

## The Individualistic Principles Of Thiru Muthuramalinga Thevar

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### Abstract

Muthuramalinga Thevar was an outstanding son of Mother India. A versatile personality Freedom fighter, Political activist, Parliamentarian, Social and Religious reformer, Trade union leader and Orator. His Nationalism was an article of faith. He was a model for many human being. He was an embodiment of virtue, service, truth, sacrifice, wisdom, courage, charity and nobility. He believed in morality, equality, justice, love and service to God. He shaped his character and personality, honesty and braveness and molded him as a social reformer. By their Individualistic traits and calibre, they attained an enhanced his status.

**Keyword:** Freedom fighter – Political activist – Social reformer - Man of masses – God of knowledge – Spirit of service and sacrifice.

### Introduction

**Thevar** popularly known as Muthuramalinga Thevar was an outstanding son of Mother India. A **versatile personality freedom fighter, political activist, parliamentarian, social and religious reformer, trade union leader and orator**. Thevar was a legend in his own life time and continues to be so even after nearly four decades of his death.<sup>1</sup> Thevar was an active political worker for whom Nationalism was an article of faith. He also symbolized the best of **Indian spiritual and cultural traditions**. Thevar was, a model for many human being to follow and emulate. He was born in a very wealthy family who could afford to live in luxury. He preferred to lead a simple life. He was an

embodiment of virtue, service, truth, sacrifice, wisdom, courage, charity and nobility.<sup>2</sup>

Thevar entered politics and was associated with the Congress party. His political guru was Shri S.Srinivasa Iyengar. He was greatly influenced by revolutionary leaders like **Tilak, Savarkar, Chittaranjan Das, Lala Lajpat Raj** and **Nethaji Subhas Chandra Bose**. For about a decade, he remained in the Congress party, worked vigorously and organised the party in the southern districts of Madras state.<sup>3</sup> He toured throughout the state and brought an awakening among the people on the ideals and goals of the Congress. Through his oratorical skill, he strengthened the Congress party and the freedom movement. He was the chief architect of the progress of the Congress party in places where the party had not gained strength. People praised him as the saviour of the congress party which was a testimony to his political conviction and commitment to the party.<sup>4</sup>

Thevar's speeches and thoughts echoed his strong desire for freedom. He wanted India to be completely independent. Unlike the moderates, he championed the cause of freedom by advocating revolutionary methods. He insisted "Freedom must be by achievement and not by adjustment".<sup>5</sup> During the year 1938, **Shri Jayaprakash Narayan** came to Madurai. The moderates in the Congress party opposed his visit. But Thevar welcomed him. The visit of **Shri Jayaprakash Narayan** helped the Socialist Party to take roots in Tamil Nadu. When elections to the All-India Congress Committee were held in Tripura, Shri **Pattabhii Seetharamaiah** contested the election for Presidentship with the support of Mahatma Gandhi. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose also contested the election. While veteran leaders like Shri C.Rajagopalachari and Shri Satyamurti supported Shri Pattabhi Seetharamaiah, Thevar supported the candidature of Nethaji for Congress party's Presidentship.<sup>6</sup>

Thevar was a man of the masses and leader in his own right not only in Southern India but a key figure in the whole of India after the formation of the Forward Bloc. Both Nethaji and Thevar had the capacity of enthraling the audience for hours together with their fiery oration and uncompromising attitude as far as their policies and ideals were concerned. They were highly critical than Anglo-American axis and adhered to an unflinching advocacy of revolutionary methods to achieve freedom and militant uprising against the suppression which

was let loose by the British. During the freedom movement, Thevar was closely associated with leaders like **Dr.Varadarajulu Naidu, V.V.Giri, Rajaji, N.G.Ranga, Satyamurti** and many other stalwarts.<sup>7</sup> Since he was a vocal leader of the freedom struggle and associate of **Nethaji Subhash Chandra Bose**, he was arrested in 1939. On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1942, the **Forward Bloc** was banned and Thevar was once again arrested. Thevar, along with his followers, was released from the Vellore prison on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1945. In 1948, Thevar became the President of the **State unit of the Forward Bloc**.<sup>8</sup>

According to Thevar, Nationalism is loftier and can be likened to the body of a man. No man can live without a body, nor can any society survive without a feeling of Nationalism. He stressed that Indian Nationalism is neither narrow nor aggressive. It is inspired by the highest ideals of the human race namely, **Satyam** (Truth), **Sivam** (God of Knowledge) and **Sundaram** (Beauty of Cosmic Order). He emphasized, Indian Nationalism which has inspired us with **truthfulness, manliness** and a **spirit of service** and **sacrifice**. At the same time, our Nationalism will never be a hindrance to internationalism.<sup>9</sup> According to Thevar, "Our Nationalism implies not merely emancipation from political bondage from the British but also equal distribution of wealth, abolition of caste barriers and social inequalities, destruction of communalism and religious intolerance". Nationalism is a two-pronged strategy for India-it defies imperialism at the global level and it fosters a spirit of achievement in the Indian context, he emphasized.<sup>10</sup>

Thevar wanted to unify the country through a strong central government but at the same time he wants to put the provinces and the minorities at ease by allowing them to have a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as in governmental affairs. In his scheme of democracy, Thevar stood for an **independent federal, socialist republic**. He wanted Hindustani to be written in Roman script as the national language; but he also insisted that one should learn English and nurture their's mother tongue. Thevar did not like the method of constructing democracy through economic reforms with doses of socialistic contents. He wanted to have a political system which will bring about speedy socio-economic change. He was for establishing socialism before **practicing institutional democracy**.<sup>11</sup>

As a social scientist, his principles and concepts of socialism were the outcomes of his own mind. The meager and

nominal interest shown by the Government with regard to workers induced Muthuramalinga Thevar to speak for them. At this critical juncture his socialist principles were guided by Jeyaprakash Narayanan in the year 1934. Due to his faith over socialism he was to devote to the problems of farmers and industrial workers.<sup>12</sup> Even when the government offered Rs.20/- to the farmers per head, at times of the cyclone in 1955, it did not reach the actually affected Muthuramalinga Thevar regretted much for such unwanted things.<sup>13</sup>

With regard to the farmers he was of the opinion that their life was a backward one due to the non-availability of improved facilities in agrarian pursuits. They had no implements of modern nature. They did not use selected seeds. While they were clinging to the old traditional ways of agriculture, the government did not attend to their miseries. No sufficient irrigation facilities were provided. The failure of monsoon, the calamities and drought conditions made them to suffer. So, Muthuramalinga Thevar hailed from a farmers community repented much for the fact that Government had not done the needful things for their uplift.<sup>14</sup>

In the same way during the pre-independence period the British were swindling the money of India by their treatment of the weavers and cloth merchants. They took away the cotton from India, converted them into finished cloths and sold them in India at higher rates.<sup>15</sup> So, the Indian weavers had no employment and their life became a risky one. So, they left the rural areas and migrated to urban centres for seeking employment. When they got employment in the spinning and weaving mills at cheaper income without any facilities their life was also at stake. So the condition of the agriculturists and labourers captivated the attention of the Muthuramalinga Thevar, who was particular to create equality among all.<sup>16</sup> The agrarian and industrial labouring classes' services and production became vain and such difficulties even troubled the workers.<sup>17</sup>

He paid equal attention to agricultural as well as Industrial economy. In this regard he was specific that the taxes should be imposed in an uniform manner without affecting either the farmers or the industrial workers.<sup>18</sup> He even pointed out that the Congressman, who had formed the Government were hand in gloves with the rich men by neglecting the suffering workers.<sup>19</sup>

Muthuramalinga Thevar was playing a leading role among farmers as well as workers. He could not distinguish between the owners and workers.<sup>20</sup> Through his powers as a member of legislature, as a labour leader, as a sympathizer of labour unions and guilds he stood for the economic affluence of all. He undertook all efforts on the basis of just and right causes and never arrived at any hasty conclusions in promoting the concept of socialism.<sup>21</sup>

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