

NEERJA BIRLA

Chairperson, Aditya Birla Education Trust, Mumbai

Where would you place education on your national list of priorities?

Definitely among the top three.

How best to upgrade government schools?

Teacher training is of utmost importance to enhance the quality of education in all – especially government – schools. Equipping them with instructional tools and age-appropriate resources would further improve teaching standards.

Thinker/philosopher you admire the most.

Rumi.

Your favourite Nobel laureate.

Rabindranath Tagore.

Your leadership style.

Democratic. I strongly believe in teamwork as every member brings something special to the table, and empowering the teams and people I work with.

Your favourite book on education.

Tuesdays with Morrie and *Forty Rules of Love* are two books which have influenced and impacted me.

For or against the RTE Act's 25 percent reservation for underprivileged children in private schools?



With inclusion, the gap between children in private schools is likely to widen considering that several social, cultural and emotional factors come into play. On the other hand, if each private school is given the mandate of one municipal school, it would ensure all children continue learning in their comfort zones, and receive high-quality education.

Should the education

outlay be doubled by cutting defence expenditure?

There are enough resources for education. They just need to be put to better use.

How satisfied are you with the growth and development of the Aditya Birla Group of Schools?

Each school is doing remarkable work. They are reaching out to children in their neighbourhoods and

improving the quality of education for over 45,000 children.

Pessimistic or optimistic about the future of education in India?

Very optimistic. Many people in the private and NGO sectors are doing some amazing work including creating awareness and improving quality of education. If we pool our resources, growth would be exponential.