



## SIGNIFICANCE OF QUESTION HOUR IN M.G. RAMACHANDRAN PERIOD

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### Abstract

The aim of this article is to highlight the significance of Question Hour in M. G. Ramachandran Period from 1977 to 1987 makes an attempt to trace the events and movements in Tamil Country that resulted in the progress of Legislative Assembly and its functions in Tamil Nadu specifically the question hour sessions of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly during the Chief Ministership of M. G. Ramachandran from 30<sup>th</sup>, June, 1977 to 17<sup>th</sup>, January, 1980, June, 1980 – 15<sup>th</sup>, November, 1984 and 24<sup>th</sup>, December, 1984 – 24<sup>th</sup>, December, 1987.

**Keywords :** M. G. Ramachandran, Question Hour, Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly

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### Introduction:

After the first General Elections held in January, 1952, the first erstwhile composite Madras State Legislative Assembly in accordance with the constitution of India was constituted on the 1st, March, 1952. It was summoned to meet for its first session on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, May, 1952. It was dissolved on the first March, 1952. It was summoned to meet for its first session on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, May, 1952. It was dissolved on the afternoon of the 31<sup>st</sup>, March, 1957. The Second Madras Legislative Assembly was constituted after the General Elections on the first April,

1957 and was summoned to meet for its first session on the 29<sup>th</sup>, April, 1957. It was dissolved on the forenoon of 1st, March, 1962. The Third Madras Legislative Assembly was constituted after the General Elections on the third March, 1962 and was summoned to meet for its first sessions. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, March, 1962, it was dissolved with effect from 28<sup>th</sup>, February, 1967. The Fourth Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly was constituted after the General Elections on the first March, 1967 and was summoned to meet for its first session on 15<sup>th</sup>, March, 1967 and dissolved with effect from fifth January,



1970. The Fifth Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly was constituted after the General Elections on the 15<sup>th</sup>, March, 1971 and was summoned to meet for its first session on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, March, 1971 and dissolved with effect from 31<sup>st</sup>, January, 1976.

After the General Elections held in June, 1977, the Sixth Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly was constituted on 30<sup>th</sup>, June, 1977, a new Ministry with Thiru. M. G. Ramachandran as Chief Minister was formed. Sixth Legislative Assembly met for first time on 4<sup>th</sup>, July, 1977.

The Chief Characteristic of the Cabinet Government is the collective responsibilities of the Executive to the legislature. The functions of the legislature are not therefore confined only to make laws. It provides a forum where the Executive can be questioned on the acts of the commissions and omissions of the Government. It is convenient to divide the functions of the legislature into three head legislative, financial and critical. The last functions is performed in a number of ways and question to Ministers is one of the ways in which the critical functions are performed.

The Chief attraction of the question hours is the battle of wits, the thrusts, and counter thrusts the flashes of humor, the laughter, now on one side and in the next moment on the other the mettle and Parliamentary flair of a Minister are often put to text and the extent to which he is able to meet the witty repartees of members by his mastery of facts combined with ready wit, to that extent he will be able to make his

ministerial career. It provides him an opportunity to make announcements on important matters in a somewhat inform way. Sometimes questions may be and to the appointment of committees or to bring in any legislation. The purpose of the question hour is to turn a search light upon every corner of the public service to explain to the public the meaning of political events to obviate the necessity in many instances of more extended debate of motions for papers and to afford to the private member under modern conditions almost his only opportunity.

During the question time the minister reads out the answer prepare in his department approved by him, when the question is called. The member who had tabled the question has a right to ask one or two supplementary questions by others also depending upon the importance of the subject matters. It is the prerogative of the speaker as to how many supplementary questions. He would allow on a question. In these supplementaries members will try to probe the Minister further. It is the cut and thrust of supplementary questions and answers which gives question time its dramatic quality.

#### **Substances of questions**

The object of Questions is either to seek information or to press for action. In either case, a question must concern a define matter of public importance within a ministers cognizance. Questions should not cover matters which had previously been answered or to which an answer had been refused. Individual any public on concern cannot form the subject of questions. Questions on secret matters



sub-Judice, legal opinion and the conduct of persons such as the President Governor, Judges are not in order, questions are also not admissible which ask for information already published or for the confirmation of rumours on press reports. Further question which were tendentious ironical, frivolous, or vague are also not allowed.

A Question for which an oral answer is desired and distinguished by an asterisk is a “starred question”. Any member may put a supplementary question for the further elucidation of any matter in regard to which an answer has been given to it. If in the opinion of the speaker any question though given notice of as starred question by the member is considered to be of such a nature that a written reply will be more appropriate the speaker may direct that such question be admitted as unstarred question. A notice of the question for which written reply is required or dose not bear an asterisk or deemed appropriate is classified as “unstarred question. Generally questions which require long statements are statistics are admitted as unstarred questions. Answer to such questions are printed and place on the Table of the house. A short notice question is a starred question is a starred question which the speaker, with the consent of the Minister concerned orders to be entered in the list of questions with shorter notice than seven days. If the Minister concerned declines to waive the seven days notice, It is admitted as a starred question and include in the list of questions in the usual course. The speaker may direct that question be

included in the list of question as a short Notice question if he is of the opinion that the question is of sufficient public importance. A member who desires to put a question shall give notice of the same in writing to the secretary. A Question shall ordinarily be forwarded to the concerned department within fifteen days from the date of receipt. Admitted question shall be entered in the list of question on the forty second atleast after the day on which they are admitted by the speaker.

### **Question Hour**

The House ordinarily meets at 9 A.M. and unless it unanimously decides otherwise the first hour of the sitting is spend on questions and answers. The speaker may in his direction extended the time for questions. The speaker may dispense with the question hour on the first day. If the house is to meet it or after 10 A.M. in the forenoon. The days on which the question hour was suspended during the period under review. On Motion moved under rule 30(3) of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly rules (Old rule 21(3).

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speaker may in his discretion extend the time for questions. The speaker may dispense with the question hour on the first day if the House is to meet it or after 10 A.M. in the forenoon.

### **Question Hour in M.G. Ramachandran period**

The Sixth Legislative Assembly which was constituted on 30<sup>th</sup>, June, 1977 after the General Election held in June, 1977 met for the first time on the fourth, July, 1977 and therefore its term would have expired by efflux of time on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, July, 1982. But the sixth Assembly was dismissed on 17, February, 1980 by a proclamation issued by the President under Article 356 of the constitution of India. According to the rule 29 of the Assembly rule the sittings of the House shall ordinarily commence at 9 A.M. and closed at 1.30 P.M. During the periods the Assembly sat in all for 179 days and term of hours, the Assembly sat for 885 hours and 13 minutes. The details of actual dates of summoning and prorogation number of actual days of sittings, number of Hours and minutes, session wise are shown in section II Table No. VI. Special occasion Presidents visit to Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly in connection with a function. The president of India Neelam Sanjeeva Reddi, unveiled the Portriate of late Thiru. K. Kamaraj, former Chief Minister on 18<sup>th</sup>, August, 1977 in Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Chamber. The members of the Assembly and the council assembled in the assembly chamber at 10 A.M. for this purpose. The Governor and Thiru. P. Ramachandran the union Minister for energy were also present at the function.

The first meeting of the sixth Assembly was held on the fourth, July, 1977, Thiru. P. K. MookaiahaThevar served as preterm's speaker on 6<sup>th</sup>, July, 1977, MunuAdhi was elected as speaker. Thiru. S. Thirunavukkarasu was elected as Deputy Speaker.

### **Progress of Question Hour**

During the period from 1977 – 1980, 20,388, notices of question were received from the Members of which 899 were admitted and 11396 were disallowed (including with drawn) 2500 question were answered on the floor of the House and answers to 3701 question were laid on the Table of the House.

During the question hour, no discussion is permitted in respect of a question or of any answer given to a question. However, if a request is made to the Honorable speaker to raise a discussion on a matter which has been the subject under question during question time or within five days prior to the date of notice the Honorable speaker may in his Conclusion of the half an hour, revoke, shall be taken on such debate.

A debate on the continue of the sprinkler system of irrigation in Karur taluk was initiated by Thiru. R. Umanath on 9<sup>th</sup>, January, 1978, P. U. Shanmugam and S. Sadasivam took part in the discussion. Thiru. G. R. Edmund, Minister for Food replied to the debate.

In the seventh assembly elections of 1980, the A.I.A.D.M.K. obtained an absolute majority of 130 seats out of 234. Hence on June, 9<sup>th</sup>, 1980, the cabinet headed by M.G.R. was sworn for a second time. The first meeting of the Legislative



Assembly after the General election in May 1980 was held on 19th June 1980.

During the period from 1980 - 84, nine sessions were conducted with 301 days. Mr. K. Rajaram was elected as speaker. Mr. P.H. Pandian was elected as Deputy Speaker and Dr. V.R. Nedunchezhiyan was the leader of the House. During the period from 1980 - 84, 23,695 notices of questions were received from the members of which 14,966 were admitted and 8,729 were disallowed or withdrawn 4,258 questions were answered on the floor of the house and 5,847 answers to questions are given in the Assembly. As per the recommendations of TamilNadu cabinet Ministry Governor Khurana dissolved the seventh Legislative Assembly on 15<sup>th</sup>, November, 1984.

In the Eighth Assembly Election of December, 1984, the A.I.A.D.M.K. obtained 152 seats and got majority. Hence on the 15<sup>th</sup>, February, 1985, the cabinet headed by M. G. R. Sworn for a third time Due to Kidney failure M. G. R. was died December, 24<sup>th</sup>, 1987. The First meeting of the Legislative Assembly after the General Election in December, 1984 was held on 25<sup>th</sup>, February, 1985 and therefore its term would expire by efflux of time normally on 24<sup>th</sup>, February, 1990. However it was dissolved by a proclamation issued by the President of India, under Article 356 of the constitution of India with effect from 30<sup>th</sup>, January, 1988. During the periods the Assembly Sat in all for 175 days and interim of hours the Assembly Sat for 829 hours and 48 minutes. On 27<sup>th</sup>, February, Thiru. P. H. Pandian was elected as speaker. V. P. Balasubramanian was elected as Deputy

speaker. Progress of Question during the period, from 1985 – 1988, 18, 370 notices of questions were received from the members, of which 10925, questions were admitted and 7455 were disallowed or withdrawn, 2539 question were answered on the floor of the House and 28870 answers to questions were laid on the Table of the house.

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