Musaliar: A Deep Source of Strength

Justice M. Fathima Beevi

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Office bearers of the TKM Trust,
Distinguished Invitees,
Staff and Students of TKM Institutions,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Memorial Lectures scheduled to be held in connection with the birth centenary celebrations of marhoom Janab. Thangal Kunju Musaliar who left an indelible stamp on the day to day life of the Keralites. Kerala is blessed with an abundance of intellectuals who constitute a mighty force in the country in the fields of education, administration and other professions. Needless to say that they contribute a lion's share to the promotion of Kerala's literature and socio-cultural heritage too. The people of Kerala are fortunate in an advanced environment of well established, widespread and smooth functioning educational system in the State. Modern education has found a firm root in the State. The people from this land, by virtue of their education and qualification are welcome outside the State and abroad too. The learned receive honour wherever they go. So do the people from this land of spiritual as well as practical wisdom. Their success speaks volumes of the effectiveness and supremacy of education, the greatest wealth God the Almighty has gifted to mankind. The Keralites' energetic outlook on life, sincerity and enthusiasm in their work are their additional qualifications that bring to their endeavours better results.

We rededicate ourselves to the cause of humanity and mankind on this occasion. It is with a profound sense of awe and admiration that one remembers Janab Thangal Kunju Musaliar. His vision and reach even in his lifetime was a legend. Throughout the country, in several regions, luminaries arose to serve as a beacon for the growth of humanity. Musaliar was one such visionary in Kerala.

This is a time for introspection for all of us to take stock of our environment, the fast eroding values and the corrosive commercialism which threatens the very fabric of our society. It is for us to appreciate the advantageous position that we enjoy in society by virtue of education and Knowledge and to make optimum use of opportunities.

It would be redundant to talk of galloping benefits opened up by our recent policy of liberalisation as today's vast body of youngsters are very aware and conscious of all the changes that are cascading into an advantageous impact on the overall economy.

Fifteen years ago, it was not easy to access education by an economically week student. Today, given the simplified procedures of institutional finance and opportunities in educational institutions there is no bar that a determined youngster cannot surmount.

The Indians as a race are known for their wisdom and a sophistication of culture, which is several thousands of years old. Lack of education was hardly a handicap to stalwarts like Musaliar who believed in the universal

fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Janab Thangal Kunju Musaliar carved a niche for himself in the annals of Kerala' s socio-economic life in the 20th century. He was an astute trader and was enormously successful during 1940s and 50s that he was probably the world's largest provider of employment then. His main trade was in cashew. As he monopolised the cashew export market in India, Janab Musaliar was called the 'Cashew King'. He built a vast business empire, all by himself, despite an initial setback. He travelled widely all over the world, particularly in the West. He compensated his lack of proper education in earlier age with his acquired knowledge of worldly things by virtue of his interaction with a multi—faceted and in many aspects an advanced global community. His inherent intelligence and intellect enriched by his practical wisdom made him a genius who outshone his contemporaries in many spheres.

In addition to the cashew trade, Musaliar's business diversified into farming and real estate, tugs and barges, industries etc. and has become a household name in Kerala.

Janab Musaliar's name is etched in our memory because of his share in a far better cause for his outstanding contribution to education. It is not usual that every business magnate comes forward to lend valuable support to social causes. The gesture calls for a considerate mind and compassionate heart from individuals who are engaged in ventures, totally unrelated to such causes. Janab Musaliar was the busiest man occupied in a highly competitive field. Yet, he had a heart that went out to the people who are deprived of education, for many reasons. His extraordinary vision and will of power saw the birth of the 'Thangal Kunju Musaliar's Trust' for which foundation was laid in 1956. He was among the earliest to respond to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's clarion call to building up a modern India.

Education is unarguably the best foundation in the process of nation building. Janab Musaliar was quick in learning this essentiality and made a mighty contribution to the process through the foundation of the T K M Trust. The T K M College of Engineering, T K M College of Arts and Science and the T K M Institute of Management are living monuments of the extraordinary vision and deeds of this great personality.

Janab Musaliar was a man of action who made use of his vast resources of intellect, knowledge and financial wealth, for the welfare of the society and the nation. He was a social reformer of an elite sort who extended the spirit of equality to all, irrespective of caste and creed even in those feudal times. He was kind and considerate to his fellow humans, especially the suffering lot. As the President of *Muslim Majlis*, he advocated unity and communal harmony.

Many of his original ideas and pursuits cause our awe and admiration. He thought of harnessing non-conventional sources of energy, which still finds difficulty in effective implementation in our country despite being a success in many other countries. He distributed vast sums of money as bonus to his employees at a time when bonus was virtually non-existent. He started *Janakshema*, a scheme for rural development to promote self-employment. He had the foresight and vision to implement, 50 years ago, schemes that are seriously being taken up now-a-days. Janab Musaliar conducted workshops for training local youth of technical competence.

What was needed most at the dawn of our Independence, Janab Musaliar provided in most appropriate manner and set an example for others with same dedication and enterprise to follow.

Of all his philanthropic activities, Janab Musaliar placed education at priority. Education is the major item on the agenda of preparing the future generation, which is vital in building up a strong nation. Education will also lay the foundation for an unblemished society with a harmonious atmosphere unperturbed by unnecessary trifles. Moral values inculcated through educational means will provide the much - sought - for generation. Schools and Colleges are vested with this enormous responsibility, as the nation expects strong-willed individuals of superlative qualities and capabilities to emerge out of these institutions.

A school is where you gather your knowledge; a college is where you expand the knowledge further and sharpen your intellect. In this regard, I am confident that the educational institutions run by the T K M Trust, will positively respond by producing character who will become pillars of our nation in future.

Education is a basic need of humanity. It is a continuous process with no end. What was learnt a decade ago will not suffice today. There must be a uniform curriculum the world over, if not, at least at national level. Higher education must undergo an expansion in facilities so that it reaches even the remotest corners of our country. Vocational education must be vigorously taken up to keep up with the advancing field of science and technology. Institutions such as these run by T K M Trust look encouraging, in this context, with their highly resourceful staff and management. They have come a long way since 1956 and are poised toward bigger achievements in the years to come.

The stupendous advancement in Science and Technology has opened up a multiplicity of opportunities for the qualified young. Computer technology is today on par with international levels.

These institutions have made it possible for the youngsters in this region to qualify themselves to suit the opportunities presented by the changing global socio-economic scenario and thereby improve their quality of life.

In the final analysis however, the lesson to be learnt is from the inspiration drawn from the examples of the likes of Janab Musaliar whose vision and compassion for his fellow beings has manifested itself in an edifice outliving him and perpetuating the values for which he worked.

Let the legend of Janab Musaliar be the inspiration to the students of these institutions. Shri. Musaliar' s ideals, positive approach and spirited ventures will be a deep source of strength to our aspiring youth.

The Management and staff must take upon themselves to promote the principles of Janab Musaliar's social philosophy of life.

I am thankful for the invitation extended to me for this memorable function. I convey my best wishes to all of you assembled here for a life of everlasting happiness.

With these few words, I have pleasure to inaugurate Janab Thangal Kunju Musaliar birth centenary memorial lectures.

Jai Hind.

(The Lecture delivered at the inaugural function of the T.K.M. Birth Centenary Memorial Lectures)