

# VIDYASAGAR UNIVERSITY



## *Seventh Annual Convocation*

*Address by*

*Professor Ananda Deb Mukhopadhyay*  
*Vice-Chancellor*

**12 April 2002**

**SAHEED PRADYUT SMRITI BHAVAN, ZILLA PARISHAD**

**WEST MIDNAPORE 721 101**

**WEST BENGAL**

*His Excellency Honourable Chancellor Sri Viren J. Shah, respected Chief Guest Sri Rangan Datta, respected Professor Ashesh Prasad Mitra, Khaled Choudhury and Sri Soumitra Chattopadhyay, Predecessor Vice-Chancellors, Deans of Faculties, my colleagues, members of the Court, Executive Council, Finance Committee, Faculty Councils for Postgraduate Studies and Councils for Undergraduate Studies, Principals of Colleges, Guests, members of the Press and Media, my esteemed teaching, non-teaching and administrative colleagues, the recipient of degrees, research scholars, my students, friends, ladies and gentlemen.*

I am extending a hearty welcome to you all on this auspicious occasion of the Seventh Convocation of Vidyasagar University. This Convocation is a landmark in the history of our University as we are honouring four outstanding personalities in the fields of Science and Culture by conferment of degrees of *honoris causa*.

I must record my deep sense of gratitude to the founders and predecessor Vice-Chancellors for their significant contributions for the growth and development of the University. Our University is moving ahead with all its programmes of development.

During this Seventh Convocation after the conferment, degree scrolls will be given away to doctorates and masters alone and bachelors are requested to collect their scrolls from their respective colleges. The bachelor rank-holders and merit earners would however receive their awards during this ceremony. Our Master degree holders also include those who have undertaken their degrees by the distance mode.

The Distance Education Programme is making a steady progress. One new M.Sc. course on Environment has been initiated this year. Attempts are afoot to switch over to Digital Distance Mode of learning. Negotiations with the Technical Teachers' Training Institute is going on for starting Distance Education Programme on Information Technology at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The University has taken lead to form a consortium called EDITWEB along with other Universities / Institutions of West Bengal for enhancing IT enabled education. The Distance Education Unit's new building has been completed and awaiting formal opening. A 50-bed guest house will also be completed soon.



The gradual progress of the University in different sectors after the last Convocation is worth mentioning. The extension work of Humanities buildings is progressing and it is expected that the entire second floor of the building will be completed very soon. The extension of the Science building is also nearing completion. We have been gradually enriching our Central Library with more and more books. The State Government has also sanctioned this session 10 lakhs for the purpose. The Central Library is also moving forward for automation. Local Area Networking with UGC assistance is expected to be completed this year. Most of the departments are having internet facilities. Website for the University has also been opened.

The University has started two new M.Sc. courses in Microbiology, and Electronics. M.Sc. in Computer Science will start from the next academic session. In one of its affiliated colleges (Haldia Institute of Technology) Bachelor of Engineering & Technology courses have been opened in Port Engineering and Biotechnology. The University has also given recognition to a number of Honours Courses in its affiliated colleges. The University has also given affiliation to a Law College at Midnapore where the Bachelor of Law course will commence from the next academic session. The University is in addition considering the possibility of opening postgraduate courses in some selected affiliated colleges.

A large number of faculty members have contributed significantly in R & D activities. Funds to the tune of Rs 2.6 crores have been obtained from CSIR, DST, DBT, ICMR, NCERT, WBDST, DOE, AICTE, UGC, UNIFEM, CWDS, UNOP etc. on different projects identified by these organisations. Many of the faculty members have participated in national and international seminars / workshops to give key note addresses. Many Faculty members have participated in Refresher and Orientation Courses. Some faculty members worked as Resource Persons in Refresher Courses conducted by different Universities. The University has organised UGC sponsored Refresher Courses on Environmental Management, and Rural Administration and Development for University and College teachers.

I am delighted to inform this august gathering that the works of some of our colleagues have gained recognition internationally and nationally.

Professor P. K. Mahapatra, Physics and Technophysics Department, visited Howard University, U.S.A. as a Visiting Scientist.

Dr Bidhan Patra, Reader of Zoology Department, was honoured as "Scientist of the Year" for his outstanding contribution in Environmental Sciences by the National Environmental Sciences Academy.

Dr Layek Ali Khan, Reader in Bengali was awarded D. Litt. degree by the University of Kalyani.

The Department of Computer Science has organised one extension programme for Computer Application in Office Management for affiliated colleges' non-teaching members. The department of Botany & Forestry will start soon a P.G. Certificate Course on "Medicinal and Aromatic Plants and its Preservation and Utilisation."

The curriculum of all disciplines both at the undergraduate and postgraduate departments have been revised.

The University has been making its sincere and honest efforts for its growth through sustained curriculum development and teaching and research activities in the thrust areas of :

- Language and Communication
- Decentralised Planning and Rural Development
- Environmental Economics
- Gandhian Studies
- Farm Management
- Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity
- Participatory Forest Management
- Political Ideas and Movements
- Displacement and Development
- Gender Studies
- Integrated Rural Development
- Cognitive Science
- Application of Remote Sensing in Natural Resource Management
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management
- Disaster Management
- Tissue Culture and Karyotic Studies of Plants
- Microbial Studies with special references to Microbial Enzyme and Biofertilizers
- Immuno-Biological Studies



The University is going to open a counselling centre for guiding students for job, and for NET, GATE, SLET and higher services examinations.

The annual Inter-Collegiate Cultural Meet of our University was successfully completed. The Annual Sports of Vidyasagar University was organised on 19 & 20th February, 2002 with large number of participants from affiliated colleges.

As regards funds the State Government and other fund giving agencies have given us constant support. The IXth Plan grants of UGC are being fully utilised and utilisation certificates have also been communicated to UGC.

The advice of UGC and State Government for resource mobilisation has been taken proper care of by the University by mobilising funds through its own resources, self-financing courses and Distance Education Programme.

Sri Probodh Pande local Member of Parliament has agreed to donate Rs 15 Lakhs for extension of building for Microbiology and Electronics Units.

The Peer Team of National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) visited the University from 15 to 18 January 2002. The Assessment made by the Team is embodied in a report. I crave your indulgence to quote some of their observations :

The Vidyasagar University has formulated its course structure and pedagogical orientation keeping in mind the societal needs and requirements. This if effectively pursued and implemented may emerge as a commendable model. Clearing national / state level tests by a number of passouts of the University is one of the most encouraging signs.

It is heartening to know that the University has undertaken an inter- and multi-disciplinary approach towards designing the course structure.

The University in the teaching learning process has included projects, field-training, seminars and group discussions which form an

integral part of students' holistic development. The fact that the emphasis is laid on realistic question-setting also reflects the commitment of the University to a meaningful education. The constant pursuit of research and development activities by the faculty and students alike reflects the healthy study atmosphere of the University. The importance attached to computer and IT related education highlight the progressive attitude of the University.

There is a good administrative monitoring mechanism where the Vice-Chancellor and Statutory Officers interact with the students, teachers and other bodies of the University.

The University is inadequately staffed. Many more teachers and non-teaching staff member should be recruited on priority basis.

As far as resource mobilisation is concerned the University has made a reasonably good attempt to mobilise resources through donations, self-financing courses, R & D projects and also by selling forest products.

The financial management of the University appears to be all right as they have not resorted to any overdraft facility from banks.

The Peer Team would also like to commend the efforts of the management, faculty and non-teaching staff for building this University inspite of severe constraints.

The Peer Team is of the firm opinion that with support from various agencies /sources, the Vice-Chancellor and his team can lead this University to achieve its full potential.

At this juncture I feel it pertinent to refer to the declaration of World Conference on Higher Education which envisaged that "a renewal of higher education is essential for the whole society to be able to face up the challenges of the twenty-first century, to ensure its intellectual independence, to create and advance knowledge and to educate and train responsible enlightened citizens and qualified specialists without whom no nation can progress economically, socially, culturally and politically."



Higher education is passing through an interesting phase world over. It is changing radically and becoming more flexible in its structure, curricula and diversity of programme. It is adapting itself to clever use of Information and Communication Technologies. The problems of Indian Education System are of access, equity, number, relevance, quality and resource crunch. Rising interest in utility oriented education is another notable feature. The structural convergence of open and conventional education system needs to be properly addressed. Credit based and open-choice approach even at the undergraduate level would allow much sought - for open and flexible system. The third dimension of University activities namely extension needs to be further widened by reorienting it as a link with business and society. Higher education is no longer a luxury ; it is essential for survival. It is also a life-long process.

The demography of the world is also changing. In order to take advantage of this change, trained person should be produced at par with global standards. The student community in rural, urban and semi-urban places aspire to be a part of new global economic order. We shall have to make a proactive efforts to attract young members from disadvantaged groups to the mainstream of higher education by framing well designed and constant remedial support. Situated in a rural milieu Vidyasagar University is committed to work to that end, and is moving ahead for approaching higher education output for rural development of backward community. The University is planning to utilise the expertise of its faculties in pursuing programmes on Safe Drinking Water, Agro-Processing, Vermiculture Technology, Aquaculture Development and Conservation and Promotion of Forest Resources. The University has a plan to develop Technology Research Centre for helping the cluster of villages in the districts for sustenance of the rural mass for future development. Moreover negotiations have started for establishing a Biotechnology Park and Paddy Seed Culture in the second campus.

Today terrorism and religious fanaticism are causing global crisis. If religion is to survive let its function be to serve the humanity and not be instrumental for destruction. Religion should be used to govern conduct and to give beauty and purity to our living. Religion if it is to be a reality for the mass of men and not only for a few saints and thinkers, must address its appeal to the whole of our being. Mass ignorance about this concept of religion is the greatest weakness of any nation. What is needed is a change

in our mindset. Contrary to this scenario there is a happy sign that everywhere there is a quest for new philosophy of life. Perhaps this is the saving point in the present critical situation.

My dear students who are receiving degrees today, I remind you that science and education have so far been used to raise the status of man economically, now they should be used for the growth of consciousness, the awakening of the knowledge of the self and the discovery of self. The progress of time and the change in the need of humanity demand a new orientation. The old forms and methods are no longer sufficient for the purpose of time-spirit. You are our future and must be the builder of the new world order. You are expected to dedicate yourselves not only to the past and present but to the future also.

I conclude by quoting from Sri Aurobindo's "A Call to Young India" which is still relevant today : "A time has now arrived for our Motherland when nothing is dearer than her service, where anything else is to be directed to that end. If you will study, study for her sake, train yourselves body and mind and soul for her service. You will earn your money that you may live for her sake. Work that she may prosper, suffer that she may rejoice. Our ideal is a new birth of humanity, our life must be an inspired effort to create a body of action for that great new birth or creation."

*Namaskar.*