

# **LANGUAGE IN INDIA**

**Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow**

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**Mu. KARUNANIDHI**

**A Great Tamil Scholar**

**M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.**

# MU. KARUNANIDHI

## A Great Tamil Scholar

M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.

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**M. Karunanidhi** is a great statesman of India. Millions cherish every bit of writing that Karunanidhi wrote: He is a great prose writer, essayist, playwright, scriptwriter, powerful orator, poet, administrator, and philosopher. Tamil, both written and spoken, both colloquial and classical, comes alive through his speech and writing.

An amazing artiste in so many ways, he has been the hope of millions of people who come from very ordinary and poor families, with hardly any tradition of literacy and formal education in their families. Karunanidhi is proof for our belief and desire that one could acquire great talents even if you have not had great formal education, and even if you are from a poor family. His knowledge and understanding of 2000 years of Tamil literature and history is something that every Indian languages scholar may seek to accomplish in his or her own language.

### Modern Tamil Renaissance

Modern Tamil Renaissance began with the assertion that Tamil has its own identity, that it is distinct from the Sanskrit tradition, that Tamil can survive and prosper on its own, and that it can generate and develop its diction and varied expressions through arts, etc. That such an assertion has been the anchor of Tamil literature for at least 2000 years is easily established through various documents including through the literary and grammatical works. However, this does not minimize the cross-fertilization that Tamil and Sanskrit enjoyed through mutual contacts.

## **Tamil Self-Identity**

Right from the early days, say, during the period of Tolkappiyam, the Tamil self-identity posture was closely associated with sociological underpinnings that focused on Tamil civilization in contrast to other civilizations.

While the best rendition of Rama's story is found in Tamil, through the great masterpiece of Kamban, the sociological, ethnic and anthropological underpinnings of the epic have been seriously questioned by the Dravidian Movement, of which Tamil Renaissance formed a cornerstone.

**Language in India** wishes Karunanidhi, a great Patriarch of Indian languages and Indian polity, many years of life ahead, and we pray that his contributions to Tamil and Indian civilization will continue to flow uninterrupted.

M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.

Editor, Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)