Mahadevi Varma

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| **Mahadevi Verma महादेवी वर्मा** | |
| [Mahadevi Verma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mahadeviverma.png) | |
| **Born** | 26 March 1907 [Farrukhabad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farrukhabad), [Farrukhabad District](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farrukhabad_District), [Uttar Pradesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uttar_Pradesh), [British India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_India) |
| **Died** | 11 September 1987 (aged 80) [Allahabad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad), [Uttar Pradesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uttar_Pradesh), [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) |
| **Occupation** | [Writer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Writer), [Poet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poet), [Freedom Fighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Fighter), Woman's [Activist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Activist), [Educationist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Educationist) |
| **Nationality** | Indian |
| **Ethnicity** | Orthodox Hindu |
| **Citizenship** | Indian |
| **Education** | High School |
| **Alma mater** | Crosthwaite Girls School,[Allahabad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad), [Uttar Pradesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uttar_Pradesh) |
| **Period** | [Chhayavaad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chhayavaad) |
| **Genres** | Poetry, literature |
| **Notable award(s)** | 1979: [Sahitya Akademi Fellowship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahitya_Akademi_Fellowship) 1982: [Jnanpith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jnanpith) Award 1956: [Padma Bhushan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Bhushan) 1988: [Padma Vibhushan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Vibhushan) |

**Mahadevi Varma** ([Hindi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindi_language): महादेवी वर्मा, 26 March 1907 – September 11, 1987) best known as an outstanding [Hindi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindi) poet, was a freedom fighter, woman's activist and educationist from [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India). She is widely regarded as the "modern [Meera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirabai)"[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]. She was a major poet of the [Chhayavaad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chhayavaad) generation, a period of romanticism in Modern [Hindi poetry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_poetry) ranging from 1914-1938. With passage of time, her limited but outstanding prose has been recognised as unique in Hindi Literature. She was a prominent poet in Hindi [Kavi sammelans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kavi_sammelan) (Gatherings of poets).

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She was the Principal, and then the Vice Chancellor of Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth, a woman's residential college in Allahabad. She was awarded India's highest literary award, for lifetime achievement, the [Sahitya Akademi Fellowship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahitya_Akademi_Fellowship) in 1979, followed by the [Jnanpith Award](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jnanpith_Award) in 1982.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahadevi_Varma#cite_note-0) She was the recipient of the [Padma Vibhushan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Vibhushan), India's second-highest civilian award, in 1988.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahadevi_Varma#cite_note-1)

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mahadevi_Varma&action=edit&section=1)]Life

Mahadevi was born in [Farrukhabad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farrukhabad), [United Provinces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Provinces_of_Agra_and_Oudh) in a family of lawyers. She was educated at Jabalpur- Madhya Pradesh. She was the eldest child of Govindprasad and Hemrani and had two brothers and a sister, Shyama. She was married in 1914 with Dr Swarup Narain Varma in Indore at a tender age of 7. She stayed with her parents while her husband studied in Lucknow to complete his education, during which time, she received her higher education at the [Allahabad University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad_University) and passed her B.A. examination in 1929 and completed her Master's degree-M.A. in Sanskrit in 1933. She later joined her husband in the princely state of Tamkoi around 1920 and later moved to Allahabad to pursue her interest in poetry with agreement from her husband, as she refused to accept her marriage with him in childhood. Mahadevi Varma and her husband mostly lived separately pursuing their respective interests and used to meet occasionally.

After the death of her husband in 1966, she moved permanently to [Allahabad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad) and lived there until her death. Mahadevi Varma was deeply affected by [Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism) and also contributed to the [Indian freedom movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence_movement). She even tried to become a [Buddhist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist)[bhikshuni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhikshu).

Mahadevi was appointed as the first headmistress of *Allahabad (Prayag) Mahila Vidyapeeth*, which was started with a view to imparting cultural and literary education to girls through Hindi medium. Later, she became the chancellor of the institute.

She died on September 11, 1987 at 9:27 pm. Her bunglow still stands at Ashok Nagar colony in Allahabad. It is under possession of descendants of her deceased secretary, Pt. Ganga Prasad Pandey. On her birth centenary year (2007), they have recreated a room dedicated to her memory.

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mahadevi_Varma&action=edit&section=2)]Early Life

In her childhood biography *Mere Bachpan Ke Din***(My Childhood Days)**, Mahadevi Verma has written that at a time when a girl child was considered a burden upon the family, she was very fortunate to be born into a liberal family. Her grandfather had the ambition of making her a scholar; her mother was fluent in [Sanskrit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskrit) and [Hindi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindi), and very religious. Mahadevi credits her mother for inspiring her to write poems, and to take an interest in literature.

Mahadevi was originally admitted to a [Convent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convent) school, but upon protests and an unwilling attitude, she took admission in Crosthwaite Girls College in Allahabad. According to Mahadevi, she learnt the strength of unity in the hostel at Crosthwaite, where students of different religions lived together and the mess was also according to the religious requirement. Mahadevi started to write poems secretly; but upon discovery of her hidden stash of poems by her room-mate and senior [Subhadra Kumari Chauhan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subhadra_Kumari_Chauhan) (known in the school for writing poems), her hidden talent was exposed. Mahadevi and Subhrada now started to write poems together in their free time.

While others used to play outside, me and Subhrada used to sit on a tree, and let our creative thoughts flow together...She used to write in [Khariboli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khariboli), and soon I also started to write in Khariboli...this way, we used to write one or two poems a day...

— *Mahadevi Varma, Mere Bachpan Ke Din*

She and Subhrada also used to send poems to publications such as weekly [magazines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magazines), and managed to get some of their poems published. Both poets also attended [poetry seminars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kavi_sammelan), where they met eminent Hindi poets, and read out their poems to the audience. This partnership continued till Subhrada graduated from Crosthwaite.

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mahadevi_Varma&action=edit&section=3)]Works

Mahadevi is considered to be one of the four major poets of the [*Chhayavaadi*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chhayavaad) school of the Hindi literature, others being [Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala'](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suryakant_Tripathi_%27Nirala%27), [Jaishankar Prasad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaishankar_Prasad) and [Sumitranandan Pant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumitranandan_Pant). She was also a noted painter. She drew a number of illustrations for her poetic works like Hindi and [Yama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yama).Her other works include short stories such as Gillu (गिल्लू) which talks about her experience with a squirrel. Mahadevi Varma is also known for her childhood memoir, *Mere Bachpan Ke Din*, which was inducted into the syllabus of India's[Central Board of Secondary Education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Board_of_Secondary_Education) for the 9th grade.

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mahadevi_Varma&action=edit&section=4)]**Poetry**

Her poems have been published under a number of other titles as well, but they contain the poems from these collections only. They include:

* Neehar (1930)
* Rashmi (1932)
* Neeraja (1934)
* Sandhyageet ()
* Deepshikha (1939)
* *Agnirekha* (1990, published after her death)

Compilations from these collections have been published under various titles. Some of them include: (a) Yama (Neehar+ Rashmi+neeraja+saandhyageet) (b) Sandhini (c) Neelaambara (d) Aatmika (e) Deepgeet The additional feature in these collections is a new "Bhoomikas" or introdictory note written in the inimitable style of Mahadevi.

[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mahadevi_Varma&action=edit&section=5)]Awards and honours

Mahadevi Varma's creative talents and sharp intellect soon earned her a prominent place in the Hindi Literary world. She is considered among the four pillars of the Chaayavad movement. In 1934, she received *Sekseriya Puraskar* from the *Hindi Sahitya Sammelan* for her work, *Niraja*. Her poetry collection (*Yama*, यामा-1936) received the [Jnanpith Award](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jnanpith_Award), one of the highest Indian literary awards.

* She also Honored with “Proud Past Alumni" in the list of 42 members, from "Allahabad University Alumni Association", NCR, Ghaziabad (Greater Noida) Chapter 2007-2008 registered under society act 1860 with registration no. 407/2000[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahadevi_Varma#cite_note-2).

In 1956, the Government of India bestowed her with [Padma Bhushan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Bhushan), India's third-highest civilian award. She was the first woman to be awarded the [Sahitya Akademi Fellowship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahitya_Akademi_Fellowship), in 1979.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahadevi_Varma#cite_note-3) In 1988, Indian Government bestowed her with [Padma Vibhushan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Vibhushan), the second-highest civilian award.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahadevi_Varma#cite_note-4)