

## **SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE AT THE 6th CONVOCATION OF DR. D.Y. PATIL VIDYAPEETH**

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I am indeed very happy to have this opportunity of being present amidst you for the Sixth Convocation of Dr. D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth. It is one of the important centres of learning in the higher education landscape of our country.

This Vidyapeeth was established in 2003 with a vision 'to see enlightened, cultured and economically vibrant India, developed through education in diverse disciplines'. Under the inspiring leadership of Dr. P.D. Patil and a team of highly dedicated teachers, this Institute has over the last twelve years contributed significantly towards the fulfilment of this objective. I congratulate all of you for the progress made so far in terms of its remarkable growth and enhanced prestige. It is heartening to note that this Institute has been awarded with an 'A' grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council.

University is at the top of the formal education pyramid. It is, therefore, incumbent on universities to guide the direction of progress of the society. Ancient India had a tradition of world-class learning, represented by renowned universities at Nalanda, Takshashila, Vikramashila, Valabhi, Odantapuri and Somapura. These seats of learning dominated the world education system in higher education for eighteen hundred years beginning sixth century BC. This system started declining from twelfth century AD. Unfortunately, Indian higher education is yet to regain that frontline position.

According to rankings by reputed agencies, no Indian institution feature in the list of top 200 universities in the world. I have been making this remark before higher academic institutions almost as a ritual now. My sole purpose is to impress upon the universities to adopt a more methodical approach to the ratings process and also effect holistic changes for better academic management. A higher ranking boosts the morale of students and teachers by increasing their growth opportunities. It can also help retain meritorious students who otherwise want to avail of higher education abroad.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

How do we transform our universities into great learning centres? At first, there is need to link education with research and innovation in a seamless manner. Education disseminates knowledge while research creates new knowledge. Innovation converts that knowledge into wealth and social good. Promoting inter-disciplinary research and research at under-graduate level, boosting collaborative research and joint research papers, and encouraging bright students to enter the research field are some of the steps required in this direction. Emphasis is being laid

on research at the Vidyapeeth right from the beginning. I am glad to know that PhD programme in all specialties was started in 2009 and that 22 PhD degrees have been awarded today.

Particular focus is called for nurturing innovative ideas. The ingenuity of the grassroots innovators require mentoring for development of viable products useful to the common man. Innovation clubs have been set up in several central institutions to act as a bridge between the academic community and innovators. I wish to see such platform being built in our private institutions as well.

Friends:

Changes needed in academic institutions are multi-dimensional. Adequate availability of good quality faculty must be ensured. Faculty must use latest pedagogy relying on ICT solutions for effective delivery of instructions. Faculty also must upgrade their knowledge of a subject through participation in refresher courses and seminars. Institutions must create synergy with other institutions for research partnerships, and sharing of course material and subject experts. Institutions must also establish networks with the industry for guidance on projects, course design and internship programmes.

Our universities are the torchbearers of socio-economic development. The relevance of its teaching must extend beyond the classrooms, to the society and the nation. At the same time, they must through their own example usher in socio-economic change. The Government initiatives aimed at faster economic development, namely Swachh Bharat, Adarsh Gram, Digital India and Make-in-India, have the potential to lift India to the state of an advanced nation. Their successful implementation calls for participation by a wide section of the society. Our education, training, research and innovation must contribute to these national objectives.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Our education model must not only develop the mind but also create positive mind-sets. Expanding a student's ability must go hand in hand with building his attitude. A creative mind-set combined with a positive attitude can help unearth solutions to problems afflicting the society like malnutrition, affordable healthcare, efficient energy use, drinking water and sanitation.

The objective of education is not merely the acquisition of knowledge and the production of competent manpower. At a macro level, education leads to nation-building. At the micro level, it must result in character-building in students. On this revered occasion, I am reminded of a Sanskrit Shubhashit from the Chanakya Niti Shastra. I quote:

न चौर हार्यम न च राज हार्यम |

न भ्रात्रभाज्यम न च भारकारी ॥

व्यये कृते वर्धते नित्यं ।

विद्या धनं सर्वे धनं प्रधानम् ॥

*"Na chor haryam, na raaj haryam, na bhrata bhajyam na cha bharaakari;  
Vyaye krate vardhate eva nityam, vidhya dhanam sarva dhan pradhanam"*  
(unquote).

(It means knowledge is something that a thief cannot steal and a king cannot take away from you. It cannot be divided amongst brothers. It is not too heavy to carry. The more you offer it to others, the more it increases. Knowledge is the supreme form of wealth.)

With these words, I conclude. I once again compliment all the students for their success. I also wish the Vidyapeeth the very best for the future.

Thank you.  
Jai Hind.