

TWENTY EIGHTH CONVOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Ravi Prakash Dani

Rekindly a deep sense of pride and joy in all of us, especially we the alumni and students of this beloved alma mater, steps in this auspicious day, as we celebrate the 28th Convocation of Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth, Akola, the Agricultural University named after a distinguished son of Vidarbha and spirit behind Indian agricultural development, patron of farmers, an ever inspirational person and incessant source of charity for the masses. I pay sincere tribute to the great soul Dr. Panjabrao *alias* Bhausahab Deshmukh. It also gives me immense pleasure to welcome Hon'ble Pro-chancellor of the University Sh. Radhakrishana Vikhe Patil, State Minister for Agriculture and Marketing, Govt. of Maharashtra, Chief Guest of 28th convocation, Hon'ble Dr. Yashwant Thorat, and our Guest of Honour Hon'ble Prof. Monkombu Sambasivan Swaminathan. It is also a unique pleasure to welcome Honourable Members of the Executive Council, former Vice-Chancellors, Members of the Academic Council, distinguished dignitaries, candidates receiving Degrees and Honours, Faculty, members of Board of Studies, former Director and Principal Scientist Colleagues of the Central Institute for Cotton Research, Nagpur, invitees, farmers, Journalists, Media Core, Ladies and Gentlemen and our dear students.

Our distinguished Chief Guest of 28th convocation, The Honorable Prof. Monkombu Sambasivan Swaminathan was Born in Kumbakonam, India, and Educated in Madras and Cambridge Universities. For most appropriate reasons, he is called 'Father of Green Revolution in India'. He has been a proud member Rajya Sabha, Govt. of India, has held the prestigious UNESCO Cousteau Chair in Ecotechnology and is presently the founder Chairman, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He was also the luminary Director, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, 1961-72; Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, 1972-79; Principal Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Govt. of India, 1979-80; Member, Planning Commission and Chairman, Scientific Adv. Committee to Cabinet, Govt. of India, 1980-82; Chairman, UN Science Advisory Committee, 1980; Independent Chairman, FAO Council, 1981-85; Director General, IRRI, Los Banos, Philippines, 1982-88; President, International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (India), 1989-96, Chairman, National Commission on Farmers of India, 2004-06 and President, Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs.

He has earned many awards and fellowships to his credit, including the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize, 1961; Ramon Magsaysay Award for community Leadership, 1971; Albert Einstein World Science Award, 1986; First World Food Prize, 1987; UNESCO Gandhi Gold Medal, France, 1999; Franklin D Roosevelt Four Freedom Medal, Netherlands, 2000; Volvo and Tylor Prize for Environment; Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, 2000; D.Sc.(h.c) from 58 Universities; Sahametrei Medal of Royal Govt. of Cambodia, 2007; Life Time Achievement Award of All Indian Management Association, 2007; Golden Peacock Life Time Achievement Award, 2007; Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award, 2007; Shining World Leadership Award, Singapore, 2007; ISCA Award, 2007-2008; Indian Academy of Sciences, 1957; Indian National Science Academy, 1962; National Academy of Sciences, India, 1976; Royal Society, London, 1973; National Academy of Sciences, USA, 1977; Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences, 1978; Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, 1983; National Academy of Arts and Sciences, USA, 1984; Academy Naz. Delle Sciencz detta del XL, Italy, 1985; European Academy of Arts, Science and Humanities, 1988; American Association for the Advancement of Science and Founder Fellow, TWAS, 1983.

Indeed, this is proud and bright moment in the history of ours, as you Sir, have very kindly returned to our university. Your gracious presence here Sir, has uniquely served to uplift our spirits, as we also take much pride in recollecting that we had the honour to present a Doctorate in Science to your honour, a few year ago in 1992.

Our Guest of Honour of 28th convocation the Hon'ble Dr.Yashwant Thorat, indeed, is a luminary with high distinction. He has retired as Chairman, NABARD in November 2007, was until recently the Chief Executive Officer of the Rajiv Gandhi Trust and Chairman, Advisory Board, Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. He has been recently appointed by the Government of Maharashtra as Chairman of the Dry land Farming Commission. Earlier Dr.Thorat served as Chairman, Working Group on Institutional Finance, Risk Management and Cooperatives for the 12th Plan set up by the Planning Commission, Government of India, Member, Governing Board, NIBM, Member, India Advisory Board, OCP, Strategic Advisor, Microensure, an international NGO engaged in the provision of insurance services to the poor and Advisor, GIZ. His present appointments include Member, Senate and Academic Council, Shivaji University, Kolhapur; Member, Advisory Board, Indian Society of Agricultural Professionals; Director, TATA Chemicals Ltd; Director, Rallis India Ltd; Director, Parag Milk Foods Pvt ltd; He is non Executive Chairman of NCDEX and the Sahayog Group of industries and serves on the boards of Khed Developers-Pune and Gokaldas Exports -Bangalore. He is associated with several educational institutes including the Governing Board of the DY Patil University, Kolhapur. Dr Thorat holds a degree in Political Science and Law and a Doctorate in Economics. He was awarded the D. Lit in 2011 by the D Y Patil University, Mumbai.

Dr. Thorat started his career in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in 1972 and was appointed Executive Director in 2003. The appointments held by him while in RBI included Principal, BTC; Regional Director, New Delhi, Maharashtra and Goa. While in service he was on the Boards of the Oriental Bank of Commerce, Punjab National Bank, Infrastructure Development and Finance Co, Export Import Bank of India, Export Credit and Guarantee Corporation of India, National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, Institute of Rural Development, Anand etc. In 2004, he was appointed by GOI as Managing Director, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and elevated a year later as Chairman. After retirement he lectured for a year in Philosophy at the Foundation for Liberal and Management Education, FLAME, Pune, where he was Dean, School of Liberal Education. Dr.Thorat brings vast experience in administration, HR, rural finance, agricultural indebtedness, cooperatives, microfinance and risk mitigation, having chaired a number of national level committees including the Group of Experts on Sugar Policy, Committee to Formulate a Comprehensive Human Resource Policy for RRBs [GoI], Expert Group on Investment Credit [RBI] and Expert Group on Credit Deposit Ratio of Banks [GoI]. He has been associated as Member of various International Committees including Advisory Committee for Microcredit Summit Campaign, Halifax and as Banking Specialist for the UN-FAO Mission to Ethiopia, UNOPS Mission to Maldives, Member Secretary, High Power Team to study Rural Financial Institutions in Indonesia, High Level Team to study Credit Agricole. As a Visiting Lecturer, he regularly lectures at various Universities including Reading, UK, Manchester UK and Geneva, Switzerland. He has published many an enlightening monograph and research paper during his dedicated professional career on a variety of subjects relevant to finance, agriculture and credit.

The convocation is a landmark event for all of us. It gives us the unique opportunity to self appraise and at the same time aspire for tomorrow. Sir, this University was established on 20th October, 1969 with a primary objective of elevating socio-economic status of farmers, with the mandate of Agricultural Education, Research and Extension Education, as specified in the Maharashtra Agricultural Universities Act, 1983. The jurisdiction of this University is the entire Vidarbha region. Production of breeder and foundation seeds are also our prime responsibilities.

Maharashtra is a state of fortunate to be richly endowed with outstanding agricultural research and educational infrastructure both in public and private sectors. The Vidarbha farmer remains ever diligent and innovative, inspite of all the adversities. Looking at the distress of farmers during the past decade, the University has taken up a number of successful programmes to boost up economy and the morale, as also to elevate the socio-economic status of our farmers of this region.

Our Directorate of Extension Education effectively undertakes various extension education activities in 11 districts of Vidarbha region, with active participation of all constituent and affiliated institutions of the University, thereby playing multiple roles in carrying out welfare programmes for the farmers of Vidarbha region. These roles are successfully performed through the agency of Training Unit, Farmers Counseling Unit of Extension Agronomists, Publication and Printing Unit, Agricultural Technology Information Centre, Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Smruti Kendra, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Training and Visit System (T&V), Transfer of Technology Unit (TOT) of Agriculture and Allied College / schemes / NGOs and Mobile Agro-clinic and Agri-business advisory services.

During this recent year, the activities of TOT have been geared up at high speed. The number of Publications, farmer visits to University, FLDs, OFTs, IT Modules, Cyber extension, trainings for extension functionaries and farmers has been increased two to three fold. Directorate of Extension has invested in several new innovative mediums of TOT, such as the Women Empowerment Mela held on 15th March (815 women farmers participated), Pre-monsoon Mela on 27th May, Agricultural Extension campaigns through religious discourse on 5th September (3225 participated) and the Shivar Pheri held during 18th to 20th October, in which more than 6000 thousand farmers from all over Vidarbha and outside States participated. A special Sustainable Innovative Agricultural Technology Workshop was successfully conducted, recently on 19th – 20th December at KVK Yavatmal. Another Farmers' Meet was held at Akola on Agricultural Technology Transfer and its Impact in collaboration with Reliance Foundation, Mumbai on 28th December (650 farmers participating). The Krishak Vigyan Manch programme of Farmer – Scientist interaction, started a few years ago, has been successfully organized in 11KVKs, having registered over 35000 farmers in 11 districts of Vidarbha. Our Extension Education Directorate has also successfully conducted 19 HRD programmes attracting some 1128 beneficiaries at university level as also over 398 training programmes for farmers, farm women, rural youths and extension functionaries at KVK level, having served 19932 Beneficiaries. The KVKs under the Directorate of Extension have successfully conducted 54 Front Line Demonstrations, with 43 On-Farm testings during this recent year.

Besides these programmes, our recent celebration of the Birth Anniversary of Dr Panjabrao Deshmukh 2013 was marked with launching of several popular publications of University such as the Krishi-Sawadini-2014 and the PDKV Krishi Calendar - 2014. So also, the Birth Anniversary of the late Vasantraoji Naik was recently celebrated with much gusto on 1st July. In addition to these programmes, our Extension Education Directorate had the honor to host a prestigious Annual Zonal Workshop for 78 KVKs in Zone V, i.e., Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Likewise, the action plan workshop for KVKs and Extension Education Council meeting was also organized successfully on 13th and 14th June. A Rapid Dissemination of Interactive Extension Information Services via Blog Spot (www.deepdkv.blogspot.in) created by the Directorate of Extension for facilitating durable and meaningful interaction between technology providers and clientele, has been receiving encouraging response from India and 16 other countries, viz. USA, UK, Italy, Germany and Holland. A unique fleet of Model 12 Diagnostic cum exhibition Mobile Vans has been made available in the service of farmers of Vidarbha, with financial assistance from the Manav Vikas Mission. This Van has eventually become a model for replication all over the country. Many contact farmer clients of Directorate of Extension have received National and International recognitions during this last year; prominent among them being Shri. Eyan Satishkumar Singh from Wardha Dist., Dilip Kapgate from Bhandara Dist. Shri Santosh Dhanare from Yavatmal district and Sau Kalyanitai Sonone from Akola district. These farmers have received Mumbai Doordarshan's prestigious Sahyandri Krishi Sanman Puraskar. Just this last week, we have been informed that 5 progressive farmers from Vidarbha nominated by Directorate of Extension Education are declared awardees of 'Sahyandri Krishi Sanman Puraskar' for the year 2013. This is certainly to be prided as a highly significant achievement of our Directorate and bestow renewed sense of satisfaction and pride on us, as well as the farmers of Vidarbha.

Salient achievements of Directorate of Extension Education during last year have been :

- Creation of a 24 Hr Helpline along with Voicemail Enabled Answerback service for the benefit of farmers.
- Launching of a live tele-conferencing event scheduled every month, involving videoconferencing between KVK staff and farmer groups.
- Organization of Agro Technology Week by all KVKs, each year.
- Integrated Farming System Modules launched in all the 11 districts of Vidarbha.
- A Department of Biotechnology sanctioned to KVK, Durgapur for the implementation of Integrated Farming System Module Project for 1000 small and marginal farmers of the Amravati District.
- Successful implementation of Technology Mission on Pulses by KVKs.
- Formation of Farmers groups & dissemination of technology through mobile messaging.
- Apiculture unit/ Azolla unit/ and Fisheries demonstration unit started at KVK.
- OFT assessment on drilled paddy under agronomy implemented by KVK, Bhandara during 2008-09 on 1 Acre has now spread over 35,000 Hectares in Eastern Vidarbha.
- Chemo – de fluoridation Efforts intensified by KVK, Yavatmal and NEERI, to rectify fluoride affected farming community.
- Launching of NABARD Pilot Project in Collaboration with Agrimet Division, Meteorological Department, Pune, has been started for dissemination of weather related information and advisory services to 5000 farmers through 50 Farmers Clubs.
- KVK, Gondia has started the supply of farm implements to the farmers on custom hiring basis, under NICRA Project.
- KVK, Gondia and Bhandara have implemented “Lac Cultivation Training Programme” for 6000 tribals funded by Tribal Development Department, Mumbai, and GOM in support with Forest Department, in the district with 80% adoption.
- A Jamun Mohotsav’ was successfully organized by KVK, Gadchiroli. The programme uniquely serves to highlight their medicinal value and accelerates the processing of Jamuns in the District.
- KVK, Wardha has promoted the perennial fodder crop, Phule Jaywant grass in the district providing 1,00,000 slips. Families of suicide affected farmers launched 10 small poultry unit with intervention of KVK.

Our Directorate of Extension Education has strengthened and established active linkages with the State and Central Governments, Corporate organizations and NGOs through all Krishi Vigyan Kendras of Vidarbha Region for speedy transfer of university developed technologies. The Directorate is successfully handling number of TOT currently projects amounting Rs. 12 crores. In all 8 externally funded projects for Transfer of Technology have been sanctioned to the Directorate of Extension. Our prominent partners are Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust, Reliance Foundation, NABARD, Cotton Corporation of India, Mumbai, Indian council of Agril. Research New Delhi, Central Water Commission, Human Resource Development Agency, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna, NICRA Project, Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA), and the Department of Agriculture, Government of Maharashtra. Recently, our Directorate received Best Stall Award in an International Exhibition held at Kolkata.

Here I would like to quote our beloved Hon'ble Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, "All birds find shelter during a rain. But Eagles avoid rain by flying above the clouds. Problems are common, but attitude makes the difference".

The University as ever, is successfully imparting high quality instructional programmes leading to higher degree courses in the field of Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Agricultural Engineering & Technology, Food technology, Agricultural Biotechnology and Agri-business Management through constituent (including 1 PGI), 2 affiliated and 21 private non granted colleges with a total intake capacity of 2655 at UG level. Our intake capacity has been increased from 249 to 410 at M.Sc. / M.Tech level since the academic year 2009-10 and 50 for Ph.D. per annum in the faculties of Agriculture, Agricultural Engineering & Technology and Agri-biotechnology. The University has produced 25414 graduates and 7434 postgraduates and 508 doctorates so far, since its inception. Out of those, some 2141 graduates, 765 postgraduates and 44 doctorates have resulted during last two years.

Today at this prestigious Convocation, 768 Graduates, 192 Masters and 21 Doctoral degrees are being conferred. For their meritorious performance and excellence, over 67 Medals and Awards are being presented to deserving students and staff. I take much pride in congratulating Dr. Sandesh Bangar, who today proudly earns the first-ever Ph.D. degree in Agricultural Biotechnology from the Maharashtra Agricultural University system.

The university has recently launched a prestigious College of Agricultural Biotechnology at Yavatmal, with the intake capacity of 40 students, named in memory of the Late Vasantrao Naik, since the year 2013. An M.Sc. (Agriculture Biotechnology) postgraduate degree programme is already being offered at Biotechnology centre, at Akola, with intake capacity of 12 students per year, Dr. PDKV is the only University in Maharashtra where the Ph. D. (Agricultural Biotechnology) has been effective with intake capacity of 3 students from the academic year 2009-10. In our university, over 12 foreign students were admitted for PG education. Out of them, 6 have already completed degrees in the discipline of Agril. Economics, M.Tech (SWCE), AHDS and Agri. Botany.

The University also offers highly empowering Lower Agriculture Education to students passing matriculation level, through 8 constituents Agricultural Technical Schools, leading to two year Diploma in Agriculture, currently having the intake capacity of 480 students. In addition, two rural Institutes are also functional in Amravati and Wardha districts. Furthermore, over Forty-seven non aided Private Agricultural Polytechnics have been affiliated (Non-aided) with this University since the academic session 2012-13, which offer three year diplomas. Our University has two *mali* Training Centres at Akola and Nagpur, wherein one year certificate course are being offered. These courses have proven extremely popular on account of instant employment potential.

As per the recommendations of the National Core Group appointed by the ICAR, syllabus of Post Graduate Programme has been revised considering the state and local requirements and implemented from the academic year 2009-10. I am extremely proud to inform that our University has ranked 2nd in JRF position among all the SAU. It has indeed been a moment of great pride when the Hon'ble President of India most recently conferred on us a special award in recognition of this high achievement.

An Educational Museum and Educational Technology Cell was recently inaugurated at the hands of Ex-Vice Chancellor Dr. M. L. Madan, Dr. V. M. Mayande, Dr. Akella and Mrs. Charu Akella at Akola, on 28th Dec. 2013.

Several prestigious MoUs in respect of technology development, seed production, farm implements and machineries have been signed with 19 different private and public sector companies. So also, the patenting a multitude of the university technologies is in process and over fifteen patent applications have been submitted to the authority. The university has also taken unique initiatives to establish public – public and public – private partnership, since last few years.

Dr. P. G. Ingole, Director of Research, Dr. PDKV, Akola and Dr. V. S. Gonge, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture, Nagpur, recently received Krishi Gourav Award - 2013 by Bharat Krushak Samaj at Jalgaon, for their outstanding contributions in agricultural research and development.

Dr. G. U. Satpute, Associate professor of SWCE was appointed as a member of monitoring committee for the project “Evaluation of effectiveness of locally available fibres for the storage tank construction in rural villages for watershed management” by the office of the principle Scientific Advisor, Govt. of India.

Dr. S. M. Jadhao, Assistant Professor received best oral presentation award in National Seminar at BSKKV, Dapoli.

At the Second Annual Review Workshop of NICRA AICRP for dryland Agriculture held at Bijapur during 15-17 December, 2013, Dr. M. B. Nagdeve was identified as a member of rainwater management group, whereas Dr. V. V. Gabhane was identified as a member of soil health and conservation agriculture group operational at National level.

Our Sorghum Research Unit was awarded “Best AICRP Centre Award” by Directorate of Sorghum Research, Hyderabad in May 2013. Our AICRP on PHT was also awarded as Outstanding Achievement Award in July 2013.

The Department of Plant Pathology and Indian Society of Mycology and Plant Pathology jointly organized the 35th National Convention on ‘Innovative and Eco-friendly research approaches in Plant diseases management’, recently from 8 to 10th Jan. 2014.

A model training course on Information and Communication for transfer of Technology was organized during 22-29 Nov., 2013 by the Department Extension Education with financial assistance of Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation Govt. of India. Trainees from all over the country participated in it.

Effectively securing for our students and academic committees, we have four fully functional modern Libraries in this University, with the Central University Library located at Akola with 1,55,735 books, periodicals, thesis and research Journals. The University library subscribes to 177 journals on gratis and on exchange basis. It is also digitalized and equipped with AGRIS and AGRICOLA CD-ROM. Our ARIS Cell providing 24 hrs uninterrupted internet connectivity services to staff and students through leased line of 1Gbps speed from BSNL under NMEICT project, so far having distributed over 250 nodes through Local Area Network (LAN). The ARIS cell has also initiated the process of creating e-learning resource for post graduate students as well as e-Governance. It has also started the e-learning resources portal for post graduates courses. The process of implementing e-Governance has been accelerated, in which a centralized data centre was established and Integrated University Management Software is under development, which covers Education, Finance and Administration and Student portals. The university has effectively put to use speed internet connectivity, a state of the art computer laboratory, a video conferencing facility for KVK and ATIC as well as a modern wi-fi and digital class room benefitting several farmers and scientists.

The University has updated its website www.pdkv.ac.in, now fully equipped with Web Mail and On Line Portal facility. Our ARIS Cell has successfully computerized and installed OMR technology to evaluate the answer sheets for recruitments in the University. It is also implementing the *Krishiprabha* e-thesis project. The university library is also a member of “Consortia for Electronic Resources in Agriculture” (CeRA) through which the 3279 full text journal of National and International repute can be instantly accessed.

Since 1995, the NSS workers of our University have successfully bagged the State Level Award for their outstanding social service. Shri. Yogesh Ramesh Metkari(2011-12) student of the College of Agriculture, Akola, bagged NSS State Level Best Volunteer Award. The Home Ministry Govt. of

Maharashtra & State NSS Unit jointly conducted 'Rasta Shurksha Abhiyan' wherein five Colleges participated and 2 colleges 1) Dr. R. G. Gode, Agriculture College, Buldhana and 2) Shri Shivaji Horticulture College Amravati were specially appreciated, with a certificate and memento. So also the university NSS Co-ordinator was awarded for his part in the 'Rasta Surakha Abhiyan' at Pune Vidyapeeth, on 5th Jan., 2014.

Our university made history in the recent XIVth All India Agricultural Universities Sports & Games Meet organized by Karnataka Veterinary Animal & Fisheries Science University at Bidar Karnataka in March, 2013. Shri. Monoj Marode, our participant in the Athletic and the High Jump Event, bagged prestigious Gold Medal, bringing high recognition and honour to his alma matter.

Our students of Biotechnology Centre have also bagged prestigious fellowships this year. Ms. Dipti Gawai received the Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for carrying out a Ph.D. research from UGC, New Delhi also Ms. Deepa Muske has qualified as SRF, ICAR.

Miss Puja Choukhande from Vegetable Science, Department of Horticulture has ranked 6th in ARS and set record as the only girl student qualifying from entire state of Maharashtra.

Our student Miss Deepika Mishra was admitted with full scholarship for prestigious Ph.D. at Texas-Tech University, USA, in the subject of Vegetable Science.

Our student Mr. Dhammashil Ganvir was selected for the prestigious Indian Forest Services.

Noteworthy of mention here remain research activities carried out by our 19 Agriculture Research Stations, 17 Departments under Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of Agriculture Engineering and 25 Crop Research Units, besides our 25 AICRP projects. We have successfully evolved 1157 technologies so far, positively impacting the region's crop production, pest management, soil and water management, seed technology and post harvest, having proven effective on farmers fields. So far also, the university has released 144 prestigious and unique varieties of the different crops including 14 hybrids, which have been extremely popular and are having a major role in Vidarbha farming.

Most recently, the University pre-released the Sunflower hybrid 'PKVSH-952' that is high yielding (1533 kg/ha) and has high oil (36.3 %) content. We have also developed two cytoplasmic male sterile (CMS) lines AKS CMS 2A and AKS CMS 3A. Using these two CMS lines, an experimental hybrid development programme aiming at diversification in several well adopted genotypes, is in progress.

Our superior Bread Wheat variety AKAW-4210-6, ideally suitable for irrigated late sown conditions, has been pre-released for Maharashtra state. DNA finger printing work in respect of 14 wheat genotypes has been successfully completed using RAPD markers. Our improved variety AKAW-4210-6 has been identified by Directorate of Wheat Research, Karnal as highly suitable for malnutrition areas, due to its higher iron, Zinc and Manganese content.

The process of registration of University developed varieties with the PPV and FRA has continued. Till date, over 14 crop varieties have been registered and 68 varieties notified. A Third PPVFR registration proposal of bread wheat variety AKAW-4627 has also been submitted to PPV & FR Authority, New Delhi on 1st Nov, 2013. During this year 63 varieties of pigeonpea and 27 varieties of safflower were evaluated under the DUS. Our outstanding rice varieties of PKV HMT and SYE-2001 have also been registered under PPV and FR.

The University has successfully taken the unique initiative in establishing and strengthening Public-Public and Public-Private Partnerships. During this recent year, an MoU has been signed with BARC, Mumbai for development of varieties and seed production programme of PDKV-BARC (TROMBAY) developed varieties. So also, most recently our University has signed an MoU with MAHABEEJ – our major partner facilitating the spread of Dr. PDKV's highly popular crop cultivars.

This unique MoU is expected soon to lead to successful conversion of our ever-popular Cotton hybrid 'PKV-2', soon to be genetically engineered with Monsanto BGII transgene impacting unique insect resistance properties. We are extremely proud and delighted to realize that together with Mahabeej, the Dr. PDKV is all set to break the high seed cost and low yield barriers in cotton, which is perfectly capable of transforming both the history and economy of Vidarbha's 'White Gold', especially restoring the glory of our signature 'PKV-2' Cotton hybrid that remains ever so popular.

Our University has judiciously performed its mandatory responsibility to provide highest quality seeds. Indeed, I am proud to inform that the seed of different crops to the tune of 13078.07 qhas been made available during this year 2012-13.

Our Department of Agricultural Economics & Statistics is effectively implementing the NAIP Project entitled 'Establishing & Networking of Agricultural Market Intelligence Centres in India under NAIP Component – I'. The main objective of this project has been to provide the price forecast information to the farmers before sowing, so that they are able to take appropriate seed and input utilization decisions and before harvesting so that they can take better selling and storage decisions of resultant agricultural commodities. Besides this, we have encountered success in creating awareness among the farmers about how to use market intelligence information. The ultimate aim of the project is to increase the net profit per unit area of the farmers. During the period from 6th February 2013 to 31st January 2014 since launch of this project, nine pre-sowing and nine pre-harvest price forecasts of major agricultural commodities namely Cotton, Soybean, Red gram, Green gram, Black gram, Maize, Hy. Sorghum, Wheat and Bengal Gram were released. The resultant outcome (Market advisories) were widely disseminated through news papers, TV, voice SMS for the benefit of the farmers. We have also organized four One Day Farmers -Training -Programmes creating awareness about active use of market intelligence information. Our Department of Agricultural Economics & Statistics is also running a non plan scheme on Agricultural Prices and Cost. Under this scheme, extensive data on cost of cultivation of principal crops are collected and analyzed. The resultant outcome is submitted to the State Government for onward transmission to Commission on Agricultural Cost and Prices (CACP), New Delhi.

A prestigious Indo-Israel project on "Citrus Improvement" has been successfully operational at our College of Agriculture, Nagpur. It is benefitting several orange growers in the region, providing new market technologies enhancing profitable cultivation.

The Biotechnology Centre of our University has a set of fully functioning and well equipped modern laboratories facilitating advanced research in biotechnology. Keeping in view the region specific needs of Vidarbha, the research has focused on important improvement aspects of all major crops. Several new research programs have been initiated in the areas of development of transgenic cultivars in pigeon pea, cotton and soybean, equipped with biotic and abiotic stress tolerance. We have newly procured highly specific and useful insect and disease resistance transgenes via, MoUs with National and International research laboratories. Similarly, five new research projects have been initiated under the sponsorship of different funding agencies this last year. A special project has also been initiated to isolate potent *Bt* gene from the local isolates of *Bacillus thuringiensis*.

The University is effectively utilizing well-equipped laboratories in all other disciplines as well, facilitating significant technology outcome, as for example, via research and development, mass multiplication, and testing of HaNPV and Trichocards, biofertilizers, bio-control agents and decomposing cultures thereby fulfilling the need for quality organic inputs to farmers.

The department of Entomology, Dr. PDKV, Akola and the Department of Agriculture and NCIPM, New Delhi, are jointly organizing a novel project "Crop Pest Surveillance and Advisory Project" since 2009-10, funded by RKVY through State Department of Agriculture, Maharashtra. Funds received till 2013-14 have been over Rs. 83.00 lakh. Under this project, we provide Taluka wise, crop wise and pest wise regular advisories on every Monday and Thursday. We have also trained so far over 3336 staff

via the project, organizing 27 training programmes at Akola and Nagpur. Our University has also appointed District scientists for all the eleven districts of Vidarbha to monitor pest status. They have visited our active field demonstrations regularly and are dedicated to creating awareness amongs the farmers .

Our Network Project on Insect Biosystematics is one of the most prestigious project across the country being funded by the ICAR,functioning at our Department of Entomology. Till date in this project, over 24,000 insect specimens of diverse group of insects from central India have been collected and preserved. Such is the unique collection of insects of Central India has proved immensely useful to the Students, Farmers, Researchers and Teachers. So far, Taxonomic studies have been focussed on 6 species of Scarabaeid beetles, which are of high agricultural importance as pests of important *Kharif* crops. Besides, biology of 12 important insect pests and bio-agents has also been detailed, along with field diagnostic photographs for quick identification to the benefit of farmers and researchers. This laboratory has thus proven itself to be truly a national resource of knowledge, offering encouragement and inspiration to all students and researchers in the area of insect Taxonomy and Systematics.

The University has an active Plant Protection and Surveillance Unit which regularly monitors the pests of major crops grown across the Vidarbha region. This unit regularly releases timely Plant Protection bulletins benefitting Extension Officers, *Wartapatre* through Akashwani and also reports in Newspapers. So also during each crop season, the unit flashes online weekly pest situation and monthly plant protection advisory for farmers and extension workers, through a special Agro Advisory Bulletin, accessible via IMD, Mumbai and pdkv.ac.in websites.

The Natural oil and Vegetable development Board, Gurgaon, has recently sanctioned extension to our popular research project on “National Network for Integrated Development of Karanj”, with the additional financial assistance of Rs.9.00 lakhs

Our College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology has successfully implemented the three major projects viz. ‘Farm Implements Testing, Training and Production Centre’ under RKVY costing Rs.4.90 crore, ‘Rain water Management and Rain fed Agriculture’ under ICAR niche area excellence amounting Rs.3.38 crore, and “Experiential Learning Unit on Processing of Cereals and Pluses”, with a grant of Rs.32.8 lakhs.

A project entitled “Rainwater Management in Rainfed Agriculture” under Niche Area of Excellence has been newly awarded by the ICAR, for the duration of 5 years since 2012. The project has the total budget outlay of Rs. 335.24 lakhs. This is one of the most prestigious programmes of the ICAR and our university. Several new landmark objectives with tangible outcome have been served, resolving some of the most fundamental challenges in the profession of rain fed farming.

A first of its own kind one day workshop on “Organic Agriculture” was recently organized by our Department of Agronomy on 22/6/2013, in collaboration with the State Agriculture Department in the presence of Dr. Sudhir Kumar Goel, Chief Secretary, Agriculture, Govt. of Maharashtra. Shri. Umakant Dangat, Commissioner of Agriculture and Dr.D.G.Bakwad, Director of Horticulture, Govt. of Maharashtra. Several renowned organic farmers also attended the programme. An exhibition of popular organic products promoted by one university was also organized during this workshop. Officers from State Agriculture Department and over 160 farmers were present for the said programme. We have also successfully carried out a unique Certificate course on Organic Agriculture with the outcome of three successive batches. I am indeed proud to inform that recently since the recent inception of our universities organic farming efforts, our progressive students have set stunningly convincingly examples of success, thereby popularizing both the sustainable and organic farming technologies, as well as the Dr. PDKV organic farming initiatives.

A “Parthenium Awareness and Eradication Week” was celebrated during 16-22 August at our Department of Agronomy, partnering with the Directorate of Weed Science, Jabalpur. As a part of this

programme, a parthenium eradication programme was recently conducted on the Agronomy Farm and nearby campus. A field demonstration of composting technology utilizing Parthenium grass was also organized at the farm. The *Zygogramma biocolorata* beetles as a biological agent for parthenium control were released in the field .

This new technology has met with much interest on the part of several interested users. The NSS students from College of Agriculture, College of Horticulture, College of Forestry, College of Agriculture Engineering and all PG students of Dr.PDKV campus have actively participated in the programme making it popular since its launch.

The IAAS and IRFS scheme of Agro-meteorology of Department of Agronomy organized one day training and farmers awareness programmes on 29/3/2013.

A soil fertility map of major and micro nutrients has been prepared utilizing GPS and GIS which is being generated in booklet through our projects.

Our AICRP on Post Harvest Technology Department of Agril. Process Engg. has successfully developed unique Onion seed extractor, Marking nut cracker, Animal feed mill and Roselle calyces detacher, which have met with much demand from the farmers and small entrepreneurs of our region.

Launching of a novel “Rainwater Harvesting and Recycling Project”, the task of rehabilitation of a large Nallah flowing through University campus has been successfully accomplished, marked by phased deepening and widening. The average top and bottom width of drainage network has also been increased up to 10 to 12m and 6 to 7 m respectively and the depth increased up to 2 to 2.5 m. A series of new CNB’s were constructed by maintaining base of the CNB on the upstream side to the top of the CNB (HFL) of the downstream. In this fashion, all the CNB’s have been constructed in a new series, in view to store the runoff in beats. After deepening and widening, depressions were created of 100 m length, 4-5 m width and 0.3 m depth, in between adjacent CNB’s, along the said drainage network resulting in a significant increase in the storage capacity and gain in a more time to conserve rain water.

Due to the above rehabilitation, the storage capacity of the Nallah indeed has increased from 12 TCM to a spectacular 27 TCM, during this last year. The resultant water level fluctuations of 16 adjoining wells were regularly recorded and compared with previous year. The analysis shows that there has been a considerable increase in the accumulation water levels, as compared to the previous years. The average gravity yield of each well was likewise observed to rise from 1.81 to 6.85 per cent of the rainfall, before and after rehabilitation, respectively. Encouraged by these results and setting a bright model for every farmer of the region, we have decided to widely implement this model project in the hope of making all of our farms self sufficient. It has also rekindled our hope that we will soon provide a revolutionary rainwater harvesting and recycling technology capable of transforming the region’s economic scenario.

Our University has a highly prestigious and nationally unique “*Nagarjun Vanaushadhi Udyan*”, wherein 450 medicinal and aromatic plants species are being maintained. It promotes unique technical research programmes, with recommendations for progressive crop improvement, crop production and phyto-chemistry, under sponsorship of the All India Coordinated Research Project on Medicinal, Aromatic Plants and Betel vine (ICAR)’. Till date, over thirty such special recommendations on agro-technologies and post harvest management have been released, incorporating our tested commercial viable medicinal and aromatic plant species. So also, several related agency projects on Medicinal & Aromatic Plants are being implemented by our centre, with financial assistance from National Medicinal Plants Board, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GOI, New Delhi and Directorate of Areca nut & Spices Development, Calicut.

In order to popularize our chosen, tested and proven successful medicinal plant cultivation philosophy in the region, latest information incorporating improved technologies is being disseminated by

us as through special workshops and various publications and in the form of folders, books, audio video CD and Radio and TV talks. As a result, though on relatively smaller area, the cultivation of several species with biodiversity conservation and utilization value have been gaining farmer approval and popularity in the region.

Furthermore, seeds and seedlings of aromatic and medicinal plants are also being produced by us on large scale and are being supplied to farmers, Agro-clinics, Department of Agriculture and Forest, Non-Governmental Organizations as also Ayurvedic and Homeopathy Colleges. We are indeed grateful to our own farmers that have brought out much awareness regarding this unique project of our university, highlighting it as a prime effort assuring viable and sustainable supplementary from income strategy.

As a significant impact and outcome of our University's pioneering efforts on frontiers of sustainable and organic farming and cultivation of Medicinal and aromatic plants, several progressive international and R & D organizations have approached us, with active partnership project proposals. Honouring one such proposal, recently our University has entered into an MoU with "Initiatives of Change International", an organization with consultative status with the United Nations' "Economic and Social Commission"(UN – ECOSOC). Implementing the same, this University has recently trained number of IoFC trainees from India, Australia, South Sudan, Kenya, Lebanon, Indonesia, South Korea, Holland and U.K.

In reciprocation, the IoFC have trained over 40 Dr.PDKV teachers and researchers 50 Administrative cadres and 60 students so far, from 11 Dr. PDKV colleges in the fields of human resource development, focussed on personal change essential for promoting character development and democratic governance. Inspired by the said PDKV – IoFC training, a group of Dr. PDKV women employees have recently launched 'ASMI – MAHILA MANCH' dedicated to strengthening and empowering Vidarbha women farmers, thereby generating fresh hope and enthusiasm. I feel confident at this historic junction that our University now has a stronger force capable of resolving deeper challenges, thereby providing fresh solutions of innovation technologies which are sure to prove decisively worthy.

A yet another recent and humble accomplishment of the Dr.PDKV, has been the opportunity to participate in the unique 'Farming Systems for Nutrition' Project under the LANSAs (Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia) network consortium launched in Vidarbha by the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation. We feel confident, Sir, that given your dynamic vision and leadership, and our willingness, this University is set to emerge as your strongest and worthiest partner in this noble effort.

The *Telankhadi* and *Mahrajbag* gardens on our subcampus at Nagpur have meticulously maintained beautiful lawns, aquarium, Children Park, fountains, ornamental, flowering plants and shrubs. Our even popular Mahrajbag Zoo, featuring Tigers, Leopards, jackals, Spotted Deer, Blue Bull, and White Peacock, proudly remains the main attraction of tourists in Nagpur. So also our *Satpuda* Botanical Garden at Nagpur spread on 25 ha. area, and having 851 different plant species, is already a major National Biodiversity Park endorsed by the International Institute of Botanical Garden Conservation, London. At Nagpur Campus of the University, a unique Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) based on the phytoid technique has been established to clear 1lakh lit. of water per day. This effort of our partnering with NEERI, has served to highlight the importance of recycling of our region's wastewater resources, having identified those as the next major unexplored frontier awaiting research capable of transforming Vidarbha agriculture.

The university is maintaining the germplasm of nine indigenous breeds of cattle viz. *Gaolao*, *Red Kandhari*, *Deoni*, *Khillar*, *Dangi*, *Gir*, *Tharparkae*, *Kankrej* and *Sahiwal*. A fodder crop demonstration project is also being implemented under RKVY, with record hundreds of farmers trained by us in the field of utilization of these breeds for effective farming and dairy industry.

The university so far has received a total of Rs.247 corers form ICAR, State Govt. and other funding agencies. Here I wish to express a deep sense of gratitude to the Maharashtra State Govt. and the ICAR for firmly standing behind the University, as the University is able to accomplish designed progress in achieving our cherished goals. The funding from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research has significantly helped the University in effecting much desired qualitative change in the student education technology. Similarly, their support for modernization of our University farm has been valuable in enhancing our mandatory task of high quality seed production. The Council's funding for KVKs has admirably helped in strengthening the infrastructure for transfer of Technology and organization of our extension activities.

A FEW WORDS OF ADVISE FOR YOUNG GRADUANTS

The phase of Youth is a unique opportunity for accomplishing of great strength and development. Youth physically, intellectually and emotionally are the ideal of mankind. Here I would like to quote Swami Vivekananda, who says, "O fortunate youth, recognize this great duty. Feel this wonderful privilege. Take up this adventure. God watches you graciously, ever ready to help and guide. I wish you to be great. The world has put its faith in you. Your elders keep their hopes in you. Now the youth means to placing your firm confidence in yourself and exercising your hopeful determination and resolution and willing good intentions in this beautiful task of self-culture. This will truly bring supreme satisfaction and fulfilment not only to you, but also to all concerned. The shaping of your life is indeed in your own hands. Practise virtue, persevere virtue. Become established in virtue. Shine as an embodiment of noblest virtue and heroic adherence to goodness. Youth is meant for this grand process. Youth life is the active development and fulfilment of these processes. This period of your time provides the suitable and favourable fields for the working out of this extremely important and most indispensable process in life. This is the special significance, the great importance and supreme value of youth life. It signifies the creation of noble personality. It is *atma-Viakasa*. It is *Atma – Nirmana*. Please try to understand the correct implication of the term successful life. When you talk of success with reference to life, it does not merely mean succeeding in everything that you undertake or do; it does not merely mean succeeding in fulfilling all wants or getting whatever you desire; it does not just mean acquiring a name or attaining a position or imitating fashionable ways appearing modern or up-to-date. The essence of true success is what you make of yourself. It is the conduct of life that you develop, it is the character that you cultivate and it is the type of person you become. This is the central meaning of successful living. Therefore, you will see this important matter is not so much a question of success in life (*Jivan – Me- Safalta*), but rather it is success *of* life. Such successful life is one that succeeds in producing an ideal individual, a noble man. Your success is not measured in terms of what all you obtained, but in terms of what you become, how you live and what actions you do. Upon this point reflect well and attain great happiness."

This day of Convocation is indeed a very special occasion in the life of you young Graduands. The parchments that have been handed over in the form of degrees signify your respective educational attainments. It is beginning of another important voyage. While you re-orient your lives and attitudes to tailor them to suit the requirements of the tasks before you, the institution, which has moulded you, would expect you also to remember the importance of morals, ethics, scruples and discipline.

Dear students, you have brought laurels to this institution through your academic achievements and extra-curricular performances. Please remember that while discharging any duty, you hold on to the morals and teaching that you have gained through your parents, teachers and all the Saints. Let your personality speak through your wholehearted works. It is now time for you to prove yourselves worthy of the investment, which this institution and your parents have made in shaping you. I once again heartily extend my congratulations to each one of you who are receiving degrees, and awards of excellence.

I also offer my best wishes to all those who are receiving degrees and prizes, today and scholars, faculty members and staff of the University charging them with the scared responsibility to keep up *esprit*

de corps and academic attainments. I take this opportunity to thank Hon'ble Chancellor of University, Pro-Chancellor of the University , Sh. Radhakrishana Vikhe Patil State Minister for Agriculture and Marketing, Govt. of Maharashtra, Guest of Honour of 28th convocation Prof. Monkombu Sambasivam Swaminathan, and the Chief Guest Dr. Yashwant Thorat, Chariman of the Maharashtra Council of Agricultural, Education and Research, Pune for their kind presence, keen interest and active support in the development of this University.

Let me avail this auspicious opportunity in the end to convey my deep sense of appreciation to Honourable members of the Executive Council, Academic Council, Board of Studies all the dignitaries present, Faculties, staff members and students and our media representatives, for their active support enthusiastic interest and continued co-operation in the continuous development of the University. I am confident that with their involvement and ever growing support from the Government of Maharashtra and ICAR, the University will be in a position to exceed expectations via landmark strides in achieving its cherished mandate in a manner appreciable and prove to be high amongst the highest ranking institutions of national and international reputation.

Thank you very much! Jai Hind!