

Living Legend Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar – A Study

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Abstract: *The objective of the study is to describe about the Living Legend Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar. The study will be analyzing the early career his entry in to politics, his influence of spiritualism and nation building. Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar is an embodiment of rich human qualities blended with simplicity, virtue. He was also great Tamil Scholar and an efficient feudatory of Ramanathapuram region. It is also to discuss the social service of Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar and he was a true pioneer of social reforms. Though we have lost the physical presence of such a dynamic leader his spirit still alive in lakhs of living hearts leads them in the right direction.*

Keywords : *Muthuramalinga Thevar, Mukkulathor, Pandiyas.*

I.INTRODUCTION

Pasumpon U. Muthuramalinga Thevar, the embodiment of rich human qualities blended with simplicity, virtue, and wisdom was born on 30th October 1908. For a country reeling under the heels of the Great kingdoms of the Pandiyas, the instinct of freedom, service and courage was in his genes and the environment in which he was brought up successfully added fuel to this inborn fire. He was born as the prestigious son of a wealthy land owning family of the village Pasumpon in Ramanathapuram District. His parents were Ukirapandia Thevar and Indirani. He belonged to the Kondayankottai Marava community, known for its valour and heroism among the 'Mukkulathor'. He was not an exception to the philanthropy of the Pasumpon family, as his great grandfather on the paternal side, Athi Muthuramalinga Thevar had already established his heroism in the soils of Ramanathapuram. He was also a great Tamil scholar and an efficient feudatory of that region. Ukirapandia Thevar was a great devotee of Lord Siva and he had done charity to the poor and the needy.

II. EARLY CAREER

Thevar's mother Indirani passed away, when Thevar was one year old. He was brought up under the loving care of his maternal grandmother, Raniammaiar at Kalluppatti village.' She was a very spiritual person and her spirituality left a deep impression on the young mind. When Thevar was six years old, a private tutor called Kuraiyaravasithan Pillai from Vallanthalai village was appointed to teach Thevar who was at that time living in Kalluppatti village. Kuraiyaravasithan Pillai was a great Tamil scholar of the time, who visited Thevar's village every day to teach him. Once on a visit to Kuttralam, Kuraiyaravasithan Pillai disappeared and was not found thereafter. Because of this, a new tutor was appointed from Thanjavur, who stayed at Thevar's home and continued his education. A well-wisher of the family, by name Kulandaisamy Pillai, was instrumental in teaching Thevar the ancient heritage of Indian literature like Ramayana, the Mahabharatha and cillor ballads.

When Thevar was nine years old, he joined the American Mission Elementary School at Kamuthi on 16th June 1917. His High School education was continued in Pasumalai High School in 1920, Madurai and later at Madurai Union Christian High School in 1924. At that time Thevar's grandmother accompanied him to Madurai. Later, at the insistence of the Rajah of Ramanathapuram, Thevar was separated from his grandmother and taken to the Rajah's High School in Ramanathapuram. With the occurrence of plague in Ramanathapuram, Thevar's grandmother took him back to Kalluppatti and this ended Thevar's formal education.

Though his formal education came to an abrupt end, he studied many books about Ramalinga Vallalar, Ramakrishna Paramahamsar, Vivekananda, Buddhists, Vedas etc., and improved his knowledge and the valuable experience of staying away from home and life under different stresses and strains groomed him into a more matured, principel human with strong determination. The lack of formal education did not inhibit him from becoming one of the greatest orators and social reformers of India.

III. INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUALISM

"Muthuramalinga Thevar was one who nationalized his body and spiritualised his soul".

- S. Srinivasa Iyengar

There were many strong incidents that shaped Muthuramalinga Thevar to the truth of the above statement. They have been identified as follows:

On a fine day, when he was taken to a hotel at Madurai by his caretaker, he was in a jubilant mood. On his entry into the hotel, he was taken up by the life size photograph of various Gods; among them was a huge portrait of Swami Vivekananda. As he stared at it, he was looking at his own self in that posture. It was just, for a flash of a second. He could not reason it out. A hollow feeling caught him. Soon he experienced tears rushing down his cheeks. It was a strange experience that happened for the first time in his life. He left the hotel immediately. Days passed and on another occasion when he was with his grandmother at the 'Shri Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple' at Madurai and was praying before Lord Muruga, a similar experience of seeing himself in the idol of Lord Muruga caught him. He went through the turmoil once again, but he could not reason it out.

But, on both of these occasions, he felt that there was a strong need to conquer the materialistic and sensual pleasures by the strength of spirituality, and this was the beginning into the never ending road of spiritualism.

"ability cannot create purity but purity can create ability" - Thevar

Thevar was of the opinion that knowledge gained by books was not the ultimate knowledge, but self-realisation was the true knowledge. He jumped into constant meditation and purity and was influenced highly by the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. Thus Swami Vivekananda became the spiritual guru of Muthuramalinga Thevar

As a school student, Muthuramalinga Thevar was different from his classmates. There was a constant instinct in him to rebel against the established, and unacceptable modalities and this quality of Muthuramalinga Thevar brought him into the forefront of politics.

IV. INFLUENCE OF NATION BUILDING

On one of the occasions, when Muthuramalinga Thevar was on a visit to Madras he was enjoying the cool breeze of Marina along with his

school friends. Suddenly an awful scene caught him. A board was hung in a hotel that read, "Dogs and Indians are Prohibited" and this made Muthuramalinga Thevar understand the intensity of discrimination and humiliation that the Indians had to face under the British. He decided to sacrifice himself for the sake of our nation and to struggle against the British for our rights and freedom.

Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar had worked throughout his life. to serve the society and Nation and took active part in the freedom struggle. He was very well acquainted with not only arts. but also the Vedas and literary heritage of both Tamil and English.

Thevar was always seen with a clean-shaven face and well-groomed hair. the following end of which, with a slight curl, falling behind the neck. He never had a twisted moustache but in the forties he had a beautifully trimmed full moustache. He was tall erect and well above the average, impressive and majestic in appearance. He was somewhat predisposed to obesity. Gentle and affectionate in disposition. he could be very firm, even relentless whenever occasion demanded. To know him was to love him. For hours together he would lecture untiringly. His resonant voice and ringing tone never failed him. His spontaneous flow of words. rich in meaning and punctuated by quotations, would impress a lay man and an intellectual alike. His speeches and writings had a new, vigorous and aggressive quality which electrified the country.

V. ENTRY IN POLITICS

Thevar entered into the politics in 1927. when he had close relation with Subash Chandra Bose, who was his political friend. Later in his life as a politician. he became a great crowd puller. By his articulating capacity he attracted the mass.

His speeches portrayed the reality they were not just a collection of quotes or bundle of anecdotes or an ornamented description or a statistics of facts and figures or a dry philosophical lecture. As a sensors orator he came and controlled the audience with his speech. Thevar's speeches transcended into the minds of millions that made them act to his words. The emergence of Thevar on the political horizon of the country thus truly a watershed in the life of the country. 1

Thevar used his eloquent power to mobilise the support of people to throw away the British Imperialism from Indian and also the superstitions they carried. The moment he entered politics. the

political climate of Justice Party was reduced. Thevar, after joining Congress Party, helped Congress to win many seats at the Assembly and Council Elections. Thevar's personality and his speech proved to be an asset to the Congress. It was the presence of Thevar in Congress, that the party gained popularity in the interior parts of Tamil Nadu.

Thevar had an unbeatable record in his Political career. The victory events starts from 1937 general election runs to 1962. Parliamentary election. Where he won all the elections with wide margin. From 1952-1957 he became the Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and from 1957-1963 he became the member of Parliament

Following Subash Chandra Bose, he organised agitations and political discussions and toured villages and aroused national consciousness by speeches with the intention of reviving valour and courage among the people. But though a revolutionary, and practical politician who had the wisdom to realize that the revolutionary era of Subash Chandra Bose. Still in the history of the country's freedom struggle he occupies an important place for his dedicated service to his nation and his attempt to achieve national unity at a very- high religious and philosophical level.

Politics was not his only field. he had proved his excellence in almost all the fields. He dedicated himself for the cause of downtrodden and Harijans. He also organised various movement for such causes.

Though he holds the name Thevar he was not an individual, who worked for Thevar community. He saw the society as a human being. His idea of religion was universal. He had such a magnanimity and charitable attitude in him that inspite of being born in a royal family, he was the one who took stern measure to abolish the very system of zamindari. The role in Temple Entry Movement has been a mark in the pages of history as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned. This is because his fierce activities in this arena broke the most rigid superiority of the Brahmin class. Repeal of Criminal Tribes Act was due to the hard struggle of Thevar.

Thevar's contribution towards the suffering working of Mills strikes was an exception by itself. This description of religion and initiation of action in this regard has been unique. The definition of nationalistic spirit was highly captive that shook the orthodox society. He proved to be a realist when it came to prescribing solutions to sufferings. He was particularly sensitive to spot the inherent weakness in any kind of the system. This made him an acceptable

leader with no hesitation and had earned him the titles 'An Uncrowned Monarch', '-Netaji of the South', 'The Lion of the South'.

VI. SOCIAL REFORMER

Thevar was the true pioneer of social reform. He was essentially a man of faith, a man of religion, a man whose life was established in God. His attempts to study and make predictions about future be it a national or international issue turned to be cent percent true. Thevar's dealing of the sensitive of Tamil Nadu have proved to be a valued guide to the contemporary studies. He was a great leader and as an assumed king of Tamil Nadu. His words were law to the people. The people not only loved him but also admired him and adored him. He possessed all characteristics, of a great leader viz., patriotism, selflessness and a great moral character.

The 'Thevar era' is of special significance. The transformation of the Congress Party from a political platform of the sophisticated, westernised and educated few to a mass movement drawing strength from the millions of the poor and down-trodden was possible because of the new orientation given to the freedom struggle by Thevar. The 'Thevar era' constitutes a significant landmark in our struggles for independence. It was essentially in this period that a moral strength was imparted to this movement and a new political thought was imparted to this movement and a new political strategy for the struggle came to be accepted.

His importance in the present day has been rightly acknowledged. The evidence being the birth of a whole district Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar dedicated to the yeoman service of the living God Muthuramalinga Thevar. Paying warm tribute to the service of the Thevar in the causes of down-trodden a national stamp picturing Thevar was released on 30.10.1995.

The life history of Thevar is prescribed in the text books of the high school students by Tamilnadu text book society. To honour Thevar, a large size photograph of Thevar is in the Tamilnadu Legislative Assembly hall. According to the Tamilnadu in government order, it recommended to display Thevar's photograph in all the government offices and public places. These events substantiates the importance of Thevar as a renowned personality in the society.

VII. CONCLUSION

Pasumpon Thevar can never become out of date because he speaks to us and to the whole world with the voice of tomorrow.

To the world Thevar was a dream that should never come to an end. But as in all dreams, the curtain is pulled; the eyelids open, and the dream comes to an abrupt end but the pleasure of the dream lives fresh in the hearts forever. And like wise Thevar is a living legend. He is a mighty leader indeed who desired to create more leaders like him. Though we have lost the physical presence of such a dynamic leader, his spirit still lives in lakhs of loving hearts of Tamilnadu and leads them in the right direction.

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