
CONVOCATION ADDRESS OF CHANCELLOR



Sri M. O. H. FAROOK

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR AND CHANCELLOR
OF UNIVERSITIES OF JHARKHAND

CONVOCATION - 2010

BIRSA AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY
RANCHI- 834006, JHARKHAD

Minister of Agriculture and Sugar Cane Development Jharkhand, Shri M.P.Mahto, Vice Chancellor Dr.N.N.Singh, Secretary, Agriculture Shri A.P.Singh, Members of Executive and Academic Councils, faculty member, officials & staff of the University, esteemed guests, representatives of press and electronic media, dear students, ladies and gentlemen.

I deem it an honour to deliver the convocation address to-day at Birsa Agricultural University before this august gathering of teachers, scientists, students, policy makers, planners, farmer representatives & scholars, who are together striving for an alround development of the State of Jharkhand agriculture.

Jharkhand has an incredible legacy. It is said in Jharkhand **“Wonders” don’t lie in museums they live and breathe around you!** It is a place where you can hear the sounds of silence and taste the elegance of nature. The enormous wealth of flora and fauna and the rich cultural heritage of Jharkhand is open for the world to explore. Nearly 28% of the population of Jharkhand consists of old tribal communities. Their culture, lifestyle and oneness with nature would surprise even the most knowledgeable anthropological researcher.

Indian Agriculture is gradually transforming towards commercialization, diversifying in favour of high value commodities and integrating with global markets. But there is widespread unrest and anxiety among farmers as their income is not keeping pace with that of non-agricultural sector. About 70 per cent of the Indian population is dependent on Agriculture for livelihood. There are several challenges on the food front. To meet the growing needs of population, food grain production must go upto 325 million tonnes by 2025 from 230 million tonnes in 2009. This target can be achieved if food production increases @ 7 million tonnes per year over the next 15 years. As there is not much scope to expand the net cultivated area of 142 million hectares, the future requirement has to be met through vertical growth by intensification of agriculture. This implies that the

surging demand for food, fodder, fibre, fruit & fuel have to be met by enhancing productivity of lands. Despite significant growth of agriculture, various kinds of land degradation, environmental pollution, declining ground water and fresh water availability have resulted in decline in the crop productivity and sustainability, which warrant immediate attention. Predominance of small and marginal farmers, fragmented land holdings and poverty does not permit faster adoption of improved scientific knowledge and technologies.

Similarly, in Jharkhand, too, the situation on the agriculture front, in spite of the various advances made since the formation of the state, continue to be most challenging. About 72% of Jharkhand's population depends on agriculture and allied activities as the mainstay of their livelihood. The agricultural holdings are small and fragmented and dependent on rain water. Assured irrigation is available only for 12% of the area. Out of about 79 lakh hectares of geographical area of the state, the net cultivated area is around 22 lakh hectares (i.e. 28% of geographical area as against national average of 43%). The average annual rainfall stands at 1329 mm, of which about 82% is received during the period June-September and the rest 18% in the remaining months.

The agricultural pattern followed by most of the farmers in the State is rainfed monocropping, with very little area under a second crop resulting in a cropping intensity of 125%. At the time of formation of the state it was a laggard in food production and by a total coverage area of 16 lakh hectares it could meet only 45% of its need for food grains that stood at 14 lakh million tonnes. In the last one decade, by watershed development programmes, seed exchange programme, and better extension facilities the area under cultivation has increased to 22.7 lakh hectares of which 85% is under different food crops. Notwithstanding this increase in the area under cultivation the problem of low productivity persists on account of low production potential of the farm saved seed and other old agriculture practices. The seed replacement ratio which was 4% at the time of creation of state, has now

reached 26%. The state is not sufficient in seed production. Intensive exercise is required to be done for quality seed production through seed villages and state seed multiplication farms with extensive support from specialist institutions through supply of foundation seeds and technologies.

In this context of low cropping intensity, low irrigation coverage and low productivity the importance of Birsa Agricultural University can hardly be over emphasized. I had the opportunity to visit some of the Departments and production units of the University recently & was very happy to see the sincere and dedicated efforts of scientists, teachers and students. The University has achieved success in several areas such as seed production, soil resource mapping, evolving excellent crop varieties, micro-watershed management, development of tissue cultured plants, development of T x D pigs and agro-forestry research. The Soil Science Department of the University has ICAR recognition as a "Centre of Excellence". This University has been the pioneer in Acid Soil research in the country. The students of the University are meritorious and creative. Teachers need to provide knowledge, know-how, wisdom through the curriculum, while the students need to develop 'Character' through honesty, integrity, initiative, curiosity, truthfulness, cooperativeness, self esteem and ability to work alone and as a team. In recent years the Birsa Agricultural University has got 26 New Projects, Six in Veterinary Faculty, 7 in Agriculture, 2 in Forestry, One in Biotechnology. Projects of ICAR, Govt. of India, DST, IRRI, ICRISAT, PPV&FRA and NAIP have been provided for research to this University.

It is imperative that all these and similar efforts be intensified and multiplied. There is an urgent need to strengthen our extension services. I am aware that KVKs (Krishi Vigyan Kendras) and ATMAs (Agricultural Technology Management Agency) in different districts are doing good work. Research Technologies generated by this University will have far reaching consequences in years to come if the mode of technology transfer is properly addressed. Livelihood security

project initiated in the Agriculturally disadvantaged districts of Jamtara & Dumka under National Agriculture Innovation Project (NAIP) – BAU programme has been successfully launched. There is need to provide ‘**Computer Aided Knowledge Centres**’ in rural areas where farm women and men are able to get upto date and authentic technical advice. This needs to be strengthened further with attachment of farmers in our programme of work. Attaching farm graduates with such programmes will make it demand driven, environment friendly with a location specific problem solving approach. I wish that you deliberate over these issues in groups & come up with practical solutions for the betterment of life of the people of this State.

The State of Jharkhand with enormous potential in allied sectors as well especially horticulture, forestry, fishery, lac, tassar, food processing & value addition. Animal husbandry and veterinary need to develop in this University as a ‘knowledge base’ for future development. This is because there is a strong linkage between knowledge and skill. The State Government must work in closer linkage with University scientists and provide them all facilities for furthering the cause of agricultural development. Placement of agriculture, veterinary & forestry graduates must as much be the concern of the State Govt. as of the University. All of us must see that there is no waste of quality human resources developed by this University of higher education.

Finally, I congratulate the bright & meritorious students of this prestigious University for achieving success in their academic pursuit. I truly hope that they will serve the cause of humanity with sincerity, integrity and compassion especially for the resource-poor farming community. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the teachers and scientists of the University for developing such quality human resource in the field of Agriculture, Veterinary, Forestry, Biotechnology & agribusiness management. My heartfelt thanks and congratulations to the Vice-Chancellor Dr. N. N. Singh and all faculty members for their excellent accomplishments over the years. I wish you all the best in all your future endeavours.

- Jai Hind !