

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT "KOVAI GETHU HEROES – 12 INSPIRING HEROES ONE
GETHU EVENING!" ORGANISED BY THE TIMES OF INDIA AT GOPALAPURAM,
COIMBATORE ON 04.07.2019 AT 6.00 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Thiru. Nizar Mohammed,
Vice President,
The Times of India

Thiru. Arun Ram,
Resident Editor,
The Times of India

Thiru. V.Lakshminarayananaswamy,
President,
Indian Chamber of Commerce

Thiru. Arunachalam Muruganandam,
Social Entrepreneur

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

I am happy to be here at the Kovai Gethu Heroes function being organized to honour achievers of Coimbatore who by their commitment to public welfare are serving as role models for the people of the City and the State.

Coimbatore is known for its industries and educational institutions and for its salubrious climate. It is also a city with a large number of good Samaritans, many of whom remain unacknowledged. It is to recognize the services of such people and to bring their work to light that this function has been organised by the Times of India.

Social service, which is synonymous with helping people in distress, has always been a part

of our tradition. Service to the poor is therefore considered by our people to be equivalent in importance and piety to service to God.

The principle of placing service above self lies at the core of India's psyche. Viewing the humanity of the world as one family is fundamental to our way of thinking and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is the driving force behind India's spirituality.

It is in this background that Swami Vivekananda feelingly spoke of 'Daridhra Narayana', which basically means that service to the poor is equivalent in importance and piety to service to God.

True to that tradition we have with us 12 Kovai heroes who by their selfless sacrifice have made a

mark for themselves for all times to come and thus created an indelible imprint in the hearts and minds of men.

They are

1. Thiru. P.K. Selvaraj, who by his efforts got a check dam at Salaiyur near Kovilpalayam renovated by the Government. After the renovation storage of flood waters became possible in the check dam resulting in the rise of ground water levels in Salaiyur.
2. Thiru. R. Manikandan - He was a part of the Kuruchi lake restoration team and his team in the last 2 years has brought about environmental restoration of many water bodies including the Vellalore Lake.

3. Thiru. K. Selvaraj - He founded a trust to extend support to those in need. The service began with 200 chairs and 20 tables. Today, his trust particularly focuses on providing services to the families of the deceased faced with financial problems.
4. Thiru. B. Pandiyarajan - A turner at a lathe workshop in Podanur by profession, he saves a portion of his meagre salary for making wooden boxes for sparrows to frequent and nest.
5. R. Vairamani - A lady who has displayed tremendous courage in the face of societal opposition, she has been living in seclusion, burying and cremating the dead and guarding

the crematorium at Chokkampudur for three decades now.

6. Thiru.Rajasethumurali - Using his paltry savings as an auto driver, he has been providing food for the poor patients and their attendants at the Government General Hospital in Coimbatore for last 15 years.

7. Thiru. V. Sivaswamy - He believes that if children finish their homework, they will be regular in school. Therefore, he offers free tuition for about 130 poor kids living in the rural suburbs of Coimbatore everyday.

8. Taslima Nasreen, who was abandoned by her family in Tirupur, is now running a trust in the name of 'Change' to help people from the

transsexual community. She has donated 250 mattresses, 500 bedsheets to the Coimbatore Medical College and Hospital.

9. Thiru. B. Murugan's Nizhal Maiyam has a number of donors and a huge family of volunteers whom Murugan calls as his family. He organizes food distribution, free of cost at orphanages and homes which offer shelter to the needy.

10. Thiru. A.Elamurgan, the Head Master at Government Higher Secondary School in Vagarayampalayam in Coimbatore district believed that a pleasant ambience will aid students in learning and therefore created a park around the school with his own funds. He

also provides free snacks and tiffin for students who are preparing for SSLC and Plus Two examinations.

11. Thiru. A. Loganathan - He earns money by cleaning toilets and urinal in hospitals and offices and uses his meagre savings to support government school students to pursue their education.

12. Thiru. C.Saravana Kumar - He has earned a reputation for fighting corruption. He refused to pay bribes for obtaining ration cards and the benefits of other government schemes and believes in leading a life of struggle for the sake of probity in public life.

I congratulate the 12 Kovai Gethu heroes who have been honoured today. Their effort is certain to prove as an inspiration for many more to follow in their footsteps.

Before I conclude, I wish to highlight three important points for your continued pursuit in thought and deed. The first one relates to Mother Nature. Live close to Nature for that is the message for sustainable development.

Mahatma Gandhi, in his writings mentioned, “Nature has enough to satisfy every man’s need but not enough to satisfy every man’s greed”. The earth gives us the air we breathe, the water we drink, the sun light we enjoy, the fire that helps us in cooking our food, the trees that give shade and

oxygen, etc. These are examples of Mother Nature's blessings to mankind. It is important that we recognize this and take steps to carry forward these blessings of Nature to our succeeding generations.

The second point relates to character building. Character building goes beyond being good. To be able to distinguish between good and evil and to stand on the side of goodness is the first step towards character building. One must have the courage of conviction in the greatness of goodness, rise above jealousy, suspicion and other petty failings and have the strength to support all those who are doing good. This is the true essence of character building.

The third point relates to the past, present and future. **“Learn from the past, live in the present and look towards the future”**. This will propel you towards happiness and achievement.

It is a matter of delight for me to be acknowledging the efforts of the Times of India for having organised this unique function. They have by their commitment to recognizing contributions made for social service risen to the pedestal of the high moral standards, wherein public good matters more than anything else. I extend my greetings to them and wish them success in all their endeavours.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Tamil Nadu....

Jai Hind....