

J N Dar Memorial Function

(As part of Diamond Jubilee Celebration of Netarhat Residential School, organized by NOBA Delhi)

Theme : **“60 years of Netarhat Education”**

Date: Aug 2, 2014 Time : 5:30 PM

Venue: Multipurpose Hall, India International Center, New Delhi

Please register at : <http://tinyurl.com/jndar>

One of the most difficult challenges India faced after achieving her freedom from the centuries of colonial domination was to design the education system, particularly the school education. The founding fathers realized that our society was witnessing several structures of domination and the collective consciousness was overloaded with the reflexes of a series of discriminations and humiliations produced by a series of master-slave relations that we experienced in the unequal society. It was a big challenge to provide adequate atmosphere to the future citizens to get rid of the unhappy consciousness so that they could realize their human potential which was necessary not only for the project of nation-building but also important for growth of the newly born democracy. The dilemma was that on the one hand, we wanted our future citizens to be modern and on the other hand, we did not want them to forget the civilizational advantage which we have received from the historical legacy of our ancient culture. The modern scientific world view was necessary to compete in the emerging global scenario and the commitment to civilizational ethos was important for maintaining our self-esteem.

Most of the makers of the modern India were aware of this problem and therefore, they had concern for appropriate theory and practice of education. Several creative experiments were undertaken in response to the issues at hand; several models emerged out of this concern. As we know, Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekanad, Dayanad Saraswati, Gandhi, Aurobindo, Jadu Krishnamurti and many others provided impetus to this movement for new education from their own perspectives.

It is in this context another important experiment was conducted in the form of Netarhat Vidyalaya. On the initiative of Shri Sarjoo Prasad Sinha, a Member of Legislative Assembly of Bihar, a proposal was adopted in 1948 in the form of:

“This Assembly recommends to the Government to take immediate steps to establish a boarding school of the same type as the English Public Schools.”

With strong backing of the then Chief Minister of Bihar Shri Krishna Singh and Education Minister Acharya Badrinath Verma, the Government of Bihar conceived and resolved to set-up a Model institution where every facility for the education could be made available to the selected meritorious and talented students between the ages of 10 and 18 years including those belonging to the weaker-sections and hailing from the rural areas. With this view, the Bihar Govt. appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Sri. F. G. Pearce, the Principal of Rishi Valley School in 1951. After a lot of churning of the available philosophical resources and institutional models, a new and an innovative

system was designed to suit the country's complex need.

Shri Pearce's scheme finally received the general approval of the Bihar Govt. in 1952. With executive level support provided by Shri J C Mathur, the then Education Secretary, and Shri L P Singh, the then Chief Secretary, the Residential School was opened on 15th November, 1954 at Netarhat with Shri Charles Napier as its First Principal. The School admitted the first batch of students numbering 60 in 1954 for a six-years course. From 1982 onwards, the strength of Boys was raised up to 100.

Among the many innovative elements of Netarhat Education System, three major distinguishing features, one can count on:

- a) It accepted the mother tongue as medium of secondary education, however, equal emphasis was given to English too, so that students could become bilingual. Interestingly, Hindi was not only a medium of instruction but also a source of imagination and the students were exposed to the Hindi literature so that they do not lose the link with the common people as it generally happens with the other public school children.
- b) A unique admission policy was designed with almost complete state funding so that the natural talent could be recognized overcoming the artificial qualities developed due to the social and cultural positioning. This system could make it possible for the poorest of the poor to have a dream of being educated at the best school. This had significant impact on the egalitarian mindset and culture that the school could instill in the consciousness of the students, which was necessary to meet the need of our society and the newly emerging nation. The state funding of this education system ensured that the future citizens feel responsible for the people and the nation.
- c) Unlike the elite public school education system this model adopted the Gandhian principle of simple life and emphasis on manual work. Many of us feel today that the training in the school spontaneously equipped us to acknowledge the dignity of labor. The idea to respect the manual labor also had another significant dimension that the most gifted minds need to think to improve the technology that the manual workers of our labor intensive society had.

Today when there is an emphasis on the second and third generation schooling system, in which private funding is increasingly becoming the norm and the industrial capital is going to control the all layers of the education system, we need to revisit this model. Therefore, on the occasion of our Diamond Jubilee celebration, we have decided to invite our alumni, teachers, educationists, policy makers to ponder upon this unique experiment. We, a community of around five thousand ex-students spread worldwide and in many professions interconnected through modern means of communication, constantly keep thinking and reflecting on this model. We have moments of satisfaction and dissatisfaction simultaneously as no model is perfect. We thought it would be a good occasion to revisit our mixed feelings of success and failures. We think we need to reassert that the world needs to acknowledge the uniqueness of the model and its continuing relevance for our society.

This year it is completing 60 years of its existence and this Diamond Jubilee Celebrations are on at various places. Delhi NOBA is also planning a number of events. One of the events, which is being initiated is J N Dar Memorial Function and is expected to be a regular event every year. We feel that we

must carry the message of this unique experiment to the rest of the world. We also think that it is important to discuss the changing context and future possibilities in the education scenario and the lessons they have to offer for the schools like Netarhat Vidyalaya.

Outline of Function

Time	Item	Speaker	Topic
5:30 PM	Registration		
6 PM	Inauguration		
6:15 PM	Netarhat Education Concept	Shri Vijoy Prakash (Netarhat , 1967), Senior IAS Officer and author of “Creative Learning : A handbook for teachers and trainers”	
6:30 PM	Panel Discussion	Moderator - Prof Prabhat Ranjan(Netarhat, 1970) – Executive Director, TIFAC and Scientist	Innovative elements of Netarhat Education
		Shri Amar Nath Dar, Eminent Educationist, Ex-Principal, Scindia School	
		Prof Manindra Thakur(Netarhat, 1975), Professor, JNU; Author	
		Prof Rajaram Sharma, Joint Director, CIET-NCERT and Expert, TIFAC Technology Vision 2035 Education Sector	
		Discussion	
8:00 PM	J N Dar Memorial Lecture	Prof Manoranjan Mohanty, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development; International Expert	Relevance of Netarhat Education System for BRICS
8:45 PM	Overview and future initiatives	President, Delhi NOBA	
8:55 PM	Vote of thanks	Secretary, Delhi NOBA	
9:00 PM	Dinner		