

Speech delivered by Thiru O. Panneerselvam, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu during the Joint Conference of the Chief Ministers of the States and Chief Justices of the High Courts on 5.4.2015 at New Delhi.

Hon'ble Prime Minister,
Hon'ble Chief Justice of India,
Hon'ble Union Ministers,
Hon'ble Chief Ministers,
Hon'ble Chief Justices of High Courts

Vanakkam

Under the guidance of our visionary leader **Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** who always thinks for the betterment and the needs of the people of Tamil Nadu, our Government has always been implementing people welfare oriented programmes in all spheres including the Judiciary.

The Conference of Chief Ministers and Chief Justices organized periodically definitely paves the way for a better understanding of the needs of the Judiciary. Decisions are arrived at, based on the deliberations made at the Conference so as to ensure that the State could provide adequate funds for the implementation of the resolutions made therein. Our revered leader **Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** and the Government of Tamil Nadu always accord the highest priority for ensuring speedy affordable justice to the poor and vulnerable sections of society.

With the above objective in mind, our Government has always made adequate provision of funds for the judiciary. In the State Budget for the year 2015-2016 a sum of Rs.809.70 crores has been provided for the Judiciary. In the past four years a sum of Rs.375 crores has been sanctioned for improving the infrastructure required by the judiciary, including construction of court buildings, residential quarters and provision of other infrastructure. Under the

benevolent leadership of **Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** adequate funds were allotted for the provision of infrastructure by which Tamil Nadu can proudly declare that out of 986 Subordinate Courts functioning in the State, 87.78% are located in their own buildings and only 12.22% are located in rented premises. A sum of Rs.157.44 crores is required for completing the construction of the remaining court buildings. The State Government has also been making adequate provision of funds for the construction of new buildings.

In fact, under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for judicial infrastructure, no funds were released to Tamil Nadu in the years 2010-11 and 2011-12. It was only after our effective follow-up action that a sum of Rs.19.53 crores was released to the State for the year 2012-13 and Rs.73.43 crores for the year 2013-14. It is requested that the same allocation may be made for the next two years also to enable Tamil Nadu to construct own buildings for all courts in the State by the year 2017.

Our Government recognises the fact that with growth in population there is a need to constitute more courts. In the last four financial years, our Government has ordered the constitution of 170 new courts in all, including 65 Special Courts for land acquisition, motor vehicles accident compensation etc., 46 Family and Mahila Courts, 26 Judicial Magistrate Courts and District Munsif Courts. In addition our Government has sanctioned 90 evening courts over and above the 53 evening courts which are already functioning.

Recognising the need for recruiting more judges in Tamil Nadu, we have recruited 178 civil judges in the year 2012-13. This has drastically brought down the number of vacancies in the lower judiciary. A similar recruitment of 162 Civil Judges is under progress.

Similarly, to enhance the performance of the subordinate judiciary, 35 posts of Court Managers have been sanctioned by the State Government for assisting the National Court Management System

(NCMS). They have also been provided with Laptops and supporting staff for their effective functioning. Further, under the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, 799 Courts have been provided with hardware items such as, computers, servers, UPS, mono laser printers, dot matrix printers, scanners, etc. Our Government has also sanctioned a sum of 1.04 crore rupees for purchase of Computers and other peripherals for the use of the Madras High Court for the year 2013-2014. Our Government has also sanctioned a sum of Rs.3.20 crores in the year 2014-2015 for purchase of computers and other peripherals for the use of Madras High Court and its Madurai Bench.

To facilitate effective functioning of the subordinate courts and to ensure uninterrupted power supply, for the first time our Government has sanctioned generators for 173 courts at a cost of Rs.17.72 crores during the year 2014-2015.

Our Government has proposed that all prisons and criminal courts in the State are equipped with video conferencing facilities to do away with the need for production of accused for remand hearings. Sanction has been accorded for Video Conferencing facilities in 169 locations including Prisons and Jails and 352 Courts in this State.

As a result of the efforts taken by our Government, Tamil Nadu is undoubtedly today the leading State in attaining the goal of equality before law for women and has emerged as a State where women feel safe and secure. Under the leadership of our revered leader **Puratchi Thalaivi Amma**, Tamil Nadu had pioneered the setting up of All Women Police Stations in India more than 20 years ago in 1992. Today, an All Women Police Station is functioning in every Police sub-division in Tamil Nadu. In 2002, a separate legislation viz., The Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Women (Amendment) Act, 2002, was enacted under which the punishment in cases of sexual harassment was made more severe.

Pursuant to the rape and death of a young woman in New Delhi, two years ago, our resolute leader **Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** had announced a fresh set of strong measures for the protection of women by which investigation of cases relating to sexual violence against women is carried out by Women Police under the direct supervision of a Deputy Superintendent of Police. 42 Fast Track Mahila Courts have been set up to cover all the districts in the State to try offences against women. Special Training seminars on the provision of laws for the protection of women and proper method of investigating sexual crimes are being imparted in the Police Training Institutions.

The Tamil Nadu State Judicial Academy has also been requested to provide training on various aspects relating to gender issues periodically, and we are happy to note that the course curriculum at the Academy includes also 'Gender Justice' which is being imparted in the Induction programmes, Refresher courses and Advanced Training which are conducted regularly. A two-day Special Programme for all District Judges and Chief Judicial Magistrates was conducted on 15th and 16th June 2013, at the Judicial Academy relating to 'Women Empowerment and Gender Justice'. In the Refresher Programme for Civil Judges topics pertaining to women and children and more particularly subjects on sensitizing the officers on Gender Justice, were included.

Our Government has also set up a Juvenile Justice Board under section 4 of the Juvenile Justice Act in every District of State. In addition, District Child Protection Societies have been formed in all the Districts of the State under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) and 1507 Child care institutions have been registered under section 34 of the Act. Our Government has also constituted the Tamil Nadu Commission for Protection of Child Rights. In order to improve the condition of the Child care institutions and to ensure their welfare, our Government has sanctioned a total amount of Rs.7.59 crores for strengthening the protection walls of the Child care institutions, providing for vocational training, strengthening infrastructural facilities, sports materials, woollen

sweaters, welcome kits, power generators, solar energy equipments and surveillance cameras. Provision has also been made for washing machines, water purifiers and modern kitchen equipment.

Our Government has also taken steps to strengthen the Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms. The Alternative Dispute Resolution Centre in the High Court premises has been constructed at a cost of Rs.4.20 crores. Construction of 29 more Centres in the District Headquarters has also been sanctioned. An additional sum of Rs.1.95 crores was sanctioned towards improvement of infrastructure facility for the Alternative Dispute Resolution Centre in the High Court campus. The system of Lok Adalats and Mega Lok Adalats, another alternative dispute resolution mechanism, has been strengthened in an exemplary manner in our State. In the National Lok Adalat held on 23.11.2013, 13,77,252 cases were disposed of in the State for an award amount of Rs.1140,32,91,487/- and in the National Lok Adalat held on 06.12.2014, 24,73,212 cases were disposed of for an award amount of Rs.2081,48,73,918/-. A sum of Rs.14.83 crores has been sanctioned during the last four years for conducting the Lok Adalats, Mega Lok Adalats and Legal Literacy Awareness camps. Our Government has also specially sanctioned funds of Rs.5.43 crores for training in mediation which has been imparted to judicial officers, advocates and mediators. District Legal Services Authorities have been created in accordance with the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 and the 10 posts of Secretaries have so far been sanctioned for the District Legal Services Authorities. Permanent Lok Adalats have been sanctioned in all the 32 Districts of the State at a cost of Rs.7.70 crores.

Our Government would like to take this opportunity to strongly reiterate a longstanding request voiced on behalf of the people of the State of Tamil Nadu by our revered leader **Puratchi Thalaivi Amma**. Article 348 (2) of the Constitution read with Section 7 of the Official Languages Act, 1963, clearly envisages the usage of the State official language in judgments, decrees and proceedings of the High Court with

the prior concurrence of the President. This practice is already being adopted in four States. However, our repeated requests to authorize the use of Tamil in the High Court of Madras have not been responded to favourably. A communication received in January, 2013, from the Department of Official Languages, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, has indicated that the request of the State was considered by the Full Court of the Supreme Court of India in the meeting held on 11.10.2012 and that the Full Court, after due deliberations, reiterated its earlier Resolutions adopted on 07.05.1997 and 15.10.1999 not to approve the proposal. If we are to take the administration of justice genuinely closer to the people, then it is absolutely imperative that the local language is used in the High Court, as is already being done in the State Government and in the State Legislature. Our Government urges the Government of India and the Supreme Court to reconsider their stand in this matter and fulfill the long standing aspiration and demand of the State to authorize the use of Tamil in the High Court of Madras.

Administration of Justice must aim for qualitative and quantitative justice to the litigant public. To attain this end, the independence and the image of the judiciary should always be upheld by providing necessary infrastructure and ensuring a conducive environment. Based on these principles advocated by our respected leader **Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** our Government has gone all out to support the requirements of judiciary and has helped in accelerating their performance with speed and quality by giving adequate infrastructure support in all possible ways. Further our Government is very keen to make progressive strides and produce tangible results.

We hope that the deliberations in this Conference will be of immense help in ensuring justice, liberty and equality to all our citizens.

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