

**Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit participated as Chief Guest at the inauguration of Shreshtha Bharat Sanskriti Samagam organised by Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi and South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur.**

Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu participated as Chief Guest at the inauguration of Shreshtha Bharat Sanskriti Samagam organised by Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi and South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur at South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur today (10.09.2019) and addressed the gathering.

Hon'ble Governor said, "It gives me great pleasure to be here today at the inauguration of Shreshtha Bharat Sanskriti Samagam.

I never miss an opportunity to visit Thanjavur, which enjoys a glorious place in history and is a treasure house of culture. Its cultural heritage dates back to more than a thousand years, when the great kings of the Chola Dynasty have left behind their majestic monuments. One such example is the temple of Lord Brihadeeshwara which showcases Tamil Nadu's ancient and rich architecture.

The Big Temple, as it is called, is not merely a sculptural treasure-house; it is a pinnacle of architectural achievement. No wonder it is called as the 'Dakshina Meru'. It shows the mastery achieved over building science by planners, architects and builders in Tamil Nadu, more than 1000 years back.

In a later era, Thanjavur was an unparalleled centre of music, with its creativity reaching a peak with Sri Thyagaraja. The nearby village of Tiruvaiyyaru was his karma bhoomi and he stood for all that is most sublime, sweet and exhilarating in classical music. It is therefore most appropriate that this cultural festival is being held in Thanjavur.

Fine arts festivals such as these, serve the all-important purpose of bringing the performers of Classical arts closer to the people. The festivals provide a platform for budding artists to exhibit their talent. It helps create awareness about varied expressions of the art form by different artistes.

This festival being jointly organised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, in collaboration with South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur will go on for 5 days and is

designed to showcase exemplary performances of Music, Dance, Drama, Puppetry, Folk and Tribal Arts.

The Sangeet Natak Akademi - India's national academy for music, dance and drama was set-up in 1952 with the objective of preserving and developing Indian's heritage of music, drama and dance by providing them with institutional support. The stature of the Akademi has grown substantially since then and today. The awards of the Sangeet Natak Akademi are considered to be the highest national recognition conferred on eminent artistes.

Zonal Cultural Centres were established with a view to bring the cultural diversity of country closer to the rural population by breaking barriers of distance and language.

The South Zone Cultural Centre has been promoting, propagating and preserving our cultural wealth by organising programmes on the various art forms, arranging training programmes and workshops etc and also by documenting the rare works of art. Their mission has been to promote National Integration through culture and to raise the level of awareness about our Cultural Heritage among the common people of our country.

A strong and vibrant culture nurtures diversity and togetherness. The world over, dance and music are expected to calm the mind and please the bodily senses. The Indian form of cultural expression goes one step further in that, it appeals to the soul. Hence our cultural performances become soul stirring in character when they are rendered with devotion and reverence to the art form.

There is a branch of medicine which attempts to heal diseases through music. In our ancient and classical form of music different ragas were meant to be sung at different times of the day considering the effect they had on our senses. Thus rag 'Bhoopal' is to be sung at the time of waking up in the morning and rag 'Neelambari' at the time of going to sleep late in the evening.

Apart from classical tradition, the state of Tamil Nadu is particularly, home to a rich repertoire of folk, tribal and devotional hymns. The tradition of Tamil music goes back to the ancient era of Tamil history. There are various references to this musical tradition found in the ancient Sangam books. The ancient grammatical work Tolkappiyam mentions the various musical expressions pertaining to the five landscapes of the Sangam literature.

In the post-Sangam period, Tamil music evolved to a different level of sophistication. The Cilappatikaram describes music based on logical, systematic and scientific calculations in the arrangement of the dancers on stage to represent the notes and tunes. The Cilappatikaram contains several chapters dedicated to music and dance, of which the most famous is the duet between Kovalan and Madavi.

The compositions of the Tamil Saivite saints such as Appar and the Vaishnavite saints such as Perialvar between the sixth and the tenth centuries CE were set to music and sung in temples. The musical poet Arunagirinathar further embellished the Tamil musical tradition through his compositions of Tamil hymns.

Their outpouring of music was inspired by devotion and divine grace and it is no wonder that even today when their songs are rendered on stage one is able to visualize the presence of the divine.

In this context let me quote to you, the words of Dr. Rukmani Devi Arundale, she said

“When you hear the sound of music or see the colours in a beautiful picture, you not only hear the music or see the picture; you see into the very soul of the artists and even more you see the soul of art itself”. This is the beauty of real art and artists.

It is important to establish cultural exchanges between people of different regions, as a means to further human bonding and a common approach to nation-building. Mutual understanding and trust are the foundations of India's strength and all citizens should feel culturally integrated in all corners of India.

The launch of “Ek Bharat Shreshta Bharat” by our Hon’ble Prime Minister, Thiru. Narendra Modi Ji to celebrate the Unity in Diversity of our Nation and to maintain and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of our country has been a great success. It has helped to foster the spirit of national integration through a deep and structured engagement among all Indian States.

I appeal to the artists, the people and institutions engaged in the promotion of fine arts to carry forward the rich legacy, culture and tradition of our nation which has been beautifully defined by Mark Twain as follows, “India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legends and the great grandmother of tradition”.

I congratulate the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the South Zone Cultural Centre for having taken special efforts for staging this festival. They deserve my appreciation and praise. I wish them all success in their endeavours.”

On this occasion, Thiru. R.Doraikkannu, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Thiru. R.Vaithilingam, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Thiru. Shekhar Sen, Chairman, Sankeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, Thiru. A. Annadurai, I.A.S., District Collector, Thanjavur, Prof. M. Balasubramoniam, Director, South Zone Cultural Centre, Padmashri Dr. Nalli Kuppusamy Chetty and other dignitaries participated.

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Raj Bhavan, Chennai -22

Sd/-

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Joint Director (PR)