

KAMARAJ

Kamaraj Earlyhood:

Kamaraj who reached the zenith of his life through hardwork; was bom at Virudhunagar on 15th July, 1903 as the son of Kumaraswamy Nadar and Sivakami Ammal. His original name was Kamatshi. He had his early education in the government primary school during his 5th year and during his 6th year. He began his education in Kshtrya Vidya Sakar school. As his father had died during the 6th year, he put an end to his education and joined as an assistant in textile shop owned by his uncle.

His connection with the congress:

The news of Indian freedom struggle attracted Kamaraj. The inspiring speeches of the leaders made Kamaraj stir against the suppressive attitude of the English. So he joined the congress party, held meetings and participated in the processions bearing the national flag and collected funds through undiyals. This made his wife Karuppaiya to send Kamaraj to Trivandrum to work, in a timber shop, owned by his sister. Loosing interest in the works of the timber shop, Kamaraj participated in the Satyagraha held at Vaikom of Kerala. So he was brought back to Virudhunagar again.

His deep involvement in the party:

Fully involved himself in the congress party at the age of 18, Kamaraj became the source of congress growth at Virudhunagar. He participated in all the struggles conducted by Congress party. He partook the riot at Suchindrem, for the worship right of harijans, nonco-operation movement in 1920 and picketing of toddy shops at Madurai in 1923. He also participated with the disciples of the party in flag struggle held at Nagpur. When he participated in the salt Satyagraha in 1930, he was arrested and was given two years imprisonment. But he was released before time due to Gandhiji Irwin pact. A great crowd of people took him in a procession to his house from Virudhunagar railway station.

Party work and big posts in politics:

Several posts came in search of Kamaraj. When representatives from the districts were elected for the Congress working committee Kamaraj was elected representative of Ramnad district. When Gandhiji was arrested for his involvement in the freedom struggle Kamaraj protested this arrest. Kamaraj was arrested, imprisoned at Vellore and later he was released.

Satyamoorthy, a great political sufferer in the party attracted Kamaraj very much. Assuming himself to be his master, Kamaraj acted as his right hand. When Satyamoorthy was elected the President of Tamilnadu Congress committee in 1936. Kamaraj was elected as its secretary. In 1937, Kamaraj became victorious from the Sattur constituency as the member of the legislative assembly. In 1940, supported by Satyamoorthy he defeated one Subbiyya patronised by Rajaji by three votes for the post of President of Tamilnadu Congress Committee.

When the second world war broke out India was involved in the war by the English without the least consultation of Indian leaders. The attitude of the British aroused the leaders of India. At this juncture, the Congress put forth a condition of complete independence. If India would be given independence. Congress was prepared to help the English in the war. As the English refused to accept this condition the anti-English riot strengthened, Kamaraj participated in the riot too. When James Hope visited Tamilnadu to collect war fund Kamaraj propagated throughout Tamilnadu not to give that fund. In 1941, when Kamaraj was carrying the list of participants in the Satyagraha to Gandhiji, he was arrested in the train and imprisoned in Vellore jail. When he was in prison, he was elected the Chairman of Virudhunagar Municipality. Again, he was given one year imprisonment for his participation in the quit India movement in 1942. When Kamaraj was released from prison, he resigned the Chairmanship of Virudhunagar Municipality by saying to his followers, I have the work of fighting for the freedom of Bharatham and you look after the welfare of Virudhunagar. Then he proceeded to Bombay and participated, All India congress committee meeting in which the Quit India resolution was passed. To execute the quit India resolution, he came back to Tamilnadu. But even before the starting of the struggle he was arrested in Virudhunagar with several charges of offenses and he was imprisoned first at Vellore and then at Amaravathi for a total period of three years. His master Satyamurthy died during this imprisonment which was a great shock to Kamaraj. When India became free in 1947, the fame of Kamaraj had grown and he became a member of parliament in the election of 1952.

Becoming chief-minister Tamilnadu:

With the removal of Rajaji from the chief ministership of Tamilnadu on 13th April, 1954, Kamaraj took up that post. When he assumed power as chief minister, he became M.L.A. from Kudiyatham Constituency. During his administration Tamilnadu reached its peak of its progress. Unlike Rajaji's ministry, the ministry of Kamaraj was constituted of eight ministers. In spite of his aspiration to give representation to all sects of people in the ministry only efficient persons

were given chances in his ministry. C. Subramonian, M. Baktavatchalam, Paramesvaran, A.P. Sethi, M.P. Manickavelu, Ramnad Raja and Ramaswamy Padyachi constituted 'Kamaraj's Mnisitry. By giving an opportunity to Parameswaran, a Harijan in his Ministry, Kamaraj became the favourite of harijans. In 1957 election forming an alliance with B.M.K. 151 seats were secured out of 205 total seats. Kamaraj became the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu once again and administered it till 1963. During this period, he executed several welfare schemes.

Growth of education:

Kamaraj felt the indispensability of education towards the socio-economic welfare of the society. He established school in every nook and corner of Tamilnadu including villages and reformed the existing educational institutions. To remove the ignorance of people, he made education compulsory upto the age of eleven. To help the poor students free education, free uniform and free noon meal were introduced. This gave a golden opportunity to all the poor children to become literate.

Since the funds for education were insufficient, he proposed to collect donations from well wishers and common people. For this purpose alone Kamaraj held 133 conferences and was able to collect six crores and 47 lakhs of rupees as donation. The whole amount was dedicated to the growth of education. Because of his utmost interest towards the growth of education 46.1 lakhs students were privileged to learn in 10,000 primary schools. Moreover, to encourage higher education, free education was introduced in the high schools also. Apart from this, technical colleges were started in every districts. Furthermore, two physical education colleges and ten teacher's training colleges and 39 teachers training schools were established. In addition to this, two medical colleges and two engineering colleges were started by him, Arrangements were made to start a new university. But this was made possible only by

Baktavatsalam, when he came to power, Hence arose the Madurai University. This university was the result of the efforts of Kamaraj and hence called Madurai Kamaraj University. Poor students who had their education in Medical colleges, engineering colleges and agricultural colleges were offered loans without interest for their education. Because of his efforts towards the improvement of education among poor people, Kamaraj was praised to be Kalvikanthiranthavar.

Land reforms and social welfare:

Kamaraj implemented several constructive schemes to uplift the conditions of the downtrodden peasants in the society. He reorganised Landlords protective act of Tanjore and made it possible for the peasants to get 60% of the land produce. He also passed Land Reform Act so that it could offer land to the landless peasants. His Madras land reform act laid a ceiling, to the land possessions of land lords and the surplus land was distributed to the landless. A family having five members could have 30 acres of land. Family having more than five members was permitted to own five acres of land to each members; but it should not exceed sixty acres. Moreover, the Madras cultivating Tenants protection Act of 1955 protected the peasants from being squeezed by the landlords. Further more, the electrification scheme of villages and manor - lands gave good result. Introduction of pumps held the first place in India for the utility of electricity in cultivation and that increased the produce several time.

Growth of Industry:

During the administration of Kamaraj in Tamilnadu industries developed considerably. As the individuals were encourage to start new industries. Tamilnadu developed industrially within a very short period. In addition to the individuals, the government had also started new industries. During his period, a photo film industry at Qoty with the investment of 12 96 crores and a heavy boiler industry at Trichy with 25 70 crores of rupees investments, a heavy industry at Avadi, Oil refinery industry at Manali, composed manure industry and atomic industry at Madras, Bhavani project and Kundala project were started, As a result of these industrial progress Tamilnadu held the third place in India for industrial growth.

The annexure of South Travancore:

Travancore Tamilnadu Congress President Nathaniel met Kamaraj in connection with the annexure of south Travancore (Present Kanyakumari District) with Madras State. Kamaraj assured to do the needful to solve this problem. But when responsible government was announced in 1947, the longstanding desire of the people of Kanyakumari ended indisappointment. So people revolted and the police opened fire against them. After visiting the affected areas, Kamaraj promised to solve the problem legally. But the government of Travancore stood against this. He wanted to make negotiation among the two groups of people. As Pattom Thanupillai did not participate in the negotiation talk no decision was reached. When the states were proposed to be reorganised on linguistic basis in 1953, solution to this problem

was anticipated. But K.M. Panicker, a member of the commission appointed for this purpose considered only the proposals of Pattom Thanupillai; but not the interests of the people in Kanyakumari district. It was the general feeling among the leaders and the people of Kanyakumari district that Kamaraj had not shown much interest in solving this problem.

Kamaraj Plan:

After the Chinese invasion in 1962, the popularity of the congress party began to diminish. The congress party failed in a few interim elections. So Kamaraj proposed a plan in which he stated the elder leaders of the party should forego their ministerships and came forward to work towards the strengthening of the party. This plan was approved by Nehru also. As per this plan, Kamaraj left his Chief Ministership and involved himself in party work as a model. Following this Morarji Desai and Lai Bhahadur Sastri had forgone their Ministership and engaged themselves in party work. Many leaders criticised this plan too.

Becoming the leader of all India congress:

In the congress .conference held at Buvanesvar in 1963 Kamaraj was elected as the president of All India Congress. He showed deep interest in satisfying the needs of people and strengthening the party by conducting tours all over the lands. He also visited Russia and other Eastern European countries to witness their industrial growth, so that they might be implemented in India.

King maker:

He was highly influential in state and central congress party. He was the' cause for the elevation of several people. As far as Tamilnadu is concerned Prakasam, Panthalu, Ramaswamy Reddiyar, Kumaraswamy Raja and Rajagobalachari got themselves elevated to higher posts only because of Kamaraj. In the centre, he was responsible for the unopposed selection of Lai Bahadur Sastri as the prime minister of India, in the event of the political uncertainty after the death of Nehru. When Sastri died unexpectedly at Tashkant in 1966 it was Kamaraj who made Indira Gandhi as the Prime minister and brought about unity among the leaders. Hence, he was called the King Makers.

Kamaraj set an example to the later administrators by his simplicity, straight forwardness, patriotism and eagerness in the welfare of the people. The present politicians expressed their desire in political stages to bring about the rule of Kamaraj once again just to set aside corruption and restlessness that are found in the to-day's politics. Kamaraj who was at his zenith of fame

died on October 2, 1975. When MISA was prevalent in India. A memorial was erected at Madras to honour the great personality Kamaraj.