



MAKING TAMIL NADU A GLOBAL HUB FOR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION



**Convocation Address delivered by
Selvi J JAYALALITHAA
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu
at the
155th Annual Convocation of
the University of Madras on 17.8.2013
&
Silver Jubilee Convocation of the Tamil Nadu
Dr. M.G.R. Medical University on 20.8.2013**



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Your Excellency the Governor of Tamil Nadu and Chancellor, University of Madras - Dr. K. Rosaiah Garu, Thiru. P. Palaniappan, Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education and Pro-Chancellor, Hon'ble Ministers of the Government of Tamil Nadu, Prof. R. Thandavan, Vice Chancellor, Thiru. Apurva Varma, Principal Secretary, Higher Education Department, Dr.G.K. Prasad, Registrar, Dr.T.Lakshmanasamy, Controller of Examinations, Members of the Senate and Syndicate, Members of the Faculty, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Students,

I am greatly honoured to be part of this scintillating event that marks a major academic milestone in your life, as you step out into the

world from the portals of this University, fortified with the knowledge you have been endowed with during your time here. It is also a special event for the University as it sends forth its students equipped with the spirit of this institution. The overwhelming ceremonial aura of this Annual Convocation is tremendously energizing and bears testimony to the 156 year old grand tradition of one of the oldest universities of the Country - the University of Madras. A Convocation is the occasion when all the hard work and midnight toil put in around the years is crystallised and is a formal recognition that you are ready to move forward in channelizing your energies towards being a complete entity in Society, adapting fearlessly and energetically to changing times. It is a moment of celebration for students and their parents who have transcended odds and striven hard to reach here. For the teachers who are waiting to witness these scholars pass out it is an endorsement of their hard work and a validation of the vocation they chose.

The University of Madras has lived up to the ideals ordained in its creation since its inception and I am sure it will continue to catalyze the flowering of human personality as well as function as a reservoir from which spring streams of innovation and imagination, of dynamism in thought and action.

The glorious history of this institution is a reminder of the journey traversed so far and will serve to enlighten future generations. The University of Madras was established in response to the demand of the time. The request for an institution of higher learning originated from the people of the Madras Presidency, in a public petition signed and submitted to Lord George Elphinstone, the then Governor of Madras. Sir Charles Wood's epoch-making Dispatch of 1854 cleared the path for the formation of the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The University Act, Act No. II of 1857, was passed by the Legislative Council and received the Governor- General's assent on the 24th January, 1857. The Act emphasised that the University was to

be an imperial university. As a sequel, the University of Madras, organized on the model of the London University, was incorporated on the 5th September, 1857, by an Act of the Legislative Council of India. The Government's intention was to create a University which would cater to the needs of the nobility and upper classes of India.

Justice Sir Christopher Rawlinson was the first Vice-Chancellor of the University. In 1904, Sir Subramania Iyer became the first Indian to be made the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras. Sir Raghupati Venkataratnam Nayudu was the first elected Vice Chancellor. The University of Madras was the first to introduce autonomous colleges within the University system in 1978-79. Since then, 27 out of the 159 affiliated institutions have become autonomous. The tiny star which appeared in 1857 has now grown into a super nova churning out treasures of enlightened and inspired citizens. This institution has an academic heritage, created and nurtured by stalwarts and visionaries.

The establishment of the University of Madras proved to be a tool of history, initiating a process quite independent of the original intention of the British to create an aristocratic institution and ultimately became directly contradictory to it. It has endeavoured to create an open and secular system and seeks to deliberately incorporate inclusiveness into the fabric of education. It has broken the shackles of the 'Ivory tower' and has thrown open the gates of the once 'elitist institution' to the common people. The University of Madras has been carefully accomplishing the task of synthesizing academic standards with social relevance to create ignited minds ready to take up enterprising careers and raring to reform the ills threatening our Society. The architectural beauty of the impressive Indo-Saracenic buildings of the University and the charm of the premises add to the character of this institution. This in itself has a potent influence on the students.

Universities are temples of knowledge wherein students are initiated as novices into the mysteries

of knowledge. They have frequently been regarded as key institutions in processes of social change and development. The most explicit role they have been allocated is the production of highly skilled labour and research output to meet perceived economic ends. Universities do not only respond to Society's needs, they contribute to its evolution. Universities in Tamil Nadu are now finding themselves at the very centre of development and are entrusted with the task of training and harnessing vital human resources essential for catapulting Tamil Nadu to the numero uno status in the country.

The University of Madras has pegged the stakes high for its students and the alumni have distinguished themselves in various fields of excellence in India and abroad and brought laurels to their Alma Mater. The Madras University boasts of many stalwarts as its alumni. It has produced two Nobel laureates, - Sir C V Raman who won the Nobel prize for Physics in 1930 and Dr S Chandrasekar in 1983, and two Presidents of India - Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

and Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, to name a few. The list however is endless with hundreds of faculty members and students proving their mettle both in India and abroad. They are all shining examples for the young people here to emulate. You need to learn from the dedication, scholarly pursuit and will to succeed of these eminent personalities.

Education is a powerful tool for human progress and empowerment. It is also a strong driver of social thinking and transformation. True education should emphasise achievement of human resource development in its entirety and thereby augment the Nation's richest asset. Imparting ethical values, as a significant constituent of education, therefore, is no longer merely obligatory but a constitutional imperative, essential for the development and realization of the full potential of the human person. Socrates had said and I quote: "*Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel*" (unquote). The atmosphere in this hall today is vibrant and I believe that many a flame has been kindled by this great institution.

An ancient Chinese proverb says,
“If you are thinking one year ahead, plant rice
If you are thinking ten years ahead, plant trees
If you are thinking 100 years ahead, educate the
people.”

My Government has done all three. I am committed to providing good governance now, in the years ahead, the decades to come and to implementing lasting reforms that generations will speak of. The mission of my Government is to promote Human Resource Development through self-actualized Institutions producing high quality professionals in sufficient numbers and to make Tamil Nadu a global hub for University Education. I envision that Institutions of Higher Education emerge as Centres of Innovation, Excellence and Development - that world-class education is offered to our youth in an all-encompassing and inclusive system. The Higher Education sector in Tamil Nadu is moving at an accelerated pace to meet the demands of the century, in terms of research

and development and many schemes have been implemented with this in view. For example,

- i. Smart Classrooms with Video- Conferencing facilities have been established in 10 universities at a cost of 2 crore rupees.
- ii. Foreign language laboratories have been established in 10 universities at a cost of 1.5 crore rupees for enhancing the language skills of students in English, Chinese, Japanese, German etc.,
- iii. Entrepreneurship cum Skill Development Centres have been established at a cost of 2 crore rupees in 10 Universities, to develop the entrepreneurial skills of students for self employment.
- iv. To promote gaining from sharing of expertise by reputed professors, a scheme of inviting them from foreign universities has been introduced in 10 Universities at a cost of 1 crore rupees.

- v. Curriculum Development Cells have been established in 10 Universities at a cost of 10 crore rupees, to restructure curricula on par with global standards.
- vi. 11 new Arts and Science Colleges have been opened during 2011-2012 and another 11 colleges during 2012-2013, in various Districts, in an effort to equip rural youth with career skills and improve their employability.
- vii. 10 Polytechnic Colleges and 2 Engineering Colleges have been started in a move to promote professional education in rural pockets and ensure that youth in the far flung backward Districts are on par with their counterparts in big cities.
- viii. Business Collaboration Centres have been started in 6 Universities of which the University of Madras is one, for co-ordinating Universities, leading Industries and other business organizations in the country and abroad.

- ix. A widely acclaimed move by my Government is the Study Abroad Programme for Faculty and Students which has commenced with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by The Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education with the British Council. 14 students and 3 faculty members have been selected to study one semester in Universities in the United Kingdom from September 2013 to January 2014.
- x. Centres for Technical and Academic Writing have been established in the University of Madras and 8 other Universities in the State. These Centres would develop the skills of students in writing academic reports and drafting other forms of written communication.
- xi. Incubation and Technology Transfer Centres have been established in the University of Madras and 8 other Universities in the State.

- xii. Centres for Multimodal Material Production for the Differently-Abled have been established in the University of Madras and 9 other Universities in the State.
- xiii. Post Graduate Centres of Excellence have been established in this University and 9 other Universities in the State.
- xiv. Soft Skill Centres have been established in 30 Colleges under 5 Universities including the University of Madras.
- xv. The free laptop computer scheme, which is a flagship scheme of my Government, was devised bearing in mind that our students must not be left lagging behind in the use of modern technology in this age of the internet and has placed our students a head above their peers in other parts of the country. So far 5,45,402 college students have received their laptop computers.

This is only an overview of the efforts taken by my Government to raise the scales of development

on the higher education front. We must direct our energies towards developing our Universities to meet global benchmarks. Universities should be prime movers of change. A more just, humane, and sustainable Society requires the development in each of our students of a personal moral compass and a commitment to ethical decision making. It is necessary not merely to achieve personal excellence, but also to enable the Nation to rise to higher levels of endeavour and achievement. Here, I would like to quote Benjamin Franklin who said, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." Learning should be a two-way process and should involve the intellect and heart of the student and the faculty. Social commitment on the part of the educationists cannot be overlooked.

As you set out on the next steps of your journey, and as you cross many more milestones that mark your achievements, I am sure you will proudly recall the value of the opportunities that the University of Madras gave you, and how it empowered you to achieve success. With confidence,

you leave this place, ready and determined to do your part in the never-ending quest to advance peace, prosperity and justice in your environment, to choose your own paths, to risk failure, to further the boundaries of knowledge, and to shine forth as worthy citizens of this great Nation. Whichever path you choose, and whichever gates you pass through, I wish you safety, good guidance, and truthfulness. I wish that you may be guided wisely through the tunnels and labyrinths of life and that you find the still centre of your purpose and your being - untarnished, persistent, illuminated and brightly glowing.

On this auspicious occasion, I urge you to solemnly reaffirm the ideals of the University and dedicate yourselves wholeheartedly to the task of building a resurgent Nation of high idealism and noble endeavours on the foundation of knowledge and moral values. I invoke upon each one of you, the blessings of the Almighty, your parents, your teachers and all the elders gathered here.

Thank you.

Convocation Address delivered by
Selvi J JAYALALITHAA,
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu during the
Silver Jubilee Convocation of the
Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University
on 20.8.2013

Your Excellency the Governor of Tamil Nadu and Chancellor, The Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University - Dr. K. Rosaiah Garu, Thiru. K.C. Veeramani, Hon'ble Minister for Health and Pro-Chancellor, Hon'ble Ministers of the Government of Tamil Nadu, Dr. D. Shantharam, Vice Chancellor, Dr. J. Radhakrishnan, Principal Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Dr. C.Vamsadhara, Director of Medical Education, Dr. S. Paranjothi, Director of Medical & Rural Health Services, Members of the Faculty, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Students,

It is a privilege to be part of this magnificent event- the Silver Jubilee Convocation, to witness this

inspiring moment, when you publicly acknowledge the profound responsibilities that await you, and declare your commitment to the practice of medicine, care of patients and advancement of humanity. I am here to commend and join you, in the celebration of this most noble commitment. It is a tradition which emphasizes the perseverance of the Faculty, students, families and friends, who are all intertwined and indispensable, in the academic journey our students have chosen to undertake. Here I behold the future promise of the health of my people of Tamil Nadu. You have come into this campus full of promise and altruism, replete with superior academic ability, and lives characterized by a commitment of service to others. As you swear by the Oath of Hippocrates, and prepare to cross the threshold of this University, invigorated by the zeal and spirit imparted, remember, that you are being sent out on a mission – a mission to heal. Healing is an art as much as a science, and I am sure you will maintain fidelity to this mission.

I have had the opportunity of delivering the Chief Guest's Address on the occasion of the Second, Twelfth and Twenty Second Convocations of this University, and it is a matter of pride to be here again, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Convocation. The Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University is committed to excellence and has been aptly named after the personality par excellence, Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G.R. The University is emerging as a veritable powerhouse for harnessing top quality health professionals, and as a hub of biomedical research. As the second largest Medical University in India, and the regulatory body for Medical, Dental, Indian Medicine and Allied Health Courses in the State of Tamil Nadu, this University has been spearheading plans and ambitions to attain world standards in medical education. I am happy to know that the University is in the process of using a more transparent, reliable and fair system of evaluation in medical, para medical, graduate and post graduate courses. Such innovations should illumine the direction of the University towards

exploring new paradigms in medical education in Tamil Nadu.

The role of the University in integrating the development of health manpower, with relevance to the real health needs and demands of the people of the State, has become accentuated in the present context. This should be the focus and direction of the education system. The pedagogic shift from the traditional approach to a need-based approach has become inevitable. The University should aim at creating socially-conscious health professionals, mindful of the great task ahead of them. It should be your commitment to create the health care delivery system of the future, to educate the workforce of tomorrow, to establish an ideal learning environment, to focus on research endeavours, and consequently make a global impact. Medical education needs to be planned and implemented, with full awareness of the aims and demands of the health care services, including consistent integration of the sciences of medical practice. Every medical graduate should appreciate

that learning is a continuous process, and knowledge should be periodically updated. The other important factor is for the University to have a community, industry and business interface, and to have exchange and collaborative linkages with other institutions.

There is no greater priority for the University, than to produce doctors, who possess high order professional skills, and are imbued with a sense of dedication, and public service. The menace posed by the corrosive commercialisation of medical education has to be warded off, and efforts should be made to ensure maintenance of standards, and check the growth of substandard medical colleges.

Tamil Nadu has the pride of place in the National health scene and has been receiving plaudits for its extraordinary performance in various indicators. I have always maintained that my highest priority remains the health of my people. Since my Government assumed office in 2011, the budget for Health has seen a 67% increase reflecting my Government's

priorities. The allocation in the current year is 6,511 crore rupees. Even in the field of Medical education, in the current academic year alone, we were able to get 410 additional MBBS seats in Government Medical Colleges, taking the overall seats in Government Medical Colleges from 2145 to 2555 this year. This is a result of the persistent efforts invested in by my Government. I have stood rock-firm in protecting the rights of my State and the interests of the students, in opposing the introduction of the Common National Entrance cum Eligibility Test which was eventually decided in the Supreme Court in favour of our Government's consistent stand.

I take pleasure in stating that Tamil Nadu is also one of the best performing States and has already achieved the National Rural Health Mission / Reproductive Child Health goals. The current Infant Mortality Rate of the State is 22 according to the Sample Registration System of 2011, which is well below the national target of 30 per 1000 live births. Against the national target of 100 per lakh live births

for the Maternal Mortality Rate, the State has already achieved a Maternal Mortality Rate of 73 per lakh live births. The State has also achieved replacement level and the current Total Fertility Rate is 1.7 which is the lowest in the Country. We have won encomiums from the Union Planning Commission, and many other independent review missions for our performance, and the best accolade received is from the people. This has been made possible because of the concordant health policy of my Government, which is committed to addressing the health needs of the people in a holistic manner. The actualization of the policy and transformation into services is credited to the quality human resources delivered by the various institutions affiliated to the University.

Let me also take this opportunity to highlight some of the schemes initiated by the Government of Tamil Nadu under my leadership. The CEMoNC, that is, the Comprehensive Emergency Maternal and Newborn Care scheme has been initiated successfully throughout Tamil Nadu, to bring down

the Maternal Mortality Rate. LSAS, that is, Life saving Anaesthetic Skills for Emergency Obstetric Care is another Intensive 24 week training programme, instituted for Graduate doctors to tackle Obstetric emergencies.

The health of women has been my foremost priority. Improvement of facilities for institutional delivery and prevention of maternal and infant mortality has been fired into action. After I assumed charge as Chief Minister for the 3rd time in 2011, I have increased the financial assistance under the revised Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme from 6,000 rupees given earlier to 12,000 rupees to be given to pregnant women from poor families as maternal assistance. This has incentivised ante natal care vaccination, and helped in encouraging institutional deliveries, which are now around 99% - the highest in the Country. On an average, 6 lakh women benefit from the scheme every year. Cancer screening of the breast and cervix has been launched in all the 32 Districts of the State. Aggressive media campaigning

is being done to encourage all reproductive age group women to come forward to get screened for cancer of the breast and cervix.

To ensure coverage of patients with Blood Cancer and Thalasaemia, my Government has sanctioned a first-of-its-kind cord banking system, with a grant of 9 crore rupees to create a Cord Bank under Public Private Partnership. Under this scheme, 3000 cord blood donations would be collected and processed. Patients referred by the Government hospitals, Government employees and their dependents, and patients under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance scheme would be given units free of charge. This will greatly benefit Blood cancer and Thalasaemia patients. Tamil Nadu was among the first States that recognised Gestational Diabetes Mellitus in the Country. Our State's contribution in identifying Diabetes at an early stage has been tremendous. The first Independent Department of Diabetology was established at the Madras Medical College. To tackle this disease, rigorous propaganda has been

launched through audio and visual media to educate the public about lifestyle modification and the need for a healthy diet.

Progress and universal coverage in the Health Sector is a key to Tamil Nadu's prominence as the numero-uno State in the Country, since the State's productivity depends on the health and well-being of its people. With this principle in mind, my Government is committed to dedicating the building at Omandurar Estate as a multi-specialty hospital to meet the health needs of the common people by offering the best possible yet affordable treatment. A medical college will also be started to augment the number of physicians and create 'health assets'. Post Graduate courses will be offered to create more specialists. Chennai is all set to become the 'Health Capital of India'.

My Government is focused on addressing the preventive, promotive and basic curative health care needs of the people of the State through a network of 8706 Health sub centres, 1614 Primary Health Centres,

267 Secondary Care Hospitals, and 19 Government Medical Colleges, with 43 tertiary hospitals attached to them. These are in addition to the private medical facilities with which, under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance scheme, we are able to provide access to the poor to those facilities also. The inflow of insurance funds to the Government Hospitals helps to constantly improve their infrastructure. So far in the past 2 years, 4.16 lakh persons have benefited under the Scheme for an insurance coverage of 912 crore rupees, of whom 1.54 lakh beneficiaries have been treated in Government hospitals for an insurance coverage of 318 crore rupees. The best practice in Blood bank administration is also credited to Tamil Nadu, where blood storage centres are not only fully functional, but also have strong linkages with various health units.

Keeping pace with the latest advances in the medical field, as the plethora of medical conditions in health care is becoming broader; the need for specialists in sub specialties and super specialties is growing today.

Earlier, Medical Graduates were leaving the Country to obtain specialized training in their chosen subjects. Now the situation has changed and I am proud to be able to inform all concerned that all their training is being offered by this University. This is the first University in India to offer Fellowship programmes in Medical, Surgical and Dental sub and super specialties. Many of these Post-Doctoral fellowship students, after successful completion of their training, are offering professional health care to our people. It is a matter of great pride that students from neighbouring countries are also keen on enrolling in our Fellowship Training Programmes.

This place attracts the best talent and the brightest minds. Many aspire to get here but only a few are chosen. You have been chosen and that, in itself, is a remarkable achievement. This day is the culmination of an extraordinary amount of inspiration, intelligence, and hard work. Each one of you is idealistic and well motivated, and you have a mental image of being a physician, even

though you may not yet know what this entails. You have been given the tremendous responsibility of caring - Listening, showing kindness, warmth and sensitivity to the patient and his or her family's needs, in addition to excellent clinical skills---these are the hallmarks of a caring physician. The health of the poorest person can have an impact on the health of the State. Caring for that person should be your concern, for it is my concern too - a mission close to my heart. Throughout your education, you have prepared to embark on your professional journey to undertake that CARE.

It is a high and noble calling. You are all called upon to make sacrifices, to make commitments, and to be present at the happiest and saddest moments in people's lives. When it comes to service, you provide that to your communities, and beyond, your efforts must be selfless and mindful of those most in need. It is a great responsibility indeed, but the powerful translation of this responsibility into a privilege will come, when you see the grateful smile of a patient. This is a memorable occasion in your life, as you embark

upon the journey of healing. I offer you my warmest congratulations. May the purity of thought in your minds, direct your hands, and guide your hearts, as you begin a life of service to others.

Thank You.

