

ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY

(Accredited with “A+” Grade by NAAC (CGPA:3.64) in the Third Cycle & Graded as Category-I University and
Granted Autonomy by MHRD-UGC)

KARAIKUDI - 630 003

Date: 7.3.2019

Under the aegis of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) a Two- Day National Conference on “Towards Clean India: A Vision for New India by 2019” was organised by the Department of Women’s Studies, Alagappa University on 6th and 7th March, 2019.



Prof.K.Manimekalai, Head, Department of Women’s Studies, Alagappa University and Former Vice-Chancellor of Mother Teresa Women’s University, Kodaikanal, while welcoming the gathering, highlighted the relevance and current significance of this National Conference and said how cleanliness and health are intrinsically linked to our day-to-day life and activities. After elaborating on the objectives of the conference, she said that effective awareness programmes would bring behavioural changes in people and motivate them to adopt hygienic practices, and help them in spreading the message among the people to strengthen the cleanliness systems throughout the country. She referred to the “World Bank Project on Total Sanitation Campaign” undertaken by the Department of Women’s Studies, Alagappa University during the year 2004 - 2006 at Ramnad District for creating awareness about the problems and health related issues involved in open defecation. The open defecation leads to various health hazards, including malnutrition among women. She added that studies have shown that there is an increase in dropout of girl-students owing to inadequate sanitation facilities in schools. She

said that girls are typically absent for 20% of the school year due to lack of adequate menstrual management services, lack of proper infrastructure such as availability of good drinking water and toilet facilities. With 10% increase in female literacy, a country's economy can grow by 0.3 percent according to UNICEF report. She noted that around 2.65 billion people lived without access to proper toilet facilities and 883 million do not have access to safe water. She asked the students to disseminate the message to the rural people that the sanitation contributes to social and economic development of a nation.

Presiding over the function, Prof.N.Rajendran, Vice Chancellor, Alagappa University stressed that Swachh Bharat Mission is counted as a major awareness campaign in India which has become really viral. He appreciated the Department of Women's Studies for organizing a conference on a topic of vital interest, which is the pressing need of the hour. He stated that Alagappa University has attained the 4th rank in Swachh Campus Ranking 2018 by the MHRD. He stated that 39 Departments of study in the University and 41 Affiliated Colleges of Alagappa University have adopted a village each for the community development. The village extension programmes lay great stress on keeping the environment clean and green and aim at creating awareness on the significance of healthy living. He stated that Swachh Bharat Campaign initiative by the Indian Government covers all the backward statutory towns for making them clean, so as to help people live in healthy environment. It is very necessary and urgent to solve the problems of sanitation, by providing safe toilets, and also by providing proper waste management systems. He added that all health promotion activities directly or indirectly create a healthy relationship between human beings and environment. If the environment is unpolluted, the system itself will promote the health status of every individual. He concluded his speech by exhorting the students to spread the message of "Clean India Mission" among the people, especially to the rural community and help them lead a healthy life.

Thiru.J.Jayakanthan,I.A.S., District Collector and Coordinator for Swachh Bharat Mission, Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu in his key - note address said that Mahatma Gandhi had dreamt of a clean India and went to the extent of saying that, "Sanitation is more important than Independence". The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi made a reference to 'Clean India' during his speech on 15th August, 2014 on Indian Independence Day and the mission was launched on the birth anniversary of Gandhiji on 2nd of October, 2014. He stated that this mission targeted its completion in 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in order to ensure hygiene for all in the entire country. He also noted that cleanliness is most important for physical well-being and a healthy environment would ensure it. It has a bearing on public and personal hygiene. He added that it is essential for everyone to learn about cleanliness, hygiene, sanitation and various diseases that are caused owing to poor hygienic conditions. According to the data of 2011 census, it was estimated that only 32.70% of the total rural population had access to the toilets. He pointed out that India is one of the countries where large number of people resort to open defecation according to UN report. However after the launch of this campaign the figures have drastically changed. As of November 2018, 96.55% of the total rural population has access to toilets and more than 5 lakh villages have already been made open defecation free. He stated that one lakh toilets have been constructed in Sivagangai District so far under this scheme. He added that the Panchayat Act, 1994 has made provision for maintenance of sanitary facilities in rural areas. He said that the potential of the youth has to

be realized through education, and through proper education our youth should be made to offer productive services to rural society.

Dr.P.Veeramani, Assistant Professor, Department of Women's Studies delivered a vote of thanks. More than 200 students, scholars and faculty from the Departments of study and Affiliated Colleges participated in the Conference.

Prof.H.Gurumallesh Prabu
Registrar