

Draft Proceeding
Regional Consultation Meeting, Vikram Dev College, Jeypore,
22 October 2009

Vikram Dev College, Jeypore hosted the second regional consultation on Higher Education in its premise on 22 October 2009. Dr. Ananga Mohapatra , Principal of the VD College extended a warm welcome to the chief guest Prof. Amulya Purohit, Director of Higher Education and all the participants. After a brief description about the perspective plan by Dr Mohapatra, the Chief Guest Prof Purohit unveiled the annual magazine of the college.

Dr. Dhanada Kanta Mishra of HDF kicked off the day's proceeding by briefing the participants on the objectives of the task force. Dr Mishra set the tone with an emphasis on raising the GER of the state which lies at an abysmally low 13%- much below the national average. He stated that the next generation would belong to the knowledge based people and hence there was a great need to bring the state up to the International standard. Talking on the thrust areas - expansion, excellence and inclusion, Dr Mishra shared some of the key concerns such as: governance system, lack of autonomy, affiliation, ignorance of ethical values, globalized standards and sought suggestions from the participants in this regard.

Prof. A K Purohit, Director (H.E) highlighted the historic significance of the Task Force on H.E. under the Chairmanship of Prof. Trilochan Pradhan emphasized on developing a road map for higher education in the state and called for honest opinions which would be actionable. In the race for knowledge, said Prof Purohit, Orissa should not lag behind at any cost and hence it was massive task of designing the academic destiny of the state. He also felt the need to do everything possible to improve GER, at least to beat the national average if not the global one. Prof Purohit felt that most of the colleges imparting higher education in the state were of medium to low quality and we must be self-critical and real about this. Then only things can improve. He also laid emphasis on expansion of the coverage of higher education in the state but with no compromise on quality in every possible sense of the term. Talking of excellence, Prof Purohit was of opinion that one did not need to produce Nobel laureates to become excellent, but only if the state could optimally realise the potential. He signed off with emphasis on ethical dimension of education in humanities and social sciences.

Dr. Ananga Mohapatra, in his keynote address gave utmost importance to developing human resources. However, he felt that quality education, infrastructure development, funding and better resource persons needed a longer gestation period. Dr Mohapatra also did a soul searching for the current state of affairs and felt strongly about the students' need to overcome low level of confidence to face the real life situations. Saying that a composite plan/programme with proper monitoring is the need of the hour, Dr Mohapatra appealed to everyone to come up with ideas for revamping Higher Education. He also offered some suggestions such as: motivation, recognition, timely training, uniform recruitment and transfer policy, etc.

Dr Suchitra Mishra reiterated the importance of the workshop followed by a recap of the points discussed and offered vote of thanks before the participants left for the technical sessions.

There were three parallel sessions on different themes: quality, infrastructure and human resources. The brain-storming sessions were fruitful and rewarding. The following important suggestions were offered by the speakers.

Quality

- a) Rationalisation of scale of pay : U.G.C. scale of pay for college teachers is not given to teachers in State scale. This anomaly should be removed to ensure quality education.
- b) The student-teacher ratio must not be above 32:1 for successful imparting of quality education.
- c) The present practice of guest faculties is extremely demoralising. This should be discontinued.
- d) Performance appraisal and activity analysis of teachers should be done at regular intervals.
- e) Twenty one lead colleges of the state should be converted to centres of excellence or deemed universities.
- f) Special support & assistance packages should be provided to the higher education institutes accredited 'C' by NAAC.
- g) Uniform academic calendar should be introduced throughout the state.
- h) Establishing community colleges.

Infrastructure development

- a) Higher budget allocation
- b) Quality infrastructure
- c) Development Grants by the UGC, the AICTE and the state government to all the stakeholders.
- d) State Development Fund for financing college.
- e) Fee structure in colleges should be increased to mobilise funds.
- f) Donation to Institutions should be exempt from income tax.
- g) The idea of Alumni patrons should be explored.
- h) Priority must be given to KBK districts for the benefit of SC/ST and backward classes.
- i) User specific maintenance charges should be introduced.
- j) A new affiliating university at Jeypore is required.

Resource Persons

- a) Promotion rules and transfer modalities must be reframed.
- b) Recruitment of more women in teaching
- c) Introduction of yoga
- d) Training on Teaching methods, research and academic administration

Indeed, the Workshop generated wide interest of the participants in the realm of Higher Education.