

Hon'ble Chancellor Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi, Respected Chief Guest Professor Sisir K. Dube, Members of the Court, Members of the Executive Council and other Authorities of the University, the Recipients of Honours and Degrees, Members of the Faculties, Students, Research Scholars, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen -

On the occasion of the 38th Annual Convocation I have this great pleasure to welcome you all at our Raja Rammohanpur campus. I have the privilege to address you for the last seven years on such auspicious occasion. This period of seven years is significant as the University witnessed a marked transformation in all sphere of activities.

Award of Degrees / Diplomas / Medals / Prizes

The Court of the University of North Bengal will confer degrees to 2048 postgraduate and 18945 undergraduate students for the examinations held in 2004 and 2005 respectively at this 38th Annual Convocation. P.G. Diplomas will be conferred to 156 students for their success in various professional examinations. The Endowment and University Medals / Prizes will be awarded to 71 P.G. and 79 U.G. students as recognition for their academic excellence for the P.G. examinations held in 2004 and U.G. examinations in 2005. The Court has proposed to award Ph. D. degree in various subjects to 52 successful candidates in this Annual Convocation (33% rise than in the previous year). M. Phil degree will be presented to 3 candidates. I congratulate the recipients of medals / prizes and all successful candidates and hope, they will prove their worthiness of such attainments and render services with all sincerity.

The degree of Doctor of Science (*Honoris Causa*) will be conferred upon Professor Arun Kumar Sharma, internationally renowned scientist for his contribution in plant science. The degree of Doctor of Literature (*Honoris Causa*) will be conferred upon Sm. Shova Sen, noted expert and performer in Bengali theatre for her lifetime contribution to cultural movement in Bengal.

Profile of Growth

The University is on a path of progress seeking excellence. In a competitive global environment the University has no other option except to take challenge and stride ahead overcoming several constraints. 2005 is a year of significance when the University completes five years after the assessment and accreditation by NAAC in September, 2000.

Our University was the first university in West Bengal to confront the challenges for assessment and accreditation. Our performance in 2000 was not at a level of excellence, but we did fair to obtain

Three Star accreditation. However, the Report of the Peer Team helped in understanding our weakness and strength. During the last five years the University took initiative in implementing programs for quality improvement with an objective of social relevance. It had been possible with the application of knowledge gained from the assessment by NAAC Peer Team in 2000.

There had been spectacular growth and expansion of gainful activities in the University during 2000-2005, which may be evident from the *Table of Growth - 2000-2005*. In many areas more than five folds growth had been registered. Not simply the growth, the University took action assuring quality of programs and enhancing the status for excellence. Many new departments in emerging fields of knowledge had been established. The departments were endowed with research programs from various agencies registering an unprecedented rise of 233% during the last five years and accredited with distinction. Such trend of development has been sustained in 2005-06 with the introduction of new courses in Microbiology, Strategic & Area Studies, Library & Information Science at P.G. level and Diploma in Mass Communication & Video Production. Two new centers of studies have also been granted by U.G.C. and are established at our university. These include Center of Ambedkar Studies and Center for Buddhist Studies. Center of Adult & Continuing has been upgraded into an academic department to conduct teaching programs. The University Grants Commission is also generous in creating facilities upgrading the human resource quality for backward class students in the university. The Coaching Center for Higher Services, Coaching Center for NET Examination and Remedial Coaching Center have been established in 2005 to cater the need of backward class students. Other students may also avail such opportunities subject to U.G.C. guidelines. One of the best practices of the University was to strive for self-reliance with programs for generation of funds from its own sources. Income from own sources registered a growth of 727% (Rs.1 crore in 2000 to Rs.8.28 crore in 2005). Such programs included consultancy & research projects, self-financed courses, collaborative academic programs and estate utilization.

Academic activities like research projects, publication of books and articles and organization of seminars have gained impetus during the year 2005. Five academic departments, i.e. Chemistry, Botany, Philosophy, Political Science and Economics received Departmental Research Support (DRS) under Special Assistance Program (SAP) of U.G.C. Three more departments, namely, Zoology, Geography & Applied Geography and Sociology have also applied for the grant of DRS under SAP in 2005. The departments are selected by U.G.C. on the basis of research activities, academic achievements and viable potential for further development. Another milestone for research activities in science departments is the award of Faculty Improvement in Science & Technology (FIST) program, granted by D.S.T., Government of India. In 2005 the departments of Zoology and Mathematics have

received financial support of Rs. 25 lakh and Rs.19.5 lakh respectively. So we have now five departments, i.e. Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Zoology and Mathematics, under FIST Program of D.S.T., Government of India.

Academic departments have organized 14 national level seminars/symposia in 2005. Two important national events like, Indian Philosophical Congress and Indian Phyto-pathological Congress were also held in our campus in this academic session. The university also organized a seminar on 'University Examination Systems : Need for Radical Reforms', attended by many vice-chancellors and executives conducting examinations. Such seminars/symposia/workshops help creating potential for knowledge generation and integrating research activities. Thirty-six teachers of our university have attended seminars/symposia in the country and abroad with support from the university. Many distinguished scholars from abroad and other institutions in the country visited this year and delivered lectures. Scholars from abroad include – 1. Dr. Mark Turin, University of Cambridge, Dr. Gurmukh Singh, State University of New York, Prof. Henry B. Kagan, University of Paris – South, Prof. Geraldine Forbes, State University of New York, Dr. Prabhasaja Paul, Deninson University, Dr. Amit Chakraborty, Nottingham University, Dr. Marie Elis Gibson, University of North Carolina, Dr. Ekaterina Zavialova, Bashkir State Pedagogic University, Prof. Starkel, Polish Academy of Sciences and Dr. Dean McHenry, Clairmont University.

Professor P.K. Saha, Vice-chancellor was invited by the International Association of Universities, UNESCO, Paris to attend the International Conference of Universities at Alexandria, Egypt on November 14-16, 2005 as a nominee of Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi. It was a great privilege for him to deliver the Introductory Lecture in the Parallel Working Group B on 'Institutional Strategies for Cross-Border Education'. The experience at the International Conference of Universities will help us evolving models of quality higher education in a challenging environment of globalization.

Our university is now engaged in project activities in various fields. The university has been identified by the Planning Commission to monitor R.S.V.Y. programs in three districts of North Bengal, namely Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur. Shri M.V. Rajasekharan, Union Minister of Planning visited the university and appreciated our role in these programs. The university is also monitoring S.S.A. program in Sikkim. The Center for Women Studies is now intensely engaged promoting the status of women, particularly in a backward region like North Bengal. The center has completed a major project on 'Incidences of Child Marriage, Dowry Related Offences and Trafficking in Women & Children in North Bengal'. This project was commissioned by the Department of Women & Child Development and Social Welfare', Government of West Bengal, as desired by Shri Buddhadev

Bhattacharyya, Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal. Our Hon'ble Chancellor Shri Gopal Krishna Gandhi has proposed to conduct a study on 'Earthquake in Darjeeling', which will be undertaken jointly by Bengal Engineering & Science University, Jadavpur University and University of North Bengal. In a meeting at Bengal Engineering & Science University on February 7, 2006 the work plans have been prepared on the basis of a working paper, prepared by the Vice-chancellor of North Bengal University. This study will be of great significance in the context of fragile ecosystems of the Himalayas. Our university is also dedicated to preserve the rich heritage of North Bengal. The museum of the university will soon be shifted to a landmark building in the campus and dedicated to the people of North Bengal.

Our university believes in the transfer of knowledge for social and economic uplift of marginal people. A new venture has been undertaken by the university to set-up the Center of Floriculture & Agribusiness Management (COFAM) with technical collaboration from PTC +, Netherlands and sponsored by the Department of Fruit Processing & Horticulture, Government of West Bengal. The center will produce planting materials and provide training facilities for innovative cultivation. This will usher in economic growth of the region.

Transcending the Limit

In a competitive global environment we have no other option except to transcend the limit achieving excellence. As a nation we have the potentials for excellence, being one of the oldest civilization of the world. We have many talented students who shone in their profession in the western world. Our universities have produced such brilliant students who proved themselves as the leaders of knowledge world. Even our university has produced such talents under many constraints in a remote environment. Certainly we lack in many infrastructure facilities, but can overcome such difficulties with our commitments for quality education.

The Government of India on June 2, 2005 declared the constitution of a National Knowledge Commission with Mr .Shyam Pitroda to head the panel of eight members. This commission will advise the Prime Minister on institutions in the production of knowledge, its use and dissemination. Such decision has a great relevance in the context of globalization and changing scenario of global economy.

Industrial societies in late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are being markedly transformed into knowledge societies with the advent of new technologies. Knowledge is now considered capital, and plays the most dominant role as an instrument of economic growth than the capital itself. It is

now acknowledged that seven-eighth growth in economy in U.S.A. during 1900-1950 was caused by technical progress (knowledge accumulation), while one-eighth was accounted for capital (Robert Solow). Similar study on the growth of U.S. economy for the period 1929-1982 also revealed the same trends, knowledge production and dissemination attributing 94 percent growth. The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in 2003 made a foresight in knowledge society in the present century. Knowledge societies, in general, reveal the intersection of several related trends, caused due to expanding knowledge resources based on technology, organization, information, education and skills.

The transformation to knowledge society will ensure higher economic growth. Knowledge society deems to be a society generating products and services that are endowed with both explicit and tacit knowledge thus creating more valuable products and enhancing the base of knowledge economy. The strength of a knowledge society lies in its people and application of knowledge resources. So the real capital for knowledge economy will be invested through knowledge workers, who possess the qualities and abilities to create explicit and tacit knowledge for valuable products. For appropriate diffusion and dissemination of knowledge the society will be highly networked that ensures developing knowledge intensive environment along with enabling process to efficiently create, share, exploit and protect knowledge.

In a knowledge driven economy the form and structure of education, particularly of tertiary education, will experience a radical change. Present systems of education under the industrial economy have been formal and based on textbook and classroom teaching. The changing form of education under the knowledge economy will be creative, interactive and self-learning. The nature of education will be informal having focus on values, merit and quality. Innovation of new technology (e.g. Blue Tooth, Nano etc.) and convergence of technologies will lead us to a world of education with no boundary.

Science and technology are not the sole basis for innovation, knowledge of markets and user needs will also be demanding. Not simply the technological innovation, many experts now consider the importance of social context of innovation, applying foresight and future methods as one of the tools for doing so. Innovation in social sector may often stem from knowledge gained through practical experience apart from conventional education and research. There shall be pragmatic approach in achieving the goal of education in a knowledge society, which will be more flexible than the conventional one.

In the coming decades the role of the institutions of higher learning and academics will be of immense importance in shaping, creating, retrieving and disseminating knowledge resources in a knowledge society. In a dynamic world the university shall have to advance on specified pathways devising a road map for growth and excellence. Our university is poised for a take-off to a destination of excellence and has taken initiative for the preparation of a document – *Vision 2025*, which may further be enriched by inputs from *NAAC PEER Team – 2005-2006*. In this competitive world we cannot live in an island, we have to build bridges. The universities in European Union in a meet at Lisbon have formed consortium sharing the resources. Our university also has taken such initiative. We have signed MOU with Bashkir State Pedagogic University, Birsk State Pedagogic University, Russia, and Assam University, Silchar for academic exchange programs.

Epilogue

On behalf of the Court of University of North Bengal I express my deep gratitude and thanks to our Hon'ble Chancellor Sri Gopal Krishna Gandhi for his first visit to our University and seek his active support for all sphere of activities in the University. I convey my heartfelt thanks to Professor Sisir K. Dube, Director, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur and look forward for his generous help to our University. We have been privileged by his presence in delivering the illuminating address as Chief Guest at the 38th Annual Convocation. On behalf of the Court of North Bengal University I propose vote of thanks to all present at the 38th Annual Convocation and also seek their cooperation in future.

(Pijushkanti Saha)

Table 1 : Profile of Growth – 2000-2005

Sl. No.	Sub-Sector	September 2000	September 2005	Growth
1	University Teaching Departments	16	26	63%
2	University Teaching / Research Centers	4	24	500%
3	Affiliated College	69	81	17%
4	Self-financed Courses	5	46	820%
5	P.G. Subjects	16	26	63%
6	P.G. Diploma Subjects	2	9	350%
7	P.G. Subjects in affiliated Colleges	2	9	350%
8	Subjects at U.G. level	27	31	15%
9	C.O.P. at U.G. Level	5	21	320%
10	Distance Education Courses (self-financed)	Nil	22	2200%
11	Courses under Partnership with Private / Corporate Sector (self-financed)	2	8	300%
12	Faculty members (sanctioned strength)	190	237	25%
13	Built-up area (sq.ft.)	1,02,000	1,20,120	18%
14	No. of students in campus	1,798	9,480	427%
15	No. of students in colleges	53,206	78,384	47%
16	Books in Central Library (Nos.)	1,28,720	1,70,000	32%
17	Cost (Rs. in lakh) of Books & Journals for Central Library	299	819	174%
18	EMR projects (outlay in Rs. in lakh)	18 (83.00)	60 (381.00)	233%
19	On-line library resources	UGC-INFLIBNET (Connectivity : dial-up)	UGC-INFLIBNET, UGC-INFONET (Connectivity : 512 kbps VSAT)	100%
20	Refresher courses	Nil	11 subjects	1100%
21	S.A.P. (UGC)	Nil	5 subjects	500%
22	Resource Generation from non-conventional sources (Rs. in lakh)	26	363	1302%
23	Website	Nil	Yes (www.nbu.ac.in)	
24	Alumni Association	Nil	Yes (since Oct., 2001)	
25	Resource mobilization from consultancy projects & schemes (Rs. in lakh)	Nil	71	
26	Quality Assurance Mechanism	Nil	QAC / IQAC	
27	Courses of study (P.G.) in emerging disciplines	1	7	600%
28	Budget Outlay (revenue account) (Rs. in lakh)	1969	3197	62%
29	Own Income (Rs. in lakh)	100	828	727%

Table 2 : Research Projects and Publications in the Departments / Centers (2005)

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Department/Center</i>	<i>Number of Projects</i>	<i>Grant received (Rupees)</i>	<i>Number of Publications</i>
1.	History	1 (Sponsored by ICHR, New Delhi)	2,00,000/-	Articles - 8
2.	English			Articles - 4
3.	Bengali			Books - 2 Articles - 3
4.	Nepali			Books - 7
5.	Philosophy	SAP Projects + Others	5,08,700/-	Books - 3
6.	Political Science	1	65,000/-	Book - 1 Articles - 2
7.	Economics	On SAP Projects	1,00,000/- + 1,72,000/- (SAP)	Books - 4 Articles - 15
8.	Sociology	2 (ICSSR-1, CWS-1)	3,70,000/-	Book - 1
9.	Commerce			Books - 3 Articles - 13
10.	Mathematics			Articles - 9
11.	Anthropology	5 (UGC-3, CWS, NBU)	1,40,000/-	Articles - 10
12.	Physics	3	4,37,000/-	Articles - 10
13.	High Energy & Cosmic Ray Research Center	1 (UGC)	1,00,000/-	Articles - 7
14.	Chemistry	13	2,00,50,000/- + 4,78,000/- (SAP)	Articles - 36
15.	Botany	10	1,20,00,000/- + 4,72,000/- (SAP)	Book - 1 Articles - 14
16.	Zoology	8	62,97,380/-	Articles - 32
17.	Computer Science & Application	1	8,90,000/-	Articles - 5
18.	Center for Himalayan Studies	6 (UGC)	1,30,000/-	Articles - 6
19.	Law			Book - 1 Articles - 5
20.	Center for Women Studies	6	3,35,000/-	Book - 6