

A Study on the Role of Freedom Fighters of Nagapattinam District in Indian National Army

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Abstract: Subash Chandra Bose, adopted a military approach to the movement by founding the Indian National Army was significant one. Freedom fighters of Nagapattinam District went to South East Asian countries for seeking fortune and joined INA. They played an important role in Indian National Army and they occupied important positions in the Indian National Army. They deserve our appreciation and praise for their good deeds. Future generation also should know about our courageous freedom fighter Subash Chandra Bose popularly known as Netaji. Freedom Fighters changed their life style for the cause of Nation.

Keywords – Indian National Army, Nagapattinam District, Freedom Fighters, Subash Chandra Bose.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The term Indian Independence movement encompasses a wide spectrum of political organisations, philosophies and movements which had the common aim of ending British colonial authority in South Asia. The term incorporates various national and regional campaigns, agitations and efforts of both non violent and militant philosophy. Some leaders, such as Subash Chandra Bose, adopted a military approach to the movement by founding the Indian National Army was significant one. In order to attain freedom for India, Indians went to several foreign countries, joined the freedom movements, namely Indian National Army and returned to India after getting Independence. Among them, the Tamilians form the majority they migrated to foreign countries to seek their fortune by trade or by labour. On account of Netaji's national feeling and leadership, they joined the Indian National Army and contributed their might for the freedom of India. It is needless to say that it was quite impossible to create an armed force in a foreign country with an intention to work for the achievement of Indian Independence. But Netaji was able to do it with able assistance of Tamilians who not only contributed their wealth, but their lives. The Tamils joined hands with Netaji and are responsible for the success of the movement. Those freedom fighters who had spent their lives with Netaji and had rendered service to our country along with him. They had rendered patriotic service for the sake of freedom for our country by adhering and adopting three main objects of unity, devotion and sacrifice. They have taken the main role in the Indian National Army headed by Subash Chandra Bose and returned to India after war. They deserve our appreciation and praise for their good deeds. Future generation also should know about our courageous freedom fighter Subash Chandra Bose popularly known as Netaji. The study is an attempt to record their role in Indian National Army in Regional History.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For the first time in recent history Indians abroad have also been politically roused and united in one organisation. They are not only thinking and feeling in tune with their county men at home. But are also marching in step with them, along the path of freedom – S.R. Bakshi, Indian Freedom Fighters struggle for Independence – 1990.

“Building up a National Army will be more difficult task, India has of course, a large number of trained and experienced soldiers and their number has been augmented as a result of the present war” – “In the Interest of the Indian Independence Movement and of the Azad Hind Fauj, I have taken over the direct command of our army from this day. This is for me a matter of joy and pride – because for an Indian, there can be no greater honour than to be a commander of India's Army of Liberation” - Sisir K. Bose & Sugata Bose “The Essential writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Leading Indians – local civilians and the P.O.Ws assembled at the aerodrome in large number to receive Netaji who, they were sure, would lead them to victory and freedom - India's struggle Quarter of a

century 1921 – 1946 part II A.C Guha Publications Division. The Rani of Jhansi Regiment was to be the Women's counter part of the Indian National Army (S.A. Iyer story of the INA 2014). J. Suguna (2001) analyzed the role of Subash Chandra Bose and asserted the role of Tamilians and concluded that the Tamils formed an important part in Indian National Army. S. Durgadevi (2009) described the role of freedom fighters in Indian National Army was a significant one.

III. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

To cherish and follow the noble ideals of the freedom struggle is one of the eleven fundamental duties of our Indian constitution. The Role of Subash Chandra Bose is most significant in the annals of our history. He was a great political leader. His place in history is assumed as a nationalist, as a freedom fighter, as a great human being and a born leader. His foundation of the Indian National Army, its organisation in the foreign land, its programme for complete Independence – all speak of his highest degree of capability during the Second World War. For the first time in recent history Indians abroad have also been politically roused and united in one organisation. Netaji's influence acted like a charm on them and they had acted under him with the single aim of achieving Indian freedom. There is a need to revive his concept of dynamic Nationalism and discipline particularly in young generation at state and National level which he tried to infuse all along his life. The most significant aspect of the freedom struggle was that persons from all walks of life, transcending all barriers of caste, religion or region worked for a common cause. These freedom fighters had rich experience and spent their energy for the cause of Indian freedom. The younger generation should uphold the ideas of Freedom, National unity and secularism. The need of hour is to maintain national integration and national defence.

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The role of freedom fighters of Nagapattinam District in Indian National Army is taken for the study. It consists of the emergence of Indian National Army, Subash Chandra Bose speeches, Role and contribution of freedom fighters of Nagapattinam District. This would create and generate a new spirit among the citizens of India especially among the younger generation. As Subash Chandra Bose said, "the youth of today will be the Nation and the leaders of tomorrow". An idea that is welcomed and supported by the youth will one day be supported by the whole Nation.

V. OBJECTIVES

1. It is essential to explore and understand the hardships of the freedom fighters for every citizen of the country.
2. To know the role of freedom fighters from the local area.
3. To have and follow the noble ideals of the great freedom fighter Subash Chandra Bose.
4. To record the services rendered by INA freedom fighters and to preserve for future generation to know their sense of patriotism and the spirit of National Integration.

VI. METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature. Field study was adopted to carry out the study. Both primary and secondary sources were used in the study. The original documents that are available pertaining to their participation in the freedom struggle were collected as primary sources. Direct Interviews were conducted with existing freedom fighter as primary source and Secondary data were collected by conducting interviews with the heirs of freedom fighters. Affidavits and freedom fighters pension papers were collected. The various books, pamphlets, letters and other related literatures, published and unpublished sources were also of immense use in the collection of secondary data. They add more historical information to the knowledge bank of freedom struggle of our country.

VII. NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT

Nagapattinam District is a unique District with all its historical and cultural significance. Nagapattinam is one of the constituents of Cholamandalam, acclaimed as the most prominent among the ancient Tamil kingdoms. Coastal town Nagapattinam was the Headquarters of a region during the period. Nagapattinam is derived from Nagar, referring to people from Sri Lanka who settled here and Pattinam referring to town. During the tenth century, Nagapattinam came under the complete sway of the cholas, who were the most powerful rulers of South India in this period. It became later one of the earliest settlements of the Portuguese on the east coast and was called by them "the city of Choramandel". It was naturally one of the first centres of the Portuguese mission. The Portuguese had commercial contacts with this town during the Thanjavur Nayaks rule - Sevvappa Nayakkar and Acchuthappa Nayakkar. The Portuguese commercial centre was established in 1554. Later this town full into the hands of British in 1781 From 1799 to 1845 CE Nagapattinam was the Headquarters of Tanjore District. Nagapattinam and Nagore were incorporated as a single municipality in 1866 C.E. The town remained one of the chief ports to the Madras Presidency. Nagapattinam District, the land of communal

harmony, was carved out by bifurcating the composite Thanjavur District on 18-10-1991. This district has traditionally been referred to as East Thanjavur and paddy granary of South India.

The District of Nagapattinam lies on the shores of the Bay of Bengal between latitude 10.7906⁰N and Longitude 79.8428⁰E an area of 2,715 square Kilometres (1048 Sqml). The District Capital, Nagapattinam lies on the eastern coast 350 kms down south of the State capital Chennai and of Tiruchirappalli. It has an average elevation of 9 metres (30 feet) above the mean sea level. The district has a coast line of 187 Kilometres. This is Peninsular delta District surrounded by Bay of Bengal on the East, Palk Strait on the South and land on the West and Northern Side. The district has two Lok Sabha constituencies, namely Nagapattinam and Mayiladuthurai. It has 8 taluks: Kilvelur, Kuthalam, Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam, Sirkazhi, Tharangambadi, Thirukkuvalai, Vedaranyam. Nagapattinam District played an important role in the history of freedom movement. The freedom fighters participated in all stages of freedom movement from 1919 to 1947. Another remarkable feature regarding the history of freedom movement is participation of people from Nagapattinam District in Indian National Army was significant and unique.

VIII. FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT AND THEIR ROLE IN INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

Nearly three hundred and sixty one (361) freedom fighters rendered their service as Sepoys some of the freedom fighters occupied higher positions in the field propaganda section of Indian National Army and worked under S.A. Iyer. Freedom fighters of Nagapattinam District spontaneously and actively participated in Indian National Army of Subash Chandra Bose. The total number of INA freedom fighters are three hundred and sixty one (361). Out of three hundred and sixty one (361) freedom fighters 325 freedom fighters rendered service as **Sepoys** one freedom fighter as **Havildar Clerk**, Two **Instructors**, Azad Hind Dal Unit of IIL and civilian training centre Kualalampur, One **Captain S.S. Groups**, One **Second Lieutenant in officers training school**, One **Recruiting Officer** in Syonam Branch unit, remarkable role played by Seven freedom fighters as **Sub officers in field propaganda section** of INA, Seven **Lance Naiks** and Sixteen **Naiks**.

The Sepoys extended their service in field propaganda, medical reinforcement animal transport, motor transport section of Indian National Army, some of them belonged to Gandhi Brigade and Azad Brigade. Among the freedom fighters of Nagapattinam District, persons from Sirkazhi and Tharangambadi went to Singapore and Malaysia with minimum educational qualification as they have study upto 8th Standard. In South East Asian countries, they have worked in Rubber plantations, Departmental stores and Labourers in various fields. They enrolled themselves in Indian Independence League. They drew inspiration from Netaji's speeches and changed their life style for the cause of freedom. They showed their spirit of Nationalism and Patriotism in an alien soil.

THE POSITION OF INA HEROES – NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT

S. No.	Taluk Name	Sepoys	L. Naik	Naik	Sub Officer / Recruiting Officer / Lieutenant	Havildar Clerk / Instructor	Total
1	Nagapattinam	46	3	3	1 Captain (S.S. Group) 1 Sub Officer (Field Propaganda)	1 Sepoy Instructor, 1 Havildar Clerk	56
2	Vedaranyam	46	-	4	-	-	50
3	Kilvelur	32	-	-	1 Sub Officer (Field Propaganda)	-	33
4	Thirukkuvalai	1	-	-	-	-	1
5	Tharangambadi	34	1	2	Sub Officer 3 (Field Propaganda) + 1 Recruiting Officer	-	41
6	Mayiladuthurai	93	1	4	1 Lieutenant	1 INA Instructor	100
7	Sirkazhi	73	2	3	2	-	80
	Total	325	7	16	10	3	361

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA

IX. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The freedom fighters of Nagapattinam district were impressed by the speeches of Subash Chandra Bose at Singapore, Malaysia and Burma. They went to Far Eastern Countries for seeking employment. After hearing the speeches of Subash Bose, they left their job and joined in INA. This proved the fact that patriotism and Nationalism has no boundary line. Many of the Freedom fighters of Nagapattinam District closely associated with Netaji in organising Indian National Army and occupied important positions in Indian National Army. The study exposed the fact that the spirit of Nationalism and patriotism has deep impact in every one of the society in those days. For achieving freedom they were ready to sacrifice their life. During their participation in INA struggle they never cared about their food and other facilities. Though they lived in foreign countries they never forget their mother country. Without any difference of caste, religion, race, they stood in front of INA's struggle for freedom. It is also found that six women of Nagapattinam District also had their role in INA. Mrs. Saraswathi belonged to Balasena unit of INA. Mrs. Abirami rendered service as Sepoy in Rani of Jhansi Regiment – a special characteristic feature of INA. The struggle made by these sincere patriots ushered the urge for liberation of people of many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The struggle for the freedom of India took an international footing. Many of the freedom fighters of Nagapattinam district enlisted in the Indian National Army, after the arrival of Netaji and revival of Indian National Army at Singapore, Malaysia, Penang in 1943. This shows the personality of Subash Chandra Bose was the significant factor in the popularity of Indian National Army.

X. SUGGESTIONS

Though the issue of Netaji's death is still a mystery, he is still alive in the minds of millions of Indians. His burning patriotism and constant efforts to liberate his motherland, from inside as well as outside make him a legend. Had he been alive, he would have been given a new shape to the political history of Independent India. The heirs of INA freedom fighters suggested to announce "Bhara Ratna" award to Netaji. They also demanded that the secrets of Netaji's death should be released. At present, the heirs of these freedom fighters requested that the government should celebrate the birthday of Netaji and January 23rd is to be declared as government holiday.

XI. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the results of the study on the role of freedom fighters of Nagapattinam District in Indian National Army revealed that these freedom fighters changed their life style for the cause of Nation. Regarding their role in INA was appreciable and valuable. Because many of them joined as sepoy and promoted to higher positions and rendered service without any expectations. Voluntarily they left their job and enlisted themselves in INA. The study also proved the fact that these freedom fighters were kindled by the magical words of Subash Chandra Bose and his personality. His famous quotations and popular speeches attracted more people to INA. It cannot be denied that Netaji's movement hastened India's ultimate freedom from the British yoke. India's emancipation paved the way for the freedom of other Asian Nations including of course, Malay and Singapore. Therefore events connected with Netaji and his movement should be sacred to one and all Asians.

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