

**Address to Parents and Teachers of SATKAMA SCHOOL ON SCHOOL ANNUAL
DAY Feb 13th 2007 by Sri K.C Narayana Garu**

Dear brothers and sisters,

1. I am happy to be associated with you on the occasion of school day of Satkama. I was hesitant to accept this invitation from the President of SSS because though I have been associated with training institutions and universities I have never worked as a teacher for more than a year and that was four decades ago in my university. I have been mostly a student and teacher in spiritual education though there cannot be any division in the real sense of the term education as material or spiritual. All education attempts to educe that which is inherent in the student and the primary object of education is to enable a person to lead a happy and peaceful life.
2. Any responsible society and more particularly caring parents share the dream of raising children who are healthy, compassionate, independent, and happy. In order for this dream to come true, children must feel safe, loved, and valued. And most importantly, kids must love and value themselves: not just for what they look or achieve, but for the very essence of who they are.
3. Many aspects of modern society harm our children and cause them to become overly focused on superficialities. The media revere beauty, wealth, and fame, while wisdom, character, and compassion are often overlooked. Over focusing on externals, over stimulation, over scheduling, and having too much too soon, are all unhealthy aspects of our society that can alienate children from their very core.
4. We are understandably concerned about children who have a poor self-concept, struggle to succeed in school, are clumsy, or have poor social skills. And our concern is justified; our society has fairly narrow parameters regarding what is considered desirable and a child's negative belief about himself can set a self-fulfilling prophesy in motion.
5. But children who are unusually attractive, bright, athletic, charming, or well-behaved can also be at risk if they become overly attached to an image that is based on other people's reactions. Unable to be carefree and true to their own nature, they become overly anxious as they continually try to portray an image that pleases the people that are important to them. And when their efforts fall short, their fragile sense of self shatters like a fallen mirror.
6. An 'A' grade student who falls apart when he does poorly on a single assignment, the perfect child who becomes distraught when mildly reprimanded, or the older child who would not go to school because he does not have the right clothes all these students reveal that they are overly dependent on their external image and reactions of others.
7. Keeping the child busy all the time may be fine for many parents who are already overburdened with their problems but giving constant activities and over stimulation to children are detrimental to their well being. In order to cope with the stress of our 24-7 society, sensitive children may begin denying their senses and deadening their feelings. But when children suppress their emotions in order

- to cope, they become out of touch with their true selves, their true nature and wholeness.
8. It must be realized that emotions and feelings are the path ways to our inner self or our core of being. Emotions lead us to a built-in monitor that lets us know if all is well. Parents can help a child to stay in touch with his inner self by encouraging him to pay attention to his body and his feelings. If a child accepts and values his own feelings then he will also accept and value the feelings of others, generously giving and receiving love, as well as choosing activities and eventually careers that will bring about personal fulfillment. By accepting your child's feelings and not overreacting to mistakes, you can help him love himself and resist bad influences.
 9. It is very important to start planting the seeds of inner value early. This I understand is the thrust area of this school. It helps the children to skillfully navigate away from the negative impact society's narcissistic attitudes, the media, and over stimulation. Studies prove that these negatives impact children as young as three or four years of age.
 10. If we allow things to go on ignoring these vital aspects, an older child or teen who is out of touch with his true self may be susceptible to the influence of peers, gangs and cults, as he continually aims to please whoever is currently shaping his identity. In contrast, a child who has a sense of his true inner value is resilient. He strives to achieve his goals.
 11. Some ideas that strike me to nurture the students inner values are
 - i. Avoid and if not possible restrict T.V. time and video games. This will work as a defense against over stimulation of modern life and technology.
 - ii. Try to ensure that the child has unstructured time so that they can relax or play freely and allow their creativity a chance to express.
 - iii. Try to teach children relaxation skills and simple meditation.
 - iv. Allow scope for the children to participate in and appreciate arts;
 - v. Enable them to listen to beautiful music.
 - vi. Encourage them in the creative arts of dancing, singing, drawing and painting.
 - vii. Teach them embroidery, stitching and tailoring.
 - viii. Allow them to spend time in nature and teach them to have reverence for all living things.
 - ix. Encourage your child to tell you how he feels.
 - x. Involve the child in helping others.
 - xi. Express gratitude and encourage the child to think of what he or she is grateful for.
 - xii. Avoid bragging about and labeling the child.
 - xiii. Do not become overly attached to your child's accomplishments.
 - xiv. Give sincere praise, but avoid over praising, as constant, excessive praise can discourage a child from finding the value in what he does from inside himself, independent of external rewards.
 12. All that is stated perhaps already the teachers and parents know and it is only an appeal to practice these methods to enable the students develop proper inner values. We know the human resource development has happened and is happening mainly due to thrust areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and

Mathematics or what we generally call the STEM. The current rate of technological invention is sure to continue in an accelerated manner. Instead of the usual text books which need to be updated every few years it may become necessary that the contents be digitally stored and updated constantly in response to the feed back from a fast changing world.

13. Literacy will be just not the three Rs but the schools have to train their wards with eco-literacy, information literacy, cultural literacy, psychological literacy and above all spiritual literacy.
I am sure we do not know how the coming generation of students who are digital-natives would use the technologies. Given the inevitability of the law of unintended consequences a key literacy must be routine consideration of multiple possible futures. Future consciousness it is necessary to realize shall become part of our every day thinking. It is lack of this responsible thinking that has led to the problems of enormous and horrifying eco disturbance and moral degradation in our lives.
14. Any commitment to the education of a new generation should consider very carefully the place of the human being in the Universe. More and more responsibilities will have to be borne by the individuals in the coming age. It would be paramount to develop personal character based on who one is and his place in the Universe. That nothing exists independently of the other should be understood and the awareness of ones universal character has to be learnt. Moral and spiritual development should find a way into the curriculum if the students are to be equipped with the necessary skills to meet the challenges that cannot be spelt out now but easily imagined. Even at present keeping ones' bearings in the dizzying world of contradictions and complexities is not an easy task.
15. Millions amongst us realize that some degree of inner work that leads to our inner self and spiritual wealth should be part of our learning so as to manage our lives satisfactorily. It is necessary that the future curriculum should cover such areas as critical and appreciative self reflection, integration of several layers of our being, meditation and creative contemplation.
16. It used to be said that we should learn to unlearn in spiritual or integrated life. But in the coming age not only should we learn how to learn but also change the method of learning. The age of specialization shall surely get wiped out. To possess only specialized knowledge in a rapidly changing environment will result in rapid marginalization unless it is accompanied by new ways of thinking about ones' expertise. Rapid information growth makes obsolescence the natural consequence and one needs to learn to forget or discard as much as one remembers. Needless to say this makes pedagogy to shift from current primary focus on the mastery of content to a focus on process, that is, from knowledge of the noun to a focus on learning a verb. As spiritual awareness matures we realize that there are only verbs and no nouns and that awareness is going to give a quantum leap in the educational process. Thanks to the internet and global communication systems knowledge is no more any individual's or group's property but universal. The educational system should aim at making the students global citizens who are responsible, trust worthy and living the highest moral standards accepted by all mankind. The dream I have is a world of peace where

cooperation, service and sacrifice would be the natural norm. The task SSS has taken is challenging. I am sure this institution under the guidance of spiritually and socially advanced persons who bask in the spiritual warmth of the great Master Sri Ramchandraji Maharaj of Shahjahanpur would achieve the objective of universal fraternity and harmony.