

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE 150TH GANDHI JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS
ORGANISED BY NETWORKING & DEVELOPMENT CENTRE FOR SERVICE
ORGANIZATIONS (NDSO) AT VINOBA HALL, THAKKAR BAPA VIDYALAYA,
CIT NAGAR EAST, T.NAGAR, CHENNAI ON 12.03.2020 AT 10.30 A.M**

Anaivarukkum Kaalai Vanakkam

Swami Satyajnanananda,
Secretary,
Ramakrishna Mission Students Home,
Mylapore

Dr. Azhgar Ramunujam,
President,
Networking & Development Centre
for Service Organizations

Thiru. Harihara Subramanian,
Trustee, NDSO

Thiru. J. Prabhakar,
Founder, NDSO

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be here today at the 150th Gandhi Jayanthi Celebrations being organised by Networking & Development Centre for Service Organizations (NDSO). This day reminds us of the yathra started by Mahatma Gandhi on 12th March 1930 to protest against the tax levied on common salt which is consumed by every man every day.

For two long centuries, the British ruled India. They considered India as the pearl of their Empire. But the course of history took a turn

when a barrister gentleman, with exceptional charisma, an apostle of truth and non-violence, sowed the seed of liberty in the hearts of his fellow citizens. With passive disobedience as his only weapon, he, who would later be called Mahatma, challenged British colonial power. His contributions are many, not just fighting British subjugation of India. He prepared India for economic autonomy. He inspired people to rise up against untouchability. The spinning wheel would have been just a museum piece had not Gandhiji made it synonymous with the freedom struggle.

Gandhiji, the Father of the Nation, who led the Indian people during the freedom struggle that resulted in the termination of British rule, is an inspiration for all of us. Millions of people know him mainly as the person who brought freedom to India. A greater number is aware that the path of truth and non-violence that he practised was unique. In world history this spiritual path of virtue was never traversed before. It was a path of goodness – a path with which the common people could easily relate – a path that ensured success and above all a path that shines as a beacon light for the whole world even now.

For Gandhiji, truth was God and his prayer meetings were meant to bring out the inner strength in an individual.

Gandhiji's contribution to India is immeasurable. Gandhiji's contribution to the world is also immeasurable. Leaders like Martin Luther

King Jr. and Nelson Mandela followed in the footsteps of Gandhiji to bring emancipation to their followers who were otherwise oppressed and enslaved. Gandhiji's message of Ahimsa is a powerful signal to mankind that stockpiling of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles will only lead to destruction.

Gandhiji brought about social cohesion among the people of India by vigorously working against untouchability. He gave an economic philosophy that focused on self-sufficiency at the village level. He propagated the concept of trusteeship and wanted people to abhor the accumulation of wealth for themselves and their families. All these were the outpourings of the wisdom of Gandhiji which went beyond the political spectrum.

Gandhiji often used to say "My life is my message". Indeed it is the message that we should all respectfully follow and propagate for the benefit of succeeding generations. It is important for us to try and practise the ideals of Gandhiji in our life. Gandhiji's life and message will be remembered and will serve as a guide for millions of people for thousands of years to come. It is only the pursuit of Gandhian ideals that will guide our society towards peace, progress and prosperity.

Albert Einstein, the greatest scientist of the 20th Century, had this to say about Gandhiji "Generations to come will scarce believe that such a person in flesh and blood ever walked upon the earth".

I am informed that the function is to honour youngsters who offer dedicated service to those in need of without any pomp and advertisement. I am also told that many of them are very young and are volunteering their services to the needy before taking care of their own needs and settle in life. I appreciate them for their service without any expectations which has become rare in the present day world.

The awardees are selfless service minded people who toil for others for years. The awards are a recognition of their consistent contribution to the society and a motivation to them towards their objective.

I take this opportunity to congratulate all the young awardees for their selfless service for the cause of poor and wish them well in their work. I pray they succeed in their personal careers and continue to serve the community more and more and help in nation building.

Service should become a part of everyone's life. Service does not mean big things. If one is taking care of one's parent it is a duty. If one can take care of a relative who does not have any one to fall back upon is a greater service. Mahatma Gandhi said and I quote, "The simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer".

NDSO is the right forum to direct and guide the younger generation. People want to contribute something to better the living conditions of the society.

I have come to know that NDSO runs more than 50 tuition centers across the State for the benefit of children of Irular community in remotest villages. It plays a big role in bringing them into main stream by providing a roof on their heads and facilities to eke out a livelihood and educate their children. It also creates awareness among them about government schemes that are meant to raise their standard of living.

I congratulate the founder and other office- bearers of the NDSO for their quest for bringing about an improvement in societal welfare. It is also important to make more and more youths take to social service by inculcating in them a passion for selfless service and the urge to dedicate oneself to social good. Mahatma Gandhi said and I quote, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

I extend my best wishes and greetings to the NDSO and Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya for the painstaking efforts taken by them to organize this function and hope that they will multiply their activities several fold. May success visit them in all their noble endeavours.

I conclude with a request to always keep in mind this famous quotation of Mahatma Gandhi,

“Carefully watch your thoughts, for they become your words.

Manage and watch your words, for they will become your actions.

Consider and judge your actions, for they have become your habits.

Acknowledge and watch your habits, for they shall become your values.

Understand and embrace your values, for they become your destiny”.

Let us all march together on the Gandhian path towards a glorious destiny.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Hind....

Jai Tamil Nadu....