

3rd Convocation of

Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong (30th August, 2010)

Convocation Address by Professor Ramesh C. Deka , Director, AIIMS, New Delhi.

Your Excellency, Governor of Meghalaya, Shri R S Mushahari, Honourable Chancellor of the University, Dr. Shyamprasad, Honourable Vice Chancellor Dr. Glenn Kharkongar, Registrar of the University Rev. Edwin Kharkongar, Learned Members of the Faculty, Staff and Students, Distinguished Guests, parents, Ladies and Gentlemen !

I am delighted to be present here at Shillong on the occasion of the 3rd annual Convocation of the Martin Luther Christian University today. I thank you for inviting me to address the convocation. Firstly, I congratulate you all on your successful completion of studies and getting a university degree. It's a great feeling. In a person's life this is a crucial moment. It is generally believed that a university degree opens the career prospect in one's life and helps you achieve the dreams. Of course having dreams and setting goals are individual choices. You are lucky that you are getting the degrees from a university, named after a great man who in the 17th century was responsible for taking university education to the common man in Europe. His struggle to liberate humanity from self-made shackles was legendary. Out of the university, you begin a long journey. I wish you all the best.

As you all know, the Martin Luther Christian University was established in 2005 as a private University with the mission: "to contribute to the sustainable development of Meghalaya and Northeast India, while upholding and preserving its cultural heritage, by providing knowledge and skills that will enable our students to become global citizens". The University has been able to achieve its commitment, keeping in mind its vision of rendering service to the community and providing its students a high quality education in an enabling environment and making them able to serve the global society with a purpose and adding values to their knowledge with high degree of integrity and efficiency.

Dear Young Friends! I am sure, you would prove worthy of being an alumni of this prestigious university.

I understand, the university is imparting studies in diverse areas such as Medical lab. Technology, Surgical Technology, Medical Imaging Technology, Physician Assistant, Peace Studies, Traditional Music, Social Work, Mission & Development Practice, Computer Application & Sciences besides business administration, both at graduate and postgraduate levels.

Our country and more so this region, needs trained manpower in all these areas. Trained manpower is the real asset of any nation. As future leaders in your respective fields, you are required not only to realize your own dreams but also to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of millions who are not as privileged as you.

Friends, ladies and gentlemen, we need to have faith in the young generation. This generation is immensely exposed to the advances in science and technology. They are better equipped to create a knowledge-driven society. Over and above the economic progress, it is important to have a peaceful and happy society. From the experience in the advanced countries, it has been seen that wealth is no guarantee to buy happiness. In this context, I believe, the university's programme on peace studies can play an important role.

The strength of a nation is judged from the education and health of its citizens. Education and health are complimentary to each other. As you know, the old saying goes that health is the real wealth of an individual. The same can be said about the society and the nation at large. An important parameter of progress is the quality of our health-care system. We need to work for improving our health sector in terms of producing competent workforce, delivering affordable, quality health care for all. We need to take measures to prevent and control diseases with a holistic approach. In this connection I urge the Martin Luther Christian University, which has shown, remarkable leadership in the area of education in this region, to take up larger projects like a medical college to increase the health workforce of the NE region.

The Indian economy has improved significantly and the Government's emphasis to improve the base and quality of education and health-care systems is clear from the massive national programmes like universal Right to Education and National Rural Health Mission. Since our Prime Minister launched the NRHM in 2005, the central government has allocated a huge amount of money to the states for this purpose.

We are aware that our country is still passing through a very crucial phase of development due to rapid increase in population. Our leaders are faced with the challenges to reconcile between poverty and plenty, development and corruption, tradition and modernism and many other issues like regional imbalances on our development scale.

Ladies and gentlemen, the MLCU has a very important role to play in this part of the country. With the patronage of the Church and the Government of Meghalaya and under the leadership of its dynamic Chancellor and his team, the University can serve as a model for other institutions in the north-east. Apart from setting high academic standards, it can perhaps have some novel programmes with the focus on the reality and requirement of this region. For example, it can perhaps add conflict resolution as a new programme along with the peace studies. The university may also consider some programmes related to tea and oil industry, traditional handloom sector, art and craft etc.

For historical and geographical reasons the north-east has remained partially isolated from rest of the country. Now it is time to catch up with the development. The central government may allocate funds but the development would happen only with the local initiative and the involvement of the local people. Now the young educated people from the north-east are moving out in big numbers and taking up jobs in big cities. They have proved that they can compete and deliver at par. It is essential for the academic institutions to prepare such man power with attitude and skills, so that they succeed anywhere they go.

Needless to say that the economy of our country is linked to globalization. There are apprehensions about this model but the fact is that each one of us today is connected, thanks to the technology, to the global village. To catch up with the developments in science, technology and medicine we need partnership with the developed countries.

The MLCU may be a young university but, I am sure, it will grow in no time as one of the largest centres of learning in the whole of Northeast. Under the leadership of the eminent educationists and with the commitment of the young generation, the university can attract attention of advanced centres. I am happy to note that 305 graduates are receiving degrees today. I am impressed that more than 1700 students are studying in graduate and post graduate programmes in this young university which has 127 faculty. It is remarkable that 95% of the students who graduated from this university are employed or pursuing higher studies.

Your Excellency, distinguished guests, the faculty, students and esteemed friends, I wish to express my deep sense of gratitude to you all for listening to me so patiently . I also thank the university authorities profusely for inviting me on this occasion.

Last but not the least, I wish the people of Meghalaya prosperity, happiness and good health.

Jai Hind.

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