

# Convocation Address

**36<sup>th</sup> Convocation of MPKV, Rahuri**



**Padma Vibhushan Dr. Anil Kakodkar**

Chairman

Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Commission,  
Government of Maharashtra;  
Former Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission, Govt. of India

**Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2023**



**MAHATMA PHULE KRISHI VIDYAPEETH**

(Agricultural University)

Rahuri - 413 722, Dist. Ahmednagar, Maharashtra (India)



## CONVOCATION ADDRESS

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Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra and Chancellor, Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri, Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari; Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Govt. of Maharashtra and Pro-Chancellor, Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri, Shri Abdul Sattar; Hon'ble Minister for Revenue, Govt. of Maharashtra and the Guardian Minister of Ahmednagar district Shri Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil; Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Prof. P. G. Patil, members of the Executive Council and Academic Council of the university, Dr. C. D. Mayee, Padmashri Shri Popatrao Pawar, members of faculty, staff, dear students specially those graduating today, invitees, ladies and gentlemen. Kindly accept my gratitude for your invitation to be a part of this convocation. My congratulations to all students graduating today. Winners of different medals and awards deserve our special appreciation. The competitive world of today presents unprecedented challenges as well as opportunities for all those who wish to take them. I expect that on the basis of capability that you have

acquired here at MPKV, you would be able to realise maximum success for yourself as well as for the country. May all your dreams be fully realised.

Let me also use this occasion to congratulate my dear friend and colleague Dr. C. D. Mayee who is being decorated with a well-deserved Doctorate h.c. at this convocation. His contributions to the field of agriculture both in the state as well as nationally are well known.

I would also like to congratulate Padmashri Shri. Popatrao Pawar, Chairman, Adarsh Gaon Yojana, Maharashtra State and a well-known face for being conferred with a well-deserved Doctorate h.c. at this convocation for his contributions for the development of villages in the state of Maharashtra.

Agricultural universities including MPKV have played a critical role in transforming India from ship to mouth situation that existed earlier to a food surplus state through green revolution. Agriculture and allied activities form the back bone of rural economy in India. Even so the rural per capita income is just around half of the urban income. In the contemporary knowledge era, there is an opportunity to bridge this disparity gap through leveraging democratisation and decentralisation

potential of knowledge technologies. Capacity building of rural population not only to leverage knowledge era opportunities in agriculture but also in service and manufacturing sectors is however a prerequisite for this to happen. Agricultural Universities have a major opportunity and important role to play in this context.

Basically, the higher education framework should aim at human capability building pursuing following three pathways with choice to individuals to adopt their own combination of the three;

1. Take learners all the way up to the current frontiers of knowledge in respective disciplines, engage in research to push these frontiers forward & be in the forefront in delivering cutting edge technologies emerging out of such new knowledge.
2. Build world class professionals in the practice of state of art technologies and contribute to the welfare of humankind and protecting the ecology as well as the environment around.
3. Pay attention to capability building of people at the grassroots through knowledge empowerment to bridge the disparity gaps which seems to be

growing even as more wealth is created. Rural areas need much greater attention in this context.

While pursuing this path, we should also ensure inculcation of a deeper understanding of human values through association and practice, preferably related to applications in different specialised areas one is working on. Inculcation of such values to leverage acquired capability for overall human and nature's benefit without being exploitative is the key to sustainable progress and should be one of the key objectives of any university.

To be effective in this context, our knowledge institutions have to be both knowledge creators as well as value creators and inculcate such an aptitude and capability in our students as a result of their being a part of a broad-based learning and practice ecosystem. In terms of knowledge creation, we should note that today India is at the third position globally in terms of our scientific publications record with perhaps the fastest growth rate. While there is scope to improve further both in terms of quantity as well as quality particularly across the full spectrum of institutions in the country, we have to cover a much larger ground in the context of value creation. Agricultural universities have indeed been playing an

important role in this context. They are becoming more comprehensive to include capacity building of rural domain in knowledge technologies related to all segments of economy including service sector and manufacturing sector has the potential of bridging urban rural divide and significantly jacking up India's economy.

Bridging the urban rural divide is clearly a matter of urgent necessity in our country. This would involve capacity building of local people through education and training in dealing with emerging technologies and also build their ability to internalise them including solving of problems as they arise. Eventually we should create a self-empowered and locally relevant innovation ecosystem that can leverage the opportunities of knowledge era. In principle, I believe that in the contemporary knowledge era, one could have greater opportunities in villages than in cities reversing the industrial era paradigms. In this context the universities or institutions can be instrumental in setting up what I call a CILLAGE – a knowledge integrated sustainable village development model that aims to leverage new and appropriate knowledge-based technologies, including some created locally, to create additional and higher-level livelihood opportunities in

villages that also include manufacturing and service sector activities in addition to agriculture and allied activities.

In the CILLAGE concept, a local Higher Education Institution serving as a Knowledge Partner hosts a Rural Human and Resources Development Facility (RHRDF) and linked with local community institutions and NGOs, works for deployment of appropriate technologies for enhanced livelihood as well as related educational and training support in the neighbourhood. To facilitate sustained and comprehensive engagement between RHRDF and the neighbourhood, a number of Advanced Knowledge based Rural Technology sub-centres (AKRUTI for short), need to be established in proximity with existing schools. RHRDF and AKRUTIs would be the bridge between local higher education institution and the neighbourhood to spread technology enabled livelihood on one side and ICT enabled school education on the other. Exposure of school children to real life livelihood activities based on contemporary technologies could be a significant value addition from education perspective as well. The knowledge institution should also engage itself in solving problems that could arise



during implementation of new technologies and search for new R&D problems to sustain a transformative knowledge-based ecosystem. The eco-system so created could also participate in deployment of other Govt. Schemes as well as corporate initiatives. One can notice that framework that I have described above is close to system of Krishi Vidnyan Kendras. One only needs to make them more holistic by bringing in knowledge technologies of relevance to service and manufacturing sector as well engagement with school education system.

Spread of technology adaptation and continuous access to new technologies could create better livelihood opportunities in rural domain that eventually would compare well with opportunities in urban domain thus leading to convergence of the best of city (i.e., opportunities for self-progress, modern infrastructure for education etc.) with best of a village (i.e., clean, calm and eco/human-friendly environment). Thus, the selected cluster of villages (Cillage) around a vibrant knowledge institution can be expected to become preferred working destination for young innovative and creative generation for leveraging local human and raw material resources on one side and new knowledge technologies on the other.

Cillages could thus become places, better than both cities and villages and may become the preferred habitats for the new age society in most of emerging India. This approach is being tried out on an experimental basis at a few places in Maharashtra. I must also mention that a number of very challenging deep research problems can be identified through such engagement. Our top tier higher education and research institutions and their graduates have a special role in this context. In partnership with local Higher Education Institution, they can trigger a locally relevant high-tech oriented innovation eco system to uplift rural India on the lines described above.

Technology and technology products that offer differentiating capability to their users, significantly add to their competitiveness and hence to their power both in the market place as well as strategically. This has several ramifications for our national progress as well as our relative position in the competitive world that exists around us. Both these dimensions are of immense importance. While the technology empowers humans, the education that we provide to our young people should also make them responsible so as to ensure that the use of

technology remains non-exploitative even as technology is used to empower everyone around through knowledge and minimise the disparity gaps that are becoming alarming by the day. Speaking more broadly, the process should bridge the gaps in key human needs *viz.*, identity, prosperity and security and usher in peace and harmony. This should be both a global as well as a local effort. Bridging the disparity gaps globally as well as within the country, to eliminate rich-poor, urban-rural and such other divides even as the technology uplifts the society as a whole is the key to peaceful and harmonious world in my view. While this is a complex matter having multiple dimensions, I do believe that knowledge and more particularly knowledge technologies can be most effective in addressing this challenge. That is where young graduates from higher education and research institutions, such as agricultural universities, come in. I do wish all of you to be successful in your professional career and make an important difference to our country in the above context.

I wish that all of you would give some serious thought to what I have said above and decide your respective course of action. It should be our collective

endeavor to progressively move towards making the world a better place. Through a lifelong learning process and maintaining knowledge institutions, industry and society interconnected with each other, each one of us, regardless of career we decide to pursue, can meaningfully contribute to this objective. After all, we are all here in this world to play our respective roles. Our happiness and joy of life depends on how well we play our roles. We must also remember that our happiness depends on the happiness all around us.

Dear students, I once again wish all of you well in your respective further pursuits. I am certain, you would rise progressively in your respective careers. I do hope that as you rise, you will retain in you a spirit of trusteeship and contribute substantially to your roots, the society around, the institutions that brought you up and the nation at large. It is this spirit of trusteeship and the desire to support others who were not as fortunate or as successful as us that makes this world a better place.

Once again, my best wishes to you all.

Thank you.

