

Knowledge Society

Chancellor' Address on the Occasion of Sixth Convocation of Fakir Mohan University, Balasore on 06.01.2011

It is a matter of great pleasure and privilege on my part to preside over the Sixth Convocation of Fakir Mohan University and to extend a cordial welcome to Madam Syeda Saiyidain Hameedjii, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India and a strong votary of women's rights and human rights as well who has just delivered the Convocation Address. I am sure the students and the members of the academic community of Fakir Mohan University have been immensely benefited from her enlightening address.

On this auspicious occasion, I also take the opportunity to welcome the students, scholars and dignitaries and above all the people of Balasore and Bhadrak. This University is named after a great son of the soil, Vyasa Kabi Fakir Mohan Senapati, the father of Modern Oriya Prose Literature, and a social thinker. I pay my homage to this illustrious son of Orissa. It is also very appropriate to remember today all the pioneers who have contributed in establishing this University and played significant role in its growth and progress.

Let me congratulate the eminent persons who have been awarded Degree Honoris Causa for their valuable contribution in manifold ways. I also congratulate all successful doctoral candidates, who were awarded degrees in recognition of their contribution to learning in various disciplines. All our young men and women who have received Gold Medals and prizes for their accomplishment in various fields deserve our hearty congratulations and good wishes. I convey my heartiest congratulations to the recipients on successful completion of their academic programmes and attaining degrees and distinctions in their respective fields. This is the only the beginning to crown with many more successes in life. I am sure, with hard work and strong determination our students will continue to be successful and make all of us proud with their achievements.

Quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens which in turn depends on the quality of their education. While school education equips the society with the enlightened workforce, higher education provides competent leadership by supplying a well developed human resource which finally takes the responsibility of operating the development system of a nation.

Knowledge has always been the prime mover of prosperity and power. The acquisition of knowledge is therefore, been the thrust area throughout the world. To become a Knowledge superpower by the year 2020 is a very important mission for our nation. Today's Knowledge Society has a two dimensional objective of societal transformation and wealth generation, a third dimension is knowledge protection and management.

Knowledge is closely linked to education and education has been an instrument of transformation. The transformation, however, can not come without quality, effectiveness, accountability and efficiency. In the Indian context, the challenges of higher education have been dynamic. While on the one hand, the decade is being celebrated as that of the innovation, there is a vast number of students that are still out of the gamut of any form of education pertaining to many social and economic challenges; there is equal need to educate, equip and empower them for a better tomorrow and also to prepare them at par with the global requirements.

Education prepares the individual for his or her fullest contribution in making the nation constantly rise to the higher levels of achievement. It is a gateway to information, opportunities and empowerment. One of the very urgent needs of our society is to educate people of the backward classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Constitution with all its appropriate provisions for the upliftment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by grant of concessions; is a meaningful inspiration for the educationists of today. "Gyanaloka" programme initiated by me aims to enhance literacy rate in the state and bring down high drop out rate among the girls. It is now implemented through all the universities of the state involving NSS students. I congratulate our students for their keen

interest and strong involvement and I am sure, we will soon achieve our goal of fully literate state.

Higher education in India is the second largest system in the world. But we are nowhere in respect of quality and relevance. We do not have a single affiliating or full-fledged unitary university which is among the top 100 in the world. The quality of higher education system is poor when we apply the four way test of quality: (a) conformity with international standards bench marks (b) fitness of purposes or relevance (c) marketability in terms of value for money and (d) transformation with reference to change management.

India is equally concerned about the low Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education. Educational planners feel that high GER is imperative to sustain economy as the educated youth contribute to the economic growth of the country. The issues of access, quality and relevance of education having direct impact on the quantity and quality of the country's economic growth constitute important parameters for inclusive growth of society.

Quality improvement is not only the responsibility of the Government and apex bodies of higher education. The ultimate responsibility of quality improvement lies with the institutions of higher education which are the real functional units. Therefore, universities and colleges have to shoulder the responsibilities of keeping a regular watch on their quality.

Several institutions which have been built with considerable expense for the purpose of providing training to our young men and women in proper educational pursuit, disciplining their lives must try to train our students to face the challenges of global competition in all fields and bring credit to our own country and to our own institution.

The learning of today has gone beyond the four walls of class room. The process now is more learner-centric with the role of the teacher being transformed from that of a mere instructor to a facilitator. The role of technology in this is crucial as it can be used not only within the class room but also to take learning across boundaries.

India has progressed rapidly as technology connectivity and net usages have increased. Apart from urban areas these days, there is significant growth in internet

services and penetration in rural and semi urban areas as well. Such a trend can be attributed to the growing literacy rates, easy availability and affordability of internet access.

The 21st century is about the management of all the knowledge and information we have generated and the value addition we bring to it. We must give our students the skills with which they find a way through the sea of knowledge that we have created and continue with life long learning.

Educational reform is the most important area in which university can aid in bridging the gap between the current work field demands and the existing university curricula. Updating the curriculum to rapidly changing needs of employers and the labour market is therefore is the need of the day.

Education is an important instrument in bring out potentialities of human being while effectiveness of a system of education is mainly dependent upon its teachers. Curriculum implementation largely depends on the class room teaching strategies, which in turn depends on the teacher's commitment, competency and training. Quality of a teacher can have a profound impact on the learning abilities of students. It is in the hands of the teachers to create the next generation of skilled manpower. Teacher's competency and empowerment can make significant difference to develop a culture and environment in classrooms. Good teachers are a rare resource all over the world.

Diversity brings with it unique opportunities to learn from one another. The exchange of staff and students across institutions, across borders result in new knowledge, new ways of thinking and exposure to new culture. According to Rabindranath Tagore, to study a banyan tree, you are not only to know its main stem in its own soil, but also must trace the growth of its greatness in the further soil; for then you can know the true nature of its vitality. The civilization of India, like the banyan tree, has shed its beneficent shade away from its own birth place..... India can live and grow by spreading abroad – not the political India, but the ideal India.

We are one nation with a rich and proud cultural heritage spanning over more than 5000 years. We as a nation have the right to charter our destiny with dignity and honour. With 55 percent of the population between 25 to 30 years of age India is a country of young

people. While all advanced countries have an ageing population India with a young population is all set to lead the world. You must feel proud that youths of India are now marching ahead and recognized as the best in the world in several sectors for their knowledge and expertise and do not forget their glorious achievements in sports arena. My dear students, you are the youths of this country. You are the strength of the nation, you are the wealth of the nation and dream of the nation. I have no doubt in my mind that all of you who are moving to the real world of building tomorrow's India, would find the task fascinating and make a difference to the society, from where you came to join your institutions, through your creativity, dedication, hard work and above all with a clear vision for the future. On this occasion, I would like to urge upon all concerned as well as the faculty members and University administration to work hard to make our students well equipped to create a better world to live in. I would like you to remember those inspiring words of Swami Vivekananda who said, "Arise, Awake and Stop till not the goal is reached."

Fakir Mohan University is a young University of only twelve years. I strongly believe that the Vice-Chancellor, members of the Senate, Syndicate, Academic Council, members of the teaching and non-teaching staff and the dynamic students will continue with their efforts to contribute for the steady progress of this university.

With these words, I have great pleasure to be on this joyous occasion and wish our young men and women all success in their every endeavour and very bright future. I wish Fakir Mohan University to attain great heights in days ahead.

Jai Hind.