

Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University



Second Convocation
Sunday, 5th February, 2017

Welcome Address & Report
by

Dr. Hitesh Deka
Vice Chancellor

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Your Excellency, the Governor of Assam and the Chancellor of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University Sjt Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Education Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Respected Prof. Ravindra Kumar, Vice Chancellor (in-charge), Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi, Esteemed Members of the Board of Management and the Academic Council of the University, Distinguished Guests, Awardees, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed a great moment for all the members of the university to be a part of the Second Convocation and I, on behalf of the Hon'ble Chancellor and the Board of Management of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, extend my hearty welcome to everyone present in this august gathering. It is a special privilege for all of us to have Prof. Ravindra Kumar, an eminent name in the field of open and distance education who has kindly agreed to be here with us to deliver the convocation address.

I also find it an extremely memorable moment to have

Hon'ble Education Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma among us.

It is also my great pleasure to welcome the degree holders of this university and successful learners. I am happy to note that our huge learner base includes security personals from the state working across the country who could not pursue their education in time, but their services are crucial to the society. Again the University is proud to extend educational services to those individuals who are above sixty years of age i.e. our senior citizens who could not attend conventional educational institutions due to their various circumstantial problems. The University also provides educational services to jail inmates and differently abled persons. Our university puts stress on woman empowerment and the number of successful women learners is an indicator of our efforts in that direction. Our open and distance mode of delivering education make us proud as they truly uphold the spirit behind our motto *education beyond barriers*.

India's north-east has a number of problems which are yet to be addressed in a scientific manner so that we can build up in the coming years a truly productive and meaningful, efficient and effective human resources. Creating an economically meaningful human resource pool is one of the main concerns of the State. The global gross enrollment ratio (GER) stands at 30%. Our state is yet to achieve this ratio which certainly indicates the poor level of penetration of our conventional educational tools and institutions. This certainly indicates the necessity of creating institutions of open and distance education.

Established under the provision of the 'Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University Act' 2005 of the State Legislature of Assam published in the Assam Gazette Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University started functioning with Professor Srinath Baruah assuming office as its first Vice Chancellor wef. 11th December, 2006.

The University has been recognized and its academic programmes have been approved by the Distance Education Council (DEC), New Delhi from 2007 and University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi from 2009. In addition to that, the Government of Assam has recognized all degree, diploma and certificate programmes of the University for job and higher study from May 08, 2009.

The University started functioning from 11th December, 2006. It was the 14th open university in the country and it was also the first open university in the entire north-east India. As it was the first of its kind in the region, certainly it has to face a number of challenges and consequently has to devise innovative and practical solutions to address these inherent problems. The journey of this university had a modest beginning with just 2623 learners. Its academic journey now encompasses more than 1,50,000 learners. For a university which has witnessed just ten springs, this is a strong indicator of its successful penetration, relevance of its academic programmes and itself is a success story for others to follow.

A university is a temple of knowledge. Again as the famous essayist Bacon reminded us long ago, knowledge is power. Viewed in that context, a university creates a knowledge

bank and further facilitates different ways to channelize these ingredients of knowledge for the benefit of others. Knowledge creates possibilities and these possibilities help us to realize our potentials. With our 53 academic programmes through our 351 study centres including 13 jail study centres, we are able to create sufficient channels and modes of delivering education for all sections of the society. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University has laid special emphasis on unprivileged and marginalized sections of the society. The aim is to bring members of this strata of the society within the ambit of the educational umbrella, thereby making them capable of enjoying rights as citizen of the country and socially empowered individuals. This is certainly a difficult task for an open university whose resources are limited and tools of penetration into the harsh conditions of life are indeed rudimentary. We are faced with challenges and we accept them as unavoidable circumstances of our educational journey. To make our educational courses full of flexibility and comprehensive for our learners, we introduce the community radio Jnan Taranga, use mobile apps, online tools, CDs and other necessary instruments so that we can transgress every barrier that may stand in our way.

Certainly a university cannot run its academic activities and broaden its social horizon without a concrete vision and action plan. For a regional university like us, challenges before us determine our courses of action and modes of operation. We can achieve our goals and materialize our dreams if we can set our priorities and carve our trajectories. In short, we are to be guided by a vision plan. Krishna

Kanta Handiqui State Open University has already empowered its journey with its *Vision Document : 2030* approved by the Board of Management.

The University desires to produce learners who understand our vision and can contribute substantially to regional and transnational development. Our success will be demonstrated by the number of learners whom we can continuously attract. In the second convocation, we are conferring degrees on 34,928. Today the University is proud to send 32,236 graduates into the world as enlightened and empowered individuals. We have with us 9 PhDs and 2678 Masters.

The University will contribute by strengthening its study centres and introducing a competitive environment in which the learners will be guided by career driven aspirations and goals. For that, we have recently established 13 jail study centres and 183 jail inmates are pursuing different courses in our university in the open mode. The University will create adequate mechanisms to understand the needs of the learning community and their expectations from this institute of higher learning.

An educational institution is also a social institution. It reminds us of the much quoted dictum that man is a social animal. To make its presence socially more meaningful and culturally more relevant, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University has introduced the Krishna Kanta Handiqui National Award and the Krishna Kanta Handiqui National Fellowship. The 2015 Krishna Kanta Handiqui National Award was presented to eminent space scientist

Jitendranath Goswami and the first Krishna Kanta Handiqui National Fellowship was presented to internationally acclaimed film director Jahnu Barua. Further I am happy to note that the Krishna Kanta Handiqui National Award, 2016 was presented to none other than Prof. Mrinal Miri, distinguished educator of the country and a philosopher of international repute. Again Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University also has the privilege of introducing the K.K. Handiqui Memorial Lecture, based on the philosophy of creating an environment where all members of the society can interact meaningfully to nurture conditions of better livelihood and a goal driven life. The University invited Noble laureate Kailash Satyarthi to deliver this lecture in 2015. Sjt. Satyarthi's carefully chosen topic for the event *Role of Youth in Protecting World's Left Out Children* is an eye opener for all of us. Certainly it was a delightful and enlightening moment for every one of us present on that day, 20th July, 2015. Further in accordance with the spirit of the University, internationally acclaimed film director Buddhadeb Dasgupta delivered K.K. Handiqui Memorial Lecture, 20th July, 2016 with the title *Art and Experience in Celluloid* where he made an impressive and intellectual presentation on the role of cinema and relevance of cinematic tools in understanding intricacies of life and complexities of the surrounding environment. Further, with our A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Social Welfare Mission and Mother Teresa Social Welfare Mission, both started in 2015, the University is taking certain bold steps that includes adoption of ethnic villages (currently that number stands at two) and free education to the girl child. The University has been providing free education to jail inmates, differently abled

learners and economically poor individuals all across the state. This is an indicator of our moral responsibility to provide education for the disadvantageous sections of the society.

With our recent Brojen Baruah Memorial Documentary Film Festival, this university has made the maiden effort to address the problems of jail inmates who happen to be our learners. This is the first effort in the entire country to address the lives and courses of jail inmates for a constructive beginning. We are proud of the fact that the University has already completed two documentary festivals at Guwahati Central Jail and Mangaldai District Jail. It is a proud privilege for us that the internationally acclaimed film director Jahnu Barua took active part in these two documentary film festivals and his participation gave a new lease of life to the jail inmates. The success of this humble beginning will inspire us to continue screening of documentaries under the banner of this festival in other jails of the state also. Further the University desires to organize this festival in a phase wise basis in different colleges across the state.

The University believes that it has a moral duty to strengthen its publication wing. For that it has already started a project that includes compilation of Assamese children literature which is supposed to cover 20 volumes. Again it is a widely accepted fact that Assam's historical narrative is strong in character and content. Therefore to preserve all these documents, the University is going to start a similar endeavor concerning compilation of these historical narratives.

We live in a risk society, uncertainties are real threats. Our choices are guided by the fact that our resources are limited. To set our priorities against all odds we need sufficient exercises in terms of planning and locating our inherent strength and weakness. Long ago, at the dawn of our civilization a thought emerged that upheld the view, "An unexamined life is not worth living." In a convocation where we are conferring degrees on our successful learners, we are creating an opportunity to examine our activities against certain strict parameters. I as the Vice Chancellor of this University sincerely hope that this open mode of education will surely bring new light and rays of hope for all the learners within this hall as well as outside.

