



Speech of

Dr M K Bhan

Chairman, Board of Governors, IIT Guwahati

AT

THE 11TH CONVOCATION OF
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI

MAY 29, 2009

Distinguished Chief Guest, Dr Kirit Parikh, Director Professor Gautam Barua, members of the Board of Governors, members of the Senate, Faculty and Staff, graduating students, parents, guardians, ladies and gentlemen. I extend my greetings and warm welcome to all of you to the eleventh Convocation of Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati.

IIT Guwahati has indeed come a long way since its inception fifteen years ago. It is heartening to see that the institute is making rapid strides in its expected chosen path; that it has grown in all aspects over the past years, and is forging ahead towards becoming one of the finest institutions of the country. Each year, during my successive visits, I observe with satisfaction that the campus is expanding with more and more infrastructure coming up to provide the right ambience for serious pursuit of learning and to fulfill the future needs associated with this quest.

That IIT Guwahati is a mature institute today is also reflected by the fact that it has been mentoring one of the newly established IITs, the IIT established at Patna. It is in fact a matter of pride that the infrastructure development work in this IIT-Guwahati mentored new IIT is progressing better than most of the other newly established IITs. Quite aptly, IIT Guwahati deserves a share of this credit.

The effects of the recent recession can be seen all over the world today. In fact, recession has hit the placement dreams of many promising students. But inspite of all odds it is good to see IIT Guwahati coping well with such problems, and looking ahead positively for other opportunities. Entrepreneurship is being specially encouraged as an avenue through activities like an entrepreneurship development cell and incubation centres, and students too are giving increasing importance to entrepreneurship. The first official Alumni Meet of IIT Guwahati was organised in Bangalore this year. Although the global footprints of this relatively younger IIT is yet to grow, a reasonably large group of former students came together for the meet. The response of the Alumni, I understand, was very encouraging and holds much promise for the future.

The North East is finally gaining importance both in the national and global scenario and it is gradually coming into focus for more significant developments happening in this region. As part of this renewed initiative, last year the Honorable Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh made his first visit to IIT Guwahati and formally inaugurated

the new state-of-the-art auditorium in the campus. We are proud to see the first Biotech Park of the North East being established in the campus. It is believed that the Park would have Incubation Centres, which would encourage entrepreneurship development besides carrying out research activities for significant progress in the field of biotechnology. We are also the proud host of the only TCS training Centre in the Northeast.

I am happy about the progress of IIT Guwahati in academics. In addition to imparting education to students, the research and development work in both theoretical and applied aspects of science and technology deserves special mention and it is inspiring to see the extent of Research and Development work going on in the institute at present. IIT Guwahati faculty members in different branches of Science, Engineering and Design have extended wide ranging consultancy services to various research and development efforts. Educational and research institutes, particularly from this part of the country, are looking towards IIT Guwahati for leadership. Among other things, a matter of satisfaction is that there has been a constant increase in the number of girl students joining the institute and that additional residential facility had to be created before anticipated time to accommodate them. The number of faculty and students visiting the institute has also gone up.

IIT Guwahati in fact is making special efforts to work for the development of the North Eastern region. The institute, in more than one sense, has become an important link between the North East and the rest of the world as far as collaboration and cooperation for the development of science and technology is concerned. A number of research areas are emerging that are of significant relevance for the North East and IIT Guwahati has started playing a pivotal role in making them a reality. The North Eastern region is an important part as far as the biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayan Region is concerned. This region is well known for its unique flora and fauna, high endemism and rare plants. Significant research work could be done to find modern ways for conservation of biological diversity, which would be a major challenge for ecologists in the forthcoming century.

IIT Guwahati is also a major Research and Development institute and so has a major role to play for solving the perennial problems of this region. A research centre of this stature could do wonders to solve some major problems that the region is facing.

solution to these problems could be found with the extent of adequate manpower, infrastructure and research facilities already available in IIT Guwahati.

Another area in which research work is very essential is the field of renewable and alternative energy sources. It is high time that such energy sources be found and in an advanced research centre like IIT Guwahati such research can surely flourish.

The North Eastern region of India also deserves an innovative transportation system and good research work in this area is very important. Better connectivity within the region and also with the rest of India is required for the overall progress of the region in all aspects. With the right research work, concrete solutions could be found out which would be pertinent to the northeast.

It should be the endeavour that IIT Guwahati with the help of its research in advanced technology and relevant facilities in place takes the initiative towards pressing issues for solving problems that the region faces and for which early solutions are becoming imperative.

At another level, IITians need to play a key role in nation building and contribute to the society as well. Alumni today are linked electronically to provide an effective platform for sharing ideas and contributing together. If we look at India as a nation, be it its nuclear programme, be it its space research centre or its defence research laboratories, most of these organisations across the country are manned by IITians who are either leading it or are in senior positions. Their coordinated efforts can help effectively in nation building. The rural population of India has many aspirations from IITians as well. Many rural problems could be solved with the help of world-class technology at our disposal and proper teamwork.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the graduating students on their achievements. I hope you will do your best to keep the name of IIT Guwahati shining bright. I also hope that you will make the best use of the knowledge you have gathered and contribute to the development of the country and mankind as a whole. Thank You.

Jai Hind

Dr M K Bhan

Chairman, Board of Governors, IIT Guwahati