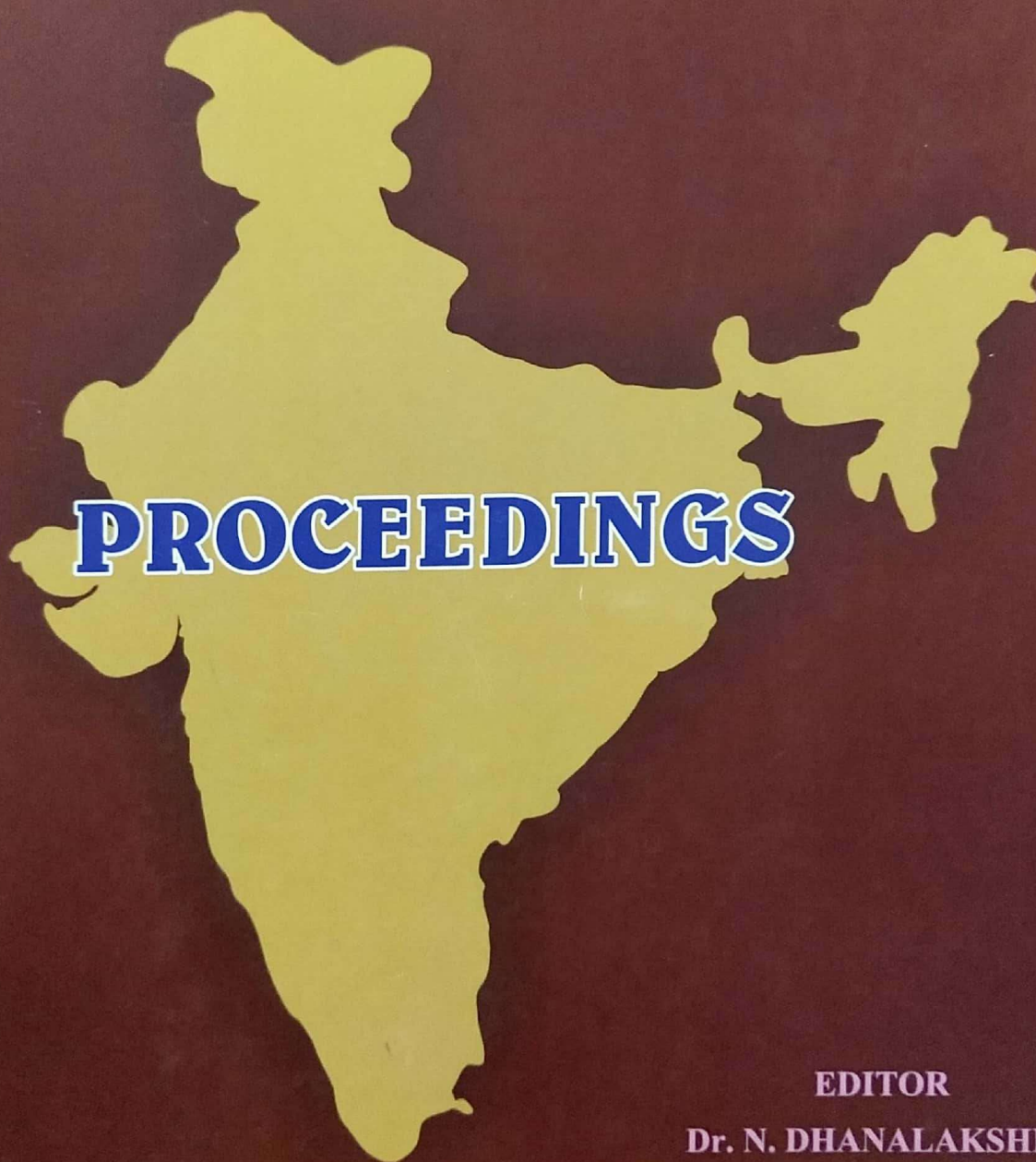


A Two Day National Conference,
on
“Reformers and Revolutionaries of South India and
their Contributions to the Social Change”
November 26-27, 2014



EDITOR
Dr. N. DHANALAKSHMI



School of History and Tourism Studies
TAMILNADU OPEN UNIVERSITY
No.577, Anna Salai, Saidapet, Chennai – 600 015.
Website: www.tnou.ac.in

SUBBORAYAN, A SOCIAL VISIONARY AND HIS ILL-FATED TEMPLE ENTRY BILL

Dr. P. NAGOORKANI

Assistant Professor in History
School of Historical Studies
Madurai Kamaraj University
Madurai-625 021
Cell.No. 9791481624

ABSTRACT

Subbarayan was re-elected as an independent to the Madras Legislative Council in 1930. As a member of the legislature, Subbarayan was instrumental in introducing prohibition in Salem district in 1930. Prohibition was enforced in Salem till 1943 when it was scrapped by the British. In 1932, C. S. Ranga Iyer passed the Untouchability Abolition Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council. On 1 November 1932, Subbarayan proposed the Temple Entry Bill which permitted low-caste Hindus and Dalits enter Hindu temples and made their prohibition illegal and punishable. He also passed a copy of the resolution and the proceedings of the Council to Mahatma Gandhi who was in jail. The Viceroy, however, refused permission explaining that temple entry was an all-India problem and should not be dealt with in a provincial basis even while clearing Ranga Iyer's bill. The Temple Entry Bill was not passed until the Indian National Congress came to power in 1937. Subbarayan had been a follower of Mahatma Gandhi from his early days^[22] and he officially joined the Indian National Congress in 1933. He also served as the President of the Tamil Nadu Harijan Sevak Sangh. P. Subbarayan drafted a bill to remove the disabilities faced by the depressed classes on temple entry issue. With Narayan Nambiar, he handed over two separate bills to the Madras Government in 1932. As the bills were considered a central subject viz; 'civil law', under section 80-A (3) of the Government of India Act of 1919, the Government of Madras submitted these bills for the prior sanction of the Viceroy. As public pressure mounted, Lord Willington decided to give his verdict on the bill of P. Subbarayan. For this purpose, he approached his own colleagues and experts and sought the views of local government. As there was a divided Hindu opinion on the bill, Lord Willington, on 23rd January 1933, refused permission to P. Subbarayan and Narayan Nambiar to introduce their bills as the problem was of an all-Indian character and so it could not be approached merely on a provincial basis.

Subbarayan was re-elected as an independent to the Madras Legislative Council in 1930. As a member of the legislature, Subbarayan was instrumental in introducing prohibition in Salem district in 1930. Prohibition was enforced in Salem till 1943 when it was scrapped by the British. In 1932, C. S. Ranga Iyer passed the Untouchability Abolition Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council. On 1 November 1932, Subbarayan proposed the Temple Entry Bill which permitted low-caste Hindus and Dalits enter Hindu temples and made their prohibition illegal and punishable. He also passed a copy of the resolution and the proceedings of the Council to Mahatma Gandhi who was in jail. The Viceroy, however, refused permission explaining that temple entry was an all-India problem and should not be dealt with in a provincial basis even while clearing Ranga Iyer's bill. The Temple Entry Bill was not passed until the Indian National Congress came to power in 1937.