

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE ON THE OCCASION OF INAUGURATION OF
THE TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS VEDA-PATHASALA

Ai-Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh: Dec 25, 2015

1. It is my privilege to inaugurate the Vedapathasala at Ai-Bhimavaram today. I am sure this Vedapathasala will emerge as a centre for promoting Vedic knowledge, oral traditions and our heritage. I congratulate the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) for taking this initiative of opening a Vedapathasala for the benefit of the students pursuing Vedic education.
2. TTD Trust Board has always supported and encouraged propagation of Vedic traditions and education with the aim to spread the Vedic wisdom in the society.
3. Vedas are a source of our heritage, culture and constitute the foundation of our value system. The ideas enshrined in the Vedas are essentially the benevolent messages limited not only to the welfare of the individual, society and the nation, but manifest a spirit of universal brotherhood. The traditional Indian philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' beautifully captures the essence of our global outlook. The UNESCO has also recognized the Vedas as oral heritage and it is our sacred duty to preserve them in their pristine form.
4. Vedas are an integral edifice of our traditional Indian culture and values. They provide us with insightful knowledge, wisdom and understanding through ancient Vedic lore and anecdotes. The Vedic seers had codified 14 Vidya-s into 4 Vedas, 6 Vedanga-s, Purana-s, Nyaya, Mimamsa and Dharmashastra. These Vedic texts enshrine the message of world peace, prosperity and sustainable development. "Lokāh samastāh sukhinah bhavantu" is the doctrine of universal peace and prosperity.
5. In ancient India, all Vidya-s were taught in residential Universities or Gurukulas some of which are world famous like Takshashila, Vikramshila and Odantapuri, the remains of which have been found. They were very famous throughout the world particularly in China & South East Asian countries. In all these Universities, 14 Vidya-s were taught to the students. In Andhra Pradesh too, we had many education centres along with river Godavari, Krishna such as Nagarjunakonda, Amaravati, etc. wherein many foreign students learned here. Vedapathasalas of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams remind us of those great learning institutes established by gurus and sages.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

6. The true message of Vedas can only be availed if they are interpreted correctly. In fact, the old Indian tradition of Vedic teachings was primarily oral and it was based upon the bedrock of “guru-shishya” parampara. Under that system, the authentic and correct interpretation of Vedic literature was handed down from ‘guru’ to his ‘shishyas’ from one generation to successive generations. The guru would stand as a trusted medium to percolate the ‘true interpretation’ of the Vedic knowledge. However, over the period this system has weaned. It is, therefore, initiatives like makings of ‘Vedapathasalas’ acquire great significance because they can provide an institutional framework for dissemination of Vedic knowledge.

Dear scholars!

7. I am happy to know that Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams is taking several measures to preserve the oral tradition of Vedas. I am told that it is supporting over 1000 Vedic scholars by providing them with financial assistance. It is also financially assisting 100 Vedapathasalas spread across the country. It is running seven Vedapathasalas at Tirumala, Hyderabad, Nalgonda, Vizianagaram, Kotappakonda and Ai-Bhimavaram. It has also started Sri Venkateswara Vedic University, a unique institution of its kind. I am glad to know that it has entered into an MoU with RCI-DRDO for conducting scientific research in association with eminent scientists. It has also established Centre for Veda Science Research (CVSR) for promoting research in Vedas under the enlightened care of scientific institutes. It has also recognized 7 Pathasalas as Centres of Excellence in Vedic Studies to give fillip for oral tradition of Vedas. It has taken initiative to record 10 rare Vedic sakhas for future generations. This indeed is a laudable endeavour in conserving, consolidating and spreading Vedic knowledge.
8. On this happy occasion, I congratulate the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams and the Government of Andhra Pradesh for providing leadership to this great centre of Vedic learning and designing innovative programs for popularizing Vedic education. I am sure this Vedapathasala will emerge as a reputed centre of learning and a seat of our traditional Vedic knowledge.

Thank you.
Jai Hind.
