

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE WORLD MGR PERAVAI DELEGATES CONFERENCE AT
VELS UNIVERSITY, PALLAVARAM, CHENNAI ON 15.07.2018 AT 11.00 A.M**

Anaivarukkum Kaalai Vanakkam

Dr.Ishari K.Ganesh
Chancellor – Vels Univeristy

Dr. G.Viswanathan
Chancellor – V.I.T University

Dr.A.C.Shanmugan
Chancellor – Dr. M.G.R. Educational and Research Institute

Thiru. Saidai S.Duraisamy
Founder – President of Manidha Neyam Free Coaching Academy

Thiru. R.S.Munirathinam
Founder – President, RMK Educational Institutions

Dr. Mariazeena
Managing Director – Sathyabama University

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

I am extremely happy today to participate in the MGR Peravai Conference being organised by eminent educationists held today at the Vels University campus in a grand manner.

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 “PonManaChemmal” i.e. the Man with a heart of gold.

He was a pioneer who brought about a major policy change in higher education. As a result nearly 2000 colleges have come up in Tamil Nadu the bulk of them being engineering and college for training teachers. Tamil Nadu has consequently been able to achieve 46% Gross Enrolment Ratio. Which is significantly higher than the national average. In the public sector MGR started the Mother Teresa Women’s University at Kodaikanal, Tamil University at Thanjavur, and the Bharathiyar University and Bharathidasan University at Coimbatore and Trichy respectively. A CHAIR was created in Madras University which was named as “Anna Centre for Public Affairs” in memory of the political visionary Thiru. C. N. Annadurai whom M.G.R. considered as his mentor and leader.

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 launched a separate Corporation for the Development of Women and also gave important positions in the administration to women. The film studio which he owned and nurtured during his lifetime was converted into a college for women based on his will.

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.

It is said in the Mahabharatha about Karna, the king that his generosity knew no bounds. Marching in the foot steps 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 wellknown. 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. His film debut was in 1936 in the film *Sathi Leelavathi*. His first big hit came in the form of *Manthiri Kumari* (1950) which changed the course of his film career. 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 acted in nearly 136 films. Many of his films were box office hits. Invariably in all his films, he exhibited his concern for the have-nots and

conveyed political messages through aphoristic songs. That is why even today, his songs are hummed by all sections of people in Tamil Nadu. Apart from acting, MGR also produced and directed films.

MGR had been in politics for a longtime 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.

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 Dr. MGR will continue to live in the hearts and minds of countless Tamilians in India and abroad. Personalities those seated on stage 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.

This was the reason why he was decorated with the Bharat Ratna award by the Government of India. One another Tamilian decorated with the Bharat Ratna was Dr. Abdul Kalam who later went on to become the President of India. Such person serve as role models during their life time and for many more succeeding generation to come. The qualities of hard work, compassion, patriotism and total commitment to the welfare of the people which Dr. MGR espoused will always remain etched in our memories for all times to come.

I wish to conclude by appreciating the Vels University for organising this conference on Dr. MGR by inviting the dignitaries from all over the world for the occasion. I wish them well and hope that they will also work for the welfare of the people of Tamil Nadu by following in the footsteps of Dr. Bharat Ratna MGR.

Nandri Vanakam...

Jai Hind...