

Presidential Address
Higher Education in West Zone - Focus on
creating Enterprising and Creative minds

by

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at

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Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof Sashiranjana Yadav, Secretary General of AIU Prof Furqan Qamar, former Presidents of AIU, fellow Vice Chancellors, distinguished invitees, members of the faculty, enlightened members of the press and media, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at the outset extend my warm greetings to the fellow Vice Chancellors of the West Zone universities for sparing their highly valuable time to be present at this historic meet at the Indian Institute of Teacher Education at Gandhinagar, the capital of the vibrant and enterprising Gujrat, a state from where the trade and wisdom of the east was marketed worldwide during the wonder that was India and from where the rhythms and vibrations of a New India of our dream are reverberating in our minds and hearts. This historic meet is taking place at a time when the resurgent of India as the brightest star of the East is being acknowledged by the world at large. As such it is our responsibility, fellow Vice Chancellors, in the universities in India to make our universities a major partner in progress for the making of a New India, a developed and prosperous India of our dream. To do this, we need to create the enterprising and creative minds in our universities and thus transform our universities as the "factories of Innovation, Technology Incubation and Enterprise development" along side with producing Industry-ready-professionals for the new knowledge age which is rapidly descending in our industry, trade, business and governance, and in fact in all human endeavours.

I therefore, hope that the synergy of mind created at this meet shall enable us to present a road map of growth and development of higher education that shall assure quality of education, relevance of our research and innovations and startups and enterprise development in our Indian universities to meet and greet the current and future challenges so as to make India a world leader in education and research in the coming years.

“The end-product of education should be a free creative man, who can battle against historical circumstances and adversities of nature. For this the universities should attract the best minds for its teaching faculty”

Dr. S Radhakrishnan
Former President of AIU

The above words of wisdom of one of the most illustrious sons of Mother India, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the former President of AIU (1943-44) are more relevant today than ever before as the 21st Century bestows upon the universities in India a great responsibility to provide to the nation the inspired and ignited minds of graduates and post graduates and scholars of eminence to fuel unprecedented growth and development to wipe out poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment, enormous pollution (air, water and soil) and advance the frontiers of knowledge, shrink the boundaries of ignorance and create the bliss and happiness all around. And that too, by nurturing creativity and innovativeness in abundance to manifest the fullest of human potential, yet protecting the interest of man and Mother Nature together.

Rural Education Rural Industry Local and Traditional Knowledge and local medicine.

Education, especially higher education, is to be the fountainhead of a developed, prosperous and enlightened human society that shall contribute to peace, prosperity, harmony and happiness all around. This is, of course, a tall order, but then who other than universities, the repositories of tremendous wisdom of our enlightened and inspired minds and the torchbearers of the faith of people could deliver this promise. This calls for a sustained focus on Quality, Relevance and Excellence so that universities in India could become, in true sense, partners in progress of nation's development and meet the global aspirations of human excellence.

Care and concern for the society, catering for local and global needs and service to society and Mother Nature should find an important space in the curriculum

and should become an important aspect of higher education and research in our universities. I am confident, my fellow Vice Chancellors are committed to create such a bright future for our great democratic republic.

India's higher education has registered an impressive growth during the last 70 years of independent India. It has provided to India and the advanced nations of the world some of the finest inspired minds of graduates and postgraduates who brought high recognition to India's higher education and made Mother India proud of their creative and innovative genius. The rise of the IISc, IITs and a few selected central and state universities such as University of Delhi, JNU, University of Hyderabad, MS University Baroda, University of Mumbai, University of Madras, Calcutta University, University of Allahabad, Punjab University Chandigarh, AIIMS and PGI Chandigarh, a few engineering colleges and institutions including Delhi College of Engineering, DCE now, Delhi Technological University, DTU, Punjab Engineering College, PEC now PEC University, Jadavpur University, Bengal Engineering College that became Bengal University of S&T and now Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, IIST Shibpur, Guindy College of Engineering, now Anna University, VJTI Mumbai, HBTI Kanpur, and some of the RECs now NITs in the government funded sector and BITs Pilani, Amity University, Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Technology, Manipal University, SRM University, Thapar University, Patiala, SASTRA University, Thanjavur, Sharda University and lately Shiv Nadar and Ashoka University to name a few in the self-financed sector are some of the finest examples of India success story in field of higher education. They produced the Nobel Laureates Dr Hargovind Khurana(Punjab University), Dr Amaratya Sen(Presidency College Calcutta), Dr Venkat Ramakrishna(MS University of Baroda), Kailash Satyarthi(SATI Vidisha), Chip Craft of the World Vinod Dham (DCE) who designed the Pentium Chip, NASA Astronaut Kalpana Chawla (PEC) , Founder of Infosys Narayan Murthy (IIT Kanpur), Founder of NIIT Rajendra Pawar (IIT Delhi), the DRDO Chief, now a Member of NITI Aayog Dr V K Saraswat (MITS Gwalior and IISc Bangalore), Chairman and Managing Director of Nuclear Power Corporation of India VK Chaturvedi (SATI Vidisha 1965 and BARC, Trombay), and above all Bharat Ratna, India's topmost defense technologist and former President of India Hon'ble Dr APJ Abdul Kalam (MIT Madras). These and many more ignited minds of higher education fraternity of India made us all feel immensely proud of the vibrancy and global eminence of India's higher education.

Likewise, the accelerated growth of Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, IISERs, National Law Universities, establishment of new AIIMS, new IITs, NITs, NITTRs, new Central Universities, specialized universities to promote education and research in traditional medicine, physical education, music and culture all make a highly impressive reading of India's higher education landscape.

With only 20 Universities and 500 Colleges in the country at the time of independence with 2.1 Lakhs students in higher education, India's higher education grew by leaps and bound during the last 70 years, more rapidly in the post globalization era, 1991 onwards. As per the UGC Annual Report 2015-16, the numbers have increased to 40 times in the case of the Universities, 100 times in the case of Colleges and the student enrolment has gone up to 165 times in the formal system of higher education in comparison to the figures at the time of independence. As on 31.03.2016, the number of Universities stood at 799 universities – (44 Central, 75 Institutions of National Importance, 342 State, 198 State Private and 140 Deemed to be Universities) and 39071 colleges and 11923 stand alone institutions enrolling 34.6 million students as per the UGC Annual Report 2015—16. So far as the number of universities is concerned, Rajasthan tops the list with 70 universities, followed by Uttar Pradesh 70, Tamil Nadu 52, Karnataka 49, Maharashtra 46, Haryana 38, etc.

But numbers alone do not suffice to earn India its repute in the field of Higher Education in the world. Serious concerns have been voiced repeatedly for utterly poor employability, acute shortage of well qualified faculty, lack of culture of research and knowledge creation, poor connect with industries and for ineffective regulatory system. The system is also least supportive of internationalization. The net result being that despite significant growth in the enrolment, quality, relevance and excellence remain as major challenges being faced by India's Higher Education system.

I, must however, add that the way ahead is equally challenging. **On one hand the higher education in India is reeling under the crisis of low employability, on the other hand, it has a great promise in store for accelerating society and industry relevant research and innovations, given the innovative and creative potential of the young India.** For this to make a phenomenal success, the higher education system in India has to align itself to the relevance and excellence that shall make higher education a powerful vehicle to fuel the growth of startups and new enterprises in plenty and meet the challenges of higher education of tomorrow driven by mind boggling advancements on the scientific and technological fronts.

The agenda for higher education, in my opinion, has to focus on **Relevance driven Excellence** and a **Strong connect to Society and Industry**. Further, the **integration of human values with education** need be given a renewed emphasis in the campuses of our universities as we cannot afford to pay a heavy price for the loss of human values in an enlightened and specialized work force in a country like ours where loss of values has already created an unprecedented rise of lust, greed and anguish. We need to, therefore, echo peace and harmony in the corridors of our

universities and discuss the value and worth of civic sense and responsible citizenship in our class rooms and in the discussion forums.

The AIU Meet of the West Zone Vice Chancellors at Indian Institute of Teacher Education at Gandhinagar holds a special significance as we are currently facing an acute shortage of highly inspired and research oriented teachers in our higher education system. It is a monumental challenge for the universities in India to attract the best inspired and creative minds in the faculty and thereafter to provide them the vital ecosystem to manifest their fullest of potential to develop industry ready, inspired, creative and enterprising minds of graduates and post graduates from the campuses of the universities, engage in cutting edge research and innovations and to roll out startups and new enterprises. We need therefore, to seriously ponder on the implementable strategies for our new Education Policy that shall meet this emergent and highly important need of Faculty Development for our universities.

I am happy to add that the universities in the AIU West Zone of India are blessed with renowned universities like Mumbai university, Pune University, MS University of Baroda, IIT Gandhinagar, Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology, Gandhinagar, University of Rajasthan and BITS Pilani among others. We have the glory of the orient in MS University of Baroda and the fragrance of the modernity in VJTI and IIT Mumbai and IIT Gandhinagar and Pt Deendayal Petroleum University.

We, in India, have a highly enriched spiritual heritage and cultural traditions that provide a sound basis for cultivation of peace and harmony besides inspiring us to rise to the alters of humility and human excellence. We must therefore, effectively blend the wisdom of our antiquity into the modernity of our human civilization to support the resurgence of India to its global eminence. I call upon you the fellow Vice Chancellors to work for effectively integrating education with values and assure highest levels of quality of education, relevance of research, innovation driven growth of startups and enterprises and be a great force in supporting the resolve of making a New India, India of our dream, where **education becomes an empowerment of capabilities, character and commitment** to serve the society and the nation with fullest of dedication and to win back, for India its lost glory of global eminence in higher education and research in the new knowledge era.

The need of the hour is to nurture interdisciplinary education, engage in cutting edge research, cultivate translational and solution research and foster creativity and innovations in abundance and take them to the level of commercially viable technologies and products of vital value to make India a world leader in quality education and research.

I call upon you to collaborate and cooperate between our universities in India, create regional and national network of Indian universities and pool together your capabilities and transform our universities in India as the world leaders to make Mother India proud of its universities.

As you leave after this summit tomorrow, take back the collective wisdom of the Vice Chancellors of the West Zone, cast a renewed vision and draw a strategic plan for your university to make stupendous progress on Quality of Education, Relevance of research and development, causing accelerated growth of Innovations and Technology Incubation giving rise to startups in plenty and make your university a vehicle of transformation of the regional and national development.

Let you keep the noble objective of ***Janni Jamabhumasche swargadapi gariyasi***, that is, to transform our own Motherland as a haven on earth while at the same time serving the divine cause of ***Vasudha eve Kutumbakam***. I also invite you to create the ***Panchamirit*** of Academia, Industry, R&D organizations, Society and the Government so that we succeed in making our universities, in true sense, partners in progress for the success of our National missions of Make in India, Skill India, Innovation and Startups India and also meet the Sustainable Millennium Goals for which the nations of the world including India are firmly committed.

I take great pleasure in being a part of this historic AIU meet of the West Zone Vice Chancellors.

Jai Hind.