

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF  
TAMIL NADU AT WORLD WOMEN'S DAY ORGANISED BY ALL WOMEN SELF-  
HELP GROUP FEDERATION AT KADAPPA ROAD, PUTHAGARAM, CHENNAI  
ON 30.03.2019 AT 5.00 P.M**

**Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam**

**Dr. I. Jayanthi,**  
Secretary/Sr.Civil Judge,  
District Legal Service Authority

**Tmt. V. Varalakshmi,**  
President,  
All Woman Self-Help Group Federation

**Tmt. S.D.Reeta,**  
Secretary,  
All Woman Self-Help Group Federation

**Tmt. V.Parimala,**  
Treasurer,  
All Woman Self-Help Group Federation

**Thiru. P. Titus,**  
Director,  
IRCDS (NGO),  
Tiruvallur

**Thiru. M.B. Nirmal,**  
Chairman,  
Exnora International

**Distinguished Invitees**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me happiness to be present here today at this function organised by the All Women Self-Help Group Federation on the occasion of World Women's Day. I am

informed that the function is being organised on such a grand scale by the Federation for the first time only this year.

All through history women all over the world have secured their rights to vote, to work and to be educated and lead a life of dignity through protests, struggle and sacrifice.

The garment workers strike in New York on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1908, where women protested against the difficult and inhuman working conditions set the ball rolling. To mark this day, Women's Day was first celebrated in the USA.

After that Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland followed suit with celebrations in 1911 where more than one million people attended rallies. These protesters demanded the right of women to vote, to hold public office, to work and to receive vocational training.

Taking a cue from this, the Women of Russia chose to protest for "Bread and Peace" on the 8th of March in 1917. The protest achieved immediate success. Four days later, the Czar abdicated and the provisional Government granted women the right to vote. It was to mark this occasion, that the United Nations, many decades later began celebrating International Women's Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March.

Seen in this background, it is heartening to see that in India, the principle of equality in voting rights which was enshrined in the Constitution of India gave women voting rights right from the first election held in 1952.

After Independence India has achieved considerable progress in implementing many measures and schemes for protecting the rights of women and for promoting their welfare. And Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in this effort. The steps taken in the state for the upliftment of women's welfare got crystallised when the State led the nation in establishing an exclusive public sector undertaking called 'The Tamil Nadu Corporation for the Development of Women' in 1983. Therefore many pioneering initiatives have been taken for women's welfare.

Important among them include

The Marriage Assistance Schemes, under which financial assistance of upto Rs.50,000 is given along with 8 grams of Gold for making the Thirumangalyam.

The Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme under which assistance for poor pregnant women / mothers is provided.

The Amma Two Wheeler Scheme under which working women are provided financial assistance for enabling them to purchase two wheelers to take them to their work place.

The Chief Minister's Girl Child Protection Scheme which is a pioneering scheme aimed at preventing gender discrimination by empowering and protecting rights of girl children.

The Cradle Baby Scheme which is an unique scheme that helps to prevent female infanticide and ensures care and protection of abandoned infants.

The All Women Police Stations which were pioneered by Tamil Nadu in 1992. At present, 200 All Women Police Stations are functioning in the State. They attend to the grievances of women and are manned by a Woman Sub-Inspector and two Women Police Constables.

To empower women and facilitate their political participation in Local Governance, the Government in 2016, have enhanced reservation for women in Local Bodies to 50%.

Tamil Nadu was also a pioneering state in that it provided through legislation, equal rights to daughters and sons in the matter of inheritance of property.

Such measures as the ones I mentioned, have, through the decades, empowered women and propelled them towards equality with men in public affairs. The change, though gradual, is definitely moving in the right direction.

The Self-Help group scheme which was started in Dharmapuri and has now expanded across the State has been an eminently successful programme in the economic sphere.

Under the Scheme, Women in the age group of 18 to 60 years residing in the same area form 'Self Help Groups in groups of 12 to 20 members with the objective of promoting savings and economic activity. Internal lending among the

members inculcates in them the practice of collective and democratic decision making. The training for the SHGs in book keeping and for Liaisoning with the banks is being successfully provided by the Tamil Nadu Corporation for the Development of Women.

It is greatly encouraging to see that there are nearly a crore women enrolled as members in the 6½ lakh SHGs in the state. They have availed a cumulative credit of Rs.42,000 crores from the banks through the Bank Linkage programme mainly provided by the nationalized banks of the Government of India.

The Interest subvention scheme for SHGs is directly implemented by the Government of India in 9 districts of Tamil Nadu with the State Government providing the assistance in the remaining districts. SHGs who repay the loan instalment and interest amount regularly without any delay or default become eligible for Interest Subvention.

In India, 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, during which period 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, our history also speaks about the great women leaders who adorned our illustrious array of thinkers, poetesses and warriors.

All these personalities have surely inspired women to move faster towards coming on par with men in public affairs. The women achievers of today, I am sure have been inspired by them.

I am sure that in the coming years the rapid strides being made by women in the educational and economic spheres will enable them to ascend to the highest level in greater numbers in their professions.

I congratulate the all women self help group federation for the painstaking efforts taken by them to organize this convention. I extend my best wishes and greetings to them and to all the members of the SHGs who are represented here. May success greet you in all your endeavours.

Nandri.... Vanakkam....

Jai Hind....