

EDUCATION MUST INCULCATE VALUES, MORALS & ETHICS: VICE PRESIDENT

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Role of Family, Society and Educational institutions in inculcating values

Vice President's Secretariat

Education must inculcate values, morals & ethics: Vice President

Develop a habit of caring and sharing; be responsive to societal needs;

Addresses Annual Convocation of Presidency College

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has stressed on the need to provide education that inculcates values, morals and ethics. He said that Education is not just accumulation of knowledge from textbooks and quoted Albert Einstein saying that education is not just the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think.

Delivering the Annual Convocation address at the prestigious Presidency College in Chennai today, the Vice President lauded the contributions made by the noted alumni of the institution. He appreciated the college for their policy of inclusive education and for their zeal in promoting research and scientific spirit.

The Vice President said that that sometimes, asking the right questions is more important than having the right answers. He urged the students to grow up with courage and conviction to question the irrational and critique the illogical. He added that students should develop the moral fibre and strength of character to have and hold their own opinions and viewpoints.

The Vice President assured them that marks obtained in texts and examinations were not true measures of their calibre. He insisted that the students never restrict themselves from pursuing their goals because of their marks.

The Vice President said that young graduates should know how to work in a team and learn to trust and be trustworthy. He commented that nothing was more important than developing the ability to put the needs of the group ahead of one's personal requirements. Students should be well-rounded people, they should develop a taste in arts, in music, in painting and in dancing. He added that art would refresh, relax and comfort a person and grant solace.

Asking the youngsters to be responsive to the needs of the less fortunate, the Vice President asked them to develop the habit of caring and sharing from a young age. He also asked them to adopt noble missions such as Swachh Bharat and take lead in making India clean. Such initiatives should take the shape of a people's movement to realise the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi, he added.

The Minister for Fisheries and Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Tamil Nadu, Shri D. Jayakumar and other dignitaries were present on the occasion. More than 1000 students, faculty members and researchers were present at the convocation that witnessed the presence of the Vice President.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"It gives me great pleasure to be here amidst all of you on the momentous occasion of the convocation, the day that marks the successful culmination of the students' journey in the prestigious Presidency College and their graduation. Convocation is a crucial rite of passage, a critical juncture in the life of any student. At the outset, let me congratulate each and every one of the young graduates on their achievement.

The convocation day is important not only to students, but also to the teachers who toiled to bring forth the best in every pupil, to the college who would be adding several more illustrious names to the glorious list of alumni and to the parents of the graduating students whose countless sacrifices bear fruit today.

Dear students,

It is truly the day when dreams come true. When you, the students stepping out of the portals of this great institution, walk up to this dais today to receive your degrees, kindly know that the gown you don today, the cap you wear and the scroll that would be handed over to you, places upon you a great responsibility.

Apart from building a great career for yourself, you may have to take on the daunting but extremely rewarding task of nation building which would soon be placed in your able hands. It is your hard work, determination, dedication and creativity that will bring the collective aspirations, the billion dreams of this country to fruition.

You are privileged to be graduating from Presidency College which has a history of more than 178 years. It was the first government college in South India established along with the other two Bombay and Calcutta Presidency Colleges by the then British government in 1840. Started merely as a Preparatory School, the institution has blossomed into a centre of excellence for higher education.

You must be proud of the fact that you belong to an institution that has produced thousands of eminent personalities including Nobel and Abel Laureates, Bharat Ratnas, Padma Shree awardees, SS Bhatnagar awardees, Prominent writers, Celebrities, Bureaucrats, Corporate Administrators, Politicians and Scientists. It is my privilege to mention a few of them - Sir C.V. Raman, the first Nobel prize recipient from India, Abel Laureate Shri Srinivasa Varadhan, Statesmen like Shri C. Rajagopalachari, Smt. R.S. Subbulakshmi, the first woman graduate from the University of Madras, Shri. R. Chidambaram, former Principal Scientific Advisor, General Cariappa and many more.

Your college has also had a great lineage of illustrious faculty members many of whom were eminent writers, translators and thinkers. The most prominent among them is "*Tamil Thaatha*" U.V. Swaminatha Iyer.

The Presidency College, Chennai, also enjoys the reputation of having been the mother of the University of Madras established in the year 1857.

While initiating the move to start the Presidency College, Lord Elphinstone, the then Governor of

Madras Presidency, is reported to have expressed his beautiful vision for the college. He said: "Education is to train and to qualify the native for the higher duties of life in an enlightened nation. If the society is to consist of responsible human beings capable of using their ability and creativity constructively, there must be a solid base for general education." It is with this mission in mind that the 49 Principals of this college right from Eyre Burton Powell to Dr. R. Ramanan have been striving hard. All their efforts have no doubt enabled this institution to produce thousands of patriotic and socially responsible graduates for the past 178 years.

I am delighted to know that this great institution is home to more than 4000 students. Presidency College today hosts 700 research scholars who are engaged in the pursuit of new knowledge aimed at the betterment of the human condition.

What is even more heartening about this institution is that more than 90% of the students here hail from socially and economically weaker sections of the society, who are mostly first generation learners. I am told that it is with the help of scholarships given by the both the state and the central governments that the students from rural and poor backgrounds are able to pursue their higher studies.

Another feather in the cap of this institution is the focus it places of inclusivity.

It enjoys the privilege of giving quality education to nearly 300 differently abled students in an inclusive set-up. I especially congratulate the differently abled members of the faculty who truly are sources of inspiration to all the youngsters present here. Your service to this great nation makes you really special. As a recognition of its continued efforts to provide quality education without any discrimination, the college has won several accolades.

I am happy to learn that NAAC has honored the college with a 4 Star status and an 'A' grade. It is encouraging to note that in the NIRF Ranking recently declared by the Ministry of HRD, Government of India, the Presidency College is placed in the fifth position.

Friends,

India today stands at the cusp of a tremendous demographic opportunity. 65% of India's population is under 35 years of age. For this demographic dividend to be effectively realized, quality education is a necessary precondition.

Education is not just the accumulation of knowledge from textbooks. Albert Einstein once said that education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think. Sometimes, asking the right questions is more important than having the right answers.

You should grow up with the courage and conviction to question the irrational and critique the illogical. You should develop the moral fiber and strength of character to shape and develop your own opinions and view points. To develop these qualities and sustain them, you must always remain students at heart, always ready to learn and forever open to new experiences.

I have always maintained that you as youngsters should never be content with the status quo.

You should always challenge that which needs to be changed. We today have a government that is very receptive to the voices of the youth, a government that is acutely sensitive to the aspirations of young India and has come forward with a number of diverse schemes ranging from 'Skill India' to Make in India to '*Khelo India*' to leverage the creative energy and zeal of the youth. So, you have a very positive environment around you and an array of great opportunities. It is up to you to make yourself capable of utilizing these opportunities to the fullest possible

extent.

I wish to draw your attention to something I consider important. The marks that you obtain in tests and examinations do matter. They are the manifestations of the excellence you have achieved in your academic pursuits. But they are not the only things that matter. You are much more than those numbers. So if you are a Chemistry graduate, never stop yourself from playing the violin or studying law. Please develop your personality in as many ways as you are capable of.

India has since time immemorial been open to absorb the best thoughts from all over the world. You, as youngsters, should imbibe these values in your thoughts, your speech and your actions. In many ways, you are the flag bearers of India before the world. Never compromise on your identity of 'Indianness', for it is an identity that is unique and worth possessing. Let humility, tolerance, love and respect for all life be the guiding principles of your life. Rabindranath Tagore once said that "the highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence". Learn to live in harmony with your fellow human beings and more importantly with nature. Let this harmony that you nurture within you be the harbinger of peace to the world.

Our country faces a number of challenges today, from rampant poverty to debilitating environmental pollution. These challenges are by no means small or easy to tackle. It is not possible for one single person to tackle these challenges. It will take our combined will power, collective intelligence and shared resources to solve the great problems of our time.

Always build a team, learn to trust and be trustworthy. There is nothing more important than being a team player, having the ability to work effectively as a part of a group, to be able to put the interests of the group ahead of your personal requirements.

We are today building 'Team India', a new India where development is inclusive and sustainable. This task demands your utter devotion and small but not insignificant sacrifices for the greater good.

Friends,

I leave you with a parting thought. Confucius once remarked that real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance. Along with what you know, be intensely aware of what you don't know and in this knowledge, may your humility be firmly rooted.

Quest for excellence, quest for truth, quest for harmony.

As the Vedic sages have said,

"Arise, awake and stop not till you reach your goal."

I wish you all the very best in your endeavours.

Jai Hind!"

AKT/BK/MS/RK

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