Ambassador's Speech for Education Conference
14 February, 2024

Her Excellency Ms Lana Othman Al-Ayyar, CEO of Al-Ryan Group

Dr Ashwin Fernandez, Regional Director, QS and author of book 'India's knowledge Supremacy'

Dr Ramakrishnan Raman, Vice-Chancellor, Symbiosis University, Pune (one of the very reputed private Universities of India)

Ms Asha Sharma, Principal of Indian Learners' Own Academy (and who has kindly agreed to host the event today)

Dignitaries (Ms Noura AlGhanim, Ms Muttawa, President of KCST, President of GUST, to name a few)

Principals of various schools, both Indian and American/British

Prominent members of Indian community related to the field of education

Students from various schools

Good Morning, Namaskar !

I thank all of you for joining us for this event today despite being right in the working hours of the day. Let

me first and foremost thank the Chief Guest for today's event HE Lana Othman Al-Ayyar for gracing the occasion in her capacity as CEO of one of the leading education-related business groups in Kuwait. I extend my sincere appreciation to the two distinguished panelists of today – Dr Ashwin Fernandez and Dr Ramakrishnan Raman, both widely known in their field. They have traveled from Dubai and India respectively only for this event on their own and this is something for which I must thank them profusely.

I also acknowledge the presence of prominent figures from the education field in Kuwait. The presence of some of the high-school students of various schools despite being their exam time shows the relevance of today's event as they are the end-users of outcomes that may come out of such events. Thank you dear children!

Friends,

The idea of such an event came when I was in GUST in December last year for book launch of Dr Ashwin. I asked Dr Ashwin for a book-reading event by him that highlights the strides made by India in this sector in recent times. And he readily agreed and here we are today. He is the one who could also be credited with the presence of VC, Symbiosis amongst us today. This is a subject that has been close to my heart during my last one year in Kuwait and I was looking forward to bring together the education investment community of Kuwait

and the premier Indian institutions of India for possible tie-ups.

I will leave the details of the Indian higher education sector for the two experts but I want to highlight a few facts:

- India is fast going to become a globally prominent education hub in the near future. The education sector in India was estimated to be worth USD 117 Bn and is expected to reach USD 313 Bn by FY30.

- India has one of the largest networks of higher education systems in the world - 45,000-degree colleges, over 1000 universities and around 1500 top institutes.

- India is becoming Ed Tech capital of the world; out of 36 Ed-Tech unicorn companies 7 are Indian which are valued at USD 34.05 billion in June 2022.

- 100% FDI (automatic route) is allowed in the education sector in India. USD 9.3 billion FDI in Education sector between Apr 2000- Sept 2023

- A total of 101 Indian institutions qualified for Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024. 10 Indian Institutes in the Top 500 in QS World University Rankings 2024.

- The Study in India Portal was launched by the Government of India in August 2023, which provides

comprehensive information about the Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

I can tell you that I myself has seen a tremendous shift in the educational spectrum of India. When I was doing my PhD in late 1990s, we hardly thought of private universities as an option. Today, I can say with great confidence that many of the Indian private Universities could be better than the government / central ones. The options of education have increased tremendously. Despite the growth in educational institutions, we are not able to meet the demand. A large number of our students go to other countries for a variety of reasons. Similarly, we are seeing greater demand of Indian Universities among foreign students. This has led to some of our premier Universities like IITs, BIT and others setting up campuses abroad. Recent examples include setting up of IIT Delhi campus in UAE last year and IIT Madras campus in Tanzania.

I would like to conclude here with the hope that this event could contribute in its own way to greater collaboration between India and Kuwait in the field of higher education, be it setting up of campuses of Indian Universities in Kuwait, enrolment of Kuwaiti students in India, enrolment of Indian students including those in Kuwait (over 50,000 Indian students studying in 26 Indian schools in Kuwait) etc.

I thank all of you again for joining us today.

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