

**ADDRESS BY THIRU. BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF  
TAMILNADU AT THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF PHOTO EXHIBITION OF  
KASHMIR, THE CROWN OF INDIA AT C.P ART CENTRE, CHENNAI ON 16<sup>TH</sup>  
DECEMBER 2017 at 11:00 A.M.**

Dr. Nanditha Krishna, President,  
The C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation

Thiru. T.K.V. Rajan,  
Founder-Director, Indian Science Monitor

Tmt. Kausalya Santhanam,  
Curator, C.P. Art Centre

Dr. S. Ravichandran,  
Former Vice-Chancellor, St. Peter's University,  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Dr. M.G.R. Educational and Research Institute, Chennai and  
Honorary Adviser, Indian Science Monitor.

It is a pleasure to inaugurate the exhibition of rare photographs titled 'Kashmir, the Crown of India' and release the students awareness Book let 'Incredible Kashmir' written by Thiru. T.K.V.Rajan and address this distinguished gathering.

Jammu & Kashmir is at the Northern tip of India and Kashmir in Tamil Nadu is of the Southern tip of India. Hence the use of the term 'Kashmir to Kanniyakumari', India is 'me' is common among the Indian people. Our Hon'ble Prime Minister who launched the scheme 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' has declared Jammu & Kashmir as the partner state of Tamil Nadu under the scheme.

Hon'ble Prime Minister propounded that cultural diversity is a joy that ought to be celebrated through mutual interaction & reciprocity between people of different States and UTs so that a common spirit of understanding resonates throughout the country. Under this scheme every State and UT in the country is paired with another State/UT for a year, during which they carry out a structured engagement with one another in the spheres of language, literature, cuisine, festivals, cultural events, tourism etc.

Kashmir derives its name from the sage Kashyap who lived there several millennia back. After that the Valley of Kashmir was the subject of several classics of literature including the famous 'Rajatarangini' of Kalhana. The Mughal Kings were fond of Kashmir and called it a paradise on earth.

Adi Shankara who journeyed upto Kashmir established the supremacy of Indian Culture and tradition upto its northern point. Sufi ideas percolated into Kashmir in the last millennium after the spread of Islamic tenets in India with the arrival of Turkish and Afghan rule over Delhi.

For ages, Kashmir has preached unity in diversity. Hindus & Muslims have been living in harmony since 13<sup>th</sup> century when Islam emerged as a major religion in Kashmir. The Rishi tradition of Kashmiri Hindus and Sufi- Islamic way of life of Kashmiri Muslims coexisted and complemented each other. This created a unique ethnicity in which Hindus and Muslims visited the same shrines and venerated the same saints.

During the periods of King Lalithaditya & Avanthivarman, the whole gamut of Kashmir's cultural, artistic, philosophical and literary traditions including architecture, sculpture, folk arts, festivals, rituals, as well performing arts like music, dance, and classical theatre played a prominent role in enriching the cultural life which pulsated throughout India. For instance, the dance dramas of Kashmir poet Khemendra were staged in Kerala.

Right from ancient times, Kashmir has become a spiritual clearing house, a laboratory to nourish and shape new thoughts, and a place where scholars concur, converse and concur to develop thinking process, language, logic, aesthetics, religions, philosophies, music, dance etc. Scholars and spiritual seekers from Kashmir moved regularly from Kashmir to various parts of India and Central Asia, viz. China, Russia, Tibet and Afghanistan and vice versa.

Kashmir was also a great seat of learning and higher education in the past. Students from various parts of India, studied at the university attached to Sharada Peeth in Kashmir valley. According to several Tibetan and Chinese chronicles thousands of pilgrims and scholars used to visit Kashmir for higher learning.

Thus every citizen of India should know how invaluable has been the contribution of Kashmir to our culture in the past 3000 years and why should we strive to protect it for India's glorious future.

The seamless integrity of India in terms of cultural traditions and religious processes have thus been already established by history that the place is one of the states of India. It is our duty to promote national integration and to preserve the unity and integrity of India. The Govt. has been taking a number of steps to support and work for the economic upliftment of the people of Kashmir, who are our brothers and sisters.

I do not know as to how many people have visited Kashmir from among the audience here. I can speak from personal experience that Kashmir is one of the most beautiful places on this earth. The gardens and orchards, the lakes and mountains provide a picturesque spectacle unparelled in natural beauty and splendor.

I am pleased to learn that this archaeological and cultural exhibition showcases the invaluable contribution of Kashmir to our culture in the past 3000 years and why should we strive to protect it.

This exhibition contains about 30 display boards with photos and descriptions including about strategic location of Kashmir & its bio diversity, Sharada Peeth, the university, visit of great scholars, importance of Sharada script, etc.

It is important to establish cultural exchanges between people of different regions, as a means to further human bonding and a common approach to nation-building. Mutual understanding and trust are the foundations of India's strength and all citizens should feel culturally integrated in all corners of India.

Through this innovative measure, the knowledge of the culture, traditions and practices of different states & UTs will lead to an enhanced understanding and bonding between the states, thereby strengthening the unity and integrity of India.

My Greetings to you all.

Jai Hind. Jai Tamil Nadu

