

The ICF Conference:

24th Annual National Conference of Indian Colleges Forum was held at Jamshedpur in collaboration with JK Mahato Group of Colleges, Salboni and Loyola College of Education, Jamshedpur from 7-9th September 2018. The theme of the conference was “ Higher Education for Empowering People and developing India” The subj-themes covered the aspects namely, (1) Higher Education Empowering people for democratic and equitable development, (2) Higher Education for Economic and Social Development rooted in culture and social values,(3) Higher Education for Development of Jharkhand and similarly placed states and,(4) Higher Education to enable people to make technology choices and contribute to development of Technology.

The Inauguration:

The conference was inaugurated by Hon. Vice Chancellor of Kolhan University, Professor Shukla Mahanty. Honourable Governor and Chancellor of Jharkhand Universities had agreed to inaugurate the conference but could not make it to the venue of the conference owing to the fact the fact that her Helicopter could not take off owing to bad weather. However, her good wishes made a very good start of the conference. Dr L.N. Bhagat, former Vice Chancellor of Ranchi University, Ranchi, Professor Bikas C. Sanyal, Former Sp. Advisor to DG UNESCO and consultant, Maastricht School of Management, Dr Kiran Hazarika, Member University Grants Commission, New Delhi and Shri PP Shrivastav (IAS) former member and Chair North Eastern Council, Shillong were guests of honour.

Dr Jamini Kant Mahato welcomed the guests and said it is the first time the ICF conference is held in Jharkhand on a theme of national importance and relevant to the empowerment of people of Jharkhand. Dr G.D. Sharma, President SEED-ICF highlighted the importance and relevance theme particularly in the context of fourth industrial revolution and likely impact of AI and IoT on the job profile of people trained in the institution of higher education. In particular, he said technology may be so enticing that may

control people rather than people controlling the technology. Higher education has, therefore, prepare people to take appropriate choices and contribute to technology development. He said theme has been chosen so that delegates may reflect on them and contribute to ideas and suggestions to deal with future challenges likely to be caused by the fast growth of technology.

Guests of honour Dr Bhagat high lighted the importance of such conference in the development of leadership of principals of colleges. He said he immensely benefited from deliberation in the past conference organised by ICF. He also said it is for the first time such conference is being held in Jharkhand and people from various parts of the country are present in Jharkhand, Professor Bikas Sanyal, highlighted the importance of the theme of the conference and said future challenges of higher education are global, but specific intervention is required in context of India. Shri PP shrivastav observed that including culture and social value as a theme for empowering people and developing India is very appropriate. Dr Kiran Hazarika said he immense benefited from such conferences held in different parts of India which he had also attended. He said UGC is relentlessly working for improving quality of higher education through its various schemes and programmes. He recently visited various institutions in India and observed that a lot of work is being done to enhance quality and meet challenges of development of India through higher education.

Honourable Vice Chancellor of Kolhan University, Dr Shukla Mahanty, Chief Guest of the function, highlighted the future challenges of AI and IoT on higher education, in particular, impact the programmes of studies in higher education. She said besides high-quality programmes relevant to the future need of India there is a need that colleges are adequately supported to meet the new challenges. In particular new initiatives are needed to strengthen the tribal children particularly women students so that they can be empowered to deal with emerging technology and challenges in the job market. She emphasised giving autonomy and adequate resources to strengthen the colleges. She wished the conference a great success and hoped deliberation will help to frame guidelines and suggestion to deal with future challenges of higher education.

Technical Sessions:

Following this presentation and deliberations were made in the technical sessions on sub-themes.

(1) Dr. L.N. Bhagat, Ranchi, chaired the first technical session and Dr. Budhin Gogoi co-chaired this session. Key speakers were Professor Bikar Sanyal and Dr. G.D. Sharma and other delegates. Both speakers made a detailed presentation on the theme.

(2) The second session was chaired by Dr. S.N. Munda, Vice Chancellor, SPM University Ranchi and co-chaired by Dr. Ajay Sareen. The key speaker was Shri P.P. Shrivastav and other delegates.

(3) The third technical session on Higher Education on Development of Jharkhand and similar states was chaired by Shri. Beli Bhodanwala and co-chaired by Dr. Debhashis Kar. Key speakers were Dr. Bikas C. Sanyal, Fr. Anthony P. Raj, and other delegates. Shri. Bodhanwala in his chairman remarks dwelt on the quality of school education. He said there is a great deal of need for improving the quality of primary education as it forms the foundation for higher education. He said the present state of primary and higher secondary education needs to be made relevant to the development of society. All stakeholders of education should seriously work for improving the quality and relevance of schooling in India.

(4) The fourth Technical Session on Higher Education for empowering people to make technology choices and enable them to contribute to the development of technology was chaired by Dr. Sayed Safdar Raji, Honourable Vice Chancellor of Arka Jain University, Jamshedpur and co-chaired by Kallol Datta Roy. Delegates from Kerala made a very important contribution in the area of enabling development and participation in new technology by setting separate arrangements within the campus to help students use technology and earn.

Group Work and Reports:

Delegates worked in four groups dealing with all the sub-themes. The group on "Higher Education for Democratic and Equitable Development" was chaired by Dr. S.C. Sharma and Co-chaired by Dr. Methew Joshep, Catholic Care College, Kerala. The second group on "Higher Education for Economic and social development rooted in culture and values" was chaired by Shri P.P. Shrivastav

and co-chaired by Shahi Kant Sakia. The third group on “ Higher Education for Development of Jharkhand and similar states” was chaired by Fr. Anthony Raj Tony and Co-chaired by Dr Chandana Bhattacharjee. The fourth group on “Enabling Students, Teachers and Principals to make technology choices and contribute to technology” was chaired by Dr B.K Tyagi and Co-chaired by Dr P.K. Saxena.

Whereas every group deliberated on their sub-theme very seriously and enthusiastically, but the enthusiasm and passion with which participants of the group on the role of higher education in empowering people and developing Jharkhand and similar states was very gratifying. Dr Jamini Kant Mahato, Director College Development Council of SPM University, faculty members of colleges in Jamshedpur particularly JK Mahato College very actively participated in deliberations.

All the groups made a presentation of their reports in the valedictory session.

The Valedictory Session:

Shri Sagandeep Chaudhary, Managing Director of Tata Pigments Ltd. Jamshedpur was the chief guest for the valedictory session and Dr, Sharat Nair of Kerala Public School was the guest of honour. Dr Nair enthralled the audience by sharing a story with the delegates. Shri Chaudhary in his address highlighted the importance of technology as also need for the development of leadership to meet emerging technology situation. He said what he learnt in college in physics has significantly changed now. New aspects like Boson are being discovered and they should form the part of education. Innovation and change is the crux of the development empowerment of people. Higher education being the mother of all profession has to be high standard and quality. He was very much impressed by group work done by the delegates and recommendation made by them. He also distributed certificates of delegates and praised young students for their excellent cultural performance.

The conference was closed with the singing of National Anthem.