

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE "RIVER CAUVERY THE MOST REVERED YET THE MOST
BATTLE (R)ED" BOOK LAUNCH FUNCTION ORGANISED BY TAMIL NADU
CAUVERY DELTA FARMERS WELFARE ASSOCIATION AT T.A.G.
AUDITORIUM, SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HIGH SEC. SCHOOL, T.NAGAR,
CHENNAI ON 11.05.2019 AT 6.00 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Sri-la-sri Masilamani Desika Gnanasambandha Swamigal,
Ilya Sannidanam Dharmapura Adheenam

Thiru. La. Ganesan,
Former Member of Parliament

Thiru. S. Renganathan,
General Secretary

Thiru. K. V. Kannan,
Vice President,

**Distinguished Invitees
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me great happiness to be here today at the function organised by Tamil Nadu Cauvery Farmers Welfare Association for the release of the book "River Cauvery the most revered yet the most battle(r)ed" written by Thiru. K.V. Kannan. The book extensively covers the literary, cultural and utilitarian aspects of the river and specially focuses on the proceedings that took place in the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal and the Supreme Court of India.

The river Cauvery also known as Ponni or the Golden River is the largest river of Tamil Nadu. Originating in the foothills of Western Ghats at Talakaveri, the river flows eastwards across the southern Deccan plateau joining the Bay of Bengal at Poompuhar in the Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu. The Cauvery delta forms one of the most fertile regions in the country.

The river basin covers the three states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and the Union Territory of Pondicherry. Hence, the river is the source for an extensive irrigation system supporting extensive tracts of agriculture in the riparian states. Since the Cauvery serves as the substantial source of livelihood of the people in the areas it irrigates, and is the main provider of food to the people of Tamil Nadu the river is worshipped as the Mother who takes care of the State with love and affection.

The documented link between Cauvery and Tamil Nadu is more than 2000 years old. Ancient Tamil Literature has vivid descriptions of the Cauvery and her bounty. There are numerous references to the river in the Silappathikaram, Manimegalai, Kamba Ramayanam, Periya Puranam, Thevaram etc.

The great Tamil classic of the 20th century 'Ponniyin Selvan' refers to Raja Raja Chola the greatest king of the Chola dynasty as the child of the river Cauvery since he was saved from drowning at the age of five years thanks to the blessings of the river.

Mythologically, the Cauvery is linked with Sage Agastya who granted her the boon of being the Dhakshina Ganga and stored the water in his Kamandalam. Lord Ganesha in the form of a crow tipped the Kamandalam and caused the water to spill resulting in the birth of a river. It is said that the river takes its name from the two words 'Ka' and 'Viri' which means the crow and the expansion of water respectively.

The major rivers of India originate from one of the following main watersheds.

- a. The Aravalli hills
- b. The Himalayas, the abode of snow
- c. The Sahyadri or the Western Ghats and

d. The Vindhya and Satpura ranges

The major Himalayan Rivers are the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra. The Yamuna and Sabarmathi originate in the Aravalli hills. The Godavari, Krishna and the Cauvery have their origins in the Western Ghats while the Narmada has its source in the Vindhya mountain ranges.

The Cauvery is classified as among the sacred rivers of India.

Many are the temples that are located on the banks of the Cauvery. The temple of Ranganatha in Sri Rangam is among the most important temples located on the Cauvery. Here the presiding deity faces south i.e., towards Sri Lanka. It is said that when Vibhishana accompanied Rama to Ayodhya after the battle in Sri Lanka, Rama gifted him an idol of Maha Vishnu and told him take it straight to Lanka. However Vibhishana absent mindedly placed the idol on the ground, at Sri Rangam when he stopped on the way to say his evening prayers. The idol remained transfixed to the ground and Vibhishana could not lift it again. The Tanjore Big Temple built up Rajaraja is another famous temple on the Cauvery. Here the presiding deity is Mahadev with the name of Brihadeeshwara. Similarly the temples at Kodumudi, Kumbakonam, Mayavaram, Thirunageswaram, Thiruvudaimaruthur, Kuttalam, Thiruvaiyaru and Thiru Anaikaval to mention a few bear ample testimony to the devotion of the people who reside on the banks of the Cauvery and the patronage of the kings who ruled the territories here.

The Cauvery is a multi state river. Agreements executed between the Government of Madras and the kingdom of Mysore upto the year 1924 governed the various aspects of dam construction, monitoring of flow in the river, and the shares of the parties with regard to the available water. Disputes started surfacing when State Governments started asserting for additional construction of dams to expand the area covered

by irrigation. The River Boards Acts of 1956 and the Inter State Water Disputes Act of 1956 provided the mechanism for the resolution of such disputes. The River Boards Act required all the parties to come together to form a Board with mutually agreed set of terms and conditions. Since such consensus is rare to see the River Boards Act has been scarcely put to use. In contrast, under the Water Disputes Act, any state affected could approach the Central Government for the setting up of a Tribunal to resolve the issue. Accordingly when the dispute arose over the sharing of Cauvery Water between the Governments of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the Government of Tamil Nadu approached the Centre for the setting up of a Tribunal. The proceedings before the Tribunal and the Supreme Court went on for almost 30 years after which the award on the sharing of water among the riparian territories of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Pondicherry was notified in the Gazette. This was subsequently approved by the Supreme Court with some minor changes in the States respective shares.

Today we are at the stage of handholding and seeing through to success the mechanism for ensuring proper implementation of judicial directions.

A long and tortuous path has already been traversed. It is necessary as law abiding citizens for all stake holders to adhere to the directions of the apex court of the land in letter and spirit. It is this spirit which will enable the building up of trust and confidence and result in the smooth operation of the mechanism that will ensure appropriate distribution of waters among the 3 States and the Union territory in a lawful and orderly manner.

It is also important to keep in mind that irrigation using river water and ground water has been an important reason for raising the food grain production in India from a mere 50 million tonnes in the 1950s to

285 million tonnes at present, leading India to attain self-sufficiency in food. Irrigated area has increased from 22 million hectares to nearly 100 million hectares during this period. The population of India is expected to cross 150 crores by the year 2050 and that would require about 450 million tonnes of food grains. For meeting this requirement, it would be necessary to increase irrigation potential to 160 million hectares by 2050.

The Brahmaputra and Ganga, Mahanadi, Godavari and the West Flowing Rivers originating in the Western Ghats are surplus in water resources. If we can build storage reservoirs on these rivers and connect them to other parts of the country, regional imbalances could be reduced significantly and benefits gained by way of additional irrigation, hydropower generation, navigational facilities etc.

Work on five such major river linking projects, including the one that would transfer surplus water from Godavari to Cauvery is underway. The effort is estimated to cost about Rs.50,000 crores and will bring nearly 1100 tmc feet of surplus water from the Godavari to the Cauvery benefitting Tamil Nadu substantially.

The book on Cauvery written by Thiru. K.V. Kannan has been the result of painstaking efforts and hard labour over many years. Generations to come will be immensely benefitted by the faithful documentation concisely brought out by him. Hailing from Kattumannar koil in Cuddalore, Thiru. Kannan has been a practising farmer for more than 50 years with long years of experience in serving farmers association and movements. I compliment him for his contributions aimed at enhancing the welfare of the farmers of the Cauvery delta and extend my best wishes and warm greetings to him. May the release of the book mark the end of feelings of hostility and renewal of ties of friendship and warmth among the various states irrigated by the

Cauvery. May this mother of rivers continue to provide sustenance, success and prosperity for many more thousands of years as she has been doing all through history.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Hind.....