



**63rd Convocation Address delivered by Hon'ble Chief Minister
Shri. Prithviraj Chavan during the Convocation held on December 23, 2013**

Shri D.P. Sawant, Minister of State for Higher and Technical Education,

Prof. Vasudha Kamat, Vice Chancellor, SNDT Women's University,

Prof. Rohini Godbole, who has been just felicitated,

Prof. Vandana Chakrabarti, Pro Vice Chancellor,

Registrar, Members of the Senate, Members of the Management Council,

Members of the Academic Council, Deans, Teachers, Graduating students,

dignitaries present and friends.

It is really a great Honour to address you on this prestigious Convocation ceremony of the SNDT Women's University, first women's University which shall be completing 100 years shortly. We are all looking forward to the centenary celebrations which are planned on a grand scale.

The 63rd Annual Convocation is a special day in the life for all graduating students. You are entering a new stage of your life after having worked very hard, in very difficult circumstances - many coming from lower middle class families. But your perseverance against the biases which the society holds even today, biases that, a girl who gets highly qualified creates the social problems for the parents. In spite of these biases, you withstood the challenges and have reached this far, having completed your courses of studies, you are graduating with different degrees in the chosen profession and the field of studies at Bachelor's level and Master's level and higher level. Not only, you have done your parents and teachers proud, I think it is a great fulfillment of your dreams and perseverance and I must congratulate every single one of you for having reached this very important milestone in your life and it is needless to say, I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

The SNDT Women's University is one of the unique institutions in this part of the world, not only in our Country but in the coastal South Asia - still larger part of the developing world. The concept of all Women's University conceived by Mahashri Karve, speaks volumes about the vision of the great man. Even in the pre independence era, he realized that upliftment of women, empowerment of women is very crucial for not only achieving true independence in the true sense of the world, not only political independence, but the true freedom. Almost

97 years ago, the concept was born, it was supported by philanthropic contribution of Thackersey family and today we have an institution which stands in several States and has produced tens of thousands of graduates and continues to serve our country in a unique and special way. You have now plans for the next century and I assure you that, the Government of Maharashtra will completely stand by with you as you celebrate your first 100 years and draw a new print for the next century. We have a long way to go.

Today I am particularly happy that, we have chosen to honor Dr. Rohini Godbole, an eminent physicist of our Country, who has done all of us proud and particularly having come from a very average middle class family from Pune. Dr. Godbole has been working in a field which is not very popular in our Country. If I look at the Science landscape and as I happened to be the Minister of Science and Technology for few years before I came to Mumbai, most of our scientists, have entered in the field of Chemistry, a very few in the field of Physics and particularly extremely rare to find a top level Scientist working in the field of Theoretical Physics/Particle Physics. Dr. Rohini Godbole has done front line work, a very exciting area of the Particle Physics, participating in the experiments concerned with the frontiers of Science, frontiers of Physics, and frontiers of knowledge. Scientist of India are involved from the Atomic Energy Establishment, but scientist like Dr. Godbole have contributed significantly to the experiments concerned at Geneva. Top scientists, with whom I had an occasion to exchange views, speak very highly about India's contribution, one of the greatest scientific experiments ever tried in the history of mankind. I think our understanding of the basic Physics will be completely changed with the work concerned goes ahead. Dr. Godbole's contribution is very important and we all are proud for what she has achieved. She also stands before us, as an example of what a person from an average middle class family, only with the support of the family members, and that is very crucial, can achieve. Today SNDT Women's University is honoring her and has set before all of you a very high goal to achieve what Dr. Godbole has achieved. Every one of you must achieve success in your respected fields and do excellent work as the predecessors have done.



63rd Convocation Address delivered by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri. Prithviraj Chavan during the Convocation held on December 23, 2013

I remember the book Dr. Godbole has edited – “Lilavati’s Daughters”. It talks about great scientists of India. It is named after famous Lilavati who was daughter of one of the great Mathematician Bhaskaracharya II in 12th Century and a mathematician herself. This book contains life sketches of women scientists.

Science is going to be very important for future of our Country. When I look at the possible growth path for our Country and for State of Maharashtra, one thing becomes starkly clear and that is we are not well endowed with natural resources. We import about 85% of our crude oil, petroleum energy. We have to import coal to produce electricity. There is huge water scarcity in many parts of the State. About 82% of our agriculture is rain-fed. The failure of monsoon creates a huge stress, as it happened in the last two years in 1/3 part of Maharashtra, Marathwada, North Maharashtra and Western Maharashtra. There is an energy security challenge, water security challenge, which is perhaps caused by climate change. Drought in one part of the State and the flooding in eastern part of Vidarbha Region happen simultaneously. This is certainly an impact of climate change. But that creates a problem of food scarcity. On one hand, an income has grown ever since we adopted economic reforms in 1991. We opened the economy; we allowed competition between public sector and private sector. We opened many areas to private sectors which were earlier closed to them. The consumers benefited, the prices fell, consumers had a choice, in the sectors of automobiles, wide range of telecommunication, mobile telephones, airlines. We can name many sectors. The 1991 Economic Reforms have speeded up the economic growth. The traditional rate of growth of our GDP is 3.5% since independence. The rate of growth is cheered by the Western economics today. Post 1991 we are growing at a much rapid rate of growth, particularly after 2004, the rate of growth has reached phenomenal level of 8-9% which was never before achieved in the history of this Country. If we go back a few hundred years in the history of our Country, never before such rate of economic growth is achieved on a sustained basis, till we hit the global economic crisis of 2008. Picked up from that crisis, again we are in the midst of other crises and our growth has plummeted to 5%. But all these economic growth rates post 2004 have put lots of money in the hands of people. The purchasing power has grown tremendously. The supply side, the goods and services have not kept pace and that is why we are facing

inflation. With the massive resources at the disposal of both Central Government and State Government, because of the high economic growth rate of 8-9%, we started to carry out many social plans and schemes to uplift people from poverty. The schemes like National Employment Guarantee Scheme, the NAREGA Scheme and the Schemes like debt-waivers for farmers to the tune of Rs. 70,000 crores which have been utilized for the purpose. The schemes like, Bharat Nirman Karyakrama which was sought to gear up rural economy. The Sarvashiksha Abhiyan has increased our literacy levels impressively, the national rural health mission has put in lots of money in the hands of state to improve the health delivery system. In the State of Maharashtra, we are able to now dream and implement schemes like Rajiv Gandhi Jeevandayi Yojana which is a free insurance scheme for all major life threatening diseases like cardiac diseases, brain or Kidney diseases. People with income below Rs. One lakh (which covers nearly 95% population in the State) are treated absolutely free through 970 health centres. This is possible because India has grown at an impressive growth rate. Take health sector, the agriculture sector, with the reforms in revenue administration, the use of e-governance India is surging fast. Look at the penetration of mobile phones, about 70% of people in Maharashtra today possess mobile phones, 45% people have Television sets at home. But there is poverty still to be fought and the schemes like food security law, if you really make sure that, the poorest of poor people do not go hungry, the dream of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to remove poverty i.e. the Garibi Hataav really stands vindicated with the food security law that was recently made. This was possible because high growth rate in the last 10 years, and ever since economic reforms were ushered in by Dr. Manmohan Singh in 1991, 20 years ago. But can we continue at this rate of growth with no natural resources? Natural resources have already in great constraints. We have no natural gas and therefore electricity production has suffered, a project at Dabhol producing 1920 megawatts is completely lying shut because there is no gas. Uran Plant is suffering because there is no gas. We don't have enough coal therefore we cannot run all our coal based thermal power plants. If there is a failure or no rains, out hydroelectric power plants would suffer. Recently 85% of our petroleum energy, crude oil was required to be imported for which we have to spend more than Rs. seven lakhs Crore of Foreign Exchange. It is a very delicate balance and a



63rd Convocation Address delivered by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri. Prithviraj Chavan

very scary situation and therefore I am very clear that, we cannot continue to grow at a higher rate of economic growth based on natural resources alone.

Our growth will have to continue based on our human resources. You are truly able to create a knowledge economy, something which is being done in other countries. Take for example Japan, or Israel, or South Korea with virtually no natural resources. They became great economies only with their human resources, the intellectual property of their people. That is what we will have to do in India and that is what you will have to do in this country to keep it growing. And it is for us to set right the policies which enable you to succeed to create a knowledge economy in our country, and the prices based on innovations which create taxes, which also create new jobs. The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2009 called for a **Decade of Renovation**. Renovation is important because it converts the intellectual power-your brain power, into wealth. Renovations will lead to real wealth which will take our people out of poverty, which will create jobs, which will be able to create world class education facilities and world class health care facilities which will make dry land agriculture sustainable. We will be able to reach water to every farmer and where we will be able to withstand any natural calamities that we have fought. But when the challenges are here, alternate source of energy will have to be discovered, nuclear energy, (whether fusion energy, hydrogen energy). There is a possibility that if India takes days to reach high science and perhaps we would get benefited by it. Otherwise we will be doomed by high technology from other countries and be satisfied with whatever is given to us.

The State Legislature recently passed the landmark legislation against black magic and human sacrifice, after almost 15 years of effort. It was a great victory for scientific temper. Although it appears to be a small step perhaps unnoticed by you, it was the landmark decision in favor of creating scientific temperament, something which, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stood for and for which he created great Institutes of Science, (CSIR and IITS, etc). We have to carry that vision and dream of late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and late Rajiv Gandhi when he ushered into IT revolution that is the challenge before your generation. The Vice Chancellor told me that, when you want to celebrate Centenary year, you wish to create Institute of Science. It is a very good idea, let us work together, and create all the new schemes that you are

thinking of such as the School of Design, School of Science and other plans that she discussed with me. We will support that for your centenary celebration. We will start planning for it from now, so that when the actual year of 2015 comes you will be transformed into a great University ready to take on the next century. That brings me to the issues which women face in our country and recently very unfortunate events happened in Delhi and in Mumbai, which brought all the citizens in the country together through electronic media. It touched us very deeply. Perhaps it may not have touched us deeply if electronic media was not there. Newspaper reports alone may not have touched us so deeply. The happenings in Delhi vividly portrayed by media disturbed everyone. The entire youth of the country mobilized against the senseless violence against women. We still have to go a long way. We are proud that, we are the first state in the country to think of the policy for women. It was in 1991 that Maharashtra's first women's policy was ushered in. Many new concepts were thought of for first time in the country - economic empowerment for women, giving them rights to properly and trying to bring in equality, etc. After a period of 7-8 years, the second women's policy was launched in the year 2001. Here we pushed empowerment further. We worked at three levels economic empowerment, political empowerment and ultimately the final frontier, i.e. the social empowerment and social equality. In terms of political empowerment, there was 33% reservation in local bodies, which we pushed further to 50% reservation in local bodies. We have not only legislated but a complete round of local body elections from the Gram Panchayat to Zilla Parishad to Nagar Palikas, to Mahanagar Palikas and all of them were conducted recently this year with 50% reservation for women. That is political empowerment. For economic empowerment we are legislating new laws giving property rights, names and credits, property cards, self help groups, low interest loans, and so on. That is happening but we still have a long way to go. Along with political empowerment and economic empowerment we will come to final frontier of social empowerment. We are still far away from social equality. Much legislation are being considered and enacted. In many cases, after getting enacted, there are difficulties in implementing the laws. We are a state which recruits 30% of police force of women. They are being trained and they are being deployed and we also recruit 30% of women in our civil service. The State has taken a lot of progressive steps that brings us to the 3rd women's policy, 12 years after the



63rd Convocation Address delivered by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri. Prithviraj Chavan during the Convocation held on December 23, 2013

2nd policy was launched in the year 2001. We have a women's policy which was widely debated. A committee chaired by the Minister and for Child Development took lot of pains to draft the policy. We have got many many new areas, in which we talk about changing of mind set in the traditional male dominating society, about equal opportunities, about violence against women, about sexual ratio and making women more self confident. We are including more women issues, making the policy more women centric than it was earlier. We are talking about domestic violence, work place violence and also including the women who were left out, on the margins of the Society. There are thoughts given to those women and special programmes for SC/ST/VJNT and minorities. If you have not looked at the Women's Policy please look at it on website. We want a thorough debate and we have got a lot of suggestions/objections to the policy and we are in the final stages of launching the third women policy in Maharashtra this year itself. Women's empowerment and equality of women is a very very decent thought. Till the middle of last century, even if I remember the UN Charter of Human rights which was initiated in 1948, there was hardly any thought or a special treatment for women's empowerment. It was only in the year 1975, the United Nations declared it as a year of women and later the decade for the women. Special attention started to be given globally to the plight of the women, followed by the 1979 Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women popularly called as C document. Taking ideas from international world, and the national women's policy, Maharashtra has moved forward in a very proactive way. We will continue to do that and lead rest of the country in innovative ideas. However, I am the first to admit that, we have a long long way to go. One way to correct this distortion is, when you step out into the world, as confident, educated, able to stand shoulder to shoulder with men folk, contributing to the society in all different ways in every field. The alternative you have chosen will bring you respect. You must change mindsets and dream for a more equal society. For no country can really be called developed or will become a developed country unless it treats its women folks with due respect and 50% of the population is allowed to progress economically with self-actualization and contribute equal measure to the development. That is the main challenge before us. As you enter the new era of technology, we find technology sector moving very rapidly. In just one

generation, I have seen the birth of silicon revolution, the micro computer revolution, and while as a student, I saw the first microprocessor chip, the first computer on silicon demonstrated in late 60s and 70s. From that, the world of personal computers, the world of internet, followed by world of social media, instant communication which has threatened the existence of print media altogether, the connectivity that has brought us speed with which the news spreads, speed with which you can communicate with all your friends is not possible with telephones and any other means. A complete ICT revolution in the field is a complete empowering force. The poorer society never had access to source what the richer society had. But the internet and computer revolution is a democratizing force that has bridged the gap between the rich and the poor in a manner that could not be imagined 10, 20, 30 years back. And that gives you an opportunity of learning, which was not possible because of disturbances in social conditions. If you have access to net, there is explosion of information, explosion of knowledge. All you have to do is dip into it or tap it and put efforts to assimilate knowledge. New ways of teaching, new ways of learning if the Distance Education Technology, internet technology, is thought of, new classrooms have been designed. One person now can teach any number of people. Lectures which are recorded can be accessed any time day or night, at will. The whole paradigm has changed and you are living in the era where you have access to all this great knowledge, and benefit from it. Before I end, a few words to the young graduates. Never stop being a student. Technology is moving so fast and you can say look I got my degree, I have worked very hard now, let me enjoy life, get a job, get a salary, get married that's enough. No! You have to face a fierce competition in the world. If you stop learning, stop updating somebody else will come up from behind and go past. People will employ you, they want you to be absolutely current, whether it is in technology or whether it is in law or in the social sector. If you stop being a student, and stop learning it will be your own peril. You now have an access to the global platform and you need no longer be restricted to Mumbai or Pune or Satara, you can work from anywhere in the world. The world demands brilliant workers, knowledge workers whether in the field of science, in the field of humanities, in the field of commerce, management, engineering and you can really work anywhere in the world, the global platform is available to you. What is crucial to reach that global



63rd Convocation Address delivered by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri. Prithviraj Chavan during the Convocation held on December 23, 2013

platform is communication skill. Unfortunately, our education system creates people with highly mono-dimensional-personality. If you are studying Home Science and that's it, you only learn Home Science and know nothing about Law, nothing about humanities or technology. Of course, now everybody learns IT. You will have to become multi-disciplinarians- only then you will succeed! The best communication skills can easily be achieved with efforts. Keeping yourself updated and networked is going to be the key to success. Please aim high. Don't be satisfied with what the previous generation used to be satisfied with. Current world needs people who are hard workers and well trained. You should not be satisfied at all by mediocre existence. Aim for the best and you can do that. Great Institution like SNDT Women's University has already given you a great opportunity to study and work in cities like Mumbai and Pune and be taught by great faculty, great teachers. It is up to you now to make the best of rest of your life. I am sure, the confidence that this institution has given you, the opportunity to learn and to self-actualize, make sure that, you can go ahead as far as you can. I think you are the hope of modern India. As I see confident faces ready to take on the challenges the world throws at them, I feel ever so encouraged that we have a great future. In spite of all the difficulties and hardship that we have, India will certainly become a great nation, not because it makes us feel good, but because our brothers and sisters who are less endowed and living in worst conditions can be lifted out of poverty and they can be given the same facilities that you in Mumbai, you living in South of Mumbai studying in South of Mumbai are getting today. That is the challenge faced by all including those who govern the State, those who govern the Country and those who are going to shape our future.

Best wishes to all of you for future!

Thank you, Jai Hind, Jai Maharashtra!



Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri. Prithviraj Chavan on December 23, 2013



In this Convocation Honoris Causa was awarded to Dr. Rohini Godbole

