CHAPTER V

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After the landslide victory of the D.M.K. in the 1967 general elections, Chief Minister Annadurai and Karunanidhi, then Minister for Public Works, applied themselves to the task of working out a series of socio-economic measures for the Tamils. The burden of implementing these ambitious schemes fell on Karunanidhi in view of Annadurai's sad and sudden demise.

Before we trace his contribution to the socio-economic sphere and his impact on the political development of the state, it is essential to study in brief his life's goal, his philosophy, struggle, development and the rise to the leadership of Tamil Nadu. This terse profile is based on his own autobiography 'Nenchukku Neethy'.

M.Karunanidhi as a statesman, laid the foundations for the socio-economic development of Tamil Nadu. He is a great journalist, an attractive writer distinguished by his own style, elegance of craftsmanship and
versatility, an ardent defender of justice and a most enthusiastic advocate of the oppressed and the downtrodden, a poet of repute, a dramatist, story writer, a conversationalist of charm, and a man of wisdom and insight. He is a man of the people, an eloquent advocate of democratic way of life. His appeal is less to the mind than to the heart. As a devout democrat, with his powerful writings, he has always emphasised the rights of the poor and the equality of all. He strengthened greatly the self-respect and democratic moment in Tamil Nadu.

As a radical and a rationalist, out to demolish orthodoxy with his powerful arguments and pungent irony, satire and sarcasm, as a true disciple of Periyar and Anna, he encouraged the growth of reason and free thinking, exhorting people by precept as well as by example to revolt against intolerance and superstition. His rationalism lies in the adaptation of the scientific method in solving all human problems.

Karunanidhi's concept of philosophy provides answers to most of the problems of to day. His purpose
is to consider philosophy as an integral part of social, economic and political life. He insists that an atomic age calls for a scientific philosophy that discards vague generalisations and yields results which are specific, detailed and verifiable. He dislikes and hates God-men, supermen and ritualism. The statesman in him thinks of the next generation rather of the next election. As a successful politician he was made everybody think aloud. He is a man of indefatigable energy, a tireless and fearless fighter for state autonomy and against imposition of Hindi; and a great lover of Tamil and Tamil Nadu.

Karunanidhi was born on 3rd June 1924 in a small village in Tanjore district, called 'Thirukovalai' or 'Thirukolili', in an orthodox atmosphere, to Anjugammal, his beloved mother, 'the third wife of his father Muthuvelar who was an agriculturist, a poet and a native doctor'.

He hailed from a middle-class family belonging to one of the Hindu Bàsai Vâllar communities of Tamil Nadu. Karunanidhi is called by the people of Tamil Nadu
affectionately as "Kalaignar" (Gifted Artist) in recognition of his contributions to Tamil literature. The Annamalai University conferred an 'Honorary Doctorate degree on him considering him as a man of letters and light.'

At the age of five, he was admitted into a village school where his father paid one seer of milk and vegetables daily in the form of fees to the school master.

Right from his boyhood, he had the instinct for acting on the stage. He used to improvise a drama-stage in his cattle-shed itself, when he played characteristic roles of the Puranic heroes like Arjuna and Krishna by applying blue powder to his body and entertained his neighbours.

In 1936, he was sent to Thiruvarur High School for admission. For some reason, admission was denied. He told his teacher, if admission were to be denied he would "commit suicide in 'Thirukulam'", a deserted pond situated in front of the High School. His
sincere and strong motivation touched the tender heart of Kasturi Iyengar, then Head Master of the High School, who gave him admission to the V standard. Even at an early age, he used to memorize the important verses or phrases of Tamil or its past leaders and heroes. A non-detailed text on 'Panagal Arasar' consisting of 50 pages was prescribed and he was the first in the V class to memorize all the pages from the beginning to the end and was able to reproduce it.

Thiruvarur, R.N. Raman was his first local teacher who laid the foundation of his rationalism, on which he could subsequently build his fame as a front-rank soldier of Periyar. In later years he was fully attracted by the revolutionary speeches of the undaunted Alagirimswamy, the reasoning and the powerful oratory of Periyar, and the golden throated speeches and debates of Anna. Manavai Thirumalaiswamy's powerful writings under Pena Narthanam (Dancing Pen) eventually inspired him.

Many scholar-politicians and scholar-statesmen have generally laid the foundations of their future
eminence and leadership in their early life by application to their studies. A wide reading, a deep knowledge and a historical perspective have made their growing lives purposive. But Karunanidhi, as a student, instead of studying his class books diligently, took a keen interest in drama, poetry and Tamil literature in which he enjoyed the great epics (the ancient Tamil glory), which are the cradle of grammar, political ideas, philosophy, logic, drama and criticism.

When Rajaji introduced Hindi for compulsory study at the school level, Karunanidhi, as a young lad of 14, organised the students of Thiruvarur in a disciplined manner, into a procession against Hindi imposition and shouted 'Down with Hindi'.

He composed several slogans and drew cartoons showing Rajaji as throwing the weapon of "compulsory Hindi at Tamil Thai (Mother of Tamil), for the students who took part in procession." Thus Karunanidhi's actual public life commenced in his 14th year when he plunged himself into cultural and social movements.
Karunanidhi, a young boy of ability took a lead in training the local students in the art of speaking and writing. He founded a Tamil Sangham, a reformist association of students, and then started a fortnightly manuscript journal called "Manavanason" of 8 pages. About 50 copies were circulated amongst its members and sympathisers. Bharathidasan, the revolutionary poet of Tamil Nadu, was highly impressed by the editor of this manuscript journal, who was a mere boy of 15 years with a puny stature! The poet's critical assessment of this manuscript journal was: "it is as mad and a blind belief as the Charaka improving the country." However, after its 10 months of strained existence, this journal ceased.

His fiery and thought-provoking speeches in younger days, along with his writing ability, established him as a natural leader of the students. As a dynamic organiser, he got together the young students, went from door to door of Thiruvarur, and secured a small fund to start a 'bit newspaper', 'Murosoli', now one of the largest circulated and popular journals of Tamil Nadu. Murosoli has been his mouthpiece
throughout. He has presented his political, social, economic and cultural ideas in a simple, convincing and forceful language, to the Tamil people, and he continues to do so even now.

A communist in the Khadi robe insisted on Karunanidhi organising a student federation to work for liberty, peace and equality. With all his brisk and brilliant propaganda, he organised a student federation consisting of 200 members. Several pro-Congress students also joined the federation presuming that it was based on Congress principles. The Tanjore students' convention made him one of its significant participants. But he came to know that the organising body was inspired by the ulterior motives of the Communists, and he also suspected that the Congress members gave support to Hindi. He immediately liquidated the federation and founded a new organisation the same evening called "Tamil Students Federation" (Tamizh Manavar Manram) in which the young students who had a real love for Tamil tongue and culture alone were enrolled."
The first anniversaries of Murosoli and the Tamil Manavar Manram were celebrated in 1942 on a grand scale. He had also invited some able orators in Tamil to address the anniversaries by advancing money for their journey and waited at the railway station with his friends to give a warm welcome to them. To his astonishment, none of the appointed speakers turned up. The unexpected absence of the speakers drove him to despair. At his request, student leaders of the Annamalai University, Ambazhagan and Mathiazhagan, agreed to address the anniversary function after attending the Dravidar Kazhaga Students Conference. In later years, they became his Ministerial colleagues. The local people who attended the function greeted young Karunanidhi with thunderous applause. This was his first step in the political field.

The responsibility for arranging the return journey of the speakers fell on the shoulders of Karunanidhi. He pledged a gold chain for Rs.50 only and purchased the Railway tickets for Ambazhagan and Mathiazhagan. Once A.P.Janarthanan came to address a
meeting conducted by Manavar Mandram. Karunanidhi was again forced to steal his wife's "Sandhana Kinnam" (a silver cup for preserving sandal) and sold it for Rs.10/-. He did not reveal this fact till the end of her life."11 He was actually ashamed for having concealed the truth from his wife.

As Karunanidhi was fully immersed in political affairs, public meetings, dramas etc., he failed thrice in his S.S.L.C. examinations. In later years, he himself felt that his entry into politics without passing S.S.L.C. was a slur. It is this bitter experience of his that makes him often insist that the primary duty of students is to study.

The same advice was given to him by Anna at his first meeting with him. "First study well and then be a full-time politician."12 Karunanidhi developed the art of writing steadily in Murasoli by using his pen name 'Cheran' and thus he improved his ability, aptitude, and fluency in literature. He strove hard in this field to make a public mark. In literature and drama he is now a celebrity, and he devotes now
his time to writing plays, articles and books, in addition to his political activities.

Karunanidhi's first published work was a book entitled 'Keezhavanin Kanauv' (Old man's dream); his first platform speech was made in school debates; his maiden public speech on the subject called 'Natpu' (Friendship); his first article, appearing in Dravida Nadu, 'Elamaibali' (Victim of a youth) and his first play written Shantha Palaniappan. The play was the result of his personal disappointment in a love affair. Its title was later changed to 'Natchukoppai' (Poison Cup).

At the age of twenty, Karunanidhi married his first wife, Padmavathy, on 13th September 1944 on the principle of Self-Respect marriage. After marriage, he chose stage as his profession and joined the Dravidar Nadigar Kazhagam (Dravidian Dramatic Society). He used to act only in his own play, Natchukoppai. He was unyielding on the idea of being controlled and directed by others. From the very beginning, he detested the idea of submission and servility, and
therefore he preferred to work independently.

His clear-cut pronunciation, musical tone and emotional acting did not hit the box office in terms of money, but the audience paid him compliments for his acting. In spite of Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy and Anna presiding over the drama, the collection used to be very poor. The proprietor of the company "used to get Rs. 10 or 15 from these leaders."\textsuperscript{13} The reason for the poor collection was that the orthodox Hindus made vociferous propaganda saying that "the actors of the company are 'Paditoha Para Pasanga' (educated Scheduled Castes) and therefore they call themselves as Dravidar Nadigar Kazhagam."\textsuperscript{14} Their aversion to the Scheduled Castes crippled this non-Brahmin dramatic troupe financially.

The meaning of the word Dravidian is defined by Rev. Saltwelds in his research study, "Dravidians are those tribes or inhabitants of the South who speak the antiquated languages Tamil, Telugu, Malayam, Kanarese and Thulu since bygone days."\textsuperscript{15} The uneducated caste Hindus unfortunately misconceived the word 'Dravida'
as 'Pariah' and driven this dramatic company to penury.

Karunanidhi's dramatic troupe shifted to Cobla theatre, Pondicherry, which was then governed by the pro-French elements, with the Congress Party as a leading political force. The drama, "Shantha Palniappan", gained both in finance and fame and his 'Sivaguru' role brought him great public and cultural encomium. The role of Sivaguru was viewed as a monster by Congressmen, as they were opposed to the Dravida Kazhagam.

Karunanidhi contributed two articles "'Antha Pena' (That Pen that was lost in Gandhi Ashram) and 'If Gandhi become Viceroy' in Thozhilalamitran." The Congressmen were in a furious mood. Meanwhile, there was a violent attack on the Dravida Kazhaga Conference Pandal. Periyar, Anna and other leaders were safely driven back to their hotels.

Karunanidhi, on his way back to the hotel, was seized by the ruffians and Congress storm troopers and beaten up till he became unconscious and thrown near
gutters believing him to be dead. He was given First Aid and brought back to consciousness by an old lady of Tanjore, the resident of Pondicherry. He reached Periyar's hotel disguising himself in Musalman's dress offered by the old lady.17

Periyar embraced him and anxiously inquired about his wounds, and applied medicines to the wounds. Karunanidhi says, 'it was a pleasant and unforgettable event in my life.' Impressed by young Karunanidhi's command over Tamil, his striking language, his duty and devotion to the party, Periyar E.V.Ramaswamy made him an Assistant Editor of Kudiarasu in 1945 (Republic-Weekly) for Rs.40/- per month of which Rs.35/- was deducted towards boarding and lodging and the remaining Rs.5/- was sent to his beloved wife Padmavathy.

'His articles and political satires, are of a high quality. Of his several celebrated writings, Annamalaiku Arokara (a pilgrim's slogan to God Annamalai Murugan) and Theetu Ayeeduthu (Polluted) touched the great Periyar's revolutionary heart. The former article was about a Theepam (a light) in the
Sri Murugan temple and the latter pertained to a Hindu orthodox person, Semungundi Srinivasa Iyengar, a popular classical vocalist who ordered a dais to be washed and purified as it had been used earlier by a non-Brahmin, Dhanda Pani Desigar, also a renowned Tamil singer. Kudiarasu gave wide publicity to this article and Karunanidhi's attack was applauded by the Tamils.

He also wrote the script for a controversial play Thookuméda (Scaffold) which stirred the minds of the people and it was like bomb-shell on the then Congress government. The Congress government naturally banned it. During the merger of the Justice Party into Dravida Kazhagam at the Salem Conference on 27th August 1944, Karunanidhi was given a free hand to design the party emblem, although Periyar proposed a black flag with a red circle at the centre. "He drew a sketchy outline on a white paper in black-ink and formed a red circle with his own blood by pricking and drawing blood from his finger."
The Jupiter Pictures, Coimbatore, invited Karunanidhi to write the script for the film, 'Rajakumari'. The hero of the film was M.G.Ramachandran. It was the first film which gave M.G.R. the hero's role. Ramachandran was an ardent follower of the Congress and a firm believer in Hindu-superstitions. At last, it was Karunanidhi who baptized him into Dravida Kazhagam and then to Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. At a Tanjore public meeting on 15-6-1962, M.G.Ramachandran emotionally said "I was an ignorant man with religious make-ups, wearing Thiruneer and Thulamalai around my neck. In those days, I was thinking about myself and my family. It was Dr.Kalaignar Karunanidhi who made me to think of the people and he was responsible for converting me into a rationalist. I am proud to acknowledge him as my Guru (Teacher..."

His Father's Death:

When he was leading a poverty-stricken life at Singanallur with his wife, who came from a rich family, he received a telegram informing him that his father
was seriously ill in Tiruvarur. Karunanidhi immediately hurried to bring a doctor to save his father's life. He was not able to intimate the doctor of the urgency as the doctor was unluckily presiding over a medical conference. "When the gathering saw Karunanidhi, he was requested to address the Conference. The unavoidable force was such that he started addressing them to comply with their request. While addressing, the news of his father's death was conveyed to him on a slip of paper."  

Conscious of the decorum and decency of the occasion, he continued his speech despite the tragic news. After completing it, he hurried back to his house and saw the lifeless body of his father. He returned to Singanallur and continued with his play-writing profession with the popular Jupiter Studio.

Opportunist Wolves:

He faced several hurdles in his life at Coimbatore. Once he was surrounded by six wild wolves on his way home from the studio, when he was anxious about his wife's ill health. Luckily he escaped from the
impending tragedy because of the lights of a passing Military Lorry. But it was during the President's rule in 1976, that Karunanidhi became fully exposed to the opportunism of others around him. Several self-centred colleagues who enjoyed the benefits and fruits of the party by flattering Karunanidhi, resigned. They not only resigned, but did so only after indulging in a character assassination and mud-slinging of Karunanidhi. When Karunanidhi was at his height of power, a fleet of careerists and opportunists showered encomiums such as: "... you are the great saviour in saving my honour and prestige; if not for you, I would have been slandered in a yellow paper; - My life certainly would not be in my body without your Himalayan help; - I am worshipping Gopalapuram (where Karunanidhi lives) from this Parliament. This post of the Member of Parliament is purely your generous alm; - to support and shelter my broken family, your noble-self have given me a job; How can I forget your charisma? You celebrated my children's marriages by donations; you are my God! I am daily worshipping you in my heart etc., "
Thus a host of political wolves paid their flattery and eulogy to deceive the innocent leader. He put out several thought-provoking ideas only when he became the script-writer at Jupiter pictures. His talents were first displayed in his film - script of 'Rajakumari' which brought him great popularity. He also wrote the script for a mythological film called, 'Abhimanyu' in modern language and style. But the producer refused to publish his name and this wounded his feelings very much.

Karunanidhi's most outstanding qualities were: a love of respectability, practical skill in handling people and situations, and a cautious and sensible approach to life. He gave up work in the Jupiter Pictures, because he could not put up with the vexations from the owner of one of the largest studios in the South. However, he was given a warm farewell party by his comrades like Nedunchezian, the then warden of G.D.Naidu Hostel.

Soon he landed with the 'Devi Dramatic troupe' (Company), Tiruvarur, which asked him to write a
script on the basis of 'Kundalaksi', a classical play. He produced an inspiring and thought-provoking script on the classical literature but tempered it with modernism. It was staged with great success first at Thiruvarur and then at Kumbakonam. It celebrated even the Silver Jubilee.

He had plans to publish *Murosoli* in print, but his purse was very thin even after pledging his wife's jewels. With the help of the generous Janab Jamal, *Murosoli* came to be printed and published as a weekly magazine. His labour in this regard was Herculean. None has ever reflected the life, joys and sorrows of Tamilians as Karunanidhi did in his writings. His powerful and flowery language carried within itself a whirl-wind, that swept off the Tamil people. Compliments flowed from all sections of Tamil population, but money did not flow from the subscribers in the same spirit. In publishing this weekly he underwent great financial and mental suffering.
As he was slowly becoming financially bankrupt, he could not even take his bedridden wife either to Tiruchi or to Madras for treatment. He was forced by circumstances to admit her in a local hospital where he himself stayed in the hospital verandah to look after her health. At last the doctors of the hospital asked him to remove his wife home as they found it beyond their capacity to save her life.

Mr. Arunachalam, a member of his party came all the way from Pudukottai to Karunanidhi's residence to invite him to address a party public meeting at Pudukottai. Karunanidhi informed him of the serious condition of his wife's health and took him to see her. Still Arunachalam requested him to proceed to Pudukottai. He was torn between his duty towards his dying beloved wife and his duty towards his party. His commitment to party policies, as he was wedded to them earlier, prevailed over his duty towards his wife. His mind became wooden and he proceeded to Pudukottai to attend the party meeting and after attending the
meeting he returned by a lorry as there was no other conveyance."

He worked for the party programme with a sense of total dedication. He was full of excitement, optimism and enthusiasm. With all his inner tension and pressure, he showed absolute allegiance to the party's doctrines which attracted him more than anything else. Even though he was affectionately attached to his wife, he almost forgot her, denied her many things that were her due as a partner in his life, because he gave himself up to the party.

On his arrival from the meeting, he saw the dead body of his wife. He became so emotional, that though the dead body was surrounded by several women folk, he did not hesitate to kiss the temple of his dead-wife.

Presiding Over his Own Marriage:

On the 15th September 1948, his second marriage was fixed with Dayalu Ammiar, a simple and modest girl
hailing from a self-respect family, who was acceptable to his sisters, mother, and, particularly, to his son by his first wife, Muthu (now a film actor). On that day Dravida Kazhagam launched a campaign against imposition of Hindi. The bride-groom Karunanidhi, on seeing the anti-Hindi procession marching in front of his marriage pandal, joined the procession and addressed a public meeting forgetting that he was a bridegroom!

On returning, "he presided over his own marriage in a radical fashion. He adhered to the code of marriage contract as found in Sangakalam's literature, where the Hero and Heroine marry each other by exchanging their chaste and sincere oaths."23

Karunanidhi staged his revolutionary and controversial play 'Thokkumadai' (Scaffold) at the anti-Hindi conference held by Dravida Kazhagam on 23rd and 24th October 1948 at Erode. Alagiri's (one of the followers of D.M.) touching speeches deeply affected hearts of the audience, including Karunanidhi. But Alagiri died in poverty, and the leadership of D.K. party did not care.
The portrait of Alagiri was unveiled by Karunanidhi at Tanjore Students' Conference where he made a heart-rending reference to the fact that Alagiri was not cared for by the party and its leadership.

With the efforts of his friend, Sherieff, Karunanidhi was appointed as a screen-play writer on Rs.500/- per month at the Modern Studios, Salem. T.R. Sundaram, the owner of the studio, asked Karunanidhi to write a screen-play for a historical story from Tamil literature. In contrast to his earlier masterpiece, this play draws its inspiration from the very depths of contemporary life, successfully introducing sober realism in the classical story - 'Manthrikumary' (Minister's daughters). It enhanced his name and fame. V.C. Shukla, one of the Central ministers during the emergency, gave a critical comment on the dialogues of the film.

N.S. Krishnan invited him to write a script for his film 'Manamagal' (Bride). N.S. Krishnan, popularly known as 'NSK', was a film actor of rare qualities, who had carved out a niche in Tamil film world as a commedian
Humour was his characteristic talent. N.S. Krishnan gave a boost to Karunanidhi in the cine-field. Karunanidhi has said about N.S. Krishnan: "Just as Anna's charismatic name is illuminating the pages of my life's history, NSK's charitable name also revolves around me...."

After the rift with Periyar, Karunanidhi became a full-pledged D.M.K. party worker under Anna's leadership and he was full of energy, vitality in his devotion to the party. Karunanidhi took a militant lead at Tiruchi to erase Hindi letters, in the D.M.K. programme of Hindi agitation.

Organising D.M.K. at Tiruchi:

Tiruchi was a stronghold of the D.K. and the Congress, and D.M.K. had not developed here, compared to these parties. The leading D.M.K. members of Tiruchi district endeavoured their maximum to get Anna inaugurate a meeting at Tiruchi, but "Anna refused because of the internal conflicts in the party."
Karunanidhi was nominated by Anna to study the position of the D.M.K. at Tiruchi.

He addressed "a dozen public meetings and hoisted D.M.K. flag at 50 places." His public lectures thrilled and captivated the Tiruchi residents. Everywhere among the industrial workers, the peasantry, the middle class, the youth, the intelligentsia and the student community the D.M.K. became popular due to his eloquent speeches and preceptive, appealing writings. Gradually, he gained strength not only to establish the party, but also to get a place in the hearts of Tamil people. Thus Karunanidhi was responsible for creating a D.M.K. wave, and laid the foundations for the growth of the party in Tiruchi district.

Organising D.M.K. at Tanjore:

The D.M.K. Party had a programme to stage black flag demonstration against Rajaji in 1950, then Governor General of India, who was due to visit Thiruvaiyaru in Tanjore district. When the members were in a respective
stage, Anna gave the final word that Neelamagam, a senior leader and long-standing resident of Tanjore, be consulted and Karunanidhi was nominated for the purpose. But Neelamagam discouraged them with a negative reply that staging of black flag demonstration would be an utter failure since the D.M.K. was not yet fully developed, and prepared to carry out the programme.

Time seemed almost to stand still or to move with desperate slowness to Karunanidhi at this time. However, he "toured the entire Tanjore district for 26 days with an effective programme and addressed unceasingly."28 His inspiring speeches gave strength and self-confidence to people. Many people began to think in terms of staging a black flag demonstration. The potential strength and inspiration was drawn from Karunanidhi's propaganda in various places. When the police came to know that he was to lead the agitation, they searched for him. As a gifted-actor, he "disguised himself as a villager, reached the spot and staged a successful demonstration."29
Parabrahmam or Parasakthi is one of the celebrated plays of Karunanidhi. He wrote this play with great insight and prophetic judgement. Indeed it was the result of an industrious study, microscopic observation and a reflection on what was agitating its author's mind. Incidentally, the revolutionary and reformist theme of the film became the directive principle for the future Karunanidhi government in Tamil Nadu.

Dalmiapuram Agitation:

During the regime of Rajaji in 1952, the D.M.K. staged a three-pronged agitation for three different reasons viz., (1) Rajaji's educational scheme (Kulakalvi Thittam) (2) Nehru's attack on Tamil leaders and (3) the renaming of Dalmiapuram Railway Station.

The D.M.K. high command ordered Karunanidhi to lead the campaign in a non-violent manner. He was the vanguard of Kallakudi struggle, which aimed at renaming Dalmiapuram Railway station. On July 15th, 1953, he led the procession with 25 partymen and divided them
into 5 groups. Thousands of men and women witnessed these gallant and majestic marches. He says, in his poetic language - "The blind beheld the scene!; The hunchback straightened their backs!; The deaf heards the slogans!; and the dumb expressed their best wishes!!"30

Following Anna's direction, he pasted a wall-poster with the name Kallakudi on the name board of Dalmiapuram Railway station. But police ignored it and brushed aside his actions. Karunanidhi undaunted, and he took a spontaneous decision to lie down on railway track and to obstruct the movement of trains. His party comrades implicitly obeyed him and laid down themselves with their neck on the track along with him. The police arrested all of them.

On this fateful day, Karunanidhi's arrest was "followed by the loss of six lives in police firing, several had undergone tortures and 5,000 members were arrested all over Tamil Nadu. He and his party comrades were sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment and he was shifted to Tiruchi central
jail along with his 400 men. " He set up a shadow cabinet in the Jail and allotted different portfolios amongst the top men to look after the 400 members. His organising efforts inside the prison was impressive. Karunanidhi was released on the 21st November, 1952 after four months rigorous imprisonment. N.S.Krishnan gave a warm welcome to him at the prison gate but the police refused him permission for conducting a public meeting. On the 29th November, when he detrained at Egmore, the station was filled with party men and the public, to accord him a warm reception. The emotional situation moved Karunanidhi, who was carried on from shoulder to shoulder as a ball. Madurai Muthu struggled hard to guard him and to put him in a jeep assigned for the procession. At Mount Road, an American dignitary's vehicle was held up due to this long and thick procession. The American dignitary, out of curiosity, enquired about the person (Karunanidhi) and the reason for this procession. Twenty years later, this American occupied the White House as the President of the U.S.A. He was Mr. Nixon.

Anna used to say .. "you are showing lakhs of
people before me, thousands of garlands, hoisting flags in high altitudes and other attractions and glamours. Would you think that the Centre will recognise all this? No, the Centre will not recognise. Centre will recognise our party only when you increase the number of M.L.As, MPs and MLCs. It is a bare necessity in a democratic system." It is a well-known truth that only after the D.M.K. came to power, and due to the unremitting onslaughts of Karunanidhi for three years, that the Centre decided to change the name of Dalmiapuram into Kallakudi. As the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Karunanidhi inaugurated the function to rename the station.

Sampath's Upper Hand:

The Kovilpatty conference was an important event in Karunanidhi's political career as well as in the history of the D.M.K. While presiding over the session, the organiser and propagandist of the party, Karunanidhi, stated "the organisational party structure in a
hierarchical manner like federal theory of state with branches at the village, town, sub-district and district levels to co-ordinate and co-operate to spread and implement the policies of the supreme command of the D.M.K. Party." 33

Without rhyme or reason E. V. K. Sampath struck a critical note by saying: "Freshers have started giving schemes for our party - the present organisational limit is adequate to spread our views." 34 Thus he openly attacked Karunanidhi's presidential address in the conference. Members of the party and the public did not relish the hard and bitter words spoken by Sampath. But Anna fully recognised and approved the plans of Karunanidhi. It was a convention in the D.M.K. party meetings that no one will address after Anna's speech. But Karunanidhi requested the convener of the conference for permission to deliver his presidential speech last. He said "If I were to suggest some schemes for party's progress under a dictator, the dictatorship in turn would question its validity and my authority on the ground that I am a fresher. But Anna being the guardian and saviour of the party under democratic principles, he has accepted and approved my views." 35
His First Constituency:

He marched into the Kulithalai constituency which was allotted to him with a fleet of dedicated party men and acquainted himself with all the remote places. As a great pioneer in election work, he showed his skill in handling election platforms. He pasted the posters with appropriate slogans in every conceivable place.

The people of Kulithalai were very much attracted towards his tape-recorded speeches, the free gift of calendars and his personal door-to-door approach in his constituency. Of the 112 members of D.M.K. that contested, 15 were elected with 1.7 million votes.

In the Kulithalai constituency, seven candidates had contested. The total number of votes polled were 48,153 of which the Congress obtained 14,489, and Karunanidhi won by obtaining 22,785 votes. Only four votes were invalid. In a village called Thanner Pandal Pali, all the votes were given to Karunanidhi. Out of 22,785 voters he polled, 12,580 votes were of ladies. According to the Election Commission the votes polled
by Karunanidhi was an All India record in All India State Legislature 1967 General Election. He was just 32 when he entered the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly for the first time in 1957.

**Maiden Speech in the House:**

Karunanidhi's maiden speech in the legislature was a moving one. His "voice and vision had evoked the sympathy of every legislator. He presented a vivid and conspicuous picture of the helpless and the downtrodden agriculturists suffering at the iron hands of Kulithalai Zamindar at Nanguram village. He little realised that he was amidst members and ministers; but it was as if he was talking from Nanguram. At last he put the problems of his constituency on the state level with his repeated pleadings in legislature."³⁶

He led the Nanguram Agriculturists' agitation in a non-violent manner from 23-8-1957 to 9-9-1957 successfully and derived remarkable benefits for the farmers from the Mirasdare and the Tamil Nadu Government. The only slogan was 'Long live Unity and
Discipline'. The aim of the agitation was to remove the hardships of the oppressed. He said in the legislature that the D.M.K. was the real communist party in Tamil Nadu.

Realisation of Poor:

Karunanidhi realised that poor and segregated people are subject to condemnation or criticism and he also realised that they should be regulated by efficient government.

All men are predominantly economic in their values from the cradle to the grave. A few, by the accident of birth, belong to a rich class; a few by their crafty nature become rich; and a few by exploiting others in the name of religion, God, morals, association, community, commerce etc.; but the majority are left to poverty and they are not allowed to rise. He learnt many things about the poverty-stricken people only after becoming a member of the legislature. He had originally thought that these people are dull-headed, that they did not know how to manage their
worldly affairs, that they were not bright as the other advanced class, and that they were in poverty because of their immorality, drunkenness etc. He was awakened to the new understanding that on such pretexts they have been exploited and pushed down to a sub-human level. He became fully convinced that the only panacea for their centuries-old chronic disease was a well-informed and realistic socialistic policy, implemented by a non-corrupt governmental agency.

His Political Writings and Ideas:

His contribution to Tamil Nadu politics is fourfolded. First, he defended with passion the cause of liberty and rationalism. Secondly he upheld the principle of equality and denounced the hereditary privileges enjoyed by the rich Zaminders and other privileged classes as a violation of the law of reason. Thirdly, he worked for democracy in politics, on the assumption that political democracy could become real only if it is associated with a programme of socio-economic justice and the principle of non-
-violence. Fourthly, being a statesman and an administrator, he wanted maximum efficiency and rationality in human relations in public administration.

As a true democrat he also believed: "It is the responsibility of the government to make people honest, prosperous, progressive and good citizens. It is an irresponsible government that makes them cheats, swindlers and a rabble. If the people become poverty-stricken and grief-stricken it is the fault of the government." 37

He believed in a scientific political theory, seeking to extract generalizations about problems from the data gathered by present observation and from precedents, measurement and analysis in a practical and realistic way.

His political theory, is rooted in human values. His living philosophy is an attempt to answer the serious problems of Tamilians. He looks upon philosophy as an integral part of social, political and economic life, and he practices this philosophy in a very real sense.
His achievements in the literary field — his first interest — are substantial. He is a popular poet, a versatile play-wright, possessing a natural flair for writing. Considering his tight daily schedule, his literary output is staggering. He has already written over 150 short stories, 35 plays (of which 30 have been adapted to the screen) and a spate of poems and articles, addressing his party men as 'beloved brethren' and other innumerable pieces. In recognition of such contribution, the Annamalai University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Letters. The people of Tamil Nadu have conferred on him the title 'Kalignar' (the gifted artist) in recognition of his achievements as a poet, play-wright, novelist, short story-writer and pamphleteer, and a scholar in Tamil literature. The then Governor of Tamil Nadu K.K. Shaw, said about him:

"I am conscious of my limitations as a Governor in extolling the greatness of Karunanidhi as a politician. I laud him as a writer worthy of praise. If only, I myself can acquire half of his intellectual attainments as a Tamil scholar, I too can hope to secure a doctorate in my language."
Nenchuku Neethi:

It is regarded as the greatest work of Karunanidhi, and it represents his thoughts better than any of his books. It is a treatise on politics, education, sociology, history and personal matters of his party-men during a period of 35 years. Though he pays Anna due as his hero, he presents the role of the common-man, his deeds, struggles and sacrifices for the party. It is a hand-book for the student of Tamil Nadu politics, containing all the wisdom distilled as it were from a comprehensive political experience of Tamil Nadu. It is not merely an autobiography but a political history right from the non-Brahmin movement upto 1976.

He seems to have written this celebrated work during a railway journey, not unlike the great Negro leader, Booker T. Washington, who emancipated the Negroes in academic and economic fields, and who wrote his famous autobiography 'Up From Slavery' during his railway journey and in railway rooms. Several leading Tamil leaders have paid glowing tributes and encomiums to him for his fabulous writing in Nenchuku Neethi.
The book was released in unique and impressive function attended by lakhs of people. It was presided over by Nallathambi, the president of the Blind Men's Society, and the book published by a leper poet P.A. Mohammed Ali, the General Secretary of the Begging Lepers' Rehabilitation Homes. Karunanidhi himself was received by an ex-beggar, Shanthakumari, the Secretary of the Beggars' Rehabilitation Homes.

This was the first historic event in India in which the crippled, the blind and the handicapped were elevated to such high honour, associated with a function relating to the most celebrated treaties of a Chief Minister!

This is an ample proof of his concern for the disabled and the destitute, who are neglected by society for no fault of theirs. No wonder, he was determined to rehabilitate the weak and the destitute. As Chief Minister he launched a constructive programme for socio-economic justice for the poor, the downtrodden and the exploited masses of Tamil Nadu.
REFERENCE

6. Ibid., p.44.
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8. Ibid., p.49.
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10. Ibid., p.53.
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12. Ibid., p.55.
13. Ibid., pp. 66-70.
14. Ibid., p.82.
17. Ibid., 89 & 90.
18. Quoted in *Nenchuku Neethi*.


23. Ibid., p.113.

24. Ibid., p.149.


27. Ibid., p.171.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p.172.

30. Ibid., p.194.


32. Anna's speech - Felicitating Karunanidhi on his Kallagudi agitation, 1957.


37. Ibid., p.694.

38. Governor's speech at the Cultural Association, Madras.

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