

Governor Urges Universities to Protect Land, Promote Sustainability at VCs' Conference

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Governor Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati, on Monday called upon Vice-Chancellors across the State to take proactive measures to protect university land from encroachment, stressing that safeguarding institutional assets was essential for the long-term growth and development of higher education institutions.

Speaking at the valedictory session of the two-day Conference of Vice-Chancellors of State Public and Private Universities at New Abhishek Hall in Lok Bhavan, the Governor said many institutions were facing challenges related to encroachment. He urged university authorities to remain vigilant and establish effective mechanisms to prevent fresh encroachments.



“The Government will do its part in reclaiming encroached land, but it is equally the responsibility of institutions to ensure that no further encroachment takes place,” he said.

The Governor also emphasised the importance of building sustainable and self-reliant campuses through the adoption of renewable energy. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s call for economic self-reliance, he encouraged universities to utilise available rooftop spaces for solar power generation and meet a part of their electricity requirements through clean energy sources.

Dr. Kambhampati suggested that universities explore Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding and adopt the Renewable Energy Service Company (RESCO) model, under which third-party developers finance, install, own and maintain solar power systems, eliminating the need for significant upfront investment by institutions. He said such initiatives could help universities undertake green transformation even in the face of financial constraints.

He further advocated a gradual transition to electric vehicles, citing Lok Bhavan’s fully electric vehicle fleet and its emergence as a net-zero energy destination as examples of sustainable practices.

Highlighting the need for environmental sustainability, the Governor urged universities to make plantation drives a regular feature of campus life and utilise unused land to expand green cover. He also encouraged institutions to explore carbon credit mechanisms as a potential source of additional revenue while contributing to environmental conservation.

Emphasising holistic campus development, Dr. Kambhampati called for greater promotion of cultural activities and suggested organising collective listening sessions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Mann Ki Baat" in university auditoriums every month.

On skill development, he advised institutions lacking adequate infrastructure to collaborate with Skill Development Institutes (SDIs) and leverage existing facilities. Stressing outcome-based assessment of skilling programmes, he said their success should be measured not merely by the number of students trained but by the number who secure employment or undertake income-generating activities after completing their courses.

The Governor further urged universities to create awareness among students about various welfare, entrepreneurship and employment schemes of the Central and State Governments so that young people could take advantage of available opportunities. He also encouraged Vice-Chancellors to undertake joint visits to institutions known for best practices and adapt successful models suited to their campuses.

Calling upon academic leaders to remain innovative and forward-looking, Dr. Kambhampati said universities must evolve into vibrant centres where knowledge is created, innovation is encouraged, character is built and leadership is nurtured.

"Universities must not merely produce degree holders; they must produce capable citizens, problem-solvers, innovators and nation-builders," he said.

The Governor noted that deliberations during the conference on governance reforms, research and innovation, internationalisation, employability, digital transformation, industry partnerships and implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 should translate into concrete action. Reaffirming his commitment as Chancellor, he assured support for genuine efforts aimed at strengthening higher education in Odisha.

Speaking on the occasion, Higher Education Minister Surjyabanshi Suraj assured that the State Government would proactively act on the Governor's suggestions. He said skill development infrastructure across higher educational institutions would be expanded and appreciated the Governor's leadership in promoting sustainable practices, including the early transition of Lok Bhavan's vehicle fleet to electric mobility.

The concluding day of the conference featured two sessions during which the vice-chancellors of various universities delivered presentations on a range of contemporary issues. Key topics included Green Energy and Sustainability Initiatives, Quantum Computing and Emerging Technologies, Best Practices in Institutional Governance, and Academic Excellence.

Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Higher Education Department, Arvind Agrawal, and Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Skill Development and Technical Education Department, Bhupendra Singh Poonia, also spoke on the occasion. Commissioner-cum-Secretary to the Governor, Dr. Roopa Roshan Sahoo, delivered the welcome address.

Aishwarya Samanta
PRO