
9th Convocation

Address

Delivered on 9th January, 2022

By

Prof. Sunaina Singh

Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Nalanda University



NAAC Re-accredited – 'A'

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SIKSHANAMANDIRA

(An Autonomous Post-Graduate College under the University of Calcutta under section 22 of the UGC Act and duly recognized by the NCTE)

College with Potential for Excellence (CPE)

College of Teacher Education (CTE) & Swami Vivekananda Centre for
Multidisciplinary Research in Educational Studies (SVCRES)

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Namaskar.

President, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, Hon. Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghosh Ji, Rev. Srimat Swami Shastrajnananda Maharaj Ji, Prof Swapna Bannerjee, Dean, University of Calcutta and chief guest on this occasion. Swami Divyagunananda Ji, all bramhacharis, faculty, staff, non-teaching staffs, students and the graduating students. Namaskar, pranam to all of you.

I am delighted to be part of the convocation ceremony of RKMSM this afternoon and my best wishes to the institution. This premier institution is building the character of the teachers. This is an institution that has been awarded in many ways and recognized for its teaching, for its values, for its character building.

So let me begin by congratulating RKMSM, premier teacher training institution, on its 9th convocation ceremony, wherein I'm told almost 487 students will receive their degrees. On this auspicious ceremony, I begin by acknowledging the institution which is founded on the vision of Swami Vivekananda ji on his education philosophy, which is widely read and all of us have grown up learning about Vivekananda Ji and his philosophy of life, his ideas on education, on character building, on how to add value addition to knowledge systems per se.

Now convocation is a time to acknowledge and celebrate the graduating students on the completion of a formal degree but in effect, in reality, it is the beginning, it's the commencement time. This is the time that the students who will be rewarded with the degree for their formal completion of their formal education, at whatever level. I think it's a beginning of a new journey in educational planning per se because you're trained as teachers. It's very important to look at education system and what we can bring to the table. I'm honoured to be addressing this convocation address to these budding teachers and faculty on the threshold of a very noble profession.

The American writer John Steinbeck has said that teachers are great artists because their art involves shaping the spirit and psyche of students. This is a very important. There's a huge responsibility for the teachers to formulate, to shape, to give effect to the new generation, show them the path as to how they need to create a new generation of learners further. Teachers are constantly creating generations of learners. They are the pillars of value system, they are pillars of knowledge. So training in Ramakrishna Mission - to my mind - has always been of unique distinctions, I'm sure. Because it's not just training of the teaching skills of the techniques but the outgoing students is how to do they carry along with them the values and ethos of Swamiji, how do they carry the ideas of Swamiji, how to shape and formulate a character while we build the knowledge quotient, that is very important. So the aim of education that Vivekananda Ji had very often talked about is to infuse grace and love into the heart of man. Which comes from character building, to be positive, to love, compassion and grace, these are

important characteristics of a teacher. Unless we have this positivity in us, we cannot teach the next generation.

So the outgoing students must remember what Sir Radhakrishnan had also said and he had said that ideas control the world. Swami Vivekanandaji's ideas still control the world not just India, but world over, because good ideas, good wise ideas triumph over the blind forces. So to remodel society - there's a huge responsibility on teaching. We must turn to scholars and teachers that's what Radhakrishnanji had said — to remodel societies one must turn to scholars and teachers in the universities in the portals of colleges in institutions because they have a huge responsibility, as they train the younger generation to be intellectual leaders, who are positive optimistic dedicated and diligent towards the nation building per se.

It is important to stay away, steer clear of negativity. Shakespeare in King Lear had famously said — nothing will come of nothing. It's best to stay clear. One should remember that the world belongs to those who are driven, who are optimistic and who are persistent in learning, in imparting knowledge - who consistently look at the positive side of knowledge, how you create new role models for others to imbibe how it is important to take your own utopias, in today's world — driven by turmoil, inconsistencies, fear, pandemics, solitariness, loneliness, I think it's very important that we stay positive; we stay focused so that we can still move forward. WB Yeats, a Irish poet has said joy is of the bill which labors, which overcomes obstacles, which triumphs. The whole idea of education is how we find better solutions, new solutions; how do we impart experiential learning; how learning itself should be an experiential journey, it should be a field study, because life itself is a laboratory.

We need to look at education like that because it's important that what we have learned through our scriptures, our spiritual tradition, speaks about *gyan-marga*- that's what Bhagavad-Gita speaks about; The path of knowledge is primary for self-realization, leading to *Atmana Viddhi*; you know, to know yourself, self-realization and that has been the philosophy of Ramakrishna Mission.

'*Atmano Mokshartham Jagat Hitaya Cha*' — the shloka from Rigveda, which was the prime motivator for Swami Vivekanandaji – the two-fold aim of human life that he looked at, that is the salvation of one's own self through knowledge and the well-being of fellow human beings of the world. This is the guiding principle and philosophy that drives Ramakrishna Mission. I think this should be the focus and the motto of every individual, every teacher, guru, since guru is the prime motivator for *Atmyagyan*.

If we go to *Chandogya Upanishad*, the story of *Svetaketu* and his father *Uddalaka*, the sage father; The entire story is in question answer form. Upanishads in fact are interactions between teachers and students. Look at our own knowledge tradition, all Upanishads, are interactions primarily between the Guru and the Shishya, that is what begets knowledge the students here are very aware because the *atma-gyan*, where they're building an awareness into *Tatwamsi*, that and how do you become a holistic person — this was the aim of education that Swami Vivekananda ji had upheld - the whole idea is to make man aware of the perfection already in himself or herself.

So, when I look at an institution such as yours and where the students, now the outgoing teachers I would say, because you would be shaping the world in some form or the other in other institutions as you get employed at school level or college level. I think it's important to look at that inner perfection to be not just aware of it but how to proliferate, how to identify that. I think that's very important. Education, therefore to my mind is that philosophy that prepares one to face life, to face the challenges of life so as teachers we should be willing to impart knowledge give them the resilience and strength of character to face life or to the realization of the potential of the self.

So this afternoon while I congratulate the outgoing students; outgoing, should shall I call them teachers already in some form or the other, having been trained at this premier institution, I think you have been privileged to get not just knowledge but knowledge with value systems, with ethos. So that is something

that you need to carry as Swamiji said earlier in his introductory remarks. Now, you have a very distinct identity.

T. S. Eliot had said somewhere, “have we lost the request of information?”. So information is all available. So knowledge and wisdom, we need to define knowledge, we need to find better solutions or new solutions and create new paradigms of learning. So each one of you will have to think as to how you will contribute to a world because this is an increasingly borderless world. Teachers and institutions therefore are or should be heavens of hope and security.

So, what I was trying to tell you in this convocation celebration ceremony is how do we guide the younger generation, how do we guide humanity, how do we look at Swami Vivekanada’s message. look what he has done in the name of Ramakrishna Mission so that's something that each one of us needs to imbibe and the youngsters have huge opportunities; Opportunities that did not exist earlier. This is the time to embark on new missions, to better organize, to open your vistas of imagination, to look at a life of fresh, to have multiple dreams and not just be driven by one, to have multiple goals as well, because it's always important to have alternate goals so that you embark from one to the other as you complete one. So it's time to accept challenging assignments, all opportunities should be embraced. As it is important, as youngsters, to face them, to be strong and resilient and not be driven by negative forces in any way. So our mission therefore should be to be philosophers of renaissance. I would conclude on that note. All students and teachers should be philosophers of renaissance of life, a symbol of solidarity in peace building - that should be the mission.

And through knowledge, how do we do that? Because of the unique position as teachers and perhaps , thereby we are lucky, we are fortunate that we can transfer knowledge and look at how to build new knowledge as well; How we can teach our students critical thinking , how to be philosophers of renaissance of life.

I leave you with that thought and with congratulating all the students for their PhD, M.Phil, Diploma, Undergraduate as well as I congratulate the Institution for its tremendous work towards shaping the psyche of new teachers that they seem to be contributing to the nation I hope all teachers are able to get admission in your institution, because this is an institution that that teaches want to build character apart from imparting knowledge so my best wishes to all of you and my congratulations to the Honorable President, The Secretary, the Swamijis here, the teachers I congratulate and a big applause to the students.

Thank you.





The College: At a Glance

- Established in 1958 by Srimat Swami Vimuktanandaji Maharaj (one of the architects for actualizing the educational vision as was envisaged by Swami Vivekananda), as a Residential Teachers' Training College for male students sponsored by the Govt. of West Bengal and affiliated to the University of Calcutta.
- Recognized by the **National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)** in the year 2002-03.
- Declared as a **College of Teacher Education (CTE)** by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India in the year 2001.
- Accredited by the **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)** in 2007 with 'A' grade.
- Upgraded into a **post graduate College by the NCTE** in the year 2008.
- On the recommendations of the University Grants Commission, the University of Calcutta conferred the **status of an Autonomous College** in favour of this institution in 2008.
- **M.Phil. Programme in Education** was initiated in the year 2012-13.
- Post-graduation Diploma in Guidance and Counselling Course started in the year 2013.
- Started **Swami Vivekananda Centre for Multidisciplinary Research in Educational Studies (SVC MRES)** a Research Wing under the University of Calcutta in 2014.
- **Re-Accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)** in 2015 with an 'A' grade. (Attached – Annexure I)
- **Extension of Autonomous Status (2nd cycle) for another six years conferred on 2015.** (Attached – Annexure II)
- Started Post-graduation Diploma in Yoga Education and Certificate Course in Communicative English and Writing on 2016.
- Awarded the status of **College with Potential for Excellence (CPE)** by the UGC on 2016. (Attached – Annexure III)
- Aided by **RUSA 2.0 Component 8** (Enhancing Quality and Excellence in select Autonomous Colleges) (Attached – Annexure IV)
- Selected by the UGC for **PARAMARSH Scheme**. (Attached – Annexure V)
- Recognized as a **Social Entrepreneurship, Swachhta & Rural Engagement Cell (SES REC)** Institution by Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education (MGNCRE) (Attached – Annexure VI)