

Convocation Address of Dr. Achyuta Samanta Founder – KIIT & KISS

Hon'ble Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of this great University, Distinguished personalities on and off the dais, invited ladies and gentlemen, Professors, faculty members, stars of today's celebration - young graduates waiting to be entering their new lives.

Before I speak anything, I must express my deep sense of gratitude to the authorities of Pokhara University for inviting me to this picturesque location of seven lake city in the lap of the beautiful Himalayan range and peaks of Mt. Machhapuchri, Mt. Annapurna and Mt. Dhavalagiri.

It is indeed a great honor for me to be standing here before such a distinguished gathering. I do not know whether I will speak up to your expectation but I am sure that I will speak everything from my heart. I come from India the land where everyone from Nepal is being treated as our own family member. Whatever is the political equation between Nepal and India, the people of our two nations share common values, culture and religious practices. We belong to one race divided by manmade boundaries. I come from Orissa, the land of Jagannath. Lord Jagannath is venerated here and Pasupatinath is worshipped there in many forms. The common factors do not end here. The University, I have come from, has a large number of students from Nepal.

Students all over the world wait for this big day – the day of graduation – the day of Convocation. This day is important for the University and the students as well. This day, the University feels proud, seeing the young boys and girls coming out in flying colors with the Degrees and Diplomas in their hands to begin a new journey. Graduation is both a concept and a process. It is a concept because in real life everyday you graduate while graduation as a process goes on until the last day of your life. If you can grasp that, you definitely will make a difference.

As young graduates you are about to embark on your own extraordinary journey and create your own life adventures. I congratulate you for the hard work, pressure of examination – you must be thinking are over. But it really starts now. A new chapter is about to begin. A myriad of new challenges and options are on your horizons. This day will continue to remain as a significant milestone in your life’s journey. From now onwards you will be entering a new world of competition. You must know for sure that the competition will not end until you feel confident of meeting uncertainties and challenges and face those with a positive attitude. I am sure that all of you will be very successful in your field. I am tempted to quote Swami Vivekananda. I believe you all know this greatest scholar of Hinduism. He said, I Quote “Do not look back, look forward! Infinite enthusiasm, infinite daring and infinite patience, then alone can great deed be achieved” unquote. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm and there is no substitute for hard work.

Sometimes, I envy the students studying here. In my young days, I never had such facilities but today you have unlimited access to the world of information. Globalization has created both interrelated and interlinked world generating opportunities and also throwing up challenges. Universities are now developing skills to cope up with these challenges. For young graduates, technocrats, I believe sky is no more the limit. If they dream high and act with determination and conviction, they are bound to get the reward. Say it reward or recognition, it never comes, if you work aiming to get that but it follows, if you work without even thinking for that. This is what Bhagvad Gita says “***Karmane Vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana***”.

I believe, life is a mysterious maze filled with twists and turns, cross roads and many dead ends. You must try to enjoy the journey at every point. Even the errors and disasters we create must eventually serve some purpose, if nothing more than to give us deeper appreciation for our triumphs and teach us the way not to go. So --- enjoy the hills and valleys with which the road of life challenges you and dare to take that road less travelled. It is unfortunate that our world is filled with people eager to tell you that your dreams are impossible. Their negativity can kill your enthusiasm. Be strong willed and block those voices and listen to you own inner spirit and your own voice. It will never guide you in wrong direction. Now that you are graduates, it is the most critical time for life changing decisions. The world awaits you to know what

steps will you choose. This is the time to discover your life's destiny, so be adventurous, be spontaneous and dare to be different in the world.

Eleanor Roosevelt once wrote, I Quote ' the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. We are all unique but I think the luckiest are those who challenge themselves to dream impossible dreams, make them a reality and ultimately leave behind a legacy' unquote.

While forging ahead, I would like you to take a pause and to look around. Never ever forget the millions looking at you. Spare a thought for those, not as privileged as you to have been graduated from an elite institution. You must thank your parents, who toiled so hard to make you what you are today. You must thank God for giving you the opportunity to be in a better place. Think about a child who has not been as fortunate as you are. Think about the parents of the poor. It is your responsibility to see the world is as much his or hers as much yours. As inheritors of a great Nepali society and culture, which blossomed up great values for life and deep concern for human development, you must intensely aspire for deepening and broadening your knowledge, learn to experience the power within you and be guided by higher values which you believe in. The greatest satisfaction in life lies in giving something back to the society which gave you the scope to be what you are today. There could not be a better example than Lord Buddha. A young Prince Siddhartha from Nepal living in luxury came out from his

royal palace to give the people of the world wisdom, compassion and the ways to attain Nirvana by becoming Buddha.

I am not her to preach sermon nor I want you to accept any if your heart, your soul, your mind do not want. I would like to conclude with what Gandhiji said in one of his last notes in 1948. I quote, 'I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the **Self** becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man or woman, whom you may have seen and ask yourself, if the steps you contemplate is going to be of any use to him (her). Will he or she gain anything by it? Will it restore him or her to a control over his (her) own life and destiny? In other word, will it lead to Swaraj (freedom) for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? then you will find your doubts and your '**Self**' melt away', unquote.

I have no doubt that each and every one of you will be very successful. However, make sure you do not forget the less fortunate. We need to bring the full power of your intelligence, wisdom and knowledge to improve the life of everyone on this earth. It is not impossible. We have done it in Bhubaneswar – the capital city of Orissa, a state in India. I started a very small institution, with the little money I had with me way back in early nineties, which has grown into the biggest Residential institution for the poorest of the poor tribal children, in the name of Kalinga Institute of Social sciences (KISS). Today 12000 children are provided here with food, accommodation, health care and all other necessities of

life absolutely free to pursue education from Kindergarten to Post graduation (KG to PG). Trust me, the satisfaction I get from by seeing their brightened faces can never be quantified by money or material wealth.

My experiences prompt me to say, today's achievement may fade or even forgotten. The applause and appreciation may become a distant memory. Your certificates and medals may gather dust on a shelf or displayed on the wall. But you always will be remembered for caring enough, for helping someone, for making someone feel special and appreciated for being the kind I have no doubt that you will get the very best in life.

I wish you a great future ahead and I thank you for listening me so very patiently.