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EDUCATION MUST LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPING A SOCIETY THAT IS STRONGLY GROUNDED IN ETHICS AND MORAL VALUES: VICE PRESIDENT

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Moral and political attitudes

Vice President's Secretariat

Education must lay the foundation for developing a society that is strongly grounded in ethics and moral values: Vice President

Discard rote method of learning and promote innovative and creative thinking: VP tells Schools

Inculcate a sense of volunteerism among young students;

Become responsible, caring and empathetic citizens: VP tells students

Align education with the best pedagogies, teaching methods and techniques to regain India's position as Vishwa Guru;

Delivers 10th Foundation Lecture at SAI International School

Posted On: 01 APR 2019 2:12PM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that education must lay the foundation for developing a society that is strongly grounded in ethics and moral values to ensure peace and contentment in life.

Expressing his concern over the all-round degeneration of morals and ethics in the society, Shri Naidu said that the undesirable trend had to be stopped completely and schools were best placed for bringing about such a transformation.

Delivering the 10th Foundation Lecture at SAI International School in Bhubaneswar today, the Vice President said that education must inculcate social, moral, ethical and

spiritual values apart from seeking to empower the future citizens with knowledge and wisdom.

‘What is important is your attitude towards fellow citizens, other living creatures, protecting the environment and your commitment towards the larger good of the society’, he said.

Shri Naidu also stressed upon the need to inculcate a sense of volunteerism among young students. He advised the students to join organisations like NCC, NSS, Scouts & Guides to learn life skills and volunteerism.

Referring to the seven deadly social sins mentioned by Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi ji, the Vice President said that education which does not build character was one of such sin.

Saying that schools play the most crucial and foundational role in shaping the destinies of a nation, the Vice President said that schooling must lay emphasis on the overall development of the child without focusing solely on academic achievements. He opined that it was extremely crucial for youngsters to become responsible, caring and empathetic citizens of the country.

The Vice President stressed that aligning the education with the best education pedagogies, teaching methods and techniques in the world, without losing our ethical moorings was necessary to regain India’s position as Vishwa Guru.

He advised schools to keep abreast with the latest methods of pedagogy and acquaint the students about the importance of the ancient civilization, culture, traditions, heritage and history of the country. “The understanding of the history should be complete and comprehensive without any scope for bias,” he said.

Shri Naidu advised schools to discard rote method of learning and promote innovative and creative thinking. He said that students must be encouraged to develop an inquisitive and questioning mind ever eager to learn new things and come out with bright ideas.

Shri Naidu wanted schools to keep themselves abreast with the rapid developments in technology and align the skill sets of the students in accordance with 21st century job market. He also advised the schools to promote entrepreneurial spirit among the students.

Following is the text of Vice President’s address:

“It gives me immense pleasure to interact with students, teachers and parents of this institution and share my thoughts. Whenever I visit a school or a college, it fills me

with intense optimism about the future of the country.

I have always held that schools are not just temples of learning but are important institutions that play a foundational role in shaping the destinies of a nation. They are the springboards for producing future teachers, scientists, doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, politicians and scholars in various disciplines.

Hence, good schooling which lays emphasis on overall development of the child without focusing solely on academic achievements is extremely crucial for youngsters to become responsible, caring and empathetic citizens of the country.

Dear students, you all have completed your exams and will soon be joining new academic session in the next class. I wish you every success in your academic career and a rewarding future.

Dear Friends,

In a school, we celebrate the colourful innovative ideas, innocent idealism, inculcate moral and ethical values and chase dreams with hope and optimism.

As our former President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam used to ask students to dream - "Dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts result in action." Your dreams, ideals and ideas will shape the future of this great country.

Education is not only for employment. It is meant for empowerment of an individual through knowledge and wisdom. While imparting knowledge and keeping abreast with the latest methods of pedagogy, schools must acquaint the students about the importance of our ancient civilization, culture, traditions, heritage and history.

The understanding of the history should be complete and comprehensive without any scope for bias.

Of the seven deadly social sins enunciated by Gandhi ji, Education which does not build character, was one of such sin. Apart from seeking to empower the future citizens with knowledge and wisdom, education must inculcate social, moral, ethical and spiritual values. What is important is your attitude towards fellow citizens, other living creatures, protecting the environment and your commitment towards the larger good of the society. The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi had put it most profoundly when he said: "The greatness of a **nation** can be judged by the way **its animals** are treated".

True education emancipates you from the bondage of ignorance. It must remove obscurantist beliefs and superstitions. In Indian Tradition it is said – "*Ya Vidya Sa Vimuktaye*" – What emancipates is the Knowledge. It is an essential part of all

human life which makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated.

For ages India was the Vishwa Guru. We excelled in abstract sciences and applied technologies. Those were not the days of claiming Intellectual Property rights. Rather, we believed that the knowledge only grows if it is spread and shared with others. True to our ideal, "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" we shared our knowledge and excellence with global community. Our famous universities of Taxila, Nalanda threw open their doors for the students and scholars of other regions.

We have shared our knowledge and fortunes with every one as we believed in the sublime ideal of "*Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, sarve santu nira maya*" i.e. may everyone be satisfied, may everyone be free of disease and sickness. Sharing and Caring has not only been an ideal but an article of faith in our long distinguished traditions.

These eternal virtues have been at the core of our education system that has inculcated strong value systems from generation to generation. True education lays the foundation for developing a society that is strongly grounded in ethics and moral values leading to peace and contentment in life.

Unfortunately, over the years, we have been witnessing an all-round degeneration of morals and ethics in the society. This undesirable trend has to be stopped completely and schools are best placed for bringing about the transformation.

In Indian tradition, it is said: "Knowledge brings humility, humility makes you worthy, with that you acquire wealth and with wealth your conduct becomes righteous that eventually leads to ultimate blissful pleasure." Education and knowledge are the basis of a civilised living. Thirukkural says "The wealth of learning is alone imperishable; nothing else is true wealth".

Dear youngsters,

Today, I expect you to redeem our past stature.

As we aspire to become Vishwa Guru once again, we shall have to align our education with the best education pedagogies, teaching methods and techniques in the world, without losing our ethical moorings.

You are living in very promising times when the technology has opened up new opportunities and avenues for acquiring knowledge. Today On-line courses and study materials are available even on your Smart Phones. You can access almost every information anywhere in the world through internet.

The world has truly become a global village and barriers to knowledge are coming down at a faster pace than before. In this knowledge-driven digital era, schools must discard rote method of learning and promote innovative and creative thinking. They

must encourage students to develop an inquisitive and questioning mind ever eager to learn new things and come out with bright ideas.

Schools must also keep themselves abreast with the rapid developments in technology and align the skill sets of the students in accordance with the requirements. They must also promote entrepreneurial spirit among the students.

In addition to making our education socially relevant and grounded in our cultural values, we need to inculcate a sense of volunteerism among young students. Students should join organisations like NCC, Scouts & Guides, to learn life skills and volunteerism.

The schools should become resource centers for the neighbourhood community service. There should be greater interaction between schools and neighbouring communities.

Students should take up community assignments and voluntary work in neighbourhood communities and adjoining villages, interact with local administration about the local issues and provide innovative solutions for community and rural development.

A large part of India lives in village. Socially-conscious students must stay in villages for a better understanding and proper perspective on the travails of a village life.

Dear youngsters,

It is also essential for you as students to acquire vocational skills, including those related to agro-economy. It will help in encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship among young students.

True knowledge is garnered through observation, reading, discussions, reflection, analysis and internalisation and this can only be possible if every school introduces experiential learning embedded with field visits. The curriculum should be oriented to make students think rationally, independently and express cogently. Focus of school education should be on instilling inquisitiveness and curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, communication.

I strongly believe that school education must aim to help students become compassionate and caring human beings, with a sense of empathy. We also need to infuse the spirit of nationalism and patriotism in each child.

Dear students, you must own up the glorious heritage of rich cultural diversity of this country. You are also the inheritors of the rich and living linguistic heritage of India. You must enrich this tradition. We must respect and take pride in our mother land and in our mother tongue. Use your Mother Tongue to express yourself creatively and enrich its literature.

I am happy that today Sports provide a promising career opportunity to our youth. It not only trains your mind and body but also inculcates the spirit of teamwork and leadership. Along with your studies, you must also pursue and excel in sports.

Young Friends,

May all of you realize your dreams and achieve success in every endeavor you undertake. I would also like to compliment and congratulate the teachers and parents for the achievements of the students.

JAI Hind!"

AKT/BK/MS/RK

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TIME HAS ARRIVED FOR INDIA TO RE ORIENT PRESENT EDUCATION SYSTEM TO INCULCATE VALUES, MORALS AND ETHICS: VICE PRESIDENT;

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

Vice President's Secretariat

Time has arrived for India to re orient present education system to inculcate values, morals and ethics: Vice President;

Special attention should be paid to giving our youngsters exposure to our great history, tradition and culture;

Framers of Education Policy must focus on teaching in local languages;

Calls for instilling a spirit of volunteerism in students through NCC, NSS and other such organizations;

Calls for stringent measures to address excessive commercialization and poor governance in private and government-funded institutions respectively;

Asks institutions such as IGNOU to impart ICT skills to students apart from regular academics;

Addresses 32nd Convocation of IGNOU

Posted On: 03 APR 2019 1:51PM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that the time has arrived for India to re orient present education system to inculcate values, morals and ethics in students and to re-established itself as a knowledge and innovation hub. He called for a complete overhaul of the higher education system so that it caters to the fast changing requirements of the 21st century. 'Apart from remolding the syllabi and pedagogy, the stress should be on learning-by-doing', he suggested.

Addressing the 32 Convocation of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), here today, the Vice President asked the students to work with dedication and sincerity to realize their

dreams. He presented degrees and diplomas to more than 2 Lakh students who were graduating from the main campus of IGNOU and various regional centres today. He urged the students to prove themselves to be worthy of the certificates, diplomas and degrees they had received.

Shri Naidu stressed that everybody must strive to build a New India, which was free of poverty, illiteracy, fear, corruption, hunger and discrimination. Saying that quality assurance was important for improving higher education sector, he called for stringent measures to address excessive commercialization and poor governance in private and government-funded institutions respectively.

The Vice President said that Higher education must transform an individual into a responsible human being with social, moral and ethical values instilled in him or her, apart from making the person more productive. He further said that the quality assurance and accreditation mechanism must acknowledge the transformative role of education in a broader sense and facilitate in widening the horizons of Indian higher education system.

Saying that India was placed in an advantageous position because of the demographic dividend, the Vice President opined that ensuring skill development and imparting latest training in various vocations to the youth was necessary to make them a skilled workforce.

Shri Naidu opined that preserving India's traditional knowledge base and integrating it with modern educational system was of great importance as we rapidly advance towards building a knowledge-based society. Shri Naidu also wanted framers of our education policy to focus upon teaching in local languages along with inculcating the spirit of volunteerism in students by way of activities such as NCC, NSS and others.

Observing that Information and Communication Technology brought a paradigmatic shift in the education sector, Shri Naidu called upon institutions such as IGNOU to impart ICT skills to students apart from regular academics so that they can apply them in areas of their engagement - such as agriculture, industry, business or service. He observed that online education is the best mode of learning as it has the potential to reach the unreached in every corner of the country via internet and help in improving the literacy rate.

Mentioning that India's rich cultural heritage, Ayurveda and Yoga had earned global recognition, Shri Naidu said that 177 countries adopting a resolution at the United Nations declaring June 21 as International Day of Yoga was a testimony to India's growing influence in the world. He instructed universities and educational institutions to promote India's vast body of indigenous knowledge especially in the fields of Yoga and Ayurveda.

Shri Naidu said Ayurveda, which has its origins in the Vedic culture as an indigenous system of natural healing has once again emerged as a major source of knowledge on diagnosis, treatment and healing. 'However, to ensure patient safety and efficacy, every system of medicine should be evidentiary and based on thorough research and widespread clinical trials', he cautioned.

The Vice President urged the students to uphold ethical values at all times and remain committed to preserving India's culture, traditions and heritage. He asked them to give utmost priority to protecting nature. 'Promote culture and protect nature for a better future,' he added.

The Vice President lauded the efforts of the University for making knowledge acquisition accessible to many learners, who otherwise were unable to attend regular institutions of higher learning. He opined that IGNOU was effectively serving the educational needs of the learners by

breaking the barriers of distance through different mediums - the print, audio, video, online delivery as also interpersonal interaction.

The Vice Chancellor of IGNOU, Prof. Nageshwar Rao, the Pro-Vice Chancellor of IGNOU, Prof. Ravindra Ramachandra Kanhere, the Registrar, Directors of the School of Studies, Heads of Divisions and Units, Faculty and Staff Members of the university and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

“
I am extremely happy to be here among you today at the 32nd Convocation of IGNOU which was founded on the cherished philosophy of ‘democratization of education’ and ‘reaching the unreached’. This university has made knowledge acquisition accessible to many learners, who otherwise were unable to attend regular institutes of higher learning.
It is effectively serving the educational needs of the learners by breaking the barriers of distance through different mediums – the print, audio, video, online delivery as also interpersonal interaction.
I am happy to learn that IGNOU is the largest university of the world in terms of student enrolment and programs offered. Over the years, IGNOU has received national and international acclaim.
I am glad to learn that IGNOU has developed a network of over 3500 Study Centres, 56 Regional Centers and 11 Recognized Regional Centres for Indian Army, Navy and Assam Rifles across the country, apart from 26 Overseas Study Centres. Indeed, IGNOU has made its presence felt both nationally and internationally by providing quality education through Open Distance Learning system.
I am delighted to learn that IGNOU today has cumulative student strength of over 32 lakhs students, who are pursuing more than 241 academic programmes.
On this momentous occasion, I congratulate all the 2.02 lakh students of IGNOU who are receiving their certificates, diplomas and degrees from this esteemed university. I also wish them all the best in their future endeavors and to be the worthy of the certificates, diplomas and degrees they have earned.
Dear students, please remember that your learning does not end with the acquisition of an educational degree. Learning is an ongoing process and you need to upgrade knowledge on a daily basis to face a highly competitive world. As you all are aware, India was once known as Vishwaguru and students from across the world used to come here and study in reputed learning centres like Takshashila. Following foreign invasions and colonization, we lost that pre-eminent position.

India has a rich treasure of ancient knowledge. The knowledge contained in our traditional scriptures, like Vedas, Upanishads and other ancient texts was passed on from generation to generation and made India the spiritual leader of the world.

We have inherited a vast body of indigenous knowledge through **Yoga and Ayurveda**. The practice of Yoga helps in leading a healthy and balanced life style. In view of its beneficial effects, as many as 177 countries adopted a resolution at the United Nations declaring June 21 as International Day of Yoga. I feel that there is a need to promote Yoga in our educational and training institutions.

Ayurveda has its origins in the Vedic culture as an indigenous system of natural healing. Unfortunately due to prolong foreign rule in the country the practice of Ayurveda got sidelined and neglected. Now Ayurveda has been emerging as a major source of diagnosis, treatment and healing. However, to ensure patient safety and efficacy, every system of medicine should be evidentiary and based on thorough research and widespread clinical trials.

Dear youngsters, the time has come now for India to re-establish itself as a knowledge and innovation hub. For that to happen, we have to completely overhaul our higher education system to cater to the fast changing requirements of the 21st century in different sectors. Apart from remoulding the syllabi and pedagogy, the stress should be on learning-by-doing. **According to the latest All India Survey on Higher Education (2017-18), there are 903 universities and the total number of colleges stands at 49,061. Currently, the total number of students enrolled in our colleges and universities is about 36.7 million.**

Although our GER has improved to 25.8 per cent, it lags behind the global average of 33 percent and those of the emerging economies like Brazil (46 percent), Russia (78 percent) and China (36 percent).

With Indian economy on the rise, all of you will have plenty of avenues and opportunities and you should seize them. But remember that there is no substitute to hard work. Set goals and persevere to achieve them. As exhorted by the former President, dream high and aim high. But work with dedication and sincerity to realize your dreams and a build a New India, which shall be free of poverty, illiteracy, fear, corruption, hunger and discrimination.

Looking at your young and enlightened faces, I am reminded of Swami Vivekananda's famous exhortation: *"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."*

Now your ideal should be as said in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: *"Asato Ma Sad Gamaya, Tamaso Ma Jyotir Gamaya, Mrityor Ma Amritam Gamaya--Lead us from ignorance to truth, Lead us from darkness to light, Lead us from death to deathlessness"*.

As India is rapidly advancing towards a knowledge-based society, it should preserve its traditional knowledge base and integrate it with modern educational system of the country.

Dear students,

India is placed in an advantageous position when compared to many other countries because 65 per cent of our population is below the age of 35 years. By ensuring skill development and imparting latest training in various vocations to the youth, India can cater to the global requirements of skilled workforce, apart from meeting the demand within the country. I am sure that the National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will address all the challenges of skilling, while the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) will help standardize and integrate the skill component of the people with the formal

learning arrangement.

We are now living in an Information and Communication Technology-driven world. With 46% people having access over internet and 92% over mobile phones, imparting ICT-enabled education has become the sine qua non of the modern society. In fact, ICT revolution is triggering a paradigmatic shift in the education sector.

As you all are aware, **Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs)** platform is set to bring a revolution in the arena of learning and knowledge dissemination. In India, **SWAYAM MOOCs** platform has emerged to be the World's Largest Online Free E-Learning Platform Portal. It is designed to achieve access, equity and quality in education at all levels and areas. Again under the **SWAYAM PRABHA** programme high-quality educational programmes are telecast through the DTH channels. Further the MHRD under its **National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT)** has initiated the **e-Pathshala**. The interactive e-content covers around 70 subjects across all disciplines of social sciences, arts, fine arts, humanities, mathematics, linguistics and languages.

The use of ICTs has made lives of millions of Indian comfortable now in most areas of their engagement—be it agriculture, industry, business or service.

Quality assurance is important for improving higher education sector. The root cause of the problem in private and government-funded institutions is commercialization and poor governance respectively.

Higher education should transform an individual into a responsible human being with social, moral and ethical values embedded in him or her apart from making the person more productive. Thus, the quality assurance and accreditation mechanism should acknowledge the transformative role of education in a broader sense and facilitate in widening the horizons of the Indian higher education system.

I glad to learn that IGNOU has already launched several skill development programmes through Open and Distance Learning and ICT-enabled modes and has integrated skill component in its flagship Bachelor Degree programme under the **Choice Based Credit System**.

I must laud IGNOU for creating a wealth of academic e-content through its **eGyanKosh- a National Digital Repository** to store, index, preserve, distribute and share the digital learning resources. I am also happy to learn that IGNOU proposes to launch several online academic programmes soon and has also initiated a new Centre for On Line Learning for giving an impetus to this mode of learning.

Quality assurance is important for improving higher education sector. The root cause of the problem in private and government-funded institutions is commercialization and poor governance respectively. While the problems have to be tackled differently, a single standardised solution may not ensure improvement in quality across Higher Education institutions.

Finally, before concluding, I would like you all to remember the four pillars of learning that UNESCO had suggested.

These are (1) Learning to know (2) Learning to do (3) Learning to be and (4) Learning to live together.

You should be able to access new knowledge and use it for your advancement and the welfare of the people around you, you should develop new skills all the time and ultimately realize the hidden potential within you. Be what you aim to be. The last aspect is perhaps the most important one in our contemporary world – Learning to live together and celebrate the infinite diversity in the world.

I would add that you should uphold ethical values at all times and remain committed to preserving India's culture, traditions and heritage. Also, please give utmost priority to protecting nature. In other words, promote culture and protect nature for a better future. My best wishes to you all in your future endeavors!

JAI HIND!"

AKT/BK/MS/RK

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ELIMINATE THE MENACE OF TERRORISM, TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE, REMOVE SOCIAL INEQUALITIES, ALLEVIATE POVERTY TO BUILD A PEACEFUL, HARMONIOUS AND HAPPY NATION: VICE PRESIDENT

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions

Vice President's Secretariat

Eliminate the menace of terrorism, tackle climate change, remove social inequalities, alleviate poverty to build a peaceful, harmonious and happy nation: Vice President

Demand the progress & performance reports from candidates and the parties;

Elect candidates with 4C's : Character, Caliber, Capacity & Conduct;

Honorary Doctorate by University for Peace is a global acknowledgement of Indian values of peace and harmony;

Addresses the felicitation ceremony organized by friends and well wishers;

Posted On: 31 MAR 2019 4:35PM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has called for concerted efforts to eliminate the menace of terrorism, tackle climate change, remove social inequalities, alleviate poverty and minimize the urban rural divide to build a peaceful, harmonious and happy nation.

Speaking at a felicitation function organized by the Vice President's friends and well wishers in Visakhapatnam today following the recent conferment of Doctor Honoris Causa upon him by the Peace University of Costa Rica in recognition of his contribution to the rule of law, democracy, sustainable development and peace, he emphasized that Peace was prerequisite for progress of any nation. Any kind of conflict or strife would prevent developmental prospects of the region. "One cannot pay attention to development if there is tension", he added.

Shri Naidu said that it was the duty of every citizen to ensure that the social harmony in our country was not disturbed in any way. He called upon the media to conduct a performance audit of parties and candidates and place a progress report before the people to enable them make an informed choice. He said the people too must seek accountability and performance reports

from candidates and the parties.

Referring to the trend of politicians switching parties, the Vice President said that such people must resign to their posts before seeking re-election.

Referring to the importance of the electoral process in strengthening democracy, he said that people should elect representatives who possess Character, Caliber, Capacity and good Conduct. Asking people to exercise their franchise, the Shri Naidu said that vote was not just a right but a responsibility bestowed upon the citizenry by the framers of the constitution.

The Vice President said that India has always been a proponent of peace and believed in the philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" which treats entire world as one family. He said that India, being a votary of peace and non-violence from time immemorial, always wishes to have cordial relations with all countries and peoples around the world.

Referring to the Honorary Doctorate conferred upon him, the Vice President said the honour was not for an individual but a reflection of the global acknowledgement and recognition of the age-old values of peace and harmony embedded in Indian philosophy.

Observing that he felt doubly honored to have received the Honorary Doctorate at a time when the world is commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi ji, who had demonstrated to the world the power of non-violence, he emphasized that peace was the prerequisite for progress of any nation. Any kind of conflict or strife would prevent developmental prospects of the region.

Saying that India has been a victim of the menace of cross-border terrorism, the Vice President said that Terrorism could never be treated with kid gloves. He asked the world community to come together to 'fight out and root out' terror.

Shri Naidu said that the United Nations must conclude at the earliest the deliberations on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism proposed by India and take action against those promoting terror. 'We need to name & shame those who promote terror as a state policy and cut their aid, he added.

The Vice President also urged every citizen to strive to protect the environment, reduce pollution, promote greenery, conserve water bodies and ensure that development does not disrupt natural resources.

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GOVT EYEING RS 50,000-CR OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT THROUGH GEM IN FY'20

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Utilization of public funds

[Public procurement](#) worth Rs 50,000 crore is expected to take place through the commerce ministry's online marketplace GeM during 2019-20, an official said. In 2018-19, Government e-Marketplace (GeM) touched Rs 17,325 crore mark in terms of value of transactions as compared to Rs 5,885 crore in the previous financial year and Rs 422 crore in 2016-17.

"We are targeting Rs 50,000 crore worth of transactions to be carried out through this platform in 2019-20," the official said.

The ministry launched the GeM on August 9, 2016 with the objective of creating an open and [transparent procurement](#) platform for government departments, ministries and agencies.

Meanwhile, the commerce ministry, in a statement on Monday, said 2018-19 has witnessed a multifold increase in total value of transactions on the portal and doubling of number of sellers at the marketplace.

It said over two lakh sellers are offering more than eight lakh products on this platform.

It added that training of over 1.3 lakh [buyers](#) and sellers has been conducted across 28 states and Union Territories to enable them operate the platform seamlessly.

"MoUs have been signed with 12 banks for payment integration to facilitate a cashless and paperless payment system on the platform," the ministry said.

Public procurement of the Central and State governments runs into over Rs 2 lakh crore annually.

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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

Posted On: 25 APR 2019 3:31PM by PIB Delhi

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!"

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ETHICS IN THE TIME OF TECHNOLOGY

Relevant for: Ethics | Topic: Dimensions of ethics

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Consider this: An external advisory council, the Advanced Technology External Advisory Council (ATEAC) — essentially an ethics council to guide new technologies — set up by [Google](#) in the last week of March, being disbanded in the first week of April, within less than a fortnight. However, one wants to play it, this was a major goof up by the company — a failure of conception, planning and execution. Google could have avoided this huge embarrassment if they had only googled to find out what lay ahead. But to do so, one must know what questions to ask. Even they seemed to have asked the wrong questions.

The ATEAC comprised eight members from across disciplines and organisations. It was supposed to discuss issues that Google confronted in the new and fast-growing area of Artificial Intelligence, and related technologies such as facial recognition and fairness in machine learning. ATEAC was to meet four times a year and complement the advice of an internal body to help Google navigate the ethical challenges that were emerging. It was to align the AI work of Google with the seven principles that the CEO, Sundar Pichai, had enunciated in June 2018. These are (i) be socially beneficial, (ii) avoid creating or reinforcing unfair bias, (iii) be built and tested for safety, (iv) be accountable to people, (v) incorporate privacy design principles, (vi) uphold high standards of scientific excellence, (vii) be made available for uses that accord with these principles. A cursory glance at these elegantly set out principles will immediately tell you that words such as “unfair bias”, “accountable”, “beneficial” and “privacy” are ethically loaded and contested concepts and, therefore, some tough ethical questions lay ahead. Google’s initiative was not a moment too late. Those of us who belong to the humanities were delighted. When it was disbanded, we were dismayed. So why did this happen?

The simple explanation is that the composition of the committee was challenged by at least 1,800 Google employees: Not just because the process employed was flawed — no consultation with the staff and no consultation with other members of the committee — but also because of who the members are. Kay Coles James, president of the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, was strongly opposed because of her anti-environment, anti-LGBTQ and anti-immigrant public views. Dyan Gibbens, CEO of a drone company, Trumbull Unmanned, was challenged because of the debate on the use of AI for military applications. Privacy expert Alessandro Acquisti resigned because he didn’t believe this was “the right forum to engage with issues of fairness, rights and inclusion in AI”. Further the task of the committee was not clearly set out. Its powers vis-a-vis Google were not properly defined. Could it, for example, veto technologies considered inappropriate? Were four meetings a year adequate? Would its recommendations be secret or made public? No clear answers were given and many suspected that it was a PR exercise, rather than a genuine attempt to begin a conversation on ethics and advanced technology.

But instead of letting the issue go into the pages of history, now that the committee has been disbanded, let me draw four lessons from the episode that are pertinent in the context of an absent Indian debate on tech ethics.

The first is poor planning. The fact that prospective members were not informed about who else would be on the council, or that the political implications of prospective members' public positions would be considered, or that clear terms of reference were not formulated — all this shows how casually the task of setting up the council was taken. Deep thought, which Google excels in, would have shown how fundamentally flawed the building blocks of the council were.

The second, is the heartening fact that politics is back in certain corporate spaces. Google employees have been at the forefront of raising issues relating to ethics and new technologies. They opposed the work done by the company on drone technologies for the Pentagon. They challenged the inclusion of a member with openly anti-LGBTQ and anti-environment views on the council. They demanded more robust public debate on the ethical issues involved. This is great news. Politics has reemerged to counter the technology-first attitude that appeared to be settling over society and colonising our minds. Ethical issues, so important for the well-being of human societies, it now appears — thanks to Google employees — cannot be ignored by policy makers in organisations, universities or the state. And, what is most uplifting is the political activism that technology workers are prepared to demonstrate. Is this the 1960s generation being re-born? Here is a group of people who are highly paid, materially comfortable and enjoying good social status. Yet, they are willing to challenge their bosses, publicly too, on issues of ethics. Just when political sociologists such as myself were lamenting the subtle co-option strategies of global capitalism of young people, grieving for the apparent death of the protest politics of a Dylan or a Freddie Mercury, or a Bob Geldof, along comes this protest from young men and women, thousands of them, from Google. Salut, my friends. But when will our own IT community get publicly involved in ethical issues in India — such as the misuse of [Aadhaar](#) by the state, or, of cooperation of IT companies with the government on the National Population Register in Assam?

Which brings me to the third issue. I looked at the ethical manifesto of Indian IT companies such as TCS and Infosys. The former only listed the ethical code of the house of Tatas: Integrity, honesty, accountability, and all that motherhood and [apple](#)-pie sort of stuff. No statement on ethics and technology such as Google's seven principles. The same is the case with Infosys. These companies seem to be living in another age where such ethical issues have not yet emerged. Despite huge grants by the Tatas and Infosys to Harvard and Yale, the humanities debates taking place there have not reached the company. Perhaps, some employee activism is now in order.

Finally, the fourth issue. I looked at the teaching curricula of the IITs: No engagement with ethics and technology. We have humanities programmes, but no mainstreaming of ethics with robotics or biotechnology or artificial intelligence. Our IITs produce technologists not humanists with excellent technology capabilities. I was disappointed to find no Indian among the experts interviewed by the MIT Technology review of April 6 on why ATEAC bombed. This despite many Indians leading technology companies in the Silicon valley. Perhaps it has to do with the absence of ethical sensibilities among Indian technologists. Perhaps it has to do with the IIT training they get. Perhaps the humanities scholars in the US are all postmodernists. Perhaps it has to do with our dharmic philosophy. Which one is it, Sundar Pichai?

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