HISTORY

Struggle for Freedom in Tiruchirappalli: A Historical Study

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Abstract

This article examines the role of Tiruchirappalli in India's freedom struggle during British rule. It highlights the contributions of local Congress leaders, political activists, students, and ordinary people in promoting the national movement. The study discusses important events such as the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha, and the Quit India Movement of 1942. It also explains the importance of Khadi production, Swadeshi activities, public demonstrations, boycotts, and political awareness in mobilizing people against colonial rule. Leaders such as T.S.S. Rajan and C. Rajagopalachari played significant roles in organizing and strengthening the movement in the region. The article demonstrates how the people of Tiruchirappalli contributed to the broader Indian independence movement through political participation, social activism, and resistance to British authority.

Keywords: Indian freedom struggle; Tiruchirappalli; Indian National Congress; Non-Cooperation Movement; Civil Disobedience Movement; Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha; Quit India Movement; Swadeshi Movement; Mahatma Gandhi; T.S.S. Rajan

1 Introduction

Since the general political awakening, the people in Tiruchirappalli began to evince keen interest in the working of the Congress Party. The non-Brahmins who once kept aloof from the main stream of the national movement associated themselves with the freedom struggle. Further the non-Brahmin reaction made the Congress to change its programmes to suit the bulk of the non-Brahmin masses and the oppressed classes. The base of the Congress party was widened and strengthened in the village level. The movement which was confined to the urban areas now began to spread to the rural areas.

2 The constructive programmes of the Congress

When T.S.S. Rajan became the Secretary of Tamil Nadu Congress in 1922, Tiruchirappalli became a leading centre of Congress activities. In order to speed up the activities of the Congress, taluk Congress Committees were formed in all the taluks of Tiruchirappalli. More members were enrolled in the Congress. The Congress, so far, dominated by the elite began to admit the ordinary peasants also.

The Congress workers asked the villagers to give importance to Native Industries. The simple living of the Congress workers in rural areas won the sympathy of the people. In villages Khadi Production was encouraged. A number of handlooms were brought out to promote the production of khadi

textiles. The first khadi cloth saries were manufactured from Tiruchirappalli. In order to sell the goods produced by the native industries, the Tiruchirappalli Congress Committee started a Khadi Vastralayam. The Congress workers brought khadi cloths to the villages and explained to the people the importance of Swadeshi goods. They shouted slogans like 'khadi would save the life of millions of the people of India, Gandhi's khadi, and Swaraji khadi.'

With the financial help of Tilak's Swarajya Fund, Khadi Craft industries were opened at Perambalur and in other taluk centres of Tiruchirappalli. Such schemes formed a part of Gandhi's constructive Programme. In 1924, the Tamil Nadu Khadi Board was set up with K. Santhanam as the President and S. Ramanathan as Secretary. In 1931, a khadi exhibition was arranged at Tiruchirappalli. Khadi Clothes were produced in different parts of the country were exhibited and sold. Not only were khadi goods sold, but how khadi cloth manufactured, was also demonstrated to the people. In 1932, a Khadi exhibition was conducted in the National College ground opened by Babu Rajendra Prasad. The khadi exhibitions spread the ideals of Gandhiji and made people to realize the importance of Swadeshi Goods.

3 Towards non-cooperation

The passing of the Rowlatt Act which empowered the Government to arrest and detain the suspected persons without warrant and to imprison them without trial disturbed the political tranquility of Tiruchirappalli. The Act was subjected to severe criticism and opposition. In response to the appeal of Gandhiji the leaders of Tiruchirappalli arranged a meeting in the Townhall in 1919 with Kashthuri Ranga Iyyangar in the chair. Leaders like C. Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem, C. Srinivasachari, Satyamoorthy and B.P. Wadia spoke in the meeting. The district congress committee of Tiruchirappalli organised hartals and demonstrations to record their protest against the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, on 13th April 1919. T.S.S. Rajan and T.V. Swaminathan Sastri convened public meetings and advised the people to boycott British goods.

A Satyagraha Sabha was established in Tiruchirappalli. Under the auspices of the Sabha, a meeting was held on 12th June 1919 and K.G. Sivasami exhorted the people to observe Satyagraha and condemned the Rowlatt Act in strong terms. In the speeches of T. Prakasam at Tiruchirappalli on 4th and 5th February 1919, he said that the failure of the Government servants to do their duties sincerely was responsible for the incidents like the Amritsar tragedy. On 16th April 1919, most of the shops in Tiruchirappalli were closed to observe the Satyagraha day. The meeting of the Madras provincial conference was presided by the Raja of Ramnad. The Chairman of the reception committee Mr. K.V. Rangaswami Ayyangar condemned the Rowlatt act and the treatment of the rioters in the Punjab. Resolutions were passed protesting against the orders under the Defence of India Act passed against Gandhiji; and asking for general amnesty with full pardon for all political offenders. Mr. Kasturi Ranga Ayyangar moved a resolution dealing with the Punjab situation deploring the delay in the appointment of a Commission.

On 5th December 1920, a special session of the Indian National Congress met at Calcutta under the leadership of Gandhiji, and decided to start the non-cooperation movement. It included non-payment of taxes, satyagraha, boycott of foreign goods, courts, colleges and legislatures, organisations of labour unions and observance of temperance. It also laid stress on the promotion of a Swadeshi establishment and the creation of volunteer corps for the purpose of maintaining order and discipline. It instructed to set up private arbitration courts, National Schools and Colleges for education.

The Congress boycott of the elections of 1920 contributed to the low polling in Tiruchirappalli. The average polling in Tiruchirappalli was between fifteen and sixteen per cent. In the urban constituency of Madurai-Tiruchirappalli-cum-srirangam, only 8.4% of the Muslims exercised their votes. In spite of the boycott programmes of the Congress, the elections were held in all the constituencies. The Congress party led by Gandhiji did not get dismayed at that set back. The non-cooperation programme began to gain momentum in other ways. The students like Sadasivam, R. Krishnaswami, Thiagarajan, Venkataraman and Muhammad Usman left their college Studies. Those who gave up their legal profession were N. Halsyam Ayyar, Thiru Narayana Ayyar and Bala Krishna Sastri. The leaders who actually left their professions and college careers were limited when compared to the number of people who continued in service. The latter indirectly sympathized with and supported the cause.

In order to prepare the people for non-cooperation movement Gandhiji visited almost all the parts of India. He came to Tiruchirappalli in 1921 along with the Ali brothers. A rousing reception was given to them while they got down from the train. A procession was carried out on the evening of 30th march 1920 from Palakarai in Tiruchirappalli city with pomp and show. The Procession passed Through the Periyakadai street and assembled at the Municipal ground. People on the road side were rejoiced at seeing the Ali brothers. The Shop keepers offered garlands and purses to them. The Tiruchirappalli Khilafat committee Secretary V.S. Muhammad Ibrahim in his welcome address praised the Ali brothers for their untiring efforts to oust the British from India.

Gandhiji planned to visit Madurai through Pudukkottai. But the Pudukkottai Durbar prohibited him to travel in its territory. At the same time when the Prince of Wales visited India a hartal was observed. The Tiruchirappalli Congress Committee took the lead and called upon the people to boycott the visit of the prince. There was a protest meeting on 17th September 1921 at Perambalur taluk, Tiruchirappalli. It aroused public enthusiasm over the issue. The Tiruchirappalli Congress sent a batch of volunteers under T.S.S. Rajan for boycott purpose. The Congress volunteer in Tiruchirappalli picked cloth shops and colleges. There was a picketing in front of the National College. The Principal of the college gave cool drinks to the arrested and indirectly supported the movement.

In many places the congress volunteers defied orders under section 144 of the criminal procedure code. The families of the arrested Congress workers, were financially assisted from party funds. In 1922, there was a meeting at Uraiyur, Tiruchirappalli in connection with the non-cooperation. The speaker Mr. Ignatius, a student of St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli was arrested. Consequently he was expelled from the college. T.S.S. Rajan was the guiding force in all the activities of Tiruchirappalli Congress. He attempted to organise the ryots for the non-payment of taxes. The high assessment imposed by the government on the mirasidars made them to join with the Congress. Though the 'no rent' campaign had a wider appeal in Tiruchirappalli, it ended in failure.

The policy of picketing liquor shops started at Tiruchirappalli from July and reached its height in September 1923. The shop-keepers and customers were frightened. On 5th February, 1923, T.S.S. Rajan, T.V. Swaminatha Sastri and others picketed the liquor shops near Uraiyur and were arrested. The picketing of liquor shops was intensified, and as a result the sales dwindled to thirty per cent. Toddy shops were boycotted and attempts had been made to terrorise those who let out palm trees to contractors for toddy tapping. Three liquor shops were burnt and about one thousand palm trees of a private person were cut down. The agitation against the sale and consumption of alcohol and toddy provided the non-cooperators with a powerful weapon that could enhance their influence in rural

areas. The failure of non-cooperation was compensated by the constructive works of the congress which awakened the people in the village.

The opposition to the Rowlatt Bill and the non-cooperation movement awakened the people of the district. Though it failed to achieve Swaraj, it resulted in the general awakening of the people to their political rights and privileges. The non-cooperation movement raised the status of the Congress in the minds of the people of Tiruchirappalli. They looked Congress as the organization which could properly direct national effort towards freedom. The non-cooperation movement began to fade away by 1925.

The Swarajists wanted to capture power and to oppose the Government. This idea soon gained currency among other parties. The Swarajya party got the majority in the 1926 elections. In 1927, Gandhiji toured Tiruchirappalli and his tour gave a temporary fillip to the khadi movement, but his advocacy of total prohibition met with little enthusiasm. His condemnation of certain social evils in Hindu society aroused a definite feeling of hostility.

In 1927, the Congress decided to boycott the Simon Commission. The workers of the Congress party in Tiruchirappalli made preparations for the boycott of the statutory commission. C.D. Gopalan of Tiruchirappalli brought black flags and pasted the boycott posters on the walls of the buildings in the Tiruchirappalli District the Police snatched all such things including black flags, the shirt and dhoti. Lastly he wrote the slogans of boycott on his body and went round the streets. The Commission's visit to Madras on 26th February passed off without incident. During that period the railway workers of Tiruchirappalli conducted a strike to solve their problems. They were supported by Congress workers and thereby drew them in to the national movement.

The Swarajists also propagated their ideals to the people. In 1929, Satyamurti in his characteristic speech at Srirangam said that while he was not against Gandhiji's principle of non-violence was necessary to repel insult and attack. George Joseph, another leader who delivered a lecture under the auspices of South Indian Liberal Federation urged the necessity to cultivate a martial spirit, being a necessary corollary to mobilise popular support for strengthening the idea of Dominion Status. The non-cooperation continued in one form or other, till the Vedaranyam march of Rajagopalachari.

4 March to Vedaranyam

The civil disobedience movement in Tamil Nadu was largely centered around Tiruchirappalli, because Vedaranyam became the venue for the violation of civil laws. The Indian National Congress held at Lahore in December, 1929, adopted the resolution to commence the Civil disobedience movement. In connection with the resolution Gandhiji wanted to defy the salt laws openly. When Gandhiji marched to Dandi the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee under the leadership of C. Rajagopalachari decided to march to Vedaranyam from Tiruchirappalli as its base. On 6th April 1930, a public meeting was held under the auspices of the Tiruchirappalli Congress Committee, Dr. T.S.S. Rajan explained the object of the march and appealed the people to join in large numbers to make the march a success. He erected pandals within the premises of his bungalow for the accommodation of the delegates. The Tamil Nadu campaign started on 13th April 1930 when C. Rajagopalachari moved from Tiruchirappalli to the salt swamps at Vedaranyam on the Thanjavur sea board at the head of the first batch of hundred volunteers. The march commenced from the house of T.S.S. Rajan when his daughter put a tilak mark on the forehead of Rajaji. The other 100 volunteers were also blessed by other women.

The volunteers were welcomed on the way by the crowd. Dr. Rajan accompanied the first batch and made speeches on the way. Having a night stay in the Tiruvanaikoil, the party left to Kallanai in the morning. The Collector of Thanjavur had given severe warning to the people not to welcome the satyagrahis. While the satyagrahis reached Koilady, the people received them by beating drums. There was a public meeting on the 14th night on the Cauvery river sand bed. The chavadi was closed as per the orders of the Collectors of Thanjavur. They had with them two carts of provisions. The volunteers moved in tune with the satyagraha vows of Gandhiji. They spent the resting time constructively visiting the villages and doing social works in order to awaken the people.

Elaborate arrangements had been made for the satyagrahis. Two temporary sheds were erected for the purpose. The satyagrahis reached Vedaranyam on 28th April 1930. On reaching Vedaranyam, the satyagrahis were given a warm reception by the Congress workers. The salt swamp of Vedaranyam extended to nearly thirty miles along the coast. Police pickets were posted in all the areas of the salt swamp since it was a government owned one. On the early morning of 29th April, Rajaji took ten volunteers and went to Augustuspalli to prepare salt. He was arrested and the volunteers returned to the camp with salt which they procured without the knowledge of the police. The arrest of Rajaji created great repercussions in the Tamil country. After the arrest of Rajaji, Santhanam became the leader of the satyagrahis. The Satyagraha camp was rounded by the police and no volunteer was permitted to come out of the camp. The volunteers suffered even from proper supply of food material. Food packets from the visitors were placed on the foot of the trees and satyagrahis collected such food packets without the knowledge of police.

The Vedaranyam campaign ended on 30th April with the general round up of the central camp along with four other subsidiary camps. Cruelties were committed on volunteers who refused to part with the salt in their possessions. The earliest use of the police lathi in the presidency was at Vedaranyam. But the repercussions gave further courage to the people and the movement assumed an all India character. The government charged that it was T.S.S. Rajan's brain and money which helped to keep the movement alive in the Tamil Country.

When Rajaji started to Vedaranyam, another party under the leadership P. Sangili Pillai started west wards of Tiruchirappalli covering Turaiyur, Musiri and Karur. They travelled on foot and courted arrest at Karur. They took salt water and prepare salt. There was a Satyagraha camp in Uraiyur under the control of Narayana Aiyyar and C.D. Gopalan to train the volunteers.

5 Civil disobedience at its peak

The salt satyagraha marked the beginning of civil disobedience movement in large scale. Intense picketing of foreign clothes and liquor shops and boycott of census were also systematically conducted in other parts. The Swadeshi league tried to promote the sale of khadi and swadeshi goods. The civil disobedience movement gave a new vigour to the congress in Tamil Nadu. Several ryots associations were organised. The situation was rather aggravated due to the complicated problems of the labouring classes. When C. Rajaji was convicted, his mantle fell on R. Narayana Ayyangar, a local vakil. He opened a Satyagraha Ashramam in Kiledar in Tiruchirappalli district. A large number of volunteers began to flock to that ashramam and from 12th June 1930 onwards propaganda work in the shape of public meetings, demonstrations, processions and collection of money were commenced. On 25th June 1930, the Satyagraha Ashramam was declared an unlawful assembly and was raided by the police. Following that incident the Congress concentrated their attention in indulging underground activities. The Congress Office in Tiruchirappalli was also raided

and all the ring leaders were arrested. Then T.V. Swaminath Sastri came to the field. On 18th August 1930, a meeting of the working committee adopted the following resolutions namely to picket colleges, enrol students as volunteers in the movement, and to boycott polling booths at the time of the council elections. As per the resolutions on 3rd September, the colleges were picketed. Students and teachers were prevented from entering the colleges by the volunteers lying across the gates. Some thirty nine persons were arrested under Indian Penal Code X. On 7th September, the volunteers and a large number of students and sympathisers about 1000 went in a procession in Tiruchirappalli. National flags were hoisted all over the town. The procession was peaceful and they shouted slogans demanding the release of the congress leaders. Picketing of colleges continued in Tiruchirappalli under the leadership of Dr. (Miss) Pichaimuthu Ammal of Madurai. All the picketeers including her were arrested and sent to jail. The total number of arrest in Tiruchirappalli during 1930-31 were 200.

In 1930, 107 students took part in civil-disobedience movement from National College. The Principal of the college imposed a fine of four annas per each student. In St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli, attendance was nearly seventy per cent in all the days of picketing. Four students were sent out of Clives Hostel and three students were arrested by the police but were set free on receiving an apology. In the Bishop Heber College attendance was fifty per cent and the usual fines for absence was imposed. Parents were informed of the students' activities. The students became jubilant when Rajaji was released from jail on 10th October 1930, and a public meeting at Tiruchirappalli was held in the Town Hall. He stressed the need for the Civil disobedience and insisted the people to lend their support to the movement.

The Government followed a repressive policy against the satyagrahis. The Tiruchirappalli Congress Committee was declared an unlawful association. In spite of that Civil-disobedience continued mainly in the town areas of Tiruchirappalli district. Open agitations were minimized due to the repressive measures of the government. Secret meetings and underground activities continued which made the Civil-disobedience movement more violent. A secret meeting was held at the house of Halsayam Ayyar on 6th February 1932 at eight in the morning and decided to send out volunteers for distributing boycott leaflets and also to conduct picketing of foreign cloth shops.

The secret and underground activities were faded away in 1933 due to the strong action of the government and the lack of interest among the people of Tiruchirappalli in general. Though there was a general decline in the tempo of the civil-disobedience movement, the ryots in Tiruchirappalli started to register their protests against the rise of the land revenue. Such activities were purely directed by the Congress. Because in Tiruchirappalli, the last re-settlement was introduced in 1925. The hike of the revenue was announced to the people by 1925 itself. So there was no point in agitating for the same issue in 1933. The land owners were induced not to pay revenue to the government. But the movement was not even a partial success. As a result the civil-disobedience movement was suspended in 1934.

6 The Tiruchirappalli affair

The local elections in Tiruchirappalli in 1935-36 received the special attention of the Congress leaders. P. Ratnavelu Thevar, one of the prominent figures of local politics who left Justice party, joined the congress party in 1934. He became popular with local congress by exploiting the anti-Brahmin and anti-muslim feelings in the town. In 1936, the congress won the majority of seats in the Tiruchirappalli municipal council. The congress nominated Ratnavelu Thevar as its candidate for

chairman. The official congress candidate was defeated by Thiru. Lourduswamy Pillai, the candidate of T.S.S. Rajan.

On knowing such developments, C. Rajagopalachari stated that the defection of T.S.S. Rajan as a signal refusal of loyalty to the party. The reaction of T.S.S. Rajan was that he resigned from the working committee and the Congress Parliamentary Committee. His decision aroused much anxiety and efforts were made to revoke his decision.

The victory of the Congress in the civic elections of Tiruchirappalli made many to join the congress towards the struggle for responsible government and hoped that the would be rewarded. The developments that followed resulted in the rise of the non-Brahmin elements in the congress fold. It weakened the position of Rajaji and his supporters. The non-Brahmin leaders from Tiruchirappalli gave their support to Kamaraj, the non-Brahmin leader of the Congress party. In Tiruchirappalli there were number of black flag demonstration when Rajaji toured the District. Most of the Congressmen in Tiruchirappalli became the ardent supporters of Kamaraj.

7 The anti-war movement

The Second World War found its repercussions in the district of Tiruchirappalli too. The last stage of the struggle for a responsible Government was started in 1939, when Great Britain involved the Indians in the Second World War without the consent or approval of the Central Legislature. The Congressmen of Tiruchirappalli again became very active in organizing demonstrations. Following that the civil disobedience movement was started by the Congress. The Congress Committees of Tiruchirappalli were converted into Satyagraha Committees. The committee which consisted hundred persons like L. Sabapathi, T.S. Arunachalam and Ladapuram Guruswamy took satyagraha pledge. The Tamil Nadu Satyagraha Committee met at the District Congress Office, Rock Fort under the leadership of T.S.S. Rajan. Under his guidance more than 160 volunteers including R. Rathnavelu Thevar, Chairman of the Tiruchirappalli Municipality signed the satyagraha pledge. In other taluks of Tiruchirappalli, satyagraha pledges were taken by the Congress Committee members. The members undertook a vigorous propaganda in villages, with a view to educate the masses politically and prepare them to take an active part in the mass civil disobedience. The students became violent and they conducted demonstrations and meetings. The speech of Sivasami, a student of St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli, created a furore in the town and became a popular topic of discussion. It created a prejudicial impression against the British Raj. Sivasami was arrested and sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment.

The initial success of Hitler changed the attitude of the British Administration in India and they made an appeal to the congress leaders for financial help. It made the leaders of Tiruchirappalli also to collect a war fund. Public meetings for the collection of war fund attracted enthusiastic audience. Two Wapiti aircraft from Bombay dropped some 12000 leaflets all over the district describing the war message. On 30th November 1941 the Governor of Madras visited Tiruchirappalli and appealed people to contribute to the war fund. Yet the political dead lock continued against the British administration.

8 The August struggle of 1942

The 'Quit India' resolution adopted by the Congress on August 8, 1942, in its session at Bombay created a storm throughout the country. The 'do or die' slogan of Gandhiji kindled the feelings of the

people. National leaders were arrested on 9th August. Tiruchirappalli became extremely turbulent. On the same day there was unrest among the students and more than fifty per cent of the students stayed away from classes. Partial hartal was observed in Tiruchirappalli and Karur. Raja Ayyar, a Congress agitator conducted a public meeting in protest on the arrest of the leaders. He was also arrested under Defence of India Rules. A passenger train had been derailed between Pugalur and Noyyal Railway station by removing the fish plates. On 17th August 1942, a crowd of about 3000 excited students thronged the gates of St. Joseph's College and prevented others from entering into the college. Later they conducted a meeting on the town hall and condemned the arrest of the leaders.

The Toddy and arrack shops in the city were burnt down on the night of October 1942. The houses and the shops, which flew the Congress flags were forced to remove the flags under the direction of the police. The Government tried to evolve order out of chaos through strong repressive measures. T.S. Arunachalam and Sabapathi decided to set fire to the taluk offices of Musiri, Wodayarpalayam and Tiruchirappalli and the All India Radio Office on September 11, 1942. Elaborate arrangements had been made for the purpose. Somehow the news leaked out and they were arrested and sent to Alipore jail in Bellary district, under rigorous imprisonment for one year. The arrest was made on the charge of the possession of several packets of prejudicial leaflets.

On 10th September 1942, the students of the National College, attempted to hold a meeting in the college premises to protest against the sentence of whipping imposed on the students of Loyola College, Chennai. The meeting was abandoned on the advice of the Principal of the college, because the Violation of the prohibitory order would entail to prosecution. In Musiri taluk a physician had advised the people to carry on civil-disobedience. The arrest of the doctor resulted in a mob attack on the police station. Many local leaders like Natesa Ayyar, T.S. Arunachalam, Raja Ayyar and Ladapuram Guruswamy had been arrested in connection with the August struggle of 1942.

9 The Ariyalur resolution

Immediately after the Bombay session of the Congress in 1942, the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee decided to conduct a meeting at Ariyalur. The leaders like Satyamurthi, and C.N. Muthurenga Reddiyar were arrested on their way back to home after attending the Bombay Session. Kamaraj who escaped arrest came to Tiruchirappalli in disguise and advised Halsyam Ayyar to postpone the Ariyalur Conference to 1944. In 1944, the conference was held under the leadership of S.K. Patil, then Secretary of the Bombay Congress Provincial Committee.

The Conference resolved to abide by the August Resolution of the All India Congress Committee and follow Gandhiji's leadership and exclude all those who opposed to the August Resolution of 1942. They further resolved to organize a volunteer corps with basic wages for the members, and to start the constructive programmes, taking the village as the starting point. Severe charges were levelled against the Government. The Conference established the Tamil Nadu Congressmen Association with Muthu Renga Reddiyar, President and T.S. Arunachalam and L. Sabhapathi Secretaries to promote the satyagraha activities.

Thus the Ariyalur resolution caught the attention of the national leaders. Gandhiji wrote an article in 'Harijan' under the title 'Ariyalur Resolution' justifying the expulsion of the communists from the National movement.

10 Towards freedom

Favourable changes began to appear by the end of the World War. The Government released the leaders from prison. The Congress decided to accept the response offered in good faith by the British. There was peace in the political arena of Tiruchirappalli. In 1946, Gandhiji visited Tiruchirappalli and delivered a speech at Ariyalur on 2nd February. Gandhiji in his speech praised the people of Tiruchirappalli for their role in the struggle for responsible government. He requested the people of Tiruchirappalli to treat the harijans as their own brothers. Great leaders like Kamaraj and T.S.S. Rajan were also with him.

Gandhiji's speech had a tremendous appeal among the congressmen. All the taluk congress committees were strengthened with presidents and secretaries who really brought to the message of Gandhiji in the rural areas in Tiruchirappalli. Leaders like Kacan and Guruswamy toured almost all the consists of Tiruchirappalli to prepare the people towards Swaraj.

T.S. Arunachalam, G. Varadarajan and Ramanathan put their energies together to mobilise people's support to the Congress Organisation. The communal tensions were reduced and the Congress in Tiruchirappalli wanted to create an atmosphere in which all the people would work for the welfare of the nation. The Independence Day on August 15, 1947, was celebrated on a grand scale.

11 Conclusion

The Congressmen in Tiruchirappalli contributed much to the attainment of Swaraj. The various activities of the Congress in Tiruchirappalli during the period of the struggle for responsible government had two complementary objectives. Firstly the party made Tiruchirappalli as the base of operation for civil-disobedience in order to attract the people of the south. The careful preparation of the Vedaranyam march demonstrated that. Secondly Tiruchirappalli, once the strong hold of the Justice Party became the centre of the congress activities in the south. The congress successfully conserved its gain in Tiruchirappalli to reflect the same on the politics on Tamil Nadu.

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