

## 70<sup>th</sup> Independence Day Celebration : Azadi 70 Saal – Bharat Bemisal

**Department of Biochemistry**  
**University of Delhi South Campus**  
**New Delhi 110021**

*23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2016, 10.50 am, Seminar Room, B.K. Bachhawat Block:*

15<sup>th</sup> August, 2016 marked the 70<sup>th</sup> year of independence of India. A day to celebrate, a day to cherish, a day to make promises, a day to take stock of our lofty aspirations and unfulfilled goals and desires – not only for ourselves but for the entire country. This year the Independence Day celebration was exceptional through several initiatives of the government of India like “Bharat Parv” festival at Rajpath and the “Tiranga Yatras” taken out across the country from 15-22 August. In addition to such events, the government had also undertaken 15-day long program called “70 Saal Azadi – Zara Yaad Karo Qurbani” (70 years of Independence – Let’s recall the sacrifices made) from August 9 until August 23, to ensure that the celebration is a festival of the people and to invoke patriotism and pride for the nation.

Department of Biochemistry, a small but significant department of the University of Delhi, opted to be part of the “70 Saal Azadi – Zara Yaad Karo Qurbani” program and celebrated 70<sup>th</sup> Independence Day in the Department on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2016. We called the program “Azadi 70 Saal – Bharat Bemisal”.

As a mark of respect and adoration for our glorious motherland, we all tried to wear clothes that represented one of the Tri-colors of the Indian Flag or the Chakra. Everyone in the department assembled in the seminar room at 10.50 am. The seminar room was aptly decorated with tri-color balloons. A powerpoint slide was displayed with the Indian flag flying and the slogan “Azadi 70 Saal – Bharat Bemisal”. The enthusiasm was remarkable and the bonding extravagant. It showed that all our hearts beat for the country – all for one, one for all.

Head of the Department (acting), Prof. Debi Sarkar, invited Ph.D student Ms. Vaishali Verma and the organizer and anchor of the event Prof. Suman Kundu, to initiate the proceedings. Vaishali briefed the reason for the assembly and Dr. Kundu reiterated the government’s golden policies to make the Independence Day celebration in 2016 special with a 15-day long program, of which 23<sup>rd</sup> August was the last day. Prof. Sarkar led the department to sing the National Anthem exactly at 11.00 am, as was planned by the government across the country. The walls of the seminar room reverberated with the rendition of the National Anthem sung with pride and gusto by each member of the department. The celebration had begun !!

Prof. Sarkar was invited to deliver his inaugural address. He talked about what freedom meant to him during his early days of childhood in the open fields of Bengal (gram-bangla) and his days in

Kolkata, which was the first capital under British rule. He talked about the importance of Bengal in the freedom struggle. He described his own journey from Kolkata to Delhi via Varanasi in search of his freedom to pursue life sciences research. He wished well for everyone and he wished a wonderful program ahead.

Prof. Kundu described what freedom means to him – that the ability to carry out responsibilities as a teacher, as a scientist and as a citizen of the country with utmost freedom. He emphasized that with independence comes responsibilities and duties for the family and fellow countrymen. He remembered the sacrifices made by countless countrymen – some of whom we know and some who remained anonymous – across the length and breadth of the country. He reminded the students that serving the nation not always meant giving up life in the battlefield, but by dispensing daily duties in a sincere manner, and fulfilling whatever duties one is assigned. Students, thus should be truthful to their studies and research, he emphasized. Practicing the value of time, being part and parcel of every activity in the department, having a sense of teamwork and even following traffic rules on the road amounted to patriotism and service to the nation.

Mr. Subroto Ghosh, a senior member of the department, also emphasized the values of Indian-ness. He reminded how sacrifices were made to establish the department and about his time in Bengal as well. Sacrifices makes a country stand up.

The talented and energetic students of the department joined the celebration with their creativities and zeal. The first year M.Sc students, who were freshly inducted in the department, overcame their nervousness and presented beautifully a dance number to the tune of the song “Desh rangeela”. They followed it up with the patriotic song “Kandho se milte kandhe”. The audience warmed up to the wonderful song.

The anchor emphasized the importance of working “Kandho se milte kandhe”. Working hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, the department will achieve its goals and make the country proud. Working together will protect against fragmentation and unity is what builds a country. He commented on how men and women should be equal and should work together. He emphasized that while the low number of women scientists in India were a concern, the department proudly is home to three women faculties out of a total strength of seven. The women faculties were invited to share their thoughts.

Prof. Alo Nag expressed how she looked forward to students making a mark and students making the program worthy of the special day. Students are the future, she reiterated, and they need to share their feelings of independence through events. She emphasized the importance of student empowerment.

Dr. Amita Gupta voiced the concern of Independence Day not being celebrated in the right spirit and how it often is taken as just another holiday. She gave the example of how school kids of Vasant Valley School, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi march on the streets of the locality on 15<sup>th</sup> August each year, inculcating the spirit of freedom and nation building early in life. She urged Master’s

and Ph.D students to be part of the celebration every year on 15<sup>th</sup> August. She reminded everyone how Delhi University has been a part of the freedom struggle since the Vice Regal lodge of Delhi University is steeped in history with Bhagat Singh kept under captivation there and several key meetings and decisions being held there that shaped the nation, when the capital of the country was shifted from Kolkata to Delhi in 1911.

The youngest faculty member, Dr. Garima Khare, urged students to make the country proud by studying and working in India itself and not abandoning it in favor of greener pastures abroad. She expressed faith in the “Make in India” policy.

Students, the flag bearer of the nation, took over soon enough. Pradeep Singh read out a piece on the glory of the nation and its achievements and pride heritage. He showed an emotional video with a strong theme whereby the idea was to spread the message of independence far and wide, across all kinds of divide of rich and poor. The day should mean much more than buying Indian flags at the traffic signal. It should set us all thinking as to how the benefits of a free democracy reach far nooks and corners of the country with a square meal for every soul in this nation. Pradeep then joined his lab members (working in Prof Nag’s laboratory) Yama, Diptashree, Hina, Aakriti, Priyanka and Taiyebba to render the soul arousing song “Jai ho”. Others joined in as well. Victory for the nation was announced.

M. Phil students were not to be left behind. Ravi Kant Sharma, working in the laboratory of Prof. Kundu, expressed in astute and pure Hindi what freedom meant to him. He urged everyone to spare a moment of thought for the Indian soldiers, who fight their life out to secure us from external threats. He reminded us of the supreme sacrifices they make, day in and day out, and shared his conversation with an Indian soldier who guarded the nation in the most difficult terrains of the country going with proper food for days altogether. He described, with his attractive oratory, how the soldier was lonely in his duty and cut off from the rest of the world with no communication, no phones. He sang a patriotic song and did justice to his wonderful voice. The anchor reflected upon this message and challenged the Ph.D students to shun the cell phone, and thus distractions, while on work!!

Creativity, the hall mark of independence, kept flowing. Sanjay Kumar Dey, a Ph.D scholar in the laboratory of Prof. Kundu, read out a poem which he had written to reiterate independence and the rich diversity of the nation. Written extremely well, it warmed everyone’s heart. Final year M.Sc. student, Ms. Ushma Anand, followed suit with a poem that she had written about the meaning of freedom and independence.

Then came the National Song “Vande Mataram”. M.Sc. final year students presented this song, which keeps echoing in the seminar room over and over again. It will be a rendition to cherish for a long time.

The faculty members were supercharged by then. Prof. Sarkar and Mr. Ghosh presented a Bengali patriotic song that charged us for the rest of the year, when the country will be remembered. All

of us took oath in our minds to make the independence count and to work with zeal and sincerity to serve the nation to the fullest potential.

The hall rose to its feet, head held high, and sang the National Anthem again.

The celebration for the day ended with tri-color sweets for treat. The Nation will keep echoing in our notion till the last breath.

Jai Hind!!!

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The Department on August 23, 2016.

