



INAUGURAL SPEECH
OF
GENERAL J.J. SINGH, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (RETD)
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OF
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I deem it my privileged and honour to address the inaugural session of the IX (ninth) Conference of Higher and Technical Education here today. I would like to take this opportunity to share my personal feelings and views on education system with the galaxy of intellectuals and academicians from different parts of the state.

First of all, once again, I would like to congratulate all the awardees who were felicitated today. It is because of the dedicated and commendable service of these exceptional personalities that we see our own technocrats, bureaucrats and academicians in every field and also have a vast reserve of human resources today. I join all Arunachalees to extend our heartfelt gratitude to these pioneers.

Esteemed friends, there can be no better way to drive and improve a nation's prosperity and social and economic wellbeing than, through its education system. It is a key to the continued economic growth and progress of the country. Education plays a very important role in our lives. Today, with the highly competitive environment, there is a rapidly growing demand for higher education in the world. Although higher education is difficult to obtain by most of us, the rewards of self-improvement, job insurance, a development of character, and social improvements are always there. Therefore, all of you, being the most concerned educationists must promote opportunity, ensure affordability and quality in our higher education system, and also ensure that higher education is accessible to every qualified and motivated student.

Everyone remembers teachers who inspired them. The teachers who might not have been the most liked at the time, but who were passionate, dedicated, intelligent and took a real interest in their students and wanted them to do their best are most remembered later on in our lives. In Arunachal, we are fortunate to have many outstanding and dedicated teachers. It has meant we have many successful schools and a better education system than others. But given that the State government invests crores of rupees for education every year, Arunachalees deserve a system that is even better.

Today, we live in a competitive world. If we want to improve our standard of living, our productivity and our society then it is crucial that we confront many of the key challenges currently facing our education system. The most important one and that which matters the most is, quality teaching. We need to improve it through reforming our teaching profession.

As you all know, well qualified and talented graduates of higher education institutions are capable of serving the community as responsible citizens and undertaking effective scholarship and advanced research and, as a consequence, a corps of talented and highly qualified higher-education teaching personnel.

Friends, institutions of higher education, and more particularly universities, I believe, are communities of scholars preserving, disseminating and expressing freely their opinions on traditional

knowledge and culture, and pursuing new knowledge without restrictions of prescribed doctrines. The pursuit of new knowledge and its application lie at the heart of the mandate of such institutions of higher education. In higher education institutions where original research is not required, higher-education teaching personnel should maintain and develop knowledge of their subject through scholarship and improved pedagogical skills.

Imparting knowledge at the higher levels requires greater professional skills. It is a form of public service that requires the educationists to have expert knowledge and specialized skills, acquired and maintained through rigorous and lifelong study and research. It also calls for a sense of personal and institutional responsibility for the education and welfare of students and of the community at large and for a commitment to high professional standards in scholarship and research. Working conditions for higher-education teaching personnel should be such as will best promote effective teaching, scholarship, research and extension work and enable higher-education teaching personnel to carry out their professional tasks adequately. Initiatives should be there for having such teaching faculties.

Friends, at all appropriate stages of your planning, you should take all necessary measures to ensure that higher education is directed to human development and to the progress of society and it contributes to the achievement of the goals of lifelong learning and to the development of other forms and levels of education.

Higher education institutions, individually or collectively, should design and implement appropriate systems of accountability, including quality assurance mechanisms to achieve the desired goals, without harming institutional autonomy or academic freedom. Institutions should endeavour to open their governance in order to be accountable. They should be accountable for effective communication to the public concerning the nature of their educational mission and should have a commitment to quality and excellence in their teaching, scholarship and research functions, and an obligation to protect and ensure the integrity of their teaching, scholarship and research, along with ensuring high quality education for as many academically qualified individuals as possible subject to the constraints of the resources available to them. Systems of institutional accountability should be based on a scientific methodology and be clear, realistic, cost-effective and simple. In their operation they should be fair, just and equitable. Both the methodology and the results should be open.

Another, point of concern is that many students are neither sufficiently prepared academically nor charged motivationally, to receive higher education. Many are there, because they have no employment opportunities and they continue to be students.

Today, unemployment is a major problem everywhere. To address it properly, we need to give emphasis on technical and vocational education. It should be an integral part of Higher education in order to prepare an individual for occupational fields and for effective preparation for responsible citizenship. It is an instrument for

promoting environmentally sound as well as sustainable development, and also a method of facilitating poverty alleviation.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to urge upon the department to encourage the Higher and Technical institutions to use scientific and technological knowledge for the enhancement of the cultural and material well-being of people of the State. To attain this objective, each institution should be equipped with the personnel and mechanisms necessary for developing and putting into practice to achieve the desired goals. The public funding of scientific research and experimental development should be treated as a form of public investment.

Hand in hand, the institutions should cultivate opportunities for scientific researchers to participate in the national scientific research and experimental development platforms. In particular, each institute should ensure that these processes are supported by appropriate institutional mechanisms enjoying adequate advice and assistance from scientific researchers and their professional organizations. It should also create that general environment and provide those specific measures for the moral and material support and encouragement of scientific researchers, as to ensure that young people of high calibre find sufficient attraction in the vocation and sufficient confidence in scientific research and experimental development as a career. It should also facilitate the emergence and stimulate the appropriate growth and encourage a situation in which the majority of scientific researchers or young people who aspire to

become scientific researchers are provided with the necessary incentives to work.

Well, it gives me immense pleasure to learn that stress is given on Distance Education and on IGNOU. With its flexible admission rules and use of latest educational and communication technologies along with student support and services and cost-effective programmes, I am sure it will effectively help in bringing down the illiteracy graph of the State.

Friends, I am elated to know that besides Rajiv Gandhi University, out of the 8 (eight) Government colleges, 6 (Six have already been accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council. I am confident, with committed effort of the Quality Assurance Cell of the Directorate of Higher and Technical Education, we will be accredited with better grades for all colleges of the State.

While, I am happy that two more colleges are coming up, one in Seppa and another in Nyapin, I would like to stress that these institutions should address the need of the society in true terms. These should not be just for the namesake. They should be true temples of higher learning, and should take pride in their products.

I am pleased to note that during your technical session, you are going to have discussions on National Service scheme and National Cadet Corps activities. These two programmes are very important and essential, as they ignite one's spirit of social service and cooperation towards the society. These also help the youth in

inculcating moral values and understanding the true meaning of life. The NCC activities help in personality development, i.e. moral character, courage, comradeship, discipline, leadership, secular outlook, spirit of adventure and sportsmanship and the ideals of selfless service among the youth to make them useful citizens. It also helps in creating a human resource of organised, trained and activated youth, to provide leadership in all walks of life including the Armed Forces and always available for the service of the nation. Academic excellence is the most important aspect in a student's life, but the overall personality is also an equally important asset to succeed in life. Besides, physical fitness can be achieved through NCC training. I am extremely happy that the department of Education is giving emphasis on these prime extracurricular programmes, which I feel is need of the hour.

I hope and trust that during the technical sessions my academicians-friends will definitely take up all vital issues related to higher and technical education of the state. I wish the Conference a tremendous success. Thank you all.

Jai Arunachal, Jai Hind.