

## **J. Hemachandran - Mahatma Of Kanyakumari District**

**Dr.D. LEKHA**

Associate Proffessor,  
Dept of History,  
SreeAyyappa College  
for Women, Chunkankadai.

### **Abstract**

*Mr. J. Hemachandran was born in 10th November 1933 at Mathoor in Aruvikarai Village near Thiruvattar, Kalkulam Taluk in Kanyakumari District. While he has studying in the college the first general election was conducted in India in the beginning of 1952. In this election,*

*Thiru.Kulanthasamy contested in Thiruvattar Assembly Constituency as a communist supported candidate. Hemachandran also participated in the election works along with the companions of the home village. While he was studying in the Law College, he joined in the students federation of Indi (SFI), through this organization he entered into political activities and he had been elected as a member of Legislative Assembly for four times.*

*He maintained relationship with the Plantation Workers Organization and he was elected as a General Secretary of the Plantation Workers Union. He organized many struggles for the betterment of plantation workers and the people of hill area. This made Hemachandran and other trade union leaders were imprisoned at Cuddalore Jail.*

*After released from central jail at Cuddalore, Mr.Hemachandran was elected as the General Secretary of the conductors union of the Government Transport Department in Kanyakumari District. He was also taken many issues of the transport workers in the floor of the Tamil Nadu Legislature Assembly when he was MLA of the Thiruvattar Assembly Constituency.*

*He also took active part in the problem of Textile mills, mineral workers and cashew - nut - workers in Kanyakumari District. He had visited many foreign countries as the representative of the CITU. He had formulated innumerable project works in Thiruvattar Constituency.*

*During his tenure as a Legislative Member, by implementing various project works, he assumed a permanent name in the hearts of the people of Kanyakumari District. The people fondly called him as JH which is pet name. He worked for the workers community till his last breath on February 8th 2008. Really he is an 'evergreen' political leader of Kanyakumari District.*

## Keywords :

Plantation workers	-	Agricultural labours
Mukkampala	-	Its a name of one Estate
Thozhar	-	Comrade

## Introduction :

The main aim of this paper is to bring light on the important achievements of J. Hemachandran - Mahatma of Kanyakumari District. Kanyakumari District named after the goddess Kanyakumari lies at the Southern - most tip of the Peninsular India where Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal confluence. This is one of the smallest districts in the State of Tamil Nadu. It is predominantly an agricultural region with vast natural resources and variety of geological feature. This district is blessed with one important Hero Thiru. J. Hemachandran.

Mr. J. Hemachandran was born on 10th November 1933 at Mathoor in Aruvikarai Village near Thiruvattar, Kalkulam Taluk in Kanyakumari District. He had completed his school education at Thiruvattar and then he joined at Trivandrum Government College, for studying degree course while he was studying in the college the first general election was conducted in India in the beginning of 1952. In this election, Thiru. Kulanthaisamy contested in Thiruvattar Assembly Constituency as a Communist supported candidate. Hemachandran also participated in the election works along with the comparisons of the home village.

After completion of the degree course, he joined in the Govt. Law College, Trivandrum. While he was studying in the Law College he joined in the Students Federation of India (SFI) and through this organization he entered into political activities and he maintained relationship with the Plantation Workers Organization he used to go to the Union Office of the Plantation Workers.

The contact made him as to be a leader of the Union and he was elected as a General Secretary of the plantation workers union. Then he shed his full attention in the Plantation Workers Union he showed his interest in the political activities and he had been elected as a member of legislative Assembly for four times.

The growing problems of the labourers in Kanyakumari District necessitated a movement. In 1943, the labour movement was started in Kanyakumari District. Prior to that the condition of the labourers were subjected to severe hardships. Their living and working conditions were away from satisfactory. Their wages were very low. In order to eradicate the miseries of the labourers, a number of Trade Union leaders played a vital role. Among them J. Hemachandran is an important person who spent his time and energy and vigour for the causes of the promotion of the well being of the labourer and plantation labourers who were created as bonded labourer.

### **Role of J. Hemachandran in the Labour Movement**

In 1960, Mukkampala Estate belonged to A.V. Thomas and Company was sold by the Arch Bishop of Malankara Church at Trivandrum. The new management refused to employ old workers of the estate and the estate and the workers of the estate and the estate and the workers under the leadership of the Union waged three month old strike and that was referred to Labour court. Hemachandran had played an important part in that struggle.

In 1964 December, the rural people of Kanyakumari District have the face a big crisis for food materials. Plantation Workers Union look up this issue and organized a March of the plantation workers and the people of the Hill areas to Nagercoil by walking. They met the District Collector of Kanyakumari District and urged to introduce Ration supply of Rice to the Plantation Workers and people of the Hilly area. The Government of Tamil Nadu accepted that demand and introduced supply of Rice through ration shops. Hemachandran took a leading part in this struggle along with comrade Perumal, Ali, G.S. Mony, D. Mony and other trade union leaders.

An important struggle of the plantation workers which was done against the illegal lock out of New Ambadi Estate in

Kulasekharam in the year 1973. As a Hemachandran made a hunger fast before the R.D.O. Office, Padmanabhapuram for seven days. At last, the workers of the estate, hundreds in number took part in Road Roko Struggle were arrested and sent to jail. Few women workers also took part in that agitation and went to jail. As a result of this powerful struggle, the management was compelled to lift the lock-out and made a good majority of the workmen in the field operations as permanent workers.

The Government Rubber Plantation Workers Union agitated to get bonus in 1982. They organized a strike lasted for 134 days. Hemachandran revised the issue in the floor of the Assembly hearing the speech made out by Hemachandran in the Assembly the Honourable Chief Minister Thiru. M.G. Ramachandran intervened in the matter and formed a corporation for rubber plantation and paved the way to pay bonus for the workers.

### **Role of Hemachandran in the problem of Textile Mills in Kanyakumari District.**

The management of Nagammal Mills had launched many measures to suppress the right of the workers of that mills. Likewise the management of Kanyakumari District Co-operative Spinning Mills has been extracting higher work load from the workmen but paying lesser wages. Many times the workers had organized strikes against this. As a result of these struggle in which Hemachandran took a leading part, the workmen were able to get many benefits and resolved their demands.

As wells he took a leading part in mineral workers at Manavalakurichy, Indian Rare Earths problems. He had also raised the problems of cashew industry and its workmen in the Legislative Assembly many times.

Hemachandran had visited Russia and Denmark as a representative of the CITU Delegation to the World Peace Conference in 1986. He had visited China in 1984 as a Member of the Delegation of All India Lawyers Union which was headed by the retired Judges of the Supreme Court Mr. H.R. Khanna. In that trip, he had visited Canton, Hongkong, Shanghai and Beijing.

### **Hemachandran as a Legislative Member**

As an honourable Chairperson of workers group as well as the influence among them Thozhar J. Hemachandran served as the member of Thiruvattar Legislative Assembly for four times. He had formulated innumerable project works only because of his arguments in the legislative assembly with the ministers and government authorities.

Thiruvattar Legislative Assembly Constituency is bound with 22 Village Panchayats considering the basic needs of the Panchayats like drinking water facility, hospitals, veterinary hospitals, bridges, mini-bridges, cleaning of the channels, erecting water tanks, forming roads and streets, building walls around the pools, street light facilities, open air bore-wells, digging ground water tank and erecting pump sets to get water from the bore-wells mending concrete in the streets, ceremony ground facilities fulfilling the basic amenities of the tourists centres building additional school buildings, computer halls and science laboratories with needed goods, making the basic needs of bus stations, building village offices mending the roads of the holy places like Churches, Temples and Mosques, building Ration Shop, houses to the poor and all other project works have been implemented by dividing the allotted funds.

Thozhar J. Hemachandran not only spent the Legislative Assembly Development Fund to his own area but throughout district. He has shared the fund as follows :

1. To 20 Sports and Game Centres (Stadium) : 5,00,000
2. To erect a Swimming Pool at Nagercoil, Anna Stadium : 2,00,000
3. Computer facility to the Padmanabhapuram R.D.O. s Office : 1,00,000
4. Computer Facility to the M.L.A. s Office : 1,00,000
5. To mend the gushing water at the Thirparappu Idathukarai Channel : 4,00,000
6. To build Medical College building at Asaripallam : 10,00,000
7. To erect 17 Shutters at PattanamkalMian Channel : 2,50,000
8. To erect Seven Shutters at Aruvikarai

Idathukarai Channel	:	1,00,000
9. To erect Two Shutters at Aruvikarai Right side Channel	:	30,000

Totally he has spendRs. 26,80,000/- to the above mentioned project works.

By implementing all these project works, he assumed a permanent name in the hearts of the people of Kanyakumari District. He is an embodiment of social service. He is hard working and highly appreciable man, a man of passion, love, affection and reformation.

Whenever he was in Kanyakumari District he was staying in the worker's office. He had an unmarried life and worked for the Workers community till his last breath. He had never earned anything to him till the end of his life. He never cared about his physical health and his family members. He spent his whole life only for the workers community. He led an ordinary life with ordinary food, wearing very low cost chapals, half hand shirt. He slept with the workers at place. He attained the name among the people who belong to downtrodden. The people fondly called him as J.H. which is his pet name.

Because of his severe ill health he was admitted in the Trivandrum Medical College Hospital for a long time, and he died on 8th February 2008. At this last funeral procession thousands of people shed tears with floral tributes. He attracted all sorts of people without any caste, religion, language and creed. Such a kind hearted soul passed away from the holy land. But still, the people praised him by remembrance of his dedicated works. He is a human and also super human. The people shall never forget the 'Mahatma' of Kanyakumari District.

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