

**Address by Thiru Ch. Vidyasagar Rao, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu at the unveiling of Thiruvalluvar statue at Raj Bhavan, Chennai at 05:30 PM on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

Thiru Sevvoor S.Ramachandran, Hon'ble Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, Hon'ble Thiru Justice M.Karpaga Vinayagam, Former Chief Justice Jharkhand High Court, Dr (Tmt) Girija Vaidyanathan, Chief Secretary to Government, Thiru Apurva Varma, Principal Secretary to Government, Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments Department, Thiru Ramesh Chand Meena, my Principal Secretary, Dr.M.Veera Shanmugha Moni, Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department, Vice-Chancellors of various Universities, Distinguished invitees, Tamil Scholars, Students, Friends from Media.

**Ladies & Gentlemen**

It gives me immense pleasure to unveil the Statue of Thiruvalluvar, the Saint Poet and Philosopher who is immortal through his creation of sacred Thirukkural which lives beyond ages for its universal outlook combining the triple themes of virtue, wealth and love.

Literature is the product of civilization. In India literary compositions have held a sway over millennia. Long before the era of paper and printing, even when there was no system of writing, the great Vedas, Upanishads and the Puranas were in reality, unprinted books in the mental libraries of our forefathers. They shaped the minds and lives of the people. Most sacred books of the world have sprung from India. India has given to the world the Tamil Classic Thirukkural.

Tamil is one of the ancient classical languages of the World and Tamil literature is vast and varied. Many poems and literary marvels were created 2000 years ago depicting the life of people living in that period. Thirukkural is one of the few literary works that has survived over the past and is relevant even today.

Thirukkural is considered equivalent to the Vedas. It serves as a guide for human morals and betterment in life and has been widely translated both in Indian and European Languages. It is learnt that this ancient Indian Treatise on the ethics and morality has been translated in about 83 world languages and there are almost 57 versions in English alone. Researchers have traced the age of this work to sometime between the third and first centuries Before the Common Era.

The Classic Tamil Sangam Literature Thirukkural is written on ethics, especially secular ethics and morality. It is a masterpiece of Tamil literature and is known for the highest and purest expression of human thoughts. Thirukkural gives comprehensive view on how to lead a life of love, respect and tolerance. Thiruvalluvar aims at guiding one to lead a moral, ethical and purposeful life in this world. According to Thiruvalluvar, "One who lives an ideal life in this world will be ranked amongst the Gods in heaven". The Saint Poet covers the whole gamut of human experiences in a very comprehensive manner.

Thirukkural is a contribution of the Tamil creative genius to the world's cultural treasure. It should be made familiar world over. I appeal to the scholars in India and across the world to facilitate translation of Thirukkural in all the languages of the world so as to make this invaluable, universal treasure reach the people.

Fascinated by the philosophy of Valluvar and his Thirukkural and its great relevance for the present and future, I asked myself why not a Thiruvalluvar statue be erected in Raj Bhavan, Chennai. I have opened the gates of Chennai Raj Bhavan for Public viewing. I am sure the children and public who visit Raj Bhavan will carry the message of Thiruvalluvar.

The Three Kurals which are inscribed on the pedestal of Thiruvalluvar statue tells about wisdom, love and the importance of education. The Kural (Kural 101) on gratitude highlights importance of the help given by those who never expect anything in return and it is of such a great value that even the gift of heaven and earth will be scarcely equal to it.

Under the head "learning", the Couplet (Kural 400) underlines the uniqueness of the wealth of learning and reveals that it could never be lost and all other wealth are no real wealth in comparison to it.

The other Kural (1100) says that when the eyes of the one convey the message of love, which the eyes of the other gladly receive; of what use are the words uttered by lips?

The statue of poetess Avvaiyar is to come at the Staff Gate. The children can touch the plaque and hear the recital of Athichudi.

In many aspects one could find the resonance between Thirukkural, Bhagavat Gita, Guru Granth Sahib, Bible, Quran and the ideals of Jainism.

Thiruvalluvar and Kabir attached importance to truth. Kabir says that no act of devotion can equal the truth and Valluvar's message is that there is nothing higher than truth.

Thiruvalluvar lays emphasis not only on the virtuous life to be adopted but also talks about the need for hygiene, cleanliness, the importance of rain, preserving water for progress and prosperity.

To us, the citizens of this great nation Thirukkural represents India's spirit in its truest form and has great relevance not only for the present but also for the future.

I appeal to the students and youth to lead a true and moral life dedicated to the cause of humanity and promoting greenery for copious rains, preserving water, maintaining hygiene and cleanliness for developing a healthy tomorrow.

May the message of Thiruvalluvar reach the whole world and touch all human beings on earth so that we build a harmonious world and realize the oneness of humanity.

I convey my warm felicitations to the Officers and Staff of Raj Bhavan, the Students and to all those who are associated with this memorable function.

My Greetings to you all.

Jai Hind. Jai Tamil Nadu.