INTRODUCTION

Tamil Nadu played a significant role in the freedom struggle of India. It may be stated that the spirit of nationalism gained ground in Tamil Nadu in the early Nineteenth Century itself. The anti-colonial struggle was led by individuals like Veera Pandya Kattabomman and Oomaithurai of Panchalam Kurichi, Muthu Vaduganathar, King of Sivaganga, Maruthu Brothers.

The earliest rising of the Indian sepoys in the British garrison took place at Vellore on 10th July, 1806. This is considered to be the forerunner to the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny. The Vellore Mutiny cannot be construed

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as a rebellion but it symbolised the spirit of anti colonialism.

However, what was conspicuous by its absence was the role of intelligentia. The post 1857 Revolt witnessed the emergence of provincial political bodies which ultimately paved the way for the emergence of Indian National Congress in 1885.

Thus, in 1884, Mahajana Sabha was formed in Madras. G. SubramaniaIyer, Vijayaraghavachariyar and P. Ananda Charlu were its pioneers. The first conference was held in December, 1884 in Madras. It aimed at the integration of all the activities of the local associations.

It is common knowledge that the first seeds for the Indian National Congress was sown in Mylapore in 1884. P. Anandha Charlu, Rengaiya Naidu and G.Subramaniya

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Iyer discussed seriously about the venue of the next Congress meet and declared that the Congress should meet in Poona in 1885.

In that conference all the nationalists of Tamil Nadu, Raghunatha Rao, S. Subramaniya Iyer, Rengaiya Naidu, Anandha Charlu, Sundararaman and G.Subramaniya Iyer actively participated. It was G.Subramania Iyer who moved the first resolution of the first Congress.

In 1887, the Third Congress conference was held at Madras in which Madhava Rao, S.Subramaniya Iyer, G.Subramania Iyer, Salem Vijayaraghava Chariar and A.O.Hume took part. They stressed the need for expansion of provincial legislatures, separation of judiciary, Indianisation of senior cadres in the army, imposition of duty on foreign cloth and development of

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technical education. The Indian newspapers like The Hindu and Swadesamitran influenced public opinion, and made mild criticism against the British Government.

District conferences were convened. Constructive programmes like prohibition, restoration of panchayat system, swarajya, boycott of foreign goods were taken up for discussion. G.Subramania Iyer's Swadesamitran. The publication exerted a powerful influence on public opinion; its very name incorporated the concept of 'Swadeshim'. The tare and spirit of the paper were such that it became a marked publication in the eyes of the authorities: it reports on the varnacular press submitted to the Government, rarely was Swadesamitran, overlooked. From 1905 onwards Swadesamitran advocated Swadeshim as an economic necessity; later it supported the weapon of boycott too. Its spirited, pro-extremist tone continued throughout 1907 and 1908, until G.Subramania Iyer was arrested and prosecuted for sedition in August 1908.

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6 N. Rajendran, National Movement in Tamil Nadu, 1905 - 1914, p. 58.
Swadesamitran became increasingly forth right in its condemnation of Governmental action. The Government took the view that Swadesamitran, as a serious 'offender', must be proceeded against. As soon as the prosecution order was given, the police on August 21 arrested G. Subramania Iyer on charges of sedition.

During Swadeshi Movement, V.O. Chidambaram, known as the Tilak of Tamil Nadu took initiative to establish the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in 1906. Among the nationalists, there were young militant nationalists who adopted violent means to achieve their objectives. In June 17, 1911, Vanchinathan shot dead Ashe, the Collector of Tirunelveli District at Maniyachi Railway Station and subsequently shot himself dead. Such militant activities were countered by repressive measures.

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7 G.O. 1212, Judicial, (confi.), 2, September, 1908, TNA, quoted in Dr. N. Rajendran, National Movement in Tamil Nadu 1905 - 1914, pp.122-123.

8 N. Rajendran, National Movement in Tamil Nadu, p.88. See also India, 21 June, 1906. S.V. Swadeshi Steamers was started by a group of Tuticorin Merchants led by S.V. Nallaperumal.
The Home Rule Movement was started by the Irish lady, Annie Besant who had become a prominent member of the Theosophical Society at Adyar\textsuperscript{10}. The main object of Home Rule Movement was to secure self rule for India through constitutional means. However, the movement remained a middle class and upper middle class movement\textsuperscript{11}.

In 1915, Gandhiji came back to India from South Africa. He employed satyagraha\textsuperscript{12} as a tool for achieving his aim. He toured South India and addressed

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\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p.154 and see Home Political Deposit, 1st March, 1912, No. NAI : Report submitted by A.R. Cox, sub-collector Tirunelveli, to the chief secretary, Madras, G.O.1112-13, Judicial (confi.), 8, July 1911. TNA. An award of Rs. 1,000 was announced for information leading to the arrest of sankara Iyer. 'Confidential Supplement to the Madras Police Gazetteer', p.252. TNA.


\textsuperscript{11} Montagu, Edwin, S., An Indian Diary, p.125. Quoted in K.A.N. Sastari and G. Srinivasa Chari, Advanced History of India, p.716.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.,
the people, stressing the need to boycott foreign goods and encourage swadeshi goods. Simultaneously he encouraged national education and Hindu - Muslim unity. As a result, demonstrations, processions and public meetings were organised. All the government institutions were boycotted and demonstrations were held before toddy shops.

The Civil Disobedience Movement (A.D. 1930) yielded good results. Gandhi's dramatic march from Sabarmathi Ashram to Dandi with the aim of violating the Salt Act had its impact all over India. In Madras City and in the whole of Tamil Nadu, strikes in the Textile Industries were organised. Similarly, in Tamil Nadu Rajaji led one hundred followers to Vedaranyam on 13th April, 1930, to pick up salt-pans. The Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha and the significant role of Sardar Vedaraynam Pillai in it are the focal point of the present thesis.

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THE AIM AND SCOPE

The aim and scope of this thesis: "Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai: A Biographical Study" is to reveal the multi-faceted life of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai. Importance is given to Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai's character and his role in public life. The scope of this thesis is limited to Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai's part in society as a freedom fighter, legislator, social reformer and humanitarian.

It is a fact that leaders like Satyamurthy, Rajagopalachari and Kamaraj with all India recognition have received ample attention in the hands of researchers both Indian and foreign. However, the second line of leadership which played no main part in the national movement remained largely in the background. The main objective of this thesis is to recount, analyse in detail the role of secondline leadership and how they bridged the gap between people and national level leaders. With the above view in mind, it is imperative to analyse in detail the life and career of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai, who inspired masses to take part in the national movement.
It cannot be denied that many a leader of the national movement like Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai courted arrest, suffered humiliations without deviating from the Gandhian path of *ahimsa*. And thus remained a true follower of Mahatma Gandhi.

Among the South Indian freedom fighters, the name of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai is one to be conjured with. He stood tall among them on account of his organising skill, his firmness in the face of adversity and sincerity and dedication to the cause which he held dear to him. These qualities of the Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai amply manifested themselves during his organisation and implementation of the Salt Satyagraha episode at Vedaranyam under the leadership of Rajaji, during the course of Civil Disobedience Movement.

Born and bred in the middle class Saiva Vellalar family as the second son of his parents, Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai, inspired by the teachings and activities of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhaiah Patel, Rajaji joined the national movement unmindful of the opposition from his parents and friends.
Just as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel took part in the 'Bardoli Movement' in Gujarat, Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai took part in the Salt Satyagraha which earned him the epithet 'Sardar' [leader].

Chapter One, gives a description of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai's early life, his aptitudes, traits and influences that shaped him into a nationalist.

Chapter Two, deals with the circumstances that led to the entry of Sardar Vedaranam Pillai into politics, his ideals and the impact of Gandhian ideals on him.

Chapter Three, depicts Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai as a true Legislator, fighting for the cause of the people of his constituency, Non-violence was his weapon. He was a model to all legislators.

Chapter Four, depicts Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai as a social reformer, fighting for the cause of the people of his constituency with non-violence as his weapon. He was a model to all social reformers.
Chapter Five, dwells at length on Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai's character and other qualities, which adjudge him as a Gurukulam. His significant contribution to the eradication of untouchability and women's education are analysed in detail.

INSTRUMENTS OF RESEARCH

The researcher followed two ways to collect data for his thesis. One was his consultation of works on Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai and the other was through oral evidence from his family members and the associates and friends and former co-legislators of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai. Besides, persons relevant to the study and living in far-off places were contacted through correspondence to obtain relevant data. The archives records (State) were consulted for necessary details for the thesis.

GOVERNMENT RECORDS AND FORTNIGHTLY REPORTS

For more details regarding Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai's early life, and his active role as a freedom
fighter, government records are of immense value. Confidential files, Fortnightly Reports and Government Orders are the primary sources. Among these the following are useful.

2. Fortnightly Reports (confidential).
3. Government proceeding of the department of law, public and Under Secretary's safe files are of great value as source materials.

MADRAS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

The debates in the Madras legislative Assembly during the tenure of Sardar Vedartnam Pillai as legislator helped the researcher to understand the role of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai in the Legislative Assembly. There are about thirty sessions which are relevant to the study.

KASTHURBA GANDHI KANYA GURUKULAM - ANNUAL REPORT BOOK

The Twelve Annual Reports available in the Gurukulam speak of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai taking keen
interest in the welfare and education of all the inmates of the Gurukulam.

ORAL EVIDENCE

When preparing the thesis on Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai, the significance of oral evidences cannot be ignored. They express the genuine feelings of his bosom friends and family members who have stood by him through thick and thin. Among them, more than a dozen members whom the researcher had contacted, mention must be made of Saminatha Udayar of Kumbakonam, and Kakaji Ramasasmy Iyengar, Freedom fighter's of Mannargudi. V.Vedaiyan, Former member of Legislative Assembly, Kallikudi - Thiruthuraipoondi, K.T. Renganatha Mudaliar, a True Gandhian, Thanjavur, who were Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai's close associates and admirers.

GAZETTEERS, MANULALS AND REPORTS

Works like the Tanjore District Gazetteer and the Manual of Tanjore District by Venkasami Rao were consulted for relevant details about the location, climatic conditions and physiography of Vedaranyam town.
MONTHLY TAMIL JOURNALS

The following monthly journals (Tamil) were useful for this study Kalki, Kumari Malar, Sarvodaum, Thaai, Senthamil Selvi, Sudandira Sangu.

THE ENGLISH AND THE TAMIL DAILIES

The English and the Tamil Dailies counter statements and facts provided by the British official documents. Among the English dailies mention must be made of the The Hindu and the Indian Express. Tamil Dailies, such as Dinamani, The Dinakaran Jana Sakthi and the Theek kadhir carried detailed reports on the day-to-day political campaigns against the British Raj. The book by C.K. Ramasami, Secretary, Sattamandra Peravai (Legislative Assembly) on Tamil Nadu Sattamandra Peravai Aimbatham Aanddu Ponvizha Malar (50th Golden Jubilee Souvenier) was very useful to understand the role of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai as a responsible legislator.
PRIVATE PAPERS

The private papers such as private correspondence, dailies of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai letters are important documents for this study. He was prompt in replying to letters. He used to inform his friends the course of action he intended to take and elicited their views on it. He had regular correspondence with friends, to whom he disclosed his programme of action and asked for their advice before putting them into practice.

SARDAR VEDARATNAM PILLAI'S DIARIES

The diaries maintained by Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai contain details of his varied public meetings he had addressed along with the leaders he had come across. The constructive schemes of Gandhi for uplifting the masses of India and how they could be implemented are explained. These diaries give detailed description of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai's social and philanthropic activities.
The letters of Babuji Vinoba Bhave to Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai on the need for 'Bhoodan Movement' are very useful. Among the other correspondences, mention may be made of those from Soundaram Kailasam, Kalyanasundaram, Baskara Thondaiman, Avinasilingam Chettiar, C.Subramaniam, former Governor of Maharashtra and Ramachandran, Director, Gandhigram Institute.

He read his friends' letters carefully, assimilated the facts and responded to them immediately after making a note in his diary.

MODERN WORKS

Bhakirathan's "Maraikkattil Oru Manikkam" gives us a lucid account of the political activities of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai, through Gandhian policy of ahimsa. Somale's Tamilnattil Oru Sardar and The History of Tanjore District, Commemorative souvenir provide a resume of the life and activities of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai.
Among numerous workers available for a study of national movement in Tamil Nadu the following books may be mentioned as illustrative examples.


A vivid description of the Salt Satyagraha is available from the *Vedaranyam Uppu Satyagraham* by Rajaji, Ramachandran and Padmanaban. M.P. Sivagnam's book *Viduthalai Poril Tamilagam* illustrates the firm conviction of Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai that India could get freedom only under Gandhiji's leadership.

A. Ramasamy's *Tamil Natil Gandhi* brings out Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai's qualities of head and heart and his association with Rajaji, his political Guru. Saroja Sundararajan's *March to Freedom in Madras*
Presidency provides a birds eye view of the entire national movement in Tamil Nadu since 1916.

Modern Biographies on Rajaji, Kamaraj, Periyar E.V.Ramasamy, Viresalingam, Satyamoorthi were also found useful for this study.