Interview with Dr. K. Veeramani, President, Rationalist Organization, Dravidar Kazhagam at Nagapattinam, on 12th August 2012.

Dr. K. Veeramani (Age 81) is president of the rationalist organisation Dravidar Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu, India and the leader of the Dravidian Self-Respect Movement, founded by Periyar E V Ramasamy. Born in 1933, he joined the movement as a very young boy and was in the age of ten already an enthusiastic speaker for rationalism and social change. The legendary Periyar took care of his education and groomed him as his successor. Veeramani was for many years the editor of the rationalist Tamil daily ‘Viduthalai’ and several other publications of the movement. He made his mark as a powerful orator, scholarly author and tireless defender of human rights, gender equality and social justice. In 2003, he received an honorary degree of Literature from Alagappa University for his outstanding contributions for Social Justice and Women’s rights. Veeramani is head of more than 45 institutions run by Periyar Trusts, including schools, engineering and other professional colleges, hospitals and publications. Many of them are exclusively dedicated to education and upliftment of girls and women.

Q1. What are the boundaries of social reformation and social transformation? Explain Kamaraj’s part in this framework?

By definition, re-forming the society is social reformation. It may have, and usually does have, similarities to the previous state of the society. In other words there may not be a fundamental or radical change to the roots but definitely has become better. On the other hand, transformation is completely changing or destroying the current situation or practices to create new ones that are usually the opposites. Periyar declared himself not as a reformer but as a revolutionist. In his words, reformers can accept to co-exist with what they are trying to reform but not revolutionists. For example, if the religious marriage customs are followed but without a Brahmin, then we consider it as a reformation in marriage. If few more rituals are reduced, it is still a reformation but certainly an advanced stage. But deciding not to follow any of the religious marriage customs in
marriage and proceeding rationally with what is required is completely revolution.

Kamaraj was a matured and cultured politician. His framework is limited in one sense and very broad in the other sense. I mean, as a chief minister, he could not perform whatever he personally likes to pursue for a social change. At the same time he was also a national leader so the framework requires grand inclusion for a culturally diverse country like India. So the words reformation or transformation cannot be considered to have exactly the same meaning each and every time.

Though Periyar a revolutionist, was quite practical in bringing up the change. So he allowed the practices that he considered are not rational to gradually be given up the society. But he did not stop anywhere in between to strike balance. Social reformation and transformation can be flexible with space and time but not revolution.

Kamaraj and Rajagopalachariyar extremely were in opposite to each other in the principles. Kamaraj was determined to spread the education and wealth to everyone. He was proud to be identified as uneducated. Rajaji was known for his intellect and also persistence on education based on caste system. Kamaraj was leader of the mass and Rajaji was the choice of intellectual group.

Q2. How many times probably have Kamaraj and Periyar met each other?

Definitely not many. I believe that there met a maximum four or five occasions. I remember that Kamaraj came to meet Periyar before taking charge as chief minister. Then they met at a wedding ceremony and another meeting happened at Periyar’s house, such were their meetings.
Q1. What was the approach of Kamaraj’s social transformation?

Education

Kamaraj’s free education, school uniform and mid-day meals schemes brought about huge social transformation. His government removed the hurdle for education by making it free and thus economic status would not affect education. School uniform was also instrumental in abdicating display of economic status in the minds of students. He made all these schemes as “people’s schemes” and made it great success story.

Mid-Day Meals Scheme

Kamaraj was a pioneer in identifying the struggle for food hinders education of children and engineered mid-day meals scheme. Today it is widely followed across the country. He brought Tamilnadu to the fore front in terms of education, industrial development and agricultural development.

People Centric Approach

Kamaraj knew that people generally used to avoid those in power out of fear and thus he tried very hard to ensure he can easily be accessed at his office and also during his visits to villages. I personally have noticed number of times that whenever the officials are cynical of welfare projects, he used to persistently convince them
to find ways to execute, not to avoid. His line of argument would always be getting things done for people.

**Q2. Did Kamaraj exercise his influence in getting education schemes approved from Central Government?**

Kamaraj had a very good relationship with Prime Minister Nehru and thus central government.

**IIT**

When Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) was decided to be in South India, Nijalingappa of Karnataka and Shankarji of Kerala also tried so hard to convince central government on the decision. However it was Kamaraj who visited Delhi and promised that the Tamilnadu government would sponsor the land for free if IIT comes there. This quickened the decision and today scientists educated in this IIT has spread all over the world. Higher technical education really transformed the society and it was knowledge transformation.

**Q3. Did the friction between Kamaraj and Rajaji have negative implications for Kamraj’s rule?**

**Hereditary Education**

Never. Kamaraj always had respects for Rajaji. When the new education policy, later known as hereditary education policy, was proposed by Rajaji, it was not welcomed by most even in the Congress Party. Kamraj was against the policy as he expected the new education policy would affect education as well as Congress Party’s image in the eyes of the people. But Rajaji was not ready to give up. So Rajaji was decided to be removed from the leadership by his own party assembly members and Kamaraj happened to be the choice for leadership. He did not plan to bring Rajaji down. The Congress Party chose its leader and Kamaraj had their complete support.
Interview with Mr. G. Boovaraghan, Former Minister for Publicity and Information in Kamaraj’s Third Cabinet, at Chennai, 15th August, 2012.

G. Boovaraghan, (Age 80), is an Indian politician and former Member of the Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu. He was elected to the Tamil Nadu legislative assembly as an Indian National Congress candidate from Vridhachalam constituency in 1962, 1967 elections and as a Janata Party candidate in 1989 election. He served as publicity and information minister in the third cabinet formed by Kamaraj in March 1962 and the only living cabinet minister of Kamaraj’s all the three cabinets. He was also the only minister of Bakthavatchalam cabinet did not get defeated in 1967 fourth legislative assembly election.

Q1. What do you think that the approach of Kamaraj’s rule on the social transformation?

Kamaraj strongly believed that education is the significant factor to transform society towards economic balance and equality beyond caste discrimination. I would say that no one has ever been so determined to spread education in Tamilnadu as Kamaraj. He executed plans to achieve at least a school with one teacher for every village with at least 350 people. As a result, every village had a school. He not just started the schools but also went in to details of the needs of students. That led to subsequent mid-day meals scheme and also the school uniform scheme to prevent discrimination of wealth in the young minds. He was also the first one to think about the equal education to all students.

When asked Kamaraj so many efforts are put for education development, he answered that education seems to be the only way out from inequality and democratic socialism. He also mentioned that when someone from the lower rank of the caste system get educated and becomes an IAS officer who controls a district, without any caste differences people will respect and also start to invite to their houses for lunch and dinner. But without education and power, even if a person has enormous wealth, probably the caste differences would remain the same. Moreover he continued that when men and women
of the society get educated, it is something that they cannot lose over
time or to an external attack like theft and disasters.

So I think that’s why Kamaraj was so determined towards
education development that would transform the society.

Q2. Could I have your comments on Kamaraj’s idea of “Manu
Neethi Naal” (a dedicated day to collect complaints and
feedbacks from people)?

The poor people of the society to get the attention of
authorities for their problems due to fear and bureaucracy will suffer
forever with their problems. His idea of dedicating a particular day of
the month to receive complaints from people of the districts freed the
people from hassles of arranging appointments and also fears. The
idea worked really well to serve its intended purpose.

Q3. What are the attempts made by Kamaraj in order to develop
the suppressed class people?

I would like to mention one of his specific interests to put the
qualified but from suppressed class persons to positions that carries
and exercises executive power. He made Kakkan as home minister
and allotted key positions in secretariat to Harijan community.
Similarly he was interested in appointing IAS and IPS officers from
suppressed class community to the parts of state where he finds some
imbalance and tensions due to caste related issues. He also met these
officers personally to advice how to handle the delicate situations.

Q4. Is it appropriate to mention that Kamaraj executed Periyar’s
principles?

Periyar openly declared that Kamaraj is his political heir and a
‘Pachai Thamizhan’ (true Tamil). So many tried to convince Periyar
in other way but he was so stubborn and asked his followers and other
Tamils to support for Kamaraj. I believe that explained everything.
Interview with Mr. Pazha. Nedurmaran, Former President of Madurai Congress Committee, at Vedharanyam, on 22\textsuperscript{nd} July 2012.

Pazha Nedumaran, (Age 81), is an outspoken Tamil politician from the state of Tamil Nadu, South India. He is an ex-national Congressman, a writer and Tamil nationalist, who has authored many books in Tamil, as well as in English. Pazha Nedumaran was born in Madurai and was a close associate of K. Kamaraj, and had met Indira Gandhi a couple of times in the company of K. Kamaraj. He was reportedly disillusioned with the Congress after Kamaraj's demise. He is the editor-in-chief of the by-weekly Tamil magazine Then Seidi.

Q1. What is your opinion about Kamaraj’s approach of social reformation or transformation?

For Kamaraj, upliftment of suppressed class people was a solid objective. When he took charge as chief minister of Tamilnadu in 1954, he did something that no Indian chief minister has ever done. It was a custom within the Congress Party to make at least one cabinet rank minister from scheduled caste whenever Congress Party comes to power in any of the state. However, Kamaraj made Mr. Parameshwaran not only a minister but responsible for Hindu and Religious Endowment. There was a time where schedule caste people were not allowed into the temple. That is a great social transformation.

Similarly when Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple trustee board was formed, Kamaraj appointed a scheduled caste comrade Mr. Maruthaiah as chairman. Once in a year, at the beginning of Tamil New Year, there is 10 days celebration for Meenakshi Amman and at the end of 10\textsuperscript{th} day, the Goddess will be crowned as queen. A golden ruler will be passed from the hands of the Goddess to the hands of the kings of those days and they will walk before the Goddess. Kamaraj made that golden ruler to be carried by Maruthaiah and that brought a wide social awareness.
Another notable thing is Mr. Kakkan’s appointment as minister for Police department. Usually Chief Ministers keep the Police department under their control as the exercise of power through Police is tremendous. Kamaraj brought it under Kakkan, an assembly member belongs to scheduled caste, so that to symbolize the handing over the power of control to scheduled caste and that is essentially a critical start for social transformation.

Q2. What are the boundaries of social reformation and social transformation?

In general, eradication of superstitious beliefs can also be considered as social reformation and that can be done through propaganda. But what Kamaraj did is a transformation through government for the people of the society, especially the suppressed class people.

I would like to highlight an incident in this regard. In 1950, when the state was still named as Madras Presidency, there was a communal Government Order (G.O) passed by the government for reservation of the suppressed class people. However, Mr. Alladi Krishaswamy Iyer, one of the six members of Constituent Assembly of India which was responsible for framing Constitution of India, appealed to Supreme Court and got the judgment that this communal G.O is invalid. It generated shock waves among the people as this G.O was an instrumental in the betterment of education and attaining the government positions for backward and suppressed class people. Kamaraj instantly travelled to the national capital Delhi and met Prime Minister Nehru to make amendments at the constitution so that the communal G.O becomes valid. Nehru hesitated as the constitution came in to effect recently so it may not look good if there is a correction made so quickly. However, Kamaraj influenced Nehru by his determination and persistence and finally the very first amendment made to the Indian constitution is this. The rest is history. Even to this day millions of suppressed class students are benefitted.

Q3. Could you narrate Kamaraj’s contribution for educational development of the society?

It is known through the stone carvings and other evident of ancient India under several monarchies the education was privileged to certain group of society either by economic status or by caste and religious status. Today we know and it is common knowledge that a society without inclusive education is on its way to peril.
Kamaraj decided when he became chief minister to ensure that there are no villages without a school, at least primary level. Old saying goes that the village is unfit for living without a temple, but Kamaraj meant schools as temples. Kamaraj appointed N.D. Sundaravadivel, a disciple of Periyar, as director of school education directorate and instructed to do everything to ensure a school in every single village.

During one of his numerous visits around the state, he happened to notice young boys working on the paddy fields and talked to them to understand why they did not go to school. The answer was sharp and precise that they either can earn their bread by working at the fields or can go to school without bread. That was the ignition point for his historical mid-day meals scheme that revolutionized the education of poor students in Tamilnadu. Hundreds of thousands of poor students especially from suppressed class benefitted. It was the foundation that Kamaraj laid and we see it today that it is not difficult to find IAS and IPS officers from backward and suppressed class.

Q4. Were the untouchability crimes more those days? Did that make implementation of these schemes?

I would say untouchability was not intense in Kamaraj’s period. He himself personally travelled to whenever it was brought to his attention that there is a tension mounting in some villages from dominant caste groups. Most importantly he did not allow alcohol inside the state and it was banned. That in a way lead to a liberation of suppressed class people.
Kumari Ananthan, (Age 81), is a Tamil Nadu congress leader. For the last 50 Years, he has been a sincere follower of the Great leader Kamaraj and has also been functioning as a social worker. He was a Member of Parliament elected from Tamil Nadu. He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Nagercoil constituency as an Indian National Congress (Organization) candidate in 1977 election, but was defeated in 1996 and 1998 elections. He also served as the president of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. He floated Thondar Congress, a new political party breaking away from Congress. He began the party as he said he was frustrated by National Congress leaders’ neglect of the Tamil Nadu state party unit and workers.

Q1. What were the contributions of Kamaraj to the development of Tamil language?

Tamil as administrative language

Even after independence of India in 1947, English continued to be the official language. In 1948, Trichy was tried as a model district to experiment whether Tamil can be implemented as official language in the place of English. However it was not completely successful. In 1956, the states were formed based on different languages spoken and Madras Presidency became the state with majority Tamil speaking people. It was only in 1957, first budget of the state in the history was submitted in the assembly by C.Subramnyam, who was the cabinet minister for finance in Kamaraj’s Government, in Tamil language.

Tamil Glossary and Encyclopedia

Kamaraj formed a committee under the leadership of Ki.Aa.Pe.Viswanatham to develop Tamil Glossary. The committee did research and appropriate translation to develop glossary and also an encyclopedia. In 1961, Socialist Party member
Mr. P. S. Chinna Samy raised the question that why not the name Madras Presidency be changed to Tamilnadu?

Kamaraj announced the proposal on 24.02.1961 for the change of name from Madras Presidency to Madras state in the assembly. He also formed a committee for developing Tamil consisting 39 members that included the opposition leaders like C. N. Annadurai and Nedunchezhiyan without discrimination.

1961 Tamil Development Committee for Higher Education

It was impossible to continue college education through Tamil and in 1961 Kamaraj made it possible through Tamil committee to continue education through Tamil medium in colleges.

Three-Language Formula

In 1956 Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) devised the three-language formula to remove inequalities among the states of India. Kamaraj suggested mother tongue, English and one of the any other National languages. He did not mention Hindi in particular. Sampurna Anand committee was sent to evaluate the development of Hindi language in Tamilnadu. Kamaraj explained the three-language formula in details to the committee without using the word Hindi and that empowered Tamil as a language to be on prior to other languages in the government.

It is fact and also an understatement just to mention that Tamil language development was put forward seriously during Kamaraj’s period from 1954 to 1963 as a part of social transformation.

Q2. Could you highlight any specific thing that Kamaraj did for teachers of Tamilnadu?

There was a rule in practice that prevented the teachers who teach Tamil in the schools to become head masters of the schools. Strangely, those teachers who teach mathematics, science or history can become head master but not Tamil teachers. But kamaraj ditched the rule and from then every teacher is equally qualified to become head master. To my knowledge, Kamaraj’s contribution to teachers and Tamil language itself is unparalleled.
Thamizharuvi Manian (Age 70), is a politician from Tamil Nadu. He is the writer and well known speaker in Tamil. Because of his oratory skills the former chief minister of Tamil Nadu Kamaraj gave him the name Thamizharuvi. Thamizharuvi Manian began his political career as a congressman in 1966. After the split happened in the Indian National Congress party, he joined the Indian National Congress (Organisation). For some years, he served in political parties like Janata Party, Janata Dal, and Lok Shakti. He then joined the Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC). After the merger of TMC with Congress, he continued his career in Congress. He served in politics over 40 years. He resigned from the post of General Secretary of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) on 23 February 2009 because of the party's position on the Eelam Tamil issue. He founded the Gandhiya Makkal Iyakkam on 2nd October 2009.

Q1. What are the boundaries of social reformation and social transformation? How did Kamaraj in this framework during his government?

We cannot consider a space as plateau when there are hills and valleys. It becomes possible only when the hills are leveled to the valleys by filling them. Kamaraj analogously did a similar social transformation through his schemes and it is difficult to find someone in Tamil Nadu to compare with kamaraj. Many can write petitions and organize for protests to create awareness but the transformation can happen in a faster way only when it is carried out by the government by implementing proper schemes and plans. Kamaraj understood this clearly and thus executed educational transformation once he came to power.

Education

Before Kamaraj, education in Tamil Nadu was not deliberately attempted to penetrate to the depth of society. His philosophy was to ensure education to everyone and the social transformation can only
be built on top of this educated society. In 1954, Kamaraj government’s first annual budget had allotted 9 crores (INR 90 million) for education development out of total budget of 43 crores (INR 430 million), almost 20%. He was a forerunner in education development and implemented free education up to 10th standard. His mid-day meals scheme multiplied the enrollment to schools. Most of the people at the bottom of the society economically, benefitted directly to become doctors, engineers and government executives because of his schemes.

**Industrial Development**

Kamaraj’s vision for education was not a blind one. I say this because he simultaneously developed employment opportunities so that the education brings meaning to the social transformation. He believed that social tranquility can be maintained by encouraging education but developing the opportunities for the education was also quite important. State capital and also efforts to get private capital in to industrial development was his key roles and he managed to infuse them diligently.

**Agricultural Development**

Food is not only one of the basic needs it is also the most fundamental need. A society deprived of food will eventually become violent. Kamaraj built many dams across the rivers to ensure the water is not wasted and thus to help to increase agricultural food production. When India became independent, Tamilnadu had only Mettur Dam that was built by British and Kallanai built by Karikalan.

**Q2. What are Kamaraj’s attempts to eradicate poverty?**

**Mid day meals scheme**

When Kamaraj proposed mid-day meals scheme for all the schools, Revenue secretary Mr.Sundaram explained the situation to Finance secretary Mr.Vargheese that the scheme is neither possible nor feasible, citing the revenue situation of the state. Kamaraj did not give up on his determination and declared that he would be begging to people to introduce the scheme from the alms of society. Eventually the mid-day meals scheme became a huge success with the support of the mass.
Q3. A historical decision in 1954 was made by Kamaraj to make Mr. Parameswaran and Mr. Kakkan as cabinet ministers for Hindu endowment and Congress Committee leaders respectively. They were both Harijans. Could you comment on the background on these decisions and his approach?

Harijan Upliftment

We can look at these appointments more closely. Mr. Kakkan was not only given the highest leadership in the party but upon his victory in 1957 assembly elections, Kamaraj brought the police department under Kakkan’s control. In administrative hierarchy, Chief Minister, Home and Finance ministers are at the top. By appointing a minister from depressed class to this highest level in the administration, there was a direct representation for Harijan community.

In the 45 years of Tamilnadu history after Kamaraj, has there ever been a Harijan given cabinets of finance, home or public works? Never. I would call Kamaraj’s appointment of Parameswaran to Hindu endowment is a “Silent Revolution”. Kamaraj also allotted the ministry that was intended to eliminate alcohol consumption, under Parameswaran. The holy bible saying goes “the heart knows its own bitterness”. Kamaraj expected the Dalit society to give up the addiction to alcohol and thus to develop in education and participation.

First amendment to constitution of India in 1950

The very first amendment to the constitution of India in 1950 was made because of Kamaraj’s persistence to give reservations for backward community. There was only reservation for SC and ST communities those days. A Brahmin student, Shenbagam DuraiRajan, appealed to high and supreme courts to remove reservation as it is against fundamental rights. The judgment also came out in favor of her. However, Kamaraj persistently attempted the central government to bring the amendment in the constitution so that the backward community reservation is restored to benefit the community.
APPENDIX – V (g)

Interview with Mr. Kanakavel Kamaraj,
Grandson of younger sister of Kamaraj at

Kanakavel Kamaraj (Age: 69) is grandson of younger sister of Kamaraj. Kanakavel carried out the last rites upon Kamaraj’s death and cremated his pyre.

Q1. What is your relationship with Kamaraj?

I’m a grandson of Kamaraj. Kamaraj’s younger sister Nagammal is my grandmother. When Kamaraj was chief minister, in 1959, I attended one of his meetings in Kumbakonam where he happened to see me. Upon recognizing me, he advised me to concentrate on my studies. When I approached him for securing a medical college admission, he refused to use his influence. When my brother was convicted and jailed, my mother passed away. But Kamaraj was not ready to use his influence to even get my brother out in parole. Kamaraj scolded us that my brother must repent during the sentence and thus we should not disturb. Kamaraj was a man of dignity and untouched by any corruption.

Q2. Have Kamaraj shared any of his freedom struggle experience with you?

Not really. I was not of the age then to understand all that. However, kamaraj took care of me whenever I needed help for education. In fact, he helped for my marriage too. He was really fond of me, I think, is because I was fond of education. He loved people who are interested in education. I can be considered the highest educated in my family and among my relatives.
APPENDIX – V (h)

Interview with Mr. S. L. Krishnamurthy, Freedom Fighter and Former General Secretary of Tamilnadu Congress Committee, at Chennai, on 15th July 2012.

K.Krishnamuthy (Age: 80) is a freedom fighter and has also served as general secretary for state Congress Committee. His reputation in politics was appreciated by Kamaraj himself.

Q1. Could you explain briefly of your political involvement with Kamaraj?

I belong to village Sornavur. When severe sentiments against Congress Party rose in Villupuram districts, I arranged for Kamaraj’s visit and speeches to the area. Kamaraj had to rise against Ramasamy Padayachiyar and I was instrumental in helping that huge task. Kamaraj recognized my efforts and later I was appointed as general secretary for State Congress Committee.

Q2. Could you explain briefly about the freedom struggle?

I actively involved in the burning foreign clothes movement by Gandhiji. Whenever Kamraj visits a village, he would highlight the freedom fighters of the village in his address as a sign of paying respects to them. When my name was missed out in the freedom fighters list that was collected by Bakthavatchalam and Ma.Po.Chi, Kamaraj found that out and included. He always used to look for people’s trouble and how to help them. In the freedom fighters list that was collected by Bakthavatchalam and Ma.Po.Chi, Kamaraj found that out and included. He always used to look for people’s trouble and how to help them.
Interview with Mrs. K. Kamala Devi,
Daughter of Nagammal, Sister of Kamaraj, at
Virudhunagar,
on 16th July, 2009.

K. Kamala Devi (Age: 81) is daughter of Kamraj’s sister Nagammal.

Q1. Could you recall what is your mother told about Kamaraj?

My mother has told me that Kamaraj has always been fond of his mother. She has also told me that Kamaraj used to be very active and quite seldom to take rest at home. Kamaraj had completely dedicated his lift for freedom struggle and politics. When my mother attempted to get my elder sister Mangalam to get married with kamaraj, he stubbornly refused. Then my mother also tried to convince Kamaraj to get married with me, however, he refused again. He remained bachelor for his whole life. Kamraj was instrumental in my marriage with Krishna Nadar.
Interview with Mr. Kalyan Ramji, Regional Commissioner for SC, ST of Southern Region, (Retired) and Personal Assistant for Gandhiji, at Chennai, on 15th July, 2012.

Kalyan Ramji (Age: 91) is a retired regional commissioner for SC ST of southern region. He also has served as personal assistant for Gandhiji until gandhiji’s demise. He has worked with Kamaraj from 1954-63 as an officer in the government service.

Q1. When you first had acquaintance of Kamaraj? What are your comments about mid-day meals scheme?

When I was assistant to Gandhiji, in 1946, Gandhiji toured here and also visited Takkar Baba Vidyalaya. It was then I met Kamraj and he also joined us in the tour to visit Trichy, Madurai and pazhani. Later when I became commissioner for Shedu led Caste, we got familiar to each other.

When I had scholarship to continue studies in the United States, I happen to know that there existed a system of providing lunch to students. Norway and Sweden also had this system. It was not known to many and in fact, I discussed the matter with Kamraj. He later came up with mid-day meals scheme. The saying goes, action speaks louder than words. Kamaraj was an example for that. He spoke less but he did more, unlike today’s politicians. He rose from poor background and served poor. His austerity is well known and did not even favour his own mother and sister through use or misuse of his power. He has been Chief Minister and even a chance came his way to become Prime Minister, but he became king maker to get Indira Gandhi as PM.

Q2. What do you assess of Kamaraj’s social reformation or transformation approach?

There are many. Most of his welfare measures inclusind education and suppressed class development are definitely the causes that initiated social transformation.
Q3. What are the positions you held during Kamaraj’s rule 1954-1963?

I became Commissioner of Schedule Caster and Scheduled Tribe for Southern Region in 1956 through 1963. In those days, Madras, Kerala, Andhra, Mysore and Andaman islands were under my control. I used to constantly in tour to these places, at least 20 days a month. Central Government sponsored development schemes would allot fund for SC/ST housing development and we ensured the proper usage of the fund. District collector and Welfare officer usually accompany my visits.

Q4. What was the role of Kamaraj in getting the schemes approved from Central Government?

Kamaraj used his influence through power and the support of people for getting the approval from central government for the schemes on education, Harijan welfare, rural and agricultural development. He was not really interested in power but interested in serving people. That brought respects to him from all the levels. It is beyond doubt that he exercised everything at his disposal for bringing a social transformation through social development.
APPENDIX – V (k)

Interview with Mr. Su. Pa. Veerapandiyan, General Secretary, Dravida Iyakka Thamizhar Peravai, at Velankanni, on 19th February, 2013.

Q1. What are your comments on the agriculture and rural women empowerment during Kamraj’s rule?

Agriculture and Rural Women Welfare

Though I did not personally have a chance to be present during Kamaraj’s rule, I am personally connected to many of the officials and others who knew him well and they used to share that Kamaraj’s cabinet formation itself is a fundamental social transformation. He provided education with mid-day meals to the students, but he also anticipated the potential income reduction through the scheme to the families and may eventually affect children’s education.

To tackle the situation, he attempted and succeeded in increasing the awareness of women, particularly rural, for education and also to be economically active and self reliant. With the help of Central Government, he made small industries and hand made articles possible for rural women. They also came together with self confidence to form Women’s Association. Agricultural tool and consumables were also supplied at subsidized price and sometimes even for free to bring up their economic status.

It is certain that his contributions to rural women empowerment and agriculture development have resulted in a social transformation.
Interview with Mr. S. Soundararajan,
Advocate in Alandur Court, at Chennai, on 20th July, 2012.

Soundararajan, (Age 65), is an advocate in Alandur Court. He is inspired by Kamaraj’s principles and life.

Q1. What inspired you in Kamaraj and what were the social transformation attempts of Kamaraj’s rule?

It is not an understatement to put that it was a social revolution as Kamaraj’s cabinet had Parameswaran, a Harijan, as the minister for Hindu Endowment Board. The doors of temples were not fully open for Harijans and Kamaraj used the tool of power to bring equality in the society that is ridden with caste segments.

Harijan Welfare Day

Every January 30th was observed as Harijan Welfare Day in Tamilnadu administration and Kamaraj personally guided how the day is to be efficiently used in terms of forming, executing the schemes and connecting the people. In his second cabinet, the powerful home ministry was allotted to a Harijan. It has never before happened in India and never happened in Tamilnadu after that. It was really a social transformation through administration.