

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE MAHAKAVI SUBRAMANIA BHARATHI FESTIVAL DESH
BAKTHI FESTIVAL ORGANISED BY VANAVIL CULTURAL CENTRE & THE
DEPARTMENT OF TAMIL DEVELOPMENT AT KALAIVANAR ARANGAM,
CHENNAI ON 08.12.2018 AT 10.00 AM**

Anaivarukkum Kaalai Vanakkam

Thiru. Kadambur Raju,
Minister for Information and Publicity

Thiru. K.Pandiarajan,
Minister for Tamil Official Language and
Tamil Culture and Archaeology

Padmashri Awardee K. Vishwanath

Thiru. L. Ganesan,
Former Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha

Padmashri Awardee Dr. Nalli Kuppusamy Chettiar,

Thiru. R. Gandhi,
Senior Advocate

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me immense pleasure to participate in the "Bharathi Festival" organized jointly by The Govt. of Tamil Nadu and Vanavil Cultural Centre, Chennai.

The festival which bears the name of Bharathi has a noble theme, "Veera Swathanthiram" (VALAROUS FREEDOM) It brings into focus the great sacrifices made by our National Leaders who fought for our Independence. The Modern history of India is predominantly made up of the supreme contributions of the men and women from different walks of life, who, for the cause of winning freedom sacrificed their lives, their livelihood and their luxuries and devoted themselves to the cause that was dear to them with single-minded focus.

Hence the grand exhibition being inaugurated today has stalls and booths and display materials depicts the life and contributions of more than fifty such freedom fighters many of whom drew their inspiration from Mahakavi Bharathi.

Subramania Bharati 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 in Ettayapuram, Tirunelveli, and had his early education in Tirunelveli and Varanasi. He worked as a journalist with many newspapers, including The Hindu, Bala Bharatham, Vijaya, Chakravarthini, the Swadesamitran and India.

Bharati'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 Tilak preferred an aggressive stance against the British. Bharati along with V.O Chidambaram Pillai supported 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, Bharati moved to Pondicherry, which was under French rule. From there he edited and published the weekly journal India, Vijaya, a Tamil daily, Bala Bharatham, an English monthly and Suryodayam a local weekly in Pondicherry. The British tried to suppress Bharati by stopping remittances to the papers. The proprietor of the journal India was arrested in Madras. Both, India and Vijaya were banned in 1909.

During his stay in Pondicherry, Bharati had the opportunity to meet many other leaders of the revolutionary wing of the Independence movement like Aurobindo and Lajpat Rai, Bharati assisted Aurobindo in the publication of the journals 'Arya' and Karma Yogi. This was also the period when he started learning Vedic literature. Three of his greatest works namely, KuyilPattu, PanchaliSapatham and Kannan Pattu were composed during 1912. He also translated Vedic hymns, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra and Bhagavt Gita to Tamil. It was between 1910 and 1920 that the best poetic works of Bharthi were written.

But by 1920 his health started deteriorating and he died on 11 September 1921. There were only 14 people to attend his funeral.

Bharati's poetry expressed a progressive, reformist ideal. His imagery and the vigour of his verse were a forerunner to modern Tamil poetry in different aspects. He was the forerunner of a forceful kind of poetry that combined classical and contemporary elements. He had a prodigious output penning thousands of verses on diverse topics like Indian Nationalism, love songs, children's songs, songs of nature, glory of the Tamil language, and odes to prominent freedom fighters of India like Tilak, Gandhi and Lajpat Rai.

It is the opinion of some litterateurs that Bharathiar's Panchali Sapatham, based on the story of Panchali (Draupadi), is also an ode to Bharat Mata. That the Pandavas were the Indians, the Kauravas the British and the Kurukshetra of Mahabharat was the scene of battle in India's freedom struggle.

Bharati 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.

India is a land of unity in diversity. This was understood even 150 years ago. For this, I would like to quote from Surendra Nath Banerjee's speech made in 1878. He said and I quote "There may be religious differences between us. There may be social differences between us. But there is a common platform where we all meet, the platform of our country's welfare." Unquote. Bharathi echoed the same feelings, when he said "We are all children of one Mother. Where is the need for foreigners to interfere.

It is necessary for the youth of the nation to be aware of the sacrifices that people like Bharathi have made to win us freedom from foreign rule. As Barack Obama said 'Even in the face of impossible odds people who love their country can change it. Exhibitions like these will help to change society for the better. They help to instil the right values, sow the seeds of patriotism in young minds and guide them towards dedicating themselves for nation building activities.

A nation of 125 crores people has enormous potential. Imagine the impact that the people of our nation will have if this large population moves forward as one unified consolidated mass with the single minded goal of making the nation great. It is very

well possible in our lifetime. What is required is commitment to the cause, adherence to discipline training to attain one's own full potential and the acquisition of the feeling that we are all Indians without distinction of caste creed, language or religion. At this important juncture of history it is my earnest call that more and more citizens should come forward to serve the nation with a feeling of selflessness and national pride. May more and more of this tribe increase.

I congratulate the noted film maker VishwanathJi who is receiving the Bharathi award today. Aveteran in his profession Mr. Vishwanath has served the nation well by making films that propagate the greatness of Indian Culture.

I extend my best wishes and greetings to the office bearers and members of the Vanavil cultural centre. Their pain staking 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.

Let us all imbibe the fundamental message of Bharathi of being fearless when we fight the evils that plague our society. Bharathi said.

Let there be no fear at all

Event if the armies of the world come together Even if the sky above us crumbles and falls

Let there be no fear at all

Let us all on this day derive inspiration from the fearless call of Bharathi, from the magic of his poetry and from the genius of his farsighted vision.

Nandri Vanakkam.....

Jai Hind...