

## FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

Gujarat Vidyapith is established during the historical movement of Indian Independence in 1920. Founded by father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, the University's objective, among others, was to prepare students who would later on join the Movement. After independence, the University adopted its major objective to prepare the truthful, non-violent, ethical, educated and informed workers who can go back to their societies and work for regeneration of those societies based on the vision of Mahatma Gandhi.

Given this historicity and the mandate, it is but obvious that Gujarat Vidyapith will have a character which is different from any other mainstream university. The University is based on Gandhi's *Nai Talim* which puts productive work at the center of the curriculum. The goal of Gujarat Vidyapith is to develop overall personality of youth through hand, heart and head (3H) and accordingly all its daily programs are planned. This schedule is well organized which attributed many values in students' life and leaves permanent impact even after leaving Gujarat Vidyapith. This community approach of teaching-learning experience was supposed to make students self-sufficient in their day to day life. We are proud of the fact that we have been able to keep that legacy intact. Daily prayers, khadi weaving, cleanliness drive, organic farming, managing kitchen, maintenance of computers, audio visual instruments, Gandhi Theatre, serving rural and nearby community and underprivileged, active participation in sport activities, cultural programs, summer hobby camps, NSS and many such activities shape the students as better human beings with values.

Gujarat Vidyapith as an institute of higher learning has received a number of awards and felicitations. More than 25 awards were bestowed on Gujarat Vidyapith, its leadership and also on faculties from India and abroad. In last 5 years, Gujarat Vidyapith has published more than 155 books. Besides this around 75 books have been published by the faculty members. More than 500 research papers were published and equal numbers were presented at various conferences. Several monographs, research reports and book chapters were contributed by the faculties. Though, Gujarat Vidyapith does not believe in consultancy and it shares knowledge as open source, it has received approximately Rs. one crores towards consultancy. More than twenty research projects were undertaken worth Rs. five crores and more than fifteen projects have been completed and twenty new projects have been initiated during this period. The flagship project of Gujarat Vidyapith is e-edition of *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (CWMG 100 Volumes, running into 60,000 pages), recently launched by the Publication Division, Government of India. At present, Gujarat Vidyapith has been entrusted to produce

e-version of Hindi edition – *Sampoorna Gandhi Vangmaya*. The social extension work of Gujarat Vidyapith is multifaceted. But to exemplify, a new scheme fully funded by Gujarat Vidyapith is *Gramshilpi* which will lead the village and its people to the real *Gram Swaraj*. The *Gramjeevan Padyatra*, a recently initiated program has now become a regular annual feature, open class learning for student from societies. It is pertinent to note that teachers and students of Gujarat Vidyapith were instrumental in establishing 3000 new toilets in villages where its campuses are located. They also influenced more than 300 highway hotels to set up biogas plants for their kitchen waste and thus leading to cleanliness in the immediate environment and saving of fuel along with the production of good quantity of biogas fertilizers.

Gujarat Vidyapith family has a tradition to stand by the calamity affected areas and populations, be it man-made or natural. In the twenty first century, students and faculty of Vidyapith participated in relief and rehabilitation programs in Jammu-Kashmir and Nepal earth-quake, Kosi (Bihar) and Tapi (Surat) and Uttaranchal flood disaster.

At the same time, Gujarat Vidyapith has moved on with the changing times to maintain itself as the vibrant centre of knowledge production and dissemination. It is our strength that we have been able to reach to all parts of Gujarat and work among the people. As the village society is our focus, we have based our curricula on the life and problems of the village society. We have retained both our traditional practices of spinning, weaving and manual labour and brought in the computer and internet-aided teaching and learning process to be the centre of education which receives best of both the worlds. The student of Gujarat Vidyapith is equipped with ‘Charkha’ in one hand and laptop in the other, and is ready to accept new challenges. Many of them have cleared UGC-NET, SLET and other competitive examinations.

Gujarat Vidyapith’s education system, if to be assessed on mainstream parameters, has not lagged behind the conventional universities. The education that Gujarat Vidyapith provides has along with scientific base, a more practical approach. The human-centric curriculum with appropriate technology promises a positive and promising future.