

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE INAUGURATION OF DISTRICT CONFERENCE 2020
"SIMMASANAM" ORGANISED BY ROTARY INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 3000
AT CHENNAI TRADE CENTRE, NANDAMPAKKAM, CHENNAI
ON 04.01.2020 AT 10.30 A.M**

Anaivarukkum Kaalai Vanakkam

Rtn. Dr A Zameer Pasha,
Rotary District Governor

Rtn. Janice Kurth,
Representative of The Rotary International President

Rtn. Dr. Shakila Zameer Pasha

Rtn. D Thirunavakarasu,
Chairman of this Rotary District Conference

All Rotarians

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies and gentlemen

Happy New Year to all of you.

I am delighted to inaugurate this District Conference 2020 – Simmasanam organised by the Rotary International District, 3000.

Exactly 120 years ago, one gentleman -- **Shri. Paul Harris** -- got a simple idea in 1905 in Chicago, the United States, and invited three of his friends for a high-tea. They enjoyed the meeting, and decided to repeat the experience. To take the idea further, they rotated one another's offices for the meetings. Thus came the name Rotary. Eventually, that little seed got as big as the Rotary International that has spread around 200-plus countries with 12 lakh members having a strong public image. The basic idea of Shri

Paul Harris was to bring together business and professional leaders and harness their potential for providing humanitarian services to society, thus advancing the cause of goodwill and peace around the world. That idea is now being taken further by all of you.

You also can boast of having thought of and funded one of the biggest immunisation programmes in the world for the past 35 years in the form of Polio Vaccination Drive that has benefitted countless people and families in living normally despite the scourge.

I hereby congratulate the 115-year old non-profit volunteer organization **Rotary International** for still continuing its fight against the dreaded disease.

Shri. Mark Maloney, the International President of this Rotary year 2019-20 has very aptly set the theme for this year as “**Rotary Connects the World**”. Rotary, through its service initiatives, fosters friendship and commitment among all. Its motto being “**SERVICE ABOVE SELF**”, I strongly believe, Rotary will definitely **Connect the World**.

Here, it is apt to recall the words of **Helen Keller**, “**Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much**”.

I am extremely delighted that your 35,000+ clubs work together on important objectives, a few of which are:

- Peace and conflict resolution;
- Disease prevention and treatment;
- Water and sanitation;
- Mother and child care;
- Literacy and quality education; and
- Economic and community development.

I am happy to see that Rotary has also connected with the youth

through Interact Clubs at School level, Rotaract Clubs at College level and Rotary Community Corps (pronounced as 'Core') at the rural level.

I am very happy to hear that **Rotary has completed 100 years of service in India on the New Year day of 2020** and to commemorate this, I was told that a Centennial Summit will be held in Kolkata in February, 2020. I Congratulate Rotary India on this milestone.

Rotary's Services in the following areas are commendable:

1. Rotary India's MoU with the Ministry of Health, Government of India, for *Swachh Bharath; Swacch Vidyalaya Mission* and engagement in providing toilets for girls and boys and washing stations in schools through the Wash In Schools (WINS) programme.

I have in the last two years visited all the districts of Tamil Nadu for the promotion of **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** activities. During these visits, a pledge is taken for ensuring cleanliness. For making the district free of Open Defecation - Free Pamphlets, Posters and Stickers were distributed and mobile vans were sent out on propaganda missions. A **Shramdan** programme was undertaken to involve all sections of the society in the cleanliness drive;

2. Rotary's joint partnership with the Ministry of Health for Routine Immunization, having worked successfully for the eradication of polio. Now its focus on diseases like Rubella, Measles, etc. Rotary volunteers support to the Government's initiatives on National Immunization Programme is appreciable.
3. Rotary India's Literacy Mission, towards 100% literacy with E-learning

Material Distribution, Adult Learning Promotion, and Child Development. Definitely this will help the Government in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and to eradicate illiteracy from India.

Dear Rotarians, I am happy to hear that Rotary International District 3000, with its 126 clubs and 5700 members, is the Number One district in the world for membership growth so far in this year. Many Congratulations.

I am immensely happy to see Rotary District 3000 to have undertaken the following service activities very successfully:

- Mammography screening;
- Rotary Blossom - Mission Mental Health programme;
- Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA);
- Providing School Kits;
- Low-Cost Dialysis Centres;
- Donation of Mobile Medical Van, Speciality Van and Ambulances;
- Adoption of Rotary happy villages;
- Installation of R.O plants, incinerators, napkin vending machines, washing stations, etc. in Government Schools for better health and hygiene;

I must thank Rotary Clubs for maintaining crematoriums at Madurai, Dindigul, Trichy and Pudukottai.

The great Tamil saint poet **Thiruvalluvar** has said and I quote, **“To give to the destitute is true charity. All other gifts have the nature of (what is done for) a measured return”**.

It has always been part of the tradition of India to care for the weak, the poor and the suffering.

Mahatma Gandhi said and I quote, **“The simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer”**.

A nation can become great if its citizens are willing to serve the nation with a sense of selflessness. Men and women of character can alone successfully lead society towards peace and prosperity. All of you assembled here have the ability to change the society. Therefore, plan carefully before you act. Once you have decided to act, please do not look back. Your actions should be free from attachment and be only guided by the benefits they will confer on your society, the state and the nation. I am sure that this thought will permeate the deliberations that are to take place at this conference of Rotarians.

Recently we had Vice-Chancellors’ Conference in Ooty on **‘Chancellor’s vision 2030: Innovating Education in the Era of Industry Four Point Zero’**. In the Conference, it was decided that each college under the State Universities in Tamil Nadu will adopt one village to bring change. May I request each Rotary Club to adopt one Government School and provide all facilities to them. Make the students well-equipped with life skills to face the future challenges.

I congratulate the Rotary International District 3000 and its members for their quest to bring about an improvement in societal welfare. It is also important to make more and more youth take to social service by inculcating in them a passion for selfless service and the urge to dedicate oneself for social good.

Thomas Jefferson said, and I quote, **“Do you want to know who you are? Don’t ask, Act! Action will delineate and define you”**.

Beginning today, treat everyone you meet as if the person were going to be dead by midnight. Extend to the person all the care, kindness and understanding you can muster, and do it with no thought of any reward. Your life will never be the same again.

I conclude with the words of **Mahatma Gandhi**, **“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”**

I extend my best wishes and greetings to the office bearers of the Rotary International District 3000 who have taken painstaking efforts to stage this conference. May welfare-oriented movements like the Rotary swell in size, multiply in magnitude and fill the Earth with goodness and humanity.

Nandri Vanakkam.....

Jai Hind....

Jai Tamil Nadu....