

K.PONRAJ: AN UNSUNG HERO IN COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

S.Sabena Asmi

M.Phil. Scholar, Department of History,

V.O.Chidambaram College, Thoothukudi, Tamilnadu, India

Abstract:

K.Ponraj was a communist leader who served for public more than 40 years. So many times he imprisoned for his struggle in the benefit of public. Still now he is struggling for salt labours welfare. His service is worth and to do research. This paper attempts to bring out the work and service of K.Ponraj. In 1967 at the age of 19, he joined as a member in communist party of Nellai District, from 1967 to till now his participation in Nellai and Thoothukudi agitation are incredible. He was attracted by the principles of the party's impartial role in the society. He realized the upliftment of labours will be possible only by the communist party. In 1952 he started an agitation against the low wages to salt coolies, atrocities committed to them, daily wages issue in equality in wages for women and heavy work assigned to women. He actively participated in the activities of the youth federation. Then K.Ponraj was elected as leader in 1987 because of his honesty.

Index Terms: Communist Movement, Salt Labour, Struggling

I. INTRODUCTION

K.Ponraj was a communist leader who served for public more than 40 years. So many times he imprisoned for his struggle. Still now he is struggling for salt labours welfare¹. His service is worth and to do research. This paper attempts to bring out the work and service of K.Pon Raj.

II. EARLY LIFE

K.Pon Raj was born on 08 Sep 1948 in pullavazhi village, Thoothukudi District. His father's name was Kadarkarai and his Mother name was Petchiammal. He belongs from salt workers family. He studied primary education in Government high School at Pazhayakayal. Due, to family circumstances he stopped his study at 10th standard. He worked in salt plant as daily wages. At the age 16 years, he was attracted by the communist thoughts².

III. INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNIST PARTY

A.K.Gopalan leader of Marxist communist party in Kerala 1927. He joined hands of congress took for the upliftments of the workers of kerala. He participated in "Indian Coffee House" labour protest for upliftment of low caste people and various labour issues³. By Reading Gopalan's life history book and his personal life style towards labours inspired K.Pon Raj to involve in the communist party.

IV. JOINING IN COMMUNIST PARTY

In 1967 at the age of 19, he joined as a member in communist party of Nellai District⁴, From 1967 to till now his participation in Nellai and Thoothukudi agitation are incredible. He maintain a loyal friendship with members of communist party. He was attracted by the principles of and the party its impartial role in the society. He realized "The upliftment of labours will be possible only by the communist party"

V. ROLE MODEL OF K.PON RAJ

M.Ponnaiah one of the leader of communist party in Thoothukudi dedicated his life for the betterment of the labours by took part in collies protest of Thoothukudi. He was arrested in protest against Tasmak. K.Pon Raj took him as his role model.

In 1952 he started a agitation against the low wages to salt coolies atrocities committed to them, daily wages problems, against the inequality in wages for women and heavy work assigned to women etc⁵.

VI. ROLE IN DEMOCRATIC YOUTH FEDERATION OF INDIA

The youths in communist party started a federation in the year 1974 at Nellai⁶. The first conference was held at Vasudevanallur. He actively participated in the activities of the Youth federation. He played as a role model for the youngsters in Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi District. Many agitations held in Thoothukudi under the leadership of K.Pon Raj. In 1978, he started a strike at Kovilpatti for price rice, education for all and fund for Unemployee⁷.

He actively participated in the Bharath bandh in 1994 conducted by All India Communist Party. He supported the students strike held in Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi related to the educational issues.

VII. SALT WORKERS UNION

In 1978 salt workers union was formed in Thoothukudi by the effort of T.K. Swamidoss, SoosaiMuthu, PonRaj. PonRaj was selected as Join secretary of this union many demands were taken forward under his leadership like weekly holidays for women and dismissing of workers with paper reasons.

The project become successful and women also got 1 day holidays with salary every week.

VIII. STRUGGLE FOR WORKERS BONUS

In 1979, he struggled to provide bonus for salt refining workers. Salt plants owners condemned his action. He was attracted by gangsters who worker for salt industry owners. Ponraj was admitted in hospital for 4 months to get recovery.

IX. KARIPPU MANIGAL MAGAZINE

His service is praised in the book karippu manigal written by Rajam Krishnan. In 1984 ponraj was attacked by weapon by rowdies because of his involvement in the salt union¹⁰.

X. HARBOUR WORKERS UNION

The workers union Started in 1970 was the second largest union in Tamilnadu. It was functioned under the control of congress party¹¹. Sundaram was the leader of this union. He was suspended because of corruption. Then k. ponraj was elected as leader in 1987, because of this honest. He worked 18 years as leader. Some gangs field a case on him because he belongs to low caste community. Against the case CITU started protest in Thoothukudi. The judgment was favoured him. Then he became the leader of the “ Sangu kulithal Union”¹².

XI. PROTECTING RIGHTS OF SCHEDULED PEOPLE

The most important task of Marxist communist party was to take welfare of Dalit people in Thoothukudi. In July 1993many Dalit people were murdered in the communal riot. He conducted a rally against this communal riot with slogan of “Avoid caste conflicts”¹³. The anti-socials were arrested by the police.

XII. CONCLUSION:

He is an active Politican of Tamilnadu. All demonstration and struggle are held under the leader ship of Ponraj not only Thoothukudi districts and Tirunelveli districts. He has under gone many hunger strikes. Some lasting for more than ten days for the betterment of the salt workers and especially for the upliftment of Dalit of Thoothukudi district.

Now he is the secretary as Thoothukudi district communist party. He organized the people against untouchability and he is the Head of Salt workers Union. Still he is working on the basis of the word said by E.V.R that “There is no rest for public life”

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