

From our Chief Executive



Lt. General Arjun Ray, PVSM, VSM (Retd)

Why Parents Should Invest in Knowledge?

Dear Parents,

International schools are often unfairly accused of breeding and sustaining elites. The popular notion of elitism is associated with money, power, influence and arrogance. This has all been changed in an economy driven by knowledge. The new elite are those who possess knowledge about themselves and the world around. The mere possession of knowledge is not power; its application is.

The media revolution and Internet explosion have ushered in the knowledge society and changed the rules of investment. Knowledge is now the most strategic, rare and expensive resource ever available to man. The dimensions of knowledge are myriad. Information is what we know; knowledge is what I know. We know a lot about the sciences, the arts, politics, management, whatever, but we know very little about ourselves. Self-knowledge is real knowledge. Irrespective of what religion we believe in or whether we are atheists or agnostics, in a spiritual sense, knowledge is one of man's pathways for salvation or self-realization.

Self-knowledge brings wholeness and makes an individual a complete person, an essential ingredient for success in the knowledge age. Man is made up of various personalities – the physical, aesthetic, emotional, cognitive and spiritual. Early and continuing education must aim at developing these facets. Man is also made up of many selves – the good, the bad, and the indifferent. All these reside within us. To be aware of them is to become a whole-person. School education must, therefore, enable a child to become self-aware, and to sensitize him or her on the most fundamental question of life: *Who am I?*

On a strategic plane, knowledge is tacit – knowledge rooted in one’s individual experiences, and involving personal perspectives on life and belief systems. In practical terms this translates in to acquiring lifelong competencies. Skills belonged to the Industrial Age, and given today’s technology and rate of obsolescence, skills get outdated fast; competencies don’t. Knowledge thus encompasses the acquisition of key competencies,, particularly the ability to learn, the ability to synthesize information and make sense out of it, and innovation. These are the master competencies in a global world that schools must provide in their curriculum.

Given the dynamics of globalization, a child can inherit his father’s riches, but he cannot inherit knowledge. In today’s fiercely competitive world, it is easier to make money but more difficult to hold on to that money. Someone smart out there will come and take it away from you.

The pattern of investment has thus far been aimed at property, land, gold and stocks and shares. In the 21st century we must now also invest in knowledge by enrolling our children in schools offering a curriculum to suit the knowledge age. Contrary to popular opinion, true knowledge is not cheap; it comes with a price tag. Since knowledge is experiential, there is intangibility about it. But that must not deter parents. To read the Upanishads and become the Upanishads are two different things. To read is to be inquisitive. To become is transformational, experiential. This is the future schools must give to our children, this is the strategic partnership between 21st century schools and enlightened parents.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arjun Ray". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Lieutenant General Arjun Ray, PVSM, VSM (Retd.)
Chief Executive