



The Doon School WEEKLY

Saturday, August 22, 2009 • Issue No. 2225

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The Doon School Weekly welcomes all delegates and guests to the DSMUN 2009

I-Day at Doon

The Doon School Weekly interviewed **Keshav Desiraju**, Principal Secretary, Health, Family Welfare and Higher Education, Government of Uttarakhand, and Chief Guest at the Independence Day Special Assembly



DSW: You are the grandson of the second President, Dr Radhakrishnan, who was an eminent educationist and philosopher. Is your commitment to education a legacy that you have imbibed from him?

KDR: It would be too grand to call it a legacy. But what I did learn from him was the importance of education. Dr Radhakrishnan was born in extreme poverty, and for him education was the only way out. They had no land, no property, and his father was in a very humble profession. He had a hand-to-mouth existence. He escaped the trap of poverty by going to school. There were German missionaries in Vellore who saw a bright boy who was doing absolutely

nothing, so they pulled him out and gave him a scholarship to Voorhees College, Vellore. He later went to Madras Christian College. He was born in 1887, and by his own account, his first ten years were directionless, but in twenty years, in 1908, he became a lecturer at Presidency College, Madras, all because of education. Education is a great transformer.

DSW: Why has it been so difficult to secure a Right to Education Bill, and why has it come so late in the day?

KDR: It should not have been difficult. I keep taking the example of Sri Lanka, which attained independence in 1948, and has a near-100% literacy rate. Following independence, Ceylon, as it then was, ensured compulsory primary school attendance. We didn't do that. Within India, the focus was on higher education, because the emphasis was on nation-building. We needed a qualified and competent workforce that could build the nation. The importance of primary education was lost, and the feeling was that because the Constitution promised compulsory primary education, that it would happen. There were also other complicating factors. Because of India's federal structure, the central government felt it should not impinge upon subjects in the State List. Education is now in the Concurrent List. Another complicating factor was language. There was a political problem with teaching in English, and there was a long period when English was regarded as the language of the imperialists.

VKRV Rao's three-language policy was a compromise. You had to acknowledge that English was the language that the rest of the world spoke. Hindi, though not a 'national language', was considered mainstream. You also had to please the regional languages. And like all compromises, this failed. Making only English or only Hindi compulsory would have been politically a very courageous decision, and the government was not willing to take it.

DSW: Recently, *India Today* magazine conducted a survey on higher education in India, and rated the Indian higher education system very poorly. Considering that, as you have said, India has focused on higher education, what are the problems that Indian higher education faces?

KDR: There are mainly two problems: firstly, we assumed that higher education was for everyone. This is very difficult to say, as one would be accused of being elitist, but we have to ensure primary education till the age of sixteen that ensures profitable employment, so that fewer would seek higher education. In the UK, everyone does O-Levels, which ensures employment, and one in every ten or so goes to university. You do not need any higher qualification to get a job. Our problem is that school leaving qualifications in India do not lead to any reasonable sort of employment and consequently huge numbers enter higher education.

The second problem is that we do not have enough qualified teachers. The government is setting up a large number of IITs, but they have no teachers. The whole IIT system depends on high-quality student-teacher classroom transactions. Young people today don't want to go into teaching in school or at university. As a result, education is suffering.

DSW: Do you think that reservations in institutions, given the great class divide, especially in states like Tamil Nadu, is too idealistic?

KDR: In a country that is as divided as ours, unless the government takes proactive decisions, we cannot provide equal

(contd. on page 3)

SPLASH-DOWN

The School swimming team participated in the **Second Brar Memorial Invitational Inter-School Swimming Tournament** held at **St George's College, Mussoorie**, on August 9. Vishesh Kochher won a **silver medal** in the 100m breaststroke and Netesh Dev won a **bronze medal** in the 100m backstroke. The School's 4x100 freestyle relay team comprising Nikhil Narain, Angad Bawa, Vishesh Kochher and Devvrat Pattney and the 4x50 medley relay team comprising Vishesh Kochher, Devvrat Pattney, Netesh Dev and Shivam Katyal won **silver medals**. Well done!

DEBATE UPDATE

Bharat Ganju and Uday Shriram represented the School at the **J L D'Souza Memorial Debate** held at the **St Joseph's Academy, Dehradun** on August 12, 2009. Uday Shriram was adjudged the **Best Speaker**, and The Doon School finished **Runners-Up**. Well done!

PING PONG

The School table tennis team participated in the **IPSC Table Tennis Tournament** held at **Pinegrove School, Solan** from August 9 to 13. The School team was **Runners-Up** in the Under-19 category. The team comprised Ashutosh Kejriwal, Sagar Agarwal, Devansh Khaitan and Amit Gupta.

In the **Individual Championship** Sagar Agarwal, Amit Gupta, Devansh Khaitan and Raghav Kothiwal reached the quarter-finals in their respective categories. Sagar Agarwal, Devansh Khaitan and Raghav Kothiwal were selected to represent the IPSC in the National Table Tennis Tournament. Kudos!

IAYP NEWS

Karan Gulati and Utkarsh Garg have successfully completed the **Bronze standard** of the **IAYP**. Congratulations!

Unquotable Quotes

Are you sure you don't have Sine flu?

Prateek Agarwal takes calculated precautions.

An exaggeration is a hyperbola.

Ankit Chowdhary, HL Maths student.

What the sick!

Viren Kapoor substitutes.

I saw a person with yellow, brown, black teeth.

Pranjal Singh is dental.

Say this in excitement way.

Piyush Upadhyay, perking up.

They performed the whirling dervish Turkey-dance.

STB reviews a performance.

We're having a joint class with Burma.

PKB, on international education.

Where the hell is here?

Arjun Sethi, apparently lost.

If you have to put something, put it funny!

Arjun Sethi giving 'unquotable advice'.

Mohammad Messi is an uprising superstar.

Aditya Kothiwal, rising paparazzi.

I traveled India worldwide!

Alawi Singh, the consummate traveller.

RECITAL RESULTS

The results of the **Vikram Seth Junior Statesman Poetry Recitation Competition**, held on August 13, 2009 are as follows:

Seniors

1st: Rishi Sood

2nd: Vihaan Khanna

3rd: Arjun Singh Badal

Congratulations!

Juniors

1st: Siddhant Sachdev

2nd: Akansha Mohan

3rd: Ujjwal Dahuja

FOOTBALL UPDATE

The School soccer team played the Asian School on August 12, 2009 and the Central School, Birpur, on August 17. They drew against **Asian School 2-2** and they beat **Central School, Birpur 6-1**.

The School Under-17 Team played its first match in the **VIII Om Prakash Memorial Football Tournament** on August 17, 2009 against the Carman School B-Team. The School won 2-1. Well played!

DRUGTAK

Kanishka Malik and Abhinav Mittal

Saurabh Malhotra from **Nijaat Rehabilitation Centre** addressed students of A-Form on August 18 regarding the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol. The initial portion of the talk regarded reasons not to indulge in such vices – somewhat like a recapitulation of the 'Life Skills' classes of D-Form and C-Form. A-Form was definitely the right time to address this issue, because it is at this time that people form a delusion about alcohol and drugs. Following this was a quiz. Their knowledge on this issue was put to test. Some facts, such as that on an average, people begin to drink at the tender age of 13, and that there are approximately 4000 chemicals in one cigarette, were difficult for the A formers to digest, and they proved to be a real eye-opener.

Towards the end, there was a brief question-answer session, where boys got an opportunity to clear their doubts on the issue. Saurabh Malhotra narrated his own story – his mistakes in life, their reasons and their consequences.

NEW RECRUIT

Chris Hatton, the exchange student from St Edward's School, Oxford, has been appointed **Guest Editor** on the Editorial Board of *The Doon School Weekly* for the duration of his stay.



Opinion Poll

Do you like the new structure of the Rose Bowl stage?

Yes 16 %

No 84 %

(283 members of the School community were polled)

Next Week's Question: Does the School need to have the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the differently-abled?

(contd. from page 1)

access to education to the whole of society. The social structure is such that some have easier access to opportunities, and there are people who believe it should be so. These people need to be corrected, and unless there is active intervention, we cannot change this. The class diversity will perpetuate. These issues can be tackled effectively. Even in Dehradun, I know of examples of schools which enable the underprivileged to successfully access mainstream education. It is only the voice of privilege that says that reservation creates problems. We are saying this because we are the lucky ones. And who are we to say where merit lies? The merit we see in students reflects generations of privilege and opportunity. This is the heartbreak of being Indian. We bear the weight of history and also this responsibility on our shoulders.

DSW: What do you think is the fundamental problem with our system of education?

KDR: In order to deal with the large number seeking education, we have standardized it. So we have lost the potential of the system to convey knowledge. Earlier, there were very few schools, but the quality of education wasn't standardized. We would have schools with a very good standard of education, and others that weren't so good. Now, the attempt to standardize the education has given rise to many problems such as the loss of quality, corruption. The ISC system here is still more flexible than the CBSE, but both of them are very standardised. In the process of standardisation, we have become familiar with a horror called the 'model answer', and this is true at every level of education. The Boards believe that there is only one correct answer. In some cases, the textbooks and material of the State Boards is poor, but the government's response is limited because no one wants to interfere in the right of states to devise their own material. We feel "What right do we have to intervene if this is the product of an approved process?"

DSW: Do you agree with the assertion that India cannot achieve its true potential because the bright ones leave India to reside overseas?

KDR: The short answer would be yes. This is because life in India is hard. There is no comparison to the quality of life abroad and there is no comparison to the quality of life and the environment for their children, like in Singapore and the USA. India suffered greatly during the 60s and 70s, when 90% of the students who left IIT went to America. India was supplying America with 90% of its finest minds, who had enjoyed the enormous benefit of high-quality and subsidised education, and they just left. I find this wrong because they had taken all of this and had turned their backs on the country.

DSW: In the light of this, what do you think we can do to bring them back?

KDR: What you can do is you can study hard and be good citizens. Whatever you do, remember that India will be behind you. You don't need to be in India. In the future, the world will be even more open than it is today. But don't forget that this is where you come from.

DSW: Don't you think that a nation needs one person it can look up to?

KDR: Yes, a nation needs a hero. And we are quick to give the hero status, but not always to the right people. I spoke of Gandhi when I was addressing everyone, and it was Gandhi who talked about *aatmashakti*, and that during the absence of a hero, you must look within yourself. If you can't find the inspiration of a model, be your own inspiration. Be your own hero.

| Viewpoint | Log Jam

Chris Hatton rues the inability to connect freely with the outside world

Imagine this: It is a Monday morning. You have just had a long weekend of enjoyment, and you discover that you have a free first school. You decide to go to the Library and write an e-mail to your parents to let them know how much fun you have had over the last few days. After logging on, and opening GMail, you discover to your dismay that a wonderful little programme called *Websense* has blocked your e-mail account. I can guarantee that you have been in this (or a similar) situation at some point.

Now, I am not saying that the School has set up a policy barring you from contacting the 'outside world', enclosing you in a cocoon of oblivion, but I don't think it is asking too much to have access to your personal e-mails once in a while (especially as some of them may be a little too personal for the School filters...)

When I questioned this sorry state of affairs, I was told that it was because the School had invested copious amounts of money in *Doscomail* and wants to encourage students to use it. This, to me, seems like a waste of energy, to spend the time blocking every single website that has the words 'mail', (including the British newspaper I read – *The Daily Mail*...) 'Log In',

or any other possible word related to e-mails.

There are other more proactive ways to encourage the use of *Doscomail* and I completely agree that now that the money has been invested in the software, it should be used. I think that encouragement is unnecessary as *Doscomail* is so much easier to use than the usual e-mail websites, and personally, I use my school e-mail account at St Edward's for absolutely everything. It is even possible to access it from home.

To add to this (so I have been told recently) students have figured out ways to bypass *Websense*, and that often *Websense* crashes for just about long enough to allow you to check your e-mail, or access *Facebook*.

I would like to make it clear that I do not think that *Websense* should be removed from the system; in fact it probably blocks more malicious viral websites than we think. It has been proven that students who use *Facebook* and other social networking sites do worse in exams than those who don't, and I think that it is important to keep school and private life separate. Websites such as these are even blocked at St. Edward's for this very reason. However, I think forcing students to use one specific mailbox, is an act that seems archaic. In fact, pointless.

Under the scanner INDIA

ANTHEMS IN FEEBLE VOICES

Vivek Santayana comments on the diminishing sense of patriotism amongst Doscos

Perhaps our Independence Day celebrations are turning into meaningless rituals to celebrate our decolonization. The reason I am making this sweeping claim is because the legacy of our independence is slowly fading. We must ask ourselves: does the wearing of a kurta-pyjama on one morning while hoisting the flag awaken or renew in us the sense of patriotism and the devotion to our nation? Does the hour of social service we groan about in the morning invoke any values or feelings of gratitude, or does it only remain one hour of social service, accredited for something or the other?

We have occasional, nationalistic fervour, which we associate normally with terrorist threats, national holidays or cricket matches. Every year, we discuss our 'glorious past', which we, as Indians, are growing complacent about. We discuss what we have gained, lost and learned since 1947, while we praise ourselves for being one of the oldest cultures in the world. We claim to be proud of our ancient heritage while we look to the west in the spirit of Occidentalism: we consider them superior. That is the great paradox of modern Indian culture; while we embrace the west, we are embarrassed when our nation is referred to in oriental stereotypes. We do not dispel these notions, we do not allow our culture to evolve, we simply embrace without questioning.

Service to society *does* involve our conventional notion of social service, that is, social and community work, but it also involves the greater nature of philanthropy: acting by putting society before self.

As Mr Desiraju, our Chief Guest on Independence Day said, his generation was raised by the generation that saw Gandhi. To his generation, Gandhi was still a living memory. Thus his generation had a firmer notion of India's future, as his generation was a generation closer to Independence. In the light of this, we have to ask ourselves where our generation stands. Do we still feel the need to serve our country, or do we turn our backs on our nation? Mr Desiraju attributes this lack of service to a variety of reasons, as we can see from his interview. One of these is the narrow definition of 'service'. Service to our nation is not just weeding someone's garden or making bricks at Fatehpur. As Doscos, we must serve society through leadership, something which we are trained to do. We learn to manage human resources, we learn to 'get the job done'. We learn to be pragmatic, ethical where necessary, and otherwise if the situation calls for it. We learn the value of integrity and good character, and we must be exemplars. We must open our minds to the situation around us, develop opinions, argue and communicate. Being a good citizen is everyone's duty, but being among the fortunate, who have had the benefit of a fine education, we must pay the nation back further. There are innumerable ways we can be of service to the country: in the Administrative Services, Foreign Service, the media, legislature, and through various other organizations and societies. We must redress the problems ourselves. What we learn in School will really go a long way, as School ultimately is a microcosm of the world outside.

Service to society *does* involve our conventional notion of social service, that is, social and community work, but it also involves the greater nature of philanthropy: acting by putting society before self. In an undocumented conversation that veered off-track during our interview, Mr Desiraju asked us whether we were interested in politics, which is a form of service to society (its demonization is another matter, altogether), not only through legislature, but through so many other channels such as the media or welfare organizations. It is a form of that leadership which we, as Doscos, must assume. We must bring about change. That is what true service to society is. And we must do so, solely because it is our duty as Indians. We cannot take our privileges for granted.

Patriotism is not only reserved for the battle field. We have equal commitments and duties to our nation. Our nation would be benefitted greatly, if every Dosco loved it as much as he loves his House.

But the harsh reality is that we take from our nation, but we do not give back. Charity work and welfare projects are one thing, but the future of the nation lies in the hands of its leaders of tomorrow, which, whether we choose to believe it or not, happens to be us, the youth. We will inevitably pass through the same gates as the illustrious alumni of our School. We must do justice to such an honour. We are a distinct, privileged lot, as we

have been told time and again. We bear on our shoulders the great legacy of the School, and the expectations of a nation. Have we forgotten what it means to serve our nation?

We are slowly forgetting the great responsibility that we bear. Patriotism is not reserved only for the battlefield. We have equal commitments and duties to our nation. There are a few examples that I learnt of during my exchange at Salem: Angela Merkel played a key role in the lobby to buy back Opel from General Motors after its bankruptcy, as it was the foremost German automobile brand. The Germans did not want to see a German brand go bankrupt, despite its acquisition by General Motors as a subsidiary. Also, the German turnout for the European Union election was abysmal: barely 40% voted; the reason being that, to Germans, the nation takes precedence over the EU. They do not consider external recognition to have much significance. Instead, they seek acknowledgement from their 'Fatherland'. I have always been in awe of such indomitable patriotism, and perhaps our nation would be benefitted greatly, if every Dosco loved it as much as he loves his House.

Talk-time Blues

Kanishka Malik

Besides the number of sleepy-heads, it is appalling to note our scornful expressions during most of the Assembly talks. The change in the speaker's countenance, and the pseudo-righteousness that he projects is what makes us characterize the speaker as 'ridiculous'. The affected air he holds becomes the subject of our criticism. This is so, especially in the case when the talk is related to ethics or moral values. Through the first impression we get of the speech, we begin to search for points opposing his character. This 'first impression' eventually becomes the 'last impression', because of our inconsideration for the rest of his speech. Many people suggest the speaker's 'hypocrisy' to be the reason for our contempt. I myself pointed that out a couple of times, and regardless of whether anyone had listened to the speaker, the point was agreed on. Of course, I had been rude and cynical myself.

The point that I'm trying to make, the fact that must be highlighted, is that we must take into account what someone is saying rather than pointing fingers. Of course, we must acknowledge the value of rational criticism. Criticism can strengthen a person, the same way it could weaken him. But for our own benefit, to learn more, we must review his ideas with utmost consideration. If we are to be indifferent towards every other matter, then every other attempt to fill ourselves with diverse knowledge would pass indifferently. Everything we read would become irrelevant if we point fingers at the writer, the same way we do at speakers. Every idea would be rejected by us and so would many great concepts.

So the motive that we must walk into Assembly with every Monday and Saturday morning, the motive, I hope I would walk in with myself, should be to absorb the diversity of the speech, to peek into the speaker's experience or review the ideas he puts forward. We have to worry about what is being said, rather than worrying about who is saying it. At first it may seem dissatisfying, but later it might yield true food for thought.

countrysearch

Vivek Santayana

Find hidden below the names of all twenty-two countries that are represented in the DSMUN, 2009

D	B	R	S	P	A	K	I	S	T	A	N
F	A	U	S	T	R	A	L	I	A	M	R
R	T	K	R	U	S	S	I	A	S	D	M
A	E	R	O	K	H	T	R	O	N	G	E
C	G	I	B	V	I	E	T	N	A	M	X
H	Y	N	R	P	A	N	A	M	A	P	I
I	P	D	A	C	I	R	A	T	S	O	C
N	T	I	Z	U	S	A	N	F	Y	Z	O
A	M	A	I	D	Y	M	J	N	A	R	I
S	P	L	L	B	N	A	P	A	J	S	T
Y	N	O	I	A	U	S	T	R	I	A	O
B	E	L	G	I	U	M	I	T	A	L	Y

| Poetry |

Crossroads

Abhilaksh Lalwani

The time to cross the street has come,
For we can not remain here now, nor go
Anywhere to long survive it all. Naught
Remains, but bitter truths of histories
Past.

In an earthly sense lies our defence,
Make a move: across the street lies our
Salvation.

Even though, in the crossing, we die,
Overrun, remember that we are
But dust, that will blow in the wind
And then again, in times to come, be
Moulded by that celestial potter into
Who we are today.

So, unless for a reason unearthly,
Or a love that could never be,
Move on: cross the street; leave.
For here lies but disease and death.

We will leave, come with us, we plead.
But we will not force you. Remain.
It's not for us to decide, but for you
To choose: He gave you the choice,
And even though it's all already
Revised and written, He gives unto
You the gift of a false control.

Take it:

Forge your own path from the shards of
Your beaten heart: remake it. Yes,
It can be done. Take heart: be of good cheer!

But do not forget us, or into
The wrong stray. You've already made
Your choices. Play your part, and well,
And you will well be rewarded. He
Does listen, though one may not hear Him.
He always helps, though one may not
Recognize His hand in the affairs of
Our lives and deaths.

In the end, when you reach the end
Of your own path and need to cross
The street and onto fresher pastures,
Move. Remember us, and remember Him,
And remember your heart – for we will
Guide you to the end, and beyond, for
This is just the end of a false beginning:
Cross the street, we are going, we plead!

CAREER CALL

This week, the Careers' noticeboard will post information on what career options one can explore with a degree in **Chemistry**. All those interested should look it up.

| Report |

Defying Disability

Shashank Peshawaria and Jayant Mukhopadhaya report on the dance performances given by Ability Unlimited on Sunday, August 16



Six-thirty pm. Boys return from their outings early; some turn up late. Prefects start shouting that we're all late for the programme. But anyway, the show is about to begin. We enter a dimmed MPH, packed with students, their parents, masters, audio-visual equipment, lights, cameras and action. The event – a dance performance by young boys and girls, all physically challenged in some way.

That's right. A group of nearly twenty differently-abled dancers took over the stage, (led by Guru Syed Sallauddin Pasha, recipient of the National Award

for outstanding performance in the field of empowerment of persons with disabilities), and began performing acts that would have put our limbs in a twist, if we were to have attempted them. The group, *Ability Unlimited*, comprised artistes from various parts of the country who were differently-abled, and who have spent years practising and perfecting classical and contemporary forms of dance, performing on wheelchairs and crutches.

They performed the famous whirling dervish Turkish dance, set to the music of *Khwaja Mere Khwaja*, composed by Oscar winner A R Rahman for the movie *Jodha Akbar*. This was followed by Bharatnatyam, a Purulia Chhau dance, popular jazz moves on Rahman's *Jai Ho*, a Manipuri martial arts dance and a yoga routine. They concluded with a soul-stirring performance of another Rahman classic, *Vande Mataram*. Clearly, any disability was of our minds, and of our minds alone. It amazed us to see that all the movements of the wheelchairs, crutches, and the dancers (despite the fact that some of them could not hear) timed perfectly as per the choreographic patterns and all the actions were well-coordinated. And the wheelchairs and the crutches were integrated into the performance such that they ceased to appear as aids for the impaired, but seemed to have been put to use as if they were props. At times, we saw wheelchairs changed into chariots, sometimes into parts of the dancers' dresses. As for the yoga *asanas* (which many of us are unable to perform in our classrooms), they weren't only complex, but physically demanding too. To maintain the right balance on wheelchairs looked very challenging.

Their creativity and talent overawed the audience, some of whom could never have imagined such feats being executed so perfectly by physically challenged people. In fact, the fault really lies in us, in the people who create classifications, for we can also be classified in various ways: that we lack in the things that

they possess – an indomitable spirit. Guru Pasha's efforts go beyond just working for the betterment of children with mental and physical disabilities: they open a world of possibilities.

The disabled, gradually, in life, adapt to what they are deprived of. What worries them most – the real disability – is actually the question of our acceptance of their disabilities. They neither want our pity, nor our indifference. For sure, in School, they received what they deserved: a standing ovation.

What struck us after seeing such a performance was that we all need to join in the process of empowering the differently-abled of our society. One such way that stood out in our minds would be to campaign actively for all schools, public institutions and facilities to be made enabled. In our school also, we should aim to make provisions for people who have disabilities. We wonder how many of you feel the same way.



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