

The Indian Express

Maharashtra to be role model in Dalit/ tribal entrepreneurs for providing jobs

The BJP-led government's policy reforms at the Centre and in the state for empowering Dalits and tribals have become a political reality that cannot be thwarted by a handful of radical elements trying to serve their own vested interests, said Dalit Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries chairman Milind Kamble.

In an interview to The Indian Express, he said, "The Stand-Up India initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with the pro-active role of DICCI has come a long way with Maharashtra emerging as the leading state of the country to transform the fate of Dalits and tribals through additional policy reforms and incentives."

"Maharashtra will set a role model for the nation with 10,000 Dalit/tribal entrepreneurs in the next three years. Backing it will be another 10,000 women entrepreneurs across the board, including both forward and backward communities. Across the country, the target is to handhold 1.25 lakh SC/ST entrepreneurs in the next three years through Stand-Up India," he said.

While acknowledging the attacks on Dalits in Gujarat or Uttar Pradesh did not auger well for the image of the nation, he said, "Today, Generation Next Dalits are convinced economic policies of the Centre-state are the way forward to development. The handful of fringe elements' efforts are going to become futile sooner or later."

"The state government's initiative to bring in sweeping reforms in its industrial policy has provided the perfect support system both logistically and financially for handholding of small- and medium-scale entrepreneurs among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes," said Kamble.

During the Make In India Week (February 13-18), the Maharashtra government brought in a new policy reserving 20 per cent plots in the MIDC for SCs/STs and extended a slew of incentives to them through concessions in power tariff and water tariff.

Maintaining that radical forces cannot stymie Dalits' economic empowerment, Kamble said, "The statistics speaks for themselves. There

are more than 3,000 Dalit millionaires. I can provide a list of more than 100 industrialists with an annual turnover of Rs 100 crore. Dalit-owned companies are providing jobs. So, we can clearly see a major shift in Dalits' prosperity, both socially and economically.”

Kamble believes policy promotions at the Centre and in the state are going to help small- and medium-scale entrepreneurs (SMSEs). “The success of SMSEs will automatically help SCs/STs, whose land holdings are extremely small in the agriculture sector,” he said.

Overriding apprehensions over SMSEs, Kamble said, “Look at the growth chart. SC/ST-run SMSEs have increased from 15 lakh (2001) to 90 lakh (2016), accounting for 15-18 per cent of SMSEs in the country.”

The DICCI is playing the role of facilitator in helping eligible Dalit or tribal candidates avail the schemes launched at the Centre and in the state. “In Mudra schemes out of 3.5 lakh SMSEs, 30 per cent account for SCs/STs.”