

ADDRESS OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE 32ND CONVOCATION OF INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY ON 3RD APRIL, 2019 AT IGNOU REGIONAL CENTRE, ASHA HALL, NORTH AOC, IMPHAL.

Dr. S.J. Neethirajan ji, Regional Director, Indira Gandhi National Open University,

All the faculty members,

Distinguished Invitees,

Friends from Media,

Dear students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be a part of this 32nd Convocation of yet another leading University of the Country, Indira Gandhi National Open University. Delighted because every Convocation gives me a golden opportunity to share some of my thoughts and views on higher education in a unique forum where almost all stakeholders are present - Students, Teachers, Academicians, Researchers, some policy makers both past and present and outstanding members of civil society. Whereelse does one find such an exceptional congregation where the brightest of brains are present. I am thankful for the invitation and congratulate the University Management on holding this impressive annual academic ceremony at IGNOU's Regional Centre, Imphal. It is understood that the main Convocation of the University is also being held today on its campus at Delhi.

Convocation is a great time of celebration for the University graduates, their families and friends. The University recognizes the hard work, perseverance and dedication of students by awarding them degrees. Academic accomplishments of students always make parents, teachers and friends proud. The students who are passing out from the University rejoice over their success and achievements. I have great pleasure to share the joy and happiness of this memorable moment and extend my warm felicitations

to the students and congratulate the Professors and staff of the University who are behind the success of these students in some way or the other.

As you all are aware, this University was established by an Act of Parliament in the year 1985 with the main objective to promote open and distance education system in the country. Since its inception, it has been the constant endeavour of IGNOU to bring about democratization in higher education and provide quality education irrespective of age, religion, gender and region. In recognition of its benevolent services in the field of education, the University was conferred the centre of excellence award in distance education by Commonwealth in 1993. In addition, it has also been recognized by UNESCO as the world's largest higher learning institution. Apart from catering to the educational aspirations of millions of students worldwide through its 21 Schools of Studies, 67 Regional Centres and 4 Sub-regional Centres across the country, the University has a significant international presence with a networking of 12 overseas study Centres. One can have a fair idea about its popularity from the fact that in 2017-18, enrolment status of the University was above ten lakhs seventy two thousand. I am happy to learn that the University is also offering affordable education to the under privileged students and reaches the doorsteps of the learners with its excellent student support service system. Development of human resources through various vocational and need based programmes and also skill development training programmes are other significant initiatives under its curriculum.

I am also happy to learn that this University is emerging as a training hub for capacity building interventions in the country particularly in the field of Teacher Training. A massive teacher training programme was taken up under which 24,000 teachers of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and 36,000 teachers from 5 North Eastern States were trained by the University. Most significantly, this University also offers free education to the jail inmates in the country.

Dear students, you have reached a significant milestone in your life as you step out of the familiar confines of your alma mater and make your way into an exciting world of myriad challenges and boundless possibilities. I am confident that the knowledge and skills you have acquired in the University will serve you well, create an identity for yourselves in this world and make the alma mater proud. I would like you to be constantly motivated and inspired by the eternal words of Swami Vivekananda throughout your journey of life. He said and I quote: “**Arise, Awake and Stop not till the goal is reached**”.

Education is a privilege and should not be thought of as ending on leaving the portals of the institution. It is a lifelong process. I am sure our students will never end their thirst for knowledge and continue the education process for the rest of their lives. I would like them to remember that education is the transformational act that takes us from where we were to where we can go. It is imperative to have quality faculty who will bring transformation in students and lead them to acquire the right knowledge. I urge the teachers to ignite the minds of the young in such a way that throughout life they have a quest for knowledge and a desire to make this world a harmonious place to live in. Research in our Universities must be emphasized and promoted to a great extent. Aim of research is to push frontiers of knowledge as well as to evolve technologies and to implement them for development. All efforts should be made in this direction so that our research becomes comparable to the best in the world. I am sure this University will encourage students to take keen interest in research activities.

Dear students, I wish you all success, happiness and contentment in your professional and personal lives. May your journey of life be illuminated by the light of knowledge, wisdom and concern for larger society.

With these few words, I wish this University all success in its endeavour.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.