

“I am extremely delighted to launch ‘Heartfulness All India Essay Writing Event’ organized by Shri Ram Chandra Mission in partnership with the United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan.

I am happy to know that this event is held every year to commemorate the United Nations International Day of the Youth between the months of July and November and more than a million participants submit their entries each year.

It is truly gratifying to know that it is a multi-lingual event with entries invited in English and Hindi at the national and state levels and in nine other Indian languages-- Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu.

A nation’s destiny is shaped by its youth. For it is the youth of today who will be the leaders of tomorrow. India has always had the good fortune to be blessed with centuries of knowledge, wisdom, systems and enlightened thinking that told us how to live the highest quality of life. All our teachings from ancient times laid great emphasis on value-based education for all round development of the individual be it social, emotional, mental, physical, intellectual and spiritual facets of life. The national education policy unveiled in 2020 lays great focus on value-based education.

It also highlights the importance of an education system that helps individuals to develop the right habits, values, discipline and punctuality, among others. It seeks to promote multi-disciplinary approach and ensure holistic development of the students.

Dear sisters and brothers,

The entire world is currently battling a very challenging situation in managing the ever evolving Covid impact. Nations have shown strong resolve and are firmly displaying great character and working together in emerging out of this strongly and together.

Adversity is also the time when one’s character is tested. This situation has reinforced the belief that no problem is insurmountable when we work together with strong values.

From time immemorial, we believed in the concept of universal tolerance, brotherhood and peaceful co-existence. Share and care is the core of the Indian philosophy and in times like the current pandemic, we should provide succour and help to the needy and marginalized people. In the present times, there is a need for greater focus on inculcating the values of compassion, empathy, respect for elders and religious tolerance among the youngsters.

This is also the time for us to return to our roots and draw upon the wisdom of our traditional methods of teaching and learning to rebuild the foundations based on universal values. Our education system needs to recognise that it is time to move beyond academics and make value-based teaching and learning an integral part of the delivery. The need for value-based education assumes greater importance in the present-day, fast-paced IT-driven material world.

Dear sisters and brothers,

India is uniquely blessed with a huge young population and education is the key to fully leverage this demographic dividend. Our universities and higher education institutions need to vastly improve the standards to make India a leading hub of knowledge and innovation. There should be greater thrust on research and collaboration between the academia and the industry. There is also a need for greater investment in research by both public sector and private sector institutions to create and promote the right ecosystem for innovative thinking to flourish.

Dear sisters and brothers,

In the information age, the youth has access to an explosion of information, technologies, tools and news – which can be very overwhelming, confusing and misdirecting too at times. Therefore, there is a dire need to impart right values to our youth from a very young age.

Governments, parents, Teachers, institutions and voluntary organizations, among others, have a huge responsibility in imparting critical life lessons to students but also ensure that they think and act with values. I am confident that if we move in that direction, India will lead the resurgence of value-based education for the world to follow.

Finally before concluding, let me stress the need for a concerted and collective action for overcoming the challenge posed by the pandemic. The first and foremost requirement for the people is to not become complacent. Everyone must continue with precautions like frequently washing hands, maintaining social distancing and adhering to all the norms issued by the authorities. No doubt, the pandemic has adversely affected the economies of all nations and severely disrupted normal lives. I am confident that sooner than later the worldwide trials for a vaccine will bear fruit and we will be able to defeat the virus.

The All India Essay Event being held for 28 years now is a truly commendable work by the team of Heartfulness in promoting the awareness for value-based education. Reflection, contemplation and discussion help build the character and I am sure that the topics chosen every year will only strengthen the value system further.

It gives me great pleasure to unveil the ‘All India Essay Event 2020’ and wish all the participants the very best.

JAI HIND!”

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