

# SEVENTH CONVOCATION

JUNE 4, 2010



*Convocation Address*

***Hon'ble Shri Sharad Pawar***

**Union Minister of Agriculture, Consumer Affairs,  
Food and Public Distribution, Govt. of India**

Dear students, parents, faculty members, officials from the Government, ladies and gentlemen.

On this wonderful day we are gathered together to celebrate your academic success. Let me at the very outset compliment all of you for your outstanding performance. Let me also compliment your proud parents for whom it is a matter of immense pride and joy to see their children being felicitated today.

In my political career of over five decades, I have always enjoyed visiting and interacting with the youth and students of this country. It is in you that our nation sees its dreams of

tomorrow. India's forward march to glory is fuelled by your enthusiasm, ideals and entrepreneurship.

Your work ahead is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do.

Animal husbandry – your chosen field of specialization, occupies a vast space in our rural economic map. Agriculture, including animal husbandry, may contribute only 17% of India's GDP, but the challenges it faces and therefore the challenges it poses for India's future is enormous. How do we address the needs of our poor farmers engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry activities who can barely manage a living out of their profession while we address the needs of farmers who are ready to take on the world in quality, productivity and efficiency? How do we bridge this duality? There are no uniform answers to these challenges nor are there any readymade solutions. It is precisely because of this that I place my hope in all of you, for your sincerity, commitment and honesty is the best answer to these challenges.

The challenge facing this sector has to be understood concurrently in many dimensions. The most critical of this is in the context of India's population and its continued growth where we are likely to see a population of nearly 1.5 billion by 2030. While we take pride in the fact that we are the largest producers of milk in the world having increased our milk production from 17 million tonnes at independence to 108 million tonnes in 2008-09, it is still a matter of concern that despite this huge increase, our per capita milk consumption is just 250 gms/per day compared to around 1000 gms/per day in most of the advanced nations.

Rise in incomes and change in eating habits will dramatically alter what India consumes and therefore beyond rice, wheat and coarse cereals, I see an ever increasing demand for poultry, dairy and dairy products. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for us. How we position ourselves to successfully exploit this situation will determine our growth in the next decade or so.

Our livestock wealth is impressive, not only numerically but also in terms of rich genetic diversity. You are aware that India ranks 1st in respect of buffalo, 2nd in respect of cattle

and goats and 3rd in respect of sheep. While we take pride in this we cannot negate the fact that productivity of our native livestock is quite low compared to the world average. For the growth we dream of, increasing the productivity will be of paramount importance. The focus has to be shifted from 'increasing production' to 'increasing productivity' per animal unit and 'attaining high resource use efficiency'. Food, fodder and fuel production will have to be increased by 60% in the next 25 years to meet the needs of the growing population. New technologies, focused research and effective transmission of lab research to the field hold the key for growth of this sector.

Besides providing for the dietary and nutrient requirements of our population, the animal husbandry sector is one of the major employment provider in the rural areas. With 11.44 million people employed in principal status and 11.01 million people employed in subsidiary status, employment in the animal husbandry sector constitutes nearly 5.5% of the total working population in the country. Development of this sector cannot be under-emphasized if we are committed to the cause of inclusive development of our nation.

Institutions like IVRI and its other allied organizations have attained a prestigious position amongst organizations in the world and have contributed immensely towards the growth of livestock sector. The creditable work carried out at IVRI on the promotion of integrated programmes for development of diagnostics and vaccines, animal health care and genetically employed nutrition, processing and marketing has enabled us to achieve a livestock revolution in this country. To be an alumni of this prestigious institution should be a matter of pride for all of you and it is my earnest hope and desire that you make your institution proud with the good work that you do after you have left its portals.

A globally significant role for the Indian livestock system depends critically on India's ability to eradicate animal diseases. Diseases impose huge national economic losses. Prevalence of animal diseases precludes India's entry in the lucrative international markets for dairy, as well as, meat products. The control of animal diseases will reduce the yield gap leading to at least a 20-25% increase in output.

Preparedness for exotic disease management and other disasters in food animals is not only central to the country's food security but also to the security of the Nation as a whole.

The outbreak of avian influenza, its impact on our poultry industry and its ultimate control, is a story well known to all. Such outbreaks are bound to happen and our readiness to tackle such unforeseen events will be instrumental in sustaining our future growth in the animal husbandry sector. We have achieved substantial success in this with the High Security Animal Disease Laboratory (HSADL) of IVRI at Bhopal being recognized as an OIE reference lab for bird flu diagnosis in the world, but much more remains to be done.

Friends, the focus of change should be to build professionalism so that agricultural education produces graduates, who have the courage of conviction to work for the poor farmers and play a decisive role in transformation of our rural hinterland. In your quest for success in life ahead meeting some failure is inevitable. It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all – in which case, you fail by default.

You will never truly know yourself or the strength of your conviction until both have been tested by adversity. I hope that every one of you seated in this hall today will have the courage and tenacity to see through the adversities that will come your way.

Before I end, I must urge you to use your knowledge gained here on behalf of those who are less knowledgeable and identify yourself not only with the rich and powerful but with those less endowed. Retain the ability to imagine yourself into the lives of those who do not have your advantages, for then, you will help transform the reality of lakhs of poor farmers for the better. Your time is limited, so make the best of it.

Thank you!!