

Chancellor's Address

**His Excellency Mr. Lyonchhen Jigmi Y.Thinley, Revered Prime Minister of Bhutan,
Mr. Ghulam Farooq Wardak;**

**Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Dr. Kee-Sun Ham, and Dr. Baidyanath Mishra, Hon'ble
recipients of the Doctorate Degree in Literature on honoris causa for their
distinguished and meritorious service;**

Our beloved Founder, Dr. Achyuta Samanta;

Vice Chancellor, Professor Premendu Prakash Mathur;

**Hon'ble members of the Academic Council and of the Board of Management on the
dais, my dear graduating students, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Convocation is a very special and proud occasion in the life of every students graduating from the University. The next phase in your life opens doors to exciting opportunities in service and you will be required to fulfill certain responsibilities and undertake certain duties and obligations which will be consistent and required out of such services. It has to be borne in mind that your hard work and preparations in years you have spent as a student shall be the key for your success in the profession you choose. All of our graduating students spreading across the country and abroad are the Ambassadors of this University. Your good words about your Alma Mater and efficient service in the endeavor you undertake to pursue shall be a source of strength and a guiding light for hundreds of coming generations in this institution. You are now the proud alumni of this University and shall act as the spirit and a source of constant energy and encouragement to the University and its coming generation of students. We earnestly believe that your advice and service will be of immense help to the society and the nation. On behalf of all the members of the KIIT University family we congratulate you and pray for your success in life.

This is the occasion when we have to try to understand the inherent quality of knowledge that takes us from untruth to truth (asato ma satgamaym), from darkness to light (tamaso ma jyortirgamayam) and from death to eternity (mrityur ma ritamgamayam). Knowledge is light, it is the ultimate truth and knowledge is immortal.



Prof. N.L. Mitra
Chancellor, KIIT University

Knowledge in Indian literature is equivalent to “vidya” that leads service to humankind as against “avidya” that induces one to work only for the benefit of the self at all cost. Upanishad explained the result of ‘vidya’ in the expression of ‘vidya dadati vinayam’, i.e, education makes a learner to abreast the behavior of humility. Avidya, on the other hand, infuses ‘arrogance’. On the occasion of Convocation it is good to emphasize our inter-personal behavior in our work place in a manner that we are recognized for the deeds we perform and stand for. Convocation, as we know today, is truly speaking an oriental thought when students used to attend “samavarthanam” in Universities like Nalanda or Takshila to receive public acclamation and recognition after completion of the course. Whereas University education was earliest concept in India in the north, its spread in the South was in the form of gurukulam. Christianity contributed to University education in the west in sixth and seventh century A.D. The quality of University education lies in the word universe, i.e., the knowledge is universally applicable and the learners come from the entire Universe. That is how the son of Vrihaspati, the teacher of develoka (domain of the Gods and Goddesses) named Katch came to the teacher of the marthaloka (the world), Sukracharya to be educated in medicine that brings life back from death. Katch’s commitment to learning and dedication to service took him back to the develoka though left to him he would have liked to stay back and live in a hamlet in the shore of river ganga with Devyani, the daughter of Sukracharya, his acquaintance in his days in gurukulam. Even if some might treat this as mythology and not history, that message is still applicable at present. Rabindranath established China Bhawan, Japanese Bhawan, French Bhawan in his University, Santiniketan and brought teachers from those countries to educate his pupils. His pupils used to come from the entire country and outside.

Today best of the Universities of the world attract students from the entire world and create a admirable confluence of various cultures from across the world. Such cultural diversity is invariably considered while evaluating and rating any University in the world. In the realm of knowledge there is no distinction between caste, creed, religion, nationality, race or sex. You feel proud when you learn that Indians built up strongest knowledge base in astronomy, geophysics, and mathematics. Many of our mathematicians were female. Name of Gargi or Maitrye will remain immortal in the history of mathematics as long as this branch of knowledge remains relevant to human existence. When you are out there in your service, feel proud that you belong to a country with such a heritage, a country that took people from all folds of thought, culture, religion, and beliefs in its lap and built up a new India. The philosophy of basudeiva kutumbakam, is now the central theme of universalism in human kind. We in KIIT family strongly believe and feel this universal bondage of brotherhood. We also strongly feel education can only be able to effectively bring all section of Indian population into the mainstream of the life and living of the country.

Education brings us closer by demolishing all inhibitions and limiting factors which deter progress and growth. This is the basic theme of universalization, that your University has undertaken the massive experiment here to which all of you are also directly and indirectly involved. More than 16,000 students from various indigenous communities are being educated from primary to University and technical educational level with free housing, boarding, educational and social supports. The mission as stated, is to bring them back to the mainstream of Indian life so that the society that is enshrined in our Constitution to be a society where equality of opportunity is offered to all and justice to everybody, economic, social and political, can truly fructify. Here would grow a mini modern-Bharat in one Campus. They are also learning various art and culture and earning some money while learning, for their family left at a far distance living in hamlets in deep rural and forest area. In studies they are in no way inferior to children from third or fourth generation education. This is quite evident in their result in the school leaving and Higher Secondary Examinations with 100% record, more than 60% of them have secured first division results. They participate in various sports and games and showing signs of excellence in various fields. Consecutively for two years they won the World Junior Rugby championship. It is the commitment of the School administration that soon some of the students would participate in various sports and games and represent the country in the State and national level. We are sure wherever you are, you will keep some space in your mind for them.

The trajectory of growth and development of your University has been unique in India, especially in the private sector. The personal interest taken by the Founder to provide the best of opportunities in the University has contributed immensely to the development of the campus. Today the campus facility and infrastructure is comparable to the very best available in any other private and public University in the country. During the last ten years the Founder and his team of workers in the University completely dedicated themselves to building physical infrastructures of the University. In this effort they were not assisted in any manner by any authorities. It is true that to scale up the University to the next level, it is now required to build up best facilities in the Laboratories, workshops and libraries. It is quite understandable that the scientists learn by experiments in the laboratories, technologists constantly innovate in their application of knowledge of science in their workshops and the social scientists learn in libraries and also in the society through direct interaction. Our next ten years would be in developing and upgrading our laboratories, workshops and libraries to at least national level. Today several branches of knowledge show the dynamics of our future focus of scientific, industrial and social knowledge-growth. Subjects like, medical instrumentation, bio-medical instrumentation, food technology, nano-technology, geophysics, cosmology, intellectual property rights protection, tele-communication & integrated circuit etc. have been the indicators for the future growth of knowledge. India with huge biodiversity and right man-power is still performing much less in the potential capacity in biotechnology.

This present century of yours is the knowledge society and we have to understand that only in absolute freedom and keen desire knowledge can grow. Our system of education, more so higher education, is stereotyped, straight jacketed and top-down directive. Knowledge on the other hand flows from one to the other direction. We require absolute freedom to the Faculty to design courses most updated and capable of being interconnected with any other branches of knowledge. As for example, once our one of the post independent great scientist, Professor Menon told me that his interest in his research area in “sound” in physics was motivated by his keenness in the play on sitar. In order to become in the global reckoning, our options have to be many and futuristic and our research conditions have to be implacable.

Let us therefore now concentrate on two things, our administrators to build up laboratories, workshops and libraries first to the national standard and then to an extent of global standard and our faculties to develop and design the curriculum to remain at the cutting edge of knowledge in any subject or course. Then perhaps we ought to develop new curriculum to remain in the lead of University education. We have to work hard before we sleep so that we can create a national and then global accredited University when your brothers and sisters would come and then your sons and daughters to come to study here in this University. We have to understand the reason why world top accredited Universities – all are in the private sector and not in the state sector. Many of the private sector Universities in their effort of providing excellent opportunity to the students receive performance based and research funding from the State.

You are launching your career in a challenging economic condition. Country after Country in Europe is facing financial crisis, growth has been consistently negative in the last decade or so and there is an economic whirlpool in which all countries of the world are sucked in. As economy of a country is more and more being globally integrated, human beings have to understand the necessity of interdependency and the need to support each other. If developed, developing and least developed countries do not hold hand together; even the pyramid of the developed economy may also crumble. ‘United we stand, divided we fall’ – this philosophy is equally applicable for human being as well as for countries. If today Europe is in the whirlpool, there is no guarantee that US 14 trillion economy will remain safe. India therefore can also not remain insulated. India’s growth rate has fallen to 5.5% from the last year’s figure of 8.5%. In various sectors of industrial growth, the production growth rate has been between 2 % to 3 %. On the other hand inflation rate has gone high, some times even touching two digits. With widening budgetary deficit the burden of public debt is also growing. At this critical time we have to work harder wherever we are and try to increase our productivity.

At this critical hours too, we have a silver lining in our economy. Our service sector has a very positive sign of growth. Both agricultural and industrial sector have tremendous growth potential. India is rich in most of the mineral resources needed for industrial growth, we have a robust 60% of our population, which is effective work force, while the work force in China is gradually going down due to negative population policy one child policy having ultimately a negative impact. Indians are highly innovative. US President in his public speech urges upon American children to study science and mathematics more intensively with interest because, otherwise, Indians and Chinese would capture the most creative work force in US both directly and indirectly. In such a ‘down the hill’ global economic condition, too, India has the third highest growth rate at present in the world and the growth rate of the last quarter has seen upward trends.

I strongly feel that the growth of Indian economy can be firmed up at a much faster and higher rate provided we give importance to agriculture and the agriculturists. If Industries require capital investment, so does agriculture; if industries require efficient management, so does agriculture, if not more; if industries require technical know how, agriculture does also require technology and technical inputs; and if industries require inventions and innovations with appropriate intellectual property right protection, so does agriculture. Today there is an unnecessary controversy on acquisition of land for industry from the agriculturists. In the process, two-three crop producing lands are acquired forcefully. These are unnecessary and it also shows the absence of land use planning and adequate land-use-mapping.

It has to be recognized that agriculture requires electricity and many other industrial tools. Roads linking the agricultural fields with the market, modern transportation system, bonded warehouses, cold storage and quick movement of goods through out the country. Above all, agriculture requires education at all levels. A few Agricultural Universities cannot meet the enormous demand of agriculture. There has to be new planning on agricultural education, I suppose, to provide agricultural education at all levels, primary, secondary, degree and University level. A University without its hinterland of high schools and colleges becomes only an island of excellence. It benefits middle class but not the farming community at large.

Agriculture also requires country’s attention at par with industries, if not more. If we have inadequate supply of capital in industries, we get foreign direct investment. If agriculture requires capital which is inadequate in the country, time has come to think why foreign equity can not be called in, if there are takers of the offer? Today, NRI and PIOs command a very high fund-source outside India, a call and they would like to be here.



Agriculture must also have the operation of scale. So why not any modern management technique be designed that would suit our land system? Government of India in 2002 amended the Companies Act and included in it the provision for incorporating producers' company. Farmers can now incorporate producers' company to avail the facility of operation of scale, integrated development of agriculture and farming, and take the advantage of operational loans and advances as any other company can do. The producer-members of the company shall also enjoy limited liability. Similarly, the recent circular of foreign direct investment includes some sector of farming and agriculture also in the foreign direct investment scheme, like, horticulture, sericulture, animal husbandry, and floriculture etc in the list of FDI up to 100% under automatic route. The list also contains vegetable production, seed production produced under controlled condition. Unfortunately has been defined in such a tight manner that farmers can not be benefited. The restrictive definition or the stipulation of the 'controlled condition' is required to be taken back. FDI is better than the external borrowing as equity does not require to be returned and only profit has to be shared. A corporate set up infuses new growth rate and encourages field research. Agriculture also requires perhaps a new outlook.

The biggest challenge is the uncertainty of monsoon. Our research is required to concentrate (a) on the production of new variety of khariff crop which can withstand uncertainty in nature and shortfall of rains and (b) proper forecasting of weather and to let the farmers know the locality and the nature of land ahead of time so that alternate arrangements can be made. Presently marketing condition is awfully bad and scarcely regulated. As a result, if there is a bumper crop, price plummets, poor farmers are deprived and if production is poor, farmers have to die. In both the cases, farmers stand to lose. All this require a new understanding and planning in the agricultural sector.

Whatever we say, democracy in India has taken roots. The quality of governance however depends upon many other issues; chief among these is of course, transparency and accountability. According to noble laureate Shri Amarta Sen the quality of governance in a country can directly be determined in proportion with the quality of human rights in the country, education and standard of public health care of the people in that country. In education, he rightly emphasized the educational level and standard of education among women. We hope our alumni wherever they are, would be conscious of the country's requirement, their own requirement and the requirement of the society they serve. That would make them serve well. They will strengthen the democratic governance and the unique cultural mosaic of the country. Protecting a multi-cultural fabric is in itself an example of good governance.

University alumni are to be in constant touch with the schools, giving their inputs in all academic and other facilities allocation. Their advice is to be taken very seriously. Annually alumni can meet once and formulate an annual program. I urge upon the Deans of the schools to provide opportunity to the alumni in the development of their respective Schools.

We all wish you the best and we pray for each of your prime health and good success in your life and career