

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE AT THE FOURTH CONVOCATION CEREMONY OF
DEV SANSKRITI VISHWAVIDYALAYA**

Haridwar, Uttarakhand: 09-12-2012

It is a matter of great pleasure to be here today and share my thoughts with you on this fourth Convocation Ceremony of the Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya. I am overwhelmed by the serene environs of the holy Ganges and the mighty Himalayas in which your institution is located. I offer my felicitations to the students who have received their degrees, awards and medals today.

2. I would also like to avail of this occasion to record my appreciation for the great strides that Vishwavidyalaya has achieved in a short span of a decade. Its mission of unifying contemporary education with spiritual training to mould well-rounded individuals is laudable, for its relevance in today's world. Education adds value to a person; and value based education equips us to contribute in a meaningful way to our society.

3. In this age, striving for spiritual development along side academic excellence is the right approach to regain lost values and traditions. Shantikunj, the social service organization that

founded Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyala, has done a great service by establishing this institution to promote these social objectives.

4. I am also delighted that your institution mandates every student to undertake a course on Life Management to imbibe social responsibility through internship programmes. Institutionalizing life-based knowledge and exposure through the medium of academic curricula is a practice that is worthy of emulation. By endowing the students with the diverse perspectives of life, this Vishwavidyalaya seeks to give them an in-depth world view of modernity. It is the innovative ideas and the holistic education that Vishwavidyalaya imparts which has made it a centre of excellence that attracts students from India and abroad; including Russia, Iran, Germany, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Japan, Spain, Czech Republic, China and South Korea.

5. Today, as I saw bright young men and women receiving their degrees, I was reminded of a quote by Mahatma Gandhi who said: (quote) *“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever”* (unquote). The spirit of these wise words is what I would urge you to take away, as you all gear up to face realities of this world. You must develop on these values

that this great Vidyalaya so resplendently embodies and practices.

6. I would also like to pay my respects to Pandit Shri Ram Sharma Acharya, whose philosophical teachings and remarkable vision have been the inspiration behind the establishment of this institution. The reverence towards the 'Guru' led to this beautiful experiment of harmonizing education with spirituality. Through spiritual regeneration, Pandit Acharya strove to inculcate in the people, high social and moral values leaving an indelible mark in the minds of multitudes.

7. Ladies and Gentlemen, our country is fast becoming a great economic power. In terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), we are the third largest economy in the world. The growth rate that our country enjoys is second only to China among the major economies in the world. In six out of the last nine years, we managed a growth rate in excess of 8%. Though the growth rate had slightly contracted since 2010-11 in the face of global economic meltdown, India has been able to withstand the crisis and has shown a remarkable resilience. It is the growth of education in India that is one of the key factors responsible for India's resilience. Therefore, it is indisputable

that education through which we build intellectual capital is of singular importance to any individual, society or nation. It helps skilled workforce to contribute directly to the nation's output. Research is a finer product of education, leading to innovation, technological advancement and process perfection, which are responsible for shifting the production frontiers, creating greater capacity for future growth. Thus, the value of education can never be exaggerated.

8. In the field of higher education, India has 659 degree awarding institutions and 33,023 colleges. At the end of the Eleventh Five Year Plan period, there were a total of 152 Central Institutions that award degrees. The number of such Institutions has increased by 65 during the Eleventh Plan period of 2007 to 2012. This has indeed contributed towards increasing productivity of our work force.

9. The Indian Institute of Technologies and the Indian Institute of Managements have created benchmark in technical and management education in the country and are held in high esteem internationally. It is, thus, heartening to note the number of IITs has increased from 7 in 2006-07 to 15 in 2011-12, and the number of IIMs has increased from 6 to 13 over this period.

The total number of degree awarding Institutions- Central, State and Private- has increased by 272 over the Eleventh Plan period. Evidently, the enrolment to higher education institutions in the country has also increased, from 1.39 crore in 2006-07 to 2.18 crore in 2011-12, which is the terminal year of the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

10. Notwithstanding our achievements, we have to upgrade the standard of higher education. The country lacks behind in terms of research and innovation. The total number of patent applications filed by Indians in 2010 was close to only six thousand, which pales in comparison to over 3 lakh applications filed by Chinese, around 1.7 lakh filed by German, 4.64 lakh filed by Japanese, and 4.2 lakh filed by Americans. The number of applications for patent filed by an Indian comprised only 0.30% of the total applications filed in the world.

11. To increase the reach of education in the country, flexible models such as Open and Distance Learning should receive more encouragement. Though the enrolment in such programmes has increased from around 27 lakh in 2006-07 to 42 lakh in 2011-12 but more needs to be done. Use of information technology and innovative methodology can usher in

new vistas and provide increased coverage through opportunities that distance learning affords to those requiring flexible learning options.

12. I am of the view that at the macro level, education nurtures nation building and at the micro level it fosters character building. I have a great faith in the philosophy and culture of our civilization. I also believe that the road to progress should be strengthened by harmonizing such values. I am, therefore, immensely encouraged by the education model that is practised by Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya.

13. I once again congratulate all the students who have received degrees today. You are now facing a world of reality. Do not get disheartened. Skill, knowledge and confidence instilled in you by the University will stand you in good state. They are the best equipment and the whole world belongs to you.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!