

**ADDRESS BY THIRU CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU**  
**AT THE INAUGURATION OF TREE CENSUS AT RAJ BHAVAN ON 10/11/2016 AT 05.00 PM.**

Dr.V.Melkani, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden, Thiru Ramesh Chand Meena IAS, Principal Secretary to Governor, Prof. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor, Professors, Researchers & Students of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, friends from Media, Officers & Staff of Raj Bhavan.

We are one of the largest mega diverse nations in the world. India lies within the Indo-malaya Ecozone with three biodiversity hotspots, with about 21% of land mass covered by forests having more than 10% tree canopy density. Out of this around 12% of country's land mass is covered by moderate to dense forests which has more than 40% tree canopy density. Our nation's flora is very rich with 17,500 species of Angiosperms, mostly distributed in tropical and sub tropical regions. Out of this, one third is endemic to our country.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Unfortunately due to population explosion, encroachments, climate change and pollution, we have been losing the green cover.

Jeevaka was the Physician of Gautama Buddha. Jeevaka studied medicine for seven years in Takshashila. His teacher gave him a spade and pick axe and asked him to go around Takshashila and examine every plant and bring a plant which has no medicinal value. He went for twelve miles but could not find any plant which had no medicinal value.

Our floras have very rich medicinal values and most of them are unknown to us. Their richness and medicinal value should be made known not only to the younger generation, but to the whole world.

I am happy to learn that Tamil Nadu has 5,676 flowering plant species and stands first in the country. It is high time we preserve and conserve these plants for prosperity and posterity. There is an urgent need to take stock of the situation at national, regional and micro level. Due to climate change, there is a shift in the habitat diversity mainly on account of invasive weeds and overexploitation. A systematic documentation of the biodiversity of every region is inevitable which requires botanical identification, cataloguing and documentation which in turn will help us for better policy planning and implementation.

Tree census and tree management plan help us to mitigate issues like Global warming, Climate Change and depletion of Green Cover which pose great threat to the Environment.

The purpose of conducting a Tree Census is not only to enhance the green cover but also to formulate plans to prevent environmental degradation.

The Raj Bhavan, Chennai is considered as one of the major heritage centers for more than two centuries and a portion of it has been given for formation of the Guindy National Park. The campus has a sprawling area of more than 156 acres with abundant wealth of flora and fauna.

When I assumed charge as the Governor of Tamil Nadu I was really amazed to see the Raj Bhavan, Chennai with a large green cover in the heart of the city. One thing which immediately struck in my mind was why should not a Tree Census be conducted in the Chennai & Ooty Raj Bhavans to analyze and update the current status of biodiversity.

A comprehensive and integrated approach to survey the vegetation and bring out a compilation is important. This compilation will help us to understand the distribution status of the plants. I instructed for conducting a census of the trees of Raj Bhavan in Chennai and Ooty. It has been planned and the work will be executed by the students and scientists of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

**Dear Professors, Researchers & Students,**

I appeal to you to prepare a comprehensive plan and integrated approach to survey the Vegetation and bring out a compilation report. I am sure this compilation will help to understand the distribution status of the plants.

I am happy that a team of scientists from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and the Horticultural Officer of Raj Bhavan have jointly made a survey, identified and documented about 250 species of plants available at the campus. I am sure using this catalogue, the students and scientists of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will take up the census of the trees.

I congratulate the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University for this commendable work.

I congratulate Prof.Dr.Ramasamy, Vice- Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University for his dedicated efforts to conduct the Tree Census. The able coordination by Thiru Ramesh Chand Meena IAS., Principal Secretary to Governor, the Deputy Secretaries, Thiru K.V.Muralidharan and Thiru D.Mohan, the Horticultural Officer, and other officers of Raj Bhavan deserve commendation.

Let us preserve and foster the gifts of nature for the generations to come for sustainable development.

I conclude with the words of Albert Einstein, I quote, “Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.” Jai Hind. Jai Tamil Nadu.