

**Hon'ble Vice President of India Thiru. M. Venkaiah Naidu Speech At  
The Export Excellence Awards For 2019-2020 Function**

“It is my immense pleasure to participate in this function and present Export Excellence Awards to the Exporting Units operating under EOU and SEZ schemes.

As you all are aware, a very famous ancient Tamil poetess by the name Avvayaar lived in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century. She wrote a book titled ‘Konrai Vendhan’. In her book, she says: “Thirai kadal odium thiraviyam thedu” meaning “Earn wealth even by crossing the Seas”.

Undoubtedly, the message contained in that book is relevant for all times. Today, we have business dealings with many countries and exports play a huge role in earning crucial foreign exchange and strengthening our economy. Therefore, you exporters are playing a critical role in nation-building.

Let me first congratulate all the award winners for their contribution in promoting exports and providing employment. Thanks to the endeavours and hard work of the exporters, the country’s exports have grown manifold in recent years.

There was a record achievement of 418 billion US dollars of merchandise exports in the just-concluded 2021-22 financial year. Services exports were about 250 billion US dollars. Together, they make up to 670 billion US dollars, a remarkable achievement in spite of the pandemic. This trend should continue and I am sure that exports will increase in the coming months, bringing more precious foreign exchange to the country.

As you all are aware, foreign exchange inflow is very essential for any country to have a strong economy. This foreign exchange inflow is mostly achieved by exports. If exports get reduced, the foreign

exchange reserves will shrink and might eventually affect the country's economy.

Hence, we need to explore newer markets to increase our exports and keep our economy flying high. Ministry of Commerce and Industry is taking all steps to further increase exports through business and industry-friendly policies , ease of doing business and focusing on 'local for global'.

The ambitious project of 'District Export Hub' announced by the Government of India in 2019 is expected to boost exports. Most of the 775 districts across the country are having the potential of becoming export hubs. I am told that GI (Geographical Indication) products are being given a fillip in this endeavour.

Similarly, 'One District One Product' (ODOP), another initiative of the Govt. of India is seen a transformational step to realize the true potential of every district, accelerate economic growth, generate employment with rural entrepreneurship and take us to the goal of Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

Dear sisters and brothers,

The Special Economic Zones contribute about 28% of India's export basket. SEZs along with Export Oriented Units (EOUs) contribute about one-third of the country's exports. I am told that 268 SEZs are functional across the country with 5604 Units operating in different sectors. Indeed, they form an ideal platform for promoting 'Make in India', 'Local goes Global' and 'Ease of Doing Business'. I am happy to note that SEZs have been in the forefront in achieving the export target of \$ 400 billion for the last financial year 2021-22.

We all know that Tamil Nadu has a highly developed industrial manufacturing eco-system. It has evolved into the largest hub for the production of automobiles and auto-components, textiles, leather

products, light and heavy engineering, pumps and motors, electronic software, and hardware. The State continues to be a national leader in exports of automobiles and automotive components, leather products, software, and ready-made garments.

With strong infrastructure and good connectivity comprising four international airports, three large seaports and several minor seaports, Tamil Nadu has become the third largest exporting state of the country.

I am sure that the Chennai-Bangalore Industrial Corridor Project and the Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor Project when completed will further transform the economic landscape of the state and give a huge thrust to exports.

Dear sisters and brothers,

I am also pleased to note that MEPZ Special Economic Zone has been pioneering industrial growth, promoting exports, investments and employment generation in Tamil Nadu. I am happy to know that MEPZ SEZ has recorded an export growth of 14% in the year 2021-22, with an Export of ₹ 1,32,803 Crore despite the problems caused by the pandemic.

As you all are aware, India is a young nation and we need to fully realize the potential of our demographic dividend. There has to be a special drive to provide employment to our youth and equip them with necessary skills. Unless this is done, our demographic advantage might turn into a major disadvantage.

In this context, it is heartening to know that about 5 lakh people have been employed directly by the SEZs and EOUs in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry so far in addition to the lakhs of indirect employment generated by them.

I am sure, the Union Government and the Tamil Nadu Government will address various challenges being faced by the exporters such as the shortage of containers at Ports, congestion in accessing Ports and low availability of Warehousing and Cold Storage facilities.

On their part, the traders must get well acquainted with issues relating to Trademarks, Patents, Certification, Quality compliances and Phyto sanitary restrictions of export markets. I am confident that we will tide over the challenges and increase our exports to foreign shores. I once again congratulate all the award winners for their sustained efforts in giving a fillip to the economy of the country.

I extend my warm greetings to all of you for this financial year. Hope it will bring greater peace, prosperity and progress for the country as a whole.

Thank you all. Vanakkam. Jai Hind.”

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