



‘NEHU should Strive for Newer Goals’



From left: Prof. E.D. Thomas, Prof. P. Shukla, Dr. K.K. Paul, Prof. B. Myrboh and Dr. L. Cajee stand as the National Anthem is sung. Contributed Photo

Meghalaya Governor and Chief Rector, NEHU, Dr. K.K. Paul said that since its inception in 1973, NEHU has been a key player in the field of education. “In all these years, its position as a premier institution has remained unchallenged,” he said while delivering the

address (*see page 4 for full text*) of the 22nd Convocation of NEHU on November 25 at the Convocation Hall.

Addressing the gathering of students waiting to receive their degrees, Dr. Paul, however cautioned against complacency as “in the face of the changing realities, NEHU’s achievements

make it incumbent on it, to maintain standards and strive for newer goals. Everybody is aware of the fact that universities are the repositories of wisdom. But, the universities of our country, except for a few select ones, do not make the cut, neither in terms of international prestige nor standing.

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The next issue of **NEHU News** will come out in **March 2015**. Materials & Articles have to be sent well in advance. Anything sent beyond **March 2015** first week cannot be included unless very important.
e-mail
(nehupro@gmail.com) & gumdor@nehu.ac.in and pen drive are preferred.

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The time has come to remedy this situation. Here, it may be necessary to reflect on the state of higher education in the country as a whole. A convocation meeting runs the risk of becoming a mere ritual, if it does not elicit some amount of soul-searching. Such an exercise, may also remind us of the newer challenges facing this four-decade-old university.”

The Governor went on to say that NEHU has to consolidate its position in its chosen areas of competency. “It has to offer its expertise and leadership in fields such as environmental studies, bio-diversity, languages, tribal and cultural studies, which are of interest to the region. Such being the case, the University would draw more scholars and this again will enhance its position and standing,” he added.

Dr. Paul also stressed on the development of infrastructure within the university with the help of modern planning and technology. “There should be an optimum utilisation of facilities.



Prof. P. Shukla is snapped as he delivers his welcome address.
Contributed Photo

The benefits arising from compactness and smart-city strategies, must be understood and followed. An energy-efficient, green and wi-fi enabled campus, with a low carbon-footprint, can become a reality, if suitable steps are taken in this direction,” he said.

A total of 10,547 candidates, including 2857 in person and 7690 in absentia, received their degrees during the convocation.

127 candidates were conferred PhD, five

were conferred M.Phil degree, while 1039 post graduates and 9376 bachelors including gold medal winners, received their degrees on Tuesday.

Earlier, in his welcome address, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. P. Shukla termed the convocation as a “very important event in the calendar of any university” and urged the graduating students to use this time to reflect on how the years of study have changed their lives.

Prof. Shukla said that the whole idea behind a university education is “to allow you to discover yourself – what you want to do with your life and to enable you to do it.” His advice to the students, who in moments of crisis find themselves singularly alone, is to look at others who have made it. “A tea-selling boy from Gujarat by his sheer talent and attributes has been chosen to lead the country. A woman of

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Prof. P. Shukla, Dr. K.K. Paul and Prof. B. Myrboh pose for shutterbugs. **Contributed Photo**

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modest origins from Manipur by her sheer talent in boxing has captured the imagination of the world. What more inspiration do you need?"

Prof. Shukla also informed that a

noteworthy feature of the 22nd Convocation is that the Chief Rector has instituted a number of gold medals which would be awarded in the course of the convocation.

In his vote of thanks, Pro-Vice-Chancellor,

E.D. Thomas recalled the convocation address of late Professor S. Nurul Hassan, the then Union Minister for Education, Government of India at the first convocation of NEHU in April 1976,

where he said NEHU students and teachers should be actively engaged and involved in the process of development so as to contribute directly as well as their research and study to the progress of Meghalaya and the other states.

"A person's worth is contingent upon who he is, not upon what he does, or how much he has. The worth of a person, or a thing, or an idea, is in being, not in doing, not in having."

—Alice Mary Hilton

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sail. Explore. Dream. Discover."

—Mark Twain

‘NEHU’s Position as a Premier Institution has Remained Unchallenged’



Dr. K.K. Paul delivers the convocation address.
Contributed Photo

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Probodh Shukla, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Prof. Myrboh and Prof. Thomas, Deans, Heads, faculty, staff and students of the North-Eastern Hill University, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

1. I consider it a matter of honour and privilege to be present in your midst on the occasion of the 22nd Convocation. My interest and involvement with this university is not an incidental one. As the Rector of the university, I am also a major stakeholder in this university. On this day of

the Convocation, at the outset I wish to offer my greetings and heartiest congratulations to the scholars who have received their degrees, as well as to the teachers and mentors

who have lovingly guided them through these several years. You are lucky to have studied at one of the most beautiful university campuses of the country.

2. Along with the distinction of being the first central university in the northeast having a

regional reach, NEHU has been a key player in the field of higher education, ever since its inception in 1973. In all these years, its position as a premier institution has remained unchallenged. Without doubt, this is on account of the ceaseless efforts of many committed teachers, staff and students. Their struggles have advanced the university’s status as University with Potential for Excellence. I congratulate each one of you, who has contributed towards this remarkable achievement.

3. In the face of the changing realities, a major achievement of NEHU in recent times has been the setting up

and ICSSR. NEHU’s achievements make it incumbent on it, to maintain standards and strive for newer goals. Everybody is aware of the fact that universities are the repositories of wisdom. But, the universities of our country, except for a few select ones, do not make the cut, neither in terms of international prestige nor standing. The time has come to remedy this situation. Here, it may be necessary to reflect on the state of higher education in the country as a whole. A convocation meeting runs the risk of becoming a mere ritual, if it does not elicit some amount of soul-searching. Such an exercise, may also

CONVOCATION ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR OF MEGHALAYA

of two picturesque and self-contained campuses in Shillong and at Tura, - both of which have become administrative and academic hubs. The main campus in Shillong, spread over 1000 acres, also hosts regional centres of institutions such as IGNOU, EFLU

remind us of the newer challenges facing this four-decade-old university.

4. Our demographic dividend is well known. Are our youth ready to encash it! It is estimated that in the next five years or so, the higher

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A sweeping view of the convocation hall. Contributed Photo

education segment of India is going to take into its fold, a population group, that may be bigger in size, than even some of the countries. By 2030, our country will witness the entry of 140 million people into the college/university-going group. The situation as such calls for a need for a great amount of change and transformation, in the area of higher education, in the near future. Even as the country braces itself for the challenge, it becomes incumbent on the part of the planners and policy makers, to put in place, a system that is capable of making use of the largest reservoir of youth power, in the world, at their disposal.

5. We need a system of education that is based on positive methods of teaching-learning, which encourage self-reliance. A time has come when

youth must realise, and grow out of the habit of seeking government jobs alone, this sector having only a limited capacity to absorb. There are opportunities in the private sector that are waiting to be seized. Ours is a nation on the march, and its development can be

faster, if the economy is galvanised by its youth power, to move in the direction of higher growth trajectory. At the same time, there is a need to make that growth story an inclusive one, by engaging with issues such as hunger, poverty, environmental degradation, illiteracy, lack of sanitation and hygiene etc. These are some of the real-life issues and challenges that the youth must be

ready to tackle. It is true that in this competitive world, targets have to be set and met with, but what is of greater importance is to instill in each individual the spirit of “Indian-ness”, the core values of our culture and a commitment to serve the society.

6. To harness the ingenuity and industry of young India, that values quality and aspires to scale greater heights, the educational institutions must change and move with the times. Curriculum planners must draw up designs that are not only more relevant and job oriented, but also futuristic. This will ensure better and ready employability. Besides, the students need to be encouraged to explore

their own creativity, instead of reproducing received knowledge. Even as class room teaching, labour in the library, and the laboratories, have their place in the mode of instruction, personal interaction between students and teachers, as well as amongst the

students themselves, form an extremely important, and lively medium for generation and transmission of knowledge.

7. These days the University has to, ideally, encourage an integrated, interdisciplinary approach in teaching and research, so as to keep pace with the current scene. There should be a spirit of

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From left: Dr. K.K. Paul, Prof. P. Shukla, Prof. B. Myrboh and Prof. E.D. Thomas take their positions before the start of the Academic Procession. **Contributed Photo**

healthy competition, not merely among different students, but each scholar must be ready to compete with himself/herself, to excel in his/her own field of research. A university provides the turf for the free expression and exchange of ideas and opinions. This makes the institution academically and socially, a vibrant place. Attempts have to be made to adapt and innovate, and mark out frontier areas of interest. Not only this, we must make sure that the quality of

research is acceptable for publication in journals of repute, and is cited by the peers in their own studies.

8. NEHU has to

consolidate its position in its chosen areas of competency. It has to offer its expertise and leadership in fields such as environmental studies, bio-diversity, language, tribal and cultural studies, which are of interest to the region. Such being the

case, this university would draw more scholars and this again will enhance its position and standing. Courses and syllabi have to be

fine-tuned to this end. Meghalaya is not a manufacturing hub, rather it can ensure growth in the service sector. As such linkages have to be established with research institutions and corporate houses for better placements. In

such an event, the youth of the region need not be constrained to travel outside. This will prevent outflow of skills and resources.

9. The infrastructure within the university must develop, with the help of modern planning and technology. There should be an optimum utilisation of facilities. The benefits arising from compactness and smart-city strategies, must be understood and followed. An energy-efficient, green and wi-fi enabled campus, with a low carbon-footprint, can become a reality, if suitable steps are taken in this direction. I understand that some work has been done towards this end. NEHU being one of the best campuses, can always play a leading role, in this direction.

10. Cross-cultural exchanges through serious academic programmes, such as language, and tribal studies have to be vigorously pursued; the location of the university and its fund of

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experience, enable it to play a key role in fostering ties, not merely at the national level, but at the transnational level, as well. This may well be replicated in the area of sports also, as the youth of the region have a special affinity for the field sports.

11. Another area of key focus has to be the emerging knowledge economy, which is seen as the latest stage of development in global economic restructuring. Thus far, the developed world has had a pattern of moving from an agricultural economy to industrial economy to post-industrial/mass production economy, to knowledge economy. This latest stage has been marked by evolutionary changes through technological innovations. The globally competitive need for innovations with new products and processes, that develop from the R&D factors, universities, labs, educational institutes is fast changing the scene. In the knowledge economy, the specialists are characterized as computer literate and well-trained in handling data, developing algorithms, simulated models, and innovating on processes and



Prof. P. Shukla felicitates one of the successful candidates. Contributed Photo

extremely fortunate persons for having the opportunity of studying in a premier institution such as NEHU. Your training here is not just a ticket to your bright future, but is also a responsibility towards society, that you must always be conscious of. On this day of your personal triumph, I urge each one of you to do, everything within your means to move in a positive direction. If each of you contributes even a small bit, then cumulatively the society will benefit, the nation will benefit.

13. You are on the threshold of a new life, and what you have

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systems. With earth’s depleting natural resources, the need for green infrastructure is being increasingly felt along with a logistics industry, forced into just-in-time deliveries. A growing global demand, regulatory policies Governed by performance results, and a host of other items, have a high priority on knowledge, and innovation. Knowledge provides the technical expertise, problem-

solving, performance measurement and evaluation, and data management needed for the interdisciplinary scale of today’s competition.

12. You, my dear students, belong to the youth-brigade of our country to which I had referred to in the earlier section of my address. You are the gen-next, and our country sees you as the harbinger of change and progress. I consider you to be

gathered in course of your stay here will enable and empower you. Always remember that your conduct and behaviour, ought to do credit to the institution that you have graduated from. Your personality must reflect the quality of the education that you have received. What is more, you must prepare to have your mettle tested in the crucible of life. As it is

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perhaps clear to you by now, real education is not merely a matter of passing exams and obtaining a certificate. That alone can be called a true education, which makes manifest the latent powers in man.

14. The story of your personal growth and achievement must also be an inclusive one. It must inevitably include the figure of the ‘unknown Indian’, who through no personal fault of his/hers, remains outside the frames of the picture. In such an event, your personal goals will be harmonised with social goals. If this aspect is overlooked, it leaves a gap and the picture remains incomplete, colourless and soulless. For accomplished people like you, it is quite possible to devise strategies for doing your bit, for others. The need of the hour is for each of you to be a front-runner in the nation-building exercise. In all your endeavours demonstrate sagacity and compassion, resolution and vision. Look within your heart to find not just your mission but also the means for achieving it.



Dr. K.K. Paul in deep conversation with Prof. P. Shukla. Contributed Photo

taste. They, in turn, promote cohesion and social harmony. For this to happen, it is necessary to search for the spirit of unity in the midst of diversity. An ethical approach to issues, necessarily leads to the formulation of a work-ethic that ennobles a person. Personal integrity and probity help to earn the

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As Vivekananda had said, - *“All power is within you; you can do everything and anything; believe in that, do not believe you are weak.”*

15. Our Constitution guarantees us our rights; it also enshrines our duties. One duty that it reminds us of, is, “to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that our nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.” When Vivekananda called out, “Arise, awake, for your country needs your tremendous sacrifice”, he also added, “It is the young that will do it. The young, energetic, the

well-built, the intellectual, for them is the task.” Such a scenario of change and transformation is at hand today, as the country braces itself to meet the challenge of eradicating poverty, untouchability, hunger, disease, malnutrition, social disabilities, environmental degradation and illiteracy. In this monumental work, the country looks up to its youth power to lead from the front.

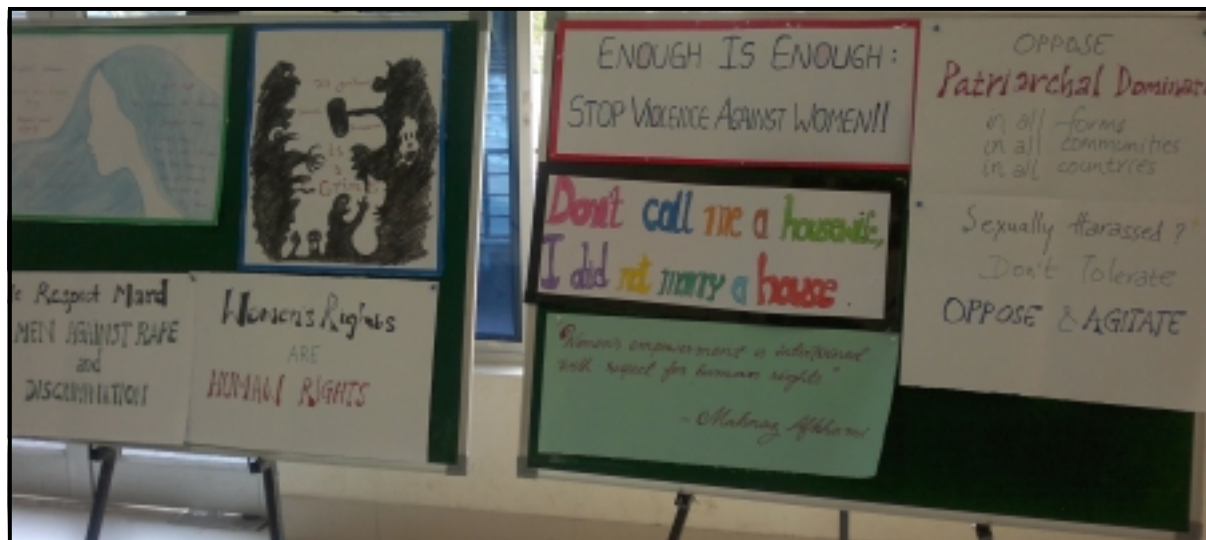
16. Society benefits when peace and tranquility reign in it, and individual interests are subsumed, under higher social goals. Personal relationships benefit from humility of approach and cultured

trust of people. Also remember, that in the midst of life’s struggles, the flame of curiosity must be kept alive. Whether you serve in the private or in the government sector, remember to do something worthwhile for your neighbour, community and people.

With these few words I again congratulate the scholars who have received their degrees today. In conclusion, I wish to thank the University authorities and each and every one of you involved with the task of organising today’s important event.

Jai Hind!

NEHU has Zero Intolerance Towards Sexual Harassment:



A few placards on display at the Multi-use Convention Hall. **Publication Photo**

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. P. Shukla has informed that NEHU has zero intolerance towards sexual harassment. Inaugurating an awareness programme on sexual harassment organized by the Women Cell, NEHU, on November 17 at the Multi-use Convention Hall, Prof. Shukla said complaints of such nature will be investigated to its logical conclusion. He appealed to the young women and girls present to report any cases of sexual harassment and to be patient as such investigations take time.

In her welcome speech, Chairperson of the programme, Prof. S.M.

Sungoh gave a brief description of the Women Cell, its powers and functions as well as its objectives, which are gender sensitization, creating awareness of rights of women, prevention of sex discrimination in jobs and others, prevention of sexual harassment in university campuses, mediation and redressal. She also informed that in the Ordinance, sexual harassment has been defined as such unwanted sexual behaviour like physical contact, demands for sexual favours, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography and any kind of physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature, which directly or

indirectly intimidates women or creates psychological harassment.

To further explain the different aspects and effects of sexual harassment, three resource persons were on hand to give information. Ms. Hasina Kharbhiih from Impulse NGO and member of the Women Cell, NEHU, explained the meaning of sexual harassment and its many issues. She stated that sexual harassment is not a women's issue but rather it's a human rights issue. In her presentation, Ms. Kharbhiih debunked many of the myths of sexual harassment such as the myth that women like to be teased or the

myth that women who dress provocatively are asking to be harassed.

She also informed of the Vishaka Guidelines (a set of procedural guidelines for use in India in cases of sexual harassment) promulgated by the Indian Supreme Court in 1997 and which were superseded in 2013 by the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act. She said copies of the guidelines should be made available at the workplace. Her advice to girls and women who are victims of sexual harassment is to fight back by reporting such cases and to not be ashamed. "Be assertive,

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Defining Who am I

Retired professor of the Department of English and one of the major literary voices in English to emerge from Northeast India, Temsula Ao was in the campus on October 17, 2014 for a programme titled 'Meet the Author' organised by Sahitya Akademi and the Department of English Literature. Here, in her own words, is what transpired:

Geetanjali from Sahitya Akademi, Esther from English Department and so many friends sitting



Prof. Temsula Ao poses for photographs.

Publication Photo

there. Students and research scholars. I must say that such a day as this comes rarely in life. And I am wondering if I actually deserve the recognition and respect bestowed on me as a writer through this programme. But I sincerely thank the Sahitya Akademi and my old department of English, NEHU for this gracious honour and making it possible for me to be with you today. I truly consider this day as an important milestone in my humble career as

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create a body of evidence such as messages, pictures, etc, share your experiences with a co-worker or friend," she urged.

Explaining the psychological impact of sexual harassment on the victim, psychologist Dr. Indu Singh said it's only natural to feel demoralized and upset when such things happen. The trick is not to be in such a state for long, but rather to speak up and fight back. "Believe in yourself, believe in your capabilities, be a fighter," she added.

NEHU has Zero Intolerance Towards...

Meanwhile, Ms. Tshering Yangni, an advocate practicing in the District and High Court, spoke about the different kinds of abuse that women face such as domestic abuse, economic abuse as well as sexual abuse, and what the law can do to protect the victims. "First of all, you can always lodge an FIR with the Police or any NGO. You can also go to a protection officer, who is an officer of the state government, or you can go to the women's commission. You can even go directly

to the magistrate in the court and give your complaint stating the abuses you have suffered in your household."

She also informed about certain sections in common procedure code which punishes the wrong-doer. "Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) says that use of assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty is a crime. The matter should be reported to the Police and a person found guilty of such offence will have to

serve a period of two years in prison, or with fine, or with both," Ms. Yangni informed.

She further informed that, "Section 509 of the IPC Word talks about gestures or acts with intent to insult the modesty of a woman. The punishment is with a simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both."

The programme concluded with the screening of a film depicting examples of sexual harassment in the workplace.

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an ‘accidental writer’. But today I will not bore you with anything that I have written so far which is precious little and those of you who have taken the trouble to read some of this have formed your own opinions regarding the merit or otherwise of the same. Instead I would like to tell you that my inadvertent foray into trying to write literature resulted through the fact that I have once taught literature for a living. Teaching an alien literature that is vast, immensely variegated and truly comprehensive and often daunting became for me a novice teacher for a long time with only a peripheral knowledge of the subject, a monumental task.

The challenge converted me into a student again and I gradually began to realize that literature is actually about life and not merely a subject on the syllabus to be disseminated to an audience, which is often indifferent and also cynical. Teaching, in that sense, became a process of learning about one’s inner being and became more than a means of

livelihood. And I believe that because of the transformation of the nature of literature into something akin to spiritual nourishment, I am the person that I have become today. That is the person who is standing before you now and who writes literature of a different kind from the one that I was appointed to teach more than three decades ago. I believe that I have been able to create a new world, a new vision of life through this writing where I have a new identity and seem to have a new lease of life. I totally belong there and I’m happy being there.

And I want to tell you that it is an extremely rewarding as well as an exacting work. Rewarding, because when we find corresponding notes of understanding in kindred minds, the sense of fulfillment and joy is exquisite and indescribable. Exacting, because it demands absolute commitment to the truth of one’s essential being, which at times poses difficulties of a different nature and becomes a new challenge. But it is a challenge worth tackling and overcoming. And this engagement with

one’s mind keeps the life force alive and thriving. And friends, I would not trade this world for any other. So this is how I look at my new identity as a writer and how I’m still trying to make headway in this world into which I have, as I said ‘accidentally’ stepped in.

I said I will not bore you with anything that I have written but I have before me a short essay which is not of recent origin because I have written it in 2012. I have read it in a similar seminar also but I was wondering what I should say and trying to go back to whatever I had, I stumbled upon this and I said I want to share the thoughts that I have expressed in this essay. I had titled it “Defining Humanity”.

Today I would like to consider the parameters which define us as what we are. But it is not an easy task because each one may have a different yardstick to define the self even within a well-articulated group. While thinking about this, my mind went back to my childhood and one particular Sunday school class where the teacher said something which struck me at once as the most

mystifying thing that I have ever heard. He asked, ‘Do you sometimes look at yourselves in the mirror and ask the question, who am I?’ I do not remember in what connection he said this or if it was at all connected to any Bible lessons. But it aroused an urgent curiosity in my mind. So, at the first opportunity, when I had the only big mirror in the house to myself, I began to gaze at myself trying to ask the question, who am I? The longer I looked, the more confused I became. I even thought that the image in the mirror was not me, but some lookalike who had nothing to do with my real self. This childhood experience often comes to me in times of stress and confusion, as if I’m still looking for some of the answers to life’s puzzle in my mirror image only.

But let us be practical. So I want to submit here two propositions which might be of some help in finding the definitions about who am I? I propose that these two are language and culture. The interconnectedness between these two most alienable aspects of

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human existence is such that it often becomes impossible to talk of one without mentioning or without the aid of the other. Many are of the firm belief that language is not only the medium of culture but also an integral part of it. Take for example the cases of immigrants settling in foreign countries, who insist on preserving their languages inspite of the fact that they have to learn the language of their new domicile and which would be significant for their survival there. In such cases their sense of identity is based not on the new environment, which they have chosen out of various compulsions, but on their native language and culture. It is as if their present reality is simply a mask to put on their original being.

On the other hand, linguistic differences are often seen as cultural differences, which invariably leads to divisiveness. We do not have to search far for examples of this. Look at the history of the formation of separate states in our nation based on linguistic considerations. The irony of this situation is

that culturally they may remain as close as they were before the new demarcations of state lines were determined by language alone. However, there is no denying the fact that language is a great unifier of human relationships. In a strange place, when you hear your mother tongue spoken, I'm sure that your heart misses a beat and you want to connect with that person who shares this identity with you.

If in modern times language plays its bonding role, in earlier times societies, it provided security to the speakers of a language. Reversely, it also led to crisis of survival for those outside the fold of a particular language. I would like to quote from Native American writer, N. Scott Momaday. He says, 'Once there was a man and his wife. They were alone at night in their tipi. By the light of a fire the man was making arrows. After a while he caught sight of something. There was a small opening in the tipi where two hides had been sewn together. Someone was there on the outside, looking in. The man went on with his work, but he said to his wife, "Someone is

standing outside. Do not be afraid. Let us talk easily, as of ordinary things.'" He took up an arrow and straightened it in his teeth; then, as it was right for him to do, he drew it to the bow and took aim, first in this direction and then in that. And all the while he was talking, as if to his wife. But this is how he spoke: "I know that you are there on the outside, for I can feel your eyes upon me. If you are a Kiowa, you will understand what I am saying, and you will speak your name." But there was no answer, and the man went on in the same way, pointing the arrow all around. At last his aim fell upon the place where his enemy stood, and he let go of the string. The arrow went straight to the enemy's heart.' The definition of the enemy was that he did not speak the same language.

And the Biblical example of Shibboleth and Sibboleth is known to all students of literature. Analyzing his own story, Momaday further says that for the arrow-maker, his reality consists in language. And it is poor and precarious. And all of this occurs to him as surely as it does to all of us. Implicit in that simple

occurrence is all of his definition, his destiny and all of ours. He ventures to speak because he must. Language is that repository of his whole knowledge and experience. And it represents the only chance he has for survival. The arrow-maker does what he does because the person standing outside the tipi did not understand the language as he was not of his tribe. That is Kiowa Te. The fact alone made him the enemy who posed a threat to him and his wife and therefore, the arrow-maker had to take a pre-emptive action by killing him to remove that threat. This example may appear to be harsh and extreme in our times. But what we have to understand here is that it describes the reality of the specific period in human history when language defined the identity and became the survival code of its speakers.

I'll give you an example for my own experience. When I was doing research on my own culture, I used to sit with knowledgeable elders and note down whatever they were telling me about our traditions.

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During a sitting with an old man, he used a word which was totally is known to me. When I asked him what it meant, he looked at me for a long time and replied, “you see what your foreign education has done to you?” After I had paused, he went on to explain what the word ‘Alardong’ meant. He said that a particular post supporting the house of a rich man was called that because it was the post where a slave would stand in readiness to do the master’s bidding. When he told me that, that was the first time I came to know that my tribe, the Aos, at one time, practiced slavery. It was a compound word consisting of ‘alar’ meaning slave and ‘dong’ meaning a tree or a post signifying that it was the post where a slave stood. The explanation of the word led to the revelation that the Aos were a slave-owning tribe, a fact unknown to me prior to this conversation.

Because of all of the reasons I’m talking about, language fascinates me. Not because of its phonology, morphology,

syntax or semantics, but for the very fact that each language, each mother tongue possesses a life force and treasure trove which it infuses in the speakers. In that sense language is culture, language is history and in the last analysis, it is also the survival of the two. There is again, a paradox woven into the very fabric of life language. It can create both mayhem as well as magic. Mayhem, when seen in the two examples mentioned earlier when language is seen as its exclusionary worst. For the magic that language creates, we have to turn to literature which is best explained in the words of C. S. Lewis who says, “Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become.”

The origin of many written literature of the world can be traced to stories and songs that were first committed to memory and transmitted orally. The great epics of our Indian literature

are the best examples of this. In a similar way, many of the songs, stories and legends of our region are finding new identities in the hands of writers who drew their inspirations from these sources. For these writers, their efforts are their way of reinterpreting their origins and giving new meaning to their ancient literary heritage.

It must have occurred to you that all this while when I mentioned language, the reference was to one’s mother tongue and all the implications that it has for its speakers. Those who can and do write in their own languages have an edge in transmitting a lot more of their cultures through their writings because the context of their writings are their own. But when it comes to writing in a language other than one’s own, is it possible to do the same? That is the important question that confronts those who write in English because the context of the language she or he uses differs from the writer’s own original language.

This dichotomy is of course of such nature

that I may, I suspect have stepped into a terrible trap of my own creation. But let me say that I pose this as a teaser to all of you. The same question may be posed in the context of translated works also. But what I want to suggest here is we can and do enjoy any work of literature if it carries the stamp of sincerity and simplicity of language, any language for that matter. And above all it has to relate to life because though we may speak different languages, we are all bound by a common humanity where the values of life, love and concern are the same. I would like to suggest that the language of literature transcends its defining point of origin and becomes a universal password that admits all humanity into its fold of understanding. Thus, providing that this inclusiveness in the language of literature is what alleviates the drabness of ordinary existence and makes it livable. And therein lies the magic of language and as creative writers it is this magic that we try to achieve when we engage ourselves with words and that is how humanity is defined for us. ***Thank you.***

ACHIEVEMENT

Ph.D Awardees

Mr. Deepak K. Pradhan has been awarded a PhD in Adult & Continuing Education for his thesis titled *A study of primitive tribal women dropouts from literacy campaigns in Bolangir District of Orissa*. Mr. Pradhan worked under the supervision of Dr. B.P Sahu.

Ms. Lallianzuali Chhangte has been awarded a PhD in History by the University for her thesis titled *Mizo Oral Tradition: A study in historical content and meaning*. Ms. Chhangte worked under the supervision of Dr. V.R. Rengsi.

Ms. Aitilang Nongrang has been awarded a PhD in Linguistics by the University for her thesis titled *A study of some syntactic characteristics in War-Khasi*. Ms. Nongrang worked under the

supervision of Dr. Saralin A. Lyngdoh.

Mr. Jamester W. Momin has been awarded a PhD in Rural Development & Agricultural Production for his thesis titled *Self-help groups and empowerment of rural women in West Garo Hills District, Meghalaya*. Mr. Momin worked under the supervision of Dr. D.C. Kalita.

Ms. Soibam Purnima Devi has been awarded a PhD in Botany by the University for her thesis titled *Assessment of genetic variations in micropropagated plants of nepenthes khasiana hook. f., an endemic insectivorous plant of Meghalaya*. Ms. Devi worked under the supervision of Dr. S.K. Kumaria & Prof. P. Tandon (Supervisors) and Prof. S.R. Rao (Jt. Supervisor).

Mr. Seydur Rahman has been awarded a PhD in Zoology for his thesis

titled *Studies on certain biochemical parameters associated with polyethism and polymorphism in apis cerana indica (Fab)*. Mr. Rahman worked under the supervision of Dr. S.R. Hajong.

Ms. Wansah Pyrbot has been awarded a PhD in Botany by the University for her thesis titled *Assessment of water quality affected by urban waste water and coal mine seepage and their impact on aquatic plant diversity in River Myntdu, Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya*. Ms. Pyrbot worked under the supervision of Prof. R.C. Laloo.

Ms. Julia Lalmuanpuii has been awarded a PhD in Anthropology by the University for her thesis titled *Ethno-medical beliefs and practices among the Mizos*. Ms. Lalmuanpuii worked under the supervision of Prof. H. Lamin.

Ms. Polashree M. Khaund has been awarded a PhD in Biotechnology and Bioinformatics by the University for her thesis titled *Molecular characterization and biochemical analysis of some wild edible macrofungi of Meghalaya*. Ms. Khaund worked under the supervision of Dr. S.R. Joshi.

Mr. Andrew C. Lyngdoh has been awarded a PhD in Environmental Studies for his thesis titled *Study of seismicity and active tectonics in the south eastern part of the Shillong plateau*. Mr. Lyngdoh worked under the supervision of Dr. Devesh Walia.

Mr. Bhauk Sinha has been awarded a PhD in Chemistry for his thesis titled *Studies on decolorisation and mineralization of some azo dyes by advanced oxidation processes*. Mr. Sinha worked under the supervision of Dr. M.K. Sahoo.

“Even if you could live to be 100, it’s really a very short time. So why not spend it undergoing this process of evolution, of opening your mind and heart, connecting with your true nature - rather than getting better and better at fixing, grasping, freezing, and closing down”.

—Anonymous

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