

Address and interaction with the students from
Schools of Shillong at St Anthony's College
Shillong
6 March 2013

**It does not matter who you are?
You will win**

*Ignited mind of the youth is
the most powerful resource
on the earth*

I am delighted to address and interact with the students from various Schools of Shillong at St Anthony's College. My greetings to all of you. I am very happy to see the mission of St Anthony's College, Shillong -- Striving for excellence in the way of life with the motto "*Ever More Better Ever*". Of course, evolution of leadership of youth calls for transforming young minds from "what I can take" to the principle of "what can I give". I am sure, St Anthony's College, Shillong and other educational institutions will transform the youth with the ideal of "What Can I Give".

Dear friends, when I am in front of large number of youth of Shillong region, I am thinking what thoughts I can share with you. I realize how the contributions of the youth in the past have continuously contributed to the world of today in many fields. I would like to assert that "No youth today need to fear about the future". How? The ignited mind of the youth is

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the most powerful resource on the earth, under the earth and above the earth. Today, I would like to share few thoughts on **“It does not matter who you are? You will win”**.

Culture of excellence

Friends, you all belong to a student community which should stand for a culture of excellence. And excellence is not by accident. It is a process, where an individual, (or organization or nation,) continuously strives to better oneself. The performance standards are set by themselves, they work on their dreams with focus and are prepared to take calculated risks and do not get deterred by failures as they move towards their dreams. Then they step up their dreams as they tend to reach the original targets. They strive to work to their potential, in the process, they increase their performance thereby multiplying further their potential and this is an unending life cycle phenomenon. They are not in competition with anyone else, but themselves. That is the culture of excellence. I am sure; each one of you will aspire to become unique with culture of excellence in the way of life.

Unique You

When I see you young friends with the mission of hope for great achievements, let me discuss with you, how you can be unique? Let us study together certain unique events by unique achievers.

Eight unique achievers in inventions and discoveries

Dear friends, Look up, what do you see, the light, the electric bulbs. Immediately, our thoughts go to the inventor **Thomas Alva Edison**, for his unique contribution towards the invention of electric bulb and his electrical lighting system.

When you hear the sound of aero plane going over your house, whom do you think of? **Wright Brothers** proved that man could fly of course at heavy risk and cost.

Whom does the telephone remind you of? Of course Alexander Graham Bell.

When everybody considered a sea travel as an experience or a voyage, a unique person questioned during his sea travel from United Kingdom to India. He was pondering on why the horizon where the sky and sea meet looks blue? His research resulted in the phenomena of scattering of light. Of course, **Sir CV Raman** was awarded Nobel Prize.

Do you know an Indian Mathematician who did not have formal higher education but had inexhaustible spirit and love for mathematics which took him to contribute to the treasure houses of mathematical research – some of which are still under serious study and engaging all-available world mathematicians' efforts to establish formal proofs? He was a unique Indian genius who could melt the heart of the most hardened and outstanding Cambridge mathematician Prof G H Hardy. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that it was Prof.

Hardy who discovered a great mathematician for the world. This mathematician was of-course **Srinivasa Ramanujan** for whom every number was a divine manifestation.

Do you know the scientist who is famous for Chandra Limit which describes the maximum mass (~1.44 solar masses) of a white dwarf star, or equivalently, the minimum mass for which a star will ultimately collapse into a neutron star to black hole following a supernova. Two of his students got the Nobel Prize before him. It is of-course the famous Nobel Laureate **Chandrasekhar Subramanian** .

Friends, there was a great scientific lady who is known for discovering Radium. She won not one, but two Nobel Prizes, one for physics and another for chemistry. Who is she? She is **Madam Curie**. Madam Curie discovered radium and she was doing research on the effect of radiation on human system. The same radiation which she discovered, affected her and she sacrificed her life for removing the pain of human life.

Whenever I describe to you young friends, scientific historical events, you all jumped. Name of the scientist – technologist who created the great event, they are the unique personalities. Young friends, can you join such unique performers of scientific history, you can, definitely you can. Let us study together, how it can be made possible?

Friends, I have, so far, met 15 million youth in a decade's time. I learnt, **"every youth wants to be unique, that is,**

YOU! But the world all around you, is doing its best, day and night, to make you just “everybody else”.

In the home, dear young fellows you are asked by your parents to be like neighbours’ children for scoring good marks. When you go to school, your teacher says “why not you become like the first five rankers in the class”. Wherever you go, they are saying “you have to be somebody else or everybody else”. Now, dear young friends, how many of you would like to be unique yourself.

The challenge, my young friends, is that you have to fight the hardest battle, which any human being can ever imagine to fight; and never stop fighting until you arrive at your destined place, that is, a UNIQUE YOU! How does achievement come? There are four proven steps; having a great aim in life before 20 years of age, acquiring knowledge continuously, hard work towards the aim and perseverance to defeat the problem and succeed.

Now dear friends, how many of you feel confident that you will and will become a unique person in your specialization and a great national leader with ethics.

Let me share with you some experiences, that will lead you to think with confidence, act with confidence and succeed with confidence.

Recent experience at Paravur village near Kochi

In December 2011, I was in a village called Paravur near Kochi. I went to the village to inaugurate the programme

Sasthrayaan – which means science propagation. During the programme, the President of Paravur Panchayat Board and the local MLA said that the mission of Sasthrayaan in Paravur is to ensure preparation of 2000 students from different schools towards attaining eligibility for entrance as engineers, scientists, doctors, qualified managers, and Civil services officers. This action will empower 2000 families of the village. My inaugural address to Paravur audience consisting of 5000 students and family members was “Science Empowers the Nation”. After my address, there were 100s of hands put-up for asking questions. Due to limited availability of time, I selected 12 students to ask me questions. I would like to share with you two questions of concern asked by the students. One 10th class girl asked me, Mr Kalam next year I have to take the subject for my specialization, I love psychology. My parents say no to this subject. They want me to take the subject that will enable me to enter a professional course. What should be my answer? I thought of it, I told the student, you have a great tool to win your parents that is love and affection. Similarly, your parents also love you. Hence, they earn and borrow for your education and they would like to ensure that you are properly positioned in your professional life. But I respect your dream and definitely I am confident, you can persuade your parents.

The next important question was from an 8th class boy called Vishnu who had come from a far away environment from the city. He was nervous and represented the youth in Indian

village environment. The boy started with telling his name, “my name is Vishu. I don’t know what should I ask? I am nervous. I have not asked any question in my class. I need to have confidence, I am not gaining confidence through education during the last 7 years. I am afraid to talk to my teachers, I am afraid to talk to my friends. Whenever I talk, I compare myself with other students. When I see you, I courage to ask a question Mr Kalam. Tell me, how I can become a unique person, which you just now explained. I want to become a marine engineer. I want to travel in the ship. I want to be the captain of the ship. I want to build the engine for the ship. Will I be able to do all this Mr Kalam? How can I achieve this mission? What I should do?” When the boy completed the question, the whole audience of 5000 people and dignitaries in the dais, including the CM, were looking at me, what Kalam is going to say for such a shivering question. I thought of it, and thought of it, I wanted to break the silence. I said, my dear Vishu, you have put the most difficult question, so far I have received from millions and millions of students whom I have met. Vishu, I value your question, also I consider you are echoing the question of millions of rural students. Then, slowly I gained the confidence to answer. Let us both recite a beautiful ancient poem named “I will fly”. I slowly started telling the poem. The boy also started repeating the poem with me.

I will fly

“I am born with potential.

*I am born with goodness and trust.
I am born with ideas and dreams.
I am born with greatness.
I am born with confidence.
I am born with wings.
So, I am not meant for crawling,
I have wings, I will fly
I will fly and fly”*

When the boy Vishu finished reciting the poem, he was in tears. He said, he has gained confidence; he will win and win and ran off.

Mission in life

Dear young friends, knowledge will empower you to undertake great missions. While entering into such type of mission in life, you need unique traits for achieving success in your missions which will require extra ordinary courage and the ability to dream big which will help overcome all obstacles. I would like to give an example of a visually challenged young boy, who was not deterred by his physical challenge.

I can do it: Friends, when I was the President of India, on 28 Aug 2006, I met the group of tribal students from Lead India 2020 movement. I asked all of them one question: “What you want to become?” Out of many responses, one visually challenged boy studying IX class got up. His name is Srikanth, he answered me "I will become visually Challenged first President of India". I was very happy to see his vision and

ambition. Small aim is a crime. Hence, I congratulated him to realize his vision and told him to work for realizing the vision.

There after he worked hard got 90% in Xth class and 96 % in intermediate and he set a goal to study Engineering in MIT, Boston USA. His relentless hard work not only secured seat but he got full fee waiver from MIT, Boston. Srikanth's achievement has brought changes in many change agents of Lead India 2020 and inspired to set high vision. The training he took under the initiative of Lead India 2020 has set a high vision for him. Seeing this impact of Lead India 2020 training, Lead India 2020 movement and GE volunteers have funded Mr. Srikanth for his travel to USA. Today he is pursuing his studies at MIT, Boston. When the GE offered him a job on his completion of graduation, he told them that he would certainly come back to GE, if I couldn't become the President of India. What a confidence that boy has amidst of difficulty and the challenges in his life by being visually challenged. What a great transformation that has brought into a visually challenged boy's life through value based education intervention.

It doesn't matter who you are?

Friends, here I would like to narrate a unique experience in this new year 2011. I went to Madurai for inaugurating the Pediatric Oncology Cancer unit at Meenakshi Mission Hospital on 7 Jan 2011. When I completed the task, suddenly one person was approaching me and his face looked familiar to me.

When he came closer to me, I found out that he was my driver during my DRDL times at Hyderabad. When I was working at DRDL, Hyderabad, I had a Driver his name is V. Kathiresan, who worked with me day and night for nine years. During that time, I used to witness, he always reads some books, newspapers and journals of substance during his free time. But he meticulously reads every time I see him. That dedication attracted me. I asked him a question? What made you to read during your leisure time? He replied that he had a son and daughter. They used to ask him lot of questions. That has made him to study and tries to answer to his level best. The spirit of learning in him, attracted me, I told him to study formally through the distance education mode and gave him some free time to attend the course and complete his +2 and then to apply for higher education. He took that as a challenge and kept on studying and acquiring his skills and upgraded his educational qualification, he did B.A. (History), then he did M.A (History) and then he did M.A (Political Science) and completed his B.Ed and then M.Ed and he worked with me upto 1992. Then he registered for his Ph.D in Manonmaniam Sundaranar University and got his PhD in 2001. He joined the Education Department of Tamilnadu Government and served for number of years. Now in 2010, he has become an Assistant Professor in the Government Arts College at Mellur near Madurai. What a commitment and dedication has helped him to acquire the right skills in his leisure time that has made his career progress and

upgrade his livelihood better. The message is, it doesn't matter who you are if you have a vision and determination to achieve that vision, you will certainly achieve.

Can you all repeat with me?

“When you wish upon a star,
Makes no difference who you are
Anything your heart desires
Will come to you”

Now let me describe my visualization of the distinctive profile of India by 2020.

Distinctive Profile of India by 2020

1. A Nation where the rural and urban divide has reduced to a thin line.
2. A Nation where there is an equitable distribution and adequate access to energy and quality water.
3. A Nation where agriculture, industry and service sector work together in symphony.
4. A Nation where education with value system is not denied to any meritorious candidates because of societal or economic discrimination.
5. A Nation, which is the best destination for the most talented scholars, scientists, and investors.
6. A Nation where the best of health care is available to all.
7. A Nation where the governance is responsive, transparent and corruption free.

8. A Nation where poverty has been totally eradicated, illiteracy removed and crimes against women and children are absent and none in the society feels alienated.
9. A Nation that is prosperous, healthy, secure, devoid of terrorism, peaceful and happy and continues with a sustainable growth path.
10. A Nation that is one of the best places to live in and is proud of its leadership.

Integrated Action for developed India

To achieve the distinctive profile of India, we have the mission of transforming India into a developed nation. We have identified five areas where India has a core competence for integrated action: (1) Agriculture and food processing (2) Education and Healthcare (3) Information and Communication Technology (4) Reliable and Quality Electric power, Surface transport and Infrastructure for all parts of the country. (5) Self-reliance in critical technologies. These five areas are closely inter-related and if progressed in a coordinated way, will lead to food, economic and national security.

Friends, youth have an important role to play in realization of all the pillars through the integrated action on five areas which I have just now described. Each pillar of development of nation can be taken up by team of youth based on the core competence. One of the important elements for

development is the enhancement of rural infrastructure in all parts of the country through the creation of PURA complexes (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas). PURA envisages an integrated sustainable development plan with employment generation as the focus, driven by provision of the habitat, healthcare, education, skill development, physical and electronic connectivity and marketing as a public-private partnership initiative. India would need 7000 PURA complexes covering 600,000 thousand villages where 700 million people live. Shillong should evolve a scheme for PURA complexes based on its core-competence and the type of terrain available in different regions. The PURA is very important because it is a sustainable system.

Visualisation of a scenario in a North Eastern PURA

Let me visualize a scenario in a remote North-Eastern PURA clusters in about three years. Being a hilly area, with physical infrastructure still coming up, the tele-education and telemedicine enabled by ISRO is considered a great boon by the empowered youth and children. The research work done by CSIR laboratories for converting the local resources into products for use by the local population and exporting them is greatly welcomed by the local population. The richness of the north-east craftsmanship is supported by technologists for increasing their productivity and aesthetic qualities. These craftsmen need technological support for enhancing their

productivity and aesthetic qualities of the products. The village knowledge centres set up in collaboration with IT, Space and NGOS add value to the earning capacity of this place. The Earth Sciences and Department of Science and Technology with their research in bio diversity, climate research has used the cluster as a working platform for mutual benefit. The Agricultural Ministry has enabled the scientists to work with local farmers to bring innovations in produce and the food processing department has multiplied the earning capacity. The Dept of Bio-technology has enhanced the production of silk from silk worm through the application of bio-nano-technology. The new and renewable energy sources department has paved the way for bio fuel and solar power. The tourism department has modernized the infrastructure and multiplied the Indian and foreign tourists visiting north-eastern states. The energy of the young professionals from Indian Institute of Management and other institutions add to fresh innovative ideas of entrepreneurship. The district administration by its transparent governance and community friendliness, with the maximum use of technology, has ensured effective coordination among the citizens, technologists, people representatives and state government organisations. The web site of the PURA gratefully presents this successful experiment of public-private-citizen partnership. In a nutshell a technological revolution for the area by the synergy of various departments has increased

all round progress and the PURA cluster is seen as a model not only in the country, but also by the world at large.

Conclusion: what I will be remembered for?

Finally, I would like to ask you, what would you like to be remembered for? You have to evolve yourself and shape your life. You should write it on a page. That page may be a very important page in the book of human history. And you will be remembered for creating that one page in the history of the nation – whether that page is the page of invention, the page of innovation or the page of discovery or the page of creating societal change or a page of removing the poverty or the page of fighting injustice or planning and executing mission of networking of rivers. I will be happy if you could write this page and mail it to me (apj@abdulkalam.com).

My greetings and best wishes to all of you for the success of your mission in your life.

May God bless you.

Oath for the Youth

- 1 A Great power is within me. With my aim of life, I will achieve the spirit of success.
- 2 I will have a goal and work hard to achieve that goal. I realize that small aim is a crime.
- 3 I will work with integrity and succeed with integrity.
- 4 I will be a good member of my family, a good member of the society, a good member of the nation and a good member of the world.

- 5 I will always try to save or better someone's life, without any discrimination of caste, creed, language religion or state. Wherever I am, a thought will always come to my mind. That is "What can I give?"
- 6 I will always protect and enhance the dignity of every human life without any bias.
- 7 I will always remember the importance of time. My motto will be "Let not my winged days, be spent in vain".
- 8 I will always work for clean planet Earth and clean energy.
- 9 As a youth of my nation, I will work and work with courage to achieve success in all my tasks and enjoy the success of others.
- 10 I am as young as my faith and as old as my doubt. Hence, I will light up then, the lamp of faith in my heart.
- 11 My National Flag flies in my heart and I will bring glory to my nation.