

# Thiyagi M. Raju: An Unsung Freedom Fighter of Dindigul

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## **Abstract**

With the youth of today hardly have any time to remembrance our rich heritage of our past, this world and competition of today day to day life has in today's current world pushed the pace so fast, we literally can not even remember where and when we were yesterday. Yes, It is most crucial when Nation celebrates Azadika Amrit Mahotsav (commemoration of 75 years of Indian Independence). Nothing could be more unique than the fight against colonial rule in India and no less has been marred by violence in any way. There was, rather, a narrative, a variegated stories of valors, bravery, Satyagraha, dedication and sacrifice, wherever and whenever they happened in the subcontinent. This is the rich Indian cultural heritage and tradition stories. Therefore, the lesser known freedom fighters don't have to necessarily be regarded as the unsung heroes. At times they may also become the leaders to define the lines of the Indian value system. India 2.0 is not only about building India's spirit based on any single paradigm of India's growth. It is all of life and most of all fills the heart and the soul. As we travel on this journey of growth and development, the spirit of India remains incomplete without placing our unsung heroes on this journey of growth and development. These kinds of ethos and principles should be called to mind and respected.

**Keywords:** *Unsung Heroes, Freedom Movement, Salt Satyagraha*

## **Introduction**

The citizens of a country determine a country's Freedom. Freedom fighters are called those people who give their lives so that the country and its men can be free of slavery. There are so many brave hearts in every country who offer their lives for their countrymen. Freedom Fighters fought not only for their country, but also for everyone who remained in silence, lost their family, and freedom, and their right to live for themselves. The freedom fighters developed love for the country and patriotism, people of the country are looking up to them with respect. But on one hand for ordinary people it's big deal if someone sacrifices their life, but freedom fighters are constantly sacrificing their lives for their country and they do this selflessly which is unimaginable thing to do, no matter one will suffer the poorest of the punishment. At the end of the day, the amount of pain and hardship that they have to bear to reach their end goal cannot be explained in words. They whom struggled forever remain indebted to the entire country. India is a land, which has given birth to many great souls. It is a birth place of many great freedom fighters of independent India. Due to their sacrifices only, today we Indians are having our own constitution and also having World's largest democracy.

For a long time, our lands were under the rule of the British. It was a very dark time for the Indian

society. Indians were suppressed and denied of their rights and opportunities but then there were heroes, who fought for our motherland. Some freedom fighters like Mahatma Gandhi, Dadabhai Naoroji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Ashfaqulla Khan, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Sukhdev and Shaheed Bhagat Singh got the spotlight, while others who also contributed to the national movement of freedom stayed in dark. Hundreds and thousands of men and women fought till their last breath that freedom was achieved finally. The Indian land has given birth to dynamic freedom fighters who made it possible that Indian live in a free country today They have made India proud by their heroic deeds and have inspired a whole generation of Indians. Their bravery and courage still remain a matter of pride and continue to inspire Indians. There were also some unsung heroes of freedom struggle, who made big sacrifices for the freedom of our country. Their insurmountable courage, selfless service and love for our nation can never be forgotten. In this article, I have tried to bring Thiyagi M. Raju along with his works to the limelight. The nation will never forget the sacrifices made by him to earn our freedom.

Muthuyal Chettiar was born as the second of eight children at Dindigul, Madurai District on 1905, M. Raju. M. Raju was an alumnus of Dindigul Municipal High School and was dear to all teachers. In his education he had unblemished track record as a distinguished student. In the year 1915 Raju had completed his SSLC. When age 18, Raju was married by his parents to Chellammal from Madras presidency, who was a wonderful wife to him all his life.

### **Participation in Freedom Struggle**

In the nation, there was widespread patriotism and it inspired M. Raju. Ramasamy Chettiyar who was Raju's maternal uncle and also a prominent congress worker, touring South Arica with Ganhiji, suggested and motivated to Raju that involved himself in the Indian National congress. Madurai became the first place Mahathma Gandhi visited in 1919. During his second visit on 22 September 1921. Gandhiji wore a small dhoti around his wist but then like them he draped a small dhoti and connected dramatically with the local farmers. His public address, which had encouraged many young people attending there who later became leader and social activist. Raju was one among them. Gandhiji announced the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920, and after joining the Indian National Congress in 1921 Raju became its full time worker. Following the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Gandhiji involved people all over India, asking them to volunteer for activities as Khadi Promotion, Hindu-Muslim Cooperation, Dalit Empowerment, etc. and to abolish alcohol as well. Other volunteers, particularly Raju visited a number of villages, met the villagers, spoke to them relating to Khadi and help them in the production of Khadi cloth. Help will be taken by other volunteers in carrying Khadi cloth to increase the sale of Khadi. Therefore Madurai District was at the top in the manufacture and sales of Khadi in the whole state. Madurai District stood first in manufacture of Khadi and so the then Tamilnadu congress leader Dr.S. Varadarajulu Naidu presented the prestigious silver hand spinning wheel in 1961. The Annual conference of Indian National congress was presided over by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in Lahore in December 1929. It was decided at this conference that the first and primary object of the party was the complete independence. After this start of talk was made between Gandhiji and British Government, Gandhiji asked British to repeal the salt law. His pleas were rejected by the British Government. Thus Gandhiji chose to carry out the Dandi movement from Sabarmathi Ashram to Dandi. He met Rajaji to discuss with him how to implement this decision on the salt march in the Southern region. Towards the end of the discussion it was agreed that the march be to begin in Tirachirapalli and conclude Vedaranyam in South Indian. Gandhiji's bid proved successful at the last and Gandhiji was arrested by the British Government and imprisoned for six years for the violation of salt law in Dandi march. However, the march in South India had been obstructed by the hurdles that British Government had set out. Trichy start was on 13 April 1930 and ended 15 days later at

Vedaranyam. There, Rajaji arrested and jailed because he made salt there.

Section 144 was enforced all over India by the British Government. M.Raju and other leaders thereafter, upon the arrest of Rajaji, carried forward the march of salt in defiance of the ban order of section 144. He was arrested later and spent one year in prison. Only after the Gandhi – Irwin pact was signed in 1931, Raju was released from prison. In 1932 Gandhiji started Civil Disobedience Movement afresh. Raju then lead the boycott of foreign goods in Madurai. These campaign was to be borne out of his personal earnings. Gandhiji was arrested and imprisoned. A public meeting was organized in Madurai to protest Gandhiji's arrest. Raju was participating in the meeting when Police entered and read section 144, he was then arrested for his comments regarding the act of police. It was ordered that six months in prison be served. Six months later he was released from jail. In Madurai district, he kept on serving for cooperation between Hindus and Muslims. On 15 August 1947, India became independent though the whole country took the occasion to the same country to rejoice for a division of the country was unfortunate for leaders like Gandhiji and Raju.

### **Contribution as Member of Municipal Corporation**

From 1955, M.Raju served the people as councilor of Municipal, Dindigul. He met the basic needs of the people, set several Public Health centers in a bid to look out for the common problem of frequency of cholera and plague. He also had well dug to solve the water scarcity problem in his ward. Raju was very much jubilant when his ward was hit by severe drought and deployed several huge pumps to bring in water from Tekkady Dam to Vaigai river. He in this way remedied thousands of acres of pastures and provided lives for thousands of Cattle and fish market. In this regard, these incidents gained him the love and respect of the people of his constituency. As soon as the people started voicing their grievances, Raju heard them, saw his way out and began to work on resolving them as soon as possible. He would go visit his ward when he had some time to know the grievances of the people. He was a simple fellow and was on good terms with people. Because of this, he had much power over the common people. M.Raju was dedicated to the freedom movement in the last days, serving social backward people and the people in his ward and caring his full without any regard of his own health. He passed away on 1990. Raju served in so many dimensions as a selfless martyr, a brave heart, a humanitarian gentleman, a super great patriot, a true Gandhian, a protector of socially depressed classes and reformer Indian Society. In his case as a leader, he served other people selflessly and made their lives meaningful, in addition to being a role model to the youth.

### **Homage to M. Raju**

Raju worked tirelessly for India's Freedom struggle. In acknowledgement of all that he had done, he received the prestigious Tamara Patra (A Copper Plate) from Srimathi. Indragandhi, the then Prime Minister of India on commemorating the 25th year of Indian Independence for his participation in the freedom struggle and his selfless service to the people. Tamilnadu Congress Committee has given fee concessions in Educational Institutions for children of Political suffers. This concession was got by M.Raju. Because he has gone to jail in the cause of Indian Independence as a result of taking part in Movement inaugurated since the beginning of the year 1921.

### **Conclusion**

In the list of unknown freedom fighters of Dindigul District, M.Raju's name also has got a proud place. M.Raju has sacrificed his life for the Independence of his Motherland. It is the freedom fighters who live in a free country. At this point, we see that these people also made scarifies in their lives and therefore we must honour the scarifies that they made and our aim is that social justice exists and we

live together in harmony in peace. Every freedom fighter aimed toward creating today's India. When people will remember them for their patriotism and for their love for the country. As end every year people think and rejoice to celebrate a republic and Independence Days to commemorate the victory of their country. But day by day communal hatred is rising among people which is for not taking freedom from India. Therefore we obtain not to be at odds against over the other and keep peace in our lives. Only then we would be able to accept their struggles and scarifies and won our development and prosperous country.

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