



Government of Tamilnadu

Department of Employment and Training

Course : TNPSC Group I, II & IIA Prelims Exam
Subject : History, Culture, Heritage and Socio-Political Movements in Tamil Nadu
Topic : **Role of Tamil Nadu in freedom struggle**

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Role of Tamil Nadu in freedom struggle

Early Agitations Against British Rule

The Poligars Revolt (A.D.1799)

After the decline of the Vijayanagar Empire, the Mughals established their supremacy in the south. The Nawab of Arcot acted as their representative in the Carnatic. He acquired the right to collect taxes from the poligars. He could not collect taxes properly. Moreover he borrowed money from the East India company. In 1792 the company made a treaty with Nawab and acquired the right to collect taxes from the poligars and appointed English collectors of tax collection. They followed rough and ruthless methods to collect taxes. The poligars opposed the British. Kattabomman was the first man who raised his voice against the British.

The South Indian Rebellion (1800-1801)

The South Indian Rebellion was the outburst of the accumulated hatred and anger against the company's rule.

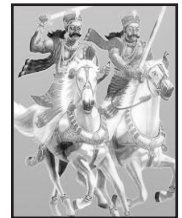
Causes

The interference of the company in the matters of local principalities reduced the power and prestige of the local rulers. The

princes and the poligars lost their dignity and respectable status in the society. The oppressive policy in administration, the rude means of collection of taxes and the superiority complex of the British severely affected the people. By following the mercantile policy of gain, they increased taxes and collected it in a high-handed manner. Kattabomman was humiliated and hanged. Their relatives were subjected to severe punishments. These factors made the revolt inevitable.

Marudhu Pandiar and the Southern League

Marudhu Pandiar was one of the heroes of south Indian rebellion. He served loyally under Muthu Vadukanath Deva of Sivaganga. When Kattabomman was hanged to death, he gave protection to



Umathurai and others. This was not liked by the merchants of Sivaganga. Anticipating a struggle with British, Marudhu Pandiar prepared himself to face any attack from the British. This greatly alarmed the British. The British sent their force under Col. Agnew against Marudhu Pandiar. Realising the seriousness, Marudhu Pandiar issued a

proclamation to call the Indians to unite against the British. A copy of it was pasted on the walls of the gate-way of the Nawab's Palace in the fort at Trichy. Another copy was pasted on the walls of the great Vaishnava Temple at Srirangam. He invited people of all castes and religions to join in the struggle against the British.

The conflict started on 29th May 1801. The rebels were defeated at various places. Dindigul, Ramanad and Madurai came under the control of the British. Marudhu Pandiar hid himself in the Singampunari forest. But Thondaiman of Padukottai captured Marudhu Pandiar and handed over to the British. Marudhu Pandiar and others were hanged to death on Oct 24, 1801 A.D and Umaithurai was impaled at Panchalamkuruchi on 16th November 1801 A.D. Thus the south Indian rebellion came to an end.

In Tamil Nadu, as in other parts of India, the earliest expressions of opposition to British rule took the form of localized rebellions and uprisings. Chief among these was the revolt of the Palayakkarars (Poligars) against the East India Company.

The Palayakkarar system had evolved with the extension of Vijayanagar rule into Tamil Nadu. Each Palayakkarar was the holder of a territory or Palayam (usually consisting of a few villages), granted to him in return for military service and tribute. In most cases, the Palayakkarars gave little attention to perform their duties and were interested in increasing their own powers. With their numerical strength, extensive resources, local influence and independent attitude, the Palayakkarars came to constitute a powerful

force in the political system of south India. They regarded themselves as independent, sovereign authorities within their respective Palayams, arguing that their lands had been handed down to them across a span of sixty generations. Such claims were brushed aside by the East India Company.

Marudu Brothers



Despite the exemplary repression of Palayakkarars in 1799, rebellion broke out again in 1800, this time in a more cohesive and united manner. Although the 1800-1801 rebellion was to be categorized in the British records as the Second Palayakkarar War, it assumed a much broader character than its predecessor. It was directed by a confederacy consisting of Marudu Pandian of Sivaganga, Gopala Nayak of Dindugal, Kerala Verma of Malabar and Krishnappa Nayak and Dhoondaji of Mysore.

The insurrection, which broke out in Coimbatore in June 1800, soon spread to Ramanathapuram and Madurai. By May 1801, it had reached the northern provinces, where Marudu Pandian and Melappan provided the leadership. Oomathurai, the brother of Kattabomman emerged as a key leader. In February 1801, Oomathurai and two hundred men by a cleverly move took control of Panchalamkuruchi Fort.

The fort now re-occupied and reconstructed by rebel forces, Panchalamkuruchi became the centre of the uprising. Three thousand armed men of Madurai and Ramanathapuram, despatched by Marudu Pandian, joined up with the Panchalamkuruchi forces. However, British

forces quickly asserted itself. The Palayakkarar forces based at Panchalamkuruchi were crushed. By the orders of the government, the site of the captured fort was ploughed up and sowed with castor oil and salt so that it should never again be inhabited.

The British forces quickly overpowered the remaining insurgents. The Marudu brothers and their sons were put to death. Oomathurai and Sevatiah were beheaded at Panchalamkuruchi on 16 November, 1801. Seventy-three of the principal rebels were sentenced to transportation. So savage and extensive was the death and destruction wrought by the English that the entire region was left in a state of terror.

The suppression of the Palayakkarar rebellions of 1799 and 1800-1801 resulted in the liquidation of the influence of the chieftains. Under the terms of the Karnatak Treaty (31 July, 1801), the British assumed direct control over Tamil Nadu. The Palayakkarar system came to a violent end and the Company introduced the Zamindari settlement in its place.

Puli Thevar

Among the Palayakkarars, there were two blocs, namely the Western and the Eastern blocs. The Western bloc had Marava Palayakkarars and the Eastern bloc had Telugu Palayakkarars. Puli Thevar of



Nerkkattumseval headed the former and Kattabomman of Panchalamkuruchi led the latter. These two Palayakkarars refused to pay the kist (tribute) to the Nawab and rebelled.

Many of the neighbouring Palayakkarars put up certain pretexts and did not pay the

tribute. Mahfuz Khan, with the assistance of the British army under Col. Heron undertook an expedition to suppress the revolt in March 1755. Puli Thevar and the Marava Palayakkarars of the Western bloc stood firm against the British. Col. Heron decided to deal with the Maravas firmly.

Col. Heron tried to change the mind of Puli Thevar by diplomatic moves and by show of force. But he failed in his attempts. Puli Thevar proceeded to consolidate his position by organising the Marava Palayakkarars of the West into a strong confederacy. He also attempted to get the support of Haider Ali of Mysore and the French against the British. The British approached Ramnad, Pudukottai and the Dutch for help. Haider Ali couldn't help Puli Thevar due to a Mysore - Maratha struggle. Yusuf Khan (Khan Sahib) was entrusted by the British with the duty of tackling Puli Thevar and his allies.

Puli Thevar attacked Madurai and captured it from Mahfuz Khan. Puli Thevar's military success had no parallel. The native ruler triumphed against the British. It is a clear demonstration of the Marava might and the heroism of the patriots. But Yusuf Khan recaptured Madurai. With the help of the Palayakkarars of the Eastern bloc and the king of Travancore, Yusuf Khan had many victories. After fierce battles, Nerkkattumseval was attacked in 1759. In 1767, this city was captured by Col. Campbell. Puli Thevar escaped and died in exile without finally fulfilling his purpose of checking the growth of the British influence. Although his attempt ended in failure, he leaves a valiant trail of a struggle for independence in the history of South India.

Vira Pandya Kattabomman

Vira Pandya Kattabomman became the Palayakkarar of Panchalamkuruchi at the age of thirty on the death of his father, Jagavira Pandya Kattabomman. Yet, several events led to the conflict between Kattabomman and East India Company. During this period the collection of tribute served as a cause of friction. The Nawab of Arcot who had this right surrendered it to the English under the provisions of the Karnatic Treaty of 1792. Therefore, the chief of Panchalamkuruchi, Kattabomman had to pay tribute to the English. In September 1798, the tribute from Kattabomman fell into arrears.

Collector Jackson in his characteristic arrogance and rashness wrote letters to Kattabomman in a threatening language. There is a tradition to indicate that Kattabomman declared: "It rains, the land yields, why should we pay tax to the English?" By the 31 May 1789, the total arrears of tribute from Kattabomman amounted to 3310 pagodas. Though Jackson wanted to send an army against Kattabomman, the Madras Government did not give permission. Hence, on the 18 August 1798 Jackson sent an order to Kattabomman to meet him at Ramanathapuram within two weeks. In the meantime, Kattabomman went with arrears of tribute to meet Jackson. Kattabomman was humiliated twice by Jackson when the former wanted to meet him at Tirukuttralam and Srivilliputtur.

Kattabomman

But he was told that he could meet the collector only at Ramanathapuram. Despite this humiliation, Kattabomman followed Jackson for twenty three days in a journey of 400 miles through the latter's route and reached Ramanathapuram on the 19 September.

An interview was granted by Jackson and Kattabomman cleared most of the arrears leaving only 1090 pagodas as balance. During this interview Kattabomman and his Minister, Sivasubramania Pillai, had to stand before the arrogant collector for three hours together. Still he did not permit them to leave the place, but directed them to stay inside the fort. Kattabomman suspected the intentions of Jackson. Hence, he tried to escape with his minister and brother Oomathurai. At the gate of the fort there followed a clash, in which some people including Lieutenant Clarke were killed. Sivasubramania Pillai was taken prisoner. But Kattabomman escaped. After his return to Panchalamkuruchi, Kattabomman appealed to the Madras Council submitting the facts. The Madras Government directed Kattabomman to appear before a Committee. Meanwhile, the government released Sivasubramania Pillai and suspended the Collector, Jackson. He appeared before the Committee, with William Brown, William Oram and John Casmayor as members. The Committee found Kattabomman not guilty. S. R. Lushington was now appointed Collector in the place of Jackson, latter was eventually dismissed from service.

League of the Palayakkarars

Thus the English removed the source of grievance to Kattabomman. Yet, the humiliation suffered by Kattabomman affected his self-respect. During this time, Marudu Pandyan of Sivaganga organized the South Indian Confederacy of rebels against the British. The Tiruchirappalli Proclamation was made. He sent missions Panchalamkuruchi. Thus a close association between Kattabomman and Marudu Pandyan established. The events now

moved to a crisis. In August 1798 the son of the Palayakkarar of Sivagiri and his adviser visited Panchalamkuruchi and held consultations. Kattabomman decided to establish his influence in Sivagiri with the aid of the son of the Palayakkarar. As the Palayakkarar of Sivagiri was a tributary to the Company, the Madras Council considered this move as a challenge to its own authority and ordered war against Kattabomman.

Expedition to Panchalamkuruchi

In May 1799, Lord Wellesley issued orders from Madras for the advance of forces from Tiruchirappalli, Thanjavur and Madurai to Tirunelveli. Major Bannerman, armed with extensive powers, assumed the command of the expedition. On the 1 September, 1799 the Major served an ultimatum directing Kattabomman to surrender and attend on him at Palayamkottai on the 4th. Kattabomman replied that he would submit on a lucky day.

Bannerman considered this reply as evasive and decided on military action. On 5 September Kattabomman's fort was attacked. On the 16th reinforcements reached from Palayamkottai. In a clash at Kolarpatti the Palayakkarar troops suffered heavy casualty and Sivasubramania Pillai was taken prisoner. Kattabomman escaped to Pudukkottai. The ruler of Pudukkottai captured Kattabomman from the jungles of Kalapore and handed him over to the British.

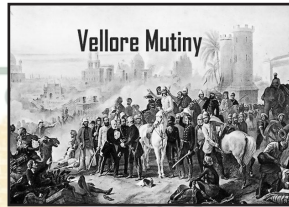
Fall of Kattabomman

Bannerman brought the prisoners to an assembly of the Pal 31 May 1789 Ayakkarars and after a mockery of trial sentenced them to



death. Sivasubramania Pillai was executed at Nagalapuram on the 13th of September. On the 16th of October Vira Pandyan was tried before an assembly of Palayakkarars, summoned at Kayattar. Thereupon, Bannerman announced death penalty. On the 16th of October Kattabomman was hanged to death at a conspicuous spot near the old fort of Kayattar. Vira Pandyan faced the last moments of his life with the pride of a hero.

Vellore Mutiny



Vellore was the capital of erstwhile North Arcot district in Tamil Nadu. At present, this district is named after its

capital Vellore. It is a well fortified and beautiful city.

With the expansion of the East India Company's rule in India, the native rulers and their dependents suffered. The native rulers either submitted or rebelled. These rebellions had no clear vision or ideal but purely motivated by the territorial interest of the native rulers and their ambition to preserve the old feudal order. The heroism and sacrifice of individuals like Puli Thevar, Kattabomman and Marudu Brothers had no parallel. But all these leaders never organised the common people for a unified and meaningful cause. The ideas of nationalism, political consciousness and organized struggle came much later.

In Vellore the native sepoys rose in revolt in 1806. This incident differs from other previous rebellions in. The earlier rebellions were those of the native rulers. The Vellore

Mutiny was organized by the sepoys. The earlier rebellions had only a regional interest. Every prince wanted to safeguard his own kingdom at any cost.

But Vellore Mutiny was the result of spontaneous outflow of the feelings of the sepoys who served under the Company. It was a protest by the sepoys against the Company. This protest showed the future possibilities.

Causes

Several causes are attributed to the Vellore Mutiny. Indian sepoys had to experience numerous difficulties when they went to serve in the Company's army. The sepoys were forced to serve under the Company since their earlier patrons (the native chieftains) were all disappearing from the scene. The strict discipline, practice, new weapons, new methods and uniforms were all new to the sepoys. Anything new appears to be difficult and wrong for a man who is well-settled in the old way of life for a long-time.

Sir John Cradock, the commander-in-chief, with the approval of **Lord- William Bentinck**, the Governor of Madras, introduced a new form of turban, resembling a European hat. Wearing ear rings and caste marks were also prohibited.

The sepoys were asked to shave the chin and to trim the moustache. The sepoys felt that these were designed to insult them and their religious and social traditions. There was also a popular belief that this was the beginning of a process by which all of them would be converted to Christianity.

The English treated the Indian sepoys as their inferior. There was the racial prejudice. This was the psychological base for the sepoy

mutinies in India during the Company's rule.

The sepoys once served the local chieftains (either Hindu or Muslim). The chieftains were their own kinsmen but now they served under the foreigners. They can never forget their original loyalties.

The Vellore uprising was preceded by a series of protests by the Indian troops. In May 1806, the 4th Regiment rose in revolt against the new turban. The Commander-in-Chief took severe action the sepoys who were found guilty were punished with 500 to 900 lashes. Before the mutiny secret associations were formed and meetings held in which Tipu's family took part.

On June 17th 1806 a sepoy of the 1st Regiment named **Mustapha Beg**, secretly informed his commanding officer, **Colonel Forbes**, that a plot had been planned for the extermination of the European officers and troops. But this was not taken seriously.

On the eve of the Mutiny at Vellore **Fettah Hyder**, the first son of Tipu, tried to form an alliance against the English and sought the help of the Marathas and the French.

Fettah Hyder received secret information through one **Mohammed Malick**. Besides, princes Fettah Hyder and Moiz-ud-Deen in particular were active in planning the execution of the Mutiny.

Thus, there was the desire to revive the old Muslim rule in this region. The sepoys were aware of the tragic end of Puli Thevar, Khan Sahib, Kattabomman, Marudu Brothers, Tipu Sultan and others. Hence there were ill-feelings about the British in the minds of the sepoys. All these led to the rebellion.

Course of the Mutiny

On July 10th in the early morning the native sepoys of the 1st and 23rd Regiments started the revolt. Colonel Fancourt, who commanded the garrison, was their first victim. Colonel Me Kerras of the 23rd Regiment, was shot down on the parade-ground. Major Armstrong was the next officer to be killed during the mutiny. About a dozen other officers were also killed.

Major Cootes who was outside the fort dashed to Ranipet, 14 miles away, and informed Colonel Gillespie at 7 am. Col. Gillespie reached the Vellore fort at 9 a.m. Meantime, the rebels proclaimed Futteh Hyder, Tipu's first son, as their new ruler and hoisted tiger-striped flag of Tipu Sultan. But the uprising was swiftly crushed by Col. Gillespie. 800 Indian soldiers were found dead in the fort alone. Six hundred soldiers were imprisoned in Tiruchi and Vellore. Some rebels were hung, some shot dead. The uprising was thus brought to a bloody end. Tipu's son was sent to Calcutta. The commander-in-chief and the governor were recalled. Vellore Mutiny failed. There was no proper leadership. The rebellion was also not well organized. But it is the starting point of a new era of the resistance of the sepoys to the British rule. The 18th century was marked by the resistance of the local chieftains. The first six decades of 19th century was marked by the resistance of sepoys.

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K.K. Pillai rejects the thesis that Vellore Mutiny led to the 1857 revolt. V.D.Savarkar calls the Vellore Mutiny of 1806 as the prelude to the first War of Indian Independence in 1857. N. Sanjivi proclaims that the Tamils had taken the real lead in the Indian freedom struggle. K. Rajayyan argues that this mutiny was a continuation of the Marudu Brothers' resistance movement against the colonial rule.

The south Indian rebellion was over by A.D.1801. But the rude shock was not erased from the minds of the people. The English East India Company emerged as the Unopposed ruler of Madras Presidency and John Cradock was commander-in-chief. His army reforms invited a mutiny at Vellore. The Vellore Mutiny of 1806 was the first Instance of a mutiny by Indian sepoys against the East India Company. it is one of the significant event snot only in the history of Tamil Country but also India. It took place

in the south Indian town Vellore. As it was led by the sepoys of Vellore. As it was led by the sepoys of Vellore fort, it was called as the Vellore Mutiny. It was presumed as a prelude to the Great Revolt of 1857.

Causes for the Failure of the Mutiny

There was no proper leadership. The revolt was not well organised. Tipu's sons did not have proper training in warfare as they spent most of their life time in prison. The sepoys could not get the support and supplies on time from the native rulers.

Results

Many Indian soldiers were arrested and imprisoned. Tipu's family was taken to Calcutta and kept in prison for more than six years. The Mutiny revealed the patriotic and the revengeful attitude of the Indians toward the British. Through the mutiny failed, it became a prelude to the First War of Indian Independence of 1857.

Role of Tamil Nadu in the Freedom Movement

Madras Mahajana Sabha Association:



It was established by Harley, Lakshmi narasu Chetty and Srinivasa Pillai in 1852. The Association criticized the policies of the East India company. In 1884, the Madras Native Association was merged with the Madras Mahajana Sabha established by S.Ramaswami Mudhaliar, P.Anandacharlu and P.Rangaiah Naidu. The Sabha functioned at the office of 'The Hindu', Ellis Road Junction, Mount Road.

P.Rangaiah Naidu was elected first President of the Sabha. The Sabha adopted a moderate policy in its early days. However, its aims and the objectives were considered seditious. In Dec 1895, on his visit to Madras, the Viceroy of India, Lord Elgin refused to receive the welcome address from the Madras Mahajana Sabha.

Madras Mahajana Sabha was considered to be a unique one that paved the way for our national freedom. The Sabha voiced out the fundamental rights of our countrymen. It had developed very close relationship with the Indian National Congress since 1920 onwards. Consequently in 1930, the Sabha organized the Salt Satyagraha movement on April 22nd in Madras George town, Esplanade, the High court and beach areas. The members were attacked savagely by the British police. As the Sabha insisted on a legal enquiry about the injustice done towards the participants of the enquired thirty people and submitted its report to the government.

When the British Government banned the Congress party, Madras Mahajana Sabha conducted numerous exhibitions to instigate the partriotic feelings in the hearts of our

countrymen such as All India Khadi Exhibition and Swadeshi Exhibition.

The father of our nation-Mahatma Gandhiji had delivered a speech at the meeting of Mahajana Sabha on Oct 24th 1896. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also had participated in the golden Jubilee celebrations of the Sabha.

Tamil Nadu in the Indian National Movement

Tamil Nadu played an important role in the Indian National Movement. Even prior to the Great Revolt of 1857, the rebellion in Panchalam Kuruchi, the 1801 "South Indian Rebellion" of the Marudu brothers and the Vellore Mutiny of 1806 were the early anti-colonial struggles in Tamil Nadu. During the nationalist era Tamil Nadu provided the leaders like G. Subramania Iyer, V.O.C. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Bharathi, C. Rajagopalachari and K. Kamaraj to the National Movement. Besides, the nationalist movement in Tamil Nadu was as active as elsewhere.

Beginning of the National Movement in Tamil Nadu

The earliest political organisation, the Madras Native Association was started in July 1852. Lakshminarasu Chetty and Srinivasa Pillai were the founders of this organization. The **Madras Native Association** was sharply critical of the policies of the East India Company's rule. Subsequently in 1884, the Madras Mahajana Sabha was established by P. Anandacharlu and P. Rangaiya Naidu. The Madras Native Association was ultimately merged with this organization.

The Madras Mahajana Sabha strongly supported the activities of the Indian National Congress. It had also initiated social reform. G.

Subramania Iyer performed the remarriage of his widowed daughter in December 1889. He moved the first resolution in the first session of the Indian National Congress in 1885. He started the nationalist papers like **The Hindu** in English and **Swadeshamitran** in Tamil. In 1892, the Madras Provincial Conference was started to mobilize people in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu. The third session of the Indian National Congress was held in Madras in 1887 under the presidentship of Fakruddin Thyabji. Later a number of such annual sessions were also held in the city of Madras.

Swadeshi Movement in Tamil Nadu

The Partition of Bengal in 1905 led to the beginning of Swadeshi Movement in Tamil Nadu. During this period the important leaders of the National Movement were – V.O.Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva and Subramania Bharathi. In May 1907 Bharathi brought Bipin Chandra Pal one of the leaders of extremists in the Congress to Madras city. After the Surat split in 1907, V.O.C and fellow nationalists started the Chennai Jana Sangam. Subramania Bharathi was a non-conformist, unorthodox and a revolutionary in social and political ideas. He edited the Tamil Weekly India. He wrote nationalist songs called the Swadesa Geethangal. V.O.Chidambaram Pillai was a lawyer by profession and he joined the nationalist movement in 1905. He was a follower of Bal Ganghadar Tilak. He led the Coral Mill Strike in February 1908 in Tuticorin. In 1906 he launched the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in Tuticorin. Hence he was called Kappalottiya Tamilan. There was competition between Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company and British India Steam

Navigation Company. V.O.C advocated the boycott of the British India Steam Navigation Company and this had resulted in the Tirunelveli uprising in March 1908. He was ably assisted by Subramania Siva. Both were arrested and imprisoned. They served six years rigorous imprisonment. They were given harsh punishment inside the prison. V.O.C was asked to draw an oil press and hence he is known as Chekkilutta Chemmal.

The arrest of the nationalist leaders, harsh punishment for the nationalist leaders inside the prison and the collapse of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company led to the formation of a revolutionary organization in Tamil Nadu called the Bharathamatha Association. Nilakanta Bramachari played a vital role in it. One of the followers of this association Vanchi Nathan shot dead the notorious British official Robert William Ashe at Maniyatchi junction in June 1911.

Home Rule Movement in Tamil Nadu

The Home rule Movement in Madras was organized by Mrs. Annie Besant between 1916 and 1918. The first indication of Annie Besant's decision to launch a Home Rule Movement appeared in New India in September 1915. Besant sought the support of the Indian National Congress at its annual meeting at Bombay in December, 1915. She was supported in her movement by Tilak. Home Rule Movement was vigorous during the First World War.

Non-co-operation Movement

In Tamil Nadu the Non-co-operation Movement was strong during the years 1921 – 23. Beginning in March 1921 there were campaigns of Non-Cooperation against the foreign regulations. In 1921 and 1922 there were

campaigns against the consumption of liquor in many parts of the province. Temperance campaign was particularly prominent in Madurai. Non- Cooperation had been a success in Tamil Nadu. C. Rajagopalachari, S. Satyamurthi and E. V. Ramaswami Naicker were the important leaders of the Non-Cooperation Movement in Tamil Nadu. At that time E.V.Ramaswami Naicker was the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. C. Rajagopalachari stressed that the council boycott was a central part of the Gandhian Programme. However, this view was not shared by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Srinivasa Iyengar, Varadarajulu Naidu and Vijayaraghavachari. In the meantime, Periyar E.V.R. launched the Vaikom Satyagraha in Kerala against the practice of social segregation. Later he resigned from the Congress and came out on the social segregation issue at Seramandevi Guru Kulam of V.V.S. Iyer. S. Satyamurthi of Pudukkottai was one of the important freedom fighters. He led the anti-Simon Campaign in 1929 when the Simon Commission visited Tamil Nadu. The other important nationalist leader was K.Kamaraj from Virudhunagar. He participated in the Vaikom Satyagraha in 1924 and thus entered nationalist movement. He was the vice-president and treasurer of the Ramnad District Congress Committee in 1929. From the beginning, Kamaraj was the man of the masses. He spoke in simple and direct language. He had a sound common sense and practical wisdom. He was fully aware of the rural Tamil Nadu. He visited each and every village and understood the different problems of the masses. He always identified himself with the common man of Tamil Nadu. Thus,

he really brought the Congress movement to the villages in Tamil Nadu.

Salt Satyagraha

As part of the Civil Disobedience Movement, Gandhi launched the Salt Satyagraha. He undertook the Dandi March in 1930. C.Rajagopalachari became the TNCC president in April 1930. Authorized by TNCC and AICC to direct the Salt Satyagraha in Tamil Nadu Rajaji undertook the famous Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha March. He selected the route from Tiruchirappalli to Vedaranyam in Thanjavur district. The March began on Tamil New Year's Day (13th April). The March reached Vedaranyam on 28 April 1930. Two days later Rajagopalachari was arrested for breaking the salt laws. Some of the other important leaders who participated in the Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha were T.S.S.Rajan, Mrs. Lakshmipathi Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai, C. Swaminatha Chetty and K.Santhanam. Tiruppur Kumaran who led the flag march was fatally beaten. Since he guarded the national flag in his hands he was called Kodi Kaththa Kumaran. Commemorating his sacrifice the Government of India issued a postal stamp in his honour.

Similarly, the National Movement was encouraged by songs composed by Namakkal Kavinjar Ramalingam Pillai. In his songs he praised the Gandhian methods in the struggle for freedom. He sang that "a war is coming

without knife and blood". This highlighted the Gandhian principle of non-violent struggle against the British.

Quit India Movement

Later, in 1937 when elections were held in accordance with the 1935 Act, Congress won the elections and formed the ministry in Madras headed by C. Rajagopalachari. There were nine other ministers in his cabinet. The ministry was in power from July 1937 to October 1939. The ministry had resigned along with other Congress ministries in the different provinces over the issue of the Indian involvement in the Second World War. During Second War, after the failure of the Cripps's Proposals Gandhi had launched the Quit India Movement. In Tamil Nadu Quit India Movement drew the factory workers, students and common people. It was a wide spread movement.

The Buckingham & Carnatic Mills, Port Trust and the Tramway workers joined the movement in large numbers. Quit India Movement was launched in places like North Arcot, Madurai and Coimbatore. There was police firing at Rajapalayam, Karaikudi and Devakottai. Besides, Subhash Bose's INA had many men and women soldiers from Tamil Nadu. Finally, when India attained independence on 15th August, 1947 the Madras Government under O.P. Ramaswami Reddiar passed a resolution appreciating the Indian Independence Act.