



DAMODARAM SANJIVAYYA



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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A man of uncompromising convictions, impeccable honesty, and transparent sincerity, Damodaram Sanjivayya was one of the most respected leaders of the country. Sanjivayya was born on 14 February 1921 in a poor Scheduled Caste family, in village Peddapadu in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. Unfortunately, immediately after his birth, he lost his father. In spite of being haunted by abject poverty in those early days, his mother brought him up with all care and attention. This left an indelible mark in the impressionable mind of young Sanjivayya.

Sanjivayya got his primary education at Palakurthy, Peddapadu, and thereafter, he went to Kurnool to attend the High School. In 1938, he joined the Arts College, Anantapur, and graduated from there in 1942. However, financial difficulties prevented him from continuing his studies further. So, he took up a job in the Civil Supplies Department to facilitate his studies in Law from the Madras Law College. After getting his Law degree, Sanjivayya started legal practice in Madras and built up a reputation as a successful lawyer.

Soon, Sanjivayya was drawn to the public life. He entered the political arena in 1950 as a member of the Provisional Parliament. Thereafter, he was elected a member of the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1952. He functioned as the Minister of Housing and Cooperation in the Ministry of C. Rajagopalachari.

Sanjivayya was a member of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1952 to 1964. He distinguished himself as a Minister in the Andhra Pradesh Government from 1952 to 1960. In fact, he was the first legislator from among the Scheduled Castes to become a Minister in the State Government. He was the Minister for Social Welfare and Health in the Cabinet of T. Prakasam in 1953; he worked

as the Minister for Transportation and Commercial Taxes in the Cabinet of B. Gopala Reddy; and as Minister in the Cabinet of Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, in 1956, he was entrusted the Departments of Labour and Local Bodies Administration. In 1960, Shri Sanjivayya assumed the Office of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and held that high Office till 1962. Sanjivayya was the first person belonging to the Scheduled Castes Community to hold the Chief Ministership of Andhra Pradesh.

As Minister in the State Government holding important portfolios and later as Chief Minister, Sanjivayya brought to bear the distinctive stamp of his personality on the Departments under him. He strived ceaselessly to improve the condition of all sections of the people, especially the poor and the destitute and initiated several policies and programmes for their welfare.

The strict enforcement of the principle of reservation, the enactment and implementation of the Land Ceiling Act, the constitution of three separate Corporations for Heavy Industries, Small Scale Industries and Mining, the introduction of the Scheme of Old Age Pension, the constitution of wage boards and the promotion schemes for the weaker sections were some of his noteworthy achievements as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

In June 1962, Sanjivayya was elected as the President of the Indian National Congress and continued to hold this important position till January 1964. Here again, he was the first person from among the Scheduled Castes to become the President of the Indian National Congress.

Sanjivayya was elected to the Rajya Sabha in April 1964 and was re-elected to the Upper House in 1970. At the national level too, he held important portfolios. He was Union Minister of Labour and Employment during 1964-66 and then the Minister of Industry during the years 1966-67 and 1970-71.

In May 1971, Sanjivayya assumed the post of the President of the Indian National Congress for the second

time, a position which he held with great distinction till his demise.

The entire career of Damodaram Sanjivayya was a record of selfless service to the nation. His concern and commitment for the welfare of the weaker sections of society was reflected in all his actions, whether as Minister and Chief Minister of the State of Andhra Pradesh or as a Union Minister. He was particularly concerned about the plight of the working class. Thus, as Union Labour Minister, he made the payment of bonus compulsory to the industrial labour.

Sanjivayya was also a lover and promoter of literature. He was always ready to help the cause of literary and cultural development in the State of Andhra Pradesh. Under his patronage, the First All India Telugu Writers' Conference was held in 1960.

Damodaram Sanjivayya passed away on 7 May 1972 at the young age of fifty-one. A leader of outstanding qualities, Sanjivayya's life was a saga of struggle, sacrifice, suffering and service for the cause of the people. Rich tributes were paid to the departed leader in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on 8 May 1972. Describing his rich and varied public career and deeply mourning his untimely death, the then Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri Gopal Swarup Pathak said: "It was unfortunate that the cruel hand of fate should have snatched him away in the prime of his life, cutting short a brilliant career. His passing away has created a void, which will indeed be difficult to fill." Expressing grief on his sad demise, the then Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, said: "His was a rich personality, combining serious concern for the complex problems of our society and age, with a love of literature and music... In all situations, in and out of office, Shri Sanjivayya bore himself with quite dignity." Dr. G.S. Dhillon, the then Speaker of Lok Sabha, paid his tributes to the departed soul in the following words: "He was a gentleman to the core and a man of few words—smiling and so affable and

amiable—and by his virtues and qualities, he had endeared himself to one and all."

[The Portrait of Damodaram Sanjivayya, painted by Shri Hussainappa, will be unveiled by the Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. The Portrait has been donated by the Shri Damodaram Sanjivayya Smarak Seva Samstha, Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh.]