

Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit participated as Chief Guest at the "Mahakavi Bharathi Award" function organised by Dinamani Tamil Daily at Bharathi Manimandapam, Ettayapuram, Tuticorin District

Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu participated as Chief Guest at the "Mahakavi Bharathi Award" function organised by Dinamani Tamil Daily at Bharathi Manimandapam, Ettayapuram, Tuticorin District today (11.12.2019) and addressed the gathering.

Hon'ble Governor said, "It gives me immense pleasure to participate in this Mahakavi Bharathi Award Function organized by 'Dinamani' Tamil Daily at this Bharathi Manimandapam, Ettayapuram in Thoothukudi district.

'Dinamani' Tamil daily was launched on September 11th 1934. When the newspaper was launched on the 13th death anniversary of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi, the founder Editor of 'Dinamani' T.S. Chokkalingam, who himself was a renowned freedom fighter, wrote an editorial emphasizing the need for its launch. The two major objectives he set for the newspaper then were: One, lending strength to the freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi; and second, upholding and propagating the vision and ideals of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi. 'Dinamani', now in its 84th year of publication, continues to follow those objectives and the principles set by its founder editors.

I appreciate that 'Dinamani' Tamil daily has always been very particular to be in the forefront in defending and propagating the cultural, literary and nationalistic values through its columns and also through various programmes that the newspaper organises periodically.

Subramania Bharathi was a multifaceted personality. He was a poet, a campaigner for women's rights, a scholar well versed in several languages and above all a passionate freedom fighter.

He was born here in Ettayapuram and had his early education in Tirunelveli and Varanasi. He worked as a journalist with many newspapers, including 'The Hindu', 'Bala Bharatam', 'Vijaya', 'Chakravarthini', the 'Swadesamitran' and 'India'.

Bharathi's participation in the historic Surat Congress in 1907 along with V.O. Chidambaram Pillai was the first major entry into the freedom struggle. The group led by Shri Lokmanya Tilak preferred an aggressive stance against the British. Bharathi along with V.O. Chidambaram Pillai supported Shri Lokmanya Tilak. This made them incur the wrath of the British Government.

In 1908, the British instituted a case against V.O. Chidambaram Pillai. Faced with the prospect of arrest, Bharathi moved to Pudducherry, which was under French rule. From there he edited and published the weekly journals 'India', 'Vijaya', a Tamil daily, 'Bala Bharatham', an English monthly and 'Suryodayam', a local weekly in Pudducherry.

His writings were rich in content and marked by a desire to uplift society. He sang songs for people of all age groups. Even now children are attracted to his songs since they are simple and easy to understand. His songs for the labourers, the working class and for the downtrodden endeared him to the common people and elevated him to the status of the leader among the Tamil Poets of the 20th Century.

Three of his greatest works namely, Kuyil Pattu, Panchali Sapatham and Kannan Pattu were composed during 1912. He translated Vedic hymns, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra and Bhagavat Gita into Tamil. It was great a contribution to Tamil Literature. It was between 1910 and 1920 that the best poetic works of Bharathi were written.

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 visualised the modern Indian woman as one who will lead society on the right path.

In Bharathi's poetry, I quote

"Aanum Pennum Nigar Enakkollvathaal

Arivil O'ngi Iwaiyagam Thazhaikkumaam"

“आन्नुम पेन्नुम निगार एनक कोल्लवताल

अरिविल ओंगी इवैयगम तलैक्कुमाम”

“This world will achieve excellence in knowledge and wisdom by holding men and women equal”.

The Bharathiyar Memorial here in Ettayapuram has some uniqueness in the sense that this is the only memorial for a poet in the world, built not by the Government or by any organisation but through the contributions by common public.

Way back in 1946 Kalki R. Krishnamurthy, the renowned novelist, freedom fighter and the Editor of 'Kalki' Tamil weekly visited Ettayapuram for a music conclave. It was then that some people from this place proposed the idea that a memorial be built in the birth-place of Mahakavi Bharathiyar befitting his stature and contribution to the Tamil society as a poet, social reformer and freedom fighter. The proposal touched the sensitive nerve in Editor Kalki.

After returning to Chennai, Editor Kalki wrote an editorial in his weekly underlining the importance of building a memorial for the all-time great poet Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiyar in his place of birth. Donations started pouring in left, right and centre from all across Tamil Nadu and beyond. The foundation stone was laid in 1947 for this Bharathiyar Memorial by none other than Shri Rajagopalachari, fondly remembered as Rajaji. When the memorial was built, it was visualised as the symbol of nationalism and a temple of Tamil literature.

It is of special interest to all of us that the seventy-seven-year-old Shri Ilasai Manian will get the Mahakavi Bharati Award. He has been one of the tallest and most eminent Bharathi Scholars. He hails from Ettayapuram, the birth-place of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi.

He has been a witness to the construction of Bharathiyar Memorial at Ettayapuram. The only authentic eye witness narrative on the celebrations when the foundation stone for the Bharathi Manimandapam was laid by Late C.Rajagopalachari, the Former Governor General of India is that of Shri. Ilasai Manian. He was also present when the Bharathi Manimandapam was inaugurated in October 13, 1948. He was also a witness to the Bharathiyar Centenary Celebrations at Ettayapuram in December 1981, which was taken over by the Government of Tamil Nadu. He has written more than 25 books which are a unique documentation on Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi.

'Dinamani' Tamil Daily deserves our appreciation for conferring the inaugural "Mahakavi Bharathi Award" for the year 2019 on Shri. Ilasai Manian, the septuagenarian researcher on Bharathi literature. The Award carries a citation and a cash award of Rs.1

lakh for outstanding contribution to Bharathiyar and his works by way of research and dedicated service. The purpose of the Award is also to promote among the youth the memory of the great national poet and honour those who strive to propagate the ideals of Mahakavi Bharathiyar among future generations.

I am happy to note that the event marks a resurgence with hundreds of people from all over Tamil Nadu once again congregating here at Ettayapuram to pay tribute and respects to the doyen of modern Tamil literature on his birthday. I salute the great poet Subramania Bharathi. I salute this holy village Ettayapuram. I appeal the youth of Tamil Nadu and youth of India to follow the ideas of this great poet.

Let me conclude the speech on this day, with inspiration from Bharathi's poetry, I quote

eNNiya mudidhal vaeNdum,
nallavai yeNNal vaeNdum;

एन्निय मुथिथल वेनडुम,

नल्लवै यन्नल वेनडुम,

“Everything that I envisage should be fulfilled,
My thoughts should be noble (good)”.

On this occasion, Thiru. K. Vaidyanathan, Editor, Dinamani, Thiru. Sandeep Nanduri, I.A.S., Collector of Thoothukudi District, Thiru. J. Vignesh Kumar, Senior Vice President (Marketing), Prof. Thothathri, Thiru. Ilasai Manian, Awardee and other dignitaries participated.

Raj Bhavan, Chennai – 22

Date : 11.12.2019

Sd/-

Addl. Director (PR)