

[National](#) » [Tamil Nadu](#)

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Aiyar lays stress on inclusive growth

Special Correspondent



Mrs. Y.G. Parthasarathy, dean and director, PSBB Group of Schools, presents an award to Bhooma Parthasarathy, educationist, at a function in Chennai on Thursday. Mani Shankar Aiyar, MP, and K. Ramanujam (left), president, Rotary Club of Madras T. Nagar, are in the picture. Photo: V. Ganesan *The Hindu*

While the defining achievements of independent India are its democracy and economic development, there is a serious danger to both these if the country's growth is not made inclusive, Mani Shankar Aiyar, MP and former Union Minister, said on Thursday.

He was delivering the chief guest's address to mark the presentation of first "Dr. (Mrs.) YGP Educationist of the Year Award" on the occasion of the silver jubilee of The Rotary Club of Madras T. Nagar.

Mr. Aiyar said the country has got perhaps its final opportunity to save democracy by privileging the XIIth Plan to facilitate inclusive growth through inclusive governance.

Mr. Aiyar added however that he doubted whether the Indian establishment had woken up to the reality that without panchayati raj, people would be left out of the development process.

A GDP growth over 8 per cent per annum and poverty alleviation that was only 0.8 per cent per annum represented the contrast in India of "India progressing but Indians were not," he said. This was a dilemma of democracy which if unresolved could threaten democracy and undermine development, he said.

While the support to fasts such as the one undertaken by Anna Hazare and Baba Ramdev would give a picture that most thinking Indians had concluded that the worst thing about democracy is that it breeds corrupt politicians, Mr. Aiyar wondered whether there could indeed be a functioning democracy without political parties or politicians.

Noting that the reality of discontent in India was overwhelming, he said the country could not afford to be complacent of civil unrest.

"It is not enough to have accelerated growth but we need inclusive growth," he said. Earlier, (Mrs.) Y.G. Parthasarathy, dean and director, PSBB Group of Schools presented the award to educationist Bhooma Parthasarathy.

In her acceptance speech, Ms. Bhooma Parthasarathy dedicated the award to the great teachers who helped her found the Vedavalli Vidyalaya Senior Secondary School in 1994, and two more not-for-profit schools, "who held out hands... defined our aims...and set in place the culture of excellence and quality." K. Ramanujam, club president, T.D.G.

Ganapathy, past district governor and Sheela Rajendra, correspondent, PSBB Group of Schools, participated.

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