



**ANNUAL CONVOCATION
CEREMONY**

Sunday, 15 December 2019

CONVOCATION ADDRESS

by

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Vice-President of India



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Sardar Patel University
Vallabh Vidyanagar

62nd Annual Convocation
Sunday, 15th December 2019

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Chief Guest

Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu
Hon'ble Vice-President of India

I feel honoured and very happy to be here with all of you bright, young graduates, on the occasion of its 62nd Annual Convocation Ceremony of the Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar.

I am very happy that this university has been named after Shri Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, one of the greatest freedom fighters of India's Independence Movement, the Iron Man who unified India's princely states through a bloodless revolution to build this sovereign nation.

He also happens to be the leader who inspires me the most.

Only recently we have paid nation-wide tribute to him on his 144th Birth Anniversary by celebrating it as **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas**.

The title of 'Sardar' was given to him by Gandhiji for the extraordinary leadership he lent to the Satyagraha of the farmers of Bardoli in Surat District. The farmers were asked to pay more land revenue than what was due. Gandhiji asked Vallabhbhai to take up the cause. An able

organiser that he was, Vallabhbhai galvanised the farmers. The battle was long drawn but the British government had to finally relent.

Hard work, honesty, courage, forthrightness, firmness and steely resolve made Vallabhbhai the real ‘Sardar’ – the leader. The youth of this country must draw inspiration from this stalwart’s extraordinary life, his work and his principles and serve the nation with the same determination and selflessness.

I am told that this university has maintained its half-a-century long tradition of holding its Annual Convocation on 15th December every year, except on a few occasions, as an institutional gesture of commemorating the Death Anniversary of **Sardar Patel**.

I bow my head with utmost humility in obeisance to this great political visionary and ‘**Loknayak**’ who serves as a source of perennial inspiration to millions around the country even to this day.

Let me also take up the opportunity of paying homage to **Shri Bhaikaka** and **Shri Bhikhabhai**, the founding fathers of this educational hub in central Gujarat.

I was really pleased when I learnt about the history of this education township of Vallabh Vidyanagar.

It has indeed set an inspiring role-model for any education institution desirous of serving the nation.

It’s really heart-warming to see how this institution is catering to the educational requirements of the younger generation in the hinterlands of ‘Charotar’ region with firm

commitment to the Gandhian principles of rural regeneration, national integration through education and Sarvodya.

I congratulate the university fraternity for having collectively maintained its academic excellence as reflected in its NAAC's 'A' ranking. I hope that the university will continue to scale new heights of all-round excellence in the times to come.

My dear young students,

Let me take up the opportunity to congratulate each one of you for having earned these coveted degrees, medals and prizes.

Let me take a moment here to congratulate the proud parents of the graduating students, the teachers who have worked hard to make their students worthy of this accomplishment and all the support staff of this university. Each one of you have played a significant part in the success of these students.

Let me also remind you, my young friends, that this day onward, you will have greater responsibilities to shoulder as the architects of a bright future for the nation. You will need to draw upon every skill that you have mastered as a part of your education and training in this university to serve your state, the nation and the society at large.

India's destiny will be written by you. Its hopes for a bright future rest on you.

Your convocation ceremony does indicate the conclusion of your current course of study. But it is not the end of your

education. Education and learning are continuous processes.

As long as we live, we must learn and grow.

My dear sisters and brothers,

India is at a very exciting juncture in its history.

Since I assumed the office of the Vice President, I have been travelling far and wide, both within and outside the country. I met many Heads of State, academicians, policy makers, scientists, educators, business leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, investors.

All our discussions have had one overarching note- a note of optimism about our collective abilities to shape a new India and a sense of strong confidence in the capabilities of our young people.

I am sure that all of you are aware of the tremendous 'demographic dividend'. India has potentially a very big dividend to be realized. More than 65% of our population is below 35 years of age and that is really a huge advantage.

Since 2018, India's working-age population i.e people between 15 and 64 years of age, has grown larger than the dependent population.

This bulge in the working-age population is set to last till 2055, or 37 years from its beginning.

Now the next 30 years is a very crucial phase for India.

We will have to reap this dividend by empowering our youth to succeed by providing them accessible, affordable, good quality education, health and economic opportunities.

You, my dear young students have the good fortune of passing out from this prestigious institution. You had access to quality education and you have made the best possible use of the resources that were available to you to get to this point.

It is now time for you to give back to the society, to help those who were less fortunate than you are.

Your task is to shape a 'New India', an India where progress is predicated on peace and stability, on innovation and excellence.

Drawing inspiration and direction from the Honourable Prime Minister's clarion call for establishing a New India by 2022, the NITI Aayog has unveiled a comprehensive national Strategy, which defines clear objectives for 2022-23 in a detailed exposition of forty-one crucial areas of focus.

This visionary document has set targets that India has to achieve by 2022 to realize a billion dreams of its citizens.

The efficiency and the speed with which this goal will be achieved depends upon young people like you.

We must begin by putting our economy on a fast track. We must focus on ease of business and promote investment. We must improve the delivery of services and enhance the quality of life of every citizen.

Technology assimilation and innovation coupled with skilled youth population will act as one of the main drivers of growth. Each one of you must keep improving your skill-set and continue acquiring new skills.

India's tradition of innovation is a long illustrious saga.

We have the ability to take the toughest of problems and find affordable, pragmatic and scalable solutions. You must take this great tradition forward.

India aspires to be among the top 50 countries in Global Innovation Index by 2022. Innovation must be a mind-set, a culture for your generation. You must never hesitate to find new and better ways of doing things.

India is today one of the top three start-up friendly ecosystems. It is heartening that this rise is powered by people from Tier-2, Tier-3 cities and even rural India. I am hopeful that many of you passing out today will become successful entrepreneurs who will run businesses that employ many more young people like you.

Today, India is one of the most carbon efficient and sustainable major economies. We have an installed renewable energy capacity of nearly 83 Gigawatts and we are on track to achieve 175 Gigawatts renewable energy generation capacity by 2022.

Any development agenda that we propose must always pass the test of sustainability. I must stress that environment must not be a casualty to development. We are at a tipping point today. We must either factor in environmental consequences into each one of our development plans or suffer catastrophic consequences.

My dear young friends,

Even as we dream to be a five trillion dollar economy, pockets of poverty, malnutrition, disease, unemployment and hunger still continue to pose a significant challenge.

Prosperity is meaningful only if it is shared, only if it reaches the under privileged, the downtrodden and the marginalized. Therefore inclusion must be touchstone of our development plans.

Social evils of caste and gender based discrimination, communalism and corruption still continue to fragment us. The New India we dream of, must be free from these narrow walls that seek to divide us.

India is the cradle of civilization. The cultural, linguistic and religious diversity one finds in this country cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Always endeavour to protect our culture and the core values of our ancient civilization and promote this diversity.

In all this diversity, a common thread of unity binds us. Each one of you is a strand in this thread and each strand must be strong for the thread to remain unbreakable. Always remain committed to the unity and integrity of this nation.

It is Sardar Patel who said *“By common endeavour we can raise the country to a new greatness, while a lack of unity will expose us to fresh calamities”*.

My dear young friends,

Many of you will go to foreign countries in search of opportunities. No matter which country you work in or live in, always think of how your work, innovations and your research could help your motherland. This is your social responsibility that you cannot ignore.

I am hopeful that you will always remain true to the values that this great institution instilled in you.

Go forth into the world and excel. I am confident that each one of you will be an asset to India and the world.

I wish you all the very best.

Thank You!

Jai Hind!

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