

Draft speech of the Presidential Address to be delivered by Smt. D. Purandeswari, MoS (HRD) in the International Conference on “Human science for the generation next” to be held at Chennai on 13th July, 2006. Organized by Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed College for Women (formerly S.I.E.T women’s college).

Mr. Chairman and other dignitaries of South Indian Education Trust and distinguished guests and friends, I feel greatly honoured in being called upon to preside over the inaugural function of the International Conference on “Human Science for the Generation next” My feelings of pleasure have been increased manifold by the fact that I have had the privilege of being an ex student of this prestigious college which for the last more than fifty years has been carrying on specialized studies on various facets of Human Science and conducting seminars, workshops, conferences and refresher courses on Human Science and cognate matters for the benefit of various segments of society.

Home Science, now more commonly referred to as Human Science encompasses a comprehensive range of subjects. It provides a wide field of study which draws upon multi disciplines such as house keeping. Child development, community living, food nutrition, clothing textiles, biotechnology and many more. In short it is aimed at achieving and maintaining the welfare and well being of home and family life. In an ever changing social scenario Home management now-a-days requires skill and competence not only to update activities within a domestic set up but it extends to broader social challenges and has wider ramifications.

For very obvious reasons, it is neither possible nor desirable to deal with the entire gamut of human science in my brief address to you. I understand that the various aspects of the subject will be discussed in separate sessions of the conference by specialists and experts who have been invited on the occasion. I would however like to touch some of the more salient points.

The first point I would like to refer is Human Nutrition. We require food substances to supply the components necessary to build and repair tissues as they wear out and die, to keep the body in good working condition, and to supply fuel for energy. For good nutrition a person should have a well-balanced diet, which provides an adequate but not excessive number of calories for the body's energy needs. Children require relatively larger amounts of nutrients and calories because of their rapid growth.

Good nutrition is reflected not only in the growth and function of the body but also in its appearance. The eyes, skin, hair, and teeth can indicate whether body nourishment is good and sufficient. A poorly nourished child will fail to grow properly; while a poorly nourished adult will have a decreased resistance to infection and disease. Poor nutrition may result from excesses in the diet as well as deficiencies. Excess of certain vitamins or minerals can produce potentially lethal diseases. Recently a survey conducted by the World Bank reveals that about 47% of the children in India are in various stages of malnourishment and under nourishment. This is a

dangerous signal for the health of our country for to-day's children will grow up to be tomorrow's adult. Institutions like yours can conducted meaningful surveys to find out the causes and preventives of such serious matters.

In this context I would like to briefly refer the to effect of nutrition on sports and sportsmen. We are a sports loving country although. Our performance in the various events in the international fora are far from encouraging. Nutrition and nourishment are very important constituents for improving the performance of our sportsmen and sport women which can put our country on the global sports map . I think this conference will devote focused attention to the problems of nutrition, particular that of child malnutrition which is widely prevalent in the country.

I now come to biotechnology which is an upcoming area and which can be profitably used in application s of growth of human science development. India is one of the largest agrarian economy in the world. However, after the green revolution of the last century the agricultural output has declined in India because of various reasons like disease, pests and weeds, the low subsistence nature of farming, unprecedented climatic conditions, limited water resources, poor land condition, drought, heat and saline soil conditions and the like.

India has 25% of the world's cotton acres, an estimated 4 million cotton farmers, and some 60 million people depend on cotton and the textile industry to make a living. Textile industry accounts for

India's single largest export sector. However the country produces only 12% of the world's cotton. Its average yields are among the lowest in the world.

India has witnessed a tremendous rise in cotton production since the introduction of Bt cotton technology in 2002. But it is necessary that we remain ever vigilant so that Bt Cotton Technology should be properly used and is closely monitored by a regulatory authority in order that it brings about real profit to the farmers and real benefits to the consumers. Recently what happened to our farmers in A.P as a result of the activities of Monsanto Company is a matter of common knowledge and this must be prevented at all costs. For the present our cotton farmers have got substantial relief thanks to judicial intervention.

Crop biotechnology can also provide the needed fuel and can be an engine of growth. It can help reduce poverty, promote rural development, strengthen trade and economy and agricultural sustainability, and also deliver direct benefits to farmers and consumers. Recently the P.M has called for a Second Green Revolution. It is quite appropriate and timely. The application of biotechnology in the farm sector can maximize yields and bring about a paradigm shift in quantum and quality of agricultural production.

Now I turn to a subject wherein our young generations will be quite interested, namely Fashion technology. Today it is no longer the exclusive preserve of the urbanites. Serious efforts are being

made to put some women from the rural areas on the fashion map in the different parts of country.

The latest fashion trends are keenly observed and survey conducted before training members of self-help groups. The uniqueness of the course is its stress on working in the most eco-friendly manner with materials available in Nature.

Though the products have not been adorned by mannequins on their cat-walk under the glare of arc lamps, they are in no way inferior either in material quality or fashion design-wise. The cloth used for designing the attire for both men and women comes from traditional weavers.

Recently Parliament passed the National Institute of Fashion Technology Act. It was in 1986 that the then Congress Government, with a vision of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, started this Institute, which is known as NIFT. A number of students who have studied in these institutes and have become fashion czars, as we call it. Not only in this country, but these designers are being accepted in the world over.

Textile is one of the most important products, which is being exported. I think 29 per cent exports of the country are textiles. More

and more other products, which are related to the fashion technology, are going outside the country.

If we see fashion in our villages, that is equally good fashion and we must carry it forward. The fashion value addition of a product is quite a lot. That is what the country needs when we export. When we export anything with value addition, the total cost is much lesser and that will be a great plus point for the country's business. It is not a question of ten or 40 billion dollars. The scope is unlimited. It's the question of taking advantage of it. And at this a point of time, if we keep our mind closed that we will not do this or that and we will keep the bureaucratic control on every step of our activity, then, I am sorry, we will only be giving only lip-service to this technology. This mindset must change if we really to flourish in the realm of fashion design.

Basically, fashion does not mean only the cotton or silk or only the textiles. Fashion could mean everything – jewellery, leather or even crafts. And when we think of fashion, even interior decoration is a fashion. Wherein there are tremendous potentialities we must exploit them to our advantage.

NIFT has been emerging as one of the pioneering institutes in the country in the field of fashion designing with nearly 1,500 intakes every year. It is fully funded by the Government. Now, with the new Fashion Technology Act, in place the NIFT would transform fashion technology into a wealth-generating business by getting more

assistance from the Government. There is however a need to embed fashion technology into a textile industry which is very important for our economy.

If you look at the textile designing, the global supply and retail chain are the key characteristics of this industry. India has a tremendous opportunity in textiles in the area of design and supply chain logistics. Design costs in India are one-tenth of that in the U.S. and there is big scope for India to become a design outsourcing hub and we should not miss this opportunity. May be, the NIFT and this college can work in tandem in this direction to the mutual advantage of both.

Technological development is not linear, but exponential, and this explosive rate of change means that human life will soon be irreversibly transformed to a state of enrichment and excellence. To keep this growth process alive, we must continue with higher studies and research in different facets of human science with or without government's support and patronage.

Thank you.