

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT LAUNCH OF "KISAN ADVANCEMENT THROUGH CASHLESS
INNOVATION: KANCHI", AT RAJBHAVAN ON 14/03/2018 AT 10.30 AM**

Anaivarukkum Kaalai Vanakkam

Thiru. S.S. Rajsekar

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Dr. M.R. Ramasubramanian

Executive Director, National Agro Foundation

Distinguished Invitees
Friends from the Media,
Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me great happiness to be here today for the launch of the Kisan Advancement through Cashless Innovation' Scheme 'Kaanchi', as it is called is a platform developed by the Centre for Digital Inclusion in partnership with National Agro Foundation.

Considering that 68 per cent of India's population is rural and agriculture is the main source of livelihood for 58 per cent of the population, making agriculture Smart by going digital is the need of the hour.

Our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is an ardent champion of technology-driven digital solutions to empower farmers in India as there is an urgent case for harnessing the potential of digital India for agricultural development.

The government has therefore launched several new initiatives to promote agriculture and the welfare of the farmer.

Water forms the life line of human existence and food production. About **61%** of cultivated area is under rainfed cultivation in India. In Tamil Nadu, the area under rainfed cultivation is 57%. The **Prime Minister's Krishi Sinchai Yojana** is aimed at improving irrigation efficiency through promotion of micro irrigation as well as improvement in infrastructure for water harvesting.

An area of **4.82 lakh hectares** has been brought under **micro irrigation** in Tamil Nadu. It is planned to cover an additional **1 lakh** hectares in the next year.

Soil health management plays an important role in improving the agricultural productivity. The Soil Health Cards scheme was launched to address this and I am proud to say that **57.63 lakh soil health cards** have been issued to farmers in Tamil Nadu. Soil health cards will help farmers understand the fertility status of the soil and plan their crop and investment accordingly.

The crop insurance scheme has been completely revamped under the current scheme of **Prime Minister's Fasal Bima Yojana** to protect the farmers from the threats of crop failure. Under this scheme, **15.2 lakh farmers** have been enrolled and **INR 487.37 crores** have been given as premium subsidy.

One of the most important problems faced by farmers is the lack of remunerative prices for their produce. While the input costs have increased, they could not sell their produce at profitable prices owing to poor holding capacity, influence of middlemen etc. Moreover, the fragmented land holdings also act as a barrier in producing marketable surplus. In order to address this problem, the Government has been promoting Farmers Producer Organizations with farmers as shareholders. In order to facilitate ease of reaching out to the market and price discovery, e-National Agriculture Markets (e-NAM) has been promoted. The APMC act in Tamil Nadu has been amended last year to facilitate our participation in eNAM project.

The Hon'ble Finance Minister in his recent budget speech announced that farm credit allocation has been increased to Rs. 11 lakh crore for the year 2018-19. This is one lakh crore rupees higher than the allocation of 10 lakh crore rupees for the year 2017-18.

It is the duty of various stakeholders involved in the welfare of the rural community to see that the available finances reach the targeted farmers.

Tamil Nadu has allocated over Rs. 90,000 crore last year towards farm credit and this year it may cross Rs. one lakh crore.

Steps for financial inclusion like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister in August 2014 have had a visible impact on the lives of the rural poor who were yet to benefit from the rapid rise of the country's financial services sector.

Since then, 31.10 crore bank accounts under the scheme have been opened across the country. Tamil Nadu has 88.52 lakh such accounts. Rural Tamil Nadu has 50 per cent of these Jan Dhan accounts.

I am proud to state that Tamil Nadu has been in the forefront in achieving near 100 per cent financial inclusion.

I am happy to see that the Centre for Digital and Financial Inclusion has developed in partnership with National Agro Foundation, what is called a 'modular technology driven tool' named Kaanchi. The aim is to digitally assist in the financial shareholding and business operations of FPOs.

'Kaanchi' provides Farmer Investor Services through digitization of equity, share certificate issuance, distribution of corporate benefits, statutory compliance and investor grievance redressal.

Thus this is a platform that has emerged as a solution to the problems observed in the context of the working of FPOs rather than as a framework imposed on them.

I feel doubly happy to be here today since the National Agro Foundation is a NGO founded by Shri C Subramaniam, the architect of India's Green Revolution. It was subsequently nurtured by former President of India Dr A P J Abdul Kalam and is engaged in promoting the welfare of small and marginal farmers and women through a multi pronged approach. I congratulate the Board of Trustees of National Agro Foundation for the commendable work they have been undertaking for the past 18 years.

I recently attended a function on Sarvodaya which means uplift for all. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has also given the clarion call 'Sabke Saath Sabka Vikas'. The upliftment of the whole population is possible when growth is

propelled by agricultural prosperity. Initiatives such as KANCHI help the Government, the farming industry and people at large to move in the direction of promoting agriculture by providing the benefits of technology to the agricultural sector. Many more such initiatives should spring up all over India so that the digital revolution entirely encompasses the needs of agriculture.

I applaud the efforts of the Centre for Digital Inclusion and the National Agro Foundation for the innovation that is being launched today.

I wish them all success in their endeavours.

Nandri Vanakkam

Jai Hind Jai Tamil Nadu