

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI
PRANAB MUKHERJEE AT THE KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY SPECIAL
CONVOCATION CEREMONY on 3 November 2016**

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Chancellor, of Kathmandu University,
Shri Dhaniram Poudel, Minister of Education and Pro-Chancellor, Kathmandu University,
Dr. Ram Kant Makaju Shrestha, Vice-Chancellor, Kathmandu University,
Distinguished members of this Senate,
Distinguished members of the faculty,
Dear students, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I thank you Mr. Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, members of this Senate and all other academic bodies of this University for conferring me this honour. I deeply value this gesture of friendship and warmly accept this Honorary Doctorate as the President of the Republic of India on behalf of my people.

Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,
I am particularly happy to have this opportunity to address the students of this University who are the leaders of tomorrow and who are the hope of the generation next.

At the outset, I would like to offer my best wishes and congratulation to Kathmandu University on the completion of successful 25 years and celebrating its Silver Jubilee. In a short span of time of 25 years, this University has been recognized as one of the important centers of higher learning in Nepal and in this region offering academic courses in Humanities, Science, Engineering, Medicines, Management, Law and other related facilities.
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my country, in the capacity of being Visitors of 114 central institutions, as the President of the Republic, more than often, whenever I get an opportunity to address an academic congregation like this, I point out and repeat that this region, the region of Indo-Nepal undivided India, including the large number of national states which have come to exist today, this sub-continent had a very prominent place in the field of higher learning. In fact, not one or two years, one or two decades, overall most centuries from 6th century B.C. to 12th century A.D., from the early days of Takshashila to the destructions of Nalanda University in the 13th century, these universities used to attract mighty minds, talents from all over the world in the form of the students and teachers like magnet. Now, with the advancement of modern education, somehow or other,

we have lost that position and now-a-days when the reputed international rating agencies bring out their lists of top 200 world class universities, universities from this region normally do not find place. That does not mean that we do not have talent, that does not mean that we do not have excellent faculties or brilliant students or researchers or innovators. One point to which I would like to draw attention of the academicians, academic administrators, faculty members and of course private life students, that it is certain technical aspects which you should take care of. I am happy that Kathmandu University has made it a focal point of intelligent innovation, research and development. Without innovation, without innovative mind, there cannot be worthwhile research and substantial contribution towards the advancement. I will give you a very simple example from India. I am glad to know that Sir C.V. Raman is also memorized with this illustrious university. In the thirties of the last century, he was the first and last Nobel laureate in Physics for original research. After that, nobody has received but it is truly a dichotomy in the sense that in the contemporary period, we have found four eminent Indians. They are product of the Indian universities at the graduation or at the post-graduation levels. Dr. Amartya Sen, Hargobind Khurana, Chandra Shekhar, all of them recognized and received Nobel Prize in different fields for their original contribution. Therefore, talents are there. They are products of the university system. But we are unable to provide the necessary ambience for working for research, development and innovation. Therefore, we shall have to emphasize that I am happy Kathmandu University is exactly doing the same and that is the reason why within a short span of two and a half decades you have emerged as a center of excellence. We shall have to emphasize on excellence our students have made it. Our faculties are excellent, our teachers and students are hardworking but we could not create the appropriate ambience, particularly neglecting innovation and research. If you want to have true industrialization, there is close connective link between innovation, research and industrial expansion. I would like to tell you the stories of German industrial revolution in the 70s of the 19th century. After the German unification under the leadership of Bismarck and Persian Empire, 1870-71, massive industrial development started there. Actually, Germany was late in industrial revolution in Europe but students of history are aware of the fact that they not only made up, they shook the whole Europe and the world in the last century's first half by causing two devastating world wars. But the short story which I am trying to bring to your attention, once as Chancellor of Germany Bismarck went to an industrial complex and the management of the company took him to a research laboratory. He asked the director of the institute, "Well Professor, what is your outcome ratio?" He said, "Sir, may be one out of hundred". Then Bismarck asked him, "Well Mr. Director, don't you think it is wastage of funds and resources?" The bold reply came, "No Sir. Your investment in 99 may be wasted but one successful investment which is possible, if we go on innovating and expanding our research work, will compensate all your losses and you will have surplus." Exactly it happened in the industrial revolution process of Germany, which emerged as one of the most advanced industrial country despite being devastated twice in the first half of the last century in two

World Wars. Even when whole European economy is struggling to keep itself afloat, the only solid economy is German economy and people are expecting that salvation of European crisis to a considerable extent would be possible because of the contributions of Germany. I would not like to link then my observations on this occasion because it is my humble acceptance of the distinction, Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Vice Chancellor, all the distinguished members of senate and academic council of this university has conferred on me. I do hope, I will come up to your expectation in discharging my services to the people, people of this universe and world, because services cannot be confined to any territorial geographical limitation. To serve a man is to serve God that is the ancient teaching of India and Nepal. Therefore, on this occasion, Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Vice Chancellor, let me humbly accept the distinction which you have conferred on for me and re-dedicate myself to the service of humanity .

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.