

# “Attitude of Indian Youth towards Progress”

Jagannatha Rao’s speech at at Inspire India Launch at Hotel Green Park, Hyderabad  
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It is not possible for civilization to flow backwards while there is youth in the world. Youth may be headstrong, but it will advance it allotted length.

- **Helen Keller**

India is the oldest and the youngest - I mean India is one of the oldest civilizations which withstood the onslaught of invaders and two hundred years of foreign rule and yet it stands like a rock preserving its cultural identity. The youngest, in terms of the average age, in the world and it is likely to remain so up to 2050. Let me substantiate my statement with some statistical data. 51% of the population is under 25 and 66% below 35 and that makes us the youngest country in the world.

The hosts Sridevi and Bharat were talking about the dichotomy; we can always see the extremes in India. In a survey done by Business World among 5645 youth across various cities in India revealed some interesting facts. 56% of the youth wanted to settle abroad and 50% of them were willing to do a boring job if it pays enough. In another survey done by Coca Cola the primary ambition of a young Indian from villages to cities is to become rich. Of course no survey in a terrifically diverse country like India can fully capture the complexities and manners of an entire generation. However, the present generation is very ambitious and is willing to take a big leap forward.

Since the youth today have more disposable income than their previous generations and are getting addicted to the vices like smoking, drinking and drugs. If you switch on MTV or Channel V there are bizarre programs like Roadies, it is like encouraging multiple partners and live in relationships. May be, the youth think that this is ‘progress’- indulging in these vices.

To give an example, I had a junior colleague of mine; he is around 25 years of age, obese, alcoholic and smoker. His cholesterol levels were 325 way above the normal, that too at such a young age. I had a close friend of mine who was earning a six figure income in a multi-national pharmaceutical company; he died of a massive heart attack he was just 29 when he died.

The youth today are getting used to the pub culture; it could be a let out for them from the work pressure they face throughout the week. We can see a high incidence of lipid abnormalities, stress induced diabetes, heart problems and even psychological problems in people in the early thirties.

Maybe the society has made the youth to be more selfish, they are getting heavily influenced by the western culture. Micro families and the divorce rate are going up. They are only taking the bad from the western culture not the good like social consciousness. Every person should develop an attitude of giving back to the society, I mean the good, and of course we are good in giving back the garbage that too in tons.

Let us take Education in India, we are churning out 30,00,000 graduates, 4,50,000 Engineers and 2,00,000 MBAs every year and 10-15% of them are world class and get high paid jobs.

According to the recent NASSCOM report 70% of the engineering graduates are unemployable, the quality is abysmally low and the colleges are merely churning out graduates but not to the Industry standards. Youth must aim at equipping themselves with quality.

If we look at today's youth they're more focused on getting the degree, they are not focused on getting knowledge or should we blame the education system designed by the British which focuses on remember facts on figures rather than the practical applicability. Probably what today's youth lack is 'sradha'. If we consider the ancient system of education in India i.e. in the Guru-Shishya parampara, the guru makes the shishya do petty things or what is called as sushrusa. It not only helps in overcoming the ego or the aham it also increases the shraddha. The focus is more on learning by experience. The relationship between the guru and the shishya is considered divine.

Education is not the amount of information that one puts into the brain and run riots there, undigested all the life. We must have life building, man-making, character making assimilation of idea. Then one will have more education than a man who got by heart a whole library.

*The ass carrying its load of sandalwood knows only the weight and not the value of sandalwood.*

On the other side today's youth are in a pressure situation because of the competition they face today. I have seen that some young engineering graduates who have quit their high paying jobs to get admission in top B-schools. They are more focused on their career and have a clear path way to achieve what they want in their life.

If you look at the Industry we have examples of many young entrepreneurs who are role models. I read about a young IIM graduate who started a chain of restaurants and gave employment to many uneducated youth. We see other examples of successful youth like Sameer Gehlaut, Rajiv Rattan and Saurabh Mittal of India Bulls, Inderpreet Wadhwa of Azure Power and many others

I met a young guy in a sales training program, he was sharp very energetic and I knew this guy had something in him and during our interaction I found out that this guy wanted to start his own retail chain of pharmacies. I was really impressed by the confidence he had in his abilities.

At the same time unemployment is at the rate of 6.8% which is frightening. Tribal youth are getting attracted to Naxalism which has become a menace. By 2020 India is going to have a surplus of around 4.5 million skilled workforce while the US will be needing 1.7 million.

Another pillar of the society is Politics. In the 13<sup>th</sup> Loksabha the average age of a parliamentarian was 55, in the 14<sup>th</sup> Loksabha the average would have reduced slightly as 36 new MPs were elected whose average age is less than 35. However, all the 36 elected representatives have a backing- we can call it 'Dynasty Politics'. If you ask any young person in the country the last thing he/ she would chose is to become a politician.

India also has been the birth place for many forms of arts. Only a fraction of the youth is learning the traditional art forms, if this continues we may not be able save these art forms. The reason is the lack of financial support for artists and parents also want to see their children as doctors or engineers not as an artist.

Religion and philosophy act like a bond in preserving the cultural identity. The young must be encouraged to be spiritual and embrace the true values given by their respective religions

The definition of progress must not be confused with the material and financial success, true success lies in preserving the culture and not forgetting the roots. If the seed is strong it will germinate even in a feeble soil. Let us make the youth strong.

Attitude is a learned tendency which can be changed by influencing the feelings, by changing the habits or by increasing the understanding. The task of shaping the youth lies with us. Youth is like the clay on the potter's wheel they can be molded beautifully –it is the responsibility of all of us to provide the right atmosphere and to build an even greater nation.

As Swami Vivekananda said, India can be likened to a mighty tree that produces a beautiful ripe fruit. The fruit falls to ground; it decays and from that decay springs another tree perhaps mightier than the first one. Out of the decay is coming the India of the future, it is sprouting, the mighty gigantic tree is already beginning to appear.

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