



The Modern

Rationalist

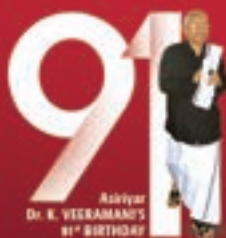
annual
number 2023



December 2

SELF-RESPECT
DAY

DRAVIDIAN MODEL & HISTORIC CENTENARIES



91
Azhiyar
Dr. K. VEERAMANI'S
91st BIRTHDAY

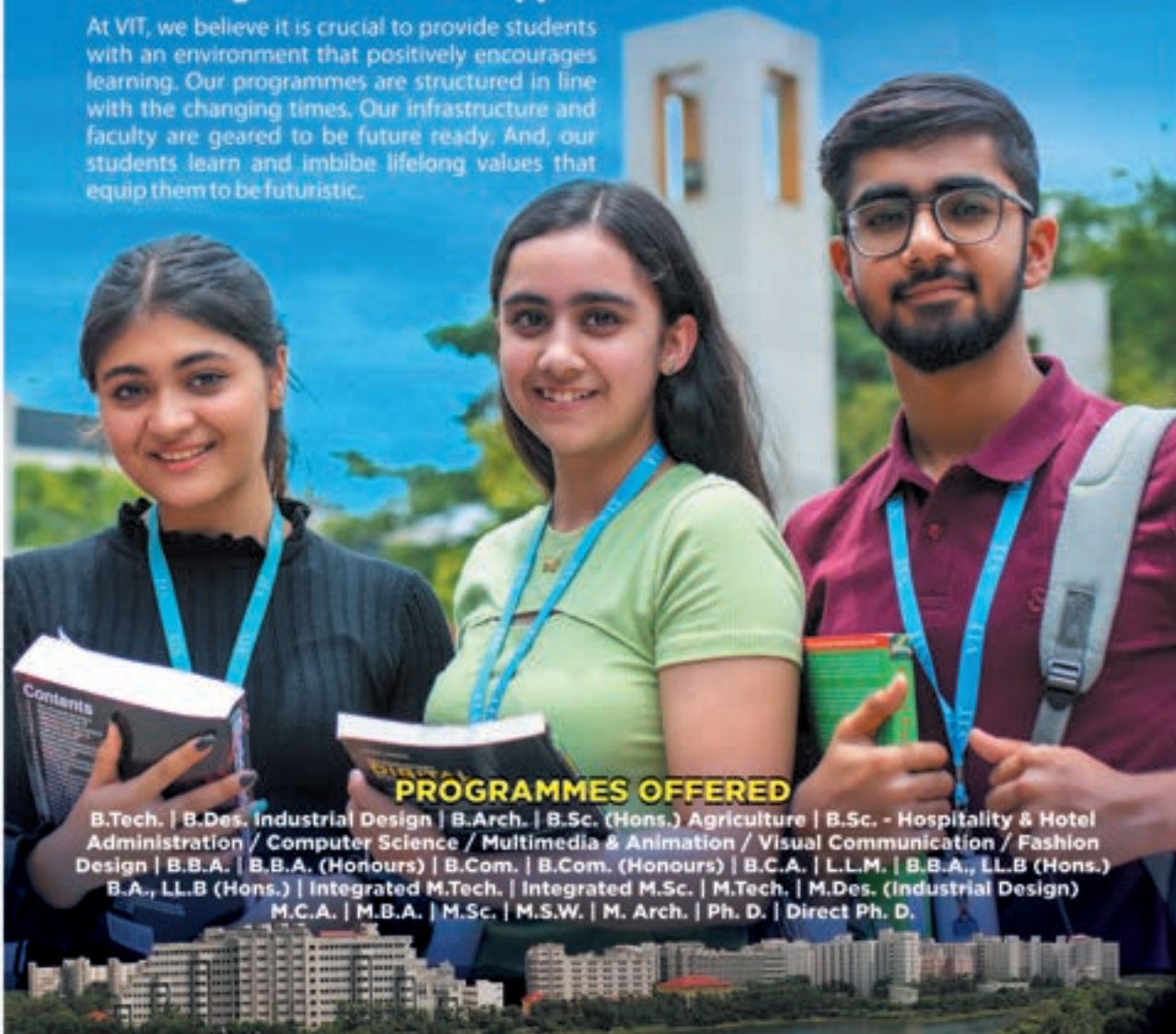


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The Modern
Rationalist
 annual
number 2023

VARANASI STRUKTURE - 100



UNAPPROACHABILITY

CHERAMMADEVI CURRICULUM - 100



DISCRIMINATORY DINING

INDUS VALLEY EXCAVATIONS - 100



MOHENJODDARO - HARAPPA ANTIQUITY

KALAMNAR 100



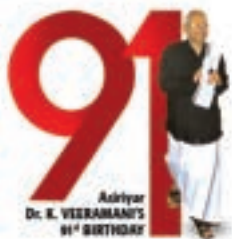
ARCHITECT - DRAVIDIAN MODEL

DRAVIDIAN MODEL & HISTORIC CENTENARIES



December 2

**SELF-RESPECT
 DAY**





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Acknowledgement with gratitude to the Social Justice Stalwarts, Social Scientists, Historians, Intellectuals, Research Scholars - Rationalists, Atheists, Humanists, Secularists and leaders of mainstream political parties and social organisations



Dignitable (Manamigu)

G. PARVATHI

Former Secretary of Dravidar Kazhagam - Women's Wing



Asinyar Dr. K. Veeramanis
91st Birthday Special



4

SALUTE TO THE STALWART!



WOMAN WARRIOR

G. PARVATHI



A former Secretary of Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) Women's Wing, G. Parvathi passed away at 77, on 8th November, 2023 at the residence of her son. It is condoled with profound grief and heartfelt sorrow. She had been a faithful cadre of the DK movement for more than five long decades. She had taken part in almost all the agitations of the movement and suffered imprisonments too.

She used to travel actively all over Tamil Nadu with Women's Wing cadres. She played a vital role in propagating the policies of the DK movement. By her restless efforts Women's Wing units were formed in every district. She rendered public services with the collaborative assistance of her husband the late Black Shirt Cadre A. Ganesan. The movement faces an irreparable loss by the passing away of a loyal female cadre and dauntless warrior who served the movement throughout her life, treating it as her noble mission.

She practised what she preached by getting all her children married off in a self-respect manner, denying caste bias and avoiding orthodox rituals.

Her eyes were donated as a gesture of humanism. It was also her last wish that her body should be kept in Periyar Thidal for a few hours and later donated to a hospital. She wanted mourners to avoid garlanding her body and showering flowers. She insisted on keeping a small container beside the hearse to enable mourners drop some money in it. She wanted the amount thus collected to be contributed later for the monumental 'Periyar World' project. Even by her death, she proved her adherence to her principles. Her passing away is a great loss not only to her kith and kin but also to the entire family of Dravidar Kazhagam.

A Grand Salute to Parvathi's invaluable and immeasurable services to the DK movement! May her family members have the strength to bear the huge loss. May she live in our memory. Once again we convey our condolence to all the Women Wing Cadres, other cadres of the movement and to every member of the bereaved family. Let us all console ourselves with a heavy heart.

K. VEERAMANI
President, Dravidar Kazhagam

DRAVIDIAN MODEL MARCHES ON WITH MODERNITY

The Modern Rationalist Annual Number 2023 gets released on the 91st Birthday of our beloved Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani – 2nd December 2023, celebrated as ‘Self-Respect Day’.

The Annual Number reaches the readership on its 12th year of publication, ‘*The Modern Rationalist*’ monthly was founded by Thanthai Periyar in 1971 and our respectful Editor-in-Chief – Asiriyar Dr.K.Veeramani holds the responsibilities from the beginning. The Annual Number 2023 reaches you on the twin theme: ‘*Dravidian Model*’ and ‘*Historic Centenaries*’.

The Non-Brahmin movement was started in 1916 by Dr. C. Natesan, Sir. Piti. Theagarayar and Dr.T.M. Nair, the triple stalwarts with great envision.

The fundamental initiatives and the deliverance to achieve the objective of dignified life of equality were strengthened by them. The Justice Party that ruled the Madras Presidency under Diarchy from 1920 to 1937 passed the progressive legislations and issued executive orders that remain as the strong bed rock for the ideals of the movement.

Thanthai Periyar through his original thinking backed with practical manifestation transformed the organisation into Dravidian Movement in 1944. Periyar carved out the organisational objective, Dravidian philosophy. Arignar Anna chose the political path, won the mandate of the people and formed the Dravidian party rule in 1967 under the heritage of Justice Party. ‘The Dravidian Model’ rule founded by Anna still continues for more than half a century in Tamil Nadu with more contributions by Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi as its architect. At present it is provided by Hon’ble Thiru. M.K.Stalin, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. In the line of patronage and guidance given by Periyar, the President of the Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) under the leadership of Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani continues the Mission.

The Annual Number 2023 contains the contributions from the educationists, experts in the multifarious modern fields of achievements, with the ideology of Dravidian Model viz. ‘Social Justice’ and ‘Human Equality’. The parental body (DK) has aptly carved out “**Everything for Everyone**” with inclusivity as, the core of ‘Dravidian Model’.



2023, is signified as the year of vital turning points in the form of Centenaries of struggles conducted, archaeological excavations that ensured the antiquity of Dravidian Culture.

In 1924, Thanthai Periyar led the first human rights struggle in Vaikom - the struggle against the discriminatory treatments to the inmate-students of Cheranmadevi Gurukulam, while dining - the archaeological excavations held by Sir John Marshall in Mohenjodaro and Harappa which were projected as Indus Valley Civilization, flourished before the Aryan intrusion - the main architect of Dravidian Model rule by Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi, whose role as Five time Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has been keeping the State distinctively different from the rest of the States in the country – all these historic happenings and the statesmanship march on into their centenaries.

Besides, the Annual Number is published on the 91st Birthday of Asiriyar

Dr.K. Veeramani, that also marks 81 years of his public life, which no other leader has ever led so far. Many intellectuals, scholars, the activists and leaders of political and social movements have contributed articles about their association with the living legend of Dravidian Movement.

Every year *'The Modern Rationalist -Annual Number'* has been adding to its significance. This year also we consider the significance ascends and hope the readership will acknowledge it.

The editorial team wishes Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani a happy 91st Birthday, to counter the challenges ideologically, upbringing the organisational policies as the ardent disciple and as the succeeded leader of Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and 'The Rationalists' Forum, founded by the social revolutionary Thanthai Periyar.

Editorial Committee
The Modern Rationalist
Annual Number 2023

V.P. SINGH

Former Prime Minister of India
(2.12.1989 - 10.11.1990)



During the brief period of Prime Ministership, V.P. Singh made a historic announcement of the reservation of 27 per cent for the Backward Classes in Central Services, as recommended by the Second Backward Classes Commission, chaired by B.P. Mandal.

In a past function of unveiling the portrait of V.P. Singh held in his memory Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani made an appeal to install the statue of V.P. Singh. Kalaigarnar M. Karunanidhi, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu consented. As a mark of respect and gratitude, the FIRST STATUE of V.P. Singh was installed by the present Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on behalf of the Government of Tamil Nadu, on 28th November, 2023 at the Presidency College Campus, Chennai. The wife and the family members of V.P. Singh participated in the function.

Long Live Saviour of Social Justice!

Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani's
91st Birthday Special

91

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M.K. STALIN
CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU



SECRETARIAT
CHENNAI - 600 009.

24 Nov, 2023



ASIRIYAR - A symbol of tireless activism and extensive travels

On this momentous occasion of Asiriyar Ayya's 91st birthday, I extend my hearty greetings and warm wishes to him. Asiriyar Dr K.Veeramani's commitment to the principles of rationalism, social justice, and the ideals of the Dravidian movement has been an enduring source of inspiration for countless individuals across generations.

His leadership as the President of Dravidar Kazhagam continues to play a pivotal role in advancing the cause of self-respect, equality, and rational thinking. The "Modern Rationalist" under his editorship stands as a beacon of knowledge and enlightenment, fostering critical thinking and progressive ideas.

Despite being in his nineties, his tireless activism and extensive travels across the state, campaigning against anti-social justice and anti-democratic acts of the Union BJP Government, showcase his unmatched dedication to the cause. Asiriyar's resilience is truly commendable and serves as a guiding light for all of us. His efforts to propagate Thanthai Periyar's ideals throughout India are noteworthy and deeply appreciated.

In Tamil Nadu, we greatly value Asiriyar's invaluable contributions to the socio-cultural fabric of our state. DMK and I personally always look up to Periyar Thidal for guidance, and Asiriyar Dr K.Veeramani's leadership ensures that this rich legacy continues to thrive.

Happy 91st birthday to Asiriyar Ayya!

With utmost respect and admiration,

Yours sincerely,

(M.K. STALIN)

The Modern Rationalist
Annual Number 2023



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Congress Parliamentary Party

Sonia Gandhi
Chairperson



Phone : 23014481

MESSAGE OF GREETINGS

On the auspicious occasion of the 91st birthday of Dr K Veeramani I send him my warm felicitations. May he enjoy good health and a long life for many years to come.

Dr Veeramani is an inspiring and influential figure in public life in Tamil Nadu, who is widely revered and admired. Under his leadership, Dravidar Kazhagam has been most effective in inculcating principles of self respect and social justice among all sections of society in Tamil Nadu.

I take this opportunity to send my greetings to all supporters of Dravidar Kazhagam and wish them success in their admirable endeavours.



November 30, 2023
New Delhi

10, Janpath, New Delhi - 110 011

Justice DORAISWAMY RAJU

Former Judge, Supreme Court of India

"Kanaka Durga" 20, (Old 39)

Puram Prakasam Road, Balaji Nagar, Royapettah, Chennai – 600 014.



1st December 2023

Revered Asiriyar Avargal

My hearty congratulations, best wishes and appreciations on your 91st Birthday – 2.12.2023.

You have been irrespective of and unmindful of your health also like your Mentor – the acclaimed Socrates of South East Asia carrying out Revolutionary mission and message of the most beloved and revered Thanthai Periyar – on the path laid down by him without any deviation, all along for almost 80 years.

Your Presence, Propaganda, Revolutionary Activities are necessitated, for the current and future welfare of the State as well as the society at large having regard to the attempts of rulers at the helm of affairs in the country to resurrect once again blindfold barbaric customs invented and imposed by the self styled upper caste to exploit them using imaginary sanctions in the name of God, as if such people are the sole agents and spokesmen of the God. As Revered Periyar used to highlight, though the people are physically capable, endowed with innate Scientific Knowledge and Intelligence, in the name of god, the thinking capacity and independent bent of mind has been strangulated and shackled to keep the large majority of the citizens in darkness of governance and barbaric thoughts.

The undoing of such maverick strategies can be effected only by the philosophy of Thanthai Periyar and could be carried out by an undaunted warrior like you, Sir. May your tribe increase and may the best wishes of Thanthai Periyar provide you with a long, healthy, life to serve in great measure the mankind, the country and particularly Tamil Nadu.

Long live Asiriyar Avargal

Ever with love,
Doraiswamy Raju



ESPOUSING CAUSES AND PRINCIPLES WHICH MAY NOT BE 'POPULAR' - EXACTLY AS PERIYAR WAS



GOPALKRISHNA GANDHI

A Former Administrator,
Diplomat and
Governor of West Bengal

Asiriyar Dr K.Veeramani is at the heart of Tamil Nadu's public life, intellectual life and its world of letters. Yet, he is more than that. He belongs to the genre of social philosophers. He is a thinker before anything else, reflecting on issues that are about matters deeper and beyond mere contemporary events. And as a thinker of that kind, he is not interested in applause or popularity. In fact, being the most prominent adherent of Periyar, he is thoroughly at home in what matters to him, are his beliefs, his convictions, his principles.

Unswerving in those, he is at the same time urbane and cosmopolitan enough to hear contrary views and opinions with patience and calm detachment.

I have had the privilege of receiving his affection over the years and have benefited from hearing and reading him. He has been kind enough to send me with unfailing regularity issues of *Viduthalai*, which contain his thoughts and reflect those of his great preceptor. This makes him what he is known as, Asiriyar or Teacher, with a capital 'T'. He would

of course like to be heard and read by more and more persons but even if he were to have no more than an audience or reader of one, he would still be Asiriyar, such is his contented rootedness in what he sees as the truth of his calling - persuasion by an appeal to reason, to good sense and to a dispassionate examination of issues.

I admire his discipline and sense of duty. Undeflected by adversity, not to speak of advancing age, he works tirelessly day in and day out for his beliefs.

In our times when extremisms and violence in thought, word and deed, are growing, and respect for contrary views is diminishing, Periyar's life of struggle for freedom and social justice is a beacon. It only follows that Asiriyar's undiminishing strivings for a just and equitable social order should be inspirational.

That Asiriyar is an atheist and a believer in the abolition of caste-based discriminations, ritualisms and superstitions is well-known. What is not so well known or fully appreciated is his respect for science as a tool for human advancement and his faith in modern education as a vehicle for the emancipation of the downtrodden and of women. And there, Asiriyar belongs to the genre of those social philosophers who believe in the perpetually evolving human propensity for research and investigation of natural phenomena. He is against stagnation of any kind.

I have no doubt that valuable as his contributions have been, Asiriyar has an important role to play in the coming years when 'natural' intelligence is undermined and Artificial Intelligence is going to place both challenges and opportunities before us. Periyar, had he been with us today, would have brought a very original approach to modern dilemmas and we may expect Asiriyar to do the same.

May Tamil Nadu and India be lucky enough to receive Asiriyar Dr K. Veeramani's stream of logic and sharp good sense for many a year to come!

Gopalkrishna Gandhi



Justice S. JAGADEESAN

Formerly Judge of
Madras High Court, Chennai.



12th November 2023

My heartiest wishes to Thiru K. Veeramani, leader of Dravidar Kazhagam party on his 91st birthday.

I have known Thiru K. Veeramani for more than 4 decades. A rationalist with convicted ideologies. He never compromised on his principles. A true disciple of Periyar. When the Reservation right that were ensured through Communal G.O. was invalidated in 1951 by his State wide struggle Periyar captured the attention of the Central rulers and enabled the insertion of Art. 15(4) through the First Constitutional Amendment. The reservation rights of the Backward Classes, which were applicable to the then Madras State enabled the entire country to either sustain or demand through this Amendment. Thiru. K. Veeramani, fought for Social Justice and took it to further heights to liberate the marginalised sections in the society.

Throughout the life of his mentor he had remained a disciplined disciple and rightly imbibed his qualities in propagating caste eradication, women's rights and education, widow remarriage and privileges without any fear for anyone. Even today the rationalist flag is flying in high spirits only because of his zeal. He is a hardworking stalwart with courage striving unmindful of his health for the sake of society in general. That's why various political parties want to be closely associated with him. A leader who never hesitated to extend his helping hand to the needy. A well wisher easily accessible to anyone. A voracious reader always in search of material to support his revolutionary ideals.

I wish him a happy birthday and also a happy, healthy, long and peaceful life.

S. Jagadeesan

Res: Salem House, New No.53A; Old No.23 Third Main Road,
Gandhi Nagar, Adyar, Chennai - 600 020.

Tan Sri Dr. T. MARIMUTHU
President, International Association Tamil Research
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Greetings on joyous 91st Birthday

Warmest congratulations on reaching the remarkable milestone in life on your 91st birthday! Your journey has been an inspiring record of your unwavering dedication to the principles of social justice and the progress of the Tamils.

Your leadership in the Dravidar Kazhagam has been instrumental in carrying forward the legacy of Periyar EVR, and your vision has left an indelible mark on Tamil Nadu's socio-political landscape. It's truly commendable that, in line with your visionary outlook, you played a pivotal role in establishing Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science and Technology (Deemed to be University), a depiction of your commitment to education and intellectual development.

The introduction of the 'Dravidian Model' governance under your guidance is a significant stride towards the realization of a just and equitable society. Your efforts in shaping the political discourse with a focus on social equality and linguistic pride have left an enduring impact.

As we celebrate this milestone achievement may you find joy in reflecting on the positive changes you have brought about and the lives you have touched. Your legacy continues to inspire the present and future generations, and your contributions to the welfare of the Tamils are immeasurable.

Wishing you good health, continued strength, and many more years of fruitful endeavours. May this special day be filled with love, happiness, and the warmth of those whose lives you have enriched.

With utmost respect and warm regards,
Tan Sri Dr. T. Marimuthu

A. RAJA

Member of Parliament
(Lok Sabha)

Chief Whip

DMK Parliamentary Party in Lok Sabha



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21.11.2023



THE MESSAGE OF GREETINGS

My joy knows no bounds on learning that the Ninety-first Birthday of our beloved Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani is to be celebrated on Second of December 2023 and I feel happy immensely. I derive great pleasure because it is not a mere addition of a year to the age of an individual but a sign of an admirable and a unique elder statesman living amidst us making History and teaching History to the Dravidian offsprings. It is historical and remarkable a feat that he who appeared on a Public Platform making his Maiden Public Address at the tender age of Ten continues to be rendering speeches ceaselessly for the Tenth Decade now. Following the footsteps of Periyar, our Asiriyar goes on propagating the dynamic social reformatory principles of Ayya Periyar for the cause of Equality of Humans.

Asiriyar is a vibrant leader creating and mobilizing positive public opinion on the progressive actions to be initiated

for the welfare of society. He has been striving to withdraw the measures of the rulers that are creating a negative impact.

When economic criterion was introduced in 1979 for the reservation of the Backward Classes in Tamil Nadu the Dravidian icons – Kalaingar and Asiriyar campaigned hectically against it throughout the State propagating the Dravidian ideals. They created an awareness to know about the economic criterion that would have denied the reservation rights to the Backward Classes. After meeting with the unprecedented defeat in the 1980 Lok Sabha election, the then ruler of the State, had to withdraw the economic criterion for reservation. In 1980s the initiatives and endeavours of Kalaingar and Asiriyar for the implementation of Mandal Commission recommendations yielded positive results and brought light in the life of the Backward Classes throughout the country. The Saviour of Social Justice, V.P. Singh during his tenure as the Prime Minister of the Country rightly chosen



by the National Front issued an Order on behalf of the Union Government with a Notification to extend for the first time 27 per cent reservation for the OBCs in Central Services.

It is only through the efforts of the Dravidian Movement, the social justice dispensation measures were commenced by Justice Party in 1921. The Communal G.O. issued by it transformed the social conditions of the oppressed people in the State. Its current reflection is seen as Dravidian Model that is sought to be emulated in all other parts of the country.

Asiriyar alone has the rare opportunity in Public life to have closely moved and interacted at close quarters with Thanthai Periyar, Arignar Anna and Kalaignar.

As of now, Asiriyar continues to remain an ideological guiding spirit to the present DMK – led Government under the leadership of Thalapathy M.K. Stalin, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

The public life of Asiriyar has had its impact on four generation and still continues beyond it enlightening the present younger generation. Even today, Thanthai Periyar leads the light beyond Tamil Nadu and India through his humanist-ideology.

It is relevant and applicable to all humans, wherever they are. All these have become possible owing to the successive leaders of Dravidian Movement for whom the parental organization is Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) ably led by our Asiriyar.

Our hearty wish is that Asiriyar shall live long to guide all of us. During the critical phases of our ever continuing Dravidian Journey, the hurdles to be faced can be tackled suitably by Asiriyar.

May Asiriyar live long to uplift the oppressed humans with the noble torch, of 'Self Respect and Rationalism', the baton Periyar and E.V.R. Maniammaiar, passed on to him as their rightful successor.

Let me wish Asiriyar on his 91st Birthday, a very happy and peaceful life with many more laurels and achievements.



(A. RAJA)



MY GRATEFUL SALUTATION TO YOU ALL!

I thank profusely all my fellow – warriors of Rationalism cum humanism for their Warmest Greetings on my 91st Birthday.

What, 'Am I Ninety-one years old!' Really it is earnestly surprising, for I

am not withered by my age and infirmity, in spite of periodic non-cooperation of my physical organs.

My battery is always charged by my Comrades and fellow fighters of our principles of self-respect.





During boyhood with Periyar, 1944

Birthdays may come and go but our commitment to our Self-respect Philosophy and Social Justice remain for ever.

What for do we live?

Is it to lead a routine, dull, drab, dismal life of average aspirations amidst many disappointments?

No, No!

We live in a society of Humans. Hence Humanism should unite us. It demands self-less love and affection, unmindful of any 'quid proquo'!

Out of these 90 years, I continue to be a young, energetic, life-long student of our Mentor Periyar because of the fact of being a Periyarist.

It is my privilege and pleasure of being not only a student of Periyar but also an ardent disciple to play my humble role like Anand to Buddha!

I hope and trust that I am continuing the 'Marathon' of Periyar with many in the Globe. I am humbled by this fact that Periyar's humanist self-respect has become the social science of humanity cutting across the barriers of language, region, ethnicity, equality and dignity of human beings, irrespective of caste

and religion, are to be in our undaunted social life. It is a great movement for Social transformation and rational rejuvenation.

We not only enjoy our self-respective life but also ensure and insure it for all on the Earth!

'Caring and sharing' is another important aspect of our self-respective way of life. This is what we learn from our Mentor Thanthai Periyar.

Bricks and bouquets will neither tire us nor motivate us.

Unmindful of them we carry forward our fight on the social front as a bounden duty.

We continue our journey of Principles of Self Respect and Social Justice treading the road less travelled, more opposed by many.

So far, we have won many battles, but we will have to win the ultimate war - the war against inequality, ignorance, inhuman behaviour and disrespect among human beings.

Let us carry forward the torch of Periyar, our undaunted Leader. With the same vision, vigour and vitality, our March never ends till we achieve our goal-victory.

Guards may be changed; yet the war front will always be vibrant, valiant and self-sacrificial.

Thank you

With humility and regards,

(K. VEERAMANI)

PERIYAR AND CASTE CONFERENCES



A.SIVASUBRAMANIAN
Tamil Scholar
Analytical Writer

The time when caste classification reared its head and a hierarchy was established among the people on the basis of castes, the need to conduct caste conferences became unavoidable.

(Periyar in *Dravidan*¹, 5.10.1929)

Throughout his life, Periyar was committed to oppose caste and religion as a duty. He awakened the people by giving voice to his ideas related to caste and religion through lectures, journal articles, short texts as well as struggles. For this he had to suffer imprisonments also.

Along with these, he also participated and addressed the caste conferences organized by several untouchable and oppressed castes. Moreover, he published his speeches in these conferences in his journal *Kudi Arasu*².

It is natural for anyone to pose the question, “How is Periyar who fought for the abolition of castes justified



in attending these conferences?” The answer to this question can be found in his lectures themselves. To know further, the first step we have to take is to perceive the historical background behind the conduct of these conferences.

Let us begin this search from the evidences we can get from the happenings of the nineteenth century. The East India Company which was functioning until the end of the eighteenth century as the agent of the Nawab of Arcot established itself as the ruler of Tamil Nadu in the nineteenth century. As a base for its power, it imposed taxes and ruined the rural economy of our region by forcing the farmers to cultivate commercial crops for its gain. It also destroyed our handicrafts.

On the other side, it established for the entire Tamil Nadu regular administrative systems in the revenue, finance and police departments. It also introduced new currency and modern communication facilities.

But on top of all these, its remarkable contribution was in the spread of modern education following democratic principles. Christian missionaries also joined hands in this service. Education which was until then beyond the reach of the commoners, under the regime of kings, chieftains and their overlords, became available to such people also to some extent.

With the help of this education, persons from backward and oppressed communities could get employment in the state administration newly created by the colonial government.



Expectably, the top positions of power in the state machinery were cornered by the erstwhile dominant castes including the Brahmins, the Velaalars³ and a section of the newly converted Christians. The cultural oppressions which prevailed in the old social system did not disappear. To be precise, discriminations based on caste and the concomitant decadences continued. Government jobs in accordance with educational qualifications were still not within the reach of the oppressed classes.

Yet, education, communication facilities and the government jobs, though inadequately low, helped the members of each of these castes to organize themselves. Persons belonging to every caste took the initiative to attain for themselves the place due to them in the society. To support this effort, they started magazines and published the histories of their castes. This was possible thanks to the printing press introduced by the colonial regime. Caste conferences were held as a part of this effort. Periyar recorded his view about these conferences in the editorial he wrote for the 24.7.1932 issue of *Kudi Arasu*.

Our support for the caste conferences from the beginning has been based on our view that if all the castes - castes inhabiting the mountaintops, castes living in the middle areas of the mountains, castes living in the mountain caves, castes living in the mountain slopes and castes in the foothills congregate in one place and get the same type of civilisational benefits, same type

of education, same type of liberty and the same type of discipline, the differences in them regarding caste and policies will disappear bit by bit and they can feel a spirit of brotherhood among them. We support caste conferences as we believe that when every caste makes its own efforts to achieve an equitable and independent way of living, castes will disappear.

Having said this, he casts aside the propaganda made against caste conferences and caste-based representation (reservation policy) under the pretext of promoting patriotism. He also points out that all these are vicious propaganda indulged in by the dominant castes to keep the oppressed castes as their slaves for ever.

He has also given the guiding principles to be followed by those who conduct caste conferences:

Those who organize caste conferences must have broad perspectives, high principles and self-respect. They must have the objective of

developing common practices that are suitable for promoting a sense of fraternity. To achieve this, they must be willing to do away with caste-centric practices as well as individualistic practices. They must also have the objective of getting rid of the feeling of inferiority or superiority about one's own caste among the people. (*ibid.*)

He continues, "A caste's traditional profession shall not be given up". A printing error might have occurred here.



'Dravidan' magazine





All of you know that I strongly advocate the abolition of caste and religion and also gods who stand as the basic support for them. A few may ask how can a person like me attend this caste conference. I have come for the sole purpose of explaining to you the atrocities done in the name of religion, caste, gods and the fraudulent trickeries behind them and to liberate you from superstitions, blind customs and practices. This is my only wish; nothing else.

(Kudi Arasu, 10.2.1935)



It would be fitting if it were, “...shall be given up”, because the following paragraph speaks in a directly opposite way from what is said here.

The organizers of caste conferences must be firm in their opinion that people belonging to their caste should not continue to pursue caste-based traditional occupations and other outmoded and superstitious practices but must follow the principle that everyone must take up any job suitable to their skills, convenience and education. Only people belonging to castes whose leaders convene caste conferences with such firm objectives and convictions could march forward. We categorically declare that only then could all the people participate in the equitable competitions of life and live prosperously. (*ibid.*)

Periyar who held views against caste divisions explained the reasons for his participation in caste conferences in that editorial. He also specified what should be the motive of such conferences. Besides his editorials, in his public speeches also he mentioned the need for caste conferences.

Periyar addressed the Devendra Kula Velaalars⁴ conference held in Salem in 1935. In that address he spoke elaborately on the need for caste conferences and the reasons why he participated in them.

Those who claim to be of high castes convene caste conferences quite often in order to ensure that their higher position and dominant status are not affected in any way. They constantly try to perpetuate their domination over others and disparage other castes. So, my opinion is that in order to guard ourselves against such maligning campaigns we must convene conferences like these. All of you know that I strongly advocate the abolition of caste and religion and also gods who stand as the basic support for them. A few may ask how can a person like me attend this caste conference. I have come for the sole purpose of explaining to you the atrocities done in the name of religion, caste, gods and the fraudulent trickeries behind them and to liberate you from superstitions, blind customs and practices. This is my only wish; nothing else. (Kudi Arasu, 10.2.1935)

In this manner, Periyar recorded the importance of caste conferences, their purpose and the reason for his participation in them.

Conference Addresses:

Periyar, who specifically stated what must be the objective of caste conferences, repeatedly emphasized in these conferences a few views similar in nature. The views that are commonly prevalent in these addresses can be classified as follows:

- 1 Untouchability
- 2 Religious Conversion
- 3 Change in the Names of Castes
- 4 Hindu Religion
- 5 Self-Respect
- 6 Non-Brahmin Movement

The above-mentioned topics receive continuous emphasis in his speeches. They help us understand his ideas regarding caste.

Among the caste conferences attended by Periyar, the most important are the conferences organized by the scheduled castes, the castes subjected to the atrocity of untouchability. Thanks to the support given by the colonial government, these people could get access to modern education and job opportunities. Conversion to Christianity had also helped to some extent. Besides these, the National Movement had also begun to look upon them with some respect. The most important development was that leaders began to rise from these castes and they began to give expression to their problems.

Only in such a situation, the caste conferences of these people began to be held. Since untouchability had not disappeared completely from public life and job opportunities had not been commensurate with educational qualifications, people belonging to the Adi Dravidar⁵ castes and the Devendra



'Kudi Arasu' magazine

Kula Velaala caste (both in the list of Scheduled Castes) began to hold separate caste conferences.

Among the Adi Dravidars a sizable section had by then converted to Christianity. Though they were able to gain access to education and job opportunities in a small way through their conversion, they had to live under the insultingly offensive stigma of their caste identity in the Christian fold. So, the Christian Adi Dravidars were under the compulsion to convene conferences exclusively for themselves.

While participating in these conferences, Periyar did not shed tears over untouchability, did not break into passionate orations, nor did he try to win the applause of his audience by listing the adorable features of the caste which had invited him. Contrarily, he gave expression only to thoughts in agreement with the prevailing conditions in a discreet manner. Most of them are relevant even today.

The untouchability witnessed in the Indian society is not based on the faith of a few people. It has a historical background.





Ambedkar had made an extensive study of it. According to him, the Hindu religion is the fountainhead of untouchability.

Periyar held the same view. While addressing the Thanjavur district Adi Dravidar conference held in Sirkazhi on 10.7.1935, he said:

... the present condition of the oppressed people has been built on a huge foundation.

It has been built on the strong foundation which states that the oppressed, the 'low-caste' and the untouchables are all born with this 'lowliness', they have been created like that by god himself, religion and religious texts are a proof for it and that no one can change the actions of god and the tenets of religion nor are they bound to accept any change. (Kudi Arasu, 28.7.1935)

In continuation of this he provided the following information:

Castes are a product of religion. The proof is in the fact that the Manudharma Sashtra mentions the origin of the Shantala⁶ caste as well as other castes.

So, to eradicate untouchability and castes the first thing to do is to eradicate your religion. If you cannot eradicate religion, you must step out of it. That your status of untouchability or exclusion will never cease to exist unless your religion is got rid of is a hard truth as strong as stone. (Kudi Arasu, 28.07.1945)

Periyar delivered the presidential address of the All India Backward Communities Conference, organized by the non-Brahmin Hindus in Kanpur in December 1944. There he affirmed in no uncertain terms,

... as long as we follow the Hindu religion, the Hindu gods and the Hindu sastras we cannot escape from being the downtrodden, oppressed and unfit for equal rights. (Kudi Arasu, 13.01.1945)

Further, he pointed out that consuming quina tablets to get rid of Malaria was not a wholesome way, instead the dirt and rubbish responsible for the spread of this disease must be burnt out and stagnant pools of dirty water should be closed. He went on to say, "We are duty bound to root out any religion or gods and the corroboratory factors which are responsible for the decadent state of the society."

From the above conference speeches of Periyar we know that he was insisting on opposing the Hindu religion as the way to eradicate all the sordid ills of the society. Whatever might be his view, most of the castes in Tamil Nadu adopted the following two ways to liberate themselves from the humiliating degradations of the caste system. (1) Caste conversion, (2) Assuming the titles of 'higher' castes. But Periyar did not approve both of them.

The oppressed who converted to Christianity continued to suffer untouchability. The only gain was the addition of a Christian given name. Discrimination prevailed in the churches, in the cemeteries and in the parsonages. In such a situation, they also had to hold caste conferences and raise their voice against caste oppression. One such conference was organized by the Christian Adi Dravidars of Lalgudi circle in April 1933. Periyar attended it and pointed out at the outset of his address that conversion to a different religion had not wiped away their degraded status:

You came out of the Hindu religion, though you were a part of it for an

unspecifiable long duration, because you were no longer able to bear with the lowly status accorded to your caste in it and the insults you were subjected to. But the new religion also treats you in the same ignoble way as you are seen to be the same old black-complexioned. Now, to put an end to this degradation somehow or other you have organized this conference and have all gathered here.

The Adi Dravidars who joined the Christian fold expected that they would not be addressed as 'parayars'⁷ and that they would not be segregated in the church from others by putting barricades to keep them separate. But instead of focusing on these, Periyar stressed on the importance of improving their economic status.

There is no use in believing that it is enough if the title 'Parayar' is done away with, or the partitions are removed, or you are allowed into the church. ... Your struggle must be based on the demand that there must be an end to the economic exploitation and the frauds perpetrated on you. Your liberation lies there only. No god nor any pastor can help you in this regard. (Kudi Arasu, 07.05.1933)

Periyar believed that in Tamil Nadu Christianity had imbibed untouchability to the core. The fifth Thiruchengode Taluk Adi Dravidar Conference was held in Samuthiram on 07.03.1936. In his address there, he made this opinion very clear.

... untouchability is not eradicated by change of religion. What was the use of your conversion? For the past two or three months, litigations are going on in the court over the mutual complaints that the Christians of the dominant castes had beaten the Adi Dravidar Christians with chappals for

having worshipped in places reserved for their worship and that it was the Adi Dravidar Christians who had beaten the dominant caste Christians. Just see, how shameful it is! It had also been alleged that the pastors are partial towards the dominant castes and that they had also financed the cost of this suit. What is the use of joining such a religion?

He did not hope that conversion to Christianity would protect the self-respect of the untouchables. For this reason, he welcomed conversion to Islam. He expressed this view in the Thiruchengode conference also.

If you need a religion, if you want to get the help of another religion and escape from the cruelties of the Hindus, I'll say that Islam is better for you. Islam will never be idle and watch an Islamite being dubbed 'he is untouchable' or that someone is 'an Islamic Parayan'.

He expressed this view in his *Kudi Arasu* articles and followed it up in its question-answer section.

One of the ways the oppressed follow to climb a few steps in the social ladder is imbibing the religious identifications, food habits and assuming the caste titles of the dominant castes. M.N. Srinivas⁸, the Indian sociologist and social anthropologist, used to call this 'Sanskritization.' Periyar did not approve of the tendency towards Sanskritization. (Some sociologists take this to be an expression of the opposing voice.) He was blunt in expressing his view while addressing caste conferences. In the Adi Dravidar Youth Conference held in Thanjavur, he spoke in the following manner:

A few among the oppressed castes and the untouchables think that if they smear sacred ash or draw 'namam' on their





... the present condition of the oppressed people has been built on a huge foundation.

It has been built on the strong foundation which states that the oppressed, the 'low-caste' and the untouchables are all born with this 'lowliness', they have been created like that by god himself, religion and religious texts are a proof for it and that no one can change the actions of god and the tenets of religion nor are they bound to accept any change.

(*Kudi Arasu*, 28.7.1935)



forehead, name themselves as 'swamy' and put up a pretention of following the Vaishnavites by desisting from eating meat and drinking alcohol their status will rise and untouchability will disappear.

This is only a stupid way of fooling oneself thinking that you are fooling others. Some try to add decorative epithets and claim that they are not ordinary Sudras⁹ but 'Suth' Sudras¹⁰. But by adopting these methods nothing has been achieved. (*Kudi Arasu*, 28.07.1935)

Though Periyar opposed these attempts towards Sanskritization, he welcomed the protests against offensive remarks made about any caste. The information he passed on in the Conference of the Maruthuvars (hairdressers) on 23.06.1944 and the advice he gave them regarding that bear evidence to this.

Hairdressers in Karur kept boards with the following words in front of their shops, 'Lepers and Melavathiyakarars (a caste of professional drummers) should not enter.' Drummers considered themselves superior to hairdressers in the caste hierarchy. So, they decided against playing drums in the functions held in the homes of hairdressers. The hairdressers had put up those boards as a protest against the attitude of the drummers.

After narrating this incident, Periyar advised the gathering of the Maruthuvars in the following manner:

Put up a notice that not only the drummers, but also anyone who denigrates you shall not enter your premises. Do not call anyone 'samy' or master. Even while shaving the Guru sankarachariyar¹¹ of the Brahmins, address him only as 'aiya'. (*Kudi Arasu* 27.05.1944)

*Courtesy: Kaakkai Ciragkinile¹²,
2017 Dec-2018 Jan.*

Notes:

1. Dravidan: One of the first three Tamil dailies, it was founded in 1917 with the main aim of awakening the non-brahmins to the caste discrimination imposed on them. Periyar took over the editorship of Dravidan around 1937 and addressed the readers thus: "A few educated non-brahmins thought about their low status and found that the magazines and the guileful stratagems of the Brahmins were the main reasons. Hence, they concluded that they should also have a newspaper for propagating their views and established the *Dravidan*." *Dravidan* played a significant



Periyar in a happy emotional moment with Kalaignar, Asiriyar and other forerunners and cadres of Dravidian Movement

role in taking the progressive policies of the Dravidian Movement to the Tamils.

2. Kudi Arasu: Started in 1925 by Periyar, Kudi Arasu exerted huge influence on the social, political and ideological history of Tamil Nadu. The articles were mostly on self-respect, rational thinking and rejection of god.

3. Velaalar: A caste name originally referring to the agricultural community of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and the North-eastern region of Sri Lanka.

4. Devendra Kula Velaalar: One of the Scheduled Castes.

5. Adi Dravidar: A term used by the Tamil Nadu government to denote the Pallar and Parayar castes since 1914. Adi Dravidars form half of the Scheduled Caste population.

6. Shantala: Earlier Shantala referred to the offspring of women of 'high' caste and men of 'low' caste. Now it refers to an oppressed caste, in the scheduled list.

7. Parayar: During the Sangam Era it referred to the professionals playing on the musical instrument parai, made of leather. Now Parayars have been classified as a scheduled caste. They exclusively function as priests in the temples of minor gods.

(The Tamil Sangam Age is the period

from the 3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE. This golden age of Tamil history and literature valued the importance of ethics and justice. The Tamil kings and chieftains patronized poets and scholars. The literature of this period is a storehouse of great poetry collections and noble thoughts. They continue to be an inspiration to Tamil writers of the succeeding ages and particularly the present ones.)

8. M.N. Srinivas: A social anthropologist (1916-1999), mostly known for his work on caste, caste systems, social stratification, Sanskritization and westernization in South India.

9. Sudra: A caste considered to be the fourth in the caste hierarchy, according to Manu.

10. Suth Sudra: Supposedly of a higher rank among the Sudras.

11. Gurusankarachariyar: Was an 8th century Vedic scholar. His works provide a harmonized reading of the Advaita philosophy.

12. Kaakkai Cirakinile: A monthly little magazine edited by V. Muthaiah, an eminent Tamil scholar, it caters to the needs of Tamil intellectuals all over the world. In the twelve years of its existence, it has published hundreds of highly informative and critically perceptive articles on Tamil culture, literature, language, arts, siddha medical tradition, religion, anthropology, ethnography, folkways, contemporary politics, Tamil diaspora and several other subjects most relevant to the Tamil community today. It is a non-profit organization surviving on the contents offered to it free of honorarium by Tamil enthusiasts and socially conscious writers.

- Translated by S. Thillainayagam



Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani's
91st Birthday Special



28



ASIRIYAR VEERAMANI: TEACHER AND FIGHTER FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE



D. RAJA

General Secretary
Communist Party of India
New Delhi

Asiriyar K. Veeramani, an eminent Indian social reformer and rationalist, has dedicated his life to the pursuit of equality, justice, and rational thinking. With a career spanning several decades, Asiriyar Veeramani has been a relentless advocate for the rights of marginalized communities, particularly the Dalits and other oppressed groups. His unwavering commitment to social justice has left an indelible mark on the socio-political landscape of Tamil Nadu.

Periyar, revered social reformer and the founder of the Dravidar Kazhagam, laid the foundation for the Dravidian movement, challenging caste-based discrimination and advocating the rights of the oppressed. Asiriyar K. Veeramani, following in the footsteps of Periyar, has continued the legacy of social reform as the President of the Dravidar Kazhagam. Asiriyar Veeramani's tireless efforts are to promote rational thinking, dismantle regressive social norms, and champion the cause of the downtrodden mirror the ideals set forth by Periyar.





As a student, I could see Periyar only once. Standing in a huge crowd in Vellore, on the Fort Maidan I listened to him. It was a great inspiring moment to see Periyar at his age articulating with clarity and commitment, on subjects such as social justice, rationality, superstitions and subjugation of women.

After Periyar, history provided me with the opportunity to be in association with Asiriyar Veeramani and work as comrades-in-arms for the empowerment of the marginalised and discriminated people.

Asiriyar Veeramani's contributions to the promotion of rationalism and scientific temper are truly commendable. He has played a pivotal role in fostering a spirit of rational thinking and breaking superstitions. His efforts in dismantling age-old discriminatory practices and challenging regressive beliefs have not only empowered individuals but have also paved the way for a more enlightened and progressive society.

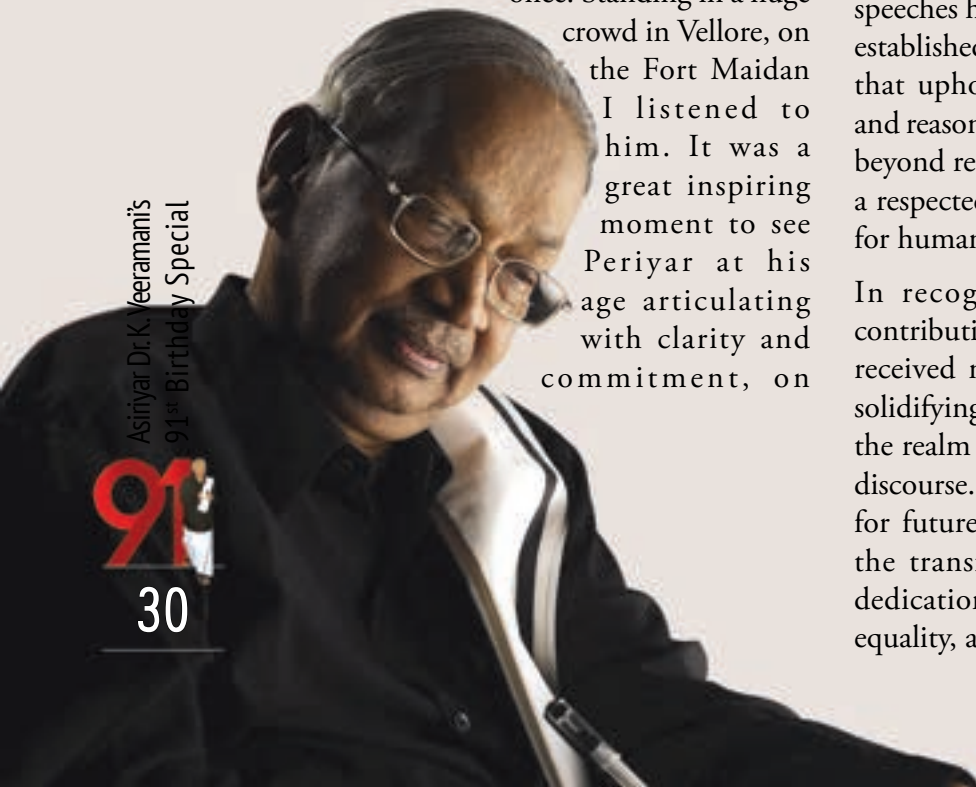
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In addition to his active public service, Asiriyar K. Veeramani has also been a prolific writer and orator, disseminating his ideas on secularism, social justice, and rationalism. His writings and speeches have inspired people to question established norms and strive for a society that upholds the principles of equality and reason. Veeramani's influence extends beyond regional boundaries, making him a respected figure in the broader struggle for human rights and social equity.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions, Asiriyar K. Veeramani has received numerous awards and honors, solidifying his status as a revered figure in the realm of social reform and rationalist discourse. His life serves as an inspiration for future generations, reminding them the transformative power of steadfast dedication to the principles of justice, equality, and rational thought. ■





FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND RELIGION



Dr. Justice A.K. RAJAN
Formerly Judge of Madras High Court
Chennai

Freedom of Speech:

Article 19 (1)(a) of Indian Constitution declares that “All citizens shall have the right –to freedom of speech and expression;”.

As early as 1950, the Supreme Court, in the famous case *Romesh Thappar vs State of Madras* held that freedom of speech and expression, include ‘freedom of propagation’. Again in *S.Rangarajan vs. Jagjeevanram* the Madras High Court cancelled the grant of ‘U’ certificate to the film ‘*Ore Oru Gramathile*’ holding that ‘the exhibition of the film was likely to cause public disorder and violence. But the Supreme Court in 1989, reversed the judgment and held that the film was a legitimate medium for the exercise of the right to freedom of speech, and ‘it cannot be suppressed on account of threat of demonstration and procession or threat of violence’.

Subjected to Reasonable restrictions:

But the right is not conferred with

unfettered liberty. Art.19(2) specifies the limits upto which it may be restricted. One such limit is ‘public order’. The Supreme Court in *Central Prison vs Ram Manohar Lohia*, in 1960 laid that ‘public order’ is synonymous with public peace, safety, and tranquility. In order to bring under this provision, the acts need not be framed with deliberate intention; even such Acts that have the tendency to bring disorder would be included.

Restrictions can be imposed ‘in the interest of public order not for maintenance of public order’. The other limitations are related to security of State, friendly relations with foreign countries, decency and morality, contempt of court, defamation, incitement to violence, sovereignty and integrity of India. Even such restrictions can be imposed only by law enacted by the legislatures, not by executive orders.

Basic Human Right:

Freedom of speech is a basic freedom of



an individual or a community to articulate their opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal sanction.

The right to freedom of expression has been recognised as a human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Human Rights law by the United Nations.

The words freedom of speech, and freedom of expression are used interchangeably. But the freedom of expression includes any activity of seeking, receiving, and imparting information or ideas, regardless of the medium used.

Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference” and “everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of his choice.

A negative right:

Freedom of speech is usually seen as a negative right. This means that the government is legally obliged to take no action against the speaker based on the speaker's views, but that no one is obliged to help any speakers publish their views, and

no one is required to listen to, agree with, or acknowledge the speaker or the speaker's views. [WIKIPEDIA]

Right not to speak:

The Supreme Court of India has consistently laid the law that persons accused of an offence have a ‘Right to silence’ . Hence investigators cannot force them to speak and to compel them to admit the charges against them. The Constitution accords every person a right against self-incrimination. That is, no person accused of an offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself. That is, at the time when the statement was given there should not be an accusation against him. Hence statement given as a witness, can be used against him if he later becomes accused.

Very often during investigation of some offence, summon is issued by investigating officers even to ‘persons not accused’ of the offence. After enquiry that person may be arrayed as an accused. Under those circumstances, subject to certain conditions, like the status/ rank of the police officers who record the statement, even the incriminating statements made by him can be used to prove the guilt against him.

Exceptions:

But a witness can be compelled to speak



the right to freedom of religion also includes freedom not to believe in religion. Therefore, just as a person has the right to propagate his religion, (what he believes) one who does not believe in the existence of God also has the right to propagate his views. Of course, subject to the restrictions imposed under Article 19(2) of the Constitution.



the truth in a court of law under certain circumstances, after protecting him from any adverse consequences. That is because Constitution confers the right against self-incrimination only on persons accused of an offence.

Freedom of Religion and Belief:

Freedom of speech also includes freedom of belief. Therefore, a person has the right to propagate what he believes. This right is, of course, also subject to the exceptions or limitations specified under Clause (2) of Article 19. That is, a person can propagate what he believes without affecting public order etc.

Freedom not to believe:

Just as any one can propagate what he believes the person who does not believe also can propagate what he does not believe. Religion is basically a bundle of beliefs. The Supreme Court has said it also includes the rituals performed. That is, the right to freedom of religion also includes freedom not to believe in religion. Therefore, just as a person has the right to propagate his religion, (what he believes) one who does not believe in the existence of God also has the right to propagate his views. Of course, subject to the restrictions imposed under Article 19(2) of the Constitution.

‘Aseevagam’:

The ancient Tamil culture, is reflected by the Tamil literature ‘*Pura Naanooru*’, ‘**Good and Bad caused by none; things happen as**

they happen; (one’s) life goes on, just as a raft in a stream’. This belief is known as ‘ASEEVAGAM’. It is also referred to as a religion. Therefore a person who believes in Aseevagam can also propagate his views, within the permissible limits.

Religious freedom is subject to Public Order:

The right to freedom of religion is always subject to public order, morality, health and other fundamental rights. That is, all religious rights should give way to the above aspects. Article 25 also confers the right on the State, to regulate all religious acts that is associated with economic, financial, political, or other secular activity associated with religious practice and social welfare and reform. That is, the religious rights are not absolute but subjected to the enumerated aspects.

Conclusion:

Neither freedom of speech nor freedom of religion is absolute. Though freedom of speech is a basic Human Right, it is also subjected to the restrictions as imposed by the Constitution. So also, the religious rights are subjected to public order morality etc. Just like the right to believe in a religion, not to have any religious belief is also a fundamental right. The right to propagate a religion is also available to non-believer of any religion. ■





THE CONSTITUTIONAL IRRELEVANCE OF SANATANA DHARMA

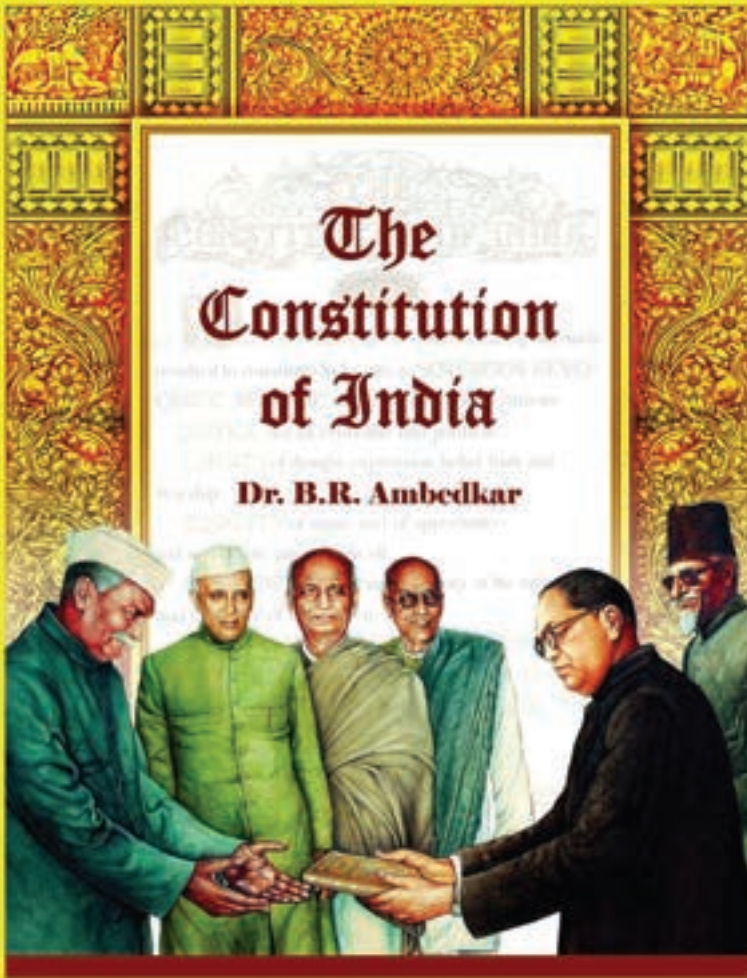


A. RAJA

Member of Parliament
Deputy General Secretary
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

Law and Religion have evolved as social institutions throughout history, not only in Indian society but also in Rome, Judia, in the Christian and Islamic lands and elsewhere in the world. India's theological contributions were subjected to intense scrutiny of European scholars during the colonial administration. The book, *Sanatana Dharma: An Elementary Text-Book of Hindu Religion and Ethics*, published by the Central Hindu College, Benares in 1916, says, the term 'Hindu' referred more to ethnic identity than religion. The Persians and Greeks used it to describe the people living on and the above Sindhu River. The book's opening remarks are axiomatic, 'Sanatana Dharma means the eternal religion, the ancient law and it is based on the Vedas, sacred book given to men many long ages ago. This religion has also been called the Aryan religion because it is the religion that was given to the first nation of Aryan race....'

WHAT IS SANATANA Dharma really? The definitions and contents of Sanatana Dharma have never been placed for public scrutiny visibly in the land where it originated; so far, most explanations have come from non-Indian,



Neither the proponents nor the opponents of the Hindu Code Bill relied on Dharmashastric sources of Hindu personal law; rather both sides advanced their arguments on rational approach of reasons and gendered identities. Only a few who argued using Hindu religious texts against the Bill, claiming, 'it went against the tenets of our shastras and the Vedas' and that 'granting women greater rights would upset the balance of Hindu society'.

non-Hindu Indologists, especially European scholars. Yet, in twenty-first-century India, attempts are always being made to project any discussion on the subject as an object of fissiparous communal politics. The recent debates on Sanatana Dharma have also been marred by abominable remarks made by the Prime Minister and others, which were myopic and flagrant.

Let us go back to the 1916 text book explainer. The book says that 'Shruti' signifies 'that which has been heard', while 'Smriti' signifies 'that which has been remembered'. The book also asserts that the Vedas' contents, including Mantra, Brahmanam, Upanishad and Manusmriti, which served as a significant compendium of Aryan law administered in the region of AryaVarta, later assimilated into the Hindu traditions. In the 1960s another book on Sanatana Dharma was published by BharatiyaVidhyaBhavan, Bombay; this was edited by the distinguished member of the Constituent Assembly, K M Munshi with similar explanations. Undoubtedly, these books also presented noble ideals as 'standards of ethics'.





Varnashrama Dharma – Education was confined to Vedas and to Brahmins alone

In both the texts explaining Sanatana Dharma, a strict 'Division of Labour' is mandated, based on one's birth, under the name of 'Varuna', categorising as Brahmin (priestly class), Kshatriya (ruling class), Vaishyaas (trading / class) Sudhra (serving class – ungrudgingly serving the other three classes). While emphasising the duty of honoring and adorning women in various roles, these two texts say that this dharma places women in a subjugated, inferior position. Upon reading them, one can easily concur with Ambedkar's interpretation of the Caste System as a vertical division of society, characterised by an 'ascending order of reverence and descending order of contempt', a dharma that rigidly separates individuals into water-tight compartments, based on their birth and gender.

Ambedkar viewed 'Hindu Religion in a very broad sense; not in the limited sense in which it would apply to a person who believed in the Vedas, also who believed in the infallibility of the Vedas, who believed probably in the Chaturvarnas and who also believed in the performance and sanctity of Yagnas as means of salvation.... We are using this word in a large sense to include Buddhist, Jain, Sikhs etc. who do not believe in these dogmas.... Buddha and

Mahavir differed from Vedic Brahmins; their difference was limited to matters of creed. But they did not propound a separate legal system for their own followers'.

In addition to western scholars, Sir C P Ramasamy Iyer, in his work, *Hindu Faith and Culture*, acknowledges 'the fairly advanced civilisation of Dravidians in the South' and the 'commercial and cultural interaction of Aryans from the North with them'. He also noted that despite linguistic and racial differences, a comprehensive legal system prevailed throughout this region.

In the light of these historical contexts, also considering the materials of framing the Indian Constitution, Hindu customs and practices in existence and debates of the Constituent Assembly on Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill, the nation has to revisit the relevance of Sanatana Dharma in free India's written Constitution to preserve our secular values without fear and favour.

Even before these considerations, when the National Flag of free India was designed and placed before the Constituent Assembly on 18th July 1947, for approval, the 'Ashok Chakra' was placed in the middle of the flag as Nehru's choice and he said on that

whosoever be at the exalted positions on the orbits of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary of this great Nation, looking back and patronising outdated 'Dharmas' in any form and in any nomenclature is not only legally irrelevant but also an attempt to defame and defile our Constitution.



occasion, 'I should like you to think that the Ashokan period in Indian history was essentially an international period. It was not narrowly (just a) National period. It was a period when India's ambassadors went abroad to far away countries, not in the way of an empire and imperialism, but as ambassadors of peace, culture and goodwill. He did not fail to mention, 'It is folly for any nation or race to think that it can only give to and not receive from the rest of the world. Once a nation or race begins to think like that, it becomes rigid and it becomes ungrowing; it grows backward and decays. In fact, if India's history can be traced, India's periods of decay are those when it closed and refused to receive or to look at the outside world'.

Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan also spoke in a powerful voice in favour of this National Flag, forecasting the need of a 'shift' in the country's approach to its Dharma. He emphasized, 'the Ashoka's wheel represents to us a wheel of the law, the wheel of the Dharma....There are ever so many institution which are worked into our social fabric like caste and untouchability. Unless these things are scrapped, we cannot say that we either seek truth or practice virtue. This wheel, which is a rotating thing, which is a perpetually revolving thing, indicates to us there is death in stagnation. There is life in movement. Our Dharma is Sanatana, eternal not in the sense that is a fixed deposit, but in the

sense that it is perpetually changing. Its uninterrupted continuity is its Sanatana Character. So even with regard to our social condition, it is essential for us to move forward.... This flag tells us "be ever alert, be ever on move, go forward, be flexible, compassionate, decent democratic society in which Christians, Sikhs, Musalmans, Hindus, Buddhists will all find a safer shelter". Thus, even before enacting the Constitution, through the National Flag, there was an inclusive call from our leaders for new interpretation of Sanatana Dharma and for it to introduce radical changes to establish a Dharma of dynamic and egalitarian nature, inviting the perpetual move and changes. This idea of revolving and evolving Dharma was later incorporated in the Preamble of the Constitution itself.

The significance of Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill, introduced in February 1949 in the Constituent Assembly, was profound. On this occasion he did not mince words and said, 'To leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex which is the soul of Hindu society untouched and go on passing legislation relating to economical problem is to make a farce of our Constitution'. Neither the proponents nor the opponents of the Hindu Code Bill relied on Dharmashastric sources of Hindu personal law; rather both sides advanced



Sanatana Dharma, a strict 'Division of Labourers' based on one's birth

their arguments on rational approach of reasons and gendered identities. Only a few who argued using Hindu religious texts against the Bill, claiming, 'it went against the tenets of our shastras and the Vedas' and that 'granting women greater rights would upset the balance of Hindu society'.

Interestingly, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee of the then Hindu Mahasabha, initially expressed his apprehension that sources of the Hindu law such as smriti, shruiti and sadachara etc. were going to lose their relevance and importance; he, however, acknowledged, 'I am prepared to admit, however there be opposition to this code, that this marvelous piece of work on the part of Dr Ambedkar is a most thorny subject he has gone through with much ability'.

Even the opponents of the Bill argued that the Hindu religion is known for tolerance and absorption of ideas of excellence from the outside.

Ambedkar countered, 'No doubt, one of the greatest qualities of Hindu society is to absorb something from those who oppose it. But, my point is this. Has the Hindu society changed in structure as a result of absorption of the Doctrine of their

opponents? What did Buddha preach? He preached equality. He was a great opponent of 'Chaturvarna' and the 'Vedas' because he believed in reasons and did not believe in the infallibility of any Book. He believed in Ahimsa, acceptable to Brahminic society. But they opposed his beliefs and teaching of equality... whatever else Hindu society may adopt, it will never give up its social structure for enslavement of Sudras and Women. It is for this reason that this law must come to rescue, in order that the society may move on'.

Similarly, when the question was vehemently posed on the competency of the Parliament to interfere with personal laws of a community, Ambedkar firmly declared, 'I want to assert in this House that I shall hear no argument from any community to say that this Parliament has no right to interfere in their personal law. This Parliament is absolutely supreme and we deal with any community, so far as their personal law is concerned apart from their religion.'

Endorsing this view, Nehru on 15th August 1948 observed in the Constituent Assembly, 'I do not wish the House to think in the slightest degree that we consider this Hindu Code Bill of



‘Therefore, looking at the matter as a lawyer, I have not the least doubt about it, that unless the Hindu law is not only codified but also modified so as to bring it in consonance with the provision of Article 15, parts of Hindu law (in vogue) will be declared to be void in view of the Article 13 of the Constitution’.



no importance, because we do attach the greatest importance to it, as I said, not because of any particular clause or anything but because of the basic approach to this vast problem in this country which is intimately allied to other problems, economic and social’.

At the end of the debate, Ambedkar concluded, ‘Therefore, looking at the matter as a lawyer, I have not the least doubt about it, that unless the Hindu law is not only codified but also modified so as to bring it in consonance with the provision of Article 15, parts of Hindu law (in vogue) will be declared to be void in view of the Article 13 of the Constitution’.

Admittedly, Article 15 says, ‘The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them’; and Article 13 stands for ‘that all laws in force immediately before the commencement of this Constitution – so far as they are inconsistent with the provision of this part – shall to the extent of such inconsistency be void’.

Ambedkar resigned from the Cabinet on the question of postponing the passing of the Hindu Code Bill in October 1951. However, after the General Election in 1952, the Bill was split into four parts and was passed between 1952-’56. It is interesting to note that much of the staunch opposition to the Bill did not come from parties like the then Hindu

Mahasabha and the then Jan Sangh, who had together had just six members in Parliament but from within the Congress Party itself. Even Rajendra Prasad, India’s first President, engaged in a dispute with Nehru over the Hindu Code Bill. Prasad hinted in his correspondence with Nehru that, as the President, he might consider exercising his option to disapprove any of the Bills, if they were passed in Parliament. Nehru’s response to such a threat was that such a move would precipitate a constitutional crisis that India’s fledgling democracy might not withstand.

Thus, the traditional journey of orthodox Hindu customs, shastras and other outdated ‘sacred’ texts thereto, were put to the test of reasoning under the Constitution which stands for Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The definition for ‘Hindus’ and enacted laws for their civic life are in force, therefore, the Constitution says, there can be no room for anymore shastrical interpretations, whatsoever thereafter. Thus, whosoever be at the exalted positions on the orbits of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary of this great Nation, looking back and patronising outdated ‘Dharmas’ in any form and in any nomenclature is not only legally irrelevant but also an attempt to defame and defile our Constitution. ■



MY ASSOCIATION WITH ASIRIYAR



Justice G.M. AKBAR ALI
Former Judge
Madras High Court
Chennai

I am one of the young-men of yesteryears who always addressed the sun of rationalism only as 'Thanthai Periyar' and never by uttering his given name. Similarly I used to address Perarignar as 'Anna'; his beloved brothers as 'Kalaigarnar', 'Professor' and 'Navalar'.

When I was a ten-year old boy I used to rush to the venue, whenever and wherever in our city, Thanthai Periyar delivered a public speech. After my school life and college days I began my career as an advocate at Thanjavur in 1978. I met Asiriyar for the first time in 1981 at Thanjavur in the office of the Dravidar Kazhagam. That was the day I took him as my 'Asiriyar'. Our teacher-student relationship has been consistent and healthy since that memorable day.

Asiriyar Ayya himself is a 'WONDER' for me. It is not an easy task to lead the massive movement 'Dravidar Kazhagam' in such an amazing and splendid manner. After the passing away of Thanthai Periyar, Asiriyar has been accomplishing it following in his footprints as his true disciple. His untiring efforts and sacrifices for the movement are innumerable. Asiriyar did not confine himself to the propagating of Rationalist principles. He went beyond it and spread the fundamental policies of Thanthai Periyar; especially prioritizing women's education. With



Asiriyar acknowledging the love and respect showered by the cadres of the Movement

this objective, Asiriyar founded many educational institutions for women, which is the most significant of his services.

In 1981 when Asiriyar Ayya established Periyar Centenary Polytechnic College for Girls at our native town, Vallam in Thanjavur, he had to face certain problems in the vicinity. My friend Kalyanasundaram of the TKS family and I rushed to help him and offered the maximum possible assistance. That was an unforgettable experience indeed.

Our friend Rajasekharan, the son of the District Judge Satyendran was the Principal of that institution. During that period my association with Asiriyar grew stronger by frequent meetings in person. In 1989, when I was elevated as a judge, we used to meet frequently as in the past and our intimacy continued. Through advocate D. Veerasekaran, I got opportunities many times to meet Asiriyar and interact. The Engineering College founded by him was the first Women's institution in India. I was able to visit the college frequently. Asiriyar permitted me gladly to chat with the students and have a lively conversation. The Principal, who was then the custodian of that college, and later the Vice-Chancellor Thiru. N.R. Ramachandran and many Professors of that institution were my friends.

Asiriyar has an exceptional love and intimacy towards the minority muslims of Islamic community. The institutions founded by him were useful for the educational development of Muslim girls in our village Vallam and also in other rural belts in the vicinity of Vallam. The Muslim minority women were also able to acquire skills in manual handicraft careers for their livelihood. Most of the girls became literate and empowered through their education. On many of the Dravidian meeting days Asiriyar Ayya introduced me to the audience and dignitaries as a representative of the minority Muslims. Though I was a face in the crowd, Asiriyar gave me an identity and made people recognize me. I recall today his kind gestures when I take a trip down my memory lane.

In 2009 when I got elevated as a High Court Judge, Asiriyar Ayya congratulated me with his hearty greetings and boundless delight. He made me the Chief Guest in the annual convocation of the Engineering College. It was a memorable occasion for me.

In 2012, I took ill owing to certain cardiac ailments. Asiriyar rushed to my house and enquired about my health. He comforted me by his kind words. He helped me undergo treatment by the Cardiac Specialists who had earlier

Asiriyar has an exceptional love and intimacy towards the minority muslims of Islamic community. The institutions founded by him were useful for the educational development of Muslim girls in our village Vallam and also in other rural belts in the vicinity of Vallam. The Muslim minority women were also able to acquire skills in manual handicraft careers for their livelihood. Most of the girls became literate and empowered through their education.

treated Asiriyar and saved his precious life. Asiriyar was indeed a friend in need. His humanism is unique.

Another memorable meeting was when Asiriyar Ayya returned after the Cardiac Surgery he had undergone in America. I happened to meet him at Madurai Railway Station when he had arrived as usual to Address at a public meeting. He was surrounded by his cadres and friends but he was kind enough to hold my arms and talk lively for a few minutes. The respect, love and regard that Ayya has for his friends and well-wishers is incomparable. He is a rare combination of rare virtues, and a restless stalwart.

After Periyar, Asiriyar's name has been indelibly etched in the hearts of the Tamils. Thanthai Periyar's Propaganda tours in his life time and more than 6000 of his speeches revitalised the lives of the Tamils. Similarly, Asiriyar's whirlwind tours and speeches on rationalism, self-respect and various Dravidian principles have strongly established those policies all over Tamil Nadu. Besides, Asiriyar has contributed much towards women's education, emancipation and empowerment by establishing colleges, institutes and a University to enable women to acquire

literacy on a par with men. He is undeniably a benevolent philanthropist.

On 24.12.1973, Thanthai Periyar passed away. After E.V.R. Maniammiar, Asiriyar has been the custodian of the Dravidar Kazhagam Movement since then for the past five decades. He has taken the movement to a glorious pedestal. Beyond public services, he has been a paragon of virtues even as an individual. His integrity, simplicity, vigour, love for books and thirst for knowledge always surprise me. He deserved the honour of being felicitated as the "Distinguished Tamil" (தகைசால் தமிழர்) by the Dravidian Chief Minister Hon'ble M.K. Stalin.

When Thanthai Periyar's 75th Birth Anniversary was celebrated in Thiruvarur I was just a school boy. As usual I rushed to watch the event from a distance. A large number of celebrities including veteran actor Sivaji Ganesan were greeting him. This year, I have got an opportunity to greet Asiriyar Ayya on his 91st Birthday on December 2nd, 2023. I wish him a long life with pristine health and much more name, fame and glory. He would certainly script history by his great services to Tamil Nadu and its people.

Long live Periyar Thought!

Long Live Asiriyar Ayya! ■



LIBERATION OF THE MAJORITIES



PUNITHA PANDIAN

Editor
'Dalit Murasu'
Chennai

Lord Buddha advised his disciples – “Always work for the happiness and welfare of the majorities in our Population.” Asiriyar Dr.K. Veeramani has been serving accordingly till this date. My hearty greetings to him on his 91st Birthday on December 2nd, 2023.

We have been suffering from the atrocious brahminist invasion for nearly two thousand years. Our '*Viduthalai*' Daily has been waging a war against it for the past 89 years. Asiriyar has been contributing greatly to the magnificent journey of '*Viduthalai*' for more than six decades. I am proud of stating that I have been an ardent and devoted reader of '*Viduthalai*' for 27 years and delighted to send my message of greetings on his 91st Birthday on 2nd December, 2023. Whenever I met Asiriyar, I used to think of explaining what I felt of the unique daily '*Viduthalai*' but I could not disturb him since he was always busy running short of time. I always wanted to convey my desire that '*Viduthalai*' should reach many

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Asiriyar addresses at the DK's Conference

more thousands of young readers in Tamil Nadu. I take advantage of this opportunity to give vent to my views, besides conveying my hearty greetings to Asiriyar.

Dear Ayya,

I began reading 'Viduthalai' in 1986. Till this date I have not missed any issue. I used to be sleepless whenever I was not able to read an issue. I used to read it on the following day without fail. Such was my preference for 'Viduthalai'. Sometimes I used to hunt bookshops to grab an issue. Your statements and the articles of the Vice-President Poet Kali.Poongundran under the pseudonym 'Minsaram' were my favourite sections in 'Viduthalai'. I have always found them informative, inspiring and interesting. Especially your speeches reproduced in print are certainly a storehouse of knowledge and encapsulated history. I have been captivated by 'Viduthalai' since my college days. I still chew every issue and digest it by reading attentively. I wish every young reader today derives similar pleasure. Your restless services and hardwork would never be in vain. Your speech and writings would mould youngsters of future generations as noble citizens and refine their thoughts

and outlook.

Your statements pertaining to Mandal Commission issue, affirmative action, your booklets, leaflets and pamphlets are all worthy of research for a doctorate. The books authored and published by you are all coffers of wisdom. Your articles on the need of communal representation are clear and simple enough for common public to read and comprehend. The references cited by you in speeches and statements are amazing, revealing your photographic memory. I don't think anyone else would have studied and deeply understood Ambedkar. I could learn much about him only through your writings. The low priced editions published by you were really affordable for lovers and collectors of books. Especially, the books listed below are all a treasure for posterity:

- i) What did Congress and Gandhi did for the untouchables? – Dr.B.R.Ambedkar
- ii) Buddha and his Dhamma - Dr.B.R. Ambedkar
- iii) The Essence of Hindu religion - Dr.B.R. Ambedkar
- iv) A rebuttal to ArunShorie – Dr.K. Veeramani



I feel proud to say that my continuous reading of ‘*Viduthalai*’ for ten years motivated me to start the magazine ‘*Dalit Murasu*’. ‘*Viduthalai*’ was the only source of inspiration. We devote our pages to the articles related to Periyar and Ambedkar to a great extent. Our ‘*Dalit Murasu*’ has caste annihilation as its prime objective. We shall be publishing henceforth much about Asiriyar’s speeches, statements and political views.



v) Periyar and Ambedkar - Dr.K. Veeramani

In fact the list would be endless if I begin to specify other invaluable books authored by you.

The conferences held by you, inviting celebrities like Kanshiram, Ram Vilas Paswan, Mayavati, V.T. Rajsekhar, the editor of ‘*Dalit Voice*’ and many renowned Ambedkarists regularly were all commendable, indeed. The celebration of Ambedkar’s 125th Birthday was memorable. I was assigned the great task of conducting workshops at Periyar Thidal and teaching the participants the principles and policies of Ambedkar. I am grateful to the Dravidar Kazhagam for entrusting the work to me during the celebration. I recall the month – long workshop, participation certificates awarded by you and your Valedictory Address explaining the nobility of Ambedkar. All these are indelibly etched in my memory.

In my opinion, Periyar had shattered ‘brahminocracy’ long ago to a great extent. Your services have almost annihilated it. Hence, Hindutva, RSS and BJP could never ever invade Tamil Nadu. ‘*Viduthalai*’ under your editorship has been keeping the state protected from the toxic forces. As an extension of ‘Periyar Thought’ you are today a stream of consciousness waging a war against all the atrocities of Brahmin coteries. It would not be an exaggeration

if I say that for the fort of the Tamils, you are an indestructible Protective wall. No one else can save this State from the atrocities of caste mongers and religious fanatics. I wish you a long life for the accomplishment of this noble task. Your relentless war against graded inequality, superstitions, blind faith in god, adherence to outdated codes of conduct, meaningless customs, vedas, mythologies, birth based discriminations and above all your protest against the recent Vishwakarma Yojana which is hereditary occupations in disguise – are all sure of scripting history. I wish to place on record through this message of greetings that people like me who have derived benefits through your services, stand as solid proof for your unparalleled nobility.

Majority of our people were crushed as pulp by the cultural invasion of brahmins. Therefore, Lord Buddha waged a war against Varnashrama dharma which is the root cause of the sufferings of the majority of our population. Most people blindly believed in Varnashrama codes that has divided people into 6000 different castes. The birth based degradation cannot be annihilated if people stand divided as separate castes. The majorities should be united and fight collectively in order to make the annihilation possible. I

could realise this truth only through thousands of 'Viduthalai' issues till this date. If brahminist ploys divide people, they can be united only through Periyar Thought and Ambedkarist ideals. All the downtrodden marginalised, backward classes and even the minorities owe a debt of gratitude to you, Ayya. On your 91st Birthday, the State of Tamil Nadu thanks you with a grand salute of honour.

There is a mushroom growth of newspapers being published as a commercial activity to amass wealth. They cater to the cheap taste of people churning out matters related to sports, movies, cuisine, superstitions and many other rubbish in print. Only 'Viduthalai' thinks about burning problems. 'Viduthalai' caters to the readers whose minds operate on a higher level of intellect. It does not stop with exposing societal problems but also comes out with solutions. This makes 'Viduthalai', truly exceptional in print media. 'Viduthalai' is not meant for entertainment; - it is meant for enlightenment.

'Viduthalai' has moulded hundreds of people as writers, orators, rationalists, thinkers, journalists, social justice warriors and above all humanists soaked in self respect. I feel proud to say that my continuous reading of 'Viduthalai' for ten years motivated me to start the magazine 'Dalit Murasu'. 'Viduthalai' was the only source of inspiration. We devote our pages to the articles related to Periyar and Ambedkar to a great extent. Our 'Dalit Murasu' has caste annihilation as its prime objective. We shall be publishing henceforth

much about Asiriyar's speeches, statements and political views.

Before concluding my message of greetings I have just one humble request Ayya, for your kind consideration and compliance. Dr.Ambedkar used to say time and again – "The crucial problem in India is that a conscious and determined minority has been creating conditions in their favour over an amorphous and ignorant majority."

In order to make this ignorant majority aware of those conditions, the services of 'Viduthalai' should continue beyond the centenary of its publication. The majorities of our population should endlessly think of annihilating castes. The seeds for this noble thought and objective must be sown deeply everyday in their minds. For this purpose, a conference of journalism and a training workshop should be conducted regularly every year under

your able guidance and presidency. Atleast a hundred young men and women should be registered and allowed to participate in that meet. A special Address by Asiriyar Ayya would ignite the sparks of awareness in them and draw them from the darkness of ignorance. This would ultimately liberate people who are bound by the chains of religious illusions. An annual event of this sort would pave the way for the annihilation of the evil called 'caste'. The great public service of 'Viduthalai' would strengthen our hands in fulfilment of this task. I humbly request you Ayya, to approve this and implement from 2024 onwards. I wish you a long, Peaceful, Prosperous life. ■



'Dalit Murasu' Tamil monthly



ASIRIYAR'S WHIRLWIND PROPAGANDA AGAINST 'MANU(A)DHARMA YOJANA'

Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) founded by Thanthai Periyar is not an organisation that limits the pronouncement of its ideology alone. DK carries on with the propagating of the ideal 'All Humans are Equal'. In that respect the DK fights against the caste system that discriminates,

divides humans and denies certain basic rights of every human i.e. education and getting employed in the field of their preference. The Varnashrama theory has brought hierarchies dogmatically, treating major sections of toiling people of our country under social enslavement. In the independent India, with the provisions that





Unmindful of rain, the public listen to the speech of Asiriyar

are emphasised in the Indian Constitution, the DK, humanist movement has laboured hard to annihilate the caste system and to expose the dogmas that divide humans by birth. Indian Constitution is for the equality of humans and anything against it, perpetuated in any form is a violation and unconstitutional. But recently, the Union government launched a scheme ‘Vishwakarma Yojana’ on September, 17th, 2023 on the birthday of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Under Vishwakarma Yojana loans will be granted to 18 types of artisans and traders involved in washing clothes, hair cutting, pottery, shoe making etc; which are being carried out as family occupations for generations. These professions are carried on based on the birth of those individuals in particular castes. Apparently the scheme may look like a welfare scheme to uplift the economic standard of the respective people, but it is an unconstitutional scheme that perpetuates caste system and discriminates people based on their birth.

Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani, President, Dravidar Kazhagam, with his ideological acumen found out the very nature of Vishwakarma Yojana. It is nothing but the prescription in Manusmriti to sustain the inhuman code of protecting the Varnashrama (a) dharma, the fourfold division in society. The Union government scheme is nothing but Manu(a)dharma Yojana. Asiriyar convened an all party meeting immediately after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced it during

the Independence day Address. On 29th August 2023 to appraise about the Union government scheme and to appeal for the co-ordinated endeavour by all. Besides Asiriyar convened an All party agitation at Chennai on 6th September 2023 to protest against the implementation of VishwakarmaYojana.

Asiriyar did not stop with the agitation. The inner meaning and motive of the policy ‘Vishwakarma Yojana’ must be known to public. For his unique propaganda, Asiriyar commenced his tour of 8 days in two stages, each of 4 days in the month of October and November 2023, covering 18 districts of the State. Everyday two meetings were addressed at two different places with the participation of the local leaders of all the political parties (except the BJP) and social organisations. The main intricacy of the ‘Yojana’ is that the age eligibility to avail the loan assistance is 18 years. It means, at the ripe age of 18, when one has to pursue higher education, their attention is diverted towards availing loan to carry on their family profession. It is an indirect means of denying higher education to a lot of people. It takes us back to the traditional pattern of society designed as per Varnashrama(a)dharma. The recent tour of Asiriyar, to expose ‘Vishwakarma Yojana’ which is nothing but Manu(a)dharma Yojana, is not the end; it is another beginning of a fight for the cause of human equality, on the similar pattern which he carried out by many tours in the past.

- nietzsche



VISHWAKARMA YOJANA: TO PERPETUATE RETROACTIVE CASTE SYSTEM!



G RAMAKRISHNAN

The Communist Party
of India (Marxist)
Polit Bureau Member

On Independence Day, August 15, Prime Minister Modi announced from the Red Fort that the government would allocate a package of loans amounting to Rs 13,000 to 15,000 crores, over the next five years, with a five per cent interest rate for the implementation of a new scheme, the Vishwakarma Yojana. Guidelines for the implementation of this scheme were later released. Launched on September 17, 2023, this scheme aims to provide support to artisans and craftspeople who work with their hands and tools, covering individuals engaged in 18 trades.

While at first glance, this scheme may appear to be a beneficial welfare programme designed to promote self-employment among its beneficiaries, this is not the case. The funds are not to assist those willing to start tiny or MSME, associated with these trades, which would have been acceptable. The Vishwakarma Yojana, as is clear from the scheme document, is being implemented with a very different purpose.





Hereditary, traditional and family occupation of artisans

For one, it focuses on trades that have traditionally been associated with the SCs, STs and the OBCs, with the scheme covering, among others, footwear artisans, cobblers (stitching footwear), barbers (primarily hair cutting, shaving, etc), and washermen (dhobis) who wash and iron clothes for people, and potters, who make pottery articles by moulding clay.

But that is not all. Para 1.1 of the scheme document says (MOU1) that “These skills or occupations are passed from generations-to-generation following guru-shishya model of traditional training both within the families and other informal groups of artisans and craftspeople”. It is not modern skills and occupations

but traditional artisanry, associated with SC, ST and OBC social categories, and traditional teaching that is being glorified. To drive home this message, Section 2.2.1 of the scheme's guidelines further states that “the support provided through the scheme to such beneficiaries will not only contribute to the preservation of 'cultural practices', 'generational skills' and guru-shishya Parampara, but will also provide an 'identity' and recognition to them.”

What is being implemented here is no modern self-employment or small entrepreneurial scheme. What is sought to be promoted instead is a range of traditional occupations, to be taught too in a traditional manner, associated with

Kula Kalvi Thittam - The Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) too vehemently opposed the scheme. Periyar argued that the scheme would perpetuate the caste system and deny the lower castes the opportunity to take to other professions.



traditional caste divisions. That this indeed is the message is amply borne out by the fact that the scheme only covers those belonging to these 18 castes, all falling under the SC, ST, and OBC categories. The rank casteist understanding behind the scheme, is further exposed in its claims that these occupations are “cultural practices” and that these occupations are indeed what provides “identity” and “recognition” to these beneficiaries from SC, ST and OBC social categories. By restricting beneficiaries to traditional caste-oriented crafts, this is a scheme that aims for nothing less than trying to perpetuate the Manu-wadi Varnashrama Dharma through a futile attempt to recreate the oppressive association of traditional occupations with particular castes.

The emphasis that it must refer to the traditional occupations is underlined by Section 4, (iii) that further notes that this scheme is applicable specifically to those who are “engaged in the trades concerned on the date of registrations”.

The Modi sarkar knows very well that the majority of the younger generation from SC, ST and OBC communities have always aspired to leave behind their traditional caste-associated trades to become skilled workers and professionals in modern industrial and service sector employment. To undermine this, the Vishwakarma Yojana, to determine eligibility in Section 4, (ii) lays down that “The minimum age of the beneficiary should be 18 years on the

date of registration”. This is clearly a trap, because this is the age, after completing +2 examinations at the higher secondary levels that students seek to go ahead to higher education. In the light of the overall thrust of the scheme and its rationale, this provision demonstrates a certain hostility to the aspirations of SC, ST and OBC youth.

Such ideas often have a long history, a history that should not be forgotten. The Vishwakarma Yojana scheme, in many ways, harks back to the discredited ‘Kulakalvithittam’, (hereditary education policy) which was proposed by the then chief minister C Rajagopalachari in the erstwhile Madras State in 1953. The “Modified Scheme of Elementary Education in Rural Schools in Madras State,” as it was officially named, proposed schooling for rural children with half a day at the school and the other half a day devoted to training in the parents’ traditional craft, if the students belonged to occupational classes. The scheme was promptly dubbed by its critics as half a day for school and half a day for caste.

There was stiff opposition to this scheme in all the parts of the state. The Communist Party of India, then the main opposition party in the state legislature, considered the scheme an ugly attempt to preserve the status quo in the socio-economic life of rural society by forcing the children to stick



to their ancestral crafts, thus attempting to ensure that the poor did not get much education and start demanding decent jobs with social security, which was then the preserve of others. The Communist Party opposed the scheme as retrograde because it tries to take the country back to pre-industrial age. The leader of Communist opposition in the legislature, Comrade P.Ramamoorthy, strongly opposed this scheme on the floor of the house. He argued, “The need of the hour is to replace the feudal-colonial set-up by a healthy, national, independent, socially-planned, productive modern economy. Education then should be science-based and science-oriented”. M.Kalyanasundaram, K.P. Gopalan, MLA from Payyanur, Nagi Reddy from Andhra, all communist leaders and members of the legislature from the various regions of the Madras Presidency, together with V.K. Krishna Iyer, who had been elected as a CPI-backed independent, were also vociferous in their criticism of the education scheme.

The Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and the

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) too vehemently opposed the scheme. Periyar argued that the scheme would perpetuate the caste system and deny the lower castes the opportunity to take to other professions.

The people’s upsurge against the ‘Kulakalvithittam’ led to the resignation of Chief Minister Rajaji, who alongside this retrograde scheme, also shockingly closed down 6000 schools. When Kamaraj became the chief minister of Madras state subsequently, the “Kulakalvithittam” education scheme was withdrawn and a large number of new schools were in fact opened.

The regressive Hindutva forces at the Centre wish to implement a National Education Policy which goes against the very fundamentals of any modern education system. Textbooks are being rewritten with an unscientific approach and packed with obscurantist ideas. The Vishwakarma scheme follows these attempts, seeking to demotivate and divert SC, ST and OBC students from seeking to obtain modern higher education and skilled employment.



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Many studies reveal that a good number of students who have passed +2 cannot continue to higher education because of financial restraints, thus constraining their employment opportunities. The All-India Survey on Higher Education, 2020-21, released on January 29, 2023, noted that in the last two decades a rise in the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for all the social groups could be seen. The GER for SC and ST is at 23.1 per cent and 18.9 per cent (percentage out of eligible SC/ST students) respectively, lower than the overall gross enrolment ratio. Students from OBC communities accounted for 35.8 per cent, up from 32.2 per cent in 2012-13. But the enrolment in higher education for both SC/ST & OBCs do not correspond to their share of the country's population. From the same study, it is clear that the lack of public investment in education and the concomitant expansion of the private sector in education, has the effect of curtailing opportunities for the less privileged section throughout the country. Of all the colleges in India, 65 per cent are now private or un-aided while only 21.4 per cent are government colleges. Since government institutions account for only 35 per cent of the enrolment, we can conclude that the majority have to spend out of their own resources for pursuing higher education in India which is a distant dream for the under privileged. If at all the central government

wants to increase the enrolment of SC/ST & OBC students, the government must invest more in education to provide free higher education. Instead, we see that privatisation is only increasing.

Instead of taking steps and framing schemes to increase access to higher education, the Modi government is headed backwards, pursuing the implementation of the Vishwakarma Yojana only to perpetuate the caste system. It is no surprise that this scheme was announced by the prime minister, an erstwhile RSS pracharak, who is sincerely implementing the Hindutva agenda proposed long back by Golwalkar.

While criticising the Constitution of India, Golwalkar wrote in the RSS mouthpiece 2, "Manu's laws were written long before. To this date, his (Manu's) laws as enunciated in the Manusmriti excite the administration of the world and elicit spontaneous obedience and conformity. But to our constitutional pundit that means nothing" (November 30, 1949). More than seventy years later, as the BJP-RSS combine still seeks to implement this retrogressive agenda, the Vishwakarma Yojana is yet another instance of why this Modi sarkar must be seen off by the people of this country.

Courtesy: People's Democracy



PSEUDOSCIENCE IN INDIA



NARENDRA NAYAK

National President
Federation of Indian
Rationalist Associations

While congratulating Dr.K.Veeramani on his 91st birthday and wishing him many more years of active life, I have to thank the editorial board of *'The Modern Rationalist'* for giving me this opportunity to express my opinion about one of the biggest problems facing our country- that is pseudoscience and more than that state sponsored pseudo-science. While it exists everywhere, it is more dangerous for a country of 1.3 billion people following a religion and ruled by a government encouraging and sponsoring it!

It is not that pseudoscience is something newly introduced to our country or our society. It is an age old phenomenon! Going by the dictionary definition of the word it is this:

a system of thought or a theory that is not formed in a scientific way:

No lie was too big to tell, no bit of pseudoscience too ridiculous to pass off as legitimate. It has been dismissed as pseudoscience - sometimes downright dangerous. When pseudo-sciences are published, they are often published in journals that have 'peer review' but are less rigorous than one would expect of the scientific mainstream.



Well, we can take numerous fields where this is rampant right from education to transport! We have ridiculous concepts like a foetus can be taught in the uterus to airplanes that can fly despite an aerodynamically impossible design or that we can have weapons which work by mantras! Well, no one will fly by such an aircraft because none will build it let alone fly! If some pseudoscientific weapon is said to be devised tests will be done before it is used! However, one field very important in our lives—the field of diagnosis and treatment of disease as well as wellness has been a fertile ground for pseudoscience. I will be analysing the information and emphasizing on those in this domain!

Ideally the field of diagnosis and treatment of disease should be one in which the best available proven facilities should be available to everyone. But, as we know there are a number of factors which prevent this. Anywhere in the world the field of medicine has been standardized and codified—yes the field of medicine which we can call as evidence based, modern or scientific medicine which has

been and continues to be wrongly called as 'Allopathy'! The word 'Allo' - means other and had been coined by the Homeopaths with their convoluted logic. Though it is wrong the term still sticks and is used by some. By all means whatever that is to be used for diagnosis or treatment of disease should be evidence based. In most of the developed nations it is so. But, in India sadly it is not. Though the only system of medicine should be that which is based on evidence and the practitioners have to work according to the norms set by professional bodies. There exist systems in India which are not so. The State and National Medical Councils are brought by acts of Parliament to regulate their standards, register eligible practitioners etc. The medicines used under this system are also tightly regulated by the Drugs controller and there are protocols for allowing anything to be used for diagnosis and/or treatment.

Those systems or to be specific, systems which are recognized though are not evidence based are those which are categorized as AYUSH. A for Ayurveda

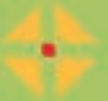


Y for Yoga and Naturopathy, U for Unani and Tibbi, S for Siddha and H for Homeopathy. While these are the recognized ones there are dozens or may be hundreds of those which are neither recognized nor evidence based. As the Supreme Court of India said, these though not evidence based are recognized because there are crores of people who follow them! So, rather than systems of medicine these are belief systems! There are registering authorities for these too called as boards of indigenous medicine though some of them like homeopathy from Germany, unani and tibbi from Greece and Arabia can be hardly called as indigenous! The term naturopathy and yoga represented by Y in Ayush is not what it implies—that everything is left to nature for cure! Their treatment consists of diets, enemas, mudbaths, immersion in water etc. All these are clubbed under one board and a ministry too!

However, there exists a third category which are neither recognized nor

evidence based; there can be long list of these which could be anything from electrohomeopathy, Rieki, Pranic healing, magneto therapy, gem therapy etc. The list can be never complete because new forms of such quackery keep cropping up! The Supreme Court of India had ruled that they can be neither recognized nor should be given any govt grants or recognition. But, they do crop up here and there with 'Dr' claiming to be qualified from so called institutes with high sounding names and 'universities' which are degree mills!

It is always claimed by the proponents of these quack systems not based on any evidence that is, pseudo sciences that the evidence based system is not perfect and has many shortcomings. They give examples of changes in drugs and treatment protocols as evidence for these. What they and their followers do not realise is, this proves that it is evidence based and hence changeable! It is not dogma, it is not faith that decides a treatment protocol but evidence. When better products with lesser side effects



... the usual washing of hands, use of masks etc they also had their own additions like consuming chyavanprash, some homeopathic sugar pills, yoga, meditation, pranayama etc. The funniest part of this was the measures for prevention, treatment and post COVID-19 recovery were the same! So, what could not prevent could cure and what could not cure could provide a support system for recovery!



are discovered, the previous ones are discarded! There is no shame in admitting that we were mistaken and have corrected ourselves. This is totally unlike the quack systems which stick to their old ones under the pretext that our ancients were wiser and better informed than us. That is why every practitioner of the evidence based system should be up-to-date in knowledge. The practices which were thought to be the latest in treatment have been discarded. For example there was something called as fever therapy for syphilis. The patient would be injected with the blood of a malaria patient which would cause the disease and high fever which would kill the spirochetes- the infectious microorganism for causing the disease! Well, now you have a patient who is cured of syphilis but has malaria-what is to be done about it? Give him quinine which was the treatment for malaria! You will not believe it but Julius Wagner a psychiatrist was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1927 for it! With the discovery of penicillin this was no longer needed! We could quote many more such examples but they would be superfluous. What we should know is that evidence based medicine goes by the available data and is always open to change unlike pseudosciences.

Let us take the latest disaster of COVID-19 as another example of the exploitation by pseudoscience. When the pandemic hit its

severity and effects shut down the whole world and brought the economy to a stand still. Evidence based medicine had little to offer at the commencement of the disaster. The only thing that could be done was try and maintain the seriously ill patients on oxygen either through high pressure or through ventilators. Though most of the infected survived, it was the aim to save the small percentage who otherwise would succumb. The immunity accorded by an infection was at that time the only available line of treatment and that could be provided only by an infection with the live virus. While isolation of the infected and prevention of infection were some of the measures prescribed, research was going on to develop immunity without the risks associated with a live infection. The profiteers who wanted to exploit the gullible had a field day.

They advertised concoctions which could boost immunity, they claimed of exercises which could strengthen the respiratory system, kill the viruses etc. However, none of them had or needed any evidence. The Government of India came up with a protocol from the Ministry of AYUSH. Besides the usual washing of hands, use of masks etc they also had their own additions like consuming chyavanprash, some



This states that it is the duty of every citizen to develop scientific temper humanism, spirit of inquiry and reform. Well, this is observed more in breach than in practice! For a nation where there is an official astrologer for cricket teams and pujas are done before opening research laboratories, what else can one expect?

homeopathic sugar pills, yoga, meditation, pranayama etc. The funniest part of this was the measures for prevention, treatment and post COVID-19 recovery were the same! So, what could not prevent could cure and what could not cure could provide a support system for recovery! The irony of the whole issue was that when the minister for AYUSH was affected by COVID - 19 , he did not take chyavanprash or do pranayama- he got admitted to a military hospital and was given evidence based medicinal support!



We can even recall that before the pandemic hit there were gaumutra drinking sessions, which were supposed to prevent the disease! The prime minister himself demonstrated his affinity to pseudoscience by banging thalis and lighting lamps after a blackout. The explanation was that the virus would hide in the darkness and come out when the lamps were lit to commit suicide! Finally, it was natural immunity and vaccination which saved people's lives. We can give numerous examples. The State sponsorship plays an important role.

Besides, religion is brought into the picture to whip up sentiments and stifle criticism. The Government machinery is used to silence critics and those who question. Mob violence is also used as a tool.

What is the solution for this? Article 51 A(h) of the Constitution of India outlines one of the duties of citizens. This states that it is the duty of every citizen to develop scientific temper humanism, spirit of inquiry and reform. Well, this is observed more in breach than in practice! For a nation where there

is an official astrologer for cricket teams and pujas are done before opening research laboratories, what else can one expect? It is only proper education that can save our nation. Only critical, rational thinking and its practice can solve our problems. Well, it is upto the will of the ruling dispensation to do it. With building of temples projected as a national agenda and superstitions dictating official policy what else can one expect?

One can only hope that better sense will prevail! ■



CENTENARY OF VAIKOM STRUGGLE (1924 - 2024)

V. KUMARESAN

The menace of Indian society is caste system, the four fold division. In it, the 'havoc-malady' is untouchability. The gravity malady does not stop with it. The additional dimensions of it are unseeability and unapproachability. The graded inequality of humans is the core of caste system.

Periyar leads the agitation to enter the streets surrounding the temple in Vaikom, Princely State of Travancore (presently Kerala), 1924



All these three maladies are inflicted on the people who were away from the caste system. They were called panchamas. All these three maladies are enforced on panchamas either singly or put jointly as two, three.

In the Princely State of Travancore (presently in Kerala) almost a year – long struggle was conducted in 1924-25 in Vaikom, to get the right of entry of deemed untouchables (mostly Ezhavas, Pulayas, Thiyyas and others) in the streets surrounding the Mahadeva Temple. This social malady of unapproachability i.e. denial of access – denial of entry in the public path was prevalent in the Princely States of British India (Kerala). Symbolically the struggle was started in Vaikom by the leaders of political parties, mainly Congress and other social activists like T.K. Madhavan, K.P. Kesava Menon, George Joseph, Kurur Neelakanda Namboodri and many others. The struggle was started on 30th March 1924; the leaders who tried to enter the public streets were arrested. When Gandhi was contacted for support, he advised that people belonging to other religion must keep away from the struggle. Besides, people from the adjoining Madras Province would support the cause.

George Joseph and K.P. Kesava Menon

K.P. Kesava Menon who had started Vaikom Struggle, wrote thus in his autobiography “*K a z h i n j a Kaalam*” about the contribution of Periyar and described Periyar’s suffering in the Prison Cell:



“With fetters on his legs, a convict’s cap on his head, a loin cloth below his knee and a wooden number plate around his neck, E.V.Ramasamy was working alongwith murderers and dacoits. He was found doing hard work almost two times more that done by a convict undergoing simple imprisonment.

His well-wishers urged on the authorities to treat him as a political prisoner and offer him atleast the minimum possible comfort but it fell on the deaf ears of the officials. The Government that existed then tortured him brutally. Periyar remained undeterred.

When Periyar addressed a meeting at Nagarcoil after his release, he asked all the cadres and well-wishers not be hurt by his sufferings and those of the fellow agitators. He added further very sportively that he was in fact hurt only by his release from the prison cell. Such was his unflinching resolve and unswerving patience.

E.V. Ramasamy by birth is a “Caste Hindu” but he fought for the untouchables in Kerala. He helped them get their rights. The sacrifice made by him for this has given us a new lease of life.”



Prime Minister Indira Gandhi inaugurates the Golden Jubilee of Vaikom Struggle, 1975

sent telegram to Periyar E.V.Ramasamy who was then the President of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. At that time Periyar was on tour. After receiving the telegram and understanding the critical situation that prevailed in Vaikom, Periyar along with a few of his cadres like Ayyamuthu and S.Ramanathan left for Vaikom. On arriving at Vaikom, Periyar was accorded royal welcome by the officials. Representing the majesty of the Princely State. The reason was that whenever the King used to go over to Madras by train, the Majesty used to stay in the guest house of Periyar in Erode. As a reciprocation of that hospitality, the officials welcomed Periyar. Periyar politely told them that his visit to Vaikom was not as a guest but to participate in the struggle against the State.

Periyar visited many of the surrounding villages and towns of Vaikom to arouse the people for the humanistic cause of the struggle. Periyar mobilised the people and started to enter the street. He was arrested and sentenced for 4 months simple imprisonment, kept in remand for a week at Vaikom Police Station and then transferred to Arikuttu prison. After the arrest of Periyar, his wife E.V.R. Nagammaiar along with the lady cadres sustained the struggle. More women were enabled to participate in the Vaikom struggle due to the timely



E.V.R. Maniammaiar addresses the Valediction of the Golden Jubilee

intervention of E.V.R. Nagammaiar. After the release he was restrained from entering Kottayam district where Vaikom was located in, and prevented from addressing meetings. But Periyar violated the order and addressed about Vaikom struggle and had more people's participation. Again he was arrested, sentenced for 6 months rigorous imprisonment and lodged in Thiruvananthapuram prison. Periyar was the only person who was treated on a par with other criminals in the prison and the rest of the leaders arrested in the struggle were treated as political prisoners. Periyar, unmindful of the way of the treatment, underwent the imprisonment.

The orthodox Namboodries under the auspices of the Majesty conducted 'Sathru Samhara Yagam' for the death of the agitators in the Vaikom Struggle. But on the contrary of the superstitious belief in the yagam ironically, the Majesty passed away. All the prisoners, were ordered to be released and Periyar too was released after imprisonment for 43 days. When Periyar returned to Erode, in order to restrain him from going back and continue the struggle in Vaikom, the rulers of Madras Province re-opened an old charge levelled against him, arrested and secured imprisonment order from the judicial authority.

However the struggle at Vaikom continued as a mass movement. The Regent, who

became the ruling authority after the demise of the Majesty was open minded for the entry of the depressed classes in the streets surrounding temples.

Gandhi was invited to Kerala to hold talks with the orthodox people and the Regent. Periyar accompanied Gandhi as the Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee as well as the prime leader who had converted the Vaikom struggle as a mass movement. The orthodox Namboodris did not allow Gandhi into their residence but held talks with him in the out-house. They did not comply with the request of Gandhi and stood firm in their stand that allowing the entry of depressed classes in the streets is violative of their dogmas.

Gandhi met Sri Narayana Guru and had a discussion. Gandhi went and met the Regent. During the course of talk, the Regent conveyed her consent, on the condition that the agitators would stop their agitation with the entry in the streets alone and not insist on temple entry. The Regent expected confirmation from Periyar who did not accompany Gandhi for the talk. Then Gandhi met Periyar who was in the local travellers' bungalow and told about the Regent's intention.

Periyar told Gandhi that temple entry might not be the agenda of Congress party but he was particular about it. Periyar said that the struggle was aimed only at getting the entry in the streets, and that the struggle would be concluded with it, the temple entry issue would be dealt separately in future. Gandhi again met the Regent and the Vaikom struggle ended in success, following his talk with her.

The Victory event of Vaikom struggle was celebrated on 29th November 1925. Periyar presided over the event. Kelappan, Mannathu Padmanabhan,



Periyar's speech at Trivandrum Meeting in May 1924 presided over by K.G. Kunju Krishnan Pillai – (in nutshell):

Our five fingers are useful for different tasks handled by us in different ways but we consider them all, as parts of our body. Likewise, every individual Hindu has the right to be treated equally – whether he is a Brahmin or of the Pulaya caste. The Pulayas slaughter cattle. Hence they are treated as untouchables. If that is acceptable, what about brahmins and Nairs who serve as doctors? They perform surgeries and post mortem slicing human bodies. Should they be called untouchables?

The Theeyas are brushed aside as untouchables because they extract toddy from coconut and palm trees. If that is a crime, why are people who drink toddy not abused? In fact the contractors who let trees on hire for extraction of toddy are worse than those drunkards, aren't they? The Government that earns revenue through the sale of toddy must be the worst in this chain of toddy trade. The superiority and worth of a person does not depend on the nature of his occupation, does it?

Which ancient scripture or code says that corrupt policemen and dishonest advocates are superior by their birth? People who wish to be called equal to those who are superior to them, must actually be considered equal to those who are graded as inferior to them. The deemed untouchables are not inferior to dogs and other animals that are allowed to loiter freely on the streets and roads prohibited for the low caste humans. Fanatics in Vaikom say that the streets would become impure if the 'untouchable' people walk on them. These wicked people of Vaikom must be beaten and thrashed in public.

Why should the idol of Vaikkathappan be in the temple, when it spectates the entry of untouchables as if they pollute the streets surrounding the temple?



Periyar, chained on a par with other criminals in the prison.

T.K.Madhavan and others participated. E.V.R.Nagammaiar accompanied Periyar.

By all means, the Vaikom struggle brought an awakening among the depressed classes. Vaikom was the first agitation for human rights in the whole of India. The struggle inspired Babasaheb Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, as expressed in the first editorial of Marathi journal, 'Bahishkrit' edited and published by him.

As the follow up of Vaikom struggle, Temple Entry Proclamation was declared in 1939 by the Princely State of Travancore. Many reforms were brought about in Kerala during the pre and post independent period.

The State Government of Kerala celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Vaikom struggle in 1975 which was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The Valedictory function was attended by E.V.R.Maniammaiar, who succeeded Periyar to lead the Dravidar



Respectful Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Minister of Kerala and Respectful M.K. Stalin, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in the Centenary Celebration at Vaikom, 2023



Paying respect to Gandhi - The stretch of the statues of the leaders who participated in Vaikom struggle

Kazhagam founded by him. Asiriyar K. Veeramani, the General Secretary, then accompanied her.

In 1994 on the platinum jubilee of Vaikom struggle, a site was allocated to the Government of Tamil Nadu in the main place of Vaikom Municipality for the installation of the statue of Thanthai Periyar. Accordingly Navalar V.R. Nedunchezhan, Hon'ble Minister of Finance, Tamil Nadu unveiled the statue. Asiriyar K. Veeramani, participated in the event.

The inauguration of the Centenary of Vaikom struggle was conducted by the State Government of Kerala wherein

the Chief Minister of Kerala, Respectful Pinarayi Vijayan and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Respectful M.K. Stalin participated jointly. As a mark of respect to Thanthai Periyar, the State Government of Kerala assured to construct a Memorial at Arukutti where Thanthai Periyar was imprisoned for the first time for his participation and leading the Vaikom Struggle at the crucial time.

The State Government of Tamil Nadu has planned to conduct the Centenary of Vaikom Struggle in Chennai. The genesis and history of Vaikom Struggle must be read by every human of the present era and also by the posterity. ■

Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani along with Poet Kanimozhi, M.P., Hon'ble Minister of Kerala and Hon'ble Minister of Tamil Nadu at the 85th anniversary of Vaikom Struggle





DRAVIDIAN MODEL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

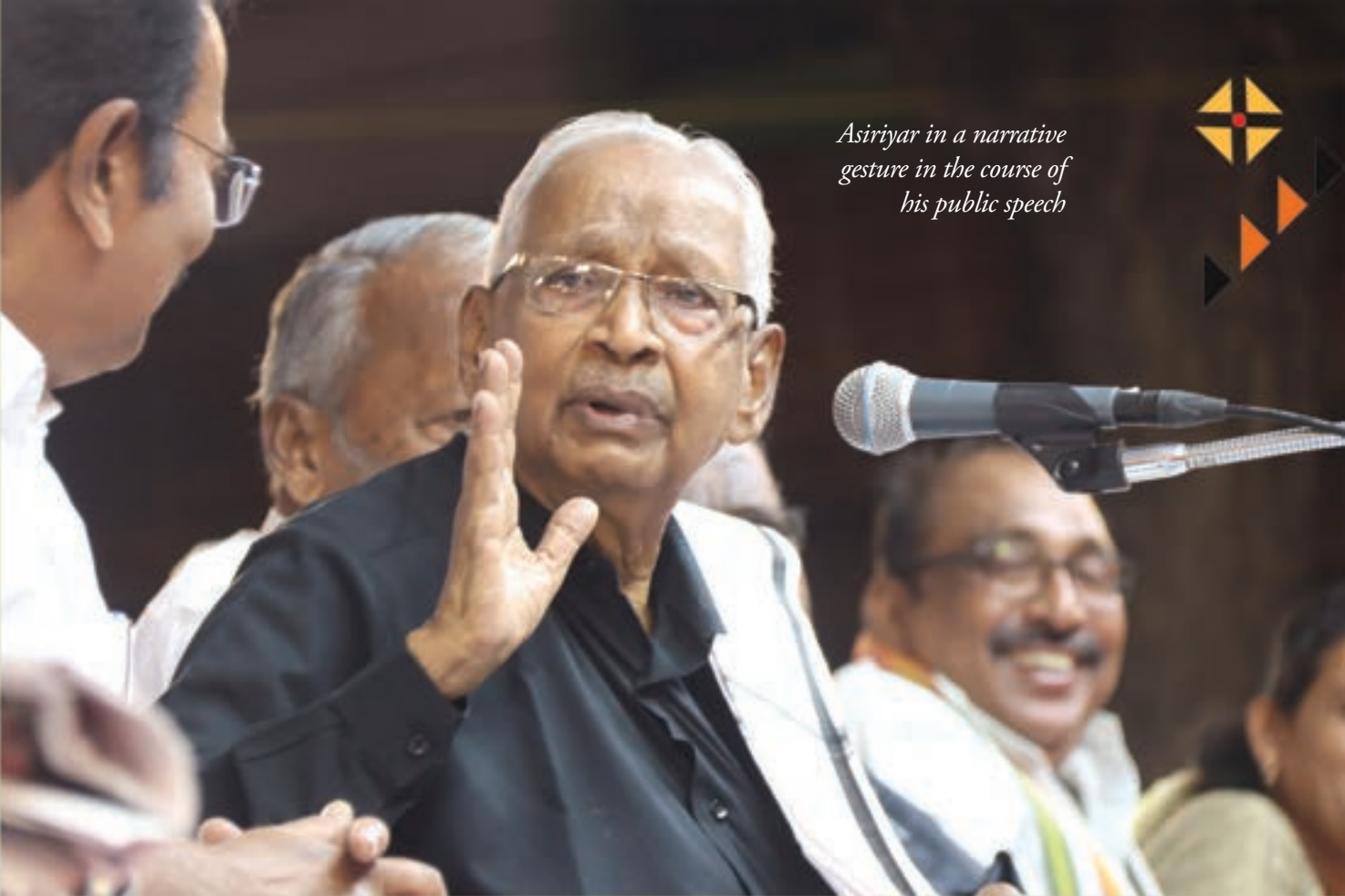


Prof. M. NAGANATHAN
Former Vice Chairman
Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission

There is no royal road for social reform and social reformers in India. Because Indian society is divided by the hierarchical caste system supported by the religious system perpetuated by the Brahmins. The majority of the non-Brahmins divided by the castes have believed and accepted the supremacy of Brahminical order in the society. This hierarchical society was also supported by the kings and ruling class in the past 2000 years.

whenever a question is raised against any of the tenets of Brahminism, the reply given by them is that the Hindu religion is ordained by God. The scriptures found in the Vedas and Upanishads are shown as evidence in support of their fallacies. They assert Brahmins only can interpret and give explanations to the so-called scriptures. They created myths and mythologies and imposed them through the power of the State and succeeded in maintaining their supremacy order throughout the long history of India.

As Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had rightly described 'Hindu society itself is a myth. The name Hindu itself is a foreign name. It was given by the Mohammedans to the natives for the purpose of distinguishing themselves. It does not occur in any Sanskrit



*Asiriyar in a narrative
gesture in the course of
his public speech*



work of the Mohammedans invasion. They did not feel the necessity of a common name because they had no conception of their having constituted a community. Hindu society as such does not exist. It is only a collection of castes (*Annihilation of Caste, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Vol. I, p.50*).

‘The Hindus are taught that the Brahmins are Bhudevas (Gods on earth). The Hindus are taught that the Brahmins alone can be their teachers.’ (p.71).

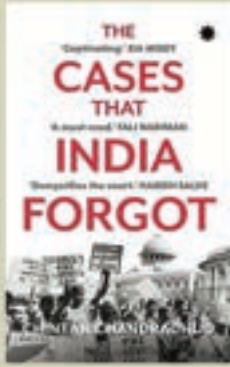
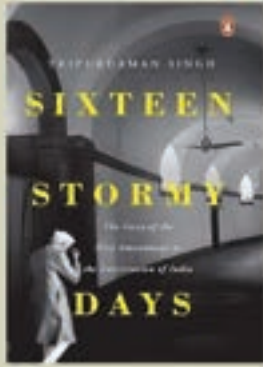
‘Can you appeal to reason and ask the Hindus to discard Caste as being contrary to reason? That raises the question: Is Hindu free to follow his reason? Manu has laid down three sanctions to which every Hindu must conform in the matter of his behaviour. Here there is no place for reason to play its part. A Hindu must follow Veda, Smriti or Sadachar. He cannot follow anything else.

According to this rule, rationalism as a

canon of interpreting Vedas and Smritis, is condemned. It is regarded to be wicked as atheism and the punishment provided for it is ex-communication. Thus, where a matter is covered by the Veda and Smriti, a Hindu cannot resort to rational thinking’ (p.72).

They have also killed their opponents and removed the influences of Carvaka philosophy, Jainism and Buddhism which preached universal brotherhood, equality and fraternity. The Brahmins have cleverly used sneaky methods to accept their hegemony even during the British rule in India.

That is why whenever criticism is made against the Sanathana, the vested interests who occupy higher positions in all the leading institutions of the country come forward to unite themselves and unitedly oppose even the scholarly criticisms. Sagar, a scholar wrote an article on “*Eternal Changes – why the Sanathana Dharma Must be Opposed?*” (*The Caravan, Nov., 23, pp.15-20*).



In this article, he argued that

“Brahmins were also changing the Hindu belief system from within. Brahmins have changed, Dr.Ambedkar writes “There was a time they worshipped the Vedic gods. Then came a time when they abandoned their Vedic gods and started worshipping non-Vedic gods. One may well ask them – when there is Indra, where is Varna, where is Brahma, where is Mitra – the gods mentioned in the Vedas? They have all disappeared. And why, because the worship of Indira, Varna and Brahma ceased to be profitable.... Ram and Krishna too originated among different communities until Brahmins built sermons around them to propagate the caste system and established the supremacy of twice-born caste. Thanthra literature made goddesses popular. In this process, Brahmins did not just create new gods. But also amended them at will. For instance, Shiva was a non-Vedic god, so Brahmins associated him with the Vedic deity Rudhra to make him acceptable. But in the Yajurveda, Rudra is described as the lord of thieves, robbers, dacoits, as the king of degraded, of potters and blacksmiths”.

Brahmins thrived in this way by adopting new gods and leaving the old gods. But the Brahmins claim that Sanathana is eternal and not changeable. Dr.Ambedkar in his celebrated work of Riddles in Hinduism exposed their opportunistic stand in different periods of history to keep themselves in the

superior position in the social and economic order.

They served as servants under different rulers for their individual and community benefits and retained their power and positions in the administrative apparatus of the country. How Periyar had dethroned them? It is because of his selfless sacrifice and continuous struggles against them. As early as 1928, Periyar exposed their cunningness and methods of conspiracy over centuries, in the editorial column of *Kudi Arasu*. Periyar wrote “We have cheated Kabilar; we have cheated Buddha; we have cheated Koon Pandiyan; we have dethroned Muvendhars (Chera, Pandya and Chola); we have destroyed Mohammadan rule; we have spoiled Naickers rule. By using poet Kamban, we have established that we are the Gods and Devas; It is easy for them to employ non-brahmin mercenaries to remove the social reform movement from this soil. Is it not possible for them?” After raising these questions, Periyar emphatically wrote, “When you attack us, we will rise like a ball, when you cut plants, they will emerge on the soil. This is the prevailing scenario. These feelings will again and again appear and save the movement. And nobody can destroy it”. Periyar’s optimism of the 1920s has come true today.

The Dravidian Movement has overcome, facing all kinds of threats from the clan of dominant casteists in the last hundred years. The Dravidian Movement has been a fighting force to get their due share in educational institutions and government employment. When the Communal G.O. introduced by the Justice Party was declared ultra-vires by the Madras High Court and Supreme Court of India in 1950, Periyar led a great agitation for restoring the reservation system in Madras State. This historic agitation for social justice is now discussed by



Because of Periyar’s agitation, Nehru had agreed to amend the constitution. While introducing the Constitutional Amendment, Dr Ambedkar had argued in the Parliament “that the Supreme Court has misread the scheme of the Constitution by making fundamental right a stumbling block in the advancement of the backward class... I have often in the course of my practice told the presiding judge in very emphatic terms that I am bound to obey his judgement, but I am not bound to respect it that is the liberty which every lawyer brings in telling the judge that his judgement is wrong and I am not prepared to give up the liberty.... This speech, lasting over 100 minutes, was described as one of the most outstanding debating performances witnessed in this parliament in *The Times of India*. This author also revealed the fact that Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer had played a double game with deceitful behaviour in this case.



many eminent legal luminaries and scholars across the states, countries and continents.

Tripurdaman Singh, a Post-Doctoral Fellow of the University of London in his book, *‘Sixteen Stormy Days – The Story of the First Amendment to the Constitution of India’* (2020) brought revealing highlights of the First Constitution Amendment. He has averred that “The Communal GO went through a number of iterations over the 1920s and 1930s and reached its final iterations in 1948 under the Congress government of Omandur Ramasamy Reddiar, a great freedom fighter. In this last iteration, the ratio for every 14 applicants stood at: Non-Brahmin hindu-6; Brahmin-2; Muslim-1; Anglo Indians, Christians and Europeans-1; Backward Class Hindus-2; Harijans-2. It was this iteration being followed when the dispute erupted. This case was called Champakam Dorairajan. She was a middle-aged woman who got a Madras University degree in 1934 in B.A. C.R.Srinivasan, a young student who had just cleared his intermediate examination and applied for admission to the Government Engineering College, Guindy, faced a similar predicament. The petitioners engaged Alladi Krishnasamy Iyer,

a noted lawyer and also one of the members of the Constituent Assembly and its drafting committee. He had argued that Article 29 (2) of the Constitution prevented any discrimination in the matter of admission to state or aided institution, was an individual right personally granted to each citizen”.

The author of the book explains many details regarding the reservation followed in the Madras Presidency. The government allotted seats following the reservation system.

As per the Communal GO – in the Engineering college admission list, 70 Brahmins, 224 non-brahmins, 51 Christians, 26 Muslims and 26 Harijans were selected. If the caste and community consideration had been ignored, the numbers would have been 249 Brahmins, 112 non-brahmins, 22 Christians, 3 Muslims and Zero Harijans.

The big political agitation was led by Periyar EVR and supported by great leaders Kamaraj, and Anna. Therefore, Nehru had to oblige the request of the then Congress Chief Minister P.S. Kumaraswamy Raja. The Advocate General of Madras Province argued

Periyar and Ambedkar, the two sides of the same coin in the moment of pleasant conversation



that Article 42 of the Indian Constitution gives power to the states to follow the reservation system. But this argument was not accepted by both the Madras High Court and the Supreme Court of India.”

Dr. Chintan Chandrachud, a Cambridge scholar in his book *“The Cases that India Forgot”* has described the events that led to the restoration of the reservation system in Tamil Nadu. He has explained that “In less than 18 months of India becoming a republic, three judges of the Madras High Court, seven judges of Supreme Court voted to strike down a Madras Government Order providing for reservations”.

What happened to the reservation policy after the Supreme Court declared that the reservation system followed in Madras Province was ultra vires?

Dr.Chintan has also narrated the events held in the High Court of Madras and the Supreme Court of India. “The full bench of the three judges of Madras High Court had arguments in Srinivasan and Dorairajan cases (which were clubbed together) from Madras” most prominent lawyers, V.V.Srinivasa Iyengar, described as the doyen of Madras Bar, represented Srinivasan, Alladi Krishnasamy Iyer, former

Advocate General of Madras and Member of the Constituent Assembly, represented Dorairajan. Iyengar and Iyer argued on behalf of their clients that the communal GO violated two fundamental rights of the newly enacted Constitution.

Each of the three judges of the High Court issued a separate opinion, Chief Justice P.V. Rajamannar and Justice Visvanatha Shastri both agreed that the communal GO should be struck down as unconstitutional...The third judge of the Madras High Court Justice Somasundaram interpreted the provisions of the Constitution quite differently from his colleagues, though he also hesitatingly agreed that the communal GO has to be struck down.”

One fact is also revealed that Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India initially did not accept the Madras government’s insistence for a Constitutional Amendment to restore the reservation system in Madras Presidency. The author says, “One legal journal in May 1951 praised Jawaharlal Nehru for declining to amend the Constitution to please Madras, with a fine disregard for electoral fortunes. Because of Periyar’s agitation, Nehru had agreed to amend the Constitution. While introducing the Constitutional Amendment,



The Union government published two Human Development Reports in 2001 and 2021. The first Human Development Report (2001) has acknowledged Periyar EVR's role in social reform policies for the successful implementation of family planning programme and social welfare programmes in Tamil Nadu. This report was published when Vajpayee was the Prime Minister of the country.



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When the Union government decided to amend the provision, Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer advised the government in support of the amendment that restored reservation, (p.122-124). Further, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the founder of the Jansangh was serving as Cabinet Minister for Industry in the Nehru ministry. Though he opposed the amendment initially, he gave his consent to Prime Minister Nehru and supported the Bill. RSS and Sangh Parivars have played a double game and shown their opposition to the reservation policy. Recently Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar placed the caste census report in the Assembly and made a provision of 65 per cent reservation for

BC, EBC, SC and STs. Like his predecessor Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS chief suddenly announced that the RSS would support caste-based reservation in India. These incidents have exposed their rank opportunism giving reservation to the upper and depressed communities.

The Dravidian Movement since the Justice Party rule has introduced many innovative inputs in the reservation system. Now, the present reservation for BC, OBC, SC and STs is 69 per cent. Kalaingar during his tenure as the Chief Minister, had introduced 20 per cent for MBC (1989), 3.5 per cent for Muslims and 3 per cent for Arunthathiyar (2006) within the 69 per cent of the reservation system. This paved the way for getting education and employment in all the spheres of the Tamil Nadu government. This has resulted in the progress of all communities in the Human Development Indices, Tamil Nadu stands in the first three positions among the major states of India in the achievements of human development indices for the last three decades. Contrary to this scenario, India slips to 131st position among the 189 countries in the Human Development Indices. The Union government published two Human Development Reports in 2001 and 2021. The first Human Development Report (2001) has acknowledged Periyar



Anna and K. Kamaraj, the political opponents discuss beyond their party barrier for the well-being of Tamil Nadu

EVR's role in social reform policies for the successful implementation of family planning programme and social welfare programmes in Tamil Nadu. This report was published when Vajpayee was the Prime minister of the country.

Following Periyar EVR's Dravidian ideology, Asiriyar Veeramani's untiring efforts to the causes that are dear to Periyar and Dravidar Kazhagam stand out. When 69 per cent reservation was challenged by a section of lawyers in the Supreme Court as it happened in 1951, Asiriyar Veeramani advised the then Chief Minister Jayalalithaa to pass a Bill in the State Legislative Assembly and keep this Bill after becoming Act in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. The Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes Bill 1993 was passed and the President of India assented the Bill in 1994. The Supreme Court also upheld the Act in 2021.

Asiriyar Veeramani, like his mentor Periyar EVR, has been consistently leading agitations against all the forms of injustices done to the Tamil people. Asiriyar has awakened the political parties in Tamil Nadu at the right time to go against the policies of the BJP government which destabilises unique social policies and social programmes. When Corona pandemic was at its peak in 2020,

Asiriyar staged a demonstration against the imposition of NEET examinations unmindful of his age and health. He thought that the NEET virus was more dangerous and more disastrous for marginalized sections of the people of Tamil Nadu.

When the New Education Policy was unilaterally announced by the Union government in 2020, Asiriyar Veeramani conducted a meeting inviting all leading educationists and sought their opinions. He has organised all-party meetings to oppose the reactionary Educational Policy which would undermine the federal system of the country and the educational rights of the states. Asiriyar has been insisting that education should be brought to the State List to protect our social justice and other progressive legislations in Tamil Nadu.

Asiriyar Veeramani has stoutly opposed the Viswakarma scheme of the Union government. He is of the view that the scheme is a replica of *Kulakalvi Thittam* introduced by C. Rajagopalachari in 1954. Ignoring his age and health, he is touring all the districts of Tamil Nadu and addressing many meetings to oppose the reintroduction of the Varnashrama system. He lives like a candle that gives light until it melts away.

Asiriyar Veeramani is an intellectual giant who understands the undercurrents of the social system of Tamil Nadu. Asiriyar never fails to acknowledge the contribution of Dravidian leaders who have served the cause of social justice. He is organising functions in Periyar Thidal to honour them and their families. The Non-Brahmin Manifesto declaration was celebrated by our Asiriyar to educate the younger generation and impart Dravidian ideologies to the length and breadth of Tamil Nadu.

As an orator, Asiriyar's tone and tenor is illuminating. He is young in his thinking and writing. Asiriyar Veeramani completed

61 years of service as an editor of 'Viduthalai', a rare phenomenon in journalism in India. He reads journals, dailies, and current books, reflects his views in articles and publishes thought-provoking books. Why is it that Tamil Nadu continues to keep alive all the viable and pertinent issues raised by Periyar? That is because of Asiriyar's continuous engagement of his mind in varieties of knowledgeable endeavours. It keeps him young and energetic. It makes him conduct an untiring tour and uphold his unflinching faith in Dravidian ideology.

Apart from his busy schedule as a social reformer, he is the Chancellor of Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science and Technology (Deemed to be University). He is the founder of many towering institutions including schools, colleges, and universities. Under his able stewardship, these institutions are rendering service for the cause of social justice.

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru.M.K.Stalin, a forerunner of Dravidian politics and governance has timely honoured our Asiriyar by conferring *Thagaisal Thamizhar* Award in 2023.

A lawyer of the highest calibre and a great social activist from Andhra Pradesh Late K.G.Kannabiran's writings were published recently. The book entitled "*The Speaking Constitution – A Sisyphean Life in Law*" was released by his daughter Kalpana in 2022. One illuminating chapter (15) is on "Terrors of Swamiji". The author Kannabiran stated "Abraham Kovoor ran a campaign against this godman in India and Sri Lanka. In Tamil Nadu, EVR, or Periyar, took on the intellectual onslaught against the obscurantist religious practices foisted by the Brahmins on the population and the caste hegemony they set up by launching the self-respect movement. It is the survival of the strong tradition that was responsible



The first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and K. Kamaraj, the Kingmaker who facilitated Lal Bahadur Shastri and then Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister successively

for the prosecution of Premananda and Sankaracharya". It is a clear vindication of the legal luminary late Kannabiran that Asiriyar is responsible for maintaining Periyar's strong tradition in Tamil Nadu.

How is it possible?

Relentless service, restless work and continuous tour to keep Periyar's tradition strong and alive. Periyar lighted a torch of social reform in 20th century and gave it to Asiriyar half a century ago. Asiriyar keeps it and makes it shine. Asiriyar firmly believes that Knowledge is the beginning of action and action is the accomplishment of knowledge.

Denis Diderot, a famous French philosopher once averred that "there are three principal means of acquiring knowledge: Observation of nature, reflection and experimentation. Observation collects facts; reflection combines them; experimentation verifies the result of that combination".

Our Asiriyar Veeramani exemplifies the above mentioned observation of the French philosopher. Tamils all over the world feel happy in expressing their gratitude to our Asiriyar Veeramani and salute him for his long march of unparalleled services to the cause of humanism and Periyarism.

Long live Asiriyar. ■





FORESIGHT



Dr. SOMA ILANGO VAN
Chair Person
Periyar International, USA

Foresight is essential for leaders. It should be based on careful observations, lessons learned by experience and on a foundation of so many observations imprinted in the human computer called the brain.

When a leader expresses his thoughts with foresight, lots of his own followers may not understand or agree. Yet leaders with foresight believe strongly and proceed. Time will prove them right.

People think this is mainly for businesses. Yes. Much has been written about this in the business world and experts have spent much time teaching foresight to their business students.

It is more important in the social and political world. Some have surprised the world with their foresight. When President John F Kennedy expressed that man will land on the moon, the world was wondering. That was a scientific achievement.



When Periyar said all should enter into the *sanctum sanctorum* of the temples, it was almost like a moon landing for the many thousands in Tamil Nadu and India. People could not comprehend. Even today many are astonished that it is happening right in front of their eyes.

Leaders like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Lee Kuan Yew, Dwight Eisenhower and Nelson Mandela have had the political foresight and many at that time could not comprehend.

I have had lots of opportunities to have discussions with our beloved Asiriyar Veeramani. Many times I have had my sincere doubts and expressed them to him. Time and again, he has been right and that was realized by others like me after 5 years or so. Where was the crystal ball?

No, it was the hard work of many years being close to our great leader Periyar and imbibing his way of thinking!

Many of what Periyar said and did have come to bear fruits after 30, 50 and 100 years!

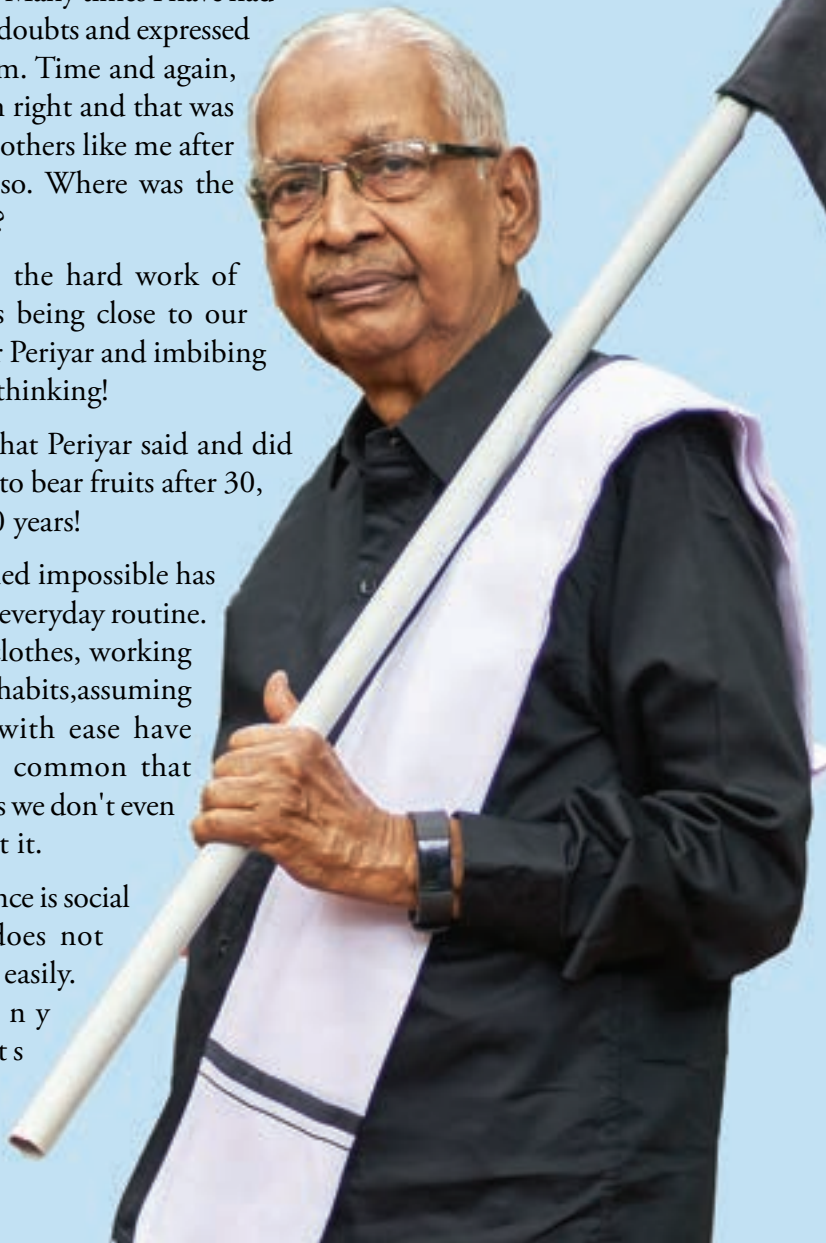
What seemed impossible has become an everyday routine. Women's clothes, working and eating habits, assuming authority with ease have become so common that lots of times we don't even think about it.

The difference is social foresight does not come that easily.

A s m a n y
s c i e n t i s t s
w o r k e d

very hard in their labs, Periyar and Asiriyar had to work much harder in their labs, which is human mind. It is very difficult to erase the thoughts embedded in the mind for so long and foster and root new ideas. The forces with power and resources who are aligned against those ideas would do their best to prevent their success and actualization in every way possible.

When the people are in such a majority in numbers why should 69 per cent reservation take so long and had to be fought with so many protests and struggles before it got implemented? Without clear





When the people are in such a majority in numbers why should 69 per cent reservation take so long and had to be fought with so many protests and struggles before it got implemented? Without clear foresight of its righteousness and necessity, some might have just given up. Actually the number of people that believed it would happen was much less than the ones who believed it would not happen. That is clear foresight!

foresight of its righteousness and necessity, some might have just given up. Actually the number of people that believed it would happen was much less than the ones who believed it would not happen. That is clear foresight!

We can go on listing the achievements

and struggles for each one, but the basic ideology is that one has to think first and then act in the best way possible to make it happen.

Asiriyar Veeramani has been a master at this from his very early years. He gives lots of credits to Thanthai Periyar. But we have to look at his habits to understand better.

He has discipline that is very strict. He is a voracious reader. Not only does he read, but he retains and expresses at the right time to the right audience. He writes and writes, all the time, in the van, in the train and wherever and whenever possible!

So the computer is so modulated that the connections are so perfect. The computer has no problem spitting out ideas of foresight!

Nothing much will happen if it is not followed by proper measures, well planned actions. That is what he does with his cadres. Some might understand and many may not at that time, but all will understand as time goes by. That is the beauty of the social foresight that he has.

I have been amazed so many times and sometimes it has taken me 5 to 10 years before I could grasp the whole.

Let us celebrate his 91st birthday with happiness and a sense of relentless service for mankind. ■





JUSTICE PARTY AND GOVERNANCE – THE GENESIS AND MECHANISM OF DRAVIDIAN MODEL



Dr. P. JAGADEESAN
Former Vice Chancellor
Bharathidasan University

Since the dawn of 19th century most of India began to experience the dawn of modernity as a result of the influence of the western theories consisting of modern values of humanism, liberalism and rationalism.

During the same period some of the Tamil Scholars have discovered some of the very valuable literatures of wisdom belonged to the Classical Age of the Tamils.

They reveal Dravidian Theory of ‘Culture and life based upon the Wisdom of Nature’ and evolve the concept of Humanism and Universalism through reasonable thinking and scientific approach.

In this inspiring intellectual atmosphere some of the great scholar – thinkers have emerged and by reflecting radically evolved a modern theory on the classical base which the historians named ‘The Age of Tamil Renaissance.’

The Age of Renaissance produced the great thinkers-cum-reformers who waged a war against several irrational institutions of the Aryans. Firstly, St. Vallalar founded the Samarasa Sanmarga Sangam and as a saint he preached and exposed heavily the inhumanism of the Sanathana Dharma which argues under the disguise of Hinduism.



Another great Tamil Scholar, Maraimalai Adigalar had launched a great movement called the *Thani Thamizh Iyakkam* against the intrusion and domination of the Sanskrit language of the Aryans.

Another great scholar-thinker called Iyothi Thass Pandithar had waged an outright war especially against the concept of Varnashrama Dharma and the untouchability of the Aryan theory.

From what is said above, it is quite clear and significant to infer that the target for all the above three movements of the Age of Tamil Renaissance was the Aryan theories and their institutions. And it was equally clear that all their great efforts show their concern for the condition of the Tamils which reasonably infers as the Non-Brahmins.

Under the above circumstances and by understanding the gravity of the issues, a conference was convened in Madras on 20th November 1916 attended by several non-Brahmin gentlemen of position and influence both in Madras and in the mufassil'.

In accordance with a resolution passed in the conference, a Political Association has been formed under the name of The South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF).

The Raja of Panagal, Dr. C. Natesan,

This Federation came to be known popularly as the Justice Party in the name of its English daily, *The Justice*.

In addition to the proceedings, the South Indian Peoples Association has issued a policy note under the title of **THE NON BRAHMIN MANIFESTO**. The following are excerpts from the historic Non-Brahmin Manifesto: (20th December 1960)

The non-Brahmins are not less than 40 out of 41½ million who form also population in this presidency (Madras) and this bulk of the tax payers, including large majority of the Zamindars, land holders and agriculturists also belong to the same class.

But in what passes for politics in Madras they had not taken part to which they are entitled. They make little or no use of their influences among the masses for the general political advancement of the country.

In these days of organized effort they maintain no proper organisation for protecting and promoting the common interests and for preventing professional and other politicians with hardly any corresponding stake in the country, from posing their accredited country spokesmen.

Dr.T.M. Nair,

Sir Piti. Theagarayar



Unlike the earlier reformers, the Justicites have decided to openly identify against whom the war was declared. And that is the reason why perhaps they named the document of the Objectives and Reasons as **THE NON-BRAHMIN MANIFESTO**. This is better expressive of their real identity than of their other organs such as South Indian Peoples Association or South Indian Liberal Federation etc. However by calling Non-Brahmins the adversary was not named but exposed.



Nor do they have a press of their own to speak the truth on their behalf.

Their political interests therefore (as compared with those of the Brahmins who number only about a million and a half) have been naturally suffered.

In addition the manifesto itself have focussed the following areas of concern for the systematic progress of the Non-Brahmins.

- 1) Employment in Public Services
- 2) Participation in Public Bodies
- 3) Rightful access to secure Education
- 4) Wanted Progressive Political Development and not unauthorized Constitution making
- 5) No Caste Rule
- 6) To achieve Self Government Based on Equal Distribution of Powers

It is significant to note the unique character of the Justice Party and the content of its 'The Non-Brahmin Manifesto'.

Firstly, the Declaration was made by including all the communities of the Non-Brahmins and also declared on their behalf.

Secondly, its aim was only to highlight the issues for the benefits of the Non-Brahmins and not attempted to antagonize unnecessarily the adversary, the Brahmins.

Thirdly, it aimed and emphasized the basic truth that the non-Brahmins form not only

the largest majority but more so the rightful inheritors of this land of the Dravidians.

Following the line of thinking of the leaders of the 19th Century the founding fathers of the Justice Party have taken up the field of Politics and governance, for they are the operative organs through which any reform of a society is possible.

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After the general election of 1920 as a party in the diarchy government the Justice Party, in the line of implementing the policies that are referred in the Manifesto started to enact and pass resolutions. To mention a few land mark enactments and resolutions which resulted with great impact on the Dravidian Society:

By the first Communal Government Order of 16th September 1921, the principle of distribution of appointments among various castes and communities which was already



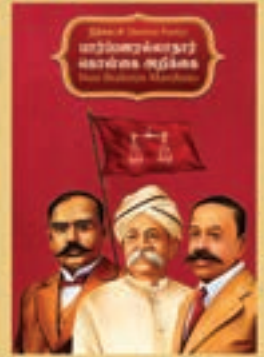
Vallalar
(1823-1874)



Maraimalai Adigal
(1876-1959)



Iyothi Thass Pandithar
(1845-1914)



*The Non-Brahmin
Manifesto - 1916*

observed in the Revenue Departments be extended to all other departments of Government and the respective departments were also advised to submit the relevant implementation report.

In continuation the Second Communal G.O. was passed on 15th August 1922 which extended the principle of proportionate representation for various communities in the realm of promotion also.

As the public services are made available the non-Brahmins are required to equip themselves educationally. Hence, the Justice Party Ministers, controlling Education subject introduced in 1922 a Selection Board for each Government College to see in the matter of admission there was no preponderance of students belonging to any one particular community.

For the first time in India the Justice Party government have implemented a welfare state concept. Based on this it had ventured some radical programmes. One such was to promote the people of Depressed Classes and the most Backward Classes. Enumerating them as labour class, the government, in addition to introducing measures for emancipation and amelioration, very impatiently implemented systematic plans to empower them. For this the government had conducted enrolment of these people as Labour class and their problems were taken care of directly by the government.

'Political development in Madras Presidency between 1921 and 1937 were of special significance for, besides successful functioning of diarchy without a break, it was during this period that 'Dravidian Conscience' gained strength among non-Brahmins as a result of the activities of the Justice Party inside and outside the legislature. The growth of Dravidian Conscience which was in the first stage aided by, indeed, by some of the legislations passed by the Justice Party.

The contribution of the Justice Party Government are various and adjudged as revolutionary measures aimed at different category such as emancipation, amelioration and very importantly empowerment. By these and by other activities the position of the Non-Brahmins was also developed in the fields of Politics, Economics as well as, Social and Political fields.

Another contribution of an historic importance was that of uniting the various communities of different groups under one common identity and more important was that they were made to realize their common suffering and identity.

The people of South India, especially of the old Madras Presidency appear to behave and live differently and developed politically, economically, socially and culturally from others, which they claim modernity. The dawn of the modernity was the wisdom and working of the governance of the Justice Party



with Dravidian theory and conscience. It is interesting to note that since the advent of the Justice Party the theory of the Dravidian Model was reflected and responded to a great extent also by the Princely States of South India.

The South Indian Liberal Federation was organized collectively by actually the Dravidian Stalwarts for various benefits of the Non-Brahmins.

The humane leaders, with great wisdom and experience drafted the Manifesto of the Organization and titled it with specific purpose as The Non Brahmin Manifesto which itself is a historic achievement for never in the history such a Congregation of opponents was possible against the so authoritative and influential force like the Brahmins and Brahminists.

Thus the nomenclature of the organization and the content of the Manifesto conveyed two messages viz. the Objectives and Reasons of the Organization and that it can be achieved only by the united efforts of the Non-Brahmins.

Thus the Justice Party brought several revolutionary social reforms that for the first time challenged the inhumanisms of Sanathana Orthodoxy which is 'ascribed as the beginning of the Age of Reform which was to be succeeded by a more ideologically greater dimension called Self Respect and Rationalism indicating the Age of Reason Begins.

By experiencing continuously, the denial of the demand and presenting / passing resolution for the cause of communal representation in proportion to the respective population, Periyar quit the Congress at its conference held in Kancheepuram in 1925:

After forming the Self-Respect Movement, he started concentrating and continuously propagating for the equality of humans of Dravidian theory. Despite the invitation

by the Justicites to join Justice Party, Periyar maintained and sustained his propaganda and consciously distanced himself from electoral politics.

After Justice Party faced the defeat in the election held in 1937, and as many leaders left the party, Periyar was requested to preside over the Justice Party and hence Periyar accepted to lead the party.

Thus Periyar's conscience of social values for human liberation was transformed as the Dravidian concept and Periyar renamed the movement as Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) through the merger of the Self Respect League and the South Indian Liberal Federation (Justice Party). The founder of this transformed Dravidian philosophy was Periyar and its advent of political participation was chosen and led by Anna in the name of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)

In course of time, both the concept of the ideology and the unity of the non-Brahmins have better developed with the Dravidian conscience. As Anna assumed as the Chief Minister in 1967, his objective was to enact measures that could provide the people a governance of Dravidian ideology. Therefore, to begin with he introduced three landmark enactments to reform some of the basic identities and systems that exist adamantly as anti-Dravidian.

Accordingly; 1. the State was named as one Tamil Nadu (Dravidian), 2. the 'two languages formula' as the language policy (Non-Aryan), 3. the legalization of the Self-Respect marriages (to create the institution of non-religious marriages and families).

Hence, Anna had enacted a theory with the Dravidian perspective and experienced in the above orientation of enactments. Thus, effected a great transformation with rationalism into a new dimension as Dravidian Model and that concept was to be adhered to by the rulers of the Tamil Nadu to come. ■



THE WINNING INNINGS OF ASIRIYAR



ARUNAN
Progressive Writer

When I heard that Asiriyar K. Veeramani has planned for another propaganda tour protesting against the Viswakarma scheme of the Union government, I was shocked by his plan for such tedious travel at the age of 90. I am just 72 year old but I shudder at the very thought of travelling. My body refuses to co-operate and my mind grows tired when I think of undertaking a journey. I was surprised at the agility of Asiriyar.

I attended the concluding function of the tour, held in Madurai. I saw his cheerful face on the stage. There was no sign of tiredness. Through his speech he made everyone clearly understand that the Viswakarma scheme is a sugar coated toxic candy, a ploy of the Manu(a)dharma promoters, and a strategy of imposing hereditary education.

He spoke for an hour captivating the audience. I could understand only then that travelling tirelessly, meeting people and explaining to them the smart tricks of the brahminists, revitalises the energy of Asiriyar and refreshes his body and mind. He made me recall Thanthai Periyar who used to travel actively ignoring his ripe age and motivate people to realise the truth. He encouraged himself to go ahead on his path with unflinching resolve. As his ardent and faithful disciple, Asiriyar is amidst us as the true heir of Periyar.

By the announcement of low interest loans to 18 categories of artists, artisans and manual workers, most people would have been delighted and hailed it as a good welfare scheme but the imminent and insidious danger hidden in the scheme



Para military Saffron – outfits

was detected first and revealed only by our Asiriyar not only in Tamil Nadu but also in the entire country. He convened an All-Party meet without delay and made it clear that loans would be granted only to the workers who follow the occupation of their family tradition and heredity and must also be involved in it at the time of sanction of the loan, besides the condition that the age of the workers concerned should be 18 or above.

This indirectly means that even if a candidate studies at an ITI and qualifies in a particular job, he would not get financial aid to carry on with that particular occupation. It has to be a hereditary occupation of his family tradition. The motive of such a tricky scheme is obviously to establish the Varnashrama. It was our Asiriyar who exposed the hidden motive of the Union government and he was able to do it because Periyar has always been the source of inspiration for him. Since he was the loyal disciple of Periyar, he could imbibe his virtues and adopt an outlook of social justice.

Not just today; Asiriyar had been looking at the world, ever since he started his life of public service, only through the spectacles of Periyar thought. Asiriyar is able to use Periyarist Vision and look at the bottom of any mess; however deep it might be. He fearlessly told the entire country that the emergency declared by Indira Gandhi is harmful for it. He made people realise that the emergency would only lead to the growth of regressive forces. He was arrested for speaking the truth and imprisoned. He suffered by the rigorous torture in the prison cell. He joined leaders of the D.M.K. and the Communist Party (Marxist) of India and protested against this atrocity. Their sacrifices were not in vain. The dictatorial rule ended atlast. The Janasangh Party pretended to be allied with them in the protest but it developed itself and grew, taking advantage of the situation. Asiriyar was quite right when he alerted that the Jansangh coterie was not trustworthy.

At another stage in the world of politics, it was declared that reservations must not exceed



The **story** behind Tamil Nadu's **reservation** policy

69%



50 per cent. Hence, 69 per cent reservation was under threat. Ms. Jayalalitha, who was then the Chief Minister of the Tamil Nadu State, came forward to safeguard 69 per cent reservation. She hailed from brahmin caste but that did not make Asiriyar brush her aside. He declared that he would readily co-operate with anyone of any caste, if only they come forward to retrieve the lost rights of the people of all other castes. He set out resolutely to face the challenge. The State achieved success only by the valuable, wise suggestion and guidance of Asiriyar. It was also proved that Asiriyar is only against brahminocracy— not at all against individual brahmins.

Asiriyar continues to be a nightmare for the Sangh Parivar coterie even after the lapse of 50 years since the passing away of Thanthai Periyar. A leader in the BJP keeps screaming that the statue of Periyar would be demolished if they come back to power. People would prevent their coming back, over this issue itself. The common worshippers of Tamil Nadu are aware of the truth that the Atheism of Periyar cropped up to establish social justice where as the Theism of the Sangh Parivar coterie cropped up to establish social injustice. Only because

of this awareness people have been granting their mandate and casting votes in favour of the DMK that blossomed from Periyar's DK, or infavour of the ADMK which sprouted from the DMK.

The BJP is dreaming of changing this by making it a dispute as Atheism vs Theism. It is trying to build castles in the air. The ADMK itself which was so far allied with the BJP has begun to say that the dream of the BJP would never be fulfilled.

The BJP is over confident of coming back to power and capturing even the State of Tamil Nadu. The current rule in hand and enormous money power makes it work out various calculations and causes speculations. It has landed the State Governor to make its daydream come true. The present Governor of Tamil Nadu is infiltrating the administrative affairs of the Government headed by the DMK. Even in the matters of cabinet decisions and policies his intervention and interception are becoming intolerable.

The Governor keeps raising voice against them besides his verbal attack on the Dravidian Movement in general. He dares to criticise even the unique genius

The common worshippers of Tamil Nadu are aware of the truth that the Atheism of Periyar cropped up to establish social justice whereas the Theism of the Sangh Parivar coterie cropped up to establish social injustice. Only because of this awareness people have been granting their mandate and casting votes in favour of the DMK that blossomed from Periyar's DK, or infavour of the ADMK which sprouted from the DMK.



Karl Marx. He opposes the language affinity of States. Above all, he eulogises Sanatana Dharma in glorious terms. He says Sanatana Dharma is indestructible. When we ask which is destructible, he says all that are against Sanatana Dharma. It has become a baffling riddle. When we ask him whether Sanatana comprises caste disparity, women's slavery and the domination of Sanskrit, he refuses to answer us. Ultimately he presides over a function of sacred thread ritual and confirms that the Sanatana and brahminocracy are synonymous. The BJP coterie strives hard to conceal this truth and drops a bombshell that Sanatana Dharma and the Hindu religion are one and the same.

We find only "Establishments of Hindu religion" and the word "Hindus" adumbrated in the Constitution. There is no reference or even a mention of 'Sanatana Dharma' in it. The BJP coterie has been falsely claiming that it is also cited in it. This is their ploy to mobilise supporters by foul means.

Hindu religion is a mode of worship with faith in the existence of god. It also comprises multiple gods and goddesses, various forms of worship, animal sacrifice, bizarre rituals and offerings. Does Sanatana accept all these? In spite of its rejection, it is still undeniably Hindu religion. Even if castes, women's slavery and Sanskrit domination are eradicated completely,

Hindu religion would continue to exist. In the bygone days, they used to say that Hindu religion would vanish if the Panchamas are allowed to enter temples and if the Devadasi system is eradicated. They have been eradicated but Hindu Religion still exists. This proves that Sanatana and Hindu religion are not the same.

At present, when we say that men and women of all castes can work as temple priests if they acquire training and when we insist on Tamil being made the language of worship and recitals in temples, these Saffronists shriek – "Hindu religion is in danger." They insist on the Government staying away from temple administration. This is the scream of the Sanatanists. They are against the Hindus of the lower strata and all the Hindu womenfolk. If temples come under the control of private elements, the safety of the entire temple property would be under the threat of embezzlement, but these toxic forces are least bothered about that risk.

In order to expose these people, to reveal all such unpalatable truths and to form a battle field to fight against all the evils, today the world needs Asiriyar Veeramani – the leader of the Tamils. I cordially wish him a very long life and express my hearty greetings to him. ■



DEMOCRACY IN DEPRESSION



Dr. PALANI ARANGASAMY

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Thanjavur.

The concept of democracy, is universally accepted as an art of governance but not without certain lesser blemishes. In its name, it is alive but in its application, it displays a different perspective and distorted view in many countries around the world.

In its function in Nepal, it is a party - less Panchayat Democracy where the National Assembly is potent enough to vote a prime minister out of office. But still, the Assembly is under the absolute control of the monarch.

Even China calls itself a People's Republic ever since it was founded in October 1949 after snatching the power from the feudal autocracy of Chiang-kai-Sheik. Its parliament, nick named by Western press as a rubber -stamp parliament where the Chinese Communist Party enacts its policies through the People's Congress. But it is deemed to be an authoritarian single-party state, least democratic in its governance. Freedom of speech and freedom of religion are all severely restricted by the Government in China. Human Rights are said to be questionable there. But they call themselves as a Republic.



Pakistan calls itself constitutionally a democratic parliamentary republic. In all these past twenty years of its political sustenance, once in 2008 only, the nation has concluded its five year term. In the rest of the years, the barrel of the gun played a devilish role after pushing aside the ruling politicians who are till now the stilled sub-ordinates of the army. It was, in fact a secular nation until 1955 since its secession from India in 1947. However from 1956 onwards, it has been calling itself an Islamic Republic with Islam as its state religion.

Not without reason, have I commented on the distortion of democratic values in a few nations, alien to us. This is to enable the readers to understand that in India too, the picture is dismal, if not disastrous. Either by hook or crook, a decade-old duration of the National Democratic Alliance has emboldened themselves to go berserk with an excitement. Their ultimate aim is to buy the banana states to maintain their survival even if their majority is tilting in the post-election period, if only they win.

India's Secular democratic Republic is based on the Federal Structure of Government, but of late, roughly from the year 2014 onwards, the secularity of

the Indian Constitution is eroded and the democratic values are slowly but steadily deteriorated. The state autonomy of Tamil Nadu is either neglected or tacitly undermined by a person deliberately chosen for sabotaging it politically. The Governor is just a de jure authority and an appointee, subject to the advice of the Chief Minister who has been empowered with a mandate by the people. The power vested with the state legislature is higher than that of the gubernatorial chair. It has been corroborated in a recent judgment of the Supreme Court that in case of a draft resolution of the legislature is sent again to the Governor because of his initial rejection, he has to sign it. Setting aside his adamant behavior, should he not sign it? Sense will prevail at length, we hope.

It is due to the persuasion of the Centre, the governors behave deliberately detrimental to the policies of the States. A day is not far off to see that this unpleasant situation will expire of its own.

In the three –language mechanism of the New Education policy of 2023, two out of three languages ought to be the native to India and the other one will be a local language. This is terrible ploy





Sovereignty is with the people

to do away with English and thrusting Sanskrit into unwilling throats. It is to regenerate the Sanskrit and Vedic culture which is neither relevant nor beneficial. Elimination of English will alienate our youth from seeking jobs within India and abroad. The English being a cementing factor of our country, can't be forgotten. Hence a concerted effort to expose the lurking danger of the new policy of Education shall be the prime duty of ours. Study of three languages will be an avoidable load to the students. This is not unknown to the Union Government. There is a Brahministic stratagem of thrusting Sanskrit into the curriculum, somehow or other. Hitting two targets at one stroke - eliminating English and entry of Sanskrit.

Vishwakarma Yojana is an undeclared war of the Centre against the social reform such as annihilation of castes and dissemination of academic education. I honestly believe that what all our esteemed Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani did in his historic tour of the whole of Tamil Nadu in October 2023 will pay ample dividends in the elections of April 2024 and in the ensuing State Election also in 2026. Lack of such intellectual leadership in the North

especially in Bihar and U.P has made the Centre lure the poor craftsmen of those states. At least in the seven districts of Tamil Nadu where the Vishwakarma is under implementation, our propaganda must still be more active. It is our 'Karma' to do so against the diabolic antipathy of the Centre.

The Centre's discrimination against the States of opposition parties in not extending the due financial allotment is atrocious. Those states can't be expected to pray the Centre with a begging bowl for ever. This tacit hostility in the long run may be detrimental to the unity of the country. Speaking glibly about the progress of the underprivileged but supporting Aryanisation is nothing but a deliberate neglect of the depressed sections. Seating a very few persons of scheduled group as show-pieces in certain posts cannot prove the bonafides of the powers that are. Out of ninety Secretaries in the Central Secretariat at Delhi, eighty seven are Brahmins only is not a good sign of fraternity and equality. May this be called a Brahminocracy as Thanthai Periyar predicted long, long back?

Rhetorical speeches and solemn promises in high-sounding voice cannot conceal

Vishwakarma Yojana is an undeclared war of the Centre against the social reform such as annihilation of castes and dissemination of academic education. I honestly believe that what all our esteemed Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani did in his historic tour of the whole of Tamil Nadu in October 2023 will pay ample dividends in the elections of April 2024 and in the ensuing State Election also in 2026.



the poor economy and heavy inflationary trend of Indian rupee. In my five decades of political observation, never did I see that monetary value of the rupee has gone down so fast as it happened now. From the equivalent of seventy rupees to American dollar, it has come down steeply to about eighty four rupees now. The doors of the nationalized banks that are slammed for the poor are kept open for Modis, Adhanis and Ambanis. Does India move towards a plutocracy is a million dollar question now.

A diamond merchant Neerav Modi, a loanee of four thousand crores of rupees from a nationalized bank has embarked on the plane from Delhi, his wife and daughter from Mumbai, and his son from Kolkata. They joined together in London and now safely settled down in a Pacific island. This is how our Nationalised banks have been emptied. It is said in the press that 5 percent of billionaires in India have kept 63 percent of financial resources of the country. The rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer is not a good sign in a developing country of ours. Can our beloved Prime Minister Modi justify the stealthy behavior of Mr. Neerav Modi or can he recover the money stashed by him elsewhere?

Equality and simplicity are the watchwords of our Prime Minister. But no one can beat him in sartorial elegance of extra-

ordinary opulence. Jawaharlal Nehru was sometimes found faulty for his excessive foreign tours and for championing global peace with fanfare and publicity. That globe-trotting of Jawaharlal Nehru pales into insignificance if it is compared with that of the present incumbent.

Replacing English names of Reports, Departments, Rules and Regulations by Hindi names is a deliberate thrust of Hindi, knowing well that it is unfair, rather illegal in a multi-lingual country. Even the protest by half-a-dozen parliamentarians to such a hasty replacement has gone unnoticed.

These are a few of the matters that are pertaining to the unilateral attitudes and decisions of the present ruling clique in Delhi. Their deep motives, subtle moves, questionable activities, shady deals and vague promises have to be unmasked before the unwary public. This should be done promptly to eliminate the saffron group from the bulwark of the Red Fort.

Forgetting certain minor differences among themselves, the coalition partners of INDIA should work together to see that India is rescued from the clutches of the present ruling group. ■



STRUGGLE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN CHERANMADEVI GURUKULAM (1923-2024)



Prof. NAM. SRINIVASAN
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From 1923 to 1925, Varnasrama Dharma reigned supreme at Cheranmadevi Gurukulam in Tamil Nadu. It was uprooted by Thanthai Periyar. The flag of victory was hoisted and the discrimination of students in the Gurukulam was abolished there. The Centenary of that glorious achievement is being celebrated now in 2023.

The Congress party which was struggling for the freedom of India was also paying attention to the affairs related to education. The curriculum and teaching methodology patronised by the British Government in educational institutions was against Nationalist Spirit, according to the Congress party. So, it thought of forming a new National Education Policy. Upon its request, in 1920s National Educational Institutions got established at several places in the country. Thus, Cheranmadevi Gurukulam was founded in Tamil Nadu.

In December 1922, Tamil Gurukulam School was started at Kallidaikurichi. It was shifted to Cheranmadevi in 1923. During 1924 it promoted caste discrimination in practice. In 1925, it was wound and ceased to exist.

V.V.S. Iyer of Gurukulam for
discriminatory dining

Periyar E V R for
common dining



V.V.S. Iyer who founded the Gurukulam had got his education in English. He had knowledge in many languages and had contributed much to the literary world. He was the editor of the weekly *'The Desa Bhaktan'*. He had authored the biography of Garibaldi, who re-formed Italy as a united country. In spite of being skilled, and competent, caste affinity was inherent overwhelmingly in him. Sanatana Dharma had also captivated him. It made him forget totally the spirit of equality and fall into the slush of disparity. In the pages of history he just exists unglorified.

Following the formation of National Education Fund by Congress, V.V.S. Iyer who was closely associated with it, participated in the conference organised by the Congress at Nagpur, in 1920. In 1924 he served as an elected representative of Thirunelveli District unit of the Congress, participated in the conference held in

Belgaum. Hence, it was not a matter of surprise when the Congress allotted a sum of Rs.10,000/- for the educational institution run by V.V.S. Iyer. Thanthai Periyar assumed the position of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee President during the latter part of 1923. From the National Education Fund of the Congress, Periyar offered Rs.5,000/- as the first instalment.

Gurukulam was in need of financial aid and the Congress party helped it by its aid. *'The Hindu'*, *'Kumaran'*, *'Swadesa Mithran'*, *'Tamil Nadu'* and *'Nava Sakthi'* were the leading newspapers, through which contributions were invited. The collection drive was vigorous all over the country and also abroad. It was a serious hunt for donations. Social activists and promoters of public welfare generously donated huge sums for the cause of education, but V.V.S. Iyer had not specified the address of any



Trust to which the donation amount was to be sent. He had cleverly furnished his personal address for remittance.

Students arrived from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Ceylon, Malaysia, Burma and many other places, and got admitted at the Gurukulam. There was discrimination not only in teaching them but also in feeding them. Foods were prepared differently and served separately for brahmin and non-brahmin resident students. In the name of educational institution, actually Varnasrama Dharma was being preached and practised directly. This mal administration was exposed to the world outside, through the students inside. Periyar learnt about their grievances and the foul practices in the Gurukulam. Ultimately widespread protest began condemning it. Caste based denigrations were severely criticised. The ill-treatment meted out to the non-brahmin students made everyone furious.

Though the struggle and agitation against Gurukulam went on for two years, it reached

its peak especially during March, April and May, 1923. The fight became aggressive during these three months. Periyar's voice of protest was like thunder. He convened an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee of the Congress. A three member sub-committee was formed to enquire about the Gurukulam complexities. This committee confirmed dual discriminations in Gurukulam. Based on their report, a talk was held with V.V.S. Iyer. Dehumanisation was highlighted by the Congress members. But V.V.S. Iyer who had grabbed cleverly Rs.5,000/- from them, stated without even an iota of qualm, that Gurukulam was not an establishment of the Congress and that hence he should not be questioned about the affairs of the Gurukulam. The otherside of V.V.S. Iyer was exposed by his unabashed response.

A sum of Rs.5,000/- was earmarked to be offered as the second instalment. The cheque was withheld, but V.V.S. Iyer cleverly received it from the Congress office, quite secretly, without the knowledge of Periyar and other Congress members. V.V.S. Iyer thus cheated them without bothering about the consequences of his foul play.

On 27.04.1925 when the Tamil Nadu Congress Working Committee convened its meeting, Periyar reprimanded V.V.S. Iyer for receiving an additional sum of Rs.5,000/- secretly without their knowledge. In the meeting it was resolved that wasting Rs.10,000/- for the purpose of Gurukulam was regretted by Tamil Nadu Congress. Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu seconded the resolution.

V.V.S. Iyer was against common feeding for the students of all castes. He had further said that there would be a catastrophe in the country if a non-brahmin student looks at a brahmin student having food.

Thanthai Periyar presented his rebuttal and remarked that it is an injustice on the part of people of one caste belittling people of another caste. He commended Varadarajulu Naidu and said that a voice-vote should be conducted to find out how many were for or against the resolution concerned. 19 members out of 26 expressed consensus. Only 7 were against it. Hence the resolution was unanimously passed in an orderly manner. After the meeting, four members resigned from the executive committee. It is noteworthy that all the four were brahmins.



Many of his supporters defended V.V.S. Iyer and said that caste discrimination has been recognized and approved by the Vedas and scriptures. They added that graded inequality was ordained by the Varnasrama dharma and that V.V.S. Iyer was quite right in his stand. Those fanatics eulogised Gurukulam. Rajagopalachari joined them in defending Iyer and spoke in favour of Sanatana Dharma.

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On 24th March, 1925 another meeting was held at the residence of S. Srinivasa Iyengar, in the presence of Gandhi. Gandhi spoke in favour of common feeding for students of all castes but V.V.S. Iyer raised objection again. There were many such disputes even after this meeting. The voice of protest against Gurukulam raised by Periyar reverberated all over the country. People who had donated money for Gurukulam started demanding refund.

V.V.S. Iyer was ordered to return the amount received by him but he avoided response and just gave evasive answers to all the queries. It was found out that all the property of Gurukulam were under the personal ownership of V.V.S. Iyer. His misappropriation got exposed. Eventually he had to demit his post by the pestering of Periyar. Gurukulam was wound in 1925.

After the passing away of V.V.S. Iyer, Mahadeva Iyer tried to revive Gurukulam in 1926 but Periyar opposed it. In 1937 Sankara Narayana Iyer was about to revive it but it was an abortive attempt. By Periyar's relentless strife, Gurukulam atlast vanished.

Thanthai Periyar's restless struggle against brahminocracy can be understood by a deep probe into the history of 'Cheranmadevi Gurukulam Struggle'. The renowned Vaikom Struggle and the Gurukulam Struggle took place simultaneously during more or less the same period. Thanthai Periyar emerged victorious out of both the gigantic, massive struggles. The flag of his victory would fly high for ever in the sky. Periyar Thought, his humanism and his unquenchable thirst for Social Justice must be understood by posterity. His ideology should be spread far and wide by our collective efforts. ■



ASIRIYAR – THE PROTECTIVE WALL



'NAKKEERAN' GOPAL

Editor

'Nakkeeran' biweekly (Tamil)

Asiriyar K. Veeramani richly deserves to be eulogised as the Protective Wall of the fort called 'the Society of the Tamils'. Renowned sage Thiruvalluvar has given us the invaluable treasure *'Thirukkural'*, comprising 1330 couplets. In the section under the caption *'Padai Matchi'* he has written much about the quality of soldiers on a battle field. In the couplet No.766, Valluvar says – “courage, dignity, following in the footprints of great warriors of the past and earning the trust of the leading Commander – are the four virtues required to protect an army.”

As per the hallmarks stressed by Valluvar, our Asiriyar has been marching majestically following in the foot prints of Thanthai Periyar, having earned his trust. With courage, dignity and progressive thoughts

Asiriyar has been restlessly striving, adhered to the lofty ideals of Periyar. The Tamils have rightly been honouring him as their vibrant leader.

If our Asiriyar of such a unique acclaim is stepping on his 91st year in his glorious life, it only means that he has passed by 91 pleasant spring seasons in his life so far. For him – spring does not imply luxury. A battlefield is pleasant spring for him. The revolutionary poet Bharathidasan once wrote – “*Even prison cells are cuckoos singing gardens for us.*”

The Tamils have been waging, a war for societal freedom for quite a long period. Following Periyar's path, Asiriyar still on the battlefield swiftly swaying his sword. He is not scared of age: age is scared of him because it is not able to weaken him. Age cannot wither him. His vigour is inexhaustible.

Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani's
91st Birthday Special

91
92



*Asiriyar
writes for the
magazines,
edited by him*

Under the guise of Viswakarma Yojana Scheme, recently Modi government indirectly imposed the hereditary education scheme thrown overboard long ago. Furious over the ploy, Asiriyar undertook a propagation tour on 25th October, 2023. We were all shocked by his decision because arrangements had begun to celebrate his 91st birthday on 2nd December, 2023. Unmindful of it, Asiriyar gave priority to public welfare and began his tour. The unflinching resolve of a warrior was exhibited by his unswerving determination. This fighting spirit is not something new in him. He has been a born rebel like Periyar and Kalaignar in all respects. Even when he was affected by COVID-19 pandemic he remained undeterred and invigorated as usual. His agitations and imprisonments have scripted indelible history.

Asiriyar has been the only trusted commander of Periyar, who rewarded him rightly with the coveted position as the General Secretary of

the Dravidar Kazhagam. After the life time of E.V.R. Maniammaiar he has been flourishing perfectly this reputable movement. Always preferring his policies and principles to every other thing, he has never ever compromised with anyone under any circumstance.

He has been the editor of 'Viduthalai' Daily for 60 long years, besides editing and publishing Tamil magazines 'Unmai', 'Periyar Pinju' and also the English monthly 'The Modern Rationalist', being printed and circulated from Periyar Thidal. He reigns supreme there and nothing escapes his notice. Nothing happens without his approval. Through Periyar Trust, he has been managing several educational institutions, hospitals, orphanages and charity homes. He is the Chancellor of Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science and Technology (Deemed to be University) in Thanjavur. Periyar Thidal bequeathed by Periyar has become a strong fort of the Tamils by the tireless efforts of Asiriyar.



The Modern Rationalist
Annual Number 2023



Asiriyar explained the powers of the Press as the FOURTH ESTATE and condemned the toxic forces of the Fascist Government that try to stifle Press freedom. He made it clear that journalists in the print media would go ahead undeterred by threats of arrests and imprisonments. He urged on all the participants to save democracy by collective efforts and assert the freedom of the Press.

Asiriyar has always been insisting on the dire need of press freedom, freedom of thoughts and expression and the prestige of journalists. The Fascist Government headed by Modi recently harassed the on-line medium 'News click' by raid and arrests. A protest meet was held recently in Chennai to condemn that atrocity. The 91 year old warrior of social justice, our beloved Asiriyar, actively participated in the conference. As usual he delivered a thundering speech holding notes of reference and made everyone realise the importance of safeguarding the rights for freedom of thoughts. The participants were all inspired by his effective oration. Since he himself is a publisher and editor, he is very particular about press freedom. Whenever my magazine 'Nakkeeran' faced troubles, Asiriyar extended his helping hand, readily coming forward without any hesitation.

On 8th October 2018, when I was arrested on false sedition charges and a case was foisted, Asiriyar fought for me and got me released on the same day. He won the legal battle and established the power of the Press media. I owe Asiriyar a debt of gratitude for his timely intervention and help. This incident is just one example for his numerous winning innings in life.

On the day following the day of my release, Asiriyar organised an event at Periyar Thidal to felicitate me. Besides many political

leaders and celebrities who attended the event, our present Chief Minister Hon'ble M.K. Stalin was also present, honouring Asiriyar's invitation. When Respectful M.K. Stalin delivered his Address, he commended Asiriyar in glorious terms for rescuing and felicitating me. Thiru. M.K. Stalin also commended my courage and confidence as a fearless journalist.

On that particular occasion Asiriyar too delivered a thundering speech. He explained the powers of the Press as the FOURTH ESTATE and condemned the toxic forces of the Fascist Government that try to stifle Press freedom. He made it clear that journalists in the print media would go ahead undeterred by threats of arrests and imprisonments. He urged on all the participants to save democracy by collective efforts and assert the freedom of the Press. Asiriyar's oration on that occasion was almost a verbal storm. The audience was amazed and mesmerised by his aggressive speech. Asiriyar is like a crouching tiger pouncing suddenly. That was how I saw him that day. His speech still resonates in my ears.

Asiriyar is undeniably a protecting wall for the Fort of the Tamils. We should all be proud of living during his historic life time. As the replica of Thanthai Periyar we possess him today as an invaluable treasure. I wish him a long and peaceful life. I convey my hearty greetings on his 91st birthday on 2nd December 2023. ■



KALAIIGNAR'S BIRTH CENTENARY - (1924-2023) ARCHITECT OF DRAVIDIAN MODEL



SURESH SAMBANDAM
IT Professional – Industrialist
Writer

Any reference to “The Dravidian Model” has to start with Anna (endearing form of C.N. Annadurai) - a great visionary. If one reads Anna’s “*Panathottam*” (Garden of Currency Notes) it will be easy to understand his economic ideology. Startup politicians are talking about “Centrism” in 2020. Anna talked about Centrism 70 years ago within a decade of India’s independence. His thoughts of the economic model and the political ideology that is best suited for Tamil Nadu.

The Dravidian Model at the core is a very simplistic yet powerful idea. The Dravidian Model is nothing but “inclusive growth”. It is just the opposite of “exclusivity and privilege” that plagued Tamil Nadu during those days. As always all simple ideas are pretty hard to execute.

Centrism is a political model to achieve the “inclusive growth”. That simply means that Dravidian leaders preferred capitalism for “industrial and economic” growth and chose socialism for “people’s welfare”. Simply put, the economic growth gives Tamil Nadu enough money to pay the poor through “welfare schemes”. Starting from Anna’s initial promise of “1 kg rice for 1 rupee” that enabled DMK to win power to present Chief Minister M.K. Stalin’s Rs.1,000/- every month for women in 1.5 crore families (approximately). I doubt, if anywhere else in the world, citizen welfare has been done at this scale.

While the DMK and ADMK can oppose each other in the election battle, the core idea of the “Dravidian Model” has penetrated deep into the system that can’t

be undone by anyone despite successive changes in the rule whether it is M.G. Ramachandran (MGR) or Jayalalitha. The philosopher is Thanthai Periyar. The credit for this deep penetration of the “Dravidian Model” goes to Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi. Anna was a visionary, but unfortunately he passed away quite early and hence it became Kalaingar’s responsibility to execute the “Dravidian Model”. Luckily for us, Kalaingar not only executed it flawlessly but also institutionalized it so well that it can’t be unplugged even if he lost power.

The foundation of the Dravidian model started by strengthening the educational system. Kamaraj was instrumental in the growth of the school education

system, especially the primary education. Although his political affiliation was with Congress his actions were truly in the lines of “Inclusive Growth” also known as “Dravidian Model”. Those days’ Congress was plagued with leaders who spoke about segregation and exclusivity and he was a rebel to go against them. From that perspective, he is also a Dravidian leader. Subsequently, between Kalaingar and MGR, higher education in Tamil Nadu saw a huge growth from mere 40+ Engineering colleges. Today Tamil Nadu boasts of 500+ colleges. Kalaingar opened 60 Arts & Science colleges from 1969 to 1976. He also bifurcated education department as school education and higher education for due attention and effective administration. He fundamentally believed in “education for all”. This is Dravidian Model.



Asinyar Dr. K. Veeramani's
91st Birthday Special

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*Periyar, the icon of Dravidian Movement felicitates Kalaingar
M. Karunanidhi, the architect of Dravidian Model*



While the DMK and ADMK can oppose each other in the election battle, the core idea of the “Dravidian Model” has penetrated deep into the system that can’t be undone by anyone despite successive changes in the rule whether it is M.G. Ramachandran (MGR) or Jayalalitha. The philosopher is Thanthai Periyar. The credit for this deep penetration of the “Dravidian Model” goes to Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi. Anna was a visionary



Today we are fighting the threat to this model via “NEET” that is taking medical education back to exclusivity and privilege and denying the poor of Tamil Nadu what it rightfully deserves.

Kalaignar fought basically to abolish the entrance exams for higher Engineering education. He created Anna University in Chennai with branches in Coimbatore, Trichy, Tirunelveli and Madurai. He opened government Engineering colleges in 12 districts. It is to be noted that during 1970s there were only 14 districts in Tamil Nadu.

Next comes industrial development. Kalaignar was instrumental in setting up industrial estates across the State. He formed many Small Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (SIPCOT) and developed many infrastructure across the state that not only brought large industries but also developed the largest Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) ecosystem in the entire State. Tamil Nadu is #1 industrialised state in the country even ahead of Maharashtra despite being #1 in GSDP.

Tamil Nadu was a pioneer in the field of Information Technology (IT). Tamil Nadu was the first to bring IT policy in the entire country and even Union of India didn’t have such a policy. Besides, Tamil Nadu formed a separate Ministry

for IT and established the TIDEL park to foster software development in the State. For all these, the credit goes to one leader - Kalaignar.

Tamil Nadu contributes close to 20 per cent in India’s, overall automobile sector. Tamil Nadu is known as the ‘Detroit of India’ housing big brands like BMW to Rolls Royce.

Tamil Nadu has a deep network of auto spare parts ecosystem that feeds the bigger manufacturing industries. The foundation for this growth was laid by Kalaignar.

Kalaignar was a true hero without whom Tamil Nadu would not be today in the current status of economy, proudly occupying the #1 state position in the country, for inclusive economic growth.

PS: Following in the footsteps of Kalaignar, M.K. Stalin launched the master stroke of Trillion Dollar GDP goal for Tamil Nadu. Through his policies Tamil Nadu has already attracted approximately 70,000 crores of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) through 130 MoUs. The State has also setup FinTech City and Knowledge City in 1400 acres and many more growth initiatives have been taken in the short span of 2 years since the DMK came to power in 2021. ■





ASIRIYAR AGAINST RAMAYANA



SIGARAM S. SENTHILNATHAN

Senior Advocate & Progressive Writer
Editor of 'Sigaram' (Tamil Magazine)

Asiriyar Dr.K.Veeramani has been striving to establish social justice and to propagate Rationalism, that are the prominent policies of the Dravidar Kazhagam (DK). He has also been spearheading several protests and agitations concerning the ideology of this reputable movement. One of the significant protests of the DK Movement has been against the mythology 'Ramayana'. This protest commenced by Arignar Anna has been carried on well by Asiriyar Veeramani.

During 1943, the voice of protest was raised against '*Periya Puranam*' and '*Ramayana*' that caused the infiltration of Aryan codes. They deserved to be burnt in public and turned into a heap of ash, according to Periyar and Anna. It was a highly significant protest. 'Ramayana' was taken up first as a myth to be burnt in public places. Anna spoke thus when the protest began:



Denigrating 'Ram Leela'

“‘Ramayana’ is a fabrication by the Aryans. It belittles Dravidians. Hence, this mythological work should cease to exist!”

According to historical facts, the protest of Periyar against Ramayana started in 1922 itself. As the counter attack on ‘Ram Leela’ celebrated in the North, he advocated ‘Ravana Leela’ to mock at it. In 1956, Periyar boldly burnt the image of Ram itself in public as a mark of protest. The protest against Ramayana was led by Annai EVR. Maniammaiar after the passing away of Periyar on 24.12.1973. It was propagated by the DK leaders that ‘Ramayana’ denigrates the Tamils. EVR. Maniammaiar conducted ‘Ravana Leela’ in December 1974. Thus, the protest continued in Tamil Nadu.

Asiriyar Veeramani was the next in the chain of protest. As the General Secretary of the Dravidar Kazhagam, he wrote on 17.10.1974 to Ms. Indira Gandhi, who was then the Prime Minister of India, requesting her to ban ‘Ram Leela’ celebration in North India. He had pointed out that her father Jawaharlal Nehru had also agreed with the truth that

‘Ramayana’ is actually a clash between the Aryans and the Dravidians, fabricated as an epic.

Asiriyar had stated in his letter to the Prime Minister that ‘Ravana Leela’ would continue to be conducted in Tamil Nadu if ‘Ram Leela’ celebration continued in North India. But the reply from Ms. Indira Gandhi was disappointing. She wanted ‘Ravana Leela’ to be stopped in Tamil Nadu. Asiriyar and EVR. Maniammaiar were furious over the negative response from the Prime Minister. They announced daringly that the next ‘Ravana Leela’ event in Tamil Nadu would be on 25th December, 1974. The public, various political leaders, DK followers and cadres were invited to participate in it.

The day before the event, Asiriyar was arrested. Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi was then the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. The CM was pressurised by the Union Government and troubled in several ways. He was threatened that the Government headed by the DMK would be dismissed if ‘Ravana Leela’ was not permanently banned and prohibited in Tamil Nadu.





In the history of the Tamils 'Ravana Leela' was a great cultural battle. It exposed 'brahminocracy' and Aryan atrocities in Tamil Nadu. The entire country was made aware of this unpalatable truth. Asiriyar set a precedent for all other states by facing the challenge as the General Secretary of the Dravidar Kazhagam. He scripted history through this protest against the Aryan mythology -- 'Ramayana'. He conquered without stooping.

However, Kalaignar ignored the threat. Asiriyar was in the prison cell. 'Ravana Leela' was conducted under the leadership of EVR. Maniammaiar, treating it as a challenge. The event did take place and she was arrested when it was over. The rest is history.

In the history of the Tamils 'Ravana Leela' was a great cultural battle. It exposed 'brahminocracy' and Aryan atrocities in Tamil Nadu. The entire country was made aware of this unpalatable truth. Asiriyar set a precedent for all other states by facing the challenge as the General Secretary of the Dravidar Kazhagam. He scripted history through this protest against the Aryan mythology -- 'Ramayana'. He conquered without stooping.

In 1992 Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was demolished. At the same spot, Ram

Temple is built by the Union Government headed by the RSS backed BJP. Reports say that the consecration of the temple would be held in January, 2024.

On 6th of December 1992, when Babri Masjid was demolished, Asiriyar raised his slogan – "Let us curb religious fanaticism! Let us protect humanism!"

The people of Tamil Nadu hope Asiriyar would continue his protest and chalk out a plan now as he did in the past. All are anxious over his move in this regard. If the consecration of Ram Temple is held in a grand manner in January – 2024, what should be our reaction in Tamil Nadu? Asiriyar is the deciding authority. Let us wait and see. Presently, let us all wish him a peaceful life on his 91st birthday. I convey my hearty greetings to our beloved Asiriyar. This State and all its people need him for ever. We await his next historic protest. ■



PERIYAR MANIAMMAI INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: A GREEN UNIVERSITY WITH ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



Prof. S. VELUSAMI

Vice Chancellor

Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science & Technology

(Deemed to be University)

Vallam, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu

Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science & Technology (Deemed to be University) is making efforts in creating new horizons in the arena of technical education and research for about 35 years. Curriculum innovation is given priority in order to make the courses industry and research oriented. The dedicated and qualified faculty members routinely teach, practice outcome based education (OBE) and learning, which leads towards an excellent academic career for the betterment of the students.

Marching ahead to enhance the objectives of promoting higher education and research; the holistic development of students, a societal-service approach, providing opportunities for students of rural background, girl students, and

students from marginalized communities remain as a special emphasis always in our approach.

Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science & Technology (PMIST) constantly encourages the students, staff and stakeholders to participate in the green practices towards the reduction of carbon emission and sustainable clean development mechanism by providing awareness, training and technical knowledge.

Since its inception in 1988 the scrolling campus has gradually been transformed into a green garden. PMIST offers environment and energy related services to safe guard the planet earth from disaster. The institute is committed to a green policy which includes conservation, waste

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PMIST – Sustainable Institutions of India “Green Ranking 2023”

management and green building materials like fly-ash bricks. Institution aims to achieve Net Zero Carbon Footprint by 2025.

Due to the continuous efforts and commitment towards environmental protection and environmental management; PMIST has been recognized with the prestigious International Green University Award 2023 by the GREEN MENTOR organization that has the special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations from 2021.

The institute received the award during the Green School Conference, held at New York on September 15, 2023. In sustainability Green Ranking 2023 PMIST received Institutional Grade ‘A’ and Gold under Institutional Band from Sustainable Institutions of India.

In all India MDRA Ranking- 2023 PMIST obtained 208th Rank in overall University Ranking, 26th Rank for Department of Architecture, and 38th Rank for Engineering. Our Institute obtained IIRF Rank 2023 All India Rank 33, State Rank 10 and Zone Rank 19 among top private engineering



Asinyar Dr. K. Veeramani's
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International Green University Award 2023



PMIST 31st Convocation held on 23rd September 2023

Colleges in India. The Department of Architecture obtained All India Rank 22nd and State Rank-6.

PMIST has been recognized for its significant contribution as a Host Institution in conducting the National Level Faculty Development Program on Cloud Infrastructure (AWS). The FDP was organized by Brain-o-vision Solutions India Pvt. Ltd in collaboration with All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). Our Institute participation has been instrumental in achieving the remarkable feat of securing a place in the India Book of Records 2023. About 28000+ faculties from 400+ colleges/universities participated from all over India.

Academic Activities:

The 31st Convocation was held at Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science and Technology (Deemed to be University) on 23rd September 2023. Esteemed Chancellor Dr.K.Veeramani presided over the convocation and conferred the degrees to the graduates. Thiru. Deepak Jacob, I.A.S., District Collector of Thanjavur was the Chief Guest for the Convocation. Various Departments of PMIST are regularly conducting Conferences, Seminars, Faculty Development Programmes, Symposiums and Value

Added Programmes. Centre for Energy and Environment, Department of Civil Engineering, Architecture, Mechanical, Biotech and Chemistry jointly organized an International Conference on 'Innovative Technologies for Environmental Sustainability' on 24th & 25th January 2023.

The Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE) Organized an International conference on 'Smart Electronics & Communication Technologies-2023' on 13th & 14th March 2023 in collaboration with Indian Society for Technical Education of the Institute. The Department of Commerce organized a Two day International conference on "Emerging Trends in E-Commerce, Business and Corporate Finance" on 29th & 30th March 2023. An International Symposium on "Mental Health and Psychological Wellbeing of Adolescents" organized on 30.09.2022 by the Department of Social Work and also an International Symposium on "Green Social Work and Green Entrepreneurship for Environment Conservation" was organized in association with Jobs for Development, Oslo, Norway and Adaikkalam Charitable Trust on 17.02.2023.

Annual Day of our Institute held on 11.03.2023. Tmt. R. Lalitha I.A.S,



Kalaingar Dr.M.Karunanidhi Centenary Celebrations held on 6th October 2023

Director, Directorate of Technical Education, Chennai who is the Alumni of our Institute was the Chief Guest and delivered Annual Day address.

Commemorating Kalaingar Dr.M.Karunanidhi's birth centenary year Dr. M. Kalaingar Karunanidhi Centre for Political Science, PMIST organized Kalaingar Centenary International Symposium on "Kalaingar Dr. M. Karunanidhi: A Versatile Personality – Leader of Modern Tamil Nadu" on 6th October 2023.

Research Activities & Recognition:

Ms. R. Abirami, final year biotechnology student, has received a one month fully funded internship under Associate Professor Yoshiyuki Kubota, National Institute of Physiological Sciences, Japan. Four Aerospace and five ECE degree programme students contributed to developing a FUNSAT of Space Kidz India which was launched on 18th November 2022 on the remarkable occasion of ISRO's Parambh Mission.

Faculty members from the Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering are working on the design of International Dugong Conservation Centre, Manora, Thanjavur. This 15 crore worth project is

for the Tamil Nadu forest Department.

Received Rs. 2.2 Lakhs fellowship fund from SMART (Seeking Modern Application for Real Transformation), New Delhi for Climate Change Awareness Programme for Periyar Community Radio 90.4. DST, VigyanPrasar sanctioned Rs.1Lakh for Periyar Community Radio for Science Communication through Community Radio project.

PMIST has published 53 scientific articles in Scopus in the year 2022 and 61 scientific articles in Scopus in the year 2023.

Periyar PURA Activities:

Periyar PURA is the noble mission of PMIST to provide urban facilities to rural areas for the upliftment of underprivileged rural people by adopting sixty seven villages in and around Thanjavur. Appreciating the efforts of PMIST; Former President of India Dr.A.P.J Abdul Kalam inaugurated the Periyar PURA on 23rd December 2003.

Centre for Rural Development organized a number of awareness and welfare programmes for the benefit of Periyar PURA village children, women and elderly people. Necessary guidance was also provided by the Centre to the above villages in connection with Physical

connectivity, Knowledge connectivity, Economic connectivity and Electronic connectivity.

Periyar Technology Business Incubator (PTBI) Activities:

In the last one year, seven neighbourhood institutions have signed co-incubation agreements with our incubator and will avail Business incubation services for their faculty and students to promote startup culture in their campus. About 353 students from these institutions visited the incubator under this collaboration.

PTBI startup Ariviya a deep tech company is selected for Startup India Seed Fund Scheme and DBT-BIG grant and a food biological startup received from GSV Fermentech. iTNT Hub of Tamil Nadu State Government has included PMIST as one of the 25 Academic institutions to work on industry sponsored research in cutting edge and futuristic technologies. PTBI will be the lead in bidding for the proposals.

Periyar TBI had successfully developed all the five modules of simulations for missile launcher guns to be used in the Indian defence sector.

Placement Cell Activities:

In order to increase the placements, the Centre for Industry Institute Interaction (CIII) conducted Soft Skills training programmes in association with corporate trainers and in association with Barclays Bank for all the final year students of Engineering, Arts and Science students. In association with NPTEL soft skills training was given to all MCA and MBA students. Also, the Centre provided technical training programmes like Full Stack Developer and Google Certification. About 97 per cent of final year students benefited out of these training programmes. Sixty nine companies from 12 different sectors such as IT, ITES, Manufacturing,

Media, Edutech Finance etc., conducted the campus recruitment drives for the students of Engineering, Arts, Science, Management and Education. Among the students opted for the placement opportunity 93 per cent of them got placed in academic year 2022-23.

Alumni Activities:

Periyar Maniammai Alumni Association (PMAA) chapters are functioning in various places of the country and abroad. Silver Jubilee Year Reunion of Batch 1994-98 Engineering Batches held on 08.07.2023 and about 87 alumni participated in the gathering from USA, UK, France, Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, Bahrain, UAE and from various states and districts of India. All alumni together presented a cheque to the Chancellor worth Rs.2.5 lakh towards the development of needy students.

In association with Periyar Maniammai Alumni Association (PMAA) various Departments organized 11 Alumni Lecture Series with renowned Alumni as resource persons.

NCC / NSS / YRC Activities:

Army Cadet A. Annamalai of III B.Com (CS) was selected for RDC 2023 to March in the Delhi Rajpath and participated in the Republic day Parade at New Delhi. NCC 'C' certificate examination was conducted by DG NCC, New Delhi on 18th & 19th February 2023. About 08 Air NCC cadets and 16 Army Cadets wrote this examination. NCC Army 'B' Certificate examination was held on 11th & 12th March 2023. About 29 NCC cadets from PMIST appeared for this Certificate examination (18 Army Cadets and 11 Air Cadets attended this examination).

YRC organized Blood Donation Camp during Periyar's 144th Birth Day and Esteemed Chancellor's Birthday and Annai



Every year PMIST awards academic scholarships for meritorious students under various categories. The wards of the teaching and non-teaching staff of PMIST, sister institutions and students from Periyar PURA villages are also given Management Merit Scholarships. During this academic year scholarships worth more than 3 crore rupees were distributed to students.

Maniammaiar's Birthday. Volunteers donated 166 units of Blood to Thanjavur Medical College Blood Bank, Thanjavur. Tamil Nadu State Blood Transfusion Council had given an appreciation award for actively participating and organizing blood donation Camp in 2022. The Award was received from Mr. Dinesh Ponraj Oliver, Collector, Thanjavur District.

Our NSS Volunteer Ms. E.EniyaVashini III B.Sc., Computer Science, participated in Tamil Nadu State Republic Day Parade on 26.01.2023.

Sports Achievements:

Our students won the "South Zone Athletic Championship 2022" organized by Andhra Athletic Association held at Acharya Nagarjuna Stadium, Guntur from 8th to 10th September 2022. They have also won the State Level Open Karate Championship 2022 organized by Thandar Sports Club which was held at our Institute on 8th & 9th October 2022.

Our students won the "National Level Athletic Championship 2022" organized by Athletic Federation of India held at Guwahati, Assam from 11th to 15th November 2022. Our Students also won the National level Ken I Kan Open Karate Championship 2022 organized by Unique Sports Karate Academy held at KG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore on 27.11.2022.

"Chancellor's Trophy State Level Sitting Men and Women PARA Volleyball Championship 2022" was organized by the Institute jointly with the Para Volleyball Association of Tamil Nadu, on 2nd and 3rd December 2022. The IOB Trophy (Men & Women) 11th Senior National Para Volleyball Championship 2023 was organized by the Institute in association with Paralympic Volleyball Federation of India, Para Volley Association of Tamil Nadu and Indian Overseas Bank from 3rd to 5th February 2023. Hon'ble Minister for School Education Thiru. Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi inaugurated this event. Our Institute's Annual sports meet 2023 was held in a grand manner on 9th March 2023.

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Our Esteemed Chancellor often quotes "If we can't, no one else can; if none can, only we can" - these words are guiding us and enabling us to march ahead towards achieving academic excellence and to provide sustainable environment in the institute. ■



HEALTH IN THE DRAVIDIAN MODEL GOVERNMENT



Dr. PONVANNAN GANAPATHY
Rtd. Army Medical Corps

World Health Organisation (WHO) defined “Health in 1948 as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

We can define the Dravidian Model on similar lines:

What is the Dravidian Model? There are various explanations for it from intellectuals and anti-nationals to patriots. I shall add my own. March towards a progressive liberal secular inclusive rational welfare state with absolute self-respect without leaving back anyone, any group based on gender, region, religion, caste and not just mere removal of poverty.

The Dravidian movement from its initial days till 2023 has given maximum thrust on the health of the people and Dravidian party governments have worked tirelessly to improve the health of the people of Tamil



Kalaignar Centenary Super Speciality Hospital, Chennai

Nadu and succeeding to a greater extent fighting against odds. DK president Asiriyar K Veeramani, President of Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) set out on a Tamil Nadu tour at the ripe age of 90 to expose the ill-intentions of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) in destroying the health infrastructure built step by step in Tamil Nadu in the past century.

Tamil Nadu formerly Madras State was a cesspool of superstitions and to make the people move towards modern medicine and accept it was by itself a Herculean task. A significant number of people in North India still go for the unscientific belief-based treatments practised by quacks. The corresponding figures in Tamil Nadu are comparatively low and the credit in totality should go to the

Dravidian movement, Periyar and his team for tirelessly working against superstitions, age-old belief systems, karma logics for diseases and disorders. The people of Tamil Nadu took a decisive turn in favour of modern medicine due to the rationalistic approach gaining supremacy on health issues starting from conceiving a child, delivery, vaccinations, infertility, treatment of diseases to death at ripe old age (The age limit for considering an age as ripe old has also increased significantly and modern medicine plays a major role in it).

Health, like education, property, land ownership, and choice of professions was grossly imbalanced between various varnas and all varnas were discriminatory to women. The health expenses for girls and women by a family were



The profile of medical students joining medicine and para-medical courses in Tamil Nadu is the reason behind it and NEET directly attack this model to destabilise the healthcare system. Asiriyar had travelled the length and breadth of Tamil Nadu to propagate the above facts about the sinister designs of NEET and its longstanding devastating effects on our healthcare model.



meagre in comparison with those for male counterparts. The women-centric approach of the Dravidian model has brought great dividends and women dominate the healthcare industry in Tamil Nadu. The share of girls in medical college admissions before compulsory NEET had crossed 65 per cent in Tamil Nadu. The decision taken by Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi led DMK government to reserve 30 per cent of seats in government jobs, arguably the first-ever decision of its kind in the world made women take a significant step in increasing their share in all walks of life.

The same can be said about the effects of the caste-based reservation policy practised in Tamil Nadu from the days of the Justice Party (Precursor of the Dravidian Movement) till now in making all pillars inclusive to all sections of the society. This remains a mirage to almost the whole of North and West India and within southern States, Tamil Nadu stands tall in its inclusiveness. Inclusiveness within the health sector for all caste groups and women is the best in the country leading to massive improvements in the physiological quality of life index in the last 50 years of the Dravidian government's rule. The increase, in sub-quotas attempted by Dravidian governments, made this inclusiveness more decisive than other states which made feeble attempts and

succumbed to judicial activism of blocking those with vengeance.

Tamil Nadu government followed Andhra (NTR government started an exclusive medical university in 1986) by starting a medical university in 1989 named after the former Chief Minister M.G.Ramachandran by the subsequent Chief Minister Kalaingar led DMK government to take care of medical education across the State and appointed Dr.Lalitha Kameswaran a renowned physician as its first vice-chancellor.

Implementation of Mandal Commission recommendations in jobs by V P Singh led National Front government in 1990 led to protests across the country but not in Tamil Nadu. The protests were sadly led by healthcare professionals who wanted to preserve their exclusivism and dominance of so called upper castes across the country. Even Mandal -2 implemented in education by Manmohan Singh led UPA -1 in 2006 was opposed across the country. Indian Medical Association (IMA) the parent body of all doctors across the country took an anti-Mandal stand exposing the pervading casteist mindset in all national institutions. Tamil Nadu branch of IMA took a diametrically opposite stand and welcomed the implementation of Mandal-2 in education.



Anna, who founded 'Dravidian Model', was named after an exclusive University for Engineering Education and Research with Head Quarters at Chennai

I have stressed more on inclusiveness and gender parity than data on primary health centres, district hospitals, tertiary care hospitals, and medical college hospitals as the effectiveness of running the above health centres successfully solely rests on the inclusiveness of selection of medical and para-medical personnel. Various states from Gujarat to West Bengal to Punjab find it very difficult to get doctors to work in their health establishments, unlike Tamil Nadu where doctors compete hard to join the Tamil Nadu State Medical Services. The profile of medical students joining medicine and para-medical courses in Tamil Nadu is the reason behind it and NEET directly attacks this model to

destabilise the healthcare system. Asiriyar had travelled the length and breadth of Tamil Nadu to propagate the above facts about the sinister designs of NEET and its longstanding devastating effects on our healthcare model.

Dravidian Model vehemently opposes the Union government's intrusions into health education tooth and nail and continue to fight for our basic rights to date. The attempts to usurp the postgraduate medical seats and super speciality seats of Tamil Nadu medical colleges and the fight against it is another long battle along with the battle against the sadistic compulsory NEET for UG/PG medical seats. The number of medical seats in government



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institutions in Tamil Nadu is the highest in the country and same is the case with super speciality seats in Tamil Nadu government Medical colleges denoting the importance given by the Dravidian model to modern health education. Tamil Nadu is the only state which fights tirelessly in courts for its in-service doctors working in government hospitals across the state for their justified share in PG and Super Speciality seats and had won many legal battles in their favour.

The change in infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate along with the reduction of BPL from 1970 to 2020 by the Dravidian Model is nothing short of a phenomenal achievement. BPL (Below Poverty Line) population ratio of Tamil Nadu was more than the Uttar Pradesh BPL ratio in 1971 hovering above 50 per cent and in the last 50 years it has reduced to single digits. The maternal mortality rate of Tamil Nadu is 60 per 100000 pregnancies a five fold reduction from the nearly 300 per 100000 in 1970.

The ratio of qualified medical personnel practising modern medicine to the state population places Tamil Nadu on top of all larger states. The density of doctors per 1000 in Tamil Nadu hovers around FOUR making it on par with developed countries like Norway, Sweden having the same 'FOUR' Tamil Nadu is better than them if we take the number of female doctors per 1000 population and girls joining medicine in the last few

decades under Dravidian rule. Dravidian Model has placed equal thrust to nursing, pharmacy and paramedical seats in UG and PG along with Medical seats and second to Karnataka in the number of seats available in the State. The indigenous Siddha medical system too has been on the radar of the Dravidian Model and documentation, research have been encouraged in government Siddha medical colleges in a big way. Ayothidoss Pandithar National Institute of Siddha located at Tambaram is a NABH-accredited institution. The institution was started on a Centre-State collaboration when DMK played a significant role in Union government.

Medical and Para-Medical personnel who studied in India and working across the globe form a significant chunk of the NRI population. The caste, religion and gender profile of those from Tamil Nadu will be in stark contrast to those from other States of India establishing the decisive role played by the Dravidian movement in the past century.

Wishing Asiriyar K Veeramani a very happy birthday with hearty gratitude and all wishes for his good health to continue his tireless work for the welfare of the people of Tamil Nadu and Humanity. ■



பகுத்தறிவாளர் கழகம் THE RATIONALISTS' FORUM, TAMIL NADU

டிசம்பர் 2
சுயமரியாதை
நாள்



மாநிலத் தலைவர் பொதுச் செயலாளர்கள்



மா.துழிச்செல்வன்



ஆ.வெங்கடேசன்
(தலைமை நிலையம்)



வி.வேலன்



எ.தமிழ் பிரபாகர்
(தஞ்சாவூர் பிரிவு)

வொருளாளர் மாநில துணைத் தலைவர்கள்



முனைவர்
சி.தமிழ்செல்வன்



கே.டி.சி.குருசாமி



கே.வேங்கடநாதன்



வேலிமான் நகன்

மாநில துணைத் தலைவர்கள்



கே.சோ.இந்திரநாதன்



வாழியன்
ந.சீனிவாசன்



மேனா முனைவர்
நா.கவிதாசனா



மேனா முனைவர்
என்.சுமதி செல்வன்

மாநில துணைப் பொதுச் செயலாளர்கள் தலைவர், டூர்னேரி



மேனா முனைவர்
டி.ஆ.கவிதாசனி



சுமன்மா. சரவணன்



வி.வினாயகி சங்கர்

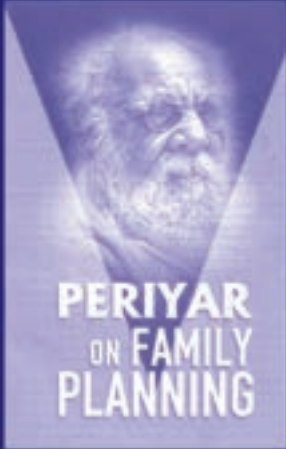


செ.நா.நாதன்





FAMILY PLANNING AWAKENING – PIONEERING WORK OF PERIYAR



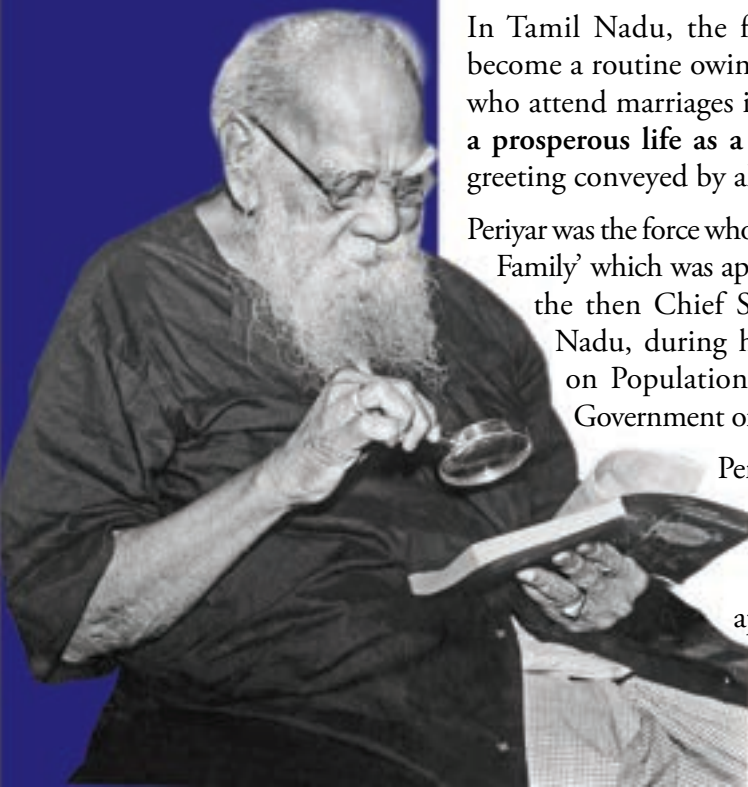
Many of the States in our country at present are unable to control their population due to the inadequacy in the awakening on Family Planning among the people. Periyar spoke about Family Planning as early as in 1930 and delivered a propaganda speech '*Garbha Thadai*' (Ban on Pregnancy) which was published as a booklet and copies of it have been circulated in lakhs so far to the people. Women must not be treated as 'child delivering machines'. As a part of women liberation and empowerment on – a par with men, Periyar used to propagate it invariably in all the meetings he addressed. It happened much earlier during the British rule and before Family Planning became the social welfare scheme of both the Union and the State governments after independence.

Under the Family Scheme the 'small family norm' (either two children or one child) was effectively carried on in Tamil Nadu on the foundation laid down by Periyar. Because of the measures, Tamil Nadu continues to remain in the forefront due to the small family norms that have become a way of life in the State.

In Tamil Nadu, the family planning measures have become a routine owing to the greetings of the persons who attend marriages in their respective circles. "**Lead a prosperous life as a very small family**" is the usual greeting conveyed by all, generally in Tamil Nadu.

Periyar was the force who inculcated the culture of 'Planned Family' which was aptly quoted by T.V. Antony, I.A.S., the then Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu, during his tenure as incharge of Survey on Population Regulation & Stabilisation by Government of India.

Periyar's forethought on modernity coupled with due welfare of humans is noteworthy. It is not confined with territorial limits but applicable to the entire humankind. ■





LONG LIVE ASIRIYAR@91 YOUNG IN MIND AND ACTION



G.KARUNANIDHY

General Secretary

All India OBC Employees Federation

The campaign for social justice and rationality that started on the platform at the age of ten is still going fast and majestically at the age of 91. There is no parallel leader in India, why, in the world, today, to equal him in active public life for a social cause.

The request of the cadres and advice of senior leaders across political parties to restrict his whirlwind tour considering his age is reacted sharply by the leader, citing Thanthai Periyar's tour undertaken tirelessly upto the age of 95 with all his ailments. "I don't require any intelligence of my own, what I have imbibed from Periyar will do for me.", says Asiriyar often, in a simple and humble manner.

Thanthai Periyar identified his skills and qualities as a leader and appointed Asiriyar as the General Secretary of Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) at the age of 29. Thereafter, within two years, at the age of 31, he was appointed as Editor of "*Viduthalai*" (Liberation), a rationalist daily

Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani's
91st Birthday Special



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run by the Dravidar Kazhagam and holds the 'Guinness record of serving as Editor continuously for more than 60 years.

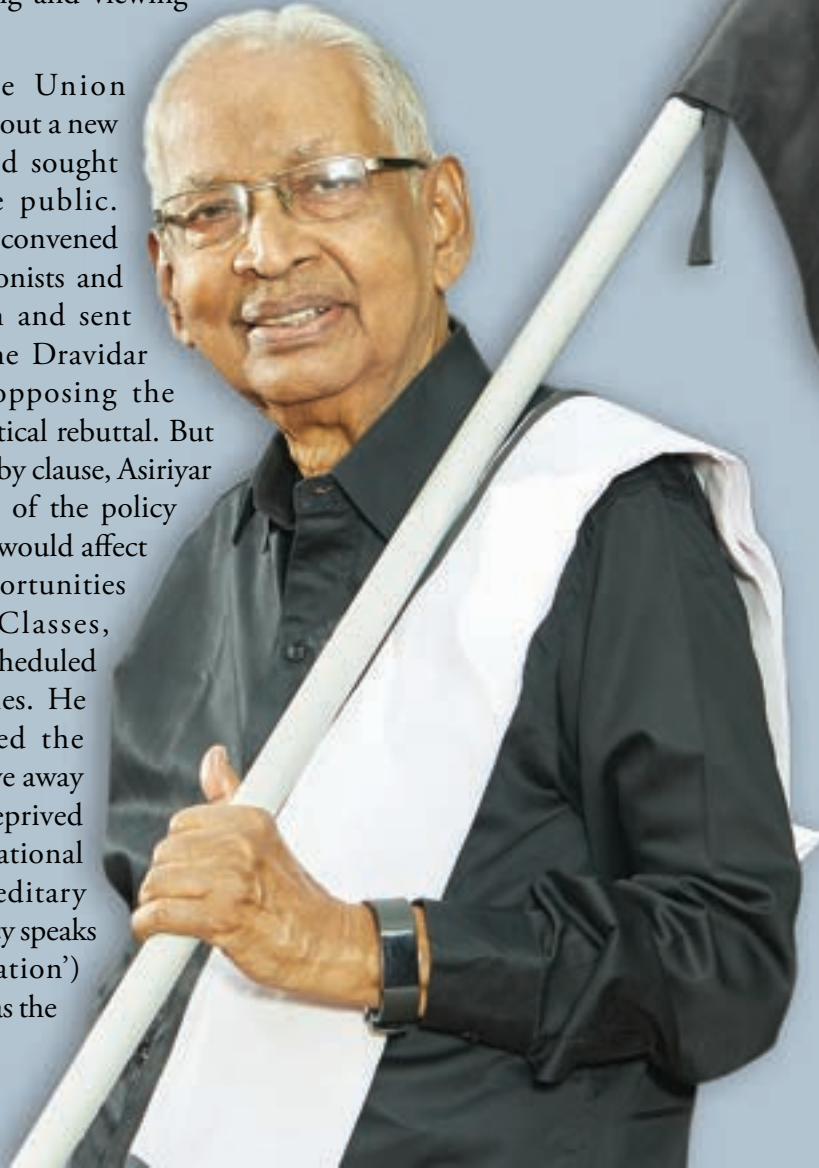
Almost on a daily basis, there is a statement from Asiriyar published in 'Viduthalai' daily, that covers all social, political, and economic subjects of the day, that have a direct bearing on the development and advancement of the people of Tamil Nadu, in particular the deprived sections of the State as well as our country.

Every order or project of the Government both at the Centre or State level will be viewed by Asiriyar, through what he often calls the "Erode lens" (ஈரோட்டுக் கண்ணாடி), Periyar's birthplace is Erode. This makes the difference from the rest of the others in analysing and viewing a matter.

To cite a few, the Union Government brought out a new Education Policy and sought the opinion of the public. Asiriyar immediately convened a meeting of educationists and discussed with them and sent the opinion from the Dravidar Kazhagam totally opposing the policy. It is not a political rebuttal. But point by point, clause by clause, Asiriyar refuted the intention of the policy makers and how that would affect the educational opportunities of the Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Minorities. He categorically rejected the policy as it would drive away the students from deprived sections of the educational stream to their hereditary occupation. (The policy speaks of 'vocational education') Asiriyar criticised this as the

Kula Kalvi Thittam (traditional occupation) brought by then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu C.Rajagopalachariyar (Rajaji). There was widespread criticism, thereafter, from all the political parties, social organisations, and educationists against the New Education Policy.

In the history of social justice in Tamil Nadu, the victories achieved by Asiriyar Veeramani led to the stepping stone for the progress of Dravidian society. In 1979, when the Government headed by M.G.Ramachandran brought in an order to exclude the backward classes whose family annual income exceeds Rs.9,000/-. Asiriyar explained the danger to the leaders of political



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Asiriyar accompanying Periyar with due care-taking

parties. He campaigned against the order throughout Tamil Nadu. As a result, in the next parliamentary elections, MGR's AIADMK was defeated. M.G.R. understood the reason – Rs.9,000/- G.O and the propaganda done by Asiriyar and his movement. He convened an all-party meeting and thereafter withdrew the income ceiling and increased the reservation percentage for backward classes from 31 to 50. Today it has risen to 69 percent and is benefiting the people of Tamil Nadu with legal protection. All because of Asiriyar's continuous and consistent efforts.

In 1980, B.P.Mandal as Chairman of the Second National Backward Classes Commission submitted the report for the welfare of backward classes. In his immediate visit to Chennai, he addressed a meeting at Periyar Thidal and said that though he has given the report, it is now

in the hands of the Periyar movement and its leader to see the report does not meet the same as Kaka Kalelkar report but rather implemented.

Asiriyar took the vow and in connection with the implementation of the Mandal Report, the Dravidar Kazhagam held 42 conferences and 16 demonstrations across the country. At Delhi he met the northern leaders and conducted programs demanding the implementation of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission report. For nearly ten years, the struggle continued. Finally, in 1990, the Saviour of Social Justice V.P.Singh as Prime Minister announced the implementation of 27 per cent reservation to backward classes in the jobs of central government and its undertakings. The impact of Asiriyar's efforts influenced V.P.Singh, he announced on the floor that the order was in realisation of the dreams of Periyar, Ambedkar, and Lohia.

Asiriyar was the first leader to raise his voice against the NEET examination. In 2017 itself he warned of its dire consequences on the medical admissions and ultimately to the health care system that has been best managed in Tamil Nadu. The struggle continues even now.

I can quote many numbers of such initiatives that Asiriyar took on the policies enactments by the Governments both at the Union and State level.

The Rs.9,000/- income ceiling G.O. brought in by the government headed by MGR in 1979, the implementation of Mandal Commission Recommendations by conducting 42 conferences and 16 agitations, the campaign to protect 69 percent reservation and also proposing a draft Bill under Article 31-C, which was accepted by the Government headed by J. Jayalalitha and Act passed unanimously



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and finally inserted in the ninth schedule of the Constitution, Against NEET way back in 2017 when it was introduced Tamil Nadu got exemption till then.

The recent one is the '*Vishwakarma Yojana*' brought in by the Modi Government with much adoration and allotting as nearly as Rs.13,000 crores. Everyone thought that the scheme, which identifies 18 occupations, would help them economically and improve their livelihood as a loan of Rs.1 lac initially is given to each of them. But Asiriyar came out with a sharp attack on the scheme. He called as the new All India avatar of Kula Kalvi Scheme that was driven from Tamil Nadu by Thanthai Periyar in 1953. He immediately convened an all-party meeting and exposed the tricks played by the Union Government in identifying the occupation based on their caste. The first agitation by all party leaders was in Chennai. Without stopping at that, Asiriyar planned for a state-wide tour to expose this ploy in the scheme. He boldly called the scheme "ManudharmaYojana". He toured for a total of eight days covering 16 districts and 16 public meetings and covering a distance of 3000 kms. All at the age of 91! Between these tour programs, there were numerous hall meetings and

functions in Chennai and places near Chennai.

As rightly mentioned by Kavignar Poongundran, Vice President of Dravidar Kazhagam thro' his pseudonym "MINSARAM", ----

"Even a clock may stop, but he (Asiriyar) is always unstoppable"

'Let's globalize Periyar; Let's Periyarise the world' is his motto. The Government of Tamil Nadu under the dynamic leadership of the 'Historical Hero of Social Justice' Thiru.M.K.Stalin has announced Thanthai Periyar's birthday as Social Justice Day. Periyar's works are being translated into almost 21 languages including foreign languages to spread the thoughts of Periyar globally. Asiriyar's vision and mission of globalising Periyar have already started and are spreading everywhere.

Towards that mission, the journey of Asiriyar goes on and on. Let us also try to run with him if possible, if not, behind him to help him achieve the Mission.

Long Live Asiriyar for many more decades with good health. May his journey continue for decades for the empowerment of the Dravididans; for their dignity and self-respect. ■



PERIYAR FEMINISM



NALLINI OLIVANNAN

Advocate

Madras High Court, Chennai

If only we understood all facets of Periyar's voice for freedom of women, we would only call it - The Radical concept of freedom for Women.

It is astonishing that Periyar, who was born into a socially conservative and resourceful family identified and exposed the critical socio-cultural issues that women faced within the patriarchal society of our country.

Periyar's writings on women are central to his commitment to his revolutionary idea of freedom. He saw in modernity, opportunities for empowering women. He welcomed some liberating aspects that colonialism had on women and viewed westernization positively in this regard. He found that native culture had harmful effects on women. To him, women's liberation was a key to ending oppression in society. He believed that the arrival of Western modernity and the spread of English education can contribute to a modern, democratic, classless, equal, free status for women in the society.

Periyar didn't believe in being guided from the past. He thought using the past as an excuse justified the ongoing oppressive practices. Periyar viewed the ideas of nation and the family as





structures that restricted the freedom of women. Hewanted to “explicit the different factors by which women were enslaved and continue to be so enslaved, and the different ways and means by which they could emancipate themselves and live as free people.”

Periyar believed in ensuring that men and women should be treated equally in society. He openly canvassed that the notion of chastity compels women to be accomplices in their own subjugation. He contested the societal importance attached to *Karpu* in Tamil culture. He viewed it as a social hypocrisy that constrains women's freedom. He was critical that similar restrictions were not imposed on men. He said that morality and chastity, if they are valid at all, should be seen as equal for both women and men. He, viewed chastity as a device of oppression that was coded by religion. He ultimately wanted women to be liberated from the clutches of this concept.

Periyar called on women of all castes to break not just notions of chastity, but all forms of community-based restrictions; equally to emerge as free individuals.

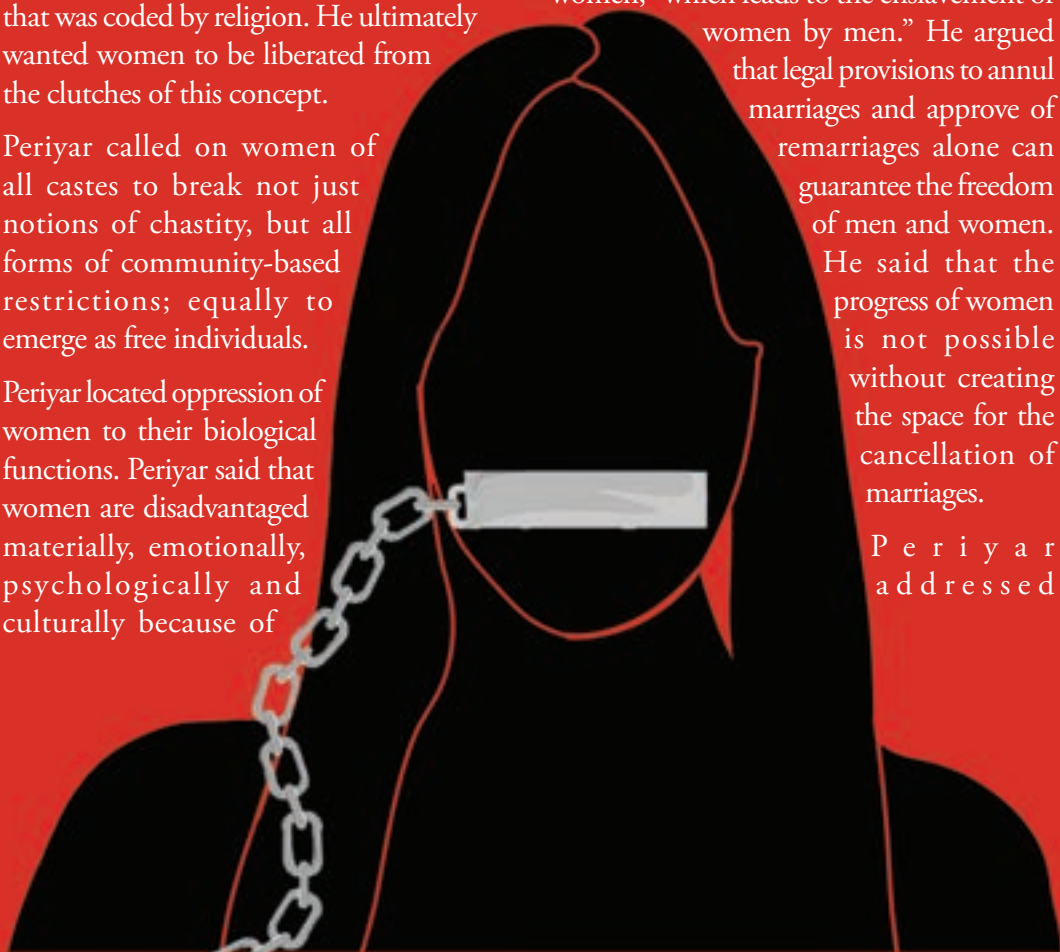
Periyar located oppression of women to their biological functions. Periyar said that women are disadvantaged materially, emotionally, psychologically and culturally because of

child-birth, which made them a slave-class utilized for the reproduction of the species. Liberating women from the constraints of their reproductive biology and distributing the responsibilities of childbearing and childrearing across society, involving both men and women, was a must, he said.

Periyar also emphasised on the aspect of promoting contraception. He saw pregnancy as the root cause of “women’s frequent illnesses, aging before time and premature death. He noted that contraception had been advocated for “liberation and autonomy of women.” Periyar argued that the absence of childrearing and childbearing responsibilities would enhance the freedom of both men and women.

Periyar said that the philosophy of marriage in India is an atrocity committed on women, “which leads to the enslavement of women by men.” He argued that legal provisions to annul marriages and approve of remarriages alone can guarantee the freedom of men and women. He said that the progress of women is not possible without creating the space for the cancellation of marriages.

Periyar addressed





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women's empowerment by advocating for freedom, from patriarchy. He argued that patriarchy was widespread. He also said that patriarchy influenced language, literature, and socialization.

Periyar argued that the concept of masculinity is socially and culturally constructed to elevate men at the expense of women. He said that without demolishing the idea of masculinity and the virtues associated with it, the freedom of women would not be possible.

Periyar endorsed family planning measures and advocated for community-operated day-care centres as interim measures to enhance women's freedom. In the long run, he

proposed introducing artificial reproduction to replace biological conception, aiming to liberate women from the constraints of their biology.

Periyar was keen on including women in politics and social reform, not as mere subordinates, but as comrades. In the Vaikom agitations, he encouraged the mass participation of women. His wife Nagammaiar played an important role in the agitations too.

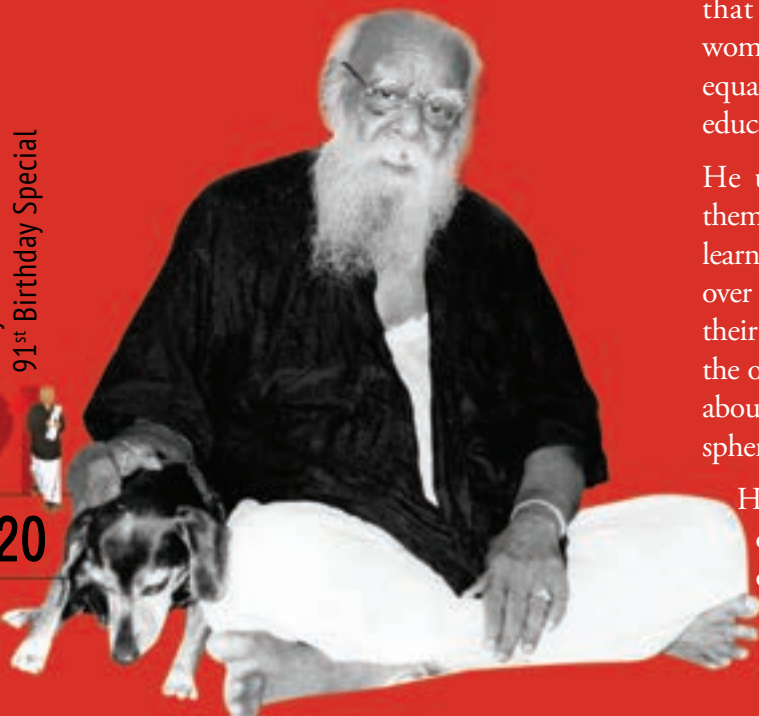
In the 1929 Chingleput Self-Respect Conference, Periyar and other leaders passed resolutions demanding equal rights to property for women, widow remarriage, abolition of child marriage, freedom to choose spouses defying caste and community norms, besides encouraging women to enter professions of their choice. Periyar noted that a crucial move toward advancing women's freedom involved ensuring their equal entitlement to hereditary property, education, and economic independence.

He urged women to stop beautifying themselves and focus instead on scientific learning. He also argued for women to take over 50 per cent of the jobs so as to ensure their economic independence. He was of the opinion that women should not worry about femininity and be represented in all spheres of social life.

He firmly believed and advocated that only women could be the agents of their own liberation. ■

Asinjar Dr. K. Veeraman's
91st Birthday Special

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THE RSS – BJP SPONSORED 'INDIA VS BHARAT'



A. KARUNANANDAN

Secretary

Dravidian Historical Research Centre
Chennai

Sanskritisation:

The ongoing Hindutva regime evinces extraordinary enthusiasm in distorting the history of the federal Indian nation, in deliberately misrepresenting India's plural cultural heritage and in wrecking the very foundations of the constitutional structure of the Indian Union. One of the methods adopted by them to achieve their nefarious hidden agenda is, the Sanskritisation of the names and terms and concepts. According to them the intended and proposed changes in nomenclatures are being inspired by patriotic goal.

- Indus Valley civilization is to be changed into Sindhu –Saraswati Civilization (ultimately with the deletion of Sindhu, it could become exclusively 'Saraswati Valley Civilization'.)
- Hindu is to be replaced by 'Sanatana'

- 'India' is to be replaced with 'Bharath'

There were days when a Janasangh leader, "Balraj Madhok called for 'Indianisation' of the Muslims', and the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha were advocating 'Hindu Rashtra' ideal. Then they were 'clamouring' for

"Militarise all Hindus and
Hinduise all politics"

They were then adopting 'Hindu' to religion identity and 'India' to a nation of Hindus.

Why not India?

Now they are running the Union government

They feel uncomfortable both with 'Hindu' and 'India'.

They now say that the name 'India' was given by foreigners. Retorting that 'India' as the identity of one nation would be a disgrace to our nationalism. Hence we have to give up

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A well structural trade activities prior to Aryan intrusion

‘India’ and replace it with ‘Bharath’. If you are a patriot call our nation Bharath, otherwise your patriotism becomes questionable.

In a cursory glance this may look childish and misguided patriotism; we may ignore the move on the premise that ‘India that is Bharath’ is referred to in the Indian Constitution, and the intended deletion of ‘India’ from all documents of the Constitution and all narratives in History text books and replacing the same with ‘Bharath’ are not going to substantially alter the situation. If we do so, we will be committing a grave error. Our silence or neutrality will be construed as our consent to the unleashing of a Fascist agendum to wreck our Constitution, and to undo our federalism, pluralism and secularism.

UGC’s unitary Bharath:

Even before the NCERT came with the

proposal of replacing ‘India’ with ‘Bharath’ in the textbooks, the UGC in 2021 circulated a uniform syllabus for all UG programs in History. All the Universities in India are asked to adopt this syllabus. There were nine compulsory papers on India (Bharath). The very first paper is titled ‘The Idea of Bharath’. The details of the said paper are given below:

UGC – LOCF 2021

Paper I Idea of Bharath

UNIT I

Concept of Bharathvarsha

- i Understanding of Bharathavarsha
- ii Eternity of synonym Bharat
- iii Indian (?) Concept of time and space (Yuga, Manvantara, Kalpa, etc.,)
- iv Glory of Indian Literature: Veda, Vedanga, Upanishads, Epics, Jain & Buddhist Lit; Smriti, Puranas etc.

The idea of Bharath does not accommodate non-Sanskrit constituents of Indian History and Culture. Everything emanates from the 'Vedas' and everything streams out from Vedic Sanskrit. The ancient knowledge, as well as the ancient history acknowledge all mythologies and epics as historical facts. A rational scientific history rejects all 'euhemeristic' interpolations.



UNIT II

Indian knowledge traditions, Art & Culture

- i Evolution of language and script Brahmi, Khareshti, Pali, Sanskrit, etc.
- ii Salient Features of Indian Art and Culture
- iii Indian Educational System
- iv The ethics of Indian Valour

UNIT III

Dharma, Philosophy, Vasudeva Kutumbakam

- i Indian perception of Dharma and Dharshan
- ii The concept of Vasudeva Kutumbakam, Man, Family, Society and World
- iii Polity and Governance
- iv The concept of Janapada and Gram Swarajya

UNIT IV

Science, Environment and Medical Science

- i Science and technology in Ancient India
- ii Environmental Conservation :Indian View
- iii Health consciousness (Science of Life) Ayur Veda, Yoga, Naturopathy
- iv Indian Numeral Systems and Mathematics

UNIT V

Indian Economic Traditions

- i Indian Economic Thought
- ii Concept of Land, Forest and Agriculture
- iii Industry: Inland trade, Commerce
- iv Maritime trade

This syllabus lists out 22 books for suggested reading. Of them Twelve are Hindi books.

The anonymous person who compiled this syllabus, himself could not replace India with Bharath, only there are three mentions on 'Bharath' while 'India', 'Indian' occur 12 times.

Why not India?

The intentions are very explicit:

'The Idea of India' until now recognised its heterogeneity, plural character. Sanskrit traditions constituted one of the streams, and not the only stream. There was Non Sanskrit tradition and Sramanik tradition. It was a rational history. But 'Bharath' as found in UGC syllabus indicates a Sanskrit oriented unitary tradition.

The idea of Bharath does not accommodate non-Sanskrit constituents of Indian History and Culture. Everything emanates from the 'Vedas' and everything streams out from Vedic Sanskrit. The ancient knowledge, as well as the ancient history acknowledge



all mythologies and epics as historical facts. A rational scientific history rejects all 'euhemeristic' interpolations. According to this 'Idea of Bharath' and its 'Ancient knowledge system' exposition, all the modern sciences, discoveries, inventions, industries and even electronic services were invented by Brahmanic Rishis, in the Sathya Yuga itself. The Rishis invented everything, they practiced plastic surgery, organ transplantation, supersonic aeroplanes, space ships, electronic communication devices, cosmology, and regular travels to celestial bodies. In the name of patriotism. You have to believe these, never put their beliefs to rational enquiries.

Ancient Knowledge System

Why Lord Rama, who availed Pushpaka Vimana for his return trip to Ayodhya, did not prefer to use the same airships to transport his monkey regiments across the Mannar straits to Sri Lanka? Why he made the 'Vaanaras' to build a bridge of rocks instead? Why Rama did not avail remote sensing systems, radars and other devices to find out the whereabouts of his consort Sita? Why in the great Kurukshetra War, air

forces were not used? The ancient traditions refer only fourfold military system i.e. Ratha, Gaja, Thuvaka and Padaati (Chariots, elephants, horses and soldiers on foot). Did the English or their Islamic predecessors conspire to delete such references in Sanskrit literature so as to deny us our past glory? Such questions if raised we are likely to be condemned for unpatriotism.

Aryans only history:

If it is Bharath's history. There could be no pre Aryan, non-Aryan Sindhu civilization. The Aryan prehistory had to precede it. Nothing could be there prior to the Vedas and Vedic Aryans. The scientifically acknowledged chronology and geography had to be mutilated for the sake of ensuring glory to the eternity of the Vedas. Researchers have established that the earliest Rig Vedic Aryans did not have towns, bricks and refined pottery, they were still in their pastoral life and were jealous of the cities, material wealth and settled life of the natives, whom they called dark complexioned (Krishna Varna / Syama Varna) Dasans, Dasyus, Panis, Asuras, Rakshasas, Amanushya, Arya Devo, Avrathas, Abrahmanas etc. A shift to Sanskrit



Pseudosciences like Yoga, Ayurveda, in the syllabus of Health consciousness

based Bharatha history would deny all these.

No Non-Aryan stream:

'Bharath' does not recognise non-Aryan streams, their languages, cultures and belief systems as 'major stream'. For Bharath, Ramayana, Mahabharath and Puranas were adorable histories, which provide model socio-religious orders, to be adored and regenerated by the people of Modern Age.

For them the Mauryas and other Sramanic dynasties were treacherous and anti-national. Asoka was a tyrant, but Pushyamitra Sunga was a redeemer. Gupta created a national empire (though their rule actually was confined only to the Gangetic plains). The Satavahanas, who ruled an empire, thrice the size of the Gupta empire for more than four centuries, the Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and Cholas are marginalised as petty kindgoms. In the idea of Bharath, only the Brahmanical and Sanskritic traditions become glorious Bharath (Hindu) traditions.

British-Brahmin norms:

Similarly of late, "Sanatana", is eulogised repeatedly and mentioning of the 'Hindu' becomes less and less: 'Hindu' as a common

identity of non-Muslim; non-Christian natives of India commenced in the days of Muhammad Bin Kasim in the 8th century, and the same Islamic rulers called their Indian territories on Hindustan. But the Brahmins who befriended the new rulers and even assisted them in the administration made them to believe that Brahmins were the religious leaders of the native Hindus, and availed exemption in taxation, including Jizya from them. The Brahmin-Muslim rulers nexus continued even in the days of the Mughal Empire. The Brahmins learned the 'Milechcha' languages of the conquering regimes i.e. Persian and Arabic, so that they could occupy respectable and responsible offices under the Sultans and Mughals. The English had a very cordial relation with the Brahmins whom they considered both as an elite class and as religious heads of the non-Muslim, non-Christian natives, and this priestly class was helpful in subduing the farmers and other working groups and in consolidating the British rule. In order to inculcate cordial relations with the 'influential' accomplices, the English evinced interest in promoting and projecting Sanskrit.

The 'Sanatana', like the 'Bharath' can be explained only through the Sanskrit Brahmanical Vedas, Itihasas, Puranas, Smritis, etc. Whereas the composite 'Hinduism' cannot ignore Tamil, Prakrit, Telugu, Gurmukhi scriptures a majority of which, either one way or the other eulogise egalitarianism and are scornful of Brahmanical primacy and rituals.

Inclusive India

The English derived the name 'India' from the traditions and they were the first to identify the natives as 'Indians' and the conquered land as India (British India). They accepted the Brahmanised Sanskrit Smritis as the basis of the Hindu law. The lack of awareness of the non-Brahmin masses and their total indifference to political changes facilitated the ascendancy of both Brahmin and Sanskrit in colonial India; Then 'India' and 'Hindu' did not cause any discomfort to the Vedic segments. The different religious segments including the variants of Saivism and Vaishnavism were brought under the Brahmin sovereignty.

Why Sanatana?

But in the 19th and 20th centuries the social awakening gained momentum in the south, especially in the Tamil region, asserting their religious, linguistic, and cultural identities. In other regions, that too is the Maratha region, the Brahmin strangle hold over religion and society came to be questioned. Such assertions began to create noticeable impact in politics too. Emergence of Linguistic States, and surge of regional linguistic versions and expressions became a serious threat to the revival of absolute Brahmanisation. Hence they now resort to 'Sanskritisation' of the concepts concerning religions and social orders. 'Hindu' and

'Hinduism' would have to accommodate even non-Brahmin cults. The assertion of non-Brahmin masses is tolerable as far as these are subservient to the Brahmanical supremacy. There is a lurking fear among the Brahmanical vested interests that their supremacy and monopolistic hold over social arrangements would be seriously eroded in due course. To offset the trend, they now project 'Sanatana' as an alternative to the Hindu.

The 'Sanatana', like the 'Bharath' can be explained only through the Sanskrit Brahmanical Vedas, Itihasas, Puranas, Smritis, etc. Whereas the composite 'Hinduism' cannot ignore Tamil, Prakrit, Telugu, Gurmukhi scriptures a majority of which, either one way or the other eulogise egalitarianism and are scornful of Brahmanical primacy and rituals.

Antiquity of India:

Thus the BJP governments' vigorous 'Sanskritisation' drive is not prompted by Indianisation or 'nationalisation'. It is not 'patriotism' but sectarian hegemonical interests that is operating from behind. In fact, there is no logic or sensitivity for despising 'India' as if it is from a foreign vocabulary. In fact the eponym of 'India' or 'Hindu' is in Sanskrit 'Sindhu' derived from 'Sapta sindhuvam (Land of Seven rivers) of Rig Veda. Sindhu, Sindhuvam, Hindu, Hidu, Indu, India are the most ancient references to Indian territories. Herodotus,



the father of history mentioned it. Nearchus, Justin, Megasthenes, Pliny, Livy, Ptolemy and a lot of other Western schools of Christian and pre-Christian era knew India by that name. The medieval era voyagers like Bartolomeu Dias, Columbus, Vasco-da Gama, Megallan, Francis Davis and umpteen number of others named it 'Indies' But even the Sanskrit literature, by and large, avoided 'Bharatha' or 'Bharatarvarsha' to even when it was mentioned it denoted not the entire subcontinent, but to a small territory confined to the Gangetic Valley. Associating 'Bharat' with 'Bharatha' a prince is a later day concoction. It was almost synonymous with Brahmavartha, Aryavartha and Madhyadesa.

“India, that is Bharath”

Even founding fathers of our Constitution were reluctant to adopt in puranic identity to a newly liberated– integrated nation. With much hesitation, as a consolation to the chauvinistic elements they mentioned 'India that is Bharat' in one reference. In all other parts of the Constitution, including the 'Preamble', 'India' alone is mentioned. India is an internationally recognised identity, which paves the way for naming Indo-China, Indonesia, Indian Ocean, West Indies, American native (Red) Indians.

By Brahmanising a composite nation's identity as Bharat, our modern Democratic Republic of India's global credibility



பகுத்தறிவாளர் கழகம்
THE RATIONALISTS' FORUM,
TAMIL NADU



டிசம்பர் 2
சுயமரியாதை
நாள்

மாநில அமைப்பாளர்கள்



கொடியமுனிரென்



தரும.விரமணி



முகம் க.குமார்



அ.சுரணை



அ.சண்முகம்



ப.கிளங்கோ



ஆசாடி
 எழில்சாணை



அ.நா.சண்முகத்தரம்



கோவி.கோபால்



இரா.செல்வா
 சாக்ஷி



ந.க.சிவசுந்தர்



கு.சுந்தர்சுமார்



முனைவர்
 வே.ச.மகேந்திரன்



கு.முத்துக்குமார்



சி.ரமேஷ்



இரா.முத்துக்கிருஷ்ணன்



ந.அண்ணாதுரை



இரா.முத்து கவிதை



வே.முனைவர்
 காஞ்சி மா.கந்திரன்



வ.மணிமுத்து



அ.குப்புசாமி



இரா.மாணிக்கண்ணன்



வே.சி.நீ.விரமணி



இரா.அன்பரசன்



பகுத்தறிவாளர் கழகம்



would be seriously impeded. 'Bharat' is thrust upon us, and 'India' is thrown out to promote – sectarian and fascist interests. It would render non-Sanskrit and non-Brahmin streams subservient to a dominant minority.

Union of States Vs Unitary State:

Those who are sincerely committed to safeguard and strengthen the foundations of constitutionally constituted Democratic Federal and Secular India should see through the toxic designs of Communal elements. A Union of States cannot be degenerated into a unitary State; Pride in the sectarian past should not be allowed to torpedo our transformation towards a modern progressive egalitarian order. Love and respect for divergent cultures, different languages, and all social segments is the basis of patriotism. Pride in the Sectarian past of a dominant few is not synonymous with patriotism. Religion and tradition wrecked people's interests in the Age of Faith. We ought to prefer the 'Age of Reason' and have to dissent, reject and resist the fascist agenda of 'Sanskritisation' and 'distorting of history'.

Assault on Constitution:

Mr. R.N. Ravi, the Sanatana propagandist, once stated that our Constitution is only laws of governance, but Sanatana is the soul of the nation. Now he bemoans that our Constitution has been an incomplete document, and it needs to be debated every year; For him linguistic and cultural pluralism make assertive trends, which is endangering our nationhood. Obviously he was suggesting reshaping of Constitution to suit a unitary state on a Sanatanic base, in which the constituent states would be downgraded as the administrative wings of the Central government, not enjoying shared sovereignty or even autonomy. The

scheme behind 'Sanatana' and 'Bharath' become explicit.

Sanskrit, never a liberator : Repudiate Sanskritisation:

Sanskrit has never been a liberating language. From the very beginning, it has been an apex instrument of an exploitative orthodoxy, distancing itself from the common people, working classes and the marginalised masses. Though Dr. Amartya Sen felt that there were spaces for scepticism in the ancient Sanskrit literature, such scepticisms were confined to obscurantistic spheres and such obscurantistic scepticisms have never questioned or challenged the 'status quo', and have never served the purposes of progressive transformation. Sanskrit language, Sanskrit ideas and Sanskrit hegemony always sanctified, justified and glorified the unjust order and demonised all attempts towards liberation, change and progress. This Sanskrit, which has been speciously projected as 'national pride' and its 'Swadesi' beneficiaries dexterously made the 'Videsi' colonial elite to believe that 'Sanskrit was the essence of 'Hindu India' and made them to subserve the Brahmanical interests through exclusive interests in Sanskrit studies and propaganda, could not serve as a medium of mobilising nationalism among the native elite of the 19th century. Instead, English and peoples languages of the different regions like the Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi and Tamil alone could inspire both the elite and the masses to foment 'national' sentiments towards self-rule and social change. Sanskrit and Sanskritisation have always justified unjust orders, social, religious, economic and political. The real and genuine redemption of our people, our masses can be found not in Sanskrit and Sanskritisation, but in repudiating both. ■



ASIRIYAR – AN ABLE ADMINISTRATOR



R. RAMACHANDRAN
Auditor

The public at large and we in particular are aware that Asiriyar is a leader par excellence, Saviour of Social justice, a great orator and prolific writer. But many, except those who are closely associated with him both at the personal and professional levels, may not be aware of his administrative acumen, leadership calibre as Chief Patron of various institutions.

In addition to the honour of having worked along with Tax Advisor Late S.Rajaratnam, I as a chartered accountant, have the privilege of observing Asiriyar's Administrative roles in close quarters.

Asiriyar is a mentor, a motivator and supporter of his team members. He assesses the performance of teaching and administrative staff of the University, colleges and schools through the heads of the institutions. He felicitates those who perform well which is a motivating factor for the staff. At the same time, he does not hesitate to reprimand anyone who commits a mistake.

Asiriyar ayya is always passionate about the mission and vision of the Institution. He insists on the same with the

heads of the institution so that institution will grow.

He is the finest example of following adherence to the ethical and moral values he learnt from his mentor, Thanthai Periyar.

தனிப்பட்ட ஒழுக்கம் என்பதன் அவசியத்தை விளக்குவார். He expects his comrades and others who work under him to follow the ethical values.

Ayya does the work so efficiently and thoroughly. He takes his work very seriously. As part of the effective administration, he has formed various Committees and Boards. I am also part of the few advisory committees.

He insists on proper agenda being circulated in advance. He goes through the agenda papers thoroughly, makes his comments and attends the meeting. He expects the CEO/heads of the organization to come forward and answer the queries raised or clarifications sought. He would further add that whoever comes for the meeting should prepare themselves thoroughly and attend the meeting. During the meetings, he

would elicit views from all the members of the committee. He always believes in team work. The proceeding will be collaborative/ democratic. He would listen to the views of even persons who are very much younger to him.

Until Rajaratnam ayya was alive, for all matters concerning the institutions, Asiriyar would fall back upon him for advice. Once he gives an opinion, Asiriyar would implement it without any discontent. Asiriyar had great respect for Rajaratnam and much confidence in him. Asiriyar ayya's Inter Personal skills such as verbal communication, ability to solve any problems and listening skills are extraordinary. His command over English language is amazing.

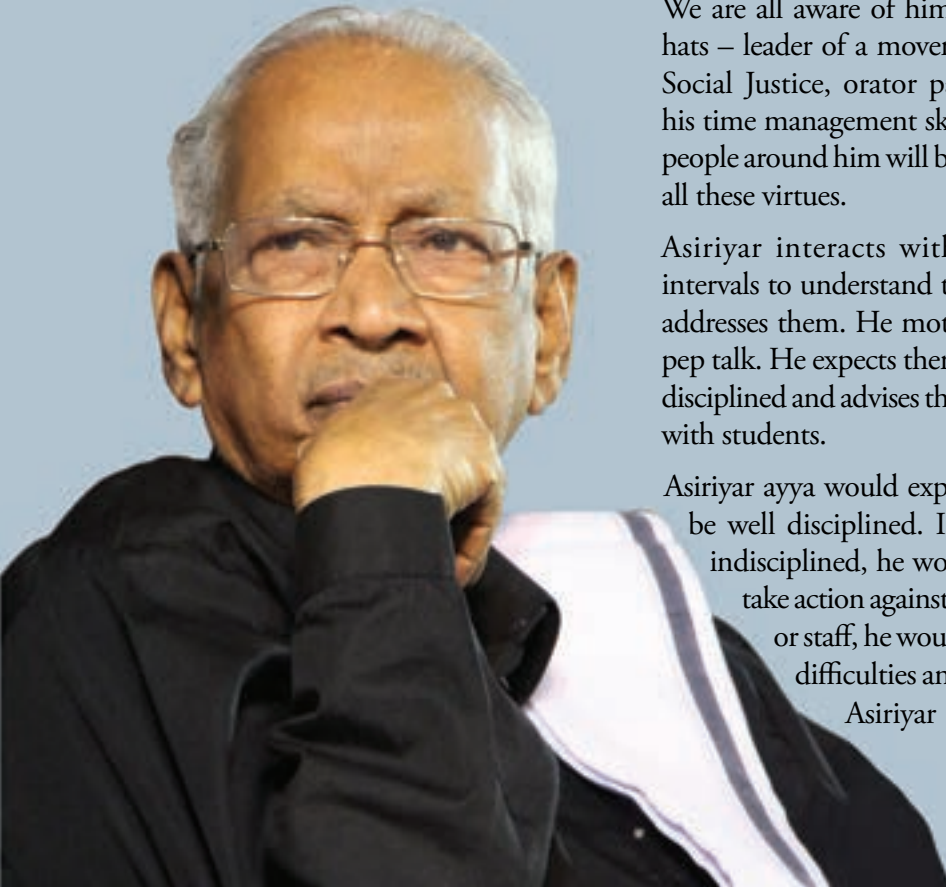
Asiriyar ayya is known for his rational decisions and it is because of the self-confidence, decisiveness and ability to remain calm under pressure. Asiriyar never postpones any decision. His ability to take quick decisions is worth emulating. Whatever Ayya does, he does it with confidence. His confidence level is unparalleled.

We are all aware of him wearing different hats – leader of a movement spearheading Social Justice, orator par excellence, and his time management skills are great. Only people around him will be able to appreciate all these virtues.

Asiriyar interacts with staff at regular intervals to understand their problems and addresses them. He motivates them by his pep talk. He expects them to be honest and disciplined and advises them to be courteous with students.

Asiriyar ayya would expect his students to be well disciplined. If anyone is found indisciplined, he would not hesitate to take action against them. Be a student or staff, he would understand their difficulties and try to help them.

Asiriyar keeps advising his



Asiriyar ayya is known for his rational decisions and it is because of the self-confidence, decisiveness and ability to remain calm under pressure. Asiriyar never postpones any decision. His ability to take quick decisions is worth emulating. Whatever Ayya does, he does it with confidence. His confidence level is unparalleled.

team members that they should comply with various laws and be abreast of the latest amendments to provisions of Income Tax Act, Companies Act, Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, Goods and Services Act. He invites experts to conduct training programs on financial management and statutory compliance.

He attends all these programs, listens to the talk with rapt attention and implements the recommendations / suggestions of the experts.

He always has a team of experts (think tank) at different points of time.

To name a few of them Former Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, Former High Court Judge, Justice P. Venugopal, Tax expert S. Rajaratham, Former Judge Thiru. S.R. Singaravelu and Auditor M. Kandasami. Whenever he approaches them, he would abide by their opinion.

Asiriyar always gets inputs from his team members, listens to them passionately, and gets feedback from them including negative variety and change whenever

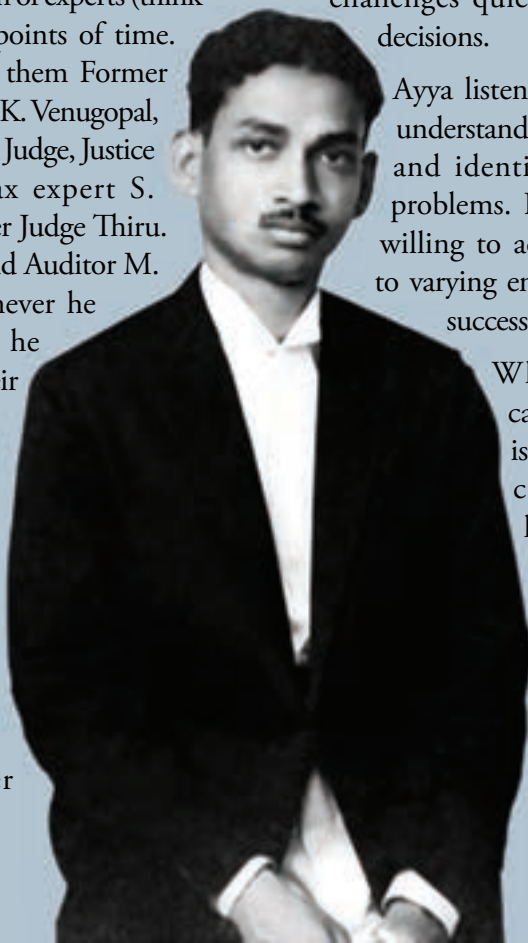
required. Ayya would advise his team members to be open for criticism and remain accountable for the area of work assigned to them. He advises the heads of institutions to act fairly and appropriately with other colleagues and students.

Asiriyar ayya is an able administrator of many institutions and takes careful, rational decisions because of his astute confidence level and ability to remain calm under pressure. He creates deadlines for himself to improve decision making skills. He is a decisive leader who makes decisions quickly.

Ayya's critical thinking skills and out of the box thinking abilities enable him to resolve challenges quickly and take informed decisions.

Ayya listens to the team members, understands the issues, works closely, and identifies a solution for the problems. He remains flexible and willing to accept changes, adapting to varying environments make him a successful administrator.

What made Asiriyar a capable administrator? It is his intelligence, excellent communication skills, high level of adaptability and drive to succeed. I conclude, wishing Asiriyar a peaceful and long life. My hearty greetings to him on his 91st Birthday on 2nd December, 2023. ■





PERIYAR'S VISION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY



DHANESWAR SAHOO

President

Odisha Rationalist Society
Bhubaneswar

Periyar (1879-1973) was preeminently a critical thinker and humanist par excellence. Despite the fact that he had no formal education, his inquisitive attitude and open mind led him to be one of the greatest thinkers of our country. He is considered one of the architects of modern India. His life was a dedication to promote secular humanism, social justice, scientific temper and democratic ideals in all walks of life. He was also a freedom fighter to free India from the British imperialism being influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. But later on he considered social imperialism as the heinous evil which had been in vogue for millennia in Indian society. From his school days he could realize the hierarchical structure of Indian society that shook his conscience. Social slavery, injustice, oppression and exploitation of the marginalized community by the so-called upper caste people, were our great predicament. Poverty, illiteracy, subjugation of women, practice of child marriage, social discrimination and many



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Collective oppression of toiling masses

social evils and maladies had ruined Indian society. All these man-perpetrated evils were a part of our religio-cultural milieu. So Periyar became a comprehensive critique of our social practices like untouchability, caste system, other – worldly mind – set and many unscientific beliefs. He radically departed from religious conservatism, ritualistic practices and bizzare traditions. He undermined the assumptions and unfounded beliefs of the Puranas and scriptures which priestly people consider sacred and sacrosanct. He was deeply moved to see the dehumanizing conditions and subhuman level of existence of the common people which they considered their destiny. They derive this faith from the scriptures which mostly support fatalism and predeterminism. Periyar was much concerned to emancipate people from superstitious beliefs and bondage of tradition. He considered a social revolution as indispensable to promote rational thinking.

comparatively easier because people support it with the emotion of patriotism. But fighting against social colonialism and conservatism is more difficult as usually people oppose it thinking it is irreligious. In Indian situation Periyar realized that the Dalits, Shudras and the tribals who constitute the majority of the populace have been condemned to live life of indignity. Their sin was that they were born in an unjust, uncaring and hierarchical social system. On account of Brahminical hegemony and creation of the Varna system they have been victims of social exclusion and are deprived of basic natural rights. As a sensitive person to human suffering and indignity Periyar was deeply moved to see why people have been condemned to live in bondage for generations. This suffering, misery, poverty and social indignity touched his heart and he took it as a mission of his life to annihilate all these man-made maladies. It turned him out to be a rebel and social revolutionary.

He had the conviction that any form of imperialism is inhuman and immoral. Fighting against political colonialism was

The European renaissance and the age of enlightenment led to two basic achievements of humanity. The age of enlightenment



Periyar's concept of social democracy is founded on the principles of equality, human dignity and exploitation-free society. All these principles are in consonance with the ideals of justice.



culminated in the birth of modern science and the rise of humanistic ideals. Modern science increasingly reinforced a naturalistic world view that established the fact that supernatural phenomena do not exist. All that exist in the world or all the phenomena that occur around us are natural. Behind every natural phenomenon there is some natural cause, whether known or unknown. Modern science followed a universal method to explain facts and thereby increasingly expanded the horizons of knowledge of the natural world from scientific perspectives. Similarly the renaissance and the enlightenment gave birth to a humanistic vision of life that opened new directions in political and social situations. The revolt against theocracy and monarchy explored the ideals of democracy. Democracy not only became a political ideal for governance but also became a way of life. All men are born equal and every person has a right to live with dignity. This turned out to be an ideal of social democracy. Any form of social discrimination between man and man is considered inhuman and immoral according to social democracy.

This notion of social democracy also influenced a few thinkers of India who wanted to bring some reformation in society. If some people are poor, socially degraded and live in a miserable condition it is their destiny or the result of their past deeds. This was the general belief of the people even of the intelligentsia of the society. Periyar developed the conviction that the poverty, misery and social degradation of the people have been the result of the social system, cultural condition and economic design of

the upper caste people with vested motive, and not because of any destiny. Any man-perpetrated evil can be removed by raising social awareness. It became his mission to bring a change in the society and thereby to raise people's consciousness.

Periyar became one of the pioneers of social democracy in Indian situation. He had the conviction that political democracy would carry no meaning without social democracy. That is, the success of political democracy would depend upon social democracy. Since Indian society is founded on hierarchical caste system and graded inequality, social democracy is required to usher in qualitative change. India got political independence in 1947 and framing a constitution for free India had started before independence by a constituent assembly. Indian Constitution was approved and adopted by the Constituent Assembly in 1949. India adopted a parliamentary form of democracy with independent judiciary.

Periyar had the realization that without creating mass awareness and promoting social democracy the constitutional ideals would not become a reality. It is because as long as the practice of caste system founded on social discrimination continues in different forms, massive illiteracy and economic exploitation would prevail, Indian society cannot achieve the ideals of our Constitution. Even today despite stringent laws many social evils like caste discrimination, trafficking, bonded labour, child labour, huge gap between the haves and have-nots, communal mind-sets,



autocratic bodies like 'Khap Panchayat' etc are still prevailing. When Periyar was on the scene of our national life, he could realize how dangerous the social evils were for building a democratic republic. So he incessantly fought till his last breath against all the evil practices of his time. The implication of his social struggle was many fold, both negative and positive. Negatively, he wanted to annihilate all the evil practices which are detrimental to civilized values. Positively he wanted to ameliorate human condition and to build a democratic society in the light of humanistic ideals.

Periyar's concept of social democracy is founded on the principles of equality, human dignity and exploitation-free society. All these principles are in consonance with the ideals of justice. Equality is a basic human value that treats all human beings as equal in right and dignity. Equality of the citizens does not mean that individuals are identical or equal in terms of physical or mental capacities. Equality can be negatively defined as absence of any discrimination. That is everyone should have the right to develop his/her potentiality to live with dignity.

Human dignity means that human beings should be treated equally. It should be the moral duty of everyone to treat other people in a spirit of brotherhood or sisterhood. In an exploitation-free social order, all people are socially equal and are entitled to equal protection. Society and state as well should ensure right to life with honour, liberty and security to all individuals. All citizens should enjoy economic, cultural and social rights which are considered important for honourable living and development of personality.

In the preindependent era Periyar fought for the civil rights of the so-called untouchables and Shudras through different agitations and satyagrahas. His role in Vaikom satyagraha is a nationally notable event. His protests, agitations and satyagrahas against injustice, social discrimination and indignity indicate his commitment to promote social democracy. Similarly his "Self-Respect movement" is a memorable in this direction to create awareness for social democracy. Many of his reformative movements to stop child marriage and to promote widow remarriage are great



Any practice of social bondage or enslavement was opposed by Periyar. So he worked to abolish male arrogance and created social awareness to stop child marriage, to allow widow remarriage and to spread education among the girls. His view on family planning, contraception and small family norm was a revolutionary ideal at his time. Like a visionary he was much ahead of his time.



social events to bring attitudinal change in the minds of the public. His insistence on casteless, ritualless and priestless marriages which he named as self-respect marriage is another revolutionary step to promote social democracy. In harmony with his idea of social democracy he was an incessant fighter for human rights and dignity. Human rights connotes different dimensions which make human life meaningful and worth-living. There is difference between different levels of existence. There is difference between animal-like existence and civilized existence. The right measure of human existence lies in living honourable lives. To live a life of dignity, decency and freedom is definitely better than just to live. But a social system that destroys or damages human value is undersirable and unwarranted. A life of peace, security, happiness and freedom is worth-living. Society and the state are responsible for promoting and preserving the beauty and sanctity of life of all its citizens.

Periyar's life long mission was the deliverance of the people who have been socially and economically disadvantaged. Those who have suffered from social degradation for generations need to be conscious of the social situation. They have to be educated and organized and break their silence. He moved from village to village creating awareness among the masses to find out effective solution to the problem of social enslavement and indignity. He also made significant contribution to the cause of

women empowerment. In Indian society women have been degraded and enslaved. The customary practice of child- marriage, polygamy and social atrocities perpetrated on widows is nothing but the wicked enslavement of women who constitute half of the population of the society. Any practice of social bondage or enslavement was opposed by Periyar. So he worked to abolish male arrogance and created social awareness to stop child marriage, to allow widow remarriage and to spread education among the girls. His view on family planning, contraception and small family norm was a revolutionary ideal at his time. Like a visionary he was much ahead of his time.

To conclude, Periyar had a dream and legacy. His dream was deliverance of justice to the marginalized, oppressed, poor and disadvantaged people. His legacy was to found a casteless and discrimination-free rational society. He cherished a scientific world-view and was a champion of scientific temper and secular human values. He had a deep understanding of the realities of Indian society and the cause of our backwardness and social decadence. He has also left a good deal of literature about his vision and ideas. His legacy has been continuing and will continue till his dreams are fulfilled. Periyar has become an institution and his ideas and philosophy has an ever-lasting message for Indian society, nay, for the humanity at large. ■

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சுயமரியாதை
நாள்

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ஆசிரியர் அய்யா
91^{ஆம்} ஆண்டு பிறந்தநாள்
வாழ்த்துகள்!



எடிசன்



எண்டர்பிரைசஸ்

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THIRU K VEERAMANI: A TEACHER PAR EXCELLENCE



Advocate
BVNS SAVITHAKUMARI
Justice BSA Swamy Memorial Trust
Hyderabad, Telengana

On the eve of the 91st Birthday of Thiru K. Veeramani on 2nd December 2023, it is not only time to wish him well for the years to come, but also time to share a few thoughts and, of course, visualize the enormity of his contribution to the cause of Social Justice.

Thiru Veeramani Ayya, or Asriyaar as his countless admirers refer to him, is a true teacher in letter and spirit.

I had sought to check key qualities of a teacher from an AI agent (Chat GPT), and it went on to list out 12 characteristics for my query. I was pleasantly surprised to see that each of those points were none other than the attributes of our Asriyar. I will, however, not dwell on each of those qualities in a pedantic manner but will share a few thoughts on our beloved Veeramani Ayya on this occasion.

Thanks to his association with Justice BSA Swamy, we had the privilege of seeing him in close quarters. When we first saw him, we had an impression of a simple and affectionate fatherly figure with an endearing smile.

Later on, we learned that he was a postgraduate in Economics, having attained it way back in the year of 1956. Given that, as per the last census data, only 8.15 per cent of Indians are graduates (for a literacy rate of over 70 per cent), and if we were to extrapolate the possible percentage graduates as of 1961, based on the literacy rate of 24 per cent reported in 1961, it would be anybody's guess that he was, in fact, part of a minuscule group of postgraduates as of the year 1956. He could have thus walked into any profession of his choice, but he chose to serve the public as a social worker, which



Asiriyar with the felicitated couple, Justice B S A Swamy - B. Jayalakshmi.

demonstrates his dedication to the cause of social justice.

That he was incarcerated no less than 40 times for his participation in various protest - demonstrations and picketing - agitations people's movements, including the Emergency and its aftermath, and yet never wavered from his path of social service, shows his steely determination and fighting spirit.

Asiriyar is a wealth of information on the social structure of Indian society and goes about spreading awareness on the tenets of the Dravidian movement, namely self-respect, women's empowerment, and the larger cause of social justice with childlike enthusiasm. He is a man who applies knowledge laterally, has internalized scientific temper, and as such is a true rationalist and a personification of Periyar's ideals.

Asiriyar Veeramani's leadership and the contribution of the Dravidar Khazagam in the dispensation of social justice in the State of Tamil Nadu is well chronicled. Also, we have instances of backward class leadership getting a share of political power in the States of Bihar, UP, and Madhya Pradesh for a while, but the dreams of social justice of our venerable social reformers like Jyothiba

Phule, Thanthai Periyar, Narayan Guru, and Sahu Maharaj are far from realized.

As per the Oxfam report on wealth distribution released in the year 2020, while the top 10 per cent of the Indian population owns 74.3 per cent of the total wealth, the bottom 50 per cent owns a mere 2.8 per cent of the wealth. To have such a state of affairs in democratic India, even after 78 years of independence, reiterates that affirmative action in favour of the disadvantaged sections of society is indeed the need of the hour.

It is against this background that we should see the leadership of Asiriyar and the achievements of the Dravidar Kazhagam in achieving social justice in the State of Tamil Nadu. The numerous mass struggles led from the forefront, the countless editorials written, and the numerous speeches made while traveling across the length and breadth of the State of Tamil Nadu by Asiriyar Veeramani, made this herculean task possible.

Thanks to the sagacity and foresight of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, while the S.Cs and the S.Ts were provided with reservations in education, jobs, and in political space, the OBCs were a neglected lot until the 1990s and hardly enjoyed any reservations despite their backwardness.

While the Mandal Commission recommended 27 per cent reservations for the OBCs in 1980, it was kept in cold storage until it was implemented 10 years later by the (Late) Prime Minister V.P.Singh. However, due to the kamandal politics, as also owing to the concept of creamy layer, the OBC reservations were watered down so much that the actual realization of OBC reservations hovers around 10-11 per cent owing to the concept of creamy layer. Thus, the OBCs, who constitute more than 52 per cent, are being provided with a mere 10 percent reservation, even after nearly 30 years since the announcement and implementation.



While the Mandal Commission recommended 27 per cent reservations for the OBCs in 1980, it was kept in cold storage until it was implemented 10 years later by the (Late) Prime Minister V.P.Singh. However, due to the kamandal politics, as also owing to the concept of creamy layer, the OBC reservations were watered down so much that the actual realization of OBC reservations hovers around 10-11 per cent owing to the concept of creamy layer. Thus, the OBCs, who constitute more than 52 per cent, are being provided with a mere 10 percent reservation, even after nearly 30 years since the announcement and implementation.

However, it hardly took a couple of days to implement the EWS reservations of 10 per cent, for the forward communities. In fact, the criteria for the EWS reservations, specifies that, you shouldn't belong to any of the SC, ST, or OBC castes for being eligible for the 10 per cent reservations under the EWS, and also stipulates that the income ought to be less than Rs.8 lakhs per annum. Thus if we do not consider any of the SC, ST, OBCs, and the Muslims, the said forward communities, come to around 10 per cent. Also given that approximately 70 per cent of the forward communities belong to the categories of either richer or the richest (as per Wealth Index-NFHS 2005), we are only talking of 30 per cent of the forward communities who are eligible,

and as such the beneficiaries of the EWS, approximately works out to 3 per cent of the total population. However, the EWS beneficiaries who constitute 3 per cent are conveniently provided with 10 per cent reservations.

The population of the OBCs was reported as 52 per cent in the Mandal Commission Report, way back in 1980. However, many communities were added to the list, from time to time, owing to political expediency and in all probability the percentage of OBCs should have gone up, and yet we see the OBCs being reported as 42 per cent in one of the statistical websites in 2023.

It is hence need of the hour to go for a full-fledged caste based census, and it is high time that the leaders go about in right earnest to see how the fruits of democracy are distributed in the so called Azaadi ki amrut Mahotsav.

We wish many more years of happiness, health, and well-being to our beloved Asiriyar Ayya and wish him all the success in all his future endeavors, including the drive for Caste based Census.

(The author is the daughter of Late Justice B.S.A. Swamy, a stalwart of social justice in the combined Andhra Pradesh)



ஐன்ஸ்டீன்

கல்வி குழுமம்



“சமீபமான பாகைகளைக் தேர்ந்தெடுங்கள்”
உங்கள் கனவை உடைய ஜக்ஸ்ட்ரூடல் சேரவும்



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REBIRTH - A SUPERSTITION



Dr. R.GOWTHAMAN
Director
Periyar Medical Mission

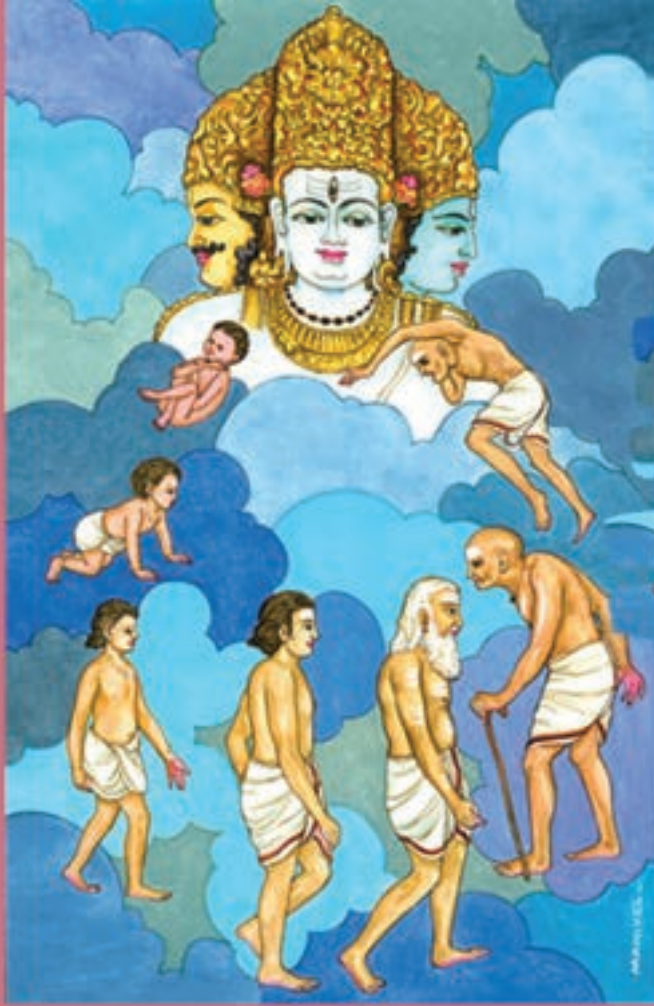
The most powerful weapon of religious fanatics is the subject – “BIRTH”. They make gullible people believe that for our sins in our birth we would be punished in the next birth. They plan to keep people at all times under their control and grip and they have succeeded in it. It is true that the blind belief in rebirth has soaked our people in constant fear. These tricksters have threatened people by saying that all of us have seven births. They have bound their brains by the shackles of this superstition. When we ask them why one is born as a brahmin and others are born as unseeable, untouchable, illiterate and unapproachable, their reply is just this – “Because of the sins committed in the former birth.” They further add that we should make amends by doing good deeds in the current birth.

In an attempt to please brahmins they

advise people to perform certain rituals and purge themselves of the sins, in order to get salvation and redemption. Thus they pull wool over the eyes of innocent people, by the temptation of happiness in the next birth. We often hear people murmuring – “why am I suffering so much in this birth?” This is ridiculous.

Like Hindu religion, other religions also keep saying that birth is an unending cycle and that a man is born again and again. Semitic religions believe that God would punish sinners on the Doomsday, the day of Last Judgement. If it is true that no one can escape from God’s punishment, there should be no crime in this world. But every city in every country is a crime-city.

What do confessions and the pardon of pastors mean? Why should God punish after their forgiving sinners? If there is life



after death why do ghosts exist? Does it not mean that rebirth is a lie or does it mean that spirits and ghosts are a lie? These are all baffling questions.

Some people also talk about transmigration of souls and say that some are born as animals in the next birth. We read about it in ancient mythologies too. We also feel like asking whether rebirth is meant only for humankind and not for other living beings. How are we to believe that we are born again? Has it been scientifically proved? Are sins and virtues not applicable to other living beings? We are prevented from raising such questions. The touts of the Gods and Goddesses silence us by two words – “God’s will.” We are taken for a ride by their caution that God’s authority is unquestionable. We are not allowed free-thinking since there is a clever brain – wash. We are constantly being warned that our duty is to obey God’s commands.

Reincarnation, Gods and Goddesses, spirits and ghosts are all tricks to exploit people and rob them of their wealth. Selfish charlatans encash the stupidity of believers. All these are rejected outright by Science. It brushes aside

everything as mere “hearsay rubbish.” Science rejects the concepts of souls, spirits and rebirth as there is no evidence for any of these. We do not get any convincing explanation from these tricksters, because their concepts are all baseless and absolutely fictitious. That which they claim to have seen and felt is far from truth.

According to scientists, fear and anxiety make people believe these concepts. We deceive our own senses by deceptive receptions. Experts in the field of mental health use the terms delusion, illusion and hallucination to explain such receptions. Imagining paranormal activities is delusion. This makes people see strange images and apparitions through their mind’s eye that is called an illusion. Imagining the sight of some misty entity in fog and a strange sound heard are termed hallucination. The root causes are fear of the unknown and the invisible. Blind belief in God, Ghosts and rebirth also crop up only in scared minds. This affects in turn even our physical health.

When physical health is affected, the biological complications make some people scream, shriek and contort their body. It is labelled by gullible people as possession. They rush to exorcists who perform bizarre rituals to ward off the evil and pretend to have done it. Innocent people pay hefty charges to these



In an attempt to please brahmins they advise people to perform certain rituals and purge themselves of the sins, in order to get salvation and redemption. Thus they pull wool over the eyes of innocent people, by the temptation of happiness in the next birth.



tricksters because of sheer idiocy. Believing that evil spirits or divine spirits have possessed a human body is a sign of mental instability. The affected persons should undergo treatment by psychiatrists, not by sidewalk conjurers. Torturing mentally sick people by whiplash is sheer cruelty. Possessions are totally unscientific concepts. For centuries, people have been inquisitive to find out what happens after death. This anxiety has resulted in their baseless beliefs. Lack of scientific spirit generally causes such beliefs.

Our body itself is like a machine. When a life is formed in the mother's womb it starts functioning and goes on till our death. This is defined in one word as 'life'. When a machine becomes dysfunctional it stops working. When human body becomes dysfunctional we call it 'death'. This machine ceases its function at that moment. Life is nothing but a biological movement and mobility. When a machine is totally out of order, it is discarded. Similarly, human body is discarded when life exhausts. When a machine needs minor repairs, we take it to a workshop to get it repaired and make it functional again. Similarly when our body is affected by some ailment we rush to a medical practitioner and make it functional again through medication and treatment. When drugs and treatment are of no use at a stage; when we are unable to get cured of the sickness, we cease to exist and call it 'death'. Human body is nothing more than a biological fact.

If a dysfunctional machine cannot become a ghost, how could man become a ghost after death. If a dysfunctional machine has no rebirth, how could we be born again? Except that a man can think and a machine cannot, what difference is there between a man and a machine? Everything that grows has life. All insects, birds and beasts have life of course but man is the only rational entity. Man's ability to reason enables him to imagine strange things which do not exist. To say that human soul is indestructible is ridiculous too. When people say that only our body perishes but not the soul in it – they just exaggerate. When we die, that is the end of it – period! There is nothing called 'afterlife'. Ghosts, spirits and rebirth are like doodles that we sometimes scribble as a reflex-action.

The saddest part of it all is that even most of the well-developed and advanced countries believe in rebirth, ghosts, exorcism, spirits, souls, conjuring etc; They keep adding fuel to the fire. The movie world, television, computers, smart phones are all signs of development of science. We live an era of Artificial Intelligence (AI) but superstitions are being spread still by the print media, electronic media and social media. We still have movies about ghosts devils and demons. Bizarre rituals and superstitious practices have not ended. Let us bring them all to an end. Let us all annihilate all forms of superstitions and live with true scientific spirit. ■



December 2
SELF-RESPECT
DAY



91
தமிழர் தலைவர்



91ஆம் அகவையில் அடியெடுத்து வைக்கும்
தீராவிட இயக்க வழிகாட்டி
தமிழர் தலைவர்

ஆசிரியர் அய்யா

அவர்களை வாழ்த்தி வணங்குகிறோம்



சா.ராசேந்திரன் எம்.ஏ.,எல்.எல்.பி.,
ஆதிதீராவிடர் நலக்குழு, தி.மு.க
மாநில துணைச் செயலாளர் அனூர்.
பகுத்தறிவாளர் கழகத் தலைவர்
அனூர் கழக மாவட்டம்.
செல் நம்பர்: 9443981683



CENTENARY OF INDUS VALLEY EXCAVATIONS (1923 - 2024)

DRAVIDIANS-PRECURSORS OF INDUS PEOPLE



Dr. INIYAN

Assistant Professor of Archaeology,
Tamil Nadu Open University,
Chennai

Archaeology's primary goal is to gather, examine, and submit the artefacts to scientific investigation for establishing historical facts using factual evidence, elements of life, the traits of cultural values, the beauty of art, the supremacy of language, the beginning of writing, the sides of the hierarchies in which they developed, the evolution of technology, the core of the social structure, agricultural production and the richness of livestock rearing through it, and the commercial interaction that developed as a result of product generation.

Based on archaeological evidence and historical accounts, the Dravidian race, which perhaps originated in the Neolithic era (8000 – 4500 BCE), has been described as an advanced civilization that has

adapted to changing conditions and experienced shifts in historical hierarchies. Archaeological digs have demonstrated the close ties between the Dravidian population and the Indus Valley Civilization, which is regarded as one of the world's oldest civilizations.

By examining the numerous excavations conducted in different regions of Tamil Nadu and a variety of archaeological material, such as the city layout, symbols, measurements, pots, and bells, it has been demonstrated that there is an unbreakable relationship between the Dravidian and Indus Civilizations. The important task of analyzing the script of the Indus Valley Civilization at the core of the connections to the Indus Valley Civilization symbols is something that linguists continue to work on with the Dravidian languages.



Artefacts, found in Mohenjodaro and Harappan archaeological excavations

Several scientific investigations have demonstrated that Tamil and the Tamil (Dravidian) language family had been in the South of India for a few thousands of years from the end of the Mesolithic era (10,000 – 8,000 BCE).

As a result of the Dravidians' indirect impact throughout their northward migration, the Indus Valley Civilization emerged. The belief that the Elam, Sumer, and Egypt civilizations as well as the Lycian, Lythian, Carian Pelasian, and Crete civilizations—which predated the establishment of the Greek state in the Lower Middle East Coast—should have been attributed to the Dravidian race's northward movement is also widely held among scholars such as JF Hewitt, HR Hall, Father Heeras, and many others. The efforts made by Sir John Marshall who was the Director-General of Archaeological Survey of India brought out the speciality of Indus Valley Civilization as a distinct one among other civilizations.

Before 1947, the Indus Valley Civilization, which covered what is now Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India, was concentrated in northwest India, a region that accounted

for more than 25 per cent of all of India. Various excavations carried out after 1921 demonstrate that the Indus Valley people are the oldest civilization in the world, despite the fact that the remnants of the Indus Valley Civilization are dispersed among more than a thousand locations in India and Pakistan. Despite the small number of excavated sites belonging to a significant Indus Valley Civilization, the information they have provided indicates that the Dravidian race and the Indus Valley Civilization shared many characteristics.

Across this large expanse, the identical weights, measures, writing system, and seals have been found in excavations at several locations, including Mohenjodaro, Alamgirpur, Lothal, Daimabad, and Chanhudaro. The Indus Civilization had a rich cultural legacy, as seen by the explosion of trade brought out by the development of diverse agricultural items, religion, the arts, and a highly developed social system.

What we get are symbols or inscriptions that indicate that the Indus Valley Civilization was an extension of the Dravidian

Tamil is mentioned in Mahavamsa before Kumarila Bhattar's Tantra Vartikam, and it is referred to as Dhramila in Thandin's Avani Sundari. According to scholars, Dhramila gave rise to Dhramita and Dravida. The languages of the Dravidian family are the offspring of the ancient Tamil.



Civilization. These are considered to be the remnants of cultural contact between the Indus Valley Civilization and the Dravidian Civilization. Similar to the script found at various places in the Indus Valley excavations, excavations carried out in many parts of Tamil Nadu have yielded potsherds inscribed with various graffiti marks. Although most graffiti marks are engraved on pottery, it is appropriate to trace their origins to graffiti marks in the rock shelters. Gurumurthy, a former professor of archeology at Madras University predicts that there is a close relationship between the graffiti marks found in Tamil Nadu and the graffiti found in pottery. In the field research and excavations carried out in Tamil Nadu, graffiti marks similar to the Indus script have been found at various places.

Graffiti symbols are still being found during Iron Age (1200-600 BCE) site digs in southern India, namely in Tamil Nadu. Graffiti symbols in large quantities have been discovered in southern India in T. Narasipur in Andhra Pradesh, Brahmagiri in Karnataka state, Kodumanal, Alagarai, and Keezhadi in Tamil Nadu. The markings on pottery might be etched by the potter, the pot's owner, or merchants who want to inscribe their own or their trade group's mark on their products.

It's impossible to ignore these symbols as being quite common. Because, as far as the academics were concerned, they were an extension of the Indus Valley Civilization and the Tamil script prototype. These

graffiti symbols remain to be properly interpreted, much as the writing of the Indus civilization has not been thoroughly examined and understood. The meaning behind these graffiti symbols is still unknown, just like the writing of the Indus civilization has not been thoroughly examined and understood. Those who follow the megalithic burial rituals and those who lived throughout the Iron Age are likely to have written these symbols, which are regarded to be an early version of Tamil script. Evidently, individuals have found and employed these symbols as a fundamental writing system to communicate their ideas.

Archaeological Survey of India in 2004 excavated at Adichanallur in Tirunelveli district and found various historical data. Based on that, archaeologist T. Sathyamurthy, in an article written in the book "*Indus Civilization and Tamil Language*" published by the Tamil Nadu Government Archaeology Department in 2009, points out a similarity between Mohenjodaro and Adichanallur in the use of copper alloys. Copper is mixed with 1 per cent arsenic to increase the hardness of the alloy from 124VHN to 177VHN. Ancient copper alloys found in excavations in India at Adichanallur and the Indus Valley Civilization contained 4 per cent and more arsenic. He says that this can be considered as one of the proofs of the



Sir John Marshall, the Director General of Archaeological Survey of India in 1920s brought the excavations of Indus Valley Civilization to the lime light

unity between the Indus Valley Civilization and the Dravidian Civilization.

Linguistically the name Tamil language family was given before Caldwell's time. It was Caldwell who changed the term Tamil to the Dravidian language family. Dravidian is the colloquial form of Tamil.

Tamil is mentioned in Mahavamsa before Kumarila Bhattar's Tantra Vartikam, and it is referred to as Dhramila in Thandin's Avani Sundari. According to scholars, Dhramila gave rise to Dhramita and Dravida. The languages of the Dravidian family are the offspring of the ancient Tamil. Unlike ancient Tamil, chaste tamil, ancient Dravidian is an invented phrase. According to Devaneya Pavanar, the old Tamil language ought to be regarded as the foundational language for all Dravidian languages.

The Tamils are the leading representatives of a civilization that has persisted uninterruptedly for longer than any other language-speaking people

in the globe. Tamils' rich cultural legacy is regarded as a representation of the world's oldest civilized people. Tamil is said to have been the first mother tongue and is thought to be the language that modern humans most closely resembles the language used by the ancestors of man, according to study conducted by a number of researchers.

It is crucial to recognize that the Indus civilization was impacted by the Dravidian culture, as evidenced by the many facets and sources of the archaeological research. The sheer volume of graffiti and its relationship to rock engravings, the parallels between the languages of the south and the west, the numerous archaeological artefacts uncovered from various Indus Valley and South Indian sites, and technological advancements like pottery-making, sanitary system arrangement, and building patterns (e.g., Keezhadi, Kodumanal, Brahmagiri) all demonstrate that the Indus civilization's inhabitants were descended from the Dravidian stock. No other culture could be found to share any of the aforementioned characteristics. Last but not the least, it is with these strong evidences and the further studies on the linguistic aspects, scientific analysis done on the archaeological relics, it can be proved with the mettle that the Indus People were the Dravidians. ■



PERIYAR & GORA- CONTEMPORARIES IN THOUGHT AND ACTION



VIKAS GORA

Grandson of Gora
Atheist Centre,
Vijayawada, India.

Periyar (1879-1973) and Gora (1902-1975) were quintessential personalities whose contribution have got universal relevance and inter-generational impact which laid a strong foundation for rationalism and atheism, in India and globally. Their efforts in eradication of caste and untouchability, strengthening human rights, gender empowerment, promoting self-respect, social justice, secular thought and social action, secular social work, addressing superstitions which are bane to the progress and ensuring initiatives that address equality, social reform, critical thinking and free inquiry have contributed significantly to build a rational society. Their philosophies are practical and relevant to the changing situations, as they address the root causes of social evils and built firmly on protecting the human dignity and life.

Periyar and Gora stood firm on the nonviolent means to achieve social change and peace and conflict resolution to build bridges of friendship. They addressed the causes of conflict and violence, which are sourced from ignorance, illiteracy, poverty,



Periyar's practical philosophy of self-respect is too well known. He taught that the human actions should be guided by reason, right and wrong should follow from rational thinking and conclusions drawn from reason should be respected under all circumstances. Freedom means respect to thoughts and actions considered 'right' by human beings based on 'reason.'

hunger, discrimination and above all the marginalization of the people in the name of religion and other social evils.

Both Periyar and Gora choose to use mass movement as an approach to create social awakening against exploitation in the name of caste, religion and superstitions. They practiced what they preached and conducted social experiments aimed at sustainable development and realizing human rights through social work, integrated development and upholding the tenets of democratic and secular values.

Periyar founded the Dravidar Kazhagam or Dravidian Association in Tamil Nadu and Gora founded the world's first Atheist Centre in Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. Both were institution builders to sustain the spirit of rationalism and atheism. The similarities in their approach and means to bring in social change have relevance from local to the global space.

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'Positive Atheism', both as a philosophy and as a way of life, partyless democracy, secular social work and social reformation activities.

Periyar and Gora propagated rationalism and atheism amongst the common people. They brought a new awakening among people in India and abroad. Periyar declared in unequivocal terms that "Rationalism and Religion do not go together. Religion prevents progress and suppresses man. Religion exploits the suppressed classes. Religion makes men lazy as well as cowardly." Periyar was uncompromising on the propagation of atheism. Periyar's famous statement was: "God does not exist at all. The inventor of god is a fool. The propagator of god is a scoundrel. The worshipper of god is a barbarian."

Similarly, Gora highlighted in his Positive Atheism that, "The atheist way of life is full of initiative. It continually progresses towards increasing happiness every time through scientific understanding and technological control of the forces of the world. Its objective is equality; its method is openness; its means is political action; its driving force is the moral freedom of the individual. Jai Insaan."

They fought against caste system and untouchability through various initiatives and approaches. Periyar's Self -Respect Marriage is a revolt against accepted dogmas and tradition, against dharma



วรากรณ์ สามโกเศศ

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Gora built his experiments through 'Positive Atheism', both as a philosophy and as a way of life, partyless democracy, secular social work and social reformation activities.



Andhra Atheist leader Gora Felicitates Periyar on his Birthday 17.09.1973. Asiriyar translates the speech of Gora

sastras, against religious rites and ceremonies. Gora's casteless, religionless, intercaste and interreligious marriages were to break the barriers and to encourage the new generation to walk into a post religious and a casteless society.

They devised programmes to liberate people from the yoke of religion and obscurantism. When Gora proposed the Beef and Pork function at Vijayawada on the eve of Silver Jubilee of India's Independence on August 15, 1972, Periyar not only wholeheartedly supported Gora's programme, but he headed a beef and pork function organized at Coimbatore later, in which Gora and hundreds of people participated.

The friendship and solidarity between Periyar and Gora is too well known. They were social revolutionaries and practical philosophers rooted in real life. The collective contribution of their work has left an indelible mark in the social reformation space in India and globally. They have ingrained seeds of rationalism and atheism in the young minds, to make

them constructive and rational global citizens. The support from their families, Nagammai, subsequently Maniammai to Periyar and Saraswathi Gora to Gora is significant, as they were equal partners in progress.

Periyar and Gora spoke the language of the masses and their philosophies were evolved from the social need to build a rational world. They not only critiqued religions, but also demonstrated an alternative life stance, built on critical thinking, free inquiry, scientific temper, and self-respect with dignity. Their writings inspired many generations and continue to do so, as they touched the issues that require generational commitment. They were not people of the past, but people for the future.

Even in the current global reality, their practical teachings and social movements are relevant as they are put forth a rationalist and atheist life stance which is the need of the hour and hope for the future. Periyar and Gora were brothers in social action and strengthened local to global rationalist and atheist movements.

As we celebrate their contribution to the society, it is of paramount importance that the younger generation continue to be inspired by their lives and take forward the great works to build a better future, for themselves and the future global citizens.

Jai Insaan! ■



ASIRIYAR IN THE FOOT PRINTS OF THANTHAI PERIYAR



R. VEERAMANI
Chairman,
GEM Group of Companies

Asiriyar Viduthalai K. Veeramani is a well-known social leader taking up the causes of the downtrodden, socially and economically weaker sections and was fighting for the rights and justice of the people in India and abroad. He is an educationist and is a great thinker following in the footprints of Thanthai Periyar in thinking and strategizing new ideas for the social, educational and economic development of the people. He is a voracious reader, thinker, orator and writer. He never stepped into the political arena seeking any authority of political office. But he is a guiding force to many political leaders and parties.

My father, the late Mr.S.P. Rangaswami of Tiruchengodu, (former Salem District, presently Namakkal district) was a rationalist deeply involving himself as

a follower of Thanthai Periyar, who used to wear black shirt, till he joined DMK and became an activist. Later he contested election from the Tiruchengodu Constituency to represent as MLA. Mr.E.V.K. Sampath, was an MP candidate along with my father and he contested as an MP candidate in DMK in the Naamakkal District and won the election.

My father used to have a souvenir of Thanthai Periyar in our study room, when I was a kid, studying in the primary school. My father never took us to a temple or to any places of worship. Asiriyar K.Veeramani studied Economics and Law and is rightly applying with his deep knowledge and creativity for every cause, where the people are suffering due to unjust practices.

It is a very interesting fact that my father liked Asiriyar K. Veeramani and named me 'Veeramani'. When the late S. Kandappan was a DMK MP, he married my sister Saradamani. At that time, my father stopped his active political activity. I had many opportunities to join and participate in many functions where Asiriyar K. Veeramani was the main speaker and I also happened to be a participant speaker including the functions of Indo-Russian Chamber of Commerce where I am serving as President

Asiriyar has admiration for Russia as late Thanthai Periyar was invited to Russia and later he was propagating Russians' contributions for the cause of the socialistic principles. Like Thanthai

Periyar, Asiriyar K. Veeramani is also a humble man helping many and took up the cause of suppressed, oppressed and downtrodden community. He always used to give respect to every person irrespective of his/her status and positions.

He had invited me to be the Chief Guest at one of the functions in Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science and Technology (Deemed to be University) in Vallam, Thanjavur and he has been a well-wisher of mine. He had enabled many scientific researches in the University and I was taken around and explained all the progressive measures that he had contributed. He appreciates and admires people in different walks of life.

For example, when Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore passed away in 2015, to my knowledge, he was the first

A LIVING PROOF

In the history of social and political movements it is often found that cadres and well-wishers give the names of their favourite leaders to their new born children. We have also seen parents of subsequent generations giving names of renowned leaders to their kids. When such kids grow up as literate adults and occupy various posts and positions, sometimes those leaders happen to meet them and feel delighted that their names were given to those adults. Persons with the names of those leaders sometimes become cadres of those leaders and serve them as followers. Even after the passing away of those leaders, people give their names to their new born babies. Faithful followers may do so in memory of their leaders. Because of this practice, by meeting persons with names of eminent leaders, it becomes easy to understand the way of life, policies and beliefs of their families, because they would have

absorbed the policies and beliefs of those departed leaders.

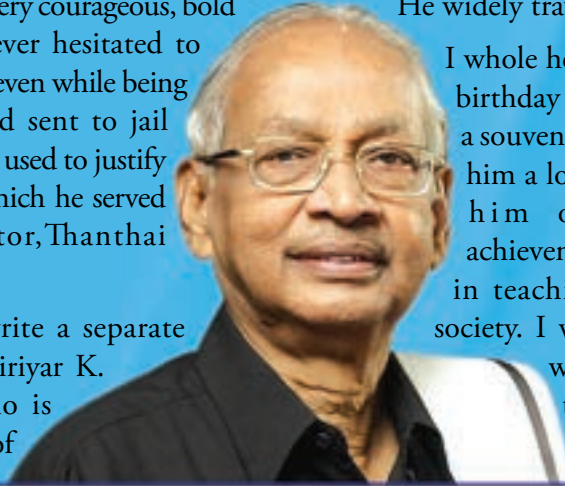
This kind of naming practice could be found in the public life of Asiriyar Veeramani too. Numerous kids have been given his name and Asiriyar has come across many of them so far in his nine decades long life. This is undeniably a noteworthy feature. That is because his public life has been long and big too. His achievements are broad and his ideals are deep. He steps on his 91st year in age but he is a proud living legend with a track record of 81 year long public life.

A few years ago, an eminent business magnate was invited to participate in an event held at Periyar Thidal in Chennai. Asiriyar presided over the event. They were both on the stage when the event started. During his Address, the businessman briefly narrated his family history. His father was a self-respector and had an



person to conduct a condolence meeting in Periyar Thidal. I am very happy that I was invited and asked to participate in the function. My friend V.R.S. Sampath was also a co-speaker. He also appreciated and recognized many Indian leaders of various States for their extraordinary contribution in social development of their State and their people. He is a very courageous, bold person who never hesitated to take up a cause even while being imprisoned and sent to jail many times. He used to justify the cause for which he served like his Mentor, Thanthai Periyar.

One should write a separate book about Asiriyar K. Veeramani who is the President of



Dravidar Kazhagam and involved deeply in the developments of Educational Trust that he has launched in the name of ‘Thanthai Periyar and EVR Maniammaiar’. Unlike many other political leaders, despite his frail body, he takes care of his health but never fails to participate in the functions anywhere in Tamil Nadu or other places.

He widely travels and participates.

I whole heartedly greet on his 91st birthday and the bringing out of a souvenir. I wholeheartedly wish him a long life and congratulate him on his admirable achievements and his hard work in teaching and educating the society. I wish, his relentless hard work yields benefits for the present and future generations. ■

intimacy with the movement of Periyar. One particular day, when he was away from home attending a self-respect conference, his wife was struggling to deliver herself of her child.

At the conference, the father found a 10 year old boy delivering on stage a thunderous speech captivating all the listeners. The conference concluded with his speech. That little boy was our beloved Asiriyar Veeramani.

When the father returned home, he found his wife had delivered herself of a male child. The father recalled the ten year old boy whom he had seen on the stage and remembered his name ‘Veeramani’. Delighted over the birth of his new born male child, he instantly named the child ‘Veeramani’.

The businessman on the stage in Periyar Thidal revealed breaking the suspense, that he was the boy, who was given the name ‘Veeramani.’ He turned towards our Asiriyar ‘Veeramani’ on the stage and

proudly said – “My father saw you on the stage. As a 10 year old boy when you delivered an impressive speech, he was captivated by it. That made him give me your name when I was born.”

That industrialist is none other than Thiru. R.Veeramani, Chairperson of GEM Group of Companies in Chennai, who is a renowned entrepreneur. His self-respective father was S.P. Rengaswami.

It was in 2022, that Thiru. R. Veeramani celebrated his 80th Birthday. Our Asiriyar K. Veeramani is stepping on the 91st year and ‘GEM’ R. Veeramani is on his 81st year. Life is indeed full of such surprises. He became a living proof for the glorious 81 year long public life of our Asiriyar K. Veeramani. The readers of this Annual number would certainly find this anecdote amusing and interesting, while they greet our Asiriyar on his 91st birthday.



டிசம்பர் 2
சுயமரியாதை
நாள்

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91ஆம்
ஆண்டில்
ஆசிரியர்



91ம் அகவை காணும்

தகைசால் தமிழர்

மரியாதைக்குரிய

ஆசிரியர் அய்யா

அவர்களை வாழ்த்தி மகிழும்...



ராமச்சந்திரன் வேல்விழி மற்றும்

கிதர அரங்கசாமி குடும்பத்தினர்

ACROSTIC TRIBUTE TO ASIRIYAR



Thanjai P. MARUTHAVANAN

K Kingpin of Dravidian Movement renowned for authenticity in his speeches and writings.

V Valiant fighter against the trickery of Brahminism and veracious exponent of Pro-Humanism

E Exemplary accomplisher in disseminating Periyar's ideologies with an unsagging morale.

E Ebullient orator whose loyalty to Periyarism is worthy of emulation and deserves every praise and adoration.

R Rationalist leader whose performance in spearheading the Dravidar Kazhagam effectively even in his 90s is a historic achievement.

A Advocate for the advancement of gender equality and self-respect and a relentless warrior against the reactionary elements who oppose social justice.

M Mass leader of dynamic traits whose thought provoking and exuberant speeches and writings hypnotized many a black shirt youth who flocked around him.

A Atheistic torch – bearer and an accredited leader of the Dravidian Tamils and an uncompromising fighter against caste system and religious bigotry.

N Nonagenarian leader of the Dravidian stock who is solely responsible for the globalization of Periyarism by his strenuous effort and dedication.

I Indoctrinator of Periyar's revolutionary principles, whose senility never forbade him from making hectic propaganda tours throughout the length and breadth of Tamil Nadu which infused awareness among the people.



டிசம்பர் 2
சுயமரியாதை
நாள்

தந்தை பெரியாரின்
தொண்டராய் முதுபெரும்
தமிழினத் தலைவராய்
தகைசால் அறிஞராய்
தமிழர் நாடே
தாங்கும் அய்யா
எமைக் காத்து
வாழ்கவே!



ரெ.ஈவேரா

மாவட்டத் தலைவர்,
பகுத்தறிவாளர் கழகம்,
திருவாரூர் மாவட்டம்



DRAVIDIAN MODEL GUIDANCE OF ASIRIYAR



M. MOHAMED ABDULLA
Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

“We have to talk about something that is conducive to knowledge, for the good of people and that makes people’s knowledge grow.”

-Thanthai Periyar

The self-respect movement, aka the Dravidian Movement, was conceptualized to revolt against Brahmin dominance. Its goal is to eradicate the ills of the existing caste system including untouchability on a grander scale. Equating poverty with race, and race with caste, Thanthai Periyar founded the Dravidian movement to fight Aryan 'domination' which to him was synonymous with Brahminism. The movement's criticism of Sanatana Dharma is rooted in its ideological belief in social justice. Playing an important role in fashioning the principles of social justice and harmony, the Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) fought for the property rights of women, formulated and encouraged self-respect marriages, for the eradication of superstition to herald rationalism.

Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani, the successor and the unprecedented follower of Thanthai Periyar,



The Modern Rationalist
Annual Number 2023



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An artistic portrayal of the grooming up of the principles of Dravidian Movement till date

dedicated himself to keeping up the flame of rationalism, unperturbed forever. It needs to be assessed in some detail that his politics still matters.

Asiriyar Thiru. K. Veeramani never stopped educating the masses, taking our ideological icon Thanthai Periyar's quote to heart. The most important thing Thanthai Periyar accomplished in his era was to instill hope in the hearts of the people that they would revolutionize society with social justice and equality, and our Asiriyar is still following in his footprints, inspiring us to persevere and work for a dignified better future.

His operating missions on scientific temper and social justice are long! He has been at the center of ideological debate and political conflict over Dravidian ideology in Tamil Nadu. The great efforts of our Asiriyar to spread awareness among people about the need to safeguard social justice and to

understand the Dravidian model rule in Tamil Nadu has always been helpful. It is because of his incredible work that Dravidian ideological sensibilities are also transmitted among today's generation.

After our veteran leader Dr.Kalaignar, Asiriyar was instrumental in supporting and implementing the 'Dravidian Model' of governance under the leadership of Thalpathi M.K. Stalin. Asiriyar leads Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and guides the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the first Dravidian political party formed in independent India, which are the progressive forces for the advancement of Union of India. These parties decisively repudiated older forms of caste hegemony not only in theory but also in practice and are paving the way for the social upliftment of the marginalized.

People are always forgotten as generations pass. But the struggle of social justice



The great efforts of our Asiriyar to spread awareness among people about the need to safeguard social justice and to understand the Dravidian model rule in Tamil Nadu has always been helpful. It is because of his incredible work that Dravidian ideological sensibilities are also transmitted among today's generation.



movements will live on in our history. Most of our leaders have a rebellious past in which they fought against oppressive forces through ideological war and mobilised people with progressive thoughts. Periyar was unique in his way, of organising the common people to raise the society through education and promote social justice at every step.

Bringing the principles of self-respect to the masses is a contentious and difficult task. His fieldwork was fighting to raise the self-respect in people's minds. This is the bedrock of Periyar thought that voices social justice throughout the country.

I consider Periyar's ideas to be alive in other forms, the most notable propaganda tool is the ongoing *Viduthalai*, the world's only Rationalist Daily.

While various political parties are in the field without any knowledge of the concepts of their own political ideologies, Periyar is still blossoming the dream of the self-respect movement in the new generation, who wants to eliminate all discriminatory elements of the various institutions that run in the society.

As an ardent disciple of Thanthai Periyar, a political companion of Kalaignar, and an ideological guide to their proud political heir our Thalapathy M.K. Stalin, Asiriyar's determination to follow the principle of self-respect despite the passage of time is an important lesson. Many political figures should learn from today's generation.

Many a State Governance may come and go; the political stance has always been one of social justice.

In the establishment of several important programs such as 'Periyar Memorial Samathuvapurams' and the promotion of self-respect marriages and trained priest appointments hailing from all castes, Thanthai Periyar continues to cast imprints over the many movements that sprouted with the principle of self-respect. This history must be passed on to future generations with the sustained endeavours of our Asiriyar.

We see the writings of Asiriyar as a reflection of Thanthai Periyar. Through his revolutionary voice, we became aware of the history of our forefathers. We learn the continuous commitment of our beloved Asiriyar with which we will have to fight against the dominant powers in the future.

It was a matter of pride in Indian history that a reform movement like the Dravidian movement mandated the power through which it enacted legislations in tune with its ideology. We would also celebrate one day our Asiriyar's birth centenary.

Until then no one can ever touch even the tertiary roots of the Dravidian movement. The Dravidian movement is not merely an Organization; it is for ideological enforcement. This keeps moving under the guidance of our Asiriyar forever. ■



Asiriyar's lovely family signifies Poet Bharatidasan's golden words
An ideal family is equal to a University' - 2018.



Beloved Asiriyar's family members at the 90th Birthday Celebrations in Chennai, 2022





கொள்கைக் குடும்ப
தலைவருக்கு
பிறந்தநாள்
வாழ்த்துகள்!



தரங்கினி வீரமணி

வினோத் வீரமணி

வசந்தி வீரமணி
வீரமணி ராசு குடும்பத்தினர்

வீரமணி ராசு
தலைவர்

சேலம் மாவட்ட பகுத்தறிவாளர் கழகம், சேலம்

9444017698



HERO OF THE 76th CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ASIRIYAR K. VEERAMANI



Poet
KALI. POONGUNDRAN
Vice-President
The Dravidar Kazhagam

Social Justice is the prime mission of Dravidian movement. Thanthai Periyar raised his voice for it when he was in the Congress Party. He brushed it aside and quit it owing to the same noble cause. The craving for social justice made him support the Justice Party. Though he had severely opposed the Congress party, he extended support to Kamaraj, since Kamaraj was very particular about social justice. By the strategy of Brahmin coteries, reservation that was in vogue was withdrawn. Thanthai Periyar

mobilised the support of non-brahmins and brought about the first amendment in Indian Constitution on 18th June, 1951. By his efforts, Social Justice became the beacon light for the entire Indian sub-continent. Asiriyar Veeramani took part in the agitation on 14th August 1950, when he was just a student.

In 1979, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M.G.Ramachandran, meddled with the reservation for the backward classes. He promulgated that the backward class families with an annual income above Rs.9,000/- are not eligible for reservation. The Social Welfare Department released the Tamil Nadu Government G.O.No.1156, announcing this on July 2nd, 1979. When the news got flashed in newspapers, Asiriyar K. Veeramani angrily let out an outburst, as the General Secretary then, of the Dravidar





K. Kamaraj in discussion with Periyar

Kazhagam. On July 3rd 1979 he released a statement through 'Viduthalai' describing the G.O. as a thunder-strike on the backward classes. Asiriyar did not stop just with creating an awareness among the people. He convened an All-Party meet on 4th July 1979 at Periyar Thidal, Chennai to protest against the G.O. – The meet was attended by various social welfare organisation and several outfits that have been constantly demanding social justice. Mobilising like-minded people conferences were also held in Chennai and Salem. The leaders of various political parties attended and condemned the Government headed by M.G. Ramachandran, blaming him as an opponent of Social Justice. They swore to redeem Social Justice by collective efforts. It was resolved on 22nd July 1979 at a conference held in Chennai to burn the copies of the income-ceiling G.O. and to send the ashes to the Secretariat at Fort St. George. The Government was issued a caution notice, granting it a month's time to revoke the order.

As there was no fruitful result, a Protest meet was held on 26th November, 1979 all over Tamil Nadu and the copy of the G.O. concerned was burnt in public at many places. Gunny sacks full of ashes were dumped at the doors of the Fort St. George.

AsiriyarVeeramani, the President of the Dravidar Kazhagam, issued another warning to the Chief Minister that it was only the initial stage of protest and that it would continue. A statement announcing and stressing this threat was published by him in the 01.12.1979 issue of the Tamil Rationalist Daily 'Viduthalai'.

The A.D.M.K. rule headed by M.G.R. faced a huge defeat in the Lok Sabha election that followed. They had lost 37 of the 39 seats. M.G.R. was terribly shocked and realised that his meddling with the reservation was the cause of their defeat. He convened an All-Party meet on 21st January 1980. AsiriyarVeeramani's views were discussed during the debate in that meeting. Eventually, the Chief Minister revoked his Order and enhanced the percentage of reservation for the backward classes from 31 per cent to 50 per cent. An order of revocation and enhancement was released by him on 24th January, 1980. This was a great achievement for Asiriyar. He convened meetings to convey thanks to the Chief Minister. Such meetings were held from 10.2.1980 to 17.2.1980 all over Tamil Nadu. That was a noble gesture of Asiriyar as the true disciple of Thanthai Periyar. The Singapore newspaper 'Tamil Murasu' had commended then in an issue



that the policy of Social Justice would have got a deep burial, if Asiriyar Veeramani had not taken right steps at the right time. Ultimately the 69 per cent reservation was ratified as follows: 50 per cent for B.C; 18 per cent for S.C. and 1 per cent for S.T.

By the efforts of V.P. Singh, the Saviour of Social Justice, the Mandal Commission recommendations got implemented by the approval at the Parliament on 7th August, 1990. But the opponents moved the Supreme Court against it. A bench of nine judges held valid the 27 per cent reservation for the Backward classes in employment but a condition was laid that the total reservation should not exceed 50 per cent. This unwarranted condition that was not found anywhere in the Constitution was laid on 16th November, 1992. Asiriyar made use of Article 31-C to solve the problem. It was passed first in the Tamil Nadu State Assembly. After several twists and turns, arguments and debates, at last by the 76th Amendment in the Constitution, it was unanimously passed at the

THE CONDITION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

| POSITIONS | CASTE-WISE |
|---|---|
| Among the 149 Union Government Secretaries holding higher positions | Not even one from the Scheduled Caste |
| Among 108 Additional Secretaries | SC - 2 |
| Among 477 Joint Secretaries | SC - 31 (6.5 per cent) ST - 15 (3.1 per cent) |
| Among 590 Directors | SC - 17 (29 per cent) ST - 7 (12 per cent) |
| Among 3251 I.A.S. Officers | SC - 13.9 per cent ST - 7.3 per cent BC - 12.9 per cent |
| In the vacant posts of 73 Departments, the vacancies for the Scheduled caste: | 25,037 |
| Group 'A' | |
| i) Scheduled Caste (S.C.) | 1.3 per cent |
| ii) Scheduled Tribe (S.T.) | 3.8 per cent |
| iii) Other Backward Classes (OBC) | 5.4 per cent |
| Group 'B' | |
| i) Scheduled Caste (S.C.) | 14.5 per cent |
| ii) Scheduled Tribe (S.T.) | 5.2 per cent |
| iii) Other Backward Classes (OBC) | 4.2 per cent |
| Among Sweepers (Supportive Staff) | S.C. - 59.4 per cent |

- Source: 'The Times of India' dt.06.09.2012



டிசம்பர் 2
சுயமரியாதை
நாள்



பகுத்தறிவுப் பகலவனின் வழியில்
சமூகநீதியை நிலைநாட்டத் தொடர்ந்து போராகும்

திராவிடர் கழகத் தலைவர்

மானமிகு **ஆசிரியர்** அவர்களுக்கு

இனிய ரிறந்தநாள் வாழ்த்துகள்!

பகுத்தறிவாளர் கழகம்
கும்பகோணம் மாவட்டம்



The Second Commission for the welfare of the backward classes was constituted on 20th December 1978. It was headed by Bindeswari Prasad Mandal (B.P. Mandal). Its report was submitted to the President Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy on 31st December, 1980. The members of the commission were accorded a warm welcome reception at Periyar Thidal in Chennai. B.P. Mandal delivered his Address and urged Asiriyar to take further steps for the implementation of the recommendations.



Parliament and included in the IX schedule on 25th August, 1994. Thanthai Periyar is remembered for the first amendment. This 76th Amendment would certainly reverberate the name of our Asiriyar Veeramani. He must be hailed as “the hero of the 76th Constitutional Amendment” in the history of Tamil Nadu.

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The Dravidar Kazhagam assured help and held 42 Conferences and 16 Agitations all over the country, insisting on the implementation. A protest was held even in front of the Parliament building. During the 7 days between 1.10.1986 and 7.10.1986 nearly fifty thousand agitators courted arrest. On 9th August 1984, there was a protest in front of the residence of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi too. At a meeting held in Delhi at ‘the Boat Club’, Asiriyar cautioned the Government that the ‘Vote Club’ of the people would teach them a lesson if their emotions are ignored. This caution

was also published in the 10.08.1984 issue of ‘Viduthalai’. Many prominent leaders including Asiriyar were arrested during the ‘Boat Club Protest’. After a lot of twists and turns, when V.P. Singh was the Prime Minister, 27 per cent reservation for the backward classes in employment was promulgated by him on 7th August 1990. He proudly stated that the dreams of Thanthai Periyar, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Ram Manohar Lohia had come true at last, but by the strategic withdrawal of support by the B.J.P., the Government headed by V.P.Singh ceased to exist. He sacrificed his post and demitted office for the noble cause of social justice.

There were widespread protests against that particular 27 per cent reservation but by the vigorous efforts of Asiriyar it remains undisturbed. Today, the backward classes have 27 per cent reservation in the Union Government Sector jobs and educational institutions. The linchpin was our Asiriyar Veeramani. The benefits of his relentless struggle have been derived not only by the backward classes of Tamil Nadu but millions of people all over the country. Following in the foot prints of Thanthai Periyar, Asiriyar Veeramani has scripted history by his marvellous achievements. I wish him a happy birthday on 2nd December, 2023; a longer and peaceful health. ■

December 2
SELF-RESPECT
DAY

91
தமிழ் தலைவர் குழுவின்



முனைவர் **டாக்டர் சிவா**
மாநிலத் தலைவர்



மாமுனைவர் **செல்வசிவன் சந்திரன்**
மாநிலச் செயலாளர்



முனைவர் **சுப.சுருஷானந்தன்**
மாநிலச் செயலாளர்



மாமுனைவர் **டாக்டர் சீனிவாசன்**
தலைவர்



முனைவர் **ம.கவிதா**
தலைவர்

துணைத் தலைவர்கள்

பேரா. முனைவர். **நம்சிவிவாசன்**, தஞ்சை
எழுத்தாளர்
ந.ஆனந்தம், குடகுப்புகோட்டை.
எழுத்தாளர்
ஞான.வள்ளுரவன், மயிலாடுதுறை

மாநிலத் துணைச் செயலாளர்கள் :
பேரா.ந.அழகிராசன்-நெல்லை, தமிழ் ஓவியா-பழனி,
வி.கிளவரசி சங்கர்-புதுச்சேரி, பேரா.சேதுராமன்-குடந்தை,
கு.வெ.கி.செந்தில்-கோயம்புத்தூர்.

பகுத்தறிவாளர் கழகம்
பகுத்தறிவு எழுத்தாளர் மன்றம்









தமிழ் கிணத்தைக் காத்த
தரணி போற்றும் தலைவர்
தந்தை பெரியார் கொள்கையில்
மாண்புக்கு தமிழர் தலைவர் வழியில்
மாண்புக்கு புதுவை மு.ந.நடராசன் அவர்கள்
கிட்டிச் சென்ற புகாதமல்
பயன்பீடோம்!






அறிவிக்கப்படுகிறது :
திருமதி. கிராசலட்சுமி நடராசன் எழுந்தமை

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>மு.ந.ந.பாண்டாரன் B.E., திருச்சி மு.ந.ந.நல்லம்பன் M.B.A., சாதி B.Sc., சொ.முனிக்ஞானி B.E., நள்ளா B.Sc.</p> | <p>தொழிலாளர் மா.முயில்செல்வன் B.E., M.B.A., மா.கணலச்செல்வன் B.Sc., ந.நா.முனிக்ஞானி B.Sc., ந.கந்தச்செல்வன், த.மீரன் B.E., B.A., த.வைபல்</p> |
|---|---|

108, சத்திரவேல் இலகல், சென்னை 600, ஸூரியேரி - IL தொலைபேசி : 88700 05810, 95855 10373



70 OUT OF 84



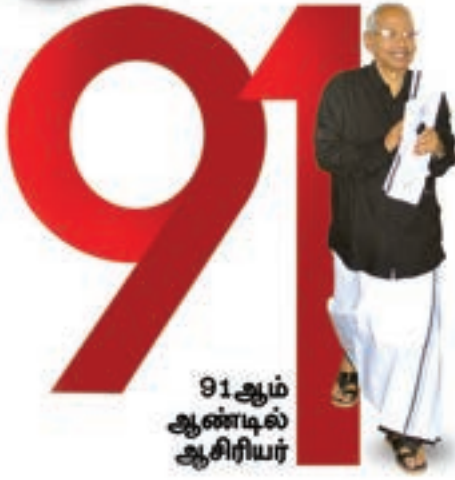
S. ARIVUKKARASU
Presidium Chairman
Dravidar Kazhagam

Asiriyar K.Veeramani is 91 today. I am younger to him by seven years. We hailed from the same city, Cuddalore, and studied at the same school which was established in 1717 C.E. It is the third oldest school in India.

As per Asiriyar's autobiography *'Ayyavin Adichuvattil'* (In the footprints of Periyar), my father was one of his mentors in his younger years. Now, he is my guide and philosopher.

It was in 1954. He was a student of Economics (Hons.) at Annamalai University. One day he came to meet my father with a small book in his hand. He placed it on a bench and spoke to my father. As a boy of 14, I took the book and went through the wrapper. It was a Tamil book titled *'Yeri Natchathiram'*. I laid it back on the bench without showing any interest. He noticed it and asked me "Have you read it?". I said – "No". He told me -- "If at all you want to





91ஆம்
ஆண்டில்
ஆசிரியர்

தம்பம் 2
தம்பம்
தம்பம்

பகுத்தறிவுப் பகலவனின்
வழியில் சமூகநீதியை நிலைநாட்ட
தொடர்ந்து போராகும்

திராவிடர் கழகத் தலைவர்
மாமணி

ஆசிரியர்

அவர்களுக்கு

இனிய ரிறந்தநாள் வாழ்த்துகள்!

த.கலையரசி M.Com., LL.B.,

Tambaram Flour Mill & Anbu Coffee Works
209, Shanmugam road, West Tambaram, Chennai-600045
Mob-98410 57099



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Nidhi Ltd.,**



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loan amount
per individual

('Nidhi' Declared Company) (Reg. No:13840/1986)

Approved by the Central Government

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INSURANCE CHARGES

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(i.e.) Rs. 1.12/- only for Rs.100/- for the Jewels)

13.5% only
p.a.

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per gram

No Need to pay any kind of
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For a Sovereign (8 grams)
Loan will be paid up to
Rs. **33120/-**

Loan will be sanctioned on the security of House and site (immovable properties)
Located within the limit of Corporation of Chennai. Interest Rate is 15% p.a
(i.e. Rs. 1.25 for Rs. 100/- per month)

V.Kumaresan
President

Regd. Office: Periyar Thidal
No.84/1 (50), E.V.K.Sampath Salai, Vepery,
Chennai - 600 007. Ph : 044 - 2661 8699, 4232 7538



Vishnu Saharam Kandekar was a Marathi writer; author of many novels such as *Verum Koil* (Vacant Temple), *Karukiya Mottu* (Withered Bud), *Iru Manam* (Twin Hearts), *Yayadhi* etc. His works were introduced to the Tamils by Ka.Sri.Sri by translation. He was honoured with 'Gnana Peeth' Award for his *Yayadhi*, a character in mythical novel that depicts the supremacy of Brahmins and the revolt of Kshatriya.



study anything worthy in life, you should read Kandekar". I was a member of the branch library in our locality. I looked for the book, got it and read. It interested me much even at that tender age.

Vishnu Saharam Kandekar was a Marathi writer; author of many novels such as *Verum Koil* (Vacant Temple), *Karukiya Mottu* (Withered Bud), *Iru Manam* (Twin Hearts), *Yayadhi* etc. His works were introduced to the Tamils by Ka.Sri.Sri by translation. He was honoured with 'Gnana Peeth' Award for his *Yayadhi*, a character in mythical novel that depicts the supremacy of Brahmins and the revolt of Kshatriya.



Annai
E.V.R. Maniammaiar

Thereafter I searched for his works. Annai EVR Maniammaiar was also a fan of Kandekar and she liked especially *Verum Koil* (vacant temple without any 'god') I passed SSLC and wanted to pursue my studies. For this my father's nod was necessary. As usual I approached my guide to talk to my father. Two days later he informed that my father was not willing owing to financial problems. I was sad.

Noticing my disappointment he immediately told me that my father had assured to admit me next year. Next year also, my father declined. There was no other option for me. My guide consoled me

and asked me to appear for Madras Public Service Commission (MPSC) [presently Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission – TNPSC] exam for government job. I obeyed. In the intermediary period, I read all the stories of Shakespeare which were then available in abridged form of pocket size books. He asked me to read Perry Mason's detective novels which were not useful to life but useful to improve my English.

I joined government service and rose upto the level of District Revenue Officer and Additional District Magistrate. There were many clashes with my superiors on account of my rationalism. I won over all the hurdles with his guidance and stewardship.

His stewardship still continues. He has been my philosopher and guide for about 70 years out of the 84 years of my life.

He will be so forever.

I wish my steward, guide and philosopher lives beyond Centenary to guide all the Tamils...

Long live PERIYAR, our mentor!.....

Long live Asiriyar VEERAMANI, my mentor!..... ■

EVERGREEN ASIRIYAR



V. ANBURAJ
General Secretary
Dravidar Kazhagam

Asiriyar's childhood life is a clear example of 'live-the-preaching.' While kids of his age would choose to play and have fun, he chose to work towards social reformation. Then a small boy, who wasn't tall enough to even reach a mike to speak on stage, he went on to reach

greater heights of social accomplishments and is an icon of inspiration today in the hearts of millions, worldwide.

With years unfolding, the light of Periyarism has only gotten better and nothing less. For every bold idea, stands



Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani's
91st Birthday Special

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*Periyar Maniammai Institute of
Science and Technology (Deemed to be
University) – Entrance*



Students amidst Green environ

an ardent torch bearer, the unprecedented follower of Thanthai Periyar who has dedicated himself to Globalise Periyar and Periyarise the globe. Starting from a tender age and still continuing the war against all sorts of discrimination at 91, Asiriyar is indeed evergreen.

Constant travelling to various parts of the country and overseas attending meetings and agitations, authoring various articles and books, conducting seminars to educate the younger generation by sharing knowledge, regular visits to the educational institutions under the trusts, addressing suggestions and queries of the party members, attending political rallies and the list goes on and on but he never complains about the rigid schedules, rather he enjoys doing it without much break even at this age.

Asiriyar has received many accolades, appreciations, awards and even criticism;

he has championed many social causes, has evolved to be an encyclopaedia on varied subjects, on the other hand, a dimension of him that I value is his views and actions in contributing to a sustainable environment. Thanthai Periyar, his mentor has spoken about the world to come with foresight of mobile phones, online education, food in capsule etc. much ahead of his time. Similarly, Asiriyar has foreseen the need for a sustainable environment and has actually put it in practice.

The Green Crusader – on a mission towards sustainable development

His unwavering commitment towards sustainability has been the driving force behind the significant strides creating a more environmental friendly and conscious academic environment at Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science and Technology, Vallam, Thanjavur. When the land parcel was first purchased, it was



Green pasture in front of Dr. Arjun Singh Memorial Library Building Complex

an unused old building with the land unfit to expect a green foliage and mostly considered to be an unfruitful move to aspire such a University. His vision for a green campus has not only been aspirational but has also translated into concrete actions and positive outcomes which reflects in the University's accolades received.

- Green Champion Award 2021 for effective contribution towards conservation of water and energy resources by the Government of Tamil Nadu
- The Green Institutional Rankings 2022 (Sustainable Institutions of India) by the R World Institutional Ranking
- UI Green Metric University Award 2022
- Institutional Grade A (category Gold) 2023 for excellence towards practicing Sustainable Education
- International Green University Award 2023 in recognition of its outstanding contribution towards fostering a culture of environmental responsibility conferred by NYC Green School, USA at a conference held at Cornell University, USA

The motivational initiatives have been instrumental in rallying support from various stakeholders, including students, faculty, and staff.

Today, solar energy is a common term. But under Asiriyar's vision the Women renewable energy development scheme of MNRE, the Periyar Renewable Energy Training Institute started in the year 2003, had already installed 4.05 kw solar power plant to give power supply to Nagammaiar Hostel's dining hall and kitchen, 800 w solar water pumping systems was installed in the campus for irrigation. PERIYAR RESEARCH ORGANIZATION FOR BIO-TECHNIC AND ECO-SYSTEM (PROBE) was started with a prime focus on the Development of environment through afforestation and wasteland development activities. Every year, the Periyar Research Organisation for Bio-Technic and Eco-System (PROBE) conducts a two-day national seminar concentrating mainly on revival of profitable farming practices for sustainable development.

Asiriyar's impactful motivation has played a vital role in the development of medicinal crops and Periyar Maniammai University conducted National seminars in which more than 300 farmers participated and benefited.

Sprawling on 115 acres, the campus boasts of a



The Chancellor beside the unique Bamboo grove a pride of PMIST

- 1.3 acre bamboo grove
- 36,820 natural trees
- About 4,500 different types of bushes
- and a number of endangered trees through which
- 3.67 lakh tonnes of CO₂ emission is absorbed every year

During raining days, water is collected through ground water conservation points and channelled into natural ponds and collecting sumps. Buildings' roof top water is collected and fed into Storm Water Harvesting well, which holds 5 lakh litre of water. The 20,000 cum percolation pond is permitted to receive the storm water and treated grey water. The whole campus gardens are watered by using drip irrigation, sprinkler irrigation, and rain gun techniques.

The tree branches and the woods on the wastelands are utilized for the Feed. The selected woods are seized and dried up for power production, thereby the environmental pollution is avoided. 60 per cent of the campus electricity demand gets fulfilled by using the biomass gasifier.

"Waste is Wealth" often insisted by Asiriyar, three distinct colour-coded containers are used to collect the garbage

produced on campus. In 2011, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) supported for establishing a Captive Power Generating Biomethanation Facility.

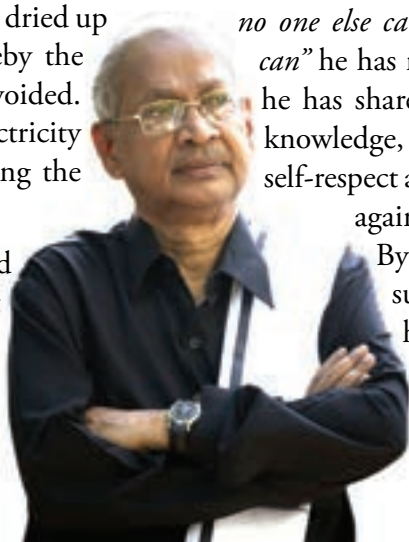
The plant can produce 500 cum of gas per day from multiple feeds, including animal excrement, night soil, vegetable waste, and food waste. A total of 60 kw of electricity can be generated from the gas produced. The biomethanation plant's sludge is used in the vermicomposting process to create nutrient-rich natural manure.

Each year, the plant decreases CO₂ emissions up to 292 tonnes.

Vermicomposting, Alternate Building Material Research Unit, Paper Recycling Unit, Construction of Eco friendly Toilet and many such initiatives have been carried out under his initiatives which I feel is a model that need to be adapted by everyone with an eye for sustainable living.

As Asiriyar always quotes *"If we can't, no one else can; if none can, only we can"* he has not just given speeches, he has shared with the society his knowledge, the ability to live with self-respect and the courage to stand against any discrimination.

By being the crusader of sustainable development, he naturally stays "EVERGREEN". ■



திராவிடப் பொதுநிலை

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October - December 2023 Quarterly

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MY CAPABILITY AND COMPETENCE

Dr.K. VEERAMANI

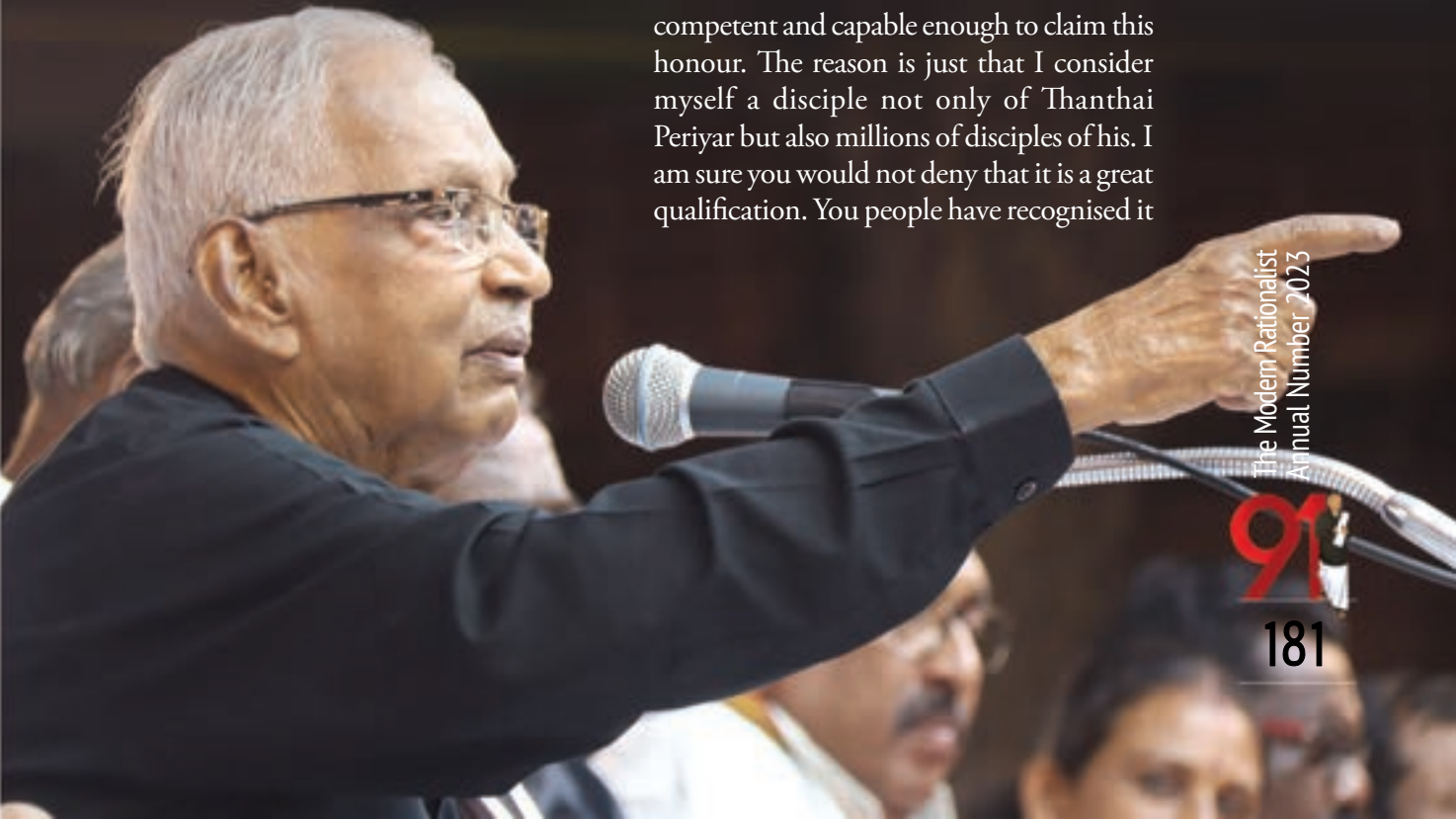
On 22nd November 1981, the Birthday of Thanthai Periyar was celebrated in Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu. As the General Secretary of the DravidarKazhagam (D.K.) Asiriyar Dr.K.Veeramani delivered a speech on the occasion. The excerpts are as follows:-

My dear cadres, well-wishers and my beloved friends, you have all honoured me today in a grand manner and encouraged me by revitalising my energy to render services for the movement, as long as possible. This is certainly a mega event of great significance. Irrespective of parties and outfits and varied views, all the people of this district have assembled here considering

it as an ideological meet convened by our movement. You have all honoured me splendidly today on this occasion. I convey my hearty thanks to every-one of you. But I am humble enough to admit that I do not deserve such an overwhelming honour from you.

On this occasion I recall what happened here in Cuddalore many years ago. As a ten year old boy I delivered a speech here. Many other memorable incidents followed that event. I also recall various events of our movement held here. They were all of historical importance and I actively participated in them.

You may ask me why I have been rendering services for this movement if I am not competent and capable enough to claim this honour. The reason is just that I consider myself a disciple not only of Thanthai Periyar but also millions of disciples of his. I am sure you would not deny that it is a great qualification. You people have recognised it



The Modern Rationalist
Annual Number 2023

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"VEERAMANI - 'THE ONE WHO NEVER COMPROMISES'"

Asiriyar K. Veeramani, the President of Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) would never compromise with anyone as far as the policies of Periyar are concerned. The popular Tamil weekly 'KUMUDAM' once asked Kalaighnar M Karunanidhi about it, for which Kalaighnar responded by his brief and crisp reply:

KUMUDAM: As far as the policies of social reformation, women's rights, and rationalist outlook are concerned, the President of the Dravidar Kazhagam K. Veeramani and you, do not seem to have any difference of opinion. These are Periyar's policies deeply soaked in progressive thoughts and both of you adhere to those principles with equal faith. Could you please comment on his attitude?

KALAIIGNAR: He would always be with anyone who advocates Social justice. He would never compromise with others as far as Periyar's policies are concerned. Whether he is with us or with anyone else does not matter at all. Veeramani would always be in my heart.

- *'Kumudam' Weekly* – 3.12.1998

and rightly motivated me to carry on with my tasks restlessly.

For all the encouragement and motivation, I owe you all a debt of gratitude. On certain occasions, you have contributed richly for our movement. Sometimes, the monetary contributions were two times more than my weight. All the amounts donated by you instead of garlands and shawls have been deposited in the fund for the growth and development of our movement. This is for the information of every one of you at this venue. Our Treasurer who is present

on this occasion would make the remittance properly and promptly at the head quarters of our movement.

The reason for your love and affection towards me and the trust reposed in me must be because you believe I am instrumental for the welfare and benefits of the Tamil society through the activities of this noble movement of ours. In my opinion I have no other capability and competence other than my involvement in the mission of our movement. Only this ideological loyalty has qualified me to earn your trust and confidence. I can cite no other feature of mine.

Our bondage is like that of a leader making us sign a promissory note and advising us to count the money lent. Lenders believe and offer a loan. Borrowers accept it with a sense of fear as they are bound to repay it. I receive all the coins offered by you, equivalent to two times my body weight, with the same feelings of a borrower. Whenever you donate a new coin or even one single currency note I accept it with a moral responsibility, fearing that I am accountable for your absolute faith in me. On such occasions, I swear silently that I should work harder for our society and prove myself worthy of your trust and love.

I am not sure if I would be able to accomplish my task fully to your satisfaction but I can assure, till my last breath, I shall strive to establish all our policies and spread Periyar thought, following at all times in his foot prints. I shall never commit breach of your invaluable trust in me. I would strive to make our movement reach glorious heights and earn laurels from people all over our country and abroad. Never ever would I betray my people. The Tamil Society would always be my master and I would be its obedient servant. On this occasion this is my promise to every one of you. Thanks to all of you. ■



MASSIVE MOBILISER OF PUBLIC OPINION



V. KUMARESAN
Treasurer
Dravidar Kazhagam

Many revolutions have occurred by mobilising the public against the ruling authority. Some of them replaced the rulers with the support of the suffering masses. Invariably in all these revolutions, the way of achieving the goal was through violent modern-armed struggle and the like. Besides it was doubtful that the public were enlightened about the ideology behind those revolutions. But due to the lack of ideological awakening of the people, the purpose of revolution became meaningless that ultimately changed the polity of the countries where revolutions were held. On some occasions the suffering of the people attained its peak and they were unable to undergo further. Hence they revolted against the rulers with the potential ideology, then prevailed in the society.

Without any leadership to take up they could not sustain the fruits of revolutions through an apt governance.

But in India, prior to independence as well as during the post period, one silent revolution was held in the deep southern part – in those days called Madras Presidency and at present, State of Tamil Nadu. The ‘silent revolution’ refers to the means without any violence but more aggressive in the propaganda of the ideology to attain the objective. The revolutionary who started it was Thanthai Periyar. The literacy rate of the people was very low when Periyar started the organisation in the 1920s. Periyar used to address as many public meetings as possible and interact with the people. That was the major mode of reaching the people to enlighten them and to bring changes

ASIRIYAR – IN THE VIEW OF PERIODICALS

Thiru. K. Veeramani, the President of the Dravidar Kazhagam would never interrupt when some-one keeps talking to him. He would fold his hands and listen attentively. He would address with respect even those who are younger to him.

- *'Ananda Vikatan'* – 22.05.1983

Only three or four leaders in the political world have clarity of thought and stubborn adherence to policies. Those leaders always shun cheaply criticising others in a derogatory manner. They deliver their speeches like a smooth flow of stream and exhibit their oratorical skill. Veeramani is one of those leaders who are quite a few in number.

- *'Tamizh Murasu'* – 1983 – a
Singapore Journal

According to K. Veeramani, Brahmins should behave first as humans and should never feel that they are superior to other fellow humans.

- *'The New York Times'* –
3rd November 1982

The Dravidar Kazhagam Movement in Tamil Nadu is quite firm in opposing brahminist hegemony. Under the leadership of K. Veeramani, the President of the movement, it exists in the State as a powerful and prominent movement

- *'India Today'* – January 15, 1983

in their societal living. This pattern of propaganda is being carried out by the successive leaders of Dravidar Kazhagam, a social organisation renamed in 1944. The President of Dravidar Kazhagam at present, Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani is an

expert in the pattern of propaganda which inspires many persons who are associated with public life.

If the propaganda style of Asiriyar is analysed it becomes clear that, the impact it has created in practice is magnificent. If anything that emerges or is moved by the Government is detrimental to the well-being of the society, Asiriyar would be the first person to diagnose it from the perspective of Periyar's ideology. Asiriyar would protest against the negative move, explaining its intricacies and about the detrimental effect it is likely to cause to the society. He would issue statements to all the print and electronic media making his views the integral part. The statement would be published in the official organ of DK, *Viduthalai* (meaning Liberation) the world's only Rationalist Daily. In the next stage, Asiriyar would convene an all parties and social organisation meet, discuss with the leaders, and arrive at a consensus on how to go about the issue and to take it to the people. An all parties agitation throughout Tamil Nadu involving the representations of all the parties would be conducted to focus on the issue for the public as the beginning.

Then Asiriyar would chalk out the exclusive continuous tour programme to take the issue to the public to enlighten them on the issue. He used to address continuously 2 or 3 public meetings everyday. In such meetings also, the local leaders, of all the political parties and vital social activists would be invited to address.

With these series of stages in taking up the issue, Asiriyar would bring out the whole picture of the issue and the impact it creates, thereby the people would be made proper judges to decide on the issue at the time of election.



Asiriyar appeals to the public to be aware of the societal problems

Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) is strongly aware of the fact that the ultimate sovereignty is with the people. Dravidar Kazhagam is a party, never contesting any election but deciding the rulers by enlightening the electorate on who would be better to deliver goods for public welfare and their well-being both at present and in future.

How the sustained propaganda yielded positive result could be depicted through the following instance.

In 1979, M.G.Ramachandran was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Dravidian party rule was based on social justice wherein the oppressed people who were denied education and employment were duly compensated with reservation measures. After independence, the Constitution of the country also enabled reservation measures through the First Amendment for those who are socially and educationally backward including the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. While extending reservation to them, only social backwardness was reckoned and the Constitution also stipulates that basis. On any account 'the economic criterion' that is elastic in nature cannot be the basis. This

point was discussed very elaborately, made members vote at the floor of the Parliament and democratically curbed the economic criterion for reservation measures. But M.G.R., introduced economic criterion (the family annual income not exceeding Rs.9,000/-) to extend the reservation for the Backward Classes.

Dravidar Kazhagam (DK), the organisation that is well aware of 'the economic criterion', protested immediately. Asiriyar explained that the economic criterion is meant only for poverty alleviation programme and not the dispensation of social justice. The State government led by MGR did not yield to it and remained adamant.

With the systematic planning and execution, Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) invited co-ordination and support from the main opposition party DMK and other like-minded parties and organisation. Protest meetings to withdraw the economic criterion were organised throughout the State. People were enlightened on how the move of the government would deny opportunities that are available for the Backward Class candidates.



Asiriyar, amidst the all parties' leaders, addresses

In 1980, General election to the Parliament was conducted. MGR was very charismatic and popular leader of Tamil Nadu, who never faced any political debacle in election. But to his surprise AIADMK, the party of MGR was defeated in 37 Constituencies out of the total 39. M.G.R. could not digest the defeat enmass. The senior colleagues in his party told, the prescription of economic criterion was against the fundamentals of social justice which is the bed rock of Dravidian Movement. MGR convened 'all parties meeting' immediately. First, the CM MGR requested Asiriyar K. Veeramani to address. Asiriyar presented a text containing the narrations of MGR in favour of the economic criterion and the DK's reply to them. After listening to the speech of Asiriyar, MGR understood that he had rubbed on the wrong side of social justice. Within a few days after the meeting, MGR convened a press meet and spoke thus:

"For the past one year, one senior leader in the public life of Tamil Nadu propagated continuously against the economic criterion for the reservation of the Backward Classes and completely changed the opinion of the public, which earlier voted for ADMK. Now we realise the fact, and this government withdraws the G.O. issued on the economic criterion."

Besides, as a compensation for it, MGR enhanced the reservation for the Backward Classes from 31 to 50 per cent accepting

that the total population of BCs was 52 per cent (as per 1931 census). MGR who created an unwanted page in the history of social justice, removed that page and opened a new page of providing the maximum of 50 per cent reservation for the Backward Classes both in education and employment in the country. The pressing force, of course ideological force, behind the historic achievement was Asiriyar K. Veeramani.

Similar efforts were taken by Asiriyar to remove the entrance tests for getting admission in the professional colleges in Tamil Nadu. The Entrance Tests were introduced by MGR as the CM. The opposition lasted for about 12 years and ultimately the entrance tests were removed. When Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi became CM the next time, he brought a legislation to the effect with the due assent from the President of India, (to equate the State legislation with Union legislation), in 2006.

War Against NEET

While the removal of entrance tests continued like this the Union government brought entrance tests for admission to all medical and dental colleges in the country as National Eligibility and Entrance Test (NEET). The Union government introduced NEET unilaterally without getting concurrence from the State governments despite the Constitutional position of the subject 'Education' in the Concurrent List of VII Schedule.

Asiriyar with the prudent formalities waged a propaganda war against NEET, when it was introduced in Tamil Nadu in 2017. An exclusive propaganda tour was programmed in TWO stages, covering invariably all the districts of the State. The light lit by Asiriyar against NEET still continues as flame. Not only Tamil



Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) is strongly aware of the fact that the ultimate sovereignty is with the people. Dravidar Kazhagam is a party, never contesting any election but deciding the rulers by enlightening the electorate on who would be better to deliver goods for public welfare and their well-being both at present and in future.



Nadu but all the States now realise that NEET has nothing to do with the selection of meritorious candidates for the studies in Medicine as envisaged by the Union government. Many aspiring students are undergoing arduous and highly expensive coaching classes to appear for NEET. Unable to score the desired mark in NEET, which is the sole criterion for the selection (despite the candidates securing high marks in all the subjects in the secondary education final examination) a few candidates committed suicide. The rate of suicide rises every year. The 'War Against NEET' will continue till the success by its abolition. Asiriyar is on the aggressive propaganda against NEET.

Manu(a)dharma Yojana

In the Independence Day address Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a retrograde announcement 'Vishwakarma Yojana' under the guise of welfare scheme. Equality and equal opportunities for all are integral to our Constitution. No one can be denied of what is judiciously meant for them. No efforts could be encouraged contrary to it. The nature of 'Vishwakarma Yojana' is the provision of loan assistance to carry on 18 types of crafts and trade, that are considered as heredity family occupation like washerman, barber, pottery, carpentry etc. The eligibility to avail the loan assistance starts at the age of 18, an ideal stage to pursue higher education. The assistance of loan at that age is nothing but denial of higher education and to

pursue the family occupation carried out by fathers and forefathers.

It is blatant resanction of Varnashrama dharma which is the four fold division of labourers by birth. Asiriyar identified the nature of the Vishvakarma Yojana while it was in the announcement stage itself and exposed it to others.

In the month of October and November 2023 Asiriyar went on a whirlwind propaganda tour at the age of 90 exclusively to expose the ill effects of Vishwakarma Yojana, which is nothing but 'Manu(a)dharma Yojana'. He addressed in 16 meetings in a span of 8 days widespread all over the State. The major part of the public life of Asiriyar is being spent only for mobilising public opinion against anything that is detrimental to the society and people.

Asiriyar used to quote an English maxim:

"Public opinion Marches on; Law comes limping behind"

In that way he is the great force that pressurises the rulers both at the Union government and at the State government to mend or amend for the wellbeing and welfare of the people. Asiriyar has been proceeding in the footprints of Periyar meticulously. Periyar lives even now after 50 years of his last breath. ■

ஓரண்டுக்கான சந்தா நவீனவாட

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91ஆம் ஆண்டில் ஆசிரியர்

முன்பு 2 சுயமரியாதை நாள்

தந்தை பெரியார்

கொள்கைகளை பரப்புவரை செய்து வரும் இந்த வலைக்காட்சிகளை ஆதரிப்புகள்! இணையங்கள் (subscribe)! வெளியிடப்படும் காலணாலிகளை கண்டு விரும்பிடுக! பகிர்ந்து கருத்துரைத்திடுக!

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|  <p>மா. அரிவூசுடர் தலைவர், ஈட.கப்பிரிவு புத்தறிவாளர் கழகம்.</p> |   |  <p>ரா. மனோகேசன் செயலாளர், ஈட.கப்பிரிவு புத்தறிவாளர் கழகம்.</p> |
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அரிவூசுடர் வலைக்காட்சி
(Arivuchudar youtube channel)
தமிழ்த்தடம் வலைக்காட்சி
(Tamil Thadam youtube channel)



December 2 SELF-RESPECT DAY

தமிழர் தலைவரே

நீவிர் நீடுழி வாழியவே!

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| <p>மு.கலைவாணன் பொம்மண்டக் கலைஞர். மாநில தலைவர், புத்தறிவாளர் கழக கலைத்துறை</p> | <p>மாரி கருணாநிதி மாநில செயலாளர் புத்தறிவாளர் கழக கலைத்துறை</p> |
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THE UNIQUE PATH OF THE DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT IN THE STRUGGLE FOR CASTE ERADICATION



S. PRINCE ENNARES PERIYAR
Deputy General Secretary
Dravidar Kazhagam

The primary aim of Periyarism is to eradicate the caste which imposes congenital disgrace / innate stigma on the majority of the people for a long time. Caste is a cruelty. In no other country or religion in the world it is like that. It is the root of Hinduism. Caste is emphasized through all the Hindu scriptures, epics, mythology, rituals, ceremonies, daily life practices, habitat, food, dress, culture; adherence is urged; violence is unleashed on those who refuse to comply.

Thousands of people have fought against this injustice since the time of the Buddha for three thousand years. The Bodhi Sangam of the Buddha was later usurped by the brahmins, who split Buddhism and created it as Mahayana, and over time destroyed its scope in India.

All the anti-Varnadharmas, anti-caste movements that followed attempted to reform Hinduism but never succeeded completely. The assimilating nature of brahminical Hinduism has over time devoured all such efforts.

Thanthai Periyar and Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar were the two leaders who were sure that caste cannot be



Two sides of the same coin for the cause of human equality

abolished without abolishing Hinduism. Caste is not an edifice to be demolished at will. It is a disease in people's minds; a very deep-rooted poisonous tree.

It's not about cutting the adventitious roots, Periyar's method of warfare is to cut down its tap root and remove it with the soil. That is why brahmanism could not destroy the Periyar movement as it crushed other attempts at caste abolition.

His questions shattered everything that protected and propagated the caste. Mere 'abolition of untouchability and caste discrimination' is not enough. He did not minimize the intensity. As long as caste system exists, how can only its evil effects be eradicated? His question shocked not only caste fanatics but also partial progressives.

Periyar, who has taken up the strategy of attacking on the origin, also knows that it cannot be done immediately. So, he made the paths very clear for it.

Periyar, who raised questions and campaigned in unheard-of directions, boldly raised questions and did not hesitate to face any opposition, did not

adopt a brute-force approach to anti-caste activities. He made it his plan to make gradual success possible.

Ambedkar called caste causing a graded inequality. Caste system gives every caste a feeling that some castes are inferior to it. So it makes them forget or accept the oppression of those superior to them. As opposition to caste-based atrocities only creates problems for those at the next level, no one's voice is raised against the upper echelons of society, who rule everything from the top. When there are only two levels of superiority and inferiority about caste, there is no clarity about who has to be fought against. But the multi-layered nature of caste system is the defense of brahmanism.

The behavior of the upper caste non-brahmins, towards the backward and oppressed communities is bad. Worse is the way people from backward communities behave towards oppressed communities! The same is true of the oppressed people who silently remain oppressed without protesting.

They never turn their eyes on the upper caste brahmins. But Periyar made it clear



Campaigning and activism for women's rights were intertwined in the process of caste abolition from another angle. One of the most important turning points was the identification of the field of feminism for gender equality as one of the tasks of eradicating caste and colour-bias



again and again that the driving rope of this was there, and he firmly expressed the need to destroy the Brahmin domination and the religious system that protected it.

Caste is a disease. It is propagated as poisonous organism called Varnasram. Affected patients are people at all levels of the caste system. Untouchability and caste discrimination are symptoms of caste disease. Treating the symptoms does not cure the disease! The germs that spreads the disease should be destroyed.

During an epidemic, a person who has been infected with disease from someone becomes a carrier of the disease. But he cannot be abandoned. The aim of the doctor is to cure him and make him survive. This is the approach taken by the Dravidian movement towards non-Brahmins suffering from caste disease. At the same time, the Dravidian movement identifies and opposes if one knowingly becomes a spreader of the disease. The intention is to prevent the spread of the caste disease.

At this point we need to be clear about one thing. Due to the Brahmin domination, all the non-Brahmins were deprived of their power, deprived of education and jobs and were crushed! Since the non-Brahmins don't realize their inferior status, the Brahmins have directed the next caste to dominate in hierarchy.

Former IAS officer Ashok Varadhan Shetty highlighted a statistical fact at a recent seminar on caste-wise census. While

implementing the scheme to provide housing to the residents of mud huts, the survey conducted by the then Tamil Nadu Government for the purpose, revealed the fact that most of the mud hut dwellers were Most Backward Class people.

Shouldn't we convey to those people the fact that everyone is oppressed by caste? Shouldn't we tell those people that caste is the reason for their serious condition? That is what Periyar did till the end. He questioned whether there could be caste consciousness among people who were denigrated as Shudras. He emphasized that if one wants to get rid of the Sudhra stigma that degrades their birth, the panchama title (caste woes of the oppressed people) must first be eradicated.

In one way, the Dravidian movement attracted the caste dissidents from within the dominant castes. It put them forward and built the movement. It instilled in people the idea that following caste system is inhuman. Periyar's move to renounce the caste title has made Tamil Nadu a 99.9% caste-surname-free state today. A state of shyness to openly ask about one's caste has developed in Tamil Nadu. We do not believe that caste has completely vanished. But we can say with certainty that we are marching decisively on its path. It has been a century since the caste system began to disintegrate.

'EDUCATION AND HEALTH TWINNS OF DRAVIDIAN MODEL'

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. M.K.Stalin conveyed a message through social media on 7th November, 2023 that education and health are the two eyes of the Dravidian Model Government, and that he has been stressing it time and again.

He further said--- "Under the 'Naan Mudhalvan Scheme' (Me, the First) implemented by me I have proved it, by introducing Common Law Admission Test (CLAT). 3300 students of the Government Higher Secondary Schools would be appearing for this test in order to become eligible for Law Studies admission.

The sum of Rs.4,000/- to be charged for applying to appear would be paid by the Government itself, besides offering them free coaching. Our objective is to augment the strength of our students in the prominent and reputable higher educational institutions in the country. Our intention is to see that our students get placement in large numbers in higher posts and positions in the Government sector establishments. This scheme is a small beginning and one of the many schemes being worked out by us."

In another message of his, the respectful Chief Minister said ---

"In 2009 Kalaignar implemented a medical insurance scheme to save the lives of poor people below poverty line. He set a precedent to the entire country. The Union Government introduced one such scheme only in 2015-2016 inspired by Kalaignar's guidance.

As the Chief Minister, I have also implemented the Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme (CMCHIS) through which our Government hospitals have made a great achievement that cannot be found in any other State. 50 per cent of the people benefited by the Comprehensive Health Scheme have undergone treatment in Government hospitals."

The Hon'ble Chief Minister has proudly added further --- "This stands not only as a solid proof for the achievement of our education and health departments, but it is also a crown of victory for our Dravidian Model Government."

Since the first generation of the well-to-do among the non-Brahmins were educated and began to seek justice for their communities, they began to work together among themselves for the development of their communities. They demanded a place for themselves; They asked for social justice. The communities that raised their voice for it came together. The national movement of the day called this upheaval separatism. But the Dravidian movement took it forward by formalizing it. Integration within castes promoted social justice.

On the other hand, anti-caste marriages, progressive campaigns, and brave struggles against the divisiveness and parochialism of Hinduism made the youth rise up. The word self-respect takes on a new meaning in the Indian context. Periyar's self-respect movement ignited a fire of self-esteem among the repressed

Decentralization and educational development planned on the basis of social justice with limited powers available to the state government acted as catalysts in the field of caste eradication.



Shouldn't we convey to those people the fact that everyone is oppressed by caste? Shouldn't we tell those people that caste is the reason for their serious condition? That is what Periyar did till the end. He questioned whether there could be caste consciousness among people who were denigrated as Shudras.



Hierarchies of castes and outcastes in Varnasrama



which the set backs have become more and more scattered and a kind of caste dissolution has taken place.

Campaigning and activism for women's rights were intertwined in the process of caste abolition from another angle. One of the most important turning points was the identification of the field of feminism for gender equality as one of the tasks of eradicating caste and colour-bias.

Caste atrocities are still happening today. They stealthily occur here and there. Mixing faeces in drinking water, attacking the youth of oppressed communities, and perpetrating violence owing to personal enmity with caste are happening. The background of those who add fuel to the fire of caste system is getting exposed. The government is also taking serious measures for that purpose. Caste hatred is responsible for many murders.

But the foundation of the caste structure has been shattered. In the changing world of communication, narrow group mentality can no longer survive; The constraints that protected caste have been broken. Marriages with caste denial have gained social acceptance and are taking place in large numbers, every day. (The self-respect marriage law has helped a lot of people in Tamil Nadu.) In line with the Tamil proverb that a lamp that goes out burns brightly, those who are struggling to protect the caste menace are also playing many tricks. Overcoming all these, Periyar's hammer is smashing the barrier of caste system and paving the way for equality and social justice. ■

Professor of History, A. Thiruneelakandan, who is looking closely at the Dravidian movement's anti-caste activities, calls it a kind of caste break, caste dissolution. Multi-pronged attacks such as propaganda, protest, and social justice programs were conducted rather than completely eradicating a particular community or communities, or by standing in opposition and fighting within communities. He thinks that due to this, a setback in caste system has gradually taken place, within



OVERSEAS LAURELS



V.C. VILVAM

State Co-ordinator
IT Wing, Dravidar Kazhagam

The Tamils of the world believe our beloved Asiriyar K.Veeramani as a library meant specially for them, in the field of Social Justice. All over the world, the Tamils have flourished and prospered in various spheres such as medicine, technology, computers and information technology. It is undeniable that education is essential to reach such great heights in life. Using the assistance and aid of the Dravidian party governments if they could gradually advance in life and reach glorious heights, should not the credit go to the Stalwarts of Dravidian movement and Dravidam?

People who talk much about religion, caste and pseudo Tamil nationalism may not have understood Dravidam perfectly. But it is a pity that most people who acquired best literacy and got placements abroad too have not realised the source of their advancement in life. They fail to look back at the path they had travelled. They need 'Erode Glasses' to look back clearly. A knowledge in the history of the movement is also required for their realisation. Not all are to be blamed in this respect. We do have Tamils abroad who constantly keep thinking of the political map of Tamil Nadu.

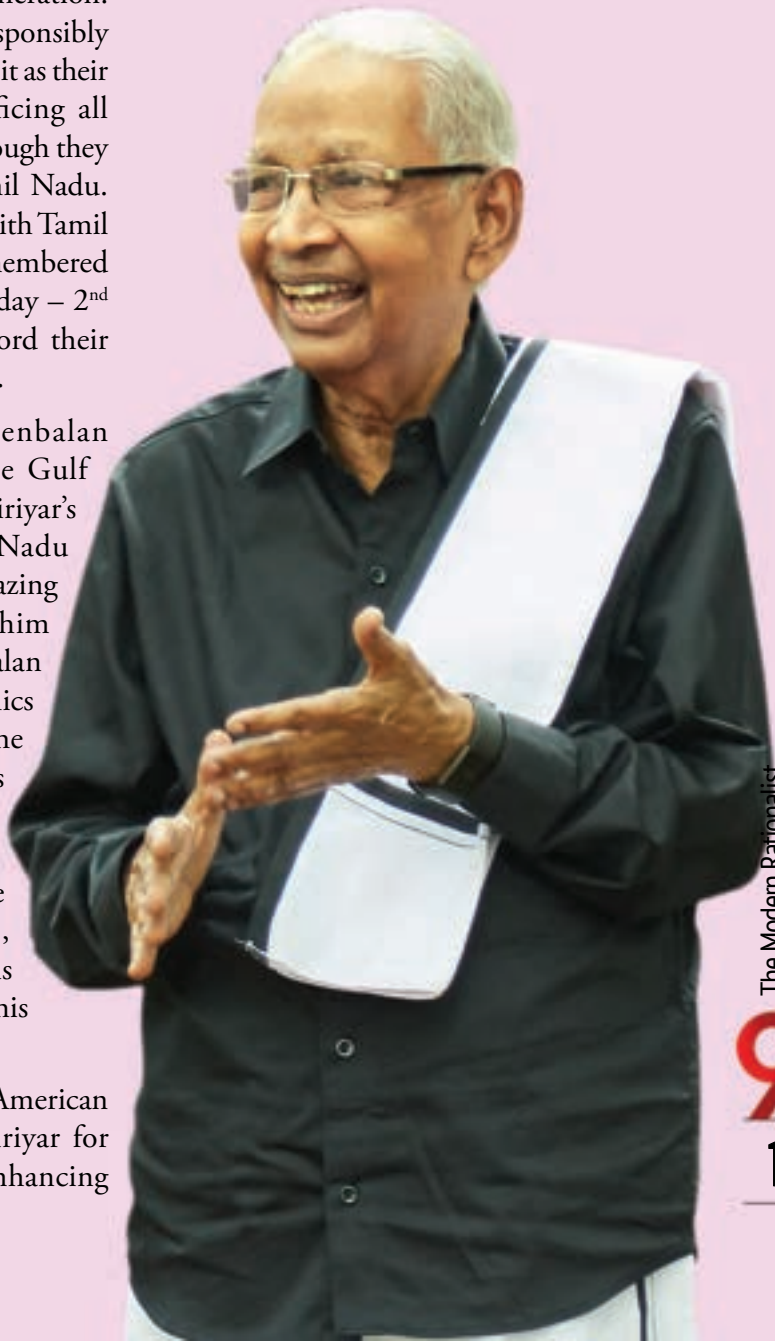
People who talk much about religion, caste and pseudo Tamil nationalism may not have understood Dravidam perfectly. But it is a pity that most people who acquired best literacy and got placements abroad too have not realised the source of their advancement in life. They fail to look back at the path they had travelled. They need 'Erode Glasses' to look back clearly.



They are aware of the history of Tamil Nadu and they work restlessly keeping in mind the flourish of the next generation. They spend their leisure hours responsibly executing their tasks, considering it as their social responsibility and sacrificing all pastimes and entertainments, though they live abroad, far away from Tamil Nadu. They have an inseparable bond with Tamil Nadu and its people. They remembered Asiriyar Dr.K.Veeramani's birthday – 2nd of December and place on record their hearty greetings and best wishes.

An eminent Tamil doctor Senbalan who practices medicine in the Gulf Country Oman commends Asiriyar's life as 'the history of Tamil Nadu politics'. He recalls Asiriyar's amazing memory power which makes him recall anything instantly. Senbalan praises Asiriyar's journalistic ethics as a publisher and editor. In the present days of fake news, his genuine reports and statements are marvellous according to Dr.Senbalan. "He is the protective wall for the Tamils", said Dr.Senbalan. He conveys his hearty greetings to Asiriyar on his 91st Birthday.

Karthik Ramasamy, serving an American Bank in Singapore, praises Asiriyar for his instrumental role in the enhancing



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*Dr. Senbalan,
Oman*



*Karthick Ramasamy,
Singapore*



*Rajarajan,
Singapore*



*Bilal Aliyar,
Dubai*

of backward classes reservation in Tamil Nadu from 30 per cent to 50 per cent and for protecting the total 69 per cent reservation by legal enactment. He is delighted that the children of backward class families in Tamil Nadu would get 50 per cent reservation in Engineering and Medical Colleges in Tamil Nadu, especially in renowned institutions such as Annamalai University and Stanley Medical College. Karthik Ramasamy thanks Asiriyar for his relentless fight against the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET). According to him the Dravidian ideology alone has helped all the first-generation graduates and their children to advance in life. Karthik Ramasamy also wishes Asiriyar a happy birthday and a peaceful, long life.

An eminent Tamil citizen Bilal Aliyar, an I.T. professional living in Dubai, says – “I have great respect and regard for any movement in Tamil Nadu that supports the DMK. Hence, I honour Asiriyar Veeramani truly and faithfully.” Mr. Bilal further says – “Asiriyar has kept open the gates of Periyar Thidal for everyone who fights for reservations in the political world, social justice, education, eradication of inequality, annihilation of castes, communal harmony and women-empowerment. The credit for the legal protection of 69 per cent reservation in Tamil Nadu goes to Asiriyar and his

wisdom. His protest against Sanatana has shook the foundation of the Fascist forces in India. Brahminocracy in Tamil Nadu has been threatened by Asiriyar’s aggressive speeches and statements. For people like us who live far away from Tamil Nadu, Asiriyar himself is a library. He is the link for us with all the Tamils. I heartily greet him on his 91st Birthday.”

RJ.Rajan, a Tamil Engineer serving an information and technology based organisation in Singapore also conveys through me, his hearty greetings to our beloved Asiriyar. He has said – “Thousands of Tamils like me have migrated to overseas countries for livelihood and survival. Our rays of hope is the Stalwart Asiriyar. The Dravidian movement helped us acquire education and get placements abroad. In World Countries, the Tamils are in enviable posts and positions. We are grateful for this to Thanthai Periyar and Asiriyar Veeramani. I feel proud to place on record that I am one of the numerous Tamils who have reaped a harvest of benefits through Thanthai Periyar and Asiriyar. We regularly listen to his speeches on-line. We read his statements through web-sites. May Asiriyar live beyond his centenary year!”

The eulogy of all the overseas Tamil citizens described above proves that Asiriyar has millions of his well-wishers all over the world. I conclude with my hearty greetings and best wishes to our beloved Asiriyar. ■

TEACHER OF SELF RESPECT



Dravidar Kazhagam and its leader Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani propagate Periyar ideals throughout the world under 'Globalising Periyar Mission'. As part of the Mission it is being organised as international conferences on Periyar's ideals of Self-Respect, Humanism, Social Justice, Women Liberation, Empowerment etc. once in every two years. The international event is organised at the initiative of Periyar International, USA in co-ordination with the local humanist organisations in the respective place / country.

The first of its kind was organised in 2017 as *International Conference of Periyar Self-*

Respect Movement' in Cologne at Cologne University, Germany. In 2019, Periyar International, USA organised *International Conference on Humanism and Self-Respect* in co-ordination with American Humanist Association at Springfield, Maryland, USA.

International Humanism Conference on Social Justice was organised at Toronto, Canada in 2022 partnered with Centre for Inquiry (CFI – Canada Chapter) and in co-ordination with Humanist Canada and the Humanist Association of Toronto. The Mission continues and is everlasting. Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani is a lover of books and a voracious reader. Any book that comes





Asiriyar Dr. K. Veeramani is a lover of books and a voracious reader. Any book that come across his attention will be subjected to his cursory glance. Within a few minutes he will locate the pages, the content of which would be appealing. Asiriyar will quote the contents of the book that are very relevant and relating to the subject of the meetings addressed by him.

across his attention will be subjected to his cursory glance. Within a few minutes he will locate the pages, the content of which would be appealing. Asiriyar will quote the contents of the book that are very relevant and relating to the subject of the meetings addressed by him. Many of the books would be made known to the audience for the first time through the speech of Asiriyar. Such a marvellous affinity and relationship Asiriyar has with books and libraries.

After the conclusion of the International Conference at Springfiled, Maryland, the adjoining State of Washington DC., Asiriyar was specific about his visit to the Library of Congress. As per his wishes, Dr. Soma Ilangovan, Chairperson, Periyar International, USA and Prof. Dr. Kannabiran Ravishankar accompanied Asiriyar when he visited the Library of Congress. After visiting

the magnificent library and looking at the voluminous collection of books that are housed in it, Asiriyar happened to meet Dr. Jonathan Loar, the Head of Asian Division of the Library of Congress. The accompanied friends introduced Asiriyar to the Head. While introducing, they mentioned him as Asiriyar Dr.K.Veeramani. Listening to the prefix, the Head asked what is meant by 'Asiriyar'. He was replied that 'Asiriyar' means 'teacher'. Immediately, the Head exclaimed "What! Is your leader a teacher?" Turning towards Asiriyar he asked, 'What! Are you a teacher?' He did not stop with that. He further asked, 'What do you teach?'

Asiriyar replied impulsively "Yes, I teach Self-Respect" Asiriyar explained the speciality of Self-Respect, its ideological base and why Periyar felt the need to propagate it and named his movement after it. Within a few minutes Asiriyar delivered a mini lecture about Periyar and his ideals.

It is the basic instinct of Asiriyar not to miss even an iota of time and opportunity available to propagate Periyar Mission, whatever be the platform and environment.

After exchanging a lot of ideas with the Head, Asiriyar and the friends departed from the cabin. As promised to the Head, Asiriyar sent a set of books, on Periyar and his ideals published by the 'Periyar Self Respect Propaganda Institution' to the Library of Congress for stacking them in their stock.

- nietzsche





Dr. SVEN WORTMANN

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Universität zu Köln, Lilleneronstr. 6
D-50931 Köln - Germany



Message of Greetings

Dear Asiriyar,

I wish you all the best on your 91st birthday!

I often think of many of the meetings in which I had conversations with you, and your valuable lessons for me and my students.

We have benefited a lot from your experiences, sharp understanding, firm stance, and your sense of humour.

I am eager to meet you and your team again in Periyar Thidal soon to continue our precious interactions.

With best regards,
Dr. Sven Wortmann

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