

BE COMPASSIONATE TOWARDS THE DOWNTRODDEN SECTIONS AND TREAT THEM WITH EMPATHY: VICE PRESIDENT TELLS MEDICOS

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Foundational values for Civil Service - Empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker-sections, and dedication to public service

Vice President's Secretariat

Be compassionate towards the downtrodden sections and treat them with empathy: Vice President tells Medicos

Private Sector must step in to provide modern healthcare facilities in rural areas;

PPP Model is the way forward to ensure affordable & quality healthcare;

VP cautions against sedentary lifestyle & unhealthy dietary habits;

Addresses 9th Convocation of KLE Deemed University

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has asked young doctors and people entering into medical profession to be compassionate towards the downtrodden sections and treat them with empathy and understanding. Asked them to view the profession as a mission to serve the people and not as a commercial vocation.

Addressing the 9th Convocation of the KLE Deemed University, in Belagavi, Karnataka today, the Vice President impressed upon the young graduates on the need to make high-quality medical care accessible to the last poor man in the queue.

Expressing concern over the rising costs of healthcare, Shri Naidu said that a large section of the population was unable to get the latest diagnostic and therapeutic tools and treat some of the hitherto incurable diseases like cancer and heart-diseases.

Opining that ensuring healthcare services were not only affordable but also accessible to the common man, the Vice President urged upon the private sector to join hands with the government in providing affordable healthcare through public-private partnership in order to ensure modern and state-of-the-art healthcare facilities in rural areas.

'While the governments are creating facilities right up to primary health centers, the private sector too should chip in to provide advanced diagnostic and treatment facilities in rural areas, he added.

Observing that non-communicable diseases were on rising in India due to a sedentary lifestyle, Shri Naidu said that poor dietary habits, consumption of alcohol and tobacco, among others, were leading rise in non-communicable diseases like obesity, hypertension, heart-diseases, diabetes and stroke.

To arrest this alarming trend, he wanted the medical fraternity to create adequate awareness among the people, particularly the youth on the hazards posed by modern-day lifestyle and unhealthy dietary habits.

Opining that there was a gradual erosion of human touch or human element in doctor-patient relationship, the Vice President said that doctors were not communicating adequately with the patients and rather performing their duty in a mechanical fashion. He wanted them to establish an effective communication with patients.

Saying that providing education to the masses would be the best way to empower them, the Vice President called up on institutions such as the KLE Society to complement efforts of government by providing affordable quality education to people living in rural areas.

Shri Naidu suggested to include subjects like bio-ethics, humanities and communication skills in the medical curriculum. He urged academic institutions also to ensure that youngsters develop adequate skills and competencies along with preventive health-care aspects particularly yoga, diet and exercises as a part of the curriculum.

The Chancellor of KLE Deemed University and the Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Dr. Prabhakar Kore, the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Dr. Vivek A. Saoji, the Members of the Board of Management, Deans of Faculties, Heads of the Institutions, Officials of the University, Faculty Members, students and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

" I am happy to be here among you this morning for the 9th Convocation ceremony of the KLE Deemed University. At the outset, I congratulate all the graduating students for their success and also wish them a very bright future.

I thank Dr. Prabhakar Koreji for inviting me here for this solemn function and to interact with you all. I am aware of the good work that the KLE Society and the KLE Deemed University are doing in the field of education and healthcare since many years and I was looking for an opportunity to visit Belagavi and this Deemed University.

I am told that the KLE Society was formed by seven dedicated teachers a century ago for the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden. They believed that providing education to the masses would be the best way to empower them. They started with few schools and colleges in those difficult times. They did all this by selling their property and collecting donations from house to house. They were supported by some philanthropists. I am happy to learn that even today the KLE Society is guided by the principles of philanthropy and charity envisioned by the forefathers of the KLE Society.

It is heartening to know that the KLE Deemed University since its inception has been in the forefront of imparting quality education in all the streams of health sciences and doing well on

the research front.

I am told that this University is among the leading universities in the country in private sector and is doing high quality research in 'Maternal and New Born Health'. I compliment the faculty for the achievements. I am also told that the KLE Deemed University provides for high quality health care in the city of Belagavi and in the vicinity of about 300 KMs with its 4000+ beds, with all the broad and super-specialties and modern laboratories. These achievements speak highly of the visionary leadership of Dr. Prabhakar Kore and the dedication and hard work of the faculty and other staff.

Friends, as you all are aware, higher education, particularly in the health sector is witnessing rapid changes due to technological advancements. No doubt, latest diagnostic and therapeutic tools are helping in the diagnosis and treat some of the hitherto incurable diseases like cancer and heart-diseases. At the same time, many these technological advances are not available to the large section of population because of the high costs.

We, therefore, need to keep a balance. The challenge before all of us is to ensure that healthcare services are not only affordable but accessible to the common man. The need of the hour is for the private sector to join hands with the government in providing affordable healthcare through public-private partnership.

I am glad that the Centre and several state governments have launched health insurance schemes for providing health coverage to the poor and the needy.

The youngsters, who are graduating today should always be compassionate towards the downtrodden sections and treat them with empathy and understanding. They should always view this noble profession as a mission to serve the people and not as a commercial vocation. I would like to impress upon the young graduates on the need to make high quality medical care accessible to the last poor man in the queue. Another major challenge that needs to be addressed on a priority basis is to ensure modern and state-of-art- healthcare facilities in the rural areas. While the governments are creating facilities right up to primary health centres, the private sector too should chip in to provide advanced diagnostic and treatment facilities in rural areas.

Thanks to the advances in medical science, the average life span of individuals has increased. So, now we have to cater to the needs of our elderly population.

However, one of the biggest concerns on the healthcare front is the rise in non-communicable diseases in India. Due to sedentary lifestyle, poor dietary habits, consumption of alcohol and tobacco, among others are leading rise in non-communicable diseases like obesity, hypertension, heart-diseases, diabetes and stroke.

The challenge before the medical faculty is to arrest this rising trend and create adequate awareness among the people, particularly the youth on the hazards posed by modern day lifestyle.

I am sure the future doctors will surely take up these challenges and come up with innovative solutions.

One of the things I have noticed in the wake of technological advancements in the medical field is the gradual erosion of human touch or human element in doctor-patient relationship. I feel that today's doctors are not communicating adequately with the patients and rather performing their duty in a mechanical fashion—probably due to work pressure.

I think there should be an effective communication between the doctor and his/her patient. It should be remembered that doctors are treated like God by patients and the latter should always be treated with empathy and humanism. It is quite important to always uphold highest standards of ethics morals.

Medical courses curriculum should also include subjects like bio-ethics, humanities and communication skills. I have also observed that focus of medical education has been on curative aspects rather than preventive aspects. I personally feel that the old saying '**Prevention is Better Than Cure**' is very true and essential to be practiced in today's era.

Good, healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet, exercise in any form – yoga, meditation, physical exercise, etc. will go a long way in preventing and controlling many diseases. I, therefore, urge you to emphasize on the preventive health-care aspects particularly yoga, diet and exercises as a part of curriculum.

While we have a highly compartmentalized healthcare delivery system with modern medicine (allopathy) on the one hand and the traditional medicines like Ayurveda, Homoeopathy and Naturopathy on the other, the scope for integrating them wherever possible could be explored if it enables providing holistic treatment to an individual.

I am told that the KLE Deemed University has all these streams under one roof. It is, therefore, possible for you to start integrative medicine care and provide integrative care to the patients for better health outcomes.

Dear sisters and brothers, as regards medical education, there has been a huge increase in the number of Colleges and Universities. This in any way is a healthy sign. However, we need to focus on the quality of education that we are imparting to our future citizens. In today's globalized world, we have to ensure that our education standards are on par with the best in the world.

As we transit from a developing country to a developed country, we need to constantly update our and reorient our medical education, while ensuring that our youngsters develop adequate skills and competencies. More importantly, they need to develop the right attitude. As stated earlier, they should not treat medical profession as a vocation to only earn money but must always be empathetic towards the downtrodden sections and contribute towards their upliftment.

Finally, my advice to the graduating students is to make your alma mater and parents proud of you and serve the society and the country to the best of your abilities. You are empowered with knowledge and necessary skills, it is time for you to prove your ability. Think innovatively, work hard and intelligently and make our motherland proud of your achievements.

I once again congratulate you on your success and convey my wishes for all your future endeavours! Let us all strive together build a new India.

Jai Hind!"

AKT/BK/MS/RK

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