



ನೇಗಲ ಮೇಲೆಯೇ ನಿಂತಿದೆ ಧರ್ಮ



UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES, SHIVAMOGGA

ಫೈಫ್ ಸಂಭ್ರಮ 5

FIFTH CONVOCATION

29-02-2020

CONVOCATION ADDRESS



Prof. RAMESH CHAND

Member, National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog and
XV Finance Commission, Government of India, New Delhi



**University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences,
Shivamogga, Karnataka**

PROF. RAMESH CHAND

Shri B.C.Patil, Hon'ble Agriculture Minister, State of Karnataka and Prochancellor of the UAHS; Vice Chancellor Dr. M.K. Naik; Members of the Board of Management and Academic Council, Directors, Deans, faculty, staff and students of the University; guests; graduating students who have received their degrees today, their parents, representative of Press and Media; Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel privileged to deliver the convocation address in the University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Shivamogga. This University is the first integrated University in the state of Karnataka with the specific mandate to integrate agriculture and horticulture. This integration is very important for economic as well as ecological reasons. Combining field crops with horticultural crops improves farm income in many ways. One, horticultural crops on an average, are six times more productive than field crops. Changing crop composition say from crops like cereals, pulses and oilseeds on one acre of land to include fruits



and vegetables on one fifth of same land raises per acre income by 121 per cent. Thus, horticulture option upto a limit raises farm income substantially and is the best choice for achieving the goal of Doubling farmers income. Crop diversification towards horticulture crops is known to reduce price risk and market risk. Ecological considerations also favour crop system approach that integrates field crops, horticulture crops and forestry/tree species.

The state of Karnataka has been making concerted efforts for development and progress of agriculture sector. However, state has been facing erratic rains and large part of the state suffers from recurrent droughts. Development of irrigation in the state covers less than one third area. Two third of cultivated area remains rainfed. Consequently, income of agriculture sector shows negative year on year growth in as much as 40 per cent of the years. Because of this, agriculture has become a very risky activity in the state.

During the year 2017-18, one hectare of area under cultivation in Karnataka yield crop output worth was Rs. 99.63 thousand as compared to Rs. 110.38 thousand for the entire country. The important reasons for lower productivity in Karnataka are (i) second crop

is sown only on 23% area in the state (ii) low productivity (iii) dominance of low productivity crops in area under cultivation and (iv) low coverage of irrigation (30%). These statistics also point to huge scope to raise productivity and reach higher growth in agriculture sector. Agricultural R&D and Universities can play a vital role in it.

India and the rest of the world face serious challenge of providing suitable employment to rising and aspiring workforce. Technological developments like use of robotics in place of human labour, artificial intelligence, Big data, IoT etc. are adversely affecting demand for labour in manufacturing and other non-agricultural sectors. These developments are also restricting the capacity of non-agricultural sector to absorb work force from agriculture. This has put renewed focus on agriculture to create gainful employment in post-harvest value addition activities.

An important reason for slow shift of farm youths to non-agriculture sector is their strong preference for middle income jobs but in many cases they do not have required skill and capability for such jobs. Medium, small and micro (MSME) enterprises, which are labour



intensive, seem to be an appropriate alternative for rural employment generation. Linking agri-food processing to production through efficient value chain, contract farming and direct linkage between factory and farm offers considerable scope for rural employment generation as well as raising farmers' income.

I suggest to UAHS Shivamogga to prepare a comprehensive strategy for transformation of agriculture in the State. This should involve promotion of high value crops and forestry, knowledge intensive farming, strong market linkage, increased participation of private sector in agriculture, partnership between the University and Private sector for transfer of promising technology to farmers and food processing. Graduates of this University can play a vital role in this.

The need for having world class institutions in agriculture education and research in the country is becoming more and more important as the agriculture sector is facing several new challenges. We are not able to bring stability to growth of output. Increase in productivity is not associated with higher resource use efficiency. Thus, growth requires higher prices which cannot be sustained over a long period. Private sector is tapping modern scientific breakthrough in other

sciences for application in agriculture more promptly than public sector research institutions. Climate change, natural disasters, and stress on natural resources system are posing formidable challenges which are not attractive to private sector. To make our future secure, we have to make our agriculture secure. This requires an expanded supply of highly skilled agricultural professionals, at various levels, capable of addressing emerging challenges and giving our agriculture competitive edge much needed in this globalised world.

Our SAUs need to catch up with the best educational system in the world and reputed institutes like IITs and IIMs in the country in two aspects. One, involvement of private sector and industry in designing research and education and in campus intake of graduates. Two, alumni associations in SAUs are not deeply involved in the health and wellbeing of their alma mater. Alumni can contribute in several ways like contributing something back to the institution as students prosper economically; guarding the future of the institution; bringing reputation, patronage and resources and forging scientific collaborations with advance institutions. The alumni are also likely to be in positions to shape opinion on how to strengthen their



alma mater in meeting new challenges in a rapidly changing world. I hope all of fresh graduates will remain engaged in the future of UAHS Shivamogga and help it to achieve greater heights in the years and decades ahead.

The agriculture scene has undergone sea change since I graduated in 1977 from PAU Ludhiana. At that time, jobs were available for asking. Various departments related to agriculture, banks and farm input industry used to have regular intake of agriculture graduates matching with the supply. The situation of agriculture and job market has changed dramatically since then. Still these organizations employ agricultural graduates but bulk jobs are not available in any organizations. Now the demand lies in diversified areas. Therefore, you need to plan your professional career differently.

I strongly feel that agriculture graduates should take cue from engineering graduates. Only small fraction of engineering graduates get technical jobs and a large number go for managerial job after obtaining diploma and degrees in management courses. Agriculture is getting modernized and commercialized. Commerce in agriculture is growing. Present status of

agro processing and post-harvest value addition is much low. As our economy grows, these areas will expand rapidly. Agri business is expanding from seed to agro-processing and agri marketing. This expansion will require professionals with technical knowhow of agriculture. Getting job there, requires business oriented skill, aptitude and some personal traits. If UAHS offers short duration course in agri-business skills with the involvement of private sector, it will be very handy in getting private sector jobs. Another potential area is much talked about self-employment. Two big differences between the opportunities open to the graduates today compared to the graduates earlier are: one, the necessity and two, the potential for getting into entrepreneurship. Government of India has launched couple of initiatives in this area - the most recent one is SETU (Self Employment Talent Utilisation). These initiatives under various Ministries offer a lot of opportunities but they require some entrepreneurial skill. This can produce excellent results if it is combined with much talked agricultural diversification in Karnataka. A large number of new models and success stories with high turnover around some aspect of agriculture are emerging from various



states. These new islands of prosperity are purely based on market but conceived and driven by high profile technical or managerial professionals attracted to agriculture. Some of you must think in this direction as well. Those who abandon the beaten path and have willingness to think out of the box and accept risks, harvest rich dividend in life.

Whatever you do, whether in private sector, government, or self-employment, this degree from UAHS will pay you lifelong dividend. In return, you are expected to contribute positively towards the reputation of this great Institution through your conduct.

I congratulate all the graduating students who have received their degrees today and wish them a very rewarding career and fulfilling life ahead.

Thank you and Jai Hind.

