

# Rukmini Devi Arundale

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Rukmini Devi Arundale(1904 – 1986)

*“I was very intuitive from an early age. I responded to people just as I responded to art – through an inner feeling which is difficult to explain. I just felt some things were right and some were not...”*

- Rukmini Devi was born on 29 February **1904 in Madurai of Tamilnadu.**
- She was the **first woman** in Indian history to be **nominated a member of the Rajya Sabha.**
- **Rukmini Devi Arundale was an Indian theosophist, dancer, and choreographer of the Indian classical dance form of Bharatnatyam, and an activist for Animal welfare.**
- The most important revivalist of **Bharatanatyam** from its original **‘sadhira’** style prevalent amongst the temple dancers, the **Devadasis**, she also worked for the re-establishment of traditional Indian arts and crafts.
- She was awarded the **Padma Bhushan** in 1956 and the **Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship** in 1967.
- In January 1936, she along with her husband **established Kalakshetra**, an academy of dance and music, built around the ancient Indian Gurukul system, **at Adyar, at Chennai.** Today the academy is a deemed university under the Kalakshetra Foundation.
- She also became very **close to Annie Besant and helped her with her work.**
- She went on to become the **President of the Theosophical Society after Dr. Besant’s passing** and Rukmini Devi herself was an active member of the Theosophical movement.
- She gave her **first performance** at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the Theosophical Society in 1935.
- Theosophists hailed her as the **World Mother**, to her

family in Kalakshetra she is Athai (paternal aunt).

- Keenly interested in **animal welfare**, she was associated with various humanitarian organisations, and as a member of the Rajya Sabha, was instrumental for the legislation for the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act** and for later setting up of the Animal Welfare Board of India, under her chairmanship in 1962.