

Information Technology must focus on Agri-Business and Agri-Markets: Vice President

Upgradation of skills and innovative new skills are needed;

Urban-rural divide must be bridged;

Gives away HYSEA IT/ITES Industry Summit Awards

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that the Information Technology must also focus on Agri-Business and Agri-Markets to improve the farmer's income because they are un-remunerative. He was addressing the gathering after giving away IT/ITES Industry Summit Awards at the 26th Annual HYSEA Summit 2018, organized by the Hyderabad Software Enterprises Association, in Hyderabad today.

The Vice President said that we must ensure that the skill deficit is addressed and rural youth should become active stakeholders in India's inclusive growth endeavor. He further said that the software engineers should think of ways to bridge the digital divide in the country and asked them to ensure that the skill deficit is addressed and rural youth should become active stakeholders in India's inclusive growth endeavor.

The Vice President said that the only way to stay on top of the tech wave is to constantly innovate and develop new technologies and solve business problems in multiple verticals using these newer technologies. This requires regular upgradation of skills, he added.

The Vice President said that the IT knowledge should ultimately help the poorest of the poor, promote literacy, digitally literacy and skill the skilled in our country. He further said that the IT industry to increase its focus on innovation and developing new technologies, apart from skilling the youth to provide gainful employment.

Saying that innovation and Intellectual Property are the main reasons for the success of global IT giants, the Vice President asked companies to stay invested in Intellectual property and continue focus on innovation.

The Vice President appreciated the government of Telangana's initiative T-Hub for promoting entrepreneurship and complemented the government for implementing industry-friendly policies and creating the necessary eco-system and infrastructure in the state.

The Vice President said that India can become a leader in innovation and developing cutting edge technology. He called for collective and coordinated efforts from all the stakeholders, including the government and IT companies for creating the ecosystem and the environment for the IT sector to flourish.

The Vice President expressed concern over the increasing lifestyle diseases in youth, including those in the IT sector and said that it is not uncommon to hear about heart related and orthopedic problems. He further said that depression is also becoming common among youngsters, which is not a good sign. This calls for a huge focus on ensuring the physical and mental wellness of employees and I am sure, the corporate sector will accord top priority to this aspect, he added.

The Vice President said that the atrocities against women must be stopped and for this, there should be a change in the mindset. He further said that the another challenge the country is facing is the urban rural divide and this gap has to be bridged. The Government alone cannot do it, even the society should also pitch in, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"In the fast-changing digitally-driven era, India has to not only remain abreast of the global trends but must try to stay ahead of others by leveraging the vast human resources available in this sector. These days, there is lot of focus on Internet of Things, Block Chain Technology and Artificial Intelligence, among others.

In a bid to bridge the digital divide in the country, the Union Government has launched an ambitious BharatNet project to provide high-speed broadband services in rural areas by connecting over 2.5 lakh villages and benefit more than 200 million people. I am glad that the first phase of the project has already been completed.

Hyderabad has been a major hub of IT in the country and I am happy to note that there has been a significant growth in Hyderabad's IT exports, which stand close to Rs.97,000 crore as against Rs.55,000 crore in 2014. I am aware that the growth is in line with the Government's vision to reach Rs.1, 20,000 crore by 2020.

The growth in exports would not have been possible without the consistent support of government. I must commend the Telangana Government for implementing industry-friendly policies and creating the necessary eco-system and infrastructure.

It is good to see that there has been lot of focus on products, design and start-ups and also heartening to see Hyderabad emerging as a product/start-up hub and a haven for IT entrepreneurs.

T-Hub in particular is a great initiative by the Government of Telangana. It should be remembered that innovation and Intellectual Property are the main reasons for the success of global IT giants. They have invested in Intellectual property and focused on innovation.

While large IT services companies, no doubt will continue to play a significant role in the growth and sustenance of the industry, the future lies in creating IP and generating value for end-customers. Coming out with innovative new products must be accorded top priority. I am glad that the Government of Telangana, HYSEA and the local industry leaders are encouraging this aspect and moving in that direction.

The IT industry in India has generated tremendous number of jobs and gainfully employed lakhs of youth in our country. I understand that about 4.75 lakh people are employed by the IT industry in Hyderabad directly and about 3 to 4 times that number indirectly.

I would like the IT industry to increase its focus on innovation and developing new technologies, apart from skilling the youth to provide gainful employment. There is also a need to infuse an entrepreneurial spirit among the youth and give a fillip to start-up ecosystem.

Dear sisters and brothers, I feel Hyderabad along with other cities like Bangalore, Chennai and Pune can be the pacesetter in harnessing Information Technology's potential.

We should work together to move the center of gravity for innovations and learning back to India, where it was earlier. India was once known as 'Vishwa Guru' and scholars from all over the world used to come here to study and seek enlightenment.

Given India's edge in the IT sector and the vastly talented human capital, particularly the youth, our country can become a leader in innovation and developing cutting edge technology. However, there has to be collective and coordinated efforts from all the stakeholders, including the government and IT companies for creating the ecosystem and the environment for the IT sector to flourish.

India's leadership in IT, represented by its companies and professionals, has earned global recognition and has served to enhance BRAND INDIA in a big way.

While the growth of the IT industry has been phenomenal, it has also given rise to certain concerns like the loss of jobs due to constant changes in technology. The only way to stay on top of the tech wave is to constantly innovate and develop new technologies and solve business problems in multiple verticals using these newer technologies. This requires regular upgradation of skills.

Keeping in view the importance of skilling the youth, the Government launched Skill India programme and the IT industry should contribute significantly in this area. Educational and corporate institutions need to ensure that skill upgradation is a continuous process. I am sure that ensuring skill upgradation in a sustained manner will also help in preventing job losses.

Along with technology skills, it is also important to develop leadership skills to succeed in a global environment. I have been told HYSEA conducts regular Tech and leadership programs for the employees of its members.

I am also aware that the sedentary lifestyles of the youth, including those in the IT sector, are leading to many health concerns. Today, it is not uncommon to hear about heart related and orthopedic problems like back ache among young professionals in their mid-30s or 40s. Depression is also becoming common among youngsters, which is not a good sign. This calls for a huge focus on ensuring the physical and mental wellness of employees and I am sure, the corporate sector will accord top priority to this aspect.

All IT companies must encourage the employees to practice Yoga daily as it would help in overall improvement of health of an individual. Apart from making the youngsters learn yoga, it is also important to create urban infrastructure that is pollution-free and commute-friendly. I am glad that Hyderabad is taking the right steps in this direction.

Although, lot of companies in Hyderabad IT industry are multinationals or very large Indian companies with their head-quarters elsewhere, I would like every company to create CSR programs that will ensure the well-being of the local communities. The CSR can relate to education, healthcare, rural development and environmental protection or any other area. Corporates should not see this as a mere fulfillment of the Government-mandated rule but more as a moral commitment to the communities and regions where they are operating.

I am happy to note HYSEA is organizing annual CSR summit and recognizing top CSR efforts by corporates and also driving its own program for digital education in schools. But I feel the potential is much more and the scale should increase significantly. The qualities of philanthropy, charity and

giving back to society must be inculcated from a very early age. I feel Indian entrepreneurs and successful business leaders – with a few exceptions – are still way behind their global counterparts in this aspect. I request them to give it a serious thought and act on it.

Sisters and Brothers,

Most of you work to deliver products and services to clients in foreign countries. I would urge you to excel in whatever you have chosen to do. Don't let mediocrity creep into your organizational culture. At the same time, please think of ways to bridge the digital divide and how best you can co-opt the youth from rural areas into your growth story. We must ensure that the skill deficit is addressed and rural youth should become active stakeholders in India's inclusive growth endeavor.

I would like you to use new technologies to fix problems unique to our country due to different languages, different cultures, different religions and castes and different terrains. Your IT knowledge should ultimately help the poorest of the poor, promote literacy, digitally literacy and skill the skilled in our country.

I would also like to compliment the Union Government and the various State Governments for adopting IT to ensure the reach of various schemes to the beneficiaries and in increasing connectivity to remotest parts of the country. Our ability to adopt technologies as well as adapting to the disruptive technologies is in itself gives us a unique opportunity to be leader to the world in these areas. I am glad that the Indian IT industry by leveraging the Indian talent and working in tandem with the businesses and the government is making significant contribution to the growth of the country's economy.

I have no doubt that Hyderabad will continue to make great strides and wish the IT industry all the success in the coming years.

JAI HIND!"

AKT/BK/RK

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