

Convocation Address delivered by Selvi J Jayalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu during the Silver Jubilee Convocation of the Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR 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 6511 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.

.....
Issued By:-