

DOCUMENTING PAINS IN SRI LANKAN WAR

Blessed to enjoy the luxuries in modern age, we have no major inconveniences except hours of power cut these days in Tamil Nadu. Intolerant to bear this nuisance, we curse the mosquitoes, when they displeasingly buzz around our ears and bite us. But, how unimaginable it is even to come across the tortures, underwent by the innocent Sri Lankan Tamils during the ethnic war in the island.

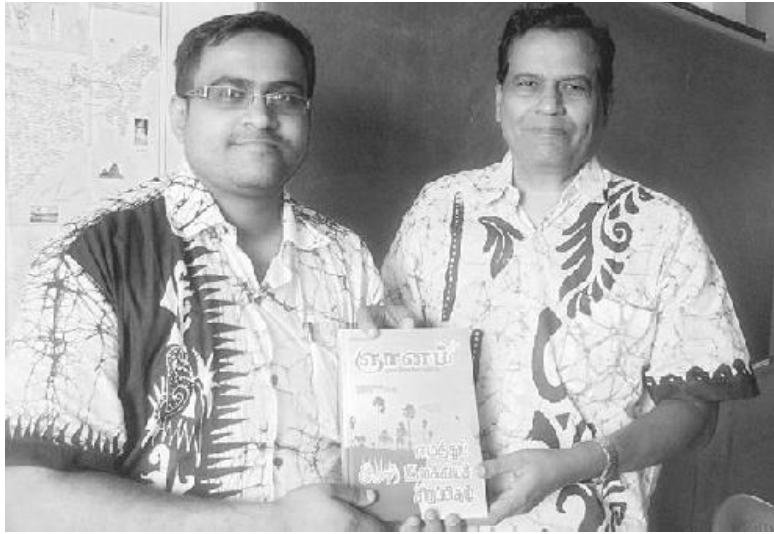
Tamil women, what have you done to bring peace to this island?

Come, unclot yourself
.....

To the descendents of Buddha,

Who pride they are fighting to Restore peace in the island

The poem titled 'Koneswarigal' attempts to register the indescribable pain of a 35-year-old Tamil woman Koneswari, a mother of four children, when a troop of Sinhala policemen gang raped and brutally killed her by exploding a grenade, inserting it into her private part. With the ethnic war in Sri Lanka leaving deep scars in the history of mankind, writers and journalists did not fail to document them.



Gnanasekaran and Balachandran display the magazine Gnanam

The 150th issue of 'Gnanam', a non-political literary magazine edited by Gnanasekaran from Sri Lanka, speaks such agonies left by the war through poems, short stories and interviews by Tamil writers of the island nation. The 600 page voluminous book with its accent on war literature was introduced in the city at a meeting organised by the visually challenged veteran literary critic 'Kovai Gnani' recently.

"I am unable to name these writings just simply as 'Wartime literature' since they were not works of imagination, but indubitable reflections of pain suffered by

innocent Tamils in the war," said Gnanasekaran while introducing the book.

On a question what urged him to collect and compile the literature born out of the ethnic war, Gnanasekaran said, "Being a writer and journalist for decades, I felt it should be my duty to compile them into a book and introduce the woes of the war to all Tamils living across the world."

Defining the literatures in the book as strong evidences for Sri Lankan government's brutal racism, Gnanasekaran underlined that all these writings would have gone in wind, if he had not documented them.

Gnanasekaran is the grandson of veteran Tamil scholar Ganesa Iyer, who is known for his detailed commentaries on 'Tholkappiyam', a treatise on Tamil grammar, as he wrote them in his columns in the Sri Lankan Tamil journal 'Eezha Kesari' before it came out as a book in 1937.

Lauding Gnanasekaran for compiling the valuable literatures, Kovai Gnani estimated that the writings in the magazine are rich in various literary aspects. However, he bitterly criticized the politicians of Tamil Nadu for their failure in protecting Eelam Tamils from being killed in the war.

"The treachery committed by the opportunistic politicians of Tamil Nadu in the Sri Lankan ethnic issue, has left an indelible mark of shame in history," rued Gnani.

Vijayakumar of Thami-zhosai Pathipagam, Arangaopal, director, Shibi IAS Academy, Balachandran, administrative editor of Gnanam and K S Mahadeva, correspondent, Dinakural, were among those present in the meeting.

— **B Meenakshi Sundaram**