

Expanding the Sphere of Knowledge

Chancellor's Address at the 30th Convocation of the Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar on October 21, 2010

It gives me immense pleasure to preside over the 30th Convocation of the Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology. Today the University has turned another leaf on its glorious existence in the service of the State and the Nation as another batch of students equipped with skill and knowledge steps out from the university campus to serve the profession to the best of their ability. In that way, it is indeed a great occasion for the students and the university as well. Convocation also provides us to join our students and share their moment of glory and happiness. By holding convocation regularly, the University reiterates its commitment that this important academic ceremony remains the most cherished moment in the life of a student. It is the occasion when the university renews its resolve to march ahead producing skilled and knowledgeable human resource of the future.

It is a matter of great privilege for all of us to have Hon'ble Vice-President of India, Mohammad Hamid Ansariji, as the Chief Guest on today's Convocation. This is his first visit to Orissa. It is my great pleasure to extend a very hearty welcome to our Hon'ble Vice-President to this momentous occasion. Our Chief Guest is a brilliant scholar and a diplomat and academician of distinction. He has deep knowledge and wide experience having visited many countries during the course of discharging diplomatic and academic responsibilities. He is a man who always believes in himself and we all are proud of such a distinguished personality occupying this prestigious post of our country. As Chairman of Rajya Sabha, he has set a high tradition in upholding the dignity of the House and is respected by all parties for his fairness, firmness and of course good humour. On his maiden visit to the state, he will be addressing our young men and women who will be the torchbearer of our technological advancement. It is a great moment for them to listen to his address and draw inspiration to work with more dedication to meet his expectations. I am sure, not only the students but also the members of faculty and all others

present here would be immensely benefited from his address. The university will certainly take a cue from his address in enhancing its reach, delivery mechanism and to march ahead.

Today, the University is proud to confer honorary Doctorate degree to very distinguished personalities for their life-time contribution to the advancement of professional knowledge and also to the growth of the Nation. I take this opportunity to extend my warm felicitations to all the recipients and I expect them to continue the good work by which our students will be inspired to emulate them.

Convocation is the occasion when the hard work put in by the students round the years is rewarded and this success not only brings cheer to them and makes them feel elated for making it but also makes the parents, teachers and friends proud of them. Today marks a great step forward in the lives of the students receiving their degrees to go up onto a career ladder. We have also students awarded with medals and prizes for their outstanding achievement. They all have shown great promises. Let me congratulate our brilliant young men and women and wish them very best in their future endeavours. I also congratulate the faculty members who have worked hard to produce these talented young men and women. I also join the delighted parents for whom this day is a memorable day in rejoicing over the success of their children. I am sure their blessings will guide them to reach the top of the mountain making everyone of us proud.

Here, I have a little advice to the graduating students that every ending is also a new beginning. The student days may be over but at the same time a new journey into an exciting world full of opportunities starts. The knowledge gained in classroom, laboratory, library and in the field will help to make one's way in this new world. Today, we are living in a Gyan Yug or Knowledge Society where knowledge is power and creator of wealth. So, it is the knowledge only that will lead one to the destination. However, with knowledge obsolescence taking place fast because new technologies are being developed exponentially and information is exploding at a phenomenal rate, knowledge gained today can become obsolete tomorrow even from the

day you step out of this campus. It is for our young men and women to continue to learn in every step of life. The world they are going out to will eagerly look how well they keeping learning and adapt themselves to the fast changing environment so as to succeed and lead from the front. So, one should never stop learning and the day one stops learning he or she will be lagging behind others. I would urge the graduating students to use their knowledge for making a good career for themselves which is very important and also for the benefit of the society.

My dear students, you should take advantage of all opportunities to expand your sphere of knowledge. You must be dreaming your future career. There is no harm in dreaming but I would like you to follow your dreams with a strong determination, to foster a culture of innovation, collaboration and creativity and shape your future that will enable you to bring in distinct improvement in the livelihood of our farming community. The alumni of this university have proved their worth in various fields and rated as quality professionals in agriculture & allied sciences and play key role in the process of development. I have no doubt that you will continue that legacy by making yourself the proud alumni of this great university.

It is a matter of great pride that Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology established in 1962 as the 2nd Agricultural University of the country has made rapid progress. It has been ceaselessly pursuing its objective of harnessing the advances in agricultural and allied sector technology and producing learned human resources for the socio-economic development of the state and the country through quality education. Today, it has many achievements and successes to its credit. This University has been awarded as the best university of the state this year by the Times of India Group for excellence in Teaching, Research, Extension Education and immense contribution to the agricultural development in the state. I feel proud of the university for releasing 127 high yielding crop varieties suitable for different agro-ecological conditions of the state; generating various production and protection technologies of crops, animals and fishes; developing various agricultural implements, machineries and land

management technologies in improving production and productivity in agriculture and allied sectors.

I am happy that the Department of Forestry in College of Agriculture, Bhubaneswar has been upgraded to a full fledged College of Forestry with five Post Graduate Departments to meet the emerging needs of professionals in forestry sector of the state. The University has also proposed to establish a new College of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry in Sambalpur district and a College of Dairy Technology in Mayurbhanj district to meet the scarcity of professionals in these areas in the state. The vision of the University for creating professional manpower in emerging disciplines is indeed commendable. The Vice-Chancellor of the University, Prof. Rayji deserves our compliments and all appreciations for the dedication, sincerity and vision with which he works with his very dedicated team of faculties to take the university to new height of glory.

The economy of the state is agrarian in nature. Agricultural sector has contributed nearly 20 per cent of the State GDP and employed over 70 per cent of the workforce. Increase in agricultural productivity, profitability and its sustainability are essential for providing food and nutritional security to 39.9 per cent BPL population of the state. Support from several national programmes like Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Horticulture Mission (NHM) and state sponsored programmes like 'Biju Krushak Yojana', with a strong State Agriculture Policy have started delivering positive result in improving agricultural production and farmer's economy. Emphasis has to be laid to enhance agri-export potential and value addition, post-harvest management and Information & Communication Technology (ICT) in Agriculture in the context of global competitiveness.

I am happy that the University has opened two Agro Polytechnics at Deogarh and Boudh this year with the support of Western Orissa Development Council for gainful employment and livelihood earning of rural youth and technological empowerment of farmers. Besides, 'Lab to Land' programme, 'On Farm Trial' and adoption of package demonstration through 'Front Line

Demonstration' and transfer of technological knowledge with the help of Krishi Vigyan Kendras have been intensified. Emphasis should be laid on drudgery reduction through suitable mechanization of agriculture so that agricultural operations becomes profitable, respectable and acceptable to the farming community. It has often seen that our farmers in spite of providing food security to the country continue to live in poverty. The reason behind this is their illiteracy which deprived them of several benefits. I have been always been telling that "Poverty leads to illiteracy but literacy drives away poverty". We have to enhance rate of literacy. The efforts of this University in implementing my literacy drive project "Gyanalok" through its KVK & NSS activity in six villages of tribal dominated Nuapada, Kandhamal and Kalahandi districts have reduced the dropout percentage of school going children significantly in the adopted villages. The project is now expanded to Khurda district and to Kargil Basti under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation from the current year and I look forward continuation of this endeavour in days ahead.

The role played by the scientists of the University in the 'e-pest surveillance' programme of the state and Agro Advisory Service for taking timely damage saving measures against natural calamities needs appreciation. Scientists, extension functionaries, input agencies and policy makers must work together in more cohesive manner to avoid crop, animal & human loss resulting out of frequent disasters the state.

I am happy that, the University has started working on holistic livelihood improvement for the economically disadvantaged populations, developing mechanisms of adaptation to changing climate, improving farmers' economy through value chain approach and through carbon trading with support of the Indian Council of Agricultural and Research. The University's effort in intensifying its research on tropical fruits and vegetables, spices, mushroom, medicinal and aromatic plants; processing and value addition to agricultural produce and improving soil health and animal nutrition is commendable. Besides, the effort of the University to protect its intellectual property deserves appreciation. The University has already started gaining the benefits of its

protected innovations under the IPR Act.

Our education should be learner's centered. I appeal the teaching community to impart knowledge, skills and wisdom with utmost dedication so that every student feels proud of his/her alma mater. Here, I would like to quote Benjamin Franklin who said, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." The relevance of these words cannot be emphasized enough on this day and age. Students have to acquire both theory as well as adequate practical knowledge for building confidence in them. It is for the members of faculty to involve their students in making learning very interesting and how it is to be done they have to find out. The University has learned faculties and modern infrastructure and it has been revising course curricula from time to time in line with national and state mandate so that our students prove themselves competent in this challenging world.

Education not only makes individuals better human beings but builds a nation. Mahatma Gandhi said it long time back "Education should so revolutionized so as to answer the wants of the poorest villager." He was true because he always said that the soul of India lives in its villages where our majority population resides and for them, agriculture is the major source of livelihood. If they earn good income from their field they live better or else they struggle to manage their family. So, agriculture is a vital sector in India's development. As I said a litter earlier, it is the education that builds a nation. So, when it is about education on agriculture it certainly holds great importance from India's point of view to build a nation with skilled and knowledgeable human resource who will take the technology to the villagers and convince them to use to enhance their production and in that way they with their education will build the nation.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to see the leadership of Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology has led to a renaissance with new ideas for innovation in the emerging era of globalization. The state and the country expect much more from the faculties, scientists, research scholars and students of the university. They should contribute their best for the development of agriculture and allied sectors keeping in view the changing climate, instability of market, declining

factor productivity, socio-economic change and globalization of trade and commerce.

With these words, I once again wish our students very best in life. I also wish the Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology scales further height and reiterates its claim to be among the best in the country.

Jai Hind.