Address By Smt. D. Purandeswari, MoS –HRD (HE) At Srujana – 2007 organised by ABVP In Hyderabad On 15th March, 2007.

It gives me great pleasure to be here today in the State Level Project Exhibition & Competition for Engineering Students organized by ABVP. The Srujana-2007 is I understand, an event of the state level Working Models Exhibition cum competition for the technical students of Andhra Pradesh. The event is designed to provide a platform to talented students to exhibit their innovative talents and multilateral interaction with industry, experts and society. Further the young technocrats will be guided and inspired, towards entrepreneurship, by the professionals and experienced entrepreneurs.

Despite my heavy schedule of work in Delhi, more especially due to the ongoing Parliamentary Session, I have chosen to accept your invitation , because, I wanted to have direct inter-action with an Youth Association like yours, which is committed to encourage the students to achieve new possibilities and dimensions in technical area.

More than a century and a half back our colonial masters introduced a new system of education in this country for a limited purpose namely, to create an educated elite class which would serve the interests of the empire. But with the attainment of Independence this limited role of education lost its relevance. The

post -independence requirement of the country was widely different. After independence our educational system had to be remodeled to meet fresh challenges of development and growth. Unfortunately we have not been very successful in this endeavour. . While the educational progress in terms quantity was quite impressive, qualitative aspects in terms of educational standards had however left much to be desired. There seemed to be a widespread feeling that the average standards had deteriorated at all levels of education both in the spheres of general and technical education. The standards Committee of the University Grants Commission that once looked into this problem concluded that Universities present a phenomenon of “lights and shades”. The Committee did not adequately and clearly define the details of this optical contrast, but a perusal of its report revealed the preponderance of shades over lights implying thereby that standards were falling.

Even after more than half a century of our freedom our universities and colleges have been turning out in large numbers persons with general education who are unsuited to the new demands of a growing society. Consequently there was a phenomenal increase in the number unemployed persons in the country that clearly pointed out to a defective educational planning and management. The returns of education were not commensurate with investment and there was a colossal wastage of manpower which could not be effectively utilized. The educational institutes started producing people who

were not really employable, consequently the contribution of educational system to the emerging ethos in the country and the return of educational investment were poor and unencouraging. Many of our leaders teachers and academicians, social activists and policy makers have come to realize that our system has culminated in a dead end that there is no light even at the end of the tunnel and that in order to give people productive employment our education system needed to be fine-tuned to the emerging scenario of a new global order.

An ideal educational system should be pyramidal in structure- a structure in which there are fewer people at each level as you proceed towards the top. The base at this structure should include all children and this should represent the stream of elementary education up to the age of 14 years. The middle of the pyramid should represent a secondary education for the students within 14-17 years with emphasis on vocational education. The top of the pyramid should include the highest echelon of students who should make it to the specialized professional / technical education in universities in different streams. The basic idea is that after the secondary education our educational system needs vocational bias and terminaliztion which do not exist at present.

The main objectives of the scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary Education as spelt out in the NPE are to provide diversification of

educational opportunities so as to enhance individual employability, reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower and to provide an alternative avocation for those not intending to pursue higher education.

In order to bring about improvement in job opportunities for vocational students, it is essential to make a reasonably accurate assessment of locally available and emerging occupations and the employment potential in the area/ district. Information in this regard is also necessary for identifying training needs and the facilities available. At the macro level, such information is required for planning curricula, location of vocational schools and provision of vocational facilities, recruitment of teachers, etc. It is, therefore necessary to have realistic estimates of manpower needs on a long term and continuing basis. District vocational surveys will therefore, have to be conducted so as to assess the manpower requirements of the area, the range of available occupations, trend of emerging vocations, levels of competence required, duration for which the demand is likely to subsist and the extent to which educational and training facilities are available in the neighbourhood. In the absence of vocational bias at the secondary level, students are and will be proceeding to higher education pursuing degree course in general education resulting in the creation of surplus manpower who do not fulfill

the productive requirements of the country. Diversification of education at secondary level would reduce the pressure on higher education. Provision of vocational training facilities in agricultural and industrial schools after eighth standard would reduce the pressure of secondary education and enrich the vocational stream. Vocationalization and terminalization of education at the middle school level and secondary education level are, therefore, essential to gear up educational development for economic growth.

National Knowledge Commission appointed by the Prime Minister has recommended a number of steps for providing an extensive area for the vocationalisation and terminalisation of secondary education so that a person at the end of a secondary education is not left to his fate in his endless and futile search for gainful employment.

The scheme which should take care of technical and professional education should receive more focused attention and adequate provision for industrial and scientific research should be made in the new educational system in view of their growing demands in the context a new development scenario. The C.S.I.R and the various institutes there under should devote more serious attention in this regard and encourage more and more functional research in tandem with captains of industry.

To maximize the benefit of industrial research, there should be a complete integration between the scientific research and industrial development: in fact both these activities should go hand in hand. We should encourage efforts to promote industry focused research and ensure their immediate practical applications. The specialized research unit in the universities should also act as a conduit between academic centers of research excellence and global industry to integrate and synergise their research efforts and place students in industrial research centers to facilitate quality research. This would meet the demands of the industry and ensure supply of adequate quality research papers functionally suitable to the industry.

It would be an ideal if a tripartite alliance between government, Industry, and the universities. Research institutes could be forged wherever possible in order to ensure well developed research projects. In the wake of liberalization and privatization, the demands of the economy would call for greater efforts by private agencies to foster industry focused research projects.

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.

With a view to have proper planning and coordinated development of the Technical Education system in the country, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has been established by an Act of the Parliament. To promote the technical education system, in a way that it could serve the present day needs, the Council has been taking various steps, which include development of Model Curricula focused towards the requirement of Industry, Faculty Development, and Research & Institutional Development Prgorammes, through its various schemes. The role of AICTE will of great importance in the industry – institute interface.

I am quite hopeful that organizations like Srujana would attempt to bring together the cream of budding engineers to further the right engineering aptitude and professional competence and that its main focus is on Institute – Industry – Interaction, to bridge the gap

between emerging talent of Institute and growing needs of skilled personnel in Industry.

A model education should be a mirror of a student's personality wherein there should be a paradigm shift in the qualities of education reflecting the creativity based on scientifically developed activities, and information which are essential in the growth-oriented scenario. I am quite clear that these qualities should form the core contents in our educational pattern so that it can enable the young generation to become leaders in whatever career they choose and to contribute positively towards self, family, society, nation and the entire world not necessarily in this order.

With these words, I wish your society well in their efforts to attain higher success in the their endeavour.

Jai Hind.

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