

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF GUJARATI KANYASHALA
AT Z.P.H. GUJARATI KANYA KELAVANI MANDAL GROUP OF SCHOOLS,
MYLAPORE, CHENNAI ON 19.07.2018 AT 6.00 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

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**Thiru. Ramesh R. Bhatt
Vice President**

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me happiness to be here today at the Gujarati Kanya Kelavani Mandal Group of Schools for the 'Centenary Celebrations'. It is always a matter of joy to be among radiant young faces of students who are full of hope and cheer.

It is indeed heartening for me to see such a large prosperous Gujarati population in the city of Chennai. The migration of Gujaratis to Tamil Nadu in large numbers took place for the first time about 1000 years ago, at the time of the repeated invasions of Mohmad ghazni on Somnath Temple. The first

migrants settled down in Salem. Seeing their expertise in weaving, royal patronage resulted in the migration of Gujarati weaver's families to Thanjavur and Madurai. The movement to Chennai may have commenced about 250 years to 300 years back only. It is quite clear that a large Gujarati settlement flourished in Chennai even more than a 100 years back.

The mid-18th century diarist, Aananda Rangam Pillai mentions the prominent place that the Gujaratis occupied in the business community of Chennai.

There is even a Gujarati book brought out in the early decades of the 20th century, titled 'Madraas Ilaakanu Digidarshan'. This book gives a list of the varied businesses in the Madras Presidency, including factories and tea and coffee estates, that the Gujaratis were involved in.

I am informed by the school management that to promote the spread of education among girl children and to keep the tradition of Gujarat culture flying high the "Sri Gujarati Kanya Shala" was started on 08.04.1919 by Gujarati philanthropic men of great foresight. Zaveri Purushottamdas Harilal - a large hearted donor donated the building for starting the primary school in 1921. Hence the name of "Gujarati Kanya Shala" was changed to "Zaveri Purushottamdas Harilal Gujarati Kanya Shala" in the year 1939.

The High school was started in the name of the donor Manilal M. Mehta which later became a Higher Secondary School. In the year 1961 Smt. Godavariben a teacher of the primary school who had served for 40 years, donated her building in Narayan chetty Lane, Park Town, to start a "Bal Vihar", "Kinder garden school" and "English primary school". To honor this sacrifice and dedication by a retired teacher the building was named as "Godavari Bhavan" and inaugurated in 1974.

The Indian nation encompasses people of various faiths living in harmony. All our religions teach us to respect our women. We salute and respect our

nation as Bharat Mata and Mother India. Vande Mataram was the inspiring war cry which drove out the British and brought freedom to India. Geographically also, the northernmost state of India is Jammu & Kashmir and this has the famous shrine of Vaishno Devi. The southern most State of India is Tamil Nadu which has the great temple of Kanyakumari at the confluence of the Indian Ocean the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal. Hence culturally speaking, India worships the Mother goddess, in all its regions from the north to the extreme south.

We believe in the concept of Nari Shakthi or Women Power. The concept of Durga as the protector of the human race is embodied in the celebrations of Navarathri, on which day we narrate hymns on her victory over the evil forces. Navarathri is celebrated all over India and in Nagpur from where I hail, the celebrations of Vijayadasami the tenth day of victory, are organized on a grand scale.

While we celebrate the power of Skakthi in religion and culture, history also speaks about the great women leaders who adorned our illustrious array of thinkers, poetesses and warriors. *Avvaiyar* was one of the most famous and important female poets of the Tamil Sangam. Women like Rani Laxmi Bai, Ahilyabai Holkar, Rani Mangammal, Kittur Chennamma and Velu Nachiyar are some of the important generals who fought with courage and bravery to defeat the oppressor. In recent times also some outstanding women leaders in Literature, Medicine and politics shine as examples of glory to womanhood and women power. I can recall the services of Sarojini Naidu, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, and Mother Teresa in this context. Among the living icons one may mention Saina Nehwal, P.V.Sindhu, Sania Mirza, Malleswari, Mary Kom, Geeta Phogat, Dipa Karmakar, Mithali Dorai Raj as some of the outstanding personalities who have done us proud in the field of sports. Music and dance have also witnessed many famous personalities among women such as Rukmini Devi Arundale, Dr.M.S.Subbulakshmi and Balasaraswati.

While there are leading women achievers, it is also true that hundreds of years of foreign rule in India starting from the beginning of 13 Century till almost the middle of the 20th Century has created a number of factors in society that suppressed women and kept them confined to the kitchen. Hence, India witnessed disparities in development which affected women adversely. In the 20th Century and more particularly after Independence there has been an improvement in the conditions of women thanks to the efforts of schools such as this.

At this juncture I wish to emphasise the importance of perseverance for achieving success. As they say "Rome was not built in a day". Perseverance and hard work combined with commitment to a noble cause are certain to produce results. The Gujarati Kanya Kelavani Mandal Group of Schools which was started as a fledgling institution a hundred years back has grown in size and stature because of sustained hard work. Thomas Alva Edison, the inventor of the incandescent bulb used to say 'Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety nine percent perspiration.'

The twenty first century is characterized by the emergence of multiculturalism due to industrialization, urbanization and globalisation. Since education is an instrument for 'societal change' it should develop the right cognitive capabilities, tolerance to withstand multicultural impulses and an understanding of diversity so as to prepare the youth to face the complex realities of globalisation.

Education and more particularly school education should provide the right training for all this to happen. Swami Vivekananda defined education to be the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Swami Vivekananda's teachings have been a source of inspiration for millions of people. His greatness lay in his ability to lead from the front. Swamiji preached to the young and old to maintain

one's own dignity, to be bold and to be strong. He said strength is life and weakness is death. He eloquently propounded that you cannot believe in God unless you learn to believe in yourself. He called upon Indians to arise, awake and stop not until the goal is reached.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the importance of character building for this forms the corner stone of success of any educational institution. An institution is known by the students that it produces and the students are known by the values that they display.

Albert Einstein once said and I quote "Most people say that it is intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong. It is character". I am sure that traditionally well run schools such as this one are giving the necessary importance to character building in the school curriculum.

I congratulate the School management, the Teacher of the School, the Headmistress and the students who with their hard work and commitment to the cause of making the school greet have elevated the status of the school into one which is still going strong even in its centenary year. I am sure that the future is going to be even more bright when compared with the past. In today's world the path of prosperity is illuminated by the lamp of education. Let me therefore request all members of the audience assembled here to ensure that the highest importance is given to education in their families. Success is bound to greet you at every step once you combine the benefit of quality education, hard work and total commitment to the cause. May the Grace of God be showered on all of you in abundant measure.

Nandri Vanakkam.

Jai Hind....