

## **TRANSFORMATION OF BESUS TO IIT: STATE AND SOCIETAL PERSPECTIVE**

In the context of the modern technology-intensive industrial investment and development in the Eastern Region of India, a steady supply of a large number of trained technical human resource of International standard is an essential prerequisite. **At national level a quantum jump in Research and Development in the field of Science and Technology** is indispensable for achieving our goal to become **a developed Nation by 2020**, as envisioned in the Vision 2020 document by Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, the Hon'ble President of India,.

The above calls for stepping up programmes for quality improvement in technical education and research and an increase in the number of Internationally recognized Institutes in the field of Science and Technology.

### **BENGAL ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE UNIVERSITY, SHIBPUR**

#### **Strength**

- Since its inception **150 years back**, Bengal Engineering and Science University, Shibpur (erstwhile B. E. College, Shibpur), remains one of the **premier centers of technical education in the country**.
- Notwithstanding the establishment of a huge number of new government as well as private engineering institutions all over India, **B.E. College retains the position of eminence with its rich history and tradition of offering quality technical service to the nation as also to many developed countries through its trained students**.
- Ever since the institute has been accorded academic and administrative autonomy in the form of a Deemed University in 1993 and a full-fledged University in 2004, it has been making **rapid inroads in the area of postgraduate education and research**.
- B.E. College, with its **rich human resource and a commendable record of achievement and contribution**, has been successful in securing several grants and research funds from Government organizations like DST, UGC, AICTE, etc as well as from several International organizations.
- It has an **unparalleled locational advantage** by being so close to the developed infrastructure and engineering environment of Kolkata and Howrah and yet having a **large developed campus with residential facilities** for students and faculty.
- It has the **access to a large alumni base well positioned in India and abroad** who are ready to extend both financial and academic help.

#### **Constraints**

- Though, **Bengal Engineering College has been elevated to a full-fledged State University in 2004**, not more than **Rs.15 crores** could be afforded for it as the annual grant. In contrast, an **Institution of National Importance** like IIT, Kharagpur attracts **an annual grant of Rs.100 crores**. Essentially, in the present scenario, such an institution can neither be developed nor be sustained by the state level funding alone.
- Under the **prevailing condition of funding and governance**, this Institution has been suffering from **deep hardship** not only in catching up with the rapid global development of

science and technology, but also facing **acute shortage of teaching and supporting positions** at various levels.

- In fact, the **present state of infrastructure puts a haunting constraint on the aspiration** of the University to avail the national and global opportunities and to contribute accordingly.

## Opportunities

Once elevated to an IIT, this Institute will:

- **draw the best quality teachers** because of its rich infrastructure as well as the advantages offered by the closely located metropolis.
- have qualitatively better **access to national and international research grants and consultancy projects.**
- be accepted as **a premier educational institution** to all established Professional Institutions and academic bodies around the world.
- act as a beacon for attracting the **knowledge based industries to the state** and create a zone of technical excellence that will have **snowballing effect on the economic growth of the state as a whole.**
- meaningfully contribute towards **development of indigenous technology and provide technological leadership.**
- immediately **enhance the job opportunities and future growth** potential of the students.
- **funnel in larger funds** from the central government and quasi government bodies **in the form of research funds.**
- **enhance quality and quantity of postgraduate and doctoral research works.**
- act as a triggering mechanism for larger active interest of the alumni, who will feel an enhanced status in the eyes of their peers. This can be converted into **greater financial and sustained technological and academic support** for the institution to grow rapidly.
- provide **greater opportunity for availing of the highest standard of Technical Education** in the country to an increasing, instead of decreasing number of students from the state of West Bengal.
- **add to the number of apex level technical institutions** in the state. **An insignia only national in level** to such an apex institute can foster the growth and prosperity of the state by attracting **greater investment from industry.**
- will provide an opportunity to **multiply and consolidate the growth of Industry, Trade and Commerce in and around the state** as a consequence of the **infrastructural upgradation of the Institute and sustained development** with the help of a **recurring annual fund.**
- will also ensure some **benefits and assistances to its students** as can be found in similar Institutes. To name a few, these are:
  - i) **Tuition fee waiver and monthly scholarship** for weaker financial background benefiting about 25% of total students.
  - ii) **Special financial assistance** to the students belonging to reserved category.
  - iii) **Lesser cost of Post Graduate education** as compared to that of Bengal Engineering and Science University, Shibpur at present.

## Conclusion

- The inroads in the area of post-graduate education and research made during the last decade under the State Government has created the **irreversible conditions for its immediate takeoff towards IIT for its meaningful existence and further growth.**
- The state resources saved due to this transformation may be used for the development of a few other technical institutions and/or upgrade existing Government Engineering Colleges.
- The status of an IIT, pending for long to this esteemed institution in recognition to its service to the nation, is eagerly awaited **on the eve of its inauguration of 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration scheduled to be held on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2006.**