Address by
Shri K Sankaranarayanan,
Hon’ble Governor of Maharashtra
at 74th Annual Convocation of
Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Convention Centre, Mumbai at 3.45 PM on Monday, 12 May 2014

Shri S Ramadorai, Chairman, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Members of the Governing Board, Prof. S. Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Faculty, researchers, teachers, staff, students, ladies and gentlemen...

I am indeed delighted to associate myself with the 74th Convocation of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and share your joy on this happy occasion.

At the outset I pay my tribute to the founding fathers who created this institution. I would particularly like to pay my tribute to the late J R D Tata under whose guidance the Tatas created premier education and research institutions in diverse areas such as the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Tata Memorial hospital and others.

I am glad that the same vision for social development is shared by Shri Ratan Tata, Chairman Emeritus of the Tata Group and Shri S Ramadorai, the present Chairman of the Governing Board.

The Convocation is a memorable day in your life, and I congratulate each one of you as you receive your degrees and move on to higher studies or pursue a career in your chosen field.

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences established in 1936 has played an important role in the development process of the nation. It has provided invaluable inputs to policy makers both at the national level and at the State level in vital areas of social development.
As a Research University of national repute, TISS has been striving to provide high quality professional education in inter-disciplinary areas of Social Sciences, develop skills in youths within and outside education system, contribute to the creation of social security policies, create human service professionals in diverse areas and enable people to secure sustainable livelihoods and dignified existence. The TISS is a unique institution that has been playing a crucial role in empowering the poor and the vulnerable groups and contributing to the process of inclusive growth.

I am proud of TISS and I have no hesitation in stating that the TISS is a model University. I congratulate TISS for its multifaceted contribution to the progress and development of the nation.

Dear Students, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For nearly six decades, I have been actively involved in public service. This provided me the opportunity to serve people, especially the poor and the marginalised sections of society.

I therefore intend to speak to you from the perspective of a public servant and not as an academician or subject expert. I will also share with you some of my expectations as Governor and Chancellor of Universities in the State.

At the time of Independence, the population of India was only 330 million. We have now crossed the figure of 1.21 billion. It needs to be noted that there has not been corresponding increase in the resources available at our disposal during this period.

Food, water and energy security are going to be the three major challenges for the planners and governments in India and its States.

Many parts of our country witness acute scarcity of water almost every year. The problem is often addressed by taking a slew of short-term measures such as supplying water through tankers, setting up fodder camps for cattle, etc. We need long term measures to tackle the problem of water scarcity. Importantly, we need efficient
management of our water resources to tackle the recurring problem. I have great expectations from your institution in addressing the problem in its proper perspective.

The Food Security Bill passed by the Parliament in the year 2013 has been a landmark legislation that aims to provide food-grains at subsidized prices to nearly 67 per cent people of India. This is indeed a daunting task. An efficient public distribution system, willing response from the administrative machinery and close monitoring by local governments is necessary to ensure that the benefits of the ambitious scheme actually reach the target population. I am glad to note that TISS and its researchers are associated with the monitoring of the implementation of the Food Security Act. I do hope that they will give their valuable inputs to the government and planners for the effective implementation of the Scheme.

India is one of the youngest countries of the world with an average population age of 29 years. This youthful population is our biggest national resource and gives India competitive advantage over developed countries. In order to benefit from this demographic dividend, we need expand access to higher education and skills to maximum youths of our country.

As Chancellor of Universities, I am concerned that for a country of our size and potential, the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education is only about 18 per cent. If we wish to increase the access, we will have to create additional infrastructure and ensure availability of qualified teachers in our colleges and universities. However, our universities and colleges are facing acute shortage of qualified teachers. We want inputs from TISS to tide over the shortage of qualified teachers both in our school system and in our higher education system.

I am pleased to note that TISS is seized of the problem of lack of employable knowledge, capacity and skills among students graduating from universities. I understand that under the National University Student Skill Development programme, it has plans to provide skill based education to nearly 50,500 students during the next
three years. I do feel that TISS should identify more educational institutions and universities to promote skill education so that more students from the country will benefit from its programmes.

Much more needs to be done to develop skills among youths and women who are outside the formal educational system. I often cite an example that it is easy to get an engineer or a management graduate today, but very difficult to get a plumber or a carpenter or an electrician when you need his services.

I have asked the State Government to give a serious thought to creating a University exclusively for skill development training where short term courses would be offered to both educated and uneducated youths.

Friends,

As Governor of Maharashtra, I have a special responsibility for addressing the issue of regional imbalance in development and bringing the relatively backward regions of the State on par with their developed counterparts on selected parameters of socio-economic and human development.

Apart from these powers, Schedule V of the Constitution gives special responsibility to the Governor for the welfare of tribals in the Scheduled Areas.

During my visits to tribal areas, I have noticed glaring disparities in the access and delivery of healthcare and education in tribal areas compared to urban areas. The government has invested several crores of rupees in addressing the issue tribal welfare. However, devolving more funds alone cannot address these issues. An efficient health care system, a pro-active public health system, good schools and public libraries are equally important to improve the quality of life of our people in rural areas. For this purpose, we have to strengthen the quality of governance of local governments and panchayat raj institutions and government departments.
Improving the quality of manpower in government programmes is a major challenge today. We need people and officials who can implement various welfare programmes of the government with sincerity, honesty and with a deep commitment to the people. I hope that institutions like TISS can provide society motivated and hard working people who can improve the human resources element of the government programmes.

In the context of pursuing the objective of development, our foremost concern should be the people living in poverty. Poverty deprives the poor of basic entitlements like nutrition, shelter, education, health, safe drinking water and other elements of dignified living. No plan of development will succeed unless it strikes at the root cause of poverty.

Last week, I met a social revolutionary, Rangasamy Elango, a former scientist with CSIR. He quit his job to bring about a social transformation in his village Kuthambakkam in Thiruvalluvar district of Tamil Nadu. Elango contested an election, became a village Sarpanch and making use of the framework provided by the Panchayat Raj institutions, brought about the socio-economic transformation of his village. The village which was struggling with poverty, caste conflicts, illicit breweries and violence against women today stands tall as an empowered village. Today each one of the 1040 households in the village earns an average Rs.40,000 per month, has well maintained roads and is considered a model village.

I believe that each one of you has the potential to bring about such transformation in our towns and villages and enable India to realize its true potential.

Dear Friends,

In a path-breaking decision, the Government of India has announced its Corporate Social Responsibility Policy and Rules under the Companies Act. These rules have come into force from 1st April 2014.
The Policy has made it mandatory for specified companies, both in the Public and Private Sectors, to allocate at least 2 per cent of their profits for social responsibilities.

Programmes such as eradicating hunger, poverty, malnutrition, sanitation and safe drinking water, promoting skill development education, promoting gender equality, empowering women, environmental sustainability, protecting national heritage, etc have been included in the new policy.

The policy is a significant step towards achieving the goal of inclusive development with the participation of Corporates. This will certainly have a positive impact on the welfare of the poor and the disadvantaged population of the country. As social science graduates and post graduates, the primary responsibility for implementing the CSR policies of various organisations through Corporates and NGOs will fall on you. Your involvement and association will also help to improve the quality of management of the non government sector.

**Dear Friends,**

I have great expectations from you. I believe that you can bring a refreshing change in the lives of the poor and the marginalised people in our country through your ideas and suggestions for improving governance at all level. Together you can bring the idea of Inclusive growth into a reality.

I congratulate you on this special day in your life and wish you all well.

**Thank you !**