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SOCIAL JUSTICE IN RAMNAD SETHUPATHI'S-A STUDY

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Introduction

Madurai Nayak king Muthu Krishnappa was ruled Madurai since 1601-1609.¹ In that time throughout India, Hindu pilgrims visited to Rameshwaram temple. The pilgrims had suffered lot of problems from the robbers on the way in Rameshwaram temple. Some of the pilgrims complained to Madurai Nayak. At that same time the Ramnad region's fisherman community was converted in to Christianity by the Portuguese traders.² The Portuguese began to benefit by all the dues and revenues of the coastal area. So Madurai Nayak's pearl business was affected. The Nayak rulers felt this loss of revenue. Muthu Krishnappa decided to solve that problem in this Ramnad region who had appointed new ruler. Most one of the Warrior Marava community people lived in Ramnad region.³ So he was appointed Marava leader Sadaika Thevar I was first ruler of Ramnad region.⁴ This rulers ruled by area called Sethu Nadu.⁵

Sethupathis ruled two centuries from 1605 to 1795.⁶ When the power of the Nayak kings of Madurai began to decline in the late 17th century, the Sethupathis of Ramnad asserted their independence.⁷

¹ Sathanatha Aiyar.R.,History of the Nayaks of Madura,1924,p.89.

² Bishop Caldwell, History of Tirunelvely, 1881, p.71.

³ Husini, S.A.Q., History of the Pandya Country, Madurai, 1962, p.147.

⁴ Krishnaswamy Iyengar,S., South India and her Muhammadan Invaders, 1921,p.92.

⁵ Dr.Saravanan,S., 'Sati' in Ramnad Sethupathi's Family,History Research Journal,Vol.5,Issue.6.Nov-Dec, 2019, p.2237.

⁶ Dr.Saravanan.S.,Cultural Contributions of Sethupathis' in Ramnad, International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, Vol.5,Issue.3.August,2018,p.651.

⁷ Rajayyan,K.,History of Madurai (1736-1801),1974,p.30.

In the late 17th century, Raghunatha Kilavan Sethupathi crowned himself the king of Ramnad. Kilavan Sethupathi shifted his capital from Pogalur to Ramnad.⁸

Sadaika Thevar I

Sadaika Thevar I(1605-1621) during his reign if at all any crime would take place at Rameshwaram temple and Rameshwaram,⁹ had entrusted the authority of enquiring and awarding punishment to the Kaariyakarar of the temple called Ramanatha Pandaram.¹⁰

Kilavan Sethupathi

During the period of Kilavan Sethupathi,(1674-1710)¹¹ the granddaughter called Veeraye of Veera Moopan had an illegal relationship with an Agamudaiyan called Nainukutty Servai and became pregnant. The entire relatives reprimanded her and so she committed suicide. All belonging to the Valaiyar community went to the king with Nainu Kutty Servai and pleaded with the king. Though the community of the Agamudaiyans served as chief of Sethupathi force¹² and on some occasions married their women to the king relations, the king without taking in to consideration that they were the close relatives, rendered justice to the Valayars, by means of the sorely punishment.¹³

Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi

Ramnad king Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi (1710-1725)¹⁴ that the pilgrims would cross the sea through the boat service to Rameshwaram for the sake of all the pilgrims coming to Rameshwaram the king nominated Dhanda Thevar.

⁸ Saravanan,S.,Ramnad Sethupathis and Fort,Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities, Vol.5,Issue.2.October,2017,p.317

⁹ Annual Report on Epigraphy, A 34 of 1947.

¹⁰ Dalavoy Sethupathi Katha Devar Rameshwaram Copper Plate,Tamilnadu government Archaeological Museum, Ramanathapuram,1610, pp.1-2.

¹¹ Sathianathaier,R.,Tamilaham in the 17th Century,1956,p.152.

¹² Manoharan.Mee.,Marudhu Pandiya Mannargal (Tamil),1994,p.93.

¹³ Raghunatha Kilavan Sethupathi, Palisathana Copper Plate, Ramanathapuram Moopananar Community, 1691

¹⁴ Dr.Saravanan.S.,Socio-Political Contributions of Vellalars in Ramnad Region in 18th Century,

As the governor of the island of Rameshwaram to operate the boat service from the Mandapam ferry department to the bank of Pamban and from the inn of Pamban to Rameshwaram and make him render facilities for pilgrims. Dhanda Thevar had already married the two daughters of the king.¹⁵ In course of time in the meanwhile Dhanda Thevar had informed the travelers that he would provide them with more road facilities from Pamban to Rameshwaram and then collected small amount as donation from them.¹⁶ On coming to know that Dhanda Thevar had collected money without his permission, the king became extremely angry and considered it as a deed against God Shiva.¹⁷ Without considering the fact that he was his son-in-law the king gave the verdict of death to him.¹⁸ Just like Manuneethi Chola he granted the punishment of death, so he was called by all the people Manu Neethi Sethupathi.¹⁹

Sivamuthu Kumara Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi

During the reign of Siva muthu Kumara Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi (1735-1748)²⁰ appointed two types of Brahmins in Rameshwaram temple. The people of Tamil Nadu, Tamil Brahmins and for the people of the North, Maratta Brahmins of Arya Sabha were appointed to conduct Pujas and distribute Prasadhams to gods. Of all the Theerthams at Rameshwaram, Laxmana theertham was supposed to be the greatest for all the people.²¹ So they used to bathe in the Laxmana Theertham. Since many liked to bathe in this Theertham the income was on the increase. With the result a dispute started between the Tamil Brahmins of the Maha sabha and the Maratta Brahmins of the Arya Sabha and this dispute was taken to the Sethupathi. Sivamuthu Kumara Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi did not investigate the case. On behalf of the king, in front of the higher officials such as Talakaratham, Pradhani, Periya kattalai, Chathira maniakkaran, the case was enquired by the Naduvars(Judges) of all kinds of the people belonging to the different castes

International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research, Vol.3, Issue.9. September, 2018, p.4968.

¹⁵ Seshadri,k., The Sethupatis of Ramnad, Ph.D.Thesis, January, 1976, p.69.

¹⁶ Thiruvencatachari,S., The Sethupatis of Ramnad, 1959, p.47.

¹⁷ Dr.Ramaswami.A., Tamilnadu District Gazetteers Ramanathapuram, 1972, p.91.

¹⁸ Rajaram Row,T., Manual of the Ramnad Samastanam,1891, p.237.

¹⁹ Dr.Kamal,S.M., Sethupathi Mannar Varalaru (Tamil), December, 2003, p.54.

²⁰ Subrahmanian,N.,History of Tamilnad(A.D.1565-1956),1977,p.78.

²¹ Raju,S.,Sethupathi Sepedugal(Tamil),1994,p.397.

and religions such as Prohitham Chinayan, Uppoor vedhamayan, Devipattinam Venkittiayyan, Rameshwaram Thimmanna Chariyar, Dhanushkodi Aasaariyar Kamachi ayyan, Yethuvali Shesaiyan, Subramaniya Kavirayar, Kadaldhurai Ramanatha Pillai, Anam kanaku Irulappa Pillai, Attavanai Subramaniya Pillai,

Suvarai Sankaran Chettiyar, Thirumalai Chettiyar, Suriya Narayana chettiyar, Vangaru Chettiyar, Rameshwaram Komutty Ramu Chetty, Alippuli Rawuthar, Uthama Panikkan and Mayileri Nadan were nominated by the king to get the case properly enquired to give justice.

The case was related to Hindu temple at Rameshwaram but the Muslim Alipuli Rawuthar was nominated as the Naduvar(judge) by the king which showed how the Sethupathi was without partiality for any religion. At that time Ramnad region Nadar community was looked down and treated very lower than the Pallars but the king without partiality for any caste nominated Mayileri Nadan from the Nadar community as the Naduvar(Judge).²² It showed how the Sethupathi in the 17th and 18th century had nominated those irrespective of caste, religion and creed to administer fair justice to the people.

Conclusion

Sadaika Thevar I has been appointed as a separated officer who had created separate Administration in Rameshwaram temple. In this activity of Sethupathi whom was pioneer of Tamilnadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department. In those Periods of Kilavan Sethupathi and Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi were gave severe punishment for Criminals. Their punishment had no exemption to close relative and relative community.

²² Sivamuthu Kumara Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi, Rameshwaram Copper Plate, Tamilnadu Government Archaeological Museum, Ramanathapuram, 1746, pp.1-2.

They were upholding social justice in Ramnad region. Siva Muthu Kumara Sethupathi had been Formed judicial Committee of Rameshwaram temple. Brahmins case. The members of Committees have Alipuli Rawuthar and Mayileri Nadar who were oppionted by Siva MuthuKumara Sethupathi. In that period he followed Secularism and Equality. He was the role model of our Indian constitution. Another finding of this article that region people were called Sur name. In the 17th and 18th centuries the tendency to render justice without partiality helped them to insist on establishing the social justice and this kind of social contribution was made by all the kings.

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