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Dr. A. P. J. ABDUL KALAM- A GREAT VISIONARY LEADER

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Abstract: The late Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam has been described as a career scientist, technology leader, inspiring teacher turned reluctant politician, and above all great visionary. He was one of the great visionaries who with his potentialities contributed to the development of the nation. The rare confluence of scientific brilliance and wisdom makes him truly unique and apart. The present study deals with his great vision for the nation and its development in all its perspectives. He had several visions but the vision of India as a developed nation or as an empowered nation by 2020 has always been his top priorities. The nation is bigger than the individual. Dr. Kalam always acknowledges that a deep understanding of our huge natural resources, biodiversity, and human resources along with action plans by the great scientific minds will make India a great nation again. Apart from his scientific accomplishments and achievements, his writings in numerous books and articles are a great contribution to the nation. The study includes the analysis and interpretation of the thoughts regarding these points and seeks whether the country succeeds in fulfilling his dream of a better nation. It would be pertinent to look at how far we have progressed on the dream of a developed India as a vision by Dr. Kalam.

Keywords: Visionary, Empowered Nation, Self-Reliance, Vision-2020, Kalam, India

*Dedicated to
The youth of India
Who have confidence in "I can do it",
That will lead to "We can do it",
Resulting in "India Can Do It".*

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam was one of India's most distinguished scientist, 11th President of India and the recipient of the most prestigious Bharat Ratna, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan- the country's three highest civilian honors. Due to his great contribution in the field of space research and missile development, he came to be known as the "Missile Man of India". In spite of being such an eminent personality, he remained humane and humble throughout his life. He can

be also described as one of the greatest visionaries who ignited young minds. His vision of seeing India developing as superpower by 2020 and beyond that is remarkable and beyond imagination. The Vice President said Kalam was "a visionary with a deep conviction to see India emerging stronger, more peaceful and more equitable through the use of science and technology. He personified humility and boundless curiosity. His life will remain an inspiration to the millions of youth in the country."

Dr. Kalam had shared his three visions for the country - freedom, development and ability to stand up to the world. Kalam believed India had to achieve self-reliance and confidence in order to become a developed nation (Forge Your Future 198). We the people of India had witnessed three thousand years of invasions and ruling thereafter. From Alexander onwards, the Greeks, the Portuguese, the British and many more all who came and plundered what was ours be it wealth, resources, etc. But it is our India; which did not invade other lands and subjugate other people. It is because we understand the value of freedom and thus respect the freedom of others. Therefore, Dr. Kalam always envisioned Freedom as his first vision of India.

Dr. Kalam second vision for India is that of development. It's been sixty seven years that India is defined as a developing nation and now we need to change our mindset and raise our level from developing to a developed nation. We already have come a lot far and progressed in almost each and every field. Our achievements are being globally recognized today but we lack self-confidence to realize ourselves as a developed nation. We need to boost up our confidence to become self reliance and self assured citizen and this change is necessary.

Further, Dr. Kalam explains that there are four chief areas of development and these areas are: the people, economy, strategic strength and infrastructure. To achieve growth in these sectors, technology is the answer. Today, in this modern world the term technology is not limited to production of goods but to explore ways as to how to re-use by products so that a minimum wastage is obtained. This also leads to minimum of environmental pollution. Dr.Kalam advocated his theory of technological exploitation which defines that if we don't utilize our technology well then our natural resources are also of no value to us. He explains the theory by citing the example of two continents, Japan and Africa. It is through technological creativity, Japan has progressed in spite of dearth of natural resources as compared to Africa which is one of richly resourced continent. Thus, according to Dr.Kalam, not only the use of technology is a must in order to realize the vision, also the craving to achieve the goal should be there in all sections of the society.

The third vision is that India must stand up to the world because Dr.Kalam always believes unless India stands up to the world, no nation will respect us. It is the strength that respects strength and this strength should come in both military as well as economic power.

Dr.Kalam's three vision of India



According to Dr. Kalam, India had gone through a glorious phase two millennium years earlier with remarkable lead in every sphere be it civilization, culture, knowledge and religious fields. It has even facilitated education to other nations. This was the first phase of India or the golden era. The second phase emerged with invasions of foreign nations along with increased population. Several invasions for more than a thousand years thus restrained the growth path and resulted in declining prosperity of our nation. With the independence on 15th August 1947, the third phase started. At that point, nation was suffering from temporary economic slowdown and the youth at that moment have to address issues like poverty, illiteracy, corruption and numbing effects of colonization. But with large skilled youth, dynamic economy and technological excellence, it was the land of opportunities and so India has to aptly exploit with defined missions, from this phase to become a developed nation. It is time now that we must be critical to the success of India becoming a global leader. Sixty four years of democratic vibrancy to the nation gives confidence to manage the socio-economic turbulences and provide leadership to the one billion plus people in a democratic, multi-cultural, multi-linguistic and multi-religious environment.

To achieve a distinctive profile for India to be a developed nation, Dr. Kalam had envisioned five areas in the Technology Vision 2020. These areas are (i) Agriculture and food processing, (ii) Education and Health care, (iii) Information and Communication Technology, (iv) Infrastructure: Reliable and Quality Electric Power, Surface transport and Infrastructure for all parts of the country, PURA, and (v) Self reliance in critical technologies are correlated and progress in an integrated way that will lead to overall national progress and development (Thoughts for change, pg 252). This great vision will aim to alleviate poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. Unified minds and focused vision of our citizens will manifest as a mammoth power leading to a happy and prosperous life.

Distinctive profile of India by 2020

- A Nation where education with value system is not denied to any meritorious candidates because of societal or economic discrimination
- A Nation, which is the best destination for the most talented scholars, scientists, and investors.
- A Nation where the best of healthcare is available to all
- A Nation where the rural and urban divide has reduced to a thin line.

- A Nation when there is equitable distribution and adequate access to energy and quality water.
- A Nation where agriculture, industry and service sector work together in symphony.
- A Nation where the governance is responsive, transparent.
- A Nation where poverty has been totally eradicated, illiteracy removed and crimes against women and children are absent and none in the society feels alienated.
- A Nation that is prosperous, healthy, secure, peaceful and happy and continues with a sustainable growth path.
- A Nation that is one of the best places to live in and is proud of its leadership.

In the 21st century, India has accepted the Vision 2020 and time has come to transform the vision into mission. Dr. Kalam always believed that vision 2020 is workable as well as achievable also just like other achievements of India- be it green revolutions or development of space technology and many more others. He describes these achievements as a development process and to reach higher standards, we should not rest on the laurels of our past achievements, but to try and improve more. So, the process of development can be transcended to next generations. He has not only pointed out the problems that our nation is facing but has also suggested a series of solutions in form of veritable treasure of data which needs to be implemented and succeeded by us. He has cited several real world examples of how vision document of other countries were created, implemented and achieved so as to provide a deeper insight of the vision and make it a workable mission for us. Vision 2020 implementation needs to be viewed as set of joint centre-state-industry- academy people missions. India is a nation of a billion people and a nation's progress depends upon how its people think. Thus, Dr. Kalam encouraged each and every individual to participate in the noble task of, 'Developed India Movement' by becoming the ambassadors for this mission. Thus, to able to achieve this vision, one needs to rise above daily routine and try to achieve something beyond the ordinary. Nobody can take us there but ourselves. A nation's strength predominantly resides in its natural and human resources. India is endowed with vast natural resources along with rich bio-diversity and human resources, particularly young population.

"I have now a dream, Dream for action; Dream for performance, I will sweat for excellence, thereby I will bring glory to the nation" (Enlightened Minds, pg 115). This short poem of Dr. Kalam ignites the mind of the youth to give best performance by acquiring adequate knowledge. Knowledge empowerment ultimately facilitates the attainment of novel goals. The future world would be dominated only by knowledge. This knowledge intensive industry of youth can redefine the dimensions of performance in every sphere is it in employment, agriculture, and industry or service sector. India is very fortunate to have 540 million youth out of a billion people. Keeping this in mind, our educational system is creating two cadres of youth mainly a global cadre of skilled youth with specific knowledge for agriculture, manufacturing and services. As well as another global cadre of youth with higher education for research should be needed for skilled manpower (Thoughts for change, pg 260).

We are doing well in agriculture, our industry is on the upswing and our performance in the service sector is also equally good. The core competence of India is its large reserve human resources of educated, skilled youth population which had remained grossly underutilized. Therefore a conducive platform should be provided to our youth to become a creative leader of knowledge society and change the vision of traditional role from commander to coach, from manager to

mentor, from director to delegator (thoughts for change 270). This provides an opportunity to the youth to elevate and to a higher level of knowledge and to think differently from yesteryear generation.

Thus a rightful thought of change, a rightful moment, devotion and courage is needed to define India as a 'Developed Nation'.

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