

## 'Children below 6 to be enrolled in school by 2003'

**By Our Staff Reporter**

**BANGALORE, NOV. 12.** The Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, announced that the Centre planned to enrol every child below 6 in school by 2003.

Inaugurating "Akshay Patra", the mid-day meal programme for needy children on Sunday, launched by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in 40 rural schools in Bangalore District here, Dr. Joshi said he had suggested to the Union Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, for the imposition of three per cent cess on education. The Cabinet would discuss the matter, he said.

A programme to distribute clothes to children was also planned by the Centre, he said.

The future of the nation would be judged

not by the warheads it had but by its standard of knowledge. "India should become a knowledge society," he said.

About 60 million children could not go to schools due to poverty and undernourishment. Nutrition and education should go hand-in-hand. He urged the non-governmental organisations and citizens to take up the challenge of providing food for every hungry child in the country.

Lauding the efforts of ISKCON to alleviate the suffering of the underprivileged, Dr. Joshi said spiritual heads in the country were doing their best to provide food for the underprivileged. The spiritual heritage should respond to the challenge of providing good health and nutrition to the needy, he added.

Mr. R.V. Deshpande, Karnataka Minister for Large and Medium Scale Industries, lamented

that the country had failed to tap its valuable human resources. He called upon the corporate sector to help alleviate poverty.

The Minister launched the ISKCON temple's website, [www.iskconbangalore.org](http://www.iskconbangalore.org) and a website on the "Akshay Patra" programme, [www.akshaypatra.org](http://www.akshaypatra.org).

The mid-day meal programme for children launched by ISKCON would provide free nutritious meals to 30,000 children in 40 government schools in the rural areas of Bangalore at an estimated cost of Rs. 40 lakhs per month. Under this programme, around 16,650 kg of food would be cooked and transported everyday.

Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde, former Union minister, and Mr. H. Vishwanath, Karnataka Minister for Primary and Secondary Education were present.

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