

CONVOCATION ADDRESS OF Prof. K. VijayRaghavan, Chief Guest , Convocation of University of Calcutta,2015

His excellency Hon'ble Chancellor Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Sugata Marjit, Dignitaries , Ladies and Gentlemen, I feel honored to be invited to deliver the convocation address of one of the oldest and premier Universities of India which had in its faculty luminaries such as C V Raman, Satyendranath Bose, Meghnad Saha, P.C. Ray and others. By extending the invitation to me the University of Calcutta has once again emphasized the significance of teaching and research in life sciences. I thank the Senate of the University and the Chancellor for giving me this opportunity and am deeply honoured.

India holds a special global positions in the field of life science research encompassing its contributions in different arena from classical subjects to translational medicine in this era of rapid scientific advances in this field.. The endeavors of Indian life scientists have led to India becoming as important and recognized contributor to new knowledge and discovery as well as applications in the field of biological science, working with its global partners. India has contributed the famous Ramachandran map and the structure of collagen, studied human genome haplotype variants and discovered and described Vibrio cholerae toxins. For the latter your University has honoured Shambu Nath De with a D.Sc. and the Coates medal. Other areas where Indian scientists have excelled are in cell-biology, developmental genetics, and vaccine research.

It seems that keeping pace with national and global trends, the faculty and researchers from various departments of the University of Calcutta continue to lead in teaching, training and research. Research here here ranges from regenerative medicine, phytotherapy of different cancers, toxicology, ergonomics, interaction between nano-particles and biomolecules, analysis of human genetic traits, molecular medicine for neurodegenerative diseases, RNA regulation of Hepatitis B virus to molecular modeling of in-silico protein-protein interactions , molecular mechanisms of cigarette smoke-induced lung damage etc.

Given this backdrop one must find ways to develop the departments and research centres in life sciences in this University further to be one of the best destinations of teaching and research. The University must be gear itself to these challenges, creating further quality teaching and research capacity and by interacting with the very best in the rest of the world

and developing an inter-disciplinary approach. The challenge is not to remain as good as it is now, but to surpass itself, a challenge faced only by the potentially very best. In scientific research it is simply not enough to do well at the national level, but to spread wings across the globe. India is trying very hard to match the world standard. In fact this is one of the major goals of biotech policy of the country. A few world class centers have been developed in some research institutes, but a lot has to be done at the level of Universities where our best students come from. Calcutta University can lead here and I am sure it will get all the help needed.

I must congratulate the University for occupying consistently the top spot among state Universities, being ranked number two among all Universities in India, for being awarded “A” by the NAAC and UPE by the UGC with more than one thrust area. I am confident that those who are getting their degrees today will be the true torch bearers of a great institution and I sincerely hope that teaching and research in life sciences in this University will prosper handsomely in future.

Thank You