

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT.

TITLE OF THE PROJECT: C P RAMASWAMY AIYAR AND MODERN
TRAVANCORE
F.No.MRP(H)-1309/13-14/KLMG044/UGC-SWRO

NAME OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: R KRISHNA KUMAR
Associate Professor
P. G. Department of History

Introduction

Travancore, the southernmost state in India, was well known in earlier times. There is scarcely a kingdom on the face of the earth, whose dynasty continued to exist in an unbroken line of succession from the time of its foundation to the present day.

The mother country of Travancore was the Mandala Kingdom Chera, which once covered the best portion of Southern India, and which underwent various changes during years. Travancore became more strongly protected by natural boundaries, the south and the west being bounded by the Indian Ocean, the east, by the range of the high ghats, and the northern parts being mostly covered with back waters, rivers, lakes etc. thus the situation of Travancore being unfavourable for the march of horses and elephants that formed the best portion of an army in those days, saved it from the incursions of foreign invaders.

Venad has almost an unbroken history. The early history wars centred around the capital at Thiruvadamcode, the, anglicized form of which was Travancore. Decline of Ay power exposed her to repeated attacks from the Pandyas and Cholas. When the ruling Chera family disappeared in the midst of the Chera - Chola war around 1036 A.D. Venad declared her independence

The Modern History of Travancore begins with the rule of Bala Marthanda Varma (1729-1758 A.D) who ascended the throne in the year 1729 A.D. During the time of his accession, the political conditions were unstable due to rebellions and the incessant inroads made by the Nayak and Nawab forces. But, Marthanda Varma put a check to the invaders by seeking the assistance of the English East India Company

Travancore attained its territorial configuration during the reign of Maharaja Marthanda Varma (1729 – 1758 A.D), who enlarged the kingdom of Venad, consolidated the royal authority, reorganized administration and founded the modern Travancore

The image of Marthanda Varma is inextricably linked with the formation of a particular kind of modernity in Kerala. Generally speaking, the advent of modernity in Kerala is seen to coincide with the ascension of Marthanda Varma to the throne of Travancore. Modernity has a definite spatio-temporal abode which cannot be dissipated into any age. As far as some historians are concerned, the reign of Marthanda Varma functions as the proto-historical or originary parental source from which all other variants and features of Kerala modernity emerged. But when we look upon C P many of his activities resemble that of Marthanda varma.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand political history of Travancore
- To understand C P Ramasawamy Aiyars Vision and mission
- To analyse the work of C P Ramaswamy Aiyar in modernizing Travancore

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Historical method is used to study this topic.

SUMMARY

Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, who lived to be nearly 87 years, represented a felicitous fusion of the cultures of the East and the West. He bestrode the political, intellectual and cultural arena of India in its pre-independence and post-independence epoch-spanning period, exceeding sixty years, like a colossus.

He started life as an advocate and soon became leader of the Original Side of Madras High Court. He appeared in and won several important cases: Besant vs. Narayaniah (for custody of J. Krishnamurthi by his father); the Ashe murder case; Subramanya Bharathi; and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai. He was one of the founders of the Indian Bank and Ramakrishna Students' Home. He was Secretary of the All India Home Rule League and editor of the "New India". He was General Secretary of the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress in 1917-18 along with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru; India's delegate at the League of Nations, Geneva, in 1926-27; and delegate to the First Indian Round Table Conference in London in 1931.

Sir C.P. has left many legacies – in terms of public utility undertakings like Hydro-electric Dams and Industrial enterprises. These include Mettur, Pykara and Lower Bhavani in Tamilnadu, the Pallivasal and Periyar Schemes in Travancore (Kerala), apart from the various industries set up by him (many of them the first of their kind in India). He was responsible for initiating the Cochin, Visakhapatnam and Tuticorin Port Schemes. He was one of the earliest to plead for the linking of the great rivers of India and in particular for the Ganga-Cauvery Project. A most vital social reform measure for which he made himself responsible was the Temple Entry Proclamation of the Maharajah of Travancore in 1936. It was his condition for accepting the post of Dewan of Travancore and his first act as Dewan. It was the first time the avarnas, as they were known, were accepted into Hindu temples. It was hailed by Mahatma

Gandhi as an epoch-making measure. In 1940, he was first to nationalize Road Transport in India and was responsible for the construction of the first cement, concrete road from Trivandrum to Cape Comorin. He was the first in India to start Aluminium Ceramic, Fertilizer and Rayon and other industries; the first to abolish capital punishment, introduce adult franchise and to appoint a lady advocate as District Judge in Travancore.

On February 12, 1946, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar visited the Government High School at Vellamadam in the then State of Travancore (now Kanyakumari district, Tamilnadu), and inaugurated the scheme of compulsory education for children above five years. He introduced at this school, for the first time in India, the free midday meal scheme for poor and needy students. He inaugurated the Vanchi Poor Fund and Seethalakshmi Ammal Anna Dhana Samajam (named after his mother) to fund the free midday meal scheme. These two schemes were to have far-reaching results, making Kerala a 100% literate state with the highest levels of education in India. They were the fore-runners for the free midday meal scheme, conceived much later by Shri. K. Kamaraj and introduced by Shri. M.G. Ramachandran, in Tamilnadu.

After retiring as Dewan he became Vice Chancellor of Annamalai University and Banaras Hindu University. He was the Chairman of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Commission, Government of India, in 1960; National Integration Committee, Government of India (as a result of which Parliament passed a bill making the demand for secession an offence); and Standing Committee on University Education, Government of India, in 1962.

In implementing his marathon welfare projects in Madras and Travancore during an exceptionally critical period of the nation's history, C.P. earned more foes than friends. But

generations to come will acknowledge that C.P. was the man of the hour, needed most in a society driven by caste and creed, religion, language and social prejudices.

The boldness of conception and the directing energy of Sachivothama Sir. C P Ramaswami Aiyar have born rich fruit in administrative, political and constitutional matters. It is his settled policy to take the legislative members and the non-official leaders of the people into confidence. He is also regarded as an egalitarian and the first caste Hindu lawyer to admit a Dalit, N .Sivaraj as his junior and the first person in India to suggest a plan for interlinking the nation's rivers. C P was a patron of arts and music and was the founder-President of the Madras Music Academy.

C P was also well-known for his Philanthropic activities and the institutions he helped to establish. After his death, the C P Ramaswami Aiyar foundation was established in his memory in order to promote traditional arts and crafts. The activities initiated by him in several domains have considered the period as the beginning of a new era and modernization. These activities relate not only to endeavours usually designated as 'Nation Building efforts', but programmes for the attainment of true spiritual values and communal unity. C P can rightly be assigned as the person who modernized Travancore.