold has elevated this State to greater heights at the international level for this purpose. After the completion of excavation works for diamond in Devbhog area, Chhattisgarh would occupy a top position among the mineral rich States. The Coal India company in our State supplies coal to all parts of the country. The iron-ore

produced in Bastar district is of very high grade which is exported by National Mineral Development Corporation from Bailadila. The power generated by Korba and Sipat units of NTPC and Chhattisgarh SEB is supplied to different regions of the State and the country as well, which is a testimony to our rich power infrastructure. Bhilai Steel Plant a jewel under Steel Authority of India is the pride of India and Chhattisgarh. This plant manufactures world class iron items and the longest rail-tracks in Asia.

Balco and other reputed industrial units have brought recognition to the name of Chhattisgarh on the world-map. It is now known as a State marching forward speedily on the industrial track.

Chhattisgarh consists of 16 districts, has about 43.85% forest-cover and has abundant forest produce, minerals and agro-products. We are committed to the development of our infrastructure for which our motto is 'Bahujan Hitay and Bahujan Sukhaye'(Good for all). With self-respect as our wealth, hospitality our culture, peace our weapon and tolerance our power, Our State is a synonym of a temple of tolerance and a confluence of cultural traditions.

Friends, I have tried to brief you about the diverse features of the culture of this State. I hope it will be useful as well as interesting for all of you.

Hon. Guests, once again, I welcome you all in this All India Conference of Presiding Officers, 70<sup>th</sup> of its kind since 1921. Chhattisgarh is a newly born, emerging state. Although parliamentary journey of our Chhattisgarh Vidhan Sabha is short, our faith and commitment towards democratic ideals is not less in any respect. It is a rewarding outcome of our untiring efforts and our devotion and commitment to the system of democracy towards developing a suitable work culture as per the parliamentary ideals, traditions and procedures that today even while the State is in its infancy we have had the good fortune of organizing an All India function of this level.

While giving credit of this achievement to Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha and the Lok Sabha Secretariat I express my gratitude to all those who not only considered the proposal related to organizing the next conference by us during the Kolkata Conference but also provided us a historic opportunity by giving instant permission to us to organize the conference. I also want to say on this occasion that we are overwhelmed with the graceful presence and company of eminent parliamentarians, well-known scholars in the parliamentary

field and profoundly learned persons from all over India. The fragrant memory of this golden day will definitely last forever in the memory of Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly.

As all of us know well that the main function of Legislative bodies is to enact laws. Seeing from this point of view the function of Legislative bodies is to build a better future for people. This is not accomplished only by the laws that are passed. This is done by social relevance, moral force and ideological dynamism of the Legislative body, which in turn has an imprint on the public mind. Representative character of Legislature in our parliamentary system is the most striking feature. This is the forum where true and complete expression of peoples hope, aspiration, apprehension, fear, find outlet and provides opportunity through debates and discussion for Knowledge, and vision. The real wishes of the masses are manifested through expression by interaction and free discussion by the elected representatives of the masses.

We have been highly benefitted by the efficient functioning of parliamentary democracy in India. We have gained this benefit from our ancient traditions, democratic thought and experience of institutions. Important and meaningful words like 'Ganatantra' 'Gananayak' and 'Ganpati' can be found in our ancient literature. Village Panchayats are our common heritage. Modern era is unique in so far as

scientific progress and mutual relations on international basis are concerned. Today, there is cut throat competition in the political field. In such a scenario, it is necessary to convince people in the efficacy of purity of means and moral force.

Our democratic institutions can function well only if some essential values are kept intact. Respect and bonding of people to democratic institutions is also necessary for continuation of democratic polity. For this, consciousness of people's representatives in their individual and public behaviour is also necessary.

We have distinction in developing this healthy tradition wherein Presiding Officers of Legislative bodies not only get benefitted from mutual discussions and individual experiences by organizing such conferences but also endeavour to forge a possible consensus for solution of difficulties of general nature coming up during the daily working of the legislature. We are proud of the fact that this tradition of Presiding Officers Conference is continuing since September 1921 regularly and now organizing such conferences has become a permanent feature of our parliamentary traditions.

The utility of Presiding Officers' Conference in making legislative functions and procedures effective and useful in accordance with the basic spirit of the Constitution, striking coherence and balance amongst different components of Parliamentary governance,

upholding dignity, decorum and integrity of democracy, firmly facing challenges and fulfilling expectations of masses is proven in itself. Our long experience tells us that conclusions emanating from decisions and ideological deliberations in these conferences have contributed significantly towards enriching our democracy in order to give new direction, thinking, speed and energy to Indian democracy.

The Presiding Officers participating in this conference are strong pillars of democracy. You all are eminent parliamentarians. You have special experience and knowledge. Definitely, your attention must have been drawn towards the challenges present before Parliamentary democracy and must have thought for a solution of these. This is the important time when we meet at a forum and exchange views on different aspects of Parliamentary system and its effective conduct and express our consent or dissent besides taking up serious ideological issues for discussion in the House.

Friends! mere procedure does not symbolize Parliamentary democracy, social and economic issues are also associated with it. In fact democracy is the name of a live, conscious procedure of making people participative and responsive equally by eradicating discrimination of all types and making changes in economic conditions in creating prosperity in the country.

Democracy is also a type of governance like other forms of governance but in today's age it is considered more

than that. Expectations of people from this system have increased. Today, it has taken the form of a life style, a social order, a cultural norm, a political order. We are fortunate that there is a successful democratic system in India and we are known as the largest successful democracy in the world.

If we have an earnest desire for keeping this democracy live and healthy, we will have to explore the possibilities of maximizing the horizons of democracy for giving serious thought to the welfare of the entire human race including subjects like nature, life-animate or inanimate- unexplored hitherto.

Hon'ble guests, on this occasion, I would like to mention a distinct achievement of Indian democracy that the India Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Hon'ble Hashim Abdul Halim, Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly, has been elected Chairman of the Executive Committee of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He has defeated his rival Sir Jeffry Henry of New Zealand who is the Deputy Prime Minister of Cook Island by 115 votes. In this election Hon'ble Halimji secured 188 votes while Sir Henry got only 73 votes. Hon'ble Halimji's victory certainly underlines the international importance, influence and respect that India commands. I, on behalf of all of you, heartily congratulate him on this great achievement.

Hon'ble guests, I would beg of your kind permission to draw your attention to the masses affected by the recent natural disaster. In the devastating earthquake which hit the North West region of the Indian sub-continent on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2005 thousands of people of Jammu and Kashmir and Pak Occupied Muzaffarabad have lost their lives and property. Thousands of people have been rendered homeless and died prematurely. On this occasion, I express my heartfelt condolence and grief to those who have been affected by the disaster.

Hon'ble guests, as I have already mentioned that our State is a newly created State and our Legislative Assembly has completed only five years, but in this short period, Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly has established great parliamentary convention and records and created several new dimensions. Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly has a unique feature of mutual coordination and understanding between the ruling and the opposition parties. Despite being a newly created State, we hope that rising above all narrow considerations we will develop such unique conventions that will make the nation proud. I believe that our achievement will reach the skies. We will make efforts that will strengthen the national unity and integrity of the country.

Though we have made all out effort at every level to welcome and provide facilities to the guests, but this is a big event and this newly created State has its own limitations and resource-related constraints, so it is quite

possible that we may have fallen short in the matter of making arrangements, providing facilities and other hospitality. I therefore request all our esteemed guests to kindly forgive us for all those shortcomings.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank the illustrious Chief Minister of the State Dr. Raman Singhji for providing financial assistance liberally and for extending all resource related cooperation. I would also like to thank his colleagues in the Council of Ministers, Officers of State administration and Shri Devendra Verma, Secretary, Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly and all the officers and employees of the Secretariat without whose enthusiastic co-operation such a grand conference could not have been held successfully.

Hon'ble Chairman of the Conference and Presiding Officers, I am once again grateful to all of you for your participation in this conference. I am sure that your stay at Raipur, the Capital of this progressive State would be comfortable, interesting, pleasant and a memorable one.

In the end, I conclude with the hope that the discussion which takes place in this conference will not only strengthen a healthy parliamentary work culture in the democratic polity but will also add luster to it.

Thank you !

Jai Bharat !    Jai Chhattisgarh !