

Leadership for Sustainability

Teachers' Day, 05 September 2012

General

I wish to reiterate the **purpose of education** at Indus. We believe that the purpose of education is to prepare a student for a life that is becoming increasingly un-sustainable, and not merely to succeed in examination or prepare for a career. Although success in examination is important, but by itself it does not ensure that a child is prepared to face the challenges of life that lie ahead, or to be happy.

A student cannot be ready to face the challenges that lie ahead unless s/he is an engaged citizen. So, the purpose of education is twofold: preparation for life and being an engaged citizen.

I take this opportunity on Teachers' day to recommend a giant leap forward in our leadership journey – leaders of tomorrow will have to be Green Leaders. Likewise, schools of tomorrow will also have to be Green Schools.

Increasing Threats to a Sustainable Society

Tomorrow is unknown; there is uncertainty, and there is chaos. There is also high-speed rapid change most of us are unable to cope with. Uncertainty, chaos and change are key features of tomorrow characterized by:

Social and economic inequalities arising from globalization and market economy

Complexity because of growing inter-dependence and multi-disciplinary nature of life

Climate change

Poverty and malnutrition. Gender equality and women's empowerment is a precondition for reducing poverty

Conflict: religion, migration, climate change, and rising intolerance

Sharing of scarce resources of the planet in a scenario wherein 6.2 billion people are consuming five planets worth of resources already. North America alone, which constitutes just 5 percent of the world's population, consumes 40 percent of the planet's resources. It is, therefore, unthinkable what will happen by 2030 when the world's population will be above 8 billion?

Spiritual emptiness

Education has immense power to save the world, only if education is given a human face. I have no doubts that given our **quality of leadership**, we will bequeath a better future to our children. We have another advantage; the overwhelming **majority of teachers are women**. Their innate strengths enable sustainability: empathy, nurturing and caring, abhorrence of violence, ability to prevent conflict, and a better understanding of conservation. Emerson once said that, "*Women are the best index of the coming hour.*"