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GENESIS OF THE PURE TAMIL MOVEMENT IN TAMILNADU

G. Premkumar

The pure Tamil movement was a purist movement started by Maraimalai Adikal¹ (1876-1950) to rid Tamil writing of the various non-Tamil especially of Sanskrit words, which have gained currency in ordinary usage. Tamil egalitarian ideas were partly rediscovered by nineteenth century Christian missionaries, and they left their impress of the unique antiquity of Tamil language, literature, history and culture of the Natives. It made the natives to realise that their mother tongue was in no way inferior to the North Indian Sanskrit. It widened the scope of the in-depth study of the languages, literatures, history and cultures. Moreover, it asserted the superiority of the Tamil language and stressed that it is free from the influence of any other language. Considering these characteristics of the Tamil language, a few learned scholars came forward to purify Tamil of its alien influence. This resulted in the form of a movement, which its founder called as 'Taniitamil movement' in Tamil language which means 'Pure Tamil Movement'. In this paper an attempt is made to trace the factors which contributed to the genesis of pure Tamil Movement.

The Influence of Missionary Writings

Certain statements by European missionary scholars like Percival, Winslow, Caldwell, Pope and others kindled a sense of pride among Tamils about their heritage. The enthusiasm and thrill with which the European savants presented the salient features of Tamil language, literature, antiquities and religion also instilled in these Tamil scholars a notion of uniqueness about their past glory and set them apart from other races and peoples of India, especially the Brahmin community (broadly identified as Aryans)²

Rev. P. Percival was the Professor of Vernacular Literature at Presidency College, Madras during 1860s and collected nearly 5000 proverbs and edited them. Thus he laid the

foundation for linguistic research.³ Following in his footsteps Winslow, an American born Missionary scholar who settled in Madras and published a Dictionary in 1862. He is well-known to the Tamil world through his Dictionary. In his research work, he said that while all the vernaculars of India had been enriched by Sanskrit, that wonderful language has borrowed from the Dravidian group of which Tamil is the oldest⁴. It also strengthened the ideas of Percival about the glory of the Tamils.

An outstanding scholar among the Christian Missionaries, Bishop Dr. Robert Caldwell (1814-1891) had strained his every nerve to resurrect Tamil from the dustbin. Caldwell is considered in Tamil Nadu as a prophetic scholar, the memory of whom in Tamil Nadu has been very sacred to the Dravidologists. It was he who resurrected and coined the word Dravidian to mean all the South Indian Languages. He studied them deeply to many years so that he could announce to the world authoritatively that the Dravidian languages did not originate from the Aryan family or do not belong to that family that their origins should be discovered somewhere else⁵.

Caldwell's thesis dispelled the darkness that satisfied the antiquity of Tamil and its family and dismantled the hegemony of Sanskrits, that it was the mother of all the world language, awakened the world of scholarship to Tamil studies and helped to remove all the prevalent fallacies about the Dravidian family of languages⁶. In his studies he showed the relations that prevailed between Sanskrit and the Dravidian group of Languages. He without any prejudice made it known that Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam had borrowed a lot of words from Sanskrit. As far as Tamil is concerned he said that it functioned independently. It is very difficult to avoid the impact of Sanskrit on the functioning of Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, but Tamil

has independent standing and requires no support of Sanskrit. In his analysis he first of all spoke about purity of the language. Then he emphasised the ancient glory of Tamil of all the Dravidian languages¹⁰. According to him Tamil is the classical and well matured language.

Caldwell's rare discovery, resurrection and his installation of Tamil on the high pedestal really startled the world of scholarship. But after sometime the Tamil world got awakened to the realities and started to continue the path identified by this great linguist¹¹. The immediate impact of his writings and findings on Tamils was the redemption of Tamil from the hegemony of any alien dialect, hence Pure Tamil Movement.

Another very leading Tamil Missionary scholar was G.U Pope (1820-1908). He worked as a Lecturer in Tamil and Telugu at the University of Oxford from 1884 to 1896. He translated Tirukkural, Tiruvacagam and Naladiyar in to English¹². His translation of the sacred Kural, the first of its kind into English with all its couplets, numbering a total of 1330, is considered as an example of his command of the subject matter in Kural.

Conceptualisation of the Dravidian Idea by Prof. Sundaram Pillai

The European missionaries, particularly Dr. Robert Caldwell and Dr. G.U Pope, opened up the flood gates of Dravidian studies which in fact led to the rediscovery of the Dravidian past. The rediscovery of the Dravidian antiquity and history, language and literature culture and thoughts, in turn, led to the Dravidian awakening. Influenced by the missionary zeal and enthusiasm of westerners Professor P. Sundaram Pillai¹⁶ conceptualised the Dravidian idea. He gave the rediscovered idea a shape, inner meaning and the coverage. As an ardent admirer of the Tamil language, its literatures and culture, Prof. Sundaram Pillai rose above the petty linguistic prejudices of South Indian, i.e. the Tamils, Telugs, Kannadigas and Malayalees, and gave them a new common bond of union on the geo-physical (regional), racial, linguistic and cultural grounds. The Tamizh Thaivazhthu (invocation of mother Goddess) of his famous drama Manonmaniam (1891) reverberates this common bond of union¹⁷. It makes a clear demarcation of the land of the Dravidians as the

South of India being occupied by the race speaking a family of language.

Further, the author compared the works both in Sanskrit and Tamil and asserted that Tamil works are superior in their imagination morality piety, social justice and relevance. For instance, he said that those who knew the Kural well would never accept the laws of Manu, which discriminates between different castes and prescribes differing moral codes and justice. Likewise, he said that those who are captivated by the enthralling Tiruvacagam would not waste their time in chanting the vedas²⁰.

De-sanskritisation

In the days of C.J Beschi (1680-1747) the need to preserve Tamil was felt. He criticised excessive Sanskritisation in children's theological literature²³. Therefore personal names were de-sanskritised. A wrong impression was created that it all started with Swami Vedachalam calling himself MaraiMalai Adikal²⁴. Even in the 16th century Fr. Henriques signed his name as Andrikku Pathiriyar²⁵. Robert DeNobili (1577-1656) translated his name in the spoken Tamil usage of the elite of his age in to Thathuva Pothakar²⁶ and Fr. Beschi called himself Veeramamunivar²⁷. In conformity with the literary tradition of that era. Prof. V.S. Manickam considers professor Vi. Ko. Suryanarayana Sastri (1870-1903), a British scholar of high repute, who lived in the beginning of the 20th century, as the forerunner of the Pure Tamil Movement²⁸. He thereby advocated the independence of Tamil, particularly in his Tamil book. A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages. Prof. V.S. Manickam observes that the Professor himself in his zeal for pure Tamil, in his last days, changed his Sanskrit name 'Surya Narayana Sastri' in to Tamil name 'Parithimar Kalsignar'²⁹. Getting inspired by Prof. Parithimar Kalsignar's spark, Prof. Marai Malai Adikal spearheaded a movement for purifying Tamil of its Sanskrit bias and preserving the pristine purity of Tamil.

Early Influences of MaraiMalai Adikal

Before launching the Pure Tamil Movement, Swami Vedachalam had a preparatory period during which he had the benefit of learning and discussing matters with active and eminent personalities like Prof. Sundaram Pillai, Nallasami Pillai and Prof. Surya

Narayanasastri, who were propagating the ideas concerning the antiquity and cultural self-sufficiency of the Dravidians. It is probable that there were also other influences that shaped Swami Vedachalam's ideas³³. He published his first book in 1898 with the opening lines of Tirukkural. From, then, on a stream of varied publications in Tamil and English came out from his prolific pen. In 1902 the Adikal started a monthly journal viz Gnanacakaram. In the first issue itself he started to trace the origin of Tamil. He gave a lecture in the anniversary at the Madurai Tamil Sangam on 24 May 1904. It attracted the audiences who again invited him for the fourth anniversary of the sangam. There after he met the Tamizh Thatha U.Ve.Saminatha Iyer on May 26, 1906 in its fifth anniversary. The TamizhThatha (grand old man of Tamil) had all appreciation for the efforts of MaraiMalai Adikal³⁵.

Conclusion

The process of Dravidian awakening was not a systematic attempt on the part of the Tamils to purify their language and culture from alien influence. It was the spontaneous outcome of the rediscovery of the greatness of ancient Tamil classics in comparison with the North Indian works. The spontaneity was revealed in the outpourings of those connoisseurs of Tamil Language, literature, history and culture. This Dravidian awakening cumulatively brought into existence the Pure Tamil Movement. It is indeed interesting to speculate on its timing when we recall the fact that the Justice Party³⁹officially called at the beginning, South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF), which came into being from 1916 onwards. The organisation announced its birth with the publication of the 'Non Brahmin Manifesto' and proclaimed its aim to promote and protect the political interests of the non-Brahmin caste Hindus.

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A CRITICAL STUDY FOR THE DELAY IN THE ENACTMENT OF 73RD AND 74TH AMENDMENT ACTS IN FREE INDIA

C. Priyalakshmi

Introduction

India is a largest democratic country in the world. The success of democracy only lies in the devolution and decentralization of the powers to the local bodies. Indian modern system of Panchayat is based in part on traditional Panchayat Governance on the vision of

Mahatma Gandhi that "gram swaraj" and in part by the work of various committees to harmonize the highly centralized Indian governmental administration with a degree of local autonomy.¹ The result was intended to create greater participation in local government by people with more effective implementation of rural and urban