

**Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru Banwarilal Purohit participated as Chief Guest at the inaugural ceremony of The International Seminar on Bharathi's Immortal Works and the presentation of Bharathi Award 2019 organised by Vanavil Cultural Centre and the Department of Tamil Development Information & Publicity and Tourism**

Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, participated as Chief Guest at the inaugural ceremony of The International Seminar on Bharathi's Immortal Works and the presentation of Bharathi Award 2019 organised by Vanavil Cultural Centre and the Department of Tamil Development Information & Publicity and Tourism at Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (Main Auditorium), T. Nagar, Chennai today (06.12.2019) and addressed the gathering.

Hon'ble Governor said, "It gives me immense pleasure to participate in the inauguration of the international seminar on Bharathi's immortal works and the presentation of Bharathi Awards 2019 being jointly organised by the Government of Tamil Nadu and Vanavil Cultural Centre to commemorate the 137<sup>th</sup> birthday of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi.

This celebration has been organised by Vanavil Cultural Centre, which has been conducting this festival for the past 26 years.

We have assembled here to recall and pay our rich tributes to the National Poet Sri Subramania Bharathi. "Bharathi" is the name that reminds us of nationalism, patriotism, Tamil prose and poetry. He was conferred with the title of 'Bharathi' for his poetic talent at a tender age. Bharathi emerged as a prolific poet earning the name of 'Mahakavi', meaning a Great Poet.

Born in Ettayapuram, a sleepy little Zamin in Thirunelveli district, in the year 1882 and having lived an illustrious life for a short span of 39 years, the contributions of Sri Subramania Bharathi are immeasurably immense to say the least.

Bharathi had his early education in Tirunelveli and Varanasi and worked as a journalist with many newspapers, including The Hindu, Bala Bharata, Vijaya, Chakravarthini, the Swadesamitran and India. In 1908, an arrest warrant was issued against Bharati by the government of British India for his revolutionary writings, forcing

him to flee to Puducherry, where he lived until 1918. Bharati's influence on Tamil literature is phenomenal. He was prolific in his output. He covered political, social and spiritual themes. The songs and poems composed by Bharati are very often used in Tamil cinema and have become staples in the literary and musical repertoire of Tamil and other artistes throughout the world.

He lived in the eventful years of our country's freedom struggle. He had met his contemporaries who influenced his political thinking like Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak, Sister Nivedita, Maharshi Aurobindo Gosh, VVS Iyer and Lala Lajpat Roy. His life itself is a shining example of upholding the spirit of freedom, equality, justice and love despite poverty and against the oppressive British rule

He breathed his last past the midnight of 11<sup>th</sup> September, 1921 at his residence in Triplicane, Chennai, which is now a Government sponsored Bharathi Memorial.

His lofty dreams about our society and the country came out brilliantly in his songs and prose. He had the uncanny ability of using his literary skills to the best to kindle the patriotic feelings of the masses and about the evils in the society which caused all their problems. He proudly proclaims that there is no other country in the world that is equal to India which has the Himalyan mountains, the sacred river Ganges and the Upanishads. He is equally proud about the Richness and sweetness of the Tamil language.

He fearlessly wrote about freedom for individuals as well as nations. He was greatly influenced by 'Vande Mataram' the patriotic song by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya. Considering this to be a divine inspiration, he went on to write revolutionary compositions that were packed with the concept of national unity and the spirit of freedom. His songs brought a spiritual dimension to the freedom movement. 'Swathesa Geethangal' and 'Janma Bhoomi' which he dedicated to sister Nivedita are examples of his patriotic songs. They were distributed to the people during the freedom movement of India.

Bharathi is considered to be the first voice to have advocated and campaigned for women's participation in politics. He advocated greater rights for women and their education. He visualized the modern Indian woman as one who will lead society on the right path.

He dreamt of a free India and a society that is educated, devoid of its social evils and living in harmony. He visualized in the year 1910 the Unified India of later years and sang thus “Let us dance and sing that we have attained freedom”. This is truly prophetic. We can see that many of his dreams have come true today.

His songs for the children in 'Paappa Paattu' and 'Pudhiya Aathichoodi' evoked a sense of equality, love towards all living beings, casteless society and courage etc. His simple words convey the ethical and moral principles to the young minds effortlessly by adopting the technique of weaving the spoken language and rhythm into beautiful prose and poetry.

His writings, when he was in exile at Puducherry, were so powerful that British even jailed him.

The object of this festival is not only to commemorate the 137<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi, merely as a ritual, but also to bring to fore his ideals and especially sensitize the present generation and the youth and the children about the lofty dreams of that great poet, to infuse in them patriotic fervor, to make them aware of the glory of the motherland, the sacrifices made by our leaders and the youth that got us the freedom that we are enjoying now and to make them realize the paramount importance of guarding the spirit of Nationalism and presenting the integration and unity in diversity of our great Nation.

“Bharathi Award” was instituted in the year 1994 by Vanavil Cultural Centre. Every year it is being conferred on eminent persons who have done laudable service in any field of social relevance and thus worked towards the fulfillment of Bharathi’s dreams.

Dr. Nalli Kuppusami Chettiar is a leading tradesman of Tamilnadu. He has been a patron of art and culture and is the moving spirit behind most of the ‘Sabhas’ in Chennai and the Music season in this month.

He is an ardent devotee of Bharathi and has published many works of ‘Mahakavi’. The publication of complete works of Bharathi chronologically arranged, in 12 volumes, is a great service to the students of literature.

The message of Bharathi is more relevant to the youth and children of the present day India. He had lofty dreams about how this Nation should be on the fore

front in the world. His mission started gradually unfolding only after our country attained independence. He sang songs of integrating the various rivers in India and the dream is yet to be realised but I am sure that we are moving closer to realisation of the dream. He had a great love for his mother tongue, Tamil, an ardent devotion to Mother India, and a universal vision. All these complimented each other and never were in conflict.

He had great faith in the role that India was about to play in emancipating the entire world. He declared: "Ellarum Amara Nilai Eydhum Nanmuraiyai India ulagirku aLikkum."

"Yes, India will show to the entire world the path of righteousness by which all can attain immortality"

I am glad that the Government of Tamil Nadu and the University of Madras have extended support to this festival and have joined hands with Vanavil Cultural Centre. I am confident that in the near future we will be able to declare Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi as Rashtrakavi and Saint Thiruvalluvar as Viswakavi.

I extend my best wishes and greetings to the office bearers and members of the Vanavil cultural centre. Their painstaking efforts to keep the banner of Bharathi flying have helped to light up the flame of patriotism in the hearts of lakhs of people. I am sure that they will meet with greater success in the times to come."

On this occasion, Poojya Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Thiru. L. Ganesan, Patron – Vanavil Cultural Centre, Padmashree Dr. Nalli Kuppusamy Chettiar, Thiru. K. Ravi, Founder, Vanavil Cultural Centre and other dignitaries participated.

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Raj Bhavan, Chennai – 22

Sd/-

Date : 06.12.2019

Addl. Director (PR)