

A GOLDMINE CALLED EDUCATION AND YOUTH

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Dr. Amit Gupta, Dr. Ravi K. Dhar, the Gupta family, students of JIMS, faculty & staff, who have made a name for themselves. I get a lot of requests asking me to put in a word regarding admissions, which is not an easy task these days and I must confess, I have never been successful at that. I respect the institution for this because if an institution comes under pressure and takes in students who are second best or third best, then I don't think we would be fair to the institution and neither the institution would have grown the way it has and earned the name which it has earned for itself.

Congratulations to all of you! I am grateful to you for inviting me to deliver this lecture. I am going to speak at random because I am not very good at speaking in a structured way *“toh jo mere mann me aata jayega aur apki shaklon ko dekh ke lagega, apko dekh ke lagega ki yeh baat theek kahi,*

ya ye boring ho raha hai, ya sahi nahi hai, to mai waise hi apne vaktavya ko ya bhashan ko mode dungi.”

Education is the most important thing for a human being. We do not have a choice in the matter of our birth. We may have been born in a mud hut or in a palace; we may be born to educated parents or we may be born to uneducated parents; we may be born in a carpenter’s family or a scientist’s family. Ultimately it’s the individual, he or she, who needs to choose what they want to become. Education is not just about learning, it is about learning skills or getting educated and to my mind education is not just about getting a job.

When I did my MA in the year 1959, there were very few women across the country who reached that stage. I can still recall, that there used to be a booklet that was published by some organizations, I don’t remember the name, which had names of women, who had done BA or MA at that time, it had their names with addresses. I got hundreds of letters congratulating me for my MA degree, from far off places like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, the North East and Nagpur. At that time I realized, what my parents had done for me by educating me. We were three sisters and no brother. Fortunately for us, they never thought that girls just have to be brought up probably in very traditional ways, just need to know how to dress-up, know how to speak a bit of English or Hindi and then married.

Our parents didn't expect us to aspire to get any job and there were few jobs available those days like teaching in a school or college or being a receptionist or a typist or someone in a corporate house or if you were educated from a very good school, or a college so perhaps you may think of getting a job in Tea Estate or in multinational companies like Lipton, Lakme, Lux or others, so the career choices available were very limited. Those days the biggest aspiration of everyone was to get a government job or become an IAS or IPS officer.

I was reasonably an average student but I didn't fail, though I did not come out with flying colors either. Believe me; I was so busy enjoying my life that I seldom thought of securing marks whether 40% or 60%, it didn't matter. My family, my parents said "you are reasonably a good student, why don't you take a shot at becoming a government officer". I took the easy way out and married an IAS officer.

Even after that, my ambition was very clear-teach some children or do some social work for which you don't get paid. But the motivation for education at that point of time was not overpowering or overridingly to make money. It was important to make people around realize the value and importance of education. We could feel the difference between those who are educated and those who are not. The opportunities are there before us. But, does this also mean that education made you a human being different from others, who

are sensitive human beings, who can understand the cultures of life, the different mannerisms of life, the way you speak, the way you look at others.

Mine was an inter caste marriage and believe me, when my late husband and I decided to get married, he told me and my late mother that he had to face a lot of problems from his family, since I was from a different caste and believe me I didn't understand as what is this business of caste?

We grew up in times, when country was under the impact of freedom struggle. But whatever people may think, freedom struggle was a great movement, something in history which is now gone and finished. But at that time we grew up thinking that India was one. We never thought of leaders, we did not know about caste, all we knew was that there were 20 people and who were great people led by Mahatma Gandhi. To which caste or religion did he belong? Was he an English speaking person or Hindi speaking person? All we knew was that he was a great leader.

I got married at the age of 20 or 21 but it was a difficult decision because we both belonged to different castes. I just couldn't understand why? We had a wonderful life; we had a wonderful marriage, so that's history now. But in 1950's and 1960's, inter-caste marriages were a big taboo. In those days as children, all we knew was that there were Indians and then there were these English, who ruled over us and took away all the wealth

that belonged to “*Sone ki Chidiya*” that is India and “*Inko bahar bhagaya gaya hai ab ham swatantra, azad ho gaye hain, Ab hum jo karna chahenge, karenge. Humme kisi ko salaam nahi karne ki zarurat hai, humme kisi ke aage jhukne ki Jarurat nahi hai, hum apne hi badshah ban gaye hai.*”

Now times have changed, my own children have changed, my grand children are changing at a much faster pace, and the motive and basic purpose of education has changed. Now I can get a skill to earn money. I don't want to sound like those Englishmen, as if I am speaking from the podium. Therefore what I would like to say is that you all have ambitions and want to have a sound career. But always concentrate on being a good human being. Your relationship within your family, your relationship within your community, your relationship in your city or state and country with fellow countrymen and, above all tolerance towards each-other is important.

Do you enjoy listening to music, do you tolerate people? If I speak a different language or belong to a different religion does not mean that I am different. I may enjoy the same music or follow a culture but above all I need to be a good human being first. Do I get affected with what I see on Television every day? There are cases of rape, murder reported daily, but is that life all about? Is that what we will tell our future generations?

My father left India because he earned many million dollars in America and forgot that it was

this Indian government and his Indian parents who spent thousands of rupees educating him. We educate our children in India because we want them to become independent and be the wealth of our nation. There are many problems here, and I know it is disgusting to be in a situation where you find out that what you deserved was better but, you may not get or receive. But there is a need to have wider and bigger picture of our country or are we always going to pull each other down and say we are divided into so many castes, religions, languages & regions and dress codes and so on and divide ourselves.

I don't think this is the kind of education we want to give our children. If we want to bring this element in their education and want to work to remove differences, I think we need to rethink on the kind of education we are imparting to them. I am afraid, we will become a nation which is dry, dull and drab, and the only growth we would see is of money and economy, we will lose out on the real beauty of life, we will lose out on understanding each other, we will lose out on loving each other, reacting or acting to what is good and what's not. These are the evaluations you have to make continuously in your life apart from all the management skills that you are going to be absorbing from JIMS. You are very lucky students who have got an institution which has a brand name, and is preparing you well for your life, which is going to give you ample opportunities

to either become self employed or help any other organization or institution and contribute towards their growth. I find so many young people and I am very impressed with the young India today when I find *“Tees saal ki umar main to aap manager, senior manager ya pata nahin director, aap kya-kya ban gaye ho. Jo 60 saal ki umar tak, 30 saal aapko aur jeena hai, jab itni height par itni chhoti umar main pahuch gaye to uske baad kya karoge.”*

You have to have an aim all the time *“yeh seedi chadh li ab iske upar ek aur chadhni hai, phir ek aur chadhni hai, lekin koni maar ke nahi chadhna hai, sabko sath le ke chadhna hai,”* that is the joy in life. You grow and help others grow along with you. You and I see so many films and say, I wish I could be that hero or heroine, people who really leave an impact on you, those films that bring out the character of a good human being, who faces the odds and comes out of it taking others along. We all admired Gabbar Singh of Sholay for a little while. We know all great things about other villains also that we see in films today. We all enjoyed the film Malaamal Weekly didn't we? *“Do ghante baith kar khud sochte hai ki ek lottery ki ticket ke pichhe kaise deewane hue jate hai sab log aur uske baad jab woh mil jata hai to sab baith kar kehte hai ye kya kar diya hamne, hamne to sara apna chain hi kho diya.”* We were better off when we didn't run after this gold rush.

So, strike a balance in your life that is what education is all about. *“Aapse koi do shabd mithe*

bool deta hai to kitne yad rahte hai, aur do shabdt badtameezi ke bol de to kitna dil ko chubhta hai. Toh jab hamko chubh sakta hai to jab ham kisi ko bolte hai to usko bhi chubh sakta hai. Main aapko ek bahut chhoti si kahani bataungi Jodha-Akbar aai abhi dekhi sabne, jisne dekhi hath uthao, kya usme se koi lesson mila aapko?”

The lesson of understanding was, that, there was a great emperor in India, about whom the whole world writes in history, even today, he is a shining star in the firmament among the emperors of the world and not just in India, He was uneducated “*jisko dastakhat karna bhi nahi aata tha, padh nahi sakta tha who, lekin usme sensitivity thi, pyar tha, compassion tha, tolerance tha. Uska woh pakshh agar ham dekhte hai to kitna heera chamakta hua nikal kar aata hai, usne ladaiyan ladi, logon ko mara woh sab theek hai, lekin usne iss desh ko uske buniyadi land reforms diye. Aaj bhi hamari jo land ki measurements hoti hai aur markane haque hote hai, woh Akbar badshah ke jamane ke hain. 500 saal pahale, padha likha nahi tha woh, kuchh bhi nahi janta tha lekin ek akal thi, ek sensitivity thi isliye woh aaj bhi Hindustan ka ek mahaan badshah mana jata hai.*”

“*Ashok ki kahani suni hogi aapne, jisne socha tha ki jab tak main fateh karta jaata hu tab tak main sabse bada badshah hun, maar-pitai, hadap liye sare kingdoms, Kalinga ke pass ja ke pahucha, jisko hum aaj Orissa kehte hai, kuchh us par prabhav*

pada Gautam Budhh ka ki ye maar-kaat mai kyun kar raha hun? Kis ke liye kar raha hun?"

He was also a great emperor that India produced but an emperor who was cruel, who had his aim *ki mujhko saare Hindustan ka badshah banana hai, aur yehi karke banunga main*. But eventually he became a bhikshu and said *ki ye to kuchh hai hi nahi, kahe ka badshah kisi ke khoon ke upar badshah banunga main? "Main ye nahi keh rahi hu ki kisi ko hum aur aap maar de, lekin jazbaat dusre ke samjhe, chahe vo aapki maa ho, aapki behen ho aapka padosi ho ya aapka colleague ho"*. Education is all about that. Education is about making life more beautiful. Education is about understanding each other and having compassion for everybody. Education is about standing on your feet and once you stand on your feet, you are able to help others around you to do the same. Education is about making you stars in your own country and eventually stars of the world and each one of you has that in you.

I am absolutely certain that *"maine kabhi sapne mein bhi nahi socha tha ki main Delhi mein Mukhyamantri banungi aur ye bhi sapna nahi dekha tha ki main rajneeti mein aaungi. Mujhe na rajneeti ki chah thi aur na hi isse ghrina thi"*. I landed and found myself here and believe me for the first few years I just thought *'ki kaha aa gai main, kaisi duniya hai ye, lekin jab us duniya mein thoda bahut kaam karne ko mila, aapki muskurahat mili, aapke acche shabd sunane ko mile, phool*

bhi mile pathar bhi mile, sab kuch jab mila toh jeewan ki sampoornta ka anand aaya' and that is what your life is going to be, full of challenges, you get married, get a husband of your choice, wife of your choice, you grow up, your parents seem old-fashioned, your companies are not always what you want them to be, your business may not grow as fast as you want it to grow, your children in future may not be what you want them to be. So there are challenges everyday in life. So enjoy them! That is my only message to you because you have the opportunity which millions of children would love to have but can't have, "*unke mauka hi nahi milta hai ki JIMS jaise institution mein aake padhna ka. Aapki khush nasebi hai ki aap padh rahe hai yahan, aapke maa-bap bhej paaye hai yaha. Gupta pariwar ne yeh institution ko sthapit kiya aur hazaro bacchon ko train kar rahe hai*" for the good of themselves and the nation; so make the best of it, enjoy yourself, work hard and have a great life.

Thank you very much!

