

Padma Shri Dr. Mathoor Krishnamurti



Padma Shri Dr. Mathoor Krishnamurti, a renowned Sanskrit scholar and director of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, was synonymous with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's cultural and spiritual activities. He was not only instrumental in setting up its London branch but also steered the institute for over two decades. From bus conductor to hotel worker, to a clerk in a mill, a Vedic and Sanskrit scholar, Mathoor ji saw life at various levels and surprised everyone with his multi-faceted talents.

Born in Mathoor village of Shimoga district on August 8, 1928, Krishnamurti did his elementary schooling there. He had to support his family and went to Shimoga seeking a job. After passing SSLC examination in 1947, he was unable to pursue college studies. An influential person recommended Krishnamurti to a city bus conductor's job with a monthly salary of about Rs 200 in Bangalore. He worked on the Basavanagudi-Shivajinagar route in the city. Within three months, Krishnamurti was promoted as a traffic inspector. However, under family pressure to give up the job, Krishnamurti worked at Raja Mills as a clerk.

After a brief stint with a Kannada daily newspaper and All India Radio, Bangalore, he took over as registrar of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Bangalore in 1969. Known for his organising skills, he was sent to London in 1972 where he worked tirelessly to promote Indian culture and spiritual values. By the time Mathoor left London in 1995, the centre had acquired a spacious building and was acknowledged as having done marvellous work. His talk on Indian festivals was featured on BBC as serial. In the process of building Bhavan in London he developed contacts with British Royal family and in the political circles.

Sr. Ramanuja, the then Executive Director of HMT Watches roped in Mathoor ji to do a series of pravachanas on Kumara Vyasa's Mahabharatha jointly Vidwan Sri Keshava Murthy across Karnataka, with which was very popular. The Pravachana's were continued to be aired on Udaya TV.



A legend in his times, Mathoor ji was known for his simplicity, soft spoken nature with utmost humility which made him very near to people. Through his deeprooted knowledge about Indian culture and ethos and through the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, he globalised the Upanishads and Indian culture by synthesising the popular and the classical.

A true Gandhian, he wrote series of articles which were later published as 'Gandhi Upanishad' and was also part of a state endeavour to popularise the works of Mahatma Gandhi.

Besides London Kerndra, his untiring efforts in building Bhavan across Karnataka especially in Mysore and Shivamogga will be standing monuments of his contribution to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Indian Culture.