

**Speech of Kalaigñar M. Karunanidhi,**  
**Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu,**  
**in the First meeting of the**  
**Information Technology Task Force**  
**held on 23-8-2007 at Chennai :**

Tamil Nadu under previous DMK Regime was the very first State in India to bring out a comprehensive IT Policy in the year 1997. A 'State Level Task Force' for Information Technology Industry in Tamil Nadu was also set up in the same year. Several pioneering efforts were taken during the period 1996 - 2001 in the field of IT. To name a few, an International Conference on Tamil Computing called "Tamil Net 99" was conducted in the year 1999. Tamil Nadu also became a full Member in the Unicode Consortium during this period. A Tamil Software Development Fund was created. Interest free loans were given by the Government of Tamil Nadu to the STPI for setting up Satellite Earth Stations in Chennai, Madurai, Trichy and Tirunelveli. In order to bridge the digital divide, a unique scheme called 'Sustainable Access to Rural India' was launched during this period. The other efforts include, setting up a Tamil Virtual University, formulation of a Right of Way Policy, establishment of venture capital fund and introduction of computer education in 1200 higher secondary schools. The crowning achievement during this period was the establishment of 'TIDEL Park' at Chennai and an IT Park at Siruseri. It would not be wrong to say that the seeds of IT revolution in Tamil Nadu were laid during my previous tenure as Chief Minister from 1996 - 2001.

As soon as I took charge as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for the fifth time, I personally undertook a visit to Bangalore and visited several IT establishments there. I have also had widespread discussions with leaders of industry in both hardware as well as software sector. It is heartening that due to the efforts of my Government, Tamil Nadu is emerging as a front runner in both Hardware manufacturing as well as Software exports.

I am happy to share with you all that the software exports from Tamil Nadu have crossed Rs. 20,000 crores in the financial year 2006-2007. The fact that large IT campuses are being put up by Infosys, TCS, Wipro, Cognizant, Satyam and HCL augurs well for the sector. IBM has just announced the setting up of its global delivery centre at Chennai. A large number of IT-ITES SEZs are being established in Tamil Nadu. Besides this, NOCs have been given for putting up 61 million square feet of IT space in Tamil Nadu. All this points to the fact that the prospects of growth for the IT Software industry in the coming years are even brighter. I have no doubt that with the effort of all of you Tamil Nadu will emerge as a leader in this sector.

I am convinced that the fruits of the IT revolution should not remain confined to Chennai and its suburbs. It should spread to other parts of the State. The Government has therefore set up IT SEZs at Coimbatore, Madurai, Salem, Trichy and Tirunelveli. You will find that all these places are in no way inferior to Chennai in terms of manpower availability and connectivity. In fact, the advantages of locating in these

places are considerable. The Government is also taking special efforts to strengthen the infrastructure in all these places. I seek your support in this venture.

The State is also emerging as an International hub for electronic hardware manufacture. Some of the world's largest hardware manufacturers like Motorola, Nokia, Flextronics, Foxconn, Dell Computers, Samsung, Sanmina are setting up their manufacturing facilities in Tamil Nadu. A number of other manufacturers in the sector are also in touch with us and will announce their plans soon. This combination of hardware manufacturing as well as software is unique and no other State in India can match this.

In order to sustain this momentum and to give a further boost to the Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector I have invited all of you today. I request you to offer your suggestions on the measures to be taken by my Government in this regard. These inputs would be valuable in formulating policies for development of ICT sector.

I am confident that together we will make Tamil Nadu a world leader in the ICT sector and thereby bring prosperity and happiness to the people of our State.