

**ADDRESS BY THIRU. BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE INAUGURATION OF MAHATMA GANDHI CENTRAL
LIBRARY AND GNANA SABHAI AT RAMANANDHA ADIGALAR AUDITORIUM,
KUMARAGURU COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, COIMBATORE
ON 20.03.2018 AT 10.30 A.M.**

ANAIVARUKKUM KAALAI VANAKKAM

Thiru B.K.KrishnarajVanavarayar, Chairman
Kumaraguru College of Technology

Thiru M. Manickam, Vice Chairman
Kumaraguru College of Technology

Thiru G.D. Gopal,
Arutchelvar Awardee

Thiru Avvai Natarajan,
Arutchelvar Awardee

Thiru M. Balasubramaniam, Correspondent
Kumaraguru College of Technology

Thiru Srinivaasan, Treasurer
Kumaraguru College of Technology

Distinguished Invitees

Friends from the Media

Faculty, Staff, Teachers and Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to be here in Coimbatore today as the Chief Guest to inaugurate the Meditation Centre and Mahatma Gandhi Central Library at Kumaraguru College of Technology, Coimbatore. It is always a pleasure to be among young, creative minds who are idealistic and intelligent. It is you, my dear young men and women engineers and technologists, who will be the architects of the New India that is now fast emerging.

We achieved Freedom 70 years back after a huge struggle and enormous sacrifice. Many people sacrificed their education by boycotting the educational institutions under the British. Lakhs of people lost their lives in the freedom struggle. The British Govt. was merciless even against non-violent agitators

and firing and merciless lathi-charging on the assembled public were common. Indians were treated as inferior people and there was no system of having a say in the policy making process. Mahatma Gandhi led the freedom struggle successfully against the British. Hence he is known as the Father of the Nation.

Gandhiji's contribution to India is immeasurable. Gandhiji's contribution to the world is also immeasurable, for leaders like Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela followed in the footsteps of Gandhiji to bring emancipation to their followers who were otherwise oppressed and enslaved. Gandhiji's message of ahimsa is a powerful signal to mankind that stockpiling of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles will only lead to destruction.

Coming to India, Gandhiji brought about social cohesion among the people of India by vigorously working against untouchability. He gave an economic philosophy that focused on self-sufficiency at the village level. He propagated the concept of trusteeship and wanted people to abhor the accumulation of wealth for themselves and their families. All these were the outpourings of the wisdom of Gandhiji which went beyond the political spectrum. His thoughts and deeds encompassed the whole gamut of activities of human existence.

He often used to say "My life is my message". It is important for us to try and practise the ideals of Gandhiji in our life.

Gandhiji's life and message will be remembered and will serve as a guide for millions of people for several thousands of years in the future. It is a matter of great happiness that the central library being inaugurated today has been named after Mahatma Gandhi.

Tamil Nadu was always close to Gandhiji's heart. It is important to recall that when Gandhiji started the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, in which there were initially, 25 inmates, 13 of them were Tamilians. People in the audience may know that Gandhi visited Tamil Nadu 20 times between 1896 and 1946. During his first visit in 1896 he tried to learn Tamil and bought 9 Tamil books for the purpose. During a subsequent visit in 1921, when in Madurai, Gandhiji made a change from donning the typical elaborate attire to

wearing the simple dhoti and upper cloth that clothed him for the remaining years of his life. About this he himself has written and I quote,

“All the alterations I have made in the course of my life have been effected by momentous occasions. Such a radical alteration in my dress I effected in Madurai.”

I am happy to note as Governor that Tamil Nadu has made great strides in higher education and leads the country in the number of students pursuing higher education. More and more colleges have been opened and various schemes implemented to make higher education more inclusive. In this regard, Anna University, of which I have the privilege of being the Chancellor, plays an important part in producing professionals with high technical knowledge, professional skills and ethical values.

While commending students in Tamil Nadu for taking to higher education in large numbers, I would also advice them not to restrict themselves to book knowledge and examinations but seek to take part in events that enlarge their vision of the world and give them ideas on how they can play a part in improving it. As the Tamil proverb goes, ‘Yettu Surakkai Karikku Udhavaadhu’. ‘You cannot make a vegetable dish with the diagram of a bottle gourd in the book’. Students should open out to the world. In today’s India which is growing at the fastest speed in the world, opportunities are manifold. Don’t be caught in negative ideas. Be positive. When you look at the world with confidence and trust, you are bound to see it reflected in others.

India is known as the spiritual capital of the world and people from all over the world come to India to understand Indian culture, Yoga and Meditation are the Gifts of India to the world. The United Nations organisation has declared 21st June as the International Yoga Day in recognition of the importance of Yoga for everyone in today’s competitive world.

The Gnana Sabhai, which is being inaugurated today will enable meditation upon the supreme grace so as to attain higher levels of spiritual realization. Such spiritual realization will enable the individual to rise above the self, involve himself in selfless service and channelize his thoughts and

energies for the betterment of society. I congratulate the college management for giving this spiritual orientation to education by establishing Gnana Sabhai.

Spirituality combined with education results in moulding of the student into a person who has intelligence and character, thus paving the way for prosperity for the individual and society. In this context, it is useful to recall the words of Albert Einstein who said “Most people say that it is intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong. It is character”.

The great saint Thiruvalluvar, when emphasizing the importance of character, says “Nandrikku Viththaagum Nallozhukkam”.

I am happy to see that there is also a ‘Swami Vivekananda Study Centre’ in your College. I am sure that all of you know about the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Swami Aurobindo in one sentence described Swami Vivekananda as follows:

“Swami Vivekananda was the soul of strength, a very lion among men. We perceive his influence still working gigantically. Behold, Swami Vivekananda still lives in the souls of her children.”

Students should feel doubly blessed by the fact that the engineering institution not only provides spiritual orientation through meditation but also awakens their minds to the saying and teachings of great patriotic saints like Swami Vivekananda.

I conclude by exhorting students to study and study well by focusing their energies on learning. The great poetess Avvaiyar shows us the way through her pithy saying “*IlamaiyilKal*”. The youth is the period when the bulk of learning takes place, but learning continues all through life. If one adopts this attitude one is bound to succeed in life.

The Library and the Meditation Centre that are being inaugurated will be useful assets for the college and I congratulate the Management for having thought of and implemented such initiatives.

I wish the College all success in its endeavours.

Nandri Vanakkam

Jai Hind Jai Tamil Nadu