

## **Hon'ble Former President of India, Bharat Ratna Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam : A Tribute to a Great Innovator of Our Times**

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"The lives of great men remind us, we can make our lives sublime, and, departing, leave behind us, footprints on the sands of time." - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

"मैं दूसरों के लिए लमसाँ नहीं बनना चाहता। िेलकन शायद कुछ पढ़ने वािों को प्रेरणा लमि लक अलतम सखु रूह और आत्मा की तस्कीन है, खदु की रहमत, उनकी लवरासत है। ...िलकन खदु की रहमत कभी खत्म नहीं होगी। गुलज़ार

Hon'ble former President of India, Bharat Ratna Dr. A. P. J Abdul Kalam – an innovator, a scientist, a President and above all a great humanitarian - has been an inspiring personality of our times. Dr. Kalam was born on October 15th, 1931 at Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, India. He graduated from Saint Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli and then studied aerospace engineering from the Madras Institute of Technology (MIT). After graduating from MIT, Dr. Kalam became the chief scientist at the Aeronautical Development Agency, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). After flourishing years in DRDO and Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Dr. Kalam served as the 11th President of India from the year 2002 to 2007. After demitting the office of President of India, Dr. Kalam served as a visiting professor in various universities and esteemed institutions.

### **Vision 2020**

Dr. Kalam's Vision 2020 is based on five core important areas : (1) Agriculture and food processing (2) Education and Healthcare (3) Information and Communication Technology (4) Infrastructure including Reliable and Quality Electric power, Surface transport and Infrastructure for all parts of the country, and (5) Self-reliance in critical technologies. He envisioned that the youth of India, based on their core competencies, would be able to use their creativity, innovation and scientific research and technological innovation, which would also make them the enablers of meeting the 2020 vision of India.

### **Dr. Kalam on Youth Power**

The famous writer and poet Gulzar mentioned Dr. Kalam as :

'मैं एक गहरा कुआं ह ं इस जमीन पर, बेशुमार लड़के-लड़कियों के कलए, जो उनकी प्यास बुझाता रह ं। उसकी बेपनाह रहमत उसी तरह ज़रे-ज़रे पर बरसती है, जैसे कुआं सबकी प्यास बुझाता है। इतनी सी कहानी है मेरी।'

Dr. Kalam once mentioned, "I feel comfortable in the company of young people, particularly high school students. Henceforth, I intend to share with them experiences, helping them to ignite their imagination and preparing them to work for a developed India for which the road map is already available".

In his last speech on "How to make our planet more liveable?", which he was going to deliver at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Shillong, he wrote "Youth dynamics is the greatest opportunity available to the nations, since the ignited minds of the youth is more powerful resource on the earth, above the earth and under the earth. This should

create a global human resource cadre and global young entrepreneur cadre who will work for world vision ...”

### **Dr. Kalam’s thoughts on Creativity and Innovation**

In his Address at the Valedictory function of the 3rd International Conference on Creativity and Innovation at Grassroots (ICCI-2015), Dr. Kalam said, “Creativity is a process through which, we can continuously improve ideas and find unique solutions by making gradual alterations and refinements to our works. Innovations come through creativity. Creativity comes from beautiful minds. The important aspect of creativity is seeing the same thing as everybody else, but thinking of something different”.

According to him a nation’s economic development is powered by competitiveness. Competitiveness is powered by knowledge. Knowledge power is powered by technology. Technology is powered by innovation. Technology and innovation are powered by resource investment. Innovation opens up new vistas of knowledge and new dimensions to our imagination to make everyday life more meaningful and richer in depth and content. Innovation is born out of creativity. In a knowledge society, we have to make innovations continuously.

He felt that innovation and creativity ultimately results into the culture of excellence. In his note on “Innovation is the capital”, Dr. Kalam mentions that growth competitiveness is determined by the innovative ability of any institution or organization. This innovation arises from institutional initiative and the research and development productivity of the firm. Innovation is the prime mover for engineering design, engineering development, value addition and production.

### **Dr. Kalam’s World Vision 2030**

As part of his last speech, which he was going to deliver at IIM, Shillong, he wrote the World Vision 2030. He wrote “The humanity needs a great vision to forget all the conflicts and move towards a common goal of peace and prosperity for all the global citizens. We visualize the birth of world vision leading to ‘livable planet earth’. This vision will be greater than any other vision so far envisioned by the humanity”.

Before concluding, he wrote the following in his speech :

“I wish to share some more ideals on how righteousness of the heart of the human being leads to a perfect life of an enlightened citizen. When I visit divine places in India, I realize how righteousness in the heart is propagated as our civilizations strength”. Let me recite the hymn :

#### **Righteousness in the heart**

Where there is righteousness in the heart  
There is beauty in the character.  
When there is beauty in the character,  
There is harmony in the home.  
When there is harmony in the home,  
There is an order in the nation.  
When there is order in the nation,  
There is peace in the world.

Dr. Kalam in the IGNOU Campus IGNOU had the good fortune of his association as he was the Visitor of this University when he was the President of India from 2002 to 2007. It was indeed a pleasurable moment for the University when in 2005 he visited IGNOU for its

16th Annual Convocation, which also happened to be the 20th year of the existence of the University.

In his Convocation speech, he said "In the 21st century, a new society is emerging where knowledge is the primary production resource. The knowledge society is powered by the ability to create and maintain the knowledge infrastructure, develop knowledge workers and enhance their productivity through creation, growth and exploitation of new knowledge. Knowledge is converted into wealth for social good through the process of innovation. Hence there is an urgent need to establish an innovation system..."

Thus, he strongly emphasized on the need innovation in Distance Education and it was the need of the hour for the IGNOU learners to build capacities for competitiveness in the five areas of research and questioning skills, entrepreneurship, high technology use, moral leadership and creativity. He advised that IGNOU, therefore, needed to develop a high technology network coupled with the latest content created by the teachers through research and study.

He showed a path for IGNOU to be followed in the coming years in alignment with his dream of seeing India as a knowledge superpower. In the year 2005, in 16th Annual Convocation speech, he left us with these inspiring words 'What should be IGNOU's dream? .... IGNOU's dream should be to become a Virtual University.'

### **Source**

1. <http://www.bhaskar.com/news/ABH-editorial-on-abdul-kalam-by-gulzar-5066240-NOR.html>
2. <http://india.yourstory.com/read/fb671f92b2/the-person-who-inspired-me-the-most-the-missile-man-of-india-the-missile-man>
3. <http://www.abdulkalam.com>