

Address of

**Shri. Kapil Sibal**

Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development

“National Awards to Teachers, 2008 Function”

Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi

at

11:40 am

on

5<sup>th</sup> September, 2009

Your Excellency the Vice President of India, Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Smt D. Purandeswari, Secretary (School Education & Literacy), Smt. Anju Vaish, Secretary (Higher Education), Shri R. P. Agrawal, our distinguished National Awardees & members of the teaching fraternity, my friends from the media, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Today is a very special day. Special in two senses. First, we celebrate this day as Teachers' Day in the memory of one of the greatest sons of India, Dr. Servapalli Radhakrishnan; acclaimed educator, scholar, philosopher. A teacher, who came to occupy the highest office in the country. He was the second President of India. He epitomized all the characteristics of an ideal teacher. His life and work are a source of inspiration to all of us.

This day is also special to us because of you: our fraternity of teachers, who have distinguished themselves and recipients of the prestigious National Awards for meritorious teaching. You deserve not only our congratulations, but also our gratitude for having nurtured our children through your unstinted commitment. You have invested your precious time in our most valuable assets.

These awards are a recognition for your hard-work, promotion of excellence and your unique initiatives in the field of education. You represent excellence yourselves and deserve recognition for having nurtured it in our children. Someone pointed out and I quote "*A teacher is a compass that activates the magnets of curiosity, knowledge, and wisdom in the pupils*". This is easier said than done. To evoke curiosity, to have the

child pursue knowledge and find pleasure in its pursuit requires subtle mentoring. A teacher guides without giving the impression that he/she is doing so. A teacher must have the ability to have the student discover his own genius. A teacher subtly motivates the student to discover both the self and the environment around him/her. At the end, the student must be equipped with the capacity to embark upon a journey to find a place in civil society. A successful teacher prides in seeing the student embark upon that journey. The entire teaching fraternity gathered here is gifted with the rare ability of inspiring our young.

Quest for knowledge has always been a part of the ethos of our country. Yet our national education system must undergo rapid change to respond to the emerging challenges of globalization. Our Government is committed to providing quality education to our children. The Eleventh Five Year Plan is virtually a National Education Plan. The Plan allocation for education has been stepped up from 7.7% of gross budgetary support in the 10th Plan, to over 19% in the 11th Plan. In nominal terms there is going to be a five-fold increase in spending on education in the 11th plan. This is an unprecedented increase in financial support for education. While the Government is committed to spending more on education, you as teachers have an important role to play. It's not just a matter of resources; it's your dedication, commitment, and motivation that inspires our young, that will ultimately win the day. You can have a school without the necessary infrastructure, but you can't have a school without a teacher.

In today's knowledge Age, it is imperative to develop an effective life long learning system to provide continuing education and skills up-gradation.

This applies to teachers as well, to help them keep abreast of the changing skills necessary to compete in the new knowledge economy. John Dana has rightly observed, **“Who dares to teach must never cease to learn.”** I therefore, urge the entire teaching community, through you, to upgrade your content knowledge and professional skills continuously.

I have no doubt that our teachers would rise to this challenge and act as facilitators of change in the way they teach and our children learn.

I have the highest personal regard for each one of the Awardees. You are truly leaders, not just in your profession, but also of our society. Each one of you, therefore, is a role model for millions of children of our country. To quote Hendry Adams, **“A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”** Be a wonderful role model because you will be the window through which many children will see their future. You have all contributed to the development of our nation and I hope you will continue to inspire younger generations.

It is often been said that a country is as good as its people. I believe the country's citizens are only as good as their teachers. Therefore, a great deal depends on you and I salute you, all of you, those who are present here today, and many more who are not here, for your passion, dedication, commitment and contributions.

I once again congratulate you all for winning this National Award. I wish you all success in your further endeavours.