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The Life and Political Career of S.S.Ramasamy Padayachiyar

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Abstract

As S.S. Ramaswamy was very much involved in social service and public activities, he was elected as the Councillor of Cuddalore Municipality at the age of twenty-four. He rendered his best service in that position. Four years later, at the age of twenty-eight, he was elected as Chairman of the Cuddalore Municipality. During that time, he used his office to provide necessary facilities to the people of Cuddalore and received acclaim and applause from the public. The drinking water project he brought into effect during his tenure as the Chairman of Cuddalore Municipality was a useful one to the people, as it gave a solution to the drinking water issue, which was very acute at that time. In order to overcome the drinking water issue, he came up with this plan and provided a solution. His drinking water project was well received by the public. He then engaged himself in full-time politics. S.S. Ramasamy Padayachi, who was appointed in the Cabinet of Kamarajar, relentlessly worked to accomplish all the projects of Kamarajar to make his administration a most popular one in the

realm of the welfare of all sections of the people, and plenty of reforms ushered in health, happiness, peace, and prosperity. S.S. Ramasamy Padayachiyar died on 3rd April 1992 at Cuddalore due to ill health.

Keywords: S.S.Ramasamy Padayachiyar, Life, Political.

Introduction

Kamaraj was a great Indian political leader of integrity and simplicity who disliked positions and spent his entire life and energy for the upliftment of people. He is the most acclaimed great leader of all time. On 13th April 1954, K. Kamaraj took charge as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.¹ The formation eight-member Cabinet of Kamaraj showed his political understanding, magnanimity, and intelligence. He even inducted C. Subramanian, who contested for the post of Chief Minister, and M. Bhaktavachalam, who opposed him, in the Cabinet.² Siva Chidambara Ramasamy, popularly known as S.S. Ramaswamy Padiyachiyar, was one of the eight ministers in the first ministry of Kamaraj.³

As S.S. Ramaswamy was very much involved in social service and public activities, he was elected as the Councillor of Cuddalore Municipality at the age of twenty-four. He rendered his best service in that position. Four years later, at the age of twenty-eight, he was elected as Chairman of the Cuddalore Municipality. During that time, he used his office to

provide necessary facilities to the people of Cuddalore and received acclaim and applause from the public.⁴ The drinking water project he brought into effect during his tenure as the Chairman of Cuddalore Municipality was a useful one to the people, as it gave a solution to the drinking water issue, which was very acute at that time. In order to overcome the drinking water issue, he came up with this plan and provided a solution. His drinking water project was well received by the public. He then engaged himself in full-time politics.⁵

Early Life of S.S.Ramaswamy Padayachiyar

S.S. Ramaswamy Padiyachiyar, one of the most prominent leaders of Tamil Nadu, was born on 16th September 1918 at Soorappanaicken Chavady near the famous Tirupathiripuliyur town in the present Cuddalore district (erstwhile South Arcot District), which is famous for agriculture and religious tradition. He was born in a wealthy farming family as the fourth child.⁶

His father, Siva Chidambara Padayachi, was engaged in agricultural activities and cultivation. His father played a pivotal role in promoting agriculture by converting several acres of barren land into arable land in the vicinity of Cuddalore. His mother, Rathinambal, was assisting her husband in farming-related activities. These circumstances paved the way for S.S. Ramaswamy to develop an interest in farming and follow the footsteps of his parents. S.S. Ramaswamy had four brothers named Nadesan, Appuraj, Chandrasekar, Dandapani, and one sister named Sundarambal.⁷

On September 3, 1942, he adopted Gnanampamal alias Pappamalmal as his life partner. In their married life, they had three children, one woman and two men. S.S.R. Ramadass, Daughter S.S.R. Bhanumathi, and S.S.R. Mantrikumar.⁸

During this time, in the political arena of Tamil Nadu, unable to secure any guarantee from the Congress Government, the Vanniya Kula Maha Kshatriya Sangham contested on its own in the Municipal election in the Madras State. S.S. Ramaswamy, who was a young man, just 24 years old, was elected as the Chairman of the Cuddalore Municipal Council, and he was elected as a member of the South Arcot District Board. At the age of twenty-eight, however, it was narrowly defeated for its Chairmanship in

the 1949 municipal elections. The drinking water project, which he had brought during his period as Cuddalore Municipal Chairman, was a unique one. Later, he entered politics and founded the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party in 1951.⁹

Tamil Nadu Toilers Party

Tamil Nadu Toilers Party was founded by S.S. Ramaswamy, M.A. Manickavelu Naicker and R. Markabandu. Initially, they convened a significant state-level conference by the name of Vanniya Kula Kshatriya Sangham in 1951. In the conference, the leaders decided to contest in the forthcoming election with the support of the toiling masses.¹⁰ Accordingly, they formed a political party called the “Tamil Nadu Toilers Party” (TNT). This party demanded that the state Government provide 15 per cent exclusive reservation to the Vanniyars in public employment.

Later, there was a split between them due to some misunderstanding. S.S. Ramaswamy remained in the Tamil Nadu Tailors Party. However, Manickavelu Naicker started a new party by the name of “Commonweal Party” in 1951, and with the full support of the Gounders from Kanchipuram, Vellore and Tiruvannamalai, the party contested in the Legislative Assembly and in the Parliament in the General Election in

1952, which was the first general election after Independence.¹¹

Madras Legislative Assembly Election (1952)

The first legislative assembly Election to the erstwhile Madras State on the basis of universal adult suffrage was held on March 1952. This was the first assembly election held in Madras State after India’s Independence. This election was formally known as the 1951 Madras State Election, even though over and done with delays, actual voting didn’t take place until early 1952.

In the general election of 1952, the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party contested with the support of the Vanniyars from South Arcot district and Salem District in 1952 in both the Assembly and the General elections, and its performance was awe-

inspiring because it won 19 Legislative assemblies out of 34 seats and captured 4 Parliament seats out of 7. The outstanding candidate from the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party who got success in the Assembly election was S.S. Ramaswamy Padayachiyar, who was elected from Cuddalore general Constituency. Later, the Toiler's Party under the leadership of S.S. Ramasamy also merged with the Congress Government, and he became a minister.¹² Ministerial berths were given to the non-Brahmin caste-based parties, Tamil Nadu Toilers Party and Commonweal Party. Both parties were subsequently “subsumed” by the Congress.¹³

Members of the cabinet who served between 13th April 1954 - 13th April 1957 under

The Chief Ministership of K. Kamraj are:

Minister	Portfolio
K. Kamaraj	- Chief Minister; Minister of Public and Police in the Home Department
A. B. Shetty	- Minister in charge of medical and public health, cooperation, housing, and ex-servicemen
M. Bhaktavatsalam	- Minister in charge of Agriculture, Forests, Fisheries, Rural Welfare, Cinchona, Community Projects, Women’s Welfare, National Extension Scheme, Industries and Labour, and Animal Husbandry and Veterinary
C. Subramaniam	- Minister in charge of Finance, Food, Education, Elections and Information and Publicity, and Law

(Courts and Prisons)

M. A. Manickavelu Naicker - Minister in charge of Land Revenue and Commercial Taxes and Rural Development

S.S. Ramasami Padayachi - Minister of Local Administration

Raja Sri Shanmuga Rajeswara Sethupathi - Minister in charge of Public Works, Accommodation Control, Engineering Colleges, Stationery and Printing

B. Parameswaran - Minister in charge of Transport, Hindu Religious Endowments, Harijan Uplift, Registration, and Prohibition

However, S.S. Ramasamy Padayachiyar was hesitant over the choice of alliances. Though initially, he was exceedingly sceptical of the Indian National Congress and criticized the Commonwealth Party for establishing an alliance with the Congress. But he considerably modified his position when C. Rajagopalachari resigned as the Chief Minister of Madras state. He offered negotiations with Rajaji's successor, K. Kamaraj, and eventually, amalgamated his party with the Congress Party, accepting an appointment as Minister of Local Self-Government of the Madras State. He served as the Minister of Local Administration in the Kamaraj Ministry from 13th April 1954 to 13th April 1957.¹⁴

As Madras State Minister of Local Administration

As Minister for Local Administration, S.S. Ramaswamy Padayachiyar rendered an excellent service for the betterment of the people. Efficient local administration is of vital importance to the people living in towns as well as in villages. Local bodies should be regarded as complementary to the Government machinery, in that they help the State Government in building up and maintaining a welfare State on the socialist pattern. The services rendered by local bodies to the people are essential and are indispensable for civilized life in any modern community. The need for encouraging a sound and active system of Local Self-Government is now increasingly recognized, as evidenced by the keen interest evinced by the Central Government in local administration and the Constitution of the Central Council of

Local Self-Government in September 1954 by order of the President of India.

Subsidies to Local Bodies

It is intended under the Second Five-Year Plan, to subsidise local bodies

Year		Lakhs
1956-57	-	13.00
1957-58	-	18.00
1958-59	-	21.00
1959-60	-	23.00
1960-61	-	25.00 ¹⁵

Out of this sum, 227 markets, 48 cart-stands, 164 bus stands and 36 slaughter-houses would newly be constructed besides improving the existing ones. During 1956-57, the Government propose to distribute the quota of Rs.13 lakhs as detailed in the next page. In addition, special schemes concerning local bodies, relating to urban water – supply and drainage, low-income group housing for local body servants, slum clearance and townplanning schemes have also been included in the Plan at State Level.

by way of loans for carrying out essential schemes of public utility which are remunerative in character and which otherwise they will not be in a position to undertake. A sum of Rs. 100 lakhs is proposed to be distributed to local bodies, as indicated below:

Roads and Bridge Works

It is also proposed to provide in the Second Five-Year Plan a sum of Rs. 3.75 crores for giving grants to District Boards for roads and bridge works. For the year 1956-57 (i.e., the first year of the Second Plan) the grant likely to be given to District Boards will be Rs. 45 lakhs as against Rs. 25 lakhs distributed in 1955-56. There will, therefore, be more significant progress during the Second Plan period in the execution of road works.¹⁶

Development of Panchayats

A sum of Rs.15 lakhs will be set apart for the development of panchayats during the Plan period (1956-61). It is proposed to constitute at least 6,000 new panchayats during the Plan period. The scheme also provides for better superintend densely and inspection of panchayats by conducting the existing staff and for the training of members and presidents of panchayats by conducting classes at taluk headquarters and arranging for talks by the District Officers like the District Health Officer, District Educational Officer, Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies and the Divisional Engineer (Highways). The Madras District Municipalities Act, 1920, has been amended recently to enable the constitution of a Government service for the municipal commissioners. This is intended to strengthen their position as the Chief Executive in the municipality and to enable them to discharge their duties efficiently without fear or favour.

With the passing of the Madras Land Revenue (Additional Surcharge) Act, 1955, a useful step has been taken in the matter of finding additional funds for affording financial assistance to district boards and panchayats.¹⁷

The Coutrallum Township Act, 1954, which has been brought into effect from 1st October 1955, is another

outstanding event of the year. The Act is designed to improve the area so that the usefulness of the Sanatorium will be enjoyed by a more extensive section of the masses.¹⁸

Free Education

The most prominent landmark is the order of the Government granting free education up to Form III or standard VIII to all children of parents whose income falls short of Rs.1,200. The beneficial results of these orders will increase year after year. It will be seen that this measure has thus provided equal opportunities for all children irrespective of caste or creed to get free education up to the age of 14 and will pave the way for it casteless society. The value of the importance of the human factor in any educational system cannot be overemphasized. Governments are fully aware of the needs of teachers and have consequently decided on a scheme of Provident Fund-cum-Insurance-cum-Pension scheme, which has effect from April 1955. The scheme is to benefit all teachers under the low-income group, whether they are serving in Elementary schools or Secondary schools. Teachers under both Aided and Local Board managements will come under this scheme. It is roughly estimated that about 90,000 teachers will be benefitted by the scheme.¹⁹

Indian general election in Madras (1962)

During the 1962 elections, S.S.Ramasamy left the Congress Party. He has revived the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party and clinched an alliance with the Swatantra Party. In the 1962 elections, Tamil Nadu Toilers Party contested the elections in alliance with the Swatantra Party. However, Tamil Nadu Toilers Party performed poorly in the elections. S.S.Ramasamy himself lost his seat. Hence, during the 1967 elections, S.S.Ramasamy moved toward the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam to offer his support.²⁰ However, the DMK rebuffed him, saying that there were adequate candidates in the DMK from the Vanniyar community and the backing of the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party would not be needed.

Conclusion

Those who think that “What does ask not what your country can do for you ask what you can do for your country?” used to devote their life and wealth in letter and spirit for the betterment of society. In that line, an essential figure in Tamil Nadu’s political history was S.S. Ramasamy Padayachiyar, who devoted his whole life to the well-being and upliftment of the ordinary people.

He started his social work as a member of the Cuddalore Municipal

Council at the age of 24. Due to devoted and relentless work as a member of the Cuddalore Municipal Council, he rose to prominence in the politics of Tamil Nadu. The drinking water project, which he brought up when he was the Chairman of the Cuddalore Municipal Council is still spoken of by the people today. S.S. Ramasamy Padayachiyar rose to prominence as an administrator, politician, and then a people’s leader.

S.S. Ramasamy Padayachi realized that it is essential to unite society first, knowing that no society can advance without self-help, since self-help is a way to achieve self-respect and good cultural practice. S.S. Ramasamy Padayachi thought about, day and night, for the upliftment of society and realised that it is imperative to devote himself to the cause. As a result, he formed the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party in 1951 to participate in the political establishment.

In the first general election held in 1952, the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party made a historic achievement by placing a Harijan candidate in a non-reserved constituency and made him succeed in the election. In the General Elections, the general performance of Tamil Nadu Toilers Party was also awe-inspiring, because it won 19 legislative assembly constituencies out of 34 contested seats and captured 4 parliamentary

constituencies out of 7 contested seats. The noted candidate of the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party elected in the Assembly election was S.S. Ramaswamy Padayachiyar who elected from the Cuddalore general constituency. Later, the Toilers Party under S.S. Ramasamy merged with the Congress after the negotiation with K. Kamaraj then the Chief Minister of the Madras State and S.S. Ramasamy became the Minister for Local Administration in the Cabinet in 1954.

During his service as the Minister for Local Administration, he relentlessly worked to pass various outstanding bills for providing better administration in local bodies: The Madras District Boards (Amendment) Act, 1954 (Madras Act No.VIII of 1954). The Madras City Municipal (Amendment) Act, 1954 (Madras Act No, XII of 1954). The Courtallam Township Act, 1954 (Madras Act No, XVI of 1954). The Madras District Boards (Second Amendment) Act, 1954 (Madras Act No, XXII of 1954). The Bhavanisagar Township Act, 1954 (Madras Act No.XXV of 1954). The Madras City Municipal (Amendment) Act, 1955 (Madras Act NO.,IV of 1955). The Madras District Municipalities (Amendment) Act, 1955 (Madras Act No.XX of 1955).

He was instrumental for the development of municipalities and

Panchayats in the Madras State. As Minister for Local Administration, he played a vital role in the implementation of the free education program of K. Kamarajar. S.S. Ramasamy Padayachiyar was instrumental in providing free education, employment training and vocational education to the oppressed people. During his tenure, S.S. Ramasamy Padayachiyar played a significant role in the Kamaraj Cabinet on all projects such as constructing bridges, dams and irrigation canals, which were the hallmarks of Kamaraj's administration.

During the period from 1954 to 1957, as Minister of Local Administration, S.S. Ramasamy Padayachiyar implemented many pivotal schemes and projects such as creating new schools and new roads, and providing required facilities to municipalities and panchayats.

S.S. Ramasamy Padayachiyar was elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly from Nellikuppam Constituency in the 1958 General Election. From 1966 to 1977, for two consecutive terms, he served as a legislator and the Chairman of the Madras State Legislative Council. On behalf of the Congress Party, he was elected as a Member of Parliament from the Tindivanam Parliamentary Constituency twice, between 1980-1984 and 1984-1989.

During his tenure as Local Administration Minister, S.S. Ramasamy Padayachi brought the Government Hospital to his hometown, Cuddalore, and made the medical facilities available to the people of Cuddalore and nearby places. He used his service to provide many vital projects to the municipalities of Cuddalore, Nellikuppam, and Chidambaram.

Due to his love and affection for people, he donated his land to set up a Government ITI, Cuddalore Bus Stand, and Government Hospital in Cuddalore. It is also significant to note that he has donated several acres of land to the farmers of Cuddalore District. Accordingly, he has rendered excellent service in his political and public life.

S.S. Ramasamy Padayachi, who was appointed in the Cabinet of Kamarajar, relentlessly worked to accomplish all the projects of Kamarajar to make his administration a most popular one in the realm of the welfare of all sections of the people, and plenty of reforms ushered in health, happiness, peace, and prosperity. S.S. Ramasamy Padayachiyar died on 3rd April 1992 at Cuddalore due to ill health.

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