

ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAR PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL
NADU AT BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION OF INDIA AWARDS 2018 FUNCTION HELD
AT CHENNAI ON 26.2.2018 AT 7.00 P.M.

Anaivarukkum Malai Vanakkam

Thiru.K.Venkatesan,
Chairman of Builders' Association of India, Southern Centre,

Thiru.Bhisma.R.Radhakrishnan,
Past President of Builders' Association of India

Mr.M.V.Satish

Mr.L.Venkatesan,
Chairman Elect of Builders' Association of India Southern Centre

Mr.Mohan,
Awards Committee Chairman

Mr.S.RamaPrabhu,
Hon.Secretary of Builders' Association of India,

Awardees

Distinguished Invitees

Friends from the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am here at the invitation of the Builders Association of India on the occasion of the Awards Function being held to recognize the talent and efforts of the leaders of the construction industry. I extend my best wishes to all the awardees who have toiled hard to become eligible for this historic recognition. I am thankful to the Builders Association of India for having organized such a function to honour the leaders of the construction industry.

The construction industry is one of the important contributors to the Indian economy. The industry alone accounts for a substantial share of the GDP. The significance of the industry apart from its contribution to GDP also lies in the enormous employment opportunities that it provides for unskilled and

untrained people coming into urban areas from the rural areas and the boost to their income that it is able to provide. As it is always said, food, clothing and shelter are basic needs of any society. Hence the farmer, weaver and the construction industry play a very important role in fulfilling the needs of the common people.

The construction industry has come a long way. I remember the periods of the 60s and 70s when most of the construction works were carried out by the State owned enterprises of Government departments. The structures were mostly of one or two storeys and were simple in design and construction. The involvement of the private sector in the construction industry and the development of public-private partnerships and mechanisms such as Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) have resulted in the construction industry undergoing a sea change. Today the construction industry comprises of 200 firms in the corporate sector. Besides this there are about 1 ½ lakh registered contractors of Class A category. The number of small contractors and sub-contractors is innumerable.

India with its large population and unprecedented levels of settlement in the urban areas will depend upon the construction industry in a big way in the coming years. For this, the industry will have to gear up itself by modernising its technologies modes of labour management and dealings with the customers and clients so as to get more confidence in their minds. In short, the construction industry should gain greater credibility in the minds of the clients and the workers. I do agree for all this the industry requires a lot of support.

In the Budget for 2018, the Central Government has laid a lot of emphasis on infrastructure development. The higher allocation for the

infrastructure segment will not only aid the construction industry but also enable the growth of many supporting industries such as the manufacture of cement, metals, building materials, etc. The spin-off effects as a result of the growth of the construction industry are tremendous.

Huge amounts of money have been allocated in the budget for railway projects and particularly for rural infrastructure. Following the footsteps of the Union Budget, many States have also provided large allocations for infrastructure development, irrigation projects, etc. There is therefore sufficient impetus to propel the construction industry forward.

Affordability of housing continues to be a major challenge for the industry. The construction industry has the argument that the input costs, particularly the cost of land has to be lower if the cost of apartments has to be reduced. The buyers feel that the increase in the prices of apartments in important and big cities has galloped far beyond their capacities and has thus become unaffordable. The right balance has to be struck. The drive against corruption, tax evasion and black money has resulted in the price of land going down in many cities in India. I am sure that this is going to help the construction industry substantially. They should reciprocate by lowering the prices of flats and apartments so as to make it affordable for the common man. With the large increase in the growth rates of economy and in the level of disposable incomes, the common man is now willing to borrow from banks to fund the purchase of apartments/flats. India is in a buoyant mood.

The State Governments can particularly help the construction industry by simplifying the procedures for layout approvals and building plan approvals. Corruption should be crushed with an iron hand and there should be

transparency in the submission and clearance of applications using the benefit of the online mode. Delays in clearing projects can also be avoided if awareness of the town planning and building plan approval rules is improved among the buyers and construction companies. The need of the hour is transparency and faster clearance of projects.

Institutions such as the Builders Association of India should look for construction material which is easy to access, affordable in cost and facilitates quick execution. Only then can we fulfil the dream of providing houses to all the houseless people of India.

I have gone around various districts and I am particularly impressed by the enormous attention paid to the construction of houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. As a novel measure, the Tamil Nadu government is contributing resources generously, under the centrally sponsored scheme of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Hence the houses that are built are more sturdy and last longer. The cost of the house is about Rs.1.7 lakhs, out of which Rs. 98,000/- is provided by the State Government alone. Measures such as this will go a long way towards providing houses to the underprivileged people in the rural areas. It is important to ensure that the selection of beneficiaries is done in a fair and transparent manner.

India has the largest scientific manpower in the world and Tamil Nadu accounts for the bulk of the engineers who pass out every year. These engineers and architects should pursue technologies and methods that are eco-friendly such as harnessing solar power for fulfilling the energy needs. This will help to reduce pollution and lead to healthier living conditions. There need to be

large scale adoption of measures for ensuring optimal utilisation of water and for recycling waste water and for solid waste management. Projects designed for the common people in urban areas should take into account all of the above to ensure that cities such as Chennai, Coimbatore, Trichy and Madurai do not have populations unsupported by civic infrastructure.

I am sure the leaders of the construction industry are aware of these issues and are closely looking at solutions to solve the problems. Some of them are being honoured today by the Builders Association of India. I call upon the leaders of today and the budding leaders of tomorrow to address themselves to solving the problems of the common man so that the needs of providing shelter for every family in Tamil Nadu are fully taken care of.

The construction industry deserves praise for the enormous contribution being made to the economy. Their efforts are propelling the economy forward and also provide employment opportunities to people who come in search of a livelihood.

Let us all focus our efforts on the national good so that our country may rise to greatness, fame and prosperity. I wish the members of the Builders Association of India success in their endeavours.

Nandri Vanakkam
Jai Hind Jai Tamil Nadu