

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTATION OF LAKSHMIPAT
SINGHANIA – IIM, LUCKNOW NATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AWARDS**

New Delhi, December 9, 2019

1. I am delighted to be here this morning with all of you on the occasion of the 15th Lakshmipat Singhania – IIM Lucknow National Leadership Awards 2018. I congratulate JK Organization and the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow for honouring exceptional leaders in three major areas; namely, Business, Science and Technology and Community Service and Social Upliftment.
2. Several eminent Indians have been honoured with this Award since 2004. The Awards recognise their leadership qualities and contributions to society. Each of the Award winners today – Dr Srikumar Banerjee, Dr Bhushan Punani, Dr Amit Sharma, Shri Anshu Gupta and Shri Puneet Dalmia – have distinguished themselves by their achievements. I offer my congratulations and best wishes to each one of them.
3. These Awards are instituted in the name of a visionary and outstanding business leader, Lala Lakshmipat Singhania. Incidentally, Lalaji's karmabhoomi was Kanpur, where I was born and educated. I cannot but get overwhelmed by pleasant memories that Kanpur always had with this business house. Lakshmipat-ji was known for his entrepreneurial spirit and contribution to business and society. It is indeed befitting that one of the country's premier management institutions, IIM Lucknow, and JK Organisation have come together to institute these awards.

Ladies and gentlemen,

4. We have gathered here today to honour excellence in leadership. Is there a better model of leadership before us than the Father of our Nation? We are celebrating this year the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhiji. I would like to share with you some of his thoughts relating to one of the award categories, Business. Gandhiji well appreciated the role the business leadership could play in the Freedom Struggle, and inspired many of them to support the cause. Following the Mahatma's word, several illustrious industrial families put the nation above their business interests.
5. Gandhiji believed "True economics must follow ethics." He favoured a version of economics that would not disregard moral and sentimental considerations. While he realised the importance of money, he was consistent in laying emphasis on combining business with ethics and trust. In a rare moment of candour, he gave his piece of mind to trade and mercantile class of Bombay in one of his leaflets in 1919. And I quote "Great movements all the world over depend for their success largely upon the mercantile class. The foundation of our success rests in truth and if it pervades mercantile affairs it will be a plaything to pull down the other citadels of untruth." (unquote).
6. These words are quite instructive even in lessons of business management. Ethics, Truth and Trust are being increasingly recognised now as essential components of business management. This is the reason why great business and management leadership experts of the West too have come around to realise the importance of the Gandhian approach. In top management institutes around the world, the eternal relevance of this approach is internalised in the curriculum. This is the precise reason why there is a determined attempt to guide the management studies more by ethical compass than profit-maximising principle. Large global businesses were accused of putting profit over people. Globally, as the business suffered from one crisis after another in recent decades, experts have come to call for value-based business

leadership. It is therefore a pleasant surprise to find references to trust and honesty and even Gandhian practices in acclaimed works of scholars of business studies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. Since independence, India has made tremendous progress in various walks of national life. From economy to science and technology, from healthcare to education, from women empowerment to social justice, we have made enormous progress. The world has taken note of our democratic institutions, economic strength, scientific prowess, culture and diversity. We, however, still face great challenges which need to be addressed. We need to collectively find solutions to the problems such as climate change, strive for inclusive growth, develop an entrepreneurial culture, safeguard our natural resources and ensure justice for the weakest sections of society.
8. These are no ordinary challenges but we have shown the resolve to set our standards high. With the right leadership in various sectors, we can meet any challenge. This thought is expressed so beautifully in a Sanskrit Shubhashit that I cannot but quote it in original:

अमंत्रम् अक्षरम् नास्ति, नास्ति मूलम् अनौषधम् ।

अयोग्यः पुरुषो नास्ति योजकः तत्र दुर्लभः॥

It means: There is no word which would not have magic power; there is no herb that would not be used as medicine; there is no human being who would be useless; but an enabler is hard to obtain. The enabler is the leader.

9. Leadership is at the foundation of the future that we will build for our country. We need to nurture our youth to become leaders in whatever vocation they may choose and in their social lives. How do we create the better leaders that will steer

the nation tomorrow? Education is the only answer I can think of. This is where institutions like IIM Lucknow play their crucial role. Over the last 35 years, it has emerged as a leading institution not only for management education but also in research and consultancy activities. I am glad to learn that leadership development is a major focus of its activities. It is also committed to drive several socially relevant research and consultancy projects in agriculture, entrepreneurship, health management, education, IT and rural development.

10. Apart from education, we nurture tomorrow's leaders by providing them with the best role models in diverse spheres. That is precisely what the National Leadership Awards aim to do. The Awards that are conferred today acknowledges those who have shown their passion for excellence and willingness to venture on the roads less travelled. By doing so, they have brought around significant change in our lives.
11. I once again offer my congratulations to all the Award Winners. I also appreciate the role of those who have maintained the high parameters associated with the process behind these Awards, especially the jury.
12. I will conclude by saying that as future leaders of the business, you will take the country to a greater prosperity without losing your feet on the ground and help create a society founded on principles of shared joy, truthfulness and trust. My best wishes to you all for your future endeavours.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!