

ADDRESS BY THIRU. BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU AT THE SPECIAL PROGRAMME ON BETI BACHAO, BETI PADHAO AT DURBAR HALL, RAJ BHAVAN, CHENNAI ON 28.12.2017 AT 05.30 PM

Dr. V. Saroja

Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare & Nutritious Noon meal Programme

Dr. C. Vijayabaskar

Hon'ble Minister for Health & Family Welfare

Thiru R.Rajagopal

Addl. Chief Secretary

Thiru. Anurag Misra

Director, Song and Drama Division, Distinguished Invitees, Members of the various cultural groups who will be performing today, Friends from Press & Media, Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me immense pleasure to launch this special initiative of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao in the State of Tamil Nadu. The programme highlights the importance of laying focus on the girl child as the harbinger of growth and prosperity. We are a nation with people of various faiths living in harmony. All our religions teach us to respect our women. We salute and respect our nation as Bharat Mata and Mother India. Vande Mataram was the inspiring war cry which drove out the British and brought freedom to India. Geographically also, the northernmost state of India is Jammu & Kashmir which has the famous shrine of Vaishno Devi. The southern most State of India is Tamil Nadu which has the great temple of Kanyakumari to which I had gone a few days back. Hence culturally speaking India worships the Mother goddess, in all its regions from the north to the extreme south.

We believe in the concept of Nari Shakthi or Women Power. The concept of Durga as the protector of the human race is embodied in the celebrations of Navarathri, on which day we narrate hymns on her victory over the evil forces. Navarathri is celebrated all over India and in Nagpur from where I hail, the celebrations of Vijayadasami the tenth day of victory, are organized on a grand scale.

While we celebrate the power of Shakthi in religion and culture, history also speak about the great women leaders who adorned our illustrious array of thinkers, poetesses and warriors. *Avvaiyar* was one of the most famous and important female poets of Tamil Sangam. Karaikkal Ammaiyar a great philosopher has sung devotional hymns which inspire the soul. Women like Rani Laxmi Bai, Ahilyabai Holkar, Rani Mangammal, Kittur Chennamma and Velu Nachiyar are some of the important generals who fought with courage and bravery to defeat the oppressor. In recent times also some outstanding women leaders in Literature, Medicine and politics shine as examples of glory to womendhood and women power. I can recall the services of Sarojini Naidu, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, Ambujammal, Indira Gandhi, Mother Teresa and Kalpana Chavala in this context. Among the living icons one may mention Saina Nehwal, P.V.Sindhu, Sania Mirza, Malleswari, Mary Kom, Geeta Phogat, Dipa Karmakar, Mithali Dorai Raj as some of the outstanding personalities who have done us proud in the field of sports. Music and dance have also witnessed many famous personalities among women such as Rukmini Devi Arundale, Dr.M.S.Subbulakshmi and Balasaraswati.

While there are leading women achievers, it is also true that hundreds of years of foreign rule in India starting from the beginning of 13 Century till almost the middle of the 20th Century have created a number of factors in society that suppressed women and kept them confined to the kitchen. Hence, India witnessed disparities in development which affected

women adversely. After Independence there has been an improvement in the conditions of women in a gradual manner only.

The launch of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Thiru Narendra Modi ji in January 2015 has provided a special thrust to enabling women and girls to overcome the social barriers that prevent their access to education and freedom.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Thiru Narendra Modi Ji has said and I quote,

“Let us celebrate the birth of the girl child. We should be equally proud of our daughters. I urge you to sow five plants when your daughter is born to celebrate the occasion.”

“Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao - Save girl child, educate a girl child” is a social campaign by the Government of India that aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls. The objectives of this initiative is Prevention of gender biased sex selective elimination, Ensuring survival & protection of the girl child, ensuring education and participation of the girl child. The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme was initially implemented in 161 districts across the country. In Tamil Nadu, Cuddalore was the only district from out of this list. Looking at the encouraging results of implementation in 161 districts and magnitude of the problem and its spread across the country, it was realized that no district can be left out of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao ambit. Accordingly, the Central Government has given its approval for expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao for a Pan India reach covering all the 640 districts of the country. The latest reports as per data of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for 161 BBBP districts indicate that for the time period between April-March, 2015-16 & 2016-17, an improving trend in Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) is visible in 104 districts and 119 districts have reported progress in first trimester registration against the reported total number of Anti Natal Care registrations. 146 districts have reported improvement in institutional deliveries. In Cuddalore district also the Sex Ratio at Birth has shown an improving trend by 101 Points from 856 to 957 females for every 1000 male children that are born. The percentage of Institutional Deliveries is 100% as per the Health Management Information System (HMIS) for the years 2014-15 and 2015-16.

The creation of awareness among the people in all the districts of the country is the need of the hour. Schools and institutions of higher learning can do a lot in this regard. This is a task in which the support of the central Government, State Governments, NGOs, Civic societies and media etc is essential. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has thought of a novel way of spreading the message through the medium of music, dance and folk arts. I congratulate them on this excellent and creative innovation. I shall be happy to assist them in every manner possible in this noble effort.

Today we have a wide range of programmes with the artists drawn from different parts of the country who are going to create melodious cultural evening through their talents and skill. I am sure that the State Government of Tamil Nadu will also popularize this noble scheme in all the districts of the State with the assistance of folk artistes and exponents of classical music. Let us all pledge to create a New India, where every girl child is endowed with life, liberty, education and all assistance to enable her to flower into an independent well endowed and patriotic citizen of India.

My Greetings to you all.

Jai Hind. Jai Tamil Nadu.