

Kolkata: St Xavier's holds 16th convocation

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KOLKATA: Sonajharia Minz, vice-chancellor of Sido Kanhu Murmu University, Dumka, recollected the trying times she faced during her school and college days before she could finally reach her goal of becoming a scholar.

Minz was the chief guest at the 16th annual convocation of St Xavier's College on Saturday. The institute principal, Father Dominic Savio, and CU vice-chancellor Asis Kumar Chattopadhyay were among the guests.

Being a member of the tribal community, Minz was even castigated for being a brilliant student. Her scholarly capabilities too were questioned. "When I had scored the highest in Sanskrit in school, my teacher scolded me that how could I do so well in the subject, Sanskrit being an Aryan

language. I was forbidden from studying mathematics after Class X because it was not supposed to be my area as I was a tribal member. But I graduated with a major in maths and did a PhD in computer science. I crossed every barrier. I do not have footprints of barriers, but I have defined my footprints over the barriers," Minz said.

India is a country of diversity, but still there are gender and social barriers for the marginalized sections to get quality education. The enrolment of marginalized students was increasing but why were so few teachers from the section, she questioned.

Degrees were awarded to 2,188 undergraduate, 400 postgraduate, 93 BEd students and eight PhD scholars at the convocation. Justice Indra Prasanna Mukherjee of Calcutta High Court was awarded the Nihil Ultra Award for his outstanding contribution to society. Fr Dominic Savio said, "The college target is to offer PG courses in 15 subjects and doctoral programmes in 10 subjects in its Vision 2025 programme. The college has introduced MSc in data science from 2022-23. We run PhD programmes in seven disciplines and have obtained permission to start PhD in political science. The next plan is to start PhD in economics."