



**"Greater energy and greater passion is more extraordinary than greater genius."
— Lt. General Arjun Ray, (Retd.), PVSM, VSM**

Issue 134, March 2014

Dear Friends,

A Sense of Belonging

The continuity of the human race has its roots in the primal need for an individual to belong to parents or care-givers, then to the family group, a larger social group and so on.

Teachers, perhaps more than most people, know what a sense of belonging is and how essential it is to survival or progress, their own and that of children they teach. Students feel the need for it when they begin to emerge from toddlerhood and this can build into sentiments behind "the old school tie". The institution to which teachers belong must make it a mission to nurture in students and teachers, staff and management a sense of belonging to the school and the wider community.

In an age when alienation is the order of the day, more than ever, we need to demonstrate to children what it means to belong in a community... the one they know best is school. The family as an institution has taken a hard knock as a nurturing and stabilizing institution. Nuclear families are even more fragmented now with an acute lack or absence of family times, shared leisure and conversation. The teacher has, of necessity become the repository of a child's confidences, fears and aspirations. She is increasingly, the only recourse.

How can this role be fulfilled when a teacher has no such source of comfort, confidence or courage herself? Schools must consciously nurture and fulfil this need to belong, spelt out very logically by American psychologist Abraham Maslow, in his theory of the hierarchy of human needs. Belongingness and love are at Level 3 in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, after physiological

needs and the need for safety. Without belongingness and love, self- actualisation is not possible. The feeling of belongingness arises when an individual experiences the following:

He or she feels valued
Feels part of the family and the community
Feels emotionally secure
The institution is appreciative of her valuable contribution
Is respected by others
Feels the freedom to express ideas, needs, and preferences.

Great schools are institutions that are led by teacher-leaders who prepare students for life. They uphold academic excellence but lay equal value on whole education, humanitarian values like Love, empathy and discipline, culture and tradition, a sense of belongingness and ownership.

Localism is enshrined in the Indus vision and encompasses our language, religions, history, culture and the neighbourhood community. In the context of belongingness, we need to apply the same idea to the school campus as well. For want of any better words, we may call it the Indus Culture or the Indus way of life.

We build this culture of “belongingness” through a staunch belief in providing an environment devoid of fear.

Teaching the Whole child pervades our approach to our educational philosophy and to our teaching learning practices in classrooms and campus.

We embrace and welcome diversity.

At Indus we nurture our students towards engaged citizenship and inculcate values for life. Experiential learning, leadership learning possible and real.

Belongingness becomes our connection, our tool, our armour, our strength and our ladder to success.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arjun Ray". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

**Lieutenant General Arjun Ray, PVSM, VSM (Retd.)
Chief Executive Officer
Indus Trust**