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We need leaders who will walk the talk and be bold enough to tread untrodden paths

Addresses Eighth Convocation of Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management (GITAM)

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that Students should continue to learn, earn and yearn to serve with clear vision, pure heart and strong shoulders. He was addressing the Eighth Convocation of Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management (GITAM), in Hyderabad today. The Minister for Irrigation, Marketing & Legislative Affairs, Shri T. Harish Rao, the Chancellor of GITAM University, Prof. K. Ramakrishna Rao and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President congratulated the students for acquiring the coveted degrees, prizes and medals and also congratulated the teachers for sharing and imparting invaluable knowledge to mould the young minds in different disciplines.

The Vice President has expressed his happiness that the University has established Centralized Research Laboratories in key thrust areas, such as Water Quality, Nano-Technology, Medical Bio-Technology and Advanced Materials & Processing. He also commended for setting up of research centers in the areas of Cancer, Urban & Sustainable Development, Integrated Rural Development, Climate Change & Disaster Management.

The Vice President said that India is on the threshold of emerging as a major economic power and we are an old civilization with a young population which is a great demographic advantage of country.

The Vice President said that we must prepare ourselves to cope with the emerging dramatic changes and we must be pro-active rather than be reactive. We must be agile and ride the waves of change, he added.

The Vice President said that the Government of India is fully aware of the changing environment and is relentlessly orienting itself towards innovation. He further said that it has taken many measures to transform the country into a digitally empowered knowledge economy and these include a number of flagship schemes and programs like 'Make in India', 'Start up India' & 'Stand up India' to give a huge fillip to manufacturing and entrepreneurship. The 'Digital India' program aims to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am delighted to be here today at the Eighth Convocation of Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management. This institution, we all know as GITAM, has been contributing immensely to the cause of quality education in our country. It is preparing a large number of our young boys and girls to achieve their potential in academics and contribute to the society and economy of the country.

As the Indian Education Commission of 1964-66 had stated in the opening paragraph of its Report – "The destiny of our country is being shaped in our classrooms." The knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired by students form the basis for nation building.

On this momentous occasion, I would like to congratulate the students for acquiring the coveted degrees, prizes and medals. I also congratulate the esteemed teachers for sharing and imparting invaluable knowledge to mould the young minds in different disciplines. I consider that the faculty have nurtured and enriched the human resources of our country and commend them for their endeavours.

I am happy to learn that this institution is offering quality higher education for over 37 years. I am extremely delighted to note that GITAM has today three picturesque campuses in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka. With a multi-disciplinary approach, it is currently offering 144 UG, PG and Doctoral programs in diverse subjects and has over 20,000 regular full-time students, 1,200 research scholars and well over 60,000 students in distance mode.

I am told that the University is among the few universities that took lead in implementing Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) which provides flexibility in learning beyond the core discipline and pursue career of one's choice.

I am happy to note that it has established Centralized Research Laboratories in key thrust areas, such as Water Quality, Nano-Technology, Medical Bio-Technology and Advanced Materials & Processing. Setting up of research centers in the areas of Cancer, Urban & Sustainable Development, Integrated Rural Development, Climate Change & Disaster Management is also commendable.

I am glad to note that GITAM has taken the lead, with great foresight, to introduce the state of the art courses in many disciplines. I am told that GITAM is the first university to establish a FinTech Academy, and offer academic programs in Block-chain technology.

It has also taken the initiative to provide its students a world class learning experience. In this context, it has signed MoUs with a number of world ranking global universities for collaborative research and also tied up with Stanford University to develop the stream of 'advanced biotechnology and life sciences' and create a Centre of Excellence.

Today, universities are expected to excel not only in providing quality education, but more importantly in developing global citizens.

The world is shrinking into a global village because of information technology resources. The universities of today have to build the competencies required for functioning effectively in a globalised world. This calls for an attitudinal change and learning how to learn. Students should know how to access, absorb, adopt and adapt new knowledge. They should know how to collaborate, coordinate and compete in different contexts. They should aim for excellence and efficiency and not settle for mediocrity or business-as-usual approach.

As all of you are aware, India is on the threshold of emerging as a major economic power. My dear students, we are an old civilization with a young population. No other country is having this kind of demographic advantage.

My earnest appeal and advice to you, dear students, is to dream big and set your sights high. This world is full of opportunities. You must seize them. As Swami Vivekananda exhorted a hundred years ago- “Awake, arise and stop not till your goal is reached”. Keep learning from the best around the world. Use the knowledge and skills you acquire to grow further, transform your world and the world of people around you. Today’s world is a world of unprecedented changes in many spheres of human life. Innovative technologies and creative disruption are changing the way we live our lives. Some of the changes are for our good but some are creating new challenges.

Dear students, you must develop the abilities to separate the wheat from the chaff, the good from the bad and be bold enough, wise enough to choose the option that contributes to making our planet a better place to live.

The nature of our economy and the very concept of ‘work’ are also changing. This *Fourth Industrial Revolution* and the advances in digital technology and robotics will together make certain types of jobs obsolete and also create many new jobs.

We must prepare ourselves to cope with the emerging dramatic changes. We must be pro-active rather than be reactive. We must be agile and ride the waves of change.

The Government of India is fully aware of the changing environment and is relentlessly orienting itself towards innovation. The Government has taken many measures to transform the country into a digitally empowered knowledge economy and these include a number of flagship schemes and programs.

For example, ‘*Make in India*’ ‘*Start up India*’ and ‘*Stand up India*’ programs seek to give a huge fillip to manufacturing and entrepreneurship, while the ‘*Digital India*’ program aims to transform India into a *digitally empowered society and knowledge economy*.

Dear students, India is at the cusp of a massive transformation in all spheres. You will be entering this exciting world of infinite opportunities after your graduation.

Keep your eyes open. Keep your ears to the ground and carve out your future in an area of your choice.

I am happy that Sri T. Harish Rao, Minister for Irrigation, Marketing & Legislative Affairs, Telangana is also with us here. The industrial policy brought out by the Telangana Government has made Telangana an attractive destination for both international and domestic entrepreneurs.

I am happy that Hyderabad is also hub to IT, Biotechnology and Pharma industries. Hyderabad is the second largest exporter of IT products in India with about Rs. 67,000 crores of exports. In tune with Govt. of India's commitment towards building a skilled India, the government established a T-Hub, to attract the best start-ups and entrepreneur organizations from across the world to Hyderabad. Major IT giants like Microsoft, Infosys and Wipro are already functioning from Hyderabad.

Therefore, dear students, you have a number of opportunities right here. But do not restrict your vision. If you have a firm knowledge base, the right skill sets and a positive attitude, you can scale new heights you may not even be able to visualize today.

Before concluding, I wish to underscore the great role the faculty can play in shaping the universities into crucibles of positive change in society. By paying attention to not only 'what' is taught but also to 'how' it is taught, you can transform the destiny of our great nation.

I would like to point out that economic growth of a country is highly dependent on "*the creativity of human resources and innovation through research and development*". The faculty must devote some time to relevant research. This will improve the intellectual stature of the Universities and make them the powerhouses of knowledge. They can potentially be the think tanks for national policy development.

Our country is facing a number of challenges like global warming, ocean acidification, loss of biodiversity, urban migration, increasing demand for energy, shortage of drinking water, polluted air, lack of safe waste disposal mechanisms and fuel-inefficient transportation. Universities should equip students with multi-disciplinary knowledge and inter-disciplinary skills to study these problems and look for solutions to meet the challenges.

I would like to commend GITAM for introducing such inter-disciplinary courses like *Cyber Forensics and Information Security, Fin Tech, Pharma Chemistry, Food Science and Technology* and a host of other programs needed for today and tomorrow. A multi disciplinary approach as is being followed by GITAM is the way forward.

There is also a strong need to set up technology incubation centres in universities to develop entrepreneurial skills among students and I am told that GITAM University has already established two incubation centres to train students in entrepreneurial skills and enabled them to establish more than 24 start-ups.

Friends, I have no doubt that you will always remain proud alumni of this great institution and dedicate a part of your time and resources to maintain the pre-eminence of your alma mater and bring glory to the university and our great nation.

I would like to thank the university authorities for inviting me to this function and providing the opportunity to meet the young and dynamic graduates.

I once again offer my hearty wishes to all those who are receiving degrees, prizes, medals and honorary doctorates.

My dear young students, today you got your degrees. These are, I sincerely hope, likely to be passports to a brilliant future and excellent life. Think of them also as a badge of honour, a decree of responsibility to live up to the University's expectation and nation's hopes. I do hope you will continue to learn, earn and yearn to serve with a clear vision, pure heart and strong shoulders. We need leaders who will walk the talk and be bold enough to tread untrodden paths.

I congratulate the management of the University, the Vice Chancellor, his team of academic leaders and the entire staff of the University for setting a high benchmark and relentlessly trying to achieve excellence.

My best wishes to you all. JAI HIND."

KSD/BK

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