



# **HINDU EDUCATION BOARD**

**Quality Education For All**



# MISSION STATEMENT

The aim of the Hindu Education Board is to ensure that all members of society receive quality education. Additionally, the Board seeks to encourage creation of high quality affordable educational institutions for all members of society, regardless of their social and economic status.

# THE NEED

A society which is not well-educated is incapable of sustaining itself over the long term. It is education which drives positive social change, and ensures betterment of a nation. Civilizations which do not value education are susceptible to decay and deterioration. So, the Hindu civilization must develop a strong and viable system of education so that it can prosper and remain strong. It must strive to ensure that all members of society, regardless of their socio-economic status, have access to quality education, thereby becoming meaningful contributors to larger and multifarious societal goals. The Hindu civilization has had a splendid record of investing in education over last several millennia. Great institutions such as the universities of Takshashila and Nalanda are a testimony to this fact. In more recent times the Hindus have created a large number of wonderful institutions including Banaras Hindu University, Madras Institute of Technology and Birla Institute of Technology and Science. However, despite these later initiatives, a large part of the society still does not have access to affordable quality education. This has seriously impaired the overall progress of our country.

The Hindu civilization, which is more than a billion strong, and constitutes more than 15% of global population, cannot rely primarily on external resources and efforts to meet its educational needs. Rather, it has to urgently develop, through internal resources, a significant number of institutions providing superior education in all fields including natural sciences, engineering and technology, social sciences, liberal and performing arts, law, business and management, ethics, religion, philosophy, and spiritual sciences. Also needed is the establishment of numerous educational institutions of excellence which set benchmarks and standards, and induce innovations in diverse areas of knowledge, thereby offering educational leadership to the world. A civilization which does not provide leadership in the area of education, progressively feels more insecure and less confident, since its perspectives remain perpetually under-appreciated and prone to distortions and misrepresentations. Creation of numerous institutions of excellence in different parts of the world will address this very serious anomaly by generating competent and confident Hindu leaders in their respective areas of academic specializations.



### **Dr. Nachiketa Tiwari**

Associate Professor, IIT Kanpur, Bharat

#### **Introductory Remarks**

Dr. Tiwari introduced the key agenda items that would be covered in the conference. About 85% of education in Bharat is provided by private or self-financed institutions, including both primary and higher education, and we need to understand what this means for the goal of democratizing quality education. There are three significant challenges facing our education system which will be covered – lack of quality due to various reasons, mismatch between what is being taught and the real needs of the country, and inability to provide education in a culturally rooted manner through our own languages.

### **Smt. Smriti Irani**

HRD Minister, Government of Bharat

Smt. Smriti Irani stressed on the importance of imparting humanity and morals along with functional education. She cited two heart-wrenching examples to describe how the human angle is missing from the products of our education system. She requested the speakers to give their suggestions on this aspect of education. She highlighted the importance of inculcating scientific temper and enquiry-based learning in the current education system. Bharat had a glorious past in the field of education, and this knowledge can serve as a foundation for the future growth of Bharat. Smt. Smriti Irani cited Nalanda University's ancient policy



of adopting and helping the surrounding villages as a role model for converting Bharat's current learning centers to experiential learning centers. Studies have shown how learning in one's native language can improve a nation's GDP – we too can emulate this without boycotting English. Smt. Irani outlined some of the key initiatives started by the NDA government in the education sector – Swayam MOOCs platform, national e-library, choice based credit transfer system, and a Know Your College portal.



### **Padma Bhushan Dr. Vijay Bhatkar**

Chairman, Board of Governors, IIT Delhi, Bharat

Dr. Bhatkar said that Bharat gave the first knowledge based civilization to the world, and the kind of knowledge that has been pursued in Bharat is still not being studied in premier modern institutes. Questions like “Who Am I?”, “What is the purpose of Life?” were first asked in the Vedic civilization and answered through inner enquiry. When we study Hindu Dharma, we have to go beyond the narrow definitions of organised religion. We have to re-discover the traditional education systems like *Gurukuls* which were systematically destroyed by Macaulay. He urged the delegates to think along these lines as well, besides just policy and regulatory discussions.

Our re-emergence as a civilization will be complete only when we are able to evolve educational institutions, from pre-school to higher education,

that people across the world would vie for. Drawing an analogy from world of computing, he said that Hindu Dharma is like ‘open source’ which makes it eternal or *sanatana*.





### **Chairperson Dr. G. Viswanathan**

Founder & Chancellor, VIT University, Bharat

#### **Introductory Remarks**

Dr. Vishwanathan mentioned that despite the large number of colleges in the country Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education - percentage of students in 17-24 age bracket enrolled in higher education - is 20% against a world average of 27%. He discussed the severe shortage of seats in professional streams, such as medicine and the scarcity of seats in colleges, which leads to very high cut-off percentage for admissions.

He mentioned that government is not able to expand owing to lack of resources, and the private sector is not able to expand owing to regulations. The 'licence permit raaj' for private industries was discontinued in 1991, however it continues to hamper the education sector of Bharat and has

given rise to the evils of corruption and capitation. There is a lack of trust between Government and institutions, which can only be solved through a constructive dialogue. He advocated the US accreditation model as it is transparent and free of government interference.

### **Padma Bhushan Dr. S.B. Mujumdar**

Founder & President, Symbiosis University, Pune, Bharat

#### **Self-Financed Universities – Challenges & Opportunities**

Dr. Mujumdar said we have a total of 687 universities, 35,000 colleges, 26.5 million students and 0.82 million teachers. Our Government proposes to increase GER to 30% by 2030 from the current 20%, for which we will need 800 new universities and 40,000 new colleges. There is a hunger for quality education, fuelled by a young demography and rising middle class. Online and distance learning education will play a key role. Traditionally, private universities like BHU, Fergusson etc. have played a key role, yet Government remains suspicious of private institutions as family-owned, sub-standard, and profit oriented. He outlined his expectations from Government - allow self-financed institutions to develop without punitive regulation, create a single regulatory and accreditation body and reduce the number of councils. Like economy, education sector also needs to be set free.





### **Dr. Narendra Faujdar**

Chancellor, World College of Technology and Management, Gurgaon, Bharat

#### **Balancing Quality, Affordability and Economic Viability in Higher Education Institutions**

Dr. Narendra Faujdar said that there has been an explosion of higher education, especially technical, in the last decade. But mindless regulatory checks by bodies like AICTE have allowed some dubious institutions too which is a waste of national resources. More communication is needed between Government and educational institutions to solve this issue. The biggest issue pertaining to affordability is the lack of education loans at minimal interest rate and relaxed collateral requirement. We should enable those who want to study and expect repayment only after employment. Only then can the Government's goal of Skills, Speed and Scale get realized. While establishing an educational institution, one needs to balance the nobility of the cause and the viability of the venture. Government's

focus is on primary and secondary education, hence there is less scope of grants for higher education institutions. Complex, overlapping regulations governing institutions need to be streamlined.

### **Shri Anand Joshi**

Vice-Chancellor, CMR University, Bharat

#### **Analyzing the financial framework of a self-financed educational institution**

Shri Joshi explained that even education, like all endeavours, comes down to economics. There is a sharp decline in philanthropy for education, in large part due to excessive Government regulation. He stressed on the need to include private institutions in the educational policy decision-making process. We need to acknowledge that educational investors expect a rate of return, and sustainability is important. Private institutions will lean towards commercially viable disciplines of study, while non-popular programs can be cross-subsidized.



We treat education as a social enterprise and fee structure is determined accordingly, but the costs of electricity, funding etc are at commercial rates! He advocated adoption of scientific cost benefit analysis to determine fixed costs and fees for institutions. Fee determination should be on basis of total cost recovery (per student cost), cash reserve needs, and physical and academic infrastructure costs. Differential pricing per quality of student input should be allowed.



### Chairperson: Prof. Aniruddha Deshpande

Akhil Bharatiya Sampark Pramukh, RSS, Bharat

#### Introductory Remarks

Prof. Deshpande started with an invocation of Swami Vivekananda's comment 'Education is a man-making process'. Students coming out of our educational system should exhibit certain values, beyond just career orientation. *Gyana*, rather than *Artha*, should be the focus of education. This inculcation of value system in education needs to be addressed through content of textbooks and school activities, teaching pedagogy and student-teacher dialogue. The concentration ability of students, *ekagrata*, also needs to be drastically improved through innovative practice. He emphasised that we need to inculcate the right values in school-going children, as they will be the youth dividend which is expected to take the nation forward in 10 year's time.

### Smt. Akila Ramarathinam

National General Secretary, VHP, Australia

#### Hindu Dharma teaching in Australian public school curricula

Smt. Akila Ramarathinam explained that in foreign countries, due to small community size, Hindus experience a loss of cultural identity. To bridge this cultural vacuum, VHP Australia has united and engaged the Australian Hindu community through various cultural and religious education projects. Today, almost 8,500 students take Hindu Dharma and Sanskrit language classes each week in different public schools of Australia. Also, Diwali is celebrated as a mainstream festival in different Australian public schools. These initiatives have given a morale boost, and induced an overall sense



of pride in the Hindu community of Australia. VHP Australia has also created a strong network of committed volunteers, out of which almost 95% are women. Smt. Ramarathinam emphasized on the need to impart cultural education during the developmental growth years to children. Today, VHP Australia seeks support of the Government of Bharat to help them organise pilgrim tours, such as Holy Ganga visit for Hindu children. Especially, for Hindus from countries like Fiji and Sri Lanka who have never seen Bharat and feel a need to visit and see Bharat, to identify themselves as natives of the indigenous culture of Bharat.



### **Smt. Manojbala Tiwari**

Principal, Balvihar Hindi School, VHP, USA

#### **Inculcating culture and values in the young through the Bal Vihar model**

Smt. Manojbala Tiwari informed that Bal Vihar is a teaching method that was started in 1974 by VHP America to instill values, and carve a sense of identity, duty and virtue in young minds. It was started when Hindu immigrants realized that their children were lacking the cultural values that they would automatically imbibe in Bharat. Bal Vihar programs operate on a volunteer basis, meet weekly or bi-weekly for 1-2 hours, cater to 4-18 year olds, and are open to all. Activities include prayer (*bhajan*), reading scripture, drama, arts and crafts, games, learning languages of Bharat, and family camps. Focus is on religion, *sanskar* and language. Bal Vihar students have a strong sense of bi-cultural identity, are able to assert their cultural differences, have well-rounded personalities, and influence mainstream perception of Hindu culture.

### **Shri Mukul Kanitkar**

Joint Organizing Secretary, Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal, Bharat

#### **National Education Draft**

Shri Mukul Kanitkar shared the salient features of the draft of the new Education Policy of Bharat. This policy aims to re-invent the education policy of Bharat to overcome the flaws in the current system. Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal (BSN) has taken inputs from almost 4,000 academicians and people from all walks of life from all over Bharat to create this draft. Shri Kanitkar suggested that the problems in the current education system can be solved using the *sanatan* or eternal concepts of Hindu Dharma. Practical wisdom and day-to-day application of knowledge are the most important aspects of learning. Bharat needs to revive its pre-colonial education system, which was autonomous, de-centralized and integrated with the practical aspects of life. Bharat's education policy should be



focused on the holistic development of students and make learning joyous, with multiple entry and exits points. We should have an Education Commission, free of Government control.



## Shri Arvind Kumar

Social Activist, USA

### Religious Indoctrination in California textbooks and the people behind it

Shri Arvind Kumar presented facts of the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) law suit against the California Department of Education (CDE). The law suit aimed to contend the derogatory and clichéd portrayal of Hindu Dharma in the sixth grade history books of CDE. This is in contrast to the way Biblical myths are being taught as hard facts with dates and timelines to students in the Californian public schools. He drew attention to the unethical manner in which the book publishers bought academic support, to prevent financial loss from the book stock being destroyed. Communists from Bharat recruited 17 Democratic Party Assembly members to fight against HAF. The Marxist historian Romila Thapar was recruited by one of the publishers to

provide expert opinion – one of her appointees quoted the 4th century AD text *Manu Smriti* in support of the text books, whereas the period in question was 1500 BC! Curriculum commissioner Charlie Munger, a Christian fanatic, also played a questionable role. One of the 'experts' appointed in the case, Professor Michael Witzel from Department of South Asian Studies at Harvard University, contacted a fake Dalit group Dalit Freedom Network (DFN) which turned out to be a Church! DFN has deep links to the right-wing Republican party and Christian missionary organisations. Hindu groups did win on some of the edits, but some corrections and procedural objections were rejected, whereas Jewish and other religious groups got most of their edits approved. This historical law suit opened the world's eyes to the suspicious activities of some churches and the prejudices faced by Hindus.





### Chairperson: Prof. Kapil Kapoor

Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi Antar Rashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha, Bharat

#### Introductory Remarks

Prof. Kapil Kapoor said that Bharat's current education system promotes elitism – a small section of people receive alien English-instrumented higher education and dominate top echelons of society in business, bureaucracy etc. Revising our curricula – both, the disciplines which are covered and the medium of education - is a means to change this self-perpetuating elitist system. He outlined four key issues with current curricula – it's not democratic, not rooted in Bharat, not federal, and not vernacular. Our examples and idioms should be rooted in Bharat and not be elite urban centric, extracts from *granthas* on different disciplines should be included in text books, regional variations in education should be

encouraged, and higher/professional education should be made available in all languages of Bharat besides English. The goal of education should be to produce virtuous humans. Sanskrit should be taught as its not just a language, but the vocabulary of our culture and thought.

### Prof. (Dr.) Balvir S Tomar

Founder and Chancellor, NIMS University, Jaipur, Bharat

#### Newest and innovative curricula to achieve excellence in higher education

Prof. Tomar stressed on the importance of curriculum as it establishes accountability of teachers and learners, and helps in accreditation of institutions. The key practices involved are curriculum design and development, curriculum adaptation (customization by host institutes as per their specific needs), and curriculum adoption. He explained that the key to success for Bharat lies in education institutes developing learner-friendly curricula resulting in employable career-based training and education.

Bharat has to remember and re-emulate its glorious past by developing an education system which helps students realize self, body, mind and spirit. Education should promote idealistic thoughts, pragmatic actions, naturalistic environment and morality leading to holistic human development. Use of ICT (Information Communication Technology) is very important as any curricula should be e-enabled to make it accessible anytime, anywhere. Excellent curricula in higher education will lead to better Human Development Index (HDI) and higher GDP.





### Swamini Pramananda (Ammaji)

Founder and Spiritual Guide, Purna Vidya Foundation, Coimbatore, Bharat

#### Introduction to Hindu civilization: A course proposal

Swamini Pramananda, also fondly known as Ammaji, emphasized the importance of knowledge in our Vedic Hindu culture. She described the Vedic model of knowledge, which is divided into two parts, *Para Vidya* (inner knowledge of self-realization) and *Apara Vidya* (various disciplines of the knowledge of creation). In Hindu culture, the hallmark of success of human life is evolution of soul and not just material wealth. She spoke about a two-year course curriculum that has been created for college students to receive the sacred heritage of Bharat. The first book is 'Indian Ethos and Self Transformation' and the second one is 'Introduction to Hindu Civilization'. She has also designed course

curriculum for Class I to XII, consisting of 24 books, which is being taught in 1000 Tamil Nadu villages. Soon, digital courses on Vedic wisdom and culture will be coming out for both children and adults. All material is available in Hindi, Tamil and English.

### Dr. Rajnish Mishra

Associate Professor, Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Bharat

#### Knowledge Traditions of Bharat

Dr. Rajnish Mishra said that the two great epics – Ramayana and Mahabharata – are not just literary compositions, they are knowledge texts and *itihasa* (history) as well. The two major sources of knowledge traditions of Bharat are *agama* (also known as *tantra*) and *nigama* (also known as *veda*), with *agama* being more popular. Our culture has meditated upon the question 'Knowledge of What?' – for which the answer is 'Knowledge of Self'. The mind acquires critical acumen when exposed to other thought systems – hence we need to create an intellectually confident Hindu. Language is central to our thinking, as it is also a means to cognition. *Vada parampara* – tradition of disputation – consists of *poorva paksha* (opponent's view) and *uttara paksha* (exponent's view). It is important that we learn our knowledge traditions in order to preserve them.





### Shri Steven Rudolph

Co-founder & Director, Jiva Institute and Jiva Public School, Faridabad, Bharat

#### Fostering Value: A successful experiment

Shri Steven Rudolph, an American by birth, has been residing in Bharat for the last 20 years. He has been working extensively to revive the traditional Hindu culture and science in a modern context. He is a co-founder of Jiva Foundation which is working in the fields of education and Ayurveda. Expounding on the Dharmic concept of *Purusharth*, which means balancing *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* in human life, he said that the West excels at *Artha* and *Kama* but sorely lacks in *Dharma* and *Moksha*. Even many Hindus are unaware of the Ganga of knowledge that is flowing through this sacred land! He urged Hindus to appreciate, understand and be proud of their rich intellectual and cultural heritage.

The education system of Jiva Public School is based on the ancient Hindu teaching concept of *Gurukul* where the key focus is to understand *Bhav* or nature

of each student, and customize lessons to strengthen their intrinsic skills. They assess children on nine different kinds of *bhav* and eight different intelligences, to figure out their qualities and suitable career. Students follow a *Dincharya* or daily schedule which forms the building block for a Dharmic life. Twice a day, they set apart time for *swadhyaya* i.e. to take a few minutes to centre on their inner self. Students also spend 15 minutes daily discussing their experiences outside of school. They have a program called *Ayur* school where children find out their body type and type of food they should consume accordingly – this keeps them healthy and improves their memory. He called for discarding the current British education system which is like a factory and for adopting the ancient learning principles of Bharat.





**Chairperson : Padma Vibhushan G. Madhavan Nair**

Leading Space Scientist & Former-Chairman ISRO, Bharat

**Introductory Remarks**

Shri Nair said that we in Bharat are trying to rebuild our higher education system which was damaged under the British. Our current regulatory framework is an impediment to the provision of quality education. Even premier academic institutions lack autonomy and there is insufficient focus on research. Our system has become exam oriented while even graduate students lack basic understanding of subjects. Education should empower children to become problem solvers, while infusing values and self-belief. Learning should be centered on teaching fundamental concepts and principles.

Our system should be such that students are empowered with real-life skills and are employment ready even after Class 12. Inculcating the right value system in children as was done through the

*Gurukulam* model in the past should be another goal of education.

**Dr. Satish Modh**

Director, Vivekananda Education Society Institute of Management, Mumbai, Bharat

**Comparing tertiary education systems of Bharat and other selected countries**

Dr. Modh said that there is a lot of criticism and debate across the world on education systems, even in the West. France has two parallel education systems – Grandes Ecoles and University. Grandes Ecoles produces the elite ruling class where one learns humanities, science, basic economics and politics – presidents and industry captains are typically products of this system. Everybody else, including doctors, engineers etc, comes from the normal university system. Germany has a system of providing two years vocational education at the end of secondary education – you can start working after this vocational training, or go to college for further education. In most countries, over 90% of higher education system is in Government hands

– but in Bharat, over 60% is in private hands. Dr. Modh made a bold suggestion to revamp the higher education system of Bharat – bomb the existing system! Let's do away with UGC and AICTE as they mostly create bureaucratic hurdles for institutions. Let us trust students and parents to choose wisely.





### Shri P. K. Gupta

Founder Chairman, Sharada University, Bharat

#### Consequences of excessive regulation in technical and medical education sectors

Shri Gupta provided a few examples to highlight the excessive regulation which is stifling higher education in Bharat. Universit Grants Commission (UGC) controls the type of courses offered by institutions, preventing institutions from meeting dynamic world-wide demand. Even teacher pay scales are fixed by the Government. He suggested that the Government should stop funding of all institutions of higher learning and make them autonomous. He said an education bank should be opened which will offer loans to prospective students, and this model will allow institutions to offer improved pay to attract the best teaching talent. The situation is especially grim in medical

education where the regulatory regime imposed by Medical Council is extremely strict, and almost impossible to meet. But we also have the other extreme of complete lack of regulation which has allowed dubious colleges to offer fake degrees for a small sum. So we have to find a balance and evolve the regulatory framework to serve the needs of the country.

### Prof. (Dr.) Made Bakta

Secretary General, World Hindu Parisada, Bali, Indonesia

#### Enhancing quality and collaboration among universities managed by Hindus

Prof. Made Bakta shared the educational problems of the minority and economically-challenged Hindu population of Indonesia. The literacy rate among Hindus in Bali is not very high, and the education system in Indonesia is heavily centralized. He detailed out the following ways to enhance the global Hindu Education system at the university-level:

- Re-structure the university curriculum to include Hindu Dharma principles and characters
- Increase the number of Hindu lecturers and professors
- Develop networking and collaboration among Hindu universities to ensure quality and uniformity of Hindu education
- Strengthen the global Hindu association and philanthropist network to solve the funding problems of Hindu universities outside of Bharat





### Smt. Anjali Jaipuria

Vice Chairperson, Jaipuria Group, Bharat

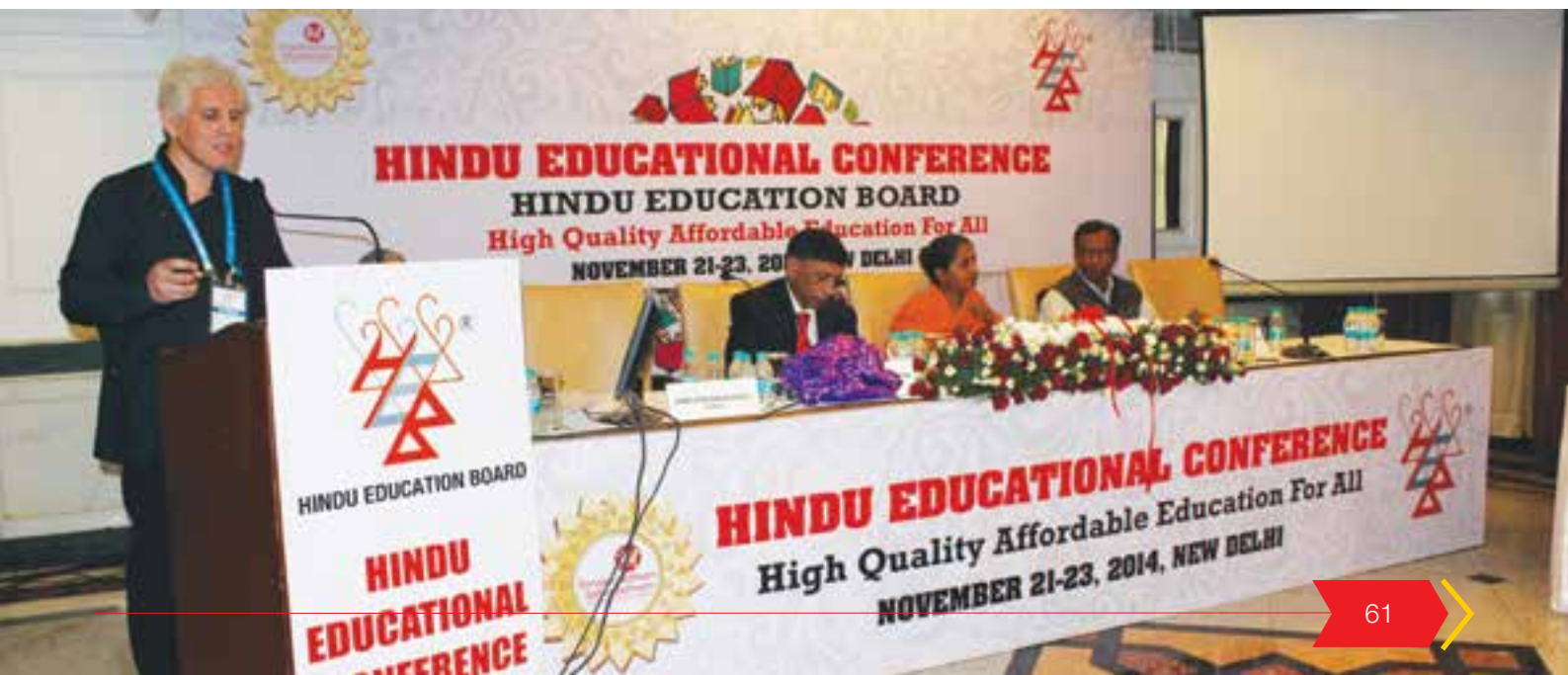
#### Teaching Sanskrit from pre-primary: A case study

Smt. Jaipuria shared the journey and success story of teaching *Devabhasha* – A Unique Sanskrit Curriculum (devised in association with Shri Aurobindo Ashram, Puducherry) - at the Seth M.R. Jaipuria School, Lucknow over the last 11 years. Sanskrit language is the vehicle that has been carrying Hindu culture over generations. It embodies timeless and universal values, and is the key to developing virtuous citizens of Bharat.

Research shows that the best time to learn a language is from birth to eight years of age, hence introduction of Sanskrit in Class 5 as is the norm today makes it a burden on students. But if it is taught right from pre-primary (LKG), students learn it naturally. The second major issue with Sanskrit teaching is over-crowding of the curriculum with too much stress on grammatical technicalities. The *Devabhasha* curriculum is designed to teach simple,

conversational Sanskrit. Teaching Sanskrit from pre-primary till Class 8 gives 10 years to space out the curriculum and allows students to understand and appreciate the nuances of Sanskrit. Regular plays, skits, assembly are held in Sanskrit to increase the joy of learning the language.

The *Devabhasha* program has been successful in creating joy in children towards Sanskrit, raised curiosity to read literature and epics in Sanskrit, generated pride in our civilization, strengthened the character of students, and infused them with the will-power to choose right over wrong. Statistics show that learning Sanskrit has also improved the overall academic performance – from maths and reasoning skills, to depth of diction and poetry.





### **Chairperson: Dr. Krishna Gopal Sharma**

Joint General Secretary, RSS, Bharat

Dr. Krishna Gopal Sharma said that Hindus in different parts of the world have evolved certain education models as per their local requirements and circumstances. It is important that we share these models and learn from each other, which will enable us to tackle common challenges more effectively.

### **Ambassador Kamlesh Arya JP,**

Registrar and Lecturer, University of Fiji, Fiji

#### **Hindu contribution in education in South-Pacific**

Ambassador Arya described the struggle of migrants from Bharat to Fiji. With hard work and determination, these immigrants have established themselves in the administrative, social and educational landscape of Fiji. In 1879, around 400 migrated from Bharat to Fiji as farm workers as *Girmits* (derived from the word Agreement), out of which only 5% were educated. However, this tiny percentage of Hindus left no stone unturned to establish and preserve Hindu culture in Fiji. Several educational institutions, from kindergarten-level to university-level were set-up by Hindus. The main aim of establishing educational institutions was to preserve Hindu Dharma, and to pass on this knowledge to next generations. Today, Hindus form almost 30% of the Fijian population, and hold eminent social positions not only in Fiji, but in Australia, New Zealand and America. He called upon different sections of Hindu Samaj to unite and work towards common goals.





### **Shri Ramesh Shah,**

Global Coordinator, Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation, USA

#### **Ekal Vidyalaya: A Large Scale Model for Imparting Non-Formal Education**

Shri Ramesh Shah said that the Ekal Vidyalaya movement started in South Bihar (now Jharkhand) in 1989 as an experiment to improve literacy levels amongst tribals. The idea behind Ekal is not to provide formal education – it is aimed at holistic education covering vocational, economic, healthcare, empowerment areas and to get children interested in further education. Ekal consists of a single teacher going to a remote village and running daily classes – this work needs a special kind of commitment. Today, Ekal runs more than 54,000 schools in as many villages, and currently has 15 lakh enrolled students. Running cost of a school consisting of 30 odd students is only Rs 20,000/- per year, out of which the teacher gets Rs 1,000/- per month. Overheads are only 10%. The school starts after 3 PM (after the formal school is over)

and runs for three hours. The teacher in an Ekal school has to be local and teach in the native language of that region. The core curriculum consists of language, math, story-telling and physical activity. the lesson from Ekal is that it is equally important to test ideas on the ground to see what works.

### **Shri Dilip Vasant Betkekar**

National Secretary, Vidya Bharati, Bharat

#### **Vidya Bharati Schools: Excellent Education with Patriotism**

Shri Betkekar pointed out that the current educational crisis of Bharat stems from the absence of true history of Bharat and legacy from school curriculums. Vidya Bharati schools are trying to bridge this gap by developing a national education system that would help build mentally, physically and spiritually developed patriotic youth, who are committed to Hindutva and the cause of developing Bharat. Vidya Bharati runs 13, 514 formal schools and has 1,36,231 committed teachers. The first Shishu Mandir school was started in Gorakhpur, UP in 1952, and today Vidya Bharati is the largest educational NGO in the world that has schools in all states of Bharat, including pathshalas in tribal and remote areas.





### **Pandit Bhadase Seetahal-Maraj**

Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha, Trinidad & Tobago

#### **Success of Hindu schools in Trinidad & Tobago**

Pt. Bhadase Seetahal Maraj shared the story of the prosperous Hindu population of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) in the Carribean region. Hindus of T&T today are descendants of the migrants from Bharat brought by British over the period 1845-1917 to work as indentured labourers in sugar plantations. At the end of the indenture, these Hindus became land-owners and continued to live in T&T and work towards sustenance and propagation of Hindu Dharma in T&T. Hindus hold important political and administrative positions in T&T, and have had a continuous relationship with Bharat through matrimony and migrations.

Hindus in T&T have adapted to situations and have developed strategic thought leadership, knowing when to expand and when to contract. Hindu

schools in T&T have ensured that Bharat is not missing from education. Every Hindu school in T&T follows the model of religion in education and not the other way around. Schools follow the teachings of Bhagavad Gita and truly believe in *Shradhhanaam Labhate Gyanam*. Many schools combine pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools in the same compound where students start the day with *puja* at the school mandir. Pt. Maraj mentioned that Hindu leadership must drive collaboration between Hindus in different parts of the world.





### **Moderator: Dr. Nachiketa Tiwari**

Associate Professor, IIT Kanpur, Bharat

Dr. Tiwari explained that there are many negative connotations attached to the word 'Hindu' due to which many of us avoid asserting ourselves as Hindus in public. We need to get rid of that hesitation and correct those distortions. He identified four broad themes which had emerged from the conference – curricula innovation to provide quality knowledge in disciplines of engineering, medical, arts etc along with a value system; policy restructuring to change the way institutions are governed and managed; focus on improving quality in school and higher education (teacher training being a key component); and importance of Sanskrit.

### **Dr. G. Viswanathan**

Founder & Chancellor, VIT University, Bharat

Dr. Viswanathan said we should aim to make Bharat a global centre for education, capitalizing on our English medium education (which is in great demand in many countries) and low costs. But despite this demand for higher education in Bharat and across the world, private educational institutions are still viewed with suspicion as profit-making entities by Government at all levels, and hardly get any support. Even good private universities don't get a fraction of Government grants which public institutes like IIT get, due to which we are lagging in research. We also need to focus on improving our school education system drastically as it is the feeder for higher education. Another problem area is the affiliation system, which restricts college autonomy. Even government institutions are suffering from lack of autonomy, and the current regulatory mechanism needs to be replaced with an accreditation system.





### Prof. Kapil Kapoor

Chancellor of MGA Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha, Bharat

Prof. Kapoor reiterated that there is an urgent need to make education more Bharatiya. We need to add more disciplines from both our own traditional knowledge as well as contemporary fields. The pedagogy and prescribed reading material for each discipline should be redefined to incorporate Bharatiya sources. This is not to exclude other knowledge systems, but to ensure that our children are not deprived of our own knowledge traditions. Reality based vocational skills should be taught through ITIs. There should be a bilateral relation between humanities and sciences to end the segregation of knowledge. Social sciences, which have done maximum damage to our society by propagating the Western ethnographic models (research in which is funded by controversial foreign entities like Ford Foundation), need to be reformed. Our own sociological traditions such as

*Dharma Shastras* and *Sutras, nibandhas* etc which kept record of social conventions over the ages need to be studied. Real issues like water and land management should be included in curricula as well. Engineering curriculum should include agricultural and rural technology, while medical curriculum should not ignore Ayurveda.

### Shri Dinesh Kamath

National Organising Secretary, Samskrita Bharati

Shri Kamath covered the key measures required to propagate Sanskrit learning – teach Sanskrit from pre-primary school and make it attractive and fun; integrate Sanskrit knowledge streams with corresponding modern disciplines; teach Sanskrit as a foreign language outside Bharat; Bharat's diplomatic missions should appoint Sanskrit teachers abroad and hold spoken Sanskrit courses; teach Sanskrit in overseas CBSE schools; hold spoken Sanskrit non-formal sessions widely across the country, and provide the same courses online. He said that our goal should be to take Sanskrit to the masses.





### Dr. Krishna Gopal

Joint General Secretary, RSS, Bharat

Dr. Gopal explained the meaning of Hindutva. He said the word 'religion' is foreign to Bharat – religion is not a synonym of *sampradaya* (community) and definitely not of *Dharma*. Our *sampradayas* respect each other and try to find commonality, unlike organised religions. When Bharat was reeling under the Islamic onslaught, the *sampradayas* of Bharat had to evolve a common identity in opposition to the common foreign enemy – hence people across the country started calling themselves Hindu. So Hindu represents a common platform for all the traditions, philosophies, *sampradayas* which originated in Bharat. Even the Constitution of Bharat accepted this definition. What are the salient features of this Hindu-ness? Our rishis did not create the Vedas as an intellectual exercise, they recited what they experienced – that all beings in nature have a common divinity *Para Brahma*, the Absolute Truth. Some get confused that Hindus have countless

*devatas* (deities), but even *devatas* are just different forms of the same *Para Brahma*. Another core principle is that all human beings have this same divine spark within and hence are fundamentally equal. Hence we wish *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah* (May All Be Happy) for people of all *sampradayas* unlike the Abrahamic religions. Tribes from different parts of Bharat who still follow their indigenous religion share the same principle - in their own way, they pray for the happiness of all beings. *Ekam Sat Viprah Bahuda Vadanti* – “Truth is One, Sages call it various names” is another core principle, which has ensured that Hindu Dharma has assimilated different thought-streams over the ages. Hindu Dharma is the eternal search for Truth, and has always been open to internal churning from time to time.

