

UNsung HERO OF COIMBATORE

BU BU RAMU AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

Dr A MANIMEKALAI

GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE COIMBATORE

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

VEERALAKSHMI

GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE

ABSTRACT

The research is about a freedom fighter of Coimbatore, who was sentenced to 47 years imprisonment. S Ramasamy who is known as Bu Bu Ramu, played an important role in the Quit India Movement. He lived in Ondipudur near Coimbatore. People in Ondipudur called him Coimbatore - Ondipudur Gandhi.

Key Words: *Quit India Movement, Suler Aerodrome ablaze, derailment Ondipur Gandhi*

Bu. Bu. Ramu was born in Mettupalayam on 15 May 1917 as S. Ramasamy to Subba Naidu and his wife Mangu Thai. His father ran a grocery shop. He was enjoying his life with all the facilities and necessities. At the age of 5, his father died. He faced many problems and they moved to Ondipudur.

Ondipudur is a part of Coimbatore city located near Singanallur. It comes under Coimbatore Municipal Corporation. The name of the locality derives from the Tamil language words, Ondi (separate) and Pudur (small town) known for its separated uniqueness. Ondipudur lies at the easternmost part of Coimbatore city separated from other part of city by the Noyyal river in west, Airport terminal area in the far north and Railway Bridge in east, also by loop of same Noyyal river which separates the town by a semicircular loop.

Ondipudur lies along NH 67 the arterial Trichy road. The place Ondipudur was surrounded by agricultural fields. Paddy, coconut and sugarcane were cultivated in large quantities. Those days, the area was famous for its large weaving community. There were about two thousand weavers in the area. Bu. Bu. Ramu's mother ran a road side idli shop for six years. When Ramasamy was of thirteen years old, his mother too passed away leaving him all alone. After his mother's death, he was raised by his uncle Ramasamy and aunt Ponnammal. Bu. Bu. Ramu had an elder brother K.R.Gurusamy, son of his aunt and uncle.

RAMASAMY'S CHILDHOOD

When children of his age were flying kites in the air, Ramasamy was working for the financial support of his family. He worked in his aunt and uncle's hotel near Cambodia Mill. It was called Hotel Gandhi Niruvanam. Both his uncle and aunt were filled with patriotism that they never fail to attend any meetings or processions and listen to the speech given by freedom fighters carefully at that period. Because of this background, Ramasamy too had patriotic feelings since his childhood days. Most of their customers were mill-workers who maintained accounts and failed to pay up and that lead them to close their business.

EDUCATION

His aunt encouraged him to continue his studies. He studied upto fourth standard in Ondipudur Government School. But he couldn't continue his study due to some circumstances. He discontinued his studies from fourth class in order to provide a helping hand to keep his family in stable condition. More than studies, he was keen interested in political activities of the country.

TALE BEHIND THE NAME

Ramasamy was called as Bu.Bu.Ramu. It was the session court judge, who a man from Andhra Pradesh, for the first time, referred Ramu as BU. BU RAMU. Since the magistrate could not follow Tamil and wanted to know more about the device Ramasamy had used, the advocates demonstrated by making a cone out of paper and yelling Bu.Bu into it. And thus Ramasamy became Bu. Bu. Ramu. By doing so, he made the judge understand that he used to announce trade union meetings through a megaphone cycling from street to street in the villages.

Ramasamy lived with his aunt in their home after death of his mother. Aunt's son K. R. Gurusamy and Ramasamy, brothers by relation, both became close friends. In that time, a meeting was held in Ondipudur where he met our great freedom fighters. His meeting with Gandhiji, Nehru and Kamarajar in 1935 led to his participation in the freedom struggle. In the year 1935, a meeting was held in the ground near Vinayakar temple. Bu. Bu. Ramu's aunt sends him and his elder brother K. R. Gurusamy to attend the meeting with congress flag in their hand. In that meeting Bu. Bu. Ramu seriously listened to the speech of Gandhi. Bu. Bu. Ramu paid attention to Gandhiji's speech carefully word by word and got inspired by him. Out of excitement on seeing Gandhi, Ramu started shouting 'Gandhiji ki Jai' and 'Vande Mataram'. That was the moment Ramasamy got the spirit to fight towards India's freedom struggle.

He became a labour leader in his young age under the guidance of N G Ramasamy. There were many mills functioning during those days. Bu Bu Ramu used to visit those mills by using his cycle and make announcements to the workers.

When the Quit India Resolution was passed and Gandhiji and the leaders were arrested, huge crowd assembled at VOC park (Kranesan Park of that time) People had taken the movement in their hands. In Coimbatore the movement was in full swing. They wanted to take some aggressive steps. The mill workers from Sulur and neighbouring villages met at Ondipudur and passed some resolutions

1.Train derailment. 2 Torching Sulur Air base, Destroying government property3 Attacking Coimbatore central jail and releasing the prisoners. First two plans were achieved. The whole of India was shocked to hear the case. Bu Bu was arrested in connection with the cases of treason.

BU.BU.RAMU'S JAIL LIFE

Bu. Bu. Ramu was sentenced to forty seven years imprisonment on various charges. He got punishment of twenty years for torching Sulur aerodrome, next twenty years for derailing train and the rest seven years for setting ablaze liquor shops, post office etc. But he stayed in jail for only four years. The English government sentenced imprisonment to both Bu. Bu. Ramu and his brother Gurusamy on account of torching Sulur aerodrome. Bu.Bu.Ramu of Ondipudur had the courage to tell a judge who sentenced him twenty years in the aerodrome blast case and another twenty years in a prohibition campaign case, that he was prepared to be incarcerated throughout his life than spending it in slavery outside. "Why don't you go and fetch my horoscope to calculate how long I would live so that you can sentence me accordingly?" he dared the judge.

TORTURE ON HIS FAMILY

But Bu. Bu. Ramu and his brother escaped from Coimbatore and both stayed at their friend Pop John's house. The police tortured his parents who stayed at Ondipudur and raised him. For a long period, his parents were tortured by police and even their house was set ablaze. Flag was also fired from their house. This news reached to Bu. Bu. Ramu and his brother K. R. Gurusamy through a letter by his brother –in –law. The police arrested his brother-in-law too. They arrested his brother-in-law for three days and tormented a lot. They kept asked him continuously regarding the whereabouts of Bu. Bu. Ramu and his brother K.V.Gurusamy. Their hotel was also destroyed by the police team. On hearing this news, Bu. Bu. Ramu and K.V. Gurusamy decided to surrender in the hands to police to free his parents from being tortured. On tenth September 1942, both got surrendered in the session court of Coimbatore with the help of his friend Pop John.

SINGANALLUR AND SULUR JAIL

Ramasamy was kept in Sulur jail initially and then shifted to Singanallur jail. He was tortured at both the Sulur and Singanallur police stations. But he didn't give up his conspirators at any cost. In Singanallur police

station, the police sub-inspector Lakshmana Perumal kicked with his booted legs. The police thrashed all the freedom fighters with heavy gun. But nobody uttered a word about their co-conspirators. They became very conscious about giving any clue or hint and never opened their mouth. Blood started leaking from K.V.Gurusamy's body full. Singanallur Sangali mudaliyar started taking blood vomit. The cruel police poured kerosene over Bu. Bu. Ramu's dress and burnt his dress in front of Vattara Narayanasamy. Out of fright, Vattara Narayanasamy closed his eyes but didn't disclose his co-freedom fighters. The cops at Singanallur police station immersed Bu. Bu. Ramu's hands in water and pierced needle between his nails and fresh forcing him to disclose the name of his comrades.

TIRUPUR SUB JAIL

Bu.Bu.Ramu spent four months of his life in tiny and dark cubicle of eight to eight room in Tirupur sub jail. It was a small grilled ventilator punctured the wall at a height of three meters, permitting a little light in the cell. In that Tirupur sub jail, a single room was shared by three people. Other members with Bu.Bu Ramu were Pallapalayam Eshwar , S.V.Gurusamy, R.Sengaliyappan, P.Velusamy, Kulattur Sokkanannan, Athhappakoundan pudur Vaiyapuri gounder, Irukkur Marutachala Mudaliyar, Pattanam Pudur Karuppanan, Sular S. Sambandam, Pattanam Velingiri, N. Ramu and K. R. Chinnasamy. They all were locked in the same Tirupur sub jail.

BELLARY JAIL

Bellary is a historic city in Ballari district in Karnataka state, India. It is three hundred and six kilometers from Bangalore, the state capital. It is one of the famous old jails in South India. A part of the British army cantonment's infantry barracks was converted into a military jail, called the Alipore jail, towards the fag-end of the 19th century. The jail was basically to lodge prisoners of war drawn from the various theaters of the First World war. Most prisoners of the jail were independence activists. This jail was to become the prison for stalwarts of our freedom struggle during the Quit India Movement. From then onwards, national leaders who participated in the freedom struggle including Rajaji, Kamaraj Nadar, Potti Sri Ramulu, Sanjiva Reddy, Bezwada Gopal Reddy, E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker (the founder of the Dravidian Movement), O.V.Alagesan, Tekur Subramanyam of Bellary, Bulusu Samba Murthy, Gantasala Venkateshwara Rao and many others were imprisoned in this historic Alipore jail.

For the next three and a half years, Bu. Bu. Ramu was kept in Bellary jail. Bu. Bu. Ramu's brother Gurusamy was also imprisoned at Bellary jail. Both were in the same jail for three and half years. On twelfth September 1943, he was sent to Alipore jail in Bellary.1 Ramasamy spent a little over three years in prison and he was released after independence when the interim government was formed under C.R. Rajagopalachari as Chief Minister of Madras Presidency.

BAIL Order

The interim government of India, formed on second September 1946, from the newly elected Constituent Assembly of India, had the task of assisting the transition of India and Pakistan from British rule to Independence.1 After setting up the interim government, Jawaharlal Nehru was elected as the leader of the government. Those who participated in the freedom struggle were released by Jawaharlal Nehru. But Bu. Bu. Ramu couldnot get release from jail. They wanted to extend his jail life.

R. Sengaliyappan, R. Kuppasamy M.L.A., K.V. Ramasamy Kounder tried to get bail for Bu. Bu. Ramu. After a lot struggle, Bu. Bu. Ramu was released from jail. After getting release, Bu. Bu. Ramu came from Bellary to his hometown. R. A. Shunmugha Thever welcomed at Erode railway station. Huge crowd gathered to welcome Bu.Bu.Ramu at Tirupur and Ondipudur.

He used to wear a khaki half pant, white shirt and a kulla on head.1 Children ran behind him whenever he goes cycling around the streets for announcement. He was an ardent follower of Gandhian thoughts. He has served for his country and his services have been recognized by both the Government of India and State Government of India. Bu. Bu. Ramu and all other freedom fighters were awarded five acres of land near Dharapuram from Government but he denied it. Similarly, Collector Abul Hasan gave two acres of land near Pappampati Piruvu but Ramasamy didn't show any interest in it.

Ayya died in the year 2015 on 9th of October at the ripe age of 99. In spite of all his great achievements, he never said or took pride that he had done all these. Bu. Bu. Ramu, by his visionary wisdom and prophetic thoughts,

his marvelous spiritual contribution and his selfless service oriented towards the welfare of the people to life, then, Ayya becomes a Karmayogi, a legend. His life is a pilgrimage towards a better living and ultimate perfection.

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