

Governor's Speech on the occasion of the 29th Convocation of Gauhati University

Esteemed Chief Guest, Prof. K. K. Aggarwal, Members of the Executive Council, University Court and the Academic Council, Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University, Professor Pratap Jyoti Handique ji, Deans of Faculties and Faculty members, Registrar and other officers and staff, invited guests and my dear student friends.

I welcome you all to the 29th Convocation of Gauhati University. This year is a very special occasion as it is the 75th year of the existence of this institution. So, I think along with Azadi Ka Amrit Mohotsav, we should all celebrate Vidya Daan Ki Amrit Mahotsav to commemorate the contributions of Gauhati University in creating human resources of the best standards.

The University is engaged in the formation of the young citizen who are making this region and the nation proud. In its responsibility towards the state and towards the country, this university is striving resolutely to reach the zenith in its academic and research programmes.

Founded by visionaries like Gopinath Bordoloi, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Madhab Chandra Bezbaruah, Bhubaneswar Barua, Krishna Kanta Handiqui and many others, and inspired by the collective desires of the people, this university has maintained a perfect balance between its resourceful past and promising future. It is really heartening that while this university is closely connected to the state and the region in fulfilling the local aspirations, it keeps its eyes fixed on national and global concerns.

As the University gears up to implement the New Education Policy, a lot of fresh thoughts poured in with regard to the existing structures

and functioning. The system of affiliation of colleges is eventually expected to end. The University will be expected to offer integrated undergraduate and postgraduate courses to help the students acquire diverse employable skills.

Meanwhile the existing faculties of Arts, Science, Commerce, Law, Engineering, Fine Arts, Management and Technology and the Centres for the study of South and Southeast Asia, the Northeast, and the Centre for Brahmaputra Studies, are all likely to offer strong foundations for the radical changes that are on the pipeline in the wake of NEP. The multidisciplinary character reflected in all these centres and departments is likely to be an advantage to reap the dividends of NEP.

As we celebrate the academic achievements of our students, we must also appreciate the richness of the culture of the region that our students bring with them to the University. The academic, sports, social and cultural exposure given by this university are nothing but the repository of values and memory that remain with the students to cherish forever. Today as we send off many bright young people into the world who are committed to give their best to the society, I consider it as the contribution of Gauhati University to the state and the nation. Students who have left its portals in past years have gone on to excel as different capacities. It is our hope that the students passing out today will be inspired by and emulate these examples to set goals and inspire in their turn, coming generations of students by excelling in their own fields. My best wishes to all the students.

There are many changes forthcoming in higher education in the country. Implementation of NEP which is encouraging **Access, Equity, Quality** and **Accountability** is all set bring with it new structures for

graduate and undergraduate programs, education in mother tongue, skill development and flexibility in choice of subjects at higher education.

The National Research Foundation, envisaged “to catalyze and expand research and innovation across the country”, will strengthen the research ecosystem and encourage research in areas of national priority. Collaborative research is encouraged and research in newly emerging areas is given priority.

An equally important measure under NEP is the decision “to integrate technology into all levels of education in order to improve classroom processes, support teachers’ professional development, enhance educational access for disadvantaged groups and streamline educational planning, administration and management.” These are revolutionary changes that are already underway and their implementation will act as a catalyst for the University to transform into better institution.

In order to take full advantage of the possibilities that the NEP has opened up, Gauhati University has to prepare itself. While the University has been doing well and there is a steady rise in its actual growth, it is important to identify the areas where there are lacunae and address these judiciously. I have no doubt about the competence of the faculty and the administrators but in order to take that leap forward, serious introspection along with hard work and the will to change are required.

While the branches of Science have been doing well, the achievements of the Humanities and Social Science streams also need our utmost attention. With the changes that are imminent, it will be both

our challenge and an opportunity to enable teaching and research of the highest quality in all the disciplines.

I look forward to the further development of the University. I am hopeful of the role that the University will play in meeting the educational needs of our state and region and to address the larger issues facing the nation and the globe.

At the last Convocation, I had said that India's primary challenges are *poverty*, and *uneven access to education and healthcare*. I would add *gender inequity* as a continuing problem for the country. Moreover, *loss of forest cover* in the NE and the rest of India and *pollution* causing damage to the natural environment are other areas of concern. The major global crises are also our concern and as each year goes by newer challenges emerge. Our University will have to address these through its research and knowledge bank. Solving these problems will require exceptional drive and will and the University's graduates are uniquely placed to deal with them with the intellectual and moral resources that they have today.

Alongside the question of access, adherence with quality is also important. Making a curriculum that is both knowledge-oriented and skill- and job-oriented has become an imperative. This has to be supplemented with adequate training and implementation of all the envisaged goals.

The University must understand, adapt and adequately implement the best of the ideas that are being proposed. Additionally it remains a goal for any educational institution to teach democratic and human values and this is something that Gauhati University is well equipped to

take up. One of the best ways to do this is to inculcate a spirit of independent thinking and openness among its fraternity.

I believe that Gauhati University has a great future. It is my hope that it will continue to grow thick and fast. It must become an attractive destination for students from all across the North East and neighbouring countries as well. It must do this through student exchange programmes and collaborations with institutions across the globe.

I congratulate the Vice Chancellor, the staff and the teaching community for their continuing commitment to the cause of higher education. Last two years the COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the world, our country, our state and our institutions. But due to your collective efforts we are standing confident and bold to face the future.

My dear Students, a Convocation is primarily about you and your achievements. I congratulate the students who are formally graduating today after the successful completion of their different programmes of study - the Graduates, Postgraduates, research degree holders and all those who will receive their certificates and diplomas for Courses under the University. As you stand poised for a leap into the future, spend a moment to take stock of the many good things you are taking with you for your future journey. Use the knowledge acquired here to make a difference to the lives of people around you, and especially those less privileged than you. Strive for excellence in your chosen fields. I extend my best wishes for your journey ahead.

Thank you,

Jai Hind