



## **Government of Tamilnadu**

### **Department of Employment and Training**

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## Freedom Fighters in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu played a remarkable part in the struggle for freedom in India. The great leaders like Puli thevar, Kattabomman, Maruthu brothers, Velu Thambi played major role in the revolt. They were all noted for their patriotism, courage, self respect and sacrifice. During the British rule, the great leaders, poets and the social reformers like G.Subramania Iyer, V.O.chidambaram Pillai, Subramanya Baharathi, C.Rajagopalachari, Periyar E.V.Ramasamy, Thiruppur Kumaran, K.Kamaraj and many others had contributed a lot towards the success of our freedom struggle.

### **V.O.Chidambaram Pillai**

V. O. Chidambaram Pillai is remembered by the Tamils as SekkiluttaSemmal, Kappalotiya Tamizhan. He was born in Ottapidaram on September 5, 1872. He started his career as a lawyer at Tirunelveli.



He encouraged the formation of Trade Guilds and Worker's Association. He was the founder of the Swadesi Dharma Sanga Weaving Association and Swadesi Co-operative Stores at Tuticorin and Colombo. The Partition of Bengal in 1905 had drawn him into politics.

He organized Coral mill Strike in the town near the sea shore that resulted in the increase of workers' wages and reduction of working hours. In 1907, he attended the Congress sessions held at Surat; where the Congress split into Moderates and Extremists. He followed the militant leader Bala Gangadhar Tilak and preached his philosophy. Charged with sedition, he was sentenced to forty years of imprisonment. His right leg was chained and he was used as a bullock in pulling the oil press (chekku).

### **Subramaniya Siva**

Subramaniya Siva was born in Vathalagdundu in Dindugal district. He was a freedom fighter and a creative writer. He was arrested many times between 1908 and 1922 for his anti-imperialist activities. While serving his last prison term, he was affected by leprosy and was ordered to be shifted to Salem jail. When Siva was unable to walk due to the severity of disease, the British Government enacted a law for Siva, stating that leprosy patient should not travel by rail. As a result of this, Subramaniya Siva travelled the whole length of Madras province on foot though his



whole body was covered with sores. Then he eventually died of the disease on 23rd July 1925.

### **Subramanya Bharathiyar**



Subramanya Bharathi was born on Dec. 11, 1882 at Ettayapuram in Tirunelveli District. He worked as Tamil Teacher in 1904 at Madurai. He also served as Assistant Editor of Swadeshimithran

in 1904. In 1907, he became the editor of the Tamil weekly 'India'. At the same time he also edited the English newspaper 'Bala Bharatham'.

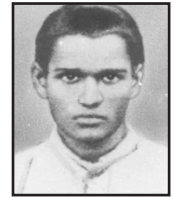
In Madras, in 1908, he organized a huge public meeting to celebrate 'Swaraj Day'. His poems 'Vande Matharam', 'Achamillai, Achamillai', 'Enthaiyum, Thayum' Jaya Bharatham were printed and distributed free to Tamil people.

In 1908, he gave evidence in the case which had been instituted by the British against 'Kappalotiya Thamizhan', V.O. Chidambaram Pillai. Hence, British ordered to arrest Bharathi. Faced with the prospect of arrest, Bharathi escaped to Pondicherry which was under the French rule. From there he edited and published the dailies weekly and monthly. But the British banned them in India in 1909.

After the World War I, Bharathi entered British India near Cuddalore in November 1918. He was arrested and released after the three weeks in custody. Today, more than 90 years later Subramanya Bharathi stands an undying symbol not only of a vibrant Tamil nationalism but also of the unity that is India.

### **Vanchinathan**

Vanchinathan was under the service of the State of Travancore. The activities of the extremists greatly alarmed the British. The collector, Ashe, shot down and killed four persons in Thirunelveli. So Vanchinathan wanted to take revenge against the Collector. He secretly went to Maniyachi Railway Station and shot dead Ashe on 17th June 1911, and he himself committed suicide. A letter was found in his pocket describing that the act of murder of collector Ashe was the first rehearsal to assassinate King George V who was expected to Madras.



### **Thiruppur Kumaran**



Thiruppur Kumaran was born on 1904, in Chennaimalai, Erode District in Tamilnadu. He was a great holding the flag of the Indian Nationalists. Kumaran is revered as a martyr in Tamil Nadu, as is known by

the epithet Kodi Kaththa Kumaran. The government has erected his statue in a park near the railway station in Thiruppur.

### **S.Satyamurti**



Satyamurti was a politician and patriot. He was the political mentor of K.Kamaraj. Rajagopalachari nominated Satyamurti to succeed him as the President of the Indian

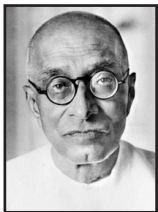
National Congress in Tamil Nadu in 1930. He served as Mayor of Madras in 1939, leading a campaign to restore public education, improved water supply and improve the life of the citizens.

S.Satyamurti was born in Tirumayyam, Madras presidency on August 19, 1887. He started practising as an advocate prior to his initiation in the National Movement. He plunged into politics at an early age and eventually emerging as one of the foremost protest the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and the Rowlatt Act.

When Satyamurti became the Mayor of Madras in 1939, the city was in the grip of an acute water scarcity and it was left to him to impress upon the British Governor for building Reservoir in poondi about 50 kms west of the city to augment the water supply position. The reservoir was commissioned by Kamaraj and named it as Satayamurti Sahar. To honour this great man, the Headquarters of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee was named after him as, Satyamurti Bhavan.

He participated in the Swadeshi Movement and Quit India Movement and imprisoned for several times. He was a highly regarded politician of rare abilities, who had dedicated his life to bring freedom and justice to the people. He passed away on 28th March 1943.

### C.Rajagopalachari



National Congress and participated in the Calcutta session in 1906. He became the staunch follower of Gandhiji. He participated in the Surat session in 1907. In 1930, he broke the salt laws at Vedaranyam.

He started his March to Vedaranyam from Thiruchirapalli with hundreds of volunteers to break salt laws. He won the 1937 provincial elections and became the Chief Minister of Madras Presidency. During his administration

he introduced Prohibition, passed several laws to uplift Adi Dravidar and other depressed classes. He also made Hindi as compulsory subject but it was opposed by Periyar EVR. He resigned his Chief Ministership in 1939 in protest against the use of Indian men and materials in the Second World war by the British Government without their consent.

He became the first Indian Governor General of free India. In 1952 he formed the ministry in Tamilnadu. During that time ministry he introduced 'Kula Kalvi Thittam'. But it was opposed by Kamaraj and Periyar EVR and at last Rajaji resigned from Chief Ministership in 1954. Later he resigned from Congress and founded Swatantra party in 1959. Rajaji wrote many books. He wrote Sakkravarthi Thirumagal, Vyassar Virundu and commentaries on Gita and Upanisad. In 1955, he was awarded 'Bharat Ratna'. He died on Dec 25, 1972. He was often referred as 'Chanakya' for his diplomatic skills.

### K.Kamaraj

Kamaraj was born on July 15th 1903 at Virudupatti now known as taking part in Vaikam Sathyagraha in 1924. He enrolled himself as a full time worker of the Congress party in 1929.



When Gandhiji announced Salt Sathyagraha he participated in the Vedaranyam march along with C.Rajagopalachari in 1930. He was arrested and imprisoned for two years in Alipore jail. As a result of Gandhi Irwin Pact of 1931 he was released.

In 1940, he went to Wardha to meet Gandhiji to get approval for the list of Sathyagrahis.

But he was arrested and sent to Vellore jail. Because of his active participation in Quit India Movement in 1942 he was arrested and sentenced to three years in the Amaravathi prison. He hoisted the Indian National flag in Satyamurti's house in 1947.

He served as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for nine years and introduced various welfare measures like opening of new schools, free education, mid-day meals scheme, construction of dams and canals etc.. He was widely acknowledged as 'King Maker', as he made Lal Bahadur Sastri as the Prime minister of India in 1964 and Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1966 after the death of Sastri. He died on October 2nd 1975. Kamaraj was famous for his policy known as 'K' Plan. He was affectionately called by the people as 'Perum Thalaivar' means 'Great Leader'.

Thus Tamil Nadu played a vital role in the freedom struggle of our Country.

### **C.N.Annadurai**

C.N.Annadurai, who was affectionately called as 'Peraringnar Anna' by the people of Tamil Nadu was born on 15th September. 1909 at Kancheepuram. He had his M.A., in the Pachaiyappa's College, Madras. He was the founder of the "Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam".

Anna's inception into politics was through the Justice Party. The desire to work for social cause made him to join the Justice Party. Anna chose the Justice Party to work for the establishment of a casteless and classless society.

Anna was a good orator. He was recognised

as one of the foremost speakers of those days. When Anna joined the Justice Party he had the privilege of working under the leadership of Periyar E.V.Ramasamy. The party provided the right platform for him and so he joined the self respect movement which was started for the elimination of social inequalities.

In the Anti-Hindi conference organized by Periyar at Kanjeevaram Anna quoted that Hindi could never take the place of Tamil and make any road in well settled Tamil culture.

In the Salem Conference of 1944, Anna brought a resolution for changing the name of Justice Party as Dravidar Kazhagam and became very close to Periyar. The marriage of Periyar with Maniammai in 1947 gave severe blow to the party men. A new party called Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam was formed on 17th September 1949 Anna and principles of the Party. He became the General Secretary of the Party.

In the election of 1967, his Party got victory and Anna became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1967. He introduced the scheme of 1 kg rice for Re.1. Due to financial strain he was not able to promulgate this system all over Tamil Nadu. He also introduced Tamil Language Development Scheme.

In 1967, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu announced, the first day of Chittirai as Tamil New Year day. Government under the leadership of Anna changed the official name of the state from 'Madras' to 'Tamizhaga Arasu' or 'Tamizhagam'. On 16th April in the Seretariat in Fort St. George, the Chief Minister Anna ceremoniously switched on neon light in the form of State Emblem-a Temple Gopuram, above the words 'Tamizhaga Arasu Talaimai





Cheyalagam'. At the same day he announced that the national motto 'satyameva Jayate' would hence for the appear as 'Vaimaye Vellum' and that Sanskrit forms of address Sri/Srimathi/Kumari would replace the Tamil forms of Thiru/Thirumathi/Selvi.

He was conferred Doctorate by Annamalai University in 1968. He passed away on 3rd February 1969.

### **Contribution of women Leaders for Social reformation**

Reformation refers to eradication of some social practices which are deep rooted in the society for to achieve the above not only men but also women have contributed a lot. Among the women reformers some of them are worth mentioning.

#### **Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy**



Tamil Nadu was the forerunner in the transformation of society. In the great cultured heritage of Tamil Nadu there are some black spots often formed and removed. One such a black spot was 'Devadasi' system. One of the important leaders who fought vigorously against this system was Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy.

Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy was born on 30th July, 1886 in Pudukottai. She was the first woman in India to get a degree in medicine. In 1923 her sister died of cancer. On that day she took a vow to eradicate cancer. So she started Cancer Relief Hospital in 1949. The Cancer Institute at Adyar was started due to her good efforts.

She was not only interested in medicine also in politics and social reforms. She dedicated herself to the cause for removing the cruel practice Devadasi system from Tamil Nadu.

She was personally praised by Gandhiji for her active propaganda against Devadasi system.

Appreciating her role in the agitation against Devadasi system she was nominated to the Tamil Nadu Legislative Council in 1929. She was Vehemently supported in her efforts by Thiru.V.Kalyana Sundaranar and Periyar. As a result the Justice party Government enacted a law abolishing Devadasi System.

In 1930, she organized All india Women conference at Pune. She was the President of Indian Women Association from 1933 to 1947. She also started Avvai Illam and orphanage the Santhome in Madras. (Now at Adyar). Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy, through her dedicated and entering work proved the world, hardwork never fails. She passed away in 1968 at the age of 82.

#### **Dr.S.Dharmambal**



Many people became famous not because of wealth, power, education and status but because of their dedication. One such a reformer who proved that service to the people could be done through humanity and goodwill was Dr.S.Dharmambal.

She had the instriect of social service, she studied Siddha medicine and started a hospital in Chennai. Later she entered into the public service Dr.Dharmambal was born at great interest in implementing widow remarriage, intercaste marriage and women education.

She had also great interest in the development of Tamil literature and Tamil music. She participated in the Hindi agitation programme and went to jail many times. Till

1940 the Tamil teachers had no due recognition in the society. They were not paid equal salary like other teachers. So she started an agitation called 'Elavu varam'. As a result the Educational Minister Thiru. Avinasilingam Chettiar announced equal pay to Tamil teachers like other teachers.

To make the students improve their knowledge in Tamil and to score good marks in Tamil "Chennai Manavar Mandram" was established. She was the President of this association for more than 10 years.

Appreciating her service to Tamil language and literature she was conferred the title "Veera Tamilannai". She gave the title "Periyar" to E.V.Ramasamy Naicker and "Ealisai Mannar" to M.K.Thiyagaraja Bagavathar.

The great woman who sacrificed and dedicated her whole life for the Tamil people, Tamil language and Tamil literature was died in 1959 at the age of 69.

### **Moovalur Ramamirdham**

Most of the women revolutionaries of the early twentieth century dedicated themselves to the cause of freedom of our nation. Only a few revolutionaries alone fought for the causes of both freedom and social Moovalur, a village near Mayiladudurai. Hence she was commonly known as Moovalur Ramamirdham Ammaiyar.

She belonged to Isai vellalar caste. In olden days girls belonging to this particular caste were sacrificed to temples to do service to God. Later they were ill-treated and humiliated by the landlords and zamindars in the name of

caste.

On seeing this atrocities and cruelties, Moovalur Ramamirdham decided to fight for their emancipation.

She travelled all over the country and spoke about the miseries of her own girls and won the support of many leaders.

She joined the Indian National Party and organized the conference of Isai Vellalar at Mayiladudurai in 1925. This conference was attended by many great leaders like Thiru. Vi.Ka.Periyar. S.Ramanathan and Mayuramani Chinnaiah Pillai who raised slogans against the cruel practice of Devadhasis. As a result the Government passed "Dr.Muthulakshmi Devadasi Abolition Act".

Along with the social work she actively involved in the National Movement. She inspired women to take part in the National movement on a large scale. With the continuous moral support by Rajaji, Periyar and Thiru. Vi.Ka, she brought awareness against Devadasi system and national awakening among the people of Tamilnadu especially on women.

In her memory, the Government of Tamil Nadu has instituted the "Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammal Ninaivu Marriage Assistance scheme"

After seeing her dream become true. She passed away on 27th June 1962.

The tradition bound Tamil society was still clinging to the old values. The widows were still forbidden from participating in auspicious and social functions, Inspite of the fact that the Widow Remarriage Act was passed in 1856. The forward and progressive social policies adopted by the justice Party and the Self Respect Movement in the 20th century





supported by legislative measures, led to the acceptance of the widow remarriage concept in Tamil Nadu. The abolition of sati and the acceptance of an widow remarriage and the steps to prevent child marriages were note worthy landmarks in the history of Tamilnadu.

Caste inequality was another significant shot coming of the Tamil Society. Temple Entry Movement could be cited as a suitable

illustration.

Temples were once the monopoly of the upper caste where as the low caste people were denied the right to enter the temple. Many social reformers like E.V.Ramasamy, Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy, Vallalar, Bharathi, Bharathidasan, Moovalur Ramamirthammal, Dr.S.Dharmambal fought for the eradication of these social evils. Thus women also contributed a lot for the social transformation in Tamil Nadu.

