

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE INAUGURATION OF 5TH YOUTH HEALTH MELA -2019
ORGANISED BY CANCER INSTITUTE (WIA) AT VALLUVAR KOTTAM,
CHENNAI ON 28.06.2019 AT 10.30 A,M**

Anaivarukkum Kaalai Vanakkam

Dr. V.Shanta,
Chairperson,
Cancer Institute

Dr. R. Swaminathan,
Assistant Director,
Cancer Institute

Dr. V. Surendran,
Head of Psycho-oncology,
Cancer Institute

Thiru. C. Newton Raj,
Associate Manager,
HCL Foundation

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

I am delighted to be here today at the 5th Youth Health Mela – 2019 being organised by the Cancer Institute of the Women's India Association. It is heartening to see the Cancer Institute promoting this massive awareness initiative for promoting healthy lifestyles year after year.

As you are all aware, the Cancer institute was established as a voluntary, charitable institution in 1954. The initiative came from Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy and began frugally as a cottage hospital with 12 beds. Today it is a comprehensive cancer centre with 510 beds providing state-of-the-art facilities for both diagnosis and treatment to any cancer patient irrespective of their socio-economic status. Of the hospital beds, only 40% are paying

beds and the remaining are general beds where patients are lodged free of cost. The hospital sees over 1,50,000 cancer patients, new and old, annually and they are drawn from all over the country.

The Youth Health Mela has been conceived by the Cancer Institute with the objective to create a heightened awareness on many of the issues concerning undesirable lifestyle behaviours and to emphasise the need for urgent attitudinal and policy changes amongst all stakeholders in society so as to protect millions of youth who are our greatest asset and thereby build a healthy and vibrant nation.

This event is the need of the hour. Globally fifteen million people die prematurely from Non Communicable Diseases, with over 85 percent of these deaths occurring in low - and middle - income countries. Non Communicable diseases kill 10 people every second in India. Cancer, Cardiovascular disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Diabetes are the main NCDs accounting for a substantial percentage of the mortality rates in India. These premature deaths reduce productivity, curtail economic growth and trap populations in poverty. The underlying determinants of these diseases and their shared risk factors clearly show that multisectoral, responses are required to prevent

and control them. This requires sustained action in a concerted and well coordinated manner.

It has been observed that lifestyle related factors are mainly responsible for these non communicable diseases. Rapid urbanization has led to an increase in harmful behavioural patterns such as increased consumption of hastily cooked low-nutritive foods, reduced physical activity and increased exposure to alcohol and tobacco. Most premature NCD deaths are preventable by taking cost-effective action to tackle the main behavioural risk factors namely tobacco use, use of alcohol, physical inactivity and unhealthy diet. It is estimated that by just tackling these risk factors,

80% of the premature deaths caused by NCDs can be prevented.

Lack of physical activity the main factor behind diabetes and obesity, cardiac failure and stroke contributes to around 3,00,000 deaths every year in India alone.

Similarly, another common risk factor causing a high incidence of mortality is tobacco usage. It is the leading cause of death among Indians between 30-69 years of age and is a major health menace which kills or disables individuals in their most productive years. Rough Estimates show that more than 50% of the tobacco users are concerned about their tobacco usage. But they are not able to give up the habit since they do not

know how to go about it. Events such as this Mela will show them the way.

Addressing NCDs is also integral to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Achieving the NCD-related Sustainable Development Goal targets can deliver shared gains across the development agenda, given the multidimensional relationship between NCDs and poverty, inequalities in economic growth and poor achievement of other SDG goals and targets. The World Health Assembly has therefore in 2017, endorsed a set of affordable, evidence-based interventions for the prevention and control of NCDs in all Member Countries.

I am sure that all of you agree that the secret to happiness lies in leading a healthy life. To the people of the State, particularly the younger generation, I wish to advise moderation in their diet, if they want to lead healthy lives.

In this context I can give the illustration of the liver, an important organ of the body which performs the useful function of neutralising the toxic substances in the human body. Most of the liver related ailments can be prevented by regular exercise, avoiding alcohol consumption and a healthy diet intake. Nowadays, it is not uncommon to find youngsters in their thirties developing liver cirrhosis. Lack of exercise along with consumption of alcohol is the main reason for this liver health

crisis. The need for a transplant occurs when the liver suffers such decline and decay. This causes great mental trauma besides imposing a financial burden on the family.

It is always advisable to avoid having to go to a doctor by adopting preventive measures. But if the need has already arisen, I am sure everybody in the audience agrees that doctor must be consulted as early as possible so that corrective curative measures can be immediately taken. The Mela also provides valuable insights into how diseases like cancer are easily curable if they are detected early.

I have with me on stage today an eminent doctor Dr. V. Shanta, the Chairperson of the

Cancer Institute who was honoured with the Padma Vibhushan in the year 2016. I am sure that she will vouchsafe for this advice of mine.

The Youth Health Mela has been programmed to be a 3 day event and shall consist of a Youth Health exhibition where scientific and evidence based information relating to the 4 focus areas are going to be presented in an interactive manner to the public so as to encourage them to change hazardous lifestyle behaviours. The event will also provide a platform to bring together scientists and policy makers to enable transfer of scientific knowledge essential to policy makers on matters related to Non Communicable Diseases. Competitions at the school and college levels have

been scheduled so as to provide an opportunity for the youth to ponder over issues concerning NCDs. To urge the public to incorporate healthy eating and nutritive millets in their daily life a 'traditional ethnic food court' has been set up where simple foods made from millets, greens and other nutritive items will be available for sale and display. Public and cultural events such as 'Meet the experts', 'Yoga', 'Kalaripayattu', 'Move to music', etc are programmed to be conducted in the evenings to urge the public to take up healthy recreational activities.

I wish the Mela all success and I am sure that the Cancer Institute, Chennai will continue to support such noble initiatives so as to enable

people to lead healthier lives. They have been indeed been performing a noble service to humanity, to the state and to the nation all these decades and I wish them may more decades of distinguished service. May they be rewarded with glory in all their endeavours.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Tamil Nadu...

Jai Hind....