

Address of Dr. S.C. Jamir, Hon'ble Governor of Odisha and Chancellor on the First Convocation of Odisha State Open University at G.M. University Campus on 24.10.2017

Chief Guest, Shri Subroto Bagchi,
Chairman, Odisha Skill Development Authority,
Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Srikant Mohapatra,
Members of the Board of Management,
Registrar, Shri J. Kar Sharma,
Recipients of Certificates and diplomas, Parents,
Invitees, Faculty Members, Staff and Students,
Media Persons, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to preside over the First Convocation of Odisha State Open University and deliver my maiden address to this University. The 1st Convocation is of great symbolic even sentimental significance in the life of this University. It bears testament to the defiance of this University; to overcome challenges and to make higher education accessible to all. Let me echo the words of noted American social reformer and speaker Henry Ward that we should not judge people by their peak of excellence, but by the distance they have travelled from the point where they started. Therefore, my appreciation goes to the Vice-Chancellor and the Board of Management, staff, students, first batch of pass outs, parents, the people of Western Odisha where this University is established and other well-wishers of the University for this outstanding accomplishment.

This University foretells a blank slate from which the staff, management and students may together fashion a model university. You neither have history nor traditions to shackle and insulate you from progress; you are to script a bright future for your University.

The idea of Open University is coming to great benefit for knowledge seekers who are from a wide range of age groups, from teenagers and youth to working adults and women. It enables them access to formal education and also helps some even to diversify their academic portfolio while others study for self-enrichment and up-gradation. In our country Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has been a successful venture. Odisha State Open University, established in the lines of IGNOU intends to popularize the 'Open and Distance Learning' movement in the state. It aims to make positive contribution to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of our state which is 19.6% in the Higher Education Sector as compared to 24.5% national average in 2015-16.

In future, academic programmes that support multiple career goals will be more in demand. Learning systems will have to adjust to the pace of the learner. Learning is locating itself off campus, to the home, the workplace and the field. For these set of emerging realities, open and distance learning is a perfect fit.

Convocation epitomizes every student's academic pursuit. It is also a moment to look back at what one has achieved in the many programmes and courses undertaken as he/she charts the way forward to enter professional careers of choice. The fact that our students are here today is a clear testimony that they have successfully gone through the academic rigours that have culminated in being awarded diplomas and certificates. I congratulate all of them, their parents and effort that has enabled them to attain this honour.

I take this opportunity to challenge our pass outs to uphold the ethical values acquired from this University. They should also make use of the entrepreneurial skills to establish enterprises and may they be good ambassadors of this University. I wish all of them good luck in all their future endeavours.

We are often reminded to ensure that our education stays relevant to the market. The curriculum must reflect the changing needs. Knowledge creation is happening at such a tremendous pace that things become obsolete and even irrelevant before we realize it. Continuous updating and review of existing material with new information is, therefore, absolutely essential. A healthy partnership with our student's future employers and even

competitors is paramount for any institution. This would ensure the knowledge, skills and experiences learnt are put into practice. To this end, we must remain on course in engaging with the industry players in a symbiotic relationship.

There is a need to harness technological advancements, particularly in IT and communication, to improve programmes and course content as well as cater to the growing size of student enrolment. The University must explore establishing video-conferencing centres and having Memorandum of Understanding with other stakeholders to effectively deal with these challenges. I hope the University will also make special provision to assist students from remote areas or with social or economic backwardness, make optimum use of technology.

Conventional system of education offered through our regular universities and distance education offered by open universities need to complement and supplement each other to achieve our goal of quality, access and excellence in higher education. I am happy to see that Gangadhar Meher University and Odisha State Open University are functioning in the same campus and are working together to make our students not only employable but also striving to achieve excellence in research through workshop, seminars etc. Our young boys and girls studying in regular colleges and universities can simultaneously pursue short-term skill based certificate and diploma courses through open universities to make them suitable for the job market both within the state and outside.

While training students in our Universities with relevant skills to meet demand in the job market, we should not lose sight of quality which can be enhanced by regular monitoring of the mechanism.

Dear students, you graduate at an exciting time in the history of this country. We are at the innovation age. No generation in the history of man's existence has been confounded with the sheer magnitude of technology that is now at your disposal. You can leverage technology for self-sustenance constantly evolving and retooling yourself to fit in to the future generation. Your aspirations must at all times remain attuned to the direction the world is moving in. Just see the technological transformation from simple mobile sets to

smartphones. Few years ago the High 5's and MySpace were the social networking sites, now facebook and twitter have confined them to the museums. So you can only ignore the global direction at your own peril. Without constant self-renewal, the universe will declare your skills obsolete.

The Government is committed towards transforming the country into a knowledge based economy, where creation, adaptation and use of knowledge are envisaged to be critical factors for economic growth and development. Universities play a critical role in the generation of knowledge. The address of chief guest Shri Bagchi would be enlightening on many aspects and particularly on skill development, its avenues and steps taken by the Government. I am sure Odisha State Open University would play its role to perfection as it adds years to its existence.

Odisha State Open University like any other institution also faces certain challenges. These range from technical to structural and systemic. The newly established universities in the state are facing faculty crunch and also having inadequate infrastructure. I had several rounds of discussions with the Vice-Chancellors and senior officers of the State Government. These issues are initial teething problems faced by all universities. I am sure that these problems will be resolved soon and our focus will shift to quality of teaching and research.

With these words, I hope that each and every student to grow and contribute in building a prosperous Odisha and a developed nation. I wish them all success and the University to scale new heights and establish itself as a pioneering Open University in the country.

Thank You.

Jai Hind.