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Tamil Nadu



"India must overcome challenge of educational deprivation"

Special Correspondent

Bishop Rajakumar Memorial Teaching Popularisation Awards presented

— Photo: M. Vedhan



Providing Impetus:Fifth Bishop Rajakumar Memorial Teaching Popularisation Award winners along with (from left sitting) R. Kishore Kumar, senior principal, SJIRS; V. Irai Anbu, Secretary, Environment and Forests; S. Mohan, former Supreme Court Judge; and R. Suresh Kumar, correspondent, St. John's MHSS, Mandaveli, at a function in Chennai on Monday.

CHENNAI: India needs to overcome its many forms of mass deprivations, especially the big challenge of educational deprivation, to fulfil its aspirations of a rising country, N. Ram, Editor-in-Chief of The Hindu, said on Monday.

In his chief guest's address after presenting the Fifth Bishop Rajakumar Memorial Teaching Popularisation Awards 2011 instituted by St. John's International Residential School (SJIRS), Mr. Ram said even several years after the Supreme Court delivered the breakthrough judgment that recognised education as a fundamental right and mandated the State to fulfil the right to education of all children below 14 years of age, "we still haven't achieved equitable education in large parts of the country."

Pointing out that former Supreme Court Judge S. Mohan, who shared the dais, was part of the Bench that came out with the judgment that is considered a turning point in the social and educational history of independent India, Mr. Ram said while the apex court had opened the way for inclusive education there was much to be achieved on this front. In fact, the situation (of deprivation) gets drastic among children above 14 years of age, he said.

The lack of educational opportunities was also at the heart of the

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The lack of educational opportunities has also at the heart of the imbalances in Indian education that have been highlighted by economist Amartya Sen, Mr. Ram said. The economist, whose stocktaking at the 50th anniversary of Independence noted that institutions of democracy had done quite well, had also indicted the education system for being incredibly slow and unbelievably unequal.

There is a need to do radically better in the field of education if India is to fulfil the apex court mandate and really emerge as a rising country that is fair and just for all its citizens, he said.

According to Mr. Ram, it had been documented by studies that lack of quality school infrastructure more than poverty was discouraging parents from sending children to school. "We need to invest more in teachers and teaching in the country."

Mr. Ram presented the 'Teaching Popularisation Awards' to V.R.S. Sampath, advocate and editor of a Tamil law journal; N.C. Sridharan, mentor of Neuro Linguistic Programming; Jayaprakash Gandhi, career counsellor; R. Sivaraman, mathematics teacher; Susi Thirugnanam, mediaperson; P. Iyamperumal, executive director, Tamil Nadu Science and Technology Centre; Allwyn Thomas, evangelist; Arivudai Nambi, environmental science communicator; Paalam Kalyanasundaram, social worker; and Subbaiah Pandian, physicist.

In his presidential address, Justice Mohan lauded the contributions of Christian missionaries in spreading education in India. Noting that teaching was the noblest of professions, he urged teachers to become visionary architects.

In his felicitations, V. Irai Anbu, Secretary, Environment and Forests, called upon educational institutions and parents to encourage children to be seekers of truth and espouse a cause-oriented, instead of a goal-oriented, system of education.

R. Kishore Kumar, Senior Principal, SJIRS, said the awards sought to reflect the values and vision of the founder of the group of schools the late Bishop Rajakumar. He also announced a scholarship of Rs.50 lakh for underprivileged students.

R. Suresh Kumar, Correspondent, St. John's MHSS, Mandaveli, and Elizabeth Manonmani Edwin, executive vice principal, SJIRS, also participated.

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