

“History of Local Heroes in Nagapattinam District – with a Special reference to their role in the Indian National Army”

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Abstract— The 19th and 20th Centuries are the Centuries of Nationalism, which witnesses tremendous Socio-Economic and Political changes throughout the world. The several factors and forces such as geographical features, cultural traditions, and historical developments, the impact of the British rule and western influences, the Socio-religious reform movements were responsible for the rise of Indian Nationalism. On the eve of the First world war, Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945) started his political career. Till the end of the Second worldwar, he actively participated in the freedom struggle and led the Indian National Army (INA). The district of Nagapattinam lies on the shores of the Bay of Bengal. Tranquebar and Porayar are the two important historical places in this district. Tranquebar and Porayare are the twin villages. Freedom fighters of these two important historical places played a vital role in the Freedom Movement of India. The total number of freedom fighters in Tamil Nadu is 16,269. Out of which, 4,263 belong to INA. Among this 4,263 INA freedom fighters, 25 are in Tranquebar and Porayar area. Their service and the history must be brought to the future generation.

Keywords—Local Heros;Indian Army;Nagapattinam

1. NATIONALISM IN INDIA

The 19th and 20th Centuries are the Centuries of Nationalism, which witnesses tremendous Socio-Economic and Political changes throughout the world. The several factors and forces such as geographical features, cultural traditions, and historical developments, the impact of the British rule and western influences, the Socio-religious reform movements were responsible for the rise of Indian Nationalism.

In the 19th Century, nationalism manifested itself through Political and Socio-religious organizations like Bramah Samaj (1828), Prarthana Samaj (1867), Arya Samaj (1875) and Indian National Congress (1885). Indian Freedom Movement is considered as the landmark in the history of India. Freedom Fighters of India, such as Moderates and Extremists were fighting against the British Administration for the right cause and forced the British Government to give freedom to the Indians. The freedom fighters really carried the nation forward towards the constitutional goal of complete independence.

2. FREEDOM MOMENT IN INDIA

The First world war (1914-1918) and the Second world war (1930-1945) had their impacts on the freedom struggle of India. On the eve of the First world war, Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945) started his political career. Till the end of the Second world war, he actively participated in the freedom struggle and led the Indian National Army which was organized by Rash Behari Bose on September 1, 1942. Subhas Chandra Bose was a militant Nationalist and an extremist par excellence.

3. ROLE OF TAMILIANS IN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

The growing desire for independence began to gradually gather pace in the country and its influence in Tamil Nadu generated a number of volunteers to the fight against the British colonial power in the struggle for Independence. Notable amongst these are Tiruppur Kumaran, who was born in 1904 in a small village near Erode. Kumaran lost his life during a protest march against the British. The location of the French colony of Pondicherry offered a place of refuge for the fugitives freedom fighters trying to flee the British Police. Aurobindo was one such living in Pondicherry in 1910. The poet Subramanya Bharathi was a contemporary of Aurobindo. Bharathi wrote numerous poems in Tamil extolling the revolutionary cause. He also published the journal India from Pondicherry. Both Aurobindo and Bharathi were associated with other Tamil revolutionaries such as V.V.S. Aiyar and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai. Tamils formed a significant percentage of the members of the Indian National Army, founded by Subash Chandra Bose to fight the British occupation in India Lakshmi Sehgal from Tamil Nadu was a prominent leader in the INA's Rani of Jhansi Regiment.

In 1916 Dr. T.M. Nair, Rao Bahadur and Thygaraya Chetty released the Non-Brahmin Manifesto sowing the seeds for the Dravidian movements. During the 1920s, two movements focused mainly on regional politics began in Tamil Nadu.

One was the Justice Party, which won the local legislative elections held in 1921. The Justice Party was not focused on the Indian independence movement, rather on the local issues such as affirmative action for socially backward groups. The other main movement was the anti-religious, anti-Brahmin reformist movement led by E.V. Ramasami Naicker. Further steps towards eventual self-rule were taken in 1935 when the British Government passed the All-India Federation Act of 1935. Fresh local elections were held and in Tamil Nadu the Congress party captured power defeating the Justice party. In 1938, Ramasami Naicker with C. N. Annadurai launched an agitation against the Congress ministry's decision to introduce the teaching of Hindi in schools.

4. NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT

The district of Nagapattinam lies on the shores of the Bay of Bengal. Nagapattinam is derived from Nagar referring to people from Sri Lanka who settled here and pattinam referring to town. The district of Nagapattinam lies on the shores of the Bay of Bengal between latitude 10.7906°N and Longitude 79.8428°E an area of 2,715 square kilometers (1,048 sq mi). The District capital, Nagapattinam lies on the eastern coast, 350 kilometers down south of the State capital Chennai and of Tiruchirappalli. It has an average elevation of 9 metres (30 ft) above the mean sea level. The district has a coastline of 187 kilometers. There are urn burials in and around the city from the Sangam period indicating some level of human habitation. The neighboring port, Kaveripoompattinam (modern day Poompuhar), was the capital of the Chola kingdom of the Sangam Age, referred widely in Tamil scriptures like Paṭṭiṇappālai. The early works of Tevaram by the 7th Century poets Appar and Sambandar mention the town had fortified walls, busy roads buildings and a busy port. The inscriptions from the Kayarohanswami temple indicate the construction was initiated during the reign of the Pallava king, Narasimha Pallava II (691 – 729 CE). A Buddhist pagoda was built under Chinese influence by the Pallava king and town was frequented by Buddhist travelers. Thirumangai Azhwar, the 9th century vaishnavite saint poet is believed to have stolen the golden Buddha statue to fund the Ranganthaswamy Temple at Srirangam; the authenticity of the theory is questionable. In the 11th century CE, Chudamani Vihara, a Buddhist monastery was built by Javanese king Sri Vijaya Soolamanivarman with the patronage of Raja Raja Chola. Nagapattinam was the prominent port of Cholas for trade and conquering gateway to the east.

In the early 16th Century the Portuguese started commercial contacts with the town and established a commercial centre in 1554 CE. The Portuguese also conducted missionary enterprise in the town. In 1658, the Dutch established an agreement between King Vijaya Nayakkar of Thanjavur on 5 January 1662. Ten villages were transferred from the Portuguese to the Dutch – Nagapattinam Port, Puthur, Muttam, Poruvalancheri, Anthanappettai, Karureppankadu, AzhingiMangalam, Sangamangalam, Thiruthinamangalam, Manjakollai, Nariyankudi. Ten Christian churches and a hospital were built by the Dutch. They also released coins with the name Nagapattinam engraved in Tamil letters. As per agreement between the first Maratta King Egoji of Thanjavur and the Dutch, Nagapattinam and surrounding villages were handed over to the Dutch on 30 December 1676. In 1690, the capital Dutch Coromandel changed from Pulicat to Nagapattinam.

This town fell into the hands of the British in 1781 after the two naval battles between British and French fleets were fought off the coast of Negapatam, as it was then known: the first in 1758 as part of the Seven Years War and the second in 1782 as part of the American Revolutionary War. The town was taken by the British from the Dutch in 1781 (who had been formally brought into the war in 1780). When the Dutch and British reached a peace agreement in 1784, Nagapattinam was formally ceded to the British. 277 villages with Nagore as the headquarters were handed over to the East India Company.

From 1799 to 1845 CE Nagapattinam was the headquarters of Tanjore district. Nagapattinam and Nagore were incorporated as a single municipality in 1866 CE. The town remained one of the chief ports to the Madras Presidency. The port suffered decline after the inclusion of Tranquebar and Tuticorin. Nagapattinam was one of the regions severely affected by the tsunami which followed the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake.

5. TRANQUEBAR AND PORAYAR

Tranquebar and Porayar, the places of the Historical Importance, are being developed in a gradual manner from time to time. During the time of British invasion, the Danish Government appointed about 30 governors to look after their settlements from 1629 to 1845 A.D. The Danish people were not interested in empire building like the British in Madras and the French in Pondicherry. In 1845 they sold it to the British for 12.5 lakhs of rupees. From 1847 A.D., to 1860 A.D., it was the head-quarters of the Tanjore District. The District Courts were functioning up to 1880 in Tranquebar. The Tranquebar village is a well planned one. It has parallel roads. The streets are bearing the old names like King street, Queen street and Admiral street. Tranquebar was enclosed by fortifications on all sides. The people called this place the Queen of Coromandel Coast.

6. INA FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN TRANQUEBAR AND PORAYAR

The total number of freedom fighters in Tamil Nadu is 16,269. Out of which, 4,263 belong to INA. Among this 4,263 INA freedom fighters, 25 are in Tranquebar and Porayar area. Tranquebar and Porayar are the two important historical places in this district. Tranquebar and Porayar are the twin villages. Freedom fighters of these two important historical places played a vital role in the Freedom Movement of India.

They are :

Kumarandi Arjunan Nadar, Duraisamy Aburvasamy, Nataraja Padayachi Thangavelu, Raghavanathar Naid Raghavan, Saravana Padayachi Subbiah, Nataraja Periyasamy Padayachi, Arunachalam Kandasamy Padayachi, Sinnadurai Uthirapathy Padayachi, Subramanian Govindaraj Padayachi, Gopalsamy Govindaraj, Duraisamy Arumugam, Kandasamy Govindaraju, Pavadai Padayachi Muthukumarasamy, Ponnusamy Muthuvelu, Chellappan Nagappan, Muthusamy Narayanasamy, Natesa Muthaliar Panchavarnam, Subbiah Rajendran, Krishna Mudaliar Raju, Natesan Ramanujam, Subramaniya Mudaliar Ramalingam, Rathinasamy, Kandasamy Padayachi Swaminathan, T.M. Natarajan, Nagalinga Mudaliar Sivaperumal Mudaliar.

7. TRANQUEBAR AND PORAYAR

All the INA Members are considered as Militant Nationalist and Extremists. They followed revolutionary methods to get independence. They all should be honoured in a befitting manner. Their life history and the services rendered to the society must be brought out to the light.

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