

Histroy Of Political And Personal Life Of K. Anandha Nambiyar: A Study

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Abstract

Com K. Anandha Nambiyar, the veteran freedom fighter and a leader of railway workers union born and brought up at Kerala and served in Tamil Nadu for 53 years for the upliftment of Tamil Nadu people especially the railway workers. He chose a clerk post in the railway department and joined at Golden Rock in Tamil Nadu. Realizing the importance of workers unity he joined the railway workers union, led the struggle for their rights and emerged as a leader among workers and later joined in the communist movement. His contribution in independent struggle was as significant as many other communist leaders. In the independent India he intensified his struggle for the rights and amenities of railways workers. He was elected as a Member of Parliament for three terms. He was forced to be underground and was imprisoned for many years on many occasions. This chapter discusses about his devoted public life as a trade union leader and as a communist leader.

Keywords: Assembly, Railway workers, Social life and Trade Union.

Introduction

Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar who chose his profession as clerk in the railway department at Golden Rock in Tamil Nadu, had strong commitment to communist ideology, continued his struggle against British colonialism and fought for the rights of working class especially the railway workers. In association with many communist leaders of his time he led many struggles and faced stiff resistance from the ruling class and was behind the bar many times. On being the trade union leader he was victimized and

punished by railway management. He resigned his job and joined as a full time worker of Communist Party of India and in Trade union movement. He was elected by the people as a Member of Madras Legislative Assembly. Thrice he was elected as a Member of Parliament. He was very much respected by the people especially the workers for his dedicated and uninterrupted work of 53 years as a leader of communist movement. This article analyses the life and work of Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar.

Early life

Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar was born on 15th January 1918, in Serudhazham at Kannur district, Kerala. His parents were Kammaran Nambiyar and Lakshmi Ammal. At his age of 12 he lost his father. That shook their family and Mrs. Lakshmi Ammal, with her 3 children moved to another village “Kadachira” in the same Kannur district, where she had her house and lands. Lending the land for lease she made little income, with which she managed her family.

School Education

Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar completed his elementary education at Kadachira village and secondary education at Thalacherry. He scored first rank in his class and hence he was offered free education. He studied Malayalam till his seventh standard and continued his secondary education in English medium. He secured first place in his 10th standard public examination and joined in an intermediate course at the Christian College in Calicut. As his family was in severe financial crisis, he stayed at his friend’s house and completed his study. While he was doing his study at Calicut he met the veteran Communist leaders Com. E.M.S. Namboodhiripad and Com. Krishnapillai. Inspired by these leaders he joined the freedom movement. During the final examination of intermediate course he fell sick and he couldn’t write his examination and hence it became mandatory to redo the course. He began to search a job as his family situation didn’t permit him to continue his education.

Trade union contact and work

More than ten thousand people were working in the Railway workshop at Golden Rock. Just before his entry the DREU was established in Golden rock. Veteran trade union leaders M. Kalyanasundaram, J.P. Purusothaman, Paramasivam and Adhikesavalu Reddiyar were the popular trade union leaders of that time. The activities of the trade union leaders inspired and

attracted the workers. Inspired by Com. Paramasivam and his contributions Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar joined the union in 1939 and became an active member. As the Communist party was banned at that time, he attended a secret meeting of party sympathizers in which Com. A.K. Gopalan addressed in Rathinam Body Builders Centre at Trichy. There after he had many chances to read the Marxist literatures. That motivated and shaped him as a communist. He got the opportunities to meet the leaders of working class movement of that time, who were leading the socialist party in Tamil Nadu viz. Com. P. Ramamurthy and Com. P. Srinivasa rao. He had close contact with Com. P. Ramamurthy, who guided the Golden rock Railway workers union. This kindled his interest to work in the trade union movement. Communist leaders who campaigned against war were arrested by the British government. In the year 1940, many Railway union leaders including the General Secretary of the union Com. M. Kalyana sundaram were imprisoned. Hence Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar was forced to look after the trade union work secretly.

Again he was transferred to Thanjavur and then to Vizhupuram. Taking advantage of these transfers he organized powerful movement in those places. Being the member of Central Executive Committee, he was elected as General Secretary of DREU in the conference held at Mayiladuthurai in April 1942. He continued his work keeping Golden rock as his nerve centre. But the Railway management kept on transferring him place after place. The Executive Committee which met on October 1942 decided to get the transfer for Com. Anandha Nambiyar to Golden Rock. His activeness (shrewdness), kind approach towards workers and the determination he showed towards the demands of workers elevated him as a popular leader.

Family Life

Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar married Ms. Meenakshi on 14th May 1944, who was the daughter of Mr. Krishnan working at the Kannur court as Junior Assistant. It was very simple and only with the wrath. Many railway workers from Golden rock travelled to Kannur to participate in their leader's wedding ceremony. The General Manager of railway management has attached a special boggy for facilitating the workers to participate in his marriage ceremony. A week after the marriage Com. Anandha Nambiyar returned with his wife to Trichy. Starting from Kannur railway station until reaching Trichy through Shoranur and Erode in every station the couple were given warm welcome with shawl, dresses, books, wreath, bouquet and many other gifts. On January 1946, Com. Meenakshi Nambiyar delivered their first child. Com.

Anandha Nambiyar till his last breath lived in the railway colony at Golden rock.

As Member of Madras State Assembly

In 1946 British government decided to form interim government in the state and conducted election for the Madras State Legislative Assembly. The property tax payers only had the rights to contest and to vote. Only one constituency was allocated for railway workers. The railway constituency of Madras Assembly (provincial) stretched between Tuticorine to Visakapatnam. The employees of southern railway and MSM were given rights to vote in this constituency. Congress nominated Mr.V.K.Adhikesavalu. Communist party nominated Com. Anandha Nambiyar as their candidates respectively. At the end Com.Anandha Nambiyar won the election with the margin of 10,000 votes. By this he had established a new record of the first communist candidate who won the election in India.

Railway struggle at Golden Rock

DREU and many other Railway workers organization decided to launch a struggle for the salary raise and many other workers issues. The railway management assured to appoint a pay commission and to release Rs 4.5 crore as interim relief. But the railways workers organization decided to continue their struggle until achieving their demands. The railway management got provoked and suspended 7 workers on 22nd July 1946. Retaliating to the management's decision the workers began their indefinite strike within the campus. The leaders of railway workers union Com. M. Kalyanasundaram and Com. K.Ananda Nambiyar met the General Manager of southern railway Mr.Reynolds and represented the workers issues appropriately. The railway management refused to address the workers graveness. As there were no other alternative the workers went for an indefinite strike. The first southern railway workers general strike began on 24th August 1946 in which rail transport was completely blocked. The state government and the railway management began their attack on workers and on the unions on 5th September 1946. Hundreds of police lead by DSP Harison marched to the sanga thidal in Golden rock where the workers gathered to have their meeting. DSP Harison and his police force fired at the workers crowd and killed 5 people at that spot. Many workers got injured severely. Com. Ananda Nambiyar was tied with rope and beaten up severely with the lathis and guns. Due to severe bleeding Com. Ananadha Nambiyar lost his conscious and he was lying on the

blood bed in the agitation spot. Many other workers were also beaten up severely with guns and were in blood beds. But the struggle continued even after the brutal attack of police forces.

Imprisonment

In continuation of 1946 naval upraise [sepoy mutiny] the Communist Party of India and the AITUC launched a powerful struggle against the British rule. The State Provincial Government got provoked and brought an emergency rule on 23rd February 1947 and arrested the leaders of Communist Party and Trade Union. Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar, Com. M. Kalyanasundaram and more than 200 leaders were imprisoned at Vellore jail for 6 months. They were released on 14th August 1947 just one day before independence. Again in 1962 the communist leaders were arrested stating that they are the supporters of china. Com. Anandha Nambiyar was imprisoned in Salem jail till 1963. On December 30, 1964 all over the country party leaders were arrested under the National Security Act. Com. K. Anandhanambiyar was imprisoned at Cudalore jail for 16 months and got released in the year 1966. On January 30, 1976 again he was arrested under MISA and imprisoned at Palayankottai jail and later transferred to Trichy jail. He got released from jail after 6 months of imprisonment. In jail he was respected by all the leaders and also by the jail officials.

Underground Work

On February 1948 the 2nd National congress of Communist Party of India was held at Calcutta. Government of India blamed the policies and outcome of the party congress as anti national and dangerous to the nation. They even banned the Communist Party of India and imprisoned many leaders. Many leaders and cadres including Com. Anandha Nambiyar absconded and carried on underground work. Com. Anandha Nambiyar visited many areas and met the leaders of trade union, interacted with them and guided them to carry out the union work uninterruptedly. He travelled in the night hours with Com. C. Govindharajan to Cuddalore, Pondicherry, Vizhuppuram and Virudhachalam and carried out the party work and trade union work. He changed his costumes and modified himself as a priest and met the Railway Kanga workers near Thidivanam and Chengalpattu. Police were severely searching and hunting for him to get him arrested at any cost. Police department has announced Rs.10000 for the person who gives information about his hidden place. The police have failed for a long while to find him.

First parliament Election

The first Indian General election after independence was held in 1952. The Communist Party of India filed Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar as its candidate for Mayavaram Constituency in Thanjavur district. Indian National Congress filed Mr. K. Santhanam, then Deputy Minister for Railway against Com. Anandha Nambiyar. In this election E.V.R. Periyar and his Dhiravidar Kazhagam supported Communist candidates and Thanthai Periyar intensively campaigned for the victory of Communist candidates. Periyar made a special campaign for Com. Anandha Nambiyar at Mayavaram constituency. People recognized Com. Anandha Nambiyar and elected him as their representative with the huge margin of 10000 votes. A mammoth celebration was held at Mannargudi in Thanjavur district to commemorate the victory of all the communist candidates including Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar. Thanthai Periyar was presided over the function. Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar was the first Korada (Leader) of parliamentary party of Communist Party of India in the history of Indian Parliament. During his tenure he registered his foot prints by voicing for the voiceless people.

Ariyalur Train Accident (1956)

On the midnight of 23rd November 1956, an Express train which travelled from Chennai to Tutucorine fell into the Marudhayaru river near Ariyalur and hundreds of passenger died in that sad incident. Com. Anandha Nambiyar the then Member of Parliament rushed to the site. He made a thorough study about the accident and wrote a detailed letter to the Prime Minister of India Mr. Lal Bahadur Sasthri. He found that the bunds of a lake near Ariyalur (Thangappan Lake) got collapsed due to which the water level has risen in the Marudhaiyaru river that lead to the severe flood in it. He came to know that earlier warning has been given by the Pennadam Thasildhar to the Railway Masthur railway station officer. More so the Railway roaming workers Mr. Innasimuthu informed the Railway inspector regarding the aggressive flood and possible collapse of the railway river bridge. But the officials ignored their warning and failed to take appropriate precautionary measures and hence the accident happened. Com. Anandha Nambiyar exposed the carelessness of railway administration was the main cause for the loss of hundreds of valuable lives.

10 Days Hunger Strike

The railway administration kept on ignoring the genuine grievances and demands of the Southern Railway employees. Taking note of the situation the Dhakshin Railway Employees Union found no alternate then going for struggle. They decided to go on hunger strike in front of the southern railway headquarter at Chennai. On 2nd October the then General Secretary of the Dhakshin Railway Employees Union Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar sat on discontinued hunger fast in front of the General Manager's office of Southern Railway at Chennai. More than 10000 employees marched in the streets of Chennai shouting slogans and insisting on their 11 point demand and reached the place where Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar was sitting on hunger strike and extended their complete solidarity to his agitation. As the 11 point demand was very much related to the life and work of 1,58, 000 railway employees the railway administration came forward to discuss the issues. Prominent Communist leaders Com. A.K. Gopalan, Com. Bupesh Gupta and many others came to Chennai and extended their support and greeted Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar at his fasting ground. They have taken serious steps and demanded the intervention of Government of India in this issue. Assessing the seriousness of the issue and struggle the then Prime Minister Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and the Railway Minister Mr. Jagajeevanram made their immediate intervention and came forward to settle the issue and invited Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar for negotiation.

As an agent for President candidate

In 1969 the then President of India Dr. Jaheer Hussain had passed away. Hence an election was called for the position of President of India in the same year. In that election Syndicate Congress has proposed Mr. Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy as their President candidate. Mr. V.V. Giri who was the then Vice President of India resigned his post and contested in the election with the support of CPI(M), CPI, DMK and Indhira Gandhi. CPI(M) has decided to campaign intensively for the success of Mr. V.V. Giri. CPI(M) politburo with the strong reference of Com. P. Ramamurthy appointed Com. Anandha Nambiyar as Chief election agent for President candidate Mr. V.V. Giri. Accordingly the election was held. All the ballot boxes were brought to Delhi and the counting was held in the presence of election officer com Parliamentary Secretary Mr. S.L. Shakthar. On behalf of Mr. V.V. Giri Com. Anandha Nambiyar participated in the counting of Votes. At the end of four rounds of counting Mr. V.V. Giri was declared elected as President of India. In this election Com. K. Anandha Nambiyar

played a significant role and brought an image to the communist party of India.

Parliamentary Work:

Com.K. Anandha Nambiyar was elected three times for parliament. First he was elected from Mayavaram constituency in the first parliamentary election itself, in 1952. Following this he was elected second time from Tiruchirappalli constituency in the year 1962. Consecutively he was reelected in the same Trichirappalli constituency in the year 1967 and served as a Member of Parliament for 14 years till December 1970. During his tenure in parliament he made remarkable contributions to the people especially for working class and stood as a band wagon for the working class. He carried out his parliamentary activities with the guidance of Marxist Party and represented all the issues related to Socio-economic and Political problems of our people. He was branded by opponents as "Fighting Cock". When he was addressing in parliament on railway budget in February 1956 he questioned about the outcome of first five year plan.

Role of Anandha Nambiyar Industrialization

Besides being an eminent trade union leader, he also made remarkable efforts to improve the business and industrial development of Tamil Nadu. He was the one who first represented the scope for power generation from Lignite in Neiveli. After the research carried out by Germany with the help of Com. P. Ramamurthy. Com. Anandha Nambiyar repeatedly made the demand for established the Neiveli Lignite Power Plant and at last in 1956 government of India has began its work in Neiveli allocating 68 crore. In August 1966, Com. Anandha Nambiyar demanded for Salem steel plant. When the government of India planned for establishing BHEL in Ramagundam in Andhra Pradesh, he has taken serious efforts and addressed in Parliament to get it established at Trichy and succeeded in it. Similarly, he uninterruptedly made effort to establish Ordinance factory, Regional Engineering College and ITI in Trichy district and achieved his demands. He even talked about the oil and natural gas wealth in Cauvery delta region referring some of the scientific studies made by experts. Based on those study, the Narimanam oil plant was established. During his tenure in parliament, he demanded for the establishment of railway track between Thiruvananthapuram - Kanyakumari and Thirunelveli, Salem – Neiveli and a broad gauge link between Mannamadurai and Virudhunagar and he ultimately

succeeded in it. His efforts to establish Seshayee paper industry in Pallipalayam of Erode district was also materialized by him.

Marxist Party Work

Dr.K. Anandha Nambiyar actively worked in the Communist Party of India and continued his party work as a Central Committee member and Parliament member in CPI(M) after 1964. He was elected as a Vice President of Centre of Indian Trade Union (CITU) in 1971 in the state conference held at Madurai. He seriously analyzed the set back of Soviet Union. He wrote series of article on Universe and Space in Semmalar monthly Tamil Journal. He was instrumental in changing the death sentence into life imprisonment of Com. A.G.Kasthuri Rengan. As per the party guidance he made serious efforts to minimize the life imprisonment of Com. Thiyagu and Com. Lenin who were arrested on various cases for their revolutionary action.

The Last days

Com.K.Anandha Nambiyar got relieved from the post of General Secretary of DREU in May 1990 at the Conference held at Palakkadu as his health condition didn't support his active participation in the organization. But he continued as Vice President of DREU till his death. On 11th October 1991 he passed away at Golden Rock Union Office while he was reading the news paper. In his funeral procession thousands of workers and party cadres beside the veteran leaders of CPI(M) A.Nallasivam, N.Sankaraiya, R.Ramaraj, R.Umanath, K.Varadharajan, Pappa Umanath and T.K.Rengarajan participated and paid their respect to their great leader. On 13th October 1991 the elder son Com. Anandha Mohan accomplished his final rites to his beloved father.

Conclusion

Com.K.Anandha Nambiyar in his 73 years of lifespan, had spent 53 years for the upliftment of working class through various struggles and sacrifices. He was strictly adhered to the principles and policies of CPI(M) and worked for achieving the goal of People's democratic Revolution in India. He began his career as clerk and later turned to an active trade union leader. He fought for the rights of working people in workshops, streets, Assembly and in parliament. He faced severe attacks from police and goons. He was in underground life and was imprisoned many times and for many years. His contribution to develop the infrastructure of state and to ensure the basic rights of working class are remarkable. His serious efforts have brought many industries such as Ordinance factory, BHEL, REC, paper industry etc in and around Trichy. Modest, untiring,

uninterrupted, dedicated and committed public life inspires many children who really love our nation.

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