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## WELCOME ADDRESS

By

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It gives me great pleasure in extending to you all a most hearty welcome on behalf of the Panjab University. I am particularly happy that three major conferences devoted to the advancement of economics are meeting simultaneously at Chandigarh. These are the days of specialisation, which is inevitable because of the quick pace at which the frontiers of knowledge are expanding. But in an age of increasing specialisation, it is equally necessary that there should be channels of mutual communication between various branches of knowledge. It has been said, that when a man has nothing more to say on his own subject, he turns to the integration of sciences. I must confess to a strong interest in the integration of knowledge, not because I am against specialisation but because I feel that there is far more unity in knowledge than is generally realised and that most of the basic phenomena of empirical world are to be found in all sciences—behaviour, interaction, growth and decay. The confinement of scholars to the narrow cells of their specialities has often obscured the broad patterns common to all. To quote Professor Boulding, one of your own tribe: "Knowledge is a many storeyed building where there is a poor elevator service between the floors and each discipline occupies a different floor. No man should expect to be thoroughly familiar with any discipline other than his own. Nevertheless, even a cursory acquaintance with the other floors of the building may lead him to investigate corners and closets of his own which he never suspected were there." It is from this point of view that I feel particularly happy to welcome the three conferences meeting together. One hopes that from such joint deliberations strong ties of mutual cooperation and communication would be developed among various disciplines—among the social sciences themselves and between social sciences and natural and physical sciences. Such a process of mutual understanding will be to the good of all disciplines and will help us in comprehending better the reality and truth in all its fullness.

The economist belongs to a profession which has made important contributions to the understanding of the dynamics of the social process. Economics today is a valuable part of every modern society. We in India have given a very high place to economists in the planning of both our present and future, and we look to them for the solution of many problems. There is, for instance, the basic problem of crushing poverty and backwardness in many fields. How to free our country

from the pains of poverty and initiate a process of what in your vocabulary is called "take off" into "self-sustained" growth is a difficult question; but as the great Cambridge economist, Alfred Marshall, put it, it is questions like this which "give to economic studies their chief and highest interest." The difficult problems by their very magnitude offer a new challenge to man. They also indicate the opportunities that lie before economists and other scientists in the service of our nation. Indeed, in the absence of wide knowledge of economic problems in the general public, the duty of the economist becomes all the more important in helping to formulate proper social and economic policies. As Lord Keynes has said: "The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. . . . Sooner or later, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or for evil." Hence the important role of the economists and other social scientists in the correct formulation of social policies.

Economics in recent years has become more and more "growth-oriented." This is a welcome shift of emphasis. I have no doubt, that questions pertaining to economic growth will figure prominently in your deliberations also. I do not wish to anticipate your discussions. However, as a person intimately connected with education for the last several years, I cannot help drawing your attention to the crucial importance of education in accelerating the pace of social and economic development. The Scandinavian countries, Germany, U. S. A. and now the Soviet Union are telling examples of how a purposive public drive for education has led to great economic progress. Japan, which was the first Asian country to industrialise itself, made primary education compulsory even before the U. K. Further, for the success of democratic institutions and democratic processes, the importance of an enlightened and educated electorate can hardly be exaggerated. The moral for us is, therefore, clear. Much is being done to advance the cause of education and learning in the country. But much more remains to be done, particularly towards the improvement of secondary and university education. It has to be realised that investment in education as investment in human resources is a prerequisite for rapid economic development. I am afraid this has not been realised as well as it should be by the economists who are engaged in our national planning.

It is after a long time that an economic conference is holding its annual session in this State. If I remember correctly, it was in 1946 that the Indian Economic Association held its conference at Lahore. The Partition of the country dealt a severe blow to the economy of this border State. The people of Punjab, however, took the challenge seriously and though even today, Punjab displays many features of under-development, it has made rapid progress in several spheres. Thanks to the sturdy peasantry of this State, instead of being an importer of food, as it was immediately after the Partition, the State today is a net exporter not only of food and raw materials but also of a number of industrial products. Punjab has made particularly rapid progress in the development of small-scale industries, despite the disadvantage of having to import many of the industrial raw materials from distant areas. The main factor at work seems to me the high "achievement motivation" of the people of Punjab, many of whom had to migrate from the much

more prosperous Western Punjab. The traditional standard of living of the migrants was higher than what East Punjab offered. But instead of remaining in a state of resignation, we were driven by the urge to regain and improve our standards of living. There was a surge for change which provided the necessary cultural, sociological and motivational framework for development. All this provided a big push needed to overcome the inertia of stagnant East Punjab economy. Punjab's development in recent years is a fruitful demonstration of Toynbee's *Challenge and Response* thesis. Punjab's progress, therefore, should form an interesting study for the students of regional economic development and I hope that during your stay here you will have an opportunity to see something of life in this part of our country.

As I have already mentioned, the Partition seriously interfered with the functioning of many normal activities of life in this State. University education was no exception. The Panjab University till recently did not have a permanent home of its own and its various teaching departments lay scattered all over the State. However, that phase is now over. With all the departments now functioning at Chandigarh, we have very nearly completed our process of rehabilitation. The Department of Economics of this University which looks after post-graduate economic studies and research, came over to the campus two and a half years ago. It has been striving to organise economic teaching and research on adequate basis, despite its full share of various difficulties, such as shortage of qualified teachers, inadequate library and the like, which young departments have usually to face. Apart from teaching for the Master's degree in economics, it has also got under way a programme of training in social sciences research generously supported by the Ford Foundation. The object of this programme is to impart systematic training in methods of research in economics. A few research projects have been completed and some others are under way. Apart from this, plans have been made for setting up post-M.A. Certificate Courses in Economic Statistics and Econometrics, in Industrial Relations and Labour Welfare, and in Agricultural Economics, and we expect to commence teaching these courses before very long. I shall not pretend that what we have so far achieved in these fields could not be better, nor that it is at all commensurate with the record of progress, at some other University centres. Nonetheless, we may say, perhaps with some reason, that the spell of stagnation has been broken and conditions for a self-sustained growth of economic studies in the State have been created.

I am quite conscious of the fact, placed as we are, in the initial stages of development in this University, we have not been able to provide all the amenities to the members and delegates to the three Conferences which a well-settled old University could possibly do. Despite these inconveniences, I trust that this trip to Chandigarh, with the lofty Himalayas in the background, will leave on the minds of all of you a lasting impression of fruitful visit to this State.

I wish you all success in your deliberations.