

Address at the Inaugural Session of the  
**Regional Seminar and Workshop-cum-Training Programme on Narcotics & Psychotropic Substances**  
**New Delhi**

**26<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

I am delighted to participate in the inaugural session of the Regional Seminar and Workshop-cum-training Programme on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic substances (NDPS) by High Court of Delhi and Government of NCT of Delhi. My greetings to the organizers, Honorable Justices, law enforcement authorities ,lawyers, academicians, scientists , societal reformers ,students and distinguished guests participating in this seminar. NDPS is becoming a major challenge for the welfare of our youth both in India and many countries of the world. There is a need for finding comprehensive solution for preventing our youth from getting exposed to NDPS which can have a long term effect on the mental and physical health of our youth. Towards this end, the conduct of this seminar with the participation of multiple stakeholders is timely and will definitely go a long way in providing harmonious environment for our youth living in urban and rural areas.

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Be concerned about both these factors. I find that the Courts also have a tendency to give the benefit of doubt to the accused purely due to technical reasons of the law. Here, I am reminded of the famous statement of Nana palkivala “law is somewhere and justice is somewhere else. I would suggest that that the Honorable Justices assembled here to take responsibility to ensure that both law and justice become convergent and pint in the same direction. If this is done, it will become deterrence and the crime rate is bound to reduce. Of course, there is need to speed up the judicial protest with minimum adjournment. Probably it may be useful to conduct a case study of hundred cases to examine the number of adjournments and the duration taken to settle the case on an average. This study may also throw light on how to speed up the judicial process.

### **Parents**

Young people use substances because they satisfy issues related to adolescent development. These needs include: taking risks, demonstrating independence, developing values distinct from parents and other authorities, signaling entry into a peer group, seeking novel and exciting experiences , satisfying curiosity. This time their parents have to pour their parental love, be watchful and see any pattern change in their behavior of the son or daughter. At the first instance when they notice the change, they have to start discussing with the child various problems and enhance the day-to-day communication with the child. Parents must also find productive channeling of the energy of the child to healthy games and sports, fine arts such as painting, music, dance etc. and participation in socially relevant activities apart from the main task of studies. In essence parents have to ensure that the child is kept fully, physically and mentally occupied for nearly eighteen hours a day including the study period in the class. Parents must also have a mechanism to assess whether the child in this period is going to the class or not. Such pro-active step will definitely prevent the child from moving in a negative direction.

### **Teacher**

The teacher in the school has a great responsibility in shaping the character of the student especially during the adolescent period. Any academic performance variation in the student must be noticed and the counseling process must immediately commence. Also, the teacher must have patience to talk to the parents and get some feedback about the behavior of the student at home. In this connection, I recall my teacher Shri Muthu Iyer (1936), when I was in a

elementary school in Rameshwaram. If I do not attend the class for any reason the teacher used to come to my home meet my father and enquire about me.

This type of concern he showed for my absence from school. It is very difficult to follow this system in the modern environment. However, periodically parents-teachers meet is essential for promoting the wellbeing of the child.

### **Participation in Religious activities**

Surveys and a few prospective studies show that adults and teens who consider religion be important and who attend religious services weekly tend to be less likely than others to smoke, drink or use drugs. There are many reasons why this might be the case, including (1) adherence to religious prescriptions against the use of particular substances (2) the satisfaction, through religion, of needs that can lead of drug use (e.g. finding a meaning in life) and (3) involvement in time filling activities that do not involve drug use (e.g., services or youth groups). It is also possible that people who choose to involve themselves in religious institutions have other characteristics that reduce their vulnerability to substance abuse, like supportive families. I understand that a few spiritual institutions in India have effectively de-addicted, rehabilitated and socially reintegrated the victims. Also, they have used the reintegrated youth as the counselors for the young so that they do not get trapped in the same situation.

### **Enlightened citizenship**

The long term solution for evolving a happy, prosperous and peaceful society in our society in our planet is by the creation of enlightened society. How do we create such a enlightened society, which has three components (i) Education with value system (ii) Religion transforming into spirituality and (iii) Economic development for removing societal inequality.

The youth drawn from such enlightened society should become guardians for protecting the new generation youth being invaded by NDPS they should be alert to the happenings around the school and other areas where students are frequented and prevent them from falling into wrong companies. They should also create productive time filling societal activities for the youth during the spare time, holidays and vacation.

### **Conclusion**

Apart from the provisions of the law which can be invoked to punished the guilty, it enjoins on each one of us and the society in general to deal with drug abuse and drug trafficking on a social and psychological level. Our educational system should be so oriented, particularly at the early stages to instill in the young minds a fear of the terrible dangers involved in pursuing drug abuse and how it destroys a individual's life indubitably. Our educationists need to look at the syllabi particularly at the school levels to see if adequate attention has been given to deal with this problem by making the impressionable minds aware of the aware of the danger involved. The parents, the teachers, the NGO's and religious and spiritual leaders have an equally important role to play in this regard. What is needed is to create a deep and keen awareness in the various strata of the society of the deleterious effects of this deadly habit. And this cannot be a one-off operation; it has to be sustained, continuous and result oriented. Once the younger generation gets into the habit, there is virtually point of no return. De-addiction and rehabilitation centers can play the role only to a limited extent. The basic philosophy should be to ensure that adequate educational inputs are made available to each individual particularly the younger generation early enough so that the various dangers involved are imprinted in the minds once for all. Easy money, apart from the transitory rapture is one vital fact that attracts people to take this habit of drug abuse and drug trafficking. As I mentioned earlier our laws should be strong enough and deal with these aspects effectively and with speed.

I inaugurate the regional Seminar and workshop-cum-training Programme on narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances

And wish you success in your mission of evolving a society free from NDPS. May God bless you.