

JAMMU, 1 SEPTEMBER 2014

I am delighted to be with you today on the occasion of the 14th Convocation of the University of Jammu. I extend my good wishes to all the graduating students and hope that they will do exceedingly well in their chosen careers in the years to come.

2. I am glad to learn that the University of Jammu is making rapid strides in all areas of its functioning. The University through its main campus, offsite campuses, affiliated colleges and Directorate of Distance Education offers a wide range of programmes in areas such as Arts, Business Studies, Life Sciences, Social Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Education, Law, Engineering and Medicine. Such a vast canvas naturally enables students to fully utilize their potentialities and excel. The University is also involved in world class research through 'A Large Ion Collider Experiment' (ALICE) collaboration and is a part of the Indian team involved at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) Experiment at the World Laboratory 'European Council for Nuclear Research' (CERN), Geneva. The setting up of the National Apple Germplasm Repository at its campus in Baderwah is indeed an important step towards conservation of an important genetic resource of the country. I congratulate the University on it being listed as one of the twenty nine universities in the country under the "Promotion of University Research and Scientific Excellence"(PURSE) programme of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. The University has also hosted, for the first time ever in Jammu & Kashmir, the 101st session of the Indian Science Congress. These recognitions are a tribute to the quality of leadership as also, in equal measure, to the untiring efforts of the faculty, research and technical staff, students and all other stakeholders.

3. It is also noteworthy that the University has been identified as a “Level 1” point-of-presence on the National Knowledge Network, given that technology and the internet have virtually revolutionized the teaching - learning process. Indeed, it is with a sense of satisfaction that I say that the University of Jammu has created for itself a niche in the academic field. Notwithstanding these achievements, you cannot afford to be complacent and rely on your past laurels. As it is with everything else, as in the field of education also, you will need to constantly strive for excellence in a global order which is dynamic, ever-changing and dismissive of mediocrity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. Higher education in India faces great challenges today. On a broader platform, the XIIth Plan places a high priority on education as an instrument for achieving accelerated and inclusive growth with emphasis on expansion, excellence and equity. Quality up-gradation of state-level institutions, which account for 96 percent of the higher education capacity, needs to be accorded high priority. The Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is an important initiative in this direction.

5. An important focus area is the role of innovation in higher education. While several policy initiatives have been taken in this area, these need to be implemented effectively to revitalize and boost the higher education framework in the country. One concept that has attracted attention, and will mark a paradigm shift in higher education, is that of the Meta University. The student must be given complete flexibility and be benefited by the expertise, courses of study and infrastructure available in other Universities and institutions of higher learning. Thus, a student enrolled in a management programme in the University of Jammu should be able to take up a course in Philosophy in Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra. This kind of flexibility will create an environment conducive to innovation and promote inter-disciplinary

approaches. It will also expand access while making the best use of technology.

6. Another inter-linked aspect is that of innovation and entrepreneurship. Realizing the centrality of innovation in the growth and development process, 2010-20 has been declared as the Decade of Innovation. India's Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy 2013 emphasizes boosting innovation through research and development (R&D), driven mainly by private sector participation, publishing more research papers, achieving gender parity in S&T and seeking global cooperation. It is here that University's third axis, the first two being teaching and research, becomes critical. While it is well recognised the world over, enterprise incubation as a part of the academia - industry linkage is still at a nascent stage in India. Some IITs and IIMs have set up formal incubation centres over the years to foster innovation, research and entrepreneurial activities in technology based areas. Universities today need to become drivers of innovation. Their focus should be on collaborative relationships with industry and Government. Entrepreneurial activities in the universities could take various forms such as contract research, consultancy, patenting, licensing, spin outs, start-ups, incubating companies etc. It is essential that Universities create the right environment for promoting entrepreneurship amongst students as well as academicians.

7. The State of Jammu and Kashmir is emerging as a knowledge hub in the country with nine universities and more than 300 affiliated colleges. All these institutions would benefit by collaborating in teaching and research and establishing common research facilities. The University of

Jammu should move towards establishing research clusters to enable scholars and faculty members to explore emerging research areas, especially related to local and regional needs, and to collaborate with industry and research organisations. Some of the major thrust areas would be Horticulture, Floriculture, Soil dynamics, Seismology, Organic farming, Tourism, Precious gems, Handicrafts etc. I am sure that over time the University shall boast of world class, state-of-the-art research and innovation facilities along with the necessary eco-system to sustain them.

8. Most importantly, however, it will be the quality, spirit and ethos of the students and faculty which will determine the footprints you leave on the sands of time. All the graduating students would do well to remember that they are central to the vision of an India which is dynamic, prosperous, equitable, all embracing and inclusive. I can do no better than quote Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of Nation:

“You are the hope of the future. You will be called upon, when you are discharged from your College, to enter upon public life to lead the poor people of this country. I would, therefore, like you students to have a sense of your responsibilities and show it in a tangible manner.” Unquote

I once again wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Jai Hind
