

# **M.S. Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences**

## **Bangalore**

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### **Convocation Address**

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#### **Quality Mandate with Inclusion and Innovation for New India**

Ladies and gentlemen, Namaskara! I feel extremely privileged to be here in Bengaluru on the occasion of 4<sup>th</sup> Convocation of Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences. At the outset let me thank the Chancellor Dr M R Jayaram, the Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellors, Trustees and members of the Board of Management, Academic Council, Senate and other authorities, Registrar, Principals, Staff and Students of Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences (RUAS) for inviting me to deliver Convocation address. I wish to acknowledge significant contributions from Ramaiah group of institutions to provide high quality education and health care at affordable cost to needy people. It is noteworthy that this important occasion coincides with the year of 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Centenary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Let me begin with appreciating efforts of RUAS that aims to focus on student-centric approach to equip students with theoretical knowledge and practical skills to make them better employable. I am happy to note that the university verticals include Academic Studies; Academic Research; Training, Skill Development and Lifelong Learning and a Techno Centre for Consultancy, Product Design and Development and Entrepreneurship Development. This approach indeed covers a wide spectrum offering real life problem solving and holistic education to students. RUAS has established faculties in Engineering and Technology, Art and Design, Management and Commerce, Mathematical & Physical Sciences, Life and Allied Health Sciences, Dental Sciences, Pharmacy and Hospitality

Management & Catering Technology. In addition, Ramaiah's flagship programs in medicine, engineering and technology on the campus may provide conducive interdisciplinary environment for students and faculty for academically enriching interactions. I am glad to know that The Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences is committed to work on the philosophy of inclusiveness and service to society. I hope RUAS will be able to contribute to the efforts of government to make education more holistic, relevant, meaningful to developed self-reliant, sensitive, employable global citizens.

### **Quality Education for New India**

On the occasion of 4<sup>th</sup> Convocation, I would like to take this opportunity to share few recent developments in the Indian Higher Education system and provide few glimpses of efforts taken by the UGC as a part of its Quality Mandate. Ladies and gentleman, let me emphasize that the focus of New India under visionary leadership of PM Narendra Modi is on education quality upgradation and inclusion. I find echo of these noble thoughts in Swami Vivekanand who proclaimed "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached" and in Mahatma Gandhi who said "Real education has to draw out the best from the boys and girls to be educated".

According to the Delors Commission of UNESCO 1996 "Education is at the heart of both personal and community development; its mission is to enable each of us, without exception, to develop all our talents to the full and to realize our creative potential, including responsibility for our own lives and achievement of our personal aims." UNESCO also considers equity an integral part of quality education and recognizes the efforts made by countries in this regard and that renewed efforts are needed to strengthen well-informed higher education systems, based on strong normative instruments and institutions with a focus on access for all. Quality education is not merely about teaching facts, but is also about cultivating knowledge on how to determine those facts. Quality education involves critical thinking, learning to work with others and work independently, in multiple disciplines.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to which India is signatory. SDG 4 is dedicated to education, which aims to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. Quality education enables people to optimally empower to achieve their potential as human beings and members of society.

In line with these international developments and juxtaposing the aspirations of NEW India, the NITI AAYOG had come out with 15 years agenda articulating its Vision, Strategy and Action Agenda. Following this, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) had constituted a high-power committee under the chairmanship of Dr K Kasturirangan to prepare draft of the National Education Policy (NEP). The Kasturirangan Committee has submitted draft NEP 2019 that envisions an India-centred education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all. In 2018, the University Grants Commission (UGC) declared Quality Mandate consisting of 10 verticals. Early this year, the MHRD has prepared a 5 year action plan with a strategic framework for teaching-learning excellence for Education Quality Upgradation & Inclusion Project (EQUIP).

### **Current Scenario**

Let me portray a broad picture of Indian higher education system, which has grown exponentially over the last several years. The number of students enrolled in the higher education system in 2014-15 was 3.42 crores which has risen to about 3.66 crores in 2017-18, the GER i.e. ratio of the students enrolled in the age group of 18-23 years to the population in that age group was 23.2 in 2014-15 and rose to 25.8 in 2017-18, while we aim to increase it to 30% by 2020.

As per AISHE REPORT 2014-15, there were 38,498 Affiliated / Constituent Colleges, where as in 2017-18, there are 39,527 Affiliated / Constituent Colleges. The number of teachers in higher education during 2014-15 was 14, 73,255 while in 2017-18, there are 12, 84,755 teachers in higher education institutions. During 2014, total number of students who Graduated was 62,94, 907 and number of Engineering students graduated was 8,16,637, while in 2018 the total Number of Students Graduated was 64, 19, 639 (All Streams) and number of Engineering Students Graduated was 8,62,746.

There are over 900 Universities including 48 Central, 399 State, 126 Deemed and 334 Private. UGC has in the recent past set forth objectives for improving the quality in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The objectives encompass all the integral areas of higher education like regular revision of curriculum with clearly specified learning outcomes and soft skills, enabling youth secure access to employment/self-employment or engage in pursuit

of higher education; developing social –industry connect; availability of motivated teachers and accreditation to ensure qualitative self improvement in HEIs. A quality mandate stating objectives approved by the Commission and various initiatives expected from all universities/colleges have been placed on UGC website and circulated across the nation.

In order to strengthen higher education and accelerate the pace of several reforms in higher education, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has taken a number of significant initiatives to bring about qualitative improvement in higher education along with promoting quality, access and equity. In India, there is immense demand for quality higher education for creating employable graduates well equipped with essential skills, knowledge and ethics needed for leading a successful life. The major challenges faced by higher education system in the country comprise upholding state-of-the-art curriculum, upgrading and maintenance of quality teaching, research and services, and absorption of latest technologies that can revolutionize the way of learning. It is with the aim of providing solutions to these challenges and setting in motion a process of in-depth reforms in higher education in India, University Grants Commission has adopted Quality Mandate and its objectives for improving the quality in Higher Education Institutions.

### **Induction Programme for Students**

UGC has formulated, “Deeksharambh - A Guide to Student Induction Programme”, which is available on UGC website ([www.ugc.ac.in](http://www.ugc.ac.in)). The programme is designed to make the transition from secondary to College/University naturally effortless by aiding the student to develop a sense of belongingness and an awareness of their rights and responsibilities, help them acclimatize with the ethos of the new Institution. Further, this shall serve as an opportunity for teachers, students to know each other and form an everlasting bonding. More than 1100 teachers participated in UGC Workshops. As on today, 151 HEIs have already initiated Deeksharambh program.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The basic premise of Learning Outcomes Based Curriculum (LOCF) approach is to align the attributes to be attained by a graduate, with Programme Learning Outcomes and Academic Standards. It is a learner centric teaching learning approach. LOCF aims to instil in our graduates attributes like Disciplinary knowledge, Communication Skills, Critical thinking,

Problem solving, Analytical reasoning, Research-related skills, Cooperation/Team work, Scientific reasoning, Reflective thinking Information/digital literacy, Self-directed learning, Multicultural competence, Moral and ethical awareness/reasoning, Leadership readiness/qualities and Lifelong learning irrespective of discipline.

UGC has constituted subject specific Expert Committees to frame LOCF in 37 subjects. The Committees after having detailed deliberations and wider consultations at national level has developed the LOCF reports in different subjects. LOCF reports of over 15 subjects have already been completed.

### **Use of ICT**

To prepare our graduates for the new work environment, integrate ICT based teaching learning tools and add in online courses that contain technical elements mandatorily at Undergraduate and post graduate levels, UGC has taken initiatives including E PG Pathshala, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on Study Web of Active and Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM). UGC has also issued a Regulation on Credit Framework for Online Courses through SWAYAM Regulation, 2016. Over 125 universities have already given consent to adopt MOOCs Course through SWAYAM Platform.

### **Life skills**

A curriculum has been prepared to empower graduates with the vital skills requisite for global employment and for leading a successful life, by making them realize ‘What they can do to make the system work for them’. A Jeevan Kaushal Curriculum of 120 hours comprising of 08 credits is now ready to be launched.

### **Social and Industry connect**

The purpose of this scheme is to promote partnership between Universities and Industry/Professional Organizations, to identify the core knowledge/skills areas to empower our graduates. A two Credit course curriculum for 30 hours has been developed on, “Fostering Social Responsibility Community Engagement of HEIs in India”. This scheme will promote Universities and other institutions of higher learning to build partnership between Industry/Professional Organizations to identify the core knowledge/skills expected from graduates and thereby improve quality higher education in the country, UGC is in the

final stage of developing concept note on University Industry Linkage which will be developed into a scheme.

### **Evaluation Reforms**

To make evaluation more meaningful, it should be linked to 'Learning Outcomes' and Institutional goals. These reforms focus on the evaluation of students based on internal assessment modes, the grading system, question bank system as a collaborative effort of many experts for setting of good quality question papers and use of technology for the effective conduct of examination. The major highlights of the scheme include test learning outcomes, knowledge gained, attitude and skills; internal and continuous evaluation emphasized without compromising quality and standards; technological interventions; grading and credit transfer, On-Demand Examination, Question Bank. For implementation of Evaluation Reforms, Regional Workshops for Training Teachers/Administrators/Dean (Academics)/ Controller of Examinations of HEIs with 300 participants have been organized. For implementation of Evaluation Reforms, Regional Workshops for Training Teachers/Administrators/Dean (Academics)/ Controller of Examinations of HEIs have been organized in Hyderabad, Pune, and Bangalore around 500 teachers has been trained. Few more workshops would be organized at Kolkata, Bhopal & Guwahati by October, 2019.

### **Career Progression and Alumni Network**

By observing trends in student progress, after obtaining degree from an Indian Higher Education Institution, evidence based decision making will be facilitated. Regulatory bodies will also be supported to implement reforms in the field and spread awareness in general public as well. Tracking student progress after higher Education and utilizing the tracked information to assess the impact of Higher Education reforms and to make improvements, UGC has constituted a task force to formulate a policy document. The same is in the stage of finalization.

### **Faculty Development**

UGC has developed Faculty Induction Programme (FIP) for all the newly recruited teachers. The objectives of the FIP is to familiarise the teachers with the structure, functioning, rules, regulations etc; understand their roles and responsibilities; explore pedagogical processes and recognise the importance of self-development and nurturing ethics and values in higher

education. UGC has prepared a Framework on Faculty Induction Programme and will be uploaded on website shortly. UGC will organise various workshops for training of teachers (ToT) and about 500 teachers will be trained for imparting the Teacher Induction Programme. The workshop on Training of Teachers (TOT) was held in March, 2019 at Pune. All National Resource Centres have been requested to implement FIP module prepared by UGC. The Government of India has also launched a programme called ARPIT (Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching), which will be conducting subject specific Refresher Programmes for updation of the knowledge of the teachers in their domain areas. About 13 lakh teachers are expected to be benefitted by these courses which would be offered through MOOCs courses on Swayam platform through 75 National Resource Centres identified for the purpose. There will be an examination after completion of the course.

### **Accreditation of institutions**

The "PARAMARSH" scheme has already been launched, to endorse Universities/institutions of higher learning which have failed to meet the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)'s quality standards, by sharing the expertise and resources of few top HEIs by making them Mentor institutions with an aim to achieve, every institution get NAAC accredited with a minimum score of 2.5 by 2022.

### **Research and Innovation**

The MHRD has already announced ambitious schemes including IMPRINT (Impacting Research Innovation and Technology), IMPRESS (Impactful Policy Research in Social Science), SPARC (Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration) and STARS (Scheme for Transformational and Advanced Research in Fundamental Sciences). Over 1000 Institutional Innovation Councils have been recognized by the MHRD. This potential knowledge and resources can significantly contribute to India's developing economy.

Systematic research can help to effectively address various problems faced by the society and improve quality of life of people. It is possible that many innovative ideas to address such problems may emerge from communities themselves. The National Innovation Foundation has a database of over 310,000 technological ideas, innovations and traditional knowledge practices from over 608 districts of the country. Such ideas can be studied by research

students for developing affordable solutions. Potential of these knowledge resources can be optimally explored with help of systematic research that can significantly contribute to India's developing economy.

A high-powered committee under Chairmanship of Prof Balaram has suggested several measures for improving quality of doctoral research. Accordingly, UGC is in a process of amending existing regulations. UGC also is in process to commission a study to assess quality of PhD thesis submitted in Indian Universities during last 10 years. This will help us to know extent of problem and also to identify areas of improvement.

### **STRIDE**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has announced a new initiative - Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy (STRIDE) to promote quality research by faculty and students. STRIDE will support trans-disciplinary research for social inclusion in line with national priorities and also support innovations and entrepreneurship. Inclusive innovations relate to creation, development and integration of new ideas, concepts and practices for public good and strengthening civil society. STRIDE will be focused on solution driven efforts by addressing needs of local/ regional communities and national priorities. Further, it will create a network of eminent researchers in identified thrust areas of humanities and human sciences from leading institutions.

### **UGC-CARE**

The UGC has set up a Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE) to identify, continuously monitor and maintain 'Reference List of Quality Journals' across disciplines (henceforth referred as 'UGC-CARE List'). UGC-CARE List is available at the UGC-CARE website <https://ugccare.unipune.ac.in/site/website/index.aspx>

UGC has issued a public notice informing Indian academic community that they must avoid publication in predatory/ dubious journals or participation in predatory conferences; and that they must not get associated (as Editors /Advisors or in any other capacity) with journals / publishers / conferences involved in fraudulent / dubious / deceptive practices. Any publications in predatory / dubious journals or presentations in predatory / dubious conferences should not be considered for academic credit for selection, confirmation, promotion, performance appraisal, award of scholarship or academic degrees or credits in any form. Research publications only from journals indexed in UGC-CARE List should be used

for all academic purposes such as Faculty appointments, promotions, career advancements, doctoral and other research degrees.

I must commend efforts of Prof Dr G G Gangadharan for developing Ramaiah Indic Specialty Ayurveda (RISA) as a unique Ayurveda-based integrative healthcare centre bringing the best from traditional and modern medicine. I am glad to know that RISA is attached to the state of the art 700 bed Ramaiah Memorial Hospital with access to services like Emergency Care, ICU facilities, Physiotherapy, Diagnostics, Laboratory Services, Tertiary Level Care and other cutting-edge medical technology. Now, RUAS should think about having faculty of AYUSH as one of its arm so that quality research through doctoral and PG programs can be undertaken and contribute to the emerging needs of this sector. The whole world is looking for such innovative initiatives.

### **Road Ahead**

As Mahatma Gandhi said, “The real difficulty is that people have no idea of what education truly is. We assess the value of education in the same manner as we assess the value of land or of shares in the stock-exchange market. We want to provide only such education as would enable the student to earn more. We hardly give any thought to the improvement of the character of the educated. The girls, we say, do not have to earn; so why should they be educated? As long as such ideas persist there is no hope of our ever knowing the true value of education.”

I would like to conclude my address by raising few questions and concerns. How could we perceive quality education at a University with hundreds of affiliated colleges, which actually becomes a degree mill or an examination board. This British model of affiliation has been discarded all over the world including its homeland. We have to think and introspect as to why by regulations we have to make 75% attendance mandatory. Why only colleges and not private tutoring classes have to do it. In my opinion, autonomy is a step towards a standalone or a cluster university. Currently ‘graded’ autonomy is linked to accreditation status. One has to earn autonomy by showing sustained efforts towards quality improvement. The autonomy concept is central in NEP 2019 as well. Autonomy comes with great sense of responsibility and undoubtedly more involvement of teachers. Autonomy is a positive step to bring some change and to make institutions more efficient and accountable. In a process some may

exploit, commercialise or take other disadvantages. This can be fixed through transparency led stringent regulations. Societal controls will be much more effective than any federal regulations or policing.

We need to care about student aspiration, society needs, responsibility to country. Teaching should be genuine passion and should not be considered as 'workload'. Teachers must continue to acquire contemporary knowledge or skills which we are supposed to deliver. Today's students are smarter than us and have several ways to find information than through class notes, textbooks or ppts. In current scenario, I feel that students and teachers can learn much better if they are sent out of campus at least for a semester internship to work with farmers, cottage industry, development projects, police or army. At UGC we are seriously considering a well-structured Semester Outreach Program for this purpose.

The real honest teacher seems to be becoming a gullible and helpless minority. Still good teachers with life mission do exist and so the system is surviving. Permanent faculty need to come out from the current state of comfort or slumber. The change is coming faster than expected and the speed of change will only accelerate in years to come. Robots are becoming smarter and holoportation like technologies are at the doorstep. Already market forces and technology are bringing disruptions. Many global companies like Amazon or Google no longer care about degree certification. We are in a transition phase where increasing GER and employment generation are priority. I hope Indian Education system will be matured and stabilise soon to face and meet these challenges. Quality and commitment of teachers shall remain the hallmark!!

Finally, I wish to congratulate all the students who are graduating today and wish them all the very best for their future. I thank Chancellor Dr M.R. Jayaram, Chairman, Gokula Education Foundation and his entire team at the University for giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts on the occasion of its 4<sup>th</sup> Convocation. RUAS and all other institutes under GEF bring a unique multidisciplinary educational conglomerate that is adopting cutting edge technology on one side with value-based ecosystem well-grounded with Indian tradition and culture. In my opinion GEF is an exemplary effort playing a vital role in Indian higher education. I do hope that RUAS will continue to play a vital role in offering quality education to masses and ensure that

it becomes a powerful means for socio-economic transformation. Please accept my appreciation and best wishes! Thank you, ladies and gentlemen!

Jai Hind