A journey from Barra to Berkeley

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THE JOURNEY from Barra, a remote village in Darbhanga district, to Berkeley has been long for M J Warsi, professor in South and Southeast Asian Studies Department of the University of California. But he has not forgotten Bihar. For, he keeps on coming back to his country and the State to create awareness on the current trends in information technology to help them explore new vistas in career.

The Bihar professor, himself a linguist, who was here to deliver his keynote address at the two-day seminar organised by Bihar Brains Scholastic Institution, an organisation run by NRIs, maintains that a whole new career option was available for students. “The only need was to empower students with awareness, give them an opportunity to share their views and guide them in choosing the right career,” he said.

But how would a student of languages be in a position to exploit the available opportunities in the IT sector? The professor, who has been nominated an ‘unsung hero’ for his extraordinary contribution in academic matters by the Chancellor of the University of California last month, says “instead of going in for a masters degree in languages, if one chooses linguistics as an option then a student would be in a position to get immediate placement not only in India but also in many European and American academic institutions and companies.”

Elaborating on the new vistas that could open up Warsi, a gold medallist from Aligarh Muslim University, said that computerisation projects needed linguists throughout the world. To make their software, truely borderless, all major software companies are trying to go in for bi-lingual formatting. And if the benefit of IT has to spread and touch the lives of millions of people the eventuality of software development in multi-lingual format is only a foregone conclusion, he says.

The young professor is already making waves at the University of California, which also has the distinction of producing the highest number of Nobel Prize winners. He has 26 papers and two books under his belt and has also been chosen as a ‘role model’ by the undergraduates of the university for his penchant to go beyond the call of duty to assist students in academic and personal matters.