

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU  
AT THE SAKSHAM 10<sup>TH</sup> YEAR CELEBRATION AT DWARAKA DOSS GOVERDHAN DOSS  
VAISHANV COLLEGE, CHENNAI ON 28.07.2018 AT 11.00 AM**

**Anaivarukkum Kaalai Vanakkam**

**Dr. Kamalesh Kumar Pandey**

Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities,  
Govt. of India

**Dr. K. Sukumar**

National Organizing Secretary,  
SAKSHAM

**Thiru. P. Chandrasekaran**

State President, SAKSHAM TAMIL NADU

**Thiru. A. Padmanathan**

State Secretary, SAKSHAM TAMIL NADU

**Thiru. Nagarajan**

State Joint Secretary, SAKSHAM TAMIL NADU

**Thiru. Ashok Kumar Mundhra**

Secretary, DG Vaishnav College

**Distinguished Invitees**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me happiness to be taking part in the tenth anniversary of SAKSHAM, a national charitable organisation dedicated to the service and well-being of differently abled people.

The World Health Organisation defines people with disabilities as those who encounter impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions in their day to day lives. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task

or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Disability is thus not a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, came into force with effect from 19<sup>th</sup> day of April 2017. This Act aims at empowering persons with disabilities by adhering to the following principles –

- i. Respect for inherent dignity, individual economy including freedom to make own choice and independence of persons with disabilities;
- ii. Non-discrimination;
- iii. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society; and
- iv. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity.

It has been estimated that more than one billion people in the world live with some form of disability. Of these, nearly 200 million people experience considerable difficulties in functioning.

In India, according to the 2011 census, about 2.21 per cent of the population is affected by some form of disability. There is also a Statistical Profile prepared in 2016, which gives the percentage figures based on type of disability suffered by the population in India.

These figures are important as touching the lives of each and every citizen of India is the essence of good governance and nothing enables this better than having the proper data based on which government schemes can be implemented. For this purpose there is also the 'Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities' project whose aim is to create a National Database for persons with disabilities, and to issue a Unique Disability Identity Card to every such person. The project will not only encourage transparency, efficiency and ease of

delivering government benefits to persons with disabilities, but also ensure comprehensive coverage and attention.

The Central Government has multiple schemes for the differently abled under various heads.

For the education of the differently abled, there is the scheme of National Scholarship for Persons with Disabilities. Scholarships are awarded for pursuing post-matric, professional and technical courses of duration more than one year.

For students with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation or multiple disabilities the scholarship is provided from Class 9 onwards.

There is also a Comprehensive Education Scheme which provides for supply of books, uniforms and stationery, specialised learning aids and scholarships for students with disabilities.

As regards employment of the differently abled, the government has reserved three per cent posts in Groups A, B, C and Group D positions in government services, public sector banks and government undertakings for persons with disabilities.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has reserved 7.5 per cent of all types of dealership agencies of public sector oil companies for persons with physical disabilities.

The National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation has been created to provide loans to persons with disabilities for self employment.

Professor Stephen Hawking, the Astro-physicist who passed away recently used to say that “disability need not be an obstacle to success”. He was speaking from personal experience.

Professor Hawking himself had a motor neurone disease for a large part of his adult life. But it did not prevent him from becoming a famous astro-physicist.

Stalwarts with disabilities like Gayathri Sankaran (Padmashri awardee, musician), Dr. Aiswarya, J. Anuradha (winner of wheel chair race in Chennai marathon), K. Radhabai (first visually disabled woman to receive a Ph.D degree in south India) have never let any form of disability come in their way of success and have left an unforgettable mark in their respective fields.

Mariyappan Thangavelu (22 years old) who hails from Salem District in Tamil Nadu is another notable achiever. He won the gold medal in the Paralympic games held in Rio in 2016. Recognising this glorious achievement the Government of India announced "Padma Shri" award for his contribution towards sports and in the same year he was also conferred with the Arjuna Award.

In Tamilnadu the state Govt. has also been implementing number of schemes for the well being of the specially abled persons.

The government runs Early Intervention Centres for Infant and young children with hearing impairment in all 32 districts.

The Government is also providing Laptop computers to the Specially abled persons pursuing higher secondary education in Govt. and Govt. aided schools free of cost.

The Government has been conducting a number of vocational training courses in the fields of computer applications, multimedia, animation, Digital Photography, Fitter, Book Binding etc. for the benefit of the Differently abled persons through recognised institutes. This will enable better employment opportunities for the skill trained persons.

Students with disabilities are provided a quota of five per cent reservation in seats in government and government-aided educational institutions.

There is also a 4% reservation in various Govt. jobs for persons with disabilities.

SAKSHAM is an acronym for 'Samadrishti, Kshamataa-vikas Evam Anusandhaan Mandal', and aims to bring all persons with various disabilities into the mainstream.

I am happy to know that SAKSHAM has conducted about 5,000 special camps for providing aids to differently-abled people in the last three years alone.

On the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Saksham I wish them well. I wish to also add that the endowing a person with the ability to overcome's ones disabilities is very important. It is necessary to develop the courage and the confidence in the person to overcome the disability that he faces. While supports and hearing aids are useful, it is the ability to kindle the spirit in the person that will mark out those organizations engaged in helping the differently abled persons. I am sure that in the coming year Saksham will strive to achieve this goal as well. They are already helping thousands of people rebuild their lives. By inspiring them, society and the nation will benefit from their contributions. Let noble goals be our quest and actions for the upliftment of mankind be our guiding spirit. The blessings of God will definitely be showered on those people who help others to lead better lives.

Nandri Vanakkam...

Jai Hind....