

14th Convocation

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Convocation Address

by

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New Delhi



कृषिमूला ऋद्धिः

Navsari Agricultural University

Navsari : Gujarat

Honourable Governor of Gujarat and the Chancellor Navsari Agricultural University Shri O. P. Kohli *ji*; Honourable Minister of Agriculture. Rural Development, Fisheries & Transport Shri R. C. Faldu *ji*, Vice-Chancellor of this University Dr. C.J. Dangaria; Registrar Dr. V.A. Solanki; Vice-Chancellors of other Agricultural Universities; Members of the Board of Management and Academic Council; Officers, Teachers, Students and Staff members; Representatives of press and media; Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel extremely honoured and fortunate to deliver the convocation speech during the glorious 14th Convocation of one of the most vibrant university of Gujarat which brought laurel to all of us by fetching 9th position in the nation among the different national institutes and state agricultural universities recently.

I am particularly happy to be with you on perhaps one of the most memorable days of your lives. My heartiest congratulations to all the graduating students, gold medallists and awardees who have received their degrees and awards on this auspicious occasion. I whole heartedly appreciate the contribution of faculty members of the university in making all the students knowledgeable and skilled to face the challenges of transforming agriculture. I am confident that the culture of this esteemed university where the national goal are priorities over personal achievement has been well inculcated in all of you to serve the nation through prosperity in agriculture. However, you are moving from the protected environment to challenging environment and will have to often take very difficult decisions in your life. The education of this university will guide you to take the smart decision which may be tough and not yield fruit immediately, however, will be valued and prove worthy with the time. If you are willing to work hard, diligently and move the extra mile, there is no horizon too far to reach.

Today as you leave, yours biggest take away will not be your marks or your degree. It will be the experiences you had, the relationship you built and more than anything else, the things you have learnt about yourself. You have learnt as much outside class room as you did in them. You have learnt not only from your professors, but also your peers and other around you. As you embark on this amazing journey through life, stick to the path of continuous growth, keep working, keep learning and keep dreaming. Your graduation is not the end of your learning, but rather the start of a life long journey of continuous learning outside the class room, in the open enrolment programme called the world.

In all of this, I urge you to direct your skills and training towards solving the problems of the farming community and uplifting their socio-economic status. Our nation is confronting a wide range of complex challenges and each and every one of us must contribute our bit towards meeting them in as economical, equitable, timely and sustainable manner as possible. The nation is looking to you for agri-innovation that is practically useful and commercially viable for the betterment of farmers.

I came to know that the University has prepared Vision-2050 and is working in the direction to make farming as one of the most remunerative and reputed profession. Vision of the University and dedication of the faculty members towards nation is reflected by the progress report submitted by the Vice Chancellor Dr. C.J. Dangaria and he deserves an applause. The technologies so developed by the University are percolating in the villages and farmers are taking advantage of these to sustain their agriculture.

Dear students and faculty members, presently we are celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of our Father of the Nation, Shri Mahatma Gandhi *ji*. We need to work on translation of Gandhiji's ideology pertaining to economic

and social development based on village as a self-sufficient unit by taking necessary steps for implementing his thought, ideas and plans for advancement of rural India and treat this aspect as one of the principle missions of all of us. Gandhian concept of rural development is that progress of the country lies in the development of majority of its rural villages. For marching ahead on rural development path we should become Techno—Social—Spiritual—Gandhian professionals having a vast practical experience in the field of agriculture & rural development.

“Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav” is a mammoth programme launched by ICAR, through the network of ATARIs located in different zones. The objective of the programme is to promote the direct interface of scientists with the farmers to hasten the lab to land process. This will ensure that farmers benefit from best farm practices by providing required information, knowledge and advisories on regular basis by adopting villages. This will also imbibe a sense of ownership among the agricultural scientists of the country.

Realizing the importance of rural youth in agricultural development of the country, ICAR has initiated a programme on “Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture” (ARYA). ARYA project has been implemented in 25 States through KVKs, one district from each State. In one district, 200-300 rural youths are being identified for their skill development in entrepreneurial activities and establishment of related micro-enterprise units. KVKs will involve the Agricultural Universities and ICAR Institutes as Technology Partners. At KVKs also one or two enterprise units are being established so that they serve as entrepreneurial training units for farmers. The purpose is to establish economic models for youth in the villages so that youths get attracted in agriculture and overall rural situation is improved. Skill development of rural youths will help in improving their confidence levels and encourage them to

pursue farming as profession, generate additional employment opportunities to absorb under employed and unemployed rural youth in secondary agriculture and service related activities in rural areas. The concurrent monitoring, evaluation and mid-term correction will be an integral part of project implementation I am happy that the KVKs of this university are working well in the direction and may set an example for the other KVKs.

Gujarat has pioneered the Soil Health Card, which was the dream project of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. The idea was conceived, planned and executed in Gujarat by him when he was Chief Minister of this state. After becoming Prime Minister, the same has been expanded in the entire country. So far more than 12 crore soil health cards have been distributed in the country. This has benefitted the farmers greatly as it has not only checked the injudicious use of chemical fertilizers by selecting proper fertilizers but also has contributed significantly in the enhancing farm income.

Dear students and faculty members, as you know the Global Warming is one of the serious issues. IPCC emissions scenario indicates that atmospheric carbon dioxide will reach 550 ppm by 2050 and this change along with increase in other "greenhouse" gases seems likely to create further perturbations in global weather patterns. By virtue of this, the climates of coming days will have warmer days and nights, fewer cold days, more frequent hot days and nights, while it is likely that there will be larger areas affected by droughts. Current climate models suggest that annual rainfall will decline and annual mean surface temperatures will rise by 1-2°C. It will pose a serious threat to crop production and our dream to turn the Green Revolution – into Evergreen Revolution would need more dedication from scientific fraternity.

For the same, we need to work seriously on the enhancement of Input Use Efficiency so that the quantum of greenhouse gas accumulation in the

atmosphere is decreased A small decision can make big difference. The central government has replaced simple urea with the cent per cent neem coated urea. This has not only checked the use of subsidized urea in non-agricultural use but also has increased the efficiency of urea and decreased the requirement of urea in the agriculture.

Another major contributor of greenhouse gas especially Carbon Dioxide is C3 plants which need to be converted in to C4 plants. In addition to quicker photosynthesis, C4 plants demand less water and less nitrogen. Overall, aim should be to introduce the characteristics of C4 into C3 crops. This would increase yield, reduce land area needed for cultivation, decrease irrigation and limit fertiliser applications.

The water use efficiency also needs to be focused upon. Gujarat is at the forefront in this and has popularized the use of drip and sprinkler irrigation systems through various schemes. The slogan “Per Drop More Crop” should reach each and every farmer so that they realize and adopt technologies which can help achieve this target.

Government of India has already began linking village markets across the country under scheme like e-NAM. In addition to this the efforts are being made to link more than 22000 villages and wholesale markets with the global market. The government is also emphasizing and encouraging the farm producer organizations (FPO). The farmers can very easily link their village market with big market by own by forming associations

Scientists should focus their attention towards innovation and new start-ups in the agriculture sector. You should make consistent efforts to link the local farmers with technology. I came to know that the NAU has established linkages with farmers by using IT based technology for timely communication

related to weather, crop advisory, pest and disease survey, surveillance and market linkage.

The Prime Minister's vision of doubling farmers' income by 2022 is worth serious attention. This laudable objective would not only improve the wellbeing of our farmers but can also be a trigger to boost agri-based manufacturing growth in rural India. If large number of agricultural households are connected to mass consumption markets — both domestic and global — the objective of doubling farm income doesn't seem daunting. The focus must shift from increasing per acre productivity to gainfully employing farm households in other farm-related activities. There is a need to involve the under-employed adults in rural households in low-skilled non-crop activities that integrate output from these activities into the existing or future markets. Central to this approach is creating a market-place that supports a rural enterprise which is partly agricultural and partly non-agricultural.

ICAR has designed and developed the Education Portal under the Digital India programme of the Prime Minister of India and for the first time all the Agricultural Universities have come on a single platform to disseminate the information for the benefits of the students and farming community. It will act as a single window platform for providing vital education information/announcements/event schedules/e-learning resources from Agricultural Universities across the country to the rural youth in an easy and fast way on their doorsteps.

ICAR has accentuated "Student READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana)" program in the credits and you are probably among those students who are ready to illustrate the upshots of this program which is in compliance with the student READY programme launched by our Hon'ble Prime Minister on 25th July, 2015

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra *bhai* Modi *ji* has always emphasized on making agricultural education more practical and useful. For that, ICAR has modified and enriched the syllabus at UG and PG level to make it relevant and useful for students, farmers and agro based industries. Also, the upgradation in the contents and new degree programmes has been included in the 5th Deans' Committee recommendations and are being implemented within the country. Another Committee has been constituted by ICAR and is currently working towards reshaping the PG syllabus. I am sure, this kind of modification and implementations will surely modulate a degree holder to a technocrat. The government is stressing up skill development programs viz. innovation and Start Up, organizing the conventions to inculcate the habit of imbibing the knowledge and skills in both the students and teachers.

IARI, New Delhi has been framing a Farm Development Card (FDC), which is a farm plan or business plan, based on holistic and system approach for the development of a farm. The objectives are to provide a precise model for development of the small and marginal farmers fitting to their resource-base, infrastructure available and market opportunity. FDC considers overall situations of the farm including the resource-base, knowledge and skill possessed by the farmer, constraints and market opportunity. This card includes all the aspects related to ecological development economic development, water productivity, soil health management, energy production, agro-biodiversity and system productivity. FDC accommodates soil health card and soil management aspects. FDC is a great tool for doubling the farmers' income by providing a viable and acceptable business plan based on the strength of the farm, need of the farm family, market opportunity and resource-base of the farmers. Hence, it is sustainable.

Dear students, now it is your turn to take agriculture to new heights. You need to play a critical role in the development of a rapidly developing India so that all can have happy and prosperous life. Once again I congratulate and bless the students passing out today and expect that the knowledge acquired in the University will act as a path finder in the competitive and challenging world for the progress and prospective of the nation. Once again, greetings and thanks to one and all present in the Dikshant Mandap.

I record my heartfelt thanks to the authorities to this esteemed University for inviting me to the convention function.

Jai Hind..