Conclusion
CONCLUSION

The noteworthy aspect of the Kamaraj Government is its approach to the problems and issues in a highly practical way. It is true that the governments of nationalist leaders that were formed in succession in the then composite Madras Province from 1937 to 1956 paid their attention to the development of the province. Of these governments, those, which had been formed between 1937 and 1947, were under the control of the British Raj and so they had only a limited say in running the administration. This limited say of theirs reflects on the service that they had done to the province. However, when Kamaraj took over the administration, his Government could take up all the development works that it wanted to take.

Another point to be noted is that Kamaraj’s Government ruled the composite Madras Province only for just two years and six months. The states were reorganized on November 1, 1956. The reorganized state was called Madras State, and as it was much smaller than the composite Madras Province, his Government could pay greater attention to its development.

The highly commendable aspect in his Government’s development activities is that his Government had a clear vision of the State’s future. Its policies show that the Government knew well that the State’s development meant that the economic development of its people. The key to the
development of the people lay in their education and opportunities of various types.

The Government’s policies and activities show that it knew well when the people would get educated they would embark upon establishing industries and in the event of such a situation the state should have proper facilities. With all these in view the Kamaraj Government formulated its policies and implemented them.

As he headed a government of a federal state under Indian Union, Kamaraj could not formulate an independent industrial policy exclusively for Tamil Nadu. But his Government did the next best thing. It evolved secondary policies to effectively implemented the Central Government’s industrial policy. The worker-friendly labour laws, factory laws, industrial housing schemes, strengthening the co-operative movement among specified professional groups such as handloom weavers and other similar programmes of his Government had created a salubrious climate for the growth of industries in the State. The road networks that his Government developed were highly useful when several large-scale industries came up in the state.

The Government’s performance in the field of technical education put the state at the lead of all the other southern states. The industrial training institutes, polytechnics and engineering colleges which the Kamaraj
Government had established had acted as trend setters. As these institutions introduced new courses of study the newly emerging entrepreneurs were never left high and dry without suitable manpower. Even the successive Governments have learnt this lesson from the Kamaraj Government and that is why the engineering education in the present Tamil Nadu under Anna University keeps effectively meeting the new challenges. Here and there in the state quite a few engineers who are products of the engineering colleges in the state have established their own industries and captured world market. The man behind the internationally-acclaimed Hindustan Computers Limited, Siva Nadar, is one of them. Some distinguished graduates in instrumentation and mechanical engineering hailing from Coimbatore district have been fabricating world-class printing presses. Most of the polytechnics in the State have also risen to the modern levels by offering courses in the latest branches of technical knowledge.

The heights that small-scale and medium industries in the state have scaled are tremendous. It is true that when the first industrial estate at Guindy in Chennai was established in the late 1950s, computer and electronic industries had not become popular in this part of the country. As such the facilities that the Kamaraj Government had created at the industrial estate were not for such industries. But the industrial scenario has changed a lot now and steps are afoot now restructure the industrial estate of Guindy suitting to the present day industries of information technology.
The electrification of the entire state, laying of new road networks to connect even the remotest obscure hamlets with the nearby district roads and state highways have changed the face of Tamil Nadu a lot. Now villages are no longer considered to be unsuitable for setting up new industries. The automobile boom in general and two-wheeler boom in particular have led to the opening of automobile servicing centres even in very small villages.

The very high literacy rate that the state has achieved now has led to the starting of printing presses in remote villages. The old style letter press has almost disappeared from the state and all the new printing presses are computerized ones and the actual printing is done in offset presses. The most noteworthy aspect of the printing industry in villages is that the presses are able to procure even mini-offset printing presses fabricated in the state itself even for the low cost as low as Rs. 1.5 lakh.

As far as large-scale industries are concerned, new big industries have come up in the state. But the difference is obvious. Four decades have gone by after Kamaraj had relinquished office as the state’s Chief Minister. The number of the public sector industries set up in the state during this long period is very negligible. The Liquid Propulsion Centre under the Indian Space Research Organization set up at Mahendragiri in Tirunelveli district and the second atomic power plant that is being built at Koodamgulam in the same district are the two major undertakings that the Central Government has taken up in the post-Kamaraj Tamil Nadu. However, the
field of the private sector is a quite impressive one. The petro-chemical industries set up at Thoothukudi and Arumuganeri, the cement factories and modern car assembling units and motorcycle companies have been keeping up the position of the state as the second largest industrialized state under the Indian Union.

The concern that the successive state governments have been showing to the good old handloom industry is a praiseworthy one. Following the footsteps of the earliest congress governments, the successive governments of the Dravidian Parties have also been coming out with various novel schemes to give succour to the industry.

A comparative study of the performance of the Governments in Tamil Nadu clearly shows that the Kamaraj Government and that of his successor, M. Bhaktavatsalam were little interested in populism. All that they wanted to do was solid work and they never failed to rise to the expectations of the enterprising entrepreneurs of the state. The spinning mills which the Kamaraj Government and that of Bhaktavatsalam had established in the state ran profitably during their tenure of those Governments. But the Governments of the State, which were formed after the 1980s, changed their shifts to populism. They failed to modernize the machinery in the already established spinning mills in the co-operative sector in tune with the age of the original machinery and the rising volume of the work. This was one of the major reasons for the losses that the mills accumulated in the 1990s.
Even in the field of non-conventional energy, the Governments which were formed in the state after 1995 failed to rise to the expectations of the industrialists who had put up wind turbine generators at Muppandal in Kanyakumari district and the south-eastern villages in Radhapuram taluk in Tirunelveli district. The industrialists entered the field of non-conventional energy only after the Government assured them of opening substations of Tamil Nadu Electricity Board to absorb all the power generated in Muppandal on its grid and supply power to the industrialists concerned at the actual place of their production. When more and more industrialists came up to put up wind turbines at new areas in Muppandal and Valliyoor in 2004, they could not go ahead with their plans as the TNEB could not cope with the rising demand for more substations in the areas to absorb the wind power which the newcomers had set to generate.

As far as the development of small-scale industries were concerned the non-Congress parties which formed the governments at the Centre also paid as much importance to them as the Congress Governments. During the Janata Party’s Government, the definition of Small-Scale Industry was revised so as to give it a broad base. According to the definition formulated in July 1980 all industries with a capital investment of Rs. 20 lakh in plant and machinery were classified as small-scale industries. The smaller units with a capital investment of Rs. 2 lakh in plant and machinery were called
tiny units. Units with a capital investment in plant and machinery varying between Rs. 20 lakh and Rs. 25 lakh were classified as ancillary industries.

The reforms which the Rajiv Gandhi Government at the Centre brought in the late eighties proved that some of the policies followed by the Nehru Government were not beneficial to the country. One of such policies related to automobile industry. The Central Government decided in 1954 to develop an indigenous automobile industry. Following this decision, General Motors, Ford, FIAT and other major automobile companies which had set up assembly lines in this country between 1910 and 1920, in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras closed down their units. The import and assembly of motor cars witnessed a steady growth crossing the 30,000 mark in 1930. With the assembling of Dodge DeSato and Plymouth, Premier Automobiles Limited (PAL) acquired the unique distinction of a pioneer in the manufacture of motor car in India in 1946, while the Birlas' Hindustan Motors (HM), which started off as an auto component maker, also graduated to making cars in 1949. Ford and other assemblers had to close down operations.

The restrictive policy actually resulted in keeping the industry thousands of kilometres away from the state-of-the-art technology at that given time. For India, the early-1980s brought a fresh breeze into the auto sector mainly with the entry into car manufacture of the government itself with a 74 per cent stake in Maruti Udyog Ltd (MUL), a joint venture with
Suzuki Motors of Japan. Maruti 800, popularly known as the people's car, was a watershed in India's auto industry, registering a sales figure of more than 2,00,000 by 1999 from a mere 1,200 units in 1984. MUL also has since diversified its portfolio by inclusion of vans, multi-utility vehicles (MUVs) and mid-sized cars.

The delicensing of auto industry in 1993 was another major milestone as it helped attract several international players to the country: Daewoo, Hyundai, GM, Ford, Peugot, Mitsubishi, Honda, Fiat and others.

A ruling that India's automobile policy was not WTO compatible compelled the Centre to revise its automobile policy in 2002 by withdrawing certain conditions such as achieving 70 per cent local content requirement, and upfront minimum capital investment of $50 million. In fact, the lifting of quantitative restrictions on imports is expected to further boost the auto industry, bringing more international players to the country. The credit for all this rosy picture of the state rightly goes to Kamaraj and it is heartening that all the right-thinking and knowledgeable people of the state gratefully remember him.