

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF ODISHA, KORAPUT

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Central University of Odisha bids farewell to Prof. S. K. Palita

The Central University of Odisha (CUO) hosted a heartfelt farewell ceremony on 28 February 2025, to honor the outgoing Dean of the School of Biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources, Prof. S. K. Palita. After 12 years of dedicated service, Prof. Palita retired from the University, marking the end of a distinguished academic career. The event, held at the university's Sunabeda campus, was attended by Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor Prof. Chakradhar Tripathi, Prof. N. C. Panda, Dean of the School of Languages, Prof. B. K. Panda, Head of the Department of Education, and teachers and officers from the university.

During the ceremony, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Tripathi reflected on Prof. Palita's invaluable contributions to the university, especially during critical periods of growth and development. He emphasized the important role of teachers in shaping society, noting that a true teacher continues to inspire and educate long after retirement. He expressed his best wishes for Prof. Palita's future, wishing him a life filled with health, peace, and prosperity.

Prof. N.C. Panda, Dean of the School of Languages, shared his memories of working with Prof. Palita in various university decision-making committees, acknowledging his role in guiding the university through many challenges. Prof. B.K. Panda also fondly recalled their collaboration on numerous administrative tasks, achieving significant milestones together. Other faculty members and staff joined in sharing their gratitude and appreciation for Prof. Palita's tireless work, recalling the memorable experiences they had while working with him.

In his farewell address, Prof. Palita expressed his deep gratitude for the warm send-off and acknowledged the support he received from both teaching and non-teaching staff throughout his tenure at CUO. He reflected on his journey with the university, saying he would always carry fond memories of his time there.

Prof. Palita, who served as the senior-most professor and Dean of the School of Biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources, has had an illustrious academic career spanning 41 years. Before joining CUO in 2013, he taught Zoology for 29 years at two renowned autonomous colleges in Odisha, Kendrapara and Nayagarh. Over the past 12 years at CUO, he has been dedicated to advancing biodiversity education. His academic credentials include an M.Sc., M.Phil., and Ph.D. in Zoology from Utkal University, with his doctoral research focusing on the biological study of the white tiger at Nandankanan Biological Park in Odisha. His research areas include conservation biology, demographic studies of captive populations, mangrove fauna, and forest ecosystem ecology.

Prof. Palita has contributed significantly to scientific knowledge, with more than 68 research publications in renowned international journals. He is also the author of a book on bats of Odisha and numerous book chapters. His recent discovery of rare species of earthworms and fishes has been hailed as a significant contribution to science. Under his mentorship, eight scholars have earned their Ph.D.s and thirteen have completed their M.Phil. degrees.

In addition to his academic roles, Prof. Palita has held several leadership positions at CUO, including serving as Vice-Chancellor in charge. He played a key role in the university's first NAAC accreditation cycle in 2017 and has led various initiatives such as the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF).

As a token of appreciation, Prof. Tripathi presented Prof. Palita with a shawl and a memento. The event was compered by Dr. Elisa Mohanty, Faculty of Sociology, while Dr. Sourav Gupta from the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, Dr. Jayanta Kumar Nayak, Faculty of Anthropology and Debabrata Panda from the Faculty of Biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources coordinated the programme.

Dr. Phagunath Bhoi, Public Relations Officer