

Why be a Scout?

Professor Najma Shams

"Yours is the world and everything that's in it, what is more, you'll be a man, my son" --Rudyard Kipling
When superiors tell us to be a man, what do they want us to be? They want us to be people of character. Life is not a bed of roses. People, best equipped for life's battle, are the winners. 'Character-building' is central in preparing for this arduous task.

Today's world is one of progress, prosperity, freedom and that entire civilisation has in store. People are concerned more than ever before about their children's up bringing. The worldwide slogan Education -- goes far beyond the knowledge of the three R's. Knowledge, without the study of the Creator and His creation, will be far from fetching the goals desired. People who aspire to a better tomorrow, a better hereafter, leave no stone unturned to build their future generation. Scouting, which took wings more than a century ago, initiated by the visionary Robert Stevenson Smith Lord Baden Powell in England, lends a hand to fulfil the aspirations of the guardians of youths, who are living in times troubled in myriad ways. The scout promise 'On my honour, I promise that I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country, help other people at all times, obey the Scout Law,' offers scouts a unique opportunity to achieve the many-faceted success.

A child, aged 7 11, is a cub scout, following the cub motto: Do your best. Children between 11 and 17 years are scouts and abide by the scout motto: Be prepared. Adolescents, between 17 and 25 years are Rover scouts ready to serve and the rover motto is service. The Scout Movement grooms youths to be good citizens, through nurturing the qualities of a God- fearing believer, of patriotism, being ever helpful to others and develop one's self, abiding by the scout law.

The saying -- If you teach me, I forget, if you show me, I remember, if you involve me, I learn, -- holds water in the Scout Movement. Scouting is not a theoretical philosophy. Scouts are involved in programmes through active participation. Scouting embraces duty to God to country, to others and to self. Scouting is fun, adventure and comradeship.

A scout cannot but perform well academically. Scouting gives mastery over many skills. Experience from Scouting make scouts better prepared than non-scouts. Scout training is to lead.

In life's journey it is delighting to see friendly faces, encounter handclasps, respond to greetings, reciprocate smiles or harken to prayers these are heavenly, which scouts preach, practice and promote.

Scouting is universal. One encounters scout friends everywhere. Scouting has brought into its fold people from all walks-of-life. Youths not in educational institutions are enrolled in open scout troops. The doors of scouting are open to the physically and mentally challenged. The dynamism of the scout movement provides programs to meet their capabilities and aspirations. In scouting women are as important as men. Girls are an integral part of the movement. The programmes, practices and awards are common. Girls-in-Scouting made its debut in 1994. Youths, abiding by religious canons, social norms and practices, work hand-in-hand for a better tomorrow following scout Ideals, which help them become 'physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.'

Bangladesh has a Muslim majority population, orthodox in religious practices and conservative in social behaviour. Scouting accepts, honours and embraces all religions, social customs with due reverence. Despite constraints, scouting has flourished in every social strata and every nook and corner of the country. Bangladesh takes pride that its scout population is over 10, 15,000 - 2007 censes. The need of the hour is to keep the tender minds engaged and involved in useful and meaningful activities, the fruits of which are essential to build a nation. The scout's organisation is the lone association worldwide. Hats off to all involved in it! It is worthwhile bringing up the young generation to meet the challenges of life harnessing the teachings of scouting. The multi-faceted quality of scouting has rendered the movement the all-comprising training apt for youths.

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