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Political History of Thiru. R. Nallakannu in Tamil Nadu –A Study

S. Mohan* and Dr. D. Ramakrishnan*

INTRODUCTION

Tamil Nadu has seen many Communist Leaders throughout the ages. One among them is R. Nallakannu. R. Nallakannu was born on December 26, 1925 in Thiruvaikundam. In his school days itself he was very much active in political issues. He went to Tirunelveli College to study intermediate. He has always espoused the cause of the most downtrodden section of society. He is called by all as Brother R. NallaKannu. He is compared to Lenin. "In a poor man's laughter one can see God", this is said by R.Nallakannu but he is an atheist. He believes only in humanity. In the midst of his political life he has written books full of essays on Art, Literature and Society. R Nallakannu is continuing his Leadership in Indian Communist Party though he is of 80 years. He is known for his straight forwardness, dedicated mind, hard work and not criticizing the opposite party. Eighty years of his political life has not come suddenly. He has faced many hardships in his earlier life. He continuously fought for the benefit of the untouchables. His journey of life is a mixture of both his victory over the championship and the loss over incidents which he was unable to win. A Communist is one who is non-believer of God, who is straightforward in his views and who believes in humanity. A relentless fighter for the deprived classes and above all, a simple person with a clean record in public life, R. Nallakannu is held in high esteem by common people. He had vigorously participated in a series of struggles against untouchability, including the struggle for the emancipation of Dalits.

R. Nallakannu had blossomed into a political leader, social reformer, cultural theoretician, journalist, creative writer, critic and orator - all rolled into one. As one of the pioneers of the Communist movement in Tamil Nadu, he strode like a colossus not only in the political arena but also in the literary field. Sri R. Nallakannu is one of the most respected leaders in the Communist Party. because of his innate qualities. He is considered as a pillar of strength to the party not only in the state of Tamil Nadu and at the national level also. R. Nallakannu has spent more than six decades of his life in the Communist movement. He has emerged as one of the important leaders of the Kisan Movement emanating from Tirunelveli District.

Graham Wallas, in his study on "The Human Nature in Politics" deals with party as 'role system' that is a system of relationship, whose regularity is maintained by "party prepossession and expectations". K. Jeeva Bharathi in his book "when the life (soul) departed and the statue arose" gives an account of the life of Jeeva, a communist leader. He states that Jeevas was born on 21.8.1907 in Boothapandi village of Kanyakumari District. Jeeva as a reply to the high handedness of the upper caste people takes a lower caste boy to the streets of upper caste and to the temple, even when he was a boy. Since his father too scolded him joining with the upper caste people he leaves his home. He joins as a teacher in the Barthwaja Ashram, run by patriot V.O.C. Iyer. Since untouchability was adopted he resigns the post. So goes the life of Jeeva, in which many incidents took place. R. Nallakannu in his book "Communists in the industrial development of Tamilnadu" writes

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that when country became independent it was felt that water and electricity are needed for the industrial development. R. Nallakannu deals in elaboration about the functioning of "Neyveli Mines and Lignite mines", "Bhel", Salem Steel Plant, the part played by communists in "Sethu Samuthra Plan", the development and fall of the traditional Handloom sector, the Match Industries etc. In his Book "Linguistic State Tamilnadu" R. Nallakannu, describes the history of Tamilnadu in a concise manner. In his Book "Samuthaya Neerottam", The following are the views of various political leaders about R. Nallakannu.

A.B. Bharathan states "Com. R. Nallakannu is one of the most respected leader of the Communist Party. Prakash Karat Sates "Comrade R. Nallakannu has spent more than six decades in the Communist movement. T. Pandian writes "Comrade R. Nallakannu had the special feature of participating in the freedom struggle apart from wishing even in his young days that India should attain freedom. Actress Manorama writes "I known an important matter about Thiru.R. Nallakannu. In this modern world and the prices are spiralling his monthly expenses are within just Rs.1,200/-. Whether he is second Gandhiji or Second Jeeva. Actor Sathya Raj says "Comrade R. Nallakannu is a simple, hones and decent leader. Popular rationalist, struggled for the development of the people associating with farmers and agricultural labourers. Besides (the second portion gives a) a vivid reference to communism by different authors during different periods which would serve as a prelude to Thiru R. Nallakannu's life style, he is a very staunch communist. Generally this portion deals mainly with Marxism, its impact etc. One author says that Marxism is the parent house innovation. Another author describes Marxism as a routine life. This portion contains R. Nallakannu's views about labour oriented policies along with other social welfare. As regards R. Nallakannu, he is a man of great virtues, noble qualities with well balanced mind. He is a man of rectitude. He is an embodiment of simplicity, honesty, integrity and propriety. His life is worth emulation by others. His pleasing qualities have endeared him to thousands of the communist workers. It is a boon to India that such a leader is born here.

R. NALLAKANNU: COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI) – AN OVERVIEW

In his school days Nallakannu would read the Journals written by; Subramania Iyer'. Bhagat Singh's journal was not allowed to be read. When Gandhiji set out salt Satyagraha at Sri Vaigundam, Nallakannu had seen the march. He had heard the speeches of V.O.Chidambaram, Satymoorthi and Muthuramalinga Thevar. As a student Nallakannu and his friends were very eager in joining the Satyagraha. But they were refused. Though they were not allowed, they raised voices in the Satyagraha march. On those days some Communist Party members were there. Among the members some youngsters like Nallakannu joined. During that period nobody could become a member in Communist Party all of a sudden. They had to wait for a year. When Nallakannu started doing social work, he was liked by all the poor. So he left his studies and started full time service to the society and people. It was a time when Second World War was going on. A food committee was being established. The ration dresses were distributed. In that group Nallakannu was also present. In that group a scheduled caste was also present. The landlords didn't want the man to sit along with them. On one May Day a singer named Pitchai Kutti came to Nanguneri for an oration. On those days in specific streets other caste people were not allowed. Nallakannu and his friends entered Nanguneri to hear Pitchai Kutti's oration, but they were not allowed to enter. In spite of the villager's obstruction, Nallakannu's troupe being big entered the village. After the programme Nallakannu and his friends were beaten by the villagers. They were brought before the Magistrate. Nallakannu boldly spoke for the other caste people to allow entering into temple. At last the case was given up and after this incident the outcaste was allowed to enter into the temple.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

On December 26, 1925, a few ardent young patriots moved by the urge to free the motherland from colonial bondage, inspired by the Great October Socialist Revolution of Soviet Russia and fired with revolutionary zeal, braved imperialist persecution and came together in the city of Kanpur, to form the Communist Party of India with a view to fight for national independence and achievement of a socialistic society. The Communist Party of India was born in the new era for mankind opened up by the October Revolution. The victory of the Russian working class, peasants and other toilers led by the Bolsheviks and guided by Lenin attracted the militant youth of India as of all lands. It inspired them to study, accept and apply the science of Marxism so that they too could lead their people forward along the road of revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation.

FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

It is the Communist Party of India which from the outset did pioneering work to popularize the ideas of socialism and made the first efforts to apply the science of Marxism-Leninism to Indian conditions and problems. Communist Party of India has fraternal relations with Communist and workers' parties, progressive and democratic movements in all countries, on the principled basis of mutual respect, equality and noninterference in each other's affair.

STAGE OF THE REVOLUTION

This significant victory for the national revolution through the course of events had developed differently than the Communist Party of India had conceived or anticipated. Great gains have been won in this period like the achievement of a sovereign national state, adoption of a constitution based on secular-democracy and parliamentary form of government with elections based on adult franchise and multi-party system, separation of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary; and a federal type of government with allocation of powers to the center and the states. The Communist Party of India is the political party of the Indian working class. It is a voluntary organisation of workers, peasants, toiling people in general, intelligentsia and other devoted to the cause of socialism and communism. The Communist Party of India bears true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India, to the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy and would uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

FORMATION OF EMBLEM AND FLAG

The emblem of the party shall be crossed hammer and sickle in white against a red background with a circular inscription in white: "Communist Party of India" The flag of the party a red in colour of which the length shall be one-and-a-half times its width. At the centre of the flag there shall be a crossed hammer and sickle in white.

PRESENT SITUATION

Communist Party of India is recognized by the Election Commission of India as a 'National Party'. To date, CPI happens to be the only national political party from India to have contested all the general elections using the same electoral symbol. On the national level they supported the Indian National Congress led United Progressive Alliance government, but without taking part in it. From the above discussions, it concludes that R. Nallakannu is very much impressed by the Communist Party of India policies. Thus, he served with Communist Party of India sincerely and fought for sufferings of the poorer.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

God has created the human beings and blessed them with all good habits and left them to live in this society. God wished man to live happily with oneness". To make this wish a real one a man came. He was a great pillar to mankind. Born in a workers family, he was brought up in poverty and later became a great leader. His one and only moral was "non-violence is world wealth." He found a smooth way to the laborers to work happily. He followed Karl Marx's path. The man who had all these in him was none but Stalin. Nallakannu had a great respect for the Communist leader Stalin. Existing studies on the communist parties in India, have unfortunately focused their attention on the ideological contestations within the communist movement; The achievements of the communist parties in India are not negligible. They have led mass movements involving hundreds and thousands of people. The governments that they had made had undertaken some of the most far-reaching reforms and executed them with a degree of efficiency that other party governments have rarely matched. They have sustained an intellectual curiosity among its members that is uncommon to-day. Com. Nallakannu is one of the most respected leaders of the Communist Party. He is a builder of the Communist Party in the state. It is to his credit that the Party in Tamilnadu could also integrate with the social reform movement led by Periyar. He was very much involved with the Congress party. His Oration in Ghorakpur was very famous. He sent his speech typed to Mr. Nallkannu. As V.O. Chidambaram lived in Tuticorin, many National Leaders would come to Tuticorin to meet V.O. Chidambaram. On the way they would come to ShriVaikundam. R. Nallakannu got his education from Coronation Hhigher Secondary School. There some teachers supported Congress Party. He was very intelligent in studies. He used to sing poet Bharati songs. Whenever political leaders arrived to his village he along with his friends would help the mob in some way or other. As his parents didn't provide him with good dress, he would wear his brother's cotton dhoti. In 1940 Salt Sathyagraha took place. On those days Mr. Nallakannu was studying in school and he wanted to enroll his name in the Salt Satyagraha. But he was not allowed. Though he was not allowed to participate, he went with his group in favour of Gandhi. In his school days R. Nallakannu showed ample interest in politics. Though he was not allowed to participate in public meetings and speeches because of his young age, he carried the lamps, flags and banners to the meeting place. In 1937 election, Congress party canvassed votes and R. Nallakannu helped the party members. In 1938, the Mill workers were in strike. At that time Nallakannu, his friend Jeeva and people like them went from house to house and gathered rice to the mill workers family. Leader Jeevanandan was one of the intimate friends of R. Nallakannu. His policies and R. Nallakannu's policies were similar. On those days there was lack of transport facility. In spite of this Nallakannu went to remote villages and fought for the cause of the poor farmers. The village head and rich people used to set fire to the huts of the farmers and robbed their earnings. Nallakannu fought against it and got freedom to the poor farmers from the landlords and zamindars. In 1918 December 20, the Congress party stopped the Indian Communist Party. So on that day onwards upto 1949 December 20, Nallakannu was forced to lead a lonely life. But he was caught by the police at midnight from a lower class hut. He was arrested and was beaten severely. In his 80 years of life, 60 years were spent on social work, freedom struggle – leading lonely life – included (eight years imprisonment) etc. He is in the heart of every poor villager for his simplicity and helping tendency. He lived in a rented house. Though he was told many times by his party members to come by Car, he refused it by saying that for a single man there was no need for a car. He would say that the members were giving small savings to the party and it should not be frittered in this way. In 1967 Dravida Munnetra Kalakam ruled Tamil Nadu. Annadurai became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. At that period the farmer's lands were confiscated from them and they were forced to evict from their farms in a village named Notchikulam. A farmer was killed by the police. The policemen filed a

case on farmers. There were none to help the farmers in Notchikuppam. Panchayat was called and the people in the village decided to go to Tirunelveli. Nallakannu met the officers and asked them to withdraw the case and to withdraw away the police force from the place. R. Nallakannu is an example for many political leaders and will be an example for many more leaders in the years to come. He did not worry about the rich farmers. He only fought for the rights of the poor farmers and got their rights. Nallakannu have kept his foot strong in politics. He was satisfied with the service that he has done to the public. R. Nallakannu and the Communist party took many steps to make them equal in status to other Backward Class people. The Communist party under the leadership of R. Nallakannu paved a new way for the Scheduled Caste people by giving equal rights in every place.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

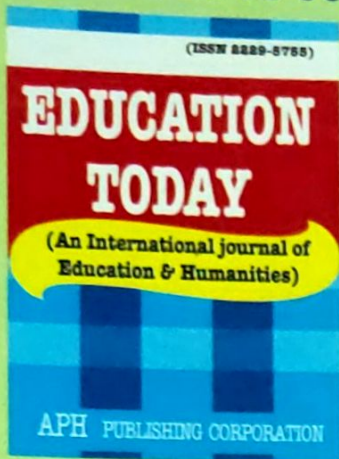
Due to the Communist party's Leader R. Nallakannu's effort, the Constitution of India has provided many safeguards to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes through repeated amendments for extending the period of reservation for them. All the rich people, landlords, old Zamindars were supported by congress. Nallakannu and his party men raised voice against this on 1948's conference which took place in Kolkatta. In 1949 December 20, Nallakannu was arrested along with some Communist party members. Among them 9 were put under life imprisonment. Nallakannu had to be in jail for 5 years. After Independence the Communist party struggled for the formation of language difference in different states. They insisted on mother-tongue (Tamil) in schools, colleges, offices as the main language in Tamil Nadu. Nallakannu and his party men insisted Tamil to be taught in schools, use of tamil language in court, as official language in offices etc. According to them in a d According to Nallakannu, to work for the society, individually is difficult, as caste difference arises. It would lead to fight. Nallakannu's aim was to make the untouchables also to enter into the temple; it is not that he had no belief in God. Democratic country one should have full liberty to talk in his own mother tongue. R. Nallakannu is the first to work as a fulltime worker without rest for the Farmers Sangam in Nanguneri Taluk and Kalakaadu. He gathered the farmers and fought against the landlords, as they kept one fourth of the crops that the farmers grew. R. Nallakannu who was imprisoned for the cause of some other cases was not freed. He was set with a case of bomblast and for that he was imprisoned for five years. In this period he was treated very badly. In 1956 December 13th he was freed from Madurai jail. He was given a warm welcome on reaching to Thiruvaikundam on December 14th. Nallakannu went in an open car as procession. R. Nallakannu was elected unanimously as the Communist Party's State Leader four times. There is a rule in the party that a person can be the leader of the party only two times. But inspite of this R. Nallakannu was elected whole heartedly by the members of his party four times. Nature has provided him with simplicity. He would not abide the rules, but he also denies the idea of making enmity with his opponents for the placement of the rules. He used to be truthful to everyone and frank in his ideas. For his rules he would fight with his opponents but the fight would only be non-violent. These characters are seldom found in all. R. Nallakannu is a man with these characters who is among us. He has gained the love from all the people and has created an indepth thought in all that they should also live like him. This thought that he has created among the people is the R. Nallakannu once went to a Public meeting in Manappaarai. The public meeting was arranged near Kamarajar statue. The followers of R. Nallakannu out of their interest kept lamp post from 100 feet from the stage. R. Nallakannu denied coming to the spot in car took auto and came to the spot. On seeing the lamp post he asked one of his members about the festival that was going on in that area. But when he heard that it was kept to welcome R. Nallakannu. He became silent and did not speak a single word with others. When the meeting started R. Nallakannu pointed out the poverty that prevailed at that time with

the lamp posts and the poverty of our country was showed with these flash lights. On hearing this followers who took steps to set the public meeting became ashamed. The Political leaders consider political culture to come in grand cars and to stay in star hotels. In between these political leaders R. Nallakannu is known for his simplicity and straightforwardness by the people. R. Nallakannu has written books on the condition that are prevailing in the village and about the farmers. He never yearned for publicity. R. Nallakannu is compared to Lenin. R. Nallakannu was called for a struggle that was going on in Tirunelveli for making all the schools to teach all subjects in Tamil medium. In that meeting R. Nallakannu felt very sad on the condition of the schools. Now days, a poor family also wants to make their children study in English medium schools. But on those days people only sent their children to Government schools and there were no English Medium schools. According to R. Nallakannu if the primary school teachers of Government schools had worked hard to make the children stay in their school, this condition would not have prevailed now. Slow, steady and at the same time stubborn in his rules" these are the motto of R. Nallakannu. The Indian Communist Party and the Marxist Communist Party jointly had done many social upliftments to people and society. Nallakannu is in the heart of each and every man who wants to serve his country without any inner thought.

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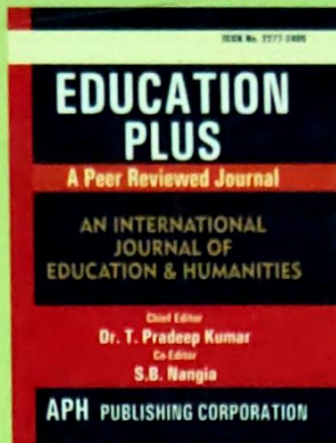
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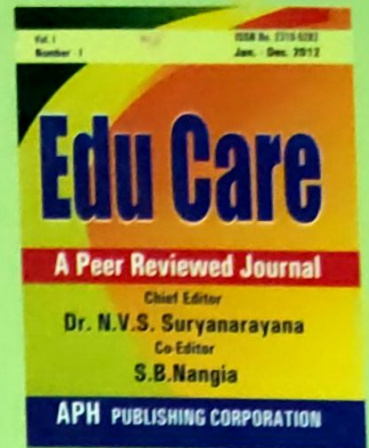
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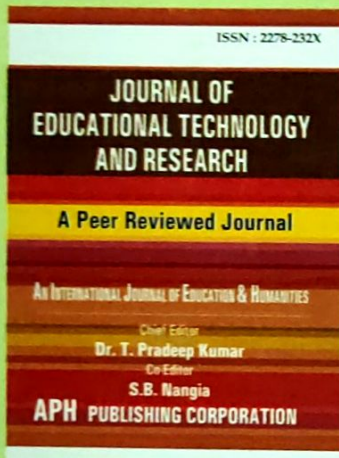
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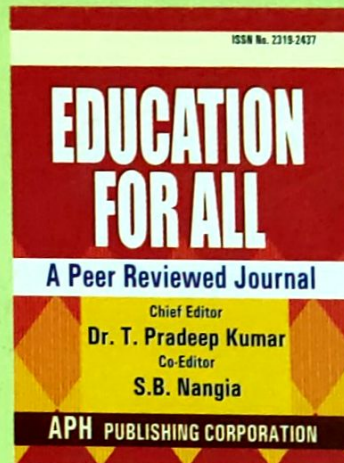
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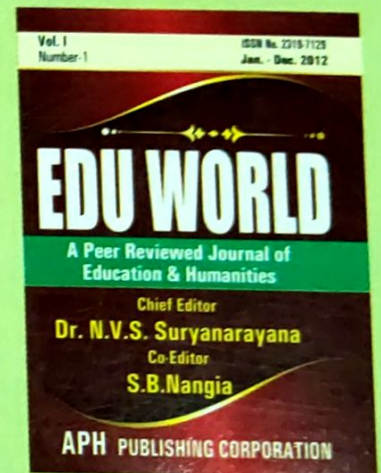
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