

Draft speech of Mrs. D. Purandeswari, MoS-HRD (HE) as Chief Guest on the occasion of the Annual Day of the Rainbow Concept School, Mahaboobnagar, A.P on 9th February, 2007 at 5.30 p.m.

It gives me immense pleasure to be here this evening and to address the young students of the Rainbow Concept School on the occasion of its Annual Day function of the school. The Rainbow concept School has been established by Dr. A. Madhusudhan Reddy very thoughtfully for an overall growth of a child and to integrate his academic excellence with his personality development.

Education is not just the amount of information that is put into a child's brain undigested, unrelated and unassimilated. The very essence of education is the concentration of mind and not mere collection or collation of facts. As Swami Vivekananda said: "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man". The concept of education is that it should help the formation of character expansion of intellect and development of a positive view of the life. It is this man-making character which is the basic object of all education.

A model school should be a mirror of the child's personality wherein education should constitute the inner beauty. Rainbow Concept School. I understand strives to identify and nurture innate talents and abilities. Experimentation and creativity through interactive and scientifically developed activities, traditional values with modern knowledge and information, all-round development of the students

without any discrimination or prejudices are the basic objectives of quality education. I am assured that these ideas form the core contents in educational pattern of the school which prepares the young generation to become leaders in whatever career they choose and to contribute positively towards self, family, society, nation and the entire world.

I am pleased to know that Rainbow understands the need for effective communication and therefore offers intensive coaching in both oral and written communication skills. This helps in expressing ideas clearly and effectively. Other activities like group discussions, elocution, seminars etc., are conducted for the personality development of students. Innovative workshops, projects and guest lectures by eminent personalities are organized for the benefit of students. Finally works of art help one to relate with the world. The expressions denote the experience and the individuals outlook towards society. Rainbow lets students kindle the fire of creativity in them who are motivated to participate and display their talents in interschool and at various other competitions. Hobby clubs at Rainbows provide the for a for students to express and hone their skills and talent in a range of activities like painting, arts, music and dance, debate elocution stamp collection and so on. Students need some time to relax and rejuvenate. This helps in learning better and also keeps the mind and body healthy. This is done through sports and games. They help in keeping the body fit and provide mental relaxation.

It is also very heartening to be informed that field trips are an integral part of education at Rainbow. Students are taken to places of historical importance, scientific interest, farms and fields to give them first-hand idea on various occupations. This enables students to see for themselves the productive processes of goods of our daily use. These trips are preceded by assigning them projects on the proposed place of visit, its significance and are followed by summarizing their individual experiences. This should provide a strong vocational bias to our educational system which is the need of the day.

A school based on the rainbow model has to ensure that entire education should take place in natural surroundings in tandem with nature where a child should learn to identify plants, flowers and birds in the open air. This would be particularly attractive to a child who while leaving the threshold of home and going to school for the first time needs a lot of inducement and persuasion for study. Nature, as Gandhiji used to observe frequently, has enough to fulfill man's needs but not his greeds. This should be firmly implanted in a child's mind so that he may constantly be aware that man has a special responsibility to protect Nature. Students should be made aware of their responsibility and duty towards protecting nature and prevent its wanton destruction which unfortunately seems to be order of the day. Some simple practices like encouraging planting of trees periodically in their neighbourhood, watering the plants and nurturing them, digging pits for rain water harvesting should be taught. These and other would foster in a child caring and sharing attitude towards

nature and life on earth and a deep appearance of the flora and fauna.

To make education more attractive, the students of lower classes should be imparted education through play-way methods. They should be taught to identify various colours, sounds, shapes and objects. Exercises like clay-modeling, building sand castles, the playpen and other interactive methods should be adopted to make learning more interesting and attractive.

In this context I would like to bring to your notice that this is how Tagore conceptualized and brought up his famous Santiniketan (Abode of Peace) where the entire educational system was integrated from pre-nursery to the stage of Masters' Degree and where the teaching was imparted in open air classrooms in natural surroundings. Poet himself used to take some nursery and pre-nursery classes and imparted education through music dance and drama composed by him. In some cases Tagore used to take part in the dramas and plays along with other children; at times he also used to personally supervise the works of painting and craft made by the children and put in a few words of encouragement for them. This instilled life in teaching as well as learning and served as a big booster for uplifting the spirit of the children. Indeed Tagore made education joyful and playful for all children.

Under Tagore's watchful supervision, a friendly atmosphere was created for students to interact with their teachers and share a

relation of mutual trust and affection. This led to a congenial environment conducive for teaching and learning. Coaching was provided through interactive teaching methods. The curiosity of the students was not suppressed but encouraged and students had the freedom to express their opinions and to seek their own answers subject of course to the correction by teachers wherever necessary. No wonder, this unconventional methodology gained quick recognition and due to Poet's untiring efforts and zeal, Shantiniketan won international reputation and ere long it became the hub of foreign scholars interested in various facets of our heritage and culture. The organizers of the Rainbow Concept School would do well to take a leaf out of Tagore's book in shaping the future of their school.

One of the basic drawbacks of to-day's schooling is that tens of thousands of school-going children in India are penalized by an educational system that has largely failed to take into account their special learning needs. It is time we better understood the profile of students with learning difficulties. Sustained application of sound scientific knowledge in the classroom can make a difference. Such application can occur only if our schools had more teachers anchored in the knowledge of neurological functions that impact learning. Teachers can then assess their students' strengths and weaknesses in order to modify their instruction, so that all students benefit. Failure in school often portends low self-esteem as adults, and most certainly contributes to poor productivity in professional life. With its escalating needs for economic development, India cannot afford a future citizenry that hasn't been given the scholastic

consideration and opportunities it deserves in childhood. The reluctance of school administrators to train teachers in these areas is puzzling. What is worse is that students' failure permeates into the home. School authorities and teachers are seldom able to reassure distraught parents. Educators and psychologists occasionally offer diagnoses of dyslexia, or other learning disability, but seldom is a learning plan offered to the child or the parent that meets that child's specific requirements. This is because teachers often do not know how a child learns, and are over focused on what a child learns. Given the pressure on children to be all-rounded, it is perhaps a matter of time before most students experience a breakdown in learning. To be successful in school, students need to be good at many things at the same time regardless of their strengths or weaknesses. This leads to frustration, humiliation, and failure among many of them. An undue pressure on the child can adversely affect his capacity to learn, as well as his ability to take pleasure in academic work. We must not forget that education must and should be joyous, not onerous.

I have earlier referred to the successful growth of Tagore's Santiniketan as a focal point of imparting true and meaningful education without tears. But the study of science and technology was not sufficiently emphasized in their educational curriculum. This was not because of any inherent defect or deliberate lapse in their educational planning but because when Santiniketan was set up more than a century back (precisely on 22-12-1901) the study of Science and technology was not assigned the overriding importance

in our educational curriculum. The position has undergone a sea-change since then in view of the phenomenal and exponential advancement in science and technology. The organizers of the Rainbow Concept School cannot afford to ignore this development. We have to remember that all training and teachings should be basically centered round science and technology. The 21st Century is universally acknowledged as the “Knowledge Century” which means that Knowledge or brain power through an extensive study and application of science and technology should be reflected in a country’s competitiveness, advancement and human capabilities. Human capabilities today are a function of the well-being of a people and the investment we make in human capital formation. The ability of a nation to make best use of its knowledge or brain power will ultimately determine its place in the comity of nations in the present century. In this context, lifelong learning is a high priority for all and is in fact fundamental to the development of a nation. It builds the base for economic and social development, and fosters the capacity of individuals to contribute to and benefit from, that development. It also sustains and enriches both individual and overall culture of a nation and builds mutual respect and understanding that ultimately transcends all national differences and barriers. The Rainbow Concept School has to keep in view this development if it really wants to come up as a focal point of professional excellence.

And yet, I must, caution that professional excellence without accompanying human virtues may many prove disastrous. As the adage goes that knowledge without character and science without

humanity portend dangerous signals for a valued-based democratic society. We must therefore ensure that the development of a knowledge society encouraging professional excellence does not directly or indirectly discards the basics of human excellence . In the beautiful and inimitable words of our philosopher-statesman Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, (I quote)

Knowledge is not something to be packed away in some corner of our brain, but is what enters into our being, colour our emotion, haunts our soul, and is as close to us as life itself. It is the over – mastering power which through the intellect moulds the whole personality, trains the emotions and disciplines the will. Unquote

I am sure that Rainbow Concept School would go a long way in boosting the tempo of development and help our country to reach soaring heights of perfection which would enable it to become a powerhouse of intellectual endeavour and knowledge engine of the world without in any compromising the qualities human virtues of kindness compassion, sympathy and fellow-feeling.

With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Annual Day Function of the Rainbow Concept School.

Jai Hind.