

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR  
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE MAHAKAVI BHARATHI AWARD FUNCTION ORGANISED  
BY DINAMANI TAMIL DAILY AT BHARATHI MANIMANDAPAM, ETTAYAPURAM,  
TUTICORIN ON 11.12.2018 AT 12.30 P.M**

**Anaivarukkum Vanakkam**

**Thiru. K. Vaidyanathan,**  
Editor – Dinamani

**Thiru. R.Rajagopal, I.A.S.,**  
Additional Chief Secretary to Governor

**Padmashri Dr. Nalli Kuppusamy Chettiar**

**Thiru. Sandeep Nanduri, I.A.S.,**  
Collector, Thoothukudi

**Thiru. Seeni Viswanathan**

**Thiru. J. Vignesh Kumar,**  
Senior Vice President,  
The New Indian Express Group

**Distinguished Invitees**

**Ladies & Gentlemen**

It gives me immense pleasure to participate in the Mahakavi Bharathi Award Function organized by Dinamani at Bharathi Manimandapam, Ettayapuram in Thoothukudi district.

Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharati, the Patriotic poet who fired the nation with his idealism and nationalistic fervor was a frontline freedom fighter. His writings, poetry and prose were a great inspiration to the youth of the nation, who dedicated themselves to the cause of the freedom struggle.

Bharathiyar who was born in Ettayapuram was a child prodigy. Even as a school boy he attracted the attention of the zamindhar of Ettayapuram with his poetic genius and this prompted the zameendar to confer on the young Subramaniam who was only 11 year old then, the title 'Bharathi'.

After a brief stint as teacher with Sethupathy High School Madurai in the year 1904, Subramania Bharathi shifted to Chennai to join the then popular Tamil newspaper 'Swadeshamithran' as its Assistant Editor. His scathing attack on the British colonial regime and powerful indictment of the administration earned him a special place in the journalistic world.

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, Panchali Sapatham 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.

The great revolutionary poet Subramania Bharathi used the literary richness and versatility of Tamil to promote the cause of national unity and oneness.

In one of his poems about Bharath, he captures the spirit of freedom that an independent India will enjoy. It reads thus

"On the silvery, snow-clad mountains we

Shall roam and on the oceans that abound around us we shall sail our ships,  
We shall raise every school to the status of a place of worship and proudly  
proclaim,

“This, is our Bharath-desh.”

Bharathi was a great visionary. He visualized in the year 1910 the Unified  
Independent India of later years and sang thus

“Let us dance and sing that we have attained freedom”.

This was truly prophetic.

His writings are 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 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

On this special occasion I pay my respects to Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi.

Dinamani Tamil daily has instituted the Mahakavi Bharathi Award from this year  
which carries with it a citation and a cash award of Rs.1 lakh, for meritorious  
contribution to Bharathiyar and his works through research and analysis. The maiden  
award is being conferred on Shri. Seeni Viswanathan.

85 years old Shri Seeni Viswanathan has spent his entire lifetime in the research  
on the works of Mahakavi Bharathiyar. The most important among them is the 12  
volume chronicle of Bharathiyar's works wherein he has compiled all the important  
poems and writings of Bharathiyar and documented them with proper footnotes about  
the background and the situation associated with that work.

He was one of the members of the committee constituted by the then government  
in 1981-82 to celebrate Bharathiyar's birth centenary at Ettayapuram and has been  
conferred with various awards and titles including the coveted 'Kalaimamani' award by  
the Government of Tamil Nadu. He has written and published 45 books on Mahakavi  
Bharathiyar and continues to write articles in periodicals and magazines about the great  
poet.

Bharathi is no more, but his name reigns. His words have not lost the magic spell.  
As stated by Norman Vincent Peale “The words that provide inspiration, courage,

confidence, faith, consolation and serenity, when needed, are not the property of any one people or any single faith. Bharathi's poems have an universal appeal and are relevant for all times.

Let us all on this day resolve to do all that we can to propagate the greatness of Bharathi's works and his contributions to the nation. Bharathi was given to the nation by Ettayapuram. He now belongs to the nation and to the world of Tamil. Through his works he has become the uncrowned king of Tamil Poetry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Generations to come will continue to draw inspiration from Bharathi. May his greatness live on for many more centuries to come.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Hind....