



Since long, Murshidabad was one of the most important places of Bengal and served as a nodal centre for colonial politics, trade and commerce and education. During the last days of the Mughals, its stature as one of the primary regions for vocational and industrial influence spread far and wide. Karnasubarna area was also an important cultural area where conventional modes of learning sustained by the zamindars intersected with the British colonial system, giving rise to the first flowerings of modern education in Bengal.

Archaeological findings of the area has traced back its educational history to the ancient times with strong evidence of the existence of a 'mahavihara' or a Buddhist centre of learning near Baharampore. The British colonial history shows evidence of the co-existence of both traditional and modern forms of education spread across the district with William Adam in his first report on the district referring to Schools of the Missionary Society as well as a centre of higher learning, the Nijamat College where Sanskrit, Arabic and English learning were in full flourish. By the turn of the nineteenth century, important nodal centres of education evolved, some of them being Jangipur, Kandi, Jiaganj, Berhampore, Azimganj, Gorabazar, Khagra, and Lalbagh. Raja Krishnath Roy of Cossimbazar assumed leadership for the introduction of a formal and western education for the inhabitants of the area and his widowed wife, Maharani Swarnamoyee took initiative in setting up the then Behrampore (now Krishnath College) on 1 November, 1853. Soon, the institution inspired the establishment of numerous schools and higher education centres across the district.

It is worthwhile that our Hon'ble Chief Minister has envisioned a greater role for the district in the sphere of higher education with the setting up of the Murshidabad University, a long standing requirement of the area. Her exemplary leadership and brilliant foresight have brought higher education to the very doors of the inhabitants of the district and have solved a long-standing practice of young scholars moving out to other places for higher education. The University has already begun catering to the high ideals set before it and I hope that in a short span of time, it shall be a higher institution of promise and social transformation.

As the First Vice Chancellor of three newly formed Universities together with my varied and extensive experience at the University of Calcutta, I am privileged to be a part of this University also and I shall work in its inspired 'Journey for Excellence' together with all stakeholders, including my dear students.

**PROF. DR. MITA BANERJEE**