

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE AT THE PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL AWARDS TO
MERITORIOUS TEACHERS ON THE OCCASION OF TEACHER'S
DAY**

Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi: 5 SEPTEMBER 2015

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be present here and address you all on Teachers' Day. I am happy to join you on this occasion where we recognise the dedicated services of many teachers throughout the country who are actively engaged in building and strengthening the intellectual and ethical foundations of our children. It is a day when we honour, with the national awards those of you who have made significant contribution for improvement of school education. I congratulate you for this national recognition. I also greet all teachers of our country and express our gratitude for their service and commitment.

In our country, 5th of September is celebrated as the Teachers' Day. It is the birth anniversary of my pre-eminent predecessor, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who was one of the great scholars and philosophers and above all a great teacher of our country. He was a mentor and a revered guide to educationists who understood the educational priorities of modern India. Long back, he had said and I quote

"The aim of education is not the acquisition of information, although important, or acquisition of technical skills, though essential in modern society, but the development of that bent of mind, that attitude of reason, that spirit of democracy which will make us responsible citizens."

These words remind us even today of the need for introspection with a basic question: What educational experiences are we providing to our children to achieve this aim? In the fast changing world of today where new ideas, values and concepts are rapidly replacing the old ones, the importance of quality of education for any student has further increased. The education has to liberate a person from narrow world view and the boundaries of caste, community, race and gender. Teachers have been entrusted with the responsibility of moulding the young minds to understand the world and make it better. To achieve this, teachers working in the schools, colleges and universities need to define to themselves what it is to be a teacher and what effort can make their performance meaningful to achieve this aim. This is a high time for introspection.

I believe that more than ever, today we need ***inspired teachers*** to instil in our children the civilizational values of ***sacrifice, tolerance, plurality, understanding and compassion***. I would define an inspired teacher as a value-oriented, mission-driven, self-motivated and result-oriented individual. He works towards impacting the environment in a positive manner through his own actions as well as by imparting knowledge amongst students to help them achieve their potential. An inspired teacher links the individual goals of the students to the societal and national goals. Such teachers appeal not only to the head but also the heart. Through words, actions and deeds, they inspire the students and elevate them to a higher level of performance and thinking. Responsibility of producing aware, conscious and intellectual citizens who build the future of our nation lies with the teachers.

Dear Teachers,

There was a time when we had renowned seats of learning like *Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramashila, Valabi, Somapura and Odantpuri*. They attracted scholars from far and wide. The powerful minds who taught at such universities created an exalted position for our ancient education system. We have to regain our leadership position. We look towards teachers to guide the way. We must ensure that our education system attracts talent to the academic profession.

Our teachers need to get themselves a new orientation and evolve new methodologies to create relevant and effective approaches to teaching and learning. They also need to continuously renew their capabilities through research, experimentation and innovation to achieve excellence. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is another area where teachers have to keep pace with rapidly changing technologies. It is essential for teachers to be comfortable in using ICT themselves first. With the advancement in communication technology leading to increased flow of information, the teachers need to be guide the students not only to benefit from the freely available information but also not to get overwhelmed by the incessant flow of information. The improved communication technology has and to ensure that the students get full benefit of ICT including children with special needs.

We must work for the long term goal of creating institutional facilities for innovative training and professional development of teachers. I am sure that Government of India's Scheme of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission for Teachers and Teaching (PMMNMTT) will

address all these urgent priorities and the related issues in a holistic manner.

Education empowers and enables a nation. A sound education system is the bedrock of an enlightened society. To build India of our dreams, the foremost task before us is to improve the quality of education infusing modern technologies and addressing the concerns of equality.

Friends, it is ingrained in us to believe that while our parents give us life, it is our "*gurus*" that shape our character and aspirations. You are the gurus; and you have the responsibility of creating leaders of the future. In present times, emphasis on values such as hard work, integrity, truthfulness, scientific temper, sensitivity towards our environment and honesty is very essential. My dear teachers, it is you who can inculcate such important values, practising these by yourselves, in your students to make them virtuous citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to recognise, with deep appreciation, the professional dedication with which you all have played a commendable role in making our nation a confident, vibrant and modern India. I congratulate all the teachers who are being recognised with awards. To all of you, I wish success for your future endeavours. I also convey my best wishes to the entire teaching community in the country and call upon them to stay firm on the path of leading India forward to its next golden age.

Thank You.

Jai Hind.
