



## C.Subramaniam - A Political Leader

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C. Subramaniam is an Indian politician, freedom fighter who served as the State minister, Central minister and Governor of the state. He is popularly known as C.S. He has won the esteem and confidence of the three important Prime Ministers<sup>1</sup> who have presided over the country destinies since 1947 Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Sastri and Indira Gandhi.

C.Subramaniam has held vital port folios in the union cabinet and has acquitted himself remarkably well in each of them. That day, he holds a key position in the Government as well as in the party hierarchy. Three personalities have influenced his attitudes and career profoundly.

First among them is his peternal uncle, Swami chid Bhavanantha, who joined the Ramakrishna mutt early in life and has dedicated himself to its service for over five decades. C. Subramaniam came into contact with the Swamiji of the Ramakrishna mutt at the young age of twelve and developed an admiration for their life of austerity and service to the poor and the down-trodden. C. Subramaniam's basic spiritual ideals in life-simplicity in living, service to his fellowmen and de attachment in success or failure and whether in office or out of office.

The second person who influenced him greatly was Rajaji gave a chance to C.Subramaniam to reach peack in the politics both in Madras State and central cabinet. He utilized these opportunities and reveals his capacity, skills and innovative thoughts. Shaped his name in the History of Tamilnadu as well as the History of India.

The Third person who shaped C. Subramaniam's career was Jawaharlal Nehru. C.Subramaniam was deeply inspired by Nehru's total commitment to development, his rationality, his faith in the scientific approach and his socialistic outlook. When Nehru identified the abilities of C.Subramaniam asked Kamaraj to relieve him from State Ministry for utilizing his capacity for the Central Government. Later Mrs. Indira Gandhi the daughter of Nehru as well as

the then Prime Minister of India. Invited him to become the interim president of the New Congress after the historic split.

### **Early Life**

He was born on 30 January 1910 in Senguttai palayam village which is located at Coimbatore district. His father was Chitambaram Gounder. C.Subramaniam has started his school life in his village. Then went to Pollachi for his high school studies. Later he joined the Madras Presidency College from where he graduated in B.Sc. (Physics) in 1930. His father wished to send him to the United Kingdom, for Higher Studies, but the political turmoil in the country put a stop to all such plans. He joined the law college in Madras and took his degree in 1932. He started his career as a lawyer under T.A. Ramalingam Chettiar, at Coimbatore.<sup>2</sup>

### **Political career**

In those days almost every youth started their political career through freedom movement. C.Subramaniam also not exempted this category he actively agitated against the British Government and imprisonment in several times.

While he was practiced as a lawyer he actively took part in the freedom movement particularly concentrated in the picketing of abkari sales at Pollachi. Therefore he was sentenced to eight months arrested and sentenced to eight months under criminal Law Amendment Act kept in Coimbatore and Vellore Jails. Again in 1941 he took part in Individual Sathyagraha and sentenced to three months or to pay a fine of Rs.500/-. The fine was not paid and underwent the imprisonment in Coimbatore and Alipuram jails. In 1942 he was participated in the Quite India Movement and arrested for the possession of prejudicial pamphlets underwent imprisonment in Vellore jail After releasing from once he was again arrested under defense of India rules and kept as defense for two months in Vellore jail.<sup>3</sup>

C.Subramaniam engaged himself in the Congress Party and participated almost all the agitative programmes conducted by the Congress. Subsequently in 1946, he was elected to the Constituent Assembly and was one of the youngest members to participate in the framing of the constitution.<sup>4</sup> He took particular interest in the debates relating to the provisions on the official language.

His active participations in the constituent Assembly he got a seat to contest in the Member of Legislative Assembly in the Madras State for the very first General Election and

Elected as MLA. Rajaji the then Chief Minister of Madras State included him as a Minister of Education. As a Minister of Education he Started many reforms in education for instance Free primary education for all children and the provision of midday meals for poor children attending schools, was a pioneer measures in all India level.<sup>5</sup> As a Minister of Finance during Kamaraj Ministry he became an instrument for promoting development of financial position in addition to its conventional concerns for economy and efficiency. With his election to the Lok Sabha in 1962. C. Subramaniam entered a wider field of activity, Jawarharlal Nehru the then Prime Minister of India appointed C. Subramaniam as a Minister for Steel. He sought to give a new deal to the steel plants by re-organising their managerial set-up and combining greater decentralization and autonomy at the plant level with greater responsibility for production and efficiency. After Nehru's demise Lal Bahadur Shastri, got a Prime Ministership.<sup>6</sup>

He decided to bring a new cabinet accordingly, in Preparing his new team, found that there were no takers for the food and Agriculture ministry. This ministry had earned the reputation of being the graveyard of many incumbents. Lal Bahadur Sastri wanted to put up C. Subramaniam on that place. But the well wishers of C. Subramaniam advised not to take on an assignment which might prove as exacting as it might be thankless. C. Subramaniam however, manfully took up this assignment to draw up a new strategy to increase agricultural output and to make the country self-sufficient in food grains. The year 1964 to 1967 when he was Minister for Food and Agriculture were to prove crucial. It was an administrative achievement to avoid large scale suffering and starvation from two successive years of drought. Undeterred by the severity of the short-term problems, C. Subramaniam applied himself to the Long-term strategy of the "Green Revolution". In fact when the country was still in the throes of drought of 1966, he confidently gave a pledge in parliament that within five years the country would be self-reliant in food production. He was to see the fulfillment of this pledge in 1975 as Minister of Planning.<sup>7</sup>

The speeches on the problems of agriculture revealed not only his deep grasp of the varied aspects of Indian agriculture, but his profound concern to revolution Indian agricultural practices by the proper application of Science and Technology. In this task C. Subramaniam interacted substainly with a large number of agriculturists, scientists, economist and administrators and implement their ideas in Agriculture. Later the general elections of 1967 administered rule jolt to the Congress both at the Centre and in many of the States. C. Subramaniam was a victim of this unexpected debacle. When the Congress High Command

decided to find out the reasons for the Congress failure in 1967. Accordingly C. Subramaniam was asked to prepare a report. His analysis of the debacle explained why the Congress had lost its hold on the electorate and suggested that the party should project a more radical image of itself and give better proof of its commitment to a socialist programme.

C.Subramaniam's counsel continued to be valued by Mrs. Indira Gandhi although he was no longer in the Government. His services were sought as Chairman of the Committee on the Aeronautics Industry (1967). When the National Commission on Agriculture was created in 1970, he was the natural choice as chairman. When crisis arose in the Congress Party in 1969, C. Subramaniam firmly in the prime minister's camp against the old leaders including Kamaraj He believed that India now needed vigorous leadership. Therefore he supported Mrs. Indira Gandhi could provide it. In return to this Indira Gandhi Selected C.Subramaniam of an interim president for the new Congress.

C. Subramaniam played a key role in the formulation of the economic policies of the New Congress. His first significant contribution as interim president was to give a new slogan. "Quit poverty", recalling Mahatma Gandhi's historic "Quit India Movement" in its more popular Hindi version of "Garibi Hatao" this slogan has acquired the status of a national commitment by the Government. Indira Gandhi induct C. Subramaniam into the cabinet. As minister for Planning and Deputy Chairmen of the Planning Commission. The newly formed Department of Science and Technology was later added to his charge. As planning Minister C. Subramaniam made a significant contribution in concretizing "Garibi Hatao" into the framework for the approach to the fifth plan. He has also been deeply concerned with imparting a new dynamism to scientific research and development. Since August 1972, when C. Subramaniam was appointed Minister for Industrial Development, science and Technology, he has been pre occupied with the problem of giving new meaning and momentum to the government's industrial policy so that the pace of industrial growth quickened and a balanced development of industries also promoted.

C.Subramaniam tremendous speeches made on various occasions which has been a momentous and exciting period for him and country. The speeches cover a wide range of themes from steel to Agriculture and community. Development to scientific research official language states reorganization etc. They are all his earnest commitment to the welfare of the masses. C. Subramaniam is a dreamer but he is not a idle dreamer, indulging in fanciful utopians.<sup>8</sup> A realize with his feet firmly on the ground, he was at the same time an idealist who can contribute, with

vision and courage, to the future of the largest democracy in the world. He was appointed as the Governor of Maharashtra in 1990. He held frequent meetings with Academicians, industrialists, and other organizations in Raj Bhavans during his tenure as Governor.

Because of his rendless service he has received the highest civilian Award of the Nation, “Bharat Ratna” in 1998, then after two years he was died in the year of 7, November 2000.

### **End notes**

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<sup>1</sup> Subramanian. C, “Yen Valkai Ninaivugal” (Tamil), Vol.I, Chennai, 1994, p.9.

<sup>2</sup> Front Line, Vol.15, No.5, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> The Hindu 8 Nov, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Front line op.cit.,

<sup>5</sup> C. Subramaniam, bio data". Rajbhavan, Maharashtra state, India.

<sup>6</sup> "CS ushered in Green Revolution". The Hindu (India). 8 November 2000. Retrieved 28 October 2011.

<sup>7</sup> "C.Subramaniam awarded Bharat Ratna". Rediff. 18 February 1998. Retrieved 28 October 2011.

<sup>8</sup> "More light on personal facets of C. Subramaniam". The Hindu (Chennai, India). 31 October 2010. Retrieved 28 October 2011.