

21st Convocation Ceremony

Speech by

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The Chief Guest of the 21st Convocation Ceremony, His Excellency Hon'ble Vice-President of India Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Hon'ble Chancellor Governor Shri Shankarnarayanan, the Pioneer of the Green Revolution in India and the distinguished awardee of “**Doctor of Letters**” Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, the Deans of various faculties, members of Management Council, members of the Senate, members of the Academic Council, Principals, Directors, Heads, Administrative Officers, Teachers, Staff, Students, Reporters, Citizens and Dear Graduates, I extend a very cordial welcome to you all.

It is a matter of great happiness that the Honorable Vice President Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari is with us today. Honorable Shri Hamid Ansari is a man of towering stature in political as well as educational circles. He has successfully served as an ambassador to many countries through the Indian Foreign Service. He was the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University and made an immense contribution in the field of education. He is an erudite scholar as well as a creative writer of great sensitivity. His career graph, from the post of the Vice-Chancellor of a University to his two tenures as Vice-President, is an inspiration and motivation for all. He has left an indelible mark on the proceedings of the Parliament through his astute leadership. It was our ardent wish that he should be the Chief Guest of our 21st Convocation and guide our students on the occasion. I am deeply indebted to him for accepting our warm invitation and for his august presence during the Convocation Ceremony.

Padma Vibhushan Prof. M.S. Swaminathan is an institution who has changed the lives of Indian farmers through his emphasis on sustainable agriculture with the use of biotechnology. We are honored and privileged for his acceptance of the coveted '**Doctor of Letters**' from North Maharashtra University. Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, through the Green Revolution, has transformed the Indian agricultural scenario by making the farmers proud and self sufficient. Even the small peasants of India live with a new self respect earned through the environment friendly technology propagated by Prof. Swaminathan. We are extremely grateful to this

intellectual stalwart, the true son of India for accepting the honour of Doctor of Letters from North Maharashtra University.

On this occasion of the 21st Convocation, I am happy to share some of my thoughts with you. North Maharashtra University caters to the educational needs of the students of Dhule, Jalgaon and Nandurbar districts, a predominantly tribal and rural area of the region with students who are mostly first generation learners. The University has concentrated on the holistic development of the students of our region to make them wholesome and healthy citizens of the country by providing them quality higher education and the best infrastructural facilities. We have already started the construction of four new hostels through various Central and State government grants to provide additional accommodation to 1,050 more students.

Having accepted the School concept, thirteen Schools, one Institute and four satellite campuses are functioning under the University's jurisdiction. Recently our University Department of Chemical Technology has been granted the status of an Institute by AICTE. The University has initiated the study of the thoughts of great thinkers like Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Phule, Buddha and Sane Guruji through the School of Thought. Different programmes are organized for the propagation and dissemination of these thoughts. In the course of the current academic year the Department of Ambedkar Thoughts has been established under the aegis of the School of Social Sciences. The Women's Studies Centre has been granted Rs. 33 lakhs from the UGC in the first phase of the XII Plan and the process is on for appointment of teaching and non teaching staff. Sixteen courses are being run through Distance Education mode.

To give international exposure to the students of Khandesh and to help them become a part of the global scenario, North Maharashtra University has signed an MoU with Cayuga Community College, State University of New York, for joint degree programmes, which will commence from June, 2013. An MoU has been signed with CETYS University, Mexico, for Engineering, Management and Education courses. Another MoU for Engineering courses is in the offing with Tukuseema University, Japan. The university has signed an MoU with MAHYCO, a major hybrid seeds company to generate new employment avenues for our students.

Any university gains recognition and reputation through its research. North Maharashtra University has created a niche for itself through its research projects which are being funded by agencies like DBT, DST, CSIR, UGC, BARC, AICTE, DRDO, INSA, and RGST. At present there are 50 ongoing R & D projects in different Schools and Departments of the University. Three Schools have received finances in the Phase-II of UGC-SAP, while two Schools and one Institute have been included in Phase-I of SAP. Three Schools and one Institute are included in the DST-FIST Program. University of Chemical Technology has received grants worth 15 crores through the TEQIP Programme. Our teachers have published 267 research papers in reputed national and international journals. All laboratories are well-equipped and are constantly being upgraded through funding of Rs. 2.5 crores received for ESEM-EDX and XRD, AFM, LC-MS and other equipment.

Satellite Centres: The University's focus is on the three satellite centres at Pratap Philosophy Centre, Amalner, Gandhi Tatvagyan Kendra, Dhule and Eklavya Centre, Nandurbar. The ambitious project, "Lab to Land", has been launched at Pratap Centre to make it a centre of sustainable agriculture research with the latest research equipment. The centre will also conduct soil and water analysis and offer expertise to local farmers. A special provision of 75 lakhs has been made for this. We have also submitted a project proposal to national financing agencies for funds worth Rs.14 crores. Forty seven lakhs have already been utilized for the upgrading of the centre.

65% of the population of Nandurbar district is tribal. 25-50% of tribal students are enrolled for various courses offered by the University. The university aspires to establish a Tribal Academy at Nandurbar for which the University and State government has initiated the process for availability of 25 acres of land. The Central Government has sanctioned a Community College to be established at Nandurbar.

The Gandhi Philosophy Centre of Dhule organizes exams on Gandhian Thought, as well as workshops, seminars and orientation programmes. There is a plan to establish a university sub centre and competitive examination centre at Dhule. Two acres of land has been allotted for this purpose and the proposal is in the last stage of approval by the State Government.

Lab to Land: The university has launched an ambitious social and community outreach initiative through **Lab to Land** to motivate farmers and peasants to use modern bio-technological and sustainable farming techniques. Till date, 17 workshops have been organized in remote villages and padas (Tribal colonies) to provide training to farmers. The initiative has received an enthusiastic and spontaneous response from all sections of society. The aim is to break through the confinements of academic research and make it relevant for the needs of the people.

Lab to Industry: Another initiative which has been launched simultaneously with “**Lab to Land**” is “**Lab to Industry**”. The university has approached various industries in Maharashtra to seek technical know-how to upgrade the existing syllabi to make them suitable for the needs of the industries. North Maharashtra University pioneered a '**University Industry Summit**' held at Aurangabad in which 9 universities and 70 industries were represented. On this occasion the winners of the state level Research Festival, Avishkar, made their presentations and were applauded for their creativity and research aptitude. In the next stage such a Summit is proposed at the national and international level.

Central Training and Placement Cell:

The university has established the Central Training and Placement Cell which aspires to build liaisons with different companies and industries to conduct campus interviews for our students. In the last 3-4 months, 300 students have procured good jobs in companies. Special training programmes to enhance students' soft skills and to provide interview techniques to students will be arranged through this centre.

Vice Chancellor's Research Motivation Scheme has been launched with a seed amount of Rs. 1.5 crore. Students and teachers will also be provided incentives to motivate them towards good research.

Health Centre: To upgrade the existing facilities in the health centre, the university has purchased an ambulance, set up a special computerized machine for eye check ups and also set up a 2-D Echo-Cardiography Colour Doppler Machine. We have also started a six month Health Attendant Certificate Course and submitted a proposal to the Maharashtra Nursing Council to begin a Nursing Diploma.

Khandesh Archives Museum was inaugurated in Feb 2013, which contains rare historical manuscripts, documents, coins and other artefacts.

The museum is to be developed as a centre of attraction for the many visitors to the university.

Student-centric Schemes have been implemented in the university right from its inception. Semester system has been adopted in all disciplines except Law with the adoption CGPA system. The students who participate in blood donation camps are to be given 2 additional marks. The results of nearly all university exams are declared within 30 to 45 days. From this year convocation forms have been accepted on-line. Admission forms are accepted online with the help of MKCL. The Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Competitive Examination Centre has received a good response from the students. For the first time, Hostel Day was celebrated by the university. E-library facilities have been started through the Digital Knowledge Centre. With a seed money of Rs. 25 lakhs five research students have been given fellowships. The university's N.S.S. unit has been awarded the state level first prize for outstanding N.S.S. activities. Students who excel in events at the national and international level are felicitated. The students use the Vice Chancellor's helpline assiduously. To achieve academic excellence in the university departments and affiliated colleges, committees comprising of experts have been appointed for academic appraisal. Preparations are going on for the third phase of NAAC accreditation. Provision of Rs. 40 lakhs has been made for this purpose. Ours is the first university in Maharashtra to go in for accreditation of NAAC for the 3rd time.

Innovations in Administration :

To facilitate smooth administration, the university has laid emphasis on "decentralization". The university has taken effective legal steps to remove trespassers and encroachments on its land and the satellite centres. Curtailment of daily wages staff is saving the university an amount of Rs. 6 lakhs per month. Meetings are regularly organized for the administrative and teaching departments for better functioning. The daily programme of the Vice Chancellor is conveyed via SMS to all the stake holders.

The Finance Department has adopted the Common Account Code and the branch of a nationalized bank has been set up on the premises. From this year, the university has started a special awards scheme to acknowledge the meritorious services of principals, teachers and non teaching staff. Staff quarters for administrative staff, a Karmachari Bhavan and Vidyarthi Bhavan are other plans in the offing.

Social Outreach :

The University recognizes its social and national responsibilities by including in the ventures all the stake holders of the community. As a step in this direction, it has distributed its old computers to social institutions, schools and organizations in far off tribal and rural areas. A Day Care Center is available for the children of daily wages workers and the Central School caters to the scholastic education of the children of the staff. Health services are provided to all as well as the people of near by villages. The Mobile Science Van is utilized to spread the message of science and education in villages, padas (Tribal colonies) and tandas. It is mandatory to conduct one session of any conference or seminar of any school or department in villages and taluka centres.

While presenting this report of the university's progress, I must also express my own expectations from the students. Those present here are fortunate to be a part of the higher education system, but there are many who are deprived of education and all connected facilities. After your graduation and post graduation, I appeal to you to think of your deprived brethren who still live on the fringes of society. The linkages between educational institutions and the community need to be strengthened. Sustainable growth can be achieved through a sustainable human resource, which we have to build and provide.

The world is changing at a very fast pace. One must meet these challenges and seek fresh opportunities for employment. For this you need to equip yourself and develop your own capacities and faculties to the full. We need a fresh perspective and attitudinal change. A degree is no longer a passage to certain employment. There is a need to add new skills with latest technologies. Innovation and creativity are the keywords of our times. You must realize your responsibility towards your country and the society at large. I am confident that you are aware of the task at hand. May this task be further resolved and strengthened is my wish on this occasion. I wish you all the best for a bright and happy future.
