

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTATION OF MALTI GYAN PEETH
PURASKAR 2016**

Rashtrapati Bhavan: May 29, 2016

1. I am happy to be present at this ceremony conferring the Malti Gyan Peeth Puraskar 2016. The awards ceremony today coincides with the 95th birthday of Malti-ji. My best wishes to her on this special day! May God grant her the strength to continue her seven decades of dedicated service to the cause of education! I take this opportunity to compliment Shri Manoj Singhal, President of the Mohinder Singh Syngle Education and Research Society, for his initiative in introducing this Award and also for his passion in spreading quality education in the rural areas. I also appreciate the efforts of the state government of Punjab for recognizing and collaborating with the selection process.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

2. Education is that human endeavour whose benefits are tangible as well as long-term. Education enriches the minds of the taught, broadens their horizons and gives them an enduring hunger to explore new ideas. A progressive society that has advanced in terms of thinking and knowledge has, at its core, a sound education system. A good education must inculcate in every individual a deep understanding of the country and its socio-economic issues. It must produce in the citizens a capability to think about their responsibilities and duties towards the society, people surrounding him or her and the country.
3. A sound education system is the cornerstone for sustainable development resulting in lasting peace and harmony in society. Educated minds have the capacity to analyze information and sift the right from the wrong.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

4. A vital dimension of development is enhancing the soft power of the people; the ability to usher in change with positive attitude. It is a culmination of people's adherence to values and their faithfulness to their spiritual and cultural heritage. A holistic education system enables us to put values at the forefront of the educational enterprise in schools and colleges. Such a system is conducive to the ideal development of society. I see a pivotal role for teachers in this endeavour.
5. The teachers who have been awarded today represent the dedicated teachers who are educating and extending learning opportunities to thousands of students in the country. From the Vedic era to modern times, we have had '*Guru-Shishya parampara*' and 'gurus' who nourished the minds and intellect of our people. Such teachers are there even today. I call them inspired teachers. They encourage students to be inquisitive and explore new frontiers of knowledge and understanding. Inspired teachers themselves have deep knowledge of their subject areas. They are able to assist students in understanding and appreciating the subject from different perspectives, and in fact, help them in constructing new knowledge.
6. Inspired teachers are much more than enablers of scholastic transformation. They sow the seeds of good values in their students through their own conduct and life example. We have remarkable teachers in our institutions today providing education that is world-class in content and rich in values.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

7. Schools have the onerous task of laying the foundation of the next generation of scientists, engineers, doctors, policy-makers, academicians and civil servants. A sound school system is possible only with teachers of good quality devoted to the profession. Teachers have to ensure that educational processes no longer remain confined to the classroom-based education. They have to design learning

experiences for their students through innovative methods and teaching aids to equip the young minds to learn, explore and contribute to the society. This underlines a need to strengthen our cadre of teachers through capacity building.

8. A pool of competent and motivated teachers, through their collective efforts, can create a society of strong minds and courageous hearts. I have said earlier that education is the true alchemy that can bring India to its next golden age. To realize this ambition, we must proceed with the motto: *All for Knowledge, and Knowledge for All*.
9. In India, we have enacted laws granting children the right to compulsory education upto the age of 14. Yet, a lot of work is still required on the ground in terms of covering the less fortunate children and creating the right kind of infrastructure for their education. Government efforts alone are not enough to bring about change in this system of education. It has to be complemented by initiatives from the private sector and voluntary organizations. I appreciate the work done by the Mohinder Singh Syngle Education and Research Society in imparting quality education and inculcating skills in rural youth in a commendable way.
10. I once again congratulate the award winners and wish them a bright future ahead. My best wishes to all of you!

Thank you.
Jai Hind.
