



# Legislative Voice of the Marginalized: An Analysis of Assembly and Parliamentary Speeches of the Legend and Philanthropic Leadership of S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar

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**Abstract :** This study examines the legislative discourse of S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar, a prominent political leader and philanthropist from Tamil Nadu, through a systematic analysis of his speeches in the State Assembly and Parliament. Emerging from a rural and marginalized social background, he played a crucial role in articulating the concerns of backward and oppressed communities during the formative decades of Indian democracy. The research adopts a qualitative approach grounded in critical discourse analysis, drawing on legislative debates, archival records, and secondary sources.

The findings reveal that his speeches consistently emphasized social justice, equitable access to education, rural development, and the need for inclusive governance. His rhetorical style combined emotional appeal with practical reasoning, enabling him to effectively represent grassroots realities within formal political institutions. In addition to his legislative contributions, his philanthropic initiatives—particularly the donation of land for public infrastructure such as educational institutions, hospitals, and transport facilities—further reinforced his commitment to social welfare.

The study argues that S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar's legislative interventions functioned as a vital medium for amplifying marginalized voices and shaping policy discourse. By integrating political leadership with philanthropy, he exemplified a model of people-centric governance. This research contributes to the limited scholarly attention on regional leaders and highlights the significance of legislative speech as an instrument of social transformation in democratic societies.

**IndexTerms - Social Justice, Marginalized Communities, Legislative Discourse, Reservation Policy, Tamil Nadu Politics, Backward Classes, Parliamentary Debates, Grassroots Leadership, Philanthropy, Inclusive Governance Component,.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar (1918–1992) occupies a prominent place in the political history of Tamil Nadu as a leader who consistently articulated the concerns of marginalized communities through legislative platforms. His political career, spanning both the Madras Legislative Assembly and the Indian Parliament, reflects a sustained commitment to social justice, equitable representation, and rural development. As a founder of the Tamil Nadu Toilers' Party, he emerged as a strong advocate for backward and most backward classes, transforming their socio-political aspirations into legislative discourse.

The historical context of his political emergence is rooted in the post-independence period, which witnessed growing demands for social equity and representation in governance. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar mobilized agrarian and socially disadvantaged groups, particularly in northern Tamil Nadu, and translated their grievances into organized political action. His role as Minister of Local Administration between 1954 and 1957 under K. Kamaraj marked a crucial phase in which he combined administrative responsibility with grassroots advocacy, reinforcing the connection between governance and public welfare.

In the legislative assembly, his speeches were characterized by a strong emphasis on the upliftment of backward communities. He advocated for reservation policies, equitable access to education and employment, and the recognition of the most backward classes as a distinct socio-political category. His interventions were not merely rhetorical but were aimed at influencing concrete policy measures that would address systemic inequalities. By framing marginalization as a structural issue, he contributed to shaping the discourse on social justice within the state.

At the national level, his tenure as a Member of Parliament from 1980 to 1989 expanded his advocacy to a broader platform. His parliamentary speeches reflected a balance between regional concerns and national development priorities. He highlighted issues such as rural poverty, uneven resource distribution, and the need for inclusive growth policies. Through these interventions, he ensured that the voices of marginalized communities were represented in national policymaking processes.

Beyond his legislative contributions, Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar's philanthropic activities further demonstrate his commitment to public welfare. He donated land for essential public infrastructure, including hospitals, educational institutions, railway facilities, and bus stands, particularly in regions like Cuddalore. These acts of philanthropy complemented his political ideals, illustrating a model of leadership that extended beyond formal governance into tangible community development.

His leadership style was deeply rooted in grassroots engagement and pragmatic political strategy. Coming from an agrarian background, he maintained close connections with rural communities, which informed his policy priorities and legislative interventions. While his early political mobilization was centered around caste-based identity, it gradually evolved into a broader social justice framework that emphasized inclusivity and institutional reform. His ability to form strategic alliances, including collaboration with the Congress, enabled him to secure policy gains for marginalized groups.

The impact of his legislative voice is evident in the long-term policy developments in Tamil Nadu, particularly in the recognition and advancement of backward and most backward classes. His efforts contributed to strengthening the foundation of reservation policies and social justice discourse in the state. His legacy continues to be acknowledged through institutional recognitions, including memorials and official commemorations, reflecting his enduring influence on Tamil Nadu's socio-political landscape.

A critical analysis of his contributions reveals both strengths and limitations. While his advocacy significantly advanced the cause of marginalized communities, the initial focus on caste-based mobilization highlights the complexities of identity politics in democratic frameworks. Additionally, the limited availability of comprehensive speech records poses challenges for in-depth discourse analysis. Nevertheless, the policy outcomes and institutional changes associated with his efforts underscore the effectiveness of his legislative approach. In conclusion, S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar exemplifies the transformative potential of legislative platforms in amplifying marginalized voices. His speeches in both the assembly and parliament served as instruments of social change, bridging the gap between grassroots realities and policy formulation. By integrating political advocacy with philanthropy and community engagement, he established a model of leadership grounded in social justice, inclusivity, and public service.

## TAMIL NADU TOILERS PARTY

The Tamil Nadu Toilers Party was founded by S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar, M. A. Manickavelu Naicker, and Markabandhu. In 1951, they organized a major state-level conference under the banner of the Vanniyar Kula Kshatriya Sangam. During this conference, the leaders resolved to contest the forthcoming elections with the support of the toiling masses and formally established the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party. The party primarily advocated for the welfare of the Vanniyar community and demanded 15% exclusive reservation in public employment and education. However, due to internal disagreements, a split occurred among the leadership. While S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar continued with the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party, M. A. Manickavelu Naicker founded a separate political organization known as the Commonweal Party in 1951, with strong support from regions such as Kanchipuram, Vellore, and Tiruvannamalai.

In the 1952 general elections, the first elections held after Indian independence, the Commonweal Party contested both the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary elections. In the Assembly elections, 6 out of 13 candidates were elected, while in the Parliamentary elections, all 3 candidates contested by the party were successfully elected. Following this electoral success, M. A. Manickavelu Naicker gained widespread popularity across Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Nadu Toilers Party contested the 1952 general elections with substantial support from the Vanniyar community, particularly in the South Arcot and Salem districts. The party participated in both the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary elections, achieving notable electoral success. Out of 34 Assembly constituencies contested, 19 candidates were elected, and in the Parliamentary elections, the party secured 4 out of 7 seats, marking a significant breakthrough for a regional party representing marginalized communities.

Among the successful candidates, S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar emerged as a prominent leader, having been elected from the Cuddalore general constituency. Following the elections, the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party extended its support to the Congress government. Subsequently, S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar was inducted into the ministry, further strengthening his role in governance and public administration.

## ***A SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AFTER BEING ELECTED AS A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FROM THE LABOUR PARTY IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1952.***

*Honourable Speaker,*

*For the past four days, a discussion has been taking place on the motion expressing confidence in this Council of Ministers. We belong to a highly backward and marginalized community. We have formed a party and are working here solely to ensure that our community and people like us achieve progress and upliftment.*

*Our community remains in a very backward condition, and it is well known to the Honourable Rajagopalachari that we have come forward to work for its advancement. Among our people, there are hardly any who hold high positions or who are well educated. Even in the past, under previous governments and Congress leaders, though some of us tried to voice our grievances, we were neglected. None of our issues were addressed.*

*Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's vision of uplifting the oppressed and marginalized, we have taken up this cause. Yet, despite repeated efforts, our community continues to remain deprived. When this matter was raised with Honourable C. Rajagopalachari, he remarked that leaders like Manickavelu Naicker represent our*

community. Even if many such leaders emerge, we will not rest until our entire community rises to a better status.

*Because the Congress has failed for so long to look after our welfare, we have decided to oppose it. Until the grievances of the backward communities are resolved, we will continue to remain in the opposition. That is why I take this stand today on this resolution.*

*Furthermore, district officials and legislative members do not take into consideration the views expressed. Even reasonable demands put forward by them are suppressed. Since this government assumed office, such authoritarian tendencies have been increasing.*

*The government has not provided any meaningful concessions to farmers. Due to the lack of employment among the educated and the working classes, unemployment and hardship are steadily increasing. The government must create opportunities for employment. To address the problem of unemployment, social welfare schemes should be expanded across all districts.*

From the speeches delivered by M. R. Kandasamy, it is clear that he was a voice for the common people. Even after the Labour Party aligned with the Congress and he served as the Minister for Labour in the Congress cabinet, he continued to insist that benefits should reach the people without any barriers. Like an opposition leader, he fearlessly expressed his views in the Assembly. From the speeches he delivered while serving as a minister, it is evident that he never failed to boldly put forward his opinions in the interest of the public.

***S. S. Ramasamy spoke in the Legislative Assembly in 1954, during his tenure as a minister, delivering a speech aimed at bringing significant progress and upliftment for our Vanniyar Community.***

*I feel compelled to say a few words about what the government has done for the backward communities in the Budget for the year 1954–55.*

*An amount of ninety lakh rupees was mentioned in the budget for the welfare and upliftment of the Scheduled and Backward Classes. However, only ten lakh rupees has actually been allocated. Funds should be distributed in proportion to the percentage of the backward population. I request the government to allocate funds according to their population ratio, especially for providing scholarships, stipends, and other benefits to school children belonging to these communities.*

*The government must take appropriate steps to provide all kinds of concessions and ensure a permanent solution for the upliftment of backward people. At present, the government has also introduced new taxes. At a time when the people of the country are already suffering and are unable to pay even the existing taxes, I would say that new taxes are unnecessary.*

*Moreover, farmers are severely affected as their crops are being damaged by pests in many ways, resulting in little to no yield. The government should consider this issue carefully and provide tax relief to help the poor people.*

***A speech delivered by S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar on March 2, 1973, while he was serving as a Member of the Legislative Council(MLC).***

*With the noble intention of providing at least basic housing facilities to the oppressed communities, a Welfare Development Board for the Scheduled Castes was established. It is commendable that ownership of the house sites they had already been residing on has been granted to one lakh people from the Scheduled Castes and fifty thousand people from the Backward Classes.*

### **LEGISLATIVE SPEECH ANALYSIS**

S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar emerged as a powerful legislative voice for marginalized and backward communities in Tamil Nadu. His speeches in the Assembly were grounded in grassroots realities and consistently reflected his commitment to social justice, inclusive governance, and rural development.

He frequently emphasized the urgent need for equitable resource distribution and welfare-oriented governance. As he asserted, *“Development must reach the last person in the village; otherwise, it cannot be called true progress.”* This perspective guided his interventions on issues such as drinking water supply, agricultural support, and rural infrastructure.

Padaiyatchiyar strongly advocated for the upliftment of backward communities, particularly the Vanniyar community. He highlighted structural inequalities and called for policy reforms, stating, *“Education and employment opportunities must be made accessible to the oppressed, for only then can social justice be realized.”* His demand for reservation and representation reflected a broader vision of equality and empowerment.

In several debates, he drew attention to the everyday struggles of rural populations. He argued, *“The voice of the farmer and the laborer must be heard in this House, for they form the backbone of our society.”* His speeches were not merely rhetorical but were rooted in lived experiences and practical concerns.

He also stressed communal harmony and unity across caste lines. As he observed, *“Progress cannot be achieved in a divided society; unity among communities is the foundation of development.”* His approach sought to bridge social divides while advocating for justice.

Unlike many contemporaries, Padaiyatchiyar combined critique with constructive suggestions. He maintained, *“It is not enough to identify problems; this House must work together to provide lasting solutions for the people.”* This constructive legislative style enhanced his credibility and effectiveness as a public representative.

Overall, his legislative discourse represents a significant contribution to democratic practice in Tamil Nadu. His speeches stand as a testament to his enduring commitment to the principles of social justice, grassroots empowerment, and responsible governance.

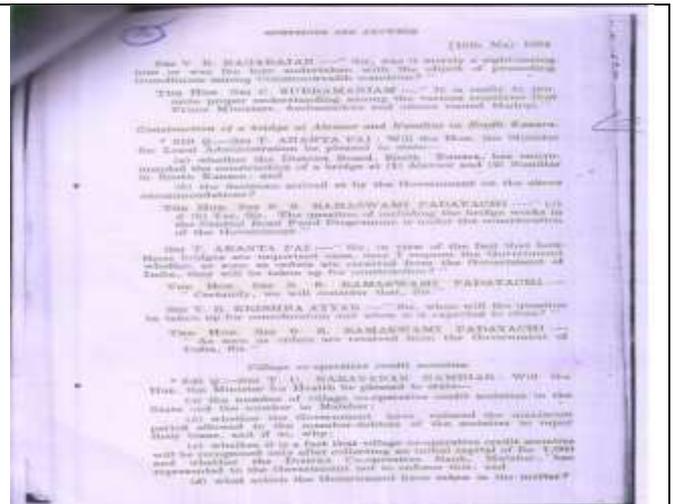
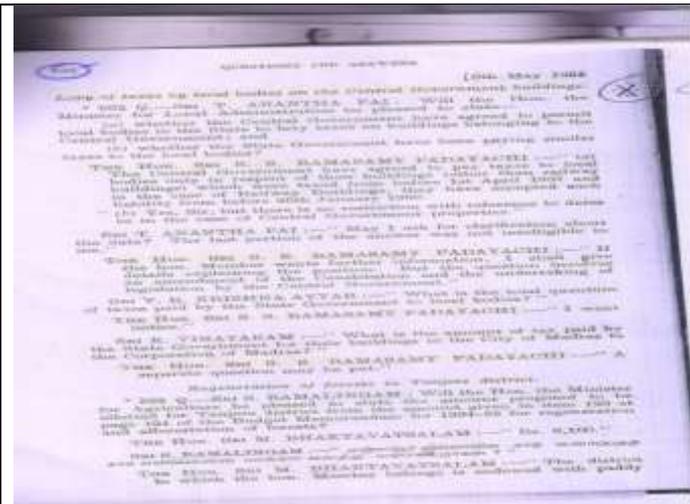


Fig.1 Legislative Assembly Speech on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1954

Fig.2 Legislative Assembly Speech on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1954

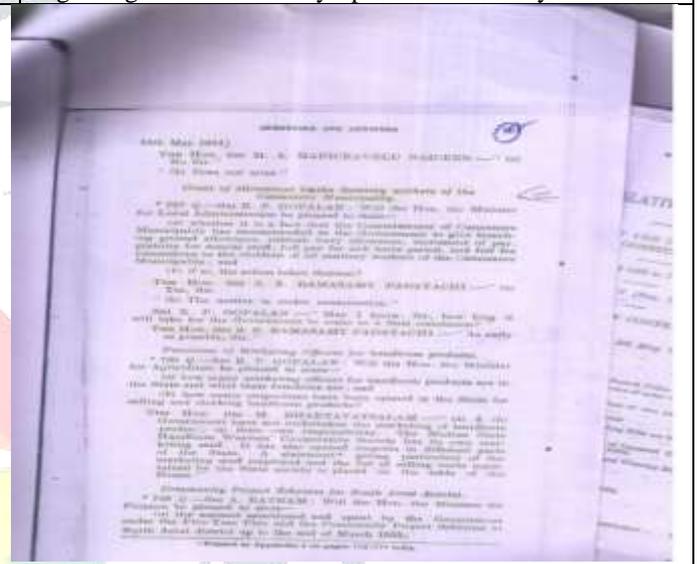
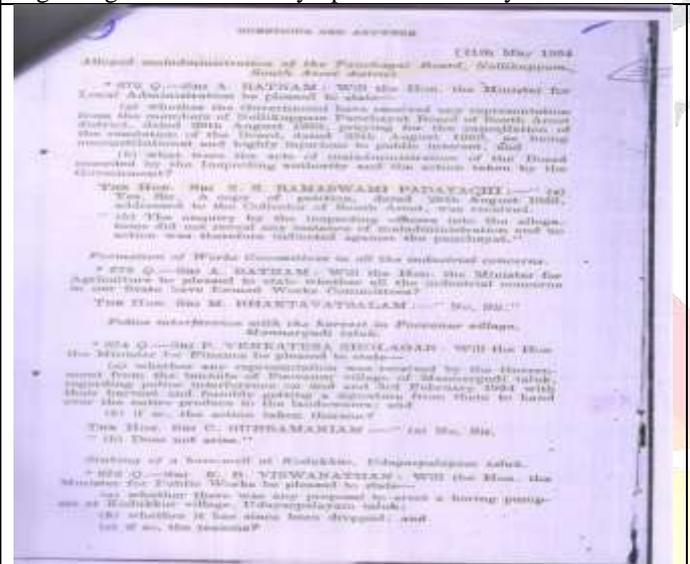


Fig.3 Legislative Assembly Speech on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1954

Fig.4 Legislative Assembly Speech on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1954

S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar emphasized the importance of educational development, stating,

*“I should like to congratulate the Government for its efforts in developing education; however, much still remains to be done.”*

Highlighting inclusivity in education, he argued,

*“Education must be made accessible to all sections of society and should not remain confined to a privileged few.”*

On rural development and infrastructure, he observed,

*“It is essential that proper educational facilities are created in rural areas so that our youth may be adequately trained and empowered.”*

Addressing economic concerns, he cautioned,

*“The burden of educational expenses should not fall entirely upon the people; the Government must take responsibility.”*

He further stressed the financial limitations of rural populations, stating,

*“Considering the economic condition of the rural poor, it is unrealistic to expect them to bear heavy costs.”*

In his legislative intervention, he remarked,

*“This is not the time to impose additional financial burdens on the people.”*

Focusing on welfare priorities, he asserted,

*“The Government must first ensure that the basic needs of the people are fulfilled before introducing new schemes.”*

On policy implementation, he advised,

*“No scheme should be introduced without carefully considering its impact on the common people.”*

Emphasizing essential services, he concluded,

*“The Government should prioritize food, housing, education, and employment for the welfare of the people.”*

Finally, he humbly submitted,  
"These are my suggestions to the Ministry, and I trust they will be given due consideration."

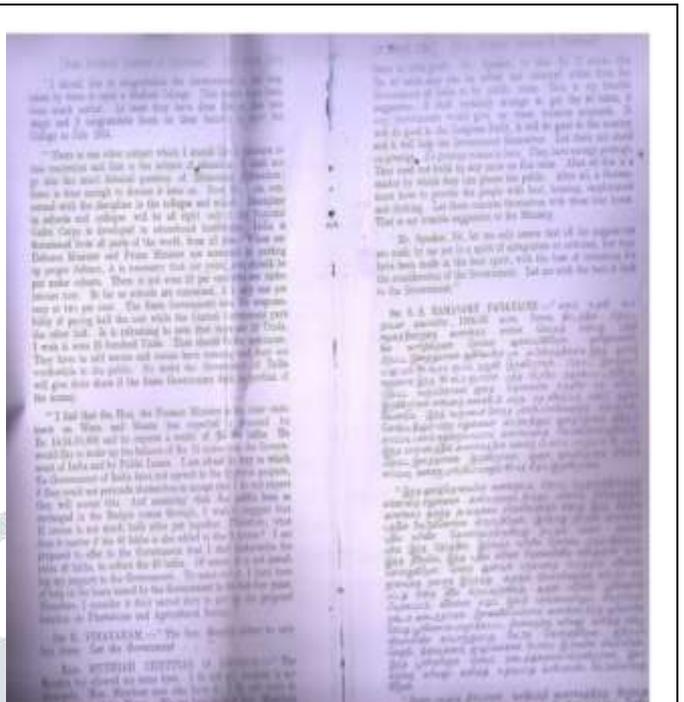
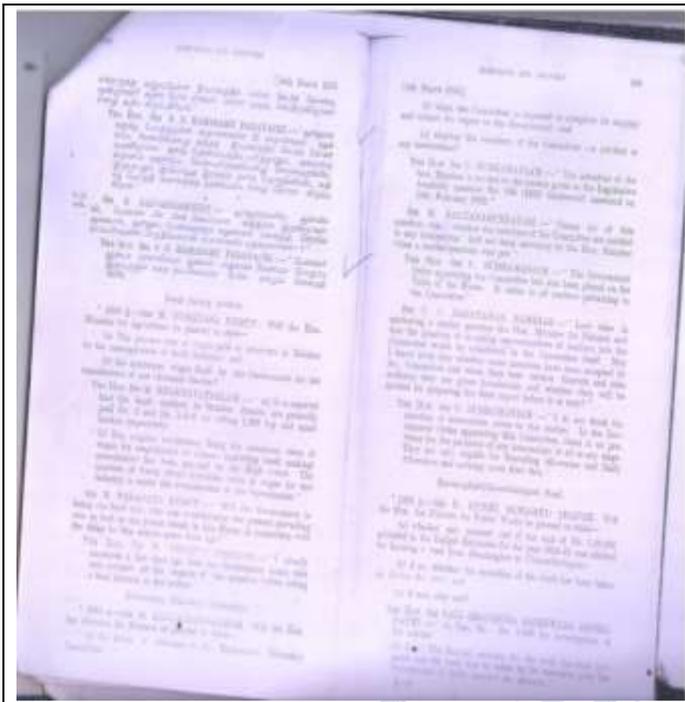


Fig.5 Legislative Assembly Speech on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1954

Fig.6 Legislative Assembly Speech on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1954

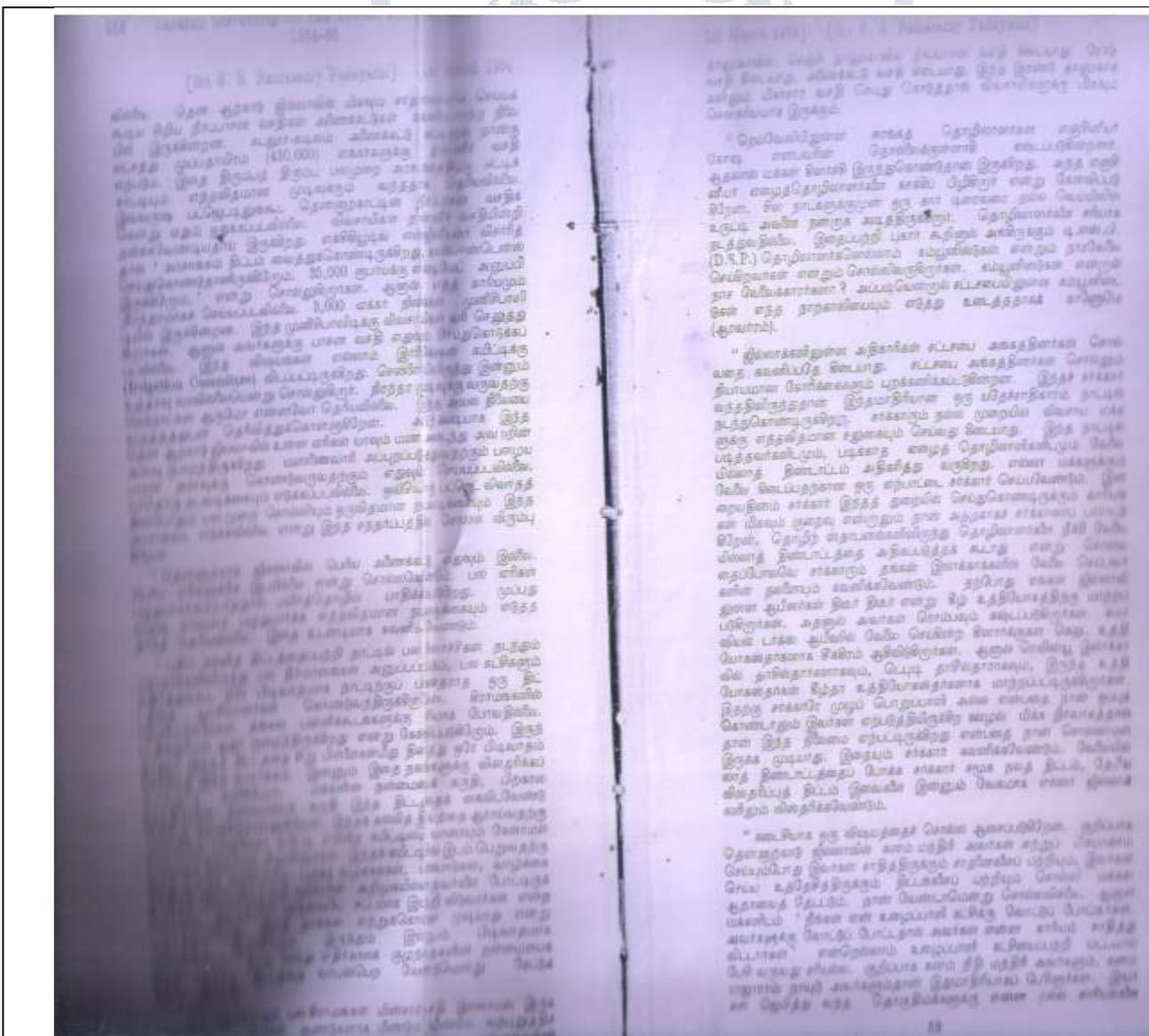


Fig.7 Legislative Assembly Speech about Vanniyar People and NLC

***District formation: Villupuram was formed as Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar District.***

Working for the advancement of society, language, and community, and showcasing to the world the spirit of service of the great leaders who laboured for these causes, as well as honoring and celebrating those who dedicated themselves entirely to the nation, and presenting their fame as an example to the younger generation—this is a tradition that runs in our blood.

As a reflection of this tradition, the revolutionary leader Dr. J. Jayalalithaa, remembering the great leader S.S.Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar—who lives on in the hearts of the people like a gentle breeze in a garden—decided to commemorate him by dividing the South Arcot district into two and naming one of them as Villupuram Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar District.

At that time, in the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa delivered a speech:

*“Honourable Speaker and respected members, after our government assumed office, we have been taking steps to divide large revenue districts into two in order to ensure efficient administration. Based on this policy, in the past two years, Thanjavur district was divided into two. Similarly, South Arcot district has also been divided into two, and the district with Cuddalore as its headquarters has been named Villupuram district.*

*The Honourable Revenue Minister had earlier mentioned this naming in his reply to the demand for grants. Following this announcement, I received requests from various places and sections of people regarding the name to be given to the district with Villupuram as its headquarters.*

*In particular, organizations representing the Vanniyar community—about thirteen to eighteen associations working for their welfare—submitted petitions to me. Mr. R. Kulasekaran, President of the Central Federation of Vanniyakula Kshatriya Welfare Associations, met me on 13.04.1993 and submitted a memorandum along with the resolution passed by the federation.*

*These associations had resolved that the district with Villupuram as its headquarters should be named after Thiru S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar, and they placed this as a request before me.*

*Similarly, on 14.04.1993, fourteen Members of the Legislative Assembly from the undivided South Arcot district, under the leadership of the Honourable Minister for Municipal Administration, met me and submitted a petition. They too conveyed, on behalf of the people of the district, their desire that the district be named after Thiru S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar.*

*There is hardly anyone in this state who is politically aware and does not know about Thiru S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar. Not only among the Vanniyar community but across all sections of society, he earned respect through his integrity in public life, political acumen, and powerful oratory, establishing himself as a remarkable figure of his time.*

*He was first elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly from the Cuddalore constituency. He served continuously as a Member of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly from 1952 to 1962 and left a deep and lasting mark on Tamil Nadu politics.*

*From 1954 to 1957, he served as the Minister for Labour and achieved several notable accomplishments. In addition, he worked as the Chairman of the Cuddalore Municipality and as a leader of the Labour Party, actively participating in various social reform initiatives and dedicating himself to the service of the nation. Such a noble personality was Thiru S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar.*

*As the great poet Thiruvalluvar said,*

**உழுதுண்டு வாழ்வாரே வாழ்வார் மற்றெல்லாம்  
தொழுதுண்டு பின் செல்வர்.**

*he lived a life of meaning and service. He hailed from a respectable agricultural family and showed deep interest and commitment towards the welfare and upliftment of the backward and most backward communities, striving to ensure they attained dignity and rightful status in society.*

*Our All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) possesses the greatness of honoring and respecting leaders who led an honest political life beyond the barriers of caste and religion. Based on this spirit, and in recognition of the sentiments of the backward and most backward communities, as well as in line with the government's commitment to building an egalitarian society, I am pleased to inform this august House that the district with Villupuram as its headquarters will be named Villupuram Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar District.*

**Speech delivered by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, J. Jayalithaa, at the district naming ceremony.**

*I feel proud to participate in this special function and to inaugurate the Villupuram Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar District.*

*Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar was a great leader who devoted his entire life to uplifting a community that had once declined and bringing it back to a position of dignity. Though countless people are born and pass away, only great heroes and protectors of society remain forever in the hearts of the people and in history. In accordance with this natural truth, we take pride in establishing the Villupuram Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar District as a tribute to the achievements of such a wonderful leader.*

*This newly formed Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar District, with Villupuram as its headquarters, should shine as the crown jewel of our beloved Tamil Nadu. The culture of naming districts after deserving leaders—transcending caste, religion, and political differences—is not something everyone possesses. Only those with broad-mindedness and confidence can rise above all divisions and appreciate, honor, and celebrate worthy individuals.*

As highlighted by the Honorable Chief Minister in her speech, the Villupuram Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar District, with Villupuram as its headquarters, comprises eight taluks: Villupuram, Tirukkoilur, Ulundurpet, Tindivanam, Gingee, Vanur, Kallakurichi, and Sankarapuram. This district includes twelve Legislative Assembly constituencies, twenty-two Panchayat Unions, two municipalities, and 1,084 villages.

**CONCLUSION**

The legislative speeches of S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar reflect a profound commitment to social justice, inclusive governance, and the upliftment of marginalized communities. His interventions in the Assembly consistently emphasized equitable access to education, rural development, and the prioritization of basic human needs. Through a pragmatic and people-centered approach, he transformed legislative platforms into instruments of social change and democratic representation.

His political vision was rooted in empathy and responsibility, ensuring that policy discussions remained closely aligned with the realities of ordinary citizens. As he firmly articulated, *“The voice of the farmer and the labourer must be heard in this House, for they form the backbone of our society.”* This guiding principle defined his legislative career and continues to resonate as a model for ethical and inclusive leadership.

In essence, S. S. Ramasamy Padaiyatchiyar’s legacy lies in his ability to bridge governance and grassroots realities, leaving behind a lasting impact on Tamil Nadu’s political and social landscape.

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