

The Indian National Congress and the ANC – Shared Experiences as Freedom Movements and the Challenges of Governing Pluralistic Democracies

Lecture Delivered by Anand Sharma at the University of Johannesburg on 15 May 2015

Programme director, former Minister, sister Brigitte Mabandla, excellencies, former ministers, friends, comrades, I see so many people present here with whom I've shared a lot over the years as has been referred to just now – from Ahmed Kathrada, Kathy as we all know him, to the two Pahad brothers, Essop and Aziz, and Abie, there are two Abies here but, there's Abie and Joel, Barbara and all of the friends who I have met over the years. So, as I was told to just say 'all protocol observed – that's a South African tradition – all protocol observed. It's an honour and privilege for me to be here today and I thank you, programme director, for your warm words of introduction and also what you have said about India, the Indian National Congress and the ANC.

This is a subject which has been very close to my heart, both as an activist, as a minister in government and now as a leader in opposition. Looking at how the journey of the two countries have been and of the two freedom movements, because India and South Africa have a relationship that's rooted deeply in history, there has been an enriching exchange between our people over centuries. In the rest of Africa there was a hiatus after the colonisation but, in the case of South Africa it has never been but from 1946 onwards, India took a conscious decision, and that was a period when we were opposing racism and apartheid; and after India's independence taking this battle globally to all the international forums. We have shared experiences of history as people who were subjugated, colonised, exploited, denied what was rightly ours and also the right to make our own decisions as free people but our leaders engaged, our people engaged and we learnt from each other and moved on. It is therefore important to remember and recall what happened from the 1890s onwards and the kind of relationship that was forged between the African leaders and the Indian leaders and, as we're known today, the Indian National Congress and the African National Congress. It is a whole list of political movements, former freedom movements of Asia and Africa.

In the case of South Africa, it was the racial discrimination. It was not after the formalisation of apartheid but well before that, the segregation of people, violence and denials and that was a period when a very powerful connect was made between the Indian National Congress that was established in 1885 (and this year we'll complete 130 years), and the leadership in Africa. But what is important to

remember is that it was the arrival of Gandhi as a lawyer representing a wealthy businessman that changed the course of history, both here and in my country and in June 1893, when he was being thrown out of the first class compartment in the Pietermaritzburg station, perhaps history was being written because he first-hand experienced humiliation, violence and discrimination. He could have decided to go back, he didn't, he chose to stay back and fight.

He was resolute, started mobilising people and he spent 22 years, and all action-filled years, here in South Africa and, as we have always said and your leaders have said: we sent a lawyer, you sent back the Mahatma and therefore independent India has always felt that we owe a debt of gratitude to South Africa and its people, as it was here that he forged the instrument of Satyagraha, a non-violent resistance. It was called passive resistance, sometimes even now we refer to that but it was not, it was active resistance to what he considered was unjust, unfair and inhuman.

It was here in this city of Johannesburg that the first Satyagraha was launched on 9/11/1906 at the Empire Theatre. After that there were many Satyagrahas, both here and in India. This date, 9/11, today is associated with violence and terror with, in 1973, the toppling of President Allende in Chile and the massacre of tens of thousands of people, or 2001 the bombing of the Towers in New York and people forget that in that century, that 9/11 also gave a very powerful message from Johannesburg by Gandhi. That was the force of truth and non-violence and that's what he used, he invoked these instruments after his return to India in 1950, but before that much had happened and I would like to comment.

The evolution of the relationship between the Indian National Congress and the ANC – Gandhi was here, he was also keeping the leaders of the Indian National Congress informed as to what was happening in South Africa in the struggle and many of the leaders, particularly Gokhale, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, one of the stalwarts of India's freedom movement, remained connected with Gandhi and kept on telling the Indian Congress that the struggle in South Africa is equally important. And it was during that period that, though the Indian Congress was itself engaged in an intense political struggle, that India started acting in solidarity in the Indian National Congress with South Africa.

When I was revisiting those old pages and the resolutions of the Indian National Congress sessions of the late 1890s and the first two decades of the 20th century, they are very illuminating, very moving and very powerful. It was during that period that Gandhi here was talking to Smuts and Botha and it was

during that period that Gokhale had ensured that the Indian National Congress at its national sessions, as we called the old India Congress committee sessions, adopted resolutions in support of the struggle in South Africa. And what is very important, that after the first Satyagraha that was against the Black Act of Transvaal as Gandhi had termed it, that there was an agreement between Gandhi and General Smuts but that was not honoured.

In 1909 they resumed the Satyagraha and it was at that time that a special conference was convened in London and the leaders from this country, along with Gandhi, went to London and they told the British government not to transfer power to a white minority government here. That was 1909 and thereafter Gokhale went in 1911. It was an all-races conference and Gokhale met both Smuts and Botha and made it very clear to them that they have to honour the past agreements reached. That didn't happen. And when that happened the Indian National Congress took a principled position and here on the 8th of January in Bloemfontein the conference was convened and the South African Native Congress, which later became the African National Congress, was established.

So this as a history I think is very important for the younger generation to know, because it's a relationship which stands a century and more. It's not something which is recent and here the two peoples of the congresses were engaged and both were fighting for freedom, for justice and for human rights. That is of critical importance. It's not that we were engaged in a fight, standing by each other as free people. We were not free. South Africans were not free. And that's why this relationship is distinct, different and very, very special. And Gandhi returned back to India in January 1915 and he invoked these tools of Satyagraha. So what does Satyagraha mean? It's a force of truth and non-violent resistance to injustice, to mobilise hundreds of millions of Indians.

Today it's easy to say but the people were too weak, powerless, exploited and subjugated for centuries – that's what Indians were. He inspired them to stand up and along with leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad. He not only mobilised them and inspired them but challenged the might of the British Empire and overwhelmed it – by using the force of non-violence. I quote from Gandhi: 'non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind; it's mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.' That's the force which he used. And India's independence, what happened? It triggered a wave of decolonisation which people have to recall and always

remember - in Asia, in Africa and in the Latin Americas – but that's how decolonisation was because we brought down the Empire.

Even before the formal independence of India, it was Ghandi and Nehru who had developed an international outlook. They both were against racism. They both were against colonialism. It was at that time that there was a great momentum here in South Africa. You had the ANC Youth League becoming active, the arrival of Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela; the three doctors pact between Xuma, Naicker, Dadoo in 1947 and that's where the momentum was and India was going to be set free. That's where some important decisions were made and important statements made.

On September 27, 1946 on the eve of India's independence, Jawaharlal Nehru – he was a hero of our freedom struggle, he was a great statesman, a very tall leader the world respected and I'll say without hesitation to my mind that perhaps one of the tallest leaders of his times the world saluted, and he had said that the kernel of our foreign policy – I'm quoting him – is the ending of colonialism all over Asia or for that matter in Africa and elsewhere and racial equality and the end of domination or exploitation of one nation by another. That was Nehru in 1946 and India then took the decision, Ghandi was alive, to take the case of racial discrimination in South Africa to the United Nations. That was the first action.

Before he took oath as India's prime Minister he had taken another important decision, and the Congress Party – India – unilaterally imposed sanctions against racist South Africa in 1946. South Africa accounted for a substantial part of India's exports, 5.5 per cent. India cut off all relations, diplomatic relations with South Africa which were only restored after the transition in 1994 and that was the hiatus I was referring to. We never compromised. And after India's independence Nehru made another important statement. He said that India's freedom would be meaningless as long as Africa is in bondage. He had convened the Asian Relations Conference. Ghandi was there and that was the statement made. Thereafter, as the struggle was intensifying in South Africa, Nehru and the Indian government made a very conscious and resolute decision to work for the isolation of racist South Africa. So it was not one step.

Programme director, Brigitte Mabandla, was referring to the Bandung conference of 1955. Recently we had the 60th anniversary. I wish that there was a complete connect in my country, here and elsewhere because South Africa was not free at that time; about the critical import of the Bandung conference and

the role that Nehru played. Nehru's role was very crucial as the Prime Minister of India. He took Moses Kotane and Maulvi Cachalia in his delegation, as representatives of the ANC, and he went to Bandung insisting that he will attend only after South Africa is excluded from Bandung. That was 1955 that that happened and thereafter he had Oliver Tambo and Yusuf Dadoo given the travel documents from our mission in Dar-es-Salaam to travel to London in 1961. That was for the Commonwealth Conference and there Nehru ensured the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth.

I feel it's very important for us to revisit and recall, otherwise it will be lost. There's such a rich, such a powerful relationship between the two people and the two congresses. And it was not only that India remained active; India remained resolute, acting in solidarity, because for India it was a national commitment which has to be understood. It was not a ritual. It was what our leaders understood. They knew each other and they knew what the struggle was all about. You know in the '80s until the early '90s, but in the '80s in particular, what became very important was the issue of sanctions against apartheid South Africa, but the first time the issue of sanctions was raised at the United Nations General Assembly was in 1960 by Nehru and by India after the Sharpeville massacre and India insisted.

India campaigned for the exclusion of South Africa, that's apartheid South Africa, from the Olympics, from the Commonwealth Games, from the Davis Cup and – that means I had something to do there and I made myself unpopular with some people. In 1988, when India refused visas to seven members of the English cricket team which was to visit India under Mike Gatting, because they had links with apartheid cricket. That led to the cancellation of the tour and that was a decisive phase here as the mass democratic movement had made South Africa virtually ungovernable and it resonated globally.

There were emergency meetings called in London, in India and elsewhere because the Indians are mad about cricket, here also, and so are the British and that's exactly what happened. At the same time it was Rajiv Gandhi who took forward the battle and he was the one who had, at the Cancun Commonwealth Summit, forced a situation on comprehensive mandatory sanctions which were being opposed by Margaret Thatcher, that Britain, head of the Commonwealth, was reduced to a minority of one. The rest of the Commonwealth voted against and Rajiv Gandhi was the one who campaigned. He visited all the frontline states. He set up the Africa Fund. Now people say a fund for Africa, no. It was action for resistance against invasion, colonialism and apartheid. He established a global fund and he took up this matter and I remember as a political activist that we took it up at other levels and,

personally, the inspiration for me and great strength was Archbishop Trevor Huddleston. For me, knowing him and working closely with him during those decisive years was very, very important and a global caucus was created. So it was parallel movements by governments, by prime ministers, by presidents, but also the people's movements and I feel that the sanctions did lead or create a situation that was a debilitating blow to the apartheid regime. It brought the apartheid regime to its knees.

In any case, the negotiations were forced because of the developments. South Africa had become ungovernable and then the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela. With regard to that, a few months before that if my memory serves me right, I was travelling to Walvis Bay; I was travelling through Johannesburg on Commonwealth papers when I got the news that Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and the others were being released. But in February 1990 that was crucial, what happened thereafter is history. The transition process, it is historic.

And then the emergence of South Africa as a multiracial – and that's what I am going to talk about – pluralistic democracies. That truly was a momentous occasion, as important as India's own freedom and, what is ironic, that the first half of the twentieth century when we, the world, was talking of, here and elsewhere, of racial domination, superiority, the first half of the 20th century, despite the two world wars, was led by the moral force of Mahatma Gandhi and the culminating decade saw Nelson Mandela standing tall, his moral authority as an embodiment of human freedom and dignity. So these were the two great people who fought against the very theory of the superiority of race and racial domination but who actually, when history is read, they are the ones who came out victorious. They are the ones who actually dictated what the final outcomes were, not those who had fought battles with guns and tanks, no.

Now when we look at India and South Africa in the contemporary context, after the transition, there followed restoration of diplomatic relations, economic relations and today we have a strategic partnership which is multifaceted. It embraces all areas from agriculture to health to infrastructure development, nuclear science, space science, defence. The word 'strategic' is consciously chosen here and an economic partnership that has promise and potential. Still we have not been able to harness what is there for both the countries to take, with a trade of 14,15 billion dollars, and then we also have more than US\$7 billion of Indian investments. One thing I would like to say about India and South Africa

is that there was one difference when it comes to the models of economic development chosen by the two countries.

In 1947 India was very backward. We hardly had infrastructure and the birth of India itself was different. It was violent. There was bloodshed. There was forced migration. And the biggest forced migration after the biggest mass movement gave us the freedom, because of the partition of India as per the Union of India Act passed by the British Parliament. We were fortunate to have Gandhi and Nehru and Gandhi gave us the healing touch as a father. You were fortunate though that you had Mandela and the ANC and Madiba had no rancour or bitterness and much was said that there would be retribution and violence here. It didn't happen. So these are the two people actually who gave that healing touch as father figures to both our countries in different contexts. South Africa had developed infrastructure, India didn't. You had developed industries, India didn't in 1947 and after that India consciously adopted the Nehruvian path.

There's the concept of mixed economy where the public sector and the private sector could co-exist and develop. India invested in infrastructure. India invested in institutions of excellence.- That was Nehru's vision. You know we established, as a very poor country, some of the finest institutions after independence – Indian institutes of technology, Indian institutes of management, Indian institutes of science, Indian institutes of space science, nuclear science. What India is today is because of that.

A few years ago we invested again and more than doubled, in the case of science five times more, creating the institutions which gave opportunities to our sons and daughters, empowering them to become global leaders in all these fields in which they're acknowledged. But in the case of South Africa you adopted the model of the market economy. We were not in a position to adopt that model, so we had a calibrated approach, a phased approach because we wanted to create adequate infrastructure and make our country globally competitive before we engaged on equal terms with the rest of the world. So we wanted the manufacturing industry to develop. We wanted India to be capable, not only to develop and innovate but also to assimilate high-end technologies used for manufacturing.

After we had achieved that, India stepped out and engaged with the world. Today India has given to the world some of the big Indian multinationals – whatever we may say about that but they are in every continent, in every big country, these are Indian investments. If you are receiving inward investments,

India is making perhaps more investment or equal investment in other countries. I refer to the investment here, in the rest of Africa but also in the developed countries— you name them and you will find, from America, to France, to Germany, to Japan, UK in a big way. In the UK we are the second largest employment provider after the government of the UK, the Indian companies, that's a fact.

Now South Africa and India, we are also in the evolving global order. We are part of IBSA. Now that's a unique platform of three democracies, three emerging economies of three continents, Asia, Africa and South America. It is developed and it has promise. We are together in BRICS and we were very clear when it was BRIC but not BRICS, to bring in South Africa and of course others agreed, so we are happy that South Africa is very much there. We are together in the G20 which is more inclusive as a global platform to address the financial and the economic challenges and the issues and we are together fighting for a more representative, fair and just global order particularly with the changes in the United Nations to make it more inclusive and reflecting the contemporary realities. We cannot accept a UN Security Council which excludes the continent of Africa, which does not include the largest democracy, a country of 1.25 billion, that's the Republic of India. Or for that matter unified Germany or the entire South Americas and Japan.

Now what we have to remember is that both countries are pluralistic, multi-religious, multilingual, multi-ethnic and the rich diversities is our strength. We have demonstrated the wisdom of harmonious co-existence as free nations and as constitutional democracies. For 21 years of South Africa's transition and 67 years of India's independence we have not been able to overcome the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. We share the burden of poverty, unemployment, socio-economic inequality and the issues of governance. For us in India, eradicating poverty and empowering the citizens remains a priority and our constitution, like yours, guarantees equal rights and opportunities but we also have to look at the social and economic disparities which are a reality and we have to move from formal equality to substantial equality and from paper rights to them becoming an everyday reality. Both the countries have yet to do that. We are a \$2.3 trillion economy, the third largest in the world in PPP terms. South Africa is the strongest economy in Africa, 660 billion. India has a median age of 25 years so we have 800 million youths, 800 million. South Africa's young population is 66%, but there's a challenge.

We have to harness their potential, create opportunities, and create jobs so that we benefit from this demographic dividend. If you don't do that, if you don't invest in their future then it can be the reverse

as we have experienced in some cases, you have experienced in your own country. People say that unemployment in South Africa is very high, official numbers maybe 37%, but the youth unemployment is very high, it could be 45% - correct me if I'm wrong but this is what I am told. Our unemployment is 8.8% but that makes it 100 million Indians. Then there is perhaps an equal number of underemployed. I would like to say something about South Africa and that is about the young people not getting the opportunities, like in my country. In some cases they have been pushed towards left wing extremism. In some cases there is resentment against people of my own country coming from different regions because there's these campaigns, local parochial campaigns that they're taking away jobs. They're pushing youth towards drug addiction, crime and violence. The same is happening here and that worries, particularly the resentment towards black immigrants, the recent violence and that actually led to the impeding of capital flows, stalling of many projects that South African companies are doing in other countries, including Mozambique and others and also forced the return of hundreds of South African workers from other countries.

So it's two-way and we didn't realise how serious it was as these immigrants from other countries are referred to as 'kwerekwere'. Maybe I'm pronouncing it wrongly, kwerekwere. So what you have to do is to have a multidimensional approach and education and skilling is important. We know that you have other issues, we too have. HIV in particular and the lack of education or skilling, also lack of awareness how to prevent and fight communicable diseases, particularly HIV, has affected the economic productivity of the young people here and I must say that we know that you have now initiatives of service delivery and I read about it, the Batho-Pele and the people's first as a part of special delivery improvement plan and this Phakisa, which I was told in Sesotho is hurry up; so that you are doing it.

Can I say something very frankly? When we are talking about job skilling, when we are talking about creating jobs there's a factor here. Politically, when I was a Minister I used to say privately to my comrades and colleagues here, there's the China factor, the cheap import of consumer goods. The various projects on their lines of credit here and elsewhere in Africa, that not only the technical people but even the workers come. They hurt the domestic industry. That's why unless and until South Africa invests in micro, small and medium enterprises and skills its young people you'll continue to have this challenge.

We had launched a number of programmes; I'm not going to go into details, including the rollout of the national manufacturing policy. We wanted, and that's the objective, to create 100 million skilled jobs in 10 years. To my mind that was the most important of all the policy rollouts of the last two and a half decades in India and we identified 16 manufacturing cities. It's not easy.

We addressed the issue of land, which is again common to both our countries, but one thing I may flag here is the disparity in equalities in both our countries. We have, to my mind, a long way to go to fulfil the commitment that our leaders had made to the people, to the emancipation of the poor and the weak. There are inequalities all over. Yesterday I was reading on the flight that people are buying paintings, US\$179 million, US\$140 million, that's what individuals are buying. Why? Because the 85 wealthiest individuals of the world have the combined wealth which is equal to 50 per cent of the poor population of the world, that is 3.5 billion people, that's the inequality. You have 1 per cent of rich adults by 2016 owning 50 per cent of the global wealth. In the case of India the top 10 per cent hold 370 times more wealth than its poor, 370 times. In South Africa the top 10 per cent hold 75 per cent of your country's wealth and the bottom 50 percent hold 2.2 per cent.

I will just flag three things because I'm sure there will be questions as to what went wrong back home with us because I feel that for political leadership and the movements to remain connected with the people and particularly the youth is important. We had 100 million voters added between the last election and this election. The Congress Party did not add to its vote of 2009, we lost about 11 million votes. So that's a huge number. We still have 130 million but we did not add, we lost, but why? Public perceptions are important.

Addressing the issue of governance we could not communicate what we were doing, quadrupling India's GDP in 10 years. No country in the world ever achieved from 480 billion to 2 trillion, bringing 140 million out of the net of the poverty, creating opportunities for our youth. But we allowed a negative narrative and that's where the issue of public perception – and also the question of perceived, alleged or real corruption – comes in. Sometimes what is alleged is not true, what is perceived may not be correct, but today's world in democracies you have to govern, it's better to stay connected and recognise that the aspirations of the youth were idealistic, were aspirational. They were also impatient. They won't wait; and the power of the media – and now you have the social media.

So how do democracies manage, particularly pluralistic democracies? The media's independence is important but media has to be and must be responsible. Commercial media, particularly the electronic media, has contributed enormously towards sensationalisation. Media can be potently used to destroy reputations and institutions but the question is, of social media, as technologies evolve and converge, regulatory regimes are put in place. I am for the freedom of the net but at the same time the governments have the onerous responsibility to prevent crimes being committed on the net. So it's a vast range. We have our experiences. I think a dispassionate and honest reflection may be required by both the congresses on where we are.

I will conclude by just saying that what we have shared is important but what we can do is equally important because there is natural affinity between our people and the future beckons us as the destinies of India and South Africa are intertwined. Thank you.

The following are further inputs from Mr. Sharma in response to questions from the floor:

What happened in the 90s? India had to step out to accept that the world has changed and that technologies had shrunk the world, the world is interconnected and interdependent. It was a very clear recognition by India that it cannot continue with the earlier model. I used the word 'calibrated' approach because we first wanted to build our strength so that when we engaged with the world we were strong enough and we proved that we were ready in 1991 when we came out with the economic liberalisation and even during the period of economic crisis. The fact is that India remained in the first three destinations for investors in the world after the economic crisis. The fact is (this is not Anand Sharma telling you) that 138 million Indians were brought out of the poverty net. The fact is, and cannot be challenged, that India's national income multiplied three times. India became the first country in the world to quadruple its GDP in one decade, the first in the world ever.

At the same time India gave rights and entitlements like you are doing here. We gave the right to education; we gave the right to information, to bring in transparency. We brought in the Whistle-blowers' Act and protection to whistle-blowers so that those who expose corruption are given legal protection. We did all that. What went wrong? I used three words: 'alleged', 'perceived' and 'real'. The common man in your country and my country is affected by corruption. There's corruption in day to day life. In my country (I do not know here) people would be harassed if they had to withhold ties to get a telephone connection, to get an electricity connection, they'll have to pay a bribe.

India was able to generate resources. We were able to reinvest and redistribute. I've not touched upon, because there was no time, the much emotive issue of land. In India, even today, it's a big political debate. We had the 1894 British Act which we changed in 2013 where the eminent domain was restricted. Africa is still grappling. You in South Africa completed your land audit only in 1913 and I'm referring to the Act in my country which we changed which was used by the British colonialists even in Kenya to take the land in Rift Valley. They had no law in Africa, they used the Indian Act.

So what I'm saying is that we did things and we gave the right to food security to our citizens. These are constitutional rights given. They gave the right to employment through the MGNREGA, 100 days of guaranteed employment to all our citizens, that's their constitutional right. What went wrong? That's the question. I was not blaming the media but the media. I am a person who has fought for freedom and I'm for liberty. At the same time, I use the word and I shall assertively use it, a *responsible* media because media informs and sensitises public opinion. I said there is always a danger that commercial media has the potential of misuse. You have to guard against that because, when you compare the constitutional rights, the freedom of speech of the citizen the liberty of the citizen takes the first priority in any society. And it is also true – not here or in my country – there are many instances where institutions and leaders have been demolished. Therefore, there has to be balance found but media must be free. I'm very clear on that because media has to inform acts of commission and omission. Media must expose what is wrong but media must also know that this power comes with a huge responsibility so that media is truthful, accurate. It cannot be denied that the commercial media are fighting for space in the TRP, the ratings and the advertisements, that has led to sensationalisation, exaggeration which has to be guarded against by democracies. That's not by curbing media but by creating awareness so that they do their work in a manner which is appreciated and saluted. But I am the last person ever to attribute our defeat to media.

Let me say one thing; we failed to communicate but our opponents communicated. There were allegations against my government, not against individuals by the way, allegations emanating from certain policy decisions which were continuing from the previous government belonging to the same party which is presently the ruling party but the resources were with our opponents. Our people were alleged to have committed some corruption but we were paupers, compared to them, when it came to funding for the elections. The corporates, the diaspora and the big money funded that. There was an intense campaign and we could not respond. Communication, unless and until political movements and leaders) remain sensitive and alert, if there is a perception being built or a narrative being built, of

course correction is required and if it is wrong then you should be in a position and it's your right to counter it. We did not do that and what has happened in India is a complete shift, it's a right wing shift, what my country is seeing today. That's why, when I refer to pluralistic democracies, we have religious intolerance, we have polarisation taking place on religious and communal lines which is breeding social conflict.

So those are fundamental issues where ideologically we will fight those battles but our opponents also came on a tsunami of hopes and promises, if you're analysing and following what happened in my country. But let me also say defeat in an election – we have faced defeats in the past, we are a 130 year old movement – after one year with a hostile government in office not even one of my colleagues or leaders has been accused of any wrongdoing, after one year, tomorrow will be one year, not even one. So that's why I say 'alleged' or 'perceived' – there's a difference. Now we are challenging those who say that: please stand up and be counted for that. That's the reality.

I am for net neutrality. I'm for net freedom. But don't forget that young people are being recruited through the net to join the IS, to join the Al Qaeda, the exhortations to terror and crime. That's why I used this word which did not register correctly, that historically, as technologies have evolved and converged, mature democracies have always put in place regulatory regimes. Don't you have a telecom regulator? Don't you have an electricity regulator. Regulating of the content, some democracies do that also if you read about FCC, FCOM in France, not India. So these are debates which will remain open and they must remain open debates in democracies so that nobody, nobody – whether the political leadership, those in power, those in civil service holding high positions and irrespective of where they are – behaves in a manner which is not conducive to the common good, that's important.

I am a person who has never been faulted when it comes to my facts, by my political opponents and even by the present government. I am giving you the numbers, you check the numbers – but yes, perhaps as I used the word, we lost connect with the youth. I'm admitting it. It's very painful for me to say that. The same party which swept the elections in 2009 carrying the urban voter and the youth, we lost them because a hostile atmosphere was built and we were not alert or sensitive to what was happening. We should have invoked course corrections in some of the cases. Where something was being said we should have been courageous enough to take actions to pre-empt this from spiralling out of control. Perhaps we have learnt a lesson but we need to honestly reflect, because in democracies people punish and the young people in particular, if you're not listening to them they can be impatient and they can throw out any government anywhere in the world. It has happened.

You see where we were and where we are today. But let me also tell you after one year, because those who battered us (this is not a defeat, it was a battering, we've been humiliated and I say so), but if you take a vote today, things are very different because our opponents had created a mirage and they came riding a tsunami of hopes and false promises and nature says every high tide is followed by a low tide, so wait.

All political parties have their internal dynamics. When you win elections then everything is good. The questions are asked in defeat normally. In victory you see everybody would claim some credit but in defeat nobody would step forward. We have our internal dynamics as to where we are. We lost our connect when it comes to our organisation. I'll be very honest here. We had very powerful youth and student movements. We had a very powerful women's movement, a very powerful trade union and suddenly we saw a lot of people coming in who were coming from the creamy layer of the society. In a party office I would see big SUVs and Mercedes coming, which was distasteful and unacceptable to me even today, even if we are a 2.3 trillion economy.

But that we claim credit too. If we were doing everything wrong we wouldn't have been where we were. But at the same time we are also home to a few hundred million poorest of the poor. We cannot forget that and when people see that, particularly the younger generation given their idealism, they would react and that was one of the factors which the Congress Party hopefully has taken cognisance of. And the second is: we have to go back to the basics, go back to the people, go back to the local committees and listen to them. There's no shortcut to revival. We will revive. We will win, perhaps in the next few state elections we'll start winning again but winning an election again will not suffice if we have to sustain that we remain a vibrant and dynamic political movement because we have always ensured over decades the infusion of fresh blood and creating space for new leadership, creating space for dissent. The Congress Party has always been a coalition. What is happening now, the dissent is from the poll, and there cannot be any democracy without disagreement or dissent and no political movement can remain a healthy organisation unless and until it accepts divergent opinions and then finds a way forward which reflects the broad national consensus. That's my take on this.

When it comes to democracy I think for both our countries, and for that matter for the rest of the world, democracy will play a huge role but you must skill them; you must educate them. Look at the crimes against women in my country, in your country. We have to create a social movement and national awareness campaigns so that this shameful cycle of violence is ended irrespective of what representation we give. My country has produced women prime ministers, a woman president, women

judges, women speakers, women leaders of opposition, powerful women leaders of political movements including my party.

So the highest rates of crime against women and their daughters, that is something which we need to also look at as political movements because, when you are representing political movements, you are representing everyone and therefore they must feel fully assured that you are sensitive, you are alert and you will do something, you will intervene in a manner that will ensure justice and equity.

The question was put to me about India, the market economy and parastatals. Let me just revisit my own words. I was referring to 1947. I was referring to 1950 that India took a conscious decision to embrace a mixed economy because we did not have infrastructural institutions, so we invested in creating parastatals. The government invested. We created the institutions and we created mega-PSUs, not one but many. It was the government which created them because the private sector didn't have the the money, but we allowed the Indian private sector also to grow.

In that context I used the term 'market economy'. I know that we became a member of the WTO but we took a 10-year transition period like China did so that we could align all of our laws to be in synch with the WTO. So by 2005 the laws passed by the Indian Parliament allowed us to be in synch with what the WTO regimes were and I still maintain, I've always maintained, that the last GATT negotiations and the agreement were imbalanced against the developing countries.

We still maintain that and we are negotiating those, but before South Africa's transition India had taken the step to embrace the market economy but even then we were calibrated, we did not do it overnight, it took us years. We are still opening up sectors as recently as last month. Even during my tenure we opened up civil aviation more, we opened up telecom more. We didn't do it in one jump, we've always been calibrated and cautious.

First we wanted to create our own strengths, not to lean on IT or electronics or pharmaceuticals, but we were strengthening many fields. We wanted Indian industry to be capable on technology assimilation and technology development, innovation and R&D to be at par with the most powerful countries of the world, which I'm very proud today we are. So, once we realised that we are there, we opened up and when we opened up it's not that we attracted investment, we are investing in those economies more. If you look at the Indian investments in all the major countries of the world, all the major economies, that will startle you, so we're also investing. It's a two-way process. You don't engage with the world when there is a one-way street, particularly in an interdependent world. So that's how we're doing it.

Now when it comes to China and India, we are two large countries. We are neighbours. We are a democracy, China is not. China is a civilisational country. India is a civilisational country. We have a healthy respect for each other. We have complexities as all big neighbours have. We have unresolved issues also between our two countries but as a democracy our policies reflect a national acceptance and consensus. It's the other way round: China can take a decision, their leadership now. In India a decision cannot be taken by a government in office without building a consensus, that's one difference. India has been an economy powered by domestic production and domestic consumption. China is suffering today, mind you, because their policy has been more external, like what is happening here in Africa. China is mainly an exporting country. China is not a consuming economy, and you must know that. You asked me a question: why does India not emulate China? Let me put to you this question: why does not China emulate India?

Thank you.