

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE AT THE SESSION ON INDUSTRY-ACADEMIA
COLLABORATIONS WITH CII DURING THE VISITOR'S
CONFERENCE**

Auditorium, RBCC: Nov 16, 2016

1. I am happy to address this session on industry-academia collaborations. This indeed is an important component of the three-day Visitor's Conference that has begun today. Let me thank the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for collaborating with Rashtrapati Bhavan for this particular session. CII has been active in bridging the higher education and industrial sectors. Its unique models of forging industry-institution collaborations, be it the Prime Minister's Fellowship Scheme for Doctoral Research with DST or the IndPact Survey with AICTE, have been quite successful. I compliment CII and the partner organizations and urge them to continue this progressive exercise for the future.

2. Before I proceed with the discussions, let me also quickly congratulate all the central institutions and the industry organizations who have exchanged MOUs on this platform just a while ago. What started as an initiative last year – when 43 MOUs were exchanged at the Visitor's Conference – has begun "trending" this year. The MOU count is 67 now. I am hopeful of this trend becoming a movement in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

3. The higher education sector has a crucial role in the national developmental effort. Being the storehouse of traditional wisdom, as also the nursery of new knowledge, the higher education eco-system influences the various growth centres of an economy. Growth of the industrial sector depends on higher education in some important ways. The quality of training provided to students employed by this sector determines the level of industrial competence, and industry provides an outlet for various research and innovations taking place at the university level. Technological developments improve efficiency of factories resulting in products of better quality at lesser costs.
4. There is therefore a vital need for the industry and higher education to interact in a mutually beneficial framework. A strong interface between these two core sectors will have positive spin offs for the entire economy. What is taught and researched in the higher education system must find application in the industrial sector.
5. For industry, the first link with an educational institution is through the induction of quality manpower. Unless graduates meet the skill sets needed in the industry, their usefulness will not translate into tangible benefits for the employer. The course work in our campuses must be aligned to industrial trends. It is necessary to have corporate experts advising

academic managers on the requirements in the industrial sector. Their inputs can then be backed up with various scholastic modules including project work and internship. This in turn would also make academic institutions better prepared to receive industry personnel for imparting mid-career training.

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen:

6. Research collaboration is another important component in the relationship between the industry and academic institutions. A vast quantum of knowledge is created in the tertiary education system through research. They find application in society through industrial and other sectors. A robust industrial linkage, to my mind, provides an efficient mechanism for transfer of knowledge from the higher education system to the economic system. It also leads to better coordination of R&D effort thereby avoiding duplication.

7. It is heartening to find our central institutions of higher learning engaging themselves actively with the industrial sector in recent years. During the vice chancellors' conference 2014, I had given a call to the central institutions to set up industry-interface cells for collaborative activities like joint research, faculty exchange, and setting up of chairs and endowments. I am happy to find industry-interface cells in 90 central institutions now. There are over 450 MOUs with the industry as on date. Visitor's Conferences - 2015 and 2016 – have

propelled over 100 MOUs. I must say that the progress made in some of the MOUs exchanged last year is indeed good as brought out in the presentations this evening. It gives me the confidence that we can soon shift our benchmarks to higher levels of performance so that both can reap full benefit.

8. Studies have found that industry collaboration not only facilitates knowledge transfer and accelerates mind-to-market conversion of innovations, it also improves academic productivity. Our MOUs have focused mainly on conferences, training of industrial employees, internship of students, adjunct faculty positions for industry experts, and transfer of academically created intellectual property to business enterprises through licensing. While this is laudable, MOUs must also focus on high intensity linkages like research partnerships, shared incubators and research parks. They must entail contracting of research-related work including consultancy, quality control, testing, certification and prototype development to institutions by industrial firms.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

9. Institutions and industry may at times find it difficult to establish intensive linkages. Research orientation between academic

institutions and business establishments may differ. Business entities may be focused on quick outcomes and faster availability of new products. Universities and institutions may lay more emphasis on basic research having long gestation. Both are right in their own thinking. But to collaborate, we must build a common meeting ground of business and intellectual perspectives. This requires human capital and soft skills. The top management in both, Corporations as well as institutions must be involved in and convinced about collaboration as a strategic purpose. They must deploy personnel who are capable of developing and maintaining partnerships, in an atmosphere of trust and harmony. A strong relationship between an institution of higher learning and an industrial enterprise can spur further expansion of the spheres of collaboration.

10. Ladies & Gentlemen,

With these words, I conclude by once again complimenting the central institutions and industry for exchanging a large number of MoUs today. I hope more and more central institutes of higher learning, including non-technical institutions focused on liberal arts, would interact with industry in the future. Wishing you all success and Godspeed in your endeavours!

Thank you.

Jai Hind.
