

**Address to the teachers and Principals from the
Panchayat, Municipal, Taluka, Cluster Resource Centre
and Special schools of Gujarat.
Ahmedabad
22 OCT 2010**

Mission of Education : Evolution of Great Citizens

“The Student’s Prayer”
Show me so that I can stand
On your shoulders,
Reveal yourself so that I can be
Something different

Don’t impose on me what you know,
I want to explore the unknown
And be the source of my own discoveries.
Let the known, be my liberation, not my slavery.

..... by son of Chilean biologist, Maturana.

I am delighted to meet the teachers, principals and Headmasters of various government schools from panchayat, municipal, Taluka schools, Cluster Resource Centers, schools set up for children with special needs of Gujarat and Zydus School for Excellence, Journalists and few selected invitees of the Ramanbhai Foundation. My greetings to all of you assembled here. I am happy to know that every year the Ramanbhai Patel – AMA Centre for Excellence in Education invitees nominations from teachers from Gujarat for the Shrestha Shikshak Award. The two teachers have been selected for this award. My heartiest congratulations. I am also happy to inaugurate the learning centre setup in the rural community on the outskirts of Ahmedabad by the Zydus School for Excellence. I consider that the Principals and Headmasters are the leaders who transform the children into enlightened citizens. Keeping this in mind, I would like to talk on the topic “**Mission of Education: Evolution of Great Citizens**”.

My perceptions of teachers with myself as a student and teacher

The relationship between a teacher and a student is very unique. A teacher lives through the entire life journey of a student. A teacher inspires students by his role model behaviour. A teacher enjoys the success of the student even more than his own. A teacher is inspired by the curiosity and creativity of the student and learns more and more to help the student.

My teacher in the primary school, Sivasubramanya Iyer not only taught me about bird flight, but also put the spark of a mission in life of pursuing a career in flight. My college lecturer Prof Thothari Iyenger was not only an expert teacher, but also introduced me to great people like ancient astronomer Aryabhata, inspired me for life. My teacher Rev Iyyadurai Solomon focused on the importance of purity in life through his life and life style. Rev. Fr. Chinnathurai taught me nuclear physics. The way he taught, I loved the subject and later it became a passion. Now he lives in Dindigal. I meet him quite often and give him my respects. Yesterday, I was very happy to see my teacher’s best wishes on my birthday on 15 October 2010. These teachers and others come in front of me whenever I have to deal with some practical and sometimes difficult problems in life. When I was teaching Societal Transformation in Anna University, I realized the power of youth to inspire a teacher. Their attention, their questions, their aspirations and above all their affection, motivate a teacher to excel. When I have been with the IIMA students or with students of Gatton College of Business and Economics, University of Kentucky, USA or when I field questions of several from the 10 million students I have addressed, I realize how the combined power of students and teachers can make a difference to the society.

Dynamic School

When I am with you, let me visualize a dynamic school system, how will it be?

1. A school that radiates greatness by the teaching capacity of the teachers.
2. A school is great because creativity is bubbling everywhere.
3. A school is great, because it cherishes the learning environment with library, internet, e-learning and creative laboratories.
4. A school is great; because it creates students with confidence that “I can do it” which in turn generates the team spirit that “We will do it”.
5. A School that promotes all-round learning to the students.
6. A School is great because it has teachers who lead a unique way of life with purity and become role models for the students and develop them as enlightened citizens.
7. A School is great because it has the capacity to teach all students to succeed with distinction.
8. A School that generates creativity among all students irrespective of whether they belong to arts or science stream.
9. A School is great, that generates an alumni which cherishes that they belong to this school.

Teacher of Teachers

When I see the students on one side, and the principals on the other, I look at you dear friends, as one integrated system of education, system of learning and system of knowledge. The seeds of peace in the world have their origin in the righteousness in the heart of every individual. Such righteous citizens lead to the evolution of an enlightened society. Education with a value system has to be so designed that the righteousness in the heart is developed in young minds. That should be the mission of education. The prime learning environment is five to seventeen years of age for over 25000 hours. This reminds me of an ancient Greek teacher’s saying, **“Give me a child for seven years: afterwards, let God or devil take the child. They cannot change the child”**. This indicates the power of great teachers and teacher of teachers. True education is the acquisition of enlightened feelings and enlightened powers to understand daily events and to understand the permanent truth by linking man, to his environment, human and planetary. I would like to quote from the great philosopher Dr. S. Radhakrishnan particularly for the benefit of students and teachers – “The sense of human need is there and the teacher can satisfy it by giving to the youth an idea of the fundamental power and worth of man, his spiritual dignity as man, a supra-national culture and an all embracing humanity.”

Let us now hear the tribute given by the great teacher Albert Einstein to his teacher: “The ideals which have lighted my way, time after time, have given new course to face life cheerfully have been kindness, beauty and truth”. This is the mission of a teacher. By nature if the student has studied in a particular school they cherish the memories. For example, in the institution the teacher belongs to, may have created 100s and 1000s of alumni depending upon the school strength. The successful alumni remember the school with veneration and want to give back to it. The schools need to create an opportunity, like IIT and other institutions.

Teachers who love teaching

I just see a scene in a school having about 50 teachers and 750 students headed by a Principal. It is simply a place of beauty for creativity and learning. How is it possible? It is because the school management and the Principal selected the teachers who love teaching, who treat the students as their sons, grand sons or grand daughters. The children see the teacher, as a role model in teaching and how always they look pious through their daily way of life. Above all I see an environment in which there is nothing like a good student, average student or poor student. The whole school and teacher system is involved in generating students who perform the best. As an example, I recall my teacher Shri Sivasubramania Iyer who taught me, when I was ten year old boy, how the birds fly, in the class room and later by taking us to the sea shore to give a practical example. The way he taught, gave me what to dream in life and what should be the pattern of education which I have to follow. And above all what should be the traits I should possess based on a teacher’s life both inside the class room and in the village. This race of teachers and teacher of teachers should multiply.

Vision for the School

Vision - does it reflect a school having a big building, having a big laboratory or having a big infrastructure? Not at all. Great schools will have great teachers who love teaching and with great vision. The vision should

be to make a beautiful school, generating righteous youth, happy youth who are professionally sound and morally upright. Hence, it should generate quality youth who are an asset to the nation. Can the Schools create a Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Nobel Laureate CV Raman, a great mathematician Ramanujan, a great pain remover Mother Theresa, a great economist Amartya Sen or a Poet Bharathiar? Can we generate the environment needed for promoting the creativity leading to development of such type of personalities by the school?

I visualize a principal or a headmaster in a high school far away from the city from district headquarters – close to the village panchayats. The School could be a Private school, run by a trust, run by municipality or Panchayat. As soon as the principal takes over the school, Principal has to plan with the assumption that he is going to be in the school for atleast 5 years. He has to decide the positive changes that he would like to bring about for the development of the school into a great institution within that period. Normally people discuss the performance of the school in terms of percentage of passes with distinction. 100% will be considered outstanding. 90% very good, 80% good. This is the present method of evaluation of the schools by the parents, by the Govt. by the management. I feel that there is a need for paradigm shift in thinking in the evaluation process.

I visualize the schools will be blessed with creative teachers, what is the creative teacher? Creative teacher means: when the teacher enters in the class room, the knowledge radiates from the teacher, the purity of the life of the teacher, radiates all around. Then the students are indeed empowered educationally and morally with ethics. According to me, the best school is one where the students complete the school up to 10+2 after 25000 hours of education in the campus. The student has to become full-fledged responsible citizens for the nation who will be able to realize his dreams and not be frightened of any problem. He should be groomed to be physically fit, academically sound with capacities for research and inquiry, innovation, use of high technology, moral and entrepreneurial leadership. He should be emotionally mature and spiritually awakened. For nurturing such an individual, what is the role and what should be the vision of the principals and headmasters. Principals should have a one line statement of vision “my vision is to give to the students all-round capability that is always creative, observant, aim to acquire knowledge continuously leading to the generation of an excellent performer with sterling character built with the unique tradition of the school. In this process, the education system has to develop the five minds as described in the book “Five Minds” for the future by Howard Gardner.

- a) **The disciplinary mind:** mastery of mind, schools of thought including science, mathematics and history and proficiency in atleast one professional craft.
- b) **The synthesizing mind:** ability to integrate ideas from different disciplines or spheres into a coherent whole and to communicate to others.
- c) **The creative mind:** capacity to uncover and clarify new problems, questions and phenomenon.
- d) **The respectful mind:** awareness of and application for differences among human beings.
- e) **The ethical mind:** fulfillment of one’s responsibility as a worker and a citizen.

To develop these five minds, one need not change the syllabus of the school. The culture of the school and vision of the school and the teacher’s way of life will inculcate these five minds among the students.

Dynamics of Smile

When we see a child, we see the innocent smile of the child. When we come across, the child in the Primary School the smile is reduced, since the child has to carry a heavy school bag. When we see the child in their teens, their smile slowly fades away and the sign of concern appears. This is because of the anxiety about the future. When they complete their education, the question uppermost in their mind is, what will I do after my education? Will I get an employment? Will I get a proper employment? Can the Principals and Headmasters see this dynamics of the smiles of the child and preserve the smile in their faces when they complete their school education. The Student should be confident that “he can do it”, he should have the self esteem and the capability to become an employment generator rather being an employment seeker. This transformation can only be brought about by a Principal who has a vision to transform, who has the ability to take risks against all challenges, who is a good listener, who is a good innovator, who maintains a cordial inter-personal or

intrapersonal relationship and who has the ability to lead the parents, community, media and the teachers for accomplishing, the vision of generating an enlightened citizen for the nation.

Now let me share my views of an ideal principal.

An ideal principal

Yesterday, when I was preparing this talk, I met a principal who has become a role model to all his students. I asked the Principal what was the secret of his success. He told me the following :

- a. He has been able to adapt himself to the age of the student.
- b. As a principal, he makes sure that he takes two to three classes per week.
- c. He considers that he is a teacher first and a principal later.
- d. He practices everything he expects his students to do.
- e. He ensures transparency in all his transactions and treats all students alike, irrespective of their religion, caste, language and economic status.
- f. He has a foresight and visualizes the students growth in the long term perspective.
- g. During the 11 years of his tenure, he has ensured that at least 2000 students who were average performers have been groomed to excel in their studies.

I am sure many principals assembled here would reflect these characteristics and also add few more important traits.

Dear teaching friends, I was asking myself, what is the treasure, the students after their school education will carry? You will agree friends, the students, if they are from good schools, the treasure they are carrying with them, is knowledge. I call it knowledge equation.

Knowledge and its components

Knowledge equation has three components, creativity, righteousness and courage and the combination of these characteristics can generate enlightened citizens. Let us look at the first component creativity:

Creativity

“Learning gives creativity
Creativity leads to thinking
Thinking provides knowledge
Knowledge makes you great”

The next component of knowledge is righteousness. The power of Righteousness is described in a divine hymn, which is as follows:

Righteousness

Where there is righteousness in the heart
There is beauty in the character.
When there is beauty in the character,
There is harmony in the home.
When there is harmony in the home,
There is order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation,
There is peace in the world.

Who will give the righteousness, only three people can give.; Who are they? They are: Father, Mother in a spiritual environment and teacher, particularly primary school teacher.

The third component is courage, which is defined as follows :

COURAGE

Courage to think different,
Courage to invent,
Courage to travel into an unexplored path,
Courage to discover the impossible,
Courage to combat the problems

And Succeed, Are the unique qualities of the youth.

As a youth of my nation, I will work and work with
courage to achieve success in all the missions.

Dear teacher friends, as givers of knowledge, I will be very happy if you all succeed in imparting knowledge with its three components in all the students. Our education system, particularly secondary education system should instill courage in the minds of students.

Conclusion : oath for teachers

In conclusion, I would like to administer an oath to the teachers. I am sure, you will be happy to take the oath.

Oath for Teachers

1. First and foremost, I will love teaching. Teaching will be my soul.
2. I realize that I am responsible for shaping not just students but ignited youths who are the most powerful resource under the earth, on the earth and above the earth. I will be fully committed for the great mission of teaching.
3. I will consider myself to be a great teacher for I can lift the average to the best performance by way of my special teaching.
4. All my actions with my students will be with kindness and affection like a mother, sister, father or brother.
5. I will organize and conduct my life, in such a way that my life itself becomes a message for my students.
6. I will encourage my students to ask questions and develop the spirit of enquiry, so that they blossom into creative enlightened citizens.
7. I will treat all the students equally and will not support any differentiation on account of religion, community or language.
8. I will continuously build the capacities in teaching so that I can impart quality education to my students.
9. I will celebrate the success of my students, with great élan.
10. I realize that by being a teacher, I am making an important contribution to all the national development initiatives.
11. I will constantly endeavour to fill my mind, with great thoughts and spread the nobility in thinking and action.

My best wishes to all the Principals, Headmasters, Teachers and Students for success in their educational mission.

May God Bless you.