
WOMEN FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF MADURAI – A STUDY

Article Particulars

Received: 7.7.2017

Accepted: 13.7.2017

Published: 28.7.2017

Dr.Mrs.N.ASHA DEVI, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.,

Asst. Professor in History,

E.M.G. Yadava Women's College, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

Tamil Nadu has a great tradition of heritage and culture that has developed over 2000 years and still continues to flourish. British men considered India as market to sell their business product. So from the beginning itself their aim was exploiting the Indian economy whenever economic dullness happened they dumped their Goods in India and sold it in later days they introduced many changes. More than the Indian Kings to eradicate misbelief and women freedom. In the British period the education of women was encouraged and this resulted change in the position of women the educated women rise the voice against British domination and entered into the freedom struggle. This paper Women Freedom Fighters of Madurai – A Study deal about the women freedom fighters of Madurai and their various contribution for freedom struggle.

Keywords: *British period, Women Freedom Fighters, freedom struggle, Indian National Congress, Madurai Municipality, Vellaiyane Veliyeru, Quit India*

Padmasini Ammal

Padmasini Ammal was one of the noteworthy frontline leader of the national movement As a result of the impact of Non-Cooperation Movement, Padmasini established the Tilak Ashram in Madurai and conducted classes for adults in the evenings. She also undertook door-to-door campaign highlighting the value of Khaddar. She was in the family way when Swami Sivam organised the Cauvery yatra. Padmasiri took part in the yatra and propagated the value of Khadar. She addressed a meeting in Paparapatti (where Subramania Siva was buried). During the course of the yatra she delivered a female baby. Due to the strenuous nature of the trip the baby passed away a couple of days after its birth. Padmasini Ammal attended the Belgaum session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1924. She established the 'Sisters Association'. When the Civil Disobedience Movement was launched, she spoke in support of the movement in the meeting held at Jhansi Rani Park. When she was arrested, she went on fast in the jail, she was then three months pregnant. As a result of the stress; she had a miscarriage. In 1934, she assigned 10 acres of land in Munnampattu village for the Bharathi Ashram. In 1935, she started a school

for the depressed classes in Manamadurai. Padmasini sent off her husband with a garland and tilak when he went to prison for picketing toddy shops. She have given many speeches to bring the unity among the people and she have participated in many riots held in Tamil Nadu. She passed away on January 16, 1936.

K.P.Janaki Ammal

K.P.JANAKI AMMAL the courageous daughter of Madurai who took on the British and faced many challenges that came her way. Janaki Ammal was born in 1917 in Madurai. She was hailed first women in South India to be arrested by the British. She was never hesitant to raise her voice against British. As a theatre artiste, freedom fighter, congress worker and later a communist the contribution of Janaki Ammal cannot be undermined. She was 1st arrested in 1930 while giving a performance in Tirunelveli and served in penury. She lost her mother when she was eight and was brought up by her grandmother. As an 8th grade school dropout, she joined music class, she later joined Palaniappapillai Boys company for a salary of Rs.25 per month later, she went on to become the lead actress. She married Guru Swamy Naidu the harmonium player in the troupe.

She joined the Congress Party as a member in 1936 and subsequently joined the Congress Socialist Party. When the Congress men of Madurai refrained from giving a reception to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose when he visited Madurai, Janaki Ammal took part in the reception. She met P.Jeevanandam and P.Ramamurthy at Batlagundu. Inspired by the Communist philosophy, she joined the Communist Party in 1940. She was arrested for taking part in the anti-war propagation work under the Defence of India she was elected as the president of the All India Democratic Women's Association and also represented the Madurai South Constituency in the Assembly in the free India she is the first women councilor elected for the Madurai Municipality in 1947. She passed away on March 1, 1992.

Sornathammal

There was something terrible in store for Sornathammal on the night of October 2, 1942. She, along with fellow freedom fighter Lakshmi Bai Ammal, organised a women's march in Madurai shouting the 'Vellaiyane Veliyeru' (Quit India) slogan. The women were arrested by the Police and beaten. They were stripped and left outside in the dead of night near Alagarkoil. But Sornathammal was a woman with a heart of steel- the episode failed to shake her resolve to fight for the nation. She participated in Individual Satyagraha and was jailed for three months in 1942.

With the advent of Gandhi, movements like Non Co-operation Khilafat, Foreign cloth boycotting, Salt Satyagraha, Civil Disobedience movements, Individual Satyagraha, Anti-war propaganda, Quit India Movement drew many people both men and women to participate in the freedom struggle all over India. Under the

constructive Programme of Gandhi, every Friday women spun two hours in the charka in Madurai Sahotharigal Sangam (The Sisters Association) formed by Padasini Ammal.

Ambujammal

As the daughter of advocate Srinivasa Iyengar. Ambujammal led a privileged life. But she gave all material comforts because of one man Gandhiji. She was born in 1898 and became his follower ever since she met him when he came to Madras in the 1920s. "She gave away her diamond & silks for the Harijan welfare fund when she visited Sewagram", recalls Sarojini Varadappan for whom Ambujammal was a 'mentor'. Over 90 years old the ailing social worker recalls how she, along with Ambujammal gave free Hindi classes in a tiny room. Ambujammal actively participated twice for six months in 1932. She dedicated her life to the cause of India's freedom and inspired several women to do the same. Women's welfare was at the top of her agenda. She set up the Srinivasa Gandhiji Nilayam in 1948 at Teynampet where free milk, medicine and Kanji (gruel) were given to the needy. Ambujammal was known for her simplicity. Akkammal as she was lovingly called, dressed in khadi and wore nothing but a strand of beads around her neck.

Manjubhashini

Manjubhashini fell in love with Gandhi's principles as a young girl She shook off the comfort of a wealthy life to join his fight for freedom. She burned foreign goods on Thambu Chetty Street in the city with Durgabai Deshmukh, rehabilitated Indians out forced out Burma in a camp in Madras in the early 1940's. "Arrest fro the country was nothing new for her" courted by N.Gandhimathi, who knew her from the time she was eight, recalls how 'Manjuma' was like Ganhiji to her. "She was responsible for all the arrangement for the Gandhiji's prayer meeting held at Hindi Prachar Sabha during 1942-1943", she says. Manjubhashini worked meticulously to create a home for an abandoned children in the city called Balamandir, she got it registered with the encouragement of K.Kamaraj in 1949. Even today, the home runs successfully in T.Nagar. The bust of Manjubhashini can be seen on the premises of Bala Mandir. The pure love and devotion towards Gandhi made her to follow his of living and she have sacralised her pleasure life and comfort and led a life of a socialist. Her contribution towards the society by creating an organisations of many to help the lower class people other backward classes. Those she became the unforgettable women fighter of Madurai.

Other Women Freedom Fighters in Madurai District

1.	Akilandathammal	:	Joined Freedom Movement and Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932 and Individual Satyagraha in 1941.
2.	Alamelu Ammal	:	Joined Freedom Movement and Individual Satyagraha in 1941.
3.	V.Bagyalakshmi	:	Joined Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932.
4.	Bhargaviamma	:	Quit India Movement in 1943.
5.	Chellakani	:	Joined Freedom movement in 1940 and Individual

			Satyagraha in 1941.
6.	Dhanambal	:	Took part in Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932.
7.	Jayalakshmi Ammal	:	Joined Freedom Movement and foreign cloth boycott movement in 1943.
8.	Lakshmi Ammal	:	Joined foreign cloth boycott movement in 1932.
9.	Meenakshiammal	:	Joined Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932.

Mrs.Lakshmi Sundaram, wife of T.V.S.Sundaram Iyyangar started Hindu Mathar Sangam and taught them spinning other women from different sections of the society hailed from different parts of the districts, Kathoon Beevi, a Muslim women from Periyakulam was one among them. R.Naraniammal of Thevaram, Meenammmal and Sinnathangammal of Koodalore, R.Kangavalli of Kuchanur participated in toddy shop picketing in 1930, Rakkammal and Samandiammal of Thandikudi and J.S.R.R.Ponnuthai of Ammapatty and Venkatammal of Chinnamanoor took part in the Quit India and Individual Satyagraha 1942. Many women of B.Renganathapuram namely T.Janakiammal, Gomathiammal, T.Viveka Chinthamani, N.Pavun Thai, S.Suruliammal, K.Virumallammal, M.Lahumuthai and S.Bangajam of Bodinayakkanur supplied food for the fighters who absconded Pappammal of Cholavandan participated in the Salt Satyagraha and jailed in 1932 for more than two years. Substantial monetary contribution of Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company of V.O.C. came from women especially those of Tirunelveli Madurai and Ramnad.

Conclusion

Women occupies a significant role in the freedom struggle. Madurai town was naturally the scene of greatest political activity today women's are all shining in the various fields. Every woman whether rich or poor, high or low should have freedom to live, to work and to have education in a freedom society with all their rights. The above said women's K.P.Janaki Ammal, Sornathammal, Padmasini Ammal, Ambujammal were became as role model for today women due to their heroic activities in the freedom struggle.

References

1. Women Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle in Tamil Nadu, ICHR Proceedings.
2. S.N.Somayajulu, Madurai Mavatta Sudhanthira Poratta Varalaru.
3. Sivalai Ilamathy, Sarithiratai Matriya Sati Vazhakkual, Alagal Publishers, Chennai, 2001.
4. The true fighters of Tamil Nadu-By.S.M.Sundaram.
5. K.P.Palnisamy, Viduthalai Velviiil Tahmizaham.
6. The Hindu, Chennai August 14, 2013.
7. S.Ganesan, Viduthalai Poril Madurain Pangu (Tamil), Shunmugam Publishers.
8. Manmohan Kaur, Women in India's Freedom Struggle, New Delhi, 19852. The Hindu, Chennai August 14, 2013.
9. Who's who of Freedom fighters (Tamil Nadu) Vol-I (1973) Printed by Director of Stationary, Madras.