

**SPEECH BY THE HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU,
THIRU. BANWARILAL PUROHIT TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING
WORKSHOP BY THE TAMIL NADU STATE COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (TANSCH) IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH THE INDIAN CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC RANKINGS & EXCELLENCE
(ICARE) AT FEATHERS HOTEL, CHENNAI : 07.11.2017 at 09.30 Hrs**

Thiru K.P Anbalagan, Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education, Government of Tamil Nadu & Chairman, Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education

Thiru Sunil Paliwal IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Higher Education & Vice Chairman, Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education

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Vice Chancellors & Registrars of the State Universities

Distinguished Academicians

Senior Officers

Representatives from ICARE

Friends from Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning:

I warmly welcome all of you to this capacity building workshop organised by the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education in partnership with the Indian Centre for Academic Rankings & Excellence (ICARE) on a topic that is extremely relevant and much needed in today's global context of Higher Education.

1. India has one of the world's largest higher education system comprising of over 750 Universities and over 36,000 colleges. The expansion of higher education network in India has enabled us to create access to higher education across the country. However ensuring the quality of education in our institutes of higher learning both at the country and state level remains a big challenge.

2. India has a rich and illustrious history of higher education. The country once attracted scholars and thinkers from all around the world. Epoch-making discoveries were made, perspectives formed and the spirit of enquiry developed. According to Amir Khusrau, the great Sufi poet and scholar (1253 – 1325 CE) "scholars from all over the world came to India but no Indian scholar found it necessary to go out of India to acquire knowledge". India made tremendous advances in the fields of Medicine, Astronomy, Architecture, Philosophy and Metallurgy - discoveries that continue to baffle scientists even today. For more than 6 centuries, Ancient Indian universities

like Nalanda, Takshashila, Vallabhi, Ujjain, Salotgi and Benaras were centers of excellence in the ancient world and India proudly led the way, making great strides in the field of higher learning. India, was probably one of the few countries to have institutions of global eminence.

3. I am happy that recently, three Indian institutions have been ranked amongst the Top 200 universities in the world. One of the institutions is in the Top 100 institutions in the engineering and technology category. It is my firm belief that there are many higher education institutions in Tamil Nadu that have the potential to become one of the best in the world. I encourage all of you to work towards this goal.

Dear Academicians:

4. Universities in Tamil Nadu must benchmark themselves with the best on the globe. The first University Commission of independent India, popularly known as the Radhakrishnan Commission of 1948, pointed out that universities need to have 'world-mindedness and national sentiments'. In the recent times, there has been a growing interest in world-class universities amongst scholars, academic institution administrators and policy makers. A world-class university in today's time is one that can address the global problems of society having the entire world as its constituency. Universities in Tamil Nadu led by erudite scholars like yourselves must have such high ambitions.

5. Accreditation and Ranking help in assuring quality of an education system and they serve the main purpose namely to assure the stakeholders that quality of education being imparted conforms to the well-defined standards set by the regulatory authority. Ranking also provides information about the performance of Higher Education Institutions within a competitive set up. Further, the quality assurance mechanism helps the students choose courses and institutions on the basis of grades or ranks they have obtained. From the perspective of the institutions, in the absence of any measurement of output, it is important that the higher education institutions are informed how they fare and are helped in identifying gaps in their delivery mechanism. It is thus imperative that our Universities put in an extra effort and improve their ranking by undergoing Self-Evaluation & Evaluation of Affiliated Colleges, undertake detailed Audit & Gap-Analysis, Create Processes and Design a road-map for Improvement in the Global Rankings.

6. Having said that, the parameters of global rankings, many a times, do not capture the ground realities and reflect socio-political conditions prevalent in India and in particular, Tamil Nadu. Some States have therefore adopted their own rating mechanism with parameters more suited to the domestic setting. In the case of India, a 'National Institutional Ranking Framework' has been developed recently to evaluate educational institutions. 24 Universities from Tamil Nadu have secured positions within the top 100 ranks in the NIRF-2017 rankings. It is noteworthy that 11 out of 24 Universities in top 100 rankings are State Universities. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) also operates in similar area, assessing and accrediting institutions of higher education in our country. I believe these national counterparts of the international ranking systems will only reinforce and concretize the push towards accountability and quality in educational institutions. At the same time, they will inspire better performance of institutions leading to improved international rankings of Universities in Tamil Nadu.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

7. Our Universities need to re-examine their founding vision on the basis of which they were established. It helps to articulate a vision of the university even after many years of its establishment, as the vision will help in galvanizing the academic consciousness among faculty, students and staff towards fulfilling a set of goals and objectives. The vision of the university should incorporate a farsighted approach towards learning and creating knowledge among faculty and students, yet be fully conscious of the reality of the university's existing challenges.

8. Friends, Universities don't become world-class institutions as soon as they are created, but evolve to become world-class through long years of hard work pursued with the commitment and dedication of students, faculty and staff. Even then, promoting excellence is an evolving process and that is why the vision of the university helps to shape its present and future.

9. Dear Friends: Tamil Nadu's aspiration to re-establish universities of global eminence rests on YOUR commitment to create transformational institutions that will inspire your faculty and students with a spirit of enquiry and capacity to instill in them the flame of imagination that can be kept constantly lit and nurtured by your positive energy now and forever.

10. All of you as Higher Education Leaders are the torchbearers of progress in our Society. Building institutions is not merely a brick and mortar activity. It represents a vision of the future which we all want for our nation and the generations to come. Irrespective of race, gender, faith or socio-economic background, institutions of higher learning are a place where merit triumphs over individual identities, in pursuit of excellence.

Friends, with this workshop today, the crusade for excellence that we have started must continue with greater vigour. Our State needs inspiring academic leaders like you to make a difference. Remember that the desired change will not happen on its own. Change is the result of sustained efforts and commitment. To prepare and to win, you need to have, not just passion, but a strategy; not just awareness, but action.

I would like to lay emphasis on the points which you should strictly adhere to.

I expect that the continuous monitoring of the working of all the Departments and institutions under your control is ensured. Particularly there should be transparency in the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff. Further, transparency in managing and spending funds with Proper accounting procedure has to be followed rigidly. The spending should be judicious. I suggest there should be total digitization and admission of the students should be done purely on merit.

Cultivate the culture of individual simplicity and character building among the staff and students. Special emphasis needs to be laid on development of sports.

Lastly, interest of students should be uppermost in your mind. If we have to fulfill the dream of our beloved Late Dr. Abdul Kalam to make India 'Vishwa Guru', certainly Angels from Heaven will not come and help us; only our all round and persistent efforts can make it happen.

Martin Luther King said, I quote,

"The day we see the truth and cease to speak is the day we begin to die."

Take bold decision; injustice should not be tolerated.

I congratulate the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education and the Indian Centre for Academic Rankings & Excellence for taking initiative for today's workshop. I expect innovative solutions to emerge out of your discussions today and look forward to the results of your deliberations.

Thank you.

Jai Hind. Jai Tamil Nadu.