CHAPTER - VI

AS MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES, LABOUR AND WOMEN’S WELFARE

Consequent on the formation of Andhra Pradesh State on October 1, 1953 and transfer of certain areas from Madras State to Mysore, some of the Ministers of the composite Madras State resigned with effect from 1, October 1953. Bhaktavatsalam was elected as Member of Legislative Council and inducted as Minister in Rajaji’s Cabinet on 9 October 1953.\(^1\) But this ministry was a short lived one because Rajaji made his exit over the controversial issue of caste based education system called “Kulak Kalvi Thittam”.\(^2\) Later when Kamaraj formed his ministry on 13 April 1954, Bhaktavatsalam was given the Industries, Women Welfare and Labour Welfare departments. Again in 1957, after the victory of the congress party in Second General Elections 1957, Kamaraj formed his second ministry, Bhaktavatsalam was allotted Home, Police, Court, Prison, Food, Agriculture and Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments.\(^3\)

In 1962, Bhaktavatsalam again got Labour Welfare Department. This Department was under him till 1967.

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3. P.Kandaswamy, op.cit., p.61
In this chapter, the welfare measures promoted by him for industrial workers and Labourers are being discussed along with his work for women's welfare.

The Industrial policy adopted by the Madras Government was in consonance with the policy of the Central Government. Except Defense, Iron and Steel industries, all the other industries are developed by private enterprise. Government extended all possible help and assistance to those who wanted to establish and operate new industrial undertakings. The main works of the Industries Department were running of existing commercial concerns of the State, Technical Education, Mineral Development, Development of Small Scale Industries, Providing information, data and advice to new industries, giving loans and aids to industries. The department also looked after the issue of certificates for obtaining import license and procurement of controlled commodities.

Loans were given to industries under "The Madras State Aid to Industries Act 1922." This act was liberalized in 1956 and extended to small scale and cottage industries.\(^4\) Upto the end of December 1956, Rs.730,000 was sanctioned to industries.\(^5\) Capital goods industries, handlooms, silk twisting, fire works, agricultural implements and engineering goods industries received aid from the Government. State aided


\(^5\) Ibid., p.58
industries rose from 39 in 1954-55 to 54 in the year 1955-56. Minimum wages were raised for rice mills, oil mills and tanneries on the recommendation of the special advisory committee.

**Welfare Measures for the Industrial Workers and Employees**

Labour welfare is an integral part of social welfare and industrial progress depends on the efficiency of the labour. Resources cannot take shape and become useful without the involvement and co-operation of Labour. They have to be associated with the industry as partners to increase their efficiency. The Directive Principles of the State also lay stress on protection and welfare of labour. The Employees State Insurance Scheme was introduced by the Central Government in 1952 following the enactment of Employees State Insurance Act 1948 and in Madras State on January 21, 1955.7

As an experimental measure the scheme was started at Coimbatore. This was an integrated scheme of insurance against sickness, maternity, and injury. In November 1956, it was extended to Madras and its suburbs. 5000 insured persons working in 325 factories were covered by this scheme in Madras city.8 The Government set up fourteen State Insurance Dispensaries. To provide inpatient treatment, a sixty beds hospital was established at Kilpauk, for Madras city. For tuberculosis patients, sixteen

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6 Op.cit., p.177  
7 Madras Information, March 1955, p.3  
8 Madras Information, June 1957, p.25
beds were reserved at Tambaram Sanatorium. The scheme covered all factories using power and employing more than twenty persons.

Another landmark in the progress of Employees State Insurance Scheme in the state was the extension of medical facilities under the Act to the families of insured persons. A full fledged ESI Hospital was constructed at Madras city at a cost of Rs.27 lakh with 175 bed strength.\(^9\)

**Provision of Housing facilities**

The housing conditions of the workers were far from satisfactory. They lived in small, dark rooms without good drinking water and other essential facilities. The unsanitary conditions of the surroundings affected their efficiency. As healthy housing conditions have far reaching effects on community life and on production level, the Government prepared schemes to provide housing to industrial workers. Government offered assistance by way of loans, subsidies to Housing Board, State Government Employees and Co-operative societies. Government of India approved the scheme of the Madras Government to construct 936 single room tenements for industrial workers.\(^10\) Employers also donated land to construct these houses at Sembium and Erukkancherry. Government of India gave a sum of Rs12.46 lakh as loan and also a similar amount as subsidy. That colony was named as "Thiru.Vi.Ka.Colony". It was named after T.V.Kalyanasundaram,

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\(^9\) Madras Information, August 1962, p.72

\(^10\) Madras Information, March 1956, p.29
who was a pioneer in the Labour Movement of the Madras Presidency. A nominal rent of Rs ten for housing purpose in the Second Five Year Plan was collected from the workers.

During the Second Five Year Plan, under the subsidized Industrial Housing Scheme, Government sanctioned 23 schemes for construction of 1700 houses at a cost of Rs.69.94 lakh.\(^{11}\) Under the Plantation Labour Housing Scheme, a sum of Rs.3.46 lakh was provided during Second Five Year Plan.\(^{12}\) Financial assistance was provided in 1964-65 for Rs.14.65 lakh and Rs.14 lakh was provided in the 1965-1966 annual budget. Under this scheme houses were constructed at Singanallur, Tiruppur and Ambattur.\(^{13}\)

**Labour Policy**

The objective of the second plan was rapid industrialization with emphasis on basic and heavy industries. For its successful implementation, improved industrial relations are essential. The labour policy of the Second Plan was for strengthening trade unions, settlement of disputes through negotiations, conciliations, increased association of labour with management, training of workers, and prevention of violence. Industrial disputes were resolved in triangular approaches i.e through Direct negotiations, State assistance and State regulations. The maintenance of industrial peace is one of the responsibilities of the State Government.

\(^{11}\) Madras Information, August 1962, p.72

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p.71

\(^{13}\) Madras Administration Report, 1965, p.270
Hence the state Government consulted the trade union leaders on labour issues and their welfare. They were represented in corporations and committees set up by the Government. The Industrial Disputes Act provided for joint consultation at the level of the industry through workers committee.

In 1955, out of 232 strikes, the conciliation officers settled 113.\(^{14}\) Government also set up two industrial tribunals at Coimbatore and Madras. From January 1956 to August 1956, 202 industrial disputes were settled by conciliation. When the T.I.Cycles struck work in January 1956, the strike was settled through conciliation.\(^{15}\) In 1965, 1013 disputes were settled by the Department.\(^{16}\) Wages and bonus issues were settled to the satisfaction of both the workers and management. Similarly disputes in textile mills of Coimbatore, Madura mills and B and C mills were settled amicably.

The Industrial Dispute Bill 1955 was passed as law to amend the definition of workman.\(^{17}\) The amendment included supervisory personnel whose emoluments were not more than 500 rupees per month. A three tier system of adjudication machinery namely, Labour court, Industrial tribunal and National tribunal was introduced.

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\(^{14}\) Madras Information, June 1956, p.14  
\(^{15}\) Madras Administration Report 1965, p.267  
\(^{16}\) Madras Information November 1956, p.7  
\(^{17}\) Ibid.
The Industrial Dispute Act 1947 was extended to working journalists by the "Working Journalist (Industrial Dispute) Act. 1955". This enabled payment of compensation for involuntary unemployment, payment of gratuity, regulation of working hours, wages, and leave. The News paper establishments were inspected by Inspectors of Labour Department by means of the Working Journalists (conditions of service) and Miscellaneous provisions Act. 1965.

**Other welfare Measures**

Most of the mills and industrial establishments including the Government Cinchona Department set up cooperative societies and canteens to supply essential commodities to workmen at reasonable price. The Government proposed a scheme of labour welfare. Accordingly five labour welfare centers, two at Coimbatore, two at Madras and one at Madurai were opened at a cost of Rs.12.15 lakhs. Free education and recreation were provided to workers and their families at these centres. At coonoor a tailoring unit was opened to impart training to dependants of Coffee Plantation workers.

A scheme for worker's education was inaugurated in Madras and Madurai in September 1960. In November 1965, another centre was started

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18 Op.cit.,
19 Madras Administration Report 1965, p.265
20 Madras Information March 1956, p.29
21 Madras Administration Report 1965, p.270
at Coimbatore. Training for worker teacher was provided at these centres. 27,679 workers were traine up to 1965. The object of this scheme was to create a well informed and responsible industrial labour capable of organising and running trade unions on sound lines.

Payment of Bonus act 1965 came into force during 1965 which applied to all factories and establishments employing more than 20 person. Minimum bonus was fixed at 4% and maximum at 20% of the total earnings.

2 October, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday was declared as holiday under Madras Industrial Establishments (National and festival holidays) Amendment bill 1962. Conferences of officers of Labour Department and Factories Department were held in May 1956.

The District set up of the Industries Department was reorganized. Seven Administrative Directors of Industries and Commerce were appointed. One administrative director for two districts was to look after the development of industries and engineering activities of the department. Bhaktavatsalam was chosen as leader for the Indian delegation to the International Labour Conference at Geneva on June 13, 1956. He gave

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24 Ibid., p.267
24 Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, 1962, Volume VI, p.289
25 Madras Information, February 1956, p.3
26 Ibid.,
lectures in the Conference thrice. His speech was very much admired by the Director General at Geneva.\textsuperscript{27}

Industrialisation resulted in large number of people migrating from villages to cities. To contain the rural population within rural areas, small scale and cottage Industries were developed. The Industries and Commerce department included the small scale industries under First Five Year Plan. Government of Madras constituted a committee to formulate schemes for village and small scale Industries. The recommendations of the committee were incorporated in the Second Five Year plan.

As the demand for technically trained persons increased, five new polytechnic colleges were opened one each at Madras, Madurai, Coimbatore, Mangalore and Kozhicode.\textsuperscript{28} Diploma courses and 33 Certificate courses were started. For research purpose, Chemical Testing and Analytical lab was established.

In addition to the Government polytechnics, Government Institutes provided training in special subjects like Leather Technology at the Institute of Leather Technology, Madras. Subjects relating to Handloom Industry were taught at Government Textile Institute, Madras. School of Arts and Crafts, Madras provided training in Painting, carpentry, enamelling, and gold smithy.

\textsuperscript{27} M.Bhaktavatsalam, \textit{Enathu Ninaivugal}, Jananayaka Seva Sangam, Madras, 1972, p.136
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Madras Information}, August 1956, p.2
Women's Welfare Department

The subject of women's welfare received greater attention and attracted more dedicated service in Madras than any other state in India. Madras Government was the first state to tackle it on an official level.

There were many voluntary private organizations devoted to the cause of women. The Women's Welfare Department run under the Director of Rural Welfare. The Government maintained vigilance homes and *Sthree Sadhanas* (Women's Home) under the Inspector of schools.

During the Second World War, social workers taught the women in slums as how to protect them from air raid. Even after the war over, the volunteers visited them and taught them sanitation, health, and child welfare. In 1947 Government took over this organization and this became the Women's Welfare Department. It embraced every aspect of women's need and problems.

Bhaktavatsalam was given the Women's Welfare Department in the Kamaraj' ministry during the period 1954-57. The department was intended to give assistance to backward women of the society on social cultural and educational aspects.

Various activities were conducted at Community Service Centers, and *Mathar sangams* (Ladies Club) like teaching of cottage industries,
family welfare, social education. It formed an important item in the Second
Five Year Plan and entirely financed by the State Government.

To coordinate the activities of Women's Welfare Department with
the community development programme, women's welfare centres were
taken over by the community development staff in 1956 and equal number
of centers were opened by the women's welfare department in areas not
covered by the community development programme. For the benefit of
Toda and Kota tribes of Nilgiris, a centre was opened at Sholur (Nilgiris).

In the year 1955-56, 102 community welfare centers functioned. Out
of which, 52 were for poor, 40 for Harijan Colonies, and 10 for hill tribes
and ex criminals. Useful crafts were taught at these centers so that they
can supplement their family income. Important festivals were celebrated
and excursions of educational values were organized. In the community
centers women were taught knitting, spinning, embroidery, weaving coir
soap and other cottage industries.

Service homes for stranded women to rehabilitate their lives and
retrieve lost hopes were constructed by the Department. Service homes
functioned at Tambaram, Gandhigram, Trichirapalli Avvai Ashram,
Sivasailam. The inmates were paid stipend. Girls were sent to schools and
taught Type writing, and Hindi. They were given training and later left the
home to take up the challenge of life.