

## Keynote Speech

### **India: Resources, Environment and Inclusive Development**

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India is a country with amazing geographical diversity together with plurality in language, religion, culture and ethnicity. It is a country of second largest human resources of the world with a population of more than 1210 million (2011) people supporting nearly 17.5 per cent of world's population. From the mountains of the Himalaya in Kashmir to the sea coasts of Kanyakumari and from the *Thar* deserts of Rajasthan to the humid forests of the north-east, India displays her wealth of diversity in cultures, religions fairs and festivals. Indeed, India is a unity in diversity. Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. Agriculture and allied sectors like forestry, logging and fishing in financial year 2011-12 accounted for about 13.9 per cent of GDP and employed about 52 per cent of India's population. About 43 per cent of total geographical area of the country is used for the agricultural practices. Despite a steady decline of its share in the GDP, agriculture remains largest economic sector and plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic development of India.

According to 2011 Census, a little over 31 per cent of India's population lives in 7935 urban centres.. The share of urban dwellers is rather small, but in terms of total size, the urban population is huge by any measure. At least three cities namely Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi contain a population size of over ten million persons. More than a million people reside in as many as 53 cities of India. The cities of India are a paradox in themselves displaying urban features comparable to any developed country and simultaneously retaining poverty and squalor as evident in the presence of slums supporting over 93 million people. The country however has made strenuous strides in achieving rapid development of its industrial base from traditional iron & steel, cotton, jute and sugar to engineering, computer, information technology, communication and biotech industries. However, poverty continues to be a major hurdle in faster socio-economic transformation. The National Sample Survey for 2011-12 estimates total poverty at 21.9 per cent, rural poor at 25.7 per cent and urban poor at 13.7 per cent of the respective population. The Five Year Plans and several other developmental schemes are geared to the upliftment of the poor and

weaker sections of the society. Since 1991, the liberalization of the economy and the increasing integration of India with the global economy have helped GDP to grow at 9 per cent or more at the present. The growth rate of Indian economy is 7.5 per cent in financial year 2015-16. India in 2000 announced the introduction of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for enhancing foreign investments and to promote exports. More than 500 SEZs have been proposed, 143 of which have been made functional until February, 2012.

Human development has become an important agenda in the development paradigm in India. Growth and development in literacy have been accorded primacy for such an agenda. According to Census of India (2011), 74 per cent of Indian population is literate. There exists however a huge disparity in literacy attainment between the sexes as also among other social groups particularly the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. Various programmes such as National Literacy Mission, *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* and non-formal education etc. have been launched with a view to achieve total literacy in the years to come. Improvement in health has been an important agenda in overall strategy through the planning period. Sustained effort at improving the health of the people has borne some results in bringing down the crude death rate to 7.5 per thousand and life expectancy has substantially moved up to 68 years. . The National Highways account for less than 2 per cent of the total road network but carry 40 per cent of the movement of goods and passengers. Communication facilities show a phenomenal growth during the recent years. Public phone booths, mobile phones, internet facility have grown rapidly in India. The landline telephones have expanded from about 0.084 million connections at the time of independence to about 40 million by the year 2011. In addition, there are about 881 million mobile phones and 121 million internet connections in India in 2011. The lecture provides critical evaluation of policy measures taken by the Government of India towards transforming Indian economy towards inclusiveness and sustainability. Japanese Experiences gained by the speaker as JSPS Fellow will be referred during lecture.