

INAUGURATION OF
VILLAGE CARE AND SUPPORT CENTRE AT THOTTAMOOLA VILLAGE,
GUDALUR

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

26.05.2014

My Lord Hon'ble Mr. Justice F.M. Ibrahim Kalifulla, Judge, Supreme Court of India, Mr. G.P. Elango, District and Sessions Judge, Dr. K. Arul, Member Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority, Judicial Officers, President, Gudalur Bar Association, all learned advocates, especially the residents of Thottamoola Village, for whom I have just now opened the Village Care and Support Centre, ladies and gentlemen,

I am grateful to be a part of this function. I express my gratitude for the warm welcome accorded to us today. It is hundred years' old Court as I am informed having 60 members in the Bar Association. Out of 60 Members, I think, 6 Members spoke dealing with their problems. Family Court, Sub Judge Court, Labour Court. One information I would like to share with you all that Sub Judge Court has already been sanctioned. The

only problem was fixation of rent and that will be examined and, as I am told by your elected representative, that will also be sorted out immediately. The other problem of Family Court and Labour Court, if you have made a representation, the High Court has constituted a Committee of Judges to examine distances and other areas and to find out, whether new Courts can be opened. That we are already examining. You give your representation through your District Judge giving the statistical data and I assure you we will examine. We are on the job.

Today, we have assembled here not for the purpose of adjudicatory process by opening the Courts. A Legal Care and Support Centre has been opened today. We have to see what for this Centre has been opened. There you all have the responsibility. Para-legal volunteers are there to look into the various problems of villagers, not only the legal problems, they have different problems. They have electricity problem. They do not have employment; how to get it? You can not resolve all your problems through adjudicatory process by going to the Court. You know how many schemes – Governmental Schemes, are there. Poor villagers may not know about it. This

employment; they will not be getting employment but there is a scheme for employment. There are several other schemes. For widows. For Minors. For minority communities. You please keep abreast of yourself of all these schemes. Whenever they are in difficulty, you go to them; tell them how it can be resolved. You can advise them to go to the Revenue Officers and other Officers. For example, the right of education is now a fundamental right. There are so many children on the streets. They are not going to schools. May be, for want of financial support, their parents may not send their children to schools under mistaken belief that they do not have the fundamental right. Now, this is your responsibility to go to them and tell them that, 'you are entitled to free education. Please send your children'. There are other schemes. You, may be in touch with Taluk officials or other revenue officials, tell them, help them, make their applications ready. You can go to Officers and if any revenue official is present here, he is under an obligation to resolve the problem. We are here for that purpose. You are under Constitutional obligation to secure social and economic justice. Advocates are not only to appear before the Courts and help their clients to resolve the disputes. They are social

reformers. They have to go to the public. Now the Hon'ble Judge from the Supreme Court is here. Can you ever think or dream in the past, that a Hon'be Judge can come to a village to guide you, to instruct you, to advice you, how to reach to the people; how to have a decent social life in the society. Family disputes. It is not necessary to go to Family Courts. Please advise them to 'go to Mediation Centres. Go to ADR building. You can resolve it by way of mediation and conciliation." There is Lok Adalat. Lok Adalat cannot grant divorce. But by mediation, you can resolve it. You can tell them not to go for conflict resolution before the Court. These are the methods, we have to adopt. Now you all know, courts are flooded with litigation. We have to find out a mechanism to resolve the disputes by alternative dispute resolution system. For that purpose, we have assembled here. Your problems will be looked into. But here please divert your attention towards resolution of social evils by other methods by educating them, by advising them by guiding them that taking recourse to litigation should be the last resort. It is told that it is a synthesis of three cultures. It is called 'sangam' in Hindi. Here 'sangamam'. I am grateful to My Lord. It is Sangam in Hindi. It

is Sangamam in Tamil. That has its own benefits. You learn good qualities of different cultures. Take advantage of that and if possible, tell the people how to resolve it. It is a beautiful place. Please, take advantage of this. I do not wish to say more because I want to hear My Lord Mr. Justice Ibrahim Kalifulla. He had initiated the programme when he was the Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir. He has guided me and by that, I am also coming to Taluks and Villages, reaching to the people, trying to help them. I would not say much. I am also eager to hear him at this juncture. Thank you very much. Nandri. Vanakkam.