

Career And Achievements Of Velu Naatchiaar - A Ferocious Tigress

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ABSTRACT

A well-known princess from Tamil Nadu's Ramnad Kingdom was named VeluNachiyar. She was conceived on January 3, 1730, in Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu, India. Her father's name was Raja Chellamuthu Vijayaragunatha Sethupathy and her mother was Rani Sakandhimuthal. The couple had no male heir to the throne, so they raised the princess as a boy. Even they made her learn horse riding and well-trained in archery and administrative skills. The present-day nations of Ramnad, Sivaganga, and Pudukottai were all formerly part of the Kingdom of Ramnad. The 7th King of Ramnad, Regunatha Sethupathy, also known as Kilavan Sethupathy, ruled from 1674 to 1710. Kilavan Sethupathy learned of Peria Oodaya Thevar's bravery and valour in Nalukottai, a village 4 kilometers from Sholapuram and close to Sivaganga. The primary sources for the study mostly consist of the Madras Government records such as the Fortnightly Reports, Government Orders, Under-secretary's safe secret files, Reports of the criminal investigation department, weekly reports on English and Vernacular press, District Calendar of events, Annual Reports on the administration of the Madras presidency, Proceeding of the Madras Legislative Council, Census Reports and files on the history of the freedom movement in the presidency. In conclusion, VeluNachiaar experienced a heart issue in her final days, according to French Father Chechool-De- Breys' diary. She had treatment in France for more than a month during which time she attended numerous official events and taught the daughter of the French ruler Vallari (Native Warfare).

KEYWORDS: Administration, Freedom Fighter, Palayam, Samasthanam, and Queen. Etc.

INTRODUCTION

The present paper is a study career and achievements of VeluNaatchiaar. Although she wasn't the only warrior queen in India, she was the first to challenge the power of the British there. Because she prevailed and restored the Sivaganga kingdom to its former splendor, the tale of VeluNachiyar, the 18th-century Queen Sivaganga of Tamil Nadu, is enthralling. This is her amazing tale. The time capsule's womb is home to Queen VeluNachchiyar of Sivagangai, the heroine of South India's brave past. This brave woman had earned a place of honor in the very first verse of this nation's struggle for freedom.

In many facets of life, she was a pioneer. She is compared to Queen Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, who eighty-five years later fought against the British in this country's northern region. The Tamil Queen fought the British, drove them out, and ruled her state.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To Study about Position of Queens of South India
- 2) To Study the timelines of the Sivagangai Empire.
- 3) To study Arc-Veera Mangai Rani VeluNachiyar

Sources

The primary sources for the study mostly consist of the Madras Government records such as the Fortnightly Reports, Government Orders, Under-secretary's safe secret files, Reports of the criminal investigation department, weekly reports on English and Vernacular press, District Calendar of events, Annual Reports on the administration of the Madras presidency, Proceeding of the Madras Legislative Council, Census Reports

and files on the history of the freedom movement in the presidency.

Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this study is both descriptive and analytical. Events leading to Velunachiar's birth, growth, assumption of power, and fight against the British have been described. To narrate the causes and effects of the events analytical method is useful.

Formation of Sivagangai

The present-day nations of Ramnad, Sivaganga, and Pudukottai were all formerly part of the Kingdom of Ramnad. The 7th King of Ramnad, RegunathaSethupathy, also known as KilavanSethupathy, ruled from 1674 to 1710. KilavanSethupathy learned of PeriaOodaya Thevar's bravery and valour in Nalukottai, a village 4 kilometers from Sholapuram and close to Sivaganga. To keep 1000 armed soldiers, the King gave PeriaOodaya Thevar of Nalukottai a chunk of land. After KilavanSethupathy's passing in 1710, Vijaya RegunathaSethupathy succeeded him as the eighth ruler of Ramnad. The King wed Sasivarna Thevar, the son of NalukottaiPeriaOodaya Thevar, and AkilandeswariNachiar, his daughter.

The King provided Sasivarna Thevar with enough tax-free lands as a dowry to support 1,000 men. He gave him command of the harbour of Thondi, and the forts of Piranmalai, Tiruppathur, Sholapuram, and Tiruppuvanam. The 9th King of Ramnad, SundareswaraRegunathaSethupathy, was detained by Bhavani Sankaran, the son of KilavanSethupathy, who had seized control of the Ramnad region. The Rajah of Ramnad, according to Bhavani Sankaran, is his claim to fame. From 1726 to 1729, he ruled as the 10th king of Ramnad. He got into a fight and expelled SasivarnaPeriaOodaya Thevar of Nalukottai from his Nalukottaipalayam. The late SundareswaraRegunathaSethupathy's brother, KattayaThevan, escaped Ramnad and sought asylum with the Rajah of Tanjore Tuljaji.

When Sasivarna Thevar was traveling through the Kalayarkoi jungle, he came across Sattappiah, a Gnani (sage), who was meditating under a jambool tree next to the spring known as "SIVAGANGA." The overthrown king knelt before him and recounted all the events from his past. The Gnani advised him to travel to Tanjore and kill a fearsome tiger that the Rajah had kept specifically to test the bravery of men. The Gnani uttered a specific mantra (Mantra Opadesam) in his ears. To Tanjore, Sasivarna Thevar travelled. There, he met KattayaThevan, another refugee like himself. The Rajah of Tanjore, who was pleased with Sasivarna Thevar and KattayaThevan's good behaviour and wanted to assist them in regaining the States, instructed his DALAVOY to lead a sizable force into Bhavani Sankaran. With a sizable army provided by the king of Tanjore, Sasivarna Thevar and KattayaThevan immediately moved on to Ramnad. In 1730, they overcame Bhavani Sankaran at the Battle of Uriyur and seized Ramnad. As a result, KattayaThevan was 11th crowned Ramnad's .

Early life

A well-known princess from Tamil Nadu's Ramnad Kingdom was named VeluNachiyar. She was born on January 3rd, 1730 in Tamil Nadu, India's Ramanathapuram. Her father's name was Raja ChellamuthuVijayaragunathaSethupathy and her mother was Rani Sakandhimuthal. The couple had no Male heir to the throne, so they rise the princess as a boy. Even they made her learn horse riding and well-trained in archery and administrative skills. She also trained in martial arts such as Silambam, using the Valari. Nachiyar profoundly studied several languages and got command over English, French, and Urdu. Although she had a reputation for being a handsome prince a la Draupathi, the Pandava concert in the Mahabharata. At the age of 16, Nachiyar wed MuthuvadugananthurUdaiyathevar, a descendant of Sivagangai's King SasivarnaPeriya Udaya. Periya Udaya served as the Sivagangai's administrator in the beginning. Eventually took control of the Sivagangai Kingdom and maintained control until his passing in 1772. Vellachi, the daughter of the couple, was born.



Multi-Linguist Queen

King SellamuthuSethupathi of Ramanathapuram and SakkandhiMuththaththalNaehchiyar were the parents of queen VeluNachchiyar. One of the Sivagangai State's auxiliary Palayams that bordered Sivagangai was Sakkaudhi. When she was younger, Queen VeluNachchiyar was incredibly talented and energetic. She studied Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Urdu, English, and French since she wanted to acquire as many languages as possible. Jose-de-pray, a priest, was the one who taught her how to speak French.

Literary Genius

She read epics including the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha as well as the Sangam literary classics Silappadhikoram and Manimegalai. Any boy or girl born into a royal household was expected to be well-versed in both these literary works and epics as well as the art of battle. The Sethupathies family had a tradition of doing this, hence VeluNachchiyar was.

Family Tradition

Muthuvaduganathar, whom VeluNachchiyar married, was the father of the couple's lone daughter. Because Muthuvaduganathar, who was supposed to raise Vellachchifollowing the rules and customs of the royal line, was brutally murdered by Englishmen, VeluNachchiyar was left to take responsibility. To comfort the grieving Queen, Minister Thandavaraya Pillai substituted her for her deceased father. Thandavaraya Pillai, a minister under Sasivarna Thevar and Muthuvaduganathar, had a wealth of experience in both the practical and theoretical elements of state administration. As a result, when the king collapsed on the battlefield, his mind quickly calculated that he should enlist the aid of Hyder Ali of Mysore to restore the broken Sivagangai State to its former preeminent position.

Marriage Option of VellachiNachchiyar

With such judgments, VeluNachchiyar, who sought to establish the State's control and bring about peace, was unable to live in peace at home. She struggled with who to trust with both the leadership of the State after her and the care of her daughter, who had reached adulthood. Two people were put forward as potential husbands for her daughter: one was Ramanathapuram's King MuthuramalingaSethupathy, and the other was a descendant of the woman's mother, SanganthiVenganPeriya Udaya Thevar. The latter was favoured by VeluNachchiyar, whose daughter wed Periya Udaya Thevar. When she made this choice, her State's interests came first in

Years of Stat in Dindigul

The "Kalaiyar Koil War," in which the British entered Sivagangai with the son of the Nawab of Arcot and assassinated VeluNachchiyar's husband, drove her to escape her kingdom with her daughter. She remained at Virupachi in Dindigul for eight years under Gopala Nayak's sanctuaries after finding refuge there. VeluNachchiyar had a meeting with Haider Ali, the Sultan and Mysore's former king, while she was in

Dindigul. She spoke to him in Urdu, and her bravery and tenacity greatly moved him. As a result, she won Haider Ali's unshakable support as well as that of Gopala Nayaker, who vowed to join her.

In recognition of their friendship, he even constructed a temple inside his palace. The Sultan extended an invitation for her to stay at the Dindigul fort, where she was treated with the dignity appropriate for a queen. Additionally, she received 5000 infantry and cavalry soldiers and 400 pounds in monthly financial support from Haider Ali. All of that, together with the weapons supplied by the Sultan, assisted VeluNachiyar in putting together a strong army to expel the British.

The organizer of the Women's Force

As a trainer for that force, Queen VeluNachiyar created it. When she and her daughter VellachiNachiyar, who was only known to a herd girl named Udaiyal, narrowly fled at Kalayarkoil (at AriyakkurichiAyyanar Koil), they were accompanied by their devoted slaves. Benjour pursued the royal family, and an investigation was launched. She, however, refused to submit to the ruthless British troops. He immediately gave his men the command to kill Young Martyr Udaiyal there. Queen VeluNachiyar gave her force the honorific name UdaiyalPadai in her honour.

She also built the Veera Kal (Hero Stone)¹⁵, where she gave her life in defense of the nation, presented a diamond sacred tie to the temple of VettudaiyalKaliyamman in Ariyakkurichi as its first offering, and granted 16 numerous villages permission to conduct daily pooja. Nevertheless, locals revere her as the goddess Udaiyal (or VettudaiyalKaliyamman). It demonstrates VeluNachiayr's appreciation and practice of honouring the Sivagangai Kingdom Martyr.

The War of 1772

Muthu VadukanathaPeriaOodaya Thevar and the Second wife Gowri Nachiyar went to Kalaiyar Koil to worship Lord Siva. Kalaiyar Koil became important place during the period of VeluNachiyar. Both Sethupathi of Ramnad and Sethupathi of Sivaganga refused to pay tax to Nawab of Arcot. To collect tax both Nawab and British forces invaded Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga under the Neelan Durai, Commander of the British in 1772. English army led by Bonjore British commander killed the people and heaped. On the other side, Joseph Smith British commander conducted a peace talk with Thandavaraya Pillai, Dalavary of Sivagangai while Bonjore attacked suddenly. In this attack, king Muthu VadukanathaPeriaOodaya and his wife Gowri Nachiyar died. Children to adults were attacked in the war. The widow VeluNachiyar and her daughter escaped to Virupakshi, where their two able servants Vella Marudu and ChinnaMarudu joined them. The invading forces plundered the town and collected jewels worth 50,000 pagodas. Nawab rule commenced in Sivagangai fort. The elder son of Nawab Umadt-Ul-Umrawas appointed as a direct representative of Nawab. The new ruler formulated declarations day to day. The name Sivaganga was changed to "Husain Nagar". The new name Husain Nagar was mentioned in the Nawab and British records.

Struggle Against the British Rule

In 1772, the son of the Nawab of Arcot and the soldiers of the East India Company stormed Sivagangai. In a second conflict (the Kalaiyar Koil war) with Col. Smith, MuthuvadugananthurUdaiyathevar was killed. One of the most heinous episodes of those times involved the cruel killing of several women and children, who were not even spared during the war. The dependable Marudhu brothers and Thandavaraya Pillai were among the noteworthy individuals who managed to flee the conflict. At that time, Nachiyar was in Kollangudi. After her husband was killed during the war, she and her daughter fled to Virupachi, which is close to Dindigul, where they hid for eight years under the protection of PalayakaararKopaalaNaayakkar.

Throughout her stay in Virupachi, she gradually gathered a strong army to combat the British. Gopala Nayaker and Hyder Ali, the Sultan and de facto ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore in southern India, provided her with a great deal of assistance in completing her mission. She found him in Dindigul after asking for his assistance. The queen made a strong impression on Sultan Hyder Ali with her resolve and bravery when she

spoke to him in Urdu. The Sultan pledged to aid the queen in her quest to reclaim her realm. The Sultan also gave her permission to dwell at Virupakshi or Dindugal Fort, where she was respected

The Sultan also sent her 400 pounds (Gold) per month as financial support. She asked the Sultan for 5000 men and 5000 cavalries to battle the British, and she maintained confusing her foe by shifting her camp regularly. She was also given the tools she needed by Sultan Hyder Ali so she could battle the British bravely.

She first engaged the British in battle in 1780, becoming the first Indian queen to engage them in a struggle for independence. She learned of the British ammunition stockpile. With this knowledge, the courageous queen, also known as Veeramangai (Tamil for "brave woman"), planned and organized a suicide strike on the ammunition warehouse. Kuyili, the queen's devoted disciple, and an army commander volunteered to do the task. To ensure the queen's victory, Kuyili doused herself in ghee, set herself ablaze, jumped into the armory, and detonated it there. Kuyili, who many people believe to be Nachiyar's adopted daughter, is recognized as the first female suicide bomber.

VeluNachiyar the First Freedom Fighter

Finally, she began the fight against the British in 1780, as the first freedom fighter in India. She was also famous as a suicide bomb user, at the time of demolishing the ammunition store of the British. She used Kuyili, the loyal follower of the Suicide Bomber, she drenched herself with ghee on the entire body and lit the fire and jumped into the armory, and blew it up. Few historians believed that Kuyili was the adopted daughter of Nachiyar. So that the Tamils called NachiyarVeeramangai, which means brave woman. Another adopted daughter, Udaya also sacrificed her life in the fight against the British. Then the Nachiyar built up completely with women and named udaya. In the war, she succeeded to recapture the Sivaganga estate and ruled for the next 10 years. She made her daughter Vellacci, the heir of the estate.

Last days of VeluNachiyar

Sivaganga under the control of VeluNachiyar and Marudhu Brothers. VengaiPeriyaUdayana Rajah married VellachiNachiyar, the princess and the daughter of VeluNachiyar. He assumed the Rajaship of Sivaganga in 1791. He gave birth to a female child in 1792. VengaiPeriya Udaya Rajah was only a nominal ruler while the real powers of the state were in the hands of the Marudhu Brothers. In 1793, VellachiNachiyar and her infant daughter died cause of discuses. After this incident, VeluNachiyar was highly affected. She suffered from heart problems. VengamPeriya Udaya Thevar married Muthathal. She was the daughter of VellaiMarudu. So Marudhu Brothers want to rule the Sivaganga. In vanity, the Marudhu army captured the castle. After this VeluNachiyar suffered from a heart problem. Joes-de-Pre took VeluNachiyars to France for her heart operation and it was done successfully. VeluNachiyar conducted training in ValariVeechu for the daughter of the French king. VeluNachiyar participated in his protest programs of politics and gave important suggestions. VeluNachiyar returned to Sivaganga after six months. On 25th December 1796, Queen VeluNachiyar passed away in Virupakshi.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, VeluNachiaar experienced a heart issue in her final days, according to French Father Chechool-De- Breys' diary. She had treatment in France for more than a month during which time she attended numerous official events and taught the daughter of the French ruler Vallari (Native Warfare). she was miserable in her final days as a result of the passing of her daughter and grandchild. Queen VeluNachiyar was one of the pioneers to resist British East India Company rule in Sivaganga. She had recovered Sivaganga successfully from the company waging valiant wars. Dr. J. Jayalalithaa the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu inaugurated VeeramangaiVeluNachiyar Memorial in Sivagangai on 18 July 2014. And also she ordered that the birth anniversary of VeluNachiyar will be celebrated as a Government function. Rani VeluNachiyar was referred to as a "Joan of Arc" in the novel "Maruthiruvar" by renowned author Prof. S. Sanjeevi. She overcame all of the discrimination, suffering, and stereotyping. She serves as a role model for everyone, not only for women. Rani VeluNachiyar dismantled gender roles during a period

when even advocating for equal rights and respect for women was considered nothing less than a sin. This could be regarded as one of the earliest battles against discrimination against women.

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