

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF  
TAMIL NADU AT THE 150<sup>th</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF  
MAHATMA GANDHI AT GANDHI MANDAPAM, CHENNAI  
ON 02.10.2018 AT 5.00 P.M.**

**Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam**

**Thiru. O. Panneerselvam,**  
Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

**Thiru. K.A. Sengottaiyan,**  
Minister for School Education

**Thiru. Kadambur Raju,**  
Minister for Information & Publicity

**Thiru. R.Venkatesan, I.A.S.,**  
Secretary,  
Tamil Development and Information Department

**Dr.P.Sankar, I.A.S.,**  
Director,  
Information and Public Relations Department

**Thiru. S.P. Ezhilalagan,**  
Additional Director,  
Information and Public Relations Department

**Distinguished Invitees**

**Ladies & Gentlemen**

It gives me immense pleasure to be here today at the Gandhi Mandapam on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhiji the Father of the Nation led the nation to freedom in 1947 and we celebrate the Gandhi Jayanti every year to pay our homage to the memory of the great soul and rededicate ourselves to follow his ideals.

For three long centuries, the British ruled India. They considered India as the pearl of their Empire. But the course of history took a turn when a small made man with exceptional charisma, an apostle of non-violence, planted the seed of liberty in the hearts of his fellow citizens. With passive disobedience as his only weapon, he, who

would later be called Mahatma, undermined British colonial power. He prepared India for economic autonomy and rose up against the caste system. Gandhiji made the spinning wheel synonymous with the freedom struggle and propagated the concept of Swadeshi. He successfully demonstrated to the world that adherence to truth and non-violence is not meant for individual causes alone but to the global affairs also.

In this context the Mahatma said and I quote

“We must refuse to meet hatred with hatred, violence with violence, evil with evil, but must love even our enemies, for in reality there are no enemies.”

Gandhiji was the strongest physical force bends before moral force when it is used in the defense of truth.

As a spiritualist, he urged social reform, not through legislation but through self-discipline, moral restraint and persuasion. He denounced intoxicating drugs and drinks as brutalizing men and doing violence to their human nature. Gandhiji's views on education were also inspired by the consideration for forming a sound character. Education should not only help in acquiring knowledge and arousing intellectual curiosity, but should also inculcate the right ideals.

Gandhiji brought about social cohesion among the people of India by vigorously working against untouchability. He gave an economic philosophy that focused on self-sufficiency at the village level. He propagated the concept of trusteeship and wanted people to abhor the accumulation of wealth for themselves and their families. All these were the outpourings of the wisdom of Gandhiji which went beyond the political spectrum. His thoughts and deeds encompassed the whole gamut of activities of human existence.

Tamil Nadu was always close to Gandhiji's heart. It is important to recall that when Gandhiji started the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, in which there were initially 25 inmates, 13 of them were Tamilians. People in the audience will do well to recall that Gandhi visited Tamil Nadu 20 times between 1896 and 1946. During his first visit in 1896 he tried to learn Tamil and bought 9 Tamil books for the purpose. During a subsequent visit in 1921, when in Madurai, Gandhiji made a change from donning the typical elaborate attire to wearing the simple dhoti and upper cloth that clothed him for the remaining years of his life. About this he himself has written and I quote,

“All the alterations I have made in the course of my life have been effected by momentous occasions. Such a radical alteration in my dress I effected in Madurai.”

He often used to say “My life is my message”. Gandhiji’s life and message will be remembered and will serve as a guide for millions of people for several thousands of years in the future.

Gandhiji’s contribution to the world is also immeasurable, for leaders like Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela followed in the footsteps of Gandhiji to bring emancipation to their followers who were otherwise oppressed and enslaved. Gandhiji’s message of ahimsa is a powerful signal to mankind that stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles will only lead to ruin.

We are all privileged that we lived in the times of Gandhiji. Some of us have had a firsthand experience of association with Gandhiji. This is a rare privilege and the accounts of those people who were associated with Gandhiji, when compiled, will serve as a guiding light for several generations in the coming centuries.

On the occasion of the launch of Mahatma Gandhi’s 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary Celebration, Let us all therefore come together in the effort to propagate the values of Gandhiji.

Let me conclude by saying the true essence of democracy should be understood in the sense that the common people are the masters of the nation. Mahatma Gandhiji wrote a Article in young India on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1925 and cautioned against seven deadly sins that can destroy a Nation. They are:-

1. Wealth without work,
2. Pleasure without conscience,
3. Knowledge without character,
4. Commerce without morality,
5. Science without humanity,
6. Religion without sacrifice and
7. Politics without principle.

It is important for us to identify the people who practice these sins in our midst and reform them without any further delay. Only then can we ensure that the fruits of freedom are available to the succeeding generations.

It is only the pursuit of Gandhian ideals that will guide our society towards peace progress and prosperity.

I congratulate the prize winners and all the students who took part in the competitions conducted to propagate the ideals of Gandhiji. The efforts taken by the various departments for organizing the cultural programmes and the exhibition deserve our tallest appreciation.

Nandri Vanakkam...

Jai Hind....