

**SPEECH OF SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE,  
FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA ON THE  
LAUNCH OF BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN'S  
DIGITIZED JOURNAL**

I am happy to be here today to inaugurate Digitized version of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Journal. At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Director, the Management and all members of the Bhavan across the nation on the launch of its Digitized Journal.

2. On various occasions I have been a part of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's journey. I remember, I had the privilege of inaugurating its Platinum Jubilee celebrations in Mumbai in the year 2012; I also had the opportunity to attend the Convocation of the sixth batch of the students of PGDM, at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Institute of Communication and Management, Bhubaneswar in 2013 and more recently, I was a part of the series of lectures on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and life in Delhi, earlier this year.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. The founding of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan was one of the pioneering steps in a series of selfless efforts put in by Dr. K.M. Munshi in emancipating the people of this nation from lack of education. The founding of the Bhavan echoed his deeply entrenched belief in the instrument of education, which he was convinced, could offer wings for the growth and development of India. Dr. Munshi once observed and I quote ***"India will once again be acknowledged as the vishwa guru – a superpower that embodies the ideals of vasudhaiva kudumbakam –the global family"***.

4. Today, I stand before you at the inauguration of the Digital Journal of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. This compendium, I am informed, contains 63 years of its publications (from 1954 to 2017); 1551 issues; 32,293 articles; 4,465 authors; and a total of 1,68,217 pages. It is surprising that a small device like this can be a power house of so much information. But then these are the benefit of Digitalization and also the natural course for all since India is one of the largest and fastest-growing markets for digital consumers. As digital capabilities

improve and connectivity becomes omnipresent, technology is poised to quickly and radically change nearly every sector of India's economy.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. I am happy to note that Bhavan's Journal, the English fortnightly is devoted to life, literature and culture, spiritual and philosophical thought and has come to be recognized as one of the most widely read magazines having vast and enlightened readership. I am informed that this journal was established in 1954 as an educational tool disseminating our eternal culture through print medium. Through this, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan made an effort to build up a modern bridge spanning the past, present and the future. I am also happy to note that the periodical outsells most others with a record 7,25,000 readers every fortnight. To my mind, it is so because it speaks the spiritual language and represents the collective wisdom of centuries.

6. There are elements in all cultures which transcend all barriers and knit people together. For us, it is our civilizational value of ***Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: The***

**World is one family.** The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is an organization which firmly believes in promoting those values through their multi-dimensional programs. And we cannot deny that these values are embedded in our national outlook. During more than eight decades of its existence, the Bhavan has blossomed into an ever growing, voluntary, apolitical national movement with an international outlook, devoted to life, literature and culture. Thus, I am not surprised that today, Bhavan has blossomed into one of the largest NGOs in the country having more than 126 Kendras including 6 abroad, 395 institutions with a student and staff strength of more than 2.30 lakh and 15,000 respectively. I am also told that they have a publication division which has so far published more than 2000 titles with more than 32 million copies sold till date.

7. I firmly believe that the strength of a nation and its quality is reflected by its written materials, manuscripts and literature – their creation and consumption. I had recently quoted the French philosopher, Rene Descartes and I quote again, “**The reading of all good**

***books is like conversation with the finest people of the past centuries.***” (Unquote) However, the reading culture today often bothers me. With the many benefits of technology, some ills have surfaced too; social media being one of them. To a large extent, the passion for reading and visiting libraries has deteriorated and has been replaced by time spent on social media platforms.

8. In my opinion, what the generation of today fails to understand and appreciate is that reading generates imagination. It sharpens the mind and builds the capacity to concentrate. Thus, my dear friends, the onus of encouraging people to see and explore this sanctuary of written knowledge lies much more on your shoulders. This digital record inaugurated today may add millions more to access it.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

9. Literary works are not merely a means of communication. Our languages, scriptures, manuscripts, literature and books are our heritage. They define and reflect the roots of our society. The promotion of

literature cannot take place on the basis of Government support alone. I urge all stakeholders, including Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan to contribute meaningfully toward preserving, encouraging and promoting Indian languages and literature through reviving the art of reading and visiting libraries.

10. I firmly believe that it is only through constant engagement with words, authors and images that one realizes what a gift readership is in itself. It not only edifies the mind but also questions the spirit. It is through reading that we can get immersed in the vast knowledge that is around us to create, innovate and evolve constantly. The motto of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, ***Aa no Bhadrah Kratavo Yantu Vishwatah : Let noble thoughts come to us from every side,*** guides us in that very direction.

11. Swami Vivekananda once observed and I quote "***All knowledge, that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the Universe, is***

*in our own mind.*” Quest for knowledge and sharing of wisdom with others will help eliminate darkness in society and take both the mind and soul forward towards enlightenment. In the Bhagavad Gita, sharing of knowledge has been termed as, “**Sarva Shrestha Punya**”, the holiest of all blessings. Thus this digitalized journal and various other publications is a major contribution by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in this regard.

12. Before concluding, I would like to mention that Dr. K.M. Munshi, looked upon the Bhavan as an “Adventure in Faith”, a faith in India’s past, present and future. Not just that, but faith in India’s people who have a rich and unbroken cultural heritage. I firmly believe that revitalizing ancient values and reintegrating them to suit the changing needs of modern times alone will give people the strength to assimilate whatever is good in the new, without being swept away from the traditional moorings. I once again congratulate you all and wish you the very best in all your future endeavours.

Thank You

Jai Hind