

**Hon. Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee**

*Chief justice, High Court, Bombay*

*Dt. 03-12-1988*

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Convocation Address by Hon'ble ShriC. Mookerjee, Chief Justice, High Court, Bombay, at Shivaji University, Kolhapur, on 3rd December 1988.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Members of the Executive Council and the Senate, members of the Faculty, distinguished guests and my young friends.

I consider it a great honour to have been invited to deliver this years convocation address of the University which commemorates the name of great Shivaji Maharaj. On this happy and auspicious occasion, I also recall that I was privileged to be associated with this University as its acting Chancellor for little over three months.

Since I came to Maharashtra, I have cherished a desire to visit Kolhapur because the people of Maharashtra look upon this city with special pride, affection and reverence. This city which in ancient days was known as Karveer has been a place of importance from time immemorial. The famous Shrine of Sri Mahalaxmi is situated here and the place has been a well-known religions center. Kolhapur has been the seat of po'wer for the descendants of Shivaji Maharaj.: Even before establishment of this University Kolhapur under the patronage of its enlightened Rulers, had been great center of culture arid education serving all classes and sections of the people.

I offer my respectful homage to the founders of this University. Men like Opr. Balakrishna who had been the Principal of Rajaram College had the farsightedness to envisage how essential it was to establish a University in this part of Western Maharashtra. It was a happy augury that Maharashtra Government with late Y. B. Chavan as the Chief Minister and late Shri Balasaheb Desai as the Education Minister made the dream a reality and in the year 1962, this University came into existence. I heartily congratulate all those who receive today degrees, diplomas and prizes. May they achieve greater success in their lives. The University has impressive buildings with extensive grounds. But a university's worth is not to be judged by the magnificence of its buildings but by the measure of success it has achieved in propagating the ideals of Advancement of Learning. What matter are the ex-cellece of its teachers and students and the standard of education imparted.

Endeavour of every human institution ought to be to serve the cause of humanity i. e. to promote mental and material progress for men and women. Ignorance, unreason, narrow mindedness inhibit development and progress, in fact these factors

retard progress and development. The most important determinant in human affairs is the interaction between intellectual, psycho-logical and economic factors. Beliefs, preferences and aspirations also affect a nation's progress in the future.

We may put the problem of progress in another way. Both collective and individual well being largely depends upon achieving a balance between (1) size of the population, (2) stage of technology (3) access to resources and allocation of resources. The balancing of the said factors requires making of moral as well as intellectual choices. In order to achieve right kind of allocation of human and material resources, a developing country like India with high rate of population growth needs rapid development of science and technology and spread of education. When we speak of technology we generally mean specialised learning or skill or applied scientific knowledge, ability to (1) harness mechanical energy and (2) the process of transforming physical products into goods and services. The society began by learning the use of fire and domestication of animals and plants. Through the ages there have been remarkable advancements in scientific knowledge and technology. We have harnessed nuclear energy, made space travel a reality. Medicine has great achievements. Age of computers has arrived. Super conductivity may be developed in not too distant future. Bio-technology is likely to make momentous changes in life forms of plants and animals.

In spite of such momentous changes and prodigious growth of science and technology, one might still legitimately ask: are 'the human beings getting better or worse? Is not the human society proceeding from one crisis to another? Population problem, energy shortage, monetary and political crises seem to have become endemic. Does it not often appear that catastrophe and destruction of humanity is imminent? One reason may be we are yet to establish a right kind of society—a society which ensures intellectual freedom, has eradicated economic and social disparity, has achieved fair distribution of wealth and has secured amity, goodwill and peace amongst mankind. It seems that such a society is still an Utopia and not a reality. One of the main reasons for this unfortunate state is that the human society did not achieve moral and ethical progress in the same degree to which science and technology were developed over the ages.

In our craze for material growth and technological innovation, the real purpose of human life has been often overlooked. Faith and belief in higher things in life and not the state of technology ought to set the pace of human progress. I do not, however, want to underestimate the role of science and technology in our lives. To lift the majority of the people of India from their present stage of poverty and degradation,

science and technology must develop at a much faster speed. Only with the aid of science we can hope to overcome the gigantic problems which face our country. But along with technological progress we ought to reestablish value of judgement in our lives. We need to replace blind faith by scientific spirit which really means that our action and thought ought to be permeated by reason and objectivity. Our primaeval ancestors tried to explain the unknown and to solve problems by resorting to magic and religion. Let not the present man replace religion only by a new dogma of, technology. We ought to establish a new faith and belief so that human beings remain masters and do not become slaves and robots of technology.

To achieve a value-based and meaningful life, we need right kind of education, i. e. the kind of education Swami Viyekananda in his lecture "The Future of India" had talked about: "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. The ass carrying its load of sandalwood knows only the weight and not the value of the sandal wood. If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in the world, and encyclopaedias are the Risis." The object of education has always been and still continues to be liberation of mind by developing it. Education must be able to stimulate reason and rationality. Dr. Radhakrishnan in one of his lectures had said that the aim of education in India has been initiation into the higher life of spirit. The student is a wayfarer in spirit. Wisdom is not merely knowledge. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the supreme wisdom is the result of learning (vidya), reflection (chinta) and austerity (tapas).

"India has hoary scholastic traditions. In ancient India there were great centers of learning like Takshasila, Nalanda, Vikramsila, Varanasi etc. The pattern of higher education has somewhat changed. Our erstwhile foreign rulers had originally fashioned our educational system to serve their colonial rule. We must pay our tribute to those who had turned the Universities from mere examining bodies into institutions for research. After our independence object of higher education has changed. Successive Commissions have examined educational problems. The education has been now placed on the concurrent list of the 7th Schedule of the Constitution in recognition of its importance. I am glad to find that, your University, within a short time, has shaped into a fine institution with emphasis on researches directly related to national needs like nonconventional, energy, conservation, threat to environment etc. You have also recognised the need for interdisciplinary approach. I

am glad to find that the concept has been 'started for combining Karma with Siksha, I wish the University a very useful and bright future,

I hope that the young graduates who are passing out of this University are not departing as mere storehouses of information but as better men who have been instilled with the spirit of objectivity and creativity.

I am sure that reading in this University has helped the new graduates to be initiated into higher and better life. The education that they had in this University has helped the graduates to be emancipated from bondages of mind.

The graduates who have passed out of this University today no doubt have successfully passed the University examinations and tests. But far greater challenge and test is ahead of them. In their lives and action they have to prove their worth. They will be called upon to participate in the struggle to overcome ignorance, poverty and blind faith. The history of mankind records ceaseless conflict between conservatism and expansionism. A small section of the society is still attempting to adhere to the past and to revive fundamentalism. Bigotry and narrowmindedness still masquerade as religion. Your University education will be considered to have been just if you can help to defeat the forces which are trying to pervert the past to justify the unjust and improper things in life. I pray that in their thought and actions the new graduates would try to overcome the forces which obstruct progress and change. We must be always aware of our great heritage and we must live up to its great traditions. But no people can survive by merely glorifying its past. While maintaining our continuity of culture, we must change to achieve progress. After all, nature never stands still and everything is subject to change. But the change must be for a better world.

The Indian civilization has continued to exist over many centuries mainly because of its ability to assimilate diverse cultures and ideals and also because it has been founded upon the concept of unity in diversity. Indian culture has never endeavoured to obliterate the different views and the diverse ways of life of the people who have lived in this great territory. We have believed in mutual respect and tolerance for each other's views and ways.

As India takes a leap for the next century, it is poised for momentous changes. Large segments of society continue to remain in ignorance and poverty. You have a long way to go and much has to be achieved. Those who have been fortunate like you to have received University education owe duty to do your utmost in uplifting the oppressed humanity.

Jai Hind. Jai Maharashtra.

