CHAPTER-I

THE EMERGENCE OF REGIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA

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CHAPTER-I
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1. INTRODUCTION:

Emergence of political parties in modern time is intimately connected with the involvement of general masses in the power politics. The extension of suffrage to masses and gradual expansion of that extension provides organised groups to get themselves taking a part directly or indirectly into the process of public decision making and execution. The intimacy between the emergence of political parties and extension of suffrage to the masses in western democracies as emphasised by scholars in the area needs improvements to suit explanation in other democracies, particularly that of India. Maurice Duverger (1979) has rightly pointed out that development of 'egalitarian feelings' and the desire to oust traditional social elites' are supplementary factors to the extension of franchise for the emergence of political parties. J. Lapalombra and M. Weiner noted that the expansion of suffrage in Europe entailed the parliamentary groups to create local electoral committees and having a 'continuous relation between the two.' But those scholars never explicitly point out that the existence of associations or groups, like caste, etc. provide a readymade structure for the origin and growth of political parties at the time of expansion of democratic values in a society.

In a plural society, and also where the caste, community or tribe loyalties are very prominent in making groups, the study in the origin and emergence of political parties in India may not underestimate the importance of the existence of such caste, religion, language or economic factors. These factors help articulation and aggregation of a particular group interest and it in turn permits the emergence of a political party.

Since a democratic political system requires a majority or consensus decision the administrative or the governing elites can no longer subscribe only to the traditional channels of participation. The modernization process and its factors make a group conscious of its identity and interest. Thus, it brings about the crisis of legitimacy, which helps in the formation of political parties.

The extension of suffrage in India (during the British rule) was a great force in awakening various groups. The modernization agents, particularly the introduction of modern English education and new professions under the British administration and the creation of new headquarters of administration, permeated the society and it gradually transformed the traditional social structure and relations. Those new values nullified the traditional caste-based social structure and the hegemony of the privileged caste groups in the society.

As against the caste-based allocation of higher positions and privileges, the new system recognizes only ‘rational’ and ‘secular’ factors. This process displaces the positions and privileges of some of the traditional forward castes. The same process also enables some other caste group in occupying higher positions and privileges in transitional or new societies. This kind of caste mobility produces caste consciousness among the backward caste groups in Madras, though in reality the movement out of those consciousness was benefited to a few forward caste group, i.e. the Vellalas (this point will be
discussed in the case of the D.M.K.). The same process of modernization also makes conscious of a particular group of people about their community interest and identity, economic backwardness and negligence by the administration in many respects like employment, education, etc. Sometimes they are impressed that their religious or community right are appropriated by some other groups who do not possess, as they thought, inherent or monopolistic right over it.

The nature of Indian federation produces a kind of political culture and relationships with her units. States differ greatly in size, population and economic infrastructure. This unevenness in the structures of units is widened by the existence of a new party system, the one-party dominant system. The Indian one-party dominant system, what Rajani Kothari calls the “Congress System”, was characterized by the dominance of elites. The Indian National Congress was full of national freedom fighters and it continued the same kind of culture in its organisation and administration. The national level leaders, including the inner core leaders, took the decisions and finalised the policies of the party. Sometimes, however, the intra-party factionalism challenged the monopoly of authority by a particular leadership in the party. As a result, the ‘congress system’ no longer sustained continuity of its unified and monopolistic authority and leadership. It produced many more parties in both national and state levels.

With such a framework of the origin of political parties, present chapter will proceed to a survey of four regional political parties in India. The survey will delimit to the emergence, ideology and policy and programme, and electoral performances of important regional political parties, i.e. (1) the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.), (2) the Akali Dal, (3) the National Conference and (4) the Telegu Desham.
2. **The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.):**

2.1. **Background:** The relation between caste and class has been a very important factor for the emergence and survival of political parties in the then Madras and now Tamil Nadu. Emergence of regional political parties, right from the Justice Party to the formation of the Dravida Kazhagam, and later on the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, in the state evolved with a protest movement by the underprivileged lower caste groups against the deprivation of and degradation from their ‘traditional positions’\(^4\) by the privileged caste groups, particularly the Brahmans. This kind of protest was initially spearheaded by the forward Vellalas when they were deprived of their share of social and administrative hegemony in their society, particularly in the urban areas in Madras in the 1910s and 1920s. In the urban areas, where the Vellalas newly shifted, the most important avenue to advancement was English education.\(^5\) The small population of the Brahmans in Madras Presidency occupied a very high percentage of high offices.\(^6\)

The demand for equality in terms of privileges made by the lower caste movements did not maintain consistency. The reality of the force behind the movement was to gain protection and occupation of better positions by

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4 The Vellalas, the forward Sudra caste, traditionally shared position and privilege in the religious affairs, particularly in temple administration, participation in which was considered a higher position in traditional Tamil society. For further elucidation please see “Middle Classes and Castes in India’s Politics: Prospects for Political Accommodation” by Francine R. Frankel in Misra, Bankey B. 1961. The Indian Middle Classes. Their Growth in Modern Times, Oxford. p. 234.

5 Ibid. p. 232.

the forward lower caste groups in the newly emerging social structures. When the Vellalas could not compete with the advanced Brahmans in the new urban areas, they started non-Brahman movement. However, when they could occupy and were secured of their positions in the society with the reservation policy in the state, they started withdrawing the stand of completely an anti-Brahman. But the reservation policy did not relieve the numerous lower caste masses from the similar grievances of entry into the services and other avenues for advancement. The Brahmans, who were only 3 p.c. of the electorate in Madras by that time secured “practically all the representation in the legislature” and occupied a larger percentage of posts in the province. Such a situation kept the ground for a lower caste movement in Madras alive.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.) was formally formed in 1949. But its origin may be traced back to the non-Brahman movement in the Madras Presidency before independence. The Brahmans were dominating the Congress Party in Madras. They were also dominating government offices and politics in the presidency. A non-Brahman movement, ideologically anti-Brahman or anti-Aryan in the beginning, and an anti-Hindi or anti-north domination in the later years, was spearheaded by a group of forward caste, the Vellalas in the first two decades of 1900s. It led to the formation of the Justice Party in 1916.

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After 1909 the Government of India and the ‘Home Government’ had decided to incorporate Indians in administration as well as in the government. The Britishers also now wanted to leave the responsibilities of administration of the provinces with a maximum autonomy to the provincial governments. With this policy the number of elected members of the provincial legislatures was increased.\textsuperscript{10} This expansion of suffrage gave a wider arena for a larger political competition.

In the late 1920s a ‘radical’ Dravida movement \textsuperscript{11} was launched by E.V. Ramaswami Naiker under the “Self-Respect League”. This movement fought against the domination of the Aryan culture in Tamil society and the injustice arising out of the domination.\textsuperscript{12} However, the ‘radical’ Dravidian movement did not digest fully the real problems of the bottom most class of people in Tamil society. The movement also could not look the ‘Adi-Dravidian’ equally with other caste members. The ‘Adi-Dravidian’ class was given position in a secondary organizational capacity.\textsuperscript{13}

2.2. Dravida Kazhagam: The Justice Party and the Self-Respect League were not wide based political parties. The two political parties united in 1944 to make a strong and widely based political party under the name and style of

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{10}] Keith, Arthur Berriedate. 1930. op. cit. pp. 233-243.
\item[\textsuperscript{11}] EVR Naiker formed the Self-Respect movement immediately after his disagreement with other members of the Provincial Congress Committee in the Conjuvaram political conference. The main issue of disagreement was on the question of feeding food separately between Brahman and non-Brahman boys in a national school, the Bharadwaja Ashram. EVR agitated in the Provincial congress Committee Conference against the system of serving food. For the Self-Respect movement, please see: Ramamurti, p. 1987. The Freedom Struggle and the Dravidian Movement. New Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd. pp.74-79.
\item[\textsuperscript{13}] ibid. p. 215
\end{itemize}
the Dravida Kazhagam. The main objective of the party was giving equal treatment and respect to all kinds of races, eradication of untouchability, stopping of all the luxurious and wasteful festivals, utilising the income coming from Hindu religious institutions for the promotion of education, social-welfare, upliftment of the poor, etc. and equal property rights to women. EVR Naiker was the leader of the party and the prominent members of the party were W.P. Soundara Pandian, V.V. Ramasamy, C.N. Annadurai and M. Karunanidhi. EVR Naiker interpreted the Hindu scripture as non-Dravidian and sole creation of the Brahman.

2.3. Formation of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam: A difference arose between the two leaders of the Dravida Kazhagam, EVR Naiker and C.N. Annadurai. Annadurai wanted ‘democratization of leadership within the party’, whereas Naiker did not believe in it. Thus Annadurai reacted against the elitist character of the Dravida Kazhagam. The factionalism in the party led to a party split when the splinter group under Annadurai formally formed the ‘Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam’ in the name of a progressive front in 1949.

The D.M.K. originally consisted of leaders, besides Annadurai, like N.V. Natarajan, M. Karunanidhi and E.V.K. Sampath (nephew of Naiker). It was committed to ‘Dravidanadu’, an independent homeland for the Dravidians.

17 ibid. p.3
The D.M.K. gained its popularity from its association with film and theatre personalities. The presence of actors in the party rallies and campaigns drew support from a large voter. M.G. Ramachandran, the leader of the cinema group, got his popularity from drama and cinema field and he became one of the most charismatic leaders in the party. Thus, the ‘cinema group’ was a strong force behind the party.

A leadership tension emerged between M.G. Ramachandran and M. Karunanidhi. As a result, M. Karunanidhi dismissed M.G. Ramachandran even from the primary membership of the party.\(^{20}\) The MGR-faction, after coming out of the party, formed the ‘Anna-DMK’ which was later on known as the “All India Anna D.M.K.”, based on the ideology followed by C.N. Annadurai in 1972.

A recent factionalism arose in December 1993 between M. Karunanidhi, the President of the party (DMK), group and V. Gopalasamy group, when both the groups convened two separate party General Councils on December 29, 1993.\(^ {21}\) The V. Gopalasamy faction later on formed the MDMK in May 1994.\(^ {22}\) Those factionalism and party splits were largely due to leadership tussles rather than ideological differences.

2.4. Ideology and Policy and Programme:

The Dravidian movement ideologically revolves around an ‘anti-north’ stance. This stance however oscillates from an anti-Aryan or an ‘anti-north stand point to anti-Hindi status. The anti-Aryan or an anti-north stand point is

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\(^{21}\) Perumal, C.A. and Thandavan R. “Regional Parties of Tamil Nadu: A case study of AIADMK”, a paper presented at the All India Political Science Conference, 15-18 May, 1983, Hyderabad. p.6

\(^{22}\) The Frontline, October 21, 1994.
related to a racial or territorial regional ideology. It implies a challenge to the
domination of the Aryans or the norths over the Dravidians or the souths. On
the other hand, the anti-Sanskrit or the anti-Hindi stance represents a
challenge organise the status of the Sanskrit or the Hindi with the status of
Tamil language or culture. This position is exactly followed by the DMK. The
recent proposal of M. Karunanidhi that the year 2000 may be declared as the
"year of Tamil" since, as he argued, the Central Government had declared
1999 as the ‘year of Sanskrit’, and to declare the Tamil treatise of the sage
Tiruvalluvan, ‘Tirukurat’ as the national scripture\textsuperscript{23} shows that Karunanidhi
still upholds the same Dravidian ideology.

The core ideology of the DMK party is the ‘Annamism’. It includes (1)
a democratization of leadership in the party, (2) a commitment to
Dravidanadu (an independent homeland for the Dravidians), (3) an-anti Hindi
or an anti-north domination, and (4) an egalitarianism.

The party reversed its militant anti-New Delhi stance when it came into
state power, and it became a loyalist to the ruling group with the centre.\textsuperscript{24}
The radicalism of Dravidian ideology contains a protest or challenge
against the hegemony of dominant groups. It embraces all the members of its
lower category of people to achieve its goal. E.V.R. Naiker terms towards a
distant ‘Dravidian Golden Age’, the value of which looks remarkably like
temple religion with a different set of gods.\textsuperscript{25}

The DMK in its 1957 election manifesto included programmes like
formation of a confederation in India, nationalization of industries,
development of industries, irrigation and hydro-electric projects in the south.

\textsuperscript{23} The Times of India. New Delhi. 6 January, 2000.
\textsuperscript{24} D.A. Washbrook. op. cit. p.216.
\textsuperscript{25} ibid. p 238.
uniform scales for employees of the central and the state government, sending of Tamil diplomats in Ceylon, Malaya, etc., cutting down the defence expenditure, providing of housing and medical facilities to the working class, plans for development of handloom industries, etc. The ‘Dravidian Socialist Federation’ as declared in its 1962 general election manifesto called for a socialist economy based on direct taxation and nationalisation of banks, big commercial chains, cinema theatres and transport.\(^{26}\)

It also promised for industrial developments and distribution of land to Harijans. The 1967 election manifesto included programmes like land for tiller, exemption of land revenue for those having less than five acres of land, provisions for insurance protection in agriculture, cattle and fishing. In its 1977 election manifesto, the party proposed many options before the votes. It included a dominance of one party versus an alternative government of another party, an independent judiciary versus a flattered one, a discipline democracy versus a moribund democracy, etc.

2.5. **Electoral Performance:**

The D.M.K. did not contest the First General Election held in 1952. During this time the party spent mainly as a cultural organisation.\(^{27}\) It simply supported independent candidates and two opposition parties, namely the “Tamilnad Toilers Party” and the “Commonweal party” in the elections.

The D.M.K. started its electoral contents in the 1957 General Elections. It contested for the seats in the Madras Legislative Assembly as well as the Lok Sabha election. The party sent up 28 candidates for the


Legislative Assembly and 8 for Lok Sabha Constituencies\(^\text{28}\). The party could secure 15 and 2 seats in the Legislative Assembly and the Lok Sabha respectively. The Congress won a thumping majority, i.e. 151 seats out of the 205 total seats. There were three-cornered contest in many constituencies and the DMK was in a disadvantageous position as the Communist Party was always in favour of the Congress.\(^\text{29}\) The sweeping success of the Congress Party in 1957 election was also largely due to the foresighted policy of its leader K. Kamaraj (a non-Brahman). Kamaraj, after assuming state power as the Chief Minister after the 1952 elections, started programmes to consolidate position of the party. He invited leaders of the “Tamilnad Toilers Party” and “Commonweal Party” to join his cabinet.\(^\text{30}\)

In the third General Election 1962, the DMK contested 143 seats,\(^\text{31}\) of which the party won 50 seats in the Madras Legislative Assembly. The Swatantra Party, a party newly formed by the Brahmans under the leadership of C. Rajagopalachari, supported the DMK in the election. The Congress Party contested all 206 seats and won 139 seats. The Congress polled 46.15 percent whereas the DMK managed 27.10 percent of votes. Although the result revealed the improvement of the DMK and a slight decline of the Congress in the State Assembly, the DMK lost its 14 sitting members including its founder member C.N. Annadurai. For the 41 Lok Sabha seats, the DMK and the Congress contested 18 and 40 seats respectively. The DMK won 7 seats whereas the Congress 31 seats.

\(^{28}\) Fadia, Babulal. op. cit. p. 222.
\(^{30}\) Ibid. p. 136.
\(^{31}\) Fadia, Babulal. op. cit. p. 224.
The DMK party consolidated itself and emerged as the leading partner of a seven party ‘United Front’ in the 1967 Madras Legislative Assembly Elections. It fully prepared its election machinery, expanded party base and augmented its organizational strength during 1962-1967 period. Unlike the previous elections, the DMK tried to avoid triangular fight. Under a policy of a seat adjustment with like-minded parties in the oppositions, the party entered into an electoral alliance with the Swatantra, the Muslim League, the Forward Block, Left Communist, the Praja Socialists and the Tamil Arasu Kazhagam.

The election result brought a land slight victory to the United Front, particularly the DMK. The DMK alone captured 138 seats. The other Front partners viz. the Swatantra secured 20, Communists 11, the PSP 4 and the Muslim League 3. On the other hand, the Congress won only 49 seats. The DMK won 25 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

The 1967 Madras State Legislative election was a historic event for the simple reason that the DMK and its front completely replaced the superiority of the Congress in the state in this election. The main issue in the election was language, an anti-Hindi imposition campaign. There was a widespread discontent among the general masses as a result of the food shortages and rising prices during the Congress ministry in the state. On the other hand, the DMK promised selling of rice at Rs.2/- (two) per kg. It also appealed returning to the glorious ‘Tamil Culture’. Thus, the DMK successfully combined economic and social sentiments for its electoral propaganda purposes.

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33 ibid. p.141.
34 ibid. p.144.
There were two united front alliances contesting the 1971 Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly elections. One front was led by the DMK and it comprised of the Congress(R), the PSP, the Muslim League, the Forward Block, the CPI, the Tamil Arasu Kazhagam and the “We Tamils”. The other front was led by the Congress (O) and it consisted of the Swatantra party and the S.S.P.

Immediately after assuming power in the state after the 1967 elections, C.N. Annadurai, the Chief-Minister and the leader of the DMK, devoted most of his time to consolidate his party position and electoral gains. Those activities of the DMK ministry in the state helped the party in gaining more seats in the state Assembly in 1971 elections. The party secured 184 seats out of 234 increasing 46 seats more than that of the previous its total seats in the State Assembly.

The 1977 Tamil Nadu Assembly election was a landmark in the electoral history of the state. This time the DMK was voted out from the state power. Two important factors for the downfall of the party were the factionalism and split that came up in the DMK party after the 1971 election, and imposition of the President’s Rule in the state coupled with the corruption charges levelled against the Chief Minister Karunanidhi. M.G. Ramachandran, the then treasurer of the party, resigned from even the primary membership of the party and formed the Anna-DMK in 1971. In the Dindigul bye-election in 1972 the ADMK candidate won the seat. During the emergency period, the DMK-ministry was dissolved and President’s rule was imposed in the state. The Central Government with the recommendation of the Governor of the state, constituted one-man commission to enquire into the ‘allegations’ against M. Karunanidhi and some members of the DMK-

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35 Fadia, Babulal. op. cit. p. 226.
36 ibid. p.229.
ministry. On the other hand, MGR gained popularity in the state before the 1977 election. He is a film star of great repute and one of the richest persons in the state with a principled personality. It was because of those qualities that he won the hearts and votes of many millions of people especially the women voters of the state.

In the 1977 Lok Sabha elections in the state the major fight was between the Congress-AIADMK – CPI alliance and the DMK-Congress (O)-Janata front. Both fronts contested in all 39 Lok Sabha constituencies. The Congress-AIADMK-CPI alliance managed to return in 35 seats.

In the State Assembly elections the AIADMK alone captured 130 seats, whereas the DMK managed to collect 48, the Congress(I) 27, Janata 10, CMP 12, CPI 5 and the remaining 2 seats by independents.

The 1980 Tamil Nadu Assembly election was held early as a result of the pre-mature dissolution of the Assembly. The AIADMK contested 176 seats and won 128. The DMK sent up 114 candidates but it fared poorly winning only 38 seats.

The 1984 Tamil Nadu Assembly election was held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha elections. Three electoral fronts contested the elections. The first front was the AIADMK-Congress(I) alliance with other smaller parties namely Gandhi-Kamaraj National Congress (GKNC), All India Forward Block (AIFB) and the Republican Party of India (RPI). The second front was a seven party DMK-led alliance. It comprised of the DMK, the CPI(M).

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38 ibid.
39 ibid.
40 Fadia, Babulal. op. cit. p.230
the CPI, the Janata, the BJP, the Indian Union Muslim League, the Forward Block and the Tamil Nadu Workers and the Peasant Party. The third front, the Namathu Kazhagam was founded by S.D. Somasundaram, a breakaway AIADMK leader, including Congress (J), Rastriya Sanjay Manch, Independent Republican party, Indian Christian Movement and Dravida Muslim League.

The AIADMK-Congress(I) alliance won a thumping majority of the seats both in the Parliamentary and the Assembly elections. The alliance won 199 of the 232 Assembly seats contested. The AIADMK alone secured 133 seats. The DMK-led front could manage 33 seats and the Namathu Kazhagam drew blank.

In the Parliamentary election, the Congress(I) won 25 seats, the AIADMK-12 and the DMK, which won 16 sets in the 1980 Lok Sabha election could manage only 1(one) seat.

But the ADMK party secured only 2 seats in 1989 Assembly election in Tamil Nadu. In that election the DMK captured 151 seats. In the 1991 Assembly elections in the state the ADMK won 164 seats while the DMK won 2 seats only. Again the positions of the two regional parties in the state reversed in the 1996 State Assembly elections. In that election the ADMK reduced to 4 seats only and the DMK won 173 seats.

2.6. Concluding Remarks: The D.M.K. emerged in the process of a movement of the backward class people which was started in the first decade of 1900s in Madras. It was also a time of expansion of suffrage in the provinces. Originally the movement adopted an anti-Hindi or anti-north

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42 Assembly Elections 2001: Tamil Nadu (Compare performances of leading parties in previous Assembly elections), WWW.Expressindia.com/election/tn/tnmap.html.
43 ibid.
44 ibid.
domination stand. The DMK was formed as a result of factionalism in the Dravida Kazhagam party in 1949. The DMK gained popularity from its association with film and theatre personalities.

The DMK suffered in its organisation and strength due to factionalism in later years. The ADMK (or AIADMK) was formed by M.G. Ramachandran faction as a separate party in 1972. Thus, another factionalism in 1993 between M. Karunanidhi and V. Gopalaswamy groups led to the formation of another new party called the MDMK in May 1994.

3. The Shiromani Akali Dal:

3.1. Background: The Shiromani Akali Dal, which is popularly known as ‘Akali Dal’, was an off-shot of the Akali movement that took place in the first part of 1900s. The Sikh community made tremendous effort for the upliftment and advancement of Sikh culture and traditions much earlier to 1900. A turning point in the Sikh movement was noticed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as a result of the religious conflict between Mughal rulers and Hindu and Sikh subjects. It created a context of deepening communal orientation, and the reformation of Sikhism from the pacifism of Guru Nanak to the militancy of Guru Govind Singh. As happened elsewhere in India, the spreading of English education and creation of new professions under the British rule, created a new educated class in Punjab also. Such a new class could feel ‘marginality, alienation’ and gain a feeling of self-confidence and superiority in the society. Such a class consciousness gave birth to “communal self re-examination, revivalism and renaissance.”

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The ‘Singh Sabha’ was formed for the upliftment of the Sikh masses. It came out as response to the increasing activities of the Christian missionary in Punjab. In 1873 four Sikh boys were converted to Christianity. The Sikh intelligentsia, following an agitation organized themselves against the conversion of Sikhs into Christianity, formed the ‘Singh Sabha’. The main objectives of the ‘Sabha’ were restoration of Sikh rituals and elimination of other religious practices, propagation of the Sikh religion as directed by the Sikh Guru, uplift of the Punjabi language, opinning of Sikh schools and colleges for education to Sikh youths in Sikh tradition and giving membership of the ‘Sabha’ only to the Sikhs.

The ‘Chief Khalsa Dewan’ was another socio-political organization. Its first meeting was held in Lahore in 1887. The programme of the organization included revival of the Sikh way of life and removal of the social evils, to make political demand, for justice in the community.

In the early part of 1900 the Sikh mass movement was moving towards political ends. Educational institutions became the centre for moulding and spreading political consciousness among the people. Later, many of the events of the freedom movement developed during Word War-I also helped the Sikh movement transforming into a strong Sikh nationalism. Reacting to the provision of the Congress-League pact of December 1916,

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48 ibid.
49 ibid. p. 10.
which consisted of a proposal for a four-fifth elected and a one-fifth nominated members in the Provisional Legislative Councils, educated upper middle class Sikh leaders expressed their demands through the Chief Khalsa Dewan. They demanded their due shares both in the Provincial and the Imperial Legislative bodies as well as in the administration. At this period, the Sikh leaders also had constant touch with the leaders of the freedom movement. ‘Hartals’ and ‘Satyagraha’ were observed by the people in Punjab at the cell of M.K. Gandhi. The vernacular press also helped in spreading political consciousness among the Sikhs. Gurmukhi news papers like the Khalsa, the Khalsa Samachar, the Pardesi Khalsa, etc. made special attention to religious sentiments of the Sikhs.

The 1920s saw the Sikh movement taking a turn towards the ‘Gurdwaras’. The Gurdwara reform movement superceded the Singh Sabha to be the carrier of the Sikh movement. Thus it became a mass movement after World War-I.


Some of hinduised mahants started claims for proprietary rights over the Gurdwara.\textsuperscript{55} The sacred Gurdwara became places of corruption. Under the Gurdwara reform movement the Sikhs fought to capture the Gurdwara from the clutches of the mahants. After the successful capturing of the ‘Golden Temple’ and some other Gurdwaras, the representatives of the Sikhs formed the “Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee”.\textsuperscript{56} The committee was regarded as the ‘Parliament of the Sikhs’ and it served as a sort of training ground for preparing the Sikhs to enter political arena.\textsuperscript{57} It looked after the cultural and religious interests of the Sikhs all over the world.

The continuous success in capturing Gurdwara under the ‘Gurdwara reforms movement’ encouraged the Sikh leadership to channelise the sentiment and feeling by organizing them into a purely political organization. Thus, the “Shiromani Akali Dal” was formed on 24\textsuperscript{th} January, 1921.\textsuperscript{58}

The co-existence of the two organizations and leadership – the socio-religious ‘Shiromani Gurudwara Pravandhak Committee’ (S.G.P.C.) and its leadership on the one hand, and the purely political organization, the ‘Shiromani Akali Dal’ and its leadership on the other hand – forms in part a unique character in the politics of Punjab. The S.G.P.C. leadership entered the political arena and emerged as leaders of the Akali Dal. On the other hand, the Akali Dal sought advice from the S.G.P.C for its activities and programme.

The Akali Dal took part the national freedom movement. Its fight against the mahants and the British imperialism, could draw sympathy of the Congress party and other freedom movement leaders.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{55} Singh Dalip. 1981. \textit{Dynamics of Punjab Politics}. New Delhi: MacMilland India Ltd. p.11
\textsuperscript{57} Singh, Dalip. op. cit. p. 79.
\textsuperscript{58} Sarhadi, Ajit Singh. op.cit. pp. 20-21.
3.2. **Ideology and Policy and Programme:** The Akali Dal cherished a ‘Sikh nation’ and believed in “Human coexistence, Human progress and ultimate unity of all Human beings with the spiritual soul.”

The party like other regional political parties in India, firmly subscribes to the stand of ‘regional autonomy’. In May 1949, the Akali Dal demanded that Sikh backward tribe should be granted similar political rights and privileges with Hindu scheduled castes, that Punjabi and Gurmukhi script should be recognised as the official and court language in the East Punjab and that Punjab should be demarcated into a ‘Punjabi-speaking’ province on a linguistic and cultural basis. The ‘Anandpur Sahib’ resolution of 1973 emphasised that the central government should confine to “defence, foreign relations, currency and general communication.”

The `18th All India Akali Conference held at Ludhiana reaffirmed that there should be a true federal form of government of India. The ‘Amritsar declaration’, which was a policy statement of the six united Akali factions published in the first week of May, 1994 put forward for a “Separate Sikh homeland”. There were different interpretations of the declaration among leaders of different political parties. According to two leaders of the erstwhile Barnaia faction, S.G.P.C. President Gurcharan Singh Tohra and captain Amrinder Singh, the ‘declaration’ was not “Anti-India or secessionist” but it aimed at establishing a true federation of India wherein Punjab would be an autonomous state.

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60 "The Basic Postulates" of the Shiromani Akali Dal as adopted by its Working Committee meeting held at Sri Anandpur Sahib on 16-17 October, 1973.


62 The Frontline: June 3, 1994, p.33

63 Resolution No. 1 of the 18th All India Conference held at Ludhiana on 28-29 October, 1978.

64 The Frontline: June 3, 1994, p.33.
Congress Party saw it as a renewal of the Anandpur Sahib resolution of 1973. But the 1st paragraph of the declaration used the term ‘confederation’, which means the units must have greater autonomy and the right to secession from the union any time.

During 1980-1985 period, the Akali politics accommodated a religious based leadership under Sant Bhindrawala. Besides his demands for economic development of Punjab, Bhindrawala focussed his primary concern on Sikh identity. During the period, both Longwal’s Akali Dal and the Bindrawala movement tried to draw the Sikh popular support in their own sides. The Akali Dal under Sant Harcharan Singh Longwal with the support of the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, emphasised on the Rajiv-Longowal accord.

65 Ibid.
66 "... if the Hindustan Government does not accept this demand for creation of a confederation, then the Shiromani Akali Dal will be left with no option but to announce their demand for a separate and independent Sikh State." The Frontline: June 3, 1994. p.33.
68 The major points in the Accord were:
(i) Referral of the portion of centre-state relations of the Anandpur Sahib resolution to the Sarkaria Commission which was appointed in March 1983;
(ii) Transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab and to determine the area to be transferred to Haryana as compensation with a commission;
(iii) Rehabilitation of deserted Sikhs from Indian army following the operation Blue Star by providing them employment, and recruitment to the military on the basis of merit;
(iv) Compensation to innocent persons killed during the Punjab agitation;
(v) Extension of the jurisdiction of the Justice Ranganath Misra Judicial enquiry into the Delhi riots following Mrs. Gandhi’s assassination to include Bokaro and Kanpur;
(vi) Referral of Punjab and Haryana’s claim in regard to the Ravi-Beas system to a tribunal for adjudication; and
3.3. **Electoral Performance:**

Language was a major issue of the Akali Dal. Until the reorganization of states in 1996, which created two separate states of Punjab and Haryana and a Union Territory of Chandigarh, the Akali Dal raised the issue of a ‘Punjabi-speaking’ state. It also asked for integration of the Punjabi-speaking area of neighbouring states with Punjab, granting of recognition to Punjabi language the status of second language in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi, and the autonomy of states.

In 1952 Assembly elections, the Akali Dal won 33 seats, which was a 14.7% of the total of the House. The party did not contest the 1957 Assembly elections following its alliance with the congress party. The Dal contested in 1962 and captured 19 of the 154 seats of the state Assembly.

During 1967 Assembly elections the Akali Dal was split into the ‘Sant-group’ and the ‘Master-group’ The two groups altogether won 26 seats in the election. The party improved its position in 1969 Assembly elections by capturing 43 seats. It was the single largest party in the House, the Congress being the second with 38 seats. Its strength reduced in 1972 elections, when it could win only 24 seats.

The Akali Dal won 58 seats out of the 117 seats in the 1977 Assembly elections. But the strength of the party reduced suddenly in the 1980 elections. In that elections it could return only 37 members in the state legislature.

Punjab was under the President’s rule after the dismissal of the Congress government in the state in 1983. After a few months of the ‘Rajiv-Longowal’ Accord of 1985, elections to the state Assembly was held. The Akali Dal government under Surjit Singh Barnala was formed after the
election. But the ministry was short lived as the President’s rule was re-imposed in the state in May 1987. The President’s rule remained for about 5 years.

The February 1992 Assembly elections was practically a congress(I) dominated election for the reason that the major Akali Dal groups boycotted the election. The congress was the only party contesting all 13 Lok Sabha and 115 Assembly seats. The only Akali faction that contested the election was the Akali Dal (Kabul). The Akali Dal (Kabul) fielded its 74 candidates for Assembly and three for Lok Sabha seats. The party left 31 seats for its allies – the Communist party of India (CPI), the CPI (Marxist) and the Janata Dal. As expected, the Congress(I) won a landslide victory both in the Parliamentary as well as the Assembly elections. It won 12 seats of the 13 Lok Sabha and 87 of the 117 Assembly seats.

3.4. Concluding Remarks: The Akali Dal started when the Akali movement gained a considerable confidence after capturing of the management of the Gurdwaras from the hands of corrupted hinduised ‘Mahants’. Consequently, there had been an intimate interplay between religion and politics in Punjab and it produces a kind of orientation of parties in the state. Thus, sometimes the leadership of the S.G.P.C. largely influenced the leadership of the Akali Dal and vice-versa. The party took the stand of regional autonomy.

70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
The Akali Dal suffered much due to factionalism and defection. The party could lead in the formation of ministries in the state. Despite factionalism, the party remained as a powerful regional political party in the state.

4. **The National Conference**

4.1 **The Background**: The National Conference is the most popular and well-organised regional political party in Jammu and Kashmir. The party started as the “All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference” in 1932 as a protest movement against the personal laws and the autocratic rule of the Dogras.

The people of the state were disappointed due to the oppressive rule of the Maharajas. The educated youths in Kashmir, particularly the Muslims were restless due to the growing unemployment. The Muslims, who constituted the majority population in the state, were educationally very backward. They were unable to compete those coming from other communities for state services. It caused them a great deal of frustration. The frustration turned into anger when they witnessed appointment of “Dogra Rajputs” of ‘mediocre abilities’ to high state posts. The taxation and legal systems of the state also caused a great dissatisfaction to the middle and lower class Muslims.

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The state administration suppressed mass-medias in the state from the very beginning. Publication of newspapers was banned unless it obtained the permission of the Maharaja. The state government had a suspicious eye even to subscribers of newspapers or magazines from outside the state. Thus the public opinion was blocked and the government could not receive the genuine demands. As a result, efforts of the government became useless and the discontentment of the people grew day by day.

The people in the state could not start a mass movement against the monarchical rule for the want of a good leader and low political consciousness. It was only when the young educated people of the state who had returned with degrees from outside universities, started to form organisation. In the beginning they started organisation as ‘prayer meetings’ in the mosques after their formal prayer as the Maharaja refused permission to hold public meetings. A group of young educated youths named as “Reading Room Party” took strong measures for the ‘prayer meetings’ and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, a fresher from the Aligarh University with a M.Sc. Degree, became a prominent figure of the party.

A public meeting was convened in the compound of the “Khanqah” of Shah Hamadan on 21st June 1931. The purpose of the meeting was to select a delegation to present a petition to the government of the Maharaja Hari Singh. One “Abdul Qadir” delivered a ‘provocative’ speech at the end of the meeting. The government considered the speech a seditious one and Abdul Qadir was arrested. The Muslim population of the state felt anxious

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75 Bamzai, P.N.K. op.cit. p. 708.
76 Ibid. p. 715.
and excited to the arrest of Qadir. A huge crowd thronged at the court complex on the hearing day, the 13th July 1931. They demanded withdrawal of the case against Qadir. While controlling the crowd, police opened fire resulting in the death of twenty-one persons, wound of many and arrest of hundreds of people including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

The incident produced a widespread political consciousness to the masses of the state. People started open demonstrations against the Maharaja. "True, there had been demonstrations in Kashmir earlier against the Maharajas particularly by the shawl weavers and often by the peasants. But never before had the entire Muslim population risen as one man against the authorities. It is from that date the people took upon themselves the task of securing for themselves the right of democratic self rule." 78

The "All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference" was formed very soon after the incident. The new party organised its inaugural session from 15 to 17 October 1932 in Srinagar. 79 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the prominent figure of the 'Reading Room Party' was its president. Due to the communal loaded term used in the name of the party, the party could not attract the Hindu population of the state, specially those in the Jammu region. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah quickly realised this loophole in his party and he expressed the need for uniting Hindus and Muslims as early as in 1935. 80 The formal initiative for converting the Muslim Conference into a more secular party, however, came somewhat late. On June 26, 1938, the working committee of the party, after a heated discussion, passed a resolution recommending the 'General Council' of the party to allow all people of

78 Bamzai, P.N.K. op.cit. pp 715-716
79 Lockwood, D.E. op.cit. p. 44.
80 Yasin, Mohammad (Ed.). op.cit. p.61.
different communities to become its member. A special session of the Muslim Conference held in Srinagar on June 11, 1939 approved the recommendation of the working committee. It resolved:

"From this day, the name of the Muslim Conference is changed into the National Conference and all those who believe in the objective of responsible and democratic government in the state can become its members irrespective of caste, creed, or religion".

Thus, the National Conference lessened its communal odour by making a change in its nomenclature. It was an effort to draw confidence and support of all sections of society in the state. The party started its reign in the state in 1952 and it remained nearly a decade. But, the National Conference party merged with the Congress Party soon after assuming the state power by G.M. Sadiq, after the State Assembly Election, 1962, though a small faction of "Bakshi-Rashid" combined later on revived the National Conference party. It started the reign of the Congress Party for a decade in the state.

Under the "Indira-Sheik Accord" in 1975, Mr Qasim, the then Congress Chief Minister in the state, stepped down and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah became the Chief Minister. Then Abdullah wanted to revive the National Conference. The Congress decided to withdraw its support from Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Abdullah advised the Governor to dissolve the Assembly and for an election. The Assembly election was held in 1977 and the National Conference regained its lost popularity and strength. Thus the party revived and it has been a major regional political party in the state.

81 Bamzai, P.N.K. op. cit. p.723.
82 Quoted in Lockwood, D.E. op.cit. p.50.
4.2. **Ideology and Policy and Programme:** It is believed that in the initial stage the policy and programme of the National Conference was influenced by the Communist party of India. The National Conference adopted a “socialistic pattern of society” in its “New Kashmir” manifesto in 1944 for an all-round advancement covering agriculture, industry, transport, distribution, utility services, currency and finance in the state. After release of the “New Kashmir” manifesto, the party took up a strong effort for land reform measures in the state. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah announced a drastic and sweeping land reform measures from the National Conference platform.\(^\text{84}\)

In the field of education the Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah’s government ventured a ‘revolutionary step’. It adopted the mother tongue of the children to be the medium of instruction in the primary schools.\(^\text{85}\) The government established arts, science and practical classes in handicrafts. In the Assembly election 1977, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah raised the issue of ‘honour and dignity’ of Kashmir. The election manifesto of 1983 of the National Conference promised to ensure safeguard and unity of the state, reformation of the electoral laws, universalization of elementary education, improvement of sanitation, abolition of dowry system, development of the regional languages and cultures, improvement of irrigation facilities, development of industries (large and small), development of fruit and tourism industries.

\(^\text{84}\) Bamzai, P.N.K. op.cit. p. 788.
\(^\text{85}\) ibid. p. 789.
The party believes in the democratic principle of responsible government starting from the village level to the national level. The party also makes efforts to achieve secularism, socialism and democracy. Thus it fought against the autocratic rule of the Maharaja and for starting of a representative government. It changed the name of the party to make itself a secular party. It also supported the Indian National Congress in the freedom movement. “On the whole the National Conference party’s own ideology was never sharply differentiated from that of the Congress”.  

The National Conference demanded restoration of the position of the state that was at the time of inauguration of the Indian Republic. Thus, Farooq Abdullah reiterated that the National Conference was committed to the stand of accession of Kashmir to India as final and irrevocable and that the only thing the party wanted was the restoration of autonomy that Kashmir once enjoyed. He has been pressing for the pattern of relation between the state and the Union prevalent prior to 1953.

4.3. **Electoral Performance:** One common electoral phenomenon in the state of Jammu and Kashmir before 1977 was the massive unopposed return of candidates in the elections. In those elections many candidates of the ruling party returned without a contest due to mass rejection of nomination papers of the candidates. As a result, during that period complaints for manipulation, ragging, etc. were lodged in large number by the opposition parties.

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The National Conference won 75 out of the 75 total seats in the 1951 State Constituent-cum-Legislative Assembly elections. Of the 75 seats won by the party, 73 were unopposed. The reason for the mass unopposed return in the election was that other next biggest party in the state, the Praja Sangha, boycotted the election on the plea that the mass-rejection of the nominations of its candidates was not satisfied.

The National Conference claimed that its government could earn strength and stability in the state after the attack of ‘Pakistani raiders’ in 1947, in the State Assembly election of 1957.\(^89\) This time, again, the National Conference could manage 68 seats. Of the remaining 7 seats, the Praja Parishad got 5, the Harijan Mandal 1 and another 1 seat went to an independent candidate. The trend of mass rejection of the nomination papers of the opposition parties by the election commission\(^90\) under the influence of the ruling party and the mass uncontested returns was not changed in the Assembly elections of 1962 and 1967, even though those elections were conducted under the strict supervision of the Election Commission of India. In 1962 election, the National Conference begged 70 of the 75 total seats, of which 32 were unopposed. In 1967 elections, the Congress got 61 seats of which 22 were unopposed returns. Thus, a change in the party-in-government or a change in the supervising authority of the elections, could not improve the trend of mass rejection of nomination papers, ragging and official patronage.


\(^90\) The Election Commission of India’s jurisdiction had been extended to the state of Jammu and Kashmir since the State Assembly Election, 1962. Two previous elections to the state Assembly of 1952 and 1977 had been conducted under the supervision of the local “Election and Franchise Commission”. Singh, Balbir. 1982. op. cit. p.6.
The 1977 Assembly elections in the state marked a record of contest in all the constituencies. In that election the contesting parties were also equally strong. The three major contending parties in the election were the National Conference, the Congress and the Janata Party. In the election, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the leader of the National Conference, expressed that Kashmir would secede from India if the state was not given a position of honour and dignity. The National Conference captured 47 seats out of which 39 were from the valley, 7 from Jammu region and 1(one) from Laddak. In the 1983 Assembly elections, the party won 47 seats. The National Conference contested the State Assembly Election, 1987 in 45 constituencies and won 40 seats. On the other hand, the two major national political parties namely the BJP and the INC sent up 29 and 31 candidates respectively and the two parties could succeed in 2 and 26 seats respectively. The next Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir was held in 1996 and in that election the National Conference captured 57 seats out of the total seats of 87 in the Assembly.

4.4. **Concluding Remarks:** The National Conference party emerged as a protest movement against the autocratic rule of the Dogras specially by the frustrated Muslim in the then princely state of Kashmir. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other members of the “Reading Room Party” organised ‘prayer meetings’ secretly to start a mass movement in the state.

The people of the state gained a mass political consciousness after the incident of firing in dispersing the crowd assembled in the court complex

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demanding withdrawal of Abdul Qadir, who was arrested on the charge of sedition for his ‘provocative’ speech in the public meeting organised in June 1931. Shortly, “All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference” was formed in October 1932 in Srinagar, with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as the founding president of the party. The party embraced ‘regionalism’ and it lately demanded for the restoration of the status of the state which was at the time of inauguration of the Indian Republic.

The leadership of the party quickly realised the weakness in the nomenclature of the party. Thus, the party changed it shortly in order to make it a secular party. The party ruled the state for about a decade before its merger with the Congress party in 1964. The party revived after the “Indira-Seikh” accord of 1975. Thus, the party ruled the state after the State Assembly election of 1977. In the course of its existence the party suffered due to factionalism in it.

5. The Telegu Desham:

5.1. Background: The Telegu Desham has been the most popular regional political party in Andhra Pradesh since the inception of the party. The late “matinee-idol”, Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (popularly known as N.T Rama Rao) founded the party in March 1982. The party could capture power in the state after the election of 1983.

Factionalism cropped up inside the Congress party in Andhra Pradesh before the 1983 State Assembly elections. There were repeated changes in leadership and ministry of the Congress party in the state. A large number of its members were expelled in a fortnight and those expelled members contested the 1983 election as independent candidates.

The factionalism and repeated change of ministries of the Congress party in the state conceived a strong discontent among the people in general and the followers of the party in particular. The Muslims, who were supporters of the party no longer wanted to remain themselves as "blind followers" of the Congress party.  

The base of other national political parties by that time was also not spread widely in the state. Once the Communist Party of India enjoyed popularity and mass support in Telengana region. But it lost its popularity due to successive party splits. The Janata Party had no organisational base except in some small pockets of Telengana. On the other hand, the Bharatiya Janata Party could gain its support only in a constituency.  

In the midst of such a political dissatisfaction, factionalism and fluidity N.T. Rama Rao emerged as a crusader to restore aspiration and hopes of the Telegu people. His political party was offered to the people as an alternative party to protect the 'Telegu self-respect'.  

5.2. **Ideology and Policy and Programme:** Ideologically, the Telegu Desham embraces similar values and ideals as other regional political parties in India do have. The party emphasises protection of Telegu culture, language and tradition. It also stands for 'regional autonofy'. N.T. Rama Rao, the leader of the party, made many promises like a 'corruption-free government, integration of the Telegu speaking people, etc. He also promised to establish 'Ram Rajya' in the state. As a part of his economic programme, N.T. Rama  

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95 ibid.  
Rao promised distribution of rice at Rs.2/- per kilo and providing of free mid-day meals to children reading in primary schools.98

On the day of the swearing-in-ceremony of his first ministry, N.T. Rama Rao circulated a ‘ten-point commandment’ to his cabinet colleagues.99 It pointed out that his colleagues must keep a close touch with the people, they must not interfere with appointment and transfer matters of officials and they must cooperate and make strong measures in removing corruption, in keeping a smooth administration and in upliftment of poor and backward people.

5.3. **Electoral Performance:** N.T. Rama Rao won the sentiment of voters in his first ever state Assembly election, 1983 with a slogan of “Telugu self-respect.” He designed the whole election strategy of his party in the election. He drove with his few party-men throughout the state as a part of his election campaign. His main promises were abolition of corruption and unemployment, supply of rice at Rs.2/- a kilo, etc. The party could draw its main support and strength from the coastal region of the state in that election. The party captured 282 seats including 4(four) Sanjay Vichar Manch, of the total 287 contested.

During his first rule in the state N.T. Rama Rao took up many daring schemes. While implementing his election promises, he introduced “a Rs.2/- a Kilo” rice scheme, lowering of superannuation age of government employees to 55, decentralisation policy of panchayats, etc.

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In 1985 mid-term Assembly election, the Telugu Desham party modified its election slogan. The party could maintain its position with its new slogan of “Telugu Welfare”. The schemes of its previous ministry, like “Rs.2/- a kilo rice”, slab rate of Rs.30/- for consumption of electric power to the farmers, abolition of ‘Patel-Patwari’ institutions and introduction of decentralization of administration in the panchayats were very much attractive to the voters and that helped the party in the mid-term election. That time the party won 202 seats out of its total contested 249.\(^{100}\)

The Telugu Desham lost in the 1989 State Assembly elections in the hands of the Congress(I). The Congress(I) won 182 seats as against 74 seats of the Telugu Desham party.\(^{101}\)

People of the state wanted to see the Congress(I) again in the 1989 election. The effect of the murder of Vangaveeti Ranga in the coastal districts and repression over the masses in the naxalite stronghold district of Telengana, were the main causes for the distrust of people against the party.\(^{102}\) Caste conflict was also an added cause to the defeat of many Telugu Desham candidates in some parties of the state in that election.\(^{103}\)

The Telugu Desham party geared up its party machinery and cadres for the state Assembly elections, 1994. One year ahead by organising ‘Praja Sadassus’ (People’s conventions). N.T. Rama Rao designed the electioneering plan of the party. Many ‘People’s conventions’, were organised to provide a platform for people “to file a 90 point charge-sheet” against the ‘misrule’ of

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\(^{100}\) The Frontline: December 30, 1994. p.9

\(^{101}\) ibid.

\(^{102}\) The Frontline: January 27, 1995. p.44

\(^{103}\) It was reported that in Krishna District Kapus organised a riot against Kammias in December 1988 and it led to the defeat of many T.D.P. candidates in the 1989 elections. ibid. p. 46.
the Congress(I). It also organised meetings and demonstrations highlighting the failures and misdeed of the Congress(I) both at the centre and the state. At the same time, those meetings and demonstrations emphasised the performances of the Telugu Deshmay ministries in the state. Similar meetings and demonstrations were also organised in the 'mandal' and district levels of the party. N.T. Rama Rao also invited national leaders in his election campaign meetings. The manifesto of the party included resumption of distribution of rice at Rs.2/- a kilo, total prohibition, free schooling up to standard-X, completion of pending irrigation projects, protection of women and effective maintenance of law and order.

The 1994 election was mainly a fight between the Telugu Deshmay party and the Congress (I) Party. The Congress (I) started its old game of leg-pulling. There were competition for leadership among the then Chief Minister Vajaya Bhaskar Reddy, the then Union Minister of Textiles G. Venkataswamy, the Cuddappah. M.P. Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy and former Andhra Pradesh Congress(I) Committee Chief, V. Hanumantha Rao. The party also could not finalise its candidates for more than 200 constituencies in a total of 294 in its Pradesh Election Committee (PEC).

The Telugu Deshmay Party, on the other hand, was not completely free from party infightings. This time, N.T. Rama Rao managed to keep his possible rivals away from him. His son-in-laws, D. Venkataswara and N. Chandrababu Naidu, who were rival centres of power of the party, were sidelined by the party chief.

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105 ibid.
106 ibid, p. 136.
107 ibid, P. 29
108 ibid.
109 ibid, p. 30
In the election, the Telugu Desham Party returned with a thumping majority. It secured 214 seats as against the Congress(l)'s 26 seats.\textsuperscript{110}

5.4. **Concluding Remarks:** This Telugu Desham party emerged as a result of the breakdown of the values of the Congress Party, particularly in the state. The repeated change in the leadership of the Congress ministry in the state caused a frustration and lack of confidence to the Congress party. N.T. Rama Rao, the much celebrated film hero, started the TDP with many promises containing regional values and sentiments in 1982.

The party emerged as a ruling party in the state and sometimes suffered due to factionalism in it.

6. **CONCLUSION:**

The survey of the above regional political parties in different states in India reveals that the D.M.K., the Akali Dal and the National Conference emerged in a common period of time and situation. Though there were slight differences according to local situations in these three regional political parties, all the three regional parties fought against the superiority of the minority rule in the respective states. A further examination in those parties separately, shows that a particular group of people in a society started movement to achieve its own interest and goal. By launching such movement the group of people incorporated its like-minded category of people. But, when those groups of people achieved their goal or interest, they diverted their movement in a different way and objective. Thus another section of that category remained unsatisfied and without any relief from the grievances. Such a situation provides a readymade ground for emergence of regional parties in the state. The D.M.K., the Akali Dal and the National Conference are such type of regional political parties emerged and survived under the above-mentioned situation.

On the other hand, some regional political parties emerged as a result of the dismantlement of coalition of forces and interests under the so-called "Congress System" in both national and state level politics in India. The Telugu Desham emerged as a result of the repeated changes of leadership in the Congress party and its government in the state. It eroded the values of the Congress party in the state. Other national political parties were also unable to fill the gap arisen out of the breakdown of the "Congress System". As a result, the Telugu Desham emerged with a strong regional ideology and objective.

The existence and holding of a lasting position particularly in the state by the regional political parties, largely depend on the nature of management of the party and the nature of relationship between the party leaders and the party in power in the centre. In the course of maintaining position and strength, a regional political party sometimes changes its strong belief in communal or sectarian stand to a more secular and democratic stand.

Factionalism and defection, in different forms are largely responsible for the weakening and downfall of regional political parties. Regional political parties suffer much and take much time to regain their positions from the wound of factionalism and defection.

The nature and strength of participation by regional political parties in elections shows the relative strength and position of those regional political parties. A regional political party based on communal or sectarian aims and objectives delimits its area of effective operation to that communal area. Thus, those regional political parties departed from the slogan of anti-centre, anti-north or Hindi, or communal stand after attaining a certain degree of considerable stable position in the states so as to adjust their share of political power in the politics of India.