

TAMIL LITERATURE

THIRUVALLUVAR

TAMIL SOCIETY

Vaikumda Swamigal (1809-1851)



Vaikumda Swamigal (1809-1851)

- ❖ Born in sasthan Koil, Sami thoppu, K.K. Dist
 - ❖ Red Turbans – ‘Ayya’ people called him **Ayya vazhi** – his followers
- ❖ Crusader for Social Justice
- ❖ **Mudisudum Perumal**
birth name changed as Muthukutty
- ❖ No formal school education
- ❖ He visited Tiruchendur and got wisdom and changed his name as Vaikundar
- ❖ He condemned Idol worship -Mirror only
- ❖ Studied various religious Text
- ❖ Raja of Travancore imprisoned him
- ❖ He preached equality
- ❖ He founded **Samathuvam Samajam** -Inter dining
- ❖ British as white devil
- His ideas – ‘Akila Tiratu’ – Rama Gopal or Hari Gopal Sitar
- ❖ Travancore king as Black Devil
- He started **Nilal Tangals** (feeding centre for all)

Ramalinga Adigalar (or) Vallalar (1823-1874)



Ramalinga
Adigal



Vadalur Satya Gnana Sabha

Ramalinga Adigalar (or) Vallalar (1823-1874)

- He established the **Samarasa Vedha Sanmarga Sangam in 1865** and it was renamed "**Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Satya Sanga**" which means "**Society for Pure Truth in Universal self-hood**".
- Ramalinga also established a free feeding house **Satya Dharma Salai – 1867** for everyone irrespective of caste at Vadalur in the wake of a terrible famine in south India in 1866.
- His voluminous songs were compiled and published under the title **Thiruvarutpa (Songs of Grace)**. His radical views deeply disturbed Saiva orthodoxy, who condemned his writings as **Marutpa (songs of ignorance)**.

- **Marudur (born)**
- **Songs - Thiruvarutpa (Secular)**
- **He believed god in the form of**
- **'Arutperum Joti'**



Ramalinga Adigalar (or) Vallalar (1823-1874)

•Ramalinga Adigalar Quotes

'Love is the key to Spirituality'

'Jeeva Karunai'

'Vadiya Payirai Kandapothelam Vadinean'

'Service to Mankind is the path for Moksha'

'Compassion & Mercy only path; to God'

Sathya Gana Sabha – 1872



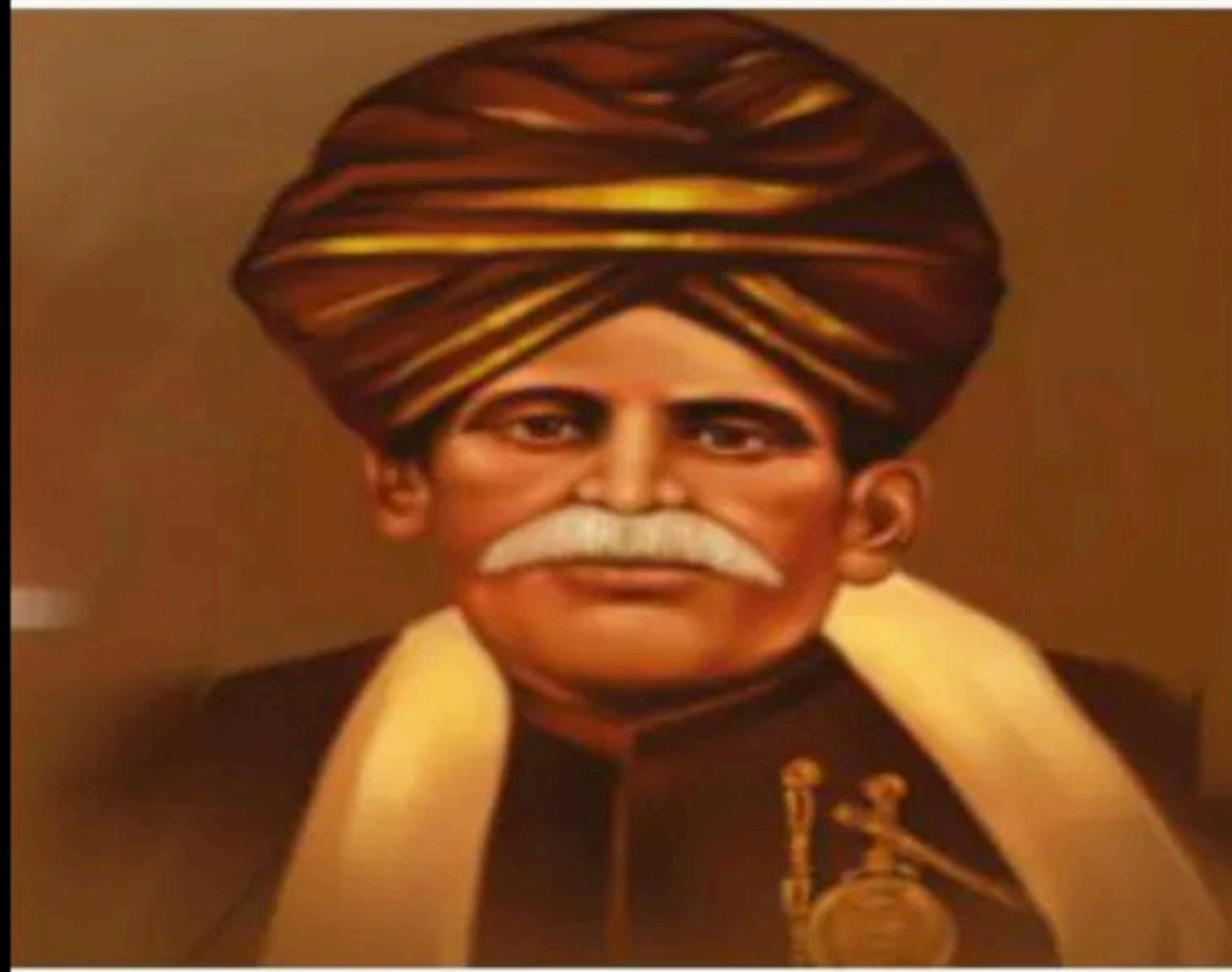
Ramalinga
Adigal



Vadalur Satya Gnana Sabha

Ramalinga bore witness to hunger and poverty in the country: "I saw poor people, emaciated with hunger and terribly weary, going to every house, yet their hunger was not removed, and my heart suffered intensely. Those who suffer with relentless disease, I saw them in front of me and my heart trembled. I saw those people, poor and of unmatched honor, their hearts weary, and I grew weak."

Mayuram Vedanayagam Pillai(1826-1889)



Mayuram Vedanayagam Pillai(1826-1889)

- ❑ He was the first and foremost to advocate granting a part of husband's property to his wife and she also emphasizes the right to property for married women
- ❑ He also emphasizes the right to property for married women he considered female education as essential as foot and confirm the child marriage widowhood and dowry system
- ❑ He wrote the first modern Tamil novel **Prathapa Mudaliar Charithram** which reflects his ideas of women's liberation and education
- ❑ 1876-1878 ஆண்டுகளில் தமிழகத்தில் ஏற்பட்ட பஞ்சத்தின் போது தமது சொத்துகள் அனைத்தையும் கொடையளித்தார்.
- ❑ இதனைப் போற்றும் விதமாகக் **கோபாலகிருஷ்ண பாரதியார் நீயே புருஷ மேரு** என்ற பாடலை எழுதினார்.

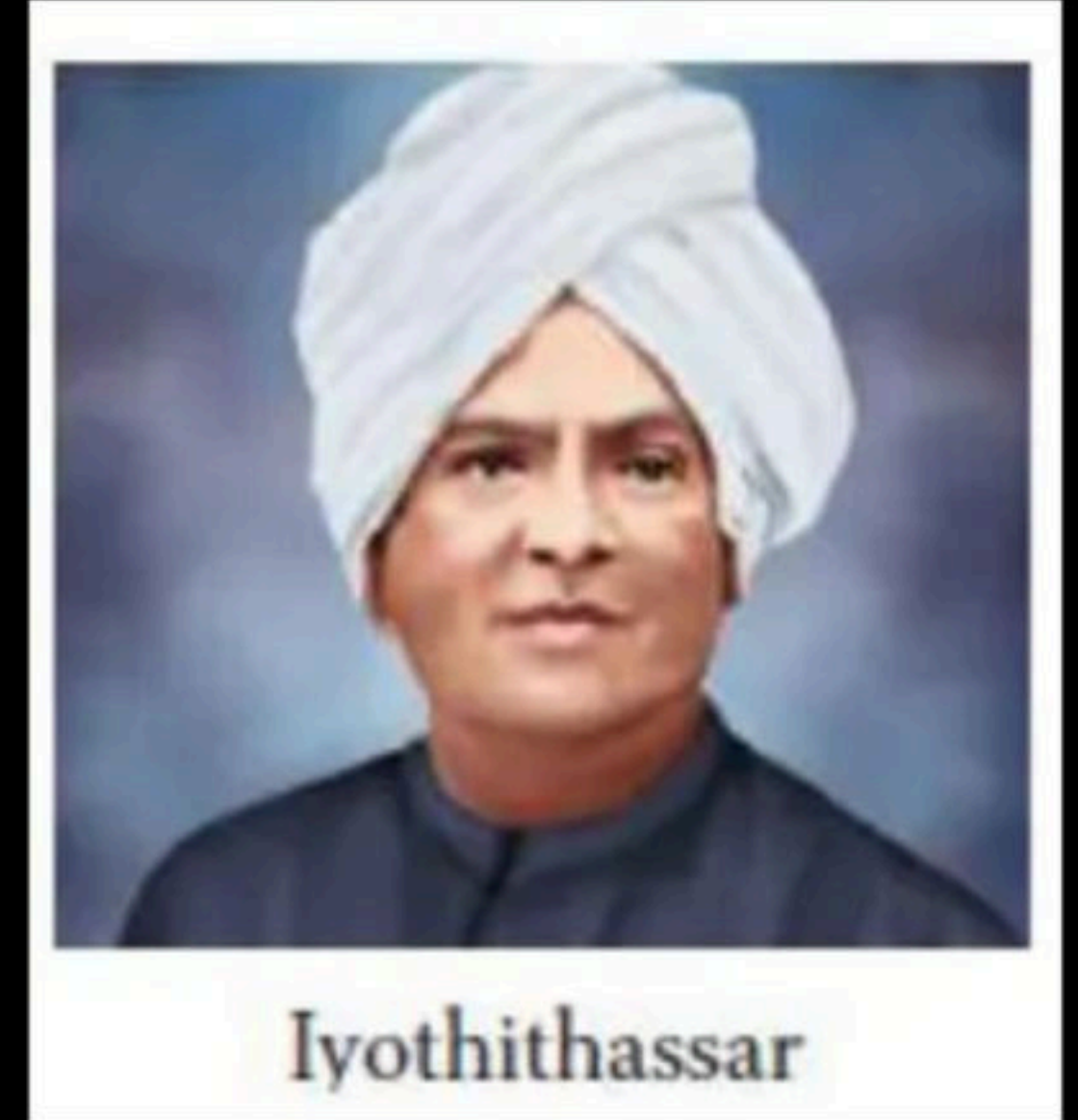
Iyothee Thaasar Pandithar (1845 – 1914)



Iyothithassar

Iyothee Thaasar Pandithar (1845 – 1914)

- Tamil Scholar
- Siddha Practioner
- Born in Chennai
- He fought for Social justice, Untouchability
- Tamil, English, Sanskrit, knows many language
- Education :Schools for untouchables in TN
- Advaidanda Sabha** – To promote Temple entry
- 1882, along with John Rathinam** started **Dravida Kalagam**
- Magazine – **1885 – Dravida Pandiyan**



Iyothee Thaasar Pandithar (1845 – 1914)

❖ Dravida Mahajana Sabha – 1891 (Iyothee Thasaar)

❖ Nilgris – 1st conference

❖ One Paisa Tamilan – weekly magazine started in 1907

❖ He was disappointed with Hindhu Dharma

❖ He was influenced by H.S. Alcot

❖ Founded Panchamar Mahajana Sabha with Reattai malai Srinivasan

❖ 1898 – went to Srilanka, converted to Buddhism

❖ 1898 came back to Chennai

❖ **Sakya Buddhist Society**
(singaravelu & P. Lakshmi Narsu)

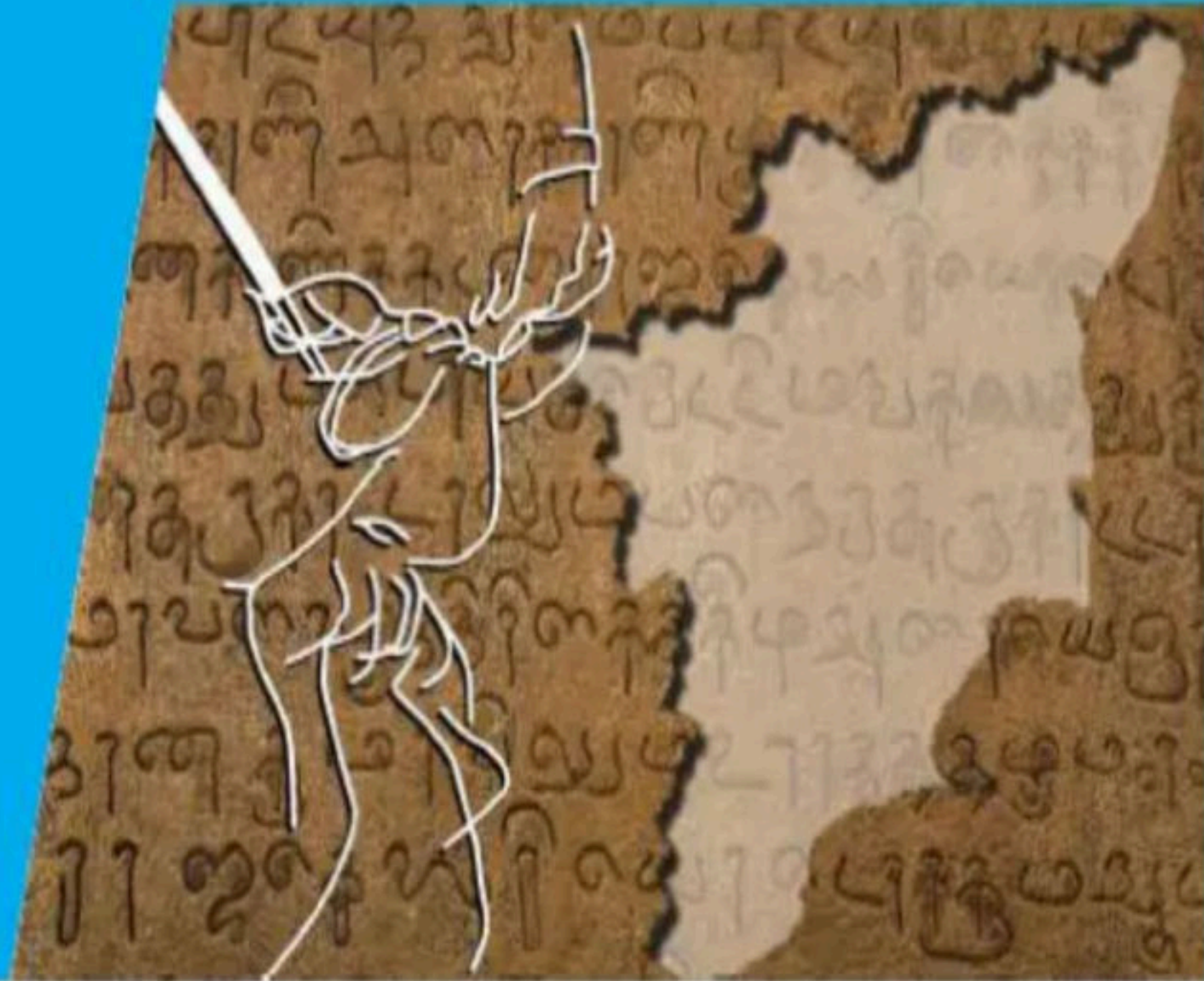
❖ Said Untouchables are real Buddhism

❖ Sathi Petham atra Dravidar

❖ Untouchables are castles Dravidars in Census

❖ Published complete edition Seevaka Chintamani (1887) and Manimekalai (1898)

Social Transformation in Tamil Nadu



Introduction

- Europeans established their political power over Indian subcontinent in the latter half of the eighteenth century.
- While they were concerned with annexing India, by the beginning of the nineteenth century they were reordering Indian society.
- New revenue settlements were made. Influenced by British Utilitarian ideas and evangelicals they also tried to impose their cultural superiority over the Indian people.

- Indigenous traditions were treated as primitive.
- Indian society was portrayed as conservative where human beings were discriminated on the basis of caste, gender, language and creed. This caused a reaction among the Indians.
- During the nineteenth century, educated Indians from different parts of the country began to feel the humiliation and responded by seeking their socio-cultural identity from their past.
- However, they understood some merits in the colonial arguments and were ready to reform.

Introduction

- Raja Rammohan Roy was among the pioneers in this process. Roy and many like him came to be known as social reformers.
- They were preparing a social and cultural sphere to counter the cultural hegemony of Europe. It resulted in the social and religious reform movements in modern India.
- This particular historical development is also identified as the Indian renaissance.
- Renaissance is an ideological and cultural phenomenon. It is closely tied to modernity, rationalism and the progressive movement of the society.

Introduction

- Critical thinking is at its root.
- A new philosophical tradition centring around human rationality and equality is its characteristic.
- The basic inspiration of renaissance is humanism and questioning the fundamentalist religious practices that denied humans their dignity.
- This ideology of humanism stimulated creative energy in all spheres of social life and knowledge such as language, literature, philosophy, music, painting, architecture, etc.

Tamil Renaissance

- The cultural hegemony of colonialism and the rise of humanism brought several changes in the socio-cultural life of the Indian subcontinent. Modern Tamil Nadu too experienced such a historical transition.
- Tamil language and culture played a significant role in their identity construction.
- The introduction of printing press, linguistic research on Dravidian languages, etc... underpinned the process of Tamil renaissance.
- Although religious literature was taken up predominantly for publication in the early years after the advent of printing technology, things began to change gradually. Works that can be described as secular were taken up for publishing.

Advent of the Printing Technology

- Tamil was the first non-European language that went into print. As early as in 1578, Tamil book, *ThambiranVanakkam*, was published from Goa.
- In 1709, a full-fledged printing press had been established thanks to **Ziegenbalg in Tranquebar**.
- *Thirukkural* was one of the earliest Tamil literary texts to be published in 1812. This led the resurgence of interest among Tamil scholars in publishing the more ancient Tamil classics around that period.
- In the nineteenth century, Tamil scholars like C.W. Damotharanar (1832–1901), and U.V. Swaminathar (1855–1942) spent their lifetime in the rediscovery of the Tamil classics.

Advent of the Printing Technology

- **C. W. Damotharanar** collected and edited different palm-leaf manuscripts of the Tamil grammar and literature. His editions included such texts as *Tolkappiyam*, *Viracholiyam*, *Iraiyanar-Akapporul*, *IlakkanaVilakkam*, *Kaliththokai* and *Culamani*.
- **U.V. Swaminathar**, a student of Meenakshisundaranar, took efforts to publish the classical texts such as *Civakachinthamani (1887)*, *Paththupattu (1889)*, *Chilapathikaram (1892)*, *Purananuru (1894)*, *Purapporul-Venpa-Malai (1895)*, *Manimekalai (1898)*, *Ainkurunuru (1903)* and *Pathitrupathu(1904)*.
- This provided the Tamil people with a revelation about their heritage. Therefore, the rediscovery of ancient classics and their publication is considered the foundation of Tamil renaissance. The publication of these ancient literary texts created an awareness among the Tamil people about their historical tradition, language, literature and religion.

- Modern Tamils founded their social and cultural identity on the ancient Tamil classics, collectively called the Sangam literature.
- Linguists, historians and Tamil scholars recognised the uniqueness of Tamil culture, which had a separate and independent cultural existence before the coming of the Aryans into the Tamil land.
- In **1816**, **F.W. Ellis** (1777–1819) who founded the **College of Fort St George**, formulated the theory that the south Indian languages belonged to a separate family which was unrelated to the Indo-Aryan family of languages.

- Robert Caldwell (1814–1891) expanded this argument in a book titled, ***A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages***, in 1856. He established the close affinity between the Dravidian languages in contrast with Sanskrit and also established the antiquity of Tamil.
- Tamil intellectuals of this period identified the fundamental differences between Tamil/Dravidian/ Egalitarian and Sanskrit/ Aryan/Brahmanism. They argued that Tamil was a language of Dravidian people, who are non-Brahmin and their social life was casteless, gender-sensitised and egalitarian.
- Tamil renaissance contributed to the origin and growth of Dravidian consciousness in the Tamil country. These ideas are exemplified in the Tamil invocation song in the play, *Manonmaniam* written by P. Sundaranar (1855–1897).

- Tamil renaissance questioned the cultural hegemony of Brahminism. These developments were reflected in art, literature, religion, etc.
- **Ramalinga Adigal (1823–1874)**, popularly known as Vallalar, questioned the existing Hindu religious orthodoxy.
- **Abraham Pandithar (1859–1919)** gave prominence to **Tamil music** and published books on the history of Tamil music.
- **C.W. Damotharanar, U.V. Swaminathar, Thiru Vi. Kaliyanasundaram (1883–1953), Parithimar Kalaignar (1870-1903), Maraimalai Adigal (1876–1950), Subramania Bharathi (1882– 1921), S. Vaiyapuri (1891–1956), and the poet Bharatidasan (1891–1964)**, in their own ways and through their writings, contributed to the revival of Tamil literature.



Maraimalai Adigal



Thiru. Vi. Ka



Bharatidasan



C.W. Damotharanar



U.V. Swaminathar

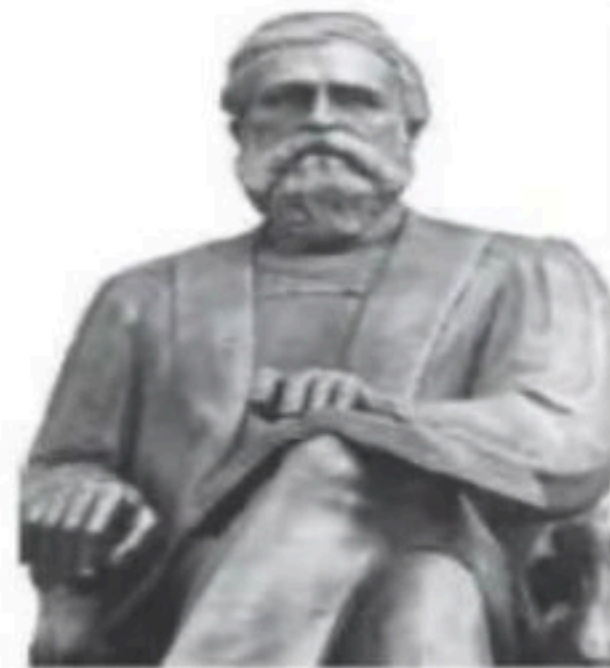
TAMIL LANGUAGE REFORMS AND SCHOLARS



Parithimar Kalignar



P. Sundaranar



Robert Caldwell



Ziegenbalg

- Meanwhile, **M. Singaravelar** (1860–1946) an early pioneer in **Buddhist revival**, promoted communism and socialism to counter the colonial power.
- **Pandithar Iyothethassar** (1845–1914) and **Periyar E.V. Ramasamy** (1879–1973) held high the radical philosophy to defend the rights of the socially underprivileged and marginalised section of the people.
- In addition, the twentieth century Tamil language movements such as **Tani Tamil Iyakkam and Tamil Isai Iyakkam**, made a significant cultural impact in creating a pure Tamil free from the influence of Sanskrit.

V.G. Suryanarayana Sastri (Parithimar Kalaignar)

- **V.G. Suryanarayana Sastri** (1870-1903), born near Madurai, was professor of Tamil at the Madras Christian College.
- He was one of the earliest scholars to identify the influence of Sanskrit on Tamil, and adopted a pure Tamil name for himself: **Parithimar Kalaignar**.
- He was the first to argue that **Tamil is a classical language**, and demanded that the University of Madras should not call Tamil a vernacular language. Influenced by Western literary models, he introduced the **sonnet form in Tamil**.
- He also wrote novels and plays, and a number of essays on science. Tragically, he died at the young age of only **33**.

Maraimalai Adigal

- Maraimalai Adigal (1876–1950) is considered the father of Tamil linguistic purism and the founder of **Tani Tamil Iyakkam (Pure Tamil Movement)**.
- He wrote commentaries on the Sangam texts, **Pattinappalai and Mullaipattu**.
- As a young man, he worked in a journal, **Siddhanta Deepika**. Later he served as a Tamil teacher in the **Madras Christian College** for many years.
- He was inclined towards non- Brahmin movement. His teachers such as **P. Sundaranar and Somasundara Nayagar were key influences in his life**.

Tani Tamil Iyakkam (*Pure Tamil Movement*)

- Maraimalai Adigal promoted the use of pure Tamil words and removal of the Sanskrit influence from the Tamil language.
- The movement made a great impact on Tamil culture especially in language and literature.
- The beginnings of the movement are usually dated to 1916 even though the process of identifying influence of foreign words in Tamil and eliminating them can be dated much earlier to the late nineteenth century.
- His daughter Neelambikai, played an important role in its foundation. He changed his own name **Vedachalam** and took on the pure Tamil name of **Maraimalai Adigal**.

Tani Tamil Iyakkam (*Pure Tamil Movement*)

- Maraimalai Adigal's journal *Jnanasagaram* was renamed *Arivukkadal* and his institution, *Samarasa Sanmarga Sangam*, was re-christened as *Pothu Nilai Kalakam*.
- The movement was critical of Hindi, Sanskrit and the Brahminical hegemony in Tamil society.
- Neelambikai compiled a dictionary that provided pure Tamil equivalents to Sanskrit words that had crept into Tamil vocabulary.
- This movement paved the way for later social movements that countered Brahminical and the Sanskrit tradition in Tamil society.

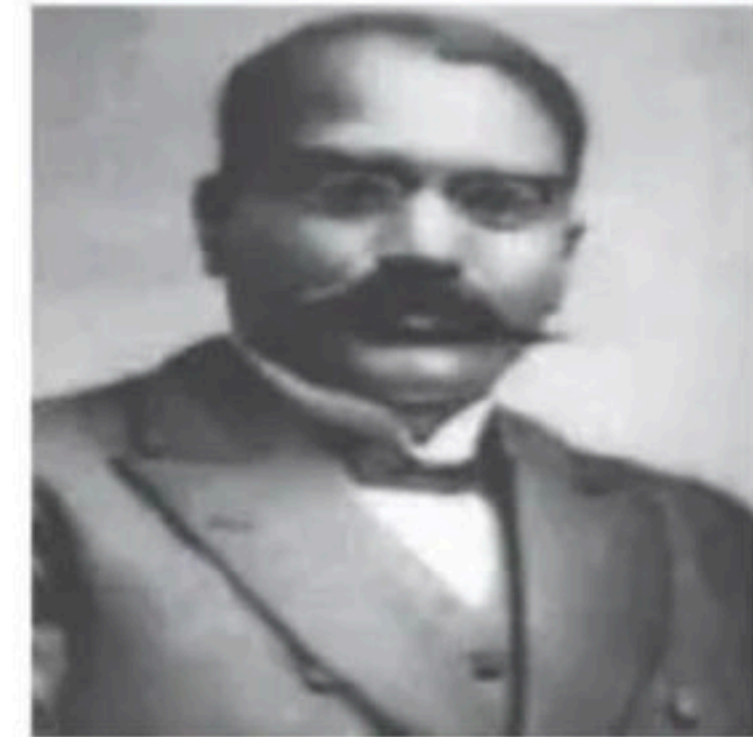
Rise of the Dravidian Movement – JUSTICE PARTY



Sir Pitti Theyagarayar



T.M. Nair



Dr. C. Natesanar

Rise of the Dravidian Movement

- In India, Brahmins enjoyed a high social status, based on their birth, and held great social privileges. In Madras Presidency, Brahmins dominated all the fields of society, especially politics, education and job opportunities in the government.
- The 1911 census showed that Brahmins were slightly over 3 per cent of Madras Presidency's population, and non- Brahmins 90 per cent.
- Yet in the ten years from 1901 to 1911 Madras University turned out 4,074 Brahmin graduates compared with only 1,035 non-Brahmin graduates. Numbers for other groups, based on how the population came to be classified then, included Indian Christian 306, Mohammedan 69 and European and Eurasian 225.

Rise of the Dravidian Movement

- In this context, the Dravidian movement emerged as a defence of the non-Brahmins against the Brahmin dominance. An organisation called The Madras Non-Brahmin Association was founded in 1909 to help the non-Brahmin students.
- In 1912 C. Natesanar, a medical doctor, founded the Madras United League, later renamed as Madras Dravidian Association to support Dravidian uplift.
- The organisation focused on educating and supporting non-Brahmin graduates and conducting regular meetings to share their grievances. Meanwhile, Natesanar founded a hostel, the Dravidian Home, at Triplicane (Madras) in July 1916 to address the lack of hostels for the non-Brahmin students which hindered their educational development.
- In addition, the home had a literary society for the benefit of non-Brahmin students.

South Indian Liberal Federation (Justice Party)

- As World War I was in progress the British government was considering the introduction of representative institutions for Indians after the War.
- Fearing that such political reforms would further strengthen the political power of Brahmins, educated non-Brahmins decided to organise themselves politically.
- On 20 November 1916 around 30 prominent non-Brahmin leaders including Dr. C. Natesanar, Sir Pitti Theyagarayar, T.M. Nair and Alamelu Mangai Thayarammal came together to form the South Indian Liberation Federation (SILF).
- In the meantime, at a meeting held in the Victoria Public Hall the Non-Brahmin Manifesto was released in December 1916.

South Indian Liberal Federation (Justice Party)

- The manifesto articulated the voice of the general condition of the non-Brahmins in Madras Presidency. The association started publishing three newspapers: *Dravidian in Tamil, Justice in English and Andhra Prakasika in Telugu*, to propagate the ideals of the Party.
- The Non-Brahmin Manifesto pointed out that though “Not less than 40 out of the 41.5millions” of the Madras Presidency were non- Brahmins, “in what passes for the politics in Madras they have not taken the part to which they are entitled”.
- Arguing that a government conducted on “true British principles of justice and equality of opportunity” was in the best interests of India, it declared, that “we are deeply devoted and loyally attached to British rule”.
- The first election, under the Montagu- Chelmsford Reforms, was held in 1920 after the introduction of the Dyarchy form of government in the provinces. The Justice Party won the election and formed the first-ever Indian cabinet in Madras.

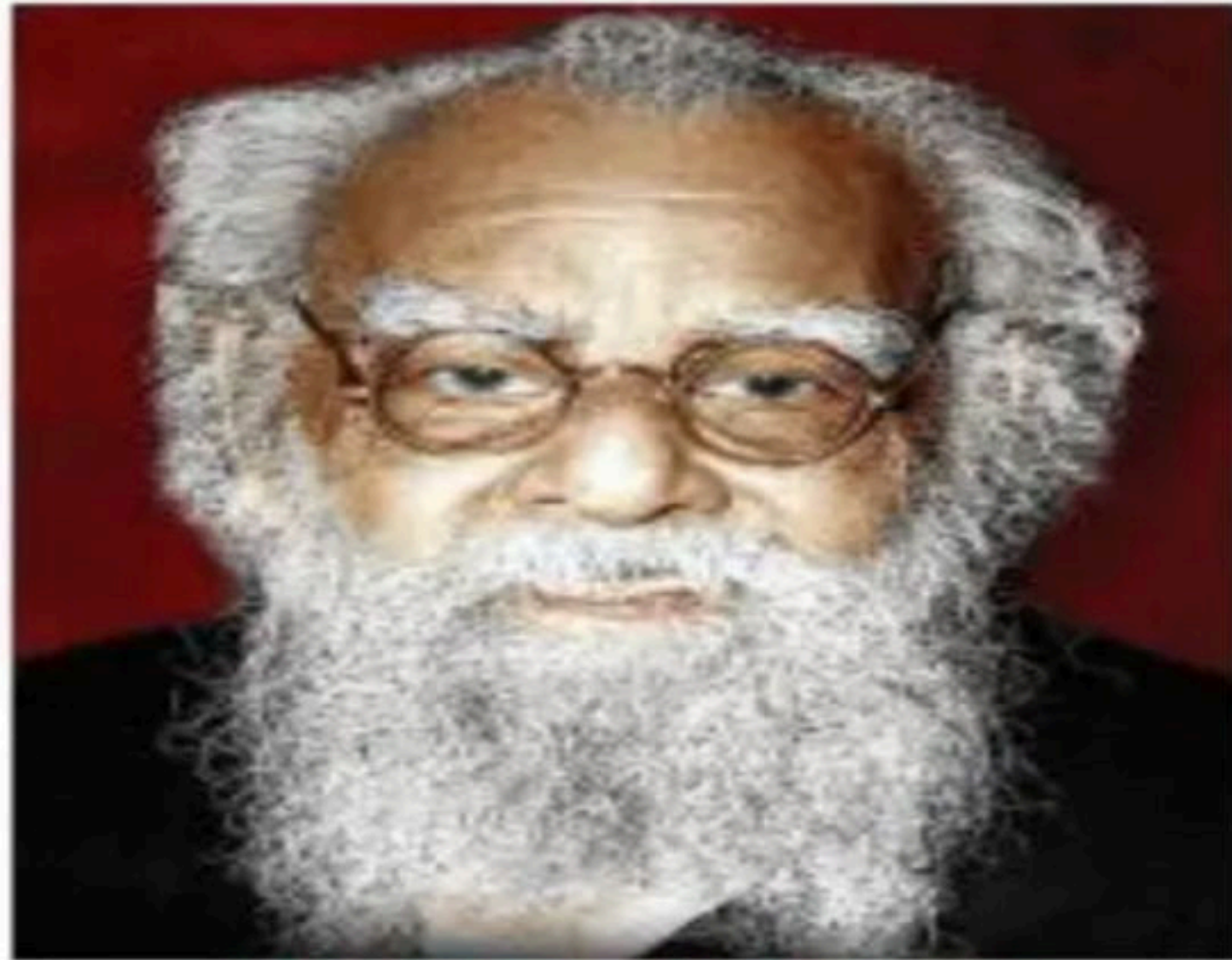
Programmes and Activities

- The Justice Party is the fountain head of the non-Brahmin Movement in the country. The Justice Party government widened education and employment opportunities for the majority of the population and created space for them in the political sphere. Tamil Nadu's legacy of social justice owes its existence to the formative years of Justice Party in power.
- The Justices removed the legal hindrances restricting inter-caste marriages and broke the barriers that prevented Depressed Classes from the use of public wells and tanks. The Justice Party government ordered that public schools accommodate the children of the Depressed Classes.
- Hostels were established for the students belonging to this social group in 1923. In the meantime, the Madras legislature under the Justice Party government was the first to approve participation of women in the electoral politics in 1921.
- This resolution created space for woman and thus facilitated Muthulakshmi Ammaiyar to become the first woman legislator in India in 1926.

Programmes and Activities

- The Justice Party worked towards legislating provisions for communal representation – reservations for various communities. Two Communal Government Orders (16 September 1921 and 15 August 1922) were passed to ensure equitable distribution in appointments among various castes and communities as a part of achieving social justice.
- The Justice Party rule established the Staff Selection Board in 1924 for the selection of government officials and encouraged all the communities to share the administrative powers.
- In 1929, the Government of British India adopted the pattern and established the Public Service Commission. The Justice Party further concentrated on reforms in religious institutions.
- Tamil Nadu has a large number of temples and these commanded huge resources. In general, the resources were monopolised and exploited by the dominant caste in the society and led to mismanagement of public resources.
- The Justice Party introduced the Hindu Religious Endowment (HRE) Act in 1926 and enabled any individual, irrespective of their caste affiliation, to become a member of the temple committee and govern the resources of the religious institutions.

Periyar & Self-Respect Movement (*Suyamariyathai Iyakkam*)



Periyar E.V.R

Self-Respect Movement (*Suyamariyathai Iyakkam*)

- The Self-Respect movement, while critiquing the then prevailing social, political and economic relations, introduced a programme of non-Brahmin uplift in Tamil Nadu.
- The movement was concerned with the marginalised sections of the society and criticised Brahminism and the cultural hegemony of the Brahmin. It advocated a casteless society devoid of rituals and differences based on birth.
- The movement declared rationality and self-respect as the birthright of all human beings and held these as more important than self-rule.
- The movement declared illiteracy as a source for women's subordination and promoted compulsory elementary education for all. It campaigned for the empowerment of women and questioned the superstitious beliefs in the society.

Self-Respect Movement (*Suyamariyathai Iyakkam*)

- The movement demanded women's emancipation, deplored superstitions, and emphasised rationality. The movement also advocated self-respect marriage. Race was central to self-respect concept, which argued that the non-Brahmin Dravidian people had been systematically subjugated by Aryan- Brahmins over the course of their long history.
- The Self-Respect Movement championed not only the cause of the non-Brahmin Hindus, but also that of the Muslims. The Self-Respect Movement extolled the lofty principles of Islam such as equality and brotherhood.
- They exhorted the Muslims to admit into their fold the depressed sections of the Hindu society, in order that they might enjoy the equality and brotherhood of Islam. Muslim elite considered the Tamil Muslims as Dravidians.
- Yet Periyar did not hesitate to attack certain customs like wearing of purdah by Muslim women. He wanted the Dravidian Muslims to follow Mustapha Kemal Pasha of Turkey and Amanullah of Afghanistan who initiated reforms in Islamic society.

Periyar E.V.R.

- Periyar E.V. Ramasamy (1879– 1973) was the founder of the Self-Respect Movement. He was the son of a wealthy businessman in Erode, Venkatappa and Chinna Thayammal. Though possessing little formal education, he engaged in critical discussions with scholars, who used to be patronised by his devout father.
- As a young man, he once ran away from home and spent many months in Varanasi and other religious centres. The firsthand experience of orthodox Hindu religion led to his disillusionment with religion. On his return, he took care of his family business for some years. His selfless public service and forthrightness made him a popular personality.
- He held different official positions of Erode that included the Chairmanship of Municipal Council (1918–1919). In the context of the rise of the non- Brahmin Justice Party after 1917, the Congress inducted non-Brahmin leaders such as Periyar and P. Varadarajulu, at the initiative of C. Rajaji.

Periyar E.V.R.

- Periyar resigned all the government positions to support the Non- Cooperation Movement (1920–1922). He gave up his profitable business and became an active member of the Congress.
- He promoted *khadi* and sold it on the streets of Tamil Nadu. He cut down 500 coconut trees in his farm to support the campaign for prohibition.
- He held the positions of Secretary and President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.
- As president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, Periyar proposed a resolution regarding the rights of “Untouchables” to temple entry. In the name of “caste dharma” the “lower caste” people were denied access to the temples and the streets surrounding the temple.
- In Vaikom (a town in the then Princely State of Travancore and in present day Kerala), people protested against this practice.

Periyar E.V.R.

- In the initial stages George Joseph of Madurai played big role. After the local leaders were arrested Periyar led the movement and was imprisoned.
- People hailed him **as Vaikom Virar (Hero of Vaikom)**. In the meantime, he was disturbed by the castebased discrimination in the dining hall at the Cheranmadevi *Gurukulam* (school), which was run by **V.V.Subramaniam** (a Congress leader) with the financial support of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. Periyar was disappointed when, despite his objections and protests against this discrimination, the Congress continued to support the iniquitous practice in the Gurukulam.
- Periyar was keen on the introduction of reservation in representative bodies such as the legislative council for non-Brahmins. He wanted to pass the resolution in the annual conference of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee in 1925 at its Kanchipuram session but in vain.

Periyar E.V.R.

- The Congress's inability in addressing these concerns made him quit the Congress in 1925. Following his disillusionment, Periyar started the Self-Respect movement in 1925.
- Periyar understood the relevance of mass communication in spreading rationalist thought.
- He started a number of newspapers and journals such as *Kudi Arasu (Democracy) (1925)*, *Revolt (1928)*, *Puratchi (Revolution) (1933)*, *Paguththarivu (Rationalism) (1934)*, and *Viduthalai (Liberation) (1935)*. *Kudi Arasu* was the official newspaper of the Self-Respect Movement.
- It brought out the multiple voices and ideas of Non-Brahmins, women and religious minorities. Usually, Periyar wrote a column and expressed his opinion on social issues in each of its issues.

Periyar E.V.R.

- He frequently wrote columns under the pseudonym of *Chitraputtiran*. Over the years, Periyar visited many countries and interacted with intellectuals all over.
- He visited Singapore and Malaya (1929– 1930, 1954), Egypt, U.S.S.R. (modern Russia), Greece, Turkey, Germany, England, Spain, France and Portugal (1931–32), and Burma (**1954 to attend the 2500th birth Anniversary of the Buddha**).
- His experience of travelling in the Soviet Union and Europe carried Periyar towards socialist ideals.
- Periyar had a close relationship with **Singaravelar** who is considered the first communist of south India and a pioneer of Buddhism.

Periyar E.V.R.

- In 1936, Periyar got Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's *Annihilation of Caste* translated into Tamil immediately after it was written. He also supported Ambedkar's demand for separate electorates for scheduled castes. In 1937, in opposition to the Rajaji's government's move to introduce compulsory Hindi in schools, he launched a popular movement to oppose it.
- The anti-Hindi agitation (1937–39) had a big impact on Tamilnadu's politics. Periyar was imprisoned for his role in the movement. When he was still in jail, Periyar was elected the president of the Justice Party.
- Thereafter the Justice Party merged with the Self-Respect Movement. It was rechristened as Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) in 1944.
- Rajaji, the Chief Minister of Madras State (1952–54), introduced a vocational education programme that encouraged imparting school children with training in tune with their father's occupation. Periyar criticised it as Kula Kalvi Thittam (caste-based education scheme) and opposed it tooth and nail. His campaigns against it led to the resignation of Rajaji.
- K. Kamaraj became Chief Minister of the Madras State. Periyar died at the age of ninety four (1973). His mortal remains were buried at Periyar Thidal, Madras.

Periyar on Religion

- ❖ Periyar's experiences taught him that it was necessary to eradicate religion in order to impart progress and justice.
- ❖ Periyar advocated atheism to deconstruct the established practices of faith, culture and custom.
- ❖ Periyar wanted religion to be replaced by rationalism. 'Religion means you accept superstitious beliefs', he asserted.
- ❖ Periyar spent his entire life campaigning against superstitions through Thinkers or Rationalists Forums he had formed. Periyar objected to the hereditary priesthood in temples.
- ❖ He argued that eligible individuals, who have a proper religious knowledge, should become priests rather than being based on caste. He encouraged the people to boycott the Brahmin priests and their Vedic rituals. He advocated inter-caste and Self-Respect Marriages devoid of any such rituals.

Periyar, a Feminist

- ❑ Periyar was critical of patriarchy. He condemned child-marriage and the devadasi system (institution of temple girls). Right from 1929, when the Self-respect Conferences began to voice its concern over the plight of women, Periyar had been emphasising women's right to divorce and property.
- ❑ Periyar objected to terms like "giving in marriage". This, he said, treats woman as a thing. He wants it substituted by "*valkaithunai*," (companion) a word for marriage taken from the Tirukkural.
- ❑ Periyar's most important work on this subject is *Why the Woman is Enslaved?* Periyar believed that property rights for women would provide them a social status and protection.
- ❑ He welcomed equal rights for males and females in property, guardianship and adoption. He was a strong champion of birth control and contraception, and said that motherhood was a burden to women.
- ❑ In 1989, Government of Tamil Nadu fulfilled the dream of radical reformers by the introduction of the **Hindu Succession Tamil Nadu Amendment Act of 1989**, which ensured the equal rights to ancestral property for women in inheritance. This Act became a trendsetter and led to similar legislation at the national level.

Periyar's Anti-Hindi Stance

- Periyar emphasised that the caste system in south India is linked with the arrival of Brahmins from the North.
- Ancient Tamil society, he said, had a different stratification based on *tinais (regions)*, determined by natural surroundings and the means of livelihood or occupation of the people.
- Anti-north Indian campaigns had made Periyar to take an anti-Hindi stand.

Rettaimalai Srinivasan

- Rettaimalai Srinivasan (1859–1945), popularly known as Grandpa (Thatha), was born in 1859 at Kanchipuram.
- He fought for social justice, equality and civil rights of the marginalised in the caste order. He was honoured with such titles as Rao Sahib (1926), Rao Bahadur (1930) and Divan Bahadur (1936) for his selfless social services.
- His autobiography, *Jeeviya Saritha Surukkam* (A Brief Autobiography), published in 1939, is one of the earliest autobiographies. Rettaimalai Srinivasan who had experienced the horrors of untouchability worked for the progress of the deprived castes.
- He founded the **Adi Dravida Mahajana Sabha in 1893**. He served as president of the **Scheduled Castes' Federation and the Madras Provincial Depressed Classes' Federation**. He constantly engaged in discussions with leaders of the Indian National Congress and the Justice Party on questions involving the depressed castes.



Rettaimalai
Srinivasan

Rettaimalai Srinivasan

- In 1906 Rettaimalai Srinivasan met Gandhi in South Africa and was closely associated with him .
- He became a member of the Madras Legislative Council in 1923 and influenced the Justice Party to take affirmative action to safeguard the interests of the depressed and deprived sections of the society.
- A close associate of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, he participated in the first and second Round Table Conferences held in London (1930 and 1931) and voiced the opinions of the marginalised sections of the society.
- He was a signatory to the Poona Pact of 1932.
- He believed that Dalits could be liberated only through education. He argued that tuition fee must not be collected from Dalits and give free education for them.

M.C. Rajah



M.C. Rajah

- ❖ Mylai Chinnathambi Raja (1883–1943), popularly known as M.C. Rajah, was one of the prominent leaders from the “depressed class”.
- ❖ Rajah started his career as a teacher and wrote different textbooks for schools and colleges. He was one of the founding members of the South Indian Liberal Federation (Justice Party).
- ❖ He became the first elected Legislative Council Member (1920–26) from the depressed classes in Madras province.
- ❖ He functioned as the Deputy Leader of Justice Party in the Madras Legislative Council. Later, he left the Justice Party.
- ❖ M.C. Rajah demanded abolition of untouchability and organised a number of political meetings and conferences for the “untouchable castes” to have access to public wells and pathways to burial grounds.
- ❖ In addition, he advocated the use of such as terms, *Adi-Dravida* and *Adi- Andhra*. In 1928, he founded the **All India Depressed Classes Association** and was its long time leader. Rajah had earlier called for separate electorate; but after the Poona Pact, he supported the idea of joint electorates.

Labour Movements in Tamil Nadu



Labour Statue in Marina Beach



Singaravelar

- The First World War (1914–18) provided stimulus to industrial growth in India. These industries, catering to war time needs, had employed a huge number of workers.
- At the end of the War there were retrenchments across the industries, as the war time requirements receded. Combined with high prices, this gave a momentum to the labour movement.
- The nationalists realising the value of organised labour power began to support the cause of labour. **B.P. Wadia, M. Singaravelar, Thiru. Vi. Kalyanasundaram** and others initiated the formation of labour unions in the Madras Presidency.
- In **1918, India's first organised trade union, the Madras Labour Union, was formed**. The first All India Trade Union Conference (**AITUC**) was held on **31 October 1920 in Bombay**. The delegates discussed several resolutions. These included a demand for protection from police interference in labour disputes, the maintenance of an unemployment register, restriction on exporting foodstuffs, compensation for injuries, and health insurance.

Labour Movements in Tamil Nadu



Labour Statue in Marina Beach

- In addition, the delegates demanded that Indian workers be given some representation in the government, just as employers had representatives on legislative councils.
- M. Singaravelar (1860–1946), was a pioneer in the labour movement activities in the Madras presidency. He was born in Madras and graduated from the Presidency College, University of Madras.
- He advocated Buddhism in his early life. He knew many languages, including Tamil, English, Urdu, Hindi, German, French and Russian and wrote about the ideas of **Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and Albert Einstein in Tamil.**
- He organised the first ever celebration of **May Day in 1923**. He was one of the early leaders of the Communist Party of India. He published a Tamil newspaper, ***Thozhilalan (Worker)*** to address the problems of the working class.
- He was closely associated with Periyar and the Self- Respect Movement.

Language Agitation before Indian Independence

- In general, language is a dominant symbol of identity and it is associated with culture and sentiments of any society. Tamil regained its prominence in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. **Maraimalai Adigal's Pure Tamil Movement**, the language reforms of Periyar and Tamil Isai Movement helped to galvanise the Tamil language.
- Tamil renaissance that led the Dravidian consciousness made a great intervention in the development of modern Tamil language and its art forms.
- Agamic temples did not permit rituals in Tamil. Tamil songs had a marginal place in musical concerts.
- **Abraham Pandithar** systematically studied the history of Tamil music and attempted to reconstruct the ancient Tamil musical system. He founded the **Tanjore Sangitha Vidya Mahajana Sangam in 1912** and it became the kernel of the Tamil Isai Movement (Tamil Music Movement). The movement gave importance to the singing of Tamil compositions in music concerts.

Language Agitation before Indian Independence

- **The first Tamil Isai Conference was held in 1943**, to discuss the status of Tamil music.
- The implementation of Hindi as a compulsory language in Tamil Nadu, at various points of time, was seen as a threat to Tamil language and culture. C. Rajaji, the Premier of Madras Presidency, introduced Hindi as a compulsory subject in schools.
- This created a stiff opposition in Madras province. Periyar declared that the introduction of Hindi over Tamil would deny the Dravidians of their job opportunities.
- Maraimalai Adigal pointed out that the Tamil language would suffer with the introduction of Hindi. The anti-Hindi campaigners considered it an ideological battle against Brahminism and the hegemony of Sanskrit over Tamil.
- They saw Sanskrit as a vehicle for propagation of Brahmanical ideology, there by preserving the caste hierarchies and gender inequalities. The agitation was marked by massive protest meetings, demonstrations, and hunger strikes. Tens of thousands of people took part in the agitation.

Women's Movements

- There were several streams of women's movements and organisations established in the early twentieth century to address the question of women empowerment in Madras Presidency.
- Women's India Association (WIA) and All India Women's Conference (AIWC) are the important among them in Tamil Nadu. WIA was started in 1917 by Annie Besant, Dorothy Jinarajadasa and Margaret Cousins at Adyar, Madras.
- The Association published pamphlets and bulletins in different languages to detail the problems of personal hygiene, marriage laws, voting rights, child care and women's role in the public through the pamphlets in different in languages.
- A Journal was started in early 1918, which was published periodically, in English, Tamil and Telugu, called **Stree Dharma**.

Women's Movements



Muvalur
Ramamirtham

- In the meantime, WIA formed the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) in 1927 to address the problem of women's education and recommended that the government implement various policies for the uplift of women.
- Women's liberation was one of the important objectives of the Self-Respect Movement. Selfrespecters led by Periyar E.V.R. worked for gender equality and gender sensitisation of the society.
- The movement provided a space for women to share their ideas. There were several women activists in the movement.
- Muthulakshmi Ammaiyar, Nagammai, Kannamma, Nilavathi, Muvalur Ramamirtham, Rukmani Ammal, Alarmelmangai Thayammal, Nilambikai, and Sivakami Chidambaranar are prominent among them.

Women's Movements

- There was a custom of dedicating young girls to the Hindu temples as a servant of God, known as *devadasi*.
- Though intended as a service to god it soon got corrupted leading to extensive immorality and abuse of the women. Dr. Muthulakshmi Ammaiyar, was in the forefront of the campaign pressing for a legislation to abolish this devadasi system.
- **The Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act 1947** was enacted by the government. In 1930, Muthulakshmi Ammaiyar introduced in the Madras Legislative Council a Bill on the “prevention of the dedication of women to Hindu temples in the Presidency of Madras”.
- The Bill, which later became the Devadasi Abolition Act, declared the “**pottukattu ceremony**” in the precincts of Hindu temples or any other place of worship unlawful, gave legal sanction to devadasis to contract marriage, and prescribed a minimum punishment of five years’ imprisonment for those found guilty of aiding and abetting the devadasi system.
- The Bill had to wait for over 15 years to become an Act.



Muvalur
Ramamirtham



Singaravelar



M.C. Rajah



Thanthai Periyar Memorial (Vaikom, Kerala)



Labour Statue in Marina Beach



Rettaimalai
Srinivasan



Periyar E.V.R



Muthulakshmi Ammaiyar



Sir Pitti Theyagarayar



T.M. Nair



Dr. C. Natesanar



Maraimalai Adigal



Thiru. Vi. Ka



Bharatidasan



Parithimar Kalignar



P. Sundaranar



Robert Caldwell



Ziegenbalg



C.W. Damotharanar



U.V. Swaminathar



EXERCISE

I. Choose the correct answer

- _____ was the pioneer of social Reformers in India.
a) C.W. Damotharanar
b) Periyar
c) Raja Rammohan Roy
d) Maraimalai Adigal
- _____ established a full-fledged printing press in 1709, at Tranquebar.
a) Caldwell b) F.W. Ellis
c) Ziegenbalg d) Meenakshisundaram
- _____ was the official newspaper of the Self Respect Movement.
a) KudiArasu b) Puratchi
c) Viduthalai d) Paguththarivu
- Periyar wanted religion to be replaced by _____
a) Nationalism b) Iconoclasm
c) Rationalism d) Spiritualism



- _____ founded Adi Dravida Mahajana Sabha in 1893.
a) Rettaimalai Srinivasan
b) B. R. Ambedkar
c) Rajaji
d) M. C. Rajah
- India's first organised trade union, the Madras Labour Union was formed in _____.
a) 1918 b) 1917 c) 1916 d) 1914
- _____ was established by the Justice Party Government for the selection of Government officials.
a) Staff Selection Board
b) Public Service Commission
c) Provincial Staff Recruitment Board
d) Staff Selection Commission
- _____ was the first elected Legislative Council Member from the depressed class in Madras Province.
a) M. C. Rajah
b) Rettaimalai Srinivasan
c) T.M. Nair
d) P. Varadarajulu

II. Fill in the blanks

1. _____ was the first non-European language that went into print.
2. The College of Fort St. George was founded by _____.
3. _____ is considered the father of Tamil linguistic purism.
4. _____ was the first to approve participation of women in the electoral politics.
5. The name Suriyanarayana Sastri changed in Tamil as _____.
6. _____ gave prominence to Tamil music.
7. The first Woman Legislator in India was _____.

III Choose the correct statement

1. (i) Thirukkural was one of the earliest Tamil literary texts to be published in 1812.
(ii) Maraimalai Adigal collected and edited different palm leaf manuscripts of the Tamil grammars and literature.
(iii) Robert Caldwell established the close affinity between the Dravidian languages in contrast with Sanskrit and also established the antiquity of Tamil.
(iv) Thiru.Vi. Kalyanasundaram was an early pioneer in Trade union movement.
a) (i) and (ii) are correct
b) (i) and (iii) are correct
c) (ii) and (iii) are correct
d) (iv) is correct
2. (i) Margret Cousins was one of the founders of Women's India Association.
(ii) Periyar spent his entire life campaigning against superstitions through Thinkers or Rationalists Forums he had formed.
(iii) Singaravelar was a staunch supporter of the Hindu Mahasabha
(iv) Periyar emphasised that the caste system in South India is linked with the arrival of Brahmins from the North.

- a) (iii) and (iv) are correct
- b) (ii), (iii) and (iv) are correct
- c) (i), (ii) and (iv) are correct
- d) (ii) and (iii) are correct

3. **Assertion (A):** The Justice Party continued to remain in government from 1920-1937 in Madras Presidency.

Reason (R): The Congress Party boycotted the Madras Legislature during this period of Dyarchy.

- a) Both A and R are correct
- b) A is correct, but R is not the correct explanation
- c) Both A and R are wrong
- d) R is correct, but it has no relevance to A

4. **Assertion (A):** As World War I was in progress, the British Government was considering the introduction of representative institutions for Indians after the war.

Reason (R): In 1920, Dyarchy as a form of Government was introduced in the provinces.

- a) A is correct, but R is not the correct reason
- b) Both A and R are wrong
- c) Both A and R are right
- d) A is wrong and R has no relevance to A

IV. Match the following

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Dravidian Home | - Maraimalai Adigal |
| 2. <i>Thozhilalan</i> | - Rettaimalai
Srinivasan |
| 3. Tani Tamil Iyakkam | - Singaravelar |
| 4. Jeeviya Saritha
Surukkam | - Natesanar |

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 found 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

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. Our first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation for that institute.

She was not only interested in medicine but also in politics and social reforms. She dedicated herself to the cause of 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** an orphanage at Santhome in Madras (Now at Adyar). Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy, through her dedicated and untiring 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 instinct 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 Karun thattankudi near Thanjavur.

As she was very much influenced by the ideas of Periyar, she showed 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 reforms. Among them Moovalur Ramamirdham Ammaiyar was most important. she was born in 1883 in Thiruvarur but was brought up in 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 illtreated 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. Muthu lakshmi 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 TamilNadu has instituted the **"Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammal Ninaivu Marriage Assistance scheme"** a social welfare scheme to provide financial assistance to poor women.

After seeing her dream became 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 Tamil Nadu.

Caste inequality was another significant short 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. History will not forget their selfless service.

I) Choose the correct answer.

1. South Indian Liberal Federation is otherwise known as the
 - a) Dravidan Party
 - b) Janantha Party
 - c) Telugu Desam
 - d) Justice Party
2. Periyar transformed the Justice Party into
 - a) Akalidal
 - b) Pattali Makkal Kazhagam
 - c) Dravidar Kazhagam
 - d) Swarajaya
3. The greatest social reformer of TamilNadu
 - a) E.V.Ramasamy
 - b) Nehru
 - c) Gandhiji
 - d) Raja Rammohan Roy
4. Vaikam is a place in
 - a) TamilNadu
 - b) Andra Pradesh
 - c) Karnataka
 - d) Kerala
5. C.N. Annadurai was affectionately called as
 - a) Chacha
 - b) Nethaji
 - c) Anna
 - d) Periyar
6. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam was founded by
 - a) C.N. Annadurai
 - b) M. Karunanidhi
 - c) K. Kamaraj
 - d) M.G. Ramachandran
7. C.N. Annadurai was conferred Doctorate by
 - a) Anna University
 - b) Annamalai University
 - c) Manipal University
 - d) Bharathiar University
8. Due to Dr. Muthulakshmi's good efforts the cancer institute was started at
 - a) Anna Nagar
 - b) Chengalpattu
 - c) Kanchipuram
 - d) Adyar
9. All India women conference was organized at
 - a) Pune
 - b) Bombay
 - c) Thane
 - d) Satara
10. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy started an orphanage known as
 - a) Anbu Illam
 - b) Saraswathi Illam
 - c) Avvai illam
 - d) Lakshmi Illam
11. Dr. S. Dharmambal started an agitation for the cause of Tamil teachers called
 - a) Nalla varam
 - b) Hindi varam
 - c) Tamil Varam
 - d. Elavu Varam
12. Moovalur Ramamirdham was born in
 - a) 1885
 - b) 1887
 - c) 1889
 - d) 1883

E.V.R. Periyar

- ❑ Born on 1879
- ❑ Rational movement, Self Respect
- ❑ Against Brahmins
- ❑ 1944 – Dravida Kalagam
- ❑ Joined INC in 1919, resigned in 1925
- ❑ 1924 – Vaikam Satyagraha
- ❑ Vaikam Hero – Periyar
- ❑ 1926 – Kudiyarasu, Republic Magazine
- ❑ 1929 – 1932 – International Tour Malaya, Europe, Russia
- ❑ 1938 – Leader of Justice Party
- ❑ 1944 – Dravida Kalagam
- ❑ 1973 – Died

QUICK FACTS

- ❑ Head of Hindu Paribalan Sabha in Burma – Madurai pillai (1858 - 1913)
- ❑ India's First Cooperative Society **Triplicane Urban Cooperative Society (TUCS)** was started by **V.S. Srinivasa Sastri** in 1904