

World Youth Skills Day – 15 July 2026

Acceptance Speech

By

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“Competence, Character, and Courage: The Triple Pillars of Viksit Bharat 2047”

Hon'ble Chief Guest, distinguished dignitaries, respected academicians, educational leaders, dear colleagues, and my young friends,

Good morning.

Standing before you today to receive the “Fellow of Eminence and Lifetime Achievement Award” from the World Academy of Higher Education and Development (W-AHEAD) is one of the most humbling moments of my life.

I accept this honour with profound gratitude—not as the culmination of a career, but as a renewed commitment to the cause of education and nation-building.

No individual walks alone.

Whatever I have been able to accomplish has been possible because of my teachers who inspired me, my colleagues who challenged me, my students who kept me young in mind, and my family whose unwavering support sustained me through every stage of my journey.



I offer my sincere thanks to W-AHEAD for this distinguished recognition.

Receiving this honour on World Youth Skills Day carries a special significance.

It reminds us that the future of every nation is shaped not in its parliaments or boardrooms, but in its classrooms, laboratories, libraries, innovation centres, and, above all, in the minds and hearts of its young people.

As India moves towards the historic milestone of Viksit Bharat 2047, many questions confront us.

Will India become only a larger economy?, Or will it become a greater civilization?, Will we merely create more wealth?, Or will we create more wisdom?, Will we produce more graduates?, Or will we nurture more leaders?

I believe the answer depends upon three timeless values, Competence. Character. Courage. These are the three pillars upon which a developed India must stand.

The first pillar is Competence.

Competence is no longer defined by what we know. It is defined by how quickly we can learn, unlearn, and relearn. Artificial Intelligence is changing every profession. Technology is redefining every workplace. Knowledge has become abundant. But wisdom remains scarce.

Tomorrow's leaders will not be those who possess the most information, but those who possess the greatest capacity to think critically, innovate creatively, solve complex problems, and continue learning throughout life.

Our educational institutions must therefore prepare students not merely for their first job, but for fifty years of continuous learning.

The second pillar is Character.

Character is the invisible force that determines the visible impact of knowledge. Without character, competence becomes manipulation. Without integrity, intelligence loses its purpose. Our nation needs scientists with ethics, entrepreneurs with compassion, administrators with fairness, teachers with dedication, and leaders with humility. Character is what enables knowledge to serve humanity.

It is the foundation upon which trust, institutions, and civilizations are built.

The third pillar is Courage.

Every generation receives two gifts from history: The opportunity to dream. And the responsibility to act. Courage is not the absence of fear. It is the determination that purpose is greater than fear. It takes courage to innovate. It takes courage to question outdated practices. It takes courage to stand for truth. It takes courage to uphold values when compromise appears easier.

Every major transformation in history has begun because someone had the courage to imagine a better future.

My young friends,

When India celebrates one hundred years of Independence in 2047, you—not we—will write the next chapter of our national story.

The India of 2047 will not be built by governments alone. It will be built by classrooms that ignite curiosity, laboratories that encourage discovery, universities that nurture excellence, industries that reward innovation and citizens who place national interest above personal gain.

Therefore, never stop learning. Never compromise your integrity. Never lose the courage to dream big.

To my fellow educators and academic leaders, I wish to leave one humble thought. Education has never been merely about producing graduates. It is about producing enlightened citizens. Degrees may create employment. Education should create civilization.

If every institution in India resolves to nurture graduates with competence, character, and courage, then Viksit Bharat 2047 will not remain a vision. It will become a national reality.

As I receive this honour today, I do so with gratitude—but also with hope. Hope in our youth. Hope in our teachers. Hope in our institutions. And above all, hope in India.

Let me conclude with a simple thought. Competence may make us successful. Character will make us respected. Courage will make us transformational.

When these three come together in millions of young Indians, Viksit Bharat 2047 will no longer be a dream. It will become our destiny.

Thank you very much.