



Freedom fighter's battle against Govt for his rights

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KOZHIKODE: After serving the country during the freedom struggle, the 80-year-old freedom fighter M K Ramachandran is now fighting a battle against the government to win his rights. A soldier of Indian National Army (INA) led by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Ramachandran has been sending petitions for the past 12 years to the State and Central Government authorities to get Freedom Fighters' Pension.

Though All-India INA Committee had certified Ramachandran as a soldier of INA and a political sufferer and had recommended the government to issue him all the concessions allowed to other political sufferers, the bureaucrats concerned have denied him the pension by taking a hyper technical approach.

In the certificate it is stated that Ramachandran was a Lance Naik of 9th Guerilla Regiment of INA.

According to Ramachandran, the authorities were not ready to accept the certificates issued by the All-India INA Committee alleging delay in the submission of the certificate.

They also demanded the submission of jail certificate and co-prisoner certificate as proof for his role in the freedom struggle.

"I am unable to submit the jail certificate as the British Government did not issue any such certificate to any INA personnel who were put in jail in 1945. Moreover, at that time we never believed that the India Government would extend any financial assistance to the freedom fighters," he said.

He also pointed out the Supreme Court verdict which had warned the officials not to give emphasis to the technicalities. Ramachandran submitted the first petition in 1997 to the then Union Home Minister L K Advani and Minister of State for Labour MP Veerendra Kumar after the Central Government decision to include Ex-INA personnel in the pension scheme.

The endless struggle continues even after approaching the government authorities, including the Kerala Chief Minister, Additional Chief Secretary, General Administration Department, Principal Secretary and the District Collector, Ramachandran said.

The ex-soldier, who served in INA from 1943 to 1945 and underwent nearly nine months of imprisonment in 1945, said it was the emotional attachment towards

the country that forced him to join the INA and fight for India's freedom. "My inability to work and the necessity to support my 65 year-old wife have forced me to go after government concessions," said Ramachandran.

Ramachandran and his wife are presently staying with his younger brother at Kannoli House near Muthappan Kavu here. A fighter, Ramachandran is not ready to give in to the technicalities and is now planning to approach the authorities for his rights.

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