

**Address By Mrs. D. Purandeswari MoS (HRD-HE) At The
Ceremony Of Yuva Festival Organised By A.P. University,
Between 5th – 7th November, 2007 At Rajahmundry.**

Friends,

It gives me immense pleasure to come here today to address my young friends at this inaugural functions of the festival. Ever since the organizers approached me to participate in this celebration, I have been thinking about the message, I should convey from this pulpit to my young audience. After some reflection, the concept and practice of nation-building emerged in my mind as a suitable subject to talk to my young friends on the occasion.

India's leading philosopher-statesman Dr. S. Radhakrishnan used to observe that: ***“To build up a modern India needs the meaningful and effective canalization of the youth force towards well-defined and welfare oriented goals.”*** The association of youth is an indispensable requirement in the nation-building activities. We are an ancient civilization but a modern nation state and while we may justifiably bask in the glory of the past, it is for the future of India that our youth power must focus their energy and strive relentlessly with hard work, dedication, determination and fortitude in order to fulfill the onerous and uphill task of nation building.

Half of the Indian population is below 24 years of age and there are today around 120 million youth in India covering the population between the age groups of 15 to 35 years constitutes 330 million

comparing nearly 30% of our population. This gives us an idea of the vast human resource and tremendous Youth force which can be harnessed profitably for the country's development.

The Youth in India have always been in the forefront. Be it our struggle for freedom or our quest for development, youth have all along played a vital role. In order to boost up the morale of the youth force, a separate Department of Youth Affairs and Sports was set up in 1985 and effort began to formulate a National Youth Policy which was adopted in 1988 and various schemes were introduced to cater to the needs of youth. These schemes aimed not only on the personality advancement and skill development of youth, but also endeavoured to involve them in community based nation building activities so that they could become catalysts of change and development. The government also declared that the 12th January, the birthday of Swami Vivekananda would be observed as the National Youth Day every year. I feel that we could not have selected a more appropriate day for the purpose.

The New National Youth Policy recognizes four thrust areas namely, Youth Empowerment, Gender Justice, a Multi-Sectoral Approach and emphasis on Information and Research Networks. It has identified the key areas of youth concern like, education, training and employment, health, environment, recreation and sports, art and culture, civics and citizenship, science and technology so that their attention could be focused on these areas. The New Youth Policy also endeavours to attach priority to the needs of underprivileged and marginalized youth.

The reduction of the minimum voting age from 21 to 18 in the year 1989 and a legislative measure taken in 1992 providing for reservation of one third of the seats for women in the village administrative units called Panchayats have enabled young people and young women to influence the decision making process in the country. Youth participation in the decision making bodies has been considerably enhanced by these decisions. Even in the present Lok Sabha a number of MPs have been elected who represent the youth force, although our efforts to reserve one-third of the seats in Parliament for our women folk is, unfortunately, still a distant dream.

It has been rightly recognized that access to education and training has to be augmented so that youth can develop their levels of skills and competencies. The National Policy of Education(NPE) 1986, has provided for designing both formal and non-formal education programmes involving youth. Our literacy rate has increased to 52.91 percent in 1991. Today, 94 percent of the rural habitations have school facilities. Gross enrolment ratio at the primary stage has also increased to 100 percent in most of the States. Our various educational schemes like Mid Day Meal, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan etc have already started yielding positive results.

The education system is periodically evaluated and curricula updated in accordance with the advancements in Science and Technology. Efforts are also made to make the education relevant to the market needs and economic demands without compromising on the ethical and moral values of education. We have decided to spend

6% of our GDP in our educational programme. Presently, 3% cess has imposed in the Budget to mop up resources for our expenditure on education.

There should be a specific role for our youth in the process of spirit building and national consciousness among our youth. We should ensure that our youth are moulded into a strong self-disciplined force capable of hard work and hardships and to see that where the spirit of brotherhood is supreme in reaching towards pre-determined goals. Our motto should be “Unity and Discipline” and the goal should be to create a human resource of organized, trained and activated youth, to provide leadership in all walks of life always available for the service of the nation. In this manner we should try to develop among the youth of India, the qualities of character, courage, comradeship, discipline, leadership, secular outlook, spirit of adventure and sportsmanship and the ideals of selfless service among the youth to make them useful citizens.

National unity is an important and essential component of nation-building building and the growth of national consciousness. Secularism is the bedrock of our democracy. This implies that the individual while adhering to his own religion must respect other religions and practise tolerance and understanding towards them; in the nonreligious sphere, social life should be governed by rational, ethical and human attitudes rather than by considerations of caste, creed and community.

When you speak of the Youth, the question of Sports automatically crops because sports, games and physical fitness are vital components of healthy and youthful civilisations. The intrinsic linkage between sports and games and the human quest for excellence was recognized ever since the inception of human civilization, reaching its epitome in the ancient Greek civilisation, which was the progenitor of the Olympic movement. As stated in the Olympic Charter, Olympism is a ***“philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind.”*** Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical practices. Olympism recognizes the practice of sport as a human right, to which every individual must have access without discrimination of any kind. In modern times, there has been increasing recognition of the role of Sports in Development. The International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, UNESCO, 1978 states that : ***(I quote) “Every human being has a fundamental right of access to physical education and support, which are essential for the full development of his personality. The freedom to develop physical, intellectual and moral powers through physical education and sport be guaranteed both within the education system and in other aspects of social life.” (unquote)*** The World Development Report 2007 entitled **“Development and the Next Generation”** published by the World Bank conveys a categorical message to governments and policy makers across the world that ***“Investing in young people is essential for development, as today’s young people are the next generation of workers,***

entrepreneurs, parents, active citizens, and leaders.” The Report emphasizes that **“countries need to seize this window of opportunity to invest in the future before the ageing process closes it.”** Countries like India, which are experiencing a sharp rise in their youth population, enjoy a major advantage over others in terms of lower dependency ratios, which would enable them to spare more resources for investing in the future. Based on studies by renowned economists Jeffrey D. Sachs, David E. Bloom, Jeffrey G. Williamson, David Canning and Pia Malaney, the Report says **“the rise in the ratio of the working population to the non-working population during the demographic transition”**, of the kind India is now experiencing, **“can boost economic growth”**: However, the point that should not be lost sight of is that this “demographic dividend”, as it is sometimes characterized, is only transient in that the rise in our youth population is expected to peak between 2010 to 2030 and would cease to exist once the death and birth rates stabilize at low levels leading to low, zero, or even negative population growth, as in the case with developed countries. Thus, demographic characteristics, the ratio of the young population to the ageing and the reproductive index will acquire a greater strategic significance. The single most important comparative advantage which India has over others is that right through the first half of the 21st century, India’s youth population will be burgeoning while the developed world and even China will have to increasingly bear the burden of an ageing population. At the same time, this comparative advantage can be availed of only if we nurture our youth, educate them and impart to them the required skills.

Recently, while inaugurating the Indian Olympic Bhawan at Delhi on 28th April, 2007 the Prime Minister specifically mentioned that: ***“As a country of young people, India has great potential in the world of sports and games.”*** He added that: ***“We are yet to fully harness the talent of our youth in this vast field.”*** To this end, he proposed: ***“A new social compact involving all stakeholders to launch a nationwide movement of youth in sports ... and unleash a new wave of sports consciousness and sport development.”***

However, these high and ambitious objectives could not be realized in significant measure both because of policy lacunae and because of the inadequacy of budgetary support to Sports from the Union Government and State Governments. While after the 1982 Asian Games, the Union Government's Sports budget was dramatically increased nearly nine times from Rs. 26.54 crore in the VIth Five Year Plan to Rs. 207.45 crore in the VIIth Five Year Plan and later to Rs. 1145.36 crore in the Xth Five Year Plan, the fact is that the current fiscal year's allocation to the Sports budget works out to a mere 0.073 per cent of the total Union Budget.

The Comprehensive National Sports Policy 2007 aims at making the framework for sports in India more effective and inclusive with the full ownership and involvement of all stakeholders. The Policy aims at adopting a holistic approach to sports development taking into account the health benefits, recreation benefits, educational benefits, social benefits, economic benefits and source of national pride that it offers. This would require a realignment of

responsibilities between the Union and State Governments, on the one hand, and, on the other, between Government and the Indian Olympics Association, the Sports Authority of India, the National Sports Federations and their affiliated bodies at the state and district level, and corporate bodies.

This in turn might require Constitutional changes and the elaboration of a suitable legal framework. The Policy shall endeavour to achieve a shared vision amongst all stakeholders that would be realized through convergence of their efforts. Special emphasis will be laid on mobilizing corporate support in the field of sports. The participant/athlete shall occupy centre-stage in the Comprehensive National Sports Policy, with all other stakeholders playing a promotional, supportive and convergent role towards achieving the goals of mass participation, expansion of the talent pool, enhanced performance in competitive sports, and the emergence of India as a vibrant leading-edge sporting nation in the world through transparent and effective sports systems. In other words, the policy would provide a conducive framework within which sports can develop and thrive. I hope that over the years we shall be able to show better performance in the Sports sector.

Before I end, I like to draw your attention to Part IV-A of the Constitution of India which enjoins upon the citizens of India to perform some fundamental duties. While all the duties mentioned therein are important, I will like to make a special reference to one of them which calls upon us to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform. In my view this requires the

focused attention of our youth who should and must constantly follow this principle in all their activities and pursuits so that the nation could strive to excellence and rise to higher levels of perfection and at the end of day we may succeed in making India a modern society, democratic in spirit, socialist in content, scientific in temper and secular in outlook.

Young friends, I firmly believe that our national progress depends, crucially, on the ways and means through which the youth are encouraged and nurtured as a positive force. In this context, I recall the hope-inspiring-words of India's illustrious saint-patriot, Swami Vivekananda who declared: (I quote)

“My hope of the future lies in the Youths – Youths of character and intelligence – who can sacrifice their lives for the good of the country,” (unquote)

With these words I have great pleasure in delivering this inaugural address and I have no doubt that through years and decades to come you would continue to make relentless efforts for realizing the mission of all-round development of our motherland.

Jai Hind.

SUMMERISED SPEECH OF MOS

KIND ATTN: DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD GARU

ADDRESS BY MRS. D. PURANDESWARI MOS (HRD-HE) AT THE
CEREMONY OF YUVA FESTIVAL ORGANISED BY A.P.
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