

INAUGURATION OF
VILLAGE CARE AND SUPPORT CENTRE AT PAMBAN VILLAGE,
RAMESWARAM

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SATISH K. AGNIHOTRI
ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE, MADRAS HIGH COURT

07.06.2014

Kalai Vanakkam.

My esteemed brother Thiru Justice T. Raja, Thiru T.Ponprakash, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Ramanathapuram, Dr.K.Arul, Member Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority, all Judicial Officers, Thiru M. Patrick, Panchayat President, Pamban, Thiru R. Saravanan, President, Advocates Association, Rameswaram, Thiru K. Gunasekaran, President, Bar Association, Ramanathapuram, learned advocates, Revenue Officers and other Officers, Public Prosecutors, supporting staff of courts and legal services institutions, print and visual media, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I express my gratitude for according warm welcome to us. Today, we have assembled to inaugurate not legal aid camp but Village Legal Care and Support Centre at the

historical place, Pamban. This is the 13th Village Care and Support Centre in this district. This is our target to have this type of care and support centre in all places in the State of Tamil Nadu. Para legal volunteers, who are not legally trained but trained to assist you in resolution of your problems, and advocates will help you in resolving your problems not through courts but otherwise.

It is a historical place no doubt about it. You all know very well. Not only divine blessing is here but you have produced great people of this country. By your presence, I am overwhelmed, particularly womenfolk. A lot of people are standing perhaps with the purpose to know about the Centre. Mr. Patrick, President, is here. He has assured that all assistance, support whatever is possible that will be extended. I am thankful.

What is this Village Care and Support Centre? It is a part of legal awakening. You must know your rights and duties. What are your rights? Rights not only to live in a dignified manner having proper food and shelter but also there are other

rights which are created by way of various schemes as pointed out by my brother Thiru Justice Raja.

I was assured by the Chief Secretary of the State that all the Heads of the Departments of the Districts will be available in implementation of this Scheme as and when and wherever I go. Unfortunately, the District Collector of this District and other Heads of Departments have shown their apathy to the programme. It appears that they do not seem to be concerned with the problems of this area. This is not a mission or programme of judiciary alone. They must be informed by one and all that they are here to implement the programmes. What rights you have that can be implemented. I do not have a complete list though I have instructed the Member Secretary of the State Legal Services Authority to ask all the District Chairmen, Taluk Level Chairmen to display all the schemes, which are beneficial to the public at large. Your Panchayat President is here. I would advise him and request him to kindly display all the schemes of the State and Central Governments on your notice board, which is meant for public. It is to be informed you have to know what are the schemes that creates

rights but how to get it your rights that this Village Care and Support Centre will assist you.

There are certain rights. Like right to education. There may be poor people who cannot send their children to the school for want of money, they do not have funds. They are taking help of their wards for earning their livelihood. Panel lawyers, advocates, who are also social reformers, must go to them and tell them that their children are entitled to free education. Please, ladies also can come forward. They may not be advocates. They may not be panel lawyers. They can go to them and tell them, 'please send your child to the school; no payment is required'.

If there is any problem, please come to Taluk Leval Village Care and Support Centre or District Level Centre. There panel lawyers, advocates, judges, will help you. They will tell you how to make an application. If it is not done, they will be in touch with district authorities. Further, I have told the Government that if an application comes from Village Care and Support Centre, that has to be dealt with within a period of one week and if it is not done, the Taluk Village Care and Support

Centre or the District Centre will maintain a register noting down the problems and your application and monthly report will be submitted to the Office at Chennai. This is a collective action.

There are certain schemes like Old Age Pension. If a person more than 60 years has no family, a lady, in his house, he is entitled to the pension to the tune of Rs.1,000/- per month. If someone is not getting, please help them. Even for other Schemes – you do not have a house to live in. There are so many schemes with the district administration which they are going to publish; going to paste it on the notice board. Take advantage of that. One of learned advocates here said that the economy of this area is fishing. What are the Schemes? – all the schemes which are for public in general that is available to you all. There may be more schemes. I request all to have the schemes from the Government and place them with the Taluk Centre so that the people can know about it and you can also get benefitted. This is every one's responsibility. This is the purpose of this scheme. There are certain other schemes.

Last time, I came here and ADR building was opened at Ramanathapuram. There you can go for your other problems, like mediation. Before going to the Court, you should try to resolve your disputes yourselves with the help of elders, because it leads to longevity, decent life, society free from useless litigation which takes its own time. If it cannot be resolved by mediation, you can go for lok adalat. You can go for arbitration. Arbitration does not mean only by judges or advocates. Arbitration can be done with the help of some elder person of the society also. Please take recourse to that.

You all know that in our society – this society has an old civilisation unlike other developed countries. In those days, this type of legal system, court system was not there where you have to spend a lot of money; lot of time. What has to be done by all of you is resolution by way of mediation, conciliation. Take recourse to that. Now this pendency of cases. If you go to courts, it will take its own time. You can avoid that. Settle your problems in a peaceful manner by taking recourse to all other methods of the alternative dispute resolution. With this, I request all of you to come forward and help this mission so

that the entire society can live decently without problems. I
compliment all of you for being present here.

Nandri. Vanakkam.