CHAPTER III

POLITICAL SCENARIO IN KARNATAKA, KERALA & TAMIL NADAU

Indian Democracy & Media Scenario

The most vital part of the Indian democracy has been the universal adult franchise, where the citizen irrespective of class, cast, religion, education and economic status is assured of a vote which can be exercised. The Indian voter has routinely used the vote to change governments both at the centre and states. Since India is a land of many races, religions and languages. The federal structure has ensured a strong centre and strong states.

One of the thrilling aspect of the Indian democracy is judiciary has the crusade for cleansing of politics and has come to the rescue of the citizens and society in many ways. The information and technology revolutions have brought news and comments close to the citizens with the media covering every aspect of Indian life.

Media Scenario

Though we have a private press in India, it was responsible press in the past according to Lucian and Pye. Our print and electronic media is powerful inspite of its aberrations. The print media comprises 7,131 dailies, 73 tri/bi weeklies, 22,116 weeklies, 8, 547 fortnightlies, 19,456 monthlies, 4470 quarterlies, 605 annuals and 2,333 publications of other periodicity as on 31 March 2007. The total number of registered newspapers/periodical was 65,032.

Television

Television transmission began in India on 15th September 1959 from a studio in the Akashavani Bhavan in New Delhi. However a regular service with a news bulletin started only in 1965. After seven years the Bombay Television channel commenced service. 1975 Television service was available in Kolkata, Chennai
Srinagar, Amritsar and Lucknow. Colour television was introduced in India in 1982 during the Asian games held in New Delhi.

A total of 357 private television channels have been uplinked up to the beginning of 2009 including as many as 197 news channels. According to the review of the Information and Broadcasting ministry during the end of 2008, the country has a total of 450 channels including 417 private channels and 33 Doordarshan and Parliamentary channels. Of the uplinked channels, a total of 160 are non news and current affairs channels. Meanwhile the state of art and Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) setup from June 2008 to record the broadcasting signals being received in India.

Political History of Karnataka:

Pre – Independence Era:

The origin of the rise of the Karnataka region as an independent power date back to the fourth-century, the birth of the Kadamba Dynasty of Banavasi, the earliest of the native rulers to conduct administration in the native language of Kannada in addition to the official Sanskrit. This is the historical starting point in studying the development of the region as an enduring geopolitical entity and of Kannada as an important regional language. In the southern regions of Karnataka, the Western Gangas of Talakad were contemporaries of the Kadambas.

The political history of medieval Karnataka spans the 4th to the 16th centuries, when the empires that evolved in the Karnataka region of India made a lasting impact on the subcontinent. The medieval era can be broadly divided into several periods.

The earliest native kingdoms and imperialism; the successful domination of the Gangetic plains in northern India and rivalry with the empires of Tamilakam over the Vengi region; and the domination of the southern Deccan and consolidation against Muslim invasion.
The Kadambas and Gangas were followed by the imperial dynasties of the Badami Chalukyas, the Rashtrakuta Dynasty, the Western Chalukya Empire, the Hoysala Empire, and the Vijayanagara Empire all patronizing the ancient Indic religions while showing tolerance to the new cultures arriving from the west of the subcontinent. The Muslim invasion of the Deccan resulted in the breaking away of the feudatory Sultanates in the 14th century. The rule of the Bahamani Sultanate of Bidar and the Bijapur Sultanate from the northern Deccan region caused a mingling of the ancient Hindu traditions with the nascent Islamic culture in the region. The hereditary ruling families and clans ably served the large empires and upheld the local culture and traditions.

The fall of the Vijayanagara Empire in 1565 at the Battle of Talikota started a slow disintegration of the region into minor kingdoms, the largest of which were the kingdoms of Kingdom of Mysore, the Keladi Nayakas and the Nayakas of Chitradurga. These kingdoms continued to owe support to a diminished Vijayanagara Empire ruling from Penukonda in modern Andhra Pradesh, followed by a brief period of independence.

However, large areas in north Karnataka came under the control of the Bijapur Sultanate who waged several wars in a bid to establish hegemony over the southern Deccan. The defeat of the Bijapur Sultanate at the hands of the Moguls in late 17th century added a new dimension to the prevailing confusion. The constant wars of the local kingdoms with the two new rivals, the Moguls and the Marathas and among themselves caused further instability in the region. Major areas of Karnataka came under the rule of the Moguls and the Marathas, until the rise of local Muslims, Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sultan. Under them the Mysore Kingdom reached its zenith of power but had to face the growing English power who by then had a firm foothold in the subcontinent. With the death of Tipu Sultan in 1799 in the fourth Anglo-Mysore war, the Mysore Kingdom came under the British umbrella. More than a century later, with the dawn of India as an independent nation in 1947, the unification of Kannada speaking regions as modern Karnataka state brought four centuries of political uncertainty (and centuries of foreign rule) to an end.
Post – Independent Era:

Karnataka consists of 28 parliamentary constituencies from which 28 members of parliament got elected to the Lok Sabha. Several politicians and bureaucrats from Karnataka have served at the center at various times in different capacities. Deve Gowda, who hails from Hassan served as the Prime Minister. B. D. Jatti from Bijapur served as the Vice President of India and also as acting President in the past. S.Nigalingappa was Congress (I) President.

There are three distinct phases in the political history of Karnataka. The first phase was marked by the Congress' dominance. This was followed by a phase in which two parties alternately held power. The third phase is the era of coalition governments.

Congress dominance: Karnataka, like many other states in India, had Congress dominance since Independence till 1983. Even when the rest of the country voted against the Congress in the 1977 elections in the aftermath of the Emergency, the Karnataka electorate stood firmly behind the Congress.

Bi-polar politics: From 1985 onwards, the Janata Dal (originally the Janata Party) and the Congress held power alternately. In 1983, the Janata Party, supported by the BJP from the outside, formed the first non-Congress government headed by Ramakrishna Hegde. Following the rout of the Janata Party in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections, Hegde dissolved the Assembly, paving the way for mid-term polls in 1985, which returned the Janata Party with an absolute majority. In 1989, the Congress wrested power from the Janata Party only to lose it to the Janata Dal in 1994. It was the Congress which won again in 1999.

Coalition politics: The BJP, which had for long been a marginal force in Karnataka, began to rise from 1994 onwards, ending the bi-polar nature of the state's politics. Though the elections in 1994, 1999 and 2004 were triangular contests among the Congress, the JD and the BJP, it was only in 2004 elections paved the way for a hung Assembly, with the BJP emerging as the single largest party. The result was the formation of two unstable coalition governments.
The first one (2004-2006) was a Congress-led Government in partnership with the JD(S). N. Dharam Singh of the Congress was the chief minister. The government collapsed after a faction of the JD(S) withdrew support. The BJP joined hands with the JD(S) in the second coalition (2006-2007). The JD(S) led this government with H.D. Kumaraswamy as chief minister. The JD(S) was to hand over the chief minister's post to the BJP in November 2007. It refused to do so, resulting in President's Rule and eventually the 2008 mid-term elections. (2)

2004 state elections:

The 2004 elections in Karnataka led to extremely unusual results. No party gained enough seats to form a government of its own. Out of a total of 224 seats, the BJP won 79 seats, the Congress 65 and the JD (Secular) 58. The only possibility then was a coalition government and the two largest parties were politically not inclined to form a coalition. JD(S) President and former Prime Minister Deve Gowda decided to partner with the Congress to form a government just to keep the BJP out of the government. The coalition headed by chief minister N Dharam Singh (Congress) and Deputy Chief Minister Siddharamiah (of JDS) lasted till 2006. Deve Gowda's son HD Kumaraswamy, of the JDS, brought in a new twist when he garnered support of 46 ministers and withdrew support from the Congress. Kumaraswamy struck a deal with the opposition party, the right wing BJP, to form an alternate government. The new coalition had H.D Kumaraswamy as the Chief Minister and B. S. Yeddyurappa of the BJP as deputy chief minister. Before forming the government, the two parties had entered into a power sharing agreement. Both parties would enjoy Chief Minister ship for a period of 20 months each (which would cover the time left for the next elections). This has created a unique situation where a government has been headed by three different political parties with no elections between them.

2008 State Elections:

In 2007, a sudden dispute occurred between HD Kumaraswamy and Yeddyurappa over the abdication of powers which threw the state into emergency and the intervention of Presidential rule. During the elections on 10, 16 and 22 May
2009, the BJP defeated both the local party as well as the Congress making Yeddyurappa the undisputed Chief Minister of the state. The BJP nearly achieved a majority, and came to power in a state for the first time in South Indian political history. Political commentators claim that the main reason for the defeat of the Congress was due to its failure of the promises to the people of Karnataka in matters of development programs, inflation and severe drought in Karnataka. Besides infight in Karnataka Congress party lead to uncertainty in matters of Chief Ministership. But within one year, BJP also became very unpopular due to corruption charges against the ministers and due to its partisan attitude towards various sections in the society.

**Political History of Kerala:**

The people of Kerala were known for their catholicity and tolerance. The state was under the rule of respected royal families and the sanskrit culture and tradition were nourished here over centuries.

The political history of modern Kerala has even shaped by a series of movements by the people at various levels. The major political movements that took shape in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar area of state were

1. The constitutional agitations sponsored by the educated middle classes.

2. The struggle for democratic and civil rights waged by the lower caste in Hindus, the Christians and Muslim religious minorities and

3. The people’s movement for the achievement of responsible government in the state.

The historic Vaikom Satyagraha which began on March 30, 1924 attracted the attention of people all over the country. Mahatma Gandhi himself blessed the struggle and extended his full moral support to the satyagrahis. Veteran journalist like K.P.Kesava Menon and leaders like T.K.Madhavan and others actively guided the Satyagraha.
Kerala became a state under the States Reorganisation Act 1956 and was formed out Travancore, Cochin and Malabar districts of Madras state.

Kerala has always been a laboratory for political experiments. It was in Kerala that for the first time in the world, a Communist government was voted to power through the ballot box. Except in 1957 no single party could get majority in the election of the state assembly. With a highly intelligent and politically conscious electorate, Kerala has established that multiparty coalition governments can be durable. A unique feature of Kerala legislature assembly is that every political party has shared power in the state at one time or other.

When Kerala was formed, the State was under President's rule. The new State went to the polls for the first time in March 1957. There were 126 Assembly seats and 16 Parliamentary seats.

The Communist Party of India emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly with 60 seats. Shri E.M.S.Namboodiripad formed an 11 member ministry on April 5, 1957 with the support of some independents. But political agitation and unrest extending over several months, culminated in the taking over of the administration of the State and the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly, under Article 356 of the Constitution, by the President of India, on July 31, 1959. Mid-term elections followed in February 1960.

A three party alliance comprising of the Congress, the Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League, came to power. Shri Pattom A.Thanu Pillai (PSP) took over as the coalition Chief Minister, leading a council of eleven ministers, in February 1960. Shri R.Sankar (Congress) was designated as the Deputy Chief Minister. Shri. Pattom A.Thanu Pillai however, resigned on September 25, 1962, consequent on a gubernatorial appointment; Shri.R.Sankar was appointed Chief Minister the next day. Shri.Sankar continued as Chief Minister for about two years.\textsuperscript{(3)}

A political crisis precipitated in September 1964, when about 15 Congress legislators lent their support to a no-confidence motion against the ministry. The motion was carried. The legislature was dissolved on September 10 and the State
thereupon passed under President's rule. Elections were held in March 1965. A fresh delimitation of constituencies had taken place in between. There were 133 Assembly and 19 Parliamentary constituencies. The election proved abortive in the sense that no single party could form a ministry commanding majority support. Once again on 25th March, 1965, Kerala was put under President's administration.

The State went to the polls two year later at the time of the general elections in March 1967. A new polarization of political forces had emerged in the meantime, leading to new electoral alliances. Politically the most potent combination was the new united front of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Communist Party of India, the Muslim League, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Karshaka Thozhilali Party and the Kerala Socialist Party. This seven-party combine was voted to power leading to the formation of a ministry headed by Shri.E.M.S.Namboodiripad (CPI-M). The Cabinet consisted of four members of the Marxist Party, two each of the CPI, the Muslim League and the SSP and one each of the RSP, the KTP and the KSP. Shri.Namboodiripad's second ministry had a chequered tenure until one of the ministers of the original SSP constituent, who had inter alia left the party to join the newly formed Indian Socialist Party group, had to resign from the Cabinet to face a judicial enquiry. The ministers belonging to the C.P.I., the Muslim League, the RSP and the KSP tendered their resignation in October 1969. Shri Namboodiripad himself resigned on 24th October, 1969. As distinct from previous crises, the legislature was intact. A fresh alignment of forces with the Assembly initiated the formation of an eight-member cabinet headed by Shri.C.Achutha Menon (CPI) in November 1969. The ruling alliance consisted of the CPI, the KSP, the Muslim League, the R.S.P. and the Kerala Congress. The Assembly was dissolved on 26th June, 1970 on the advice of the Chief Minister who tendered the resignation of his council of ministers on 1st August 1970.

Elections were held in September, 1970. The partners of the ruling front then included the Indian National Congress, the CPI, the RSP, the Muslim League and the Praja Socialist Party and were returned with a considerable majority. Shri.C.Achutha Menon formed his second ministry on 4th October, 1970. The
Indian National Congress supported the front Government without joining it. The cabinet was expanded on two occasions, once when the Indian National Congress joined it in September 1971 and for the second time in December, 1975 to accommodate Kerala Congress nominees. The fourth Legislative Assembly was unique in many respects. It emerged as the first Assembly in the chequered post-independence history of the State which completed its normal constitutional term. Moreover, the normal term of the Assembly was extended on three occasions - for a period of six months from 22nd October, 1975, for a second period of six months from 22nd April, 1976 and for yet another six months from 22nd October, 1976.

Elections were then held in March 1977, the sixth to be held since the formation of the State. The ruling front, essentially a continuation of the previous alignment of forces, won a decisive majority. Cabinet leadership now passed on to Shri.K.Karunakaran of the Congress who formed a ministry on March 25, 1977. But this ministry was short-lived. Shri.Karunakaran tendered the resignation of his cabinet on April 25, 1977 following certain reference by the Kerala High Court in what had been known as the Rajan case. Shri.A.K.Antony (Congress) became the next Chief Minister. However, in the wake of differences of opinion of the Congress Working Committee on the attitude of the Congress vis-a-vis parliamentary by-election at Chikkamagalur in Karnataka, Shri Antony resigned his Chief Ministership on October 27, 1978. Shri.P.K.Vasudevan Nair (CPI) took over as Chief Minister on October 29, 1978. But his ministry also resigned on October 7, 1979 in order to create a favourable atmosphere for the formation of a Left Democratic Front in Kerala. Shri.C.H.Muhammad Koya was sworn-in as Chief Minister on October 12, 1979, but the four member ministry could continue in office only for a short term. The ministry resigned on December 1, 1979 and the Assembly was dissolved. Again President's rule was invoked in Kerala up to 24th January 1980. Political alignment in Kerala had then undergone a sea change involving a drastic regrouping of major political parties. (4)

The stage was set for the eventual emergence of two political combines - the Left Democratic Front and the United Democratic Front. In the 1980 Assembly
polls, out of the 140 elective seats in the Assembly, 13 were reserved for scheduled castes and one for scheduled tribes. The LDF bagged 93 seats. Shri. E.K. Nayanar, leader of the L.D.F. headed a 17 member ministry which assumed office on 25th January, 1980. Despite the thumping majority for the LDF, there arose ideological differences among the ruling partners and it culminated in the withdrawal of support to the ministry by the Congress (S). The curtain fell down on 20th October 1981 when the eight-member Kerala Congress (M) also withdrew support to the Government. Shri. E.K. Nayanar tendered resignation of the ministry and President's rule was introduced on 21st October 1981. Again political realignment took place. The Kerala Congress (M) and the Congress(S) joined the U.D.F. An eight-member U.D.F. ministry was sworn in on 28th December 1981 with Shri. K. Karunakaran (Congress-I) as the leader. It was the twelfth ministry in Kerala since the formation of the State. The Congress (S) broke into two factions. The major group supported the Government. Another split took place in the Janatha Party also and a section lent support to the ministry. A member of the Kerala Congress (M) later withdrew his backing to the Government and it resulted in the resignation of the ministry and dissolution of the Assembly on March 17, 1982. The State fell under President's rule for the seventh time. Mid-term elections to the seventh Kerala Assembly were held on May 19, 1982. The nominees of the UDF and the LDF were the main political contestants. The U.D.F. won 77 seats.

The 19 member U.D.F. Ministry with Shri. K. Karunakaran as the Chief Minister assumed office on 24th May 1982. During the regime of the U.D.F. Government the major events that took place, were the merger of the INC (I) and INC(A) in November 1982, the merger of the two rival factions of the Muslim League (IUML and AIML) in August 1985 and the splits in the N.D.P., the Janata (J) and the SRP. That ministry could complete the full term of office. The U.D.F. Ministry resigned office soon after the announcement of the election results on March 24, 1987.

The ninth election to the eighth Kerala Assembly was held on March 23, 1987, about two months in advance of the due date. The electorate numbered
1,59,94,280 as in the case of the two previous elections, the U.D.F. And the L.D.F. were the contestants. The U.D.F. consisted of INC, IUML, KC(J), KC(M), SRP(S), NDP(P) and RSP(S). It fielded two independent candidates. The KC(J) and the IUML had given one each of their seats-Thaliparamba and Azhikode - to the Communist Marxist Party with which they had electoral adjustments and understanding. The LDF comprised of CPI (M), CPI, RSP, IC(S), Janatha and Lokdal. A third political front had also emerged with the B.J.P. And the Hindu Munnani, as constituents which put up 127 candidates.

The presence of 84 candidates fielded by the newly born Communist Marxist Party led by Shri.M.V.Raghavan who was expelled from the CPM, added a new dimension to the poll. In the elections, the LDF came out victorious by securing 78 seats, pushing the UDF to the opposition with 60 seats. An independent and one CMP candidate also won the elections. A five-member ministry under the Chief Ministership of Shri.E.K.Nayanar assumed charge of office on March 26, 1987. The ministry was expanded on April 3, 1987 by including 14 more members in the Cabinet. Later the Janatha Dal recommended to the Cabinet, the name of Prof. N.M.Joseph in the place of Shri.M.P.Veerendra Kumar. Shri.Varkala Radhakrishnan was elected Speaker and Smt.Bhargavi Thankappan as Deputy Speaker, in the first sitting of the Assembly.

In a move to decentralize power, the L.D.F. Ministry brought in the District council. In the elections to this council held in December 1990, the front came out victorious. Subsequently, early general elections to the assembly were declared and were scheduled for 23rd May 1991, though the tenure of the ministry extended up to March 1992. Consequent to the assassination of Shri.Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister, on 21st May, barely two days before the dates fixed for the polls, the elections were postponed to 12th June, 1991. Elections were held as per the revised schedule in 139 constituencies as polls in the Eattumanoor constituency was countermanded, because of the death of one of the candidates there. The total electorate numbered 1,95,12,248 and the votes polled were 1,43,33,377 (73%).In the elections, the U.D.F. emerged victors with 89 seats, their constituents being INC,
ML, KC(M), KC (B), CMP, NDP and independents. The 9th Kerala Assembly was sworn in to power on 24th June 1991, with Shri.K.Karunakaran as the Chief Minister.

The ministry comprised of 19 ministers, drawn from INC, ML, NDP, KC(M), KC(B), KC(J) and CMP. Shri.P.P.Thankachan was elected speaker. This ministry completed its full term of five years with a change of Chief Minister and Speaker in between. On 22nd March, 1995, Shri.K.Karunakaran took up a berth in the union cabinet, making way for Shri.A.K.Antony to take up the Chief Ministership. When Shri.P.P.Thankachan became the Agriculture Minister, Shri.Therambil Ramakrishnan was elected as Speaker in his place. As in previous years the L.D.F. Were the main contestants in the elections to the 10th Kerala Assembly.

The L.D.F. Consisted of CPI (M), CPI, Janatha Dal, Congress (S), Kerala Congress (J), R.S.P. And the U.D.F. Consisted of INC, ML, KC (Jacob), KC (M), KC(B) and CMP. Tilting the balance, the L.D.F. Emerged winners and the 10th Kerala Assembly was sworn in to power on the 20th of May 1996 with Shri.E.K.Nayanar as Chief Minister. The cabinet comprised of 14 ministers drawn from CPI (M), CPI, JD, INC(S), K.C.(J) and RSP. Shri.M.Vijaya Kumar was elected as Speaker.

Election to the 11th assembly was held on May 10 ,2001 in which UDF got 99 seats and the 11th Kerala Assembly was sworn in to power on the 17th of May 2001 with Shri.A.K.Antony as Chief Minister. The cabinet comprised of 20 ministers. Mr. Vakkom Purushothaman was elected as speaker. Shri. Sundaran Nadar sworn in as Deputy Speaker.

Shri.A.K.Antony tendered the resignation of his cabinet on august 29, 2004. A five member ministry under the chief ministership of Oommen chandy assumed charge of office on August 31, 2004. Shri.Therambil Ramakrishnan was elected as the Speaker. The ministry was further expanded to a 20 members cabinet. INC faced a split in 2005,a new party ,DIC[K] was formed under the leadership of veteran congress leader K.Karunakaran on may 1st 2005.
Election to the 12 assembly was conducted in three phases on April 22nd, 29th and May 3rd. The LDF won with 98 seats. The 19 member LDF ministry was sworn into power on 18th may 2006 with Shri V.S. Achuthanandan as the chief minister. Shri K. Radhakrishnan was elected as the speaker and deputy speaker is Shri JoseBaby.

In the 140 member house, the LDF secured 98 seats, the UDF secured 41 seats and the DIC (K) secured 1 seat. The LDF has got 48.63 percent of the votes polled and the UDF got 42.98 percent. The difference between the two fronts is 5.65 percentage points. The LDF government continue to be in power in Kerala till date.

Tamil Nadu Political History:

Tamil Nadu's history dates back to pre-historic times and archaeological evidence points to this area being one of the longest continuous habitations in India. From early pre-historic times, Tamil Nadu was the home of the four Tamil kingdoms of the Chera, Chola, Pandya, and Pallavas. The oldest extant literature dated between 300 BC and 600 BC mentions the exploits of the kings and the princes, and of the poets who extolled them. Cheras ruled from the capital of Karur in the west and traded extensively with West Asian kingdoms. An unknown dynasty called Kalabhras invaded and displaced the three Tamil kingdoms between the fourth and the seventh centuries CE. This is referred to as the Dark Age in Tamil history. They were eventually expelled by the Pallavas and the Pandyas.

Around 580 CE, the Pallavas, great temple builders, emerged into prominence and dominated the south for another 150 years. They ruled a vast portion of Tamil Nadu with Kanchipuram as their capital. They subjugated the Cholas and reigned as far south as the Kaveri River. Pallavas were replaced by the Pandyas in the 8th century. Their capital Madurai was in the deep south away from the coast.

By the 9th century, under Rajaraja Chola and his son Rajendra Chola, the Cholas rose as a notable power in south Asia. The Chola Empire stretched as far as Bengal. At its peak, the empire spanned almost 250 million acres. Rajaraja Chola
conquered all of peninsular South India and parts of Sri Lanka. Rajendra Chola's navies went even further, occupying coastal Burma, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Sumatra, Java, Malaya in South East Asia and Pegu islands. With the decline of the Cholas towards the end of the 11th century, the Pandyas rose to prominence once again, under Maravarman Sundara Pandya.

The northern invasions of Alauddin Khilji troops triggered the establishment of Vijayanagara Empire in the Deccan. It eventually conquered the entire Tamil country (c. 1370 CE). This empire lasted almost three centuries.

As the Vijayanagara Empire went into decline after mid-16th century, the Nayak governors, who were appointed by the Vijayanagar kingdom to administer various territories of the empire, declared their independence. The Nayaks of Madurai and Nayaks of Thanjavur were most prominent of them all in the 17th century. They reconstructed some of the oldest temples in the country.

Around 1609, the Dutch established a settlement in Pulicat. In 1639, the British, under the British East India Company, established a settlement further south, in present day Chennai.

The British used petty quarrels among the provincial rulers (divide and rule) to expand their sphere of influence throughout the Nizam's dominions. The British fought and reduced the French dominions in India to Pondicherry. Nizams bestowed tax revenue collection rights on the East India Company by the end of 18th century.

In early 19th century, East India Company consolidated most of southern India into the Madras Presidency coterminal with the dominions of Nizam of Hyderabad. Pudukkottai remained as a princely state under British suzerainty.\(^5\)

Pre Independence:

Prior to Indian independence, Tamil Nadu was under British colonial rule as part of the Madras Presidency. The main party in Tamil Nadu at that time was the Congress Party. Regional parties have dominated state politics since 1916. One of the earliest regional parties was the South Indian Welfare Association, which was a
forerunner to Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu, was started in 1916. The party was called after its English organ, *Justice Party*, by its opponents and later the same was adopted as its official name. The reason for victory of the Justice Party in elections was the non-participation of the Congress Party, demanding complete independence of India.

Tamil Nadu had one of the earliest independence movements (separatist or secessionist or liberation movements) in India even before the British left. Unlike the Pakistan movement the latter is based on nationalism, ethnicity and language and not on religion.

The first "Tamil Nadu for Tamils" Conference was held in December 10, 1939. Mr. C.N. Annadurai, the chief lieutenant of Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy (EVR) was the principal speaker and he explained the reasons and justification for the demand in his own spell binding oratory. (6)

E.V.Ramaswami Naicker popularly known as *EVR* and also as *Periyar*, believed in agitational politics and he took the Justice Party away from its original path. The Justice Party which had a moribund existence under E.V.Ramaswami Naicker, died at last in 1944 which he renamed the party *Dravidar Kazhagam* (DK) in 1944. DK was a non-political party which demanded the establishment of an independent state called *Dravida Nadu*. However, due to the differences between its two leaders Periyar and C.N. Annadurai, the party was split. Annadurai left the party to form the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. The DMK decided to enter politics in 1956. Following the 1963 law enacted by the Congress Party Government of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru that banned parties and individuals demanding independence (freedom or separatism or secession) from India, DMK abandoned their primary goal of an independent Dravida Nadu (southern India which included Tamil Nadu) separate from India.

**Independence**

When India became independent in 1947, Madras Presidency became Madras State, comprised of present day Tamil Nadu, coastal Andhra Pradesh up to
Ganjam district in Orissa, northern Karnataka, and parts of Kerala. The state was subsequently split up along linguistic lines. In 1968, Madras State was renamed Tamil Nadu, meaning Land of Tamil.

Tamil Nadu had a bicameral legislature until 1986, when it was replaced with a unicameral legislature, like most other states in India. The 'Governor' is the Constitutional head of the state while the 'Chief Minister' is the head of the government and the head of the council of ministers. The Chief Justice of the Madras High Court is the head of the judiciary. The major administrative units of the state constitute 39 Lok Sabha constituencies, 234 Assembly constituencies, 31 districts, 10 municipal corporations, 145 municipalities, 561 town panchayats and 12,618 village panchayats. Chennai (formerly known as Madras) is the state capital. It is the fourth largest city in India and is also one of the five A1 Metropolitan cities of India.

The Politics of Tamil Nadu is dominated by the Dravidian movement for about four decades. Regional Parties form the major part of the Tamil Nadu Politics since 1967. Re-organization of Indian states according to linguistic and ethnic basis has moderated Tamil nationalism, especially the demand for separation from the Indian Union. The Anti-Hindi agitations in mid-1960s made the DMK more popular and a more powerful political force in the state. The DMK routed the Congress Party in the 1967 elections and took control of the state government, ending Congress' stronghold in Tamil Nadu. C.N. Annadurai became the DMK's first Chief Minister.


Karunanidhi’s leadership was soon challenged by M.G. Ramachandran, popularly known as MGR. In 1972 MGR broke away from the DMK and formed the
Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (ADMK). MGR made corruption the main issue for the parting of ways. In an interview with the New York Times in 1974, MGR said in a reference to the top leaders of the DMK, "They have corrupted a party that was once incorruptible. What they do best is lie, give false accounts, take money." It's likely that Karunanidhi's efforts to promote his son Muthu as a film star also played a role in MGR's decision to leave the DMK.\(^{(7)}\)

Later renamed the party as All India Anna Dravid Munnetra Kazhagam. He was the Chief Minister of the state from 1977 until his death in 1987. After the death of MGR, the party split again into two factions, one led by Janaki Ramachandran, wife of MGR, and the other led by J. Jayalalithaa. After the defeat of AIADMK in the 1989 assembly polls, J. Jayalalithaa took control of the party. She was elected as the General Secretary of the unified AIADMK. There have been several splits in both the DMK and the AIADMK; but since 1967 one of those two parties has held power in the state.

**Karunanidhi's Political Star Declines as MGR's Star Rises:**

With the rise of MGR and his ADMK party, Karunanidhi's political stardom declined.

The ADMK won a resounding victory in the 1977 state Legislative Assembly elections and MGR became Chief Minister of the state. Such was MGR's sway over the masses in Tamil Nadu that until his death, Karunanidhi was relegated to the opposition benches.

In the 1989 elections (held after MGR's death in December 1987), Karunanidhi's DMK won handily. He became Chief Minister for the third time. However, the vicissitudes of political fortune were sharply brought home to Karunanidhi when he lost the 1991 elections to MGR's protégé Jayaram Jayalalitha who was also a popular film actress. However, voters were dissatisfied with both Jayalalitha and her AIADMK party and in the 1996 elections, the Karunanidhi-led DMK was again back in power for the next five years. Jayalalitha appeared to have
learned her lessons and on the back of a strong campaign was reelected to power in 2001 trouncing Karunanidhi's DMK.  

One of Jayalalitha's first acts after returning to power in 2001 was to have Karunanidhi arrested. In the early hours of June 30, 2001, Karunanidhi was arrested on charges of corruption. TV channels flashed images of Karunanidhi being dragged out of his home, screaming and kicking. Similarly DMK government had arrested Jayalalitha in December 1996 on charges of corruption forcing her to spend a few weeks in jail.

Karunanidhi made a comeback to the Chief Minister's office following the May 2006 elections. The DMK-led Democratic Progressive Alliance won a solid victory over the AIADMK setting the stage for Karunanidhi's fifth term as Chief Minister. In a bid to win the votes of the poor people, Karunanidhi made two promises during his election campaign - 1) The DMK government would provide them with rice at Rs 2 per kilogram; 2) Free color television to every household.

K. Kamaraj – A Great Indian Political Leader:

Sometime in the early 1970s we had our first and only glimpse of Kumaraswami Kamaraj, one of India's great political leaders. New York Times reporter J. Anthony Lukas, who covered India in the mid-1960s, described Kamaraj thus:

"A dark mountain of a man with a slashing white mustache, he looks like a cross between Sonny Liston and the Walrus in the illustrations for Alice in Wonderland."

Born in 1903 in the town of Virudhunagar in Southern Tamil Nadu, Kamaraj is often referred to as a king maker of Indian politics. Kamaraj was born into a family of Nadars, the traditional toddy tapping community in Southern Tamil Nadu, and had little formal education. Politics attracted Kamaraj at an early age after seeing Mohandas Gandhi at a meeting in the nearby temple city of Madurai.
Kamaraj quickly joined the Congress party and national resistance against the British colonists. For his protests against the British, Kamaraj was thrown into jail several times and spent eight years in prison. In the early days, Kamaraj worked closely with his first mentor Sundaresa Satyamurthi, a lawyer from Madras (now Chennai). Hailing from a low caste, Kamaraj naturally threw in his lot with the non-Brahmins, who were resentful of the domination of the Brahmins in state politics.

Kamaraj became Chief Minister of Madras in 1954, a post he held until 1963. During his stint as Chief Minister, he introduced the mid-day meal scheme for poor children, a step that was later significantly expanded by one of his successors like MGR.

Kamaraj became president of the Congress party in 1964 under the so called Kamaraj Plan, which led to several senior Congress ministers in Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet and Chief Ministers resigning so that they could devote their energies to revitalizing the party. After Nehru's death, as Congress party president Kamaraj worked behind the scenes to elevate Lal Bahadur Sastri as Prime Minister of India.

Kamaraj played a similar role in helping Indira Gandhi to become Prime Minister after Sastri died suddenly in Tashkent. But Kamaraj's relations with Indira Gandhi soured quickly. Within six months, relations between Kamaraj and Indira Gandhi became strained, primarily over the issue of devaluation of the Rupee. According to Ramachandra Guha, Kamaraj opposed devaluation because he "saw it as undermining the policy of national self-reliance."

In the 1967 state Assembly elections, Kamaraj suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of a young student leader P. Sreenivasan of the DMK. Kamaraj got 47.98% of the total votes polled while his main opponent Sreenivasan secured 49.9% of the votes. Although Kamaraj won a bye-election sometime later, his reputation never recovered from the 1967 defeat.

Final Days:

Despite the DMK-Congress (I) alliance, Kamaraj won the 1971 Parliamentary elections from the Nagercoil constituency with 58.37% of the total
valid votes polled compared to 31.11% for his DMK rival M.C.Balan. Kamaraj was the sole victor for the Congress (O) in Tamil Nadu.

After the 1971 elections, the Congress (O) became completely marginalized in the country and Kamaraj's influence waned considerably.

A bachelor, Kamaraj died of a heart attack in Madras (now Chennai) on October 2. This simple man was honored with India's highest civilian award Bharat Ratna in 1976.

**Conjeevaram Natarajan Annadurai:**

Annadurai - fondly referred to Anna or elder brother - was a politician, playwright, journalist and scriptwriter for Tamil movies. A good debater in both Tamil and English, Annadurai became a follower of the rationalist and Dravida Kazhagam leader E.V.Ramasamy Naicker a.k.a. Periyar (elder). Disillusioned with the Dravida Kazhagam's reluctance to enter the political arena, Annadurai parted ways with Periyar and founded the *Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam* party in 1949.

In the 1957 state Legislative Assembly elections, Annadurai won from the Kancheepuram constituency defeating P.S.Srinivasan of the Congress party. Annadurai secured 51.94% of the votes versus 33.77% for the runner-up Srinivasan. The DMK fared even better in the 1962 state Legislative Assembly elections winning 50 seats out of the 143 it contested.

But Annadurai, who contested in the 1962 state Legislative Assembly elections from the Kancheepuram constituency, lost to a Congress candidate S.V.Natesha Mudaliar. It was not a narrow defeat for Annadurai because his opponent got 54.8% of the votes. However, he was nominated to the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) of the Indian Parliament.

It was his secessionist speeches in Parliament that brought Annadurai to the national limelight. On May 5, 1962, Annadurai stunned his fellow parliamentarians and the country by advocating the secession of the four south Indian states including Madras, the state he hailed from.
Annadurai mooted that India should be turned into "a comity of nations instead of a medley of disgruntled units." Parliament was shocked and so was Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Annadurai had two complaints - discrimination against the southern states and imposition of the Hindi language.

An angry Nehru declared that the creation of Pakistan was "bad enough." To Nehru, any more divisions would balkanize India into "thousands of bits" and he vowed to resist such secessionist demands with all force. Subsequently, Annadurai toned down his secessionist rhetoric and he and his DMK party focused on opposing the Hindi language.

In the 1967 state Legislative Assembly elections, the DMK defeated the Congress party handily and Annadurai became the first non-Congress Chief Minister of Madras (now known as Tamil Nadu). Of the 174 seats the DMK contested, it won 137 and secured 40.69% of the total votes. The Congress party got 41.1% of the total votes but won just 51 of the 232 seats it contested.

Marudur Gopala Ramachandran Menon (MGR):

MGR was a unique phenomenon in Indian politics. Idolized by his followers as a "Puratchi Thalaivar" (revolutionary leader), MGR was a prominent film star who parlayed his popularity with the masses into a successful second career as a politician. Hard poverty compelled MGR to join the theater at the early age of seven and then enter the movie business as an actor.

After MGR's mentor C.W. Annadurai died in 1969, M.Karunanidhi became the leader of the DMK and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. MGR parted with the DMK and Karunanidhi in 1974 after making corruption the main issue. MGR launched the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (ADMK) and in 1977 state Legislative Assembly elections, MGR's ADMK won a resounding victory over the DMK.

MGR and his political offspring, the ADMK never looked back after that. Until his death in 1987, MGR comfortably won the two subsequent state Legislative Assembly elections.
Even as the rural and urban poor idolized him, the middle class and the media was disdainful of the star.

Some political observers are dismissive of the MGR era. "His style of governance was autocratic, his demeanour feudal, his attitude vindictive, his administration inefficient," noted the writers from news magazine India Today in the aftermath of MGR's death.

Professor M.S.S. Pandian in his analytical study of the MGR phenomenon is even more critical describing MGR's 11-year rule "as undoubtedly one of the darkest periods in the contemporary history of the state. Under his dispensation, profiteers of different kinds...greatly prospered while a stagnant, if not declining economy forced the poor, who constituted the mainstay of MGR's support, into unbearable misery."

MGR's best known program was the free mid-day meal scheme for poor children. Dismissed as a populist program by academics, the media and middle class, the program ensured for hundreds of thousands of children poor children the only hearty meal of the day. (11)

After his death, MGR was succeeded by his wife Janaki as Chief Minister. However, Janaki's tenure was short-lived and she faded away from the political scene. Ever since, the political battle in Tamil Nadu has been fought primarily between Karunanidhi and Jayalalitha with the Congress party on the sidelines.

**The Contemporary Tamil Political Scenario:**

The relatively new political parties are Patali Makkal Katchi (PMK) headed by Dr. Ramadoss and Tamil National Movement (Tamil Desiya Iyakkam) headed by Pazha Nedumaran. Underground organizations which are waging an armed struggle for independence for Tamil Nadu include Tamil Nadu Viduthalai Pañdai (TNLA) headed by Maran, Tamil Nadu Viduthalai Padai (TNLA) headed by Ilavarasan and Tamil Nadu Retrieval Troops (TNRT). Number of cadres in these groups is not known but they are believed to be small.
The Indian national parties such as the Congress Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are for a more unitary government with power more centralized at the Union Government and the state governments more dependent on the former. Offshoots of the Congress Party like the Tamil Manila Congress (TMC), founded by Moopanar and now headed by his son Vasan and the Rajive Tamil Nau Congress (named after the late Rajiv Gandhi) headed by Ramamurthy are also have similar views. These parties do not, however, have the popular support and vote bank as DMK and AIADMK.
Reference:

3. http://www.kerala.gov.in
4. http://www.kerala.gov.in