LAST YEARS OF KAMARAJ
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The Fourth General Elections were held in the month of February 1967 (between February 15 and 21). Out of 518 seats to the Lok Sabha, the Indian National Congress could win only 282 seats, just 22 seats more than what was required for an absolute majority.\(^1\) At the State level, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Punjab and Rajasthan voted for non-Congress Governments. The election results showed that the 'Era of Congress' had come to an end and it also marked the beginning of a weakened Government at the Centre and coalition Governments in the States.\(^2\)

"India's Fourth General Elections will go down in Tamilnadu history as one of the most significant landmarks in the evolution of democracy in Asia and the world.\(^3\) - The Hindu commented on the outcome of the Fourth General Elections held in February 1967. The Indian National Congress which had been in power

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2 Ibid., p.198.

for over two decades; since Independence, was given a crushing blow by the electorate. The agony of the Party was that it lost absolute control in eight States and was voted to power in the Centre with a slender majority.

In Tamilnadu, the outcome of the election was more disastrous. 4

In Tamilnadu Congress could win only 49 out of 234 seats in the Legislative Assembly. Of the 39 Lok Sabha seats it could win only 3 seats. Kamaraj, the AICC President, who had been the supreme leader of the organisation since 1940, was defeated by an unknown student leader in his native Constituency, by a small margin of about 1285 votes as noted in the previous pages. 5 Besides Kamaraj, prominent leaders of the State, including former Central Ministers like C. Subramaniam, O.V. Alagesan, C.R. Pattabiraman and Maragatham Chandrasekar were defeated by their DMK rivals. The outgoing Chief Minister M. Bakthavatsalam and all his Cabinet colleagues except one were defeated.

There were many factors for the dismal performance of

4 Ibid., p.766.
the Congress Party in Tamilnadu. Since the study is about the political career of Kamaraj and as he was the President of the AICC at the time of the election, it is relevant to assess the factors that worked against the victory of Kamaraj in his home town Virudhunagar. Kamaraj's selection of Virudhunagar Assembly Constituency clearly indicated his intention of returning to State politics.

The electorate of Virudhunagar numbered about 83,000 and among them 22,000 were Nadars. Kamaraj was opposed by a DMK candidate and by three other independents. The Nadar population of Virudhunagar got divided because of the old time rival of Kamaraj, V.V. Ramasamy Nadar who worked for the DMK candidate. V.V. Ramasamy Nadar not only divided the Nadar community votes, but also used his influence and prevented the rural voters from voting for Kamaraj.  

Further a few days before the election Kamaraj met with an accident and as a result he could not continue with his electioneering work. Moreover, a battalion of students came from different parts of Tamilnadu and carried on with a door-to-door

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7 *The Hindu* (Madras), 28th February 1967.
door campaign in favour of the DMK candidate and this won the sympathy of the voters. Added to these a notable leader of the Nadar community by name 'Embar Nadar' died on the day of election and his funeral prevented about 1000 voters from casting their votes before the closure of the polling time.  

Above all, Kamaraj's insistence on the speedy implementation of the economic policies of the Congress Party, earned the discontent of the big businessmen of the country who joined hands to unseat him from his pre-eminent position in the Congress organisation by working against his victory at Virudhunagar. Kamaraj himself has stated this as a reason for his defeat on more than one occasion.  

The general discontent against the Congress coupled with the specific reasons cited above led to the personal defeat of Kamaraj.

It was presumed by the political opponents of Kamaraj in his native State that his political career had come to an end. But the unexpected defeat of Kamaraj did not deter him from playing an active role in politics even after the debacle.

8 Personal Interview with C. Ramachandran at Virudhunagar, on 5th July 1990.

9 The Hindu (Madras), 13th December 1966; Navasakthi (Tamil Daily), 13th March 1968.
Kamaraj took keen interest in Party work at the State level. It was remarkable that he attended almost all the Working Committee meetings of the State unit. During the course of a series of Party organisation meetings held from March 1969, Kamaraj emphasised the need to build up the Party cadres.

In reviewing the performance of the Party in the General Elections, Kamaraj was of the opinion that problems like increased price of rice, were mainly responsible for the defeat of the Congress. He also identified the other causes to be the language issue, weakness of the organisation and the organised work put up by the opposition during the election. 10

Kamaraj in fact proposed the constitution of new Working Committees at village, taluk, town and district levels. He was very keen to enroll more number of educated and uneducated village folk as members of the Party. On the advice of Kamaraj, the TNCC took up the issue of appointing District Observers to monitor the Party organisation at different levels. 11

The city of Madras was divided into two major areas

11 Ibid; Interview with P. Ramachandran at Madras, on 3rd January 1993.
each consisting of fifty divisions with proper organisation and political observers.

Kamaraj paid due attention to analyse the causes for the debacle of the Congress Party in the General Elections of 1967. As the language problem was considered one of the major causes, he wanted the Party to clearly spell out the stand of the Congress Party on the language issue. He suggested arranging district-wise meetings to explain the language policy of the Congress in Tamilnadu to remove the misgivings in the minds of the people. Regarding his other suggestion the TNCC came out with the proposal of organising Labour, Peasants, Youth and Women's wings of the Party. These measures helped to strengthen the Party and made it stronger.

Realising the fact that the Youth Force played a key-role for the success of the DMK in the 1967 General Elections, Kamaraj wanted to concentrate on bringing more youth from rural and urban areas into the fold of the Congress.

Fortunately within a year from the 1967 elections, almost all the college student unions in the city of Madras and other

13 Ibid., p.218.
14 Ibid., p.217.
urban areas elected Congress-oriented student leaders. To a great extent the Constitution of the National Students' Council for Tamil Development - an organisation meant to promote enrolment of youngsters was responsible for the change found among college students.  

In the following years the colleges situated in Madras and other rural reas vied with one another in inviting the leaders of the Tamilnadu Congress to inaugurate the College Unions and other activities. Pachaiyappa's College, Madras, known for its intimate link with the DMK leaders and a forerunner in the Anti-Hindi Agitation also had the honour of inviting Kamaraj to inaugurate their Students' Union. Law College, Madras, considered to be another citadel of Dravidian forces, invited Kamaraj and other leaders of the Congress on various occasions to celebrate the functions associated with the Students' Union.  

The National Students' Council for Tamil Development held a series of conferences at district levels all over Tamilnadu.  

15 Personal Interview with V. Dhandayuthapani at Madras, on 6th January 1993.  

16 Navasakthi (Tamil Daily), Madras, 13th March 1968.  

17 Navasakthi (Tamil Daily), Madras, 18th March 1968; Interview with V. Dhandayuthapani at Madras, on 6th January 1993.
In the month of March 1968, a Regional Conference of the organisation at Madurai was convened. Kamaraj and other frontline leaders of the Congress participated in the conference. Similarly a district level conference of the National Students' Council for Tamil Development was held in Trichy district in March 1968. Kamaraj took part in the conference and drew the attention of the youth to ponder over the defects in the policies of the ruling DMK Party. Vellore, the headquarters of North Arcot district witnessed a similar conference in the same month. Kamaraj, along with other provincial Congress leaders addressed a large gathering. Just a day before the meeting i.e. on March 26, 1968 there was a clash between the State Transport workers and College students in Madras and in that incident, a Transport worker and a student died and several students were injured and educational institutions including schools were closed. Kamaraj attributed the plight of students to the ruling Party, citing the incident, and condemned them.

In the TNCWC meeting, Kamaraj insisted on the formation of National Peasants' Union to fight for the cause of the Peasants.

18 Navasakthi (Tamil Daily), Madras, 2nd March 1968.
20 Navasakthi (Tamil Daily), Madras, 27th March 1968.
He also suggested the Constitution of District Level Committees involving those Party cadres who were peasants. The formation of the Peasants' Wing of the Congress helped in a major way to focus the plight of the peasants through resolutions, passed by the district level conferences arranged by the Party.

The TNCC, on its part, appointed District Level Convenors and helped them to organise periodical conferences. Kamaraj along with other State level leaders addressed the conferences and wanted the Government to redress the grievances of the peasants. This step also won the support of the peasant sections and strengthened the Party. The Youth Wing of the Congress took out a procession in Madras in August 1968. While the procession was on it was attacked by anti-social elements. Kamaraj personally led a procession and thereby demonstrated to the opponents that he would rise to the occasion to take up the problems of the Party and cadres.

Similar measures taken by the Congress Party in organising the Labour Wing, Weavers Wing and Women's Wing, helped the

23 **Swadesamitran** (Tamil Daily), 4th August 1968.
Party to have good rapport with different sections of the public. It also provided the Party with different outlets to fight the anti-labour, anti-social moves of the Government such as lay-off in factories and lifting of prohibition. Thus the able leadership of Kamaraj, helped the Congress to stage a successful come back in the political arena of Tamilnadu.

The Madras Corporation Elections took place in the last week of October 1968. The Chief Minister of the DMK Government, C.N. Annadurai had gone to the United States for medical treatment. The shortcomings of the DMK Government and the effective propagation of Congress cadres coupled with the masterly strategy of Kamaraj enabled the Congress Party to secure almost a near majority position in the Corporation. It was considered to be a prestigious victory for the Congress. It had almost wrested the civic body, lost a decade before. It proved that Kamaraj and the Congress had staged a comeback from the debacle that had taken place in the early part of 1967.

Soon after the Corporation Elections in Madras, Kamaraj chose to contest in the Nagercoil Parliamentary By-election. Formerly the seat was held by 'Marshal' Nesamani of Congress Party. His sudden demise in 1968 led to the By-election in

the Parliamentary Constituency. When Kamaraj announced his decision to contest the By-election, it was viewed by the opponents as a danger signal.

Considering the fact that Nagercoil Constituency was dominated by Nadar community voters, Rajaji viewed the By-election seriously as it would easily ensure the victory of Kamaraj who was a popular leader. So Rajaji wrote in the 'Swarajya', the magazine of the Swatantra Party about the need to defeat Kamaraj. He appealed to C.N. Annadurai to support the candidate of the Swatantra Party, M. Mathias.

C.N. Annadurai deputed the then Minister for Public Works Department in his Cabinet, M. Karunanidhi to take charge of electioneering in the Constituency. Karunanidhi mustered all his strength and camped there for many days to prevent the electoral victory of Kamaraj, but in vain. Kamaraj won by a thumping majority defeating his nearest rival M. Mathias by a different of 1,28,201 votes. "The triumph of Kamaraj in the Parliamentary By-election from Nagercoil held on January 8, 1969 was easily the biggest boost for the Tamilnadu Congress since


the disastrous rout of early 1967. Congressmen all over Tamilnadu felt that it would be a turning point which would provide them with the necessary morale to fight and challenge the DMK in the 1972 elections.

But 1969 witnessed the split of the Indian National Congress into Congress(O)-Organisation and Congress(R)-Ruling. An attempt was made by the supporters of Indira Gandhi to make an impression in the public mind that the split was against the 'Old guards' in the Party, the so-called 'Syndicate' who were opposed to establishing a 'Socialist' and 'Progressive India' by the Union Government headed by Indira Gandhi. So far as the Congress was concerned, the Syndicate consisted of Kamaraj, Nijalingappa, S.K. Patil, Sanjeeva Reddy, Morarji Desai and Atulya Ghosh.

In Tamilnadu the State Unit of the Congress remained almost solid with Congress(O) and Kamaraj. Added to that,

27 Ibid., p.75.
the mass backing was behind Kamaraj, which was evident in the Assembly By-election to Kolachchel Constituency held on May 24, 1970, in which Congress(O) candidate Balaiah won with a resounding majority of over 26,000 votes against Rafi, an independent candidate supported by Congress(R). 32

After the split, Kamaraj restricted his activities mostly to State politics. Though he was still wielding profound influence with the AICC(O) at the National level, Kamaraj was very keen in strengthening the organisation at the State level.

After the split in the Indian National Congress the capability and leadership of Kamaraj became evident in the Panchayat elections of 1970 in Tamilnadu. Generally, Panchayat elections in the State used to take place on non-Party basis. But owing to the growing political awareness and the attitude of the then ruling Party, the DMK to strengthen its hold at the grass-root level, Panchayat elections also assumed political importance.

In the last week of July 1970, elections to 12,000 Panchayats, 235 Panchayat Unions and 600 Town Panchayats were held all over Tamilnadu. 33 The then Prime Minister Indira

32 The Hindu (Madras), 25th and 26th May 1970.
Gandhi was reported to be keenly following the outcome of the Panchayat results. Her interest was to note whether the people in Tamilnadu would lean towards Congress(O), led by Kamaraj in the State. Though Congress was out of power and its candidates were subjected to harassment and coercion during poll time, it could register victory in almost 50 per cent of the Villages and Town Panchayats. The victory of the Congress(O) in the Panchayat elections, after the split in 1969, proved that Kamaraj was still the undisputed leader of the Congress in Tamilnadu. In addition to this, it also proved that Congress could be a powerful challenge in the forthcoming General Elections of 1972 to the DMK.

The year 1971 proved to be another historic and eventful year in the political career of Kamaraj. While he was successfully gaining his political influence and grip over the electorate of Tamilnadu, the mid-term elections of 1971 gave a serious set-back to his resurgence.

After September 1970, there was an indication of break-up of relations between the DMK and the Swatantra Party.

34 Ibid., p.109.
In November 1970 the DMK signed a poll pact with the Communist Party of India (CPI), Congress(R), Praja Socialist Party (PSP), Forward Block, Muslim League and Tamizharasu Kazhagam to contest the Municipal elections due for December 1970. The reaction of Rajaji was that Swatantra Party could not continue to be a poll ally of DMK because of its alliance with Congress(R) and CPI. Further Rajaji was unhappy over the lifting of prohibition, by the DMK Government which had been adopted in Tamilnadu since Congress rule. Besides, the Swatantra Party criticised the attitude of DMK Ministers and their alleged corruption.

Such factors drew Kamaraj and Rajaji closer to fight against the DMK in the State and Indira Gandhi at the Centre. To ensure the success of the democratic forces, Congress(O), Jan Sangh, Swatantra and PSP forged a united front, which was described by a section of the press as the 'Grand Alliance'.

Kamaraj and Rajaji met quite often and discussed the poll strategy. Rajaji gave a free hand to Kamaraj in selecting the candidates for Lok Sabha and Assembly seats and had even

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., pp.120-121.
41 Ibid., p.89.
directed his party men to accept the decisions of Kamaraj. Thus Kamaraj with the full support of Rajaji and other parties faced the 1971 elections. He worked hard and planned carefully the electioneering and campaign work. Rajaji for his part appealed to the electorate through press statements and articles in the dailies and other magazines. There were high hopes in the political camp of Congress(O) and Swatantra. The Grand Alliance declared 'Save Democracy' and 'Save India' as its election appeal in reply to Indira Gandhi's 'Quit Poverty'. While Congress(O) camp declared itself as the 'Democratic Front', the opposing group consisting of Congress(R). DMK and their allies declared themselves as 'Progressive Front'.

The results of the General Elections were indeed a setback to the political expectations and plans of Kamaraj. The tremendous victory of the 'Progressive Front' consisting of DMK and Congress(R) almost swept away the Congress(O) and Swatantra Alliance. Kamaraj was the only candidate elected from Nagercoil Parliamentary Constituency from the entire South comprising Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu. It was still worse in the Assembly elections as the Democratic Front could claim only 15 seats.

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42 Ibid., p.140.
44 Ibid.
Kamaraj felt that the Party could not win the confidence of the electorate. He urged his followers and partymen to strengthen the Party. He stressed the need for the enrolment of 'Youth Force' to build up the Party. He did not lose heart and decided to devote himself all the more to the reorganisation of the Party. Even at the National level Kamaraj did not give up his hope. When it was reported that Congress(O) should merge with other parties or be disbanded, Kamaraj quietly opposed the view, when he met Nijalingappa, the President of the Congress(O), at New Delhi. In his opinion "there was no cause for despair". He was of the opinion that the situation arising after the election should be faced with determination. True to his words he put his Party on the path of reorganisation.

Kamaraj, with a view to rebuild and reorganise the Party, paid more attention to the organisational matters. Under his able guidance, the TNCC(O) took steps to form the Youth and Student Wings of the Party. As a result of this special attention to the Youth and Students Organisation nearly 151 of the 168 colleges elected their Student Union office bearers from Congress(O) supporters.

46 The Hindu, 18th March 1971.
47 Navasakthi (Tamil Daily), Madras, 26th August 1972.
Kamaraj realising the need to plan a careful political strategy to stage a come-back and to weaken the DMK alliance with Congress(R), helped the victory of Congress(R) candidate in the Ariyankuppam By-election to the Assembly of Pondicherry Union Territory in March 1972. Purusothama Reddy of Congress(R) was supported by Kamaraj against Ramakrishnan alias Pandurangan. It is interesting to note that Purusothama Reddy had been defeated in the previous elections held in March 1969 by a slender margin of 16 votes. This time with the support of Congress(O) and Kamaraj he won the election with a difference of 1271, in a Constituency where the total electorate numbered 10,402.\textsuperscript{48} His victory led to the break-up of the alliance between the DMK and the Congress(R) and further made the Communist Party of India to disassociate itself from the Congress(R).\textsuperscript{49}

At the same time, Kamaraj was taking every step to expose the weakness of the DMK Government. The peasants agitation of 1972 took a new turn with the support extended by Kamaraj. The peasants' agitation was gaining momentum in the Southern and Western districts of the State like Madurai, Tiruchirapalli, Coimbatore and Dharmapuri. The inept handling of the peasants' problem by the DMK Government led to violent agitation on

\textsuperscript{48} The Hindu (Madras), 13th March 1972.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
the part of the peasants and subsequent firing by the police at a number of places like Manamadurai, Sathoor and Perumanallur.\textsuperscript{50} On Kamaraj's direction Congress volunteers plunged into the struggle. He personally toured the places where the riots had taken place and condemned the excesses of the Government.\textsuperscript{51} Nearly 19,000 Congress volunteers participated in the struggle and were imprisoned during the course of the agitation.\textsuperscript{52} It once again proved that Congress(O) with Kamaraj as its leader was still a popular organisation with the masses. The ruling party had to yield to the agitating peasants and it came forward to redress their grievances. It was partly due to the role played by Congress(O) under the guidance of Kamaraj.

The year 1972 witnessed another important development in Tamilnadu politics. M.G. Ramachandran, a popular matinee idol and great crowd puller of the DMK Party, was expelled from the Party for anti-Party activities.\textsuperscript{53} His expulsion from the DMK Party led him to launch a new Party named after C.N. Annadurai, founder of the DMK as Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam on October 17, 1972.\textsuperscript{54} Later it was renamed as All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

\textsuperscript{50} Navasakthi (Madras), 3rd August 1972.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Navasakthi (Madras), 6th August 1972.
\textsuperscript{53} Swadesamitran (Madras), 14th October 1972; Dinamani (Madras), 10th October 1972.
\textsuperscript{54} Dinamani (Madras), 18th October 1972.
Soon M.G. Ramachandran entered the election fray, when the By-election for the Dindigal Parliamentary Constituency was held in May 1973. During his election campaign M.G. Ramachandran stressed on several occasions that the real opponent to ADMK was Congress(O) and not the then ruling Party DMK. It was true that in the Dindigal Parliamentary By-election Congress(O) secured the second higher votes leaving DMK to the third place, followed by Congress(R).

Kamaraj did not give much importance to the emergence of the ADMK as he thought that both the DMK and ADMK were one and the same under different labels. He strongly criticised both the 'Dravidian Parties'. He also appealed to the people to identify the right persons with National outlook. He took a vow to fight unto death to safeguard democracy and socialism. He also wanted the people to fight corruption, nepotism and wrong economic policies of both the Central and the State Governments.

Kamaraj did not favour making any agreement either with the DMK or ADMK, as he felt that both the parties were 'Orey kuttaiyil ooriya mattaigal' (one and the same). Rather he

56 Murasoli (Madras), 22nd May 1973.
† Kamaraj addressed a public meeting on 8th November 1972 at Cheyyar, where he first commented on the nature of ADMK.
directed his battery of opposition on both the Dravidian Parties, with greater vigour and spirit.\textsuperscript{57}

Hence, the Dindigal defeat did not deter him from taking up the problems of the people and from fighting for their well-being.

The leadership of Kamaraj came to the fore-front once again in 1973, when the Congress(O) announced a non-violent agitation against the DMK Government in the month of October 1973. Unemployment problem, price-rise, peasants' problem, lifting of prohibition and weavers problem were the major causes for the State-wide peaceful non-violent agitation.\textsuperscript{58}

The TNCC(O) Working Committee under the guidance of Kamaraj, chalked out a programme.\textsuperscript{59} It was planned to carry on the struggle for ten days from 3rd October 1973 to 12th October 1973. The State-wide agitation was to be carried out simultaneously all over Tamilnadu. The list of volunteers was prepared at the State Headquarters of the Party.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{57} Dinamani (Madras), 9th November 1972; Interview with M. Boopalan at Cheyyar, on 3rd October 1992.

\textsuperscript{58} Navasakthi (Madras), 3rd October 1973.

\textsuperscript{59} Personal Interview with P. Ramachandran at Madras, on 3rd January 1993.

\textsuperscript{60} Navasakthi (Madras), 1st October 1973.
The first day of the peaceful agitation was carried out under the Chairmanship of the State President of the Congress(O) P. Ramachandran. Along with P. Ramachandran about 150 volunteers were arrested and imprisoned for 5 weeks. Soon the peaceful agitation gained momentum all over Tamilnadu, and nearly 55,000 volunteers of the Congress(O) were imprisoned for varied terms extending from two weeks to five weeks.

Since the struggle was for the common cause of the public it became popular. The Central Government under Indira Gandhi, who was also the President of the Congress(R), was watching the struggle. Kamaraj was the real source of inspiration for the Congress volunteers and his addresses to the Party cadres during the course of the struggle further strengthened the movement.

Kamaraj was very happy to conduct such a mass agitation in a peaceful and non-violent manner. Many newspapers and periodicals like Kumudam and Thugleq appreciated the conduct of the peaceful agitation. They even compared the agitation,

64 Navasakthi (Madras), 5th October 1973.
with the freedom struggle of Mahatma Gandhi.\textsuperscript{65}

The impact of the agitation was such that \textit{Deccan Herald} an English newspaper commented that it was a 'Historic Movement'.\textsuperscript{66} \textit{Anandavikatan}, another Tamil weekly applauded Kamaraj and remarked that he was leading the Party on the path of Mahatma Gandhi in Tamilnadu.\textsuperscript{67} The Congress(O) had a clear plan to champion the cause of the general public. The leadership of Kamaraj was mainly responsible for the success of the struggle. His position and stature were again established in the State politics.

The year 1974 came as a turning point in the political career of Kamaraj. Since he was a true patriot and had a broad outlook, he was longing for the return of the Congress to power in Tamilnadu. To achieve this objective he tried to be soft towards the Congress(R). There were also attempts from the Congress(R), for a reconciliation.\textsuperscript{68}

The Pondicherry election scene of 1974 provided the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Navasakthi} (Madras), 18th October 1973.
  \item \textit{Navasakthi} (Madras), 15th October 1973.
  \item \textit{Navasakthi} (Madras), 18th October 1973.
  \item \textit{Navasakthi} (Madras), 22nd March 1974; \textit{Interview} with Kudandhai N. Ramalingam at Madras, on 26th December 1992.
\end{itemize}
necessary base for effecting political understanding between Kamaraj and Indira Gandhi.

The two leaders, Kamaraj and Indira Gandhi, were stated to have met for the first time after the split of 1969, in the second week of August 1973 in Delhi. The second meeting took place on September 20, 1973. It was decided to have electoral understanding in the Pondicherry election of 1974.

The growth of unrest in the country made Indira Gandhi seek the support of Kamaraj, while Kamaraj wanted to remove the DMK from power and to prevent the growth of the ADMK. Further his national outlook also compelled him to work together with Congress(R). The National level leaders of Congress(O) also endorsed the opinion of Kamaraj.

But the declaration of emergency in an unprecedented manner in the month of June 1975 made Kamaraj condemn the declaration of the Emergency.

69 Navasakthi (Madras), 16th November 1973.
70 Navasakthi (Madras), 22nd November 1973.
71 Ibid.
At this juncture his illness did not allow him to take a more active role in politics. He had a slip in the bath-room and that led to further deterioration in his health. Yet he was voicing his opposition to the declaration of the Emergency. He had turned down the conciliatory moves of the Congress(R). The TNCC(O) on his advice passed a resolution condemning the imposition of emergency. 73

On October 1, 1975 after a gap of three months rest Kamaraj went out of his home to felicitate Sivaji Ganesan a Congress(O) man and famous cine-actor, on his birthday. On October 2, 1975 a batch of Law College students in Madras called on him on the occasion of the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. Kamaraj advised them to dedicate themselves for the cause of the Nation. He also advised them to adopt Gandhian principles. In the afternoon while he was taking rest he suddenly felt uneasy. He called his personal attendant Vairavan to ring up his personal doctor Sowrirajan.

Before the arrival of his personal Doctor, Kamaraj breathed his last following a massive heart attack at 3.10 P.M. When the end came his close aides Vairavan, Ramabadrnan and Rangarajan

73 Interview with P. Ramachandran at Madras, on 3rd January 1993.
were near him. By a strange coincidence the true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi passed away on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi i.e. October 2, 1975.74

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74 Dinamani (Madurai), 4th October 1975; Interview with Rangarajan at Virudhunagar, on 5th July 1990; Interview with R. Ramabadran at Madras on 3rd October 1992.