



SPEECH
OF
HIS EXCELLENCY GEN JJ SINGH,
PVSM, AVSM, VSM (RETD),
GOVERNOR OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH
ON THE OCCASION OF
UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD DAY,
AT
VIVEKANANDA HALL,
R.K. MISSION HOSPITAL,
ITANAGAR
ON
FRIDAY, 11 SEP, 2009

It is said, it is easy to sit up and take notice. What is difficult is standing up and taking action. Today we are celebrating the fact that someone stood up and took that action. Today we are celebrating the commitment and sheer hard work of our revered and visionary Swami Vivekananda. Today, we are observing the Universal Brotherhood Day to commemorate Swami ji's blessed historical speech at the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago on this very day in 1893, 116 years ago. In a masterly way he spoke on Indian Philosophy of tolerance and universal acceptance of all religions as true. It was impact of his soul stirring deliberations that Swami Vivekananda, disciple of Sri Ramakrishna began to be known as the 'Orator by Divine Right' and also the 'Messenger of Indian wisdom to the Western world'.

On this special occasion I extend my heartiest greetings to all of you. I hope, the day will inspire each one of us to rededicate our self for the cause of our great nation.

I am very happy that on this special occasion, we are felicitating those who worked late into the evening and early in the morning, those who wouldn't take "No" for an answer. I would like you to take as your motto the words of Pearl S. Buck who said, "All things are possible until they are proved impossible and even the impossible may only be so as of now." My heartiest congratulations to toppers amongst the students and also to the award winning dedicated teachers for their most deserving awards.

Friends, the need of the hour is to look back and seek the guidance from the teachings of saints like Vivekananda, Guru Nanak and Mother Teresa, which are truly relevant in present times. Today, in the name of religion and sects, violence has become part of our daily life, which has huge impact on the development of our country and the world. Therefore, there is a need that we follow the path shown by Swamiji for peace, prosperity and development. If each one of us starts contributing

towards the goal, we can make difference. Let us fight against the divisive forces and elements of sectarian violence. Let us strengthen the spirit of unity and reinforce the splendid integrity in diversity of our society.

During his travel to different parts of our country in 1890, Swami ji discovered that in spite of poverty, the masses clung to religion, but they had never been taught the life-giving, ennobling principles enunciated in our holy scripts and how to apply them in practical life. They needed two kinds of knowledge, the knowledge to improve their economic condition, and spiritual knowledge to infuse in them faith in themselves and strengthen their moral values. The next question was how to spread these two kinds of knowledge among the masses?

Through education – this was the answer that Swamiji found. As a tribute to this blessed son of our Motherland, let us spread education and removed illiteracy. Let us lead all Indians from 'Darkness to Light.' Let us make it our paramount duty to ensure quality education for all. Without a doubt, education is the greatest driving force behind all human endeavours. It is the only thing that has kept mankind pushing the frontiers of nature and knowledge in every direction.

As Swamiji said, I quote, "Education is the realization of perfection that already exists in man." Unquote. We can not compromise with education as it gives knowledge which provides opportunity to think for a good civil society. All should contribute in shaping the education system so that best facility is provided to teachers and students. In this direction, I place on record my appreciation for the Vivekananda Kendra and Ramakrishna Mission for their untiring effort in field of education in this Frontier State. Their responses to the needs of the tribal people and their unbridled commitment indeed are praiseworthy.

The Vivekananda Kendra always had close association with the State of Arunachal Pradesh, especially in the field of education since 1974. It was visionary officers like late K.A.A. Raja, who later become the Lt. Governor of State, who initiated this highly valued relationship especially in the field of primary education. The pioneers really took pains and worked hard in creating and nurturing these institutions. When I was posted at Tezu in 1981-83 as Commanding Officer of my battalion, maintaining the glorious tradition of the Indian Army, our unit had adopted Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya, Tafrogam. We contributed and provided whatever help we could at that time. Me and my wife always treasured the memories of our time with the children and also with the then Principal of the School, respected Rekha Davey, who is today with us here.

The State has always acknowledged that Vivekananda Kendra has given top priority to Arunachal Pradesh in it's plan of nation building through Arun Jyoti and Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalayas. But today, the spirit to serve the people is diminishing, which needs to be revived at all costs.

Friends, the aim of education imparted should be to bring changes not only in the amount of knowledge gained but also in the abilities to do so, to think and to acquire habits, skills and attitude which characterize an individual who is socially accepted and well adjusted. Education, I believe is ability to develop a sensible attitude towards society, gender and culture. Therefore, the alumni of the Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalayas and Ramakrishna Mission Schools are at least expected that they maintain the values and spirits they inculcated during the period spent by them in these institutions throughout their lives. These students should always remain attached to their local traditions and indigenous faith, and most importantly, their mother tongue. In the same breath, I would like to urge upon these esteemed organizations to instill the spirit of Pan Arunachal amongst its students.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my firm belief that quality education is the key to overcome poverty in a single generation. And the same is fundamental in creating a future for human security, community development and progress of the nation. It is an enormous challenge. It is also an immense opportunity.

Let us pledge to work united as TEAM ARUNACHAL to eradicate illiteracy, poverty, inequality and corruption from our beautiful pristine Arunachal Pradesh and contribute all that is possible for its progress and prosperity. If all our 51,000 State government employees and few thousand members of NGOs work with the same dedication and spirit shown by our brothers and sisters of Vivekananda Kendra and Ramakrishna Mission order, we can build Arunachal Pradesh as one of the most developed State in the country.

Before, I conclude, I extend my gratitude to Vivekananda Kendra for organizing this special function, which no doubt will instill universal brotherhood, patriotism and respect for all religions amongst all Arunachalees and my fellow citizens of India.

Friends, I would like to quote Swami Vivekananda, "Arise, awake and stop not until the goal is reached." Unquote.

Jai Arunachal Jai Hind.