

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF  
TAMIL NADU AT THE LATE DR. MOHAN DHARIA RASHTRANIRMAN PURASKAR-  
2018 AWARD FUNCTION ORGANISED BY VANARAI FOUNDATION AT RAJ  
BHAVAN, CHENNAI ON 13.10.2018 AT 5.00 P.M**

**Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam**

**Thiru. Devendra Fadnavis,**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra

**Padma Vibhushan Dr. M.S. Swaminathan**

**Thiru. Ajay Sancheti**

**Padmashri Bansilal Rathi**

**Dr. Girish Gandhi,**

**Thiru. Ravindra Dharia,**  
President Vanarai

**Thiru. Sammer Saraf,**  
Working President, Vanarai Foundation

**Thiru. Nilesh Khandekar,**  
Secretary, Vanarai Foundation

**Distinguished Invitees**

**Ladies & Gentlemen**

It is a pleasure to be participating in the function being organised by Vanarai Foundation for conferring the Late Dr. Mohan Dharia Rashtranirman Puraskar award on Prof M.S. Swaminathan.

As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The soul of India lives in its villages". Indeed Agriculture is the primary occupation of the bulk of the population which lives in the rural areas.

Though agriculture contributes only about 26 percent of the Gross domestic product it meets the food requirements of a population of 125 crores besides producing the raw materials for industrial growth. Today Indian agriculture has reached a level where by the nation has emerged as the largest exporter of rice in the world.

But 60 years before it was not so. The agricultural scenario was different. Farmers grew traditional long duration crops that gave moderate to poor yields. Therefore food production was low and highly inadequate to satisfy the Nation's food requirements. Foreign exchange resources were very low and the elders in the audience will recall that in 1966 the devaluation of the rupee, was undertaken so as to obtain a loan from the International Monetary Fund.

We owe a lot to Dr.M.S.Swaminathan, the Agricultural Scientist who played a key role in uplifting Indian Agriculture to its present level of self sufficiency.

A plant Geneticist by training, Dr.Swaminathan made a stellar contribution to the agricultural renaissance of India, and is widely regarded as the scientific leader of India's Green Revolution movement.

Dr.M.S.Swaminathan along with Norman Borlaug and other scientists, developed the high yielding varieties (HYV)of wheat, a scientific development that led to the Green Revolution in India. The yield increases achieved in wheat and then in rice which have occurred in the last 50 years have made India self sufficient in food production.

Tracing the life of Dr. Swaminathan he obtained a B.Sc. degree in Zoology from the Maharajas College in Thiruvananthapuram, and then studied Agricultural Sciences in the Coimbatore College for Agriculture. Subsequently, he received his M.Sc. degree in Agricultural Sciences, specializing in genetics and plant breeding from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in 1949 and a Ph.D. degree from the Cambridge University, UK in 1952.

He then joined the faculty of IARI, New Delhi, in 1954 and became the Director of IARI, in 1962. After heading his prestigious institution for nearly 11 years, he became the Director General of Indian Council of the Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agricultural Research and Education in 1972. The next assignment was that of being the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Agriculture before he became a Member of the Planning Commission in 1980. International honours beckoned him and he was appointed as the Director General of the International Rice Research Institute in Manila a post he held for 6 long years.

For the stellar role played by Dr.M.S.Swaminathan in bringing about a revolution in the field of agriculture he has been conferred with the Padma Shri in 1967, the Padma Bhushan in 1972 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1989. Besides the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership and the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Gold Medal for his outstanding work in extending the benefits of biotechnology to marginalised and poverty-stricken populations in developing countries. Dr.Swaminathan has been honoured both at the national and international level making him one of the most outstanding citizens of our country.

Today the Vanarai Foundation has come forward to honour him with the Dr. Mohan Dharia, Rashtranirman Puraskar. The award has been instituted in honour of Dr. Mohan Dharia, who was another outstanding Indian.

Dr. Mohan Dharia was a staunch follower of the principles of Mahatma Gandhi and Jaiprakash Narayan. Owing to his strong opposition to the Thirty-eighth Amendment of the Constitution of India, introduced in 1975 which he called as 'a surrender of parliamentary democracy to the coming dictatorship'. He had to quit the cabinet and also suffer detention during the Emergency.

He was elected to Parliament again in 1977 and held the portfolios of Commerce, Civil Supplies and Co-operation in the Shri Morarji Desai cabinet. Subsequently in 1990, he was appointed as the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission.

A born leader, organizer and administrator, Dr.Mohan Dharia's strong in the Indian way of life helped him to organize common people so that they could claim their legitimate rights.

One of his proudest achievements was the founding of 'Vanaraayi' in 1986, and the steps he took to make villages self reliant.

Making a significant contribution through his Waste-land development and Joint Forestry Management concepts, he championed the 'Vanaraayi' bunds drive to conserve rain water. This made hundreds of villages in Maharashtra tanker free.

As a result of Vanaraai's Village Development efforts, several hundreds of families staying in the congested slums in Mumbai City have returned to their villages.

As a recognition for his contributions the nation honoured him with the prestigious Padma Vibhushan in 2005. Dr. Dharia's Mission is now being actively pursued by the Vanarai Foundation and I wish them well.

It is proud moment for me to be seeing a person from Tamil Nadu receiving an award instituted in the name of another outstanding person from Maharashtra. Though they hail from different States they share a commonness in the Indianness of their life styles and thought processes. Their lives are examples of outstanding achievement that came about after long years of hardwork, sacrifice and devotion to the cause they held to their hearts. The youth of the nation have a lot to learn from them.

Researchers and Scientists should not only draw inspiration from great personalities like Dr.M.S.Swaminathan but they should also seek their guidance and advice to attain excellence.

I appeal to the younger generation to take the lead in the field of agriculture. They should rise up to the occasion to bring about another green revolution in India.

I convey my warm felicitations to Dr.M.S.Swaminathan and wish him a long, happy and healthy life in his distinguished service in the field of agriculture.

NandriVanakkam

Jai Hind