

Annual Convocation Address by Justice D. Murugesan
Vellore Institute of Technology University, Chennai Campus
on 09.07.2016

Dr. G. Viswanathan, Founder and Chancellor, Mr. Sankar Viswanathan, Dr. Sekar Viswanathan, Mr. G.V. Selvam, Vice-Presidents, Ms Kadhambari S. Viswanathan, Assistant Vice President, respected faculty members, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, my dear young friends, their family members and distinguished invitees.

I feel an incredible sense of honour and privilege to stand before you on the occasion of the annual convocation today before this august gathering. I feel humble and honoured for the honour graciously conferred upon me for this opportunity. First of all, let me congratulate all the students who are taking their graduation today in various disciplines. This day will always have a special day in your memory and it is an important day in your career. Today is the end of one journey – Yet it is the beginning of another journey. Today is the day to celebrate and recognize the hard work and dedication put in by you in the past few years.

I know all of you are excited and at the same time your heart is full of trepidation, expectation and the occasional moment of panic to face the world with your new gained knowledge and expertise.

Convocation address poses a dilemma for me always. It is a great temptation to candidly share my personal views which is an ideal combination of young and old– Yet I must restrain myself to some extent and I do not want it to be an occasion for fault finding and preaching.

On this occasion, it would be more appropriate to make a mention of the strong foundation of this university. You will appreciate the role and dedication of the management and the faculty members of this university in shaping you for your bright future. I am amazed to note some of the achievements of this University in the field of higher education. Founded as an engineering college in Vellore in the year 1984 with modest strength of 180 students, it has grown into a deemed university with two campuses one at Vellore and another at Chennai, with

the aim of providing quality higher education on par with international standard. I am given to understand that in Vellore campus itself nearly 29,000 students are studying in various courses with able guidance of around 1500 academic staff. This campus has been imparting various courses from the year 2010. As of this year, there are nearly 5800 students in various disciplines with 389 academic staff in this campus.

As per the ranking made by HRD Ministry during April, 2016, this university is ranked No. 1 in private engineering institutions in the country. This university has been ranked 13 among NITs and IITs in the country. Another achievement of this university is 100 per cent placement through campus recruitments with 250 odd companies participating. I understand that the aim of the university is to make 350 companies to participate in the recruitment process in the years to come. All of you must be proud of this and the excellence of the university will certainly play a vital role in your future.

Let me now move on to some of my tips to the outgoing students. You, the professional graduates are at the threshold of your career. Most of you are leaving the portals of this university and joining the “School of Life”. You will have to discharge very significant responsibilities in holding our basic national objective of secularism, democracy and socialism.

From today the most significant decision that confronts you is the choice of profession, if you have not already chosen. The choice of a profession is a very vital decision and you must make informed choices. I must caution that highly effective people are product of their choices and not-so-highly effective people are product of circumstances. The confidence you can take to face the new world much depends upon what was given to you by your management. It is the time for your choice to prove to the world that the education you have received here has been an awarding experience and as the custodian of nation’s future, you will continue with your learning process and put your education to use, face the day to day challenges and help in constructing a nation that is a force to reckon with. It has far reaching

implications on how an individual shapes out eventually and whether he finds fulfillment in his life. It also shapes the future of society and the nation. Livelihood is a primary concern but in order to grow, you must have your heart in and a firm commitment towards your profession.

The youth of today are at a great advantage - they begin their professional lives in an age of opportunity, in which liberalization and information technology has with finality, shattered many barriers, which were the bane of earlier generations. Time has thrown up greater opportunities with wider horizons. Technology and the communication revolution have brought in monumental changes. The horizons being wider, the alternatives are multifarious and as a natural corollary there is over-riding ambition for growth. Unfortunately, however, growth has come to largely mean wealth and comfort. Indeed, without ambition, there cannot be progress – it is a great motivating force but somewhere there has to be a braking system. In your choice of profession, let earning money not be the only driving force. In

the beginning of your career what you must learn is more important than what you earn.

Only that society can progress whose foundations are secured by ethical means and moral ends. I must stress that we owe it to ourselves, as well as the society, to bring in an honesty of purpose and spirit of service. Ends are no doubt important but means must remain above board. No society can be governed by rule of law if its democratic functioning is not pillared on strong ethical and moral foundations. Let me assure you that the practice of proper value system and the path of righteousness will always brighten the intellect because without practice of virtue, human reason is not capable of growth. Intellect without a perception of proper means can be self-defeating. Intellect possesses an extraordinary capacity for rationalization. We must, therefore, strive to have proper perception in tune with our cultural heritage and our value system. The practice of virtue and adherence to moral absolutes unfolds tremendous hidden energy of man. Adoption of this way of life with humility and reverence has its own immense rewards. Most of the ills that the society

faces today are because we have taken to the easy course and drifted away from following the proper value system and there is a consequent loss of character. You need not however lament. We can redeem the situation and it is in your hands. You must always have a positive attitude to life. Compassion in public life and contentment in personal life are the much needed values. Do harmonise your speech and action, since pure thoughts are the true treasure of life. Let us all strive to lead disciplined and enlightened lives. Do not forget that you have inherited a great culture and civilization and that it is your duty to maintain high standards of character and culture.

Man is continuously involved in dream re-making his world. But the world really belongs to the youth. The youth designs the future, gives the followers to change the world from age to age. It does not need to be stated that future depends upon the youth. I have greater faith in you that you will steer this country to the future development, but there are some challenges. The youth in India comes from very diverse background having lived in different social realities and coming from different socio-economic

backgrounds. However, the challenges faced by youth today are more or less similar. In general, we face poverty, unemployment, intolerance, inequality, exploitation of man by man, corruption, terrorism etc. People in India hope that these must be eliminated. I expect the youth sitting here to convert the hopes of people in to a reality. It is possible as you are the driving force equipped with confidence, dedication, skill and knowledge. It is also possible if you recognize that you should shoulder greater responsibility.

I am also of view that achievements by youths could only be possible if they are properly motivated. Parents and teachers must implant confidence in youth by encouraging them in their all endeavours. We must compliment and appreciate whenever the youths do good things. We should join them to solve any problem faced by them. We should adopt best ways to explain the youths and inculcate discipline and not let them to fall in depression. I strongly believe that the talents of youths from rural background are not suitably recognized. Neglecting those talents could lead to unhealthy community and society. This requires genuine attention.

Having said the above, a word of caution is necessary on certain areas. I am referring to social media and the internet. You have the opportunity to have advanced technologies to shape yourself to contribute good to our country. Though we have many advantages of social media on internet, like education, awareness and being informed of various good things, enhancing learning opportunities, social benefits, job opportunities etc, it has negative impact as well. Constant use of social media may lead to addiction which is detrimental to work, lack of privacy, vulnerability to crimes, prone to be victims, cyber bullying, online harassment etc. I am prompted to make a reference on statistics on cyber crime rates in India which is alarming. In the year 2011 there were 13, 301 instances of cyber crimes reported in India. It was 22, 060 in 2012, 71,780 in 2013, 1, 49, 254 in 2014 and 3, 00,000 in 2015. India is ranked 3rd highest online cyber bullying, which represents 79% against remaining throughout the world. These things must be kept in mind when you are at internet.

Before I conclude, I would like to state that you must develop the culture of discipline to face the challenges in future. Be always humble and humane. I must also emphasis that your life is going to be meaningful if only you are honest to your employer, to your profession, to your family members and to the society. Take care of your parents always, in particular in their old age. Always remember their hard work, dedication, commitment and above all their love and affection which have brought you this position. Be grateful to your university, management and faculty members.

I take the opportunity to congratulate the proud management, professors and other academicians and the parents whose faith, trust and belief in you have made you what you are today. I wish you all the very best.

Thank You...