

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

NINETEENTH ANNUAL CONVOCATION



Address

by

Sri. Umashankar Dikshit

Chancellor

RAJA RAMMOHUNPUR

11th April, 1986.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Respected Chief Guest, Dr. Bhabatosh Dutta, other distinguished guests, teachers and students of the University, ladies and gentlemen.

I deem it a privilege to preside over this 19th Annual Convocation of the North Bengal University. I welcome this opportunity to renew my acquaintance with the many respected teachers I met in December, 1984 and to refresh my knowledge about the smooth and amicable functioning of the University and to keep in touch with its quiet but steady march on the road to progress.

You, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, have presented a fairly detailed and illuminating account of the various activities during the past year and the remarkable progress the university has achieved in the fields of teaching and research. You have also given an indication of some of its problems such as delay in publication of examination results which do not seem to be too difficult or insurmountable. It is a matter of some concern that the programme of construction has been rather unduly delayed to the consequent detriment of the university's programme of developments.

It is a step of considerable significance that your university has taken to install a computer centre with the assistance of the University Grants Commission, which is running courses of four to eight weeks duration and is popularising the use of this versatile tool of modern technology for ensuring efficient and speedy disposal of administrative affairs. It has been found particularly serviceable in the solution of complicated mathematical problems. It seems obvious to me that the computer has come to stay and is going inevitably to have a vital role in human affairs. In the West it has already acquired wide acceptance in the fields of industry, administration and even education. There is a view that computerisation should for the present be treated as a promising experiment. Also that its active appropriation should accompany wider development of technology

in a developing country like India. Nonetheless I hope the experience your university has acquired in the handling of this instrument would give it an edge over others in its development programme. It is gratifying that this university is ready to handle job assignments from private and public agencies. I do hope that the additional facilities required in this connection would be made available by the U. G. C. coming forth with the necessary grants for the purpose.

I hope that the university's developmental programme during the 7th Plan would be finalised before long, spelling out all its essential requirements. I have reason to believe that in view of the higher allocation for education in the Central Budget, the U. G. C. should be able to accord a satisfactory response to our needs and demands.

On the occasion of the last annual Convocation I utilised the opportunity to express some of my dearly held views on education and my disappointment with the prevailing conditions in the entire field of education of the country. Today, however, I propose to confine myself to the issues with which the students and their mentors are immediately and directly concerned. I need hardly point out that this university was founded to meet special educational needs of the five districts in its charge and to provide special encouragement and patronage to the rather backward tribes and communities who seem to have visibly benefited from their alma mater already.

During the last half year or more the national problem of education has been widely debated since the Central Ministry of Education issued their document "Challenge of Education—a Policy Perspective". While that document in several respects is an extension of the 1964-66 policy declaration, its special character consists in its being a most comprehensive analysis covering the entire field from the pre-primary to the university and research levels of education. It has exposed every weakness, inadequacy and complicating factor which inhibit our education at various stages. It also brings out the failure which has plagued the implementation of the recommendations of the earlier studies. It also emphasises overall

financial constraint from which education in India has suffered both at the Central and the State levels. Against the allocation of 6 to 8 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) in advanced countries on education, the Indian contribution has been 3 percent only.

There has been, as yet, no comprehensive and authoritative declaration of programme and schemes for the removal of the weaknesses and dangers spell out in the document. It would not, therefore, be proper for me, or even practicable, to attempt a meaningful discussion of the new education policy as a whole, which is still under consultation and final formulation. A few observations, however, I would venture to offer nevertheless. In matters where opposition relates to detail and not to principle, it will not help matters to characterise a proposition as wholly right or wrong. It would be more relevant and a wiser approach to specify aspects and measures considered specially necessary for incorporation in the new policy.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor you have expressed a feeling of apprehension or misgiving about the special emphasis laid in the document on the importance of excellence in the fields of science and technology. For one thing this university has already recognised the validity and justification of the thrust in favour of achievement of high levels of excellence in the disciplines connected with science and technology. The opening of M. Sc. courses in Botany and Zoology is one such step and the university will certainly need substantial support from the U. G. C. for acquisition of necessary equipment, adequate library for post-graduate courses, and well equipped laboratories etc. Well-planned seminars on highly technical subjects have been sponsored and held under its auspices, several Ph. D. degrees have been awarded for research into life science, various sub-disciplines of chemistry and Physics and department of mathematics. Similarly noteworthy is the fact that seven scholars won scholarships on the basis of national level lists. The university can therefore take legitimate pride on their recent achievements.

Policy indications in two other directions are such as would not adversely affect the working lines of this university.

Education at the secondary level up to the 12th Class has to be oriented in favour of instruction and training on vocational and professional lines. Its implication lies in re-emphasising the objective of 10+2+3 system. It also seeks to lay stress on professional education in humanities at higher level. The professional slant is an appeal for encouraging enrolment more to the departments of commerce, sciences and engineering than for arts subjects. Statistics have demonstrated that larger output of arts graduates at 'pass' level has accentuated the distressing problem of unemployment in the country.

The third emphasis is on the implementation of the national policy for promoting education among members of scheduled castes scheduled Tribes and other backward communities at as fast a pace as possible. It is in the last category that North Bengal University has a special responsibility to discharge. Thus it seems to me that there is no reason for a feeling of disencouragement or pessimism in these respects.

Another idea which has emerged from experience of public Service Commissions and other employing agencies is that knowledge of text-books alone is not enough and that the acquisition of the desired degree should not be the end of the students' education.

In the modern world rapid changes are taking place in all spheres of life namely education, administration, industry, social and cultural values. Therefore youngmen and youngwomen having passed out of their colleges and universities have to continue to enlarge their vision and area of knowledge, particularly on subjects connected with the individual preferences or vocational interest.

University education has to train the student's mind and help him to learn to study on his own and continue to do so in after-life. To help fulfil this objective, UGC will have to give liberal grants for the opening and maintenance of fully equipped libraries under the universities and under independent management.

I may add here one necessary caution. The best advantage of constant study of new ideas can be reaped only if the reader limits the field of his studies to literature having some intrinsic relation with his profession or vocation. Simultaneously a discerning citizen will also have to keep in general touch with the latest discoveries in the fields of technology, new economic ideas, and major political events.

Another important direction towards which I must draw pointed attention is the utility of wider co-curricular activities in educational institutions. Facilities for sports and games are usually provided by all such schools, colleges and universities. But these activities have to be multifarious in order to expose the students to the limitless variety of events happening around us. Study circles, periodical visits to major developmental undertakings like hydroelectric establishments, factories of locomotives and railway coaches, shipyards, aircraft factories, atomic energy establishments, and so on can prove of invaluable help to the students in broadening their vision.

Affiliated colleges may adopt certain selected villages to which their students, preferably under the leadership of a teacher, should pay regular visits reasonable duration. Such visits will mean survey and study of the existing village conditions and submission of reports of the completed surveys. Visiting students can take note of the residents complaints, Judge their accuracy and forward them to the concerned authorities.

Other activities may include play acting, ballets, elocution competition, debates on special subjects by students and teachers, sports competition between colleges, and college magazines.

I take it that most of these extra-curricular activities must be already in vogue. My Purpose in raising the subject, however, is to emphasise that the most brilliant "book worm" would find himself helpless in a situation outside his circle of study unless he has had a wide exposure to contacts with different people, different localities and regions, and broad knowledge of his country's process of development.

In ultimate analysis each individual is master of one's own destiny. It is within his or her power to build himself or herself into a powerful instrument for achieving the desired goals in one's own interest and the interests of one's State and country. To succeed in such an effort, the youth has to develop strength of character, sense of responsibility, capacity for hard work and above all, the spirit of discipline.

Before I close, I like to express my profound regards for the Chief Guest, Dr. Bhabotosh Dutta whose learned and frank address we have just heard. Among intellectuals in this State, of whom still there is no dearth, Dr. Dutta stands out as a man of many-faceted talents and I trust that his wide knowledge will be utilised for greater good of the country. It is my other pleasant duty to congratulate all those on whom post-graduate and other degrees have been conferred today and all those to whom medals have been awarded for excellent performance.

I also take this opportunity to pay my tribute to our wise Vice-Chancellor, Dr. D. B. Dutta, for leading his university so smoothly and successfully, and also to the teachers, students and staff for the cooperation they have given him so well.

Finally I say to the students; "Good Luck and Good Bye".

JAI HIND.

Other activities may include play, sports, and other recreation. The students should be encouraged to take part in these activities. The school should provide facilities for these activities. The school should also provide facilities for the students to take part in these activities. The school should also provide facilities for the students to take part in these activities.