

**Embassy of India**

**Muscat**

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**32nd Annual Day of Indian School Muladha**

**15 December 2022**

**Remarks by Ambassador Shri Amit Narang**

His Excellency Ammar Al Saadi, Honourable Member of the Majlis Shura, representing the Wilayat of Musannah,

Chairman and Members of the Board of Directors of the Indian Schools,

President of the School Management Committee,

Principal Praveen Kumar ji,

Other dignitaries,

Parents, Students and Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening, Namaskar, As-Salaam-Alaikum,

When I was coming here this evening I thought I'm going to a small interior school but this is by far biggest crowd of people of parents and students that I have seen in any of the schools in Oman.

It clearly shows a wonderful parent student community and the enthusiasm of the parents to come and attend the annual day of their students. It's a pleasure to be among with all of you such a large gathering.

I also wanted to acknowledge the absolutely outstanding performance by the 270 member choir of the little children. Thank you for starting this evening with so much joy on your faces and so much colour that you brought to the evening.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This school in Muladha began with very humble beginnings, if I'm not mistaken in 1991, with only 90 students and 9 teachers. Today it is a strong community school imparting education and service to well over 2000 students. Growth of a school like

Muladha, known as an interior Community School, is perhaps the greatest evidence how successful the Indian schooling system has been in Oman.

From its humble beginnings with its first school to now 21 schools giving education to I believe now 44,000 Indian students in Oman is a major achievement.

In the early part of this presentation, tribute was paid - rightly so - to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and even more so to late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. Not just for their generosity but also for their foresight, for their wisdom in allowing this Indian Community schooling system to flourish.

Today, these 44,000 Indian students do not just represent good Indian students. But in the wider scheme of things these 44,000 Indian students are also Ambassadors of Oman and of Oman-India Friendship. When they go out and study in colleges all over the world, they take the good word of this country, they bring their experiences gained in this beautiful country and they become veritable living ambassadors of the friendship that is between our two countries.

Friends,

Education system is the foundation of any community and it is no exaggeration to say that if today Indian community in Oman is so successful, is so settled, is so renowned all over the world, then the credit goes to the teachers and the staff working in these schools. So as we celebrate this annual day, I think it is befitting that we pay tribute to all the teachers of this lovely school, all the staff, non-teaching staff and of course the students who make this possible.

Ladies and gentlemen,

What is true of the past is not always true of the future.

Today, our world is changing.

The parents who are sitting here, perhaps will recognize what I'm saying, that when you went to school was very different from what your children are doing in their school.

And 5 years from now, 10 years from now, the world will be even more different. These changes are happening at a pace that none of us can understand, let alone appreciate. Therefore, the education system also has to continuously evolve. Under the Board of Directors, the Indian schooling system is also evolving, changing and bringing education up to the mark.

Going forward, we need to produce children from the schooling system who are not merely content with regurgitating what they are taught. Not just completing the syllabus that they have been given. But our challenge is rather than merely imparting knowledge, we must imbibe in students a desire to acquire knowledge for knowledge sake. To go beyond their textbooks and seek knowledge. Not just for this career or that career, but to become inquisitive knowledge seekers.

We also need to inculcate in our students the attribute of curiosity. This is very important. The schooling system - and I include the parents and when I say the schooling system - must also encourage a habit among our students for asking questions. To challenge what is being told to them. If we are honest to ourselves, that is one area where the Indian schooling system certainly can improve.

We need to tell our students that asking the question 'why' is the right thing to do. Not just to accept what they have been told, but to challenge the given notion.

Not just memorizing what is given. But to imagine things which are not told to them so that they can become leaders for tomorrow.

In a world where most of our students now spend perhaps 50 to 70% of their time looking at a screen - computer screen, TV screen, mobile screen, iPad screen; it is very important that we also inculcate in our students in awareness of our surroundings.

When we were growing up, this was not a problem because we did not have the screen distraction. But today they do. So what should the schooling system do? It must promote reading books. It should promote children playing on the playground, going into the trees, going into the mud and exploring the world with their hands, with their senses. This is very important in today's world, and perhaps even more important, in the world that is coming.

Additionally, our education system must inculcate in our students the value of globalism. That we are all in this together.

Prime Minister Modi always talks about this in terms of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', the motto of G-20 which we are hosting - One world, One family, One future. Our children will be working in environments which will be truly global and to have this global outlook will become their innate strength.

Last but not the least, we must produce students they are able to unlearn. Our schooling system is geared only to teach them to learn. But in today's world, what you learn today will become redundant in a few years.

How do you unlearn what you have learnt and still keep your mind programmed to learn new skills? Much like the what we call the machine learning. To constantly learn new skills, give up old ideas and go to new ideas. That will become the hallmark of success in the coming years. If we can evolve our schooling system towards this direction, we will produce better students who in turn will produce a better future for them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before closing I just wanted to mention this to you.

2023 is India's G-20 moment. For the first time, India is the President of G-20. G-20 comprises twenty of the largest nations of the world, accounting for 85% of global GDP. Starting from December this year up till September next year, the Presidency will be in India.

But that is only half the story. What I wanted to tell you is that as part of our Presidency, we have invited a very few select countries as our special guests, and no surprise that India has extended an invitation to the Sultanate of Oman to be our special guest.

This is a mark of this very special friendship. This is a mark of our vision for this relationship, of where we want India and Oman relationship to grow and this platform will give us an added arena to strengthen our partnership.

I once again thank the organizers, the SMC, the Board of Directors, for inviting me to this lovely function.

I extend my greetings to all the parents who are sitting here patiently and my best wishes to all the students of Indian School Muladha for greater and greater success in the future.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!

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