

“I am delighted to be amongst you to deliver the 13th Convocation Address of Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences – Deemed to be University, which is the brain child of Padmabhushan late Dr. Balasaheb Vikhe Patil – a true son of the soil.

I have had a 25 year of long association with Dr. Balasaheb Vikhe Patil. He was a valued colleague in the Parliament.

Although we belonged to two different political parties at that time, we always found converging areas of interest, especially in the field of rural development, a quest that is close to my heart.

He was much admired for his simple living and his commitment to undertaking developmental projects at the grassroots level.

Dr. Balasaheb Vikhe Patil is the proud son of late Dr. Vitthalrao Vikhe Patil, a legendary figure in the history of co-operative enterprise in the country. He pioneered the use of co-operative movement as a tool for social, educational and economic uplifting of the rural masses.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Dr. Ashok Panagariya, who has been recognized by this University for his services to the nation in the field of Neurology and Medical Sciences by conferring an Honorary Doctorate upon him.

I understand that PIMS-DU offers Graduate, Post Graduate, PG Diploma, Diploma & Ph.D programmes under the faculty of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing & Allied health Sciences.

It is truly heartening to note that as many as 437 graduates are being presented with their degrees in this convocation here today.

My heartiest congratulations to all of them for their achievements.

My sincere appreciation to the parents for supporting and trusting their children, thus empowering them to fully explore their talents and creativity.

I am glad to note that PIMS-DU is striving to provide quality education and training to the health professionals of the nation. On the other hand, through its multispecialty tertiary hospital and its specialist doctors, nurses and technicians, PIMS-DU is providing tertiary health care to the rural population.

I applaud PIMS-DU for extending their health care and research to tribal areas also.

As India aspires to have more qualified doctors, nurses and therapists serving in rural areas, the PIMS-DU is rendering valuable service by meeting the healthcare needs of the rural populace.

I appreciate the Loni PURA Model of PIMS-DU. Though rural in location, it is truly urban in terms of its facilities and amenities.

It is indeed a unique model of excellence.

I congratulate the visionary leaders Dr. Vitthalrao Vikhe Patil, Padmashri Awardee and Dr. Balasaheb Vikhe Patil, Padmabhushan Awardee for their foresight and missionary zeal.

My dear young friends,

I strongly believe that it is the youth of a nation that will determine its future.

As you are all aware, India has a burgeoning youth population. United Nations Population Fund estimates that the window of demographic dividend opportunity in India is available for **five decades from 2005-06 to 2055-56, longer than any other country in the world.**

Demographic dividend is said to be occurring when the ratio of the working age population is high and the dependency ratio in terms of proportion of children and elderly people low.

The working age group 15-59 years accounts for 62.5% of India's population.

This immense advantage can create the space needed to increase investments in enhancing human capabilities, which, in turn, can have a positive influence on growth and development in the time to come.

Thrust on quality Higher education, especially professional and technical education is imperative to empower the youth so that they can play a meaningful role in nation building.

I am extremely glad to know that this University is setting new benchmarks in excellence through its commitment to advancing meaningful teaching & learning, promoting need-based research, amplifying community engagement, and accelerating internationalization, all the while, serving the poor and the needy.

Dear Sisters and brothers,

In any student's life, convocation is a crucial ceremony. It marks the completion of an important phase of life and symbolizes the beginning of the next significant phase.

Attainment of a degree is only a milestone and not an end in itself.

I am sure you all will take up the mantle for serving the nation selflessly.

Emphasis must be placed on continuous learning and updating of the existing knowledge base.

The world of Science and Technology is undergoing rapid transformation and I urge each and every one of you to be poised to absorb and utilize these innovations for the greater good.

Let me tell you that the future belongs to brilliant innovators and leaders whose priority is to serve the masses selflessly.

The career path you have chosen is rife with a number of challenges today.

It is true that we have achieved a number of significant milestones in the health sector since independence.

Life expectancy at birth has increased, infant mortality and crude death rates have been greatly reduced, diseases such as Small Pox and Polio have been eradicated, and Leprosy has been nearly eliminated.

Yet, a lot more needs to be done to ensure **health security** to our vast population.

India is undergoing an **epidemiological transition** today. The burden of non communicable, lifestyle diseases is on the rise, dominating over communicable diseases in the total disease burden of the country.

India also faces challenges of **unequal access** and **rising costs** in healthcare.

There is also **low health insurance penetration**, leaving a large section of the population to incur out of pocket health expenditure, pushing many families to poverty.

There is also a great **rural-urban divide** when it comes to healthcare.

Urban areas have four times as many medical practitioners compared to rural areas, making rural India grossly underserved. The quality of medical education of also varies between rural and urban centers.

Our **Primary Health Centers** which are the first point of contact for patients are face funding issues and infrastructural lacunae.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is the need of the hour.

UHC can resolve a number of issues we face in the health sector by **standardizing healthcare infrastructure** and providing **value-based medicine**.

Always remember that the healthcare sector represents a huge opportunity to **leverage technology** to improve critical processes that would aid the delivery of quality healthcare.

With technology, it is possible to reach millions of people who are geographically spread across the country, providing better and more accurate diagnosis, managing treatment and facilitating effective collaboration and dialogue between doctors and healthcare workers.

The cost of providing medical services has also been rising steadily. The integration of technological innovation with healthcare delivery will enable scale and lower healthcare delivery costs.

I urge all educational institutions to invest a sizeable portion of their budget in research and development for the discovery and advancement of new technologies.

My dear young friends who are earning coveted degrees today,

Let me remind you that the profession you have chosen is a mission.

You will play a critical role in nation building.

I have said time and again that only a healthy nation is capable of being a wealthy nation.

It is upto you to safeguard the health of this nation, enabling it for it to take its rightful place of leadership in the world.

It is truly unfortunate that the quality of healthcare delivered in this country is very often determined by the price that is being paid.

Today, I urge all the young doctors and budding healthcare professionals present here to treat all your patients, both rich and poor, with the same commitment, investment, respect and integrity.

In your able hands lie the power to transform lives.

Use your talents wisely and well.

Serve the nation with a passion and missionary zeal. Adopt the “*kaizan*” or the principle of continuous improvement to excel in all walks of life.

Further, nurture the values of nationalism, patriotism, honesty, peace, compassion, respect, harmony and co-existence.

The lofty notion of “*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” is engrained in the very DNA of our civilization.

Let this ideal act as a beacon to you during testing times.

I am glad to know that Pravara Medical Trust was established in 1976 as a 100 bed hospital to serve the poverty stricken people of this drought and epidemic prone region.

It is indeed very heartening to know that today it has become a 1275 bedded hospital, offering super specialty services to the rural people of this district and neighboring districts at a very reasonable cost.

I am told that this trust has also been providing free medical facilities to all the children below 12 years of age and to senior citizens.

I am also really impressed by the community engagement of this university including the adoption of more than 400 rural and tribal villages for the provision of health services.

I congratulate the faculty and students of this university for being true “change agents”.

I am also delighted to know that this Rural University has strong international engagement with over 31 active academic, research and medical care collaborations with Foreign Universities, Research and Development Organizations across the globe.

I call upon my young friends to dedicate themselves to the service of mankind, mitigate hunger, poverty, ignorance and blind beliefs.

Today, you have made your University proud.

It is time to go forth and make your nation proud.

The word 'Pravara' means 'excellence' and 'eminence'. It is a word used to describe distinction and achievement.

I hope that all students passing out of the portals of this institution will, through their noble deeds, keep this grand tradition of 'Pravara' alive and blazing.

I congratulate the university, the faculty, the students and parents once again and wish them all the very best in their future endeavors.

Thank You!

Jai Hind!"