FILM AND THE 1967 ELECTION TOWARDS THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT

In Tamilnadu Cinema caused a political change in favour of a new mode of administration based on the ideology of dravidian concepts. It is one of the cheapest and most effective means of communication for social mobilization in India. It has played a vital role in the creation of national self-consciousness among Tamil people. In the 1967 election the D.M.K. spread rationalist ideas to be found in the administration of the Madras State. Besides this, the D.M.K. party used electronic media such as slide and projector in the election campaign.\(^1\) There were some important factors and incidents to cause the fall of the Congress Government in the 1967 general elections. The D.M.K. party to capture the government followed some strategy and made a series of efforts till 1967 to win the election.\(^2\) It also organised party conferences in Tamilnadu to awake and inspire the party members. The second conference of the D.M.K. party held at

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Trichy in 1953, became a great impetus among the party workers who began to propagate the party ideals and ideology to the nook and corner of Tamilnadu.\textsuperscript{3}

\textbf{3.1 TRICHY CONFERENCE OF 1953}

The State conference of D.M.K. party held at Trichy from 17 to 20\textsuperscript{th} May 1953 made a radical change in the policy and function of the D.M.K. party. It was attended by almost all the representatives of the party from Bombay, Ahmadabad, Bangalore, Travancore, Chittoor and the whole Tamilnadu. The Conference was presided over by R. Nedunchezhiyan. Since the formation of the D.M.K. party in 1949 it did not contest any election in the State.\textsuperscript{4}

So the participation of the conference urged the party leaders to pass resolutions to contest in the ensuing second General Election to be held in January 1957. This matter was put into vote to know the opinion of the party members. The election was conducted on 20\textsuperscript{th} May 1953, Last

\textsuperscript{3} Elavahal, \textit{Achievements of DMK government}, [Tamil], Madras, 1977, P.23.

day of the Conference in which 56,942 members voted in favour of contest and 4208 against it.\textsuperscript{5} The DMK party passed a resolution to contest the 1957 election on the strength of the majority opinion. Following that, in the Conference a committee was constituted consisting of C.N. Annathurai, E.V.K.Sampath, K.A.Mathiyalagan, A.V.P.Aasithambi, N.V.Natarajan to collect the public opinion of the party about its policy on contesting elections.

The committee members were asked to go to almost all the places in person and collect the public opinions from the common people as well as prominent personalities. Accordingly they collected all the available data from the people and submitted the report. Subsequently on 28\textsuperscript{th} December 1956, the party organised the General body meeting and discussed the strategies to be followed in the coming 1957 election.

Then N.V.Natarajan was entrusted to frame the election manifesto with the help and co-operation of E.V.K.Sampath, K.A.Mathiyalagan, M.Karunanidhi, A.Govindaswamy, M.P.Subramanian, Satyavanimuthu. A

\textsuperscript{5} C.N.Annathurai, \textit{Illatchiya Varalaru} [Tamil], Trichy, 1957, P.17.
Committee was constituted to select the candidates for the
the ensuing parliamentary and state legislature.\(^6\)

The Trichy conference was followed by the
Salem district conference at Salem in 1957 under the
presidency of E. V. Ramaswamy Naickar. He advised his
followers to actively campaign for Kamaraj as the Brahmins
and D.M.K. activists were trying to oust Kamaraj from power.
He stressed about the responsibility of all Tamilians to support
Kamaraj and his followers in the election.\(^7\)

On 10\(^{th}\) February 1957, a special conference
was organised in Madras and in connection with the
conference a procession was organised to start from
Royapuram at 9 o’clock.  The leader of the conference,
Nedunchezhiyan explained about the involvement of the party
in the election.

In the 1957 election, 15 candidates won
from the D.M.K. front for Madras Legislative Assembly and 2
candidates won for Lok Sabha. In the election 11,62,902 votes
were polled and out of that Congress obtained 49,13,375 votes

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6. Parthasarathi, History of DMK, [Tamil], Madras, 1973,
P.195.
and D.M.K. 16,53,484. The rest were obtained by others parties. C.N. Annathurai, K. Anbalagan, M. Karunanidhi, Satyavanimuthu, A.V.P. Aasaithambi, Kalampur Annamalai, Anandar, Erusappan, A. Govindaswamy, P.V. Sanmugam, S. Santhanamswamy, M.P. Sarathi, M.P. Subramanian, M. Selvaraj, Narayanan were elected for Madras Legislative Assembly. E.V.K. Sampath and Tharmalingam were elected for the Lok Sabha. Thus the D.M.K. emerged as a powerful and active opposition party in the Madras Legislative Assembly. C.N. Annadurai became the leader of the opposition party and K. Anbalagan became the assistant leader.

In the election campaign S.S. Rajendran, an active leader and attractive film star made his propaganda and other election work. The famous Tamil poet and writer Kannadhasan also rendered valuable support to the D.M.K. party. Besides these M.G. Ramachandran took active part in the party. Thus film personalities played a major role in the D.M.K. election campaign.

10. Ibid., P.209.
Since 1957, the position and status of the D.M.K. party began to increase because it raised the socio-economic condition of the people in the legislature and platforms. The eloquency of the D.M.K. orators in Tamil and the propaganda work of the film personalities gave a fresh impetus to the party. M.G.Ramachandran and S.S.Rajendran were the film personalities who worked for the development of the party. M.G.Ramachandran’s charitable and philanthropic attitude offered a new outlook to the D.M.K. party. He lavishly spent for the progress of the party. His propaganda work had a great impact in the 1959 Madras Corporation and 1962 Madras Legislative Assembly elections.11

3.2 D.M.K. IN MADRAS CITY CORPORATION

The D.M.K. captured Madras Corporation in 1959. With the support rendered by Communist Party it contested in 100 places and secured victory in 45 places. A.P.Arasu became the first mayor of D.M.K. Abdul Khader was elected as Muslim Candidate in rotation system. In Madurai also CPI with the support of D.M.K. contested for 12 seats and secured victory in all constituencies securing 32,862 votes. The

D.M.K. captured 2 seats. By these alliances it also captured the city administration in Madurai. Thus the D.M.K. through arduous efforts obtained a chance to rule the corporation for the first time. The D.M.K. Candidates as Mayor and Deputy Mayor were hailed as a hallmark in the Dravidian Movement.

The D.M.K. found electoral success in the general elections of 1957 and in the municipal elections which followed beneath the black and red banners of the D.M.K. A small minority party of Tamilnadu securing 15 seats in 1957 election out of 206 had at once reached the zenith to attract the popular attention at the national level.

3.3 1962 GENERAL ELECTION

In the 1962 General election the D.M.K. made an electoral alliance with the CPI for straight contest between the Congress on one hand and the CPI and D.M.K. on the other. To build up an alliance the D.M.K. made an

understanding with Muthuramalinaga Thevar’s Forward Block Party and Mohammed Ismail’s Muslim League Party.\textsuperscript{15} Annathurai in a statement told that the D.M.K. was making all electoral alliances with the opposition parties except for Muslim League which had very limited ambitions.

The election manifesto of the D.M.K. drafted by Annathurai declared its long – range goal as the creation of a Dravidian Socialist Federation.\textsuperscript{16} The manifesto played a significant role in the orientation of the D.M.K.’s election campaign. In the election campaign increasing of prices in Madras was the major concern to every voter. The D.M.K. also announced its intention to seek recognition as an All-India Party.\textsuperscript{17}

In the 1962 election the D.M.K. got 50 seats in Madras Assembly and 7 seats for Parliament. In that election it was very shock to see the defeat of Annathurai in his own constituency. But it proved a blessing in disguise for him as he was elected to Rajya Sabha. There he made a great mark

\textsuperscript{15}Tamilmathi, Kancheepurathu Therthal Ragasiyam [Tamil], Kancheepuram, 1962, P.13.
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17}Madras Administrative Report – 1962, August, Madras, P.22.
with his classical speeches.\textsuperscript{18} Naval R. Nedunchezhiyan was elected as the leader of the opposition party in the Madras Assembly. It is said that the dignity of Navalr, ready reports of Karunanidhi, broad sides of Mathiazhagan, punches of P.U. Shanmugham, legal achumen of S. Madhavan and the scholarship of Pulavar Govindan enabled the D.M.K. to establish itself as a responsible opposition party. The young MLA’s maintained great decorum in the assembly.\textsuperscript{19} Nanjil Manojaran with his polished eloquence, Era. Chezhiyan with facts and statics, K. Rajendran with his amiable disposition projected the D.M.K.’s image in parliament in 1962.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{3.4 D.M.K. FILM STARS IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN}

In addition to its efforts in Madras the D.M.K. party contested assembly seats in Mysore and Andhra Pradesh. Highlighting cinema as the most effective instrument of communication and the popularity of the film stars, the D.M.K. organised rallies throughout the State by using the issue


\textsuperscript{18} The Hindu English daily Madras dated 23-6-1962, Madras, P.15.

\textsuperscript{19} N. Murganandam, Tamilnadu Netu-Endru-Nalai (Tamil), USA, 1997, P. 233.

\textsuperscript{20} K. Thirunavukarasu, Dravida Iyakkamum Thiraipada Ulagamum, Madras, 1990, P.27.
of rising prices. S.S. Rajendran, one of the most popular Tamil film stars was a D.M.K. candidate from Theni constituency in 1962. He secured victory by defeating N.R.Thiagarajan in 1969.\textsuperscript{21}

M.G.Ramachandran offered his active participation for the D.M.K. Shivaji Ganesan, a veteran actor extended his support to E.V.K. Sampath’s Tamil National Movement, but he was warned by artists to keep himself away from politics. M.R.Radha, the Dravida Kazhagam representative in the cinema world campaigned for the congress together with a host of other film personalities.\textsuperscript{22}

Shivaji Ganesan rapidly became the most popular film star in Madras. He made large contributions to the party and collected money at rallies. However, he lacked recognition for his efforts on D.M.K. and felt that the party was no longer an asset. At once he started attacking the D.M.K. as a ‘Glamour Party’ to exploit the Tamil film industry. The DMK on the other hand abused Shivaji publicly and its members went to the extent of defacing his photographs and posters with

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{21} The Hindu, English daily, Madras, dated 4-2-1962.
\textsuperscript{22} M.Thangavelu, Annavin Arasu, Madras, 1971, P.15
\end{flushright}
mud and dung.\textsuperscript{23} The 1962 general election revealed the emergence of the D.M.K. as a more formidable force than the congress.\textsuperscript{24} It became the strongest opposition party to challenge the Congress Government in Tamilnadu.\textsuperscript{25} Doubling its strength in the Assembly, the Dravida Muunetra Kazhagam secured 3.5 million votes compared to congress party.\textsuperscript{26}

D.M.K.’s victory was a loss to the Congress party. It won 50 seats in 1962 election and thus became the second largest party in Tamilnadu.\textsuperscript{27} In the mean time the anti–Hindi agitation formed by the party cleared its path to reach the goal.\textsuperscript{28}

3.5 THE ANTI – HINDI AGITATION

The anti-Hindi agitation in Tamilnadu made radical changes in the political arena of Tamilnadu and caused the failure of the Congress party in the 1967 General Election.

\begin{enumerate}
\item R.M. Veerapan, \textit{MGR Yare} [Tamil], Chennai, 1998, P. 17.
\item Ibid., P.22.
\item The Hindu, English daily, Madras dated 18-8-1961.
\item Robert. C. Hardgrave, \textit{Political Sociology of South India}, \textit{op. cit.}, P.76.
\item C.N. Annadurai, \textit{Nanbarkalakku Anna} [Tamil], Madras, 1963, P.15.
\item S. Sadasivam, \textit{op. cit.}, P.30.
\end{enumerate}
election. At the outset the anti-Hindi agitation gained momentum when the Madras administration under Rajaji in 1937 announced Hindi as compulsory in educational institutions. In this movement E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker took the lead and launched a number of agitations against the Government.

The anti-Hindi Movement reached the zenith when Tamil scholars cutting across all political and communal differences, came out in the open and expressed their opinions about the harm that Hindi might cause to Tamil language.\textsuperscript{29} As soon as Rajaji announced his plan to make Hindi compulsory in schools, the Karandi Tamil Sangam organised a protest meeting on 27\textsuperscript{th} August 1937.\textsuperscript{30}

Academicians and students voiced their concern at the prospect of Hindi causing a great harm to Tamil language and culture. In that meeting presided over by Venkatachala Pillai, T.V. Umamaheswarn Pillai, J.M. Somasundaram Pillai, S.V. Kuppuswamy Pillai and Venkatachalam spoke on the evils that might cause to Tamilnadu.

\textsuperscript{29} The Hindu, English daily, Madras, dated 27-2-1962.\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., dated 11-5-1965.
On 29th August 1937 anti-Hindi agitators took out a procession. The processionists shouted slogan against Hindi imposition. It was in this procession M.Karunanidhi as a fourteen year old boy shouted ‘down with Hindi’, Maraimalai Adigal presided over an anti-Hindi meeting at the Gokhlake Hall on 4th October 1937.31 In his presidential address, he gave irrefutable reason for opposing Hindi in Tamilnadu.

Following his speech several scholars like Somasundara Bharathi, Rev. Arul Thangaiah, Prof. Sargunar of Madras Christian College, Balasubramania Mudaliar, K.M.Balasubramanian and C.N.Annathurai spoke of the need for safeguarding the interest of Tamil. Maraimala Adigal subsequently published a Booklet entitled “Can Hindi Be the Lingua Franca of India”.32 In this book, he refuted the very theory that Hindi was spoken by a majority of people in India. He said that “Hindi is not a common tongue of even the northerners; Hindi is spoken in varied ways in different places.

of north India”. Somasundara Bharathi, an eminent scholar and Prof. of Tamil in the Annamalai University saw in compulsory Hindi a great threat to the very existence of the Tamil language.

Though he was a staunch congress man, he stated that the inner motive behind the imposition of Hindi was to destroy Tamil language and Tamil arts and the Tamils could be made perpetual slaves to the Aryans. He also wondered why among the small size Congress ruled province in Tamilnadu alone Hindi was introduced as a compulsory subject in schools.\textsuperscript{33}

Umamaheswaran Pillai, a prominent Justice and a Tamil Scholar of repute declared, that he had decided to sacrifice his life for Tamil. He stressed that the fundamental secret for the introduction of Hindi was to popularise Sanskrit, so that the educational progress of the illiterate masses in Tamilnadu could be checked. While addressing a meeting at Karandai, he called upon the Tamil People to rise against the imposition of Hindi language.\textsuperscript{34} Besides M.C.Poornalingam Pillai,

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{33} Kudi Arasu, Tamil daily, Madras, dated 12- 9- 1937.  
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.,}
Vidwan Varadharajan and other Tamil scholars opposed the imposition of Hindi tooth and nail. Scholars like Dr. Arundale felt that the introduction of Hindi in schools would be harmful to the students. He stated that already students had to study a lot of books and compulsory Hindi would be an additional burden which the boys could not bear.

When the Congress leaders alleged that anti-Hindi agitation drew its support chiefly from the Justice Party men and Self – Respecters. E.V.Ramaswamy Naickar gave a list of eminent Brahmins who supported the movement. The list included such persons of great eminence and social status as T.R. Venkaram Sastri, V.V. Swaminatha Iyyengar and Kunzru.  

Justice party leaders like A.T.Panneerselvam, K.V. Reddi Naidu and Umamaheswarn Pillai, strongly criticised the introduction of compulsory Hindi. They used press and platform to launch the anti-Hindi propaganda and stated that the people demanded Hindi to be made compulsory subject in schools.  

35.Kudi Arasu, Tamil daily, Madras, dated 29-8-1937.  
As a mark of protest N.V. Natarajan resigned from the Congress party and vehemently criticised the Hindi policy of the Rajaji’s administration. Generally Rajaji’s language policy was not authorised by the Congress party. In the All India Congress committee meeting held in 1938 no resolution authorising any province to introduce Hindi as a compulsory subject was passed. Prominent congress men in the province such as Dr.Varadharajulu Naidu, George Jacab, Karimuthu Theyagaraja Chettiyar, N.V.Natarajan, M.Balasubramanian and P.K.Vinayakam openly opposed the scheme. V.V.Giri, one of the ministers in Rajaji’s cabinet said in a meeting at Chingleput that anything forced by compulsion would be last long.\footnote{Muthiah Chettiar quoting mail referred to V.V. Giri stand on Hindi, Madras Assembly Debates, 1938.}

Day by day the anti-Hindi agitation developed with valour and vigour. Rajaji took law into his hands and began to arrest the ring leaders first and the followers subsequently. By 31\textsuperscript{st} January 1939, 683 men and 36 women were sent to jail.\footnote{Fortnightly Report dated 19 12 1939, PP. 4 – 23.} A conference meeting, processions and propaganda works against Hindi imposition was
the order of the day. The agitation reached the zenith when E.V.Ramswami Naicker was imprisoned on 6th December 1938. He was charged with the offences of instigating the women to resort to picketing, in front of the Hindu Theological High School.\textsuperscript{39} He was sentenced one and a half year of rigorous imprisonment.

The press and public condemned the imprisonment. The Indian Express condemned it as ‘barbarous’; the Bombay sentinel called it vindictive Navasakthi; Mail, Poona Ithavadha, Calcutta star of India, the Amirtha Bazar Partika, the Daily Express, the Allahabad leader and Nagpur Maratha unanimously criticised the harsh sentence given to E.V. Ramswami Naicker.\textsuperscript{40}

The health condition of E.V. Ramaswami Naicker was critical and all the leaders and common people compelled the immediate release of E.V. Ramswami Naicker. He was released on 22nd May 1939 after staying 167 days in jail. On 15th January 1939 L.Natarajan, an activist in the anti-

\textsuperscript{39}Fortnightly Report dated 13-1- 1939, PP. 4 – 24.

\textsuperscript{40}M.Ilanchelian, Thamilan Thodutha Por, Madras , 1986, P.155.
Hindi agitation died in the prison. His death stormed the Madras Legislators. Due to the outbreak of World War II, the Congress Government under Rajaji resigned on 20th October 1939. After his resignation, the British administration did not like to continue the policy of Rajaji on compulsory Hindi and on 21st February 1940, Lord Erskine, the Governor of Madras withdrew the compulsory Hindi scheme.41

The anti-Hindi agitation occurred subsequently whenever Hindi imposition was attempted. In 1942 an agitation was organised against compulsory Hindi. Again in 1946, during Prakasam’s Chief Ministership Hindi was made a compulsory subject in schools. C.N. Annadurai and his associates agitated against the move.

But after India’s independence compulsory Hindi was evoked again in 1948. E.V.Ramswami Naicker, Maraimalai Adigal and Thiru Vi.Kalyana Sundara Mudaliar joined hands in opposing Hindi at that time. In 1950 when Hindi was introduced in High school, Tamilnadu witnessed an intense struggle against Hindi imposition.42

41.Anrony Copley, Rajagopala chari, Gandhi’s Southern Commander, Madras, 1986, P.168.
Among the anti-Hindi agitation, the 1965 agitation was so violent and its impact was so severe. It sounded the death knell of the Congress regime in Tamilnadu and prevented the development of Hindi in Tamilnadu. Above all a number of young politicians emerged by their involvement in the anti-Hindi agitation in Tamilnadu. Later this helped them to become ministers as well as to play a conspicuous role in national and regional politics.\textsuperscript{43}

The Central Government in pursuance of Article 343 of the Indian constitution decided to proclaim Hindi as the official language of India with the effect from 26\textsuperscript{th} January 1965. Tamilnadu which opposed to move from the very beginning reacted predictably in the preceding weeks. Rajaji, [former Premier and Chief Minister of Tamilnadu (Madras Presidency) 1937 – 39, 1950 – 54], organised the anti-Hindi conference in Trichy on 17\textsuperscript{th} January 1965 with the cooperation of Thiagaraja Chettiyar and G.D. Naidu, two industrialists. He criticised the language policy of the Central Government and instigated the Tamil to resist the imposition of Hindi as an unwise, unjust and discriminatory tyranny.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{43} K.Rajaram, Anna Thiruvilakku, Madras, 1969, P.18.
\textsuperscript{44} K.K.Velmani, Trichirapally District Gazetteer, Government of Tamiladu, Madras,1998, P.86.
The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [D.M.K.] Party, the vanguard of Tamil Nationalism declared January 26 as a day of mourning. The cries against Hindi imperialism were long familiar, but the tragedy which was to follow was one for which the Government and the nation were wholly unprecedent.45

The DMK decided to react against the incident of 26th January 1965, through the observance of mourning in a peaceful way. As Chief Minister M. Bhaktavataslam had already announced that the D.M.K. Programme would be smashed, the police plunged into action to prevent the D.M.K. from observing the mourning day. In a pre-down swoop, D.M.K. leader Annadurai was arrested in Madras, M.Karunanidhi was arrested in Karur, V.R.Nedumchezhian at Madurai and K.Anbazhagan at Coimbatore.46

Besides these R.Sezhian, R.Dharmalingam, K.Manohoran the members of Parliament, K.A.Mathaiaghagan and Kanchi Mani Mozhiar, C.V.Rajagopal the members of State

Assembly were arrested. The Madras Corporation councilors Neela Narayanan who was also D.M.K. district secretary, V. Munuswamy and A.P. Arasu, former Mayors, Madras, Mayor S. Chitti Babu then Mayor were arrested at Satyamangalm. In all the districts the ring leaders of D.M.K. were arrested as preventive measure.\textsuperscript{47}

Hundreds of D.M.K. leaders and workers were arrested throughout the State. Some members of the We Tamil movement were also arrested. Central Ministers from Tamilnadu C. Subramanian and O.V. Alagesan, resigned their ministership from the central ministry. Their resignation was welcomed by the D.M.K. party. The press also gave their comment that it was a welcome measure.\textsuperscript{48}

Lawlessness and confusion went unchecked throughout the State. Shoot at sight order was issued and Bakthavatsalam took law into his hand and 51 persons died by bullets and 328 were wounded in the shooting. 3,824 students and 2,972 politicians were arrested. Total confusion was confronted by Tamilnadu during the anti-Hindi agitation. After

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Indian Express}, English Daily, Madras, dated 6-2-1965.
\textsuperscript{48}\textit{The Hindu}, English Daily, Madras, dated 12-2-1965.
the storm, calm began to prevail by the efforts taken by K. Kamaraj, the president of the All India Congress Committee. He favoured a solution roughly comparable to that advocated by the community.

In June 1965 it was announced that Kamaraj’s proposals had been accepted. Setting aside the Government’s original recommendation, the Congress working committee, the most important decision making body in India adopted what will become with parliamentary action in August, the Government language policy. It provided as well, that Nehru’s assurance on the continued use of English would be incorporated in the proposed amendment to the Official Language Act. The policy resolution, thought brief is clear. It would be obligatory for all States to introduce the three-language formula in their educational curriculum and to retend into the state University.

The formula, to be applied strictly, would require the Hindi-speaking States to introduce as a compulsory subject and a non-Hindi speaking states it would not be imposed. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)

49.A. Ramaswamy, Struggle for freedom of Languages in India, Madurai, 2005, PP.576 – 577.
examination would be conducted in English and in each of the regional languages including Hindi.\textsuperscript{50}

The impact of the anti-Hindi agitation was so severe. A new set of student community emerged to condemn strongly the Congress administration. A large number of students jumped into politics and worked for the success of the D.M.K. party in the ensuing 1967 General election.\textsuperscript{51} They spared no time to work for the growth of the D.M.K. party by constituting committees and conferences. Their untiring efforts and works paved the way for the defeat of the ruling Congress party in the 1967 general elections.


\textsuperscript{50} Administrative Report of Tamilnadu, Govt. of Tamilnadu, Madras, 1969, P.21.

which it was being used immediately before that day, and for
the transaction of business in parliament, English language
shall be used for purposes of communication between the
Union and a State which has not adopted Hindi as its official
language.\textsuperscript{52}

Provided further that where Hindi is used for
purposes of communication between one State which has
adopted Hindi as its official language and another state which
has not adopted Hindi as its official language, such
communications in Hindi shall be accompanied by translation
of the same in the English language.\textsuperscript{53}

Thus the D.M.K. party and Government gave
a death knell to the imposition of Hindi in Tamilnadu.
However, when the language problem got sub-sided another
problem in the name of food arose.

\textbf{3.6 FOOD CRISIS}

During the Congress regime severe food
crisis reached the top in the Madras State. The
Bhathavatsalam’s Government did not take sufficient measures

\textsuperscript{52}Fort St. George Gazette Government of Madras, 22-1-1968.
\textsuperscript{53}Ibid.
to solve the food crisis in the State. The mixed matters of maladministration and the private hoardings paved the way for food crisis in the state. For the consumers however, the scarcity was real and the price of rice already climbed still higher. Women with babies on their hips stood in lines as long as one mile in length for a measure of low-grade rice. The wealthy bought from the black market and others had no choice but to simply wait in queue. The scarcity only accentuated the public resentment against Governmental corruption and mismanagement. This was however a frustration without coherence or direction a revolutionary situation without revolutionaries.54

In the assembly the food crisis was highlighted by the members of the D.M.K. Many meetings were organised in the State against the food crisis and slogans were raised in the processions and meetings. Day by day the Congress party began to lose its strength and glamour in Tamilnadu.55 In every family four and more people had to deprive from the earning of a single man. Among the middle class families there was little saving for the marriages and other

expenses in the family. It was frequently published in the news papers with cartoon that C.Subramanian the food minister with a begging bowel in the hands for asking food supplies from foreign countries particularly from America.\textsuperscript{56} Prices of essential commodities raised severely.

On 19\textsuperscript{th} July 1966, the D.M.K. agitated against the price rise of essential commodities. For that more than 5000 D.M.K. leaders and followers were arrested. Almost all top leaders including C.N.Annadurai the founder leader of D.M.K. participated in the picketing of Government offices were taken into custody. Life in George Town in Madras city was paralysed when a defiant crowd of several thousand began throwing stones and indulged in hooliganism.

The police had to use several rounds of trigger. Shops and many offices remained closed. Two members of the Madras Legislative Assembly and nine members of the Madras Corporation were arrested in a crowd. Besides 21 women and some of them with their children in arms were arrested and jailed.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{56} Dinathanthi, Tamil daily, Madras, dated 12-1-1966.
\textsuperscript{57} Hindustan Times, English daily, Madras, dated 19-7-1966.
Madras city witnessed an ugly scene everywhere and lawlessness and confusion confronted in the city everywhere. In the agitation for foods, many people including police personnels were wounded. There never had been a more critical situation in the history of the Madras State as regards supply of rice which was the principal food for everybody.  

The rich people got the food stuff by means of black marketing and the poor and middle class were the major victims. The Government explained that food crisis occurred due to the large scale export to Kerala. Another reason was that Andhra State which was supplying food to Tamilnadu began to sell the rice to Mysore and the Kerala for better prices and the rice merchants from Andhra indulged in such trade. After seeing the activities of Andhra rice merchants, the Madras rice merchants followed them.58  

The opposition parties the D.M.K. and Rajaji’s party raised a hue and cry and spared no time and opportunity to enlighten the people about the failure of the Government in food policy. As a source of solution, the Chief-

Minister M. Bhaktavatsalam announced that the Government would introduce family cards from November 15, 1966. Instead of finding ways and means to the food problem the Government particularly Chief Minister M. Bhaktavatsalam criticised the opposition parties which were instigating the people to agitate against the Government to destabilise it.\(^{59}\)

To make matter worse adulteration of all essential articles became a regular and well known factor. All the fair price shops were functioning from 5. A.M. to 12 noon and from 12 noon to 7.P.M. where hundreds of people crowded for getting food grains. Food crisis emerged as principal subject in the ensuing General election 1967.\(^{60}\)

In the election propaganda work, the food crisis was taken as an important subject and each and every election meeting the food crisis cropped up. The situation was further worsened by the gold control measure of Morarji Desai.

\(^{59}\)Hindustan Times, English daily, Madras, dated 17-1-1966. \(^{60}\)The Hindu, English daily, Madras, dated 12-1-1966.
3.7 GOLD CONTROL

The introduction of Gold control system paved the way for the failure of the Congress party in the 1967 election. The Gold control system was introduced by the then Finance Minister Moraji Desai. Later when T.T. Krishnamachari became the Finance Minister, he boldly withdrew the system because K. Kamaraj warned that millions of Tamil people venerated gold as a sacred object of making Thali and it should not be disturbed.\(^{61}\)

The Gold control system was introduced for avoiding smuggling of gold from foreign countries. The order extended even upon the point of asking gold medals owned by people to be returned if it was of 22 carrats. Representations of tens of thousands of goldsmith who were uprooted went absolutely unheard and they were told that they might have to rehabilitate themselves in other business.\(^{62}\) People who were doing goldsmith work centuries together became unemployed and this affected a section of people. The Gold control system


\(^{62}\)Ibid.,
materially affected the Goldsmiths who began to curse and criticise the Government and were waiting for an opportunity to defeat the Government. Along with the goldsmiths, weavers and peasants rose up with the problems.\footnote{K.S. Ramanujam, The Big Change, Madras, 1967, P.71.}

### 3.8 PROBLEMS OF WEAVERS AND PEASANTS

Ploughing and weaving were the traditional works of the Tamils from time immemorable. The Government did not pay heed to the cry of the weavers for better shelters and high remunerative works in handlooms. The mechanization of Textile Industries made many members of the weaving communities jobless and poverty stricken. There were very limited cooperative societies for the weavers and they were fully depending on the money lenders and investors in the handloom industry.

As the congress Government kept a deaf year to then live and cry, they were waiting for an opportunity to defeat the Congress Government. Thus in the 1967 election the D.M.K. party got a considerable number of vote banks from
the Handloom workers. This party gave all assurance to the handloom workers to do the needful after their coming to power in the 1967 General election.\textsuperscript{64} Though Congress followed a number of land policies, it did not solve the problem of the landless workers and poor peasants. Till 1960s, land revenue was the principal income of the Government. Colonial and subsequent congress Government followed a number of measures to get maximum revenue from land.

In 1938, the Rajaji Government constituted the Estate Land Act Committee under Prakasam and made some abortive attempts to abolish Zamindary system in Tamilnadu. But it was not succeeded in 1938 and Zamindary system was abolished in 1948 after independence.\textsuperscript{65}

The abolition of Zamindary system had a little impact in Tamilnadu because the Zamindars and big land holders were congressmen and they hesitated to vacate the zamin

\textsuperscript{64} Report of general election of 1967, Govt. of Madras, Madras, 1968, P.112.

lands due to their influence in Governments. The formation of Committees and Commissions by the Government did not bear the required fruit. They adopted all measures to safeguard their lands from the Government’s intervention. The Government’s intervention on land system through the enactment of Land ceiling Act No. 58 (1961) also had very little impact.  

The agricultural workers mostly belonged to the scheduled castes lived in a pitiable condition. They were mostly landless and lived at the mercy of the landlords. The Government promised the landless labourers that the excess lands taken by land ceiling would be given to the landless agricultural labourers.

Even the Government announced on the floor of the House that all the excess lands would be given to them. Due to the interference and dominance of the Congress in the Government the ceiling lands were not given to the landless peasants. This made the poor people discontent especially the scheduled caste people to develop a grudge against

the congress men and the Government. The fund raising policy of the congress party further worsened the situation.\textsuperscript{67}

\textbf{3.9 FUND RAISING FOR ELECTION}

Collection of the funds for the Congress party was another important matter which turned the people against the congress party. The members of the Congress party were rich and they were the ruling party in the State. They started collecting money for party fund expecting the 1967 elections from industrialist and business concerns.

For instance, it was reported that bus operators were levied Rs.1000 per bus. They had to pay the amount because their permit and other matters were in the hands of the Government. The money collectors also developed the impression that the bus service was a profitable business. No bus operator took risks by non-compliance of this money collection. Many business concerns complained about this kind of money collection and some denied to give money.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{67}K.S. Ramanujam., \textit{op.cit.}, P.75.

\textsuperscript{68}Dinathanthi, English daily Madras dated 15-11- 2008.
Rajaji emerged as a potential source of strength to the D.M.K. alliance. The former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu (1937 – 1939 and 1952 – 1954) left congress party and started a separate party named ‘Swatantra party’ in 1959 and made its alliance with the D.M.K. group in the 1967 General election. In 1956, a number of well known congressmen resigned from the Congress party dissatisfied with the method of selection of candidates by K.Kamaraj for 1957 elections.\(^6^9\) They formed themselves into a new party called “Congress Reform Party”. They approached Rajaji for support and the result was that many joined Swatantra party of Rajaji.

This gave additional set back to the strength of the congress party which began to loose its popularity and importance in Tamilnadu. Through pen and platform Rajaji spared no opportunity to call the people for the D.M.K. side. His famous paper swarajya was a strong weapon to make crusade against the congress party. At the outset a triple alliance consisting of D.M.K. swatantra and Muslim League was formed and Rajaji fully believed Annathurai’s leadership.\(^7^0\)

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\(^6^9\). The Hindu, English daily, Madras, dated 12-7- 1957.  
\(^7^0\). Swarajya, Tamil daily, Madras, dated 21-11- 1966.
The dawn of 1967 marked a series of important events in the political scenario in Tamilnadu as well as in Delhi. On the 12th January 1967 evening there was an attempt of murdering M.G.Ramachandran the film idol and favourite actor of Tamil films as well as an important leader and fan of D.M.K. M.R.Radha, another film actor was alleged to have fired at M.G.Ramachandran and injured him seriously near left side of his head. Fortunately M.G. Ramachandran escaped miraculously.

The sensational incident gave a rude shock to everybody in politics and film industry. His fans too were shocked and they conducted prayer meetings everywhere in Tamilnadu. M.R.Radha was on the congress front and he was identified as a congress personality. This firing incident was the last straw which broke the camels back of the Congress party. It also worsened the name and popularity of the congress party and people in Tamilnadu began to consider congress as a “Rowdy” party. After the shooting incident M.G.Ramachandran made his election campaign with bandages

71. The Indian Express, English daily, Madras, dated 13-1-1967.
in his head and got the sympathy of the voters. The shooting incident virtually brought a big change among the voters who casted their votes in favour of the D.M.K. party. Banners and posters of M.G. Ramachandran’s photos with bandages and it made dramatic change in the elections.

In the 1967 general elections, seven party bilateral electoral alliances was made. The seven parties were D.M.K., the Swatantra, Forward Block, Muslim League, the Left communist, the PSP, the Tamil Arasu Kazhagam and We Tamil. Out of 234 seats in the State Assembly for which election was held, the D.M.K. contested in 169 the swatantra 30 seats, the Left communist 29 while the remaining seats were shared by other parties.

For 39 Lok Sabha seats D.M.K. contested in 25, Swatantra in 10 and the Left Communists in 4. The Congress contested in 234 Assembly seats and 39 Lok Sabha seats. On the Congress side T.T.Krishnamachari, former Finance Minister, C.Subramanian and O.V.Alagesan were the Union Minsters, M.Bhaktavatsalam, the Chief Minster and a number of prominent congress personalities. K.Kamaraj contested

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73. See Appendix-1, 1967 General Election Result details.
from the Virudunager constituency. The Home Minister Kakkan, a popular Harijan leader also contested.\textsuperscript{74}

On 8\textsuperscript{th} January C.N.Annathurai, the leader of the D.M.K. party released the election manifesto of the party.\textsuperscript{75} In the manifesto they highlighted the important issues such as fight against Hindi Imperialism, strive for the growth of Tamil, acceptance of 14 languages as official languages and the continuance of English until then, renaming the present; Madras as “Tamilnadu”; controlling of soaring prices, Industrial growth; Labour welfare; Land Reform, pay according to cost of living to the labourers; Formation of a pay commission with a high court judge as chairman, to fix the pay of workers in all industries, insisting the Nationalisation of Banking; pleading for parity between the lowest and the highest pay to be narrowed by increasing the lowest and fixing a ceiling to the highest; increased employment for the teachers, village officers and village P &T employee; suggested pension for the disabled and widows without anybody to support

\textsuperscript{74}Report of General Election of 1967, Govt. of Madras, Madras, 1968, P.87.
\textsuperscript{75}The Hindu, English daily, Madras, dated 10-1- 1967.
repeal of the Gold control order conversion of the loans to the goldsmith into grants a separate plan to remove untouchability and to help improve the backward communities; separate departments to look after the welfare of the Backward people; to do justice be met to the Tamil people who have been driven out of some foreign countries where they have lived for long periods; put up a strong case for more powers for the State and for federal form of Governments, Repeal of Emergency; Defense of India Act, and the preventive Detention Act granting of more funds and powers for municipalities and panchayats, and direct election of panchayat and Panchayat Union Presidents and so on.76

Film personalities like S.S.Rajendran, M.G.Ramachandran and their fans and followers canvassed for the D.M.K. party besides M.Karunanidhi and C.N.Annathurai. Slides and other electronic devices were used for canvassing work. In the Congress side veteran film star Shivaji Ganesan canvassed for the Congress party. M.R.Radha, a congress supporter was in jail and he could not do any election work due to his firing case on M.G.Ramachandran. The other film

personalities also did a lot of work in the 1967 election. Film star M.G.Ramachandran contested in the St.Thomas Mount constituency near Madras and S.S.Rajendran contested in Theni constituency and C.N.Annadurai in Kanchipuram constituency. Colourful banners, posters, flags and cut outs were placed in important centres.

E.M.Hanefa a veteran singer of Islamic songs became an active election worker for D.M.K. The General election commenced on 15th February 1967. The counting of votes commenced on 22nd February at different places in Tamilnadu and the result began to come out from 22nd February evening onwards.

The D.M.K. captured 138 out of 234 Assembly seats. The congress which filed 233 candidates; was able to win only 49 seats one less than the former Assembly (1962) election won by the D.M.K. party (50). In the Lok Sabha, the D.M.K. won all the 25 out of the 39 Madras seats it contested. The congress on the other hand had contested all the seats and managed to win a bare three. None of the successful

candidates was known outside the State. All important members of Madras Cabinet were defeated including the Chief Minister M.Bhaktavatsalam, who had been almost continuously at the seat at power in one capacity or another since 1937. All the members of the Union Cabinet, Minister of State and Deputy Minister from Madras were unseated.\textsuperscript{79}

Among the defeats of the Congress party, the defeat of Kamaraj was intolerable. He contested in the Virudunagar constituency, which was his home constituency where he got a thumping victory in the 1962 General elections. In Virudhunagar he was defeated by a young student leader Srinivasan with a margin of 1285 votes. The defeat of Kamaraj gave a rude shock to the nation because he was the president of the All India Congress Committee and the Kingmaker.\textsuperscript{80} The press gave different statements and opinion about his defeat in the General election. The leaders of all the political parties in India felt a lot about his failure.

\textsuperscript{79}The Hindustan Times, English daily, Madras, dated 24-2-1967. \textsuperscript{80}The Indian Express, English daily, Madras, dated 23-2-1967.
Even Annadurai expressed his heart felt remark about the defeat of Kamaraj.\textsuperscript{81} The failure of the Congress party was attributed to many factors like the rise in price of commodities, anti Hindi agitation, and the support of the youngsters and students to the D.M.K. party. The D.M.K. Government took over the rule of Tamilnadu on 6\textsuperscript{th} March 1967, under the Chief Ministership of Annathurai.\textsuperscript{82}

After winning the Election Annathurai came to the conclusion that the D.M.K. party and the Government would not revive the demand for separate Dravida nadu (Southern States). Discussing the problems which his party would have to face when it came to power, Annadurai said “First of all we have to take of the situation in order to find what the Congress Government has left behind”. He wanted to solve the food problem as the most important one.

Besides, industrialisation was given priority for solving the problem of economic crisis. He assured all the people of Tamilnadu that his Government would press the centre to amend the constitution to relieve the people from the

\textsuperscript{81} The Indian Express, English daily, Madras, dated 25-2-1967.
\textsuperscript{82} The Hindu, English daily, Madras, dated 7-3-1967.
clutches of the imposition of Hindi. Accordingly the Congress rule in the centre amended the constitution so that Hindi was not imposed throughout the nation where Hindi was not spoken.83

Annadurai’s rule witnessed the amendment of the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 for recognising the self-respect marriage introduced by E.V.Ramasami Naickar in 1925. He also introduced the system of presenting gold medal to the inter caste married couples. Accordingly the Harijan couple either male or female should marry a partner from higher caste.84

Annathurai’s rule did not last long. He was affected by cancer and died on 3rd February 1969. His death created a great vacuum in the DMK party. On 3rd February 1969 R.Nedhunchezhiyan became the interim Chief Minister and he continued till 10th February 1969 when Karunanidhi became the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu.

Karunanidhi, the famous film personality started his career as a film story writer and an actor. He is

having all the capacity to rule the State. His rule marked the blending of Dravidian ideology to politics. He introduced a series reform measures in the State for the upliftment of the people. Being a film personality, he made many reforms in the film industry. He amended the Hindu religious Endowment Act in 1970 to enable people of all castes to become priest in the Hindu temples. This made a hue and cry among the Brahmins who monopolised the priest hood in the Hindu temples.

Besides he constituted the pay commission and Backward class Commission. The Backward class commission gave better opportunities to the backward class communities in the sphere of Education and employment. He cared for the scheduled caste people by establishing Scheduled Caste Commission and established boards for the scheduled castes. He abolished Hand Rickshaw and changed into Cycle Rickshaw. He did a lot for the development of the Tamil language and literature.85 After some break he is now ruling the State of Tamilnadu.86

In short in Tamilnadu film played a vital role for the change of government in 1967 General election and enabled the film personalities C.N.Annathurai and M.Karunanidhi both film personalities to make remarkable contributions.