



PRESS RELEASE

National movement to honour outstanding teachers across India launched on the eve of Teacher's Day with 'Guruvar Awards'

- Biggest Teacher's Award in the country
- The Indian School Teacher will be celebrated across India through an interactive campaign

Mumbai, September 3, 2009: Sparking a national movement to honor outstanding teachers across India, Varkey Gems Foundation today announces the launch of 'Guruvar Awards' to coincide with 'Teacher's Day'.

To be held in December this year, the award marks the establishment of a movement to acknowledge the role of teachers in shaping the future of our nation. The nominations will begin around September with 48 teachers being recognized and felicitated for their invaluable contribution across four categories. The total prize money is Rs. 2 crore.

This Award aims to endow teachers with the recognition and respect they so richly deserve by felicitating them. People across the nation will be urged to nominate their favorite teacher. A dedicated online process has been set up for this purpose. Awardees will be selected through an intensive selection process comprising of online nominations, reviews and interviews. Winners will be decided over a process involving pan-India nominations, four Zonal Juries and one Grand Jury.

A Strategic Advisory Panel comprising of eminent personalities to guide the course of the awards will be appointed along with juries at various levels. The newly revised categories are '**Lifetime Achievement Award**', '**Outstanding Indian Teacher**', '**Outstanding Young Indian teacher**' and '**Outstanding Indian teacher of Children with Special Needs**'.

This non-profit, non-commercial initiative is targeting a pan-India audience. India faces an acute shortage of teachers. Primary and middle schools nationwide are short of

800,000 teachers. India is spread across 1.3 million square miles where thousands of teachers are lost due to discontent, brain-drain and retirement. At least 6.5% of the teaching community retires each year. In all by 2011 the education system in India will lack 25 lakh teachers. The Guruvar Award aims to leverage the "Education for Social Sustainability" platform to showcase a critical situation to an audience who has an interest and is concerned for the future of his/her country.

Sunny Varkey, Founder and Chairman, GEMS Education and Chairperson of the Varkey Gems Foundation said: "Deteriorating motivational cues in the profession has led to a dearth of quality teachers in India today. This award is aimed as a catalyst to promote teaching as a preferred profession amongst youth in India and to thank teachers for their praise worthy contribution in shaping lives of our future generations."

A lack of sufficient strong and passionate teachers is one of the prominent reasons for the bleak future that stares India's education system in the face. There are, however, many individuals who are dedicating their lives to this noble profession and they are making a difference.

The event is designed and managed for the Varkey Gems Foundation by Indian Expressions Management Consultancy, a UAE based, IP Design & Strategy Company.

About Varkey Gems Foundation:

Created by Padmashree Sunny Varkey, the Varkey Gems Foundation is a philanthropic trust. The mission of the foundation is primarily for the up-liftment of education of children. The foundation promotes superior quality of teaching and strives to strengthen the teacher-student interface. The Guruvar Award 2009 programme is the first in a series of recognition and reward programmes planned by the Foundation. The Foundation is connected to a number of education related charitable initiatives that revolve around the creation of innovative educational programmes and models to enhance the teaching and learning experience, financial support for deserving students, education for slum children and promotion of rural schools.