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Tamil Nadu

Issues facing school education discussed
 Staff Reporter

— Photo: S. Theodor

EXCHANGING IDEAS: Speakers at a panel discussion at a conference on the future of school education organised by iDiscover in Chennai on Tuesday.

CHENNAI: The second edition of the XSEED conference on the future of school education, organised simultaneously in New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai on Tuesday by iDiscover, had experts from different fields talking on issues concerning the school education system of today and tomorrow.

Speaking via videoconferencing, author Girisharan Das spoke on nurturing self-confidence, ambition, curiosity, responsibility and integrity in children.

Mr. Das said corruption at the ground level harms any system. Referring to the government school system that has nearly 3.7 million teachers, he said half of them do not do their duties properly and that is a moral failure.

A panel discussion on 'Society's Expectations from Schools' saw the exchange of both, pessimistic and optimistic views from the speakers.

KRS Chaitanyam, member All India Congress Committee, said there is very little political will to take up reforms in the education sector. "If transformation has to take place, it has to come from the government. We need to start from the Parichay School at primary level," he said.

Krishnaswami Sikkanti, Chairman, Selection Committee of the BCCE, was of the opinion that career choices are driven by demand more than one's passion.

Michael Pelletier, Minister-Counselor (Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy), American Embassy, New Delhi, said although slow changes are happening we need to work more.

Mala Ramadani, chairperson of the CBI School of Special Education in Mumbai, argued that every citizen has a role to mould the next generation, especially the less privileged. "Confidence can be instilled through music and arts in schools," she said.

Steven Rudolph, director, JVA Education, said schools should play a greater role in identifying potential in government school children as the challenge for school of tomorrow.

The other deliberations of Peter H. Senge of MIT Sloan School of Management and David Perkins, senior professor of Harvard University, were brought live through videoconferencing technology. Ashish Rajpal, CEO, iDiscover Education, presented a case study on improving learning in schools. He emphasised on the need to engage while teaching and importance of teacher training.

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