

Educational and Industrial policies of Kamaraj - A Study

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Introduction:

Kamaraj was an extraordinary leader who rose from the ranks of poor and lowly in the distant and remote village Virudupatti in Virudunagar District to the exalted position of King Maker in the complex web of political atmosphere in the country. By his integrity, forthrightness and hard work with simplicity he raised to such status. Being a dynamic organizational Chief Minister, he concentrated on various developments which made his period a golden era of Tamilnadu. He saw to it that every village with a population of around 1000 people to have a school. He laid roads to the remotest areas to be linked with nearby towns so that the village people can merchandise their produce in nearby towns and earns more income in city markets. He brought electricity to almost all villages in Tamilnadu was responsible for opening industrial estates all around. From his cabinet colleagues and bureaucrats he never demands personal loyalty but a commitment to the public cause. Kamaraj made the Tamilnadu State administration a model one for all the states especially by his Educational and Industrial policies. This paper focuses on those very positive highly progressive ideas which brighten the lives of the rural people.

Early Life of Kamaraj

Kamaraj was born on July 15, 1903 in Virudupatti, southern Tamilnadu. He was the son of Kumaraswami and Sivakami. He was early named as Kamakshi. His parents affectionately added the suffix Raja to this name Kamakshi. Later on both the names were mingled and the name Kamaraj came to stay. Kamaraj had a younger sister by name Nagammai. Kamaraj by nature was retired, shy and soft spoken words and this distinguished him from others even later years. He had his earlier education in a local school beginning at the age of five. Shortly he was shifted to another school called Yenad Nayanar Vidyasala. His formal learning, reading and writing of the vernacular language Tamil began in that age. Soon he found himself transferred to the Kshatriya Vidyasala High School which was then the pre-eminent high school in that area. This high school was run on the munificence of Nadar Community from their common fund called Mahamai. Perhaps this might have been the inspiration for Kamaraj to make education free up to high school level in the whole of Tamilnadu later when he became entry into Congress party, Role in the freedom struggle, he was elected to the congress committee, As a secretary of Tamilnadu congress committee, President of Tamilnadu congress committee, President of all India congress committee, as the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu. The king maker Kamarajar was the chief minister of Madras State from 13th April, 1954 to 2nd October 1963.

Rural Development

Kamaraj had very positive and highly progressive ideas regarding electrification of the rural areas. He concentrated on power development as he felt that electricity was the foremost requirement for industry and agriculture. He was confident that electric power would bring in not only light but also brighten the lives of the rural people. He considered it as a valuable addition to modernizing the village. He was able to bring electricity for as many villages as possible. In respect of utilization of power for irrigations, Madras was said to rank first five year plan had targeted 250 villages to be covered by electrification. Tamilnadu extended power to 1000 villages per annum. Moreover 6000 miles of HT lines were laid to extend electricity to new industries and to cater to the needs of the additional villages that was brought under the power grid. Today no village in Tamilnadu is without electric power connection. This was due to the farsightedness of Kamaraj in those days. Tamilnadu had more electrically operated pump sets used for irrigation in the country than any other state. He was able to help the farmers to systematically exploit the ground water resources for irrigation purpose.

As a result Tamilnadu which was a deficit state in food grains production became a self sufficient state in food grains production became a self sufficient state. During his Chief Minister ship, the capital consumption of electricity has risen from 12 units 1951 to 94 units 1996. Major irrigation schemes like lower Bhavani, Manimuthar, Cauvery, Arani River, Vaigai dam, Amaravathi, Sathanur, Krishnagiri, Pullambadi, Parambikulam, and Nayyaru dams were established. 200 wells were dug up with outlets and long term loans with 25 percent subsidy were issued to farmers. Farmers possessing dry lands were given oil engines, electric pump sets on installment basis. 56 lakh acres of land got permanent irrigation facility.

Educational policy

Kamaraj was very particular in promoting primary school education. He wanted to motivate those depressed communities which were earlier denied the benefits of education. During his tour of villages to dismay he saw the children were in a state of poor health due to poverty with poor vision, un-groomed hair without oil, ill fed scantily dressed and dwelling in sanitary hutments. He realized that under such a situation the parents would care little about their child's education. For this purpose he made primary education free. He had also ensured that villages with the population of 300 people should provide with primary school. He also created single teacher schools in the villages and facilitated the unemployed youths to have jobs. Even after this poor people in the country side hesitated to send their children to schools as they were also earning some money to add to the family income.

Kamaraj thought about a plan to draw the children to schools. The poor people may be motivated to send their children to schools rather than sending them to tend cattle or work in the farm. Mid-day meals scheme which was already in existence in a smaller proportion since 1925, was extended by Kamaraj to all villages and supported by government's munificence and subsidies. Kamaraj found out that the scheme was sound and workable. After the launch of the scheme, thousands of parents sent their children to schools. Kamaraj also expanded educational facilities to one and all. In 1951 there were 16, 037 primary schools in the state. This rose to 30,554 in 1966. The number of pupils on the rolls were 1852 million in 1951 increased to 3,558 million in 1961.

The number of children in the mid-day meals scheme was 8, 88,000. The government subsidy was to the of Rs. 8,278 million. In 1966 the number under the mid-day meals programme had increased to 1,67,000 and the government's subsidy level had increased to Rs. 16.7 millions. The scheme had received wide support from the press, other state governments and from Nehru himself. The scheme was successful far beyond expectations. It became huge incentives for pupils to join the schools increased in rural areas and also helped to break the caste barrier and led to a silent revolution. Many state governments followed the mid-day scheme of Kamaraj in their respective states. The American government was very much impressed by the scheme and came forward to associate itself in the scheme. It sent milk powder packets through their CARE programme. Besides, free books, slates and dresses for the poor children attending school were distributed by government.

Kamaraj's contribution to the cause of education in Tamilnadu was immense. First, as soon he had assumed office he had withdrawn the Rajagopalachari's educational reform. That act generated groundswell of welcome from the people. Besides the mid-day meals scheme, he had also introduced free uniforms scheme. A scheme was carried out at the instance of Kamaraj who had wanted to eschew discrimination of school children on the basis of their being poor children. In 1966, 940000 children were the beneficiaries of the scheme. For carrying out very many improvements in the schools he had mobilized voluntary donations from the public which swelled to the tune of Rs. 80,000 millions. With this generous fund schools in Tamilnadu were improved in very many directions such as repairs to building, addition to school equipments, better furniture and additional facilities for children. Kamaraj had declared in 1960 that poor children would get free educational up to the secondary school level. He saw it that there was no village in Tamilnadu without a primary school. He also took efforts to improve the standard of education also. Because of this he was hailed by one and all as one who had brought literacy to Tamilnadu.

The government also build houses for the village teacher to reside in the villages as competent teacher shied away from working in rural schools for want of facilities. Poor students on admission to professional courses were given interest free educational loans repayable in installments later. Kamaraj's reign saw the healthy growth of arts colleges, two physical education colleges, 10 teachers training colleges and 39 teacher training schools. New schools within a perimeter of five miles from residence of the students were opened. The teacher began to enjoy sound pension scheme, provident fund and had compulsory saving schemes. The education was development of under Kamaraj rule. Kamaraj's rule was lauded by one and all as the golden rule of Kamaraj.

Industrial policy

Kamaraj being a socialist was aware of the fact that mixed economy alone will be congenial and conducive for the promotion of the economy. The state development committee meeting helped him a lot in streamlining the economic pursuits of the state. Due to his practical mindedness the expansion work of the madras harbour was undertaken in the Rayapuram side and the proposed work of expansion on the side of the fort St. George was dropped because he felt that will spoil the beauty of the city many industries and activities assisted the promotion of the economy of Tamilnadu and they are all the activities which came up due to his efforts. By utilization of the fund allotment made by the central government on national policy basis he utilized the allotted amount properly and made the Madras state as an industrially developed state.

For encouraging the small scale industries nine industrial estates were established at places like Guindy, Trichy, Madurai and Virudhunagar.

Subsequently by beginning of the five year plan 13 more industrial estates were also established at places like Ambbathur, Ranipettai etc., for making the industries to grow steadily. Madras state was divided into five industrial zones, namely 1. Madras 2. Neyveli project area, 3. Tuticorin belt, 4. Salem- Pallipalayam and 5. Coimbatore- Pollachi.

Because of such divisions many heavy and small scale industrial units emerged there that was also benefit for the full use of the raw-materials. They offered employment opportunities also.

With Swiss assistance the central government of India he established the Madras Perambur coach factory at cost of Rs. 12 cores. By making arrangement to establish this factory Kamaraj was able to give employment opportunities for 10,000 people. Further it assisted the introduction of many subsidiary industries. Such investment improved the overall standard of the economy.

In 1956 at an estimate of Rs.160 cores Neyveli Lignite Corporation(NLC) was established. The multipurpose project produced 25 Mega Watt electricity. This central government unit was given to Madras state by the effort of Kamaraj with French support of Hindustani Photo film Ltd was established at Oodagamandalam at the cost of Rs. 11 cores. That was also an economy fetching industry.

The state government assigned lands to establish the Hindustan take printer factory at Guindy, and at Avadi, Madras heavy vehicles factory was established and modern Tanks are produced in addition to them a new industry to produce surgical equipments was started at the cost of Rs. 5.25 cores. This was due executed with collaboration of the Soviet Union Technology. Thus the establishment of large and small scale industries with the support of the central government and collaboration of foreign countries enriched the standard of living of the people of Tamilnadu.

Due to the cordial centre state relations during the reign of Kamaraj sponsored industries such as NLC projects were implemented in Tamilnadu. The Trichy Bharat Heavy Electrical(BHEL)Ltd., Kalpakkam, Atomic energy Plant, Pallipalayam, Seshaya Paper Mills, Sakari durg, Nellikkupam Sugar Factory will all stand testimony to the multi dimensional industrial growth of Tamilnadu during the period of Kamaraj.

Kamaraj took effort to start co-operative and private spinning mills at Coimbatore and made Coimbatore city to be called as the Manchester of Tamilnadu(India). Madras state co-operative industrial Bank was established by the state government in 1958. This encouraged the creation of co-operative units for developments of Handy Crafts and others. Nearly 365 co-operative societies were also started. In 1963 in the Madras state there were 6,365 industries of different types and 3,52,563 workers were working in them. Thus the state net with a planned development.

Due to the industrial policies and activities of Kamaraj Madras state occupied the third place among the Indian states. The small ministry as given below assisted him a lot in launching many programs successfully and effectively. His ministry in 1954 consisted eight in 1957 also eight ministers and in 1962 nine ministers.

The industrial development during the Kamaraj ministry was remarkable and there was a tremendous growth in 1959 a number of industries were available in Tamilnadu for instance there were 230 engineering industries, 106 chemical fertilizers and 226 paper and soap mills opened for this period.

Conclusion

Kamaraj as Chief Minister of Tamilnadu for all but a decade from 1954 to 1963. His accomplishment, as we listed some of them as freedom fighter, King Maker, seasoned diplomat, educational philanthropist, uncorrupted administrator and up-lifter of poor, when he passed away at the age of seventy two, 1975, were unusual and beyond any reasonable and logical imagination. Economically, socially, educationally he brought the Tamilnadu state to the force front. His cordial relationship and political influence with the central government allowed him to lead the state in the right path way. He was able to up utilize all the resources for proper progress. By setting aside conservatives, he stood for the progressive in the overall development of Tamilnadu.

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