

**Education must mould a strong character and inculcate ethical and moral values among students:
Vice President**

Vice President's Secretariat

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Ensure that the environment at home as well as in schools is de-stressed;

Inaugurates Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of R.A. Podar College of Commerce and Economics

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that education must mould a strong character and inculcate ethical and moral values among students. He was addressing the gathering after inaugurating the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of R.A. Podar College of Commerce and Economics, in Mumbai today. The Minister for Housing Department, Maharashtra, Shri Prakash Mehta and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President called on parents, teachers, schools and colleges to ensure that the environment at home as well as in schools is de-stressed. He further said that it is unfortunate that many a time the parents fail to recognize the warning signs or fail to understand the mental stress their wards are coping with. This important subject was close to the heart of Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, who has even penned a book titled 'Exam Warriors' on how to overcome the anxiety and stress caused by exams, he added.

The Vice President said that converting country's vast pool of human resources into a "demographic dividend" is a big challenge before everyone. He further said that we must use it as an advantage to propel India's growth trajectory to be among the top three economies in the world in the coming years. Education must develop the overall personality of an individual in a truly holistic manner by enabling them to make informed choices on their careers and at every stage in their later part of the lives, he added.

The Vice President said that education must empower and enlighten the youth, improve their analytical skills and make them to explore new vistas, discover and innovate. He further said that merely adding more and more buildings without providing quality as well as inclusive education will not enable the creation of the 'New India'. Education must not only be accessible but affordable too and it must empower and Enlighten people apart from providing employment, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am extremely pleased to inaugurate the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of this prestigious college, which has catered since its inception to the educational needs of different sections of this vibrant city and produced eminent personalities in different fields.

I am told that former Chief Justice of India, R.C. Lahoti, cricketers Farokh Engineer and Ravi Shastri, film actor, Shilpa Shetty, carnatic vocalist and composer, Bombay Jayashree and President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Nilesh Vikamsey are some of the well-known alumni of this college.

Dear students! India is one of the fastest growing large economies with a predominantly young population. A big challenge for the country is to convert this vast pool of human resources into a "demographic dividend" and propel India's growth trajectory to be among the top three economies in the world in the coming years.

As you all are aware, millions of graduates in various disciplines come out of the portals of our higher education institutions every year. But the big question we all need to ask ourselves is—Are we producing holistic students with sound knowledge in their disciplines and the life skills needed to face the present-day competitive world or are we merely producing millions of degree-holders who are unemployable?

Education is not meant only for degrees and employment. Education must develop the overall personality of an individual in a truly holistic manner by enabling them to make informed choices on their careers and at every stage in their later part of the lives. At the same time, education must mould a strong character and inculcate ethical and moral values among students.

It must transform them into mature individuals with empathy and a humanistic worldview and not just modern-day computer geeks. Education must empower and enlighten the youth, improve their analytical skills and make them to explore new vistas, discover and innovate.

In fact, the education system needs a total overhaul from the primary education to higher levels so that learning becomes a joyful experience and students are not subjected to exam stress and needless tension. Over the years, we have been witnessing the disturbing trend of students committing suicide due to their inability to cope with the stress and pressure of exams. Parents, teachers, schools and colleges have a huge responsibility in ensuring that the environment at home as well as in schools and schools is de-stressed.

It is unfortunate that many a time the parents fail to recognize the warning signs or fail to understand the mental stress their wards are coping with. I am glad that this important subject is close to the heart of Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, who has even penned a book titled 'Exam Warriors' on how to overcome the anxiety and stress caused by exams.

Another aspect I would like to flag is the need to provide quality education rather than focusing on numbers. No doubt, expansion of educational infrastructure is important. But merely adding more and more buildings without providing quality as well as inclusive education will not enable the creation of the 'New India'. Education must not only be accessible but affordable too.

We have to collectively strive to eradicate poverty, agrarian problems, illiteracy, caste divisions, religious fundamentalism and gender discrimination, among others, to usher in the 'New India' as envisaged by our freedom fighters. Also, the rural areas cannot be allowed to lag behind the urban

areas and all the amenities found in urban areas must be created in small towns and villages.

This is needed absolutely to create equal opportunities for people living in rural areas and prevent migration so that cities are not turned into inhabitable concrete jungles.

Dear students, we have a rich culture which recognizes the value of knowledge and learning. In our culture, the Guru, who is the knowledge-giver is venerated. India was once known as 'Vishwaguru' and our ancient universities like Takshashila and Nalanda were famous centres of learning which attracted learners from across the globe.

Today, India once again has the chance to emerge as a knowledge hub in the world. But to achieve that, we need to overcome many formidable challenges by fully empowering the vulnerable sections, youth and women through education, knowledge and skills. Literacy plays a vital role in overcoming various challenges, empowering people and transforming communities.

I was truly impressed with vision and mission statements of your college. The Vision "Samaani va aakooti samaanaa hridayaani vaham" (one in mind and one in heart) highlights the meaning of the verse that God has created us all equal, while Mission states "Nahi gnyaanen sadrasham pavitramiha vidyate"(there is nothing in this universe as pure as knowledge) and that it needs to be shared and exchanged freely, without any inhibition.

These thoughts must permeate every action of us in creating the New India of equal opportunities for all.

JAI HIND!

AKT/BK/RK

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