

Education for Growth

Annual Function of SAI International School, Bhubaneswar on 16.12.2010

It is a matter of great joy for me that I am coming to this lovely school for the second time and let me tell you that I still vividly remember my first visit when I was fascinated by the cultural programme by the children as well as their horse riding ability. Today is another annual day celebration and I take this opportunity to convey my best wishes to all of you.

Within a very short period of time, the SAI International School has established itself as a quality institution of excellence and the school has earned many accolades and has made not only our state but also our nation proud by its achievements. I am informed that, two students of the school have secured the 1st and 9th position in the world amongst 5000 schools across the globe in the "paint our World" competition organised by the British Council, Scotland UK. Similarly the School has also received the prestigious International School Award from the UK Government, conducted in India through the British Council and has accomplished this outstanding status amongst the top 90 schools of the country. With the school receiving the Green School Award, I am sure; it will achieve many more such laurels in the coming years.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Sri Bijaya Kumar Sahoo for setting up this excellent school in the beautiful city of Bhubaneswar. This step is especially appreciable since India is on a mission of transforming herself into a knowledge hub. There was a long standing demand by the IT and Industrial sector to have an International School in Bhubaneswar. SAI has fulfilled this objective. SAI is the first day boarding cum residential International School of Bhubaneswar and has conceptualised unique ideas for teaching and learning practices. With its mission to ignite the mind, energise the body, kindle the spirit and enrich the soul, it enables, encourages and endows every student to initiate the life long pursuit of learning by providing a safe, nurturing and enjoyable environment. I am sure with this philosophy the school is providing each child with a culturally appropriate

environment, love, protection, appreciation and motivation needed to grow in body, mind, spirit and values.

With the Right to Education Act, 2009, it has become mandatory for the state to provide quality educational facilities by establishing schools both by itself and through joint collaborations. For modern and quality schools the edu-prenuers will play a definitive role. Good schools have become the need of the hour to cater to the overwhelming public demand for quality schools. At this juncture social entrepreneurship assumes an imperative role. Bhubaneswar is fortunate to have many good educational institutions both in the public and private sector. The state capital is fast emerging as one of the most favoured educational destinations of the country.

I would like to quote Sri Rabindranath Tagore “Children are living beings – more living than grown up people who have built shells of habit around themselves. Therefore it is absolutely necessary for their mental health and development that they should not have mere schools for their lessons, but a world whose guiding spirit is personal love”. I am extremely happy to note that the motto of the school matches the principles of Gurudev Tagore. Another aspect, which is very important for a child is that the child should be given full freedom to pursue his or her creative instincts. If we analyse the life story of great men and women, we would see that they got freedom in their early formative years. Einstein was erratic as child, Thomas Alva Edison was mischievous, Marconi was naughty, Mark Twain seemed spoilt, Winston Churchill was average as a student. However, all of them went on to become great in their respective field. The list is long and it also includes our Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi who, as we all know, was an average student, yet he could unite and ignite the minds of millions and freed India from colonial bondage. The point which I want to make is that your study is important, in fact very very important, but pursuing your creative instinct is more important. Parents and teachers need to identify the creative spark in a child and guide him or her accordingly.

During my visit to Australia, I had the privilege to see that there are exclusive schools for teaching primary school teachers. The Curriculum is rigorous and the student teachers have to qualify with distinction before being appointed as primary school teachers. While such practices may exist in some pockets of our country, making it a wide spread phenomenon will ensure that all our rural schools also have high quality teachers who are equipped to build creative capacity among the children.

Friends, the special relationship between a teacher and a student is eternal. The teacher often becomes a role model for his disciple and basks in the accomplishments of his students more than his own. The teacher who is inspired by the curiosity and creativity of learners is motivated to excel. My teacher in the primary school, not only taught me about bird flight, but also put the spark of a mission in life of pursuing a career in flight. In time of difficulty I still reminisce about them and their teachers which often provide me with answers and solutions for coping up with challenges. This leads me to realize that the combined power of students and teachers can make a difference to society. The esteemed teaching community should have the capability to transform the students to become employment generators rather being employment seekers.

I request the managers and leaders of education, to have creative teachers in large numbers in primary and secondary schools for I strongly believe that transformations can only be brought about by teachers who have a vision to transform, the ability to take risks against all challenges, are good listeners, innovators, who maintain cordial inter-personal or intrapersonal relationships harmoniously and who have the ability to walk in step with parents, community, media and the others teachers for accomplishing the vision of generating a nation of enlightened citizens.

I am quoting a great visionary of education of our country, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam – “Education is the most important element for growth and prosperity of a nation. India is in the process of transforming itself into a developed nation by 2020. Yet, we have 350 million people who need literacy and many more than that have to acquire employable skills to suit

the emerging modern India on the globe.” All of us now know the value and importance of education. When people are literate and educated, they are aware of their various rights. When I joined as Governor of Orissa more than 3 years back, I was pained to know that the literacy rate in remote rural and tribal areas is low. So I started a Project called “Gyanaloka” – “Knowledge is light”. All Universities have been involved in this Project. Students of NSS Wings adopt tribal villages and spread education. They also convince people to send their children to schools and they also bring back the “drop-out” children to schools. This way thousands have been educated. All of you are immensely fortunate that you are reading in such a world-class educational institution with all modern facilities. Yet, there are millions who need formal education and all of us have a duty and responsibility towards them. When you are grown up and are well placed in life, never forget these millions of our nation and try to help them and educate them. That way you will be able to give back to society which has given you so much.

I extend my best wishes to all the children of SAI for their future and a great success of Symphony. I once again thank the Chairman Sri Sahooji and his team for inviting me and giving me the opportunity to interact with such wonderful children. I wish this school realises its vision of being one of the top 10 schools of the country by 2015.

Vande Utkal Janani,

Jai Hind

