

**Honorary Fellowship**  
**to H. E. Leopold Sedar Senghor**



**Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi**

## Citation

**T**HE Sahitya Akademi or the National Academy of Letters of India feels honoured in presenting its first Honorary Fellowship on the President of Senegal H. E. Dr. Leopold Sedar Senghor. He is an eminent poet and linguist, a distinguished nationalist and internationalist, a symbol of resurgent West Africa and a bridge of friendship between several continents and civilizations. A great friend of India, his belief in the principles of co-existence, socialism and everlasting peace is reflected in his literary works. His several collections of poetry and critical articles are published in French.

Born in Jaol, Senegal on October 9, 1906, his name Sedar is from the language of Serer tribe, which means "one who need never be ashamed before anything". Educated in Catholic Mission Schools in his native land and later in France, in 1935 he became the first African 'agregé', with grammar as his main subject. He was Professor of Latin and later French. In the second World War he was on the battle-front and sent to a German prisoners of war camp. In 1942 he was named Professor of African Languages and Civilization in the institution forming future colonial administrators of France. In 1945 he was elected deputy for Senegal to the French Constituent Assembly and was a prominent member of the drafting committee which wrote the New French Constitution in 1946. For ten years he was engaged in the movement of independence for his country, which was achieved by non-violent means, in 1960.

President Senghor is one of the leading literary figures of the African Continent. As a linguist he has been working to establish links between Dravidian, Sumerian, ancient Egyptian and some African languages like Wolof. He is the father of the concept of Negritude, which is a systematic analysis of the black African culture, civilization, attitudes, values and modes

of artistic expression. He is trying to integrate socialism into Negritude. He has keenly worked for the revival of Black Art and through his efforts the First World Festival of Negro Art was held in Dakar. He has advocated the spirit of tolerance and co-existence amongst various races and civilizations. Nineteen Universities have conferred honorary doctorates on him.

President Senghor is a great humanist and believes that the imbalance between poor and rich nations ought to be eradicated. As an educationist, linguist, thinker, statesman and politician President Senghor is world-renowned, yet primarily he is a poet and eminent man of letters.

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