

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

**Vanakkam.**

It is my privilege and honour to inaugurate this sixth session of the fifteenth Legislative Assembly by delivering my address in this august House. I take this opportunity to extend my warm greetings to all of you for the New Year and the ensuing Pongal festival. I wish that the New Year will bring greater prosperity and happiness to the people of Tamil Nadu.

2) This Government, led by the Hon'ble Chief Minister is being steadfast in carrying forward the proud legacy of the **late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa**, by implementing programmes and policies

envisioned by her. As a true welfare State, this Government continues to focus on the socio-economic development of the State, with a special emphasis on protecting the interests of the poor and other vulnerable sections of society. I am glad to mention that the Hon'ble Chief Minister with his able leadership has made the administration responsive to public needs and has been taking swift decisions by clearing an unprecedented number of 11,286 files since he assumed office.

3) Tamil Nadu, as always, has continued to be a fiscally prudent State, notwithstanding several financial challenges. However, the revenue deficit has been on the rise in recent years mainly due to the devolution formulae evolved by the

14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission which has adversely affected the State finances. Further, implementation of Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) and 7<sup>th</sup> Pay Commission recommendations has also widened the revenue deficit. The delay in the release of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) and Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation, due to the State, has also accentuated this problem. The Fifteenth Finance Commission, constituted by the Hon'ble President of India to give recommendations on the distribution of financial resources between Centre and States, visited the State in September 2018 and has had detailed discussions with the Government. I earnestly hope that the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission will uphold the principles of equity and efficiency and

will give a fair deal in financial devolution to the State of Tamil Nadu.

4) Tamil Nadu has successfully embraced the GST despite the challenges associated with the transition to a completely new tax regime. However, there has been delay by the Government of India in the release of State share of IGST and in the settlement of GST compensation on the guaranteed 14 per cent growth in SGST revenues. The Government of India is yet to make IGST settlement of Rs.5,454 crore relating to the year 2017-18 and short payments on GST compensation of Rs.455 crore for the year 2017-18 and Rs.1,305 crore for the period from April to September 2018, which are adversely affecting the State finances. I therefore urge

the Central Government to settle these dues at the earliest and ensure prompt release of such dues in future.

5) The State of Tamil Nadu has expressed its concerns on various National legislations such as suggesting amendments to National Medical Commission Bill, withdrawal of Dam Safety Bill, issues related to Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, Electricity Bill etc. These concerns have been put forward by the State to uphold the interests of the people of Tamil Nadu. The Government of India has introduced the Dam Safety Bill in the Parliament, which infringes upon the State's rights. I hope the concerns of the State will be impartially addressed and resolved by the Government of India in such legislations.

6) The Government has issued orders for permanent closure of the Sterlite copper plant in Thoothukudi with immediate effect, as the unit has failed to comply with the environmental norms. This order has been challenged by Sterlite Industries in the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the Tribunal has ordered to reopen the unit in spite of the objections raised by this Government. This order has already been stayed by the Madurai bench of the Madras High Court. This Government will appeal against the order of the National Green Tribunal.

7) Tamil Nadu has been pioneering various research activities. The proposals by the Central Government to close some of the research and other Central institutions in

the State will adversely impact the scientific research work in Tamil Nadu which are beneficial to farmers and fishermen. I expect that the request of State Government to continue the operation of Central institutes like the Central Institute of Brackish water Aquaculture (CIBA) in Chennai, Sugarcane Breeding Institute at Coimbatore, National Research Centre for Banana at Tiruchirappalli, Potato Research Institute at Ooty and the Central Press at Coimbatore will be duly considered by the Government of India.

8) The State has recently suffered from the devastating Gaja cyclone, which ravaged the Cauvery delta area and the central districts of the State, causing enormous destruction in terms of loss of life,

damages to houses, crops, coconut and other plantations and severe damages to power infrastructure. The State Government had taken prompt pre-emptive action to evacuate people from vulnerable coastal areas and alerted the fishermen as part of its pre-monsoon preparedness, which saved large number of lives. The Government also acted swiftly in the aftermath of the calamity and put 4.81 lakh persons in relief camps and has compassionately extended gratuitous relief to 6.4 lakh affected families which includes a package of essential items. The Hon'ble Chief Minister announced a comprehensive package of Rs.2,335.48 crore so far for immediate relief and rehabilitation of the affected areas. I thank the Central Government for expediting the release of Rs.353.70 crore towards second

instalment of its committed contribution to SDRF allocation for the year 2018-19. I applaud the Hon'ble Chief Minister for unveiling a programme for replacing one lakh fully damaged huts with concrete houses and extending full financial support for rejuvenation of coconut and other plantations under project mode. The State Government has sought assistance of Rs.2,709 crore as immediate relief and Rs.15,190 crore for permanent restoration from Government of India, following which a Central team visited the affected districts. While thanking the Government of India for sanctioning Rs.900.31 crore additionally under National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF) for immediate relief, I request the Government of India to extend adequate additional financial assistance to the

State Government under ongoing schemes to rebuild the affected houses and restore the economic livelihood of people.

9) This Government has strongly opposed the recent move by the Central Water Commission for giving clearance to Government of Karnataka to prepare the Detailed Project Report for constructing a reservoir at Mekedatu in Karnataka. This act is a blatant violation of the Hon'ble Supreme Court judgment on the order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal which states that '*upper riparian State shall not take any action so as to affect the scheduled deliveries of water to lower riparian States*'. It is my duty to point out that this august House has also passed a resolution unanimously condemning and

opposing the action of the Government of Karnataka and the Central Water Commission. It has also urged the Government of India to direct the Central Water Commission immediately to withdraw the permission granted for preparing the Detailed Project Report and to restrain the Government of Karnataka or its agencies from taking up any work at Mekedatu or at any other place in the Cauvery basin of Karnataka, in violation of the final order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal and the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, without the consent of the State of Tamil Nadu.

10) This Government opposes the attempt by Kerala to construct a new dam to replace the existing Mullai Periyar Dam

and will continue its pursuit of raising the water level of this dam to 152 feet. Though the inter-State river water disputes can be better resolved through mutual trust and understanding, the State of Tamil Nadu has been repeatedly forced to seek legal remedy to protect its legitimate riparian rights. Therefore, following the footsteps of late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, our Hon'ble Chief Minister is committed to protecting the interests of the farmers and the people of Tamil Nadu by all legal means in inter-State river water disputes.

11) The arrest of fishermen and confiscation of their fishing vessels by the Sri Lankan Navy continues unabated. In the last two years, 551 fishermen were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy.

I appreciate the efforts taken by the Hon'ble Chief Minister in securing the release of 206 boats and 543 fishermen who were languishing in the Sri Lankan prisons. The State Government reiterates its stand that Government of India should amicably resolve this issue to find a lasting solution with the Sri Lankan Government.

12) The 'Tamil Nadu Vision 2023' Document conceived by the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa has always served as the guiding light for this Government to take the State on the path of development. The Government has laid down the broad policy framework and strategies for the critical areas of development which includes the recently unveiled Eco-tourism policy, Forest policy, Youth policy,

Food processing policy, e-Governance policy and Information Communication Technology policy. I hope that this well-thought out policy framework will pave the way for the State to achieve its developmental goals.

13) I am happy to note that the State Government has won several accolades such as Krishi Karman award for agriculture and Awards of Excellence instituted by 'India Today' in categories of 'Overall best performing State', 'Tourism', 'Infrastructure' and in 'maintenance of law and order'. Further, the State also received best practice award for the computerisation of Public Distribution system, recognition for high quality health services, including best performance in organ transplantation as well as awards for

renewable energy. The State is also ranked second in good governance in the Public affairs index created by the Public Affairs Centre, Bengaluru. The State ranks second in the Sustainable Development Goals index compiled and published recently by Niti Aayog. These accomplishments bear testimony to the remarkable administrative prowess of this Government in ensuring overall development of the State.

14) The Government has approved the creation of Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. Arts and Social Development Research Chair in the name of Bharat Ratna Dr.M.G.R at a cost of Rs.1.08 crore in the International Institute of Tamil Studies, Chennai. In the interest of promoting Tamil language and culture, a conference of international

Tamil organizations will be held once in two years through World Tamil Sangam, Madurai. I hope that the Government of India will favourably consider the requests of the State Government to confer 'Bharat Ratna' posthumously on Tamil Nadu's revered leaders, Perarignar Anna and Puratchi Thalaivi Amma and to rename the Chennai Central Railway Station as 'Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G. Ramachandran Central Railway Station'.

15) The maintenance of law and order is a pre-requisite for the overall development of the State. This Government has effectively maintained law and order, ensuring peace and stability in the State. The wellness programme launched by the Government to rejuvenate police personnel

is a path breaking programme that will motivate the police force and keep their morale high. I wish to point out that the recent National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report has named Chennai as the safest metro and Coimbatore as the safest city for women. The launch of 181 helpline for women's safety and 'Kavalan App' of Police will definitely strengthen the efforts of the State Government in ensuring safety and security of the people, particularly women.

16) The State Government has always adopted a multi-pronged approach towards the development of agriculture and its allied sectors, aimed at creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for the farmers through technological interventions and diversification. It is heartening to note

that the State is one of the top performers in implementing the 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana', a centrally sponsored scheme, aimed at mitigating weather risk through crop insurance. The 'Mission on Sustainable Dry Land Agriculture' to improve the productivity of millets, pulses, cotton and oil seeds in dry lands, Collective Farming Scheme, Integrated Farming, accelerated implementation of micro irrigation schemes, strengthening of irrigation structures and remunerative value addition through Farmer Interest Groups and Farmer Producer Organisations etc., will certainly enhance farmers' income and promote sustainable farming.

17) This Government is taking several measures to strengthen irrigation

structures and augment water storage capacity. The 'Tamil Nadu Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation Project' (TNIAMP) at an outlay of Rs.2,962 crore has already been launched. The programme of permitting farmers to collect silt from irrigation tanks and 'Kudimaramath' programme to rejuvenate irrigation structures, are being implemented with full zeal. I appreciate the Government for immediately sanctioning Rs.387.60 crore to construct the new Kollidam regulator at Mukkombu in Trichy district to replace the old regulator which was damaged in the recent flood. **The comprehensive Athikadavu-Avinashi Scheme has been taken up at a cost of Rs.1,652 crore and will benefit 24,468 acres of cultivated lands besides recharging ground water**

**and augmenting water supply in Coimbatore, Erode and Tiruppur districts, by channelising surplus water of Bhavani river to 74 tanks and 971 ponds. The tender process has already commenced and the project will be launched very soon by the Hon'ble Chief Minister.**

18) The flagship scheme of 'Free distribution of milch cows, goats and sheep' being implemented by this Government since 2011, has provided sustained livelihood opportunities to the rural poor, insulating them from economic vulnerabilities. These efforts have been supplemented by initiatives such as 'Poultry Development Scheme', 'Fodder Development Scheme' and by substantially

augmenting the veterinary infrastructure throughout the State. The State has witnessed remarkable growth in the dairy sector due to the concerted efforts of the Government with the milk procurement reaching a record level of 37.03 lakh litres during October 2018.

19) This Government is committed to improving the Fisheries Sector, by strengthening of infrastructure like fishing harbours, fish landing centres, fish processing parks and promoting inland aquaculture. The Government is working in tandem with the Government of India to encourage deep sea fishing using tuna long-liners. The development of fishing harbours at Mookaiyur and Kunthukal in Ramanathapuram district and at Poompuhar

in Nagapattinam district will further promote deep sea fishing.

20) The innovative strategies in poverty reduction under 'Pudhu Vazhvu' led to the formation of Self Help groups, Village Poverty Reduction Committees and Panchayat Level Federations ensuring better economic and social empowerment of the rural poor in 120 blocks of the State. These strategies are now being scaled up to cover the remaining 265 blocks under the 'Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission' (TNSRLM) thereby covering the whole State. Through the Self Help Group – Bank Linkage Programme, credit linkages are being extended under TNSRLM, to start micro-enterprises for sustained economic security of the rural poor. The TNSRLM model

has been replicated in the urban areas through the 'Tamil Nadu State Urban Livelihoods Mission' for providing sustained employment opportunities to the urban poor.

21) The State has taken earnest efforts for implementing the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' effectively to meet its national goals. I am happy to note that 100 percent sanitation coverage has been achieved in the State and all Village Panchayats have been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF). The State is taking active steps for sustaining the ODF status to attain the goal of universal sanitation in the State. Tamil Nadu is the first State in the country to achieve universal coverage in the establishment of Solid Waste Management Systems among Village Panchayats.

The '**Thooimai Kaavalars**' have ensured that last mile sanitation is a reality. This Government is committed to protecting the environment and eco system and has banned certain 'use and throw away plastics' with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2019.

22) I take pride in the fact that the policy of 'Universal Public Distribution System' (PDS) of the State Government has ensured food security for all. The supply of rice free of cost and supply of sugar, dal and palm oil at subsidised prices to eligible card holders, has ensured that the State is free from hunger. Implementation of 'Comprehensive Computerization Scheme' in PDS operations with Aadhaar linkage has eliminated bogus cards and multiple entries of beneficiaries. This Government

has achieved the remarkable feat of distributing Aadhaar linked smart cards to 2.01 crore families to ensure a seamless and transparent Public Distribution System. **Following the footsteps of late Chief Ministers M.G.Ramachandran and J Jayalalithaa, who have always helped the poor and downtrodden during calamities, this Government will distribute Pongal Gift hampers containing raw rice, sugar, raisins, cashew nut, cardamom and sugarcane to all card holders to celebrate the Pongal festival, to mitigate the impact of Gaja cyclone in Cauvery delta and the widespread drought in northern districts. In addition to this, I am happy to announce that this Government will give a cash support of**

**Rs.1,000/- per family for the celebration of Pongal festival which will be applicable for the entire State except Thiruvarur district where the Model Code of Conduct is in force, in view of the by-election to Thiruvarur assembly constituency.**

23) The systematic efforts taken by the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa brought about a turn around in the power sector in the State. This Government continues her initiatives by implementing thermal and hydro-electric projects to the tune of 17,100 MW at a total estimated cost of Rs.1.27 lakh crore, which are under various stages of execution. Tamil Nadu continues to top the States producing renewable energy, with an installed capacity of 11,716 MW.

The transmission infrastructure throughout the State is being strengthened with assistance from Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), Asian Development Bank (ADB), KfW and National Clean Energy Fund at a cost of Rs.9,178 crore. A robust power sector has become the biggest strength of the State for attracting new investments.

24) The State has been undertaking major road infrastructure projects including construction of by-passes, ring roads and bridges under the 'Comprehensive Road Infrastructure Development Programme'. The decision of the Government to transfer 7,964 kilometre length of 2,596 Panchayat and Panchayat Union roads from rural local bodies to Highways Department for

upgrading them in a phased manner over three years, to the standards of Other District Roads is a laudable initiative. The first phase of upgrading 1,436 kilometre of roads at a cost of Rs.608 crore is under progress and the second phase to upgrade 1,538 kilometre of roads at a cost of Rs.882 crore has been sanctioned by the Government this year. The World Bank aided 'Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project-II' is also contributing immensely to the creation of road infrastructure of high standards in the State. I compliment the State for developing an excellent road network which provides the core strength for accelerated economic development of the State.

25) The development of certain major infrastructure projects requires

close coordination between the Union and State Governments. Some critical projects such as Chennai Port - Maduravoyal Elevated Corridor, Chennai-Bangalore Industrial Corridor, Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor and upgrading the East Coast Road as four lane National Highway, are of vital importance to the State. I hope that the Government of India will give paramount priority to these projects and will expedite their implementation.

26) The State Transport Corporations operate more than 21,678 buses on about 19,488 routes carrying 1.74 crore passengers per day. Despite revision in fares, the bus ticket tariffs in Tamil Nadu are still among the lowest in the country. The Government is absorbing the additional

costs that arise due to increase in diesel prices and has sanctioned Rs.268.35 crore as Diesel Price Compensation to the Transport Corporations from January 2018 to October 2018. **The Government is also embarking on a comprehensive restructuring programme for the transport corporations with the support of the German bilateral financing agency, KfW. This would involve replacement of the aging fleet with fuel efficient BS-VI buses and procurement of environment friendly electric buses in metro cities like Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai.**

27) The State Government has revived the schemes of 'Integrated Urban Development Mission' (IUDM) and

'Chennai Mega City Development Mission' (CMCDM) in 2018-19 with an annual allocation of Rs.750 crore and Rs.500 crore respectively, to augment financial resources for urban infrastructure development. The 'Smart Cities' programme is being implemented in eleven cities. Various urban projects are currently being undertaken in 28 cities and towns of Tamil Nadu under the 'Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation' (AMRUT) programme. The Government is also implementing the 'Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Project' (TNSUDP) with World Bank aid and the 'Tamil Nadu Urban Flagship Investment Programme' (TNUFIP) with Asian Development Bank assistance, for giving greater fillip to meeting the growing urban infrastructure requirements of the State.

28) One of the noteworthy initiatives of this Government is to ensure slum-free cities and hut-free villages in the State. The State has been a forerunner in providing houses to the rural poor through the 'Chief Minister's Solar Powered Green House Scheme' supplementing the efforts under the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin)'. The Government has constituted the 'Shelter Fund' to raise adequate resources to meet the housing needs of the urban poor. The Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB) has so far taken up construction of 5,16,741 dwelling units at a project cost of Rs.21,604 crore under the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)'. **The Government has formulated a comprehensive housing project called 'Tamil Nadu Housing and Habitat Development**

**Project' to transform slums in Chennai, Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram Districts with World Bank funding assistance. A similar project for areas other than Chennai Metropolitan Area has been posed to the Asian Development Bank for assistance.** The Common Building Rules will also be notified shortly to enhance the ease of doing business in the housing sector. Further, the decision of the Government to raise the Floor Space Index (FSI) will go a long way to make housing more affordable.

29) The Chennai Metro Rail has provided a world class urban public transport facility in Chennai. The Phase –I has already commenced operations and is expected to be fully commissioned by January 2019. The Phase-I extension from Washermenpet

to Wimco Nagar at an estimated cost of Rs.3,770 crore will be ready for inauguration by June 2020 as scheduled. The State Government has already accorded in-principle approval for the implementation of Phase-II of Chennai Metro Rail Project covering 107.55 kilometre in three corridors.

**I am happy to inform this august House that the Japan International Co-operation Agency has now approved the funding of Rs.20,196 crore for the priority stretches totaling 52 kilometre from Madhavaram to Sholinganallur and Madhavaram to Chennai Mofussil Bus Terminus (CMBT). The loan agreement for the first tranche of approximately Rs.4,770 crore was signed on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2018 and work will commence shortly. I am glad**

**to announce that the Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) Act and its relevant rules will be notified on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 to make the integrated functioning of Multi Modal Transportation System a reality.**

30) With the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education at 48.6, Tamil Nadu continues to reign as *numero-uno* in India. In order to make higher education affordable to students from economically backward regions and rural areas, 41 University constituent Arts and Science Colleges are being converted to Government Arts and Science Colleges in a phased manner from 2018-19. The scholarship support to first generation graduates has also made

immense contribution in this regard. Further, 264 new courses have been started during this year in 61 Government Arts and Science Colleges. Higher education institutions should be headed by competent and talented Vice Chancellors to improve the quality of teaching and research to international standards. Accordingly, this Government is adopting a transparent selection procedure in appointing Vice Chancellors. Similarly the vacancies in the syndicate of Universities are being filled up promptly. I am confident that these efforts of the Government will substantially improve the quality of higher education and research work in the State.

31) I compliment the State for providing essential study materials like books, notebooks and laptops, four sets of

uniform, school bags, footwear, bus passes and bicycles to students of Government and Government aided schools, free of cost. The special cash incentives provided by the State to girl children have increased their enrolment and reduced drop-outs. The Government has been making substantial investments in the development of school infrastructure and upgrading schools wherever necessary to ensure availability of high quality education. It is heartening to note that the 'Atal Tinkering labs', Smart classes and Hi-Tech labs in schools have been effectively leveraging the capabilities of modern technology to impart quality education to students. **As the literacy among tribals is significantly lower than the State average, this Government will soon launch a**

**scheme to extend financial support to Non Governmental Organisations for opening schools in interior tribal areas, catering substantially to tribal students.**

32) I am proud to say that Tamil Nadu has made great strides in comprehensive public health service delivery. As per the latest Sample Registration System Data, the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has reduced to 66 per one lakh live births and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has been brought down to 17 per 1,000 live births. The ambitious 'Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme' launched in 2012 continues to deliver state-of-the-art quality health care to the poor and needy. The Government has recently increased the insurance coverage from

Rs.2 lakh to Rs.5 lakh per family by integrating the State scheme with the Government of India's flagship scheme of 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana' from September 2018. I am delighted to note that the Government of India's 'Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana' which benefits pregnant and lactating women giving first live birth, has also been synchronised with the State Government's 'Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme' with effect from April 2018. The State sponsored health schemes like 'Menstrual Hygiene Programme', 'Amma Baby Care Kit' and 'Amma Magapperu Sanjeevi' will continue to augment the efforts of the State in ensuring maternal and child care. **I thank the Government of India for sanctioning Rs.1,264 crore for establishing AIIMS at**

**Thoppur in Madurai District. It will go a long way in providing high-end healthcare services to the people of southern districts of Tamil Nadu.**

33) Industrial sector being the engine of economic growth and development, the State Government is giving special focus to attract new investments. **The State being a major automobile hub, thrust will be given for the promotion of new-generation electric vehicles with appropriate incentives.** Renowned organisations such as National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) have hailed the efforts of the State in fostering industrial development. The Government of Tamil Nadu is organising the second edition

of Global Investors Meet (GIM) on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2019 at Chennai Trade Centre. Japan, South Korea, Australia, France and United Kingdom are the partner nations for GIM-2019. The State Government is taking all efforts to make GIM-2019 a resounding success. **To promote aerospace and defence production, this Government will release the Tamil Nadu Aerospace and Defence Industrial policy shortly.** The establishment of industrial hubs for defence products in Chennai – Vellore – Salem – Hosur - Coimbatore-Trichy corridor will definitely improve the prospects of Tamil Nadu as a major defence manufacturing force. I request the Government of India to expedite the implementation of this defence industrial production corridor project.

34) The Government has taken various steps to provide a vibrant business environment and eco system for starting new enterprises, through single window clearance besides promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. **Start-up entrepreneurs are being promoted under the 'New Entrepreneur-cum-Enterprise Development Scheme' (NEEDS). The new startup and innovation policy will be unveiled by this Government shortly to improve the startup environment.** The Government has amended the Tender Transparency Act to make it mandatory for State Government departments and Public Sector Undertakings to procure at least 25 percent of the requirement of goods and services from Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSME)

when they participate in the tender. The numerous initiatives taken by the Government will definitely give an impetus to the MSME sector in Tamil Nadu.

35) The Government has taken up e-Governance initiatives with the primary objective of improving public service delivery and ushering in transparency and efficiency in public administration. An online portal for e-Sevai services has been developed and launched to make these services available round the clock to the public. Under land record modernisation programme, the Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency has developed 'e-Adangal', an application for digitising the adangal registers. The Registration Department has implemented the prestigious web-based

comprehensive software called STAR 2.0 which ensures end-to-end digitisation of the registration process. The completion of land record modernisation and computerisation of registration process will help the Government in updating the land records online, facilitating speedy disposal of land record mutations.

36) The Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation has been closely working with the industries in the State to identify skill gaps and for conducting training to improve the employability of our youth. I am happy to note that the State Government is ensuring the skilling of the rural and urban poor through the Centrally Sponsored schemes namely 'Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal

Yojana' (DDU-GKY), 'Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana' (PMKVY) and 'Employment through Skills Training & Placement' (ESTP) under the 'Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission' (DAY-NULM) programme. I am confident that all these endeavours will significantly improve the employability of the educated youth while also resolving the problem of skill deficit presently being faced by the industries.

37) The Government is committed to ensuring the welfare of the youth and strives to develop world class sportspersons in the State by providing necessary infrastructure and financial support like sports scholarships and awarding high cash incentives to the medal winners and their coaches in National

and international tournaments such as Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, South Asian Federation Games and the National Games. I appreciate the Government for announcing three percent reservation in employment for eminent sportspersons.

38) Tamil Nadu has been ranked first in both domestic and foreign tourist arrivals in the Country for four consecutive years from 2014 to 2017. The promotional slogan 'Enchanting Tamil Nadu' continues to attract large number of tourists to the State. The State has signed a Memorandum of Understanding recently with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the Tranche-IV funding of Rs.218 crore for continuing our

efforts in promoting destination and circuit based tourism.

39) The Government has always given utmost importance to the safety, empowerment and welfare of socially disadvantaged sections of the society like the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Most Backward Classes, De-notified Communities, Backward Classes and Minorities. I am happy to mention that the Vanniyar Trust Act has already been notified by this Government. The post-matric scholarship schemes for the students belonging to the socially disadvantaged sections have given them access to higher education. The Government of India has revised the guidelines of post-matric scholarship for Scheduled Caste students, thereby increasing the committed

liability of the State from Rs.353.55 crore to Rs.1,526.46 crore with effect from 2017-18. As a result, post-matric scholarship scheme, though a centrally sponsored scheme, the State is forced to bear almost the entire liability. I request the Government of India to reconsider this issue and hope that the guidelines would be revised to share the expenses between the Centre and States as in the case of other Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

40) As a welfare State, it is the duty of the Government to protect and safeguard the vulnerable sections of the society like women, children, differently-abled, transgenders, senior citizens and destitutes. The Government will continue to provide assistance through

the marriage assistance schemes, social security pensions, cradle baby scheme and integrated special homes for senior citizens and destitute children. The 'Integrated Child Development Services' (ICDS) scheme is being effectively implemented to ensure proper development of children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and nursing mothers by providing them nutritious food and supplements. The 'Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. Nutritious Meal Programme' is a praise worthy scheme of Tamil Nadu which tends to ensure overall nutritional security of all school-going children by providing them variety meals with eggs. I am happy to state that 'Amma Two Wheeler' scheme is empowering the working women by providing them

financial assistance upto Rs.25,000/- each to purchase two wheelers.

41) I have broadly outlined the policies and programmes of the State Government. We all know that democracy fosters noble institutions. This Democracy only has enabled all of you to represent the people who have elected you to this august House with the confidence that you will serve the State and its people with utmost dedication and commitment. It is therefore your bounden duty to dedicate yourselves to fulfill the aspirations of the people and to win over their trust and confidence. I am confident that you will adhere to the highest traditions of democratic principles while discussing and debating issues that will further

the socio-economic development of the State and the well-being of the people. Finally, before concluding my speech, I once again wish you a happy New Year and Pongal.

**Nanri**  
**Vanakkam**  
**Jai Hind**