



Sumeet Ponda

Chairman, The Red Rose Group of Schools and Colleges

Date of birth : June 17, 1968

Employee strength : 600

Success Mantra : Success is what you perceive it to be. But if you do your Karma with honesty of purpose then success shall fall en route.



“Make children street-smart, not book worms”

Sumeet Ponda, chairman of the Red Rose Group of Schools and Colleges believes that the mindset of the parents needs to be worked up on and the absolute focus on the scores as a yardstick for success has to be done away with.

Sumeet Ponda is one of the most unorthodox and non-conformist educators that you find in the education circle of Bhopal. A self-proclaimed Bollywood buff, he was a business manager for the internationally acclaimed director Shekhar Kapur before he came back to Bhopal to join Red Rose School. The School is his mother's legacy. His mother, Manjula Ponda had started the first Red Rose School in 1977 and had been working hard to provide quality education to the students of Bhopal when there was an absolute dearth of good schools in the city.

Even though Sumeet had big shoes to fill, as his mother is an excellent educator, he did it with much triumph and aplomb. The School that had been stuck at a middle school level for a few years achieved the status of a higher secondary school. Under his chairmanship, the Red Rose School now has three more branches that include the flagship Red Rose School, Lambakheda which is Bhopal's first School to have collaborated with the University of Cambridge apart from the CBSE board and the no-placement Manjula K Ponda College of Business and Management, Lambakheda. His vision and philosophy for educating the youth is to build the leaders of tomorrow, to empower the people of this nation by giving them the opportunity to participate in the knowledge-based economy of the future. He is

VISION FOR BHOPAL :

I envision education to be free from malice, cheating and pseudo-educators. Education may be a business for many and that is fair but this is not just any other business. It is more a vocation than a profession. The focus should be on making our children street smart and not book worms, on making them entrepreneurs rather than job-seekers. It is my view that it is easier to create a job than to find one.

of the opinion that you should not wait to strike the iron when its hot rather you should make the iron hot by striking it. He feels an overwhelming responsibility and accountability towards the children who are the most valuable treasures of their parents. And when the parents entrust him with the responsibility of their children, he wants to make sure that the faith that they have shown toward the school must remain intact.

Sumeet believes, “Being an educated person means one has access to optimal states of mind regardless of the situation one is in and though the basic aim of education has always been to sensitize the scholars to the various situations of life, imbibing values, creating a reflex system in the mind whereby decision-making is justified and resultantly, action comes in handy. It is unacceptable to see that undue emphasis is being put on ‘learning’ things which will be of scant use in life. Importance is being attached to memorizing than on responsiveness.”

INSTITUTE BACKGROUND:

Started in July, 1977, Red Rose School, Berasia Road, Bhopal is an established institution with its characteristic strength of thoroughness, discipline and dedicated attitude to work that rubs on to its other three associates at situated at Lambakheda, Karond and Trilanga. The Schools are different and can easily be termed as laboratories of education wherein newer means to educate are evolved rather than the oft-beaten book-ridden education system. The School's philosophy of education revolves around the fact that the principal goal of education is to create people who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done - people who are creative, inventive and discoverers. The second aim of education is to form minds that can be critical, can verify facts and not accept everything they are offered.

THE CHOICE TO BE AN EDUCATOR:

Though it was destiny that made him an educator, he enjoys teaching now. He



says that each day the thrill in teaching grows.

LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENTS:

Years ago when ERP in Schools wasn't even heard of, the Red Rose School computerized its entire management system. It is the first School in Bhopal to have introduced the Smart School Concept with Educomp and has also won the National Computer Literacy Award instituted by the government of India apart from many other awards. It is also the first and only School in the State Capital to be affiliated to the Cambridge International, UK. The Schools are the pioneers in inclusive education for the specially-gifted children. Sumeet Ponda has received many accolades for his achievements including the Rashtriya Vidhya Samman Puruskar,

the Educational Excellence Award, Gujarat Shiksha Ratn Puruskar, Rajiv Gandhi Educational Excellence Award, Vidya Ratan Gold Medal, Best Educationist Award, etc. among others.

COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT SCENARIO OF EDUCATION:

“Absolutely hopeless!” is the first unabashed response that I get from Sumeet when I ask him about what he thinks of the current system of education. The conventional approach to education where marks only matter needs to be given a face-lift and the educational institutes must focus on complete development of the individual rather than only scholastic development. He advocates tension-free education for the young ones and believes that if a child is not able to enjoy his or her childhood, then the education is a wasteful exercise. Make children street-smart and not book-worms is his prophecy.

DREAM PROJECTS:

The Group now is on a state-wide expansion trail with more schools and colleges coming up in semi-urban towns and cities. Give the deprived class the best in education at affordable cost.

CANDID TALK

If you weren't an educator, what else you would be?

I think I was destined to be an educator. I live in the reality and I don't think hypothetically. The biggest truth is the IS.