

**Address Of Mrs. D. Purandeswari, MoS-HRD (HE) As Chief Guest
On The Occasion Of The Annual Day Celebrations Of Pre
Primary And Primary Sections Of The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
Public School, Hyderabad On 23rd February, 2008.**

I am extremely glad to be here this morning and to address the little children on the occasion of its Annual Day celebrations of the Pre- Primary and Primary classes of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Public School, Hyderabad. It always gives me immense pleasure to have interaction with small kids appropriately regarded as 'blooming flowers'.

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. 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. 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. These ideas should 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. It should also understand the need for effective communication and offer 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., should also be conducted for the personality development of students. It is also important that innovative workshops, projects and guest lectures by eminent personalities are organized for the benefit of students. Hobby clubs should provide 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.

At intervals the schools should also organize field trips as an integral part of education and students should be 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 should be preceded by assigning them projects on the proposed place of visit, its significance and should be followed by summarizing their individual experiences. This would provide a strong vocational bias to our educational system which is the need of the day.

A model school 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 steps would foster in a child a caring and sharing attitude towards nature and life on earth and a deep appreciation 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 say 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 primary, 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 supervise personally 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.

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 has not 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.**

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 modern school system 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 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

With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Annual Day Celebrations of the Pre-Primary and Primary sections of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Public School, Hyderabad.

Jai Hind.