



## **REGENERATING HUMANISM: IDEOLOGIES AND ACTIVISM OF PERIYAR**

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### **Abstract:**

Be it civilization development, inventions, discoveries, social transformations, cultural revolutions, protections, wars, peace-exchanges, technological innovations, agricultural developments, space, pharmaceuticals etcetera, the hidden humans behind the developments are always to be remembered and socialized to the upcoming budding generations. Indian's of any background should have reason enough to celebrate their historical or cultural association with Nagarjuna's penetrating philosophical arguments. Harsa's philanthropic leadership, maître is or Gargis's searching questions, Carvaka's reasoned scepticism, Aryabbata's as trinomial and mathematical departures, Kalidas' dazzling poetry, sudrakas' Subversive drama, Abul Fazol's astounding scholarship, shah Jaahan's aesthetic vision, Ramaujan's mathematics, Ravishankar's and Ali Akbar's music and added to that Periyar's efforts on social justice.

### **Introduction:**

The 'why' and 'do' attitude of E.V.R. fetched far reaching results and remedies in the society of Tamilnadu. It also created a stir in the minds of 'Status-quoits' and as well as so called freedom fighters and social reformers. EVR's ability to bring transformation in Tamilnadu turned entire attention of the world towards his personality and leadership trait which was shining as a silver crystal in Tamilnadu's social and political history. For this reason he was awarded with "South East Asian Socrates" by UNESCO which is desired to be in the hands of Periyar (Big man).

The courage and self sacrifice shown by him in making revolutionary changes is illumined and indefinite if compared with world leaders. Such a traditional background and society was Tamilnadu in the initial period 20<sup>th</sup> century. Before this era, it was worsen to a large extent and because of British regime and social reformers like Rajarammohan Roy, untoward atrocities were lessened. The raj empire took series of resolving measures in order to curb out cultural menaces in Indian society. Although, there are positives and negatives of the establishment of Raj Empire, the positives may not be forgotten. The introduction of railways and English education in India are both positives and as well as considered as negative factors. Moderates of Indian National movement tolerated the suppressive atrocities of British Empire, since they believed in the gradual and evolutionary process of freedom. Whereas extremists as non- believers of evolutionary method, come to understand about the exploitative activities of raj empire. Hence they opted for revolutionary method. E.V.R as a social revolutionary involved in the localized problems such as caste discrimination, religious hegemonism, male chauvinism, human exploitation, inequality, alcoholism, education, political hypocrisy so on so forth. As a revolutionary but a follower of non-violence he emancipated people of Tamilnadu and as well as world society by his courageous forward ideas and ideals which tended to reshape and reformulate cultural and social ethos. By involving in prohibition activities, he also attempted to change behavioural ethos of the entire society. His courage in opposition the existing caste discrimination even attracted schematic relationship among his own men. Vaikom Sathyagraha is one such incident in which he has shown utmost courageousness against the existing social system. Also by being against brahminical scripture like Vedas, Ramayana and other epics, it was fist by other emancipation. In the brahminical community also it has made a tremendous impact and turbulent tremors which changed the mind-set to think and act in other way.

His trait of self sacrifice startled fellow citizens in various ways and modes. Attracted by gandhian philosophy initially. He has resigned from all jobs as great businessmen and instructed all his followers including his family members to wear Khadi and adopt truth and non-violence as the mode and way of life. This inspired a lot of fellow community men. E.V.R. was not only a man of simple words but an actioner who indulged in a lot of protests and picketing for the sake of people. For the benefit of human community, he chopped down 100's of coconut trees in order to show himself as a true model for others. The prohibition which he initiated through this kind of act has opened his eyes around his village and served as pioneering act.

### **Ideas and Actions:**

Revolutionaries born in occasions and also in situations. When analyzing Periyar's characteristics trait his seemed to be a situational one. The Kasi incident was a one by which he got a turbulent mind change and also propelled him to think deeply towards the social set-up in the atmosphere. The Indian national movement produced more number of revolutionaries. French revolution also had the same impact. Heavy taxation in the

American colony also kindled more revolutionary thinking. In the same manner E.V.R as a social activate and reformer was kindled through the complex social set-up of Tamilnadu, specifically the Brahmin domination on all spheres of human life. The questioning mind is also an inducing factor. Situations are the common phenomenon. But rising accordingly, to the situation needs an ignited mind. Solvates used to kinds the younger generation by his voluminous queries in Athens. This questing attitude cost him his own life. Only because of his questioning mind, he was poisoned to death. But he has not bothered about his own life. Freedom of thought and ideas are the basic postulates and essentials of human life said E.V.R. Ambition-oriented people rise quickly to the situations. E.V.R get such uncommon ambitions and the situations made him an extra ordinary and un common character in Tamilnadu. In these days people never bothered about getting freedom. That too people those who belong to upper class community confine themselves in amassing more wealth and also in leading sophisticated life. It would have been easier for him to lead that type of life in a better way. The reactionary and revolutionary attitude of E.V.R made him to respond and resolve the crises whatever if may be in the nature. His observation capacity for reached and out reached any other personalities in this world. He used to call all the people by names and he know nook and corner of his followed behaviour and attitude Mahatma once visited Erode and astonished about the stubborn personality of E.V.R. Periyar futuristic vision related with egalitarian society almost attracted by plethora of global personalities. Atheistic ideology has got numerous followers but Periyaristic action-oriented ideology made a niche for itself.

Self-respect ideology of E.V.R is one among his ideologies which played a greater role in Tamilnadu. Realizing the subjugation attitude of Brahmanism, E.V.R started to propagate self-respect ideal which spreaded out all among the peoples of Tamilnadu. As per the self-respect ideology, marriages were conducted and even now without enchanting mantras by Brahmins. This new type of marriage-conduction was considered as a radical one and followed by numerous followers of Dravida Kazhagam (DK). The self-respect idolatry of E.V.R also alienated the dependency of non-Brahmins towards Brahmins. Before self-respect marriage the caste Hindu people were highly dependent upon Brahmins for ceremonial practices and rituals. But as of now Periyaristic mode of marriage made it easier which, received wide applause from the majority communities of Hindus. As of now, the current political activities highly dependent upon power. The realist theory and power emphasized for capture of power, sustenance of it, and expansion of power. Power protect, influences secures the position. Without power, social reformers are unable to deliver good since it may not touch what then dreamt for, also self-assertion is another component which every political days people strives for and high level demand for assertion. But only with ideology and courageousness for establishing it is an unique one, which was appreciated in E.V.R.

E.V.R has highly pressurized for human respectability. Hinduism and its Varnashrma Dharma exploit the people who are under dependency. The life has to be lived only with respect and without it the life may be lost. This is what the crux of all of the ideologies of E.V.R. In this way E.V.R. gradually added another vital component i.e., “economic equality”. Luring independent era, due to Brahmin domination in all jobs and professions, other caste Hindu people were adversely affected. The intellectual capacity of Brahmins outsourced caste Hindu people and 97% of all jobs were held by Brahmins. Power, authority and influence were the statement made by Robert Dahl. All these components were highly exercised and enjoyed by upper class people and only 3% of the government opportunities were held by other community people that 100 with all sorts of humiliations and violations. The gap between rich community and poor were widened to a large extent. This made E.V.R. to concentrate much upon to reduce the gap. E.V.R. was very much interested in establishing egalitarian society in which people can get equal share in all the resources of a nation. But before economic equality, societal equality was the primary concern of E.V.R. The largest of primary concern can be attained by the second target. Thus E.V.R. made vociferous speeches in all rostrums about rationalist thinking. Only by change of mind, people can attain all sorts of equality including social, Periyar believed. The caste discrimination in Kerala, Viakom was another incident where E.V.R. fought against upper community won him high acclamation and accolades from which he was known to be ‘Vaikom Periyar’.

From his childhood onwards, E.V.R’s efficiency was proved. Though he is less educated, his talent and efficiency in business tactics earned him good reputation in and around his hometown. After the death of his father in 1911, he took all family burden and role the family ship in a right way. In 1920’s he entered into all sort of political activity. During non-cooperation movement, he resigned all government positions and closed his own business for in order to give support to the movement. In the initial period E.V.R never suspected the high gung leadership in terms of resolution passing and other national movement activities. But other congress leader feared about righteousness and daringness of E.V.R. He was very active in noncooperation movement, temperance movement 1922, Khalar movement 1922, 24, Vaikom 1924 gradually he lost hope congress due to highhandedness and caste oriented which furthered their own interests and not the movements interests.

In 1920’s itself in Tirunelveli conference Periyar tried to pass communal representation bill which provides job opportunities for other community people. S. Srinivasa Iyengar disallowed the resolution to be passed by Periyar. During Tiruppur congress the problem got aggravated which ended in heated discussion which spoiled the decorum in Tamilnadu congress. Being provided by Brahmins domination and exploitation in

the society, E.V.R. tried to burn Manusashtra and Ramayana in order to show his real hatred against Brahmanism. During Salem conference, tension gripped congress members, since one section of the congress has not allowed to pass important resolutions regarding communal representation and related to eradication of untouchability. In Madras President Association from 1927 to 1934. E.V.R. involved in number of social reform initiatives which impacted social and political life of fellow citizens. The self respect movement started by E.V.R. was secular in native and non-religious as desired by him. It was considered as a militant organization which aimed for social and economical equality. The only motto of SRM was anti-Brahmanism which could fetch more job opportunities and establish social equality in Tamilnadu.

The situation and as well as atmosphere of cultural orthodox and complexity made E.V.R. to be beyond the regular ceremonial practices. In 1925 after being disappointed and disillusioned E.V.R. let the congress movement which had paved way for establishing social equality. He has made assurance to his followers that they should not stop until the eradication of caste and religion from the society which is the cause of all miseries and subjugation. Particularly in Tirunelveli, separate dining for upper caste Hindus made E.V.R. to act against the congress movement. Since the hostel in Cheramadevi is funded by congress, E.V.R. fought for justice and to establish common dining. All his moves were derailed by other leaders and that is the reason for his exit from the movement.

The self-respect movement intended to establish casteless society free from Brahminical beliefs and also for eradication of all social evils. Also it gave assurance for fighting equal rights of women on par with men in education and as well as property spheres. Compared with Gandhi's freedom movement, E.V.R.'s self respect reached all contours of Tamilnadu since he spoke the reality and real conditions of the existing society.

Periyar imagined about an ideal world which is free fissiparous tendencies and divisive thinking. The social order must be an universal and unanimous one. All thinking should be on the basis of rational and inferences should be common interest oriented. E.V.R. also added that freedom of self and freedom from the self is primary concern rather giving priority for national freedom. In 1925 'Kudi Arasu' was started in order to propagate the ideals and ideologies of S.R.M. And also pamphlets issued as "Namadhu Kurikol". The natural and spontaneous phenomenon of equal and mutual relationship maintenance was given priority. Also SRM planned for establishing orphan homo and windows for which educational institutions also was assured. If also decided to discourage building temples, mutts, chariots and Vedic schools.

During II-conference of SRM a resolution was passed against idol worship. In Virudhunagar conference, strong resolution passed against untouchability and supported inter-caste marriage. Also SRM followers were instructed to not involve in politics as it is composed and consisted of political demagogues and hypocrites.

#### **Conclusion:**

Periyar opined that women all along the nations of the world were oppressed and exfoliated for fulfilling the desires of men. The patriarchal society has to be demolished; women must come away from confined duties viz., home making, cooking, child, rearing duties. Periyar advocated women to indulge in public services like Plato and Aristotle's advocacy. He also further added that women should give up all kind of subjugation practices. Physical strength has to be improved in order to tackle over men's subservient activities. He also supported the cause of women to enter into army and other military activities in order to show their potentiality and capacity. Lower status of women can be disappeared if government provides common education which may free them from the yoke of cowardice.

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