

National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
New Delhi

Seventeenth Foundation Day Lecture

Education – Life Long Learning

by

Professor Anand Bhalerao

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Rajasthan*



हीरक जयंती

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National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration

The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration is the premier national institution engaged in all aspects of educational policy, planning, and administration. Originally established in 1962 as the Asian Centre for Educational Planners and Administrators, it is today conferred with the status of a university, and is fully funded by the Ministry of Education, Government of India. Over the last several decades, through its research, teaching, and capacity building activities with educational administrators at national, state, district, and sub-district levels, the organization has rightfully earned the status of being the apex national institution steering educational policy - planning as also in guiding on the ground change processes.

As a university, the NIEPA today has a multi-disciplinary faculty, and their scholarship contributes to broadening of the inter-disciplinary social science perspective, specially with respect to education. The NIEPA offers Doctoral programmes and Masters in educational policy and development. The institution hosts leading scholars of education globally, as also visiting delegations of educational administrators from the developing world, including an in-residence diploma programme for international educational administrators.

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Education – Life Long Learning

Anand Bhalerao*

Chief Guest of today's function, Minister of State for Education, Hon'ble Smt. Annapurna Devi ji, Chairperson of today's programme and most fascinating personality among all Vice-Chancellors of Central Universities Hon'ble Prof. Shashikala Wanjari ji, Prof. Manisha Priyam ji, respected dignitaries, esteemed guests, members of the NIEPA faculty and staff, dear students, and all the distinguished participants, ladies, and gentlemen, good evening to you all.

At the outset, I wish you all a warm and heartfelt congratulations on the Foundation Day celebration of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA).

It gives me immense pleasure to be a part of this joyous occasion of this esteemed institution. I feel privileged and honoured today.

Today, we have gathered here to commemorate the visionaries who laid the foundation of this esteemed institution and to celebrate the journey of

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learning, growth, and innovation that has shaped NIEPA over the years.

As we embark on this momentous occasion, it is essential to pay homage to the great minds whose vision and dedication gave birth to this institution. We pay our gratitude to those far-sighted individuals who recognized the power of education and its pivotal role in nation-building.

Their vision has led NIEPA to this very moment.

Now NIEPA stands tall as a beacon of knowledge and academic excellence in the field of educational planning and administration.

Since its inception, NIEPA has been steadfast in its commitment to fostering educational research, providing training, and promoting capacity-building to enhance educational planning and administration in India.

This institute has continuously strived to bridge the gap between research and policy, thereby shaping the educational landscape of our for the better.

It has not only produced exceptional scholars and academicians but has also played a crucial role in informing education policies and practices

at both national and international levels. Its contributions to the field of education have been invaluable. The impact of its work can be seen across various domains of academia, policymaking, and practice.

While we celebrate our achievements, we also acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. The world of education is dynamic and constantly evolving.

The advent of new technologies, changing societal needs, and global challenges require us to be adaptive, innovative, and proactive in our approach.

So, I was thinking about what should I speak today. Prof. Manisha Priyam Ji gave me an MCQ with three options, I selected one of them, but my inner mind was finding some relationship between foundation day and lifelong learning.

Both ideas of the Foundation Day and of lifelong learning converge in their shared emphasis on knowledge, growth, and evolution.

The celebration of Foundation Day not only marks the institution's birth but also serves as a reminder of its commitment to nurturing lifelong learners.

Lifelong learning is the concept of continuously acquiring knowledge, skills, and competencies throughout one's life.

It is an approach that emphasizes the importance of learning beyond formal education and throughout various stages of an individual's personal and professional development.

Lifelong learning recognizes that learning is not confined to specific periods of life or formal educational institutions.

It is a journey that continues beyond school and university, evolving as individuals encounter new challenges, experiences, and opportunities.

Recently I came across a very interesting book titled – 'Bride at Ten, Mother at Fifteen' written by Smt Sethu Ramaswamy, a lady from Tamil Nadu.

Her formal education was only till 5th class, but she had a strong desire to become a postgraduate.

She was married at age 10 and became a mother at 15. Family responsibilities didn't give her the time or opportunity to meet her desire.

However, her desire to become a postgraduate was burning in her mind.

She worked hard and registered for an M.A. degree, at the age of 78, and passed the examination at 80,

she proudly said,

"I passed my M.A. and my degree came by post. It was a bare second division but I had at last fulfilled a great desire, my life's ambition, which was burning within me".

In the book, she says, "All her life, like countless Indian housewives, I was an unknown woman - a woman of no consequence.

But at the age of 80, I became a known Indian woman - a person of some consequence. What had I achieved in my life until that point?

I had brought up six daughters, the first being born when I was fifteen, the last when I was twenty-nine."

The message is clear and loud –

"Age doesn't matter, if you have a great aim in life, you can achieve it."

Friends, let me share with you one story shared by the former president of India, Hon'ble Dr. A P J Kalam in one convocation.

The story was of his driver when he was in DRDO. (V. Kathiresan),

APJ noticed, that his driver was always reading some books, newspapers, and journals during his free time. He had a very high concentration on his reading.

He asked him, What made you read during your leisure time?

He replied that he had a son and daughter. They used to ask him a lot of questions.

That made him study and try to answer at his level best.

This way, studying in their free time, he completed his +2, did B.A. (History), M.A (History), M.A (Political Science), and completed his B.Ed., M.Ed., and Ph.D. in 2001.

He then became an Assistant Professor at the Government Arts College at Mellur near Madurai.

The message is, loud and clear – no matter who we are if we have commitment, dedication, and determination, we will certainly achieve our vision.

We always complain about the lack of resources, equipment, and infrastructure for quality research. I wish to have your attention towards what Dr. C V Raman said in this regard. He said and I quote

"The essence of science is independent thinking, hard work, and not equipment. When I got my Nobel Prize, I had spent hardly 200 rupees on my equipment."

Dr. C V Raman's entire life was devoted to the creation of knowledge through research, and he is a role model for generations together.

You all know Plato, a Greek philosopher, and a disciple of Socrates. He was known by his disciple Aristotle.

In his academy, Plato gave a definition of man as 'featherless bipeds', and he was much praised.

Another philosopher and critic of Plato Diogenes plucked a chicken and brought it into Plato's academy and said, 'Behold I have brought your man'.

And then the definition of man was corrected as 'Man is a rational animal.'

Man is different from other animals due to his thinking power. He acquires knowledge with the help of his thinking power.

Society also remembers only knowledgeable people.

You all know Socrates; He was offered a glass of poison. His disciple came and asked on his last night, what should I do of your body after your death?

He replied ' Who are you to do anything of my body? I am not going to die; I will be there in this world forever.

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि

In that sense, we don't remember the names of the people who gave him poison. However, till today, Socrates is with us in the form of knowledge.

To whoever wants to study philosophy, one has to study Socrates first. Society remembers knowledgeable people only.

No matter what is our age, who we are, or what facilities we have, the strong desire to learn will make us a knowledgeable person.

धान्यानामुत्तमं किंस्विद् धनानां स्यात् किमुत्तमम्।
लाभानामुत्तमं किं स्यात् सुखानां स्यात् किमुत्तमम्॥

The yaksha asked 'What is the best of all laudable things? What is the most valuable of all possessions? What is the best of all gains? And what is the best of all kinds of happiness?

Yudhishtira Replies – The best of all laudable things is skill; the best of all possessions is knowledge; the best of all gains is health and contentment is the best of all kinds of happiness.

'न चोरहार्यं न च राजहार्यं न भ्रातृभाज्यं न च भारकारि।
व्यये कृते वर्धते एव नित्यं विद्याधनं सर्वधनप्रधानम्॥

The wealth of knowledge is indeed the supreme among all wealth as it is not stealable by a thief, also not snatchable by the king, not divisible among the brothers, nor is it a burden and if spent, it always increases.

जिस को कोई चोर चुरा नहीं सकता, राजा छीन नहीं सकता, भाईयों में जिस को बाँटा नहीं जा सकता, जिस का बोझ नहीं लगता और जो खर्च करने से नित्य बढ़ता है, इस तरह के ज्ञान का धन सचमुच सर्वश्रेष्ठ धन है।

Institutions play a vital role in this journey. NIEPA, with its rich legacy and diverse expertise, is well-positioned to address these challenges. As we move forward, let us embrace the opportunities to collaborate, learn from one another, and work together to shape the future of education in our country and beyond.

As we celebrate the Foundation Day of NIEPA, let us not only cherish our past achievements but also look forward to a promising future.

I wish NIEPA to continue to shine brightly and make a significant impact in the world of education. Foundation Day is a time to reflect on achievements of the past and our ambitions and challenges for the future.

Together, let us continue to be torch-bearers of knowledge, fostering excellence in educational planning and administration.

Let us strive to build an education ecosystem that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and inclusivity, empowering generations to come.

मैं ऐसा इसलिए कह रहा हूँ क्योंकि समाज को NIEPA जैसे संस्थानों पर भरोसा है। जब किसी टैक्सी चालक, क्लर्क या आम आदमी के बेटे/बेटी को IIT/NIEPA में दाखिला मिलता है, तो उनका विश्वास है

कि उनके बेटे/बेटी का भविष्य सुरक्षित है। उन्हें इन संस्थानों पर भरोसा है।

सोनोपंत दांडेकर द्वारा सुनाई गई एक कहानी है:-

प्रति वर्ष एक दादी वारी (भक्त द्वारा पंढरपुर तक की पैदल यात्रा) के लिए जाती थीं, 30 से 35 साल तक पांडुरंग (विठ्ठल) की सेवा की। पति की मृत्यु बहुत पहले हो चुकी थी। लड़का भी युवा अवस्था में ही गुजर गया था।

दादी का एक पोता था। उसे इंजीनियरिंग में प्रवेश मिल जाता है, किन्तु फ़ीस भरने के लिए उनके पास पैसे नहीं होते हैं। अपनी जमीन बेचकर वे कुछ रुपये इकठ्ठा करते हैं, फिर भी 1500 रुपए कम पड़ते हैं। दादी की भगवान पर बहुत अधिक आस्था थी। दादी भगवान को पत्र लिखती हैं कि 'मेरे पोते की सहायता करो'। और उस पत्र पर पता लिखती है - 'श्री पांडुरंग, वैकुंठ, पंढरपुर'।

पोस्टमैन उसका पत्र पढ़ते हैं। उन्हें लगता है कि दादी बहुत परेशान हैं, हम आपस में सहयोग राशि जमा करके रुपए भेजेंगे। वे सब लोग 750 रुपए भेजते हैं। दादी पोते को भेजती है। पोता कहता है - "दादी मैंने आप से 1500 रुपए माँगे थे, आपने तो केवल 750 भेजे।"

दादी फिर से पत्र लिखती है - "पांडुरंग, आपने 1500 रुपए ही भेजे होंगे, लेकिन इन पोस्ट ऑफिस के लोगों ने 750 निकाल लिए होंगे। आप मुझे 750 रुपए और भेजिए।"

सभी पोस्टमैनों को गुस्सा आ जाता है, पोस्टमास्टर उनसे कहते हैं कि हम फिर से सहयोग राशि जमा करेंगे, फिर से रुपए भेजेंगे क्योंकि दादी की भगवान पर जो अटूट आस्था है, वो बनी रहनी चाहिए।

इसी तरह संस्थाओं पर जनता का, समाज का विश्वास बरकरार रहना चाहिए।

समस्त भौतिक समृद्धि के बावजूद हम सुख की तलाश में कहीं चले गए थे।

राम शेवालकर एक बात बहुत अच्छी बताते थे। एक फाइव स्टार होटल में एक सज्जन ठहरे थे। उनका कमरा भी सातवीं मंजिल पर था। लाइट नहीं थी। लिफ्ट काम नहीं कर रही थी।

सीढ़ियाँ चढ़कर सातवीं मंजिल पर पहुंचे। ऊपर जाने के बाद, उन्हें पता चला कि जिस कमरे में वे ठहरे थे उसकी चाबी नीचे काउंटर पर ही छूट गयी है।

आज भले ही हम भौतिक सुख की सात मंजिलें चढ़ गए हों, लेकिन हमारे सुख की चाबी कहीं खो गई है।

मेरा मानना है कि हमारे सुख की चाभी, जीवन पर्यन्त अधिगम (lifelong learning) में है।

बहुत पहले मैंने अपने स्कूल के दिनों में एक किताब पढ़ी थी। स्वामी विवेकानंद के पुस्तक की 'विविध प्रसंग'। पतली सी पुस्तक है।

उसमें उन्होंने कहा, जीवन का लक्ष्य क्या है? अब हमलोग कभी सोचें की हमारे जीवन का लक्ष्य क्या है? ज्यादा लोग अच्छी शिक्षा पा जाये, फिर अच्छी नौकरी, फिर एक अच्छा वेतन और समृद्ध जीवन फिर जीवन समाप्त। यदि इसी प्रकार के जीवन का लक्ष्य है, तो फिर हममें और दुसरे प्रणियों के जीवन में क्या अंतर है। वो भी एक निश्चित पद्धति से अपना जीवन जीते हैं और समाप्त हो जाते हैं ।

उन्होंने लिखा - मैं यह नहीं कहता, कि तुम्हें किसी चीज़ को प्राप्त नहीं करना चाहिए। यदि प्राप्त करो तो उस ऊँचाई को प्राप्त करो, जिसके बाद ऊँचाई के मायने समाप्त हो जाते हैं।

यदि कोई चीज़ प्राप्त करना चाहो तो उस चीज़ को प्राप्त करो, जिसके बाद कुछ प्राप्त करने का अर्थ ही समाप्त हो जाता है। ऊँचाई प्राप्त करने के मायने समाप्त हो जाते हैं।

इसलिए मैं आज इस शुभ दिन पर आप सबके लिए ईश्वर से प्रार्थना करता हूँ की आपका जीवन, करियर उच्चतम हो। जो आपके अंदर की आवाज है, वही करने का मौका आपको मिले।

अपनी क्षमता का एहसास करें कि जीवन में हम क्या कर सकते हैं? इसकी अपनी क्षमता का एहसास करें, क्योंकि जीवन में हम क्या कर सकते हैं, केवल हम ही जानते हैं।

हम अपने संस्थान को गौरवान्वित करें, इस देश को गौरवान्वित करें, अपने आप को गौरवान्वित करें, अपने माता-पिता को गौरवान्वित करें।

आपने मुझे यहां आमंत्रित किया, अपने विचार साझा करने का अवसर दिया और धैर्यपूर्वक सुना। मैं इसके लिए आपके कुलपति और आप सभी का आभारी हूँ।

आप सभी को बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद!

Foundation Day Lectures

- 1. Alternative Perspectives on Higher Education in the Context of Globalization**
Prabhat Patnaik (2007)
- 2. Designing Architecture for a Learning Revolution Based on a Life Cycle Approach**
M. S. Swaminathan (2008)
- 3. Universities in the Twenty-First Century**
Andre Beteille (2009)
- 4. Education, Autonomy and Accountability**
Mrinal Miri (2010)
- 5. Twenty Years After: The Countryside and Two Decades of 'Reforms'**
P. Sainath (2011)
- 6. Children's Right to Education in Areas of Civil Unrest**
Shantha Sinha (2012)
- 7. Education and Modernity in Rural India**
Krishna Kumar (2013)
- 8. Imagining Knowledge: Dreaming Democracy**
Shiv Visvanathan (2014)
- 9. Education as an Instrument of Social Transformation: The Role of Mother Tongue**
T.K. Oommen (2015)
- 10. Am I an Educated Person? Reflections on 'Becoming' and 'Being'**
T.N. Madan (2016)
- 11. Changing Perspectives: Neo-liberal Policy Reforms and Education in India**
Kuldeep Mathur (2017)
- 12. The Poor B.A. Student: Crisis of Undergraduate Education in India**
Manoranjan Mohanty (2018)
- 13. Governing Academic: Within and Without**
Pankaj Chandra (2019)
- 14. Education and Social Opportunity: Bridging the Gap**
A. K. Shiva Kumar (2020); *(Delivered online)*
- 15. Liberal Education - A 21st Century Imperative**
K. Kasturirangan (2021); *(Delivered online)*
- 16. Globalising Compassion: Key to the Future**
Kailash Satyarthi (2022)



Prof. Anand Bhalerao, is Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Rajasthan. He is an academician with over three decade of experience. He holds a doctoral degree in Civil Engineering from Pune University. His research interests include hydraulic engineering, project management, sediment transport, and construction management. Prof. Bhalerao has also been a distinguished speaker at prestigious institutions in India & abroad. He has also received numerous awards.