

Biographical note

**C G Rajaram**

Secretary, Tamilnadu Retired Electricity Workers' Association,  
Chennai

Rajaram was born on July 1, 1940. He comes from a very humble background. His grandmother was widowed early and worked as cook to run the household. Rajaram was brought up by his grandma in the best of traditions. She taught him that serving the people was true devotion to god. Rajaram was also inspired by Swami Vivekanand as he studied books authored by Swamiji. Rajaram did his post-graduation in political science at the age of 56.

He joined the Tamilnadu electricity Board as a typist in 1959. He met several famous trade union leaders in this period, but it was in 1969 when he actively joined the union in Vellore and later got it affiliated to AITUC. He was greatly inspired by the speech made by Mohan Kumar Mangalam, then a central minister. S C Krishnan impressed him as a leader of electricity workers' movement. It was at this time that in Vellore, famous Khadija Bi case and historical judgement of the Supreme Court came out.

In Vellore, a movement was launched with great popular support against reducing the number of workers in different categories from 87 to 26 under the leadership of Rajaram. Soon he became the district secretary of the AITUC unit in Vellore.

Rajaram also organised the retired workers of the Electricity Board in Tamilnadu and formed their association in 2004. Com Rajaram is the general secretary of the same.

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Transcriptive note

C. G. Rajaram T' N

(A short transcriptive note on C G Rajaram interviewed at CPI office, Chennai on March 13, 2005. A calm and cool-headed person, he went about replying the questions in a very systematic manner.—Krishna Jha, Anil Rajimwale.)

I am district secretary of Vellore AITUC and general secretary of Retired Electricity Workers' Association of Tamilnadu. The state electricity workers' federation was formed by leaders like S C Krishnan, V G Rao and others. My grandmother was a great inspiration for me. She lost her husband early in life and took up cooking job in houses to run the family. She always used to ask me to visit the temples and pray not only for myself but for all the suffering people I knew.

My another source of inspiration was Swami Vivekanand and I have studied him in detail. I got post graduate degree in Political Science at the age of fifty six from Madurai Kamraj university. I joined Tamilnadu Electricity Board in 1959 and a few years later, I became an active trade unionist in "MDS 125", which is the registration number of our union. We had to face attacks and pressures from the DMK and ultimately wrested the union from them.

Mohan Kumarmangalam addressed a gate meeting in the end of 1970 and told us about the AITUC history and its major achievements. It was a memorable experience. My association with SCK (S C Krishnan) was also very educative.

It was from Vellore that famous Khadija Bi case originated in 1980.

I began organising employees and workers of Vellore Electricity Central office, which was earlier with DMK. We had launched major struggles against them and among them was on the question of revising the number of categories of employees/workers. It was to be slashed from 87 to 26. We ultimately won the battle in 1978 despite the disrupting attempts by the DMK.

We got a room in the Tamilnadu Electricity Board office. We began with seven members and grew upto 2000. In Tamilnadu, we are better placed than other states in terms of service conditions and legislations.

I worked for increase and expansion of pension schemes. We also fought for filling up the vacancies. The issue of contract labour was raised in 1987. The trade unions and the management selected and confirmed 12006 as help-

ers throughout the state, a unique step that was not initiated any where else in the country.

I organised the retired electricity workers and formed their association in 2004. It has 3000 members. The number of retired persons is increasing and so also their problems. Labour commission too has its reservations against the retired workers forming a union. There are 25000 retired persons.

I am also working among the labour engaged in non-conventional energy sector, bidi, and sugar cooperatives.

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