HISTORY OF POLITICAL AND PERSONAL LIFE OF PERUNTHALAIVAR K.KAMARAJ IN TAMILNADU

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Abstract
In this chapter an attempt has been made to elucidate the personal and political career of Perunthalaivar K.Kamaraj. His presence, administration, social service, pro-poor welfare activities, courtesy based political administration and simplicity life in all his walk and way of life has earned an immortal and undeletable tattoo of good administrator to him after he passed away in the soil. On these aspects this study is here to say about his excellent, exemplary, and exquisite political, social, economic and infrastructure development activities in Tamilnadu. In India’s very few good political leaders k.kamarajar is known very excellent political leader in southern region, reason for his famous leadership qualities development in Tamilnadu came due to his good minded and social minded behaviors are highlighted his name from several dirty and corrupted leaders in Tamilnadu politics.

Key Words: Kamarajar Life, Social Service, Free Education, Simplicity Personality, uncorrupted political life.

INTRODUCTION

Early life of K.Kamaraj-
Kumaraswami Kamaraj was born on July 15, 1903 in a middle class Nadar family at Virudupatti, a small village situated forty-eight kilometers South of Madurai in Madras Presidency. His parents were Kumaraswami and Sivakamiammal. Kamaraj was initially named as Kamatchi in gratitude and reverence to the famous deity. However, later the name was changed to Kamaraj. Two years later a girl was born to the couple and was named Nagammal. Virudupatti was situated in Ramanathapuram District, which was well known for cotton and tobacco. The leading community of the district was the Nadars. They were staunch Hindus and claimed to be Kshatriyas-Naadalwars (rulers of the land). The village Virudupatti gradually grew as a trade centre of the district and came to be called ‘Virudunagar’. Kamaraj was, by nature, retired, shy and soft-spoken. In fact he
spoke very little unlike the boys of his age. He was sent to school at the age of five and received harsh treatments, like many other boys, from a primary school teacher Velayutham, known as ‘nondi vathiyar’ (lame teacher), who did not believe in sparing the rod. Disappointed at Kamaraj’s first such experiences of school, the parents shifted him to Enaditha Nayanar Vidyasala, an elementary school that was run by a person by name Murugayya. Kamaraj learnt here to read and write in Tamil. In the following years he was transferred to Kshatriya Vidayasala, the only high school then in Virudupatti.

This school was known as ‘pidi arisi’ (hand full of rice) school since the school had started to offer free education, by Nadar community, and each family in Virudunagar contributed a hand full of rice for providing meals at the school. Kamaraj was enrolled in the school in academic year 1910-11.

In the same year, for the occasion of ‘vinayaka chathurthi’, the yearly celebration for the elephant God, every pupil in his class had contributed some amount of money (about 9 Paise) for the celebrations. At the end of the day’s celebrations ‘prasadam’ (eatables offered to the God) was distributed to all pupils, however, Kamaraj managed to receive a very little portion of it and returned home. When his grandmother asked him why the prasadam was so less, he explained that his contribution was exactly same as others but since he was not interested in crowding around the teacher who distributed the prasadam, he got only a little of it.

He further argued that the problem was with the teacher since he was responsible for sharing the prasadam equally to all who had contributed equally. Another interesting incident that happened of about the same period also sheds some light on his early boyhood character. The elephant of the temple of Virudupatti ran out of control on the streets and Kamaraj, like many other, happened to notice it. He observed that the iron chain the elephant used to have on its trunk was missing and rushed back to the temple to bring the chain since he expected the elephant could psychologically be controlled at the sight of the chain. He was correct and the elephant came to a control. Another reason was that the mahout Mariappa Thevar and Kamaraj had gained acquaintance with each other previously and the face of Kamaraj thus could have been more familiar to the elephant.

Responsibilities to Family
The year 1911 rather turned out quite calamitous for young Kamaraj. Kamaraj’s
grandfather Chinnappa Nadar passed away on First of July and within four months Kamaraj’s father passed away on October 16. The income of the family came to a sudden and shocking halt as both the earning members of the family had demised within a very short span of time and the family was left only women and children. Kamaraj and his sister were in their age of eight and six respectively and their mother did not have any source of income for the family. Though Karuppaiah, Kamaraj’s maternal uncle, came forward to help the family, Kamaraj’s mother Sivakamiammal was not willing to accept the help as she considered depending on others to run the family was not the right thing. She sold all her jewels for Rs.3000 and invested the money in with a trustable local trader. The interest of the investment helped the family with Rs.30 per month and she managed well with this meager sum and also hoped that the family could survive until the completion of Kamaraj’s elementary school. She also expected Kamaraj, upon completion of his primary schooling, to join his uncle’s cloth business to support the family.

Kamaraj was not showing much interest in studies and his teacher Sargunam advised him quite often how important it was for him to study well, citing his family’s tough economic position. However the preaching did not bring any significant changes in young Kamaraj in terms of academic performance, in fact, it got worse. The prime distraction for Kamaraj from studies was the interest in learning about freedom struggle of India and his teacher even noticed that Kamaraj often talked to fellow students about Gandhi and his Satyagraha, even at that tender age.

Soon after the pressure on young Kamaraj mounted, to earn for supporting the family, he joined as an apprentice at his uncle Karuppaiah’s cloth shop in 1914. While working in the cloth shop at Virudupatti, Kamaraj had developed an interest in the national politics by when he was a regular reader of daily newspapers. During the same time he was also interested in joining the ‘Bhajans’ (songs in praise of the Lord) on Lord Muruga and had become a member of the team organised by Kandasamy Pulavar, a devotee of Lord Muruga. As a young boy he was quite interested in physical exercises. He regularly practiced ‘silambam’ (a type of martial arts and exercise that is practiced with long sticks) and boxing.

Joining the Congress Party
Kamaraj’s interest on Indian freedom struggle had intensified during the cloth shop days through posters of ‘Vande
It was on April 01, 1915; Gandhi came from South Africa back to India to participate in the freedom struggle. Kamaraj’s mounting interests on politics and stand against British for freedom of nation worried his mother and she decided to send him away from Virudunagar so that his political connections will get severed. Kamaraj was sent to another uncle Kasinadar’s timber shop in Trivandrum and the mother strongly believed that his son’s freedom movement involvement would come to an end. It was there in Vaikom, a village near Trivandrum, Kamaraj participated in E. V. Ramasamy’s (E.V.R) struggle against the prohibition of lower caste people’s entry in to temples. Eventually, since Kamaraj’s uncle could not control the activities of Kamaraj beyond the scope of timber shop, he sent him back to Virudunagar. Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, a tragedy at which over a thousand people were killed at a gathering against the Rowlatt Act that had harsh measures for controlling the nationalist movements, in Amritsar, Punjab happened on April 13, 1919. The tragedy sent strong waves of shock and resentment across the country. When Kamaraj learned the details of the massacre, it disturbed him so much and he started thinking deeply about participating in freedom struggle more actively. Soon after the massacre, prominent leaders of Congress Party started to spread the details of the tragedy through their speeches across the country and Kamaraj happened to listen to speeches of George Joseph, Lakshmana Pillai and Satyamurthi at Virudunagar. Among all of them Satyamurthi attracted Kamaraj and on the same day Kamaraj met him. These incidents of Jallainwala Bagh and subsequent meeting with Satyamurthi turned the life of Kamaraj once for all. By then the First World War had already ended and India had supported British Government in the War. However after the war no sign of favour was shown from British towards the freedom of India. The disappointment together with bitterness of Jallianwala Bagh further intensified the freedom movements. People revolt and Satyagraha (non-violent protest devised by Gandhi) became more acute and the British Government began to control the protests aggressively by arresting the leaders of Congress Party. People of India, especially the youth, rose against the control of British and Kamaraj was no exception. He joined the Congress Party in 1919 and he readily responded to Gandhi’s Non-Cooperation
Movement. Kamaraj was then just eighteen years old.

Decision to Remain a Bachelor for Life
During this time, Kamaraj’s mother tried to get his only son married to his sister Nagammal’s eldest daughter Mangalam. The mother’s interest was to divert his son’s interest and activities in freedom fighting by tying him with the burden of starting a family. However, Kamaraj firmly refused and declared that he had no slightest idea of getting married or starting a family but decided to dedicate his life to free India. Kamaraj’s mother was shocked but did not compel her son right away as she believed the time would bring changes to his decision. After a year she tried to convince Kamaraj to marry Nagammal’s another daughter Kamala Devi. Kamaraj refused firmly, again.

To make his stand clear once and for all, he offered his mother and family with two choices that they would have to either forget about his marriage or forget about him. Kamaraj’s mother did not insist on his marriage thereafter and he remained a bachelor for whole of his life.

Meeting with Gandhi
Kamaraj for the first time met Gandhi on September 21, 1921, after two years from his joining in the Congress Party. Gandhi was on his visit to Madurai, as a part of his broader tour across India to gather people’s support for the Satyagraha and freedom movements. After Gandhi’s address to public in Madurai, Kamaraj met him that night at the place where Gandhi had stayed. That meeting had energised Kamaraj even stronger than before in freedom fighting and subsequently he arranged many public addresses and conferences to national leaders to spread the need of freedom of nation among the masses.

Early Positions in Congress Party
In 1922, Kamaraj was elected as a member of Madras Presidency Congress Party at a conference held at Sattur Taluk that was led by E.V.Ramasamy. Kamaraj was also the secretary of Inauguration Committee for this conference. Subsequently in 1923, he led the picketing of toddy shops at Madurai but he was not arrested in the protest.

Flag Satyagraha
British Government had banned, in 1923, the carrying of Indian National Congress’ flag in Nagpur residential areas. Congress Party announced Flag Satyagraha against this ban and Congress Party members from all over the country were invited to Nagpur to participate in the protest against the ban. From Tamilnadu, Kamaraj led the efforts and guided supporters to Nagpur. However, before their arrival to Nagpur, the Flag Satyagraha had been withdrawn.
**Sword Satyagraha**

In 1927, British Government banned the carrying of swords and similar long knives by Indians. Congress Party decided to send a strong signal to the British against the ban. Sword Satyagraha was begun on June 16, 1927. Kamaraj and his friend K.S.Muthusamy of Virudunagar assisted the Satyagrahis by supplying them with half a dozen swords. Kamaraj also organised a procession in Virudunagar and his plan was to extend the procession to Madurai. At the procession Kamaraj went along with singing the patriotic songs of Bharathi (famous nationalist Tamil poet of the State).

**Neill Satyagraha**

General James George Smith Neill, who was known for his cruel killing of India soldiers in Sepoy Mutiny 1857, had been given honour by erecting a statue for him at Mount Road, Chennai in 1860. On October 11, 1927, an agitation was launched by the Madras Congress Party to remove the Neill Statue. Gandhi had given his consent for the proposal and emphasized the activities should be limited to throwing of small clay balls to indicate the hatred that people of India have for Neill. However, many leaders including Somayajulu and Srinivasa Varadhan succeeded in breaking a portion of the sheath of the sword carried by Neill and hoisting the national flag on it. Eventually the Neill statue was removed after a decade, in 1937, and placed in Connemara museum.

**Meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru**

The 43rd annual session of Indian National Congress was scheduled in Tamilnadu. In 1927, the session happened near Egmore, Chennai at the place ‘Erikarai Thidal’. Dr. Ansari was the president of the session and Kamaraj participated on behalf of Tamilnadu Congress Party. Nehru was on Europe tour and he came to attend the session with his family from the tour. In his address he explained the details of complete freedom, self-governance, and war threats amongst other important issues. Proposals were made on all these issues and were unanimously agreed by the Party. Kamaraj met Nehru there for the first time, together with Satyamurthi, and managed to ensure Nehru’s presence for a conference he was arranging at his hometown Virudunagar.

**Simon Go Back**

Indian Statutory Commission (commonly known as Simon Commission after its chairman Sir John Simon) constituted by British Government, was strongly opposed by Congress Party as the Commission did not have any representatives from India. Nehru was already in action supporting the protests against the Commission. On
February 18, 1929, the Simon Commission arrived at High Court premises in Madras and March 01, 1929 to Madurai. Kamaraj had arranged and organised thousands of Congress Party members for showing plaques with inscriptions of “SIMON GO BACK”.

Salt Satyagraha and First Jail Term
In 1930, Gandhi took Dandi March to defy salt law. In Tamilnadu, Rajaji led the Salt Satyagraha with volunteers from Touché to Vedaranyam in Thanjavur district. Kamaraj gathered and guided the volunteers for the march and got arrested. On June 09, 1930, he was given two years of imprisonment and sent to Alipuram Jail. However, he was released from jail after Gandhi-Irwin Pact on March 12, 1931. This was the first imprisonment in his political career.

Getting in to Working Committee
The provincial meeting of the Congress Party was held in Madurai in 1931 under the chairmanship of Satyamurthi. Kamaraj was elected as a member of the Working Committee to represent Ramanathapuram and that could be considered as the first important official key position Kamaraj held in Tamilnadu Congress Party.

Break of Gandhi-Irwin Pact and Second Jail Term
Gandhi-Irwin Pact turned out unsuccessful and Gandhi returned, disappointed, from Second Round-Table Conference that was held in London, 1931. Though Kamaraj did not act against the prohibitory orders, the British Government anticipated trouble and arrested Kamaraj in 1931. He was sent to Vellore Jail. He was released on January 09, 1933 after serving his second term Jail tenure.

CONCLUSION:
A person or administrator may die one day but their name presence is so important in this way his name has been written in all syllabus of Tamilnadu education board, social service board, achievement board and remarkable leader’s board in Tamilnadu political history. All these praiseworthy names and characters came to him owing to his marvelous, splendor, luminous, esthetic, sparkling and holy attitude of Perunthalaivar K.Kamaraj in southern region in Tamilnadu politics. Still he has been role model of so many young students, politicians, administrator, workers and others because his genuine and good administration during his political power got to him all these good characters and names. Yet in future and present his name would be spoken and presently speaking about him is continuous one, reason for which is good love and character could not be destroyed.
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