

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru M.K. Stalin Speech thro' Video conference in The New Indian Express – Think Edu Conclave

I am honoured to be part of this Think Edu conference by the reputed The New Indian Express Group.

The conference which is happening for the tenth year is providing a ground for healthy debates and suggestions. I congratulate Thiru. Prabhu Chawla, Editorial Board Director, Thiru. Manoj Kumar Sonthalia, Chairman of the TNIE group and others.

It is Tamil Nadu which first took the initiative of educating all in a broad manner. This is such a land of Social Justice. I am here as the Chief Minister of such a state.

Leaders from Justice Party, Kamarajar, Perarignar Anna, Muthamizharnar Kalaignar, MGR have all worked to bring children to schools.

They allotted more funds for education. They had a clear vision that education for all is imperative for the holistic development of the state. Dravidian movement always prioritised education since its inception.

Muthamizh Arignar Kalaignar who had been the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister for five times put great efforts to make Tamil Nadu a developed state in the field of higher education. He started new colleges across Tamil Nadu. He established many universities. He introduced equitable education system with uniform syllabus. Named the Law University in Chennai after Babasaheb Ambedkar. Above all, he eradicated the entrance exam system which acted as a barrier in accessing professional courses. If Tamil Nadu has lot of engineers and top-class doctors today, it was Dravidian movement and the unmatched icon Kalaignar who sowed the seeds for the same.

In a society which denied access to education using a bogus definition of merit, we said that if education is given, they will attain merit on their own and ensured the rights of the oppressed people. Now they have come up with another stumbling block in the name of NEET. It is for this reason that we oppose NEET. That stumbling block will be removed.

It is our state Tamil Nadu which gave Tuition fee concession and many other concessions to first generation learners and girls to make them graduates.

Just like NEET, to disfigure the system which we have built carefully for over century, they have dressed old-fashioned thoughts with the new name called “New Education Policy”.

The education sector has been destroyed very badly in the last eight years of BJP’s misrule. Using the brute majority, superstitious, regressive and unscientific claims are imposed in the syllabi. Communal forces are poisoning the young minds with divisive thoughts and hatred. Is this the contribution a government is supposed to offer for education? This is the question that the intellectuals, those with conscience, neutral commentators, educationists ought to ask with without fear.

In conferences like this, it shall be discussed on how to get rid of such dangers to education.

The fact that Education is concurrent list is not for the parties that form the Union Government to promote its regressive principles.

Education is the asset of this nation and the right of every citizen. That a party which is in power in the Union Government wants to destroy it is like depriving people without oxygen. No good human would allow it.

That is why we have been continuously demanding to move education back into State list.

Despite such hardships, the DMK government in Tamil Nadu is implementing many progressive schemes. To bridge the learning gap caused by lockdown period, we have introduced “Illam Thedi Kalvi” scheme. World renowned economist Jean Dreze has recommended for the implementation of this scheme in Jharkhand.

All the 24,345 classrooms in TN Govt Elementary schools are being converted into smart class rooms. Hightech computer labs, modern science and language labs are being set up in 6,992 middle, high and higher secondary schools. All schools are being equipped with Broadband connectivity.

We are also planning to offer refresher courses and soft skills training to teachers under the guidance of top educationists. And the State Education Policy which is being drafted is the cherry on the cake.

Apart from school education, to develop their skills in various aspects, I have launched a very unique “Naan Mudhalvan” scheme.

That Tamil Nadu excels in education alone is not enough for us. We should excel in higher education and research field too. This is what I have been stressing whenever I visit any educational institution. To attain such excellence, education shall not be denied to anyone. No factor like caste, place, background, money, religion, attire, gender should act as hindrance to a student’s education. It is to establish such a society; we have been fighting. Let us march ahead to attain a day when the world would embrace our students as the great in knowledge and skills.

In this conference happening in Tamil Nadu, the land of social justice, many educationists, political leaders from across India are going to present their thoughts in this two-day conference. I wish the event will have fruitful discussions and lead to healthy changes.

Vanakkam.

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