

Report on the Conference

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The first conference of Sathya Sai Schools held under the divine guidance of Bhagawan Baba has been discussing matters relating to Sathya Sai Schools and Sathya Sai Educare during the last two days. The following are noted.

1. The discussions focused mainly on EDUCARE and were based on Swami's teachings and His vision on Education.

Having drawn inspirations from Swami's inaugural address yesterday, the conference proceeded with a talk by the International Chairman Sri Indulal Shah, on the topic, "Vision of Sathya Sai Educare". He elaborated on the five principles of education, that Swami discussed in his discourse, such as:-

1. What is education?
2. What are the types of education?
3. What is the purpose of education?
4. What are the responsibilities of teachers?
5. What are the benefits of education?

Sri Shah highlighted the distance between life and death which is taken care of by Educare. He also narrated the beginning of the Balvikas movement for the children of Swami's devotees in the year 1962, which has since expanded to the secular EHV programme in 1982. Under the divine guidance and Swami's extreme love for the entire humanity, this movement has now extended to over 200,000 students, the Educare programme is now benefiting children all over the world.

2. Dr. Judo, in his presentation, discussed educare in the 21st century. He emphasized that the fundamental principle underlying Educare is that the source of all knowledge and experience is really within our own inmost soul, the supreme person. All we need to do is to go within and tap the knowledge and that is educare. He emphasized that educare is a gradual unfolding of our inner consciousness. It is the process of bringing out the inner knowledge and values. It is systematic evolution of man to God.

3. Dr. Jumsai then spoke on "Methods of teaching in Sathya Sai Schools." Centering his thoughts on integration of values he drew examples of interdisciplinary integration and intra disciplinary integration of subjects and values in the school curriculum. He proceeded with explaining as to how inputs such as school climate and classroom management influence outcomes such as character and academic achievement. Emphasis was placed on silencing the mind in order to enable the child to go deep within and bring out the five human values.

4. Speaking on "An Innovative Approach to SSEHV", Victor Krishna Kanu concentrated on SSEHV in Africa. His presentation focused on 2 aspects:
 - a) The importance of culture as a repository of human values. Elaborate examples of the basic human values in African culture and tradition were given.

 - b) The scientific approach, laying emphasis on the importance of psychology, neurology and science as aids to the understanding of educare as propounded by Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

5. Dr. Pal Dhall chaired the evening session where 10 Principals from different countries shared their experiences of managing Sathya Sai Schools. Some of the thoughts, experiences and concerns expressed by these Principals from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Fiji, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and Zambia included:
 - a) The challenges experienced in the establishment of Sathya Sai Schools.

 - b) To develop more schools or to create a model of excellence that could be replicated by others

 - c) Nation building through Sathya Sai Schools and so on.

6. Sri Hira started the first session of the second day's proceedings with an input titled, "Innovative management of Sathya Sai Schools". Shri Hira stated that 2000 schools all over the world are now exposed to Sathya Sai Education in Human Values programme and that there are 47 schools managed by the Institutes of Sathya Sai Education, devotees and the Sathya Sai Organisations, worldwide. He stressed that the goal should be spiritual management and not the conventional style of management of schools. He suggested a number of active points, of which some are:

- a) Conducting more research and publishing a manual on the management of Sathya Sai Schools.
- b) Creating self-reliant and sustainable schools that employ devoted, experienced , retired teachers.
- c) That Sathya Sai Schools receive the first priority for service activities by all devotees.
- d) Following the 'gurukul' pattern of schooling where the interaction between the teachers and the students is round the clock, comprising all aspects of their daily life and studies, just as Bhagawan Baba takes care of all the institutions under his direct physical presence.

In short, he said that the school management should be the means to reach the end, that is education.

7. Sister Angela Loraine Burrows was the second presenter. Her paper was on "A new look at the methodology for SSEHV". She placed emphasis on drawing out, rather than merely implementing the seeds of human value education in the child. It was suggested that the 3 goals of the programme should be:
 - a) to draw out the latent divinity from within the child.
 - b) to develop discrimination between right and the wrong.
 - c) to know who we are.

Sister Angela Loraine Burrows said that values should not be compartmentalized and should be drawn out in a programmed manner. She suggested that a thematic approach be used to draw out the values in an integrated and holistic manner.

In summary, the emphasis was on creating an appropriate learning atmosphere, building trust and cooperation, being clear in the teacher's mind and always keeping the goal of bringing out the divinity in children, in view. A checklist for the teachers was suggested, for looking into the aspects of practical application, reaching the heart of the child and helping the child to transform.

8. Sister Kay Scovill, in her talk, explained the techniques that go into an innovative approach for training teachers. Emphasis was laid on the following points.
 - a) Worldly knowledge, practical knowledge and spiritual knowledge that is put into use in teaching children.
 - b) focusing on the positive aspects, developing a heart to heart connection and development of character in the Educare programme.
 - c) the aim of education is attaining divinity.

9. The last session of the morning was devoted to the views and suggestions from the participants for an action plan for the future of the Sathya Sai schools. This session was chaired by Bro. Judo who shall present his Action plan later.

10. The final session concluded with two presentations by the current Vice Chancellor and the former Vice Chancellor of Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

11. The Vice Chancellor Giri stressed two aspects that are being implemented at the Institute :
 - a) That the medium of instruction is discipline with the other languages spoken being Love, Service and Sadhana.
 - b) Doing every action as belonging to Swami and making them worthy of offering to Him.

The former Vice Chancellor, Dr Venkataraman, amongst other things threw light on the meaning of Constant Integrated Awareness. In short, he emphasized that this meant seeing Swami everywhere, in everything all the time. He shared many insights and experiences in the unfolding of educare in the students of the Institute.

Conclusion:

Gratitude to Swami for bringing together this conference to share ideas, experiences and to be inspired to deliver excellence in Sathya Sai education in all the schools of the world. We pray to Him for his continued guidance, support and blessings.

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