CHAPTER - IV

CONTRIBUTIONS OF FEW EMINENT THULUVA VELLALAS TO SOCIETY
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The greatness of a nation to a great extent is determined by the character and achievements of its citizens. Like a king, a prominent individual or a great soul has also something to do with the making of history. They mould history by their very presence and by the inspirations they give to the other individuals. History of a country is also referred to as collection of biographies of its greatmen. A society needs examples of greatmen to emulate and follow their footsteps. These men on account of their hard work, perfection in all their activities, selflessness, sincerity and service to humanity have achieved success. The discussion of their biographies raises hope and encouragement to rise above mundane activities and to be different and make a mark by serving the society. There are quite a number of eminent personalities in the Thuluva vellala community who have left their foot prints in the sands of history. Their contributions are varied and are in different fields. The contributions of few eminent Thuluva vellalas are traced in this chapter.
PAMMAL SAMBANDA MUDALIAR
Drama is the king of arts, mirror of the country's civilization and university of the commoners. It kindles emotions, brings out love, intellect and purity of the heart and is a glorious art that brings about the cultural transformation of the people. The art of drama and the Tamil language in its dramatic form put together constitute the history of Tamil drama. Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar occupies a place of prominence in the history of Tamil drama. He is hailed as the Morning star of the revivalism of the Tamil theatre, Father of the Tamil drama and Shakespeare of the Tamil dramatic field. He kindled the dramatic literary interests of the people and used drama as an instrument of social reform. Though he served in the Judicial department, with unceasing interest in the field of drama he had produced more than 90 Tamil dramas. The last years of the 19th century marked a turning point in the history of Tamil drama. The position of the Tamil theatre was very low in the beginning of the century. Most of the Tamil plays were conducted as theru kootthus (Street dance). The Tamil drama which once held a high position as an art appreciated by the ruling class, had deteriorated very much. It has come down from the position of an art to a profession of dance practiced by a section of the people mainly to earn their livelihood. Few personalities attempted to change this condition and succeeded in bringing about a renaissance of the

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Tamil theatre. Pammal Sambanda Mudaliär was a pioneer of this movement who brought a surge of refreshing experiments, new themes and methods to the Tamil theatre. Following his example many came forward to write dramas and novels in a better way. Thousands of dramas came to be produced in Tamil language. The status of the Tamil theatre began to improve².

Pammal, a small town on the outskirts of Madras city had the unique privilege of being the native place of Sambanda Mudaliär. It is the town where his ancestors lived. Sambanda Mudaliär was born in Chennai on first February 1873. His parents were Vijayaranga Mudaliär and Manickaveluammal. He had his early education in Govindappa naicker school and Pachayappa’s high school. He stood state first in his matriculation examination. Later he joined the Madras Presidency College and had the distinction of passing B.A. degree in first class with History as the main subject and secured second rank in English subject. Thus from the very beginning, he was destined to win many laurels. After graduation he joined the Madras Law College and qualified himself as a lawyer. He started his legal career as an apprentice under one Mr. Kumarasamy Sastry. He raised to the level of Judge of a Small cause court in 1924³. With the background of good parentage, acclaimed educational achievements he could

have scaled to great heights in the legal profession. But this prodigy was destined to shape the art of stage, namely drama. A person who was even positively hating the very same art initially, turned virtually into a guardian in promoting the art and securing a status in society to the artist engaged in the field. It was astonishing to note a lawyer by profession completely identifying himself as a dramatist and produced 94 dramas touching upon varied subjects. After leading a fruitful life he passed away in the year 1964.

Sambanda Mudaliár himself was at first, disinclined towards seeing Tamil dramas. In fact he positively hated them. The initiation and attraction towards the Tamil stage began when he had the opportunity to witness some of the dramas staged in Victoria Public Hall in the year 1891 by a troupe from Bellary called 'Sarasa Vinodini Sabha'. The troupe was led by one Mr.Krishnamacharlu who incidentally was also a lawyer. The dramas conducted by him had made a dent in the mind of educated well placed personalities of Madras and gave a new twist to this art suggesting the involvement and partaking of educated people in the field of drama. The aversion which Sambanda Mudaliár had until then towards Tamil dramas drastically changed. The impact was so much for Sambanda Mudaliár when he witnessed the drama 'Siragari' in Telugu script staged by 'Sarasvinodini Sabha'. He was engrossed for full five hours of the drama. He started

ruminating the characters he saw in the drama. It drove him to the extent
to decide that he should start a drama company by himself and also become
a stage actor.⁵

The seed sown by Krishnamacharlu in the mind of Sambanda Mudaliār grew took shape in the form of a drama troupe or company by
name ‘Suguna Vilasa Sabha’ in First July 1891. Sambanda Mudaliār
records this date as a very important date in his life⁶. Muthukumara
Chettiar, Venkatakrishna Naidu, Venkatakrishna Pillai and Jayaram
Naicker were the primary members of this sabha. Krishnamacharlu who
was mainly responsible for the total transformation in the views of
Sambanda Mudaliār towards dramas advised him to set aside dramas if he
wanted to make a mark in the legal field. But Sambanda Mudaliār used to
meticulously plan each and every work he undertook. Having a time-table
and performing duties as per schedule was his quality. From 9.30 A.M. to
5 P.M. he concentrated in his legal profession. The rest of the day was
devoted to dramas. After his retirement he dedicated his entire life to the
world of Tamil dramas⁷. He records in his autobiography that after his
retirement he decided to dedicate the entire life which God would bestow

A.N. Perumal, Pammal Sambanda Mudaliār (New Delhi, 1988),
pp.10-11.
on him to the service of Tamil drama and Tamil language\(^8\). The habit of organizing and planning right from his younger days helped him to a great extent in producing 94 dramas and other literary works. His immortal works fetched him great honours.

When Sambanda Mudaliār was only eighteen years old, in the year 1891, he authored a Tamil drama 'Pushpavalli'. It turned into renaissance in the field of revolutionary drama and hailed as a milestone in the long journey of Tamil drama. Till then Tamil dramas were enacted with many songs and poems. But giving importance to dialogue and making it more meaningful was started by Sambanda Mudaliār. His first drama published in book form was *Leelavathi Sulochana* which was totally in text form and the first Tamil drama to be printed.\(^9\) Of the 94 dramas written by Sambanda Mudaliār, 13 dramas were written in the 19th century and 81 dramas in the 20th century.\(^10\)

Sambanda Mudaliār has penned dramas of different categories. Some of his plays were of the *comedy type* both of the serious and hilarious types. In the former, though the play has a happy ending, the hero and heroine suffer a lot before reaching that state of happiness, 'Pushpavalli',

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\(^10\) List of dramas, vide Appendix - V.
'Meikkadai', 'Erusagodirigal', 'Manohara', 'Narkuladeivam' and 'Peyalla penmaniye' belong to this category. Light comedy is the one in which the materials are selected and managed primarily in order to interest and amuse us; the characters and their disconfitures engage our delighted attention rather than our profound concern. We feel that no great disaster will occur and usually the action turns out happily for the chief characters'. 'Sathi sakthi', 'Vaigunda vathiyar', 'Sangeeda paithiyam', 'Somberi sagunam parthal' are hilarious comedy plays of Sambanda Mudaliar.

Sambanda Mudaliar was the first dramatist to write dramas of Burlesque type in Tamil language. Burlesque is often defined as an incongruous imitation, that is it imitates the matter or manner of a serious literary work, or literary genre but makes the immittance amusing by a ridiculous disparity between its form and style and its subject matter. His play 'Chandragiri' was of the burlesque type. The original play Harichandra was about a king who inspite of facing many ordeals resolved not to deviate from truth and not to utter a lie. But the character

\[\text{References:} \]

3. A.N. Perumal, Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar, op. cit., p.27.
‘chandragiri’in Sambanda Mudaliär play always uttered lies and never spoke truth.

Again Sambanda Mudaliär was the first, to break the tradition of Tamil theatre of not writing tragedy plays. ‘Kalvarthalivan’, ‘Eru nanbargal’ were the tragedy plays written by him which were well received by the audience16. People of the Indian subcontinent were familiar with certain traditional stories that have been passed on to them over generations. These stories never failed to evoke unceasing interest among the people. Naturally they would be delighted to see such stories enacted on the stage. To fulfill their desire Sambanda Mudaliär authored plays like ‘Harichandran’ and ‘Nallathangāl’. ‘Yayathi’, ‘Kodaiyalikarnan’, ‘Vallimanam’, ‘Siruthondan’, ‘Markandeyan’ and ‘Sathi Anusuya’ were the mythological plays of Sambanda Mudaliär.

‘Buddha avataram’ was the historical drama written by Sambanda Mudaliär. History is the chronological record of past events where fact would be given prominence. Drama is an attractive presentation of events in art form. Historical dramas are the presentation of historical events in art form that would attract the attention of audience. The duration of the play ‘Buddha avataram’ was three hours in which the

16 V.T. Chellam, Tamilaga varalārum panbādum (Chennai, 1998), p.646.
personality of Buddha and his lofty ideals were well brought out and interest sustained till the end\textsuperscript{17}.

Sambanda Mudaliär had written as many as twenty seven social dramas. Through his social plays he attempted to reform the society. His social play ‘\textit{Dāsippen}’ portrayed the evils of prostitution. The play is about mutual love between a prostitute and a brahmin by name Subramanya Iyer. While the entire society looks upon her as a prostitute, he looks at her as a woman with all normal emotions. Breaking opposition, he marries her, similarly in his play ‘\textit{Edai}chuv\textit{ar}erupuram’ he narrates the life of two families living under the same roof on either side of the wall. The economic standard of the families being extreme, constant quarrel occurs between them. Sambanda Mudaliär conveys through this play that if the economic differences between people is removed, it would lead to better relations between them which would ultimately lead to social peace\textsuperscript{18}. He felt that drama being a powerful media of mass communication, is an ideal tool for removing social evils. Many people have written letters to the playwright that after seeing his plays they have given up evil practices like alcoholism, cheat, robbery etc.

\textsuperscript{17} A.N. Perumal, \textit{Pammal Sambanda Mudaliär}, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.31-33.

Sambanda Mudaliār has not left even the field of **fabulous plays** untouched. In this type of play one comes across unbelievable characters like speaking trees, birds and animals. In his play 'Patalipurathupadagargal' three animals the donkey, cat, dog and a bird the cock by raising their voice foil the robbery attempt of a thief. Men dressed up as animals or birds and acting in the stage was a real treat for the audience especially children.

Pammal Sambanda Mudaliār had another first to his credit. He was the first playwright to pen plays of **satire type** in Tamil Satire is the literary art of diminishing a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, contempt, indignation or scorn. It differs from the comic in that comedy evokes laughter as an end itself while satire 'derides' that, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt existing outside the work itself. That butt may be an individual (in personal satire) or a type of person, a class, an institution, a nation or even the whole race of man. ‘Sabāpathi’ was the play of the Satire type written by him.

Besides writing original plays in Tamil, Sambanda Mudaliār had translated dramas of other languages namely English, Sanskrit and French. He had translated Sanskrit dramas of Sākuntalam, Malavikignimitram, Vikrama Orvasiyam and Ratnavali. Hamlet,

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As you like it, Cymbaline, Merchant of Venice and Macbeth were the English dramas translated to Tamil by him. He also translated the French play the Knavery of Salphin to Tamil language. He knew only Tamil and English languages and his translations of Sanskrit and French plays were made from their English version. While translating dramas of other languages into Tamil, he made suitable changes to suit the standards, qualities and taste of the Tamil audience. This type adopted by him is referred to as 'Tender adaptation'. In this method the format and the theme of the play would remain unchanged but the names and habits of characters in the play would be changed to suit Tamil language. For example he translated the title of plays of other languages in the following way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Title</th>
<th>Tamil Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hamlet</td>
<td>Amalădityan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Macbeth</td>
<td>Magabathi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. As you like it</td>
<td>Virumbiya Vidhame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cymbaline</td>
<td>Cymhalanathan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only titles of plays but also the names of characters were changed to suit the Tamil theatre. Here are a few examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Title</th>
<th>Tamil Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Antonio</td>
<td>Ananthanāthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Horatio</td>
<td>Hariharan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Claudius</td>
<td>Baladevan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Leonatus</td>
<td>Kesarinathan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One can understand and appreciate the necessary adaptations made by him when one comes across the name Samlal given by him to the Jewish character Shylock in the play Merchant of Venice. It is worth mentioning here that in Tamil Nadu men of the money lending class always had the term 'lal' attached to their name.

The changes made in mythological terms are also thought provoking. He made changes in Western mythological notes to suit appropriate Indian notes. The following are some of the changes in mythological notes made by him.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Version</th>
<th>Tamil Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phoebus</td>
<td>Surya Narayanan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Arundati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortune</td>
<td>Athirshtadevata²¹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All his 94 dramas were acted on the stage²². His dramas were staged in more than 5000 occasions. Simple dialogues, good story, effective characterization were the characteristic features of his plays²³.

Sambanda Mudaliär had great reverence for his parents and he records that the grace of God and blessings of his parents helped him accomplish much. He says that his mother used to tell him different stories while serving him dinner and her influence was the first that made him write dramas. He also says that a great number of Tamil and English books collected by his father was very helpful to him in writing plays. His dramas conveyed necessary message to the society like belief in God, reverence to parents, perfect understanding between husband and wife. Through his dramas one can understand the condition of the Tamil society during his times. The hypocritical life led by the educated civilized people in the society was well brought out in his play Sabāpathi. Many of his plays like 'Manohara' 'Sabāpathi', 'Vedāla Ulagam', 'Dāsippen', 'Ratnavali' were produced as pictures in the silver screen and brought him great fame.

Sambanda Mudaliär's contribution to Tamil drama did not stop with having authored as many as 94 dramas and having founded an amateur company to stage the plays. His contributions to the world of Tamil theatre are many. Perfection was his hallmark. He introduced many new techniques. A persian company came from Bombay and conducted dramas continuously for three months in the year 1897-98 at Esplanade in Chennai to train the Sugunavilas sabha founded by Sambanda Mudaliär.

25 Chera, India Natakam oru koorntha kannottam, op. cit., p.262.
The practice of starting the play exactly at the announced time, restriction of intervals to two or three, use of side wings and flies that suited the scene, relevant costume for the artists, quick transformation of scenes from one to another like the king's court suddenly transformed to a jail scene or park and the presence of orchestra in front of the stage as against the usual practice of being seated in the side stage were the novel techniques introduced by Sambanda Mudaliār which brought great fame to the world of Tamil drama\(^{26}\). He also restricted the duration of his dramas to three or four hours. Previously dramas were conducted the whole night which affected the health of both the artists and the audience.

Sugunavilasa saba conducted dramas not only in the capital city Chennai and in districts but also in metropolitan cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and in overseas countries like Ceylon and Burma S.V.S. Sornalingam of Ceylon, referred to as Sambanda Mudaliār of Ceylon developed interest in the field of Tamil drama and made contributions to it only after seeing the dramas staged by Suguna vilasa sabha\(^{27}\). The sabha also proved to be a forerunner of many amateur troops that came to be established subsequently Rasiga Ranjini sabha in Trichy, Sarguna vilasa sabha in Tinneveli, Vanivilasa sabha in Kumbakonam, Sabeda vilasa sabha


\(^{27}\) Mrs. Sakthi Perumal, \textit{Tamil Nātaka Varalāru}, (Madurai, 1989), p.79.
in Colombo were some of the amateur sabhas established on the model of Suguna vilasa sabha. Sambanda Mudaliär considered this as the greatest credit of Suguna vilasa sabha.

Sambanda Mudaliär was not only a playwright but also an actor and director. He has acted in lead roles in many of his plays. His dedication to the field is evident by the fact that he never hesitated to perform minor roles. In his youth he played the lead role of hero in his play Manóhara but when he grew old he did not hesitate to perform the aged role of Purushothaman, father of the hero. Another instance of his dedication to the field of drama was his choice of his son for the role of a child in the plays of ‘Siruthondar’ and ‘Harichandra’. No one was willing to do the role because in the first mentioned play there was a scene where the child would be shown as being cut on the stage with a knife and in the second play as a dead body in the burial ground. But Sambanda Mudaliär did not hesitate to select his son for the role who was born to him after twelve years of married life and fulfillment of many religious vows.

He was also liberal in praising talented actors. His play Manóhara was staged by many other drama troupes. After seeing T.K. Shanmugam another noted artist performing the role of Manóhara he was instant in

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29 Aru. Azhagappan, Tamil Nátakam Thotramium Valarchiyum (Annamalai University, 1987), pp.544-545.
appreciating his skill and revealing his feeling that at last he had found in T.K. Shanmugam a talented successor to perform the role. He made eminent personalities act in his plays. Till then educated higher class people hesitated to act in Tamil plays and considered it as below their dignity to do so. Some of the eminent personalities who acted in his plays were R.K. Shanmugam Chettiar (who later became the finance minister in the Government of India), C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer (famous lawyer and who later became Diwan of Travancore) and Sathyamurthy (Congress leader and later Mayor of Chennai). The credit of introducing Sadhavadanam Krishnasamy Pavalar, a playwright himself and who later organised many drama troupes, M. Kandasamy Mudaliar considered as the father of renaissance of Tamil drama, V.C. Gopalaratnam a lawyer who became an actor and playwright to the field of drama goes to Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar.

The greatest service rendered by Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar was the respect he earned for the art of Tamil drama and the artists. Before his entry into the field, the educated and elite were not inclined towards the Tamil theatre. The artists were looked down upon and it was difficult for them even to get houses for rent. They were called as "koothadis". From this

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low level, Sambanda Mudaliār by his contributions made the art of Tamil drama rise up to the position of fine art and the stage actors came to be called as artists33. Sambanda Mudaliār has brought out his memories of the theatre in his work Nātakamedai ninaiugal in six volumes. His works Nātaka Tamil as also his ‘How to improve the theatre of art?’ (in Tamil) are critical and technical works about the Tamil theatre and its evolution34. In recognition of his services to Tamil drama he was conferred the title Rao Bahadur in 1916, by the British Government. The Government of India conferred on him the Padmabushan award in the year 195935. Thus Sambanda Mudaliār was a man with multi dimensional skills being a dramatist, actor, dancer, writer and director36.

34 M. Cheran, India Nātakam Oru koorntha kannottam, op. cit., p.264.
35 Kopalaratnam V.C., Tamil Drama Article, Indian Drama (Publication Division, Government of India (New Delhi, 1951), p.110.
Dr. MU. VARADARAJAN

Dr. M. Varadarajan popularly known as Mu.Va, was one of the towering personalities of the 20th century literary figures. A prolific writer on Tamil literature, linguistics and Tamil culture he was a well renowned teacher, a versatile scholar, a social thinker and an able administrator. These invaluable qualities blended in such a form that projected him as a complete man. An unassuming, gentle and soft natured person he was very firm in principles and practices.

"A tall willowy figure; the face reflecting the still clearness of a mountain lake; eyes radiating brilliance; the look which compels the guilty to shy away; the willingness to guide even the most ignorant; an innate kindness reflected in the eyes; the ready smile untouched by guile, the aversion for hypocrisy, the calm unruffled nature even when attending to the most taxing problems - this is the sketch the mind's eye sees, when one thinks of Dr. Mu.Va."

Dr. Mu. Va, the illustrious son of Tamil Nadu was born on 25th April 1912. His father Munusami Mudaliar was a wealthy man from a decent agrarian family and his mother was Ammakannuammal. He hailed from a place called Velam near Walajapet. He passed the school final examination in 1928 securing 98% in Mathematics. Though he was strong in Mathematics, the unquenchable thirst for Tamil language prevailed over and directed him towards becoming a sincere student of Tamil language. After serving as a clerk in the Incometax department and later Revenue department he returned to his native place Velam due to ill health. He utilised his stay at Velam (1931-34) to study Tamil literature and qualified in the Tamil vidwan preliminary examination. He then served as a Tamil teacher in his alma mater. In 1935 he passed the vidwan final examination in First rank in the state and received cash prize of Rs. 1000 from the Thiruppanandal Mutt. Dr. Mu. Va's life at Madras started when he was appointed tutor in Tamil in Pachaiyappa's college. In 1945 he qualified for the M.O.L. degree for a dissertation on Tamil verbs. In 1946 he was awarded the doctoral degree for his research on sangam literature on the topic 'The treatment of nature in Sangam literature'. He served as the Head of department of Tamil in Pachaiyappa's college in 1948, the post he held with deft for thirteen years. In 1961 he was appointed Head of the department of Tamil, Madras University. He took charge as Vice-Chancellor of the Madurai University on February 1971. The Vooster University of America conferred on him the D.Litt. degree. Again he was the first Tamil
scholar who got such a honorary title from a foreign university. Though he was disinclined, his service period was extended for another three years from 1974. He passed away on Oct. 1974 due to cardiac arrest. Thus from the position of a clerk he rose to the prestigious position of Vice-Chancellor of University by sheer dint of hard work and merit.2

The great revival of Tamil learning under the influence of western education and the discovery of Sangam literature started in Tamilnadu during the twenties of the 20th century. It has taken thirty to forty years to blossom as a finest flower in the garden of Tamil culture. The movement that gave a new impetus to the regeneration and rededication of the Tamils to their cherished ideals and values of their hoary past is called the renaissance. Dr.Mu.Varadarajan was the child of Tamil renaissance who became a savant of Tamil scholarship and an embodiment of Tamil culture. He was an erudite Tamil scholar and prolific writer. His writings range from scholarly expositions of ancient Tamil classics to fiction and drama. They cover various fields such as novels, short stories, essays, biographies, literary criticism, linguistics etc.

Dr.Mu.Va has authored thirteen novels. Senthamarai (1946) was his first novel and Vadāmalar (1956) was the last novel written by him. Novel

R.Mohan, Dr.Mu.Va vin Nāvalgal (Chidambaram, 1981), pp.185-188.
is described as the epic of common life.\(^3\) Of all the creative literary genres, he loved the novel most. One of the reasons for his reluctance to continue as Vice-Chancellor of Madurai University for the second term was his desire to write novels. He had expressed his desire to write at least four novels after his retirement. He was described as ‘a novelist with purpose’\(^4\) and he never believed in the dictum ‘art for art sake.’ His view was that art is an instrument for the social or moral upliftment to find new ways or directions in the daily routine of life and said that he always tried to instruct in his novels.\(^5\)

Dr. Mu. Va was a true, sound and sympathetic observer of life and never went out of everyday life, for the theme of his novels. As Emile Zola points out, every novelist is equally an observer and experimentalist "The observer in him gives the fact as he has observed them, suggests the point of departure, display the solid earth on which his characters are to tread and the phenomena to develop. Then the experimentalist appears and introduces an experiment, that is to say, set his characters going in a certain story so as to show that the succession of facts will be such as the requirements of the determinism of the phenomena under examination.

\(^3\) Lathrop, Henry Burrowes, the Art of the Novelist (London, 1921), p.23.


\(^5\) Perāciriyar Mu. Varatarasarin Ilakkiyangal, Tamil oli (1966-67), p.44.
This was very true of Dr. Mu.Va. The characters of Dr. Mu.Va's novels represented almost all levels of society, most of them belong to the middle class. They were individuals with a social consciousness and a capability to think. He was aware that the world is a mixture of both good and evil and evil beings were more cautious than good ones. He was also aware that the society increases the sufferings and therefore man tries to escape from them. Therefore he created man as he was, amidst the problems and perplexities of contemporary life.

In all of Dr. Mu.Va's novels dialogues held a prominent place. He used it as an instrument to express his views and thoughts. The conversation in his novels were balanced and discussions of his characters ranged over wide fields such as marxism, capitalism, socialism, arranged marriages, education in the mother tongue, women's education, bribery and corruption, omens and superstitions, housing in city, beggar problem, the evolution of a happier of society and the temporary triumph of evil. Dr. Mu.Va. had vividly brought out the troubles and toils of women and stressed the need for more freedom and for women's education. He had condemned the system of dowry. In one of his plays ‘Agalvilakku’

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'Manimekalai' a character marries a man less educated than her simply because she is not rich enough to offer the dowry, the other alliances demanded. His views on working women were very considerate. He compares working women and the less illiterate housewives to walking in the muddy sand and on the beach respectively. Walking in the muddy sand is difficult and one is prone to fall whereas walking in the sand is easy and smooth. Hence his view is that if working women happened to go astray society should sympathise with them. His support for women's freedom is such that in case a woman finds it difficult to dance to the whims and fancies of her husband she should opt for divorce. This point he emphasises through his character 'Alli' in his novel 'Alli'. Dr. Mu. Va. is of the opinion that women should come out of their house and play a vital role in reforming society. He wanted women to travel widely and improve their knowledge, to be simple, free from the craziness for jewels and glamour and shed their superstitions. Thus Dr. Mu. Va. grasped the common aspects of human nature and picturised them in his novels. This aspect of his artistic nature gave his novels a sense of universality. In fact, his study of human beings in contemporary circumstances as against his general nature, was his creative force and original contribution. Mu. Va. was the first Tamil professor to write novels. He gave respectability and dignity to novel writing even in the world of pandits who thought this art as the hobby of those who failed to become pandits or scholar.

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Dr. Mu. Va had made his mark in the literary field as a writer of short stories. He has written seventeen short stories in two volumes to his credit. With the secundity of his imagination and profound artistic perception, great fictions were created and ancient fragmented plots were developed into new plays. He gave new interpretations to old philosophical dogmas. Like his novels, short stories were also endowed with certain purpose. Some of his excellent stories like 'Andamanam Varumā?' where satirical and narrative elements reach their pinnacle, stands as testimony to his mastery in the field. All the seventeen stories are textured as first person narratives and the narrator who is a central figure makes one feel that all the stories are separate episodes and incidents he has encountered in various occasions.  

Dr. Mu. Va has made contributions in the field of letter-writing as well. Letters have an important place in the life of an individual. Letters keep one anticipating and on its receipt kindles interest to read it. Some letters would be regarded as precious and deserves to be preserved. Dr. Mu. Va had authored five books on the literary form of letter writing. Four of them are on lofty principles and ideas to be followed in life and one about his visit to Ceylon.  


Dr. Mu. Va has not left the literary field of Drama untouched. Four plays were written and published by him and they are (1) Manasānru, (2) Kadalenge? (3) Munru Nātakangal and (4) Pachaiyappar. There was good reception for these plays and they were mostly staged in Pachaiyappas College where he was serving as Professor of Tamil. His plays like his novels and short stories were instructive in nature. The main theme of all these plays was that the modern youth give more importance to money than human values. The plays of Dr. Mu. Va emphasised the virtue of service. In his play Pachaiyappar he brought out the service rendered by the great benefactor Pachaiyappar who founded the Pachaiyappas College, Madras.¹³

Dr. Mu. Va's contribution to modern Tamil included biographical sketches also. His biographical writings are 'Gandhi Annal', 'Arignar Bernad Shaw', 'Kavignar Tagore' and 'Tiru.Vi.Ka'. Though classed under one group, the last one is basically different from the other three books. This book was a collection of occasional articles which the author wrote on the life and writings of Thiru.V.Kalyanasundaram while the remaining three relate to the life story of the subjects in a somewhat cogent manner. Dr. Mu. Va being an ideal teacher of classical literature had developed explanatory and analytical way of telling things which was evident in all his writings and biographical writings were not an exception.

¹³ Ibid., p.99.
to this. They however cannot be called as biographies in the real sense of the word. In fact Dr.Mu.Va never claimed that he wanted to write a biography. In his book on Gandhiji, he said there are hundreds of books that narrate the life of Gandhi in the biographical pattern and said he had attempted to explain the way in which the world famous man led his life.\textsuperscript{14} Again when he wrote his book on Bernard Shaw, he was fully aware that his small book would not do full justice to the life and achievements of that great man but contended that as there was no other book available in Tamil on Shaw he wanted to publish a short sketch on him.\textsuperscript{15} His biographical writings clearly showed his belief that a discussion on greatness of men would instil a thirst in the minds of young for great achievements in life.

Dr.Mu.Va contributed his share to Tamilology through his essays as well. Based on their contents essays of Dr.Mu.Va. can be classified into three groups. They are (1) literary essays based on one or more verses of the classics and other literatures, (2) essays on language and linguistics and (3) essay on general topics. Dr.Mu.Va. was a born essayist, being able to write on any subject with penetration and sympathetic understanding and tackle the problems with utmost skill and care and come to reasonable conclusions. Through his essays he not only expressed his views but sharpened the reader's power of thinking. Dr.Mu.Va. has given very many

\textsuperscript{14} M.Varadarajan, \textit{Gandhi Annal} (Madras, 1967), Preface.
\textsuperscript{15} M.Vadarajan, \textit{Arignar Bernadshaw} (Madras, 1963), Preface.
valuable suggestions in his essays. He expects the reforms to come into practice and give results immediately or at least in the near future, lest it may be too late. A few of the suggestions have really come into force, in his own time. The introduction of semester system in education, starting Tamil medium classes in colleges, abolition of Hindi as a compulsory language in schools, etc. hold proof to the realizations of his objectives envisaged through these pages.  

Mu.Va was a great literary critic as well. Criticism of any art is as old as its creation. His critical books which are twenty four in number and fall under two categories namely books on literary criticism and books of literary criticism. His short commentary to the Kural is one of his critical works which became very popular. The fact that nearly a million copies of the Kural with this commentary had been sold is a pointer to the magnitude of the usefulness of this commentary and of his service in propagating it to such a wider audience. The language and style of Dr.Mu.Va. in these work was simple, lucid and clear. It is this lucidity of style and felicity of diction in contrast to those of his great contemporaries that endeared him to an ever widening audience.

16 Annie Thomas, "Dr.Mu.Va As an Essayist" Dr.Mu.Va (ed), S.V.Subramanian, A.A.Manavalan, op. cit., p.187.

Thus Dr. Mu. Va proved to be an outstanding personality of the 20th century as a great novelist, dramatist, essayist, critic and linguist philosopher. Greatness of Dr. Mu. Va. was that he practiced what he preached and never swerved from the righteous path. He never allowed himself to be confined within the exclusive academic circle. Whenever he sensed any danger to his mother tongue or some injustice to the ideals he cherished, he did not hesitate to come out of the academic campus and to raise his voice of protest. When Hindi was sought to be imposed on the people of Tamil Nadu, he boldly joined the ranks of those who voiced their strong protest against it. To register his protest against the imposition of Hindi he refused to accept the ‘Padmasri’ award conferred on him by the Government of India in 1967. Dr. Varadarajan never sought after any office. Only after considerable persuasion he would agree to continue as Vice-chancellor of Madurai University for the second term. He never used any harsh words in his conversation with others. He possessed photographic memory and could remember names, dates and incidents very clearly. He had a good sense of humour. He never allowed physical discomfiture interfere his work. Inspite of his heart problem, he saw to it that the convocation function of Madurai University in the year 1974 was conducted as planned.

18 C. Balasubramanian, Perundagai Mu.Va, op. cit., p.121.
Dr. Mu.Va always thought of the less privileged and wanted to do something beneficial to them. He implemented the correspondence course for the first time in the history of the Madurai University which enabled the students who could not attend college during regular morning hours to acquire higher education. Once a handicapped student, he had only two fingers on his right hand, met Dr. Mu.Va after making unsuccessful attempts to join the M.A. course in some college or the other. The colleges rejected him saying he could not cope with the studies due to his handicap. Dr. Mu.Va. straight away asked him to demonstrate his capacity to write with his two fingers and when he found the boy could write really fast, he admitted him to the M.A. course. He had provided assistance to many college students in payment of tuition fees, examination fees and in providing boarding and lodging facilities to them but never made it public. It is stated that a young man who worked in the Post and telegraph department and attended the part time Tamil degree course had to abandon it as he could not remit the fees. Finding the young man who happened to be a promising student being absent, Mu.Va. learnt he had dropped out because of financial difficulty. He promptly paid the fees for the student and asked him to attend the classes. After completing his studies the former postal employer has become a professor in Malaysia.²¹ He established a

²¹ The Hindu, dated 3-12-74.
high school in the name of his intellectual and spiritual guru Thiru.V.Kalyanasundaram at Shenoy Nagar as a mark of respect and admiration for him. He gave rupees eleven thousand and the copyright of four of his books as donation. He led a very simple life and was very much against publicity. When Mu.Va was awarded the doctorate degree by the Madras University, one Mr. Shanmuga Mudaliyar who was very much interested in progress of Mu.Va asked for his permission to celebrate the event. In his reply to Mr. Raghu son of Shanmuga Mudaliyar, with all humility Dr. Mu.Va. stated that the event was not such a great one to be celebrated and asked him to give up any felicitation plan. So was his reply in the negative when his friends wanted to organise a function when he completed 60 years of age. When he was conferred a doctorate by the American University, except a handful of his intimate friends nobody knew about it. His family members came to know about it much later.

A great lover of nature, his boyhood days were spent wandering over the Javvadu hills near Tirupattur (North Arcot’ District) where he studied. As the Vice-Chancellor of the Madurai University he attached special importance to tree planting. Rows and rows of mango trees, long lines of

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23 Copy of the letter - Vide Appendix VI.
24 R.Dhandayutham "Ooruni", Tamilnesam 20/9/74, p.147.
coconut, palm, neem and guava and other species were planted during his regime to provide shady avenues\textsuperscript{25}.

Dr. Varadarajan began to repose faith in nature cure. When as a young man he tried with success the method to get rid of the consumptive disease from which he was suffering. In fact, his belief in nature cure was so steadfast that in his last days when he was suffering from a heart attack he refused to take modern medicine. Although all his three sons were allopathic doctors, he insisted on getting over the crisis by nature cure. When it failed him, he told his sons that even allopathic medicines would not succeed. This became true, he did not respond to the medicines and passed away some hours after admission to hospital. He adopted the Gandhian approach not only in attempts to curing his ailments but also in leading a simple life. He always wore khadi dress and overcame a challenge to his faith in khadi. Once as a young clerk in Tirupattur Taluk Office, he had to meet the British collector and hand over some papers to him. His colleagues in the office advised him not to wear khadi when he went to see the collector. Those were the days when the government frowned upon people who wore khadi and government employees clad in Khadi were considered to be anti-British. Young Varadarajan laughed at the ideas that

\textsuperscript{25} The Hindu, loc.cit.,
the powers - that - be should object to the dress worn by a clerk. He met the collector fully dressed in khadi\textsuperscript{26}.

Biography of great men were always helpful in shaping the growth of human race in the proper direction. The life, career and contributions of Dr. Mu. Va inspires every one to aim for lofty ideals and achievements in life. With his wit and humour, opulence of imagination, deep analytical mind, he has established a new epoch that may very well be called the age of Mu. Va.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
TWINS OF ARCOT

It is not often that two brothers, even if they were twins, succeeded in attaining an equal degree of distinction and well merited prominence. Such a rare phenomenon had occurred in the case of Arcot brothers. They were born in a middle class Vaishnavite family in Kurnool, a small village in Andhra Pradesh on October 14, 1887. Their parents were Kuppuswami Mudaliar and Sidamma. The twins were as it was customary with Hindu parents named Rama and Lakshmana. They lost their mother when they were two years old and were then brought up under the care of their father who also added a certain amount of spartan austerity. They had their school education in Kurnool. They lost their father shortly after they passed out of high school. The brothers were then brought up by the elder brother Duraiswami Mudaliar. They migrated to Madras in 1903 for further education and joined the Madras Christian College. The college was then in the noisiest part of George Town and nearby was Caithness Hall, where the brothers were admitted. Here they read indiscriminately in the expansive fields of English literature. The lectures of Swami Vivekananda in America on India's culture and religion had a great impact on them. They read the voluminous speeches of Swami Vivekananda. They organised student groups and debates on various subjects. Undoubtedly the foundation of one
Dr. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR
of their precious gifts namely powerful eloquence was laid during this time. They both successfully completed the F.A. degree course. After graduation the elder brother took up the practice of Law and the younger took to Medicine. They have both distinguished themselves and have brought name and fame to their motherland. Their lives are worthy of useful study and emulation by the younger generation.

**Dr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIÁR**

A. Ramaswami Mudaliár after taking his degrees in Arts and Law, was enrolled as an advocate in Madras High Court in 1911 and joined the chambers of Mr. Richmond, a Barrister-at-law. Legal profession was not his only love. He did not allow it to monopolise all his time, energy and talent. His enthusiasm for public work was too exuberant to be confined to the narrow limits of his profession. It soon overflowed the bounds. Forensic eloquence naturally developed into platform oratory. In 1916 when he was coming up as one of a prominent advocate of the Madras Bar, he was called to political life by Sir P. Theagaraya Chettiar and Dr. T.M. Nair who greatly admired the fluent speeches of Ramaswami Mudaliár. He joined the Justice party when it was founded in 1917 and was one of the most faithful members of his party, very staunch with its ideals. His abilities as a politician quickly gained recognition. In 1919 he was selected as a Justice
party delegate to give evidence in London before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reform for India. When the first ministry was formed under the Government of India Act of 1919 he was elected to the Madras Legislative Council (1920-23) and became the parliamentary secretary to the then Chief Minister, the Raja of Panagal. He was re-elected to the Madras Legislative Council for another term (1923-26). He was the Editor of ‘Justice’ the official organ of the party during the period 1927 to 1935. He was elected President of the Madras Municipal Corporation twice in 1928 and in 1930. He participated in the Round Table Conference of 1931. He was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly, New Delhi (1931-34) and made his mark as a legislator. But later, he had to fight the elections to the Delhi Central Legislative Assembly against a strong opponent Sri.S.Sathyamurthy a congress candidate. In this he had to face a defeat which however proved to be a turning point in his career. His intimate knowledge of public affairs, combined with his oratorical gifts attracted the attention of the British government. He was soon invited to fill high offices of the British government.

He became a member of the India Council, London (1936-37) and later adviser to the secretary of State for India, London (1937-39). He was called upon to join the Executive Council in 1939 and was incharge of Commerce till 1942. He was appointed Supply member of the Governor-
General's Executive Council 1943-46 and was in charge of Planning and Development. He filled these offices with much distinction for seven years from 1939 to 1946. When the second World War was in progress he was appointed a member in the Imperial War Cabinet presided over by Winston Churchill and represented the country in the Pacific War Council (1942-43). He led the Indian delegation to the United Nations conference in 1945. He was the Diwan of Mysore state from 1946 to 1949. He was elected the first President of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (1946 and 1947) and continued as President for the next four sessions. He was the first Asian to have this distinction. In 1946 he led the Indian Food Delegation to the U.K. and U.S.A. and in 1948 he led the Indian Delegation to the United Nations Maritime Conference on Freedom of Information. He held the office of the Vice-Chancellor of Travancore University from 1951 to 1959. He was elected to the Rajyasabha (1952-62) and his wise counsel has always been appreciated and welcomed. Thus starting from modest beginnings he had reached the height of fame. To the rare gifts of nature, he added striving and inch by inch scaled the heights of achievement. After a glorious and fruitful career he passed away in the year 1976.

The political career of Ramaswami Mudaliar had been unmistakably identified with the career of the Justice Party. He was its accredited agent with a blank cheque of opinion. He had an inherent right to fill it up and use it, hardly happened that he went wrong. The party championed the cause of non-Brahmins. The position of majority of non-Brahmins was miserable and most of them were still "drawers of water and hewers of wood". The leaders of the party had to fight against odds in securing rights to them. His work in that direction was beset with onerous difficulties. When the Montague - Chelmsford Reforms (1919) were about to be introduced, the Justice party demanded separate electorates to the non-Brahmins, similar to the one granted to muslims by the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909. Ramaswami Mudaliar was one of the delegates sent by the party to London to address the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reforms For India. After the death of T.M.Nair, the leader of the delegation, the responsibilities of leading the delegation fell on Mr.K.V.Reddy. Ramaswami Mudaliar was of great help and assistance to K.V.Reddy. With the help extended by Charles Watney, an enthusiastic journalist of Britain who was introduced to them earlier by T.M.Nair, they met the members of the Houses of Lords and Commons and put forth the cause of non-Brahmins. They also wrote articles in various papers like

Morning Post, Staffordshire Sentinel, and the Times explaining the problems of the non-Brahmins of Madras Presidency. They delivered more than thirty speeches both in mofussil and in the metropolitan cities of England including London. Ramaswami Mudaliar who was active right from the beginning, met even the members of the Scottish Party to mobilise their support. His memorandum presented to the committee was not only lucid but also precise in its content. He stated in his memorandum:

"We ask for communal representation only as a temporary expedient. It is said that the reforms themselves are only for a transitional period. We do not ask for communal electorates for all eternity. We only ask for it for a transitional period, so that, for instance when the next parliamentary committee meets and goes over the whole question, it will be quite within its powers to say that communal representation is no longer necessary."

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3 E.F.Irschick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India (Bombay, 1969), p.139.


5 T.A.V.Nathan (ed), The Justice Year Book 1929, Section IV p.18.
The oral evidence he gave before the Committee made indelible impression in the mind of Montague. Finally, when the Montague - Chelmsford Reforms were introduced, though no separate electorates was granted to non-Brahmins, they were given reservation of seats in plural constituency which was a great victory for the Justice Party. After the defeat of the Justice Party in 1926 elections, Ramaswami Mudaliar as editor of ‘Justice’, the official organ of the party took up the responsibility of preparing the party for the acceptance of future responsibilities and power. In this capacity he was ably assisted by an editorial board. Notable among them was Mr.T.A.V.Nathan. Ramaswami Mudaliar served as the editor of ‘Justice’ for a period of eight years (1927-35). The popularity of the paper Justice rose by leaps and bounds. The main characteristics of his editorial was commitment to a social change, which was the prime need of the country. He was charged with emotions and propelled by an internal urge towards determined action for ushering in a new social order, where non-Brahmins would find a new identity and acceptance in the social structure of the country. He was the first to introduce publishing of cartoons in India by giving, prominence to them in his paper.


7 *Mirror of the year* (Madras, 1987), Introduction Page XVIII.
Ramaswami Mudaliar would always be remembered as a model legislator. He was an orator first and orator last and bathed his audience with the Niagara of eloquence and never ending flow. He had a gift of concluding his speech by a powerful and appealing peroration in such felicitous terms as to make the whole house give him a loud and prolonged applause at the end. As a member of the Madras Legislative Council during two terms (1920-23) and from (1923-26) he exerted a powerful influence on the ministry of the day. He was the Parliamentary Secretary to the then Chief Minister Raja of Panagal during his first tenure. He took a deep interest in bringing into full operation the Madras Education Act of 1920. The Act made better provision for the expansion of elementary education by empowering local bodies to raise additional funds by the levy of an education tax, the government contributing a sum equal to that raised by the local body. It also provided for Compulsory Education. He was also occupied with the Madras University Act of 1923. The Act conferred substantial measure of autonomy on the University. The University was free from government’s financial control and empowered to frame its laws and was made the sole authority in the matter of affiliation of colleges. The Vice-Chancellor was made a full time officer and executive head of the

8 Sa.Su. Mani Iyer (ed), Dr.A.Ramaswami Mudaliar and Dr.A.Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar 81st Birthday Commemoration Volume, op. cit., p.36.
University. He was to be appointed by the Chancellor, the Governor of state from a panel to be recommended by the Senate. It was Ramaswamy Mudaliär who drafted this progressive measure⁹. When the Raja of Panagal introduced the Hindu Religious Endowment Bill in the Madras Legislative Council, there was much opposition to it. This was because the Bill besides providing for the better management of Hindu religious institutions, allowed the utilisation of surplus funds for educational and other useful purposes. Ramaswami Mudaliär defended the Bill answering all objections to it¹⁰. The Bill was finally passed and became an Act in 1925. It may be regarded as a drastic piece of social and religious legislation which the Justice Party enacted. It cut the very grass root of an organised system of corruption and misuse of funds that had been flourishing in temples and mutts for years past¹¹.

As Mayor of the Madras Corporation in 1928 and in 1930 he introduced various welfare measures. As early as 1920 the system of midday meals was introduced in corporation schools by the Justice Party. The system which was suspended in 1925 was revived in 1927. Ramaswami Mudaliär felt that the meals should be nutritious and brought a resolution

⁹ Ibid., p.531.
¹¹ Justice, Commemoration Day Supplement.
in 1930 in the Corporation Council which stated that both curd and dhal should be added to the midday meals served to students of elementary schools of Madras Corporation\textsuperscript{12}. He also took effective measures to provide drinking water, street lights and vaccination against communicable diseases to the residents of Madras\textsuperscript{13}. When the Simon Commission visited Madras in 1929, he along with A.T. Pannerselvam, the President of the District Board of Tanjore gave evidence before the Commission. In his evidence he insisted on provincial autonomy, separate electorate for a certain period to the non-Brahmin and bicameral legislature\textsuperscript{14}. As president of the Madras Corporation he had to face stiff opposition of the Congress members under the leadership of Mr.Sathyamurthy. On one occasion the Sathyamurthy group created confusion with noisy vociferation in the Corporation meeting, while discussing his alleged attitudes towards some of the city fathers during the Simon Commission visit to Madras, Ramaswami Mudaliar on account of pandemonium in the council was compelled to stop the meeting. But soon he arranged a public meeting at Pachayappa's grounds and explained his stand to the public and convinced them of his attitude. It was a first class marathon speech and as a piece of rhetoric it was unrivalled.

\textsuperscript{12} Proceedings of the Minutes of the Madras Corporation Council, 12th August 1930, p.3.

\textsuperscript{13} P.Rajaraman, Inaiyilla Arccottu Irattaiyar, op. cit., p.37.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p.39.
"Purple patches, flights of eloquence, Antonian irony, killing sarcasm, cogent reasoning and a hundred other tricks of rhetoric abounded in that speech"\textsuperscript{15}.

His services as a legislator on the National level began when he was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly, New Delhi (1931-1934). He had profound knowledge on a variety of subjects. He could deal with technical and dry subjects like the Army budget or Frontier problem and homely topics like communal representation in services or the grievance of railway passengers with same ease and facility. Participating in the discussion on the budget statement of the year 1931, he pointed out that a huge sum of fifty two crores of rupees was spent on defence and argued that the amount should be reduced and diverted to welfare measures. The British government realising the validity of his arguments, appointed a committee to review the military expenditure of which he was made a member. On the recommendation of the committee the defence expenditure was cut by eight and a half crores. He extended his support to the resolutions favouring the presence of Indians alone in the Indian army and the establishment of the Reserve Bank in India\textsuperscript{16}.


\textsuperscript{16} \textit{The Legislative Assembly debates (Official Report)}, Vol.II (New Delhi, 1934), p.1746.
Participating in the Round Table Conference of 1931, he recommended federation as the best set up for India. When the Federal Structure Committee was set up to draft the constitutional reform for India, Ramaswami Mudaliār was appointed a member of the committee. As a member he pointed out the defects of dyarchy in the provinces and strongly appealed for provincial autonomy. Most of his ideas were incorporated in the Government of India Act of 1935.

His contribution in international sphere speaks of him as a great humanitarian. The training he received in the legal profession stood him in good stead when, in later years, he had to advocate the cause of his country before international bodies. His measured eloquence made a deep impression on even hyper critical audiences.

"A dark, medium-sized figure, tip-toe in a blue tweed suit, with a gold-laced turban crowning the head and a gleaming red ‘Namam’ adorning the forehead; a cane hanging down from the left arm, while the right palm holds closing the left palm, his frame now swinging to the right and now to the left with the head held at a tangent all the time the silver tongue amazingly weaving its enchantment". This was the picture of Ramaswami Mudaliār on any platform.

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As the leader of the Indian delegation to the United Nations Conference in San Francisco in 1945 he emphasised the need for World peace. He assessed that no country could afford to be independent and underlined the importance of interdependence of countries. His speech won the appreciation of the members and the press which published the speech. When Bengal suffered from famine in 1948 he secured support of United States of America, by a trip to that great country and enlisted its sympathy by his persuasive talk to agree to supply food\(^\text{18}\).

As a patriotic statesman he had contributed to the integration of the country. As Diwan of Mysore he advised the Maharaja to agree for integration of Mysore with the Indian Union. Later when the Mysore congress party organised sathyagraha, demanding responsible government in the state many people were arrested. Ramaswami Mudaliār helped in bringing about a solution acceptable both to the ruler of Mysore and the people. Arrested men were let free. The role played by him was appreciated by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi praised Ramaswami Mudaliār as a great man

who had visited many countries of the world and whose concern that people
should not suffer had helped in bringing about the solution.¹⁹

Similarly he played a crucial role in the integration of Hyderabad
with the Indian Union. In 1948, with the lapse of British paramountcy
Hyderabad declared itself to be an independent state. The Government of
India sent its army and annexed Hyderabad with the Indian Union. The
Nizam appealed to the United Nations against this act of the Indian
Government. Fully aware of the brilliant oratory and knowledge of
Ramaswami Mudaliār in public affairs the Indian Government selected him
to address the security council on this issue. Ramaswami Mudaliār skilfully
handled the issue. He asserted that Hyderabad was not a sovereign state
by itself to appeal to the United Nations. He also described the annexation
of Hyderabad as a police action to restore law and order in the states
bordering Hyderabad and won the case for India²⁰.

His contributions in the field of education were also many. As Vice
Chancellor of Travancore University he laid the foundation of the
University building, encouraged research students by grant of fellowship

¹⁹ The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol.89 (Ahmedabad, 1983),
Publication division Government of India, p.343.

²⁰ P.Rajaraman, Inaiyilla Arcattu Iraittaiyar, op. cit., p.68.
and other incentives to them. To fulfil the educational needs of the people
he granted permission for starting more than twenty colleges in the
state.\textsuperscript{21} He has been associated with the Council of Scientific and
Industrial Research and played an important role in its establishment. As
a member of the governing body as well as chairman of the Executive
Council of National Laboratories, like the National Physical Laboratory and
as Chairman of the Third Reviewing Committee he played an important
role in the development of science in India. He had contributed to the
Industrial scene as well. As Chairman and Director of about twenty
industrial units he had helped to build up strong companies and had
enriched the industrial sphere\textsuperscript{22}.

The contributions of Dr.A.Ramaswami Mudaliär in every sphere of
activity has been truly great. From the Mayorship of the Municipal
Corporation, Madras to the Executive Council in Delhi, from Diwanship of
Mysore to the Vice-Chancellor of Travancore University and from
journalism to shipping is indeed a great field of diverse experiences and
responsibilities. No wonder many degrees and honours were conferred on

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.71-72.

\textsuperscript{22} Sa.Su. Mani Iyer (ed), Dr.A.Ramasami Mudaliär and
Dr.A.Lakshmanasami Mudaliär 81st Birthday Commemoration
Volume, \textit{op. cit.}, p.105.
Dr. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIAR
him. He was awarded the title of Rao Bahadur in 1930. He was Knighted in 1937 and made K.C.I.E., in 1942. He has been the recipient of honorary degrees from British and Indian Universities. His dynamic personality, amiable disposition and above all his abiding love for the upliftment of masses bear eloquent testimony to his astounding popularity. The present generation owes a great deal to Dr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar for the services rendered by him. It is a great source of inspiration and his life should inspire confidence and encourage everyone to rise by merit true to the saying that ‘Chiefly the mould of a man’s fortune is in his own hand’.

Dr. A. LAKSHAMANASWAMI MUDALIAR

A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar entered the Madras Medical College in 1905 and took his Medical Degree in the year 1909 at the age of twenty two. He entered the Provincial Medical Service in October 1909, when he had just completed his twenty second year. The first year of his service was spent in the district of Madurai. He was then transferred to Madras and posted as Assistant Surgeon to Lt. Col. Donovan. It was undoubtedly an assistance of great value to the enthusiastic doctor. After spending a couple of years on the surgical side of the General hospital he joined the Government Hospital for Women and Children in 1912, where as it turned
out later his great life work was laid. After a couple of years he was posted to the Maternity Hospital at Royapuram, where he worked for six years with conspicuous success. He rejoined the Government Hospital for Women and Children Egmore in 1922 and he had served the hospital without interruption for over quarter of a century. During this period the prestige of the hospital had spread throughout the East and had commanded admiration in the West. In 1922, he secured his Doctorate in Medicine. By the year 1928, Dr. Lakshmanaswami's professional distinction was so clearly recognized, that he was deputed by the Government of Madras for twelve months tour of Europe. It was his first visit to the West. In 1934 Dr.Lakshmanaswami was appointed professor of clinical obstetrics in Madras Medical College, in addition to his other duties. In 1939 he was appointed Superintendent of Women and Children Hospital Egmore. In the same year he was appointed Principal of Madras Medical College the first Indian to have this honour. It was in fact a late recognition of his talent. The reason was that the higher posts in the Madras Medical Service were considered the exclusive privilege of the Indian Medical Service (I.M.S) the members of which were all Europeans. When Lt. Col Plumptre was given the principalship in suppression of seniors like Dr. Guruswami, Dr.Tirumurthy and Dr. Lakshmanaswami it aroused such an amount of discontent, and indignant letters appeared in the press that later when Col.
Plumper went on furlough in 1939 Dr. Lakshmanawami was appointed Principal of Madras Medical College. He served as the Principal till 1942 when he became the Vice Chancellor of Madras University. He served the University in that capacity for a quarter of century. He was nominated to the Madras Legislative Council in 1946. He was elected to the Council twice in 1952 and 1958 and as a member of the council he championed the cause of democracy. The great personality who rendered invaluable service to people in general and to women folk in particular by saving them from the jaws of death during confinement, passed away in his eighty seventh year on 15th April 1974.

Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar was a doctor of international repute and was rightly considered as one of the most eminent gynaecologist in the world. His contributions in the field of medicine were unparalled. He was considered as an able and efficient doctor whose very presence would bring up cheer in the face and confidence on the minds of his patients. He has rightly been hailed as 'the safest midwife'. His invaluable services were available to people of all sections of the society and he had delivered

newborn babies of all social order from a street urchin to that of a prince and minister of cabinet rank.

At a very early stage in his career he came to realise that the conditions under which midwifery was practiced in the country was primitive and that the mortality rate of young mothers and children was very high. He wanted to rouse public awareness on the subject and to provide relief to the mothers especially of the labouring classes. This thought made him to be instrumental in the starting of a Creche at the Raja Sir. Ramaswami Mudaliar Lying in Hospital in 1918. When National Health and Baby Week was organised he was chosen as the secretary. He was also responsible for arranging annual health week and lectures being delivered both in the city and as well as mofusil areas on matters pertaining to health. In 1930 he conducted a detailed survey of Maternal Mortality in the city of Madras and the report presented was the first of its kind in India. All these innovative measures of Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar were very helpful in the task of educating the public on matters of health. By organising the First All India Obstetric and Gynaecological Congress in Madras in 1936, he contributed to the widening of knowledge in that field and encouraged further research in the subject. Following this example, many

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surgeons and physicians organised similar conferences in their respective specialties.

He made the best use of any opportunity that came in his way and utilised it for the cause of Public Health. He was deputed by the Government of Madras in 1928 to Europe to visit and observe the developments and improvements in the hospitals of the continent. During this trip he participated in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Congress held at Edinborough. On his return to India, on the basis of knowledge gained as a result of the tour, he implemented many changes in the undergraduate, post graduate and research training programme of the Hospital For Women and Children at Egmore. He recommended research courses in Rickets and Eclampsia with the aid of Radiology and Bio-chemistry. He also recommended the starting of an Indian Universities Medical Magazine. Most fruitful of all the recommendations, he persuaded the University to introduce Diploma Course in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. It was the first Diploma Course in the Faculty of Medicine of any university in India. In 1930 when the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists was established he was elected a Foundation Fellow of the Institution.


He has the honour of being the first Indian to be appointed as Principal of Madras Medical College. This opportunity again was utilised by him to the best to raise the standard of medical education in the State. He was responsible for introducing a Degree in Pharmacy, the first of its kind in Indian universities. He also introduced the system of case recording by the students. In his sustained effort to maintain a high standard, he had made it a cardinal point of his policy that hospital and college should work in union and be located in the same campus. This would save much of time for both professors and students. Moreover the University decided at his insistence that every medical graduate must spend one year in hospital internment. In his opinion health and life were too precious to be exposed to the blunders of raw inexperience 27.

In 1943 the Government of India set up a Committee known as the Bhore Committee to report on the post war plans for medical relief and public health, Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar was invited to serve in the committee in 1944. He was the chairman of the Medical Education Sub-Committee and Chairman of one of the touring committee. He was entrusted with the task of reviewing the health condition prevalent in Bengal and the neighbouring state. On survey he found that there was possibility of

outbreak of contagious diseases like small pox and cholera in the city of Calcutta and was surprised to find there was no separate hospital for treatment of people affected by communicable diseases. He warned that unless preventive steps were taken it would lead to disaster. He also expressed his views that government should spend more on department of Public Health and Education. He was appointed Chairman of many Committees to implement the reports of the Bhore Committee. He travelled to Europe and America in order to study post graduate medical training. He returned with the determination to do all in his power to secure the development of medical research. In 1948, he along with other members of the Upgrading Committee visited representatives of the faculties of Medicine, interviewed Ministers for Health and reported that ‘a minimum standard of efficiency should be made available in all Universities in the interest of the profession’. He recommended the setting up of an All India Council of post graduate Education on the pattern of the American College of Surgeons. The function of this council would be to advise on the fitness of college to be a centre of post graduate education. His persuasive power based on large experience, sound judgement and factual knowledge commended his suggestion to the acceptance of Government. He held a conference of post graduate medical education at Madras in 1949 where he insisted on upgradation of many departments. A few months later as a result of this
conference, the Government of India appointed a Council of post graduate Medical Education. Many departments of Madras Medical College were upgraded and inaugurated by the then Health Minister Rajkumari Amrit Kaur in 1951. In her speech she referred to the "great interest enthusiasm and sustained drive of Dr. Mudaliar" which was welcomed with a great ovation.

Dr. Lakshmanawami Mudaliar was not only an expert medical practitioner but a talented teacher as well. In 1934 when he was appointed Professor of Clinical Obstetrics in Madras Medical College, medical students greatly benefitted by his lectures. His lectures disclosed an unsuspected talent for clear, patient and interesting exposition. The graphic description of cases at ward rounds and the diagnostic pitfalls which he was impressed on the students and his skill in the operation theatre attracted students from different parts of the country and even from abroad. He wanted the students to keep in mind that learning is a continuous process and that they should never be stagnant at any point of time. He wanted them take note of rapid advance made in the field of medicine. On the post graduate level his method was to make the students learn by themselves by observation. In his opinion this training would keep the future doctor a

\[\text{Ibid., p.38.}\]
professional man and not a tradesman. He has authored the first Indian Text Book on Obstetrics which ran into several editions. It was appreciated and accepted a Text Book in foreign countries a well\textsuperscript{29}.

From a very early stage in his career he took keen interest in the welfare of the members of the service. He was one of the founder members of the Madras Medical Association in 1912 and served the Association in different capacities as Secretary, Vice President and President till 1942. In that capacity he took efforts to secure the rights and status of members of the profession. By his consistent pressure he went a long way to secure the Indianisation of Madras Medical Service. As a member of the Indian Medical Council for many years since its establishment in 1933, he strived to raise the standard of medical teaching and uniformity of high standard among medical practitioners. In his opinion there should be only one entrance to the medical profession and wanted the abolition of L.M.P. course. The Good Enough Committee went into the matter and recommended that the entrance to medical profession should be through the University only. The Minister of Health, Dr. T.S.S.Rajan agreed to the recommendations and the Government passed an order in 1937 abolishing the Licentiate Course. At the

\textsuperscript{29} P. Rajaraman, \textit{Inavilla Arcattu Irattaivar, op. cit.}, pp.78-80.
same time Stanley School and Vellore Medical School were raised to the grade of Medical Colleges. It is rightly observed

"there may have been a few medical men extremely distinguished in their specialties, there may have been a few noted medical administrators, greater than Sir. A.L.Mudaliär, but a combination of Medical Education, Medical Administration, Medical Authorship and Medical Statesmanship like that in Sir. A. Lakshmanawami Mudaliär has never occurred in this country in any other individual before and nor likely to occur in the near future."

Important as his services in Medicine were, equally significant were his achievements in the field of education. He had been the Vice Chancellor of Madras University for twenty five years. His record of service as Vice Chancellor for quarter of a century in a single university is

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unparalleled in the annals of universities in India and unique for any university in the World. The Madras University made great strides in all directions under his wise stewardship. To meet the new requirements of the changing times fresh diploma and degree courses of study in new branches of learning were started. Veterinary Science, Pharmacy, Nursing, Home Science and Master of Education were the degrees in the establishment of which he took interest and played a prominent part. Journalism, International Law, French, German, Business Management and Statistics were the faculties in which diploma courses were introduced. The major contribution of Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliār was the inauguration of the Alagappa Chettiar College of Technology and the starting of course of Technology in Chemical Engineering, Textile Technology and Leather Technology.\(^{31}\)

There was increase in the number of colleges affiliated to the University during his period of office as Vice Chancellor. Permission was granted for starting of four Engineering and two Medical Colleges, thirteen Teacher Training Institutions and two Colleges of Physical Training. While permission was granted for starting of new colleges, relevant condition of infrastructure facilities was insisted and a commission sent by the University would make on the spot study and submit its report. He was very particular that the influx of numbers must not be allowed to affect the standard. On its physical side. the contribution of Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliār was the magnificent centenary buildings which owe their

\(^{31}\) Collected speeches of Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliār (Madras, 1957), p.20.
existence to his untiring zeal. He had concern for the welfare of the teaching community and succeeded against odds in revising scales of pay of college lecturers.\textsuperscript{32}

He had been a fearless advocate of the academic independence of educational institution. While presiding over University bodies like the Senate ad Academic Council his intimate knowledge of the regulations was evident. He was never discourteous to any member. Even when ruling a motion out of order, he used to be gentle and polite. Madras University is deeply indebted to him for expanding the wide range of its horizon. His statue in the university campus is a tribute of the public to his valuable services in the manifold activities of his public service.\textsuperscript{33}

The culmination of Dr. Mudaliär's contribution to Education was his report on Secondary Education, known as Mudaliär Commission Report. The Commission consisted of Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliär as the chairman and eight members. It did its work in an exhaustive manner. Not only members of the academic bodies but each and every person who was interested in education were consulted. The recommendation of the Commission with reference to the duration of secondary education, reorganisation of school curriculum, creation of multipurpose schools and the bringing into existence of Pre-University course where humanities and science would be studied side by side were salutary and timely\textsuperscript{34}.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p.136.

\textsuperscript{33} J.G. Kannappan, \textit{Maruthuva Kalvi Ulagil Tamilargal}, opcit., p.46.

Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliār has his contributions in the field of politics as well. He had the distinction of being in politics without being a politician. As the leader of the opposition in the Madras Legislative Council he was bold and honest in expression of his views. His constructive criticism was acknowledged by the treasury bench. Dr. C. Rajagopalachari, the then chief minister of Madras in 1953 expressed the sentiments of the council as follows.

"We have now a powerful link for co-operation not only when possible, but I would say except when impossible. a just opposition and the help of a search light, as has been so aptly put by Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliār to see ourselves as others see us. If we go wrong Dr. Mudaliār and his powerful group will help us with their wisdom, with their experience and with their objective outlook; and I am sure the business of the Council here after will be even better than it has been."

35 Collected speeches of Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliār, op. cit., p.36.
His speeches underlined constitutional principle. He criticised the absenteeism of Ministers and emphasised the principle of collective responsibility of the Ministry where every Minister who is a member of the Cabinet is responsible for the action of every other Minister. He never hesitated to vehemently reprimand the Government when the democratic procedure was violated in the Council. In 1950 when the democratic procedure was violated in the case of the alleged malpractice of a certain minister, he warned that this threat to the democratic form of government would cut at the foundation of democracy and must be opposed at all costs. He also underlined the necessity for Bicameral Legislature. He was a strong supporter of the policy of Prohibition and was against the exemption of armed forces from Prohibition. In the day of rationing when it was unnecessarily prolonged, the public was subject to hardship. He argued for and was successful in bringing the 'decontrols' that brought much relief to the public. State Athletic Associations were benefitted by his pleading that they should be exempted from paying the heavy entertainment tax. Similarly he came to the defence of aided colleges by defeating the move of the Government in 1948 to impose Advisory Committee on them. He pointed out that more than half of the University students were being educated in these colleges and the move might be disastrous for the very education it was thought to benefit. He was against hasty passage of bills and urged the
Government to appoint select committees where the bill would be discussed in detail. As a non-party man he expressed thoughtful opinions on various problems on the floor of the house without fear or favour. His courage and practical wisdom have won respectful hearing for his views from all sections of the House. His membership of the Council had its effects on the Administration of the Province.36

He had engaged himself in various social service activities. As Member and President of Pachayappa’s Trust Board he secured lands and grants for the construction of new building at chetput for the Pachayappa’s College. It was a matter of universal gratification when in 1940 the Governor Sir Arthur Hope, officially and ceremoniously presided at the opening of the new building.37 He had travelled widely and frequently in Europe and America as a member of the UNESCO and WHO, the Common Wealth Vice-Chancellors Association and on other deputations. He utilised those visits to study the educational institutions of different countries and use knowledge gained in improving the standard of education in India. He had been associated with the Madras branch of the Indian Red Cross

36 Ibid., p.37.
Society for twenty four years. He held high tradition of the Red Cross and his towering personality inspired the workers to undertake the humanitarian tasks with ease and zeal.\textsuperscript{38}

In recognition of his valuable services to the country many awards were conferred on him. In 1928 he was conferred the title of \textbf{Rao Bahadur}. He was elected a foundation Fellow of the Royal college of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists when it was first established in 1930, Sir Kedarnathdas being the only other Indian to have this rare honour. In recognition of his contribution in the field of medical science, he was elected a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons in 1941. Universities and scientific bodies all over the globe have conferred on him honorary degrees of Doctor of Laws, Doctor of Science, Doctor of Letters and Doctor of Civil Laws\textsuperscript{39}. Success had marked every milestone of his life. The reason for success was his unremitting toil with no thought of self interest. From dawn to dusk he was on his feet thinking, deciding, counselling or comforting and treating his patients all of which have made him a remarkable and unique personality. His contributions to society have made his life worthy of emulation.

\textsuperscript{38} Sa.Su.Mani Iyer, (ed) \textit{Dr.A.Ramaswami Mudaliār and Dr.A.Lakshmanaswami Mudaliār. 81st Birthday Commemoration Volume, op. cit., p.232.}

Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār was the doyen of medicine and saviour of the poor. He was born on 7th November 1880 in a middleclass family in a village near Bangalore. His father Ramaswami Mudaliār died when Gurusawai was very young, and he was brought up by his mother Durgamma. He had his early education in Srirangapatnam and graduated from the Central College Bangalore in 1902. His academic record was a shining example to his fellow students as well as to the future generation. He passed in First class in his Matriculation and Intermediate examinations. He won a Mysore Government scholarship for studying medicine at the Madras Medical College where he came out with flying colours winning the Chipperfield Gold Medal for Surgery. Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār entered Mysore Government service in 1909 as officer in charge of anti-plague campaign. In 1910 he joined Madras Medical Service standing first in the competitive examination for recruitment of Civil Assistant Surgeons. First he served in Tanjore Hospital. By dint of honest, loyal, and sincere work and devotion to duty, he rose to high eminence in the official cadre as also in the medical profession. In 1915 he was transferred to General Hospital, Madras. In 1920 he took the Degree of Doctorate of Medicine (M.D) the very year when it was introduced in Madras University. In the same year he was promoted as professor of Materia Medica. This
post had till then been reserved for senior European officers of the India Medical Service (I.M.S.) and Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār had the unique distinction of being the first Indian to occupy the Chair of Medicine. In 1927-28 a Chair in Therapeutics was created and he was appointed to that post. In the following year he was deputed to Great Britain to make a comparative study of the methods of teaching in Therapeutics. He returned to India in March 1930 and served as professor of Therapeutics till he retired in 1937. After retirement he was appointed as the Honorary Director of Indigenous System of Medicine and he held that post till June 1955. Besides being a member of the Senate and Syndicate of the Madras University over a decade he was also a nominated member of the Madras Legislative Council. He was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science by the Madras University at a special convocation held in 1957 in connection with the centenary celebrations of the Madras University. He passed away in the year 1958.

Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār led a simple life and his name was a household name in South India for many decades. He had left indelible prints in the field of medicine, education, philanthropy and social service. His outstanding contribution was his service to the suffering humanity without distinction of caste or creed or financial status. He had a sharp clinical acumen and tackled cases like Sherlock Holmes. He had a peculiar knack of

arriving at the diagnosis. He diagnosed at first sight and steps were taken to confirm the original clinical picture. Occasions were numerous when he had come out with diagnosis with amazing accuracy. As stated by Thiruvalluvar in his Kural, he was a standing example of a physician who diagnosed the disease by its symptoms, found out the reasons for the disease and cured them by prescribing the correct medicine. The following couplet gives description of such an efficient physician.

"The skillful treatment of a disease consists in identifying the symptoms and causes, As well as possible remedies, before choosing the best"

The patients never had to worry how much money was needed to seek the advice of the saint like knowledgeable doctor. Money was placed in a container on his table, the patient not showing what he was giving as fees, the doctor not showing interest to know what was given. His house at chetpet was almost a shrine where the sick came for the healing touch and leave their offering as a token. He used to keep the doors open in the morning from 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. Sitting on the window still he would be treating the patients who used to come in hundreds everyday at this prescribed time. He was a man of punctuality, never indulging in unwanted talk with his patients, not wanting too many relatives around the patients when he was examining and not taking a too long a time to arrive


The Sunday observer, April 22, 1956.
at conclusions. Guruswami Mudaliār was a complete physician who treated man as a whole. He hated to consider a disease as belonging to the exclusive domain of any particular specialist. While he was not against specialisation, he invariably wanted specialist to co-ordinate with the General Physician.

Mr. R. Venkatraman, the then President of India, participating in Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār’s Post Centenary Celebrations held at Madras had paid the following tribute to his diagnostic skill.

"Medicine was Dr. Guruswamy Mudaliyār’s chosen line but his acumen for correct diagnosis seem to flow not from the Book Knowledge but from an intuitive insight into the human anatomy. Numerous in fact innumerable patients in distress and disease came to Dr. Guruswamy Mudaliyār. They had immense faith in his skills and his ability. His very presence inspired confidence in the patients'.

President’s (R. Venkatraman) speech delivered at the function of Dr. Guruswami Mudaliyār’s post Centenary Celebration held at Kalaivanar arangam on 24.12.90. Arivuchudar. (Madras, Jan. 1991).
There were many instances of his skill of unmatching excellence in the art of diagnosing. Many patients were relieved of their perennial health problems once they came to Dr. Guruswami Mudaliar for treatment. Her problem was constant headache which was worse during the evening and night compared to the day time. After listening carefully, Dr. Guruswami asked the lady to remove her nose studs which were of a very high quality diamond and shining immensely. This had given rise to unnecessary ophthalmic problem leading to persistent headache. The headache vanished promptly on the removal of nose studs. Mr. Sreeprakasa the then Governor of Madras had come out with his personal experience of the diagnostic capacity of the doctor. He had stated that.

"Dr. M.R. Guruswami had great skill for diagnosis and I recall this with gratitude that on one occasion when all Doctors failed to find the cause of a fever that was persisting, Mr. M.R. Guruswami whom Rajaji insisted, I should consult caught the source of the trouble almost immediately with the help of his Stethoscope".


6 Ibid., p.13.
Thus Dr. Guruswami Mudaliär was a Physician of fame among the rich and the poor, the elite and the weaker sections. He was adorned by the poor and the rich were greatful to him.

As a teacher of medicine he was kind and considerate. He never lost temper with the patients nor with students. His university extension lectureres delivered in 1937 on tuberculosis were greatly appreciated. They were full of wisdom which cannot be learnt through study of books. He was an outstanding and dedicated teacher. Many of his students became well known doctors in Madras city and elsewhere in Tamil Nadu. His students were very much impressed by his sincerity, dedication and punctuality. Whether sun or rain, bad weather or good weather, he would always enter the main ward of the Madras Medical College at the stroke of 10.30 in the morning. Within a short time after entering the ward, there will be a huge crowd of students around him anxious to learn something from the great master. He was a teacher who could hold the students spell bound from the minute they came in contact with him till he chose to dismiss them. He always kept himself upto date and used to devour the latest journals and

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7 Indian Express, 5.4.1956.
8 Arivuchudar, Dr. Guruswami Mudaliär Nútränuvila Cirappu Malar (Madras, 1980), p. 31.
periodicals voraciously. He was a staunch and unrelenting champion of the cause of his fellow physicians and rendered yeomen service for them in his capacity as the President of the All India Association of Physicians. In the first conference of All India Association of Physicians held at Delhi in 1947, in his presidential address, Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār emphasized the fact that free medical service should be provided to every Indian citizen. He also wanted certain changes to be made in medical education. He recommended more hours of practical study and a cut in the lecture hours for the medical students. Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār had great regard for Indian medical systems like Ayurveda, Siddha etc. and appreciated the services of medical professionals of those departments. He had been to Kerala once to unveil a statue of Dr. Variar a reputed doctor in Ayurveda Medicine. It is but natural that after retirement he was appointed Director of Indigenous System of Medicine and he held the post till 1955. In recognition of his services to this institution a block of buildings had been named after him.

Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār was a great humanist. His munificent donations was very helpful in implementing the free mid-day meals in

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11 Arivu Chudar, Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār Nūtrāndu Viḷa Cirappu Malar, op. cit., p.79.
Tondaimandala Tuluva Vellala School functioning at Minst street, Chennai. The idea of free mid-day meals for the school going poor children was conceived by a teacher of the school Sri Vemoor Narasimhachar in 1933. People would never have thought at that time that in future such a scheme would be implemented by the Government in all schools in the state. The noble venture was named as ‘Deena Bala Rakshana Sangam’ which meant that it was an association to protect the poor children. In the beginning the teacher himself sought the benvolent people of George Town and was able to collect donations for the poor feeding. It must have been some divinely inspiration that had induced the teacher to seek the help of Doctor Guruswami Mudaliär, the noble soul of the Thuluva Vellala Community. At that point of time Dr. Guruswami Mudaliär was not in any way connected with the Tondaimandala Thuluva Vellala School Committee. Yet the teacher sought his help to seek some donation. At first Dr. Guruswami wanted to have a look at the accounts of the scheme, if there were any. The teacher promptly brought the accounts that he had been maintaining and showed it to Dr. Guruswami. The doctor was satisfied with the accounts and asked the teacher to meet him next day at the Sub-Registrar’s office. When the teacher met the doctor at the appointed time, great excitement and surprise were in store for him. The doctor handed him over the documents relating to the donation of a big bungalow at Kenneth Lane, Egmore to the ‘Deena Bala Rakshana Sangam’ of the
Tondaimandala Thuluvavellala High School. It was a pleasant surprise to the teacher who would never have dreamt of such a big fortune to the Association he had started. Such was the generosity of Dr. Guruswami. The bungalow was later disposed in 1946, and Rs. 45,000 the amount realised through the sale has been invested to feed about 300 pupils daily. Such was his spontaneous generosity given without any publicity. There can be no other parallel to the benevolence of Dr. Guruswami.

Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār had made another major contribution in the field of education. In 1946 he became a member of the Tondaimandala Thuluvavellala High School and later its President. He found the school could not accommodate the growing student population and wanted to do some thing concrete to avoid the disappointment of students who could not get admission in the school. He donated more than one and a half acres of land in Ammankoil street, Geroge town and built on it a spacious school building with three wings and a good sports field. It cost him more than one and a half lakh rupees. He personally supervised the construction finding time amidst his medical practice. The school was subsequently named as Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār Tondiamandalam Thuluva Vellala High School and was inaugurated in 1951. It was a great boon to the middle class people of

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12 Arivuchudar Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār Nūtrāndu Viḷa Cirappu Malar, op. cit., p.134.
George Town area that fulfilled their educational needs. Mr. Justice P.V. Rajamannar in his inaugural address paid the following tribute to Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār.

"Undoubtedly, all the credit for this achievement must go to two persons. First to Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār, the President of the Board of Management whose generosity and charity cannot be sufficiently praised. But for his magnificent donations, the building would have been merely castles in the air. If this new branch of the school is called after him, it is but in token of the gratitude of the Board of Management for the munificent help given by him".

The other person who spent all his time day and night to make the new building scheme success was Mr. Sriraman, Honorary Secretary of the School Committee. ¹³

Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār had great regard for teachers and their service to society which he had upheld in his following benediction.

"My best wishes to those worthy teachers who have dedicated their lives to give the wealth of learning to the children entrusted to their care. This is a wealth which grows when expended, ennobles the giver and enlightens the recipient, a wealth which cannot be stolen by any mortal thief, a wealth which befriends its possessor wherever he may be - country or company making no difference."\textsuperscript{14}

Besides medicine and education Dr. Guruswami Mudaliär had made contributions in other fields as well. He was deeply religious and had done unostentatious work for the renovation of temples and the pilgrims to Palani and Tiruttani will ever remember his name. He renovated the Palani temple gopuram and constructed steps to facilitate pilgrims to go up the Tiruttani hills\textsuperscript{15} He was a devoted disciple of savants like Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharishi, Jagadguru Chandrasekara Swamigal. On one occasion he was asked to treat Sri Aurobindo who had fractured his leg.

\textsuperscript{14} Arivuchudar, Dr. B. M. Sundaravadhanan Avargalin Thonnû rà vadhu Pirandanāl Cirappu Malar (Madras, 1990), p. 9.

\textsuperscript{15} The Mail, April 5, 1956.
He wanted to administer anaesthesia to Sri Aurobindo before carrying out the operation. But not only the patient declined to subject himself to anaesthesia but also asked the doctor to carry out the operation. The operation was conducted neatly without the patient showing the least bit of pain - a tribute to the spiritual greatness of the patient as well as for the surgical skill of the doctor\textsuperscript{16}. He had served as one of the Directors of Indian Bank, where he did good work and his decisions were respected. He was also a Director of the Madras Co-operative Milk Supply Union. He shunned publicity. In commemoration of his great services, a public meeting was held in Rajaji Hall, Madras in 1956, When many eminent personalities like Mr.Sreeprakasa the then Governor of Madras, Mr.C. Rajagopalachari, Mr.K. Kamaraj, Rajah.Sir.M.A.Muthia Chettiar and other paid high tributes to his eminent qualities, Dr.Guruswami Mudaliār who was very simple and who shunned publicity did not participate in the meeting\textsuperscript{17}.

In recognition of Dr. Guruswami Mudaliār's service to the society, the general public had erected his statue at the entrance of the Madras Medical College in 1962. Beneath his statue was engraved his motto \textit{"Service Before Self"} Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliār the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras unveiled the statue. Posterity would remember Dr.Guruswami as a friend of the poor, an eminent physician and as a great benefactor to the cause of education in Tamil Nadu. His services have been rightly summed up by Dr.A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliār in his following condolence message at the passing away of the great physician.

\textsuperscript{16} Dr. Guruswamy Mudaliār Post Centenary Celebration, \textit{op. cit.}, p.6.

\textsuperscript{17} Arivchudar, Dr.Guruswami Mudaliār Nūtrāndu Viḷa Cirappu Malar, \textit{op. cit.}, p.90.
"Dr. Gurumuswami Mudaliar's demise creates a void in the medical profession that can never be filled adequately. His remarkable personality and his enthusiasm for the cause of the suffering humanity, particularly the poor, had always endeared him to all classes of people. As a teacher he was outstanding and many are his pupils spread all over India who will regret his demise. He was a staunch fighter for the rights of Indian doctors and if all that he has done during his service in the state are revealed, it will be realised how strongly he stood for the rights of Indian doctors against powerful members of the Indian Medical Service of foreign domination. He was the first President of the All India Association of Physician and was for a long time connected with the Medical Council of Madras, where he did outstanding work"\textsuperscript{18}.

Thus by his contributions he had set himself as an example for emulation by the future generations.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid}, p.57.
Mr. V.L. ETHIRAJ
Thiru V. L. Ethiraj was born on 18th July 1890 in the city of Vellore in North Arcot District in a vaishnairte family. His father Lakshmanasami Mudaliar was working as a storekeeper in Arakonam section of Southern Railway. But later he moved to Vellore and turned into a big building contractor. V. L. Ethiraj showed great respect and abundant affection towards his mother Ammayeeammal. V. L. Ethiraj was the second son in the family. He passed his Matriculation examination in 1908. His father died before the results were published. Young Ethiraj had to decide the future course of education by himself. He joined the Presidency College Madras in 1909 where he studied for one year only. During this period he received private coaching from Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Professor of Philosophy who later became the President of the Indian Republic. V. L. Ethiraj proceeded to England, qualified himself as a Barrister and returned to India in 1913.

Mr. V. L. Ethiraj decided to start his career in the legal profession as an apprentice under an eminent barrister Mr. Chamier. As per regulations he was expected to officially register under Mr. Chamier on 23rd November 1913. He was waiting for the arrival of his senior. Barister chamier, a cautious and conscientious person used to have a bicycle in his car to use it in the event of a break down of his car to reach the court at the correct
time. But on that day both the vehicles let him down. Hence he could not reach the court on time. But strangely another senior laywer Dr. Swaminathan was waiting for his junior to join him as an apprentice. Things turned out differently Dr. Swaminathan suggested that he would take Mr. V. L. Ethiraj as his apprentice and he requested the Chief Justice to permit Mr. V. L. Ethiraj name to be included in the list of Lawyers of the High Court. By sheer chance Mr. V. L. Ethiraj became the Junior Lawyer of Dr. Swaminathan, Dr. Swaminathan had studied law in London and later obtained doctorate from Harvard University. Mr. V. L. Ethiraj’s meeting with Dr. Swaminathan was not only accidental probably providential. Mr. V. L. Ethiraj considered Dr. Swaminathan as friend, philosopher and guide. At a later date Mr. Swaminathan’s son Govind Swaminathan also became a lawyer and he worked as a junior under Mr. V. L. Ethiraj. In 1948, when the Ethiraj College for Women was founded Mr. Ethiraj wanted Dr. Swaminathan’s wife, Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan to function as a member in the first Administrative Council of the college. Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan accepted the invitation and played a key role in laying a firm foundation for the future development of the college. Thus the contact which began between Mr. V. L. Ethiraj and Dr. Swaminathan proved to be life long and useful.

The legal career of Mr. V.L. Ethiraj can be broadly divided into four stages

1. From 1913-1937 he served as Junior Defence Lawyer and practiced cases pertaining to criminal law under eminent lawyers like Nujent Grant, J.C. Adam, E.S. Osborne and Dr. S. Swaminathan.

2. He was appointed as Public Prosecutor and held that post from 1937-1950.

3. From 1950 - 1955 he practiced as a Defence Laywer.

4. From 1955 to 60 he practiced with Mr. V.T. Rangasami Iyengar as a partner in appearing for criminal cases.

His long and illustrious career as a lawyer was for a period of forty seven years. It came to an end when he died in at the age of seventy. The name and fame he achieved during this period was unparallel in his field. The soaring heights he attained and continuous stay at the top speaks volume of his capabilities as a laywer. His choice of criminal cases was a wise decision since in those days many lawyers hesitated to appear for or against persons involved in criminal offences fearing consequences of the case. Though Ethiraj excelled as criminal lawyer, it is wrong to assume that
he never practiced civil cases. As an Apprentice under Nujent Grant he had assisted in the conduct of civil cases.

Even after practicing as a lawyer in High court he did not hesitate to appear for a case in Chengleput District Sessions Court in 1950. This was after having established himself as a famous lawyer. According to him the welfare of a client, should be the main concern of a lawyer. Hardwork, grace of god, indepth study of the case, brief arguments and simplicity were the chief factors responsible for his Himalayan success in the legal career.

Testimony for his genius in handling criminal cases was vividly portrayed in number of cases. A rare feat had happened after few years of his practice. He himself recalled the incident as a proud moment to cherish in his career. Four prominent lawyers of that time Mr.S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Sir Alladi Krishnasami Iyer, E.Srinivasa Iyengar and T.R. Ramachandra Iyer came to Mr.V.L. Ethiraj’s house. It was a pleasant surprise to him. With all humility Mr.V.L.Ethiraj said that he would have himself met these great people if he had been informed. S.Srinivasa Iyengar spoke on behalf of the four. The very purpose of the meeting was to request Mr.V.L.Ethiraj to appear in a criminal case. They categorically mentioned that he was the

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2 Karuppiah, Varalāru Padaiṭha Valakkarignar V.L. Ethiraj, op. cit., p.43.

3 Ibid., pp.70-71.
fittest person to appear for their client who was accused and proceeded against the Gambling Prohibitory Act. Though all four were eminent lawyers they preferred Mr. V. L. Ethiraj as the case pertained to criminal law. As anticipated by them, Ethiraj appeared for the case and succeeded in it. Their client was acquitted Mr. V. L. Ethiraj had great regard and respect for these lawyers. The respect shown can be seen by his own act of standing before them literally until they finished their discussion. The incident was a token of appreciation of Mr. V. L. Ethiraj’s skill in criminal cases and his regard for them.

There were many factors responsible for his success in criminal cases. One of the factors was Mr. V. L. Ethiraj conviction that in criminal cases, the scene of the crime and circumstance in which the crime was committed deserved more importance than the Law. By applying this factor he won the case popularly called as the ‘case of the saucer lamp’ in 1929. The case dealt with the personal rivalry between two persons namely Gopal Rao and Sivarama Reddy in the Bellary district of the then Madras Presidency. Gopal Rao, and four others were accused of attacking Krishna Reddy, Thotta Basappa brothers of Sivarama Reddy and their other relative Mallanna who were sleeping in a room where there was only one earthen (saucer) lamp

The Law weekly special No. in commemoration of the Madras High Court Post Centenary Silver Jubilee (125th year) Celebration (Madras -30/8/1988).
which provided light for the room. In the attack Thotta Basappa died and others were hurt seriously. Krishna Reddy and Mallana appeared as witnesses on the Government side in the District Sessions Court. The case was heard in the High Court on appeal and Mr. V. L. Ethiraj appeared on behalf of the accused. He studied the case thoroughly and observed that from the beginning the police had insisted that Gopal Rao and others had wanted to kill Sivarama Reddy, but had killed his brother Thotta Basappa out of mistaken identity. Ethiraj also made a careful study of the scene of crime and noted that there was only one saucer lamp burning in the room. He argued that if lack of proper light was the reason for the accused to kill Thotta Basappa out of mistaken identity, how in the same poor visibility the witnesses could say very surely that Gopal Rao and others have committed the crime. The Judges were impressed by the arguments of Mr. Ethiraj and addressed the same question to the Public Prosecutor who could not give a satisfactory reply. The accused were given the benefit of doubt and acquitted. The case was an outstanding example for Mr. V. L. Ethiraj’s skill in handling criminal cases.

Studying the behaviour and attitude of the Judges with as much sincerity as studying the case in detail was another secret of his success.

Randor Guy, The case of the Saucer Lamp undated.
Advocate, V.C. Gopalaratnam, who had assisted Mr.V.L.Ethiraj as a Junior Lawyer has mentioned about this practice of Mr.V.L.Ethiraj

"The psychology not only of the parties and witnesses in the case, but also of the Judge trying it was always given first place in importance in the preparation of big cases by Ethiraj. I have seen him adapt himself in half a dozen different ways to half a dozen different Judges, in respect of the same type of cases, and walk away with the result everytime".

His hard work, sincerity, and legal acumen brought him great fame and won for him the post of Public Prosecutor in 1937. He was the first Indian Public Prosecutor of the then Madras Presidency. In general Public Prosecutor in alliance with Government officers and Police officials used to present cases in such a way that the Judges had to award punishments even for the innocent. But Mr. Ethiraj was careful in seeing to it that such a thing never occurred and this role of Mr.V.L.Ethiraj in preventing wrong

judgements being delivered was appreciated by many Judges themselves⁷. He showed equal importance in not letting the criminal go unpunished.

During his tenure as Public Prosecutor Mr.V.L.Ethiraj had handled many cases that revealed his talent as a Criminal Laywer. Of these two cases, namely, a case involving an I.C.S. Officer and Hyderabad conspiracy case were noteworthy to mention Mr.Swaminathan an I.C.S. Officer and another court subordinate had been charged with having hatched and prosecuted a criminal conspiracy to commit heinous crimes of breach of trust, forgery and falsification of accounts to benefit personally at the expenses of the state. That the case was presented and conducted with great skill and acumen by Mr.V.L.Ethiraj, the famous criminal laywer and Chief Public Prosecutor, also added to the public flavour attached to the matter. The charges against the I.C.S. Officer and official were found true and they were sentenced to Rigorous Imprisonment and payment of fine. The sentencing of the I.C.S. officer and subordinate was a signal triumph not only for the Police of the erstwhile Madras Presidency and for Mr.V.L.Ethiraj as Public Prosecutor, but also for the concept, than no one, however highly placed could take to achieve wrongful personal gains,

Ibid., p.19.
liberties with the law and the public interest it was meant, above all scrupulously to protect.

Hyderabad conspiracy case dealt with the anti-national activities of Razakars, of Hyderabad. After the independence of India, Saradar Patel succeeded in integrating most of the native Indian States with the Indian Union. Nizam of Hyderabad was against this move and Razakars under the leadership Syed Kasim Razvi indulged in riots. The state was finally annexed and a tribunal was set up to try the anti-national activities of the Razakars. The Razakars appointed a famous British lawyer to try the case and Mr. Ethiraj was the Public Prosecutor. The British lawyer was not able to cope up with the arguments of Mr. Ethiraj who won the case. The hardships faced by the British lawyer at the hands of Ethiraj was well brought out by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Vivian Bose in his judgement Ethiraj received rupees four lakhs as fees in this case. Till then no lawyer in India ever received such a huge sum as fees.

Another case which brought great fame to Mr. Ethiraj was the Lakshmikantham murder case. Lakshmikanthan through his magazines ‘Hindu Nesan’ and ‘Cinema Thoothu’ exposed behind the scene activities of

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8 The Hindu, October 24 to 30, 1944.

noted public personalities like rich merchants, doctors, lawyers, musicians, pontiffs and film personalities. He wielded a facile pen and his writings were lively, punchy and enjoyable to read. His magazines were a raving sellout and copies sold at a premium. People affected by his writings tried to put an end to it by paying him a huge sum. As it did not work out they conspired to kill him. He was murdered in November 8, 1944. Suspicion fell on Thyagaraja Bhagavathar, the first superstar of the Tamil Cinema, N.S.Krishnan leading comedian and Sriramula Naidu a film director. The first two persons have been very seriously exposed by Lakshmikanthan. Sriramulu was released on the basis of the arguments of his lawyer that he was not present in the scene of any conspiracy of the crime but the other two were given Life Imprisonment in 1945. Later High court admitted the appeal but the case was dismissed and conviction was confirmed. Both Thyagaraja Bagavathar and N.S. Krishnan appealed to the Privy Council in London, which directed the Madras High Court to try the case again. It was at this stage, Mr. Ethiraj appeared in the scene on behalf of the accused. He narrated the inconsistency in the behaviour of the approver in the case and the Trial Court Judge had not guided the Jury in the correct direction. He took only few hours to convince the judge and won the case. Apart from paying the fees, Thyagaraja Bhagavathar expressed his gratitude to Mr.
V.L.Ethiraj in presenting a golden plate at a function organised in celebrating the victory\textsuperscript{10}.

There were other aspects of Ethiraj as a lawyer besides his skill in presenting the case, skilful arguments, observing judges etc. He gave importance to other factors as well. When he appeared in a case against Mr. Muthuramalinga Thevar, a sitting member of the Parliament, uncrowned monarch of the southern districts, he appealed to the judge that taking into account the status of the accused, he should be allowed to sit and answer during the Cross-Examination. Immediately a chair was provided to Thevar. This act made every one assembled in the court to cheer and clap for a moment, ignoring the traditions of the Court. Mr. V.L. Ethiraj admitted gracefully that the court does not have sufficient evidence to prosecute Mr. Muthuramalinga Thevar\textsuperscript{11}.

Mr. V.L. Ethiraj was a man of high integrity. When he was asked to take equal share of the income received through practice carried out jointly with P.T. Rangasamy Iyengar, he politely refused saying that it was not fair, because he appeared only in the criminal cases. In another incident in

\textsuperscript{10} Randor Guy, \textit{Lakshmikantham Murder Case} Undated.

\textsuperscript{11} Karuppiah, \textit{Varalāru Padaitha Valakkarignar V.L.Ethiraj}, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.138-141.
1953, When Mr. Rajaji, the then Chief Minister of Madras Province asked Mr. V.L. Ethiraj to appear in the court of Mysore for bailing out a duty bound honest Police Officer, he obliged and carried out the duty. When the Chief Minister asked about the fees Mr. Ethiraj said that the Chief Minister's trust on him was the greatest honour to him. Though as a person he preferred western dress and habits, inwardly he was committed to his religion and continued to be a god fearing person. He had made provision for payment of Rs.300/- annually to the Vinayagar Temple in his native village of Shembakkam near Vellore and annual payment of Rs.100/- to the Tarakeswarar temple at Thottapalayam, Vellore.

Mr. V.L. Ethiraj would always be remembered not only as a legal luminary but as a great philanthropist as well. He rendered noble service for the cause of higher education of women. He created history by making a munificent donation of ten lakhs of rupees for establishing a Women's College in the city. The college was to be named after him as 'The Ethiraj College for Women'. He had a firm conviction that education of women was the first step towards the development of a nation. To quote him,

14 Trust Deed Execurted on 7th April 1948 by V.L. Ethiraj C.I.E.
"Women shape the home and the home shapes the country, and it is on this foundation that I have, with the greatest pleasure contributed my life's savings for the cause of Women's education"\textsuperscript{15}.

This noble act of his, perhaps was lying sub consciously in him after seeing the distress state of women belonging to his own family due to illiteracy. No publicity was given to this noble act. Local news papers carried a news item that a lawyer of Madras had donated ten lakhs of rupees for the establishment of a Women's College. It was only after a week people came to know that the lawyer was Mr.V.L.Ethiraj. He did not stop with having founded the college but took a keen interest it its progress. During his life time itself he could witness the growth and progress of the institution and winning a place among the premier educational institutions in the city. It was in a large measure to the 'tireless industry, the unerring foresight and the uncanny knowledge of men and matters of its illustrations founder'\textsuperscript{16}.

\textsuperscript{15} The Hindu, February 6, 1945.

\textsuperscript{16} Souvenir, The Ethiraj College for Women, \textit{op. cit.}, p.1.
Thus the life and career of V.L. Ethiraj stands as an example for the younger generation to emulate and serve to the society at large. He himself had stated that if his act would stimulate others, he would have the satisfaction that he had done a lot of service. His laudable contribution to the cause of Women's education will stand as an eternal monument to his sacred memory defying the ravages of time. Ethiraj will always be remembered as a great lawyer, as a great philanthropist and as a fascinating social figure in the state of Madras.

17 The Hindu, loc.cit.
MAILAI GURUJI SUNDARARAM SWAMIGAL

In the list of eminent personalities of Thuluva Vellala Community, a person of rare kind Mailai Guruji Sundararam Swamigal had made contributions in the spiritual field. A silent but revolutionary ascetic, he performed thousands of Kumbəbiskekams (consecration) in various temples throughout the length and breadth of Tamil Nadu. To the tens of thousands of devotees he was affectionately and also reverentially known as Mailai Guruji, ‘Māmunivar’ (great Saint) Appa (father) and so on. His Holiness Mailai Guruji Sundararama Swamigal was destined to choose the path to help others, to show concern for weaklings, to shower abundant love to the sufferers and to be succour to men afflicted with various kinds of miseries and hardships.

Mailai Guruji was born on Chithra pournami day (fullmoon day of the Tamil month Chithirai [March/April] in the year 1908 at Mylapore in the city of Madras. Mylapore was an ancient town with the famous Kapāλi swarar temple of Lord Siva. There were many other Saivite and Vaishnavite temples in Mylapore. Thiruvalluvar, the famous saint poet of the Tamil language who gave the world his famous work Thirukkural is believed to have born in this town. Guruji’s parents were K.R.Somasundara Mudaliar and Jayalakshmi Ammal. The first two children of Guruji’s parents were girls.
The parents longed for a male child. They performed Puja with devotion to Sun God and were blessed with a male child. As per astrological indications, the child was named ‘Sundararaman’. But the household name from the date of birth was ‘Dakshinamurthy’. This proved to be more proverbial as he continued to remain as Dakshinamurthy, the guru to several thousands of his devotees. Sundararaman’s parents were pious and orthodox. Right from childhood he was taught to practice good manners. He learnt religious hymns like Thiruvengadathānthōttiram, Ambigaithōttiram and Thirupugazh. At the tender age of nine it so happened that Sundararaman was made to be present by destiny at the spot where a hut was in flames and to commence his holy mission of saving the mankind inflicted with miseries. Without any hesitation Sundararaman entered into the hut and came out with an infant who was in the cradle without knowing the grave situation of the surroundings. Later, Sundararaman used to think over this act and used to wonder now he gained such courage and strength to perform a heroic act of saving a child’s life. The glorious path shown by God to young Sundararaman continued and brought everlasting peace and happiness to several families, turned out shambles and ruins into sacred places and worshipful temples. It is unfortunate that the various noble acts rendered to the society and individuals were not adequately recorded. Even this act of not publicizing the various events was perhaps due to the famous saying of Guruji ‘Irundhum Illāmal Iru’ (detached attchment).
Sundararaman had his schooling in Mylapore and later at Kanchipuram. He had mastered Tamil, English, Malayalam and Telugu languages and could speak and understand Hindi and Urdu languages. He qualified himself in Radio technician course through distant education from Hollywood Radio Television Centre, Los Angles, America. He had served in Hindustan Aircraft, Bangalore State Civil Supplies Department and later owned an automobile shop but was not satisfied with all these. He was not interested in worldly life. His mind was bent towards service to humanity. After the adventurous act of his boyhood, he continued to brood over it and realised that the strong faith and devotion to God at the sub-conscious level was responsible for him to unhesitantly in a split second to get into the act and saved a child's life.¹

Sundararaman was incessantly attracted towards Tirupathy and used to visit Thirumalai once in fifteen days to worship Lord Venkateswara. In 1946, on the Sivarathri day, Guruji went to Tirupathy to offer worship to Lord Venkateswara. While he was meditating, he felt a hot breath from a person standing behind him which affected his meditation. The stranger who was looking like a saint put his hands on the shoulders of Sundararaman. The stranger was wearing a white dress and with long

stresses of matted hair. Later Sundararaman moved to the outer corridors of the temple and started his prayers. The old man came there too and disturbed him. On seeing him Sundararaman thought that he was in need of some money and gave him some money. The stranger did not touch the money. Sundararaman was furious and asked him, what else he wanted. Sundararaman did not know that the stranger was Mounaguruswami a great sage. Mounaguru smiled and wrote in a piece of paper in English language and gave to Sundararaman. In the writing Sundararaman saw his exact prayer to God being reproduced. The prayer of Sundararaman was to serve society in the name of God. It was also stated that he would not speak and that he was observing ‘silence’, a penance. Though at first Sundararaman suspected the Mounaguru later he started admiring him. Similarly Mounaguru was also searching for a rightful companion to serve the humanity. Thus the bond between two personalities was laid in the premises of Lord Venkateswara and the relationship between them was like that of a guru and sishya.

Mounaguru took Sundararaman to his guru who was known as Paramaguru. Paramaguru and Sundararaman discussed manythings about the reality of life. Paramaguru was impressed by the worldly knowledge, thought provoking ideas and enthusiasm and ambition of Sundararaman to
serve society. In fact it was Paramaguru who first called Sundararaman as Guruji Sundararaman combining his original name Dakshinamurthy which meant guru with his official name.

Both Mounaguru and Guruji were searching for a suitable place to do penance. They finally selected Thangal and built a small ashram here. Thangal Ashram is located near Vallimalai, a religious centre of the Hindus where the wedding of Lord Muruga with Valli is supposed to have taken place. Vallimalai is about 20 kilometers away from Vellore in North Arcot District. While at Thangal in 1949, Mounaguru was afflicted with small pox that resulted in the loss of his eye sight. Guruji was terribly upset, felt helpless and cursed himself that he could do nothing to regain the eye sight of his Guru. Mounaguru wrote in a piece of paper that the suffering was perhaps due to the curse of some innocent people whom he might have punished when he was serving as a Police Officer before he turned into an ascetic. He told Guruji that he was not interested in regaining the eyesight and if still Guruji was interested he could meet Paramaguru at Kumarathara near Tirupathi. Guruji met Paramaguru and narrated the plight. Paramaguru instructed guruji to perform a vagna, on the completion of which a serpent would appear and strike at the face of Mounaguru and he would recover eyesight. Guruji returned to Thangal and performed the
On the Chitrapournami day while the yagna was in progress, a snake appeared and struck the Mounaguru who was in the sirassana position (head touching the grounds) and stayed for a while with its stretched hood. Mounaguru signalled that he could see clearly the fullmoon. This great moment gave Guruji immense joy and confirmed his feeling that it is possible to achieve anything by single minded devotion on to God².

On one occasion when Guruji and his family members were about to return from Thangal to Madras, Mounaguru allowed his family members to proceed to Madras but prevailed upon Guruji to stay there. He asked Guruji to perform a Puja which he had taught him earlier. The nuances of the religious act involved the arrangement of nine limes with camphor lit on them. While guruji was performing the Puja and breaking the coconut with his forehead the camphor lit on the lime was put out. Mounaguru passed away. This had happened on 3rd May 1971. Guruji wept for nearly three hours. A great sage could not hide his feelings and proved that attachments are not easy to conquer. Next day Mounaguru was buried in the ashram premises and a samādhi was constructed. Pujas were conducted.
for a period of 48 days (called a *mandalam*) at the conclusion of which a Sivalingam was installed on the top of *samādhi*.

Guruji continued his journey in realizing the real truth and love towards mankind. He had an urge to bend his asceticism to the good of man. He always wanted his experiences in the rare realm could be used in making the lives of common man much better. His approach was twofold namely cleansing the mind of people and benefitting them in all their genuine endeavour on one hand and working towards redeeming the glory of great temples which have been pushed to inconsequence due to evil designs of some form or the other. He undertook and filled with great risk the re-installation of the deity at Sri Jalakanteswarar Temple followed by the redeeming of an ancient temple of Kolavizhi Amman from the clutches of unscrupulous elements, and consecration of Vellore Srichelliamman Temple. The renovation of temples and performance of *Kumbābhishekam* were done strictly in accordance with the principles of *Āgama*. The word *Āgama* is indeed the counter part of *Mantra* or veda and it denotes a popular cult along with some practical religious formalities and offerings in the form of fruits, flowers, foods, drinks and sacrifices.

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Vellore is one of the important historical places in South India. The First War of Independence in India was started in Vellore in 1857 and it was known as Vellore Mutiny. It is the capital town of North Arcot District, Vellore is situated in Madras-Bangalore National Highway Road. Vellore fort is historically an important fort in Tamilnadu. Fort Temple is situated in the fort itself. It was built by Nayaks of Madura. During the Mugal rule, due to political instability the devotees of Vellore took the Sivalingam to a nearby village called Sathuvachari. There the devotees carried out the daily ceremonies and rituals as usual with devotion. The people of Vellore wanted to renovate the Jalakanteshwara Temple. They approached Guruji Sundarara Swami to do the needful. Sundararaman Swami accepted it and made up his mind to renovate the fort temple of Vellore by performing Kumbabishekam.

It is to be pointed out in this context, that Sankarachariar of Kanchi while on his pilgrimage to Satara in the North came across a manuscript which stated that restoration of the Jalakanteshwarar temple at Vellore, could be accomplished by a person named Sundararaman. Sankarachariar extended invitation to Guruji at Mylapore to visit the Kanchi Mutt, through a representative of the mutt. Accordingly Guruji met Sankarachariar who showed him the manuscript and asked him to carry out the task. He also
told Guruji, that the latter would meet many difficulties, in the performance of the sacred task. Whenever any representation was made to Sankaracharya requesting him for the consecration of Jalakanteswara Temple in the fort and for revival of daily Puja in the temple, his reply was always to approach Mailai Guruji, a devoted sishya of Mounaguruswamy, who was above any distinction of caste or creed as the only person who could accomplish the challenging task\(^5\).

On fourteenth of March 1981 Guruji Sundaram Swami and his devotees went to Sathuvachari and did abishekam to Sivalingam. On the early morning of 15th March 1981 he did Pujas and vagnam also. The first phase of shifting the idol commenced by levering, the base with crow bars. They could not move the big idol. Once again Guruji performed certain religious acts taught to him by Mounaguru and ‘GoPuja’ (puja to cow). Slowly the idol started to move inch by inch. Finally Sivalingam was installed in the fort temple. Prior to the setting of the lingam, nine gold coins given to Guruji earlier by Mounaguru were placed at the peetam. Without retaining even a single one for himself he placed everything at the base so that the power and radiation emanating from them would reach every one and bless them for ever. Mailai Guruji performed

\(^{5}\) Mayilai Bhaktha Jana Sabai, Velli Vila Malar (Mylapore, 1997), pp.52-53.
Mandalabishekam to the temple successfully which extended over a period of forty eight days.\textsuperscript{6}

Sri Kanaga Durgai Amman Temple is situated near Kanchipuram. There Guruji installed Valampuri Vinayagar. Since then the temple is worshipped by a lot of people. In Vellore near Palar Bridge Sri Chelliamman Temple is situated. During the first week of every Chittirai month, the Sun’s rays falls directly on the head of Chellaimman. Mailai Guruji performed Pujas, installed Ambigai (Goddess) in the temple and did Kumbābishekam on 10th March 1983.\textsuperscript{7} Now Chelli Amman temple is so popular and it is worshipped by many thousands of people.

In Vellore at Saidapet there is a small hill. On the top of the hill Sri Karumariumman Temple is situated. There is a water fall near the temple. Sri Guruji performed Astabandhana Kumbābishekam. Soon it became a famous shrine throughout North Arcot District and many people visit the temple\textsuperscript{8}.

\textsuperscript{6} N. Karunabai, A study of Mouna Guruswami Ashram Thangal, op. cit., pp.86-88.

\textsuperscript{7} Tablet fixed in the Chelliamman Temple, Vellore.

\textsuperscript{8} N.Karunabai, A study of the Mouna Guru Asham Thangal, op. cit., pp.88-89.
Kolavizhi Amman Temple, another ancient temple at Mylapore was the other temple consecrated by Mailai Guruji. The presiding deity was also called ‘Badra Kāli’ and ‘Ellaikāli’. The idol of this temple is unique in the sense that on one of it sides it had the appearance of Siva and on the other side the appearance of Sakthi. Such a powerful temple was left uncared resulting in desolate ruined condition. With great difficulties, risking his life Guruji Sundararaman Swamigal virtually rebuilt, renovated and consecrated the temple. Prior to Guruji, who ever attempted this work died under the control of black magic by some persons. Quite a number of human skulls were seen buried in the ground, around the temple premises and also, the area was surrounded by liquor shops. Guruji tried to remove the obstacles on his own. He was threatened and even at times beat by rowdy elements. Whenever he tried to remove the human skulls, he was directly affected and blood was gushing out through his nostrils, ear and mouth. By the grace of God and by the grace of Mouna Guru, he escaped from the jaws of death. He installed a trident and beneath it kept a copper plate with tantric powers and precious gems. On that day a business man came to the temple and prayed to the goddess to come out of a problem within that evening. It did happen and the businessman spent nearly two and a half lakhs for the renovation of the temple and wished to remain anonymous. The episode was due to the power of the trident installed by
Guruji. Unassumingly Guruji used to refer to the incident and say that by giving a problem to the businessman the goddess had paved the way for the renovation of the temple⁹. Though he was out and out responsible for the consecration the Kolavizhi Amman Temple, Guruji never projected himself as being responsible for that event.

He had always insisted on right attitude and renunciation of self ego.

To quote him

"Not only in your inward concentration, but in your outward acts and movements you must take the right attitude. You must learn to act always from within from your inner being... ‘I’, the outer should be a mere instrument and not be allowed at all to compel or dictate your speech, thought or action"¹⁰.

Mayilai Mamunivar Guruji Vallimalai Thangal Mounaguru Swamigal, op. cit., p.103 to 116.

¹⁰ Deivega Gnanam, Maha Gurupujai Malar (Thangal, 2000), p.5
In the Thangal Ashram, Guruji constructed a temple for Lord Venkateswara in the same cosmic form as in Tirupathi. He also constructed a huge Dhyana Mandapam (Meditation Hall). Comforting breeze blowing from all four sides, with enthralling garden of beautiful flowers and fragrance, a sacred Thulasi Nandavanam, varieties of birds chirping merrily around the trees, there the Lord Venkateswara appears in all divinity and confers blessings to the devotees. The Kumbabhishekam was performed to the temple on 12th December 1999.11

The adage ‘He roamed with the kings and ate with the beggars’ could never be more apt to any other than Guruji who was sought after by leaders of men, diplomats, officials and also by the lowest in the social strata. His greatness was that he could be a strict father to some, jolly friend to some, guiding philosopher to some, omnipotent God to some, omniscient guide to some, illuminating teacher to some, caring mother to some and all this role he could play simultaneously for the devotees with his unique personality remaining unaltered with only the philosophy his Guru - Sri Mounaguru, Detached attachment. More than his vast knowledge and brilliant mastery of speech, what attracted people to him was his ability to comedown to their

11 Mayilai Māmunivar Guruji, Deiveega Gnanam (Thangal December 2000), page not numbered.
level and hold them by the hands as it were to lead them very lovingly to peace and joy.\(^{12}\)

Malai Guruji worked single handedly and developed the ashram to the present prestigious status. It is quite interesting to note that he did not approach any body to solicit funds. All the funds for the development of the ashram came from the devotees who were the patrons of the ashram. The persons who came to the Thangal Ashram, got the blessings of Mailai Guruji and returned from the ashram with heartfelt satisfaction. From morning to evening, seated in front of his Gurndeva’s portrait, listening to the problems of several persons he used to relieve them from their worries. God had bestowed upon him some supernatural powers which he utilised for the betterment of society. He never accepted anything in return for his service. Whenever people thanked Guruji for his services, he used to say that it was not he who did them but it was on account of his Guru’s blessings.

Incidents of people benefitting from his blessings were many. Two persons of Vellore town, one Ganesh by name and owner of an automobile shop and another person, owner of Apsara theater at Vellore came to Guruji for cure of their health problem. On account of dislocation of the vertical

Mr. M. C. Dwarakanath residing in Triplicane was serving in the Pallavan Transport Corporation. He had narrated how Guruji had saved him and by his blessings he could lead a healthy life. Dwarakanath’s office was in front of Guruji’s residence at Mylapore. He used to ridicule those who visited Guruji’s house for his blessings and to relieve themselves from their problems, illness etc. Once when Dwarakanath fell ill and started vomiting blood, his health did not permit him to take even liquid food. Inspite of consulting various doctors and taking several medicine his health did not improve. Dwarakanath’s brother Mr. Narendran who was a devotee of Guruji wanted Dwarakanath to meet Guruji for relief. Dwarakanath thought that Guruji would be definitely aware of what he did to the devotees of Guruji and suspected whether Guruji would bless him. But Guruji received him with a smiling face. It was a fullmoon day. After patiently hearing everything, Guruji placed his hands over Dwarakanath’s head and prayed. He blessed him and sent him away. Since then his vomiting of blood was stopped and he recovered his health. He wept and felt sorry for his mistake and turned out to be a devotee of Guruji.

Similarly daughter of Dr. S. M. Jaikar, M. S. (FRCS) while on excursion from her school fell down from terrace and became unconscious. As per the
advice of Guruji, the girl was admitted in a Nursing Home at Poonamallee High Road. The girl was taken care of by Guruji along with other doctors and was completely cured. Innumerable were such instances when people were relieved of their sufferings because of the mysterious power of Guruji.

While mentioning the mysteries of Mailai Guruji, mention must also made about his power to suppress witchcraft. In 1993, when Mr. Ramesh, the son of Thirumalai Bhattacharya family was affected by the witchcraft, Mailai Guruji was able to ward off its evil influence on his family. With all these miraculous powers, Mailai Guruji was simple and unassuming and attributed all his abilities to his Guru Mounaguru Swamingal whom he held in high reverence as personification of God Himself. Mailai Guruji himself had stated that,

"God and guru are not really different; are identical. He that has earned Grace of the Guru shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken. But the disciple, for his part should unswervingly follow the path shown by the Guru." 

14 Ibid., pp.81-82.
15 Mayilai Mamunivar Guruji, Deiveega Gnanam, op. cit., Cover page.
Thus the contributions of Mailai Guruji were many. They included selfless service to individuals suffering from diseases and various personal problems and renovation and consecration of temples. His services to humanity were based on certain principles. No distinction of caste or creed or material status was made among his devotees. His contributions are unique in the sense that it was in a field which was the exclusive domain of the priestly class. A person not of the priestly class performing these religious acts was well received by the community and recognised by no less a person than His Holiness Kanchi Acharya himself. Distribution of food to devotees called ‘annadānam’ at the conclusion of every Puja was a chief feature of the prayers at Thangal Ashram. This practice helped in bringing together of the rich and poor, educated and illiterate, people of different communities which facilitates the establishment of a peaceful, harmonious society.