



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

A STUDY ON ECONOMIC WELFARE ACTIVITIES BY MUTHURAMALINGA THEVAR

R.Kumaravel

Ph.D., Full Time Research Scholar

Department of History

Government Arts College (Autonomous)

Affiliated to Bharathidasan University

Karur – 639 005

Dr.F.Judas Mary

Assistant Professor

Department of History

Government Arts College (Autonomous)

Affiliated to Bharathidasan University

Karur – 639 005

ABSTRACT

Muthuramalinga Thevar was apparent that the British freedom grants never improved India's dismal economic situation because the laborers continued to starve and their personal economic standards remained intact. By his own immaculate unique attributes, Muthuramalinga Thevar, the patriot, economist, spiritualist, and socialist, served as a model for individuals from all walks of life. He dedicated himself to others, who were capable of judging the rights and wrongs, without regard for his own health or money. He appraised the diverse political tendencies in their genuine colors throughout his career as an undeterred true politician during the British period and the period after independence. His extensive understanding of regional, national, and worldwide affairs elevated him to a position where no one could approach him at any moment. This study elaborated the contributions of Muthuramalinga Thevar in terms of economic development for the people of Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: Economic development, Welfare activities, Muthuramalinga Thevar, socialist, politics

INTRODUCTION

A number of national and regional-level freedom fighters were produced by the Ramanathapuram District, whose sacrifices, devotion, and commitment to the cause of national liberation served as a guiding and unifying force in the national liberation process. Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar, among the thousands of selfless freedom fighters, deserves special mention because his dedicated services and forward-thinking ideologies continue to inspire future generations.

Muthuramalinga Thevar's humanitarianism and humanism inspired him to live as a pure bachelor and serve the cause of upliftment of the oppressed. He had the ability to rule because he was a political genius. He had no desire for power since he was a child.¹ He used spiritualism and earnestness in politics to serve the people during the alien rule. From the time he entered public life until his death, he faced numerous losses of wealth and difficulties in his fight for the welfare of the people of the backward community. He was a practical man who took an active interest in all of the unique services he provided. He was involved in social, economic, political, and religious pursuits regardless of caste or creed. He was not an enemy of anyone, despite his differences of opinion with others.² Swami Sivananda of Risikesh bestowed the titles Sundara paramachariya Swamigal of Madurai and Vidhya Baskara Pravachana Kesari bestowed the title Sanmarga Chandra Marutham on him, implying his noble and virtuous traits.³ He represented his own bravery and assertiveness in making decisions in a variety of situations without causing turmoil.

Muthuramalinga Thevar, a remarkable personality, was a torchbearer of virtue who, through his own intelligence and discipline, outshined the other politicians of his time. He had his own economic perspectives because he was a landlord and came from a rural background. His Congress-mindedness pushed him to become a socialist, and he wasn't bound by community ideals.⁴ He was cognizant of economic trends and situations as a practical politician in the pre- and post-independence period. He was a staunch friend of the poor, and he worked to educate the poor about the complexities of economic backwardness. He has always advocated for the abolition of slavery. He longed for people to be free of hunger and poverty. He was passionate about eliminating society's ups and downs. His political inclinations and affiliations were buried by his concept of the general welfare of the general people. Even as a member of the Madras Legislative Assembly and a member of the Indian Parliament, he advocated for the improvement of the economic status of the poor and the elimination of economic inequities.

To begin, analyzing Muthuramalinga Thevar's economic viewpoints will be extremely helpful in estimating his services. He was precise that in a big democratic country, the people should be spared from economic distresses such as adulteration, black marketing, and plundering, because politics played such a prominent role throughout the pre- and post-independence period. He had a plain appearance and pursued simple economic principles, while being a Zamindar. His charitable and financial contributions to the destitute and needy were incalculable, and only his closest acquaintances were aware of them. He was

always an advocate for the pleasant and comfortable lives of the poor and downtrodden. He was able to do so since he used to mix freely with them without reservation. His political trips also allowed him to get a sense of the general economic situation. He transferred his riches and possessions to many people because he believed in the economic notion of equal distribution of wealth. He downsized his personal luxuries and lived a humble life. He was a microcosm of the average man's economy.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

- To explore the economic development activities that required attention during pre-independence period
- To study the various economic contributions made by Muthramalinga Thevar

CONCEPT OF ECONOMIC WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT

Economic well-being is usually expressed as a ratio of real income to real GDP. An increase in real output and real incomes indicates that people are better off, and thus that economic welfare has improved. The goal of welfare economics is to improve society's overall well-being. As a result, welfare economics entails assessing economic strategies and guiding public policy for the better good of society.

The economic progress and social welfare of a country are also taken into account when determining the country's prosperity. Economic development is a concept and an activity that assesses a country's basic capabilities, innovation, and use of available resources. People's political, economic, and social well-being improves as a result of this process. Economic development is simply a policy that tries to improve the nation's social as well as economic situations. Economic growth is the outcome of increases in both GDP and market productivity. When gauging economic development, we must examine a variety of factors. Each of these elements are detailed as follows:

- Increase in real per capita income
- Life expectancy and quality of life
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Human development index
- Gender-Related Development Index (GRDI)
- Poverty Index

THEVAR AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

In 1932, Thevar organized the Tamil Nadu Civil Disobedience Movement, which held meetings and spoke out against British imperialism and the Act. Thevar, like B.G.Tilak, was labelled a "Violent Agitator" in 1936 and was barred from giving lectures. For nine months, Thevar was confined. Thevar expected the Congress Ministry to repeal the black Act, but C. Rajagopalachari remained silent until his resignation in 1939. Thevar's matured analytical mind did not accept or reject every stimulus from the outside world. He saw them all through the eyes of two wide perspectives: Mukkulathors' welfare in particular and the welfare of all people in general. According to Thevar, British imperialism dominated India because of its utilitarian liberal and evangelical features. By exploiting the Indians' economic, political, and moral lives, it was approaching its nadir.⁵

ECONOMIC IDEAS OF THE MUTHURAMALINGA THEVAR

- **Foreign Investments and Debts**

According to Thevar, preserving India's robust economy did not necessitate foreign investment. The national economy should be able to meet their needs and expectations. The Indian government should create such provisions, and Indian planning should focus on achieving self-sufficiency with the resources available in the country. The Indian government should make every effort to avoid borrowing from foreign countries of any kind. Foreign economic threats could be mitigated as a result of this.

- **Agricultural Economy Protection**

Muthuramalinga Thevar's practical economic ideas marked a turning point in the farmers' lives. His agrarian economic strategies were essential in bringing about resurgence in the agricultural economy. Above all, he believed that safeguarding the agricultural economy would help to stabilize the country's economy.

- **Attentiveness of Thevar to the Development of Indian Markets**

Muthuramalinga Thevar's objective was to develop a Swadeshi, Indian economy that was fit for Indian conditions. Without focusing on the growth and development of Indian markets, a position in the global market should be assigned. Foreign involvement and investment in Indian sectors should be avoided at all costs, as this will cause the Indian economy to collapse. Indian cottage industries, leather industries, and small-scale industries should not be allowed to decline. By reserving agricultural land, alien industrialists and business magnets will not be able to monopolize and exploit the cultivable lands. He regarded liberalization, privatization and globalization as impediments to the domestic economy. The stability of the native agrarian economy should be prioritized. If industrialization is prioritized, the gap between the haves and have-nots will deepen. Workers and wage earners will be introduced as a new class as a result of further industrialization. Such things should be avoided because unemployment is the result of the

establishment of occupational variances. Local resources and technologies should be fully utilized to boost the local economy. He believed that the best way to stabilize the Indian economy was to be an Indian in both words and conduct.⁶

- **Economic Equalities Protection**

Muthuramalinga Thevar was clear that the British granting of freedom never improved India's downtrodden economic situation because the laborers continued to starve and their own economic standards remained unchanged. He made it clear that only a country without inflation will be able to keep commodity prices under control.⁷ That will benefit and assist the poor in living a life free of poverty and achieving all of their desires. Their happiness would be based on their contentment in life. The impoverished should not be permitted to remain restless, and this can only be accomplished by improving their circumstances. Muthuramalinga Thevar's economic politics were based on maintaining economic equality.

- **Democratic Socialism**

He had a thorough understanding of the premise of "democratic socialism." On that note, he stated that the idea of socialism should be instilled in the minds of the people in order for them to live a comfortable existence. After estimating what they have obtained to meet their needs, they should be provided all for the sake of democracy. The simultaneous implementation of both would be a death knell for nationalism, and democratic socialism would be forced to flee as a result. Only after a comprehensive and critical examination of democracy and socialism would such an estimate be possible. Though both are necessary for the improvement of a nation's people, they must be put into effect at the right moment and in the right method.⁸ It is necessary to assess the current situation and surrounding environment. For the success of those principles, Muthuramalingam Thevar's viewpoints were accurate.

- **Agricultural Scientific Method**

The government must classify the Harijans as forwarding people in order to grant them land. They would plough the land and earn their living by their own labour if they were given land. They don't have to be waiters or wage workers. The government should also avoid the migration of unemployed rural farmers to urban industrial hubs by introducing the scientific approach of agriculture. Muthuramalinga Thevar proposed this realistic economic approach for the improvement of rural India and those involved in agriculture. On that note, he also stated that after getting the workers' services, the government should make arrangements for the precise payment of adequate remuneration for the work performed. The practical economist Muthuramalinga Thevar also believed that there should be a wealth ceiling for the wealthy, similar to the land ceiling for landowners.

THEVAR'S EFFORTS FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE ZAMINDARI SYSTEM

Zamindars, money lenders, landlords and merchants were all involved in some way in sucking the blood of the farmers. They were not provided with any facilities for raising their production from the land or disposing of their yields at appropriate rates. As a result of these circumstances, imports from other countries have increased. It will have an impact on the state's economy.⁹ The government's community development programme aimed at improving village conditions. MuthuRamalinga Thevar was largely responsible for the abolishment of the Zamindari system in the Madras Presidency in this regard. He advocated for a socialist economy based on his practical perspectives. He advocated for the advancement of the oppressed to a higher status.

He gave his fortune to others without expecting anything in return. Wealth disparities in the works undertaken should be eliminated in order to achieve an equal and equitable distribution of wealth. Due to his immaculate practical business efforts, Muthuramalinga Thevar received no allegations of any kind. He allowed many underprivileged children and youths to remain in his home and provided them with food and clothing without expecting anything in return since he could not stand the miseries of the economically poor and backward.¹⁰ As a result, his economy was humanistic. He stated unequivocally that economic concerns contribute to disparities and that if the backward class people are wealthy, even the well-to-do people of higher social classes will not hesitate to have cordial connections with them. Thus, he believed that money was the sole determining element in social gradations.

SUGGESTIONS ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUALITIES OF PEOPLE - THEVAR'S POINT OF VIEW

Muthuramalinga Thevar's economic views were oriented on India after independence. Because his economic philosophy was centered on centralization, he believed that a cooperative joint agricultural system would only cause uncertainty. People's economic conditions will grow chaotic as they go through ups and downs. This was regarded as one of the methods for fostering social and economic equality. In society, he sought to see gradations. He thought that individual development would pave the path for society's improved nature. Natural disasters frequently wreaked havoc on natural resources. Storms and hurricanes wreaked havoc not just on dams, tanks, and irrigation canals, but also on people lives. Despite the fact that the government issued announcements or relief measures, little was done in practice. Muthuramalinga Thevar made this claim. The following are some of Thevar's recommendations:

Thevar believes that the government should have followed the lessons learned from prior instances. According to him, the government should have taken protective steps as a precaution. Many families had devolved into beggars. The government's inaction made it harder to carry out rescue and relief activities. Before natural disasters strike, the government should restore the people to their pre-disaster state. To avoid drought situations, Muthuramalinga Thevar also urged that rainwater be properly preserved. The pay and salaries of government workers participating in public welfare initiatives should be uniform. The

money should be disbursed as soon as possible when the work is completed. Remission of taxes should also be permitted to avoid the suffering of unwelcome natural disasters. Along with the actions taken to prevent contagious diseases, funds should be made available to restore dwellings and acquire animals that have been harmed by natural disasters. All of these procedures should be carried out as soon as the disaster strikes. The government should never rely solely on ads and publicity to achieve its goals. Any government, regardless of political affiliation, should focus on alleviating the suffering of those who are afflicted. He emphasized the importance of the government being awake in crucial and disastrous situations.¹¹

Muthuramalinga Thevar was open and frank in sharing his thoughts on economic welfare operations. For example, he criticized the government's implementation of mid-day food programmes at the time. According to him, when the parents go begging and borrowing for rice, the children's studies are harmed. They are complete wastes, and the women have to go to great lengths to clean the rice before cooking it. All of this suffering is the result of the government's poor planning and economic policies.¹² He was very clear that people's grievances should be brought to the attention of the government so that their problems could be addressed. As a result, he was concerned about the welfare of the people and the elimination of flaws in the administration's economic plans.

The government should exclude a family of five with an income of Rs.1200/- from paying any taxes. Joint farming should also be used in a cooperative manner. Insurance coverage for cattle, fire, and health care should be enhanced. The relevance of housing facilities should be emphasized. The government must step forward to fulfill its responsibilities and be ready at all times to alleviate the people's natural and economic distresses.¹³

Thevar have found a middle ground between rural and urban economic systems. He was able to assess the rights and privileges of all natural workers.¹⁴ As a result of his involvement in agrarian concerns, their difficulties were examined in the conferences that were convened. He proposed appropriate solutions to settle the various issues summarily after analyzing them. With a more materialistic outlook on life, it is impossible to live without the help and cooperation of others. Because their wants had skyrocketed, it was suggested that they work together to meet their requirements. Extravagance, luxury, and a growth in unneeded and unwanted needs have harmed the majority of people financially. It's because cultural and materialistic revolutions and transformations are given such weight. As a result, even initiatives aimed at a more progressive lifestyle were ineffective. The impoverished should be freed from the suffocating confines of poverty. That is the only universe in which economic progress and growth are possible. His

economic approach aimed to eliminate such abnormalities and misery. As a result, his economic concepts were mostly welfare-oriented.

Droughts and monsoon failure have a negative impact on yields. According to Muthuramalinga Thevar, the government's role in such disasters should be to assess the needs and requirements of the farmer's ordinary people and others. Rather than consoling them for their needs, their grievances should be addressed through proper planning. Solutions must be implemented quickly, completely, and indefinitely. Various types of banking facilities must be available. Unless the government intervenes to stop merchants' illegal acts, the public would be subjected to a slew of negative effects. He criticized the western economic system as being unsuitable for the diverse Indian contexts. As a result, the Indians did not obtain economic freedom even after gaining political independence. Foreign exploitation of any kind should be limited and eliminated.

According to the local conditions, proper taxation canons should be implemented. He was emphatic that education based on a family's hereditary occupation will never elevate the youth to the highest level. Need-based education should be delivered depending on the students' wishes. Furthermore, they had no prior experience in any other field. As a result, the government must take the appropriate actions to raise people's economic standards. Provisions should be created for cooperative banks to distribute loans at lower interest rates. Prior to planning, a good assessment of the social setup is required. In addition, full-fledged, general development in numerous domains is required. In the correct context, partial arrangements would not result in the required advancement. Appointments should be made on the basis of efficiency, talent, merit, and capacity in the same way. Trade and commerce must be carried out in a timely and accurate manner, without the use of deception.¹⁵ As a result, as a member of the Legislative Assembly, he was able to bring attention to the current economic situation. It was partly due to his own assessment of the then-current economic situation.

CONCLUSION

From the time he entered public life until his death, Muthuramalinga Thevar faced numerous losses of wealth and difficulties in his fight for the welfare of the backward community's people. He lived a life of austerity and had his own conscience as his guide by controlling his senses. He began his public life as a sage and saint, and he ended it as a spiritual leader after performing all of his deeds with zeal and enthusiasm. He was a practical man who took an active interest in all of the unique services he provided. His economic views were the result of his own insight and experience. Furthermore, persons with a perfect and honest mentality, dedicated service, and self-control were anticipated to be present in order to achieve a socialist society. Bribery, corruption, and exploitation will never be eradicated, and people will never be able to live in peace. As a result, he argued that economic operations should always be society-oriented, and that a member of society should view economic actions as a duty infused with spiritualism and broad-mindedness. Muthuramalinga Thevar established himself as a true and practical economist as a

result of his beliefs. Because his economic techniques were all founded on his own firsthand observations of the present situations and not theory oriented, his economic viewpoints will be valuable for all periods.

REFERENCES

1. PattaliMaindan, PasumponMuthuramalingaThevar, Ramaiah Pathippagam, Chennai, 2007.
2. B.L. Rajendran, Thevar Thirumagan, Poonkodi Publishers, Madras, 1994.
3. K.K. Pillai, The Caste System in Tamil Nadu, University of Madras, Madras, 1975.
4. V.A. AndiappaThevar, Pasumpon Thevar Murasu, Madurai, 1992.
5. K. Bose, Forward Bloc, Tamil Nadu Academy of Political Science, Madras, 1988.
6. Speech on Thevar at the Madras Legislative Assembly on 26th March 1954.
7. Index to Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol.I, Nos 1to 12, Dated 27th, 28th, 30th June and 1st to 5th , 7th to 10th July, 1952.
8. Thevar Centenary Souvenir 1908-2008, Madurai.
9. Bhoopathy Raja, Pokkisham, P.J.A.M. Sangam, Chennai, 2008.
10. Idem.,
11. Mekala Devi, Economic Thoughts of Pasumpon – An Overview, International Journal of Advance Research and Development, 3 (4), 2018.
12. Kavya Shanmuga Sundaram, Pasumpon Charithiram, Kavya Publications, Chennai, 2008.
13. The speech in the Lok Sabha on February, 13, 1959.
14. Kavya Shanmuga Sundaram, op.cit.,
15. R. Sethu, Sethu Nattu Singangal, Kavya Publications, 2012.