

Address by Mr. Azim H Premji, Chairman, Wipro Ltd., during the Mission10X Educators Meet at Bangalore on Friday, September 5th , 2008

Dr. R.A. Mashelkar - Former Director General - CSIR, Prof. K Chidananda Gowda - Ex Vice Chancellor Kuvempu University, distinguished academicians and fellow Wiproites who have gathered here.

It is my privilege to be with you today. I would like to greet you on this Teacher's Day, because I do owe a lot of what I am today to my own teachers. I am very grateful to them and would like to say this in front of others in the same noble profession.

I am a big believer that teachers can contribute a lot in shaping the future of our nation. The global economy has become a level playing field for all countries. Collaboration between the developed and the developing countries for doing business and the exchange of technological knowledge has helped the global economy prosper remarkably. This has largely happened owing to the Knowledge Base of the respective countries. India has a rich Knowledge Base in multiple areas. In fact, India is known to be the best of the knowledge hubs for "Outsourcing". However, all the Research and Development work happens largely in other countries. Our combined aim should be to transform this scenario and make India the preferred destination for Research and Development work. This will change the landscape of Indian economy thus benefiting our society at large. For this to happen students need to unshackle themselves from their existing mind-sets and nourish creative thinking. This needs the guidance of their teachers. Teachers have a direct impact on the lives of students – from when they are children to when they grow to be young adults.

Let me take this opportunity to speak to you about three key aspects in this direction, namely, **Innovation, Learn-ability and Excellence**, which are very close to my heart. My passion towards these subjects is because they help in the process of nation building. Experience has taught me that when put together in the right way, these three parameters can form a triad of success. The success triad can lead to multiple positive ripple effects. It can greatly enrich the knowledge base of our country. A rich knowledge base in turn influences the employability scenario. And as we are aware greater employability of our youth will grow the Indian economy. It will position India as a world leader amongst the developed nations.

Let me elaborate on each element of the success triad.

**First, let me speak about Learn-ability.** This reminds me of the quote by Henry Ford who said "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.

Anyone who keeps learning stays young". Learn-ability of an individual is their willingness to learn. The academia can develop willingness to learn by building the necessary qualities in their students. However, this need to be applied in the work context and that is where the corporate world can contribute. They can nurture Learn-ability by providing fresh recruits the correct work ambience, adequate roles that are commensurate with their skill sets, motivation and encouragement through good reward and recognition systems. At Wipro, we insist that 5% of the billable time of an employee should be spent on learning every year. We look upon education and learning as strategic investments and not discretionary expenses. That is why even during downturns we do more and not less of training. Our HR practices are also so aligned that every new recruit is assigned a mentor who hand holds the recruit till such time they are comfortable in the organization. Such collaborative efforts by the academia and the organizations can definitely enrich Learn-ability of an individual and make them proactive to envisage change and be prepared for it.

**Second, let me move on to the subject of Excellence.** Students must always be encouraged to strive for excellence. Excellence must become an obsession. It must involve not only the mind but also the heart and soul. One way of doing this is by creating a competitive environment but that is not all. The education system in India prepares a student right from their kindergarten days to be competitive. This is because there is always academic peer pressure for students to perform. Unfortunately, our academics are grades focused. Hence over a period of time students tend to orient their learning towards scoring good grades. However, we need to appreciate the fact that a student who scores well consistently is also committed and disciplined. The corporate world whose first level entry criteria are academic scores can groom such students by formulating appropriate HR and talent transformation practices. If this happens, Excellence can be ingrained as a habit in every individual and it can become a continuous journey.

**Finally, let me share my thoughts on Innovation.** In my view, Innovation is the glue that can tie together Learn-ability and Excellence. We need innovative ways for the Academia and Corporate to work together and inculcate excellence and enhance learn-ability in individuals. Students need to realize that they have to do things which no one else has done before and this needs creative thinking. Equally important is that they need to excel in whatever they do to create a better tomorrow. The academia can play a very vital role in developing this amongst the student community. Innovation and Excellence is important for survival in business and for enduring success in any profession. Innovation is personally very exciting for me and the most important differentiator for winning. We at Wipro have been debating for some time now on what is Wipro's biggest differentiator in the market place. We have realized that the answer to what makes us truly different from businesses similar to ours lies in something that is intrinsic to us as a company. It is so intricately woven into our DNA that perhaps

we don't recognize it very often. It is our spirit of Innovation; exemplified in our corporate credo of 'Applying Thought'.

**Mission10X is one of Wipro's quantum Innovation projects.** Mission10X is about aspiration. It is about changing the fabric of our country through collective wisdom and shared responsibility. I am glad that Mission10X has touched more than 1000 faculty members within a year's time. This speaks volumes about the encouragement that Mission10X has received from the academia and I thank each one of you for the same.

**This is just a humble beginning.** The road ahead is full of challenges and opportunities. I want to reiterate our commitment to work together with the academia and ensure that Mission10X benefits every Engineering College and every graduating student across the country.

**I sincerely appreciate your presence today for this event. Thank You.**