

SPEECH OF
THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA,

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI

DURING THE FOUNDATION LAYING CEREMONY FOR
THE UNIVERSITY OF NAGALAND

AT

LUMAMI

ON

5TH OCTOBER, 1987.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Friends, it gives me great pleasure to be with you today at this foundation laying ceremony for University of Nagaland. Every University is a major step forward for a State and this University at Lumami represents a major step forward not just for Nagaland or the North East but for the whole Country. This University is particularly important because for the first time we trying to orient the education system so that it actually benefits you in terms of your daily living, in terms of your earning capacity, in terms of your way of life. In many ways this University is a new venture for the whole Country. Prior to this University a lot of expansion had taken place. Our Universities had grown from 16 at Independence to over a 150 today but their basic pattern had not changed. They were still geared to produce the same type of graduate, who in today's India is finding it harder and harder to get a job to use that education for future. Infact, University education was becoming more and more frustrating for the youth because they would get good degrees, they get an education but it would be so diversed from reality that they could not use it. Sometimes Universities became almost like factories handing out degrees. The quality of the certificates that they gave were not of the highest standard that one would expect from centres of education. All these is being changed with this University. At this University, it will be our attempt to recast the curriculum and to have the subjects tailored in such a manner that those that get degrees from here, that pass out in this University will find it useful in building their future lives, in helping them get a job and earn.

Also we hope that the curriculum will match the possibilities of developments in Nagaland and will not be such that it will destroy all that is of value in your culture, in your traditions all that is of value ecologically and

environmentally in your region. Our attempt will be to see that the courses lay stress on the more practical aspects, the more productive aspects and skill oriented aspect, so that they will benefit the people going through here almost immediately they pass out. It is an attempt to mix learning with more practical aspects of living. All that study here will receive the basic foundation courses. They will all go through courses on static areas of education, preservation of your arts, your culture, your heritage. They will all learn physical education games and sports and in other areas. More than that, they will learn in areas that are related directly to the development of Nagaland. They will be taught productive and functional skills, which relate to youth problems, your problems in agriculture, in horticulture, animal husbandary, forestry, small industries and in other areas. There should be no barriers between the general and the more technical courses and perhaps it will be good if the students during the vacation could participate in practical extension work. The education will be no traditional, very innovative, perhaps in some ways even experimental. We feel that this will lead to very high standards of educational accomplishment and in the skills and the orientation that will be given to the young people in this University and I have no doubt that will lead to a much fuller and faster development of Nagaland. Nagaland already has one of the highest literacy rates in the country. Thanks to our network of schools and thanks to realization amongst the people of Nagaland that the development and progress is rooted in the education of its people. But till today there was no opportunity for all these students to study further in Nagaland.

With this University in Lumami that opportunity will be given to the younger generation in Nagaland. But no education can be complete if the institutions are isolated in little compartments of their own. We would like to see exchanges and inter-actions between this Universities and other Universities in India, perhaps even outside. University education must lead to much greater national integration, must lead to a greater unity of the country and must lead to a perception in our people, of their responsibilities towards the nation, towards building and strengthening the nation. I have no doubt that this University will do its part in building that awareness and that strength in the nation. One of the most difficult

areas of development, specially, in today's world where science and technology are moving very fast and economic development takes place much more rapidly than ever before in human history, is to preserve the tradition and the culture, the heritage that we have received from early generations the mixtures of old values a new science and technologies is what we are looking for and I have no doubt that in this University we will be able to do just that. Too often we find that education and even more so, higher education cuts our younger generation from the root that link them back to the Indian tradition. That should not happen here. This University must inculcate the best values of science and technology and modern development, while keeping alive everything that is good in our traditions and in our heritage Education. and more specially the higher education is a liberating force and harmonizing force and it gives one the intellectual ability to reflect and to think about critical issues. We have to see that this education also enlarges one's vision, enriches one's experience and enlightens one and broadens one's horizon. Just as I have said education must be a tool which gives us the best in our traditions and heritage. So must education be a tool to rid us of all that is wrong that we have inherited in our society. I have no doubt that this University will bring about all that is best and a new enlightenment in Nagaland, a new strength in the North East and the whole country. I would like to congratulate the Chief Minister and the Education Minister and the Vice Chairman on the setting up of this University. They have all put tremendous effort into acquiring this land and in getting this University, prestigious University in the State. I must also thank all the people of Nagaland on this major step forward. The challenge now is to complete this University in the minimum possible time so that it can start functioning and become operational. Quick dedicated work, no delay and no hang up. One point I almost forget is that of architecture. The University is set in a most beautiful surrounding and I hope that every thought and attention will be paid to the architecture and design of the University so that it blends in surroundings and with the traditions and the culture of Nagaland. I want to thank you for the warm welcome you have given me all morning as we have driven through Nagaland and specially in Mokochung and Lumami.

Thank you very much.