

NCERT

Valedictory Speech By

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1st October 2004

Thanks for inviting me to this gathering of teachers and educators. I never had any training in teaching but thoroughly enjoyed my years teaching university students, and developing curricula through non-traditional collaboration with teachers from other disciplines, and designing research projects. **I felt uncomfortable with disciplines acquiring the behavioural forms of the caste system which ultimately drove me into women's studies. I have always believed that education is equally an interdisciplinary area in which castes, communities and gender cannot be segregated, if we are to be true to our role as educators.** If educators bend with every swing in the socio-political wind then the educator's role in social transformation will be marginalized.

May I also express my great happiness to welcome - along with all of you, Prof. Krishna Kumar in his new role as the **Karnadhar** of this institution? We have shared the same Guru despite our age difference, and I shared the Guru's assessment of his capacities and talents. The Guru left us a long time ago, but I have watched with increasing respect and delight - the flowering of that promise, which enables me to congratulate all of you in this gathering, and especially the staff of this institution. I have a long association with the NCERT going back several decades, despite a gap in recent years. I feel confident that the future of NCERT is indeed going to be vibrant and dynamic under his leadership.

Coming to Action Research - I must warn you that I have never read a single book on Action Research. But the Centre for Women's Development Studies has been involved - since its inception 25 years ago in what we call Action Research. The very first Centre for Women's Studies in India - within the SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, had started it even earlier - under the leadership of Prof. Neera Desai. Two still earlier experiences in my own case were (a) some of the research commission by the ICSSR to assist the CSWI; and (b) A series of profiles of Colleges in Rajasthan and the North-Eastern States of Manipur and Nagaland that I had to do with a Committee of the UGC - to examine their problems and potential as agencies for socio-economic development.

Let me conclude with a few observations as a student of history. Action Research strategy as a way of thinking came out of the youth revolt of the '60s in the Affluent Societies, Action Research, Alternatives in Development came from social scientists/politically active **adult groups** in Developing Countries - questioning the paradigm of development.

Feminism in the West was an outcome of the youth revolt. The Indian Women's Movement in comparison was a questioning of the paradigm of Development. Women's Studies is intricately related to the Women's Movement. I plead with you, do not try to jettison the **indigenous origins** of either by seeking guidance in external sources. As a

spur to action in Education of improvement, read the World leader in Alternatives - J.P. Naik, Equality, Quality and Quantity, the Elusive Triangle of Indian Education. And do not even dream of designing a separate curriculum for girls' education - we shall not let you. Nor will Krishna Kumar.