

SPEECH OF H.E. THE LT. GOVERNOR AT THE INAUGURATION OF ALL INDIA EDITORS CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL SECTOR ISSUES AT HOTEL ANANDHA INN ON 10<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2012 AT 15:00 HRS.

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Shri. Jairam Ramesh, Hon'ble Union Minister for Rural Development

Dr. S. Jagathrakshakan, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting

Shri. V. Narayanasamy, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pension

Shri N. Rangasamy, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Puducherry

Smt. Neelam Kapur, Principal Director General, Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

Eminent Editors of the Press World

Members of the Press Fraternity

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be present here, to grace the All India Editors Conference on Social and Infrastructure issues.

At the outset, I thank the Government of India and the Hon'ble Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting for having selected Puducherry as the venue for this conference. Social and Infrastructure issues having been declared as the central theme of deliberations, the selection of the U.T. of Puducherry is an apt decision considering the high rate of progress made by the Union Territory in socio economic front.

It is heartening to note that who's who of the media world have descended here. I am happy that the assemblage here is a gathering of leading writers spanning from the length and breadth of this country right from Kashmir to Trivandrum and from Ahmedabad to Imphal and Aizwal. By their insightful and thoughtful writings they not only create informed citizens but bring to fore centric issues that deserve attention of the Government. I welcome them to Puducherry and I am sure that their stay here will be pleasant. The deliberations of the next two days notwithstanding, I am sure, that they will take time off to visit Puducherry and get to enjoy the unique indo French ambience and hospitality of Puducherry.

In a democracy, the role of Press is paramount. As the Fourth Estate, they do share the onus of providing good governance along with the other three pillars of the Government viz., the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. Media makes democracy to function in its true spirit by informing the citizens about the developments in the society. Healthy reporting by media, keeps the elected representative accountable to the electors by highlighting whether the representatives have met their wishes and whether they have implemented their promises contained in the manifesto. Editorial independence to pursue public interests is an essential facet for the Press to lend credible voice for creating informed citizens.

The Union Territory of Puducherry continues to be one of the best Administered among Small States and Union Territories in the country. The

Government is committed towards a people-centric Administration with greater transparency and accountability. A substantial part of the Plan fund is utilised to improve the socio-economic status of the people of Puducherry and for infrastructure developments.

To augment agricultural production and uplift the status of farmers, precision farming techniques have been introduced. Interest free crop loans are extended to provide support to farming community. In the fisheries sector subsidy of 50% is provided for procurement of mechanised boats. Training to farmers, weavers and fishermen are provided through Co-operatives.

With a vision to provide Food Security to all, the Government of Puducherry has introduced Universal Public Distribution System through a network of 505 Fair Price Shops. Puducherry has successfully implemented the issue of Adhar integrated Biometric smart cards. As a sequel, the Smart Card based PDS distribution with a complete supply chain management using GPRS system will be started by April 2012 for a robust PDS to function in Puducherry.

Education is the decisive factor in empowering the poor. To reach out to the needy students free supply of text books, transport facilities to students of rural and far flung areas, Mid-day meals and Rajiv Gandhi Breakfast Scheme have been introduced. These are first of the kind in the country. In the higher education front, under Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Financial Assistance Scheme, two thousand and eighty five (2,085) students in Professional courses are provided with reimbursement of Tuition Fee in the current financial year 2011-12. Health indicators of Union Territory of Puducherry continue to be progressive as compared to the National indicators.

The initiatives of the Government reach out to the needy from the downtrodden sector. Benefits such as Marriage Assistance, Maternity benefits, Education incentives, Insurance, festival gifts etc., are provided to Unorganised Labour forced through Welfare Board and Construction Workers Society.

Inclusive development is possible only by providing opportunities to people deprived with the wherewithal of empowering tools. Providing equal opportunity to Women, Differently-abled, Old and Marginalised sections of the society has remained at the forefront of our social development schemes. Complying with the guidelines of Hon'ble Supreme Court, supplementary nutrition with revised nutritive and calorific value is provided to children and pregnant / lactating women through Anganwadi Centres.

The Government of Puducherry stands out from the rest of States in providing housing subsidy. The Govt. of Puducherry is granting subsidy to enhance the living conditions of the Slum Dwellers in Rural and Urban areas.

The initiatives introduced by Puducherry to achieve this staggering socio economic growth could be taken as a pilot project for study and research to be rolled out in other parts.

I am sure the deliberations at the Editorial Conference will venture upon to throw more innovative information and I wish the conference all the success.

Thank you!