

**ADDRESS BY THIRU CH.VIDYASAGAR RAO, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU AT THE GANDHI
JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS AT GANDHI MANDAPAM, CHENNAI ON 02/10/2017 AT 05.00PM**

Thiru O.Panneerselvam, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Thiru K.A.Sengottaiyan, Hon'ble Minister for School Education, Thiru Kadambur Raju, Hon'ble Minister for Information and Publicity, Thiru R.Venkatesan, IAS., Secretary to Government, Tamil Development and Information Department, Dr.P.Shankar, IAS., Director of Information and Public Relations, Thiru S.P.Ezhilazhagan, Additional Director (Information), Officials and Staff of Information and Public Relations Department, Teachers, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me immense pleasure to participate in the Gandhi Jayanthi Celebrations and to present prizes to students.

Gandhiji's life is a message. The contribution made by him to the freedom struggle is invaluable and his principles of truthfulness, non-violence, simplicity and Faith in God have portrayed him as a man of wisdom and Mahatma. The stern practice of his principles evolved Gandhiji as a leader of the masses.

The final push to the independence was launched in the form of Quit India Movement urging the British Government to leave India. Gandhiji was a man of faith and conviction and galvanized people in our nation's freedom movement. As citizens of this great nation the greatest tribute we can pay to the Father of our Nation is by safe guarding this hard earned freedom, shedding our egos, living in harmony and dedicating ourselves to build a harmonious and prosperous India.

The celebration of Birth Anniversaries of great personalities is not only to recall their great services but also to draw inspiration and to follow the path shown by them.

Mahatma Gandhiji was a social reformer. The Father of our Nation finds a unique place in the world. On the birth anniversary of Gandhiji may we pledge to practice and follow what Gandhiji preached and stood for.

Dear Teachers,

Mahatma Gandhi said, 'By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in the child and man – body, mind and spirit.'

The education imparted should draw out the best in an individual, develop the mind and the body. The essence of education lies in serving others. This brings physical, moral and spiritual development. I appeal to educational institutions to develop knowledge and wisdom coupled with character, moral values, courage, righteousness and patriotic fervour in students. I appeal to the Teachers to be makers of new India.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Gandhiji had cleanliness and sanitation close to his heart. Cleanliness should begin from each home. The concept of cleanliness is not new to us. We have a rich tradition and culture which lays emphasis on cleanliness. In our busy daily life and pressures of the modern world today, we have forgotten the cultural and religious practice of maintaining cleanliness and hygiene. Gandhiji's dream of a clean India is yet to be fulfilled.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has called upon the nation to begin the campaign 'Swachhata Hi Seva', from 15th September 2017 to Gandhi Jayanthi on 2nd

October 2017. He has urged all NGOs, schools, colleges, social, cultural and political leaders, corporate, government officials, Collectors, sarpanches and all to accelerate Swachhata activities during the September 15 – October 2 period. It is high time the practice of cleanliness is cultivated as a routine habit. We have to build a Clean India by 2019 and this would be a befitting tribute to the Father of our Nation, on his 150th Birth Anniversary.

I am happy to learn that Govt of Tamil Nadu has conducted various programmes to create awareness on cleanliness, hygiene and has organized - Swachhata Hi Seva Programmes to maintain cleanliness and sanitation and to create a more healthy environment.

Parents and Teachers should play a pivotal role in creating awareness on cleanliness among children. Cleanliness is not the responsibility of the authorities or the Local bodies only, but each and every citizen of this great nation should dedicate himself or herself to share this responsibility to keep our nation clean and green.

Dear Students,

I appeal to you to make it as a habit of washing your hands before taking food. The cause of many diseases, is germs which easily enter our body through food. The practice of personal hygiene can keep one safe and healthy.

Social responsibility, good character and self-discipline are the collective responsibilities that Gandhiji expected from the youth and students. Be true, honest and hardworking and high thinking. Develop the indomitable will and the strength of character. Donate your valuable time to educate the poor children and for the cause of the society.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

On 22nd September 1921 at Madurai, Mahatma Gandhiji made a momentous decision to change his traditional attire to loincloth - simple dothi.

On two earlier occasions, he had thought of donning common man's clothes but it was ultimately in Madurai only where he took to wearing common man's clothes. Gandhiji has remarked that it was Madurai that gave him the strength to take decision on his clothing.

Tamil Nadu should come forward to celebrate the centenary of his decision to identify himself with the masses.

I congratulate the educational institutions for coming forward and organizing programmes propagating the message of Gandhiji in a grand manner. I commend all the students for participating in various competitions and convey my best wishes to all the prize winners.

Let us practice what Mahatma Gandhi preached and follow the path shown by him and revitalize our energies to build a vibrant India.

Jai Hind. Jai Tamil Nadu.
