

VICE PRESIDENT CALLS UPON CIVIL SOCIETY AND BUSINESS HOUSES TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT IN ELIMINATING MALNUTRITION

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Vice President's Secretariat

Vice President calls upon Civil Society and Business houses to support government in eliminating malnutrition

Create awareness among youngsters on the need to avoid junk food and maintain physical fitness: Vice President

Visits the mechanised kitchen facility at Adamyia Chetana in Bengaluru

Appreciates them for providing nutritious food to around 1.5 lakh children daily

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The Vice President of India, Shri M Venkaiah Naidu today called upon the Civil Society, NGOs and Business houses to supplement government's efforts in eliminating malnutrition in the country.

Expressing concerns, the Vice President said that despite considerable progress made by the nation in various spheres in the past seven decades, malnutrition remains a major challenge. "It is sad state of affairs that that 35.7% of our children below 5 years of age are underweight and 38.4% are stunted," he added.

Addressing the gathering after visiting Adamyia Chetana in Bengaluru today, the Vice President pointed out that various studies have shown that nutritional status of children was strongly associated with their academic performance.

"Lack of nutritious food may lead to poor brain development, weak learning, low immunity and increased infections," he added.

Shri Naidu said that malnutrition perpetuates a vicious cycle of poverty and affects the economic development. He asserted that immediate steps must be taken to avoid such scenarios for the healthy development of the children and the adolescents.

Referring to the growing incidence of Non Communicable diseases due to sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy dietary habits, the Vice President called for creating awareness among youngsters on the need to avoid junk food and maintain physical fitness at all times.

The Vice President appreciated Adamyia Chetana founded by late Shri Ananth Kumar and his spouse Smt. Tejaswini Ananth Kumar for providing food to around 1.5 lakh children from four of its kitchens located in Bengaluru, Hubballi, Kalburgi and Jodhpur in Rajasthan daily.

Shri Naidu lauded the organisation for personifying age-old Indian values of Sharing and Caring. He stated that the POSHAN Abhiyaan or the National Nutrition Mission by the Government was playing a major role in improving nutrition indicators across India.

Earlier, the Vice President went around the campus and visited different facilities engaged in food preparation. He complimented the management, workers and volunteers for converting the Annapoorna kitchen into a zero garbage and fossil-fuel free kitchen.

Shri Naidu said that the organisation's process of fulfilling its energy needs from biomass and solar energy was worthy of emulation by others.

In this context, Shri Naidu said that starting of Ananth Kumar Pratishthana to develop and mentor new leaders through a Leadership Institute in all fields was a welcome step and said that it would carry forward work on healthcare and green lifestyle, both areas in which Shri Ananth Kumar ji strongly believed.

On the occasion, Shri Naidu recalled his close association with former Union Minister, late Shri Ananth Kumar and said "I not only lost a dear friend in Shri Ananth Kumar, but our nation lost a true leader. It is imperative that we continue the ideals, values and work that he espoused,"

The Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka, Shri C. N. Ashwath Narayan, Shri Tejasvi Surya, MP, Bengaluru South, Managing Trustee and Chairperson of Adamyia Chetana, Dr Tejaswini Ananth Kumar, and others associated with the organisation were present at the event.

Following is the full text of the speech –

"It is an emotional moment for me to be amidst all of you here at Adamyia Chetna today.

I am overwhelmed with the memories of my dear friend and former Union Minister, Shri Ananth Kumar Ji.

My association with Ananth Kumar ji dated back to my student days. After that, we were fellow companions since the beginning of our journey in political life.

When I reached Delhi in those times, I stayed with Ananth Kumar ji and Tejaswini ji in their house. I always felt myself a member of their family.

On a personal note, both Ananth and I were foodies. Ananth ji, Jaitley ji and I have spent many evenings relishing local delicacies.

I have known about Adama Chetana for years and have been very impressed by the dedication and meticulous way that Ananth Kumar ji and Tejaswini ji have worked on this noble platform to serve people. But I never had an opportunity to actually visit.

Today when I am here, I am truly amazed by the sheer dedication of the staff, management and volunteers who prepare hot cooked meals with deep love for around 1 lakh 50 thousand children for four of its kitchens located in Bengaluru, Hubballi, Kalburgi and Jodhpur in Rajasthan daily.

You are doing commendable work!

Share and care has been the core of Indian philosophy. Ours is the culture that believes in 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' – the whole world as one family and "Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavantu" – the happiness and wellbeing of all.

Work and principles of Adama Chetna personify these age old values.

Dear friends,

It is a fact that despite considerable progress made by nation in various fields in past seven decades, malnutrition remains a major concern. It's a sad state of affairs that 35.7% of our children under 5 years of age are underweight and 38.4% are stunted.

A recent UNICEF report says that malnutrition is behind 69 per cent deaths among children below 5 years in our country. The report also suggests that children under the age of five years are affected by micronutrient deficiencies and there is a disturbing trend towards unhealthy food and snacking. Child diets are lacking in proteins and micronutrients.

It is a well-known fact that young children need to be fed nutritious food to support their rapidly growing body and brains. Various studies have confirmed that the nutritional status of the children is strongly associated with their academic performance. Lack of nutritious food may lead to poor brain development, weak learning, low immunity and increased infections.

A 15 year-long study by the NGO - 'Save the Children' reveals how access to nutrients affects the child's learning capacity. The study found that an eight years old malnourished child is 19 per cent more likely to face difficulty in reading simple sentences like 'The sun is hot.'

Malnutrition also impacts the children's future capabilities. When today's malnourished children become part of tomorrow's working population, it impacts their

earning potential. Thus malnutrition perpetuates the vicious cycle of poverty and affects the economic development.

The POSHAN Abhiyaan or the National Nutrition Mission by the Government is playing a major role in improving nutrition indicators across India. Recently only I launched Poshan Anthem at a WCD Ministry event to spread awareness about the issue of malnutrition.

Here the role and work of organisations like Adama Chetna becomes very important in supplementing the Government's efforts.

Our Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi used to say, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

I call upon all like-minded individuals to come forward and help the Government create a malnutrition free India.

It is also admirable that you have turned Annapoorna kitchen here into a zero garbage and fossil-fuel free kitchen.

I am told that earlier this kitchen was consuming 400 litres of diesel and creating 300 Kilograms of waste on a daily basis.

But now Adama Chetna It became a zero-garbage generating unit with every leftover resourcefully reused. It is fulfilling its energy needs from biomass and solar energy. This feat is worth emulating by others.

Also, your concept of the plate bank is a unique innovation. Having 10 thousands set of steel plates, glasses that anybody can borrow free of cost to make their own functions plastic garbage free - It's truly imaginative and farsighted idea.

Our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has given a call for plastics free India. It's duty cast upon all of us to turn it into a people's movement. It is next step of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

I am sure that this model of Adama Chetana can serve as an inspiration to many. And I am not surprised by this. I have known Ananth Kumar ji and Tejaswini ji for decades and they are always committed to setting higher bar.

Last year has been a trying one for all of us. I not only lost a dear friend in Shri Ananth Kumar, but our nation lost a true leader. It is imperative that we continue the ideals, values and work that he espoused.

In that direction, I am glad to know that you are starting Ananth Kumar Pratishthana to carry his work forward.

Drawing inspiration from Shri Ananth Kumar ji, this Pratishthana should work on developing and mentoring new leaders through a Leadership Institute in all fields.

This is a noble initiative and would help in creating a glowing future of our country.

The Pratishthana will also work on health care and green lifestyle – both areas Shri Ananth Kumar ji strongly believed in and supported. His commitment for healthcare is evident from various initiatives under his leadership such as PM Jana Aushadhi Kendras and making cardiac stents and knee implants more accessible and affordable to all. His consistent efforts for Banguluru Metro only affirm his commitment for people’s welfare and the Green lifestyle.

Shri Ananth Kumar ji conceptualized the enormously successful Green Bengaluru 1:1 program promoting planting lakhs of trees in Bengaluru and other towns. All of you know how he was personally committed to this program every Sunday (last Sunday was the 210th consecutive Sunday).

Green Bharat program launched recently by Dr. Tejaswini ji where people can adopt a tree will take it to the next level across the nation.

These are admirable initiatives. I have always highlighted the importance of nature and culture for a better future.

Adamyia Chetana is a noble effort. Its focus on Anna – Akshara – Arogya (Food – Education – Health) can serve as a role model for others to create a healthy, educated, clean and green India.

I hope AK Pratishthana will also carry forward the works that Ananth Kumar stood for.

I wish you all the very best.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!”

VRRK/MS/MSY/RK

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