

# **C O N V O C A T I O N   A D D R E S S**

**By**

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**RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SIKSHANAMANDIRA, BELURMATH**

**August 4, 2016**

## **Convocation Address at Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, Belurmath on 04.08.2016**

My respect to the persons on stage and my good wishes to all Staff Members, Students and others present here.

At the outset, I must say how deeply honoured I feel at having been invited to address this distinguished gathering on this auspicious moment, marking the 6<sup>th</sup> Convocation of this prestigious autonomous institution. My best wishes to you all on this momentous occasion. I extend my hearty congratulations to all the graduating students for having achieved a landmark in their lives through their excellent academic performance. At the same time, I commend the significant contribution of faculty members for imparting the best of training and guidance to the students with such affectionate acumen. I am very happy to be amidst you to share this significant moment in your life.

Friends, this is to state that higher education in India has a long history stretching back to the primordial centres of learning at Nalanda, Vikramashila and Takshashila, which were the oldest university system of education in the world. Over the time Indian higher education system has made considerable progress in terms of capacity building and enrolment.

Students, in order to remain globally relevant and competitive you should place yourself on the global higher education map and project yourself through your skills relevant for the job market. On the brighter side, the Indian higher education system is expected to emerge as a role model for high quality affordable educational system and a global magnet for aspiring learners in the future.

Standing here amongst these bright faces and also to look back at the track records of your distinguished alumni, I must admit that I have no qualm that this institution is in the right track to reach great heights. Being established in the year 1958, it has travelled a long path ahead with great distinction. Myself as Teacher and Professor of the Department of Education, University of Calcutta was associated with this institution for long and have seen its growth, development and progress in the field of education and teacher education in particular. In this context, the name of

the present Principal, Maharaj Swami Tattaswarananda deserves special mention. My hearty congratulations also to all stakeholders of this stupendous institution.

The Convocation today marks the completion of a vital phase in your life. You all have worked so hard to acquire knowledge, skills and technology through all the programmes offered by this institution. In the process you must have undergone pressures, ups and downs and also anxious moments while trying to achieve your goal. On this very significant day in your life, you would be expressing a certain amount of joy and happiness to see your perseverance, hard work and commitment being translated into achievement of your goals and objectives. I am so happy to find that your students will now enter the professional field to become part of an active and skilled work force and also add to the technical powers of our nation. Talents arising out of wisdom lead to fulfillment, satisfaction and prosperity, not only to the individual but also to the society at large.

Prosperity here does not mean only earning but living with contentment is also a sign of prosperity and being useful to the people and society around will bring you the greatest satisfaction and fulfillment. Modesty, humility and value will bring you more laurels and recognition.

As an autonomous institution, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira has developed to impart professional education very successfully.

## **TEACHER EDUCATION**

Development of human resource remains the prime responsibility of any country. Education is the main force for developing the human resource. A teacher is a highly valued personality in a society and teaching is considered to be the most sacred and distinctive profession. Global emphasis on literacy shows the world's concern for the teacher's role in the development of society. Role of teachers in the educational system is of paramount importance. It would be the quality of teachers, their knowledge, skills, values and loyalty to the profession which would determine the quality of human resource of our nation. It is for such reasons that the Education Commission (1964-66) in its report stated in the first sentence itself, "The Destiny of India is

being shaped in her classroom”. Thus the responsibility of the teachers and the institutions which prepare teachers is tremendous.

The quality of education of a nation depends upon the quality of their teacher. The academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals of a nation. The focus of teacher preparation had shifted from training to education. Holistic teacher building is necessary and therefore teacher education needed more emphasis than mere training.

The Teacher Education Programmes have to be developed in accordance with the curriculum framework for school education. Teachers have to be developed professionally as per the requirements of the schools, particularly the content, learners and the learning environment.

In addition to the above, the NCF requires a teacher to be a facilitator of children’s learning in a manner that helps children to construct knowledge and meaning. “The teacher in this process is a co-constructor of knowledge. It also opens out possibilities for the teacher to participate in the construction of Syllabi, text books and teaching learning materials. Such roles demand that teachers be equipped with an adequate understanding of curriculum, subject content and pedagogy on one hand; and the community and school structures and managements, on the other” states the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE, 2009.

A teacher is a highly valued personality in a society and teaching is considered to be the most sacred and distinctive profession. According to Kothari Commission, a teacher who unlike an ordinary worker, acts as a master, crafts man, an artist, a strategist and a powerful motivator. The environs of a classroom are enlivened by the inspiring, dynamic, enthusiastic, encouraging, skillful and dedicated teacher. It is he who shapes the destiny of students and that of the future citizens who eventually shape the destiny of the country. Such a teacher only can successfully inculcate among children values that strengthen the ideals of social justice, equity, secularism and pluralism. Highly skilled teachers are one of the single most important influences on student success. Work and worth of teachers has brought name and fame to nations. Teachers have brought laureates to nations. The profession of a teacher has never been so challenging and

demanding as it has become now. Global emphasis on literacy shows the world's concern for the teacher's role in the development of society. This makes effective teacher training of paramount importance in the cultivation of an educated citizenry within this country.

## **TEACHING AS A PROFESSION**

By its very definition, a professional, including a teacher is a lifelong learner because of his association with scientific knowledge which keeps growing and so opportunities have to be afforded to ensure that he keeps learning and developing throughout his professional life. This is precisely the responsibility of teacher education system which is more than a mere combination of two of its major components i.e. pre-service teacher preparation and in-service education.

Professional preparation and professional development of teachers is a continuous process. It begins with the selection of an aspirant teacher and includes his initial preparation till induction into the profession and his continuous development throughout his teaching carrier.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development is the enrichment training provided to teachers over a period of time to promote their development in all aspects of content and pedagogy. Professional development for teachers should be analogous to professional development of other professionals. Becoming an effective teacher is a continuous process that stretches from pre-service experiences to the end of the professional career. It is conceptually divided into **pre-service and in-service teacher training**. It is not simply a time-bound activity or series of events, but a continuous process. From this perspective, the conventionally divided in-service and pre-service activities should be viewed as seamless components of the same process. It is the tool by which policy makers' visions for change are disseminated and conveyed to teachers.

### **An overview of the Teacher Education Policy in India**

The Teacher Education Policy in India has evolved over time and is based on recommendations contained in various Reports of Committees/Commissions on Education, the important ones being the Kothari Commission (1966), the Chattopadhyay Committee (1985), the National Policy

on Education (NPE 1986/92), Acharya Ramamurthi Committee (1990), Yashpal Committee (1993), and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, and the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, 2009, has important implications for teacher education in the country.

Within the federal structure of the country, while broad policy and legal framework on teacher education is provided by the Central Government, implementation of various programmes and schemes are undertaken largely by state governments. Within the broad objective of improving the learning achievements of school children, the twin strategy is to (a) prepare teachers for the school system (pre-service training); and (b) improve capacity of existing school teachers (in-service training).

For **pre-service training**, the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE), a statutory body of the Central Government, is responsible for planned and coordinated development of teacher education in the country. The NCTE lays down norms and standards for various teacher education courses, minimum qualifications for teacher educators, course and content and duration and minimum qualification for entry of student-teachers for the various courses. It also grants recognition to institutions (government, government-aided and self-financing) interested in undertaking such courses and has in-built mechanism to regulate and monitor their standards and quality.

For **in-service training**, the country has a large network of government-owned teacher training institutions (TTIs), which provide in-service training to the school teachers. The spread of these TTIs is both vertical and horizontal. At the National Level, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), along with its six Regional Institutes of Education (REIs) prepares a host of modules for various teacher training courses and also undertakes specific programmes for training of teachers and teacher educators. Institutional support is also provided by the National University on Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA). Both NCERT and NUEPA are national level autonomous bodies. At the state level, the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), prepares modules for teacher training and conducts specialised courses for teacher educators and school teachers. The Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Institutes for Advanced Learning in Education (IASes) provide in-service

training to secondary and senior secondary school teachers and teacher educators. At the district level, in-service training is provided by the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs). The Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) are the lowest form of institutions in the vertical hierarchy for providing in-service training to school teachers. Apart from these, in-service training is also imparted with active role of the civil society, unaided schools and other establishments.

### **Implications on Teacher Education by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009**

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has implications on the present teacher education system and the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education.

### **National Curriculum Framework on Teacher Education**

The National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) has prepared the National Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education, which was circulated in March 2009. This Framework has been prepared in the background of the NCF, 2005 and the principles laid down in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 which necessitated an altered framework on Teacher Education which would be consistent with the changed philosophy of school curriculum recommended in the NCF, 2005. While articulating the vision of teacher education, the Framework has some important dimensions of the new approach to teacher education.

### **Models of teacher education and training for the 21st century :**

The new directions will have to grapple with models of teacher education. The current models need reform and innovation and new models would have to be developed that would enable teachers to adapt comfortably to the changing times. The new models should emphasize learning to do and learning to think so that we do not produce learned monsters but learned thinkers.

- 1. There is absolute need for participatory teacher education.** In this model, teachers in training should play active role in the training process. They should become participants

in decisions. Teachers must be self-directed and self-taught. Every aspect of the training must be based on reflection and introspection.

**2. The new teacher education and training should not lose site of the power of technology for both teachers and students learning.** The real power of technology will come when teachers have been trained well in them and have captured the potential of technology themselves.

### **3. Need for in-depth content and practical knowledge of research for teacher**

Research must be a major priority in teacher education and preparation in the 21st century. Professional teachers naturally seek answers to questions and solutions to problems that enable them to help their students to learn. They are decision makers. They are highly reflective and sensitive to the needs of their students.

### **4. The concept of research and its significance to teacher education and training :**

There is need to look at the concept of research and how it applies to the teaching-learning environment, especially in the 21st century school environment. This will make the professional teacher to identify with the fact that research is a major part of the professional practice. For this reason, research in this discussion will be taken to mean :

“...systematic study of a phenomenon with the aim of finding explanations or solutions or understanding and finding patterns among what is studied so that action could be taken to arrest or improve the situation”.

### **5. Need to provide 21st century teachers with solid foundation in research methods:**

If the 21st century teachers are to consider themselves as researchers and use research to improve their practice.

### **6. Professional Standards and Ethics**

Professional Ethics of teaching profession expects a teacher to:



- Fulfil professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity
- Maintain professional confidentiality at all times
- Improve the effectiveness of the profession through research and continuing professional development
- Nurture the intellectual potential of each student
- Accept challenging learning environments
- Encourage collaborative learning
- Discuss with colleagues and other professionals the progress of student learning.

Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, presently under the University of Calcutta, has proved its excellence by becoming an autonomous institution and also gaining the potential for excellence.

Training of teachers and the teacher education programmes including M. Phil and research are being carried out within this institutional framework. As the first Vice Chancellor of a newly formed University named as the West Bengal University of Teachers' Training, Education Planning and Administration. I convey my good wishes to this institution for its further growth and development in the field of education and teacher education in particular.

I would request the students that after passing out from the hallowed portals of this institution you are to continuously keep updating your knowledge and skills to deliver substantive outcomes for your institution, for the society and the country at large. You are now at a very interesting turning point in your life. After spending your time within the confines of a protected environment, you will now be exposed to the realities of the world. How well you perform in this real world depends on your ability to use knowledge you have acquired, skills you have learnt

and the ability to adapt to a work environment. At this juncture, I would like to leave with you some thoughts to ponder upon like

1. Always dream and aspire
2. Enhance your ability to learn
3. Be innovative
4. Inculcate the spirit of leadership
5. Measure your success not by wealth and fame but by how successfully you solved your problems.
6. Develop strength of character and deep-rooted values.

I am sure that the faculty members of this institution have empowered you to overcome myriad challenges and become successful leaders in whatever field of work you may decide to work in.

As you walk the path of professional success, do remember to contribute to the society that saw you grow to this stature. To quote Swami Vivekananda “Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life – think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body be full of that idea alone. This is the way to success.....”.

On this, the 5<sup>th</sup> Convocation of Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira I once again take this opportunity to congratulate each one of you and sincerely wish an exciting, challenging and satisfying journey ahead. You are a valuable asset to your profession and to the intellectual wealth of our nation. I wish you choose a profession that will be driven by inquisitiveness and curiosity leading to the fulfillment of all your dreams and create peace and prosperity for the nation. May your life be a bright one and may its lustre brighten the entire country!

I am sure you will make all of us proud of your achievements in the years to come. In the words of Tagore –

Where the mind is without fear

And the head is held high....”

Thank you.