

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB  
MUKHERJEE ON THE OCCASION OF INAUGURATION OF  
CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF UNIVERSITY OF  
MYSORE**

Mysore, Karnataka: Jul 27, 2015

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1. It is my pleasure to be here on this historic occasion to inaugurate the Centenary Celebrations of University of Mysore. It is one of the oldest universities in our country. I am also happy to have the opportunity to visit Mysore. With Chamundi Hills as its backdrop, this city is dotted with beautiful palaces and attractive Indo-Saracenic buildings.
2. Mysore is an academic hub today, comprising prestigious institutions in wide array of disciplines – from ayurveda to medicine, management to engineering, law and commerce. The University of Mysore, which is headquartered here, has pioneered higher education in Karnataka. It was founded under the patronage of ‘Rajarshi’ Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar and with the able assistance of Diwan Sir M. Visvesvaraya in 1916.
3. Both Rajarshi Wadiyar and Diwan Visvesvaraya were steadfast in their commitment to bring enlightenment to the people of this state. The Maharaja in the first convocation of this University in 1918 had eloquently said of Visvesvaraya, which I now quote: *“I feel that I should acknowledge on this public occasion a debt of gratitude from myself and my people to Sir M. Visvesvaraya the Diwan of my state. It is chiefly his patriotism, his enthusiasm and his unflinching advocacy which converted what was once little more than a dream of the future into a living creation and his name will always be remembered above all others, as the man to whom our university owes its being”* (unquote).

Ladies and Gentlemen:

4. On this occasion, I would like to recall the names of some of the stalwarts - the first Vice Chancellor Shri H.V. Nanjundayya, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Dr. Brajendranath Seal, Dr. C.R. Reddy, Prof Thomas Denham, Prof A.R. Wadia, Prof M. Hirianna, Dr. K.V. Puttappa (Kuvempu) and Dr. D. Javare Gowda - who shaped the destiny of this great university. The others who followed kept the flag of this institution flying high, capitalizing on the rich legacy and moving

forward with purposive action. In 1960, all the post-graduate departments were brought together in one location - the beautiful *Mana-sagan-gothri* - where we are assembled today. This campus was named so by Vice Chancellor Kuvempu who was also a poet laureate. He emphasized the use of mother tongue as the medium to communicate and inspired innumerable scholars to write textbooks for higher education.

5. Due to the vision of its academic leaders and hard work of others associated with it, University of Mysore has been a story of progress. Beginning with 11 departments, I am told that it now has 54 post-graduate departments, two post-graduate centres, one satellite centre, four constituent colleges, 49 research centres and 38 outreach centres. It has 85,000 students on its rolls including 1,400 students from 64 countries. What started as a small rivulet has assumed the proportion of a roaring river today. I compliment you all and urge you to keep going!
6. The motto of this University is derived from a *shloka* that Krishna told Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, which I quote: "*Nahi Jnanen Sadrusham Pavitra Iha Vidyate*" (unquote), which means, there is no purified in the world like knowledge. The founding fathers of this centre of higher learning wanted education to be taken to the doorsteps of the common man. At the assembly of Vice Chancellors in Cambridge in 1934, Prof J.C. Rollo, Principal of Maharaja's College, spoke about the 'Mysore Experiment', where the university professors with their erudition and knowledge went to villages and remote areas to share their wisdom. The Vice Chancellors attending the Conference declared their intention to replicate this model. Eight decades later, this method of knowledge propagation is still relevant in our country. In that context, I have said elsewhere that '*a university is the banyan tree whose roots lie in basic education, in a vast network of schools that build the intellectual prowess of our communities; we have to invest in every part of this knowledge tree, from seed, root and branch to the highest leaf*'. I wish to see your academic leaders continue their engagement with the society at large in disseminating knowledge.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

7. India with two-third of her 1.25 billion people below 35 years of age holds great prospects to become one of the front ranking nations in the world. To unleash the potential of her energetic youth, a world-class educational system is necessary. Though India's higher education is the second largest in the world, the enrolment rate at 20 percent is not enough to improve the future prospects of the youth and harnessing

opportunities in an increasingly knowledge intensive world. Many bright scholars go abroad for higher studies for want of good quality institutions in our country.

8. The government has made considerable efforts to expand the higher education sector by starting new IITs, NITs and central universities, besides other institutions. Even the private sector has started contributing significantly to this expansion in higher education. However, if an objective analysis of the state of higher education in our country is undertaken today, it is easy to suggest that there are only a handful of higher education institutions possessing the quality to produce graduates for the global market. Indian institutions are absent from the top 200 positions in world university rankings published by reputed agencies.

Friends:

9. Transforming the higher education sector requires innovative changes on several fronts. Availability of good faculty is one. Teaching must be made more attractive as a career option for bright students. To inject new thinking and diversity in pedagogy, faculty must also be hired from abroad. Faculty development through exchange programmes, participation in seminars and workshops, and joint research and project work with academic and industry partners is another area we need to lay emphasis on.
10. If faculty is the lifeblood of a higher education institution, then a good governance structure is its taproot. Good governance must play a central role in the growth of an institution. For that, it must identify and incorporate expertise from varied fields including industry and alumni, to support considered decision-making processes in the academic institutions. A concerted effort to involve the industry in academic affairs could reap benefits in terms of sponsorship of research endowments, creations of chairs, conduct of internship programmes and improvement in the employability of students.
11. Present-day higher education institutions ought to apply dynamic learning models. They must deploy technology to efficiently disseminate academic material to greater number of students, engage resource persons through e-platforms, and establish linkages with research and other academic institutions. Collaborative partnerships must be aimed at pursuing frontier research and creating synergy in the development of new concepts for furthering human wellbeing.

Friends:

12. There is unfortunately a general neglect of research in our universities. This must be reversed. Our country grapples with many socio-economic problems and answers to many of them have eluded us so far. We must identify areas that call for innovative solutions and facilitate our universities and institutions to undertake research programmes. We must adopt a multi-disciplinary approach as most research activity requires the meeting of minds from multiple domains.
13. Our universities must promote scientific temper amongst students. A way forward could be to give wings to the ingenious ideas of students and grassroots innovators. The initiative of setting up Innovation Clubs taken up in several Central Universities could be replicated by others. It will act as a platform where novel ideas are nurtured and innovators mentored to develop new products. I urge you to spearhead an innovation movement in this region.
14. Let me conclude by complimenting your institution on celebrating its one hundred years of fruitful service to the people. Accept my best wishes for a successful conduct of your year-long centenary festivities, which I am happy to note, includes a theme song, play, documentary and a film about your history. Best of luck for the future!

Thank you.  
Jai Hind.

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