

Convocation Address

by

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Chancellor

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North Bengal
University

Mr. Minister, Mr. Vice-Chancellor,
professor Surajit Sinha, Distinguished Guests,
Colleagues of the various departments of the University,

Graduates of the Year, Students of the University,
Ladies and Gentlemen :

2. It is a matter of great pleasure for me to be with you and address you as the Chancellor of the University on the happy occasion of its 20th Annual Convocation. At the outset, it is my pleasant duty to welcome the Chief Guest, Professor Surajit Sinha, an educationist and a scholar of international repute and congratulate him for delivering an inspiring speech which would guide the University in its march towards progress. We have also heard a comprehensive report by the Vice-Chancellor on the multifarious activities of the University since its last convocation held in April, 1986, in which he has dwelt on the difficulties and problems faced by the University and its praiseworthy responses to the challenges during the period under review.

3. The North Bengal University though situated far away from Calcutta is nevertheless equally dear to the people of the State. It has been especially designed

to serve the needs of North Bengal and, therefore, has a vital role to play in the realisation of our dreams related to national integration and economic development with social justice. The knowledge disseminated from this University should not be an idle exercise in any hollow intellectualism; it should directly contribute towards solving real economic and social problems that still plague the society and gratify its spiritual needs. The University has a direct responsibility in ensuring that the capability it builds up by promoting the development of human resources is ultimately utilised for satisfying the aspirations and desires which are generated. I must congratulate the University for its splendid track-record of service in this respect.

4. It is indeed a matter of concern that construction of some buildings for the various departments has been slow. It is equally unfortunate that many development projects of the University have been shelved due to financial constraints. But the problem of financial constraint is a national one. I do fervently believe and hope that in spite of financial stringency the University will succeed in delivering the goods. My conviction is born of the fact that a spirit of understanding and accommodation, peace and goodwill prevails among all sections of people, teachers, students and non-teaching workers in the sprawling campus of the University.

5. I would now like to make a few observations on the functioning of our educational system. Till the beginning of the century, it was perhaps possible for an educated man to be versatile in a number of subjects. However, with the knowledge growing rapidly, there has been an information explosion. This has resulted in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, it is no longer possible for an individual to acquire even a working knowledge of all branches of any discipline. On the other hand, most worthwhile contributions to knowledge result from the interaction of different disciplines. As each discipline proliferates into specialities and super specialities, undergraduate and even post-graduate students are unable to integrate and synthesise that knowledge and use it in any meaningful and active application in the social context they are located in. Side by side, especially at the Postgraduate level, there is a discernible tendency toward over-specialization and over-compartmentalization which frequently distorts the overall perspective and tends to encourage the researchers to be concerned with trivialities having little relevance for the social environment. The broadness of vision and depth of understanding which invariably accompanied higher education in the last century is now being gradually replaced by narrow compartmentalism obstructing the

the total view. The link between education and the social needs is often missing.

6. The ultimate goal of education remains self-realization for the individual. Full development of all the qualities of head and heart, body, mind and spirit is the real goal. Ideal scholars must abjure the tendency of confining himself into an ivory tower of scholasticism and pendency. He is a unit of the society and must achieve his self-actualization in the context of the society itself. Education is meaningless if it does not promote its own social application to the needs of the society and the humanity.

7. With this little piece of advice I wish all of you who are being admitted to the Doctorate degrees, the recipients of Master's degrees and the medal-winners well and every success in life. I shall fail in my duty if before concluding I do not thank once again Professor Surajit Sinha for his thought-provoking address; the Vice-Chancellor Professor Dipti Bhusan Dutta for kindly giving me this unique opportunity to share my ideas with you as Chancellor of the University; and the distinguished audience assembled here for giving me a patient hearing.

Jai Hind