SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
AND
LITERARY TRENDS
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The creativity of an artist or a writer does not confine with his imagination alone. The society to which he belongs cannot be ignored and it has a crucial role to play in his creation. As such, the social movements do have their impact on the literature created in any society.

Every art form has certain relationship with one or other aspect of the society and it is decided by the content of the creation. The content shall portray the views of the society and its divisions which the creators represent. The author also gains some experience during his creation that will not be one and the same to all his contemporaries. A creation may therefore be considered as the experience of the author influenced by a number of external factors and their impact on him (1).

While analyzing the creation of any author the following viz. its content, the author's contact with the society and its different groups, the impact of his own work on the society and its consequences, must be taken into account. All these aspects must also be examined with reference to the author's period of living, since his creation is the reflection of his lifetime.

Several social movements as and when they exist have influenced Tamil, during its past 2000 years of literary heritage (2). No literature would suddenly come into being or change or disappear without some basic reasons, among which the most important one could be the social trend of the society.

LITERARY TRENDS AND MOVEMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF LITERATURE

Tamil literature has a long history and tradition with varied faces. Its process and progress during Sangam period, Cholas, Pallavas, Nayaks and Europeans rule are different, the reason for which is the Tamil literary activities at a particular time have
never been stereotyped not completely dissimilar. To understand the variance of Tamil literature both in its content and form, the social movements at different periods must be studied.

Both the content and form of any poetic work are indeed decided by the society which neither fully accommodates nor completely ignores the established age old traditions while accepting the impact of the current movements on them (3).

THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND LITERARY TRENDS IN PONDICHERRY DURING 20TH CENTURY

The social set up of Pondicherry varied considerably after the arrival of Europeans. The feudalism that prevailed for about 2000 years came to an end and was replaced by industrialized capitalism, because of which a lot of change took place in the society. The literary organisations and the content of literature also did not escape from the transition. In the beginning of 20th century the social movements which have influenced the Tamil literary activities are as follows:

1. Independence Movement
2. Dravidian Movement
3. Language Movement
4. Religious Movement

All the above mentioned movements have their own independent evolution and growth and at times they have also worked together.

LITERARY TRENDS DURING INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

Indian National Congress happened to be the only main organization to struggle for the freedom of our country. While fighting against British imperialism it had to take into consideration the culture, art and literature, and economic conditions of the people spread throughout the country from Himalayas to Kanyakumari. In this connection the Congress party and the National Freedom Movement used the following tools.
1. An acceptable leadership by the entire people of this land.
2. The encouragement to the art and literature with which the people of this country are familiar.
3. The prominence to the native culture, art and literature instead of preferring foreign ones.
4. The Vedic religion in the acceptable forms by one and all.

Though several national leaders involved themselves to fight for our national independence, Mahatma Gandhi stood top among them. Our country as and still is disintegrated on the basis of culture, religion, race, caste, language and so on. A national leader to unite these people, therefore, was an immediate necessity, and in Mahatma Gandhi, Indians found their unquestionable leadership. To introduce Gandhi to the people of Tamilnadu, the language played a vital role. It was not uncommon in Tamilnadu to use the language as a means for hero worship and thereby with the help of Tamil language Gandhi was portrayed as a morning star and saviour to the Tamils.

As such, two essential requirements in the freedom struggle were met with. They are:
1. An agreeable, a welcome and a matchless leadership to lead the freedom movement
2. The acceptance of Tamil art and literary forms with national perspective as against the alien ones.

No freedom movement could be successful, without the active participation of the people and therefore the art and literature conceivable by the ordinary and less educated mass were used for communication. In this connection, the literary forms like paLLu, kummi, ulaa, piLLaittamiz, cintu, kaNNi became familiar to propagate the message of freedom struggle to the common man.

Further, religion happened to be the foundation of Indian nationalism. Many literary works like Gandhi piLLaittamiz, Gandhi antati, Gandhi tiruppaLLiyezucci, have been written contemplating Gandhi as a venerable hero. These ancient religious literary forms were used to produce hymns in praise of the almighty God. During independence
movement, these forms have been successfully utilized to spread the message of freedom struggle.

**Literary trends during Dravidian movement**

E.V.Ramasamy, reverentially known as Periyar, established the Self-Respect Movement in the year 1925. Initially this movement was functioning in co-operation with Justice Party and Periyar was elected, as president in 1938 at the Justice Party Conference held in Salem. On 27th August 1944, this party came to be known as Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and Periyar continued to be its leader. Again in the year 1949, under the guidance of C.N.Annadurai, an offshoot of DK, known as Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) came into existence. This party was also disintegrated and the splinter group All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) under the leadership of M.G.Ramachandran was formed. All these socio-political organisations viz. Self-Respect Movement, Justice Party, DK, DMK, and AIADMK are generally known as Dravidian Movements and their contributions to the growth of Tamil literature deserve to be taken for a detailed research.

Dravidian Movements gave more importance to language, especially the mother tongue. These movements, taking Tamil language as a powerful weapon, fought for a renaissance in all walks of public life.

In the beginning, the Dravidian movements struggled for the upliftment of non-Brahmins who were under the clutches of Aryan / Brahmin domination. Due to this struggle, all the Brhamanical religions, caste systems, beliefs and rituals were critically analysed and reviewed. A significant portion of Tamil literature is, no doubt, an admixture of Aryan thoughts and doctrines and as such Dravidian movement vehemently opposed them. The burning of Kamba Ramayanam, an important Tamil literary masterpiece, is a typical example to prove their unscathed attack on Aryan domination.

Later the Dravidian movements had to project and give importance to Tamil language and many of its original literatures in their struggle and even for their very survival. In this connection, a close relationship with pure Tamil movement was developed. The
intimacy between these two movements in Tamilnadu has made Tamil language and Tamil politics two unseparable entities. So is the case even in Pondicherry and it is a fact that many of the native literary works of modern period are based on Dravidian ideologies.

**Literary Trend During Language Movement**

The pure Tamil movement started in the early part of 20th century was a source of renaissance in the field of Tamil literature. It was thought that Tamils could be united to a great extent by their language. With this intention Pure Tamil Movement conducted its programme from two viewpoints:

1. To rescue Tamil language from the onslaught of Sanskritisation
2. To enrich Tamil language by accepting various literary forms like novel, short story, etc. that were imported from the West through English.

The Pure Tamil Movement, while maintaining the purity of the language, wanted to preserve the age-old literary traditions also. The movement enlightened the people about these aspects and obtained their ardent support to achieve the desired aims and goals.

The Pure Tamil Movement and Dravidian Movement functioned together and their cooperation gave an impetus in enriching Tamil language. A number of outstanding literary works have been written in the traditional style. Such works in Pondicherry region are given due weightage in this research.

**Literary Trends During Various Religious Movements**

As far as Tamilnadu is concerned, religious divisions happened to be the source for several social conflicts. The maximum number of 20th century literary pieces belongs to one or other religious group. The history of Nayak rule is to be studied to understand the background of religious movements. The rule of later Cholas is supposed to be the golden era of Saivism. After their decline, Pandyas and Muslims ruled and during Muslim rule several social changes took place. Finally Vijayanagar Empire conquered the Muslims and brought most parts of Tamilnadu including Pondicherry under its rule.

The Nayaks, as the representatives of Vijayanagar Empire governed Tamilnadu and they
followed the principle of Vaishnavism. During this period Saivism struggled hard to protect itself and this led to the composition of several Saivite Stalam puranams.

At the end of Nayak dynasty, Christianity entered into Tamilnadu. The foreign priests of Christianity with their complete ignorance of local language struggled hard to settle and adjust themselves with natives.

It is therefore pertinent to study the religious movement under the following four divisions:
1. The movement of Saivism
2. The movement of Vaishnavism
3. The movement of Islam
4. The movement of Christianity

All these four religious movements did their yeoman service to the growth and development of Tamil literature during 20th century.

All the four religious scholars wrote several literary works on various styles such as antaati, ulaa, koovai, pillaittamiz, etc. Muslims, for instance, developed a separate linguistic style known as Arabic Tamil. Though the content of Christian and Islamic literatures include mainly Jesus Christ and Allah the Great respectively, the form of their works are mostly indigenous.

All the four religious movements contributed to the literary development of Pondicherry also, which is going to be discussed in detail in course of our study.

Footnote:
1. Kesavan, K., iyakkamum ilakkiyap pookkukaLum. pp1
2. Selvarasu Silambu Naa., irupataam nuuRRaaumc TirilakkiyanakaL. Pp. 3-4
3. Ibid. pp13-34