

**ADDRESS BY THIRU. BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMILNADU AT THE VALEDICTORY FUNCTION OF Dr. M.G.R. CENTENARY
AND BOOK RELEASE FUNCTION IN VELLORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY,
VELLORE ON 9TH MARCH 2018 AT 4.00 P.M.**

AnaivarukkumMalai Vanakkam

Thiru K.C. Veeramani,
Hon'ble Minister for Commercial Taxes

Dr. NiloferKafeel,
Hon'ble Minister for Labour

Thiru Sevvoor S. Ramachandran,
Hon'ble Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable
Endowments

Thiru G. Hari,Member of Parliament

Thiru Duraimurugan,
Former Minister of Tamil Nadu

Dr. G. Viswanathan
Founder and Chancellor of VIT

Thiru SankarViswanathan
Vice President, VIT

Dignitaries on the Dais
Faculty, Staff and Students
Distinguished Invitees
Friends from the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be here today to release a book on Dr. MGR written by Dr. G. Vishwanathan, the Chancellor of the Vellore Institute of Technology.

Dr. M.G. Ramachandran widely known as "Puratchi Thalaivar" and "Makkal Thilagam" was a charismatic personality and a man of the masses. One of the great Presidents of the USA, Theodore Roosevelt said,

"Great thoughts speak only to the mind, but great actions speak to all mankind."

MGR was one such personality whose actions spoke for his thoughts and intentions. It is therefore not surprising that he has found a permanent place in the hearts of the poor and the downtrodden.

MGR as he was affectionately called served as the Chief Minister from 1977 to 1987. During the period there were several novel and noble initiatives in the implementation of which Tamil Nadu showed the way for the whole of India. The Nutritious Meal Scheme and the special schemes for the promotion of education among the poor and weaker sections of society and for upliftment of women are some of them. These administrative achievements endeared him to the common people.

It was because of the Midday Meals Scheme of Dr. MGR that the drop-out rate in schools came down substantially and even today Tamil Nadu is ranked as one of the best performing states in the field of school education. The Mid Day Meal Scheme also brought in other benefits. Caste discrimination among students was eliminated since children of all castes were served food together. The scheme also provided employment to lakhs of unemployed and uneducated women in the form of Ayahs, Cooks and helpers. The scheme was such a roaring success that M.G.R. is remembered even today as "PonMana Chemmal" i.e. the Man with a heart of gold.

Dr. M.G. Ramachandran was loved by the people of Tamil Nadu so much that till today nobody else has been able to match his record of never having been defeated during the tenure of his Chief Ministership which continued in an uninterrupted manner. His concern for the suffering and downtrodden was genuine. His attachment to the cause of uplifting women was unparalleled. He started the first University for Women in the country at Kodaikanal and also launched a separate Corporation for the Development of Women. He gave important positions in the administration to women.

Dr. M.G.R. had also written in his will that except the house in his Ramavaram gardens, the rest of the land should be used for a school for poor children who could not hear or speak. It was here that the Dr. M.G.R. Home

and Higher Secondary School for the Speech and Hearing impaired was established in 1989.

Similarly the Sathya Studio which he owned the banks of the Adyar river now houses a College for Women.

It is said in the Mahabharatha about Karna, the king that his generosity knew no bounds. Marching in the footsteps of Karna Dr. M.G.R. became a legend for his acts of generosity and kindness. In 1985 when he was convalescing after recovering from a paralytic stroke an ordinary worker came to meet him with his daughter. The girl could not speak as she was dumb. Dr. M.G.R. was also in a similar condition. When the worker was going to say good bye MGR called him to his side and gestured to the Doctor who was attending on him to also take care of the child. The child was subsequently treated in the same Hospital.

MGR was also a true patriot, he made a contribution of Rs. 50,000 to help in the war effort during the Indo-China war. That contribution when reckoned inflation in the last 50 years amounts to nearly Rupees 5 crores. Similarly his assistance in times of cyclone and natural calamities to the people who were suffering is well known. There were also many students who studied with the support of Dr. M.G.R. Many of them became lawyers, engineers and doctors and some of them became politicians. The qualities of hard work and dedication helped him to overcome all odds to succeed in the film industry and in politics.

He was struggling to be recognised as an actor for many years before luck smiled on him. In the late 50's he invested all his wealth to produce a film called 'Nadodi Mannan'. It is said that if the film had failed M.G.R. could have been left with nothing. Fortunately the film succeeded tremendously and became a big hit. That was the turning point in his career. He went on to produce and act in many more films successfully which brought him name and fame. MGR had in politics for a long time before he started his party in 1972. Within five years he achieved phenomenal success and became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. As Chief Minister he played a crucial role in improving

Centre State relations. He also had excellent relations with the neighbouring States. Consequently, water from the Krishna River was brought to Chennai to satisfy the water requirements of the residents of the city. All this earned him the adulation and support of millions of people in Tamil Nadu.

We are all assembled here in the Vellore Institute of Technology to honour the memory of Dr. MGR. The Vellore Institute of Technology, which started as a single college, has now grown into a deemed university. Thousands and thousands of students have studied in this university in the last 33 years and brought laurels to the State and prosperity to their families. Similarly, many private universities owe their origin to Dr. MGR, who encouraged the growth of higher education in Tamil Nadu tremendously. The push given by Dr. MGR in the sector of higher education enabled the students of the State to reap the benefits of the IT revolution that took place at the turn of the century. Students from Tamil Nadu educated in these private institutions have assumed positions of power and importance not only in India but all over the world.

Dr. MGR was also avidly promoting the growth of the Tamil language. He started the Tamil University in Thanjavur. He organised a World Tamil Conference in Madurai. He issued an order for all government servants to affix their signatures on in Tamil.

His love for the Tamils of Sri Lanka is also well known. He tried his best to bring about a peaceful solution for resolving the difference between the Sri Lankan Government and the substantial Tamil population residing in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka. Since he himself was born in Sri Lanka, he understood the problems of the Tamil people better than anybody else. His efforts proved to be successful and a comprehensive solution will have definitely emerged if he had lived on. Unfortunately, fate struck a cruel blow and he breathed his last in December 1987. His loss was mourned by millions of people who gathered in Chennai. Even today I see thousands of people visiting the MGR Samadhi on the Marina. Such was the love that Tamil people had for him.

This function is being organised to mark the completion of the Centenary Celebrations of his birth anniversary. I have had the privilege of participating in functions at the Tamil University, at the MGR Janaki Arts and Science College for Women and many other institutions for the same purpose.

When I see the outpourings of the people who participate in these functions, each one of them has a story of affection, an anecdote of love, a memory of support, a friendship they cherish and so on.

Even today, the mention of his name brings back fond memories of the golden years of Tamil Nadu under his rule. I am sure that people like Dr. Viswanathan, who moved with Dr. MGR know about him and traits much more. That is why Dr. Viswanathan has chosen to write a book on Bharat Ratna Dr. MGR. I am happy to be here to release book titled "Moondrezhuthu Athisayam M.G.R." authored by him. It contains many instances of his close association with Dr. MGR. I am sure the readers will find it interesting. I am sure Dr. MGR will continue to live in the hearts and minds of countless Tamilians in India and abroad. Personalities like Dr. Viswanathan and many others will continue to write about him and sing his praise. All this only happens with people who have dedicated their lives for the benefit of society and it is people. Dr. MGR was one such legendary personality.

I am thankful to the Vellore Institute of Technology for having invited me for this function.

Nandri

Vanakkam

Jai Hind

Jai Tamil Nadu