

## NEELAMBIKAI AMMAIYAR THE PIONEER OF THE TANI TAMIL MOVEMENT (LINGUISTIC- PURITY MOVEMENT)

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### ABSTRACT

*In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Tamil language had a lot of foreign language admixture. The vernacular mixture increased and the manipavalam style flowed fluently among people. The Tanittamil Iyakkam Independent Tamil Movement is a linguistic movement in Tamil literature which was a revival movement to avoid a mixture of words from Sanskrit. The movement has been successful in eradicating most of the admixture of another language in the Tamil language. The movement began in the writing of Maraimalai Adigal, Paventhar Barathidassan, Devaneyar Pavanar, and Pavalaleru Perunchitthirananar and propagated the Tani Tamil Movement. This paper aims to focus the limelight on the woman who laid the foundation stone of this movement she was Thiruvatti Neelambikai Ammaiyar.*

**Keywords:** Tamil Language, Independent Tamil Movement, Neelambikai Ammaiyar.

### Introduction

Neelambikai Ammaiyar was born on 06<sup>th</sup> August 1903 in Pallavaram Chennai. She was the daughter of a veteran pure Tamil Scholar Maraimalai Adigal founder of the Tani Tamil Movement. He was given the name of his daughter Nagai Nilayadatshi. Neelambikai grew up to be a child of knowledge at a young age. Adigalar started teaching Tamil grammar, and literature at a young age.

Neelambikai Ammaiyar inspired people with her eloquent essay titled Father's Duty written along with her father at the age of thirteen and received Tamil scholars' appreciation. She also worked as a writer. No one can deny the glory of Neelambikai Ammaiyar as a unique Tamil Scholar, a champion of language warriors who raised women's education through her writings. She was an inevitable versatile and polyglot person in Tamil society.

Ammaiyar learned Tamil from her father as she was the daughter of a famous Tamil scholar and Tamil researcher Maraimalai Adigal. She has written more than fifteen books in 42 years of world life. Her works are Sis Hundred Idioms, Vadasol Tamil Alphabetical

Abbreviation, Vadasol Tamil Dictionary, House Name Alphabetical, History of Three Ladies and more works show Ammaiyar's intellectual pride.

### Birth of Tani Tamil Movement:

The revival movement of social history of Tamilnadu and the revival linguistic movement is Tani (Independent) Tamil Movement. The unsung voice of this movement is Neelambikai Ammaiyar who was the main reason of the birth of this movement. While reading Thiruvartuppa by Ramalinga Adigalar, young Neelambikai Ammaiyar questioned her father about the word 'தேகம்' *thegam* which means body, the word *thegam* was hard to pronounce while reading fast. The poem

பெற்ற தாய்தனை மகமறந் தாலும்  
 பிள்ளை யைப்பெறும் தாய்மறந் தாலும்  
 உற்ற தேகத்தை உயிர்மறந் தாலும்  
 உயிரை மேவிய உடல்மறந் தாலும்  
 கற்ற நெஞ்சகம் கலைமறந் தாலும்  
 கண்கள் நின்றிமைப் பதுமறந் தாலும்  
 நற்ற வத்தவர் உள்ளிருந் தோங்கும்  
 நமச்சி வாயத்தை நான்மற வேனே!

-இராமலிங்க அடிகளார்

திருவருட்பா, இரண்டாம் திருமுறை 23. நமச்சிவாயப் பதிகம்

English Translation:

If the child forgets the mother who gave birth to him, and if the mother forgets the child, she gave birth to,

Even if you forget the place where you stand, \_

When the **body** forgets the nature of the life that drives it, and the artistic sense that learns itself well and settles in the heart forgets that heart,

Even though the eyes forget the eyelids that move up and down to guard the sight,

I will never forget the title Namachivayam ongum Namachivayam from Sannor Thiruvulluttu who is a good penitent.

- Saint Ramalingam

(Thiruvartupa, II Thirumypi 23. Namachivaya Padhikam)

This incident is the foundation of the Tani (Independent) Tamil Movement. Maraimalai Adigalar asked Neelambikai Ammaiyar to replace the Sanskrit word *शरीरम्* to Tamil word *பிணை* (body). After replacing the word, the poem style was simple and direct. This consciousness of admixture of Sanskrit in the Tamil language gave birth to the Tani (Independent) Tamil Movement was born with the question of this scholar Neelambikai Ammaiyar, with her continuous effort along with her father the modern revival of the Pure Tamil Movement is attributed to Maramalai Adigalar who publicly pledged to defend Pure Tamil in 1916.

Learning, writing, and research were her lifeline. Ammaiyar worked hard to preserve Tamil words. She is well-versed in Tamil, English, and Vernacular languages. That's why Ammaiyar could excel in translation as well.

### **Writing Style:**

Neelambikai Ammaiyar's works are simple with short series in elegant style written understandably. Ammaiyar was the founder of the "Tirunelveli Saiva Siddhanta Publication Society" and published several books of knowledge. Thiruvaranaganar had a great affection for Maramalai Adiglar and married Neelambikai Ammaiyar. In eleven years of married life, she had ten children.

### **Conferring Periyar Degree:**

On November 13, 1938, Ammaiyar who presided over the Tamilnadu Women's Conference held at Sindhi Vaadi Theatre said, 'How can Tamil language progress?'. At this conference, eminent female personalities like Dr. Dharmampal, Comrade Meenampal Sivraj,

Comrade Thamaraianni, and Ammaiyar came together with the title of “Periyar” to the social reformer E.V. Ramasamy. The conferring title of Periyar to Periyar is the evidence and the reply statement to the wrong criticism of Periyar that he criticized the Tamil language as a Barbaric language. The great Tamil scholar Neelambikai Ammaiyar gave the title Periyar to EVR is evidence that the great thinker Periyar’s contribution and love of the Tamil Language is inevitable.

The death of her husband Thiruvaranganar in 1944 left Ammaiyar devastated. The next year in 1945, Ammaiyar also died due to ill health. Ammaiyar had children Sudarathamai, Muthammai, Vairamuthu, Velammai, Sangariammai, Pichammai, Mangaiyakarai, Thiruvanakai. She left them at a very young age. Ammaiyar’s contribution to the Tamil language is unforgettable to the Tamilians and the people who speak Tamil around the world.

### **Conclusion:**

The short span of her lifetime of Neelambikai Ammaiyar and her contribution to the Tamil language and Tamil society is inevitable. In history, the movement Tani Tamil spelled out along with the movement name Tiruvatti Neelambikai Ammaiyar name also remarked in the people's hearts.

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