



Need teachers who have competence, confidence and commitment to make a difference to the educational landscape of our country: Vice President Gives away National Award to Teachers – 2016

Posted On: 05 SEP 2017 8:01PM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that we need teachers who have the required competence, confidence and commitment to make a difference to the educational landscape of our country. He was addressing the gathering after giving away the National Award to Teachers – 2016, here today. The Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Prakash Javadekar, the Ministers of State for Human Resource Development, Shri Upendra Kushwaha, Dr. Satya Pal Singh, the Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shri Anil Swarup and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that today, on Teachers' Day, we reverentially remember first Vice President of India, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan a great teacher, an intellectual giant and an eloquent exponent of Hindu thought, on his birth anniversary. He congratulated all teachers who were receiving National Award to Teachers - 2016. He further said that he appreciate the work of numerous unsung heroes in classrooms of our country. The 'real education' to foster all round development of students is what should aim for and there should be holistic development of students with equal emphasis on academic excellence and skills for self-employment or gainful employment, he added.

The Vice President said that the teachers, are the '*Bharata Bhagya Vidhatas*' (shapers of India's development) and they are dedicating their time and energy to shape individuals for creating New India. He further said that the teachers have a formidable responsibility for India to achieve 100 per cent literacy in next five years. India was once known as "Vishwa Guru" with people from across the globe flocking to our ancient seats of learning like Nalanda and Takshashila, he added.

The Vice President said that India's value system, culture and heritage should be accorded due importance in the syllabus. Today all teachers must pledge to transform classrooms into hubs of joyful learning and raise the education system to a much higher level, he advised.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am delighted to be present amongst you today on the occasion of Teachers' Day, a day when the nation celebrates the extraordinary contribution teachers are making to national development, a day when we reverentially remember on his birth anniversary, the first Vice President of India, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a great teacher, an intellectual giant and an eloquent exponent of Hindu philosophy.

I am extremely delighted to share with you some thoughts against the backdrop of the cultural and educational heritage of our ancient land.

Indian education development is intertwined with the freedom movement and reflects the deep commitment of our founding fathers to providing universal access to good quality education. To name only a few, Gandhiji, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Dr B.R.Ambedkar, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Dr. Zakir Husain have clearly emphasised education as the most crucial foundation for national development.

In fact, today is a day to recall with pride the rich cultural and intellectual heritage we have collectively inherited. Ours is a country that has given a central place to teachers and given them the appellation of '**gurus**', a Sanskrit word that connotes '**a source of illumination**'. In fact, the respect and veneration a teacher receives in our culture is well depicted in the lines:

"Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu, Gurur Devo Maheshwarah Guru Saakshaat Parabrahma Tasmai Shri Gurave Namah— 'Guru is like Brahma the Creator initiating us into learning, Vishnu the Preserver nurturing our talents and Maheshwara the Destroyer dispelling doubts and negative thoughts. Guru is the Supreme God and my salutation to such a Guru'.

We are the inheritors of the system of gurukulas where the teachers and the students lived together and pursued studies in a caring environment, the system of educational inquiry that was based on a constant dialogue between the teacher and students and the concept of 'Vidya' as a process of discovery.

You are all blessed to have the unique opportunity to shape the destiny of our nation in your classrooms every day and every minute through your interaction with students. Through your knowledge, skills and attitude, you are determining the course of India's future.

It is an onerous task. It is a challenging task. And when it is well done, it is the most satisfying task. You, teachers, are all, in my view, the 'Bharata Bhagya Vidhata's' (shapers of India's development) who are tirelessly dedicating their time and energy to shape individuals who will in turn be creating the New India we are all dreaming of. Shaping the character of the young and impressionable minds through your words and deeds should be accorded the highest priority by the teaching community. "Literary education is of no value, if it is not able to build up a sound character", said Mahatma Gandhi.

We, in India, have come a long way after we made the tryst with destiny to end poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality of opportunity. Today, 95 percent of children are in schools and we have more universities and institutions of excellence than we had in 1947.

Nearly 70 lakh teachers are teaching 20 crore children in 15 lakh elementary schools across the country. The literacy rate has been steadily improving from a mere 18 percent in 1947 to nearly 80 percent at present.

The foreign rulers never bothered to teach us, educate us, because they are not interested in the future of our country. The literacy rate is now steadily improving, and it should improve further. I hope that government will take all necessary steps that no children is out of school, that should be mission of the government, that should be the duty of all the people. This is not only the duty of teacher alone. It is the duty of all enlightened citizens, the parents, the public representatives and everybody should get involved into this and see to it that we achieve 100 per cent literacy.

It is needless to say that teachers have a formidable responsibility if India has to achieve 100 per cent literacy over the next five years.

But there is still a long way to go and it should be a matter of concern that the learning outcomes of students have shown an overall decline in the recent years as reflected in the National Achievement Surveys. The academic standards in institutions of higher learning by and large need considerably improvement.

One of the most important issues facing school education today is the need to improve quality in education and learning. It is admirable that enormous strides towards establishing schools within the reach of every habitation have been achieved.

The Right to Education Act has strengthened the resolve and lent a supporting hand to the continuous efforts of bringing each and every child to school. However, children who have dropped out of school need special attention and careful planning to bring them back to school and here, teachers need to be sensitive to their needs. But the onus of bringing children to school lies not just on teachers but collectively with the community and parents also who should work actively with schools.

Today, we felicitate teachers for their contribution towards education and their achievements by honouring them with the national awards in recognition of their commendable and exceptional contribution to the noble cause of teaching. I am sure there are many more teachers who are not here but have been doing excellent work.

I congratulate all of you who are receiving the awards today and I also sincerely appreciate the work of numerous unsung heroes in the classrooms of our country.

Today, I read an article written by a serving IPS Officer from Talangana, Dr. P.S. Praveen Kumar, and he writes that 'we live because of teachers', and further says 'good teachers are now an endangered species'. Honestly, whatever I am today because of teachers. The way I speak, read, dress and work are deeply influenced by my teachers, Mr. Praveen Kumar wrote. In all the skills they have taught have helped me to navigate, to preach the values of life. Great teachers live through us, beyond us, and we live because of them. They are immortal, he said.

People should be judged, should be selected, should be elected, should be elected on the basis of character, calibre, capacity and conduct, discipline, dynamism, dedication, devotion.

As per a 1996 Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first century, there are four pillars of learning:

Learning to know: to provide the cognitive tools required to better comprehend the world

Learning to do: to provide the skills that would enable individuals to effectively participate in the global economy and society.

Learning to be: to provide self analytical and social skills to enable individuals to develop to their fullest potential for a all-round complete person.

Learning to live together: to expose individuals to the values implicit within human rights, democratic principles, intercultural understanding and respect and peace at all levels of society and human relationships to enable individuals and societies to live in peace and harmony.

Today, the entire world is facing the problem of terrorism. Terrorism of the enemy of the nation. We must teach our children from the beginning. Terrorism of any kind, it has no religion, it has no region, it is a menace to the humanity. And all our minds should be developed in such a way they should be put down with an iron hand. All countries are now realizing the difficulty. BRICS leaders have collectively condemned the terrorism.

We must also make the children to understand and behave that they are all one. Irrespective of caste, creed, sex, religion and region, India is one. One nation, one country, one people. You may be having different languages. You may be speaking different languages. You may dress differently, belief in different religions; religion is a way of worship. We need not bother about it, it is left to the individuals. What we need to focus is on culture. Culture is a way of life. We must focus on teaching the mother tongue.

Many successful teachers, of which you are shining examples, have transformed schools into places of joyful learning through their **knowledge, skills and attitudes**.

Dr. Radhakrishnan had said: "Teachers should be the best minds in the country". Good teachers are good learners. They keep learning new things all the time and acquiring knowledge from different sources.

In addition to **sound knowledge**, teachers should have the **skills** to communicate that knowledge effectively to the students. They should have the ability to stimulate the curiosity, open up opportunities for dialogue in the classrooms and encourage the children to discover, think and express. They should creatively link classroom learning with the learners' lives. In recent times, technology has become inexpensive and all pervasive.

It is heartening to note that 44 percent of rural secondary schools in India have computers. Technology can be a very powerful tool for assisting the teachers. Many teachers are using these tools effectively. Some of them are creating 'Apps' as well. We must encourage these innovations that enrich the learning process.

Excellent teachers who leave an indelible impression on the students have been the role models exemplifying through their **attitudes** and behaviour, the values and behaviour they wish to impart in the children.

It is said that values are caught. They cannot be taught. Ideal behaviour is important than ideology. Children learn to be kind, compassionate if the teachers are kind and compassionate. The students will learn the value of patience, tolerance and democratic functioning in a class where the teacher embodies these values and where her/his actions in the classroom reflect these values.

The teachers have to hone their skills to develop among children critical, creative, and reflective and problem solving abilities. In fact, this is the most crucial aspect of a teacher's work.

As has been said:

"The mediocre teacher tells;

The good teacher explains;

The superior teacher demonstrates;

The great teacher inspires."

What we need today are more and more great teachers. We need inspirational, transformational leaders in our classrooms.

It is not merely the grand building that makes a school good but the dedication and commitment of teachers that makes it great.

In this context, I would like to recall the words of Swami Vivekananda, who said 'If you are not pure and you know all the sciences of the world. That will not help you at all, you may be buried in all books you read, but that will not be of much use. It is the heart that reaches the goal. Follow the heart. A pure heart sees beyond the intellect, it gets inspired". The teacher who loves the children from her/his heart is the real nation builder, who can lay the solid foundation of a nation committed to growth and development.

We need more **child-friendly schools** with **caring, inspired and inspiring teachers**.

Good quality pre-primary education and elementary education are the essential building blocks for building a developed India. In a country with such a high commitment to knowledge and education, we cannot allow poor quality education to persist. As Sri MC Chagla, the then Education Minister of India said in 1964: "Our Constitution fathers did not intend that we just set up hovels, put students there, give untrained teachers, give them bad textbooks, no playgrounds, and say, we have complied with Article 45 and primary education is expanding... They meant that real education should be given to our children between the ages of 6 and 14".

The 'real education' to foster all round development of students is what should aim for. There should be holistic development of students with equal emphasis on academic excellence and skills for self-employment or gainful employment.

India's value system, culture and heritage should be accorded due importance in the syllabus. Also physical training, crafts, sports, NCC training, music and even subjects like gardening should be part of the curricula for a well-rounded development of the student. Health of the students is very important. A healthy nation can become a wealthy nation, but a wealthy nation may not become a healthy nation.

India was once known as "Vishwa Guru" with all those seeking knowledge from across the globe flocking to our ancient seats of learning like Nalanda and Takshashila Universities and scholars like Friedrich Max Müller admiring it in the following words:

"If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most full developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India."

However, following various invasions and colonisation, India lost its pre-eminent position. Now the time has come for India to regain its position as a "Vishwa Guru", the centre of educational excellence. This can happen if we can create and strengthen our own system by drawing inspiration from the best examples from around the world like the ancient sages had suggested: "Aano Bhadrah Kratavo Yantu Vishvathah" meaning "Let noble thoughts come to us from all over the world".

The teachers must take this as a sacred mission, a mission that aims to see that all children acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required for a twenty-first century citizen.

We need more teachers who can build in our children a commitment to the values of democracy, equality, freedom, justice, secularism, concern for others well being, respect for human dignity and human rights. Children should be made aware of our rich heritage and the glorious history.

I congratulate all the awardees, whose commendable professional dedication has been recognised through this award.

I call upon all teachers at all levels in the country, in the pre-primary centres, elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities to rededicate themselves and pledge that they will transform the classrooms into hubs of joyful learning and raise the entire education system to a much higher level than what exists today.

I am sure the Government will ensure that the education system is considerably strengthened in terms of infrastructure and a congenial work environment where quality of learning becomes central.

I hope there will be a new impetus to make human development, quality education and lifelong learning as cornerstones in the development architecture of a new India.

We cannot rest on the past laurels. Nor can we be satisfied with a few islands of excellence. We need a system that responds effectively to the learning needs of all children, youth and adults and keeps constantly innovating.

We need teachers who have the required **competence, confidence** and **commitment** to make a difference to the educational landscape of our country. They must work in collaboration with the community members and parents to enrol all children in each habitation like teachers have been doing in some states like Gujarat, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

The entire educational system including the teachers should internalize the message of 'Reform, Perform and Transform' for India to once again become the knowledge hub of the world.

My greetings once again to all teachers across the country on this auspicious occasion and best wishes for a long exciting voyage of promoting learning in the years to come.

Jai Hind"

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(Release ID: 1501843) Visitor Counter : 97

