

**ADDRESS BY THIRU CH.VIDYASAGAR RAO, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU AT THE
INAUGURATION OF SMILE TRAIN BLOCK AT MEENAKSHI HOSPITAL, THANJAVUR ON
13/10/2016 AT 06.00 PM**

Vanakkam

Dr.S.Gurushankar, Chairman, Tmt. Kamini Gurushankar, Dr.Saumya Tripathi, Dr.Ravi Chandran, Medical Superintendent, Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur, Dr.P.R.Subas Chandran, Doctors and staff of Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur.

I am happy to be in Thanjavur, a city known for its ancient history, culture, architecture and landmarks. I fondly recall that on 29th September, I unveiled the portrait of Naval Emperor Rajendra Chola-I at Mazagan Dock in Mumbai and the very next month I am visiting his kingdom is something a memorable event in my life. Adding more glory to the city, Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur, under the stewardship of Dr.Gurushankar is offering free cleft – lip – palate correctional services to children.

It is worrying to note that The Indian Journal of Plastic Surgery states that in India out of 24.5 million births a year there are about 27,000 to 33,000 children born with cleft lips every year. I am told that 1 in every 1000 new born children in India is with cleft lip & palate.

The Cleft lip & Palate is found more in rural children and many have no access to counseling or to the care and treatment to be given. It is sad to see that the children are called by nick names because of their deformity. The parents have no knowledge and awareness that the cleft Lip & Palate can be corrected by minor surgery. The lack of knowledge and resources result in unacceptable delays in seeking and receiving adequate medical care.

I am thankful to Dr.Gurushankar for inviting me to inaugurate the 'Smile Train Block.'

Generally when a leader or a Minister or a politician is invited to inaugurate a hospital or a Court building, after inaugurating, the difficulty arises while addressing the gathering; we cannot say the hospital to be filled with patients nor the Court to be filled with litigants and the advocates with more cases. We pray for peace and good health to prevail. However every hospital should serve as a destination for good healthcare. Good treatment and care with a human touch is the birth right of every patient.

I am confident Dr.Gurushankar's Hospital in Thanjavur would serve as quality healthcare destination. Dr.Gurushankar's service is commendable. I wish more doctors and hospitals like this come up to provide quality healthcare to the people in villages at an affordable cost.

I congratulate Dr.Gurushankar for performing nearly 11,000 free cleft – lip – palate correctional services including post-operative support such as free boarding, lodging, medicine and regular follow-ups. I am told that this achievement is one of the highest numbers of procedures in South India. I am happy to honour him for his dedicated service. His service with compassion will be recognised not only in our country but also across the world. I wish him all success in his service to the poor especially children affected by cleft lips in the villages.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

In this context I like to share my experience I had in my constituency, Karimnagar.

When I was touring in my constituency I saw a 17 year old girl running after my car. I stopped the vehicle and enquired. I found that she was having Cleft lip and was requesting for surgery so that it could be corrected. I called the Sarpanch and elders & villagers and asked them to get that girl to Hyderabad so that she can be operated upon. But it took one year for them to get her to me. I had to send a vehicle to get her and get operated. After some months, I received a letter and a marriage invitation card with a photo of the girl. It is really a miracle that by a small surgery her cleft lip had been corrected and her lips were made into normal and she was getting married.

I was happy that I could be of some help because of the able service provided by the doctors. Not only the girl but her parents and the entire family were happy because of this. It brought her a new life.

Here at this juncture I would like to commend the dedicated services rendered by doctors to the poor and needy.

Dear Doctors,

I appeal to you to go on hunt for such poor children who have cleft lip and palate and who cannot afford to undergo the surgery. The NGOs, all elected representatives starting from Village to town should join hands to extend a helping hand to identify those with cleft lip and palate and facilitate them to get corrected by surgery. It would also be nice if some sort of incentive is given to those who identify and bring such children or persons affected by cleft lip & palates so that a new lease of life could be given to such people.

Ladies & Gentlemen

I see a lot of philanthropists present here. I appeal to you to create awareness among the patients in rural areas and to support for such a noble cause.

People living in rural areas and smaller towns should get quality healthcare facilities. I am pleased to learn that 'Smile Train India' is an international children's Charity organization with a sustainable approach to a single, solvable problem: cleft lip and palate and it has partners and programmes in over 80 countries.

I congratulate Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur for empowering villages through qualitative and affordable health care service in and around Thanjavur.

I appreciate the doctors, technicians, nurses and all those associated with the Meenaksi Hospital, Thanjavur for joining hands to provide a patient-friendly care.

Jai Hind . Jai Tamil Nadu.

NANRI.
