

**Speech of Smt. D. Purandeswari, Hon'ble MoS  
HRD (HE) as Chief Guest on the occasion of  
The Silver Jubilee Function of NTR Government Degree  
College for Women, Mahaboobngar, AP on 9<sup>th</sup> Febraury,  
2007.**

I am glad to be invited here as the Chief Guest on the occasion of the celebration of Silver Jubilee function of the NTR Government Degree college for Women, Mahaboobnagar on its successful and glorious completion of 25 years catering to the needs of higher education for women. The college which was established in 1981-82 to provide education to the women of the most educationally backward district of the State namely the District of Palmoour has gone through many vicissitude's during these 25 years. But I am glad that it has faced all the challenges and hurdles with courage and fortitude and has come up as a prime educational institute in the State of AP. With an initial student strength of 51 in 1981-82 the college has on its roll to-day nearly 2000 students and is catering to the educational requirements of nearly 80 percent of the marginalized sections of the society including SC,ST, OBC and other minorities. I congratulate the management of the college and its Principal on their successful completion of a long innings in the cause of female education and hope that college will maintain the tempo and quality of its development.

The cause of women's education which is the most potent method of the empowerment of the womenkind has been a cause dear to many of our front ranking leaders of the social and cultural

renaissance in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Beginning with Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, Gandhi and others all have been championing the cause of female education. All of them felt that unless the cause of women's education was promoted on a massive scale, our struggle for political emancipation would be incomplete and meaningless. They considered that education would fully empower women to stand on their legs and do away with gender discrimination. In the words of Swami Vivekananda ( I quote)

“Educate your women first and leave them to themselves; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them”  
(Unquote)

To speak of gender equality is to speak of a world when the ideal scenario would be that both men and women are equal partners in all vital aspects of national life and living. Although gender equality is an important issue of human rights and social justice and although efforts to promote greater equality between men and women can contribute to the overall development of human society, this contemplated equality is just a myth as yet. Despite a highline consciousness and greater awareness of the role of women, no society throughout the globe treats its women as well as its men. Consequently women continue to suffer from diverse deprivations. This leaves nearly half the corpus of the world population with an ignoble feeling of frustration, of opportunities missed and of the challenges unresolved. An International Labour Organizations study

shows that although women represents 50% of the world adult population, one third of the official labour force, perform nearly 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the working hours but they receive one tenth of the world's income and owns less than 1% of the world property. In India, the scenario is no better.

The Economic Survey of the Government of India for , 2004 – 05 presents a bleak picture of the gender discrimination in the country.

I quote:

“As per the 2001 census, women who constituted 48% of the total population of the country, suffer many disadvantages as compared to men in the areas of education, health, labour participation rate and earnings.” Unquote.

This position prevails in spite of the fact that our Constitution which is the supreme law of the land expressly prohibits gender discrimination and prescribes, specific, measures for economic and social empowerment of women. The provisions of Art. 14, 15, 16(2), 21, 23, 39(a), 39(d), 39(e) etc., uniformly speak for equal treatment for both men and women in all economic and social activities including educational and cultural activities and make the message loud and clear that State will actively promote measures so that men and women would have equal access to “finer graces of human civilization”. But despite these statutory provisions and despite

umpteen number of judicial interventions in place, the ground realities are altogether different.

Education to my mind is not only a goal in itself but is a powerful facilitator of social and economic change. Combined with sound macroeconomic 'policies, education is fundamental for the build up of democratic societies. It is key to creating, applying and spreading new ideas, which in turn are critical for sustained growth. Education builds up what the Noble Laureate Amartya Sen rightly calls "human capabilities" and it is one of the most powerful instruments known for laying the basis for sustained socio-economic growth and sound and stable governance, assuring justice and equity for all. Education and education alone could provide the foundation of an enduring value-based and egalitarian society.

Shortly after independence the University Education Commission 1948-49 under the Chairmanship of the famous philosopher–Statesman Dr. S. Radhakrishnan identified education as a critical input in human resource development which was essential not only for the material welfare and prosperity but also for development of moral and spiritual qualities of the younger generation and to promote the latent potentialities of dynamic social and political leadership. The Commission submitted a comprehensive report on educational reforms for the country's development and growth.

Article 45 of the Constitution of India provided that the State would endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years but it could not effectively direct the States to universalize elementary education. It was only in 2002 that the 86<sup>th</sup> amendment was made to the Constitution, inserting article 21A which authorized the State by law to provide compulsory education to all children between fourteen years age irrespective of gender disparity. The contemplated legislative intervention envisaged in Article 21-A will bring about a metamorphosis in universalizing education on a mass scale.

The Common Minimum Programme of the UPA government under the leadership headed by Smt. Sonia Gandhi Ji for the first time decided to give a direction to our new requirements and increase the expenses in the development of human resources to 6 percent of our GDP. In actual practice, however we have been able to provide only about 3.3% so far. But we are serious about making higher allocation for education because we believe, as stated in the reports of the Education Commission 1964-66, that “in an age of science, there can be no greater risk than a policy of drift and niggardliness in education” and that is our firm commitment. In pursuance of this commitment, we have from time to time been inaugurating various schemes like Midday Meal, Education for All, and National Literacy Mission for upgrading the status of education in the country including the status of female education.

I think we succeeded in a fair measure in taking education to the targeted groups including girls and I think we shall succeed.

Now reverting back to your college I understand that the name of the college was changed as NTR Government. Degree College after late Sri N.T. Rama Rao former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh who made yeomen's contribution to the overall growth and development of A.P including the cause of women upliftment.

I would like to mention in this context that among the lesser known, yet significant, contributions of late Shri N.T.Rama Rao were the educational reforms he brought about in the State, where he overhauled the entire State's education curricula for schools. He instituted statewide entrance examinations for all disciplines of higher education like Engineering, Medicine, Pharmacy, Law and MBA to name a few. Students, based on the merit of their ranks obtained in these tests, could join any college in the State of their choice. Slowly but surely meritocracy began to take hold and the effect of this reform started raising the educational standards in all the fields of learning, all along the state of Andhra Pradesh. Little did anyone realize at their inception, that these competitive examinations would serve as a stepping stone for the students of the State to prepare and brace for the tough international standards that would greet them the world over. Several centers of academic excellence and coaching began to take shape across the State, with the intent of grooming students for these examinations. Within just a decade of implementation of these reforms, students from Andhra Pradesh began excelling nationally

and internationally. As of recent count based on statistics from the years 2001 to 2006), Andhra Pradesh alone sent almost 25% of the students to the various [Indian Institutes of Technology](#), furthering the State's cause to request the Central Govt. to set up an [IIT](#) in AP.

I am glad to be informed that your college has earned a fair share of excellence in different fields. It is heartening that due to the quality of teaching in the college the results of the college, year after year are improving and are better than the overall performance of the Osmania University percentage of results. Further 2 of your students secured Gold Medals from Osmania University being 1<sup>st</sup> Rankers at UG level, though, the District is educationally backward and most of the students are 1<sup>st</sup> generation literates. In the field of sports & Games, also the students of this institution have brought laurels to the college by representing in many events like Kabbadi, Kho-Kho, Basket Ball, Net Ball, Soft Ball and Athletics by playing for Osmania University, State of Andhra Pradesh and Indian Teams.

I understand that over the years many of the College students have become teachers, Lecturers Bank Employees, Administrators & few are working with the Multinationals in the IT Sector. This is really encouraging.

My young friends, before I end, I would like to draw your focused attention to area of your specific responsibility, which if discharged conscientiously could contribute to the overall upliftment of status of women power in the country.

As you may be aware the increasing instances of female foeticide, female infanticide child marriages, dowry deaths have not shown any decline despite the existence of legal provisions prohibiting these social evils. Even the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act recognizing the girl child's right to acquire property has remained practically a dead letter. Similarly the instances of domestic violence, and harassment of women in work place have not abated despite the legal provisions and judicial directives to the contrary. The Government have over the years put in place a number of legislations and issued administrative fiats for the benefit of women, their education, health, job security, congenial atmosphere in workplace, their safety in moving around etc. But unfortunately the actual implementation of these measures have not been as effective as we had expected. Otherwise how do we explain, continuously declining child ratio, high foeticide and infanticide, high rates of female girl drop out from the school, and continuously rising cases of dowry deaths etc?.

I would like that institutions like yours should create a social awareness among their students about these social evils so that at the end of the day, when you leave the institution on finishing your college education, you should be fully imbued with the fiery zeal for women empowerment and are in a position to sensitize the female members of the society about these social evils and instances of gender discrimination, which inflict grave physical and mental injuries on our womenfolk and, in the process, act as a great deterrent to our

overall development. The message, therefore, should go round that the eradication of the gender disparity and discrimination would be possible when and only when our womenkind firm up in their struggle for an effective implementation of the various laws and directives which confer rights and privileges on them. We must not forget that eternal vigilance is not only the price of liberty but it is also the price for the strict enforcement of legal rights and measures by the various law-enforcing agencies. I therefore desire that the college authorities should take effective and expeditious initiatives for sensitizing the students about this social disability and malaise.

With these words, I have immense pleasure in inaugurating Silver Jubilee celebrations of this prestigious college.

Jai Hind.