

# Republic Day January 26, 2013

**N. Sathyamurthy**

My dear students and friends:

My heartiest republic day greetings to all of you. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> republic day in IISER Mohali. The republic day is, in some sense, more important than the Independence Day. India took a conscious decision to go the Democratic Socialistic Republic way and the Republic of India was born in 1950.

The English argued that we would not know how to govern ourselves. But we learned and learned quickly. Indians had practised democracy much before the West did. Some great kings like the Cholas gave a lot of freedom to their people.

Freedom comes with responsibility. That is where we have a problem as a Nation. We do not know how to enjoy our freedom and still be responsible. We are good in making laws but very quickly we break them. We don't like to follow the rules. We feel that they are meant for others. The moment a rule is made, we come up with clever means of circumventing it.

In our campus, I see that many students do not go to the class. But they consider scholarship as their right. They do not want attendance to be taken. Because they think they are matured and should not be monitored. Many of them do not show the maturity. I have mentioned earlier that when I find a faculty member not taking his class or starting it late, I feel sad. I feel sad that the role models are slipping. When things go wrong, I feel that I as the Director have failed.

The good news is that many of our students are doing exceedingly well. Wherever I go, I hear good things about IISERs in general and about IISER Mohali in particular. That makes me feel proud about our students. Many faculty members have done exceedingly well. The ones who joined early have started publishing in leading journals. Many of our students are co-authors. I am particularly delighted to see some of the undergraduates as co-authors. The research as a culture has taken root in IISER Mohali campus.

We have been able to build many things. We are behind schedule in many respects. Our labs are getting furnished. Every inch forward is a difficult job. Everybody inside and outside IISER Mohali is watching us. They are ready to point fingers at us. Indians are very good in finding fault with others and in giving explanation as to why something could not be done.

We have to learn professionalism. We need to have a professional commitment. The Institute I was in, once we resolved that we would continue to teach, evaluate answer scripts



and award grades regardless of what happens. Many of us have taught when we were seriously ill. Missing a class was something that was never considered an option.

Being punctual should become a part of our blood. Doing things and doing things properly should become a habit. If each one of us tries to attain perfection, We as a Nation will rise to heights nobody can match us.

I am very happy to see that four students are getting the CNR Rao Foundation Prize this semester. I congratulate all of them. I see a large number receiving the Certificate of Merit. Congratulations to all of them. I am particularly delighted to see that a majority of the award winners are girls. Ma tuje salam.

Several people have told me that the boys and girls should have separate hostels and that the PG and the UG should have separate hostels. These are old fashioned ideas. Some of the boys and girls have told me that this arrangement is fine. They go to class together. They eat together. They discuss things. Why should they be segregated. Recently, I met some parents. They are happy that we are gender neutral.

I feel sad that books are missing from our library. I don't want to treat our students as thieves. I don't want to frisk them. I don't want to restrict the library hours. I hope that they will conduct themselves worthy of the trust reposed on them. May be we should switch to e-books. That will stop stealing of books.

I want to wish each one of you all the best in your endeavour. I would like to see each one of you doing your best. When that happens, IISER Mohali will be the best.

Jai Hind!

Thank you.

N. Sathyamurthy

Director, IISER Mohali