



Rajbhawan Uttarakhand-Information Wing

PRESS NOTE

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The Governor of Uttarakhand Smt. Margaret Alva has said that there does exist a serious mismatch between what is being taught by higher educational institutions and what the job market is actually demanding. Addressing participants at a Workshop on 'Higher Education in Uttarakhand-Issues and Challenges', organised by the Doon University here today, the Governor said that this has raised a big question mark on the very legitimacy of the State's higher educational system.

Throwing a word of caution on awarding degrees in 'convenient courses', the Governor said, "In a State like ours, it does not make sense to award degrees in 'convenient courses'. We cannot ignore the implications of creating a pool of literate but unemployable youth. I would suggest that wherever required, surgical action be taken by grafting certain disciplines into professional courses rather than running them on their own."

In her hour long address to a galaxy of educationists led by the Vice Chancellor of Doon University Dr. Girijesh Pant, the Governor highlighted a large number of pressing issues confronting the state of higher education in Uttarakhand and emphasized upon the need for its modernization and standardization. "We live in a global age; we are talking of global factor mobility. Clearly we must be talking of global standards. How do we achieve them? We need to do bold thinking and adopt innovative methods", she said.

On the occasion, the Governor said that the present system needs to be revisited to meet the emerging challenges, especially at a time when the higher Education Department of the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development is proactively engaged in the education reforms process. "At this juncture, when the Central Government is having a serious re-look at the higher education regime, it is time that we in our state of Uttarakhand give serious attention to the education sector in general and higher education, in particular. In the recent past, a number of Universities have come up in the State. Many more are in the pipeline. It is the dream of the State government to make the State an education-hub. These are indeed noble goals. But expansion alone will not help us achieve our objectives", she said.

The Governor said, "Even in state run colleges, we do not have adequate number of teachers and infrastructure. What is most alarming is that in many colleges, we do not have the viable number of students. I am told that given the pathetic state of some of these colleges, local students avoid going there to attend classes. The serious question to be asked today is, how can we harness our human resources from the mountain region with inadequate infrastructure? Rather than further adding to numbers, our priority must be to consolidate what has been created.

Addressing the Workshop participants, the Governor emphasized upon various important factors that would be required for the qualitative growth and development of higher education in the State. She mentioned several important steps that would be required to overhaul the higher education regime in the State. These include the need for imbibing and inculcating skill sets for knowledge delivery, moving towards a knowledge application regime, autonomy and accountability as means to achieve excellence, parity in inter-university courses and facility of credit transfer, reducing external interference while preventing inbreeding, promoting intra-faculty communication and inter-institutional networking, establishing more education institutions in hill areas, pedagogy, and public private partnership to prevent obsolescence, among other things.

The Governor said, "In the modern context of University education and higher education, it is important that the education being given, helps students to become good citizens and human beings." "We need to address the issue of quality to enable our students to face the highly competitive market. But quality should not be defined in terms of competition alone. It is equally important that our students become responsible citizens. This requires that competition and values are made integral components of our education. Apparently these concerns are not adequately reflected in our Institutions of higher learning today", she said.

On the occasion, the Governor praised the role and contribution of Dr. Girijesh Pant, Vice Chancellor of Doon University, in making the University a centre of excellence in learning and teaching, and in taking the initiative to hold the Workshop to discuss the emerging challenges. The Governor expressed the confidence that the Workshop participants would come out with viable suggestions that would help put India on the knowledge map of the world. "Quality education is the rock on which India must build her political destiny, and educational institutions must strive to produce citizens who are healthy in body and mind, and qualified to face the emerging challenges of the modern world", she added.

Earlier, Dr. Pant highlighted the aims and objectives behind organizing the Workshop.

Those who were present on the occasion include Secretary to the Governor Shri Ashok Pai, Vice Chancellors of all Universities in the State, leading educationists, faculty members, and ADC to the Governor Shri VK Krishna Kumar, among others.