

**Address by Hon'ble MOS EA at the Valedictory  
Session of the 24<sup>th</sup> Principals' Conference of CBSE  
Affiliated Schools in the Gulf at Doha on 21.1.2012**

Hon'ble Minister of Education of Qatar, H.E. Mr. Saad bin Ibrahim Al Mahmoud,

Her Excellency the Ambassador of India to Qatar Mrs. Deepa Wadhawa,

Madam Fouzia Al Khader, Director of Public Education,

Mrs. Neelam Upadhyay, Chairperson, Council of CBSE affiliated Schools and other office bearers,

Shri A.P. Sasidharan, Convenor of Qatar Chapter of CBSE Schools,

Principals and Members of the Management Committees of Indian Schools,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset I express my deep sense of gratitude to the Hon'ble Minister of Education of Qatar for honouring us here today with his presence. This is a strong indication of the good support our Indian Community

Schools have been receiving from the Government of the State of Qatar. I would also like to thank the organizers of this event for having invited me to this function. I have landed here this morning only, after attending two important educational conferences in Chennai – one at Loyola College and another at Dr. B.S. Abdur Rahman University. After attending your meet here, I have to address one more Conference in this region that is at Indian School, Al Ghubra, Muscat tomorrow. Since I am holding the additional charge of MHRD, now-a-days, I have the pleasure of enjoying the company of academicians also besides diplomats.

The theme that you selected for this Conference - ‘Synergise to Energise’ - with the aim of interaction and coordination pertaining to the conduct of Continuous

and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) in your respective Schools, will be a good exercise in strengthening the common objectives of the Council of CBSE schools in the Gulf. I am happy to know that the Gulf Council consists of 120 schools situated in the Gulf and affiliated to the CBSE which include 8 schools in Qatar alone. It helps to promote a sharing of expertise, research and literature to help in mutual growth of the member schools and create understanding for the rich heritage of India and the Arab host countries. It also helps to organize in-service training programmes, seminars & workshops for the benefit of the teachers working in the member schools and convene Annual Conferences of the Heads of Schools.

Friends,

The GCC is home to over 5 million Indian expatriates. While in the past, a predominantly large proportion of the Indian population was made up of blue collar workers, this ratio has been changing with a larger influx of Indian professionals, entrepreneurs and other white collar workers. This trend has resulted in more families meeting the eligibility criteria for residence in the Gulf countries and, therefore, an ever-growing need for schools based on the Indian curriculum. Governments of the GCC countries have been receptive to the needs of the Indian expatriates in the Gulf from a very early time and generous in providing land and approvals for setting up Indian schools. It is indeed commendable that these schools which were primarily for Indian expatriates, have over the years earned

themselves a reputation for high scholastic achievements, and thus now sought after by other expatriates communities, including from our neighbourhood South Asia. While this is a most welcome trend which provides an international environment for Indian children, it is important to bear in mind that the permissions for Indian Schools have been granted by the local governments principally for the Indian community and as a school seat is a precious and scarce commodity, it should be treated as such.

India has close relations with Qatar marked by historical commercial ties and people to people contacts. There is a large Indian community in this country. There have been regular high level visits between the two countries, prominent among them were by His Highness

the Emir of Qatar in 1999 and 2005, His Excellency the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2006, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah in 2006 and from India by the Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister in 2003 and Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2008.

I would also like to inform you that with regard to India-Qatar relations in the education sector, there is provision for a Joint Working Group to promote cooperation which we hope will be convened soon. The Indian side has made some important offers for collaboration with Qatar which includes the setting up of a campus of an Indian Institute of Technology in Qatar which is under their consideration.

Education today needs to create leaders, thinkers, reflectors and creators. Leaders, who are credible, committed to serve, believe in lifelong and continuous learning and are imbued with values and virtues. Education should bring out the perfection already manifest within self awareness or self knowledge and humility are the touchstones of real learning.

In a bid to improve the education system, the Government of India is committed to bring revolutionary reforms in the field of education and the major initiatives include the Right to Education Bill 2009, which ensures the right of children to free & compulsory Education.

As our primary education programmes achieve a degree of success, there is growing demand for

secondary schools and colleges. We are committed to universalizing secondary education. We should seek not just functional literacy, but good quality education – education that is affordable, accessible, equitable – and available to everybody who seek to study.

The Central Board of Secondary Education has also appropriately taken a leading role in the implementation of Examination Reforms. The introduction of grading system at the Secondary stage (IX & X) and making Class X Examination optional, received over-whelming positive response from different stakeholders. The Board has taken many initiatives to de-stress the examination, empowerment and training programmes for Principals and teachers to enhance the leadership skills, online counseling at the time of examination, introduction of

more vibrant vocational courses and other non-conventional subjects like Bio-technology, Engineering Graphics, Entrepreneurship, Creative Writing and Translation Studies, Heritage Craft and Graphic Design etc.

I congratulate Chairman, CBSE and his team on responding to national call in bringing about examination reforms in a vibrant manner. I wish the Board a grand success in its future endeavours.

An issue which plagues our education system is that in striving for outstanding results which would help to burnish the reputation of the schools, children who are late bloomers or may not be high achievers by the standards of the schools, are screened out of the system.

This amounts to cruelty to the families. It is the responsibility of the schools to ensure that all their students are able to complete their secondary education in regular institutions and to guide those who may, for whatever reasons be falling back in their academic achievements.

One has also been hearing of the pressures on children to perform which have led to psychological problems including drastic steps among the young. Children in the GCC stay away from their normal social milieu without the supportive care of extended family, grand-parents and cultural ethos. It is necessary, therefore, for schools to be extra attentive to the psychological needs of children. I do hope that each school represented by the Principals before me have in

place Psychologists and Counsellors to guide children in need, and an empathetic system of interaction with parents to ensure the physical and psychological well-being of students.

Friends, before I conclude, I would like to assure you that Government of India has adopted a neo-liberal approach to expansion of education in recent years.

The Government of India has also accorded blanket permission to all institutions of higher learning to collaborate with foreign institutions in all areas of mutual interests. We are encouraging our institutions to undertake both faculty exchange and joint research programmes with institutions from abroad.

Friends, I hope you had meaningful deliberations on these three days and wish you all the success in your future endeavours.

Thank you and Jai Hind.