

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE INAUGURATION OF ARIYALUR BOOK FAIR 2019
ORGANISED BY THAMIZH CULTURAL ACADEMY AT GOVERNMENT HIGHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL PLAY GROUND, ARIYALUR
ON 19.07.2019 AT 5.00 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Thiru. S.Rajendran, M.L.A.,
Chief Whip, Tamil Nadu Assembly

Thiru. K.N.Ramajayalingam, M.L.A.,
Jayankondam

Thiru. R.T. Ramachandran, M.L.A.,
Kunnam

Thiru. T.G. Vinai, I.A.S.,
District Collector, Ariyalur

Thiru. V.R. Srinivasan,
District Superintendent of Police, Ariyalur

Thiru. Seeni Balakrishnan,
President, Tamizh Cultural Academy

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me great joy to be here today at the inauguration of the fifth book fair organised by the Thamizh Cultural Academy.

The district of Ariyalur has a rich and glorious past. Particularly significant in history is Gangaikonda Cholapuram which was the capital of the Imperial Cholas more than a thousand years back. The Cholas contributed immensely for the development of art and architecture and these are visible in the large number of temples constructed by them. Tamil Poets and Scholars like U.Vee.Swaminatha Ayyar also lived here in Ariyalur and Udayarpalayam.

I am informed that this book fair being organised at Ariyalur is gaining in popularity since

books on a set of wide ranging topics are being made available here, for the benefit of the common public.

A book fair is a celebration of books; it is a celebration of the reading habit. It is a celebration of authors and thinkers; it is a celebration of knowledge itself.

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the Second President of India once said “Books are the means by which we build bridges between cultures”.

When children develop the love of reading at an early age, their language skills grow, their imagination is enriched, their world becomes a world of wonder and they later easily adapt to the

reading-focussed learning environment of their classrooms.

For books are friends that open themselves to us at our will and convenience sharing all that they have! What would many of us be without the values and sense of adventure that books bequeathed us! Books give us the wisdom and strength to face the challenges of life!

Great men change the world, but it is books that change great men. Take Gandhiji for example. His life was profoundly changed after he read John Ruskin's 'Unto This Last' on a train ride from Johannesburg to Durban in South Africa on October first, 1904.

Influenced by the book, he established the

Phoenix Settlement where he and his co-workers practiced the ideals put forth by 'Unto this last'!

Steve Jobs who gave the cell phone company 'Apple' to the world was deeply drawn to the Indian spiritual tradition; Paramahansa Yogananda's 'Autobiography of a Yogi' influenced him profoundly. In fact, at his memorial service it was copies of this book that were distributed!

At a book fair, there is a joy of finding all the books from the publishing industry right at our doorstep. There is the possibility of meeting a favourite author at the fair and getting one's books autographed by him. That would forge a direct connection with the source and inspiration of one's ideas! There is the occasion of finding a book-

lover friend at the fair and making a foray into the world of books with him or her.

At the root of all great books, are exemplary human qualities like hard work, selflessness, social concern, truth, sincerity and the like. Such qualities are reflected by great biographies, and by great fiction and inspired poetry as well, and by self-improvement works too. It is the reader's challenge to find the author who will truly lead him forward to greater horizons.

In India, we have hoary and beautiful traditions connected with the writing of great works and the making of masterpieces. Lord Ganapathi takes upon himself the challenge of writing down the extensive Mahabharatha even as Sage Vyasa

dictates it. And the Valmiki Ramayana is borne out of the compassion that flowers in Sage Valmiki's heart when he sees a bird of a pair of lovebirds being brought down by a hunter's arrow!

There is indeed a lot about which Tamil and Tamilians can be proud about. During the last 21 months of my stay in the State, I have been greatly attracted to the Thirukkural and the book has made an indelible imprint on my mind.

This famous creation of Thiruvalluvar focuses almost on all aspects of life. It is loaded with nuggets of wisdom on good governance, planning, specialization, merit selection, placement, communication, equality, time management, financial management, water management, etc.

These valuable pearls of wisdom are relevant to present day living.

It is appealing to the mind and sweet to the ears and conveys the maximum in the minimum words. Its construction resembles that of a design in a mosaic.

Mahathma Gandhi after reading a translation of Thirukkural remarked “The maxims of Thiruvalluvar have touched my heart and soul. There is none who has given such a treasure of wisdom like him.”

One is reminded of a poem by Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai in this regard. He calls the Thirukkural a dictionary of ethics for all humanity to live a life of happiness. He goes on to add that the

Ramayana as presented by Kambar, illustrates through the narrative of Rama's life all the great values embodied in the Thirukkural.

The unparalleled Tiruvalluvar gives the nature of the quality of good books in the seven hundred and eighty third verse, 'Navil thorum Nool Nayam'. In this verse, he uses good books as to good men of character. He says that one's experience of such persons is like the reading of good books. As we keep associating with great men of substance, we learn greater dimensions of their nobility even as good works keep yielding newer and deeper thoughts with every reading!

I wish to conclude by mentioning about a pithy saying that I came across when I was reading a

book on the way to Ariyalur. The saying ran thus “If you only read the books that everyone else is reading you can only think what everyone else is thinking”. From this one can infer two things namely that books spur on your thoughts and that you should be careful about the books that you choose to read. As they say if consumed in excess even nectar works like a poison. The same is true of books also. We should not only be selective about the books that we choose to read, we should also not cram our brains with too much of material. Excessive crowding in the brain stamps out creativity.

The efforts of the Thamizh Cultural Academy deserve praise for having organized this useful

book fair. I am sure the people of Ariyalur and book lovers from all over Tamil Nadu and beyond will make the best use of the fair. I call upon all the book lovers assembled here to spread the word about good books found in the fair. So that they get widely propagated. Let us not forget the maxim “Books are our best companions”.

I congratulate the Tamil Cultural Academy for having taken painstaking efforts to organize this function. May success greet them in all their endeavours. I extend my best wishes and greetings to all of you from the bottom of my heart.

Nandri Vanakkam...

Jai Tamil Nadu....

Jai Hind....