



ADDRESS

OF

Dr R. P. SINGH

CHAIRMAN

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

AT

THE 13TH CONVOCATION OF

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI

FRIDAY, 27 MAY 2011

Distinguished Chief Guest of the Convocation and Hon'ble Minister for Environment and Forests, Government of India, Shri Jairam Ramesh; Director of the Institute, 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 heartiest greetings and warm welcome to all of you to the 13th Convocation of the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati.

IIT Guwahati, an important member of the IIT family, is growing in all spheres and is well on course to establish itself as one of the leading academic Institutes in the country. I congratulate all graduating students for your achievements. I am truly privileged to be in your midst on an occasion which is both joyous and solemn because it is a major milestone in your career and propels you to the real world. There is no doubt about the effort, time and dedication you have put through to obtain one of the most coveted academic qualifications. I take this opportunity to also congratulate your parents/guardians who have made sacrifices and stood by you all along and the faculty members of the Institute who have taught and guided you over the years with commitment and dedication.

IITs were created in the 1960s with the vision of developing a technological workforce of skilled and motivated engineers and scientists to support the economic and social development of India. IITians have contributed a great deal over the years towards the development of the country and taking it forward. In fact, IIT is one of the strongest brand names that have come out of our country post independence. Brand IIT is accepted as a symbol of ability and quality all over the world. You have the onerous task of living up to the expectations of the countrymen and global citizens in finding solutions to their myriad problems.

India has come to occupy a leading place in the global stage, especially after the recent economic meltdown experienced by the developed economies. India's growth story is unique in many ways. The growth has been mainly service sector and consumption driven, besides being led domestically. These are the very reasons why the Indian economy was least affected by the global meltdown and recovered quickly from the little setback that it faced. But India's position is quite paradoxical in terms of global competitiveness. On one hand, India ranks high in the world in terms of availability of scientists and engineers, but in terms of

technological readiness, we rank low because of low penetration of technology in our society. We score poorly in terms of basic requirements like infrastructure, health and primary education. Therefore, the role for the young scientists and technocrats is cut out to fuel the Indian growth story in a sustainable manner. In fact, their quality and capability would also have significant bearing on the global economy as many of them join the MNCs and global corporates.

A good way to begin the journey of sustaining growth of the nation is to make rapid progress in R & D activities. We must realize the needs of our future and tune our research work towards achieving them. The nation expects IITs to be nuclei of new knowledge and technological innovations at par with the best research institutes in the world. The focus has to be geared towards new knowledge creation as well as using technology for serving the needs of society in innovative ways. I am happy to note that the number of research scholars in the Institute has gone up considerably compared to last year, which is a step in the right direction. I am hopeful that our students will bring more glory to the Institute through their work in the days to come.

At the Institute level, gearing up for the future implies augmentation of our resources and infrastructure to cater to the needs of the students and faculty members. IIT Guwahati is vibrating with around 3400 students and the number will be increasing in the coming years. The process of expansion of the infrastructure is in its right course and part of that expansion of several Departments and Centres will be ready by the new academic session starting July 2011. Construction of new hostels, residential accommodation for the faculty and staff, Student's Activity Centre annexe, food courts, etc. are in various stages of progress.

To address the multitude of problems faced by the country and the region, several Departments and Centres of the Institute are engaged in active R & D work. The growth of Indian economy over last few decades has resulted in rapid urbanisation and industrialisation of the country. It has resulted in a manifold increase in the demand for both conventional and alternate sources of energy. The Northeastern region of India alone has about 40% of the country's hydroelectric potential and proper harnessing of the same can contribute a great deal to the nation's progress. The Centre for Energy of the Institute is working on

finding different sources of alternate energy and bringing them to the public for regular use. The Departments of Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Centre for the Environment, Biotechnology and Humanities and Social Sciences are actively engaged in R&D topics specific to this region such as flood control, earthquake research, harnessing bio-resources of the region, water resources, conservation of the environment, consequences of climate change, etc.

IITs, in general, can play another role to help India have a sustainable development process. IITs could be the catalyst in the growth of quality technical education in the country. Technical education has grown manifold over the last two decades in the country in terms of quantity but questions remain about the quality of the graduates. A major reason for that is the general lack of trained faculty members in these institutions. IITs can play a big role here by reaching out and grooming the faculty members of these institutions in both teaching and research. This will augment the national efforts such as the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), which provides e-based courses on various engineering and science subjects.

Dear students, by now most of you must have decided on the path ahead in life. I am hoping that the research environment in the Institute would inspire at least some of the talented graduates and post graduates to pursue a PhD programme in the Institute. I would also like to point out that the IIT Guwahati Technology Incubation Centre is geared to nurture the young entrepreneurs in you. Nevertheless, I whole heartedly wish that you pursue a career of your dreams. I would like to conclude my address by sharing with you certain points that have stood the tests of time - be honest in all your dealings, strive not to achieve success at the cost of others, be compassionate and humane, and do remember the helping hands that you got during your journey in life. Be a proud torchbearer of IIT Guwahati wherever you go and bring laurels to your Alma Mater. I wish you all a very successful career ahead and a satisfying life.

Thank you and Jai Hind.

Dr. R.P. Singh
Chairman, Board of Governors
Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati