

TAMIL JOURNALS AND THE CIVILDISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The fury of the People against the British rulers reached its peak by the Non-Cooperation Movement. The People learnt how to face the Police and Military atrocities boldly. Courting arrest for the national cause became an act of Patriotism. The Country Was Once again prepared for Civil Disobedience and great enthusiasm was exhibited admirably when the movement actually started in 1930.

Key words: Tamil journals Swedesamitran, Navasakthi, Kudiarasu, Sundantira Sangu.

INTRODUCTION

The Contribution of Tamil Journals during the Civil Disobedience Movement is the main theme of this chapter. The Major role of Tamil Journals in the Progress of the Civil Disobedience Movement is discussed here. Many Journals appeared during this period and they played a vital role in the Freedom Movement. The Journals referred to the Civil Disobedience Movement as a National war against the British and played a vital role in mobilizing public opinion.ⁱ

The Struggle to win Indian Freedom Continued inspite of the British checks and atrocities. With much disappointment the Indian National Congress met at Lahore on December 29, 1929, and took important decision of for reaching Consequences. A resolution was passed for interpreting the word Swaraj to mean Independence. The Lahore Session authorised Gandhiji To Launch The Civil Disobedience Movement.ⁱⁱ

Gandhi Started the Civil Disobedience Movement on 1930. The Programme of Civil Disobedience Movement included (i) The Violation of Salt-Law, (ii) Boycott of the Educational Institution by the students and offices by the Government Employees, (iii) Picketing of shops dealing with liquor, opium and foreign goods and (iv) Bonfire of foreign cloth and Non-Payment of taxes.ⁱⁱⁱ

On April 5, 1930 Gandhiji started his historic Dandi March to break the Salt-Tax law. The Violation of the Salt act was the first aim of Civil Disobedience as it would involve the entire Population of the Country.

C.Rajagopalachari started a plan for Salt Satyagraha in Tamilnadu on the Gandhian model and successfully organised it at Vedaranyam on April 13, 1930.

The Vedaranyam Salt March drew the attention of entire Tamilnadu. The enthusiasm shown by the people during the March to Vedaranyam and display of violence in madras marked the rising spirit of nationalism among the Tamils. On the same model the Swarajists led by T. Prakasam organised Salt Satyagraha on the beach in Madras simultaneously. During this Satyagraha violence has started because the police beaten the women volunteers. The Tamil Journals like Sudantira Sangu, Gandhi, Ooliyan and Navasakthi highlighted the atrocities of the Police beating women Satyagrahis in Madras.^{iv}

The Tamil Journals Played a very important part in this campaign of Salt Satyagraha. The enthusiasm of the public was kindled and maintained by the vigorous writings in these Journals. The Journals displayed in bold headlines. The arrests of the leaders and published pictures the huge protest processions organised. It also published the photos of the congress volunteers who were injured in the lathicharge made by the police.

After Salt Satyagraha, the Congress Party sought other avenues to continue the Civil Disobedience Movement in Tamil Nadu due to depression the Cotton Textile Industry in Tamil Nadu was affected. The Congress Party attributed the import of cloth as the reason of Unemployment and preached the boycott of foreign cloth. Accordingly it was decided to give encouragement to Khaddar manufacture and this attracted many handloom weavers to join in the

struggle. During the Satyagraha Movement the congress women volunteers started to picket foreign cloth shops in madras. The Congress Party next propagated or the boycott of liquor shops. The Congress Party under the leadership of C.Rajagopalachari carried on the agitation and sacked many liquor shops in Tamil Nadu.

The Swadesamitran criticised the salt tax and regarded as the most unjust and cruel of all the taxes imposed on the country, Swadesamitran took the initiative and never hesitated to criticise the policies of the Government.^v

In response to the congress call for the constructive work, a Tamil Fortnightly namely Kudinool was started at Arani in 1924. It was started by the Tamil Nadu Congress Khaddar board. The editor of Kudinool was K.Santhanam.

Kudiarasuwas Published in Erode on May 2, 1925 by E.V.Ramaswami Naicker, the most Controversial Personality in the recent history of Tamils. It was started as a weekly. E.V.Ramaswami Naicker dedicated his Kudiarasu for all round advancement of the Indian Society. Kudiarasudeclared that it would subordinate political wrangles to constructive national endeavour.^{vi}

The Andhra leader T.Prakasam begun Swarajya as a Tamil Daily in 1925. A Companion to the English daily Swarajya of C Rajapopalachari. K.Srinivasan was the editor of Swarajya. Due for financial difficulties this paper stopped its publication in the same year.^{vii}

Ananda Vikatan was the another Tamil Journal that supported the freedom struggle. In 1926 Ananda Vikatan was started as monthly. Kutta Parthasarathy Naidu and sons were the publishers and Pudhur Vaidhyanatha Iyer was the editor. Ananda Vikatan was originally known as Ananda Vijay Vikatan. In 1934. S.S.Vasan became the editor and the publisher of Ananda Vijay Vikatan. He changed the name of Ananda Vijay Vikatan into an Anda Vikatan and it became weekly from 1938. The Pioneer of periodical journalist in tamil was S.S.Vasan who brought in anew phase in Tamil Journalism. Kalki Krishnamurthi was the sub-editor of Anadavikatan.

Ananda Vikatan became famous during the freedom struggle for the cartoons of Mali. His cartoons were based on the political happenings. The Cartoons played a vital role to create an awareness among the people. Ananda Vikatan still exists even today with its editor Mr.S. Balasubramanian the son of S.S. Vasan.

S.N.Somayajulu an intimate friend of V.O.Chidambaramanar, Subramania Siva and V.V.Subramania Iyer and a Staunch freedomfighter started a monthly in 1928 called

Ilanthamizhan. It came out from Tuticorin. The main aim of this Journal was to inculcate in the youngsters the nationalistic feelings.

C. Rajagopalachari established the Journal Vimochanam on Aug 1929. It was the first Journal in India itself to support prohibition. In every issue C. Rajagopalachari emphasised the importance of the closing of Today and arrack shops in Tamil Nadu. The first issue was from the Gandhi Ashram - Tiruchengode. C. Rajagopalachari published cartoons in connection Prohibition. By these cartoons he hoped to support the poor people and at the same time to reduce the Income of the British Government from excise.

The Journal Vimochanam Published a leading cartoon with a title, Parthaya Thambi. It depicted that when the liquor bottle was shown in front of a horse, cow, dog and pig, They ignored it but whereas the same liquor bottle was purchased by a man.^{viii}

When Tamil Journals Played a vital role to create the awareness among the people about The Civil Disobedience campaign, the writings in it was certainly one of the major factor. Its appeal was expressed in seditious tone quite often.^{ix}

Sundantira Sangu was started as a bi-weekly on January 26, 1930. S. Ganesan and S. Subramanian were the editors of the Sundantira Sangu. The term Sundantira Sangu literally means voice of freedom. Sundantira Sangu became a tri-weekly, and later a daily. It shaped the public opinion in favour of Salt Satyagraha and shortly became a legend in the history of the press and the Nationalist Movement in the Madras Presidency. Sundantira Sangu was largely instrumental in spreading the picketing programmes to many parts of the country. Sundantira Sangu indulged in vigorous propaganda against the British and was popular among the congressmen in Tamil Nadu.

After the Lahore session of the Congress, Ganesan with the instruction from Rajagopalachari jointly worked to popularise the Congress Resolution on complete Independence and Civil Disobedience on January 26, 1930, Independence Day was celebrated throughout India, Rajaji appealed to all people to celebrate the day not only in every town and village but in every home.

In the first issue of the Sundantira Sangu on January 26, 1930 breathed Revolutionary fervour. The people could hear the beatings of the Kettledrum, The Clamour for liberty should reach the ears of English people beyond the seas and strike terror in their heart. Cut the chain of bondage. We will do away the foreign domination. We will dig a pit and bury the fruitless system of administration; We will tear up the deceptive snare of the strangers and fling it away.

We will Wipe the tears of the mothers. We will erect the temple of Swaraj or die after displaying Heroism.^x

On September 17, 1933 Manikodanother Journal started its publication in support of the freedom movement.^{xi} Manikodiwas jointly founded by K.Srinivasan and T.S.Chokalingam. Manikodidistinguished itself from the rest of the Tamil Journals by its refreshing originality in idea and literary style. Due to financial problems on January 1935 Manikodistopped its publications and could not continue to serve for the National Movement.

The Journal Navasaktiof Thiru. V.Kalyana Sundaranar lost its vigour due to lack of finance and ceased publication in 1934, Though it was revived again on May, 1936. It did not make much progress.

In the later half of 1930, The Civil Disobedience Movement received a setback by the oppressive stactics of the Government of India. For example the Press ordinance of May 1930 precipitated she crisis. Simultaneously, the Government of India went ahead with the Plans to convene the round table conference in London. The first round table conference held in 1930 without the representation of the congress party. The British wanted a Settlement with the congress party and singed a pact with Gandhiji on march 5. 1931 known as Gandhi - Irwin pact.^{xii}

The Journals of Tamil Nadu appreciated the signing of the Gandhi - Irwin Pact. According to the pact, Gandhiji agreed to participate in Second Round Table Conference on September 1931.^{xiii} The British Government in turn accepted to withdraw the ordinance against Civil Disobedience and release all political prisoners except the terrorist activities. Further the people were allowed to make salt for their domestic needs and permitted to picket liquor shops peacefully. Hence Gandhiji agreed to suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement. By this time, Lord Willington have succeeded Lord Irwin as viceroy.

While Gandhiji was in England to attend the Second Round Table Conference, terrorism started in Bengal. Many British officials were murdered. Hence the British Government was forced to pass many ordinances. One such was the Indian Press Act of 1931.^{xiv} The Swadesamitran accused the Anglo-Indians and European Association of Being Responsible for the Passing of the Bill. At London Gandhiji announced openly that congress party would not accept anything less than complete freedom. Gandhiji returned to Bombay on December 29, 1931 and wrote a letter to the viceroy protesting against the promulgation of the various ordinances.

The Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended in may 1933 and withdrawn fully in may 1934. Gandhiji asked his followers to stop the Civil Disobedience Movement in order to

have a fair trial to the newly announced political reforms in India as prescribed in the Government of India Act 1935.^{xv}

The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 which was an important phase of the freedom struggle awakened the whole nation and took the people towards the goal of complete independence. The Tamil Journals played a leading role during the Civil Disobedience Movement in Tamilnadu by which it gained popularity and it proved to be of great value in the middle of 1930.

Though the Civil Disobedience Movement was fully withdrawn in 1934 it had a great impact. The national spirit of the people reached its peak and led to the Quit India Movement.

ENDNOTES

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