

Address Delivered By Smt. D. Purandeswari, Hon'ble Minister Of State (HRD) To The A.P. Teachers' Federation On 7-2-2008 At Hyderabad.

Friends,

I am glad to be here amongst you and speak to you on the role and responsibilities of the Teachers in the Society. Teachers are universally accepted as nation builders whose contribution to social and economic development is widely acknowledged. In the emerging scenario, education is not only a goal in itself but is a powerful driver of social change. Combined with sound macroeconomic 'policies, education is fundamental for the construction of globally competitive economics and democratic societies. Education is key to creating, applying and spreading new ideas and technologies which in turn are critical for sustained growth. It augments cognitive and other skills and in the process leads to higher productivity and development. Education builds what the Noble Laureate Amartya Sen calls "human capabilities' which generate and promote the essential and individual power to reflect, make choices, seek a voice in society, and enjoy a better life. In short, education is one of the most powerful instruments known for reducing poverty and inequality and for laying the basis for sustained economic growth, sound governance, and effective social order.

In order to ensure that a meaningful education is imparted to our children, it is essential that right type of teachers and instructors are put in place. Teacher education programme generally train our teachers to adjust to a system in which education is seen as a mere transmission of

information and knowledge is treated as information 'given' by the teacher and taken by the taught with out question. In this system there is very little leeway for inquiry, initiative and innovation. This is because mostly the teachers training schemes do not give much scope for the teachers undergoing such training to have a critical examination of curriculum, syllabi or the course contents. Most of such programmes provide little or no opportunity for inquiry or investigation: In the process the teachers end up with a purely pedantic outlook and restrictive mind set which prevent them from serving as effective facilitators of social transformation. This mindset must change. Teachers must be encouraged to develop a spirit of inquiry and research and must be perennial learners and must update their knowledge continuously. It is some times complained that teaching profession always does not attract the best talent because of inadequate prospect of career advancement. This I think is not fully correct in the present system. Over the years we have taken fundamental steps to improve appreciably the teachers' lot in terms of monetary and other fringe benefits; and the process is still on.

However, the profession of teaching should be treated more than a Government job. It is the duty of life long; once a teacher enters into the service his duty is to fight any ignorance, any backwardness and poverty throughout his life. His duty is to bring about anything coming under the term goodness. It is often said police service is 24 hours service, but the service of teacher is life long. The service of teacher demands that the teacher ought to be good and fit morally, psychologically, mentally and physically.

There is a wrong perception regarding the role of teachers that the service of teacher is considered as one of the cushy Government jobs. Actually, the society, the community and the family do entrust the work of preparing the next generation to the custody of the teachers. This right perception of the role of teachers should be revived and redeemed on a universal scale. The status of the Guru and the Guru Shishya Parampara should be restored, and then only our land will head for progress in the right direction.

Individual citizens at times develop a wrong perception by measuring the profession of teaching in term of materialistic principles. The value systems of human beings have to be guided by the principle of human goodness and the maxim should be that, man does not live by bread alone. But at the same time without giving any their due to the teachers, expecting good returns would be a fruitless and futile expectation. I assure you that the Government is ever aware of this responsibility.

As you are well aware, students tend to copy the behaviour and mannerism of the teachers. The teachers entire personality is a reflection on the minds of the students. If the teacher is honest, leads a balanced and disciplined life, the children adopt these virtues as a ideal conduct unconsciously and effortlessly. The ideal teacher is one who through his thoughts, words and deeds, gives an impression of an honest and upright life which can serve as a model for the students to copy, follow and emulate.

A flower in bloom is loved by all and in this lies its glory. Similarly, a man may be viewed as having achieved everything in life when he

becomes perfect in character. If the best flowers among mankind take to teaching, society is abundantly enriched, their fragrance and beauty are then made the best use of. If the teacher becomes an embodiment of right conduct in thought, word and deed, the students by their association will learn virtue and develop many qualities. A successful teacher should, therefore, always try to radiate these qualities and be on the same wavelength as that of his student.

As Swami Vivekananda said:

“The true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, transfer his soul to the student’s soul and see through and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else”

Every teacher must have a good personality. Radiant, pleasing and impressive personal appearance, refinement, pleasant manners, industry, enthusiasm, drive, initiative, open mindedness etc., are some of the essential traits of an ideal teacher. External appearance has a psychological effect upon the students. By attractive appearance, he/she can win the love and affection of his students and can command their respect and obedience spontaneously. He/she should be frank, tolerant, kind, fair and straight-forward so that he/she can stimulate learning and inspire confidence.

We speak of education as a lamp lighting another lamp, one life making another life and a spirit speaking to another spirit. We can achieve this objective, if the teachers have good mental health. Students develop

interest in those subjects, which are taught by pleasing and genial teachers. The teacher makes the emotional atmosphere in the classroom. A neurotic teacher may spread fear, nervousness and worry in the classroom. A fanatic-teacher may spread hatred, prejudice and hostile feelings among the students. If he has a good mental health, he can create love, interest and enthusiasm for learning and a taste in the subject he teaches.

Sociability is another important quality of a teacher. He should have a sound social philosophy and he should make his best contribution to the society. He should know how to adjust himself to the social surroundings in which he lives. He should not be quiet, retreating and introverted. He should be free from worry, anxiety and thinking and feeling about himself. He should mix well in society to have a large body of friends and to take a helpful interest in his neighbours. Normal social life outside the school will go a long way to give him happy social adjustments.

The teacher must possess a strong sense of vocation and true devotion towards teaching. He should have a genuine love for his calling. For his professional efficiency, he should have knowledge of psychology, educational philosophy, aims, contents, methods and materials of instruction, skill and interest in teaching. He must possess a fair knowledge of current affairs about his own country and other countries and should continuously upgrade the level of his information and knowledge about the world around.

To quote Tagore:

“A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living contact with his knowledge, but merely repeats his lessons to his students can only load their minds.”

In this context I would like to say a few words on the teacher's accountability in ensuring that each child is properly educated in order to become a productive citizen of a country. Teachers, being the “educational or human engineers” are accountable for the progress of the children they teach. The National Policy on Education – 1986, in India, has specially stressed this concept.

Since a teacher's accountability is very important in modern teaching-learning process, the accountability of the teachers should be evaluated at frequent intervals. There must be proper supervision of their work. The supervisor should see how far the teachers are accountable in respect of teaching, research, co-curricular activities, use of aids and equipments in the classroom, utilization of local resources for the benefit of the students and development of students moral and ethical values. Thus, the degrading condition of education in our country can be checked.

Teachers who consider their job as a profession, work only for pay cheque. But our cultural heritage proves that true teachers are those who consider their job as honourable . Such teachers work with a sense of self-

fulfillment and self-realization. Prof. George Herbet Palmer once rightly said, “If Harvard does not pay me to teach, I would gladly pay Harvard for the privilege of teaching”. This should be the professional attitude of an Indian teacher too. An ideal teacher should not work only with pecuniary motives, but with a sense of dedication for the cause of education. As the report of the Secondary Education Commission headed by Dr. S.Radhakrishnan observed: (I quote)

“Every teacher and educationist of experience knows that even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus remains dead unless quickened in to life by the right method of teaching and the right kind of teachers.” Unquote

All in all, it should be their primary duty to set an example in citizenship, to endeavour to promote the public good, to uphold the dignity of their calling on all occasions, to size up the demands and aspirations of the society, to be dynamic leaders when required and to be ideal role models at all times.

Teacher’s union can also play a very significant role in creating a congenial atmosphere in this regard. At present, teachers’ unions are used merely as a forum for ventilating their grievances and otherwise trying to promote service conditions. I do not for a moment suggest that this should not be done. What I want to highlight is that this should not be their sole objective. They should certainly focus the teachers problems and professional bottlenecks and bring them to the notice of the appropriate authorities for redressal but at the same time they should remember that

the teachers in our country occupying a high place of respects and regards in society. As our scripture says:

Mathru Devo Bhava, Pithru Devo Bhava,
Acharya Devo Bhava.

And again:

“Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu,
Gururdevo Maheswarah”

Our teachers should by their professional ethics and behaviour, keep up this noble tradition alive. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said:

“The teacher’s place in society is of vital importance. He acts as the pivot for the transmission of intellectual traditions and technical skills from generation to generation and helps to keep the lamp of civilization burning”

With these words, I hope you will play a more effective role in assisting the younger generation in attaining greater heights of excellence for themselves and for their country as well.

Jai Hind.