

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE 41ST EEPIC INDIA SOUTHERN REGION EXPORT
AWARDS ORGANISED BY EEPIC INDIA AT HOTEL TAJ COROMANDEL,
NUNGAMBAKKAM, CHENNAI ON 28.12.2018 AT 6.00 PM**

Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu participated as Chief Guest at the 41st EEPIC India Southern Region Export Awards organised by EEPIC India at Hotel Taj Coromandel, Nungambakkam, Chennai On 28.12.2018 and addressed the gathering.

Hon'ble Governor said "I am happy to be here today at the Export Awards Function being organised by the Engineering Export Promotion Council for honouring outstanding performers who have done the nation proud through their record breaking achievements in merchandise exports.

The Engineering Export Promotion Council under the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, has been mandated with the responsibility of promoting exports of Engineering products. Established in the year 1955 it has grown manifold from the membership of a few hundreds of engineering units to the current membership level of nearly 13,000 comprising large Corporate Houses, Star Trading Houses and Small & Medium Scale Units (SME).

It is a matter of great satisfaction to note that the share of engineering goods in India's total merchandise exports is around 25% and that their annual value is close to 80 billion dollars.

The major Engineering Products exported have a wide range Commercial Vehicles and Passenger Cars, Automobile Accessories and Components, Electric Power Machinery, Textile Machinery Industrial Castings & Forgings, Food Processing Machinery, Material Handling Equipment, Aerospace Equipment, Aluminium Products, Stainless Steel Utensils, Pumps, Steel Pipes, Tubes and Fittings, Ferro Alloy Castings, Agricultural Machinery & Equipment, Electrical Home Appliances, Two and Three Wheelers and Precision Engineering Components constitute the bulk of the exports of the southern region. The top export destinations are USA, United Arab Emirates, China, Germany, The Netherlands, U.K., Spain, Japan, Mexico, Brazil, Nepal, Italy, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Singapore.

Our economy is increasingly getting integrated with the global economy and hence there is a need to focus on exports since that paves the way for maintaining the stability of the foreign exchange rate and for ensuring that the essential commodities required to be imported are available to the people of the nation. Thanks to the efforts taken by the Government of India in the last few years, the foreign exchange reserves position is comfortable and the foreign exchange rate has been stable. The current account deficit is well under control and it is easily met by inflows in the form of remittances by Non Resident Indians and through foreign direct investment channels.

Different States contribute in their own way towards boosting the level of exports. Statistically speaking, the States in the Southern Region contribute nearly a quarter of the total exports and it is estimated that this will reach a figure of 30% within the next five years. I am happy to see that among these Southern States, Tamil Nadu is the largest contributor, with almost half of the total exports of the Southern Region. Chennai, particularly because of its vantage location and its established infrastructure, has seen a considerable growth in exports in recent years.

Every nation attempts to further its prosperity by encouraging economic growth for this provides employment opportunities to its people. For the rapid growth of industry and services, it is necessary that the State and Central Governments work closely to enable the smoothening out of difficult and complex problems that entrepreneurs and industrialists may face. There are a variety of issues wherein such cooperation is necessary. I can mention in this context points such as the need for a land bank, the need for forming institutions to foster and improve skills, the need for a transparent and corruption-free administration and matters such as environmental management, etc. These are only some illustrative points which form part of a larger list of items.

Considering the vast potential that is available in the Southern Region and the special attention being made by the Government of India for the development of sea ports in this region, the contribution of the Southern Region in India's trade is bound to expand and help in achieving the target of India accounting for 3% of global trade as against the current level of 1.7%.

I am happy to see in your midst a large number of representatives from the small and medium sector. The MSME sector has indeed contributed greatly to the growth of the Indian economy over the years. MSMEs manufacture more than 6000 products, contributing about 45% to manufacturing and about 40% to exports. With its agility and dynamism, the sector has shown admirable adaptability to survive several global upheavals.

MSMEs produce a wide variety of products in almost all sectors of which one of the prominent items is engineering products.

Tamilnadu is estimated to be having nearly 11.10 lakh small-scale industries, constituting about 12% of the total MSMEs in India, with an investment of about Rs. 1 Lakh Crores.

The export awards have a special significance for the economy as they are conferred on individuals and institutions who have, by their hardwork and talent provided goods of international quality at competitive prices. The valuable foreign exchange earned by them is utilised to pay for the import of items such as crude oil, gold and vegetable oils. And engineering exports have even a greater significance. They utilise the raw materials available, add value to them providing valuable employment opportunities in the process and export the finished products to the rest of the world. Thus the country enjoys the triple benefits of value addition employment and foreign exchange when engineering goods are exported.

I congratulate the exporters of the southern region who have been leaders in the field of engineering exports. Many of them have been engaged in the activity of exporting engineering goods for many years. The time for recognition for all the foils of the fast has come today. They have by their contributions become an inspiration for future leaders of industry to follow in their footsteps.

I wish to conclude by informing the members of this august gathering that in a competitive situation as is found in international trade today it is necessary to stay ahead technologically and commercially. Quality standards must be strictly adhered to. And most importantly the value of 'Brand India' should be protected.

Exporters are in a way brand ambassadors since the quality of your products, your ethical adherence to contractual terms the general demeanor and supply logistics create an impression in the minds of the receiver about our nation. Delayed supplies, reneging on contractual terms and lack of dignity in export-import relationships will not only hurt commercial interests but also the national interest. I appeal to all of you to keep this in mind when discharging your responsibilities.

India is fast emerging as an important leader of the international community of nations. It is the largest democracy in the world. It has the largest diaspora spread over many countries of the world.

Going by the GDP growth rates recorded in 2017-18 and the first half of 2018-19 it is the fastest growing major economy of the world. We are fortunate to be proud citizens of our nation.

With this as our strength and a future which promises the tremendous advantage of the demographic dividend we will be in a position to dominate the 21st century. You as the brand ambassadors of India will be playing a major role in the performance of this journey. Let us keep the flag flying high. Let us unite to make our nation great and our people prosperous. I thank the organizers for having given me an opportunity to address the business and industrial leaders of the southern region and wish you all success in your endeavours".

On the occasion Thiru. Mahesh K Desai, Senior Vice Chairman, EEPIC India, Thiru Ravi Sehgal, National Chairman, Thiru K S Mani, Deputy Regional Chairman, Thiru C H Nadiger, Regional Director and other dignitaries participated.

Raj Bhavan, Chennai -22

Sd/-

Date : 28.12.2018

Joint Director (PR)