

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF  
TAMIL NADU AT THE ST. JOHN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION  
AT CHENNAI ON 09.06.2018 AT 6.00 P.M.**

Anaivarukkum Malai Vanakkam

Dr. G. Viswanathan

Dr. R. Kishore Kumar

Dr. R. Ramesh Kumar

Thiru. R. Suresh Kumar

Tmt. Veena E. Gayathri

Thiru. Raju

Distinguished Invitees

Teachers and Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to be here at the inaugural function of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the St. John's Educational Trust. It is satisfying to see in our midst scientists, engineers, doctors and musicians, who have studied in institutions run by the St. John's Educational Trust.

Swami Vivekananda defined education to be the manifestation of the perfection already in man. He elaborated on how all the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves. He therefore exhorted that our work should be mainly educational both morally and intellectually. Going by the record of the St. John's Educational Trust in promoting the cause of education, I should say that they have performed the crucial role that Swami Vivekananda wanted society to devote itself to.

I have been the Governor of Tamil Nadu for nearly eight months now and have visited 17 districts of the State. I am extremely happy to see that the

achievements of the State in the field of education have been remarkable. The dropout rate is extremely low. The teacher-student ratio is about one teacher for 30 to 40 students. Nearly 45% of the children who finish school education take to higher education. The large number of medical colleges and engineering colleges available in the State speak for the tremendous interest that students have for pursuing these professional courses.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has been actively promoting the cause of education since Independence. The State was a pioneer in promoting the concept of aided schools. This enabled the rapid spread of education, particularly in the rural areas. This also triggered the growth of training institutions for teachers enabling the growth of employment opportunities. When it was realised that many families could not afford to send their children to schools, provision of midday meals was done on a universal scale along with the provision of uniforms, footwear, textbooks, bus passes, etc. free of cost.

The contribution of the private sector for promoting the cause of education has also been impressive. Many private entrepreneurs have come forward to set up schools, colleges and universities in the State. Some of the institutions attract students from all over India and even from many countries of the world.

The economic growth in India has led to an aspirational middle class. This in turn has increased the demand for quality schooling at all levels of education.

One of the most striking trends in Indian school education is the increase of private sector participation with an estimated 3 lakh private schools and 40 per cent of the total student enrolment.

Today education is 'a dynamic teacher-student interactive process' in which teaching needs to be given great emphasis so as to make it yield maximized learning outcomes. A teacher should act as "a friend, philosopher and guide". He should help students to discover their academic preferences,

aptitude, natural inclinations and talents and nurture them. By integrating social values in teaching, teachers can promote social transformation and help students overcome prejudices of all kinds and inspire and mentor them to live in harmony in society.

The former President of India Dr. Abdul Kalam once narrated an interesting anecdote about the influence that teachers can have in shaping the future of the students. When referring to the contribution of his school teacher who kindled in him the passion for flying and aeronautics he wrote and I quote:

The teacher first taught the students about 'How birds fly' by sketches and explanations in the classroom. The students told the teacher that they did not understand the concept. The teacher then took the students to the Rameswaram seashore where dozens of seabirds were flying and said, 'See how the birds flap their wings and change direction using their wings and tail. The locomotive force of the bird's flight is its life energy'.

The understanding of science that was inculcated in the young Kalam by his teacher in a manner so as to satisfy his intellectual curiosity enabled the blossoming of the genius that was latent in him.

When speaking about education, Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "the function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education". Hence besides encouraging the students to think, the goal of education should also be character building.

An institution is known by the students that it produces and the students are known by the values that they display and the values are borne out of the character building that is undertaken by the teachers and the teachers are guided by the policy set out by the school management. From this it should be quite

clear to the school management that the sequence of activities is in their hands and I am sure that they will provide the right guidance and leadership.

I wish to conclude by highlighting the importance of perseverance for achieving success. As they say “Rome was not built in a day”. Perseverance and hard work combined with commitment to a noble cause are certain to produce results. I am informed that even the St. John’s School which was started as a fledgling institution fifty years back with a lite roof temporary shed has grown into a banyan tree covering a plethora of institutions because of sustained hard work. Thomas Alva Edison, the inventor of the incandescent bulb used to say ‘Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety nine percent perspiration.’ It is important for all of us assembled here to resolve to work constructively for our nation and for the benefit of our society with commitment and zeal. Such a determined resolve combined with the right guidance and perseverance is certain to make India the Jagat Guru and Tamil Nadu a leader in the Indian growth story. I wish all the students assembled here a bright future. My appreciation is for the teachers who have been guiding the students for the last fifty years with purpose and direction. The school management deserves a special word of praise for the display of farsightedness combined with a missionary zeal. May success greet them at every step along the way.

Nandri Vanakkam...

Jai Hind.