

Respected Chancellor Sir, His Excellency Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi; Honourable Chief Guest Professor Santanu Bhattacharya, Director, Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS), Kolkata; esteemed recipient of Doctor of Science (*Honoris Causa*) Degree Professor Krishna N. Ganesh, Director, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune; esteemed recipient of Doctor of Literature (*Honoris Causa*) Degree, Dr. Subodh Sarkar, Eminent Poet, Litterateur and a *Sahitya Akademi* Awardee; my esteemed former 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 Nineteenth Convocation of Vidyasagar University.

I am particularly grateful to our Honourable Chancellor, His Excellency Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi, for having kindly accepted our invitation to preside over this Convocation. Thank you very much Sir. The entire Vidyasagar University community feels greatly honoured and they join me in sharing the pleasure of having you with us and express their gratitude. On their behalf and on my own, I welcome you, Sir, with greatest reverence and highest admiration on the occasion of your visit to Vidyasagar University. We look forward to having your wise counseling, advice and blessings on this great occasion.

I, on behalf of the entire University community, extend a very special welcome to Professor Santanu Bhattacharya, our revered Chief

Guest. I thank you, Professor Bhattacharya, 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 recommended, and the Honourable Chancellor has duly approved, to confer the Degree of Doctor of Science (*Honoris Causa*) on Professor Krishna N. Ganesh, the Director of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune and to confer the Degree of Doctor of Literature (*Honoris Causa*) on Dr. Subodh Sarkar, Eminent Poet, Litterateur and a *Sahitya Akademi* Awardee.

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.

The overall achievements of our University in the last one year gives us a tremendous confidence and indicates that we are moving in the right direction in consonance with our Vision and Mission, with a firm determination. But this is not the end, it is rather a beginning and we have to work harder and harder as a team to achieve bigger and higher goals both in the field of higher education and social regeneration. We have to rededicate ourselves with absolute commitment and dedication to make Vidyasagar University as one of the best research and innovative Universities in the country. In a true sense, the University is developing by leaps and bounds.

Coming to our achievements for the last one year, 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, 32 students in the Faculty of Arts & Commerce and 57 students in the Faculty of Science were awarded Ph.D. Degrees, respectively. Apart from Ph.D, regular D.Litt and D.Sc. Degrees are to be conferred to Professor Anil Bhumali and to Dr. Kaushik Sankar Bose respectively. In the Postgraduate examinations 3161 students received their Master Degrees in Regular Mode. Likewise 4290 students obtained Postgraduate Degrees through Distance Mode of learning. On the other hand, Undergraduate Degrees (both Honours and General) were awarded to 20188 students. In addition, the number of successful candidates in B.Ed., B.P.Ed., BCA, LL.B., Vocational and Paramedical Courses are 3443.

In order to meet the increasing demands for higher education, various academic programmes have been opened since the last Convocation. The regular M.Phil programmes in English, Sanskrit, Commerce, Women's Study, Anthropology and Life Sciences have been introduced from the Academic Session 2016-2017. Vidyasagar University is the first State University in West Bengal to introduce an Integrated Interdisciplinary M.Phil.-Ph.D. Programme in the Life Sciences. M.Sc. in Geography has been started in Midnapore College and in Bajkul Milani Mahavidyalaya; M.A. in Bengali, History, Applied Mathematics, Human Physiology in Raja Narendralal Khan Women's College and M.A. in Bengali in Narajole Raj College have been introduced from the academic session 2016 - 2017. Apart from that, Choice Based

Credit System has been introduced at the PG level from 2016-2017 and to be introduced in the UG Colleges from 2017-18.

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, ICHR, ICSSR, ICMR etc. 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, the teachers have been motivated to apply for research projects from the UGC, DST, DBT, CSIR, ICHR, ICSSR, ICMR and other funding agencies. Faculty members who have, in the last session, received research grants from different funding agencies referred to above are: Dr. Abhijit Sinha, Department of Commerce with Farm Management (UGC-Major Research Project – Rs. 4451); Professor Amal Kumar Mondal, Department of Botany & Forestry (UGC-Major Research Project – Rs. 36476 & Rs. 326433 respectively); Professor Amiya Kumar Panda, Department of Chemistry & Chemical Technology (Department of Biotechnology, Government of India – Rs. 541642 & Rs. 3766 respectively); Professor Bidhan Chandra Patra, Department of Zoology (DBT/NER-Government of India – Rs. 747000; Department of Science & Technology (SEED), Government of India – Rs. 1048580 & Department of Science & Technology, Government of India – Rs. 1276970 & Rs. 842600 respectively); Professor Chandradipa Ghosh, Department of Human Physiology with Community Health (Indian Council of Medical Research – Rs. 278380 & Rs. 601541 respectively); Dr. Debdulal Banerjee, Department of Botany & Forestry (UGC-Major Research Project – Rs. 20526); Professor Debidas Ghosh, Department of Bio-Medical Laboratory Science & Management (National Tea Research Foundation –

Rs. 569326); Professor Dipak Kumar Midya, Department of Anthropology (Indian Council of Social Science Research – Rs. 400000); Professor Jayanta Kumar Kundu, Department of Zoology (Department of Science & Technology, Government of West Bengal – Rs. 522800); Dr. Keshab Chandra Mandal, Department of Microbiology (UGC-Major Research Project – Rs. 77880 & Department of Science & Technology, Government of West Bengal – Rs. 650800, respectively); Professor Mihir Kumar Pal, Department of Economics with Rural Development (UGC-Major Research Project – Rs. 361600); Dr. Moidul Hossain, Department of Chemistry & Chemical Technology (Department of Science & Technology, Government of India – Rs. 380000); Dr. Pinaki Das, Department of Economics with Rural Development (Indian Council of Social Science Research – Rs. 39525); Dr. Ratan Hembram, Department of Santali (Indian Council of Social Science Research – Rs. 1322000); Dr. Sandip Chattopadhyay, Department of Bio-Medical Laboratory Science & Management (Department of Science & Technology, Government of West Bengal – Rs. 300000); Dr. Sebak Kumar Jana, Department of Economics with Rural Development (NABARD – Rs. 250000); Dr. Subal Chandra Manna, Department of Chemistry & Chemical Technology (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – Rs. 361270 & Rs. 72665 respectively; Department of Science & Technology, Government of India – Rs. 169980 & UGC-Raman Fellowship – Rs. 2513752); Professor Subrata Kumar De, Department of Zoology (Department of Science & Technology, Government of West Bengal – Rs. 1293000); Dr. Sumana Sarkhel, Department of Human Physiology with Community Health (Department of Science & Technology, Government of West Bengal – Rs. 1046800); Dr. Sumita Roy, Department of Chemistry & Chemical Technology (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – Rs. 769254).

I have the pleasure to report that the United States India Educational Foundation (USIEF) conducted an interactive session at Vidyasagar University on March 31, 2016 to encourage the faculty members and research scholars to apply for the Fulbright-Nehru and other Fulbright Fellowships.

In addition, 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. The Department of Economics with Rural Development invited Mr. Robert Bryce, one of America's most prominent Journalist and a Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute, USA, to deliver a lecture on *The Scale of India's Electricity Challenge* and it was held on December 16, 2016 under Special Lecture Programme. The Department of History also organized a Lecture delivered by Associate Professor of History and Former Director of Environmental Studies and Sciences Program at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, Professor Tait Keller on *Global Environmental History of the First World War* held on January 16, 2017. Pertaining to that, several Scholars have been invited to visit our campus and have delivered lectures under the UGC Merged Scheme Programme. A Three-week Winter School Programme on *Geospatial Technologies* has also been conducted during November 16 - December 6, 2016. It is pertinent to mention that the "University Lecture Series" has gained momentum by the collective effort of the faculty members of various academic departments. The Academic Departments have also been bringing out Departmental Journals regularly.

I take the opportunity to report that the Second Rajnarayan Basu Memorial Lecture was held on April 8, 2016 and was delivered by

Professor Chittabrata Palit, Director, Institute of Historical Studies, Kolkata & Director, Corpus Research Institute. The Second Anil Kumar Gayen Memorial Lecture was held on May 13, 2016 and was delivered by Dr. Kripasindhu Chaudhuri, Former Professor, Department of Mathematics, Jadavpur University.

A university can grow successfully only when research and teaching mesh together seamlessly - one without the other is incomplete. Therefore we have ensured the development of a collaborative environment conducive to learning, exposure to the best international practices and promotion of innovation and creativity. I am happy to report that a Memorandum of Understanding is going to be signed shortly between Vidyasagar University and McGill University, Montreal, Canada to carry out a Collaborative Research Programme on the Project entitled *Appraising Risk, Past and Present: Interrogating Historical Data to Enhance Understanding of Environmental Crises in the Indian Ocean World*.

It is my pleasure to pronounce that since the last Convocation a good number of our esteemed faculty members represented our institution in various International Conferences and Seminars. Dr. Nilanjana Das Chatterjee, Associate Professor, Department of Geography & Environment Management presented a research paper at the *5th International Elephant and Rhino Conservation and Research Symposium* held at Singapore, during 14-18 June, 2016. Professor Kaushik Sankar Bose, Department of Anthropology visited the Institute of Anthropology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Wroclaw, Poland on an Indian National Science Academy (INSA) - Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS) International Academic Exchange Programme in June 2016. Professor

Bose also delivered an Invited Lecture at the International Conference at Rajshahi University, Bangladesh during January 20 - 23, 2017. Dr. Sumahan Bandyopadhyay, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology delivered an Invited Lecture at the International Conference at Rajshahi University, Bangladesh during April 15 - 16, 2016. Dr. Abhisek Chakraborty, Assistant Professor, Department of Remote Sensing & Global Information System presented a research paper at the *International Conference on Geo Python 2016* at Basel, Switzerland during June 22-24, 2016. Dr. Asmita Bhattacharya, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology presented a research paper at the *3rd International Sociological Forum of International Sociological Association* held at University of Vienna, Austria during 10-14 July, 2016. Professor Raj Kumar Kothari, Department of Political Science with Rural Administration participated in the *24th World Political Science Congress* held at Istanbul, Turkey during 23-28 July, 2016. Professor Susanta Kumar Chakraborty and Dr. Priyanka Halder Mallick, Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology presented research papers at the *5th International EcoSummit on Ecological Sustainability: Engineering Change* held at Montpellier, France during 29th August - 1st September, 2016. Dr. Sandip Chattopadhyay, Assistant Professor, Department of Bio-Medical Laboratory Science & Management presented a research paper at the *International Conference of SAAPCON - 2016* held at Kathmandu, Nepal during November 10 - 13, 2016. Mr. Suratha Kumar Malik, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science with Rural Administration presented a research paper at the *11th International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences* held at Imperial College, London, U.K. during August 2 - 5, 2016. He also presented a research paper at the *12th International Conference on Social Science and Humanities (ICSSH)* held at Linton University College, Kuala Lumpur,

Malaysia during December 5 – 6, 2016 and has been awarded as the Best Paper Presenter in the said Conference. Professor Sankar Kumar Roy, Department of Applied Mathematics was invited to present a Paper at the International Conference (PHESD2016) at Rajshahi University, Bangladesh during December 17 – 18, 2016. Dr. Debjani Das, Assistant Professor of History has been recommended by the USIEF for the Fulbright Fellowship for the academic year 2017.

Professor Tarun Kumar Banerjee, who joined as a National Fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research in the Department of Political Science on 3rd June, 2014, has been awarded a second term by the ICSSR for one year.

Since the last Convocation, a host of developmental activities have taken place at Vidyasagar University. The entire University campus has become fully wi-fi enabled and Vidyasagar University is the first University in West Bengal to have achieved this facility. Smart Card based Biometric Attendance System has been implemented in Vidyasagar University for the first time in any University campus in West Bengal. Again, Vidyasagar University is the first University in the State to launch its *Chhatrabandhu* Mobile Application for the benefit of its students. The University has added another feather to its cap by establishing the Meteorological Park in the University campus which is the sole resource for the media to gain information about the regional weather changes. Vidyasagar University is the first University in the State to introduce state-of-the-art Smart Classrooms in its campus and Virtual Classrooms are also going to be introduced shortly. I am all the more delighted to report that a state-of-the-art Video Conferencing Unit has been established at Vidyasagar University. A new 500 KVA

transformer has been recently commissioned in the *Benjamin Franklin Bhavan (Annexe)* as a part of the augmentation of the University electrical substation. In order to encourage the use of renewable energy, a number of solar lights have been installed and used in the beautification of the University campus. The University has created a Publication Division which started its glorious journey by bringing out one of the most authentic and updated version of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's collected works entitled *Vidyasagar Rachanasamagra*. This edition of the collected works of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar is the first such publication ever published by a University. The University store *Granthaguccha* has become fully operational with multiple merchandises and is now ready to cater to the demands of the Vidyasagar University community. Feeding of the stray dogs in the Vidyasagar University campus on a regular basis is another unique initiative taken by us. The Indian Anthropology Congress: 2017 is going to be held at Vidyasagar University during February 21 – 23, 2017. This is the largest Anthropology meet in India and is to be organized for the first time in any University in West Bengal. Apart from imparting quality higher education in the *Junglemahal* area, Vidyasagar University is also committed to serve the society and is the first University in West Bengal to adopt an adjacent village, *Muradanga*, to empower the villagers by making them self-reliant through imparting various handicraft skills. Adoption of another nearby village, *Gopegarh*, is in the pipeline. Offering of free PG studentship to the eligible students of the village and imparting free teaching by the Teachers, including the Vice-Chancellor and the Deans of the Faculties, at the said village are some of the significant outreach activities of the University which are under active consideration. It makes me delighted to pronounce that the ancestral house of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar at Birsingha village is going to be

preserved by the Vidyasagar University and a resolution in this regard has already been adopted by us. Representatives from Vidyasagar University will also visit Karmatar in Jharkhand to chalk out a detailed plan in preserving the memory of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar there.

I am delighted to mention that Professor Subrata Kumar De, Dean (Acting), Faculty of Science has received the prestigious *Shiksha Ratna Award* from the Government of West Bengal and Professor Sebak Kumar Jana of the Department of Economics with Rural Development has been conferred with the *Bharat Vikas Award* by the Institute of Self Reliance, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Dr. Debasish Biswas, Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration has received the Best Business Academic of the Year (BBAY) Award - 2016 (Gold Medal) at the 69th All India Commerce Conference, organized by the Lucknow University, Lucknow on November 13, 2016. Congratulations to Professor De, Professor Jana & Dr. Biswas! It is also gladdening to pronounce that Dr. Prakash Chandra Dhara, Former Professor, Department of Human Physiology with Community Health & Director, Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) has obtained a design registration from the Patent Office, Government of India on *Walking Stick for Elderly*.

To cope with the ever increasing demands of the users, our university central library had switched over from traditional library services to computerized information services and in the present scenario our university library seems to be one of the best computerized libraries in our state having an excellent and effective IT infrastructure. Being a fully computerized library, the information of entire collections of library books is accessible by anybody in the Earth through WEBOPAC. From the collection of its rich Institutional Repository, the digitized

documents are also available to the registered members through remote access facility. Emphasis has also been given to subscribe more e-books as per the requirements of the bona fide members. The existing library Data Centre and Network Infrastructure has recently been upgraded using the state-of-the-art technology under the financial support of RUSA grant and its institutional repository has also been re-designed with a new attractive look. A high capacity UTM device is installed recently for better network security. To strengthen the safety and security of valuable library documents, some new IP based cameras with modern technology are installed in prominent working places in the library premises. RFID compliant multi-facility Identity-cum-Library cards have been provided to the bona fide members from this academic year. The work of introducing RFID systems at the central library is in progress and expected to be completed soon. As a member of the UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium, our university library gets the opportunity to access more than eight thousand peer-reviewed scholarly online international journals from nineteen renowned publishers to enrich our faculties and scholars. A new library annex building is completed and some important service units are almost ready to start from there shortly.

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. The DDE of Vidyasagar University has been relentlessly catering to the demands of learning through the Distance Mode, in the *Junglemahal* areas, through its 46 Study Centres. I am also happy to

pronounce that a multi-recreational lounge *Banani* has been established on the first floor of the Aranyak Guest House and has been dedicated to the members of the Vidyasagar University community.

The Women Infrastructure Facilities have been strengthened than before. Efforts have also been made to revive the activities of the Gandhian Studies Centre. The University Science Instrumentation Centre and Bioinformatics Infrastructure Facilities have been made well equipped to cater to the needs of the students. The RTI Cell, the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Cell, the Anti Ragging Cell and the Equal Opportunity Cell are being efficiently managed to minimize the response time and to become pro-active. The NSS Unit has been conducting its regular activities in an orderly manner.

Under the aegis of the Department of the Dean of Students' Welfare, the Placement Cell of our University, consisting of different placement co-ordinators of respective departments, invites various organizations to conduct campus recruitment for the interested students of the University. This Cell facilitates recruitment of the eligible students of the University to get employment through on campus or off campus interviews. A partial list of the organizations who recruited our students are - Yes Bank, Kolkata; Bagicha Tea Company, Kolkata; MAKGEO Private Limited, Kolkata; Ashadip Medical Social Welfare Association, Balichak & Kinnova, Kolkata etc. Apart from this, a good number of students also got selected through on and off campus placement activities.

The University Sports Department organized and conducted Inter College Foot Ball, Volley Ball, Cricket, Kho-Kho, Chess, Kabaddi,

Tournaments and Annual Athletics Meet (both PG & UG), etc. under the auspices of the Students' Welfare Department. It is noteworthy to mention that the Vidyasagar University, for the first time in its history, has been entrusted by the Association of Indian Universities to organize the i) Inter-University East Zone Cricket Tournament (Men); ii) Inter-University All India Football Tournament (Men); iii) Inter-University East Zone Football Tournament (Men); iv) Inter-University All India Kho-Kho Tournament (Men) & v) Inter-University East Zone Kho-Kho Tournament (Men), respectively. Vidyasagar University Cricket Team has emerged as the Runners-Up in the Ajoy Ghosh Memorial Cricket Tournament organized by the Cricket Association of Bengal during December 26 - 31, 2016. I would like to take the opportunity to report that the Vidyasagar University Women's Kho-Kho Team participated in the Inter-University East Zone Kho-Kho (Women's) Tournament held at Visva Bharati University during January 28 - February 1, 2017 and has qualified to participate in the Inter-University All India Kho-Kho Tournament (Women) to be held at Chettinad Academy of Research and Education, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu during February 7 - 10, 2017. I am happy to report that Ms. Abha Khatua of Vidyasagar University Athletics Team has bagged the Bronze Medal in Javelin Throw in the Inter-University All India Athletics Meet held at Anna University, Chennai during January 9 - 13, 2017 and she is the only athlete from West Bengal to have achieved this feat.

I am glad to pronounce that the Vidyasagar University was entrusted by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) to host the 32nd Inter-University East Zone Youth Festival 2016-2017 held during December 27 - 31, 2016. The University successfully conducted the event where about six hundred participants from 16 Universities from

Eastern India took part in it. Vidyasagar University Cultural Team bagged 16 prizes in different events in the said competition and emerged as the overall Champion in this competition and qualified for the All India Youth Festival to be held at Shivaji University, Kolhapur during February 10 – 14, 2017. Vidyasagar University organized the 17th Inter College Cultural Meet on 21st and 22nd September, 2016. 22 events were held and 550 students from 26 UG Colleges and 14 PG Departments participated in it.

Given the present national academic scenario, the country needs institutions like Vidyasagar Universities to empower the marginalized. 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 players in the decades to come. For the significant development of a nation, a catalyst is needed. 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. As the Vice-Chancellor of this University I would have to 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.

Values ascribe to the highest levels of academic distinction, academic freedom and accountability; values encourage innovation, individuality and collective effort. And, values strive to promote integrity and respect for diversity and human dignity. Notice a world

beyond yourself and put these values into practice by serving the less fortunate members of society. Through service, citizenship is meaningful and dignified. Where there is inequality and injustice, we need you to work for opportunity and equity.

Today, as you receive your qualifications, you will hold in your hands the key to the door of your future professional success. This is your achievement but you should always remember the sacrifices others have made to ensure that you stand here today. I wish you unlimited ambition and forecast great success to all of you. As you are moving from a protected environment to a challenging environment, with all its ups and downs, you have to learn and listen because the whole world is going to be learning and listening. Your success is going to be your humility. You are the ones who will not only make your own destiny but have a say in the entire country's destiny. Do everything possible to expand the name and image of your mother institute as your life and career expands. You can do it and you surely will. I wish each one of you the very best in life. I would like to share a famous saying by Respected Late A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Former President of India, *All birds find shelter during a rain but an Eagle avoids rain by flying above the clouds.* My dear students, set higher targets in life and soar above the clouds like an eagle.

Before I conclude, I extend my warm welcome to all the recipients of Degrees and distinctions at today's ceremonial function. 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 Nineteenth Convocation of Vidyasagar University a grand success.

Thank you all.



VIDYASAGAR UNIVERSITY
Nineteenth Convocation

Address by

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