



The Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Viswanathan, Vice Chancellor, Anna University, Chennai lighting the lamp at the Inaugural Ceremony of the Conference

ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS FOR THE INDIAN SCHOOL C E R T I F I C A T E 48TH CONFERENCE

23RD - 25TH NOVEMBER 2005



November 23-25, 2005, witnessed a flurry of activities in the otherwise tranquil surroundings of G.S.I.S. This was due to the convergence of heads of schools and delegates, who had come to attend the meet of ASISC. More than 600 delegates from various parts of the country attended the conference.

Prof. Dr. D. Viswanathan, Vice Chancellor of Anna University, Chennai, inaugurated the conference on 23rd November 2005. Rtn. Dr. B.K. Krishnaraj Vanavarayar, Chairman, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan was the Guest of Honour. Mr. Shiv Khera of the Qualified Learning Systems, New Delhi, an eminent speaker and author, conducted the first session.

On 24th November, Mr. Neil O' Brien, Chairman, Mrs. Rita Wilson, Deputy Secretary and Holding Additional C.E.O., Mrs. Poonam Sodhi, Head RDCD of the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations, New Delhi addressed the delegates and chaired the interactive sessions on matters of the Council.

This was yet another feather, in the already feathered cap of Good Shepherd International School.



The Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Viswanathan, Vice Chancellor, Anna University, Chennai delivering his address at the Inaugural Ceremony of the Conference

Distinguished Chief Guest of this morning Sri Krishnaraj Vanavarayar, respected Principal of Good Shepherd International School Dr. Thomas, distinguished delegates from all over the country, invitees, students, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset I am delighted to be here in this morning on the occasion of the 48th Indian School Certificate conference. I am very happy to note that every year the Heads of the Schools as a form of associations meet in different places and discuss the issues of their role in the School Education and taking stock about the past and planning for the future.

Today, India has 108 crore people, but literacy is only 35%. In spite of the huge population our country is marching ahead progressively. Every country in the world looks upon India as one of the strongest force in the future. Today if India is being recognized by the advanced countries that is because of the advancements in technology and defence we have made. At this point if I mention it may be useful to our younger students we should encourage and inculcate patriotism among the young minds. It is something missing today and our students are being greatly attracted, diverted and distracted by western culture. The young talented and potential brains are not being properly guided towards the research and developmental activities which is most essential for our country. We cannot go on to expect technologies from other countries, for example, when I was

associated with a project missiles sponsored by our Excellency Dr. Kalam of India, when he was the director of DRDO, I was able to develop a technology for Indian missile and transfer to Defence.

When I was invited by Washington State University to present the technology at the International Conference I presented it and claimed that India is the 7th country in the world to develop this technology as on today and I am the one who developed it in India. Within two hours of presentation I was offered a job by Kemtronic California a process engineering company manufacturing missiles for America they offered me 4000\$ salary. 'I said I am born for India not for USA'. The same day the Japanese approached me with 1 million dollars. I said 'I cannot betray my country'. So like this every one of us need to be involved in development of Indian technology. Then only the dream of our President in 2020 India can be a developed country.

Unfortunately we find today students are not motivated towards research and development. There are a lot of destructive forces on the students' education like cell phones, internets etc. Even the brilliant students are not putting their efforts on their studies. It is our endeavour to see that the same kind of discipline what we are inculcating in the schools should be maintained in the colleges also. Unfortunately the government is not able to provide education for all in the country. The role of private sectors and private institutions are commendable.



View of a section of delegates

The latest technologies need to be incorporated on e-learning to the students so that the authentic knowledge reaches the students. Today's problems with the students is lack of understanding on the subjects. The teaching methodologies must be changed. Huge syllabus are being dumped on the school and with that kind of pressure children are not able to spare time to understand, instead they mug up. So it is our duty to see whether the syllabus needs to be reduced at the school level. So a resolution need to be adopted by you, that what should be the level of syllabus at the school level. There should be a co-ordination between the schools and colleges. The same syllabus what they study in XI and XII, in most of the degree courses is being repeated in the 1st year. If there is proper co-ordination this overlapping can be avoided. So I hope the delegates will come out with fruitful discussions and recommend the government so that these aspects need to be considered.

Further, what I would like to share with you is our school education in India has a long way to go to produce bright students who can undertake high quality professional education. The entire system of school education needs to be re-engineered to achieve this goal. The large number of vacant seats in the engineering colleges not only in Tamil Nadu through out the country reflects the same. The school education is fragmented at the top level. There are several boards like CBSE, ISC etc. State Board made a thorough analysis of these models at some point, for the sake of guiding students. There are prospects and pitfalls in each model and these models aim at imparting knowledge to a reasonable depth in a chosen set of topics. There is an enormous scope in thinking and learning in these models. The state board models can facilitate this but the focus is to expose the young minds to a wider spectrum of topics. This is to enable the young minds to voluntarily inculcate a sort of passion towards some topics and study on their own.

New learning systems will enable teachers to create challenging assignments that can close the gap between the world of instruction and the world of work and tailor instruction and increase the efficiency of learning.

College education can and does improve morality, ethics, civility, standard of living, self esteem, freedom and all the other tenets that form the basis for the economic prosperity and intellectual maturity of any nation. Technology and quality teaching are the pillars for enabling quality education for large number of students. I have a vision of exposing young minds to many application of IT including Accounting, Weather Forecasting and other popular applications. Good animated content will greatly help the students in having awareness about this application. It will motivate them in trying alternate solutions. IT should be a tool to teach other subjects of particular interest on basic sciences, laboratories or virtual laboratories are now available on the WWW to facilitate easy experimentation and learning.

Engineering colleges all over the Sate are willing to extend all facilities to impart high quality education to the school students. Quality education must begin during the professional studies. It is strongly suggested not to create a bias in the young minds towards any particular subject or profession. Just things happen when they are done out of passion. It is our duty to create such a learning passion and towards this goal we should come together to share experiences, knowledge, course content and create a depository of ideas, strategies and just practices in the area of school education. I am sure that this conference will bring out a strong resolution towards our commitment to the society and to the nation. At the last I thank all the organizers having given me this opportunity and I am very happy to inaugurate this conference.

Thank you very much.



The Guest of Honour, Dr. B.K. Krishnaraj Vanavarayar, Chairman, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Coimbatore delivering his address

Distinguished Chief Guest of this morning, the illustrious Vice Chancellor of Anna University, my good friend and the host of this event Dr. Thomas, Mrs. Thomas, other dignitaries and friends,

I deem it a great honour and privilege to speak to you this morning before this august gathering. I am no stranger to this campus and I am happy to be back again to be part of this event to address a distinguished gathering of Heads of Schools from all over the nation is perhaps a great honour for anybody and I should thank Dr. P C to have given me this opportunity.

Now as one representing the Bharathiya Vidhya Bhawan my presentation will be different from that of the Vice Chancellor. The significance of any conference depends upon the theme that you select to deliberate upon. That way you have chosen a theme which in my opinion virtually gives a wake up call not only to India but the whole of humanity and you know what the theme is - "From darkness to Light" - and I understand that it was Dr. P C's theme and I complement you Dr. for this wonderful theme.

So it's a good beginning, a good invocation and I am sure that it has given us a good mind set as well for the two day long deliberations. And as I told, this theme is the one which I would like to deal with particularly in a meeting of the Heads of Schools. Now, we are in a beginning of a new century and you know the twentieth century saw sweeping changes. Changes that are fundamental in nature with far reaching implications for which

we feel it very difficult to cope with these changes but changes are inevitable. We cannot grumble over changes. We have to change with a change and we have to even welcome change because if we don't we will be left behind in isolation and we may even suffer from stagnation. Today we say a lot about knowledge revolution but what we need to know is while we welcome change we should also know how to manage change. Managing change is in fact a biggest challenge which change brings about. Once we were saying that matter is power, then we said energy is power, today we say knowledge is power. While we welcome the good that has happened we need to be careful about what we need to do about the aberrations which were also part of these changes. Ultimately we need to ask certain questions to ourselves. By virtue of all these changes, all these revolutions and reforms, what is the state of affairs of humanity today? Certain basic questions we need to ask ourselves.

- 1) **Have all these changes guaranteed a better world order today?**
- 2) **Have all these changes promoted peace and harmony in the world?**
- 3) **Have all these changes and reforms ensured sustainable economic development?**
- 4) **Have all these changes guaranteed justice, equity and fair play at all levels?**
- 5) **Have these changes and reforms answered to the aspirations for all the people all over the world at all levels?**



Mr. Neil O'Brien, Chairman of the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations addressing the gathering

The answer will be not just a no! but a big 'NO'. So the bottom line is, there has been some good, there has been some bad thanks to all these changes but ultimately the negatives weigh more than the positives. That's where humanity stands today and that's why people say humanity is at the cross roads.

However, all the nations of the world went through indiscriminate changes one copying the other, one competing with the other unmindful of the fact whether it is best for its own conditions. We too, in India, were in a bit of a haste to bring about these sweeping changes particularly in the last fifteen years and more changes are in the offing. And as a whole humanity faces certain threats, I will just list out some threats. There are ten.

- 1) **Religious intolerance**
- 2) **Racial discrimination**
- 3) **Economic marginalization**
- 4) **Political tensions**
- 5) **Social disparities**
- 6) **Cultural degradation**
- 7) **Rampant materialism**
- 8) **Crisis of character and leadership**
- 9) **Ecological imbalance**
- 10) **Terrorism**

If by virtue of all these sweeping changes in the last 100 years and because of all these economic reforms, if ultimately humanity is stuck in all these 10 challenges, have we progressed, have we moved forward or do we feel weak and vulnerable to meet and cope with these challenges? What is the reason for all this? The reason is only hasty changes, indiscriminate changes without developing the capacity to cope with the changes to manage the change has caused us everything. That is why I am happy this conference has given



The office bearers of the Council with the host School Principal and Senior Vice Principal

this wake up call - "From Darkness to Light" - a very relevant and daring theme. There is darkness everywhere, there is gloom everywhere. Every morning when you open the newspapers, when you switch on the television to watch the news, what do you see in it? Is there anything for you to feel happy about? Is there anything that gives you comfort? Rampant materialism, unabated materialism and triggering a kind of competition that have deprived us of the inner peace and leisure. Can you imagine school children being told about stress management and we are saying we are moving forward? Moving towards what, you need to ask yourself. Therefore the time has now come to reorient and restructure education to be close to this theme. Or else in the name of education we will be inviting more trouble in the decades to come. The goal of education has to be not academic excellence but human excellence. That is how education is understood in India. A mention was made while introducing me about my admiration for Swami Vivekananda. Yes, it was he who said '**education is the manifestation of the perfection already in a child**'. And the vedic vision of this nation says '**every man is potentially divine and the expression of that divinity is real education**'. But is there any mention of it in any of our curriculum anywhere in India? What is the kind of education that we are giving? When we talk of education the one name that all remember in India is Dr. Radhakrishnan, and one of his quotation is accepted today by the UNESCO. The quotation is "**education to be complete has to be humane, it should include not only the training of the intellect but disciplining the heart and refinement of the soul**". As I told you, human excellence has to be the ultimate goal and not academic excellence. Your class rooms, your examinations, your marks and distinctions is okay up to a point, but beyond that what is needed is we need to do something to sensitize the youth of India today.



Dr. P.C Thomas with the Key Note Speaker, Mr. Shiv Kherra

The fourth book of President Kalam is titled "Ignite the might". There is a divine spark in every child. In the name of education we should ignite that spark. Get rid of the ego and help him to expand and embrace everything around him. Again I wish to tell you a quotation of yet another eminent man of India. It goes like this - **"Character training through intelligent self discipline makes human energy socially oriented"**. Now tell me, can you sum up education better than this? What does this quotation say? Knowledge should ultimately go to develop a social concern, a sensitivity and the pride of belonging to something. How many of our children are introduced to their own country today? Do we introduce India to the youth of India? No, we don't. Do we tell our children the cultural heritage of this nation? No we don't. Do we introduce the great men and women who guided the destiny of this country to our youth? No, we don't. Do we tell our children the hundred years of freedom struggle of this nation and the sacrifices that went with it? No, we don't. Do we tell the children what are the challenges they have to be encountered in the 21st century? Do we tell the children what are the opportunities available to them in the 21st century? And finally, the most important - is any attempt in the name of human resource development taking place in any of the schools anywhere in India? No ! But you got to know one thing. Infinite energy, infinite potential is there in every child. We need to tell the child where lies the strength, what is the core of human personality and how to manifest it and use it for what.

Short of that, nothing will work. Just science, economics and politics will not guide the destiny of a nation. We need to develop the character of a nation in tune with its own culture. That is the only way you can make a great nation. That is the need of the hour. We need to bring about a synthesis of science and spirituality of tradition and modernity.



The host Principal Dr. P.C Thomas delivering his vote of thanks

Finally, before I conclude, what I wish to tell you is 'nations are built in their educational institutions'. It is Dr. Radhakrishnan who said this. How well we groom the youth, how well we prepare them as enlightened citizens to transform a country that alone will ultimately build a strong India. So the role of education and the role of teachers and more so of the Heads of the institutions is very crucial today. I only pray Dr. P C, you had hit upon a theme which will make the difference for India and humanity in the decades to come and some wisdom will prevail upon the people concerned to bring about this beautiful balancing act of the past and the present – science and spirituality – tradition and modernity. This land had undergone a tremendous crisis and it has emerged successfully. The Indian economy has never been this good as it is today. We found unity in diversity and today we are slowly making our presence in the world.

I close with one interesting incident. Recently the Tsunami struck India and the hurricane struck America both brought tremendous devastation in both the places but you can make a contrast of the outcome of these two things. America is the richest nation in the world. India is even today a developing nation. America could provide food only after five days after that calamity, but in India, in most remote corners of the seashore, breakfast was provided the next day morning. The government did not do it, people helped each other, whereas in America they waited for the government to do. There was a power failure when hurricane struck America and a power failure when tsunami struck India. There was total darkness in America and India. Everything went wrong in the darkness in America but nothing went wrong in India. In America, in spite of this misery, the white took revenge over the black. But in India, Hindus, Muslims and Christians everyone stood together and helped each other. So we will rule the world.