

**Governor Calls for Globally Competitive Universities
Rooted in Indian Values at Vice-Chancellors' Conference**

Bhubaneswar, May 31: Governor Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati on Sunday called upon universities in Odisha to evolve into globally competitive, socially responsible and technologically advanced institutions while remaining deeply rooted in Indian values, emphasizing that higher education institutions must play a pivotal role in building an Atmanirbhar Bharat and preparing the State for future challenges.



Addressing the Conference of Vice-Chancellors of State Public Universities and Private Universities at New Abhishek Hall in Lok Bhavan, the Governor described the gathering as a significant collective effort to shape the future of higher education in Odisha.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Deputy Chief Minister K.V. Singh Deo, Health and Family Welfare and Electronics and Information Technology Minister Mukesh Mahaling, School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond, Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj and senior government officials attended the conference.

Welcoming the Vice-Chancellors, Dr. Kambhampati said universities are centres of knowledge, innovation and leadership and have a crucial responsibility in nation-building. Observing that the world is undergoing unprecedented transformation driven by rapid technological advancements, emerging disciplines and evolving global challenges, he stressed that institutions of higher learning must equip students with the knowledge, skills and values required to navigate an increasingly complex future.

The Governor said the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat extends beyond economic self-reliance and encompasses innovation, technology, manufacturing, healthcare, energy and education. Universities, he noted, must foster entrepreneurship and innovation, empowering young people to become catalysts for growth and development in society.

Highlighting the transformative potential of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Dr. Kambhampati said the policy promotes multidisciplinary education, academic flexibility, skill integration, digital learning, research excellence and stronger industry partnerships. He appreciated the efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and the Odisha Government in advancing the implementation of the policy.

Drawing attention to Odisha's rich tribal heritage, the Governor urged universities to undertake meaningful research on indigenous knowledge systems, tribal traditions and cultural preservation. He informed the gathering that publications documenting Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), prepared by the Tribal Cell of Lok Bhavan, would be made available to universities to support academic study and research initiatives.

Addressing the conference, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said universities are not merely degree-awarding institutions but centres of knowledge creation, innovation and research. He highlighted the State Government's enhanced budgetary allocation for the education sector and outlined several initiatives aimed at strengthening higher education.



Emphasising that education is the foundation of a progressive and prosperous society, the Chief Minister said Odisha has set an ambitious target of becoming a developed State by 2036 and contributing significantly to the national vision of Viksit Bharat. He called upon educational institutions to prepare a roadmap for inclusive development and help transform Odisha into a major growth engine of the country.

Deputy Chief Minister K.V. Singh Deo, Ministers Mukesh Mahaling, Nityananda Gond, Sampad Chandra Swain and Suryabanshi Suraj also shared their perspectives on strengthening higher education, fostering innovation and creating an ecosystem that supports sustainable and inclusive growth.

During the first session, Higher Education Department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Arvind Agrawal presented the achievements and ongoing initiatives of the department under the visions of Viksit Odisha@2036 and Viksit Bharat@2047. The occasion also witnessed the announcement and

unveiling of the Chancellor's Cup on issues of national importance, Chancellor's Cup for English Debate and Chancellor's Cup for Odia Debate. Awards and certificates were presented to selected universities for their short films on drug de-addiction.

The second session of the day focused on skill development, internships and ADEP initiatives, with presentations by Arvind Agrawal and Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the Skill Development and Technical Education Department, Bhupendra Singh Poonia. Sessions on youth leadership, volunteerism and nation-building were addressed by officials from the Armed Forces and NCC, followed by an open-house discussion on strengthening Bharat Scouts and Guides activities in universities, Indian Red Cross initiatives, NSS-led community outreach and youth participation in nation-building.

Commissioner-cum-Secretary to the Governor Dr. Roopa Roshan Sahoo delivered the welcome address, while Special Secretary to the Governor, Higher Education, Prashant Kishore Mohapatra proposed the vote of thanks. The conference will continue on Monday also.

Aishwarya Samanta
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