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It is well established that since the inception of Bengal Engineering and Science University, Shibpur (BESUS), erstwhile Bengal Engineering College, remains one of the premier centers of technical education in the country. B.E. College retains the position of eminence with its rich history of 150 years and tradition of offering quality technical education to meet the current need.

About a year back, BESUS ranked third in the list of seven institutions shortlisted by the S.K. Joshi committee formed by the MHRD, Govt. of India for their upgradation to the national status in the form of IIT/ Institution of National Importance (INI). Subsequently, an expert committee from MHRD headed by Dr. Anandkrishnan visited all the seven Institutions. The committee evaluated the readiness of the institutions for the proposed upgradation and submitted its recommendations to MHRD on 13th February, 2006. As per the Anandkrishnan Committee, BESUS is expected to be at the top of the list of the prospective institutions poised for upgradation. To resolve the issues related to the upgradation, MHRD invites the Vice Chancellor of our University on 23rd February, 2006. It is learnt that the senior officials of Govt. of West Bengal have also been invited to attend the meeting.

It appears that BESUS is all set for achieving a national status in the form of an IIT/ INI. We, the teaching community of this University understand that the discussion in the said meeting will primarily be focused on the issues of governance and student intake procedure after the proposed upgradation of BESUS takes place. In this context, the stand of the teaching community which has been resolved unanimously, is as follows:

1. In the question of governance, it is most natural that once upgraded its governance should primarily be like that of any other IIT/INI.
2. The admission procedure should also be like any other IIT/ INI.

The teaching community of BESUS has communicated its stand clearly to our Vice Chancellor and Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal.

Though Bengal Engineering College has been elevated to a full-fledged State University in 2004, not more than Rs.15 Crore could be afforded for it as the annual grant. Essentially, in the present scenario, such an institution can neither be developed nor be sustained by such a meagre amount. In contrast, an Institution of National Importance like IIT, Kharagpur receives an annual grant of Rs.100 Crore. Under the prevailing condition of funding and governance, BESUS 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 staff.

The teachers of this University (BESUS) identify the major achievements, once it is upgraded to the national level:

- Greater opportunity for the students from the state for availing of the highest standard of Technical Education in the country, as is seen in IIT, Kharagpur, especially with lesser cost of post-graduate education, tuition fee waiver and monthly scholarship for students of weaker financial background.
- This University will 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.
- This University will provide an opportunity to multiply and consolidate the growth of Industry, Trade and Commerce in and around the district of Howrah as a consequence of the infrastructural upgradation of the Institute and sustained development with the help of a recurring annual fund.
- Immediate enhancement of the job opportunity and future growth potential of the students.
- Enhancement of quality and quantity of postgraduate and doctoral research works.

On the eve of its inauguration of 150th Anniversary Celebration scheduled to be held in November, 2006, the status of an IIT/ INI, pending for long to this esteemed institution in recognition to its service to the nation, is eagerly awaited.

(Manas Hira)
Secretary, BESUTA.