

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE AT THE PRESENTATION OF RASHTRAPATI
SCOUT/GUIDE/ROVER/RANGER AND ADULT LEADER AWARD/
CERTIFICATES FOR THE YEAR 2011 AND 2012**

Rashtrapati Bhavan Bhavan, New Delhi: 09-09-2013

1. I am indeed delighted to meet you today to participate in this award ceremony.
2. Since 1961, when my illustrious predecessor, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, associated himself with the Bharat Scouts and Guides, the tradition of these annual awards has continued. The recognition of the highest achievers amongst you has encouraged and inspired generations of Scouts and Guides to channelise their energies vigorously into community service and nation building.
3. I laud the Scouts and Guides Movement in India for its success in developing a wide national network and also in connecting with counterpart organizations throughout the world to spread friendship and cooperation. I am happy to see that your strength has reached a record 51 lakhs. This is certainly indicative of the increasing enthusiasm, in the youth of India, to embrace the motto of “*service*” and to work for national integration and international harmony.
4. I am especially happy to have this opportunity to convey to the Bharat Scouts and Guides community, my simple message: your country is proud of you. You represent a highly motivated and well-organized body of dedicated youth. You have proven to be a very efficient voluntary movement, non-political in nature, that has purposefully engaged in the building of an enlightened and progressive society.
5. Your guiding dictum, ‘*duty to god, duty to others and duty to self*’, will ingrain in you spiritual principles that build character. It will impel you to spread the virtues of mutual respect and brotherhood in our society. Through your participation in the Scouts and Guides Movement, you will also realise your own intellectual, physical and spiritual potential.

6. Ladies and Gentlemen, we are, today, only too aware of the social conflicts that can threaten our rapidly transforming society. Our nation is presently transiting through an unprecedented demographic change. In 2020, the average Indian will be only 29 years old. This should indicate how important it is for us to focus, today, on our youth. While we speak of inclusive growth, it is the leaders at the grassroots who will be the agents of change. I am confident that the Scouts and Guides Movement can effectively provide this leadership where it is needed - at the bottom of the pyramid.

7. I am aware that one of your campaigns is the "*Khari Kama*" in which you undertake work for remuneration that is then used by your respective Units. This simple campaign teaches you dignity of labour, an important value that Gandhiji strongly upheld. Inculcating this at a young age will enthuse you with self confidence, self reliance and a sense of duty.

8. As Indians, we have inherited a legacy of profound reverence towards nature. Community activities to protect, conserve and preserve our abundant natural resources and our environment are, in my estimation a national duty. Creating greater awareness of this duty, and the manner in which each and every member of our society can fulfil this important obligation is an area where your cadres can make a big difference.

9. I would emphasise that in our quest for higher standards of living, we must equally seek to create higher standards of social order. We must be increasingly mindful of the sensitivities of those around us – and how they may be affected by our words and deeds. While we endeavour to eliminate the problems that distort our social development, and as we address imbalances, we must collectively identify the values that have, over the centuries, served to safeguard the pluralistic and secular fabric of our society. And we must reinforce these ethics so that as we go forth into a globalised world, we, as Indians, remain faithful to these unique traditions. Similarly, we must strive to continuously generate greater tolerance and understanding among all sections of our democratic society. Your initiatives can help in the building of national pride among young people and teach them to recognize and reject any narrow and divisive agendas. The Scouts and Guides law of "*pure in thought, word and deed*" is an excellent principle

indeed. In this context, especially, the Scouts, Guides, Rovers and Rangers are fortunate that they have the guidance of Adult Leaders.

10. I would also like to take this opportunity to convey my deep appreciation to the Scouts and Guides for your untiring efforts in rescue and rehabilitation operations - including just a few months ago during the devastating floods in Uttarakhand. You have been at the forefront in extremely challenging situations. Your support to the railways and civil administration during the Kumbh Mela, your programmes of rebuilding schools, Polio Immunization, Anti Tobacco Campaign, Education extension and Community Workshops are only a few of the numerous projects that you have so successfully carried out. I thank each and every member of the Bharat Scouts and Guides Movement for your selfless service to the nation. I am sure that with every initiative that you take up, you inspire many to also come forward and make a contribution with similar dedication and sincerity.

11. With these words, I once again congratulate all the award winners – including the Adult Leaders of the Bharat Scouts and Guides Organisation for their meritorious and outstanding service. I offer the Bharat Scouts and Guides my felicitations and extend to you my good wishes for the continued success of your endeavours. May you grow from strength to strength.

Jai Hind!
