



Speech of Hon'ble Governor of Andhra Pradesh
Sri Biswa Bhusan Harichandan
participates as Chief Guest
at the inauguration of 31st Vijayawada Book Festival
on January 03, 2020 at Vijayawada

Guests on the dais, friends from media, SODARA SODAREE MANUMULU, ANDARIKI NAMASKARAM.

I am immensely delighted to inaugurate the 31st Vijayawada Book Festival on the shores of the sacred river Krishna. This is a great land which had given birth to eminent writers like 'Jnanapeeth' awardee Sri Viswanatha Satyanarayana, Tripuraneni Ramaswami Choudhary, Veturi Prabhakara Sastri, just to name a few.

I am told the Vijayawada Book Festival, is one of the biggest Book Festivals held in South India.

I was informed by the organizers that around 200 publishers from within and outside Andhra Pradesh are participating in the Book Festival, displaying more than three lakh books in English, Telugu and Hindi languages.

The Vijayawada Book Festival owes its success to the initiative taken by the National Book Trust way back in 1989, to hold a book festival for the first time in Vijayawada. This led to the emergence of Vijayawada Book Festival Society in 1990 and conduct of annual Book Festivals since then. As the well known Telugu adage goes 'Pustakam hasta bhuushanam' meaning 'book is like an ornament in hand.' Books also make a good item to be given as a gift to someone you respect.

In fact, I am also a book-lover and a writer in Odiya language. I am happy to share with you that I am a writer of patriotic literature. I am happy to learn that the Vijayawada Book Festival Society is successfully running a library for the last 18 years, in addition to holding the annual Book Festival, which shows the commitment of the society to cater to the needs of book lovers.

Libraries are our treasures of knowledge. If we look back into the freedom movement, books were the means for the leaders of freedom movement to gain knowledge about freedom struggles in other colonized countries. Though limited in number, it was libraries in cities that helped the leaders of freedom struggle, to gain knowledge and to carry forward the movement in the right direction.

However, people like Iyyanki Venkata Ramanayya of Andhra Pradesh, who is known as the 'Architect of Public Library Movement in India' and others led library movements in the country in pre-independence era. I am immensely pleased to note that this Vijayawada Book Festival Society is also contributing for the cause of Library Movement.

As Ernest Hemingway said "There is no friend as loyal as a book."

A book takes us into a world of knowledge, entertainment, new thought process and so on. A book is a real friend who expects nothing from the reader in return. It never argues with you. It never questions the reader's knowledge levels and never tries to judge you.

Books enhances your knowledge and make you more knowledgeable than before, from time to time.

Our Late Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee Ji was well known for his scintillating poetry, oratory skills and instantaneous wit and humour. Vajpayee Ji said, "I owe all that credit, if any, only to book reading" Mahatma Gandhi on a number of occasions said the best friend he ever had was "books."

The great resources I availed of, while in prison or later, for writing books, such as Raana Pratap, Maru Bataas, Manasi and so on were also books.

According to Swami Vivekananda, "Books are infinite dealing with every subject that we come across in life. But our life is short. When can we read all of them and utilize? Hence, secret of knowledge is to gain essence of it and make best use of it earliest."

With the advent of new technology, e-books are the new trend in book reading now and children are catching up with book reading habit through reading of e-books on I-Pads and Tablet PCs with the advent of Digital Libraries.

As a writer and book lover, I strongly appeal to all parents to inculcate the habit book reading among children at an early age. They will be empowered with knowledge as they grow up reading books. As someone said "A child who reads will be an adult who thinks."

I appreciate the efforts of the publishers for organizing the annual Vijayawada Book Festival on such a large scale and encouraging book reading habit among people.

My advice to the organizers is to consider publication of selected books from other Indian languages into Telugu language, so that the readers will be exposed to richness of literature available in other languages as well.

I am thankful to the organizers of Vijayawada Book Festival Society for giving me this opportunity to share some good thoughts with you all on this occasion.

As someone said: "A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one."

I wish you all Happy New Year and Happy Reading.

Jai Hind