

**Speech of Dr. Palanivel Thiaga Rajan, Minister for Finance and Human Resources Management, Government of Tamil Nadu, presenting the Budget Estimates for the year 2023-24 to the Legislative Assembly on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

**Hon'ble Speaker,**

I rise to present to this August House the Budget Estimates for the year 2023-24. I commence my address by recalling the immortal words of Saint Thiruvalluvar, which eloquently captures the people-oriented leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister, who is strongly committed to the well-being and welfare of the people of Tamil Nadu and is guiding the State with utmost feeling of responsibility and care, amidst various difficulties:

*கொடையளி செங்கோல் குடியோம்பல் நான்கும்*

*உடையானாம் வேந்தர்க் கொளி*

*(குறள்-390)*

*Bounty, mercy, justice and love for the subjects, Who has all these is a light among rulers*

*(Kural-390)*

2. In the last budget, the thrust was on social welfare and inclusive economic development by designing various schemes, even as this Government worked towards fiscal consolidation and administrative reforms. I present the budget speech today with the deep satisfaction that we have taken enormous strides towards fulfilling our vision. For the last two years, our Dravidian model of governance, inspired by the century old Dravidian Movement has been marching forward with the vision of ensuring social justice in all walks of life. I pay my respects and homage to our political forerunners who have always guided us in this path.

3. Tamil Nadu is a beacon for the entire Country for pursuing the principles of social justice, women empowerment, inclusive growth and rationalism, made possible by the fact that, we continue to follow the footsteps of the Justice Party that had planted the seeds of social reforms a century ago. The Dravidian movement led by the triumvirate of its political stalwarts Thanthai Periyar, Perarignar Anna and Muthamizharignar Kalaignar, has emblazoned the idea of self-respect into the body politic of Tamil society. It is this principle of self-respect which has made us the foremost State in advocating state autonomy, linguistic rights and true federalism. Our Hon'ble Chief Minister, who also has travelled along the same ideological path, is now the

bulwark and life breath of these ideals, which are the lynchpins of Tamil society.

4. At the outset, I thank the Hon'ble Chief Minister for his constant guidance and unstinting support. Only due to the confidence that he has reposed in me and the inspiration that he constantly provides, we have been able to embark upon widespread and pathbreaking reforms to promote the welfare of the people. In the last budget, we laid out our broad focus areas as follows:

- (i) enhancing economic growth,
- (ii) strengthening the social safety net,
- (iii) creating large number of job opportunities for youth,
- (iv) improving livelihood of women through education,
- (v) socio-economic development of the marginalized,
- (vi) elimination of poverty through inclusive growth,

(vii) data-driven governance to ensure that full benefits of Government schemes reach the people, and

(viii) promoting environmental sustainability and inter-generational equity.

We have achieved significant results in each of these areas during the current year.

5. Even as we rightly celebrate our accomplishments, we are bracing for challenging times ahead, due to unprecedented inflation, the continuing war in Ukraine and volatility in the Global Economy and Financial Markets. We have outperformed by growing faster than the national average in the previous year and by significantly lowering the Revenue Deficit and Fiscal Deficit when compared to that of the Union Government. This is a testimony to the quality of leadership and deft financial management by our Hon'ble Chief Minister.

6. Notwithstanding the several massive welfare schemes that are being implemented during the last two years, **owing to the unprecedented and difficult reforms undertaken, we have reduced the annual revenue deficit of around Rs.62,000 crore which we inherited on assuming office, to around Rs.30,000 crore in the Revised Estimates of the**

**current year.** It is noteworthy that this is approximately Rs.5,000 crore lower than the level of the pre-COVID year of 2019-20. In accordance with the mandate of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of achieving Zero-revenue deficit, the State will adopt a smooth glide path without compromising on our welfare initiatives and developmental priorities.

7. The main reason for the fiscal stress faced by the Government at the time of assuming office was the fall in tax revenue in the previous years. The State's own tax revenues which were at a healthy 8 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) during 2006-11 have witnessed a precipitous fall in the last 10 years and reached 5.58 per cent in 2020-21. This is much lower when compared to other large States such as Maharashtra and Karnataka. Though the Tax-GSDP ratio has increased to 6.11 per cent in the current year due to the efforts of this Government in the last two years, concerted action is needed to raise it further to find financial resources for welfare schemes.

8. The Hon'ble Chief Minister adroitly handled the second wave of Covid, major floods in Chennai and severe financial stress. In spite of these constraints, he was able to fulfill the promises to the people and has several achievements to his credit. He has urged us to

strive to fulfill the expectations of the people in the coming years and I have prepared this budget keeping these instructions in mind. With these introductory remarks, let me now proceed to sector-wise view of the Budget 2023-24.

### **Tamil Development and Culture**

9. **To honour the legacy of Tamil martyrs Thiruvalluvar, Thiruvalluvar and Natarajan**, who sacrificed their lives to protect Tamil in the struggle against Hindi imposition, **a memorial will be established at Chennai.**

10. In order to propagate the ideals of **Annal Ambedkar**, the father of the Indian Constitution and the architect of a progressive and egalitarian India, **the Government will provide a grant of Rs.5 crore to translate his works into Tamil language.**

11. To give an impetus to the growth of Tamil as a global language by promoting its usage in the technology sector, an **'International Conference on Tamil Computing'** will be held with the participation of renowned experts from across the world. This will greatly encourage development of software in Tamil language.

12. With a view to celebrating the glory of Tamils who have conquered many lands overseas, **efforts will**

**be taken to promote and support sea cruises that will connect places of significance in Tamil culture.**

These cruises will showcase the rich history, literature, art, culture, handicrafts and cuisine of Tamil people and will spread the State's glory across the seven seas.

13. The Government has been providing **free bus pass to elderly Tamil scholars** in recognition of their invaluable contribution to our language. In the coming year, the **Government will extend this benefit to 591 more Tamil scholars.**

14. To enable the younger generation to imbibe and appreciate our celebrated art heritage, the **Government will expand the widely popular Chennai Sangamam cultural programme to 8 major cities in the coming year.** It will provide a platform to nurture folk art and artists and celebrate the shared cultural ethos of the Tamil people. An amount of Rs.11 crore is provided in this Budget for this purpose.

15. To preserve folk arts and to ensure that these traditions continue to flourish in the future, 25 part time folk art training centres will be set up across the State.

16. The Cholas are one of the greatest dynasties who conquered seas and the lands beyond, and ruled vast stretches of India and South East Asia for many

centuries. Tamil art, music, architecture, sculpture, crafts and dance reached their pinnacle during the Chola period and their glory spread far and wide. **To highlight the contribution of the Cholas who ruled the world, and to preserve artefacts and relics of that age, a 'Grand Chola Museum' will be set up in Thanjavur.**

### **Welfare of Sri Lankan Tamils**

17. The Hon'ble Chief Minister intervened on humanitarian grounds to send essential commodities to help the people affected by the severe economic crisis in Sri Lanka. After securing the consent of the Union Government, 40,000 MT of rice, 500 MT of milk powder and 102 MT of medical supplies, worth Rs.197 crore have been sent in three ships.

18. We have been continually requesting the Union Government to grant Indian citizenship to Sri Lankan Tamils residing in India. Pending this request, this Government had announced that 7,469 houses will be constructed in the rehabilitation camps for Sri Lankan Tamils, with the objective of providing safe and quality accommodation. In the first phase, 3,510 houses were taken up for construction at a cost of Rs.176 crore and the works are underway. **In the second phase, the Government will sanction Rs.223 crore towards**



**construction of the remaining 3,959 houses in the coming financial year.**

### **Welfare of Ex-Servicemen**

19. Recognizing the valour and supreme sacrifice made by security forces in guarding our nation, the ex-gratia that is being offered by the State Government to the next of kin of armed forces personnel hailing from Tamil Nadu who are killed in war/ war-like operations will be doubled from Rs.20 lakh to Rs.40 lakh. Further, the monetary grants that are offered to gallantry awards/distinguished service medal winners in armed forces hailing from Tamil Nadu will be enhanced four times.

### **Health and Family Welfare**

20. Ensuring quality education and medical facilities to all is the fundamental objective of this Government. It is in pursuance of this goal that the Government is implementing pioneering schemes like Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam and Innuyir Kappom, besides taking several initiatives to strengthen the public health infrastructure in the State. The Government is implementing the novel Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam scheme, where non-communicable diseases are identified and addressed at an early stage. This Government which is deeply concerned about the welfare

of workers, who are the bedrock of our economy, will launch a new initiative to address the issue of non-communicable diseases among workers in factories and in unorganised sectors like construction. **The Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam scheme will be expanded to 711 factories covering 8.35 lakh workers in the first phase.** Health checkup camps will be held in these factories with specific emphasis on non-communicable diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes. Migrant labourers will also benefit under this scheme.

21. Under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme, insurance coverage of Rs.5 lakh is being given per year per family. During the current year, so far, 11.82 lakh patients have availed treatment worth Rs.993 crore, which is the highest since the inception of the scheme.

22. **The 1,000 bedded Kalaignar Memorial Multi Super Speciality Hospital in the premises of King Institute of Preventive Medicine and Research Centre, Guindy will be inaugurated this year.** New speciality hospital buildings are being constructed in three Government medical college hospitals at Madurai, Coimbatore and Kilpauk at a total cost of Rs.1,020 crore and they will be put to use shortly.

23. New buildings will be constructed at a cost of Rs.110 crore in the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital, which caters to the medical needs of people in Tiruchirappalli and its surrounding districts. In order to fulfil the medical needs of people in North Chennai, a new multi-speciality block, nurses training school and hostel will be constructed in Stanley Hospital at a cost of Rs.147 crore.

24. The first Government Siddha Medical College in the State was established in Palayamkottai in 1964. At present, there are 100 undergraduate and 60 post-graduate students in this institute. Further, treatment is also being provided to nearly 1,000 patients on a daily basis. The Government will undertake works to improve the infrastructure of the college and hospital at a cost of Rs.40 crore. Rs.18,661 crore has been allotted towards Health and Family Welfare Department in the Budget.

### **School Education**

25. Due to the various initiatives launched by this Government in the last two years, the student enrolment in Government schools has increased significantly. Therefore, the Government had launched the **'Perasiriyar Anbazhagan School Development Scheme'** to modernize and upgrade physical

infrastructure at an outlay of Rs.7,000 crore over a period of five years. During the current year, works to the tune of Rs.2,000 crore have been taken up. **In the upcoming financial year, the Government will construct classrooms, laboratories and toilets at a cost of Rs.1,500 crore.**

26. The '**Ennum Ezhuthum**' Programme aims at achieving Universal Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for students in classes 1 – 3 by 2025. Owing to the positive response received, this programme **will be expanded to classes 4 and 5 with an outlay of Rs.110 crore in the upcoming financial year.**

27. The goal of social justice can be fulfilled only when knowledge is made widespread and accessible to people in the remotest of places. With this objective, moving beyond Chennai, book fairs were conducted in all districts and five literature festivals were successfully conducted during the current year. This great initiative will continue next year also, at a cost Rs.10 crore. The Government successfully organized the first edition of the Chennai International Book Fair in January 2023 with participation from 24 countries. An unprecedented number of 355 MoUs were signed between publishers from Tamil Nadu and various countries paving way for

knowledge and copyright exchange. **This international book fair will also be conducted next year.**

28. Educational institutions play a vital role in establishing social justice, equality and equity in all walks of life. Therefore, the Government has been taking multiple initiatives in the last two years to improve the quality of education through schemes such as Ennum Ezhuthum, Schools of Excellence, Hi-tech Labs, Model Schools, and Perasiriyar Anbazhagan School Development Scheme. It is essential that the benefits of these programmes reach all students. Requests have been received to operate and maintain Adi Dravidar Welfare Schools through the School Education department in the State High-Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meetings held under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Chief Minister on 19.8.21 and 12.4.22. To achieve the goal of social justice in the field of education, to improve the quality of schools functioning under various departments and to ensure that all students are provided quality education, **all schools functioning under various departments like Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare, Backward Class, Most Backward Class & Denotified Communities, Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowments and Forest will be brought under the School Education department.** It will be ensured that

the service conditions and benefits of teachers and staff presently working in these schools are protected.

29. The Government is using data based governance to remove various shortcomings in the implementation of schemes. In order to reduce the unnecessary delay in the disbursement of scholarships by various departments and to ensure that scholarship amount reaches eligible students in a timely manner, directly to their bank accounts, an integrated scholarship portal will be created.

30. An iconic eight-storeyed library in two lakh square feet, with all modern amenities is being constructed in Madurai, the seat of Tamil Sangam. This library will cater to all sections of the society including children, students, researchers, youth who are preparing for competitive exams, homemakers, senior citizens and the differently abled. The library will feature special facilities including children's section with colourful books, separate area with internet facility for those writing competitive exams, braille books for the visually impaired, air conditioned meeting halls, art gallery to exhibit the cultural heritage of Southern Tamil Nadu and an exquisite repository of the writings and speeches of Muthamizharignar Kalaignar.

31. In the first phase, this library will house 3.50 lakh books in Tamil and English relating to various subjects like literature, culture, science, engineering, law and medicine. This modern temple of knowledge in Southern Tamil Nadu will be named **Kalaignar Centenary Library** to mark the commencement of centenary celebrations of Muthamizharignar Kalaignar, in recognition of his immense contribution to the Tamil society. This library will welcome its first readers in June this year. Rs.40,299 crore has been allocated towards School Education Department in the Budget.

### **Higher Education and Skill Development**

32. The Government is cognizant of the fact that human resource is the greatest wealth of the State and has been investing heavily in its development. We recognise that a highly skilled workforce is a unique competitive advantage to attract investments into the State. Therefore, to create a workforce suited for the rapidly changing industrial ecosystems, a scheme is underway to transform 71 Government ITIs to Centres of Excellence at a cost of Rs.2,877 crore. The works will be completed and students will be enrolled in new courses in the coming academic year itself.

33. In the next phase, the Government will launch a programme in the coming year to transform and

modernize the Government Polytechnic colleges into 'Centres of Excellence' in accordance with the Industry 4.0 standards in collaboration with industry partners. The programme will focus on infrastructure modernization, industry relevant course content creation, capacity building of faculty members and employment opportunities for the students. **54 Government polytechnics will be upgraded as 'Centres of Excellence' at a total cost of Rs.2,783 crore under this scheme.**

34. The Government proposes to establish a world class skill centre named **"Tamil Nadu World Innovation and Skill Training Hub" (TN-WISH) at Ambattur at a cost of Rs.120 crore** with the objective of providing skill training to trainers in ITIs and polytechnics and to create a highly skilled workforce. The hub will provide training in advanced technologies such as Mechatronics, Internet of Things, Advanced Automobile Technology, Precision Engineering and Advanced Welding.

35. The Hon'ble Chief Minister had launched the visionary programme **"Naan Mudhalvan"** last year to train 10 lakh students and youth in industry relevant skills and thus generate job opportunities for them. This programme is being implemented in all engineering



and arts and science colleges in collaboration with industry partneRs. Academic curriculum has been revised to include industry relevant courses to improve employability of students. Currently, about 12.7 lakh students from engineering and arts and science colleges are being trained under this programme. 12,582 engineering faculty and 7,797 arts & science faculty have also been trained. Rs.50 crore has been provided for this scheme in the budget.

36. To scale up skill training infrastructure in a massive way, factories will be used as Skill Development Centres. Industries will be incentivized to provide on-the-job-training to youth in factories. In this Budget, **an amount of Rs.25 crore has been allocated for this 'Factory Skill Schools' programme.** A state-of-the-art Skill Development Centre will be established, at an estimated cost of Rs.80 crore, in SIPCOT Industrial Park, Shoolagiri in Krishnagiri district, which is emerging as the third largest industrial cluster in the State.

37. The **Perunthalaivar Kamarajar College Development Scheme** was launched last year with an outlay of Rs.1,000 crore for improving infrastructure and basic amenities in Government colleges over a period of five yeaRs. In the current year, works such as

construction of new classrooms and additional laboratories have been taken up in 26 Government polytechnic colleges and 55 Government arts and science colleges. **These works will be carried out in the coming financial year also at an estimated cost of Rs.200 crore.**

38. It is seen that the number of students from Tamil Nadu clearing the Civil Services Examinations has been on the decline in the last few years. With the objective of reversing this trend, Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC) will implement a scheme in co-ordination with Anna Staff Administrative College to help **civil services aspirants** to access better coaching facilities and materials. Every year 1,000 civil services aspirants will be short listed through a screening test. **Each aspirant will be provided Rs.7,500 per month for 10 months to prepare for the preliminary examination. Those students who clear the preliminary examination will be provided a lumpsum amount of Rs.25,000.** For this programme, an amount of Rs.10 crore has been allocated to TNSDC in the Budget Estimates 2023-24. In aggregate, an allocation of Rs.6,967 crore has been made to the Higher Education Department in this Budget.

## **Youth Welfare and Sports**

39. With the realization that tomorrow's society is the responsibility of today's youth, this Government is committed to making the youth strong and vibrant. With the successful conduct of International Chess Olympiad in Chennai and the competitions for Chief Minister's Trophy being held across the State, the sports sector has been given a new impetus. As the next step, **the Government through the Chennai Metropolitan Development Agency will set up a state-of-the-art Global Sports City in Chennai** which will promote the development of sports and emerge as a favoured destination for leading sports events. For this purpose, a detailed project report will be prepared by engaging international experts.

40. The Government will undertake a **comprehensive renovation of the iconic Jawaharlal Nehru Outdoor Stadium, Chennai and equip it with modern sports facilities at an estimated cost of Rs.25 crore.**

## **Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare**

41. This Government, which is founded on the principles of social justice and equitable growth, attaches highest priority to the development of Adi-Dravidars and Tribals. With the objective of increasing the Gross

Enrolment Ratio of Adi Dravidar and Tribal students in higher education and providing them safe and quality accommodation, **four new hostels will be constructed with modern facilities in Madurai, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli and Nilgiris at an estimated total cost of Rs.100 crore.** These hostels will be maintained and managed by engaging professional agencies.

42. It has been a long pending demand to enact a legislation to ensure effective implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Tribal Sub Plan. Heeding to this request, the **Government will bring a new legislation to ensure adequate allocation of funds and effective implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Tribal Sub Plans.** The draft bill will be introduced in the next session of the Assembly after due consultation with stakeholdeRs.

43. The practice of manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks is a blot on humanity. In order to completely prevent deaths due to manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks, a new scheme has been recently launched by this Government. By transforming sanitary workers into entrepreneurs and facilitating them to procure modern machinery, this scheme will enable them to undertake these works in a safe manner and generate income. In this scheme, priority will be given to

families of sanitary workers who died during manual cleaning and to persons currently engaged in sanitary work, on the basis of their willingness. In the first phase, the scheme will be implemented in the Chennai Metropolitan area. Based on this pilot exercise, the scheme will be expanded to the entire State.

44. It is seen that the share of persons from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities who avail various entrepreneurship promotion subsidies from the Government is very low. In order to **promote economic development of SC/ST entrepreneurs, a new scheme called 'Annal Ambedkar Business Champions Scheme' will be launched** in the coming financial year. The new scheme will provide 35 per cent capital subsidy and offer 6 per cent interest subvention for loans to procure machineries and equipment. A sum of Rs.100 crore is allocated for this scheme in the Budget Estimates 2023-24.

45. To revive the Welfare Board for Puthirai Vannars, Rs.10 crore will be provided to undertake livelihood development and welfare activities.

46. A new scheme named **'Iyothee Thass Pandithar Habitation Development Scheme'** will be launched to ensure basic amenities in Adi Dravidar habitations in both urban and rural areas and to bring

about comprehensive socio-economic development.

**The scheme will be implemented at a cost of Rs.1,000 crore over a period of 5 years.**

47. A sum of Rs.3,513 crore has been allocated to the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department in this Budget.

### **Welfare of Differently Abled**

48. It is well known that it was Muthamizharignar Kalaignar who coined the term 'Differently Abled'. Given the importance of this department, it is directly looked after and works are closely monitored by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. RIGHTS project is being implemented at a cost of Rs.1,763 crore with financial assistance from World Bank. The main objective of this project is to create an inclusive society by promoting accessibility through creation of barrier-free structures and employment opportunities through vocational training. The project will be implemented in 15 districts in 2023-24. At the divisional level, 39 One Stop social care service centres will be established to provide services including disability assessment, certification and early intervention. Further, 150 neighbourhood centres manned by volunteers will be set up to provide treatment at home and assistance in availing benefits under various welfare schemes.