CONCLUSION
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In recent years, the study of the freedom movement in India is gaining a momentum. It is neither a luxury nor a wastage of time but a pressing need. A country which forgets its freedom struggle that took place in the past, will have no future at all. In this connection, Cierco rightly observes, “Not to know what took place in the past is to remain a child for ever.”

The freedom movement in India is characterized as the intellectual revolution while it was a Political Revolution in England, Social Revolution in France and Economic Revolution in Russia. The part played by the intellectuals are so great that the historians went upto the level of calling it as the intellectual revolution, which had it is unique weapon of non-violence in all its battles. We cannot see anywhere in the world history, which is neither equal nor parallel to satyagraha in winning the independence of a country. Such is the uniqueness that India posses in its freedom struggle. The South Indian Rebellion of 1800-1801 was the first major organised opposition to the British rule in India. Even before that, it is argued by the historians of the south, that the idea of nationalism and patriotism had its origin starting from the time of Veera Pandiya Kattapoomman who had been hanged on October 16, 1799 at Kaytharu near Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu. The Vellore Mutiny of 1806 was a precedent
factor to the mutiny of 1857. The British began to interfere in the internal matters of the people, as a result, from 1808 to 1857 there were sporadic expression of opposition.

The great rebellion of 1857 served as a warning signal to the British. After that India was brought under the crown of England, thereby ending the English East India Company’s Rule in 1858. Following this, the socio-religious reform movements in the second half of the 19th century opened the eyes of the Indians towards the rise of Indian nationalism. It culminated in the founding of Indian National Congress in 1885, which kept the torch of freedom burning till the end of the movement.

After the foundation of Indian National Congress, there were three parts for the movement: The first phase from 1885 to 1905 is usually characterized as the ‘Era of moderates’, which was under the undaunted leadership of the Maharastra Gem, Gopalakrishna Gokhale, who was the political guru of Mahatma Gandhi. The second phase from 1905 to 1919 is usually characterized as the ‘era of extremists’ under the leadership of Bala Gangadara Tilak. In this phase, the partition of Bengal and the Swedeshi Movement led to the rise of extremism in Indian politics. In Tamil Nadu, V. O. Chidambaram carried the day. Vanchinathan, a young clerk in the Forest Department of Travancore State murdered Ashe, the District Collector of Tirunelveli at 10 a.m. on 17th June, 1911 at Maniyachi Junction and committed suicide. Thus extremism and terrorism added a new demission to the freedom struggle in the Tamil country.
The last phase (1919-1947) in the freedom struggle is the ‘Gandhian Era’ where *satyagraha*, the non-violence played a vital role. Gandhiji headed the movement against the Rowlett Act and it brought him to the political forefront. Jallian Walla Bagh massacre occurred on 13th April 1919. In the same year Montford Reforms were announced. Then Khilafat movement was followed by the non-cooperation movement (1920-1922).

The dalits of Tamil Nadu took part actively in the struggle for national liberation since the tire of non-cooperation. Gandhiji’s principles inspired them and they were impressed by his evangelical approach to liberate dalits. The visit of Gandhiji and other leaders to whole Tamil Nadu revitalized the Congress Programmes. As Mahatma linked the constructive works and Harijan upliftment programmes as part of Congress activities, more and more dalits involved in the national movement. Hence when Gandhiji launched the non-cooperation movement, the people of Tamil Nadu emerged equal to the occasion and worked with zeal for the successful implementation of the movement. As a result, foreign goods were boycotted and effective picketing was conducted in front of the toddy shops.

The non-cooperation movement ended with the violence at Chauri-Chaurn on 5th February 1922. From 1922 to 1925, the Swarajists dominated the scene. It was followed by the Simon Commission, which was constituted on 26th November 1927, to investigate the working of dyarchy and suggest further constitutional measures. Mothilal Nehru characterized it as a mere eye wash. The Tamil country greeted the
commission with black flags. It was followed by Nehru Reports and as a Muslim reaction Jinnah gave his fourteen points. Meanwhile the Congress passed a resolution on *Purna Swaraj*, in its annual session near Lahore in December 1929.

In between 1930-31, Gandhiji undertook his famous civil disobedience movement which began on 12th March 1930 in the form of Dandi March along with 78 chosen disciples. In Tamil Nadu, C. Rajagopalachari and a hundred volunteers staged their famous march from Tiruchirappalli to Vedaranyam on 13th April 1930. In this ‘salt satyagraha’ campaign, more dalit volunteers of Tamil Nadu took part in the whole Tamil Nadu. The response to other programmes of the civil disobedience movement was also spontaneous. As constructive programmes were part of the civil disobedience movement, the welfare of the dalits way protected. Temperance and prohibition movements saved millions of dalits from the evils of liquor.

The three Round Table Conferences (1930-32) ended in failure. Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Communal Award and Poona Pact were the significant events, leading to the Government of India Act of 1935, which was the crowing climax of a prolonged process of constitution making that had commenced in 1927 with the appointment of the Simon Commission. Meanwhile, the Second World War broke out and Britain involved India without its consent resulting in the resignation of Congress Ministers. Congress launched Individual Satyagraha between 1939-1942.
Leaders of Tamil Nadu, Rajaji and others, mobilized the support of public to the anti-war propaganda. The Congress volunteers responded with enthusiasm to the ‘Delhi Chalo’ or march to Delhi call given by Gandhiji. Select volunteers of Tamil Nadu started their march towards Delhi. Many dalit people participated in these programmes.

Britain was forced to sent Cripps Mission to India, which was “a post-dated cheque on a fast crashing bank” as characterized by Mahatma Gandhi. Then we have the famous Quit India Movement.

In the history of Freedom Movement of India, the Quit India Movement of 1942 was really a people’s battle in which the people gave a good account of themselves and laid down their lives as martyrs to the cause of the country’s freedom. When the people have reached a stage where they can demonstrate that they can lay down their lives for national independence, it becomes impossible for a foreign power to continue to impose their will on them, for any length of time. The revolt of 1942 made the British nation realize that their rule was no longer wanted by India.

On July 14, 1942 the Congress Working Committee at Wardha, passed a long resolution, generally referred to as the ‘Quit India’ resolution. It renewed the demand that British rule in India must end immediately and reiterated the view that the Freedom of India was necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, Facism, militarism and other forms of imperialism and the aggression of one nation over another. Even though
Gandhiji and other leaders were arrested immediately after the launching of Quit India Movement, the second grade leaders continued the struggle.

‘Do or Die’ call of Mahatma Gandhi electrified the dalit masses. During this last great struggle dalit freedom fighters participated in large number. Government imprisoned many leaders and volunteers. But this move backfired and the people became more aggressive. The August Movement not only heralded a new chapter in the struggle for independence but also exposed the determination of the people to achieve their goal.

In the post-war period some unexpected incidents took place. 1946 was a year of historic importance since it was in that year Naval officers in India struck work for their demands like salary hike, periodical time bound promotion for all, without any discrepancy. Freedom struggle touched its peak in that year. Winston Churchill’s office of prime ministership came to a close. During this period of political turmoil a British Bishop by name V.W. King scolded the labours in the ships in Bombay as ‘sons of dogs’. As a result all the labours on deck became rebellious and launched a huge strike. This strike spread to Calcutta, Cochi and all other harbors of India. On account of this massive strike, work of loading and unloading in 74 ships, 4 fighting ships and 24 passenger liners came to a grinding halt. Angry slogans for promotions, increment hike etc. were heard from all harbors and the intention behind this fighting was to drive the English viceroy form India to his country.
In this mutiny also dalits from Tamil Nadu actively involved. Malumi (Captain) Olimuthu Devendrar was an active participant in this strike. Many native naval officers arrested British navy officers and put them in jail. Weapon godowns were looted. Insurgency set in and lawlessness ran rampant. Indian troops in foreign countries also remonstrated against their British high command.

What was the role of Olimuthu in this historic episode? He met secretly many Indian air force officials who were deployed by British government to quell the strike. He convinced them that the navel officers fighting fiercely on the spirit of patriotism to liberate our land from British. His appeal to them to join the historic military struggle against British changed the airmen's heart and mind and many secretly supported naval strike. This act of him which was considered to be felony and treason by the British got him imprisonment in Elephant Island Bombay. Many great leaders intervened and got him released. He was from Nellai district. He was really pearl among the dalits. Like him many other dalits also participated in the post-war struggles.

Dalit people thus played a prominent role in the struggle for independence. This state produced leaders of great standing who worked with determination to spread the Congress ideology. This proved the point that they had the capacity to fulfil the aims and objectives of the Congress. Further the success of any movement depends upon the nature of dalit volunteers. It may be a call to boycott foreign goods or an appeal to picket toddy shop or a suggestion to violate anti-people law, the Congress dalit
people whole heartedly extended their support to the same. Dalit community gave a band of dedicated volunteers who worked with conviction to transform the ideal of Poorna Swaraj into reality. The dalit participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement and Quit India Movement were wonderful. The repressive measures of the government could not subdue the spirit of the dalits. Gandhiji wholeheartedly appreciated the contribution of dalits.

India became free on 15th August 1947. For this great achievement, all communities including dalits, rendered their valuable service. The role played by dalits in the freedom struggle is respected. The free India took steps to provide equal opportunities to dalit people.

The Constitution embodies the principles of equality, freedom, justice, and human dignity and requires both Union and State Governments to provide special protection to scheduled-caste members, to raise their standard of living, and to ensure their equality with other citizens. The Constitution guarantees equal rights, liberty, justice and the right to live with dignity. Building on constitutional provisions, the government of India has proceeded to ensure that relevant legal provisions are adequately implemented, enforced and monitored. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989; and many other state and central government laws were enacted to remedy past injustices related to low-caste status.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 provided special courts for the trial of any offences
against the SCs and STs. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995 provided for the setting up of a Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Protection Cell at the State headquarter under the charge of Director of Police or Inspector General of Police. The Cell shall be responsible for the security of SCs & STs.

Many political leaders emerged from the dalit community in independent India. It is the legacy of freedom movement. Many dalits were appointed as ministers in Tamil Nadu. During Kamaraj Ministry, the great untouchable leader Kakkan was appointed as Minister.

Dalit women were also given political representation. Due to this many women entered in the Assembly as people’s representatives. They did many welfare works for the people. Most of these dalit women political leaders were influenced by Gandhian ideologies. Krishnaveni Mallathiyar was one among such ladies.

Krishnaveni Mallathiyar was the congress MLA for Andipatti constituency from 1962 to 1967. Without showing any distinction of caste, religion and gender, she and her husband served people relentlessly and tried their best to lift them up from their poverty. They were responsible in bringing many educational institutions for the poor. Theni, Periyakulam, Vathalakundu, Nilakottai, Cholavandan and some parts of Madurai witnessed the growth of education, thanks to their endeavour of opening more and more educational institutions in this areas. Both the husband and the wife wear only Khadar and both of them were staunch followers of Gandhian ideals. They led a simple life and their service to women
education carved a niche in the hearts of the poor. They also organised several meetings and processions to redeem the lands of the Dalits called *panchami nilam* from upper caste Hindus. Thalai Lama, the Buddhist monk of Nepal highly praised the services of Krishnaveni in his book the Legends of Leaders.

Many women also undertook constructive programmes on Gandhian model. Padma Shri Krishnamal Mallathiyar was one among them. Born in Ayyankottai village, Pattiveeranpatti Taluk, Dindigul district, she was graduated in B.A. English. She was attracted by the Gandhian ideologies. She took part in the *Padayatra* that had taken in Dindigul at the wake of the freedom struggle. Heard about the coming of Gandhiji to Chinnalapatti, she founded a village and named it as Gandhigram. She set up an orphanage for children in that village and also started a primary school. Deeply attracted by Gandhian ideals she traveled extensively and visited many villages in Tamil Nadu. She established Sarvodaya organization in almost all villages in South. Her husband Jeganathan was also a true follower of Gandhiji. He helped her to start Sarvodaya Sangham. Both were also responsible in establishing Kinder garden schools for children in many villages as well as both introduced mid day meal scheme in such schools. She with the help of foreigners started many social programmes in Tamil Nadu. She was the founder member of the Gandhigram Rural University. She was awarded Padma Shri for her part in the growth of education among rural masses. She got lands for landless persons for which she traveled on foot to reach all villages. She was honoured by President
with Padma Shri. She was the most fittest person to be honoured as well as a honour to the award itself.

Many other dalit women were also given important positions. Jyoti Venkatachalam served as M.L.A. as well as Governor of a State. Satyavani Muthu served the Harijan people in the capacities of M.L.A. and M.P.s. A. S. Ponnammal served as M.L.A. All these shows the increasing participation of dalits in the administration.

Even though there are some incidents of human rights violations, on the whole their condition is improved. Untouchability is meager. The socio-economic condition of dalits improved. An educational opportunity for them is increased. All these developments that took place in independent India are the legacy of freedom movement. The liberal ideals of great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, K. Kamarajar, Rajaji and others are respected and equality is maintained. The caste differences are diminishing very fast. For all these good gestures, no doubt, the liberal ideals cherished during the freedom movement, is helping a lot. Very soon, it is hoped, all differences will be done away with and a casteless society will emerge.