



2nd
Convocation
2009

Commencement Speech
Hon'ble Dr. Justice Arijit Pasayat

2 May 2009

I feel honoured to be a part of the second convocation of the Ravenshaw University , Cuttack. I was student of the Ravenshaw College which was transformed into Ravenshaw University in 2006. Those who have been students of Ravenshaw College have nurtured the memories of their days in the college and I am no exception. In the last convocation, the then President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam had addressed the teachers, students and staff of the University and had spoken on 'Mission of Education: Capacity Building'. According to Dr. Kalam, University education should embed the mission in life. This mission provides the foundation for translating into reality the dream of visionaries by providing value based quality education for students to all sections of the society and to make higher education an effective instrument for socio-economic transformation of nation.

The Ravenshaw College now the Ravenshaw University was never and is not a mere educational institution, it is something more than that. It has seen a large number of great Indians who have left their footprints in different walks of life. Probably, nowhere in the world you can find the galaxy of such illustrious sons and daughters of eminence who were students of an educational institution like Ravenshaw College. The destinies of many like me were shaped by the dexterous hands of the brilliant teachers who had one goal in life to make us good citizens in future. I can say without any sense of contradiction that their efforts have not gone unrewarded. Whatever we have achieved in life because of great love and affection with which they prepared us for facing challenges in life. They and the present teachers have in mind what Cicero said: 'what greater or better gift

can we offer the republic than to teach and instruct our youth?' Many of them have left this world but their memories remained etched in our minds forever.

A higher education system should meet many different goals. These include:

- (i) satisfying demand from students for an increasingly sophisticated and rewarding education.
- (ii) training the people needed to run a modern society and contribute to its further advancement.
- (iii) providing a forum in which a society can examine its problems and identify appropriate solutions; and
- (iv) offering a setting in which a society's culture and values can be studied and developed.

In a stratified higher education system, institutions of different types meet these needs in different ways. Professional and vocational schools meet some needs, while open universities and distance learning institutions satisfy others. However, developing countries need to be sure that some of their institutions are providing a sufficient breadth of education to give students the abilities that are needed in a rapidly changing world. A general education is an excellent form of preparation for the flexible, knowledge based careers. With knowledge growing at unprecedented rates, higher education systems must equip

students with the ability to manage and assimilate greatly expanded quantities of information. The ability to learn, however, will continue to provide valuable insurance against the vagaries of a rapidly changing economic environment.

Education in India has a history stretching back to the ancient urban centres of learning at Taxila and Nalanda. Western education became ingrained into Indian society with the establishment of the British Raj. Education in the Republic of India falls under the control of both the Central Government and the States with some responsibilities lying with the centre and the State having autonomy for others. The various articles of the Indian Constitution provide for education as a fundamental right.

‘Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe’, said **H.G. Wells, in The Outline of History.**

‘Today, more than ever before in human history, the wealth-or poverty-of nations depends on the quality of higher education. Those with a larger repertoire of skills and a greater capacity for learning can look forward to lifetimes of unprecedented economic fulfillment. But in the coming decades the poorly educated face little better than the dreary prospects of lives of quiet desperation’, said **Malcolm Gillis, President of Rice University, on 12 February, 1999.**

‘Science education in the broad sense – is a fundamental pre-requisite for democracy and for ensuring sustainable development’ says

Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge. World Conference on Science, Budapest on 2 July, 1999.

Alvin Toffler said, 'The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.'

In *Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India* (1984 (3) SCC 161) the Supreme Court held that the right to life guaranteed by Article 21 does take in 'educational facilities'. Having regard to the fundamental significance of education to the life of an individual and the nation, the Court held that right to education is implicit in and flows from the right to life guaranteed by Article 21. That the right to education because of its transcendental importance in the life of an individual has been recognised not only in this country since thousands of years, but all over the world. In *Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka* (1992 (3) SCC 666) the importance of education has been duly and rightly stressed. Without education being provided to the citizens of this country, the objectives set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution cannot be achieved. The Constitution would fail. We do not think that the importance of education could have been better emphasised than in the above words. The importance of education was emphasised in the *Neethishatakam* by Bhartruhari (First Century BC) in the following words:

Translation

Education is the special manifestation of man;

Education is the treasure which can be preserved without the fear of loss;

Education secures material pleasure, happiness and fame;

Education is the teacher of the teacher;

Education is God incarnate;

Education secures honour at the hands of the State, not money.

A man without education is equal to animal.'

In *Brown v. Board of Education* (98 L.Ed.873) Earl Warren, C.J., speaking for the US Supreme Court emphasised the right to education in the following words: (US p.493)

'Today, education is perhaps the most important function of State and local Governments. ... It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is the principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days,

it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education.'

The Preamble to the Constitution of India secures, as one of its objects, fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation to 'We the People of India'. Constitution itself, as given to us by the Founding Fathers and as adopted by the People of India, is subversion of fraternity, unity and integrity and dignity of the individual. While dealing with the directive principles of State policy, Article 46 is taken note of often by overlooking Articles 41 and 47. Article 41 obliges the State inter-alia to make effective provision for securing the right to work and right to education. Rabindra Nath Tagore's vision of a free India cannot be materialised unless 'knowledge is free' and 'tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection'. Almost a quarter century after the People of India have given the Constitution unto themselves, a chapter on fundamental duties came to be incorporated in the Constitution. Fundamental duties, as defined in Article 51-A, are not made enforceable by a writ of court just as the fundamental rights are, but it cannot be lost sight of that 'duties' in Part IV-A Article 51-A are prefixed by the same word 'fundamental' which was prefixed by the Founding Fathers of the Constitution to 'rights' in Part III. Every citizen of India is fundamentally obligated to develop a scientific temper and humanism. He is fundamentally duty-bound to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievements. State

is, all the citizens placed together and hence though Article 51-A does not expressly cast any fundamental duty on the State, the fact remains that the duty of every citizen of India is the collective duty of the State.

Those of you who are graduating from this great college must remember that you have just started climbing the ladder for reaching greater heights in life. Don't be satisfied by what you have achieved. Certainly, they are no mean achievements, but your goals must be higher. There is always a crowd at the bottom of the ladder but there is enough space at the top of it. You should all try to reach there. Do not treat the certificate received by you as a piece of paper; treat it as society's invitation to you to reach greater heights of glory.

My best wishes to the members of the Ravenshaw University for success in their mission for developing and enlightening citizens of our great country.

JAI HIND