

Action has been taken.  
Chandan Basu 2.12.19.

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Chandan Basu  
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NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY  
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V.C. NSDD  
SSS/527  
28/11/2019

Reporting of the 8th Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Memorial Lecture

The School of Social Sciences is entrusted to organize the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Memorial Lectures on behalf of the University. The eighth Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Memorial Lecture was delivered by Professor Suranjan Das, eminent historian and Vice-Chancellor, Jadavpur University, Kolkata on 22.11.19. Professor Das spoke on ভারতবর্ষের উচ্চ শিক্ষার প্রেক্ষিতে গান্ধিজীর চিন্তা-ভাবনা। Professor Subha Sankar Sarkar, Vice-Chancellor, NSOU presided over the Programme.

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The programme initiated with the Welcome Address by Professor Chandan Basu Director, School of Social Sciences, NSOU. Prof. Das took the stage before the packed house and presented a vivacious lecture on Gandhi's idea of the higher education and its contemporary relevance. In his speech, Das had quoted from different articles Gandhi had written especially those written in 1926 for his *Young India* journal, which also said: "The freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied. Unbridled licence is a sign of vulgarity, injurious alike to self and one's neighbours."

Prof. Das said, the actual difficulty is that people have no idea of what education should be. We assess the value of education in the same way as we assess the value of land or of shares and debentures in the stock-exchange market. We want to provide only that sort of education as would enable the student to earn more. We hardly spare any thought on the improvement of the character of the educated. The girls, we often say, do not have to earn; so why should they be educated at all? As long as such ideas loom over us, there is no hope of our ever knowing the true worth of education. Das also said that education gives us democracy but we should not go anarchic in exercising our democratic rights. He quoted Gandhi, when he said, "Democratic rights must not be curbed. But while applying democratic rights, one should be careful so that others' democratic rights are not scuttled" (Young India:1926).

Given Gandhi's values and his vision of what constituted an absolutely civilized and free India, it was not surprising that Prof. Das chose to speak on education. Education not only forms the new generation, but reflects a society's primary image about itself and the individuals which compose it. Das echoed Gandhi's views of Swaraj when he said English language alone cannot save us for the language is not totally reliable to bank upon for an entire civilization which feeds on English education, that often has been taken as a tool to enslave the nation. In the same chord he spoke of the newly introduced CBCS syllabus structures which are exported directly from the westernized institutions and imposed on our local institutions without any cognitive enquiry. He thought of its pitfalls and danger. Das felt that education if carried out in English could only cater the chosen few. He was of the opinion that education if facilitated through translation studies will help contextualize our contents according to the need of the hour and society. A pan western educational system will not work but rather the need to contemporize it is the study of the hour. Das quoted Gandhi when he said, 'real freedom will come only when we free ourselves of the domination of Western education, Western culture and Western way of living which have been ingrained in us. Emancipation from this culture would mean real freedom for us'.

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(\*) We may think of uploading the aforesaid report along with the excerpts of the interview (recorded in the studio) and also prepare this as a dossier.  
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**The Takeaway from the 8th Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Memorial Lecture:**

Das quoting Gandhi said, a teacher who establishes rapport with the taught, soon becomes one with them, learns more from them than what he teaches them. He who learns nothing from his disciples is not worth mentioning. Whenever we talk with someone we must learn from him. We must take from him more than we give him. In this way, a true teacher regards himself as a valuable student of his students. If we teach our pupils with this attitude, we will benefit much from them. Das through his lecture showed us how an education that aimed at educating the whole person, rather than concentrating on one aspect was a more of a moral activity. This aim of higher education, Das felt while towing Gandhi, if truly accomplished can go a long way in sustaining the pillars of value education in the near future, especially in a society rotten by the iniquities of corruption.

**A few questions thrown by the 8th Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Memorial Lecture which can invite discursive interactions in the future are:**

1. How is Gandhi relevant still today in modernity in all its diverse manifestations?
2. How is it possible to bridge the gap between primary and higher education, which essentially is the need of the hour?
3. How has Mahatma Gandhi's multi-faceted character help evolved the changing discourse of education in contemporary India?

Herein lied the justification of the stated memorial lecture, which we think will go a long way in creating interpolative ripples that shall show the path for further ameliorations and deliberations on higher education in Bengal and beyond.

The programme was well conducted by Dr. Ritu Mathur Mitra, Associate Professor in History, School of Social Sciences, NSOU. The day came to an end with the vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Srabanti Choudhuri, Assistant Professor in Sociology, School of Social Sciences, NSOU before the august gathering.

Presented before the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor through the Director, SSS, for his kind information and record.

Srabanti Choudhuri

27/11/19.

Dr. Srabanti Choudhuri  
Assistant Professor in Sociology,  
School of Social Sciences,  
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