



VIDYASAGAR UNIVERSITY
Sixteenth Convocation

Address by

Professor Ranjan Chakrabarti
Vice-Chancellor

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Saheed Pradyut Smriti Bhavan, Zilla Parishad Complex
Paschim Medinipur – 721101
West Bengal

Respected Chancellor Sir, His Excellency Shri M. K. Narayanan, Honourable Chief Guest Professor Goverdhan Mehta, who is at present National Research Professor and Bhartia Jubilant Chair Professor, University of Hyderabad, esteemed recipient of Doctor of Literature (Honoris Causa) Degree, Ustad Ali Ahmad Hussain Khan, the eminent Shehnai maestro of India, esteemed recipients of Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) Degree, Professor Dilip Mahalanabis, the Director, Society for Applied Studies, and Professor Raman Sukumar, Professor and Chairman, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, my esteemed previous Vice-Chancellors of Vidyasagar University, Honourable members of the Court and the Executive Council of the University, Faculty Members, Officers and other staff members of the University community, recipients of Degrees, Medals and Prizes, distinguished guests, representatives from the media, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed a matter of great privilege to welcome you all to the Sixteenth Convocation of Vidyasagar University.

I am particularly grateful to our Honourable Chancellor, His Excellency Shri M. K. Narayanan, for having kindly accepted our invitation to preside over this Convocation. For the last three years we have largely benefited by his constant guidance to steer away any impediment that stand in the way of our courses of progress. Thank you very much Sir. Sir, we are greatly honoured by your august presence in the Convocation and on behalf of the entire University community I assure you Sir, that we are rededicating ourselves to the cause of academic expansion and excellence in education – the passions which were so dear to the heart of Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, a great social reformer and educationist of India, after whose name this University has been established.

I extend, on behalf of the University, a very special welcome to Professor Goverdhan Mehta who is the National Research Professor & Bhartia Jubilant Chair Professor, University of Hyderabad and Hon'ble Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Prime Minister of India. Professor Mehta has been President,

Association of Indian Universities and the Chemical Research Society of India (CRSI). He has served as the Founder Co-chair of Inter Academy Council and President of the International Council of Scientific Union (ICSU). I thank you, Sir, for being kind enough to accede to our request to deliver the Convocation address this year.

The Executive Council and the Court of the University have, this year, also unanimously recommended, and the Honourable Chancellor has duly assented, to confer the Degree of Doctor of Literature (Honoris Causa) on Ustad Ali Ahmad Hussain Khan, a premier Shehnai maestro and pride of Kolkata as well as of our country, who has been an exponent of the Benaras Gharana. The purity of *raags* in his performances is a hallmark of his steadfastness to tradition. He has taught shehnai at Sangeet Research Academy, Calcutta since 1974. He holds the distinction of composing the signature tune for Indian Television with Pandit Ravi Shankar.

The University also feels proud to confer the Degree of Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) on Professor Raman Sukumar and Professor Dilip Mahalanabish. Professor Sukumar is a leading ecologist who has made significant contributions towards Asian elephant ecology and conservation, climate change and tropical forest ecology. He is Professor and Chair at the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. Professor Dilip Mahalanabis is a Paediatrician with subspeciality: Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition and holds the distinction to conduct the first definitive field trial of Oral Rehydration Therapy for diarrheal diseases under the most difficult field situation during a massive outbreak of cholera among millions of Bangladeshi refugees taking shelter in India in 1971. The University feels highly privileged to honour these outstanding personalities on this auspicious day of the Convocation. It is also my pleasure to welcome all my previous Vice-Chancellors present here, other distinguished guests and the media persons who have taken all the trouble to join us on this happy occasion.

Before I submit an audit of the academic achievements of the University, I wish to inform this distinguished gathering that for various reasons beyond our control we could not arrange for the Convocation in the session of 2010-2011. Coming to our achievements during the last two years, I would like to inform you that the University has made considerable progress both in academic sphere and infrastructural sector, thanks to the commendable team-spirit of the University community. In the academic field, the success rate has been gradually getting higher and higher each year. Since the last Convocation, 27 students in the Faculty of Arts & Commerce and 63 students in the Faculty of Science were awarded Ph.D Degrees, respectively. **Thirteen** students obtained M.Phil Degrees in Political Science. In the Postgraduate examinations 3,533 students received their Master Degrees in Regular Mode. Likewise 6,958 students obtained Postgraduate Degrees through Distance Mode of learning. On the other hand, Undergraduate Degrees (both Honours and General) were awarded to 32,985 students. In addition, the number of successful candidates in B.Ed., B.P.Ed., BCA, LL.B. Vocational and Paramedical Courses are 3,909.

I am glad to report that Research Grants have been regularly pouring into the different academic Departments of the University from several funding agencies like UGC, DST, DBT, CSIR and DRDO. The Departments which have received such grants are Department of Chemistry & Chemical Technology, Department of Human Physiology with Community Health, Department of Microbiology, Department of Bio-Medical Laboratory Science & Management, Department of Botany & Forestry, Department of Commerce with Farm Management, Department of Sociology, Department of Political Science with Rural Administration, Department of Anthropology, Department of Aquaculture Management & Technology, Department of Remote Sensing & GIS, Department of Zoology, Department of Physics & Techno-Physics, Department of English, Department of Applied Mathematics, Department of Geography & Environment Management. Two of our Departments namely Microbiology and Bio-Medical Laboratory Science and Management have received the UGC Grant for their Innovative Programmes. Many of our distinguished faculty

members are also pursuing collaborative research work with other Universities in West Bengal and India. In an effort to continue the ongoing progress of R & D activities we have raised the slogan of 'one teacher one project' and the teachers have been motivated to apply for research project from the UGC, DST, ICHR, ICSSR, DBT and other funding agencies. A large number of Visiting Professors and Scholars have been invited from esteemed National and International Institutions for the benefit of our Post Graduate students. Pertaining to that, several Scholars from USA, Germany, UK, France and West Indies have been invited to visit our campus and have delivered lectures under the UGC Merged Scheme Programme. Departments have been bringing out Departmental Journals regularly.

The University organized an International Conference on "Historicizing Sub-Regional Cooperation in South Asia: Society, Culture and Politics in Bangladesh and Eastern India" between 30th May and 1st June, 2012 in collaboration with Dhaka University, Bangladesh and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata between May 30 - June 2, 2012. An International Conference & Workshop was organized by the Directorate of Distance Education, Vidyasagar University in collaboration with International Institute of Management Sciences (IIMS), Kolkata during March 27-31, 2012 at Bangkok, Thailand.

A good number of our esteemed faculty members also went abroad to attend different International Seminar/Symposia/Conference etc.

A considerable degree of progress has been made in the last couple of years in facilitating the students and teachers as well as the researchers to accede to the University of learning. I am happy to pronounce that our University Library is the first Wi-Fi enabled Library in the State (using the high bandwidth 802.11 N standard) and it is now completely automated. Our Central Library serves as a point of presence for National Knowledge Network (NKN). During the last couple of years, the University Library had received a grant of Rs. 121 Lacs from the State Government for purchasing reading materials from which good amount have been

spent for subscribing e-books. There is also a well organized digital data archive where more than 800 CDs along with the old Question Papers, Ph.D. Theses awarded by our University, Faculty Publications and other digital contents are stored in digital format and are accessible through campus LAN.

The Computer Centre of the University plays a pioneering role in disseminating the knowledge in technological advancement in Computer and its application and to augment the computer culture in University. Under its service division it provides compliant LAN and Internet services throughout the campus to almost 3000 users through the 1 GBPS link established under NME-ICT / NKN Project along with campus wide LAN-WAN maintenance.

In the academic sphere certain important steps have been taken. We have re-introduced M. Phil course in Political Science on regular basis this year. PG course in Hindi has also been introduced. Affiliation / re-affiliation have been granted to several colleges. Proposals for setting up of two new Post Graduate Departments in Education and Comparative Literature, from the ensuing session, have already been submitted to the Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal. Necessary steps have been taken to restore the Language Laboratory of Vidyasagar University. Under the XII Plan Programme, Proposals have been submitted to the University Grants Commission for Setting up of i) Centre for Translation of Integrated Bio-Chemical Research to Community Health - for the Science Faculty and ii) Centre for the Study of Adivasi Society, Language & Culture - for the Arts Faculty at Vidyasagar University and the said projects are in the pipeline.

The Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal has taken a very positive step to reform the higher education scenario in the State. The transition finds manifestation in recent legislations. We are happy to announce that as per the West Bengal University Laws (Amendment) Act 2011, the Seventh Court and also the Seventh Executive Council of Vidyasagar University have been constituted. We are also glad to inform you that we have been able to take effective measures to utilize

the unspent building grants under the XI Plan. With the help of these grants, construction works have been going on in full swing.

Apart from developing and building infrastructural set-up, I am happy to report to you that all the Teaching Posts, approved under the XI Plan, were re-advertised and 23 Assistant Professors have been recruited. In addition, all other vacant posts of teachers, Officers and Non-teaching employees have been advertised and the recruitment process is currently going on. A good number of Officers of the University have been sent to different Conference/Symposium/Workshop/Training Programmes, both within the country and abroad, to enhance their professional skills.

Learning through Distance Mode has been, it is well known, recognized medium of education throughout the world today. Our Directorate of Distance Education (DDE) has been functioning since the session of 1994 – 1995 to reach those students of rural and urban sections, who are unable to get formal system of education under regular mode.

During the past two years (2010-2011 and 2011-2012) the NSS Unit has emerged as the largest youth unit to devote to the community services.

The University Sports Department organized and conducted Inter College Foot Ball, Volley Ball, Cricket, Kho-Kho, Chess, Kabaddi, Carom tournament and Annual Athletics Meet (both PG & UG), etc. under the auspices of the Students' Welfare Department.

Our University's cultural team qualified as 1st, 2nd and 3rd position in 8 cultural events at the East Zone Inter University youth festival which was held at Tezpur University during December 16 – 20, 2011. The qualified students of 8 cultural events participated in the National Youth Festival which was held in the RTM Nagpur University, Nagpur, Maharashtra, during January 22 – 26, 2012.

The education system is not shaped only by the actions taken within the education sector, but it is conditioned by underlying social, cultural and economic forces. But even admitting the relevance of the over-all structural features, we, who function within the education system itself, have the obligation to make the system relevant and contextual and to ensure its quality in a competitive environment. The central focus of our endeavour has to be the students and the teaching-learning environment. The thing which should be uppermost in our minds should be the kind of human resource we intend to produce from our institutions of higher learning. We are getting the human raw materials; the quality of our product depends upon our sincerity and sense of commitment.

Fossil fuel resources have changed the Middle East, cheap labour has changed China, banking has served as an agent of change in the smaller European countries, similarly quality higher education, I believe, can serve as a catalyst in the Indian case. Indian intelligence can eventually transform Asia and the wider world. It is here that Universities like Vidyasagar is capable of playing a significant role. Given the fact that the number of central universities or IITs will not multiply magically in the near future, the State Universities will continue to be the key player in the decades to come. As the Vice-Chancellor of this university I would be proactive to compete for a slot in the academic map of the country and beyond. I am confident that this will be achievable with a little bit of hard work, dedication and team-spirit.

Before I conclude, I extend my warm welcome to all the recipients of Degrees and distinctions at today's ceremonial function. Do please remember the efforts of the nation and the Institution in helping you to develop your potentialities. Your University bears through you the glorious legacy of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar who was a life-long crusader fighting for justice and equality, for modernity and humanitarianism. The University, as your alma mater, will always be by your side. All my best wishes are with you.

Once again, I convey my deepest regards and thanks to all those who have assembled here to make the Sixteenth Convocation of Vidyasagar University a grand success.

Thank you all.

Professor Ranjan Chakrabarti

Vice-Chancellor

Vidyasagar University