

23rd Convocation North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon

Address

By

Prof V.K. jain

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It is such an honor and privilege to be part of this Convocation particularly when Dr K .Radhakrishnan, ex-Chairman of ISRO, has joined the NMU family as one of their own. I am especially thankful to Prof. Sudhir Meshram, the Vice-Chancellor of NMU, who considered me worthy enough to be sharing the excitement and joy of all of you on this auspicious occasion in the silver jubilee year of the university.

At the outset, let me congratulate one and all- the students, the faculty and the administration of NMU, the nonteaching personnel, the parents and guardians of the degree receiving students. May I also congratulate the university administration for providing an academically conducive environment to encourage research and innovation as reflected in the number of research papers and patents. In particular, I am heartened by the university's outreach programs aimed at training farmers of this region in biotechnological tools under Lab to land Project. Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Meshram's personal efforts and engagement in this is indeed very laudable. Equally praiseworthy is the attempt by the university to involve industry under 'Lab to Industry' initiative. I also note that the university is one of the reputed institutions in the country

providing an inclusive education and also has a number of MOUs with foreign countries such as USA and Japan. The university's faculty also deserves special mention for being awarded extra-mural research funding from various funding agencies.

Today the higher education in our country has become one of the top priorities for the respective state governments as well as the central government in addition to the infrastructure sector. Globally, education and specially the higher education are considered as a vehicle of change and an instrument for empowering an individual, a society and a country. If one looks at the history of the world, specially of the advanced countries whether that of USA, UK and the rest of Europe, their university systems have been the centers of critical thinking, centers of knowledge generation and building capacities of human resource needed for various sectors of economy and human welfare. In those countries, there is synergy among the universities, the industries and enabling governance. In our country this synergy is missing except may be in case of IT, life sciences. There is empirical correlation between the quality of higher education and of R & D laboratories and the status- economic and power commanded by these countries in general. In the contemporary context, when we are aspiring to become a global power, let us look at our university and laboratory system. From a very meager number of universities and laboratories in sixties and seventies, there has been huge expansion in terms of number of universities as well as R & D laboratories. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the country has been able to provide access to higher education to an ever increasing number of students as reflected in the current GER. It is equally true that the higher education system has been a crucial factor in promoting an individual's economic and social wellbeing and in India's development story. However, more the things change, more they remain the same. Issues of poverty, energy security, water availability, and sanitation and food security continue to be very much relevant. The challenges we face today in addressing them continue to be serious and real. The solutions have to come from higher education system involving universities, laboratories and IITs with industry participation in implementing them. Although, there is great deal of emphasis on skill and job oriented courses these days particularly in the backdrop of concern emanating from some surveys about the findings of unsuitability of our graduates for employment in some specific sectors, it

would be a mistake to think that even these can be disengaged from the imperative of quality of teaching, research and knowledge generation in our institutions. Why is it that USA, UK, Japan and even China are the leaders in publishing research articles and in citations of these articles? Only when all of us (teachers/students/academic administrators) do our respective jobs well with a commitment to quality in whatever we do, we cannot hope to move forward in a meaningful and effective manner.

India is poised to do well in next couple of decades as it seems that our economy will grow at rapid pace. Issues of environment, sanitation, water resource management, climate change, inevitability of large scale use of solar, wind and other renewable energy sources are going to dominate and engage the government, policy makers, scientific community, engineers and the industry. The system has to provide skilled manpower without losing sight of research and innovation in addressing these issues. This is where the institutions like yours have to play a significant role.

Finally, our nation's success will depend on a value system for all of us internalizing hard work, honesty, transparency and patriotism. This value system should define us. Our countries developmental imperatives are far greater than the sum of our individual aspirations. I am confident that our young graduates like you will grab the opportunities which are bound to come your way and make NMU proud. On this occasion, I am reminded of the famous quote of Benjamin Franklin:

“Resolve to perform what you ought;

Perform without fail what you resolve”

I wish you all the very best in all your future endeavors.