

We need a scientific renaissance in our country: Vice President

Vice President's Secretariat

We need a scientific renaissance in our country: Vice President**Excellence and quest for the best should be the goal posts of the new India: Vice President****Addresses 9th Indian Youth Science Congress**

Posted On: 07 APR 2018 6:17PM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that we need a scientific renaissance in our country and the excellence and quest for the best should be the goal posts of the new India. He was addressing the 9th Indian Youth Science Congress at Career Point University in Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh today. The Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Shri Acharya Dev Vrat, the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Shri Jai Ram Thakur, the Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Shri J.P. Nadda and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that the spirit of enquiry and the spirit of enhancing public well being should be the guiding principles. He called on young minds to creatively engage with issues like poverty, illiteracy, ill health, poor returns from agriculture and others. He further said that we need governments that focus on science for development. We need a transformation in the way we run our educational and scientific institutions, he added.

The Vice President said that the young India has the ability to see beyond the obvious and ask the relevant questions that a scientist will ask and we need more young people to develop these abilities. The new India that we collectively dreaming of will be possible only if the children and youth of our country develop the scientific attitude, he added.

The Vice President said that new India can only be built with new ideas and new ways of making them real through effective implementation. He further said that the new India will be a scientific India and it will be a technological India. It will be an India that will be sustained by knowledge and science, what is called as 'Gyana' and 'Vigyana' in Indian parlance, he added.

The Vice President said that country needs total revamp of school education as well as higher education adding that science should be an integral component of the curriculum. Scientific approach that relies on evidence and raising relevant questions and seeking answers should be internalized, he added.

The Vice President said that students should be encouraged to 'discover' rather than be 'told' the answers and rote memorization should be discouraged. He further said that we have to bring back the fun into the learning process and the joy of knowing, the joy of discovering, and the joy of innovating lies at the core of scientific temper. This should be the heart of the schooling and educational processes at various levels, he added.

Quoting Confucius, the Vice President said that teaching, learning process should be reoriented keeping in view the basic principles encapsulated in his famous saying “I learn and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand”. He asked higher education institutions must focus on research and problem solving and children should be given ample opportunities to ‘do’ experiments not merely read about them from a book. We need more laboratories and project-based, problem-based teaching approaches, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President’s address:

“I am very happy to be here in the inaugural ceremony of 9th Indian Youth Science Congress on the ‘Role of Young Scientists in developing new India’ being organized by Career Point University Hamirpur, in collaboration with SRM University Chennai, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Youth Development Beemanthanga Tamil Nadu.

I am delighted that Dr. M.S. Swaminathanji, the doyen among Indian scientists, who has been the fountain head of inspiration to millions of youth and young scientists is with us. His passion for popularising science is evident in the excellent initiative he has taken to organise these Science Congresses.

Sisters and Brothers,

Demographically, our country is a young democracy. Nearly 65% of our population is less than 35 years of age. This is a huge asset.

We have many bright young people with the knowledge and skills who are creating a new world, a better world, in many ways, as compared to what they inherited.

They are able to change the world because they are able to ask the relevant questions that a scientist will ask.

They have the ability to see beyond the obvious.

We need more young people to develop these abilities. The new India we are collectively dreaming of will be possible only if the children and youth of our country develop the scientific attitude.

The Indian Youth Science Congress can provide a useful springboard for motivating young scientists to pursue their passion.

Sisters and Brothers,

Our country is a country with a long, illustrious heritage of scientific thought and achievements.

We remember with legitimate pride great scientists like Baudhayana who calculated the value of ‘pi’, Aryabhata who discovered the concept of ‘zero’, Kanad who researched on atomic particles, Varahamihira who made remarkable contributions to hydrology, geology and ecology, Nagarjuna who specialised in chemistry, Susruta and Charaka pioneers in surgery and Patanjali who gave the science of Yoga to the World.

Of course, the legacy of scientific excellence continues even till this day. We have amidst us Dr. M.S. Swaminathan who ushered in green revolution and laid the foundation of our country’s food

security. We have scientists across the length and breadth of our country discovering new drugs to cure diseases, advancing the frontiers of knowledge in various fields like information technology, bio-technology, earth and material sciences, life sciences and medical sciences.

The new India will be a scientific India. It will be a technological India. It will be an India that will be sustained by knowledge and science, what is called as 'Gyana' and 'Vigyana' in Indian parlance.

Forums like the Science Congress enable young minds to share knowledge, information and draw inspiration to come up with new ideas that will power the India of the future.

New India can only be built with new ideas and new ways of making them real through effective implementation.

I imagine that youth will be in the vanguard of this knowledge and scientific revolution.

The government has the responsibility to collaborate with academic institutions and intellectual leaders to create a congenial environment for creative minds to thrive.

Science festivals like this can provide a boost. However, these annual events are not enough.

We need to revamp school education as well as higher education.

Science should be an integral component of the curriculum. Scientific approach that relies on evidence and raising relevant questions and seeking answers should be internalized.

Students should be encouraged to 'discover' rather than be 'told' the answers. Rote memorization should be discouraged.

We have to bring back the fun into the learning process. The joy of knowing, the joy of discovering, the joy of innovating lies at the core of scientific temper. This should be the heart of the schooling and educational processes at various levels.

The teaching-learning process should be reoriented keeping in view the basic principles encapsulated in the following quotation of Confucius: "I learn and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand".

Children should be given ample opportunities to 'do' experiments not merely read about them from a book.

So, we need more laboratories and project-based, problem-based teaching approaches.

The higher education institutions must focus on research and problem solving.

I do hope organisations like Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation will trigger this educational reform.

We have numerous challenges in our world today for which we have to find solutions. Poverty, illiteracy, ill health, poor returns from agriculture, environmental degradation and lack of water and sanitation are a few of these. These impact the quality of life of our people and therefore need urgent attention. We need concerted efforts by all. We need young minds to be creatively engaged with these issues. We need governments that focus on science for development.

We need a scientific renaissance in this country.

We need a transformation in the way we run our educational and scientific institutions.

The spirit of enquiry and the spirit of public well being should be the guiding principles.

Excellence and quest for the best should be the goal posts of the new India.

I do hope events like this will spur all stakeholders to come up with bright and creative ideas for action. I hope this Science Congress will usher in greater progress and development by fostering scientific temper among our youth.

Jai Hind!"

AKT/BK/RK

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