

**MESSAGE FROM THE HONORABLE CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF GOVERNORS
FOR 5th CONVOCATION (October 7th, 2017)**

IIT Mandi



MR. SUBODH BHARGAVA

**CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF GOVERNORS, IIT MANDI
&
FORMER CHAIRMAN, TATA COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED**

Mr. Banmali Agrawala, President, Infrastructure, Defence and Aerospace, Tata Sons and former President and CEO, South Asia, GE, Prof Timothy A Gonsalves, Director IIT Mandi, Members of Board of Governors, IIT Mandi, Members of the Academic Senate, Faculty and Staff Members of the Institute, invited dignitaries, guests, members of the Press and electronic media and most importantly graduating students and their families, ladies and gentlemen: I am happy to join Prof Gonsalves in extending a warm and cordial welcome to you all.

I am delighted to welcome our Chief Guest Mr Banmali Agrawala with whom I had the pleasure of working closely for many years during his tenure as the Managing Director, Wartsila India Ltd. We are indeed grateful to Mr Agrawala for accepting our invitation and more so for honouring his promise and commitment by being with us today within less than seven days of his taking over his new assignment. We are truly privileged to have Mr. Agrawala in our midst this afternoon.

My heartiest congratulations to all the graduating students. It is fulfilment of your aspirations as well as the dreams of your parents and loved ones. This is also an occasion to ‘pay-back’ – do reflect upon the efforts and sacrifices of your parents for their support and the contribution by the teachers who taught, mentored and inspired you in your learning.

IIT Mandi started its journey in 2009. Over the years the Institute has grown to become an important member of the IIT family. The Director, the faculty, staff and students deserve compliments for their sustained efforts towards the progress of the Institute.

My first visit to IIT Mandi was as Chief Guest in its 1st Convocation in October 2013. It has been my privilege to be associated with IIT Mandi as Chairman since the beginning of this year. I feel encouraged and happy to be a part of this story.

IIT Mandi has completed eight years of its existence. Although the major academic programs and infrastructure are in place, there is need for sustained efforts in order for the Institute to realise its plans, vision and the mission. Accelerated expansion of infrastructure and academic resources, therefore, will continue to be our highest priority.

Construction of important buildings to cater to the immediate requirements has been completed. However, going forward, timely construction to create envisaged expanded capacity is one of the major challenges for the Team.

I am very happy that the Institute under the dynamic leadership of the Director, Prof Gonsalves has taken a few unique and innovative measures in the areas of academic programs, governance structure, and empowerment of younger faculty and staff and the students. A few of the initiatives are:

IIT Mandi launched its Technology Business Incubator '**CATALYST**' in May 2016. Catalyst has received funding of Rs 4.5 Cr from DST and Rs 30 Lacs from HP CM's Startup Scheme. IIT Mandi has committed space and funds worth about Rs 8 Cr.

CATALYST has addressed also the neighbouring communities by conducting educational and awareness programs for the students and young Himachali entrepreneurs. In a very short period it is already incubating 8 projects engaged in the areas such as software to automate planning of rooftop solar installations, advanced image processing and sensors for precision agriculture.

Another Incubator **EWOK** – Enabling Women of Kamand -- is helping local women to start village scale businesses based on their traditional strengths together with modern mobile and internet connectivity. They are addressing a customer base consisting of the villagers, the IIT community and beyond too.

Gender diversification and women empowerment to make the Institute a favoured location to study has received strong focus. IIT Mandi is spearheading the effort to increase the number of women in BTech in all the IITs from a woeful 8% to 20% by 2020. The number of women joining BTech in IIT Mandi has risen from 4% last year to 15% this year. We have 20% women in our faculty, among the highest in the IIT system.

Keeping in view national priorities IIT Mandi has started three new research centres recently:

BioX Centre: a group of over 20 members of the faculty from the life sciences, physical sciences and engineering are working on Research & Development projects aimed at improving human health, agriculture and the environment. Collaboration amongst different disciplines is the unique feature of this centre. While inaugurating the BioX Centre in May 2017, Prof VijayRaghavan, Secretary DBT, remarked that he had not seen such an example of collaborative inter-disciplinary research in any of the old IITs. IIT Mandi has also led an effort to form the BioX Consortium with IIT Ropar and PGI, Chandigarh.

Energy Centre: will focus on research and development of technology/prototype which will contribute towards achieving the goals that the Government of India has set in the National Electric Mobility Mission

Centre for Fabrication and Design of Microelectronics: a state-of-the-art 400 sqm clean room, about half of which will house Class of 100, is in the final stages of construction. It is expected to be ready by the end of 2017 and will house about Rs. 30 crores of equipment.

IIT Mandi has active collaborations with many leading universities in Europe and North

America. The strategic partnership with the **TU9 in Germany** has seen a large number of exchange visits in both directions, involving many faculty and also students. Already, over a dozen academic workshops have been held in Kamand and in Germany. The partnership is being strengthened to increase the funding for research projects.

I am pleased to note that the **Green Committee** of the Institute is working hard to ensure that the campus develops in harmony with Nature. Large numbers of trees and shrubs have been planted to more than balance the few trees felled during construction. A solid waste management program is in place, including segregation, composting and a bio-gas plant. Much of the campus is a pedestrian zone.

An Institution is only as efficient and effective as the **staff** who run the administration, the labs, the hostels, etc. While faculty and students win awards and achieve global recognition for their achievements, the staff who make this possible are the unsung heroes. I would like to record my deep appreciation for the staff who work tirelessly in this remote location to make IIT Mandi into a leading hub of research, education and innovation. Compared to older IITs, we have relatively few staff in each Section, which has not hampered their support to the growth of IIT Mandi.

On behalf of myself and the Board of Governors of IIT Mandi, I would like to record our appreciation and thanks to the Director Prof Gonsalves and his Team of the Deans and all other faculty members for their leadership, commitment, efforts and the achievements.

Last but not the least, let me turn to the **graduating students** – you entered this Institute after winning stiff competition, you have worked hard with dedication and commitment and have qualified for graduation. Today belongs to you, do celebrate the biggest milestone to date in your lives. Congratulations and best wishes for the next phase of your life in the real world where there is always some good news and some otherwise.

Let me share with you some lessons I learned and unlearned:

- The first may not be most appropriate specially today when for many of you it is the end of your days as student which is: Stay a student all your life. No set curricula, no grading or credits, no attendance. Learn from life. Make learning a life time occupation. Keep asking questions.
- 2nd is that ‘credibility’ is most important to succeed. Be value driven
- 3rd is the ability to change
- Remain imaginative, realist but always an optimist.
- And finally, failures are inevitable – an event and not a person to live and hound you. Learn from failures.

Once again congratulations and I wish each one of you success in your endeavours and in life.

God Bless. Thank you all.

MR. SUBODH BHARGAVA