

**ADDRESS BY SHRI CH VIDYASAGAR RAO, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU AT THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF WOMEN'S INDIAN ASSOCIATION AT THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY ADYAR, CHENNAI AT 12 NOON ON 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2017**

Hon'ble President of India **Shri Pranab Mukherjee**, Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare & Nutritious Noon Meal Programme, Govt. of Tamil Nadu **Dr. V. Saroja**, **Smt Padma Venkataraman**, President, Women's Indian Association, **Dr.V.Shantha**, Chairman, Cancer Institute, **Smt. Krishnammal Jagannathan**, Social Activist, **Ms. M. Bargavi Devendra**, Honorary Secretary, Office Bearers and Members of Women's Indian Association, distinguished invitees, Friends from Media, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to participate in the Centenary Celebrations of Women's Indian Association in which Hon'ble President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, an elderly statesman and an erudite scholar is participating as Chief Guest.

At the outset, I congratulate the Women's Indian Association for recognizing the two great women, Dr.V.Shantha, Chairman, Cancer Institute and Thirumati Krishnammal Jagannathan, Social Activist and Gandhian, at its centenary celebrations for their contribution to the society.

Women are the pivot around which the family revolves. Education is the most important instrument through which human resources can be developed. This enables one, to acquire basic skills and inculcate abilities, which are helpful for socio-economic development of women. Empowerment of women through education will help in development of a harmonious and stable society.

Women in our society play different roles as a mother, a sister, a wife and many more, making them adept at multi-tasking by nature and inevitably being the source of the strength and success of every man. Women's participation in nation building enriches the fabric of our nation. In the Vedic Times, women enjoyed a high status in the society. Later, the advent of foreign rule in India made women to be confined to the four walls. Thanks to initiatives taken by the social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhiji, the status of women in India improved. Mahatma Gandhiji motivated large number of women to join our nation's freedom movement. In this historic occasion for Women's Indian Association, I would like to underline the role played by the past members and women leaders of yesteryears of this Association in our nation's freedom movement.

The voice of women is now being heard in Parliament and in international forums. Women deserve honour, respect and love. They have been a symbol of reverence and a repository of our cultural values. Yet in some places we see incidents of violence and harassment of women.

Our nation is on the path of empowering women and girls by providing them access to education and economic opportunities especially to the unreached. Women in rural areas should utilize these opportunities. I appeal to the students to educate and assist the poor and

economically backward girls in their studies. The youth should educate women in rural areas on use of ATMs, Mobile Banking and IT enabled services.

I congratulate Women's Indian Association for dedicating itself for the cause of women's issues, promotion of women's literacy & education and for its role in abolishing Devadasi system and bringing in Sarada Act for raising the marriage age of women and preventing childhood marriages. Its initiatives to promote national integration and peace deserves appreciation.

I am pleased to learn that it has about 50 Branches and has spread its wings from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. The concerted efforts of Office Bearers & Members of Women's Indian Association to bring about change in perception of society about women and highlight importance of role of women in nation building deserves commendation.

I appeal to young women to join hands with the Women's Indian Association in large numbers to bring more and more women to the mainstream.

As Chancellor of Universities in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, it is my personal experience that a majority of university toppers in all major streams are girl students. There are more women at the Post Graduate level and Ph Ds. But very few make it as Professors or researchers. We need to change this picture and encourage more women to pursue their career.

A survey conducted by an American think tank covering 22000 publicly-traded companies in over 91 countries, showed that companies employing 30 percent and more female executives earn more profits. So it makes a sound economic sense to employ more women as Professors, as Board Members and in all other professions.

I congratulate women for their indispensable role in making our country economically stronger and for joining hands to make India a global leader. I wish Women's Indian Association all success in its future endeavours.

**Jai Hind ! Jai Tamil Nadu !!**

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