

PATRIOTIC EFFORTS OF SUBRAMANIA SIVA TO BUILT BHARATHA MATHA TEMPLE AT PAPPARAPATTY IN DHARMAPURI DISTRICT

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Abstract

In the beginning of the 20th century, the great Nationalist leader Subramania Siva of Tamilnadu contributed immensely to the movement for the liberation of Indians from the slavery of the British rule. He was on of those selfless patriots who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the national movement in Tamilnadu under the leadership of Tilak. The others were poet Subramania Bharathi, V.V.S.Iyer, V.O.Chidambaram Pillai and Vanchinatham. Poet Bharathi described Subramania Siva as 'Shivaji'¹. He was a very close associate of V.O.Chidambaram Pillai, founder of Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company at Tuticorin. Siva inculcated a sense of nationalism and patriotic fervour to the people of Tamilnadu which played a great role in the National movement.

Keywords: Subramania Siva, Deshbandhu, V.O.Chidambaram Pillai, National movement, Subramania Bharathi, British Government

Early Life

Subramania Siva was born in Vattalakundu in Madurai district of Tamilnadu on 04.10.1884, to the parents Rama Iyer and Nagalakshmi Ammal. He had his early education at Madurai, Trivandrum and Coimbatore. While he was at Trivandrum, he was inspired by the lecture delivered there by Chanda Varma of Arya Samaj in 1906. He developed his love for the country and started 'Dharma Samaj' and induced the youth for fighting against the British for freedom. While he was at Tuticorin, he got the friendship of V.O.Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Bharathi. Siva was arrested for his anti-British propaganda and was imprisoned in Salem Jail for 6 years. After his release in 1912, he came to Madras and started a journal called "Gnana Banu" and "Prapancha Mithra". Siva attended a conference at Calcutta held under the presidentship of Lala Lajpathi. He preached his ideals to the nook and corner of Tamilnadu. The British Government gave him a lot of trouble. Even then he was not frightened and pointed out the atrocities of the foreign rule to the people. He was in prison for a total period of 9 years at Salem jail².

Siva and His Activities

Siva had many followers in Dharmapuri district. With their support he spread the message of nationalism far and wide with devotion and dedication³. Thiyagi Theerthagiri Mudaliar of Dharmapuri encouraged Siva in many ways. Siva used to call him as Emden. Chinnamuthu Mudaliar, of Pappalapatti (25 Km from Dharmapuri) was a close friend of Siva and helped him liberally during his campaign against British Government in Dharmapuri District⁴. He inspired the youth to fight for freedom and gave them training to do so. He founded a "Bhajana Sangh" and propagated the patriotic songs of "Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi" throughout Tamilnadu by going from place to place by foot. His disciple Kandasamy was a great singer in his group. Siva gave him a title "Kodaiyidi Pulavar"⁵. He sang Bharathi songs such as "Vazhga Tilakar Namam Vazhga", "Veezhga Kodunkonmai Veezhga" in a loud voice to the villagers. His other disciples were Sundara Bharathi, Srinivasa Varadan, Somayajulu, Chidambara Bharathi, etc. Through his dramas like Shivaji, Desingu Rajan, Bhakta Ramdas, etc, he spread the patriotic spirit throughout Tamilnadu⁶. With the help of his friends and admirers, Siva wanted to build a "Bharata Matha Temple" at Pappalapatti. He wanted to invite Mahatma Gandhi for the inauguration of the temple⁷. As Mahatma did not come due to his active political work, the foundation stone of the temple was laid by the National Leader "Deshbandhu" C.R.Das on 23.01.1923 at Bharata Puram, 4 Km from Pappalapatti.

Bharath Matha Temple

His Bharath Matha temple symbolized the national unity of India. Siva allowed all the people irrespective of caste or religion to enter temple and perform pooja. There was no poojari to perform Archana. He wanted that instead of adorning the deity with gold jewels, a factory may be built out the temple funds, thereby creating employment opportunities to all poor people. He wanted that wealth obtained through the temple should be distributed to the poor people. According to Siva, service to Nation is service to God. In 1921, at Madurai court he said, "My religion is Bharatheeyam, My deith is Bharath Matha, My dharma is to preach Satya and fight for the freedom of Bharath". He appealed to the people to support the extremists to achieve Poorna Swaraj and to boycott foreign goods⁸.

Bharath Ashram at Pappaparatty

It was founded by Siva during the second week of January 1921 at No.11, Hamilton Bridge Road, Triplicane (Madras). Its aim was to take serious efforts to make Bharath independent of foreign control. In order to get success in such an endeavour people should develop Desa Bhakthi or devotion to Bharath Matha for whom temples should be constructed everywhere. Siva was the president of the Bharatha Ashram. The chief priest must be a Sanyasi according to him. If a Sanyasi is not available a Brahmachari can hold the post. The chief priest must follow the principles of Bharatheeyam sincerely. This Bharatha Ashramam is to be built at Bharathipuram at Pappaparatti. He wanted people of Bharathapuram to follow his principles with dedication and devotion. They must get up early in the morning, offer prayers and do social and national service to the people. Foreign cloth and Kerosin were prohibited in the village. They must wear simple dress and must develop good character. Free housing, a hospital, and a school were provided for the villagers. The people must not only accept the rules of the Bharatha Matha Ashram but also pay one tenth of their income to the Bharatha Matha as kanikka. The assets of the temple will belong to Bharath Matha only. Annual conferences will be held in different places to honour Bharatha Matha. Anyone who violates the rules will be sent out of the village.

Along with his disciple Sundara Bharathi, Siva reached Bharatha Ashramam at Pappaparatti on 22.07.1925 to start the construction of the temple of Bharatha Matha. But he suddenly passed away on 23.07.1925 at the age of 41 at Pappaparatti⁹. So the temple work was stopped and it was not taken up by anybody. In memory of Siva, a (Samadhi) memorial was built at Bharathipuram.

Estimate

Siva was a lover of mankind¹⁰. He was a great writer, orator, dramatist and what not. He was brave and courageous. Even poet Bharathi appreciated his brave nature, when he met him at Palayamkottai jail¹¹. Indeed, he was a great revolutionary leader of the early 20th century¹². His intention to start Bharatheeya religion, and to build Bharatha Matha temple at Bharathipuram shows that he was a great nationalist without any selfish interests. His ideals will ever encourage our countrymen to achieve national unity and solidarity for the promotion and preservation of Bharatheeya cult. Not only will the people of Dharmapuri district, but also Tamilnadu ever remember the services rendered by Siva for the cause of nationalism and freedom movement. He has earned a significant place in the history of Tamilnadu¹³.

Endnotes

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2. Subramaniya Siva Centenary Volume by Ramanadan, Dharmapuri, 1983 Page.50.
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4. Interview by the author with Dhakshinamoorthy, S/o. Botharaja Mudhaliyar (S/o. Chinnamuthu Mudhaliyar) of Papaprapatti on 01.09.2009
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7. Subramaniya Sivavin Katturaigal, V.Balaji, Chennai, 1998 P.88
8. Viduthalaiporil Thamilagam, M.P.Sivagnanam, Madras-17, Page.193
9. '15 years of Dharmapuri' - Tamilnadu Government Information Department Souvenir 1982, Dharmapuri Page 16
10. Idhayam Kavarntha Mamanidhargal, Senthamil Selvan, P.39
11. Subramaniya Siva Centenary Issue - Ramanandam, Dharmapuri, 1983, Page 39
12. N.T.Vanamalai - Ibid
13. Viduthalai Poril Thamilagam, M.P.Sivagnanam, Madras, P.545