

**Hon'ble Members of the Legislative
Assembly,
Vanakkam.**

It is a privilege and great honour to deliver my fourth consecutive inaugural address in this Fourteenth Assembly. At the outset, let me express the hope that this New Year 2015, will continue to bring more growth and prosperity to the State of Tamil Nadu. The people of Tamil Nadu have reposed their immense faith, time and again, in this Government for its efforts to bring in holistic development, which was reflected in the historic victory in the Parliamentary Election and in the bye-election to the Assembly constituency of Srirangam. I am confident that this Government will continue to fulfill the aspirations of the people.

2. I greatly appreciate the stupendous efforts taken by this Government to establish a true welfare State, promoting the welfare of all, particularly the poor and the downtrodden, by achieving equitable growth. Towards this objective, this Government is implementing several welfare schemes filled with compassion, besides pursuing developmental goals.

3. Maintenance of law and order is the bedrock on which the development of a State is built. This Government has always ensured impartial enforcement of law through its well-disciplined and motivated Police Force, thus maintaining public order and communal harmony in the State. Over the last four years, the State Police Force, through its timely and effective

interventions, has ensured that the State remained peaceful, thereby providing a complete sense of safety and security to the people. The attempts of extremist groups to establish their base in the State have been successfully thwarted through vigilant and effective preventive measures.

4. This Government has been implementing various schemes for promotion of the Tamil language. Grants of 42.23 crore rupees were sanctioned to the Tamil University to promote the Tamil language. In addition, various institutions such as Dravidian University in Andhra Pradesh and International School of Dravidian Linguistics in Kerala were also sanctioned grants liberally. This Government has taken up the construction of administrative and

other buildings in the International Institute of Tamil Studies in Chennai, World Tamil Sangam in Madurai and Tamil University in Thanjavur at a total cost of Rs.43.98 crore. To honour Tamil scholars and enthusiasts, this Government has instituted 10 new awards, including a Tamil Semmal Award for each district, in the last four years.

5. Recently, the Government of India has initiated steps to begin bilateral consultations for the voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees. This Government has categorically stated that even though the recent political developments in Sri Lanka have raised expectations of reconciliation, in view of the prevailing atmosphere of fear and intimidation, presence of Sri Lankan Army in

Tamil areas, non-resettlement of internally displaced Tamils and absence of any concrete and credible measures taken by the new Sri Lankan Government, any meeting to discuss voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees to Sri Lanka at this juncture is premature and should be deferred. This Government stands committed to the peaceful, just and honourable resettlement of Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees and is of the view that voluntary repatriation can be countenanced only after proper rehabilitation of internally displaced Sri Lankan Tamils and after the autonomy and democratic rights of minority Tamils are fully restored and sufficient economic and political measures are taken to create a congenial atmosphere for the return of refugees.

6. Repeated arrests of fishermen from Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy while pursuing their peaceful avocation of fishing in their traditional waters should come to an immediate end. I appreciate the efforts taken by this Government for the release of five fishermen, who were facing death penalty in Sri Lanka and ensuring their safe return home by providing assistance towards legal expenses, subsistence allowance to their families during their incarceration and assistance to begin a new life. This Government reiterates its consistent stand that a permanent solution to this vexatious problem faced by our fishermen will be possible only by restoring India's sovereignty over Katchatheevu,

thereby securing their rights to fish in their traditional waters.

7. I must place on record my heartfelt appreciation to **Selvi J Jayalithaa** for her relentless pursuit and untiring efforts to secure the legitimate rights of the State in various inter-state river water disputes. It is only because of her perseverance and courage that the State could secure a historic verdict from the Hon'ble Supreme Court declaring the Mullai Periyar Dam as hydrologically, structurally and seismically safe, thereby enabling the State of Tamil Nadu to raise the water level to 142 feet. I am extremely happy to note that the water level in Mullai Periyar Dam has now reached the legally permissible level of 142 feet and has given

new hope to the people of southern Tamil Nadu.

8. This Government has registered its strong objection to the Government of India for the clearance given by the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife for conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment Study to construct a new dam by the Government of Kerala at Mullai Periyar. Similarly, the legitimate concerns of Tamil Nadu have been conveyed to the Government of India over the proposed plan of the Government of Kerala to take up new projects in the Pambar sub-basin which is in violation of the Final Order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. Any such new project should have the approval of the

Cauvery Management Board and the specific consent of all the riparian States.

9. The Government of Karnataka has planned new reservoirs near Mekedatu in the guise of drinking water supply across the river Cauvery without the consent of the Government of Tamil Nadu. The Government of Tamil Nadu has since filed an Interlocutory Application in November, 2014 in the Supreme Court to restrain the Government of Karnataka, among others, from executing new projects. Further, the Government of India is urged not to accord clearance to any such projects of Karnataka across the River Cauvery by the Ministry of Environment and Forests till the Cauvery Management Board is formed as a permanent monitoring mechanism.

10. The Government of India's immediate intervention has been sought to constitute the Cauvery Management Board and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee for effective implementation of the Final Order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. Inter-state river water disputes pose a serious threat to national unity. This Government is of the firm view that only the implementation of the Peninsular River Water Linkage Project, as part of the National Water Grid Project, can address this problem, thus promoting national integration and development.

11. The Government of India has already introduced the Constitutional Amendment Bill on Goods and Services Tax (GST) in the Lok Sabha without evolving a

consensus on the critical aspects of GST like Revenue Neutral Rates, compensation methodology and threshold. This move is bound to have serious long term implications on the fiscal autonomy of the States, besides affecting our federal structure. The Government of Tamil Nadu has expressed its concerns and suggested that the Government of India should evolve a consensus before the enactment of the Constitutional Amendment Bill on GST and has also strongly urged that such an important Bill should not be hastily pushed through.

12. This Government has been taking several steps to improve governance through the usage of Information Technology so as to ensure speedy and transparent

delivery of services to the citizens. One of the major schemes being implemented is the setting up of 'Common Service Centres' throughout the State. More than 2,500 such centres set up through the IT Department are currently operational. Several services, including certificates issued by Revenue Department, payment of taxes and utility charges, applications for benefits under different Government schemes, etc., have been made available online and citizens are able to access these services with ease through the Common Service Centres. By the end of this year, such centres will become operational throughout the State in all Collectorate, Taluk Offices, Block Development Offices and offices of Corporations, Municipalities,

Town Panchayats and Village Panchayats. More than 100 services will be made available through these centres. I am happy to inform this House that due to the concerted efforts taken by the State Government, Tamil Nadu consistently ranks among the top three best performing States in e-delivery of citizen services in the entire country. I am confident that it will reach the top spot very soon.

13. The revival of the defunct Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation (TACTV), a State Public Sector Undertaking formed to provide affordable cable television services to the poor and middle class households has proved to be a great success. This Government is taking diligent and ardent efforts to obtain the

'Digital Addressable System' license for the TACTV, which would go a long way in providing inexpensive and quality cable TV services to the people of Tamil Nadu. TACTV has also set up 200 Common Service Centres (CSC) to provide public services to the people. It will further expand these services by establishing more CSCs in the rural and urban areas.

14. This Government welcomes the decision of the Government of India to abolish the Union Planning Commission, which has lost its relevance in the current context and to replace it with the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog. This Government has always advocated an increased role for States in development and in the nation building

process as well as greater fiscal autonomy. I hope that the new institution will foster the spirit of co-operative federalism with the active participation of all the Chief Ministers of the States and Union Territories in its Governing Council. I hope it will aid better formulation of economic and developmental policies for both the Union and the State Governments, having regard to the unique and specific needs of different States.

15. This Government has sanctioned 40 new taluks, taking the total number of taluks to 260. The Revenue Administration is fully geared to handle Integrated Land Record Management for which works are in progress. You would be happy to know that due to the efforts of this Government to computerize land records, now the citizens of

Chennai City will be able to access computerized Patta online through Common Service Centres. Similar benefits will accrue to the people in other cities, once the ongoing Natham and Urban Survey is completed.

16. The Primary Sector, being the lifeline of the rural economy, provides livelihood for around 40 per cent of Tamil Nadu's population. The State has seven agro-climatic zones which make it ideal for experimenting with cultivation of cash crops and horticultural crops in addition to the traditional agricultural crops. With the crop-specific strategies coupled with farm level interventions, this Government has made remarkable strides in improving crop productivity. It is heartening to mention that

maize, groundnut, oil seeds, sugarcane and tapioca are some of the crops wherein this State has recorded the highest productivity in the country. I am also proud to note that **due to the concerted efforts taken by this Government, the State has achieved the highest ever foodgrain production of 110.02 lakh Metric Tonnes during 2013-2014. In recognition of the record production of 6.14 lakh Metric Tonnes of pulses during 2013-2014, the State has been selected for the Krishi Karman Award by the Government of India.**

17. The Animal Husbandry Sector provides sustainable supplementary income to the small and marginal farmers. Under the flagship scheme of **'Free Distribution of Milch Cows and Sheep/Goats'**, so far,

47,735 milch cows and 21.91 lakh sheep/goats have been distributed to the poor in rural areas. I appreciate the measures taken to strengthen the veterinary extension network, on a scale that has never happened in the past. Fodder Development and Poultry Development programmes are the other initiatives of this Government, which have paved the way for increased prosperity in rural areas. One of the laudable steps taken by this Government is increasing the procurement price of milk by five rupees per litre and as a result, Aavin's milk procurement has gone up substantially.

18. Inflation hits the poor hard. Insulating the poor from the ill-effects of inflation is the topmost priority of this Government. The State Government has not

only ensured provision of essential commodities such as rice at free of cost and pulses, palmolein oil, sugar, wheat and kerosene to the common people at the most affordable prices through the Public Distribution System, but also walked the extra mile through innovative price control measures such as Farm Fresh Consumer Outlets, Amma Marundhagams, Amma Unavagams, Amma Drinking Water and Amma Salt. Launching of **AMMA Cement Supply Scheme** to provide cement at a concessional rate of Rs.190/- per bag with effect from 5th January, 2015, is yet another feather in the cap of this Government. This will help in mitigating the hardships faced by low and middle income families due to the rising price of cement in the open market.

19. Natural disasters like cyclones and floods have struck various parts of the Country and left many people homeless. On a humanitarian consideration, this Government has immediately responded and sanctioned a sum of five crore rupees to the flood ravaged areas of Jammu & Kashmir. This Government has also extended a helping hand through a contribution of five crore rupees and other relief assistance to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, for undertaking immediate rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures in Visakhapatnam, which was devastated by the Hudhud cyclone. I appreciate these humanitarian interventions taken by this Government.

20. This Government had launched **'Tamil Nadu Village Habitation**

Improvement (THAI) Scheme' to improve the basic amenities in the rural areas. Since May 2011, a sum of 2,930 crore rupees has been allocated for this purpose. The innovative 'Chief Minister's Solar Powered Green House Scheme' is being implemented to construct environment friendly houses for the rural poor. In the last four years, 2.4 lakh houses have been taken up for construction at an outlay of Rs.4,680 crore. Tamil Nadu continues to excel in the implementation of 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme' (MGNREGS) at the National level in many key parameters, including generation of person-days, expenditure on wages, participation of women and average number of days of employment provided per family.

21. Financial inclusion is an important tool to achieve inclusive growth. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) function as a useful vehicle to achieve this objective. It is commendable that this Government has facilitated the SHGs in the State in availing of Rs.18,302 crore of bank credit during the last four years. The appointment of more than 3,000 Business Correspondents (BCs) from amongst SHGs and Panchayat Level Federation members has strengthened their relationship with the bankers for accessing easy credit. It is also heartening to note that the President of the World Bank has commended the exemplary performance of the 'Pudhu Vaazhvu Project' during his visit to the State. He has even declared that this project has many lessons to offer to other

similar projects not only in India but in the entire world.

22. Rapid urbanization brings unique challenges in urban infrastructure management. Hence this Government has initiated various projects, including '**Integrated Urban Development Mission (IUDM)**' with an annual allocation of 750 crore rupees to ensure balanced development in urban areas across the State. The Chennai Urban agglomeration accounts for 25 per cent of the total urban population in the State. To address the specific needs of Chennai City, the '**Chennai Mega City Development Mission**' with an annual allocation of 500 crore rupees is being implemented. I am glad to point out that these schemes have facilitated the

strengthening of urban infrastructure like storm water drains, sewerage system, solid waste management and roads. I also hope that the request of this Government to the Union Government for including the 12 Municipal Corporations in our State under the 'Smart Cities' programme, will be accepted at the earliest.

23. Providing potable drinking water to all households remains a major challenge in this country and more so in a water starved State like Tamil Nadu. Nevertheless, this Government has been taking extraordinary efforts, blended with innovative technological solutions, to cater to the drinking water needs of both rural and rapidly growing urban areas. Currently, 14 major Combined Drinking Water Supply

Schemes at a cost of Rs.4,890 crore are under implementation to benefit one Corporation, 18 Municipalities, 84 Town Panchayats and 13,068 rural habitations in the State. To address the drinking water needs of Chennai City, two desalination plants commissioned at Minjur and Nemmeli, each with a capacity of 100 MLD, are functioning at full capacity. In addition, the State Government is taking steps to set up two more such plants with 150 MLD and 400 MLD capacity at Nemmeli and Perur respectively. Further, to augment water storage capacity, works relating to a new reservoir at Thervaikandigai in Thiruvallur District at an estimated cost of Rs.330 crore and linking it with Poondi reservoir at an estimated cost of Rs.93.77 crore are in

progress. These visionary projects would certainly enable Chennai City to meet the future drinking water needs of its rapidly growing population.

24. One of the goals encapsulated in the Vision 2023 Document is to provide affordable housing to all. This Government has additionally sanctioned Rs.406.31 crore from the State fund, during 2014-2015, to complete the pending 19,928 houses taken up by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board under JNNURM-I. Though the 'Housing for All' scheme promised by the Government of India is yet to be launched, this Government will continue its efforts for slum area improvement.

25. I am happy to note that substantial progress has been achieved in

the implementation of the Chennai Metro Rail Project and a part of the elevated section from Koyambedu to Alandur is to be commissioned soon. I urge the Government of India for the early clearance of the extension of the project from Washermenpet to Thiruvotriyur. The State Government has already taken up the preparation of Detailed Project Reports for Phase-II Corridors. I hope that the Government of India will support the State to implement these additional corridors expeditiously, so as to make the Chennai Metro Rail Project more comprehensive and useful to the people of Chennai.

26. The socio-economic growth of the State mainly depends on adequate availability of power. The concerted efforts of

this Government have resulted in the completion of Thermal Power Projects at Mettur, North Chennai and Vallur which have augmented power generation by 2500 MW. Altogether, 3358 MW has been added to the power generation capacity of the State in the last four years. This has provided a huge relief to the State. It is heartening to note that unit III with a capacity of 500 MW of TNEB-NTPC Joint Venture Project at Vallur, which is under trial run, is expected to commence commercial operation shortly. The works of Ennore Expansion Project for 660 MW and Ennore Special Economic Zone Project - two Units of 660 MW each have also commenced. Strengthening the transmission network with a financial assistance of Rs.3,572 crore from the Japan International

Co-operation Agency (JICA) is one of the major steps taken by this Government to improve the quality of power supply. All these concrete measures taken by this Government will improve the power supply position in the State.

27. This Government's policy to form new roads and upgrade the existing road network has resulted in better connectivity to remote areas. Road density in the State has been enhanced to 1.77 km per square kilometer, which is one of the highest in the Country. This Government has strengthened the road infrastructure by sanctioning Rs.10,637 crore under the '**Comprehensive Road Infrastructure Development Programme**' (CRIDP) from 2011-2012 onwards. I am pleased to know that the first

phase of Outer Ring Road from Mannivakkam to Nemilichery has been inaugurated and Phase II of the Outer Ring Road work connecting Nemilichery to Thatchur is in progress.

28. This Government has taken several path-breaking initiatives to create an industry-friendly environment for attracting substantial investments into the State. The New Industrial Policy and sector-specific policies for Biotechnology and Automobile and Auto-Components were also brought out in 2014. It is noteworthy that during May 2011 to September 2014, the total incremental investment attracted by the State stood at Rs.2,58,382 crore and Tamil Nadu ranks second in the Country. During this period, the State has attracted

Rs.44,402 crore of Foreign Direct Investment. According to Foreign Direct Investment Statistics published by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Government of India, Tamil Nadu is ranked third among Indian States in terms of foreign investment inflows. I am confident that the proposed Global Investors Meet (GIM) on 23rd and 24th May 2015 in Chennai will ensure the emergence of Tamil Nadu as one of the top three preferred investment destinations in Asia and the best State in the Country.

29. With 9.68 lakh registered units in the State, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Sector provides employment to 63.18 lakh persons. This Government has taken many proactive

measures including creation of a land bank for MSME units, promotion of entrepreneurship through 'New Entrepreneur-cum-Enterprise Development Scheme' (NEEDS), assisting the private industrial clusters with financial support for infrastructure facilities and advanced skill development programmes to impart training to youth. This Government's support to micro, small and medium enterprises will continue as the Government is well aware that the growth of the Manufacturing Sector is possible only through vibrant micro, small and medium enterprises.

30. This Government has taken all efforts to ensure universal access to quality education by opening 182 new primary schools and upgrading 1,317 schools in the

middle and high school segments in the past four years. This Government has accorded top priority to the quality of education in the last four years by introducing many innovative programmes like connect classrooms, virtual classrooms and Information and Communication Technology in schools. To ensure imparting of quality education, the Government has sanctioned 76,338 additional teaching posts and ensured the recruitment of 72,597 teachers till date. This Government has also provided laptop computers, special cash incentives to reduce dropouts at the secondary level, free textbooks, notebooks, four sets of uniform, footwear, school bags, bus passes, bicycles, transport facilities, etc., at a total cost of Rs.8,748.89 crore from 2011-2012 to

2014-2015. It is heartening to note that for the first time in the history of Tamil Nadu, students studying in Government schools have secured the first three ranks in the 10th Standard Board Examination.

31. This Government has opened 38 Arts and Science Colleges, 11 Polytechnic Colleges and 4 Engineering Colleges in various parts of Tamil Nadu in the last four years to ensure access and equal opportunity to the students from rural and economically backward areas to pursue higher studies. Similarly, 796 new courses have been introduced in the Government Arts and Science Colleges with the sanction of 1800 teaching posts from the years 2011-2012 to 2013-2014. This has benefited 10,204 students so far. In order to take

Tamil Nadu forward in Information Technology, the Government, along with the Government of India and Industry has established the Indian Institute of Information Technology at Srirangam, Tiruchirappalli District. Due to these multi-pronged initiatives, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of Tamil Nadu has reached 42 per cent as against the National GER of 21 per cent.

32. Quality healthcare services rendered by this State in maternal, reproductive and childcare have enabled the State to achieve the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations. Several landmark initiatives such as the 'Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme', 'Dr. Muthulakshmi

Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme', 'Menstrual Hygiene Programme' and strengthening of health infrastructure have been widely appreciated by the Government of India, World Health Organisation and other agencies. During the last four years, 172 new Primary Health Centres (PHCs) have been established and 122 PHCs have been upgraded as 30 bedded PHCs with specialist doctors and modern equipment. 42 PHCs have also been upgraded as Maternal and Child Health Centres.

33. Tamil Nadu is in the forefront of sports development. The strategies and initiatives taken by this Government have resulted in excellent performance by our sportspersons in the national and international arena. Seven sportspersons

from Tamil Nadu have won three Gold Medals and four Silver Medals in the recently concluded 20th Commonwealth Games. In the 17th Asian Games also, twelve sportspersons from Tamil Nadu won five Gold Medals, five Silver Medals and four Bronze Medals. These sportspersons were suitably rewarded with attractive cash incentives as a token of appreciation of their talent.

34. This Government has accorded the highest priority to the welfare of women and children. Tamil Nadu is a pioneer in launching several welfare initiatives like the 'Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. Nutritious Meal Programme', 'Girl Child Protection Scheme', incentives to encourage girls' education and Marriage Assistance Scheme. As already

announced in this august House, this Government has extended variety meals under the Nutritious Meal Programme throughout the State at an additional annual cost of Rs.103.28 crore to improve the nutritional value of the meals served. The 'Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme' has also been revamped to enhance the effectiveness of ICDS centres as Vibrant Early Childhood Development Centres. Coverage of Social Security Pensions has been substantially increased by this Government, thereby benefiting a large number of destitutes and aged persons. Through these measures, this State has emerged as a model welfare State, providing a comprehensive social safety net for the poor and vulnerable.

35. Pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, enhancement of monthly food charges, construction of school and college hostels are some of the noteworthy schemes being implemented by this Government for the welfare of socially disadvantaged sections of Society such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes, Denotified Communities and Minorities. One of the spectacular achievements of this Government is the extension of post-matric scholarship to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students studying in private colleges. This has enabled a significant number of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students to avail of the benefit of post-matric scholarships.

36. I have broadly outlined the policies and initiatives of this Government. I am fully confident that under this Government, the State will march forward and reach the pinnacle of success. I am sure that in the ensuing session, this House will debate and discuss many issues of importance to the State and come out with more initiatives to achieve higher growth as envisaged in the Vision 2023 Document. I conclude my address with my warm New Year Greetings once again.

Nanri

Vanakkam

Jai Hind