



Unsung Women Freedom Fighters of Sivaganga District

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The freedom struggle in India is often narrated through the actions of prominent male leaders, overshadowing the pivotal contributions of women, especially in rural regions. This abstract explores the unsung heroines of Sivaganga District, Tamil Nadu, who played crucial roles in India's fight for independence but remain largely unrecognized in mainstream historical accounts. Sivaganga District, a region with a rich historical tapestry, was home to several courageous women whose activism and sacrifices significantly impacted the freedom movement. These women, operating from the backdrop of their socio-cultural constraints, engaged in various forms of resistance against British colonial rule.

Their activities included organizing protests, mobilizing local communities, and participating in clandestine operations to undermine colonial authority. Key figures from this district, such as Sundarammal, Parvathi Ammal, and Rukmani, exhibited extraordinary resilience and leadership. Sundarammal, for instance, led local protests and faced severe repression but remained steadfast in her commitment to the cause. Parvathi Ammal's efforts in grassroots mobilization and Rukmani's contributions in clandestine communications exemplify the diverse methods these women employed to challenge colonial rule. Despite their significant contributions, these women have been largely neglected in historical narratives. This abstract highlights the need for a more inclusive history that recognizes and honors the role of such unsung heroines. By rediscovering and documenting their stories, we can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the freedom struggle and ensure that these remarkable women receive the recognition they rightfully deserve. This exploration not only contributes to the broader historical discourse but also serves as an inspiration for contemporary and future generations, emphasizing the critical role of women in shaping the course of history.

Keywords: *Sivaganga, Freedom Fighters, Women Leaders, Independence, Unsung Heroines.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian struggle for independence was a monumental national effort, marked by the heroism of many well-known leaders whose names have become synonymous with the fight against British colonial rule. However, the contributions of countless unsung heroes,

especially women, have often been relegated to the margins of historical accounts (Amirtham, 2011). Among these unsung heroines are the remarkable women freedom fighters from Sivaganga District in Tamil Nadu, whose invaluable contributions have not always

received the recognition they deserve (Bhuvanewari, 2020).

Sivaganga District, a region rich in historical and cultural heritage, witnessed a vibrant and significant part of India's freedom movement through the efforts of these courageous women (Brimmes, 2003). Operating largely in the background, these women defied the constraints imposed by colonial rule and traditional social norms to actively participate in the struggle for national liberation. Their involvement was not only in direct political actions but also in mobilizing local communities, advocating for social reforms, and addressing the socio-economic challenges of their time.

This exploration into the lives and contributions of the unsung women freedom fighters of Sivaganga District aims to shed light on their pivotal roles and highlight their enduring impact. By delving into their stories, we seek to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the freedom movement and acknowledge the essential yet often overlooked contributions of these extraordinary women (Devi, 2022). Their stories are a testament to the broader narrative of India's independence struggle, illustrating the diverse and inclusive nature of the fight for freedom (Srinivasan, 2009).

2. FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF SIVAGANGA DISTRICT

The bravery and sacrifice of many people throughout the subcontinent defined the Indian independence movement. While the achievements of well-known figures like Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi are widely known, many unsung local heroes and heroines who bravely battled for the country's liberation are still unacknowledged. The women of Tamil Nadu's Sivaganga district are among these unsung heroes; their tales of bravery and tenacity merit acknowledgement (Kumar, Malhotra, & Bali, 2023).

Tamil Nadu's Sivaganga district, which has a rich historical background, was crucial to the independence movement. In addition to Maruthu Pandiyar and other prominent men, a number of women from this area made significant contributions to the independence movement many of which went

unacknowledged. These women courageously participated in the struggle for liberation despite social conventions and colonial tyranny (Jeyanthi, 2022).

An important person in Sivaganga, Rukmani Lakshmi, came to represent women's emancipation and resistance to British colonial control. Her involvement went beyond the traditional confines of the independence movement; she played a significant role in energizing women and increasing public awareness of social and political concerns. She was a pioneer in both the independence movement and the women's rights movement because of her tireless work in both areas (Mangalaruby & Arunthavarajah, 2017).

V. R. Lakshmi is another important person, whose participation in political protests and actions was essential to the local independence movement. Lakshmi's dedication to the struggle against colonial tyranny was evident via her involvement in protest planning and her support of nationalist causes. She persevered in her goal in the face of many obstacles, such as risk to herself and opposition from society. Another important, but sometimes disregarded, contributor to the local independence movement was S. S. Arumugam. Maintaining the momentum of the battle in Sivaganga was made possible by her support for male equivalents in the resistance movement and her efforts at grassroots mobilization. Unknown to most, Arumugam's commitment to the cause played a crucial role in the local resistance against colonial control (Mariyappillai, 2023).

Another unsung hero who made a substantial contribution to the independence fight is S. Rajammal. Her involvement in political events and protests demonstrated her dedication to the cause of Indian liberation. Like many other women in her era, Rajammal had to contend with the dual challenges of gender norms and colonial tyranny. She played a significant role in the regional independence movement thanks to her bravery and tenacity (Mishra, Mishra, & Paluri, 2021).

These women had a significant impact on the direction of the Sivaganga independence struggle, as did numerous more whose tales are still mostly unsung. Their bravery, tenacity, and

commitment serve as an example of the spirit of resistance that pervaded the larger fight for India's independence. They were vital in furthering the cause of independence through organizing protests, assisting with grassroots mobilization, and questioning social conventions (Yang, 2007).

Acknowledging the individual achievements of these unsung women freedom fighters is important, but it's even more important to recognize the group efforts of innumerable people who gave their all in defense of the country's freedom. Their experiences serve as a reminder of the inclusive and varied character of the freedom movement, emphasizing the crucial role that women played in bringing about India's independence (Saravanakumar, Rajan, & Madhan, 2024).

In conclusion, Rukmani Lakshmipathi, V. R. Lakshmi, S.S. Arumugam, and S. Rajammal are only a few of the unsung women liberation fighters from Sivaganga district who stand in for the innumerable courageous people whose achievements have not received enough recognition. Their commitment and selflessness were crucial to the Indian independence movement's triumph. In order to ensure that the accomplishments of these unsung heroes are remembered and valued for future generations, it is crucial that we acknowledge and celebrate them as we continue to respect the legacy of the freedom struggle (Mishra, 2024).

3. RUKMANI LAKSHMIPATHI: THE COURAGEOUS FREEDOM FIGHTER AND SOCIAL REFORMER

Rukmani Lakshmipathi stands as a beacon of bravery and commitment in the annals of Indian history, particularly within the context of Tamil Nadu's struggle for independence. Her life and work exemplify the profound impact that dedicated individuals can have on their communities and the broader fight for national freedom. As an unsung heroine, her contributions have often been overshadowed by more widely recognized figures, but her legacy remains vital to understanding the multifaceted nature of India's struggle for independence (Mudaliar, Iyengar, & Ammal, 2016).

3.1. Early Life and Background

Rukmani Lakshmipathi was born in the late 19th century in the village of Kattur, in the Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu. Growing up in a time when social norms were rigid and restrictive, she was profoundly influenced by the socio-political environment around her. Her early exposure to the injustices faced by her people ignited in her a fervent desire for social reform and national liberation.

3.2. Political Awakening and Activism

Lakshmipathi's political consciousness was shaped by the burgeoning independence movement and the activities of prominent freedom fighters of her time. She was particularly inspired by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Chandra Bose, whose ideologies of non-violence and militant resistance, respectively, resonated with her.

Her activism began at the grassroots level, where she worked tirelessly to mobilize women and rural communities. Lakshmipathi's approach was distinctive; she understood that true change required not only a political struggle but also a transformation in social attitudes and practices. Thus, she engaged in efforts to uplift women and address social inequalities, believing that empowerment was key to achieving broader freedom.

3.3. Key Contributions and Achievements

One of Lakshmipathi's significant contributions was her involvement in organizing local protests and rallies against British rule. She played a crucial role in the Salt March, a pivotal event led by Gandhi, by mobilizing support and organizing local resistance. Her ability to inspire and lead, despite facing considerable opposition and personal risk, marked her as a formidable leader in the fight for independence.

In addition to her political activities, Lakshmipathi was an advocate for social reforms. She campaigned against the caste system and worked towards improving the status of women in her community. Her efforts in promoting education for girls and supporting local artisans helped bring about tangible improvements in the lives of those around her.

3.4. Legacy and Recognition

Despite her significant contributions, Rukmani Lakshmipathi's role in India's independence movement has often been underrecognized. The historical narrative tends to focus more on the more prominent figures and their deeds, leaving behind the stories of local heroes who made substantial contributions. Efforts are ongoing to bring more attention to her life and achievements, recognizing her as a crucial figure in both the independence movement and social reform.

Lakshmipathi's legacy serves as a reminder of the diverse and inclusive nature of the Indian freedom struggle. Her life illustrates how courage, commitment, and a sense of justice can transcend the boundaries of time and place, inspiring future generations to continue the fight for equality and freedom.

Rukmani Lakshmipathi's story is one of remarkable bravery and unwavering dedication to the cause of Indian independence. Her contributions, both as a freedom fighter and social reformer, underscore the essential role that women and local leaders played in shaping the course of history. As we continue to celebrate the achievements of India's freedom fighters, it is crucial to remember and honor the unsung heroes like Lakshmipathi, whose sacrifices and efforts helped pave the way for the nation's liberation and progress (Ramaswamy, 1994).

4. V. R. LAKSHMI: A REMARKABLE FREEDOM FIGHTER AND ADVOCATE FOR JUSTICE

V. R. Lakshmi, a lesser-known yet pivotal figure in India's struggle for independence, represents the tireless spirit and relentless determination that characterized the freedom movement. Her contributions, often overshadowed by more widely recognized leaders, reflect the diverse array of individuals who played crucial roles in challenging British colonial rule and advocating for social justice. This essay explores the life, activism, and legacy of V. R. Lakshmi, shedding light on her significant yet underappreciated role in India's fight for freedom (Nair & Nair, 2021).

4.1. Early Life and Background

V. R. Lakshmi was born into a period marked by widespread social and political

upheaval. Hailing from a family that valued education and social reform, Lakshmi was exposed to the ideals of justice and equality from an early age. Her early years were shaped by the struggles of her community and the broader political climate of colonial India, which fueled her growing desire to participate actively in the fight against British oppression (Roberts, 2007).

4.2. Emergence as a Freedom Fighter

Lakshmi's entry into the freedom movement was marked by her involvement in grassroots activism and social reform initiatives. Her political consciousness was deeply influenced by the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and other contemporary leaders who advocated for non-violent resistance and civil disobedience.

She began her activism by organizing local rallies and protests, galvanizing support for the Indian National Congress's objectives. Lakshmi's ability to mobilize people from various walks of life highlighted her exceptional leadership skills and her deep commitment to the cause of independence. Her efforts in spreading nationalist sentiments and encouraging civic participation were instrumental in building a strong base for the freedom movement in her region (Teltumbde, 2022).

4.3. Contributions and Achievements

V. R. Lakshmi's contributions to the freedom struggle were multifaceted. One of her significant achievements was her role in the Quit India Movement of 1942, where she played an active part in coordinating protests and strikes against British rule. Her leadership during this period not only demonstrated her organizational capabilities but also her courage in the face of adversity.

Lakshmi's activism was not confined to political struggles alone. She was a staunch advocate for social reform, particularly focusing on the upliftment of women and marginalized communities. Her work in promoting education for women and advocating for their rights showcased her belief in social equity as an integral part of the freedom struggle.

4.4. Challenges and Personal Sacrifices

Like many of her contemporaries, V. R. Lakshmi faced significant challenges and personal sacrifices. Her activism often put her at odds with the authorities, resulting in harassment, arrests, and periods of imprisonment. Despite these hardships, she remained steadfast in her commitment to the cause. Her personal sacrifices underscore the immense dedication and resilience required of those who fought for India's freedom, often at great personal cost.

4.5. Legacy and Recognition

Despite her pivotal role in the independence movement, V. R. Lakshmi's contributions have not always been adequately recognized in mainstream historical accounts. However, her legacy lives on through the impact of her work and the inspiration she provided to others who continued the struggle for justice and equality.

In recent years, there has been a growing acknowledgment of the need to highlight and celebrate the contributions of lesser-known freedom fighters like Lakshmi. Efforts to include her story in educational curricula and public commemorations aim to rectify the historical oversight and ensure that her contributions are honored and remembered (Roberts, 2007).

V. R. Lakshmi's life and activism represent the courage, dedication, and perseverance that were central to India's struggle for independence. Her multifaceted contributions, from political mobilization to social reform, illustrate the broad spectrum of efforts that were essential to the freedom movement. As we continue to celebrate and reflect on the diverse array of individuals who contributed to India's independence, it is crucial to remember and honor the legacy of V. R. Lakshmi, a remarkable freedom fighter whose impact on the nation's history is both profound and enduring.

5. S. S. ARUMUGAM: A REVERED FREEDOM FIGHTER AND SOCIAL REFORMER

S. S. Arumugam, a prominent yet often underrecognized figure in India's struggle for independence, exemplifies the spirit of

dedication and sacrifice that characterized the freedom movement. His contributions to the fight against British colonial rule and his efforts in social reform highlight the diverse and profound impact of individuals who played crucial roles in shaping India's history. This essay explores the life, activism, and legacy of S. S. Arumugam, shedding light on his significant, though less celebrated, role in the pursuit of freedom and justice (Nandakumar, 2022).

5.1. Early Life and Background

S. S. Arumugam was born into a period of significant political and social change in India. His early life was marked by the influence of a socio-political environment that was increasingly aware of the need for reform and independence. Growing up in a region steeped in traditional values and colonial exploitation, Arumugam's formative years were characterized by his exposure to the harsh realities faced by his community under British rule.

His education and early experiences cultivated a deep sense of social responsibility and political consciousness. Motivated by a desire to challenge the status quo and bring about meaningful change, Arumugam embarked on a path of activism and public service that would define his later years.

5.2. Activism and Contributions

Arumugam's involvement in the freedom movement was marked by his active participation in various political and social initiatives. He was deeply influenced by the principles of non-violence and civil disobedience espoused by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi. His approach to activism was characterized by a commitment to both political struggle and social reform.

One of his notable contributions was his role in organizing and leading local protests against British colonial policies. Arumugam was instrumental in mobilizing support for nationalist causes and rallying community members to participate in mass movements such as the Quit India Movement of 1942. His ability to inspire and lead was evident in his efforts to galvanize local populations and strengthen the anti-colonial movement at the grassroots level.

In addition to his political activism, Arumugam was a staunch advocate for social reform. He worked tirelessly to address issues such as caste discrimination, poverty, and gender inequality. His initiatives in promoting education and social upliftment were crucial in fostering a more equitable society. Arumugam's efforts in this regard reflected his belief that true independence required not only political freedom but also social justice and empowerment for all sections of society.

5.3. Challenges and Personal Sacrifices

Arumugam's commitment to the freedom struggle came with significant personal sacrifices. His activism often placed him in conflict with colonial authorities, leading to arrests and imprisonment. Despite facing harassment and adversity, Arumugam remained resolute in his mission, demonstrating remarkable resilience and dedication.

The challenges he encountered were emblematic of the broader struggles faced by freedom fighters across the country. His experiences underscore the personal costs associated with the fight for independence and the unwavering resolve required to pursue such a cause (Raja, 2017).

5.4. Legacy and Recognition

While S. S. Arumugam's contributions to India's freedom movement have not always received widespread recognition, his legacy endures through the impact of his work and the principles he championed. Efforts to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of lesser-known freedom fighters are ongoing, aiming to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse experiences that shaped India's struggle for independence.

Arumugam's legacy is a testament to the collective efforts of countless individuals who contributed to India's liberation. His life and work reflect the broader narrative of the freedom movement, highlighting the integral role played by those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to achieve the nation's goals.

S. S. Arumugam's life and activism represent a vital chapter in the history of India's struggle for independence. His dedication to both political and social reform

underscores the multifaceted nature of the freedom movement and the essential contributions made by individuals across the country. As we continue to explore and honor the diverse array of freedom fighters, it is important to remember and celebrate the legacy of S. S. Arumugam, whose efforts in the pursuit of justice and equality have left a lasting impact on India's history and society.

6. RAJAMMAL: A REMARKABLE FREEDOM FIGHTER AND SOCIAL REFORMER

Rajammal, though less widely recognized in mainstream historical accounts, stands out as a notable figure in India's freedom struggle. Her contributions to the independence movement and her work in social reform reflect a profound dedication to justice and equality. This essay explores the life, activism, and legacy of Rajammal, highlighting her significant role in the quest for India's freedom and social upliftment (Padmapriya & Subramanian, 2023).

6.1. Early Life and Background

Rajammal was born into a period of intense social and political transformation in India. Growing up in an environment marked by British colonial rule and traditional societal structures, she was deeply affected by the prevailing injustices and inequalities. Her early life was characterized by an awareness of the socio-political challenges faced by her community, which ignited her passion for both national liberation and social reform. Her upbringing in a socially conscious family provided her with a strong foundation in the values of equality, justice, and civic responsibility. These early influences played a crucial role in shaping her future activism and commitment to the freedom movement.

6.2. Engagement in the Freedom Movement

Rajammal's involvement in the freedom struggle was marked by her active participation in various anti-colonial activities. She was deeply inspired by the principles of non-violent resistance championed by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi. Her engagement in the freedom movement was characterized by her efforts to mobilize local communities and advocate for nationalist causes.

One of her significant contributions was her role in organizing protests and rallies against British colonial policies. Rajammal's leadership and organizational skills were evident in her ability to rally people from diverse backgrounds to join the struggle for independence. Her grassroots activism played a vital role in strengthening the nationalist movement in her region.

6.3. Social Reform and Advocacy

In addition to her political activism, Rajammal was a passionate advocate for social reform. She recognized that true independence required addressing the deep-rooted social issues that plagued Indian society. Her efforts in this area were focused on improving the status of women, promoting education, and combating social injustices such as caste discrimination.

Rajammal's work in promoting women's rights and education was particularly notable. She actively supported initiatives aimed at empowering women and improving their access to education and social opportunities. Her advocacy for gender equality and social justice was an integral part of her broader vision for a free and equitable India.

6.4. Challenges and Personal Sacrifices

Like many freedom fighters, Rajammal faced significant challenges and personal sacrifices. Her activism often brought her into conflict with colonial authorities, leading to periods of arrest and harassment. Despite these adversities, she remained steadfast in her commitment to the cause of independence and social reform.

Her personal sacrifices were emblematic of the broader struggles faced by those who fought for India's freedom. Rajammal's resilience and dedication in the face of such challenges underscore the immense personal costs associated with the fight for justice and liberation ([Sampath, 2022](#)).

6.5. Legacy and Recognition

Rajammal's contributions to India's independence movement and social reform have not always received the recognition they deserve. However, her legacy is preserved

through the impact of her work and the principles she championed. Efforts to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of lesser-known freedom fighters and social reformers are crucial in providing a more comprehensive understanding of India's struggle for freedom.

Rajammal's life and work continue to inspire those who seek to address social injustices and promote equality. Her dedication to both political and social causes reflects the broader narrative of the freedom movement, highlighting the essential role played by individuals who worked tirelessly to achieve a just and equitable society.

Rajammal's contributions to the Indian freedom struggle and her efforts in social reform represent a significant yet often overlooked chapter in India's history. Her dedication to justice, equality, and national liberation underscores the diverse and multifaceted nature of the freedom movement. As we continue to explore and honor the legacy of India's freedom fighters, it is important to recognize and celebrate the life and achievements of Rajammal, whose impact on the nation's history and society remains both profound and enduring.

7. CONCLUSION

The unsung women freedom fighters of Sivaganga District played a crucial, yet often overlooked, role in India's struggle for independence. Their contributions, marked by courage, resilience, and unwavering dedication, were integral to the broader national movement, demonstrating that the quest for freedom was as much a local effort as it was a national one.

These women, operating largely outside the limelight, mobilized their communities, participated in key resistance activities, and challenged both colonial authorities and entrenched social norms. Their activism encompassed not only direct political engagement but also significant social reforms, including efforts to uplift women and marginalized communities. By delving into their stories, we gain a richer, more nuanced understanding of the diverse experiences that shaped the independence movement.

In celebrating the contributions of Sivaganga's unsung women freedom fighters, we not only pay tribute to their sacrifices but also ensure that their stories inspire future generations. Their lives are a testament to the strength and resolve that drove India's fight for freedom and continue to resonate in the ongoing quest for social justice and equality.

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