Chapter III

REGIONALIZATION OF CONGRESS AND STATE POLITICS

There were three important personalities and associated factions found operating in the politics of Tamil Nadu in the middle of the twentieth century. Among them the Rajaji faction represented national culture while other two groups symbolized in different forms the regional political culture. The dominant group led by Kamaraj represented the regional, indigenous classes and categories. The protracted conflict between Kamaraj and Rajaji factions within and outside Congress underlines the tensions and struggle for supremacy between national and regional cultures. The third most important segment operating in the politics and society of Tamil areas then was the Dravida Kazhagam led by Periyar. The congress dominance of Tamil politics in the two decades after independence was established because of the regionalized nature of the congress party, brought out tellingly by the dominance of Kamaraj and Symbiotic alliance between Kamaraj faction and Dravida Kazhagam.

Rajaji– Kamaraj Rift

The British government had banned congress for launching the Quit India Movement in 1942, which it believed, had endangered British interests in the Asian theatre of the Second World War. At the end of the war the imprisoned Congressmen came to be released though the ban on the party was not immediately lifted. These released congressmen including C.N. Muthuranga Mudaliyar and Bhakthavachalam redirected the congress activities under the name of a new organization titled as Congress Sangam.¹ Under the presidency of S.K. Patel these released congressmen convened a conference at Ariyalur to discuss the organizational priorities of the party. A resolution was moved at this conference seeking to throw out of congress party those leaders who did not remain part of the 1942 Quit India Movement, in the hour of grave crisis for the party and those who supported the colonial interests. The resolution was passed with a
overwhelming majority as it was supported by 670 members and was opposed by a paltry number of four members.

The resolution and the conference were considered by Rajaji and his band of loyalists as essentially directed against him. It is pertinent to remember here that Rajaji remained opposed against the August resolution and disobeyed the directives of the Congress Working Committee to participate in the Quit India Movement. Moreover, during the interwar period Rajaji actively associated himself with the British government and more disappointingly for congress authored the Rajaji Plan, which permitted the partition of the country along communal lines and visualized the creation of Pakistan from the truncated parts of India. Amidst these anti congress activities the Congress Working Committee delegated the decision on Rajaji’s indiscipline to the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. Its president Kamaraj even insisted on the withdrawal of four annas membership of Rajaji.

Though Kamaraj was in jail in Amaroti at the time of Ariyalur conference of Congress Sangam there was a clear manifestation of the ire of the rank and file of the congress against the political demeanor of Rajaji during the interwar period. The Congress party oriented students conducted a massive conference in Madurai opposing any move towards the readmission of Rajaji into congress.

But isolated Rajaji attempted to bring about rapprochement with Kamaraj and through the efforts of some common friends a meeting was arranged in Rajaji’s house where he suggested to Kamaraj that both of them should undertake a joint tour in Tamil Nadu to dispel the impressions of any serious disagreement between them. Though Kamaraj expressed his formal concurrence with that suggestion, in practice through the strategy of procrastination avoided any such tour primarily because his own supporters were not enthusiastic but lukewarm to such a joint endeavor.

A few days after the rendezvous in Rajaji’s house Kamaraj went to his hometown of Virudhunagar and it was expected that his return would be within a week and after that
a joint tour would be undertaken. But to his horror and amazement the newspapers reported that Rajaji had been elected to the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee from Tiruchengode, a place where Rajaji had enduring association since the establishment of his Ashram many years ago. Kamaraj was surprised that without achieving primary membership of the party how an expelled member could be elected to the provincial congress committee especially he as the president of TNCC did not know anything about it. As a result in a mood of rejoinder he immediately issued a statement to the press challenging the validity of the election supposedly held in Tiruchengode.

The Tamil Nadu Congress Committee convened a conference in Madurai to deliberate on the issue of Tiruchengode election of Rajaji. The conference was important as it was the first meeting of the provincial congress committee to be organized since the passage of the August Resolution 1942. As a preemptory strategy the Rajaji group sent a letter to the office of the Provincial Congress Committee signed by 80 members recommending that Rajaji should be invited back to congress party so that his skilful leadership could be utilized for the benefit of the party and people in the province. 4

The Kamaraj group was incensed over this letter and organized a Provincial Workers Conference one day ahead of the scheduled official conference on October 30, 1945. The staunch member of Kamaraj group Chidampara Bharathi organized this conference to demonstrate the strength of anti-Rajaji sentiments. In the deliberations Muthuramalinga Thevar, Muthuranga Mudaliyar, Meenchur Bhakthavachalam etc., expressed their steadfast resolve against the admission of Rajaji as it would have a deleterious impact on the culture of discipline in the party. 5

In the discussions of this conference Meenchur Bhakthavachalam argued that even if the claimed admittance of Rajaji into congress had some validity or conformity to congress rules his election from Tiruchengode was invalid as the party constitution clearly stated that only those who demonstrated a minimum period of three years of continuous service to the party could be elected to the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. C.N. Muthuranga Mudaliyar another ardent supporter of Kamaraj argued that there were
37 vacancies in the provincial congress and how an election could be conducted in Tiruchengode alone that too in a manner shrouded in mystery and even the president of Provincial Congress Committee did not know anything about it.

A massive vote against Rajaji’s entry and leadership by some 1400 to 100 votes at this special provincial workers conference was passed and later submitted in the form of indictment to the representative of the congress High Command for the past and present behaviour of Rajaji. An umpteen number of placards and pamphlets were issued against Rajaji’s political career.

These Kamaraj’s followers approached the high command against any move to satisfy Rajaji’s desire to become a member of congress party. One Mrs. Krishnabai Nimbkar wrote to the congress secretary Acharya Kripalani.

“He has deliberately been instrumental in crippling the public life of the province. His obsessions have been so great that even the sense of shame attendant to the part he has been playing seems to have left him. The faith of the whole province will be shattered if the Working Committee fails to rise to the occasion late then never .... The prestige of the Working Committee and the Indian National Congress will become more firmly entrenched among the people of the south if it shows the courage to discipline even a Rajaji”.

The president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee ruling out the validity of Rajaji’s election wrote to Maulana Abdul Kalam Azhd, the president of congress in 1945 “you are aware that during the last three years Sri C. Rajagopalachariar had been strongly condemning the August Resolution and the consequent resistance movement of congressmen and had been openly advocating the acceptance of the rejected Cripps offer, surrender to the government and acceptance of office in the province on any terms. He, joining hands with the communists openly dissuaded the students of Madras even against observing hartals on the arrest of the leaders and pleaded with a few members of the Congress Legislative Party in Madras to form a group and form the ministry.
Sri. C. Rajagopalachariar has been consistently condemning the congress programmes and policies and openly inciting others against congress. Even as recently as early September (this month), he was reported to have advised an audience in Tiruchirapalli at a public meeting that at the ensuing elections to the legislature, people should not be carried away by the colour of the boxes, referring to the colour box voting system and voting by party labels, but that they should look at the personality of the individual candidates seeking the election. This being the persistent attitude of Sri Rajagopalachariar, congressmen in Tamil Nadu feel themselves unable to take him as one of them.

In the circumstances stated above, the correspondence that is reported to have passed between Sri Rajagopalchariar and yourself has caused no surprise and misgiving. While we are always willing to be guided by you, we are bound to expect that you will at least consult our committee before doing anything with reference to the taking back of Sri C.R. into the congress fold. I would also like to inform you regarding your invitation to him to attend the meeting of the Congress Working Committee in Poona, that Sri. C.Rajagopalachariar should not be deemed to represent, in any way the Tamil Nadu Congress.”

Similarly another opponent of Rajaji, Muthuranga Mudaliyar wrote to Azad. “... Rajaji’s alleged election to the Provincial Congress Committee was wholly irregular and void not merely on technical grounds but also on substantive grounds. The contention of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, since confirmed by the General Body of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee is that no election has taken place at all. And we cannot distinguish prominent leaders from ordinary congressmen in applying the rules of the congress constitution. ... Now the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee is not against Rajaji’s entry into the congress. In fact, our president in his opening speech, made a statement welcoming Rajaji back into the congress and seeking his cooperation for the work before us. But neither the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee nor the bulk of the congress workers in Tamil Nadu has any confidence in Rajaji’s leadership. Both his past and present attitude and conduct only tend to alienate further the feelings of congress workers towards him.”

The vehement reaction of these congressmen from Tamil Nadu against Rajaji became increasingly shrill as Rajaji bypassing the local congress where his strength was not appreciable straight away established communication with high command of the
party. His extensive links with the congress party at the higher corridors of power became handy for him. His group after a secret meeting in Seerkali, a small town in the cauvery delta decided to approach the Congress Working Committee.\textsuperscript{10}

They dispatched T.S.S. Rajan to Calcutta to seek the support of the Congress Working Committee and in response Asaf Ali was sent south to sort out these paralyzing rivalries within the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. In spite of the registration of vehement protest Asaf Ali concluded in favour of Rajaji and said that the election of Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar to the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee from Tiruchengode should be decreed valid unless a duly constituted Election Tribunal under Article VIII and XI of the congress committee set it aside.\textsuperscript{11}

He also said conclusively that such a Parliamentary Board should contain eight representatives and at least 3 of Rajaji men should be included. That Tribunal was duly constituted later and it had the following members. The president of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee Kamaraj, Rukmani Lakshmipathi, C.N. Muthuranga Mudaliyar, Omandur Ramasamy Reddiar, Avinashilingam Chettiar are the five members from the Kamaraj faction and the remaining members were loyal to Rajaji.

\textbf{Mahatma Gandhi's Visit}

The last visit of Gandhiji to Tamil Nadu proved to be a source of increasing divergence between Rajaji and Kamaraj. In 1946 Gandhiji came to Madras Presidency to preside over the annual day celebration of the Hindi Prachar Shaba. The visit also included his pilgrimage to the holy cities of Madurai and Palani. The tour became controversial as it turned out to be medium of manifestation of the paralyzing factionalism in the Provincial Congress Committee. The Rajaji group secretly shielded the entire schedule of the tour away from the knowledge of Kamaraj himself, the president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.
The details about the time and place of Gandhiji's arrival, stay and departure in Madras were kept shrouded in mystery by Rajaji group so as to exclude any association of Kamaraj with Gandhiji. In its zeal to utilize the closeness to Gandhiji it withheld this information from the knowledge of the president of the provincial congress committee. Rajaji along with his supporters like N. Gopalasamy Iyankar and the secretary of Hindi Prachar Shaba Sathyanarayanan went to receive Gandhiji at the Ambattur Railway station.

Meanwhile the details about Gandhiji's programmes were leaked out to Kamaraj by one of his journalist friends Ganapathy and an alerted Kamaraj went on time to Ambattur to receive the Mahatma. Rajaji was a bit bewildered and annoyed by the arrival of Kamaraj and consciously attempted to avoid introducing the president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee to the visiting dignitary. Gandhiji's tour lasted seven days in Tamil Nadu and on 02.02.1946 he departed in a special train from Kattupakkam railway station to have a holy darshan at the pilgrimage centres of Madurai and Palani. Traveling in the same time were Rajaji, Kamaraj and a group of journalists. The train had halts at Acharapakkam and Tindivanam and Gandhiji addressed multitudinous gatherings of people. He spoke profusely praising Rajaji saying that he was going to these temples in appreciation of the historical fact that Rajaji had opened these temples to all people through legislation passed during his premiership of Madras presidency. He extolled copiously the contributions of Rajaji to the temple entry movement and the untouchability eradication in Tamil Nadu.

The train traveled from Vilupuram, Viruthachalam, Ariyalur and Trichy to reach Madurai where Gandhiji spoke to a mammoth gathering and later went to worship at the temples. There while climbing the stairs of the Palani shrine Rajaji suddenly albeit belatedly introduced Kamaraj to Gandhiji stating rather awkwardly that he was Kamaraj the President of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. With deliberate intention he hesitated to introduce Kamaraj to Gandhiji either in Madras or throughout the journey to Madurai lasting more than 450 kilometers though Kamaraj was traveling in the same time was the strong suspicion of Kamaraj group.
In the return journey too Kamaraj was prevented from developing any rapport with Gandhiji. He was intentionally kept in the dark about the time of departure of the Gandhiji and hence Kamaraj missed the train departing with Gandhiji from Madurai in the return direction. He traveled in a car to reach Dindigul the next station and boarded the train from there. Thus for around seven long days Gandhiji was in Madras Presidency and the Rajaji faction kept him away from the approach and reach of the rival Kamaraj faction.

But when Gandhiji reached the Wardha Ashram he wrote the letter in the Harijan on 10-02-1946 under the caption CURIOUS setting of a major controversy. In that article while paying a tribute to Rajaji Gandhiji said that he was pained to find a clique working against him.

“It is a clique that evidently counts in the official congress in Madras... but the masses are devoted to Rajaji. I am neither vain nor foolish enough to feel that I could have had the huge public demonstrations all along the route of the pilgrimage if he had no influence with the masses in Tamilnadu. Congressmen will act as they think best. But I would be less than loyal to the organization if I did not warn them against losing the valuable services which no one can shoulder as Rajaji can at the present moment”.

In the same article Gandhiji denied that his visit had anything to do with Rajaji’s political future. Yet when he was asked about the prospects of Madras premiership, without tentativeness Gandhiji said “Rajaji was by for the best man for the purpose in the Southern Presidency and if I had the disposal in my hands I would call Rajaji to office, if I did not give it to myself”.

This statement precipitated a grave crisis in the provincial congress in Madras as Kamaraj rightly felt that reference to a clique by Gandhiji was a reflection on himself and his colleagues in the TNCC executive and promptly tendered his resignation from the Tamil Nadu Congress Parliamentary Board. Deeply wounded by the indirect reference by Gandhiji Kamaraj declined to continue as the president of TNCC as he rightly interpreted that remark as an indication of absence of confidence in his capacity.
In his explanation Kamraj said 'I am the official head of the Tamil Nadu Congress. According to the constitution I nominated the Working Committee. Therefore Gandhiji's references can only be applicable to me. I have paid my respects to Gandhiji in person and I have been in his calling distance in Madras during his Tamil Nadu tour. So have been many of the other members of our Working Committee. It pains me much that Gandhiji did not talk to us anything about Tamil Nadu Congress affairs while he was here. His use of the word 'clique' affects me deeply.

Neither I nor my colleagues believe in the parliamentary programme except as a means to further the country's struggle for freedom. I had made my position clear on dozens of platforms since my release. At any rate I am no aspirer to any kind of office under the parliamentary activities.

As for the public agitation against Rajaji it is only a reaction among congressmen and the public to Rajaji's actions and speeches since his Pakistan resolution and resignation from the congress. But after Gandhiji's recent article I feel I can do nothing else than resign from the parliamentary Board, because all the conflict has come about only on account of the parliamentary programme. "Four of my colleagues, messors T.S. Avinashilingam, C.N. Muthuranga Mudhaliar, O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar and Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmipathy felt compelled to quit also. I have persuaded them to remain for the very simple reason that the short time available for the election work ahead would not admit of such wholesale resignations. I thank them for the spirit in which they have agreed to continue on the Board. They would certainly have been within their rights if they had followed my example. But they and I do not want to disturb the election work.

For my part I can not but quit. For twenty years Gandhiji has been the leader whom I have unwaveringly followed and my faith in him continues unabated. That I should occasion him pain drives me to take the action I have decided to take. I assure everybody concerned that every decision taken by the board here or at the centre will command my wholehearted acceptance".

Dr. Varadharaja Naidu, a member of the Kamaraj faction wrote a letter to Gandhiji as a reaction to his "clique" statement.
“Kamaraj works in the south for the implementation of the Gandhian Dharma, programmes of the congress party with unparalleled enthusiasm and dedication. He has risen through his selfless service to be one of the front ranking leaders of the congress party. Your statement, about Kamaraj and his colleagues as a clique is not reflective of reality. We humbly request you not to interfere in this fashion in the internal affairs of the congress party in the state”.

Immediately Gandhiji wrote a reply to Dr. Varadharajalu Naidu stating that hereafter he would not interfere in the Nadar’s affair. Meanwhile Pattabhi Seetharamaiya also met Gandhiji and apprised him of the reality in the affairs of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. Gandhiji commented on Kamaraj’s decision in Harijan and defended his use of the epithet clique by stating that he used it with the meaning found in the dictionary. He appealed to Kamaraj to withdraw his resignation and subsequently he received letters of discontent from other Congressmen in Tamil Nadu on his statement. On 24-02-1946 Gandhiji, in an article in his Harijan accepted that “I must admit that I did not talk to those who were with me in the special train”.

Positive Discrimination and Non-Brahmin Congress

The strategy of positive discrimination as an instrument of the empowerment of the Non-Brahmins, which created tenacious misunderstandings between the Brahmin and Non-Brahmin Congressmen in the 1920’s, again visited upon the political landscape of the state in the early fifties. But this time due to the changed composition of the organizational leadership and socio-economic base of the Congress, the response was exceedingly congenial to the strategy of positive discrimination.

The democratic, sovereign, republican constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26th 1949 and exactly two months later the commencement of the constitution started. This supreme, sacrosanct document in part – III provided various fundamental rights to the people of India out of which the right to equality was enshrined from articles 14 to 18. The Communal G.O. of Madras state that
contained the policy of bestowing special treatment to the backward classes was challenged in the courts as it was deemed to be in contradiction to the article 16 of this egalitarian constitution.

The disappointed Brahmins against this G.O filed two writ petitions. Chithambaram Durairajan, a candidate seeking admission to the Madras Medical College, filed a petition for a writ of *mandamus* restraining the government from enforcing the Communal G.O by which admission to the medical college was regulated. A similar petition was filed by C.R. Srinivasan, an applicant to the Engineering College where also admissions were regulated in the manner prescribed for the state services.

The aggrieved Brahmins considered the communal G.O as patently discriminatory and specifically targeted against them. The Salem Brahmana Seva Sangam sent a petition to the president praying for a declaration that the communal G.O was "ultra vires, illegal and opposed to the fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution. The Madras High Court in its judgement declared that the aforementioned communal G.O discriminated against citizens on grounds of caste, community and religion and therefore violated article 15 (1) of the constitution. This judgment delivered by the Madras High Court holding that the communal G.O made caste and religion the grounds for admission or rejection declared it ultra virus.

There was a vociferous opposition to the judgment of the courts and fired by the weight of the public pressure, the increasingly non-Brahmanized provincial congress party and government decided to appeal in the Supreme Court against the judgment of the Madras High Court. The Government of Madras argued in the Supreme Court through its Advocate-General that the communal G.O was constitutionally valid conforming to the article 46 of the constitution falling under the Directive Principles of State Policy. It argued before the Supreme Court that the communal distribution of seats in educational institutions was tantamount to assisting the dis-privileged sections of the population. The Supreme Court rejected the argument of the state Government and said that fundamental rights are sacrosanct and not liable to be abridged by any legislative,
executive act or order except to the extent provided in the appropriate articles of the constitution and confirmed the judgment of the High Court regarding the constitutional invalidity of the communal G.O implemented in the state.

As soon as the judgment was delivered, there were unceasing waves of demonstration in favour of incorporating constitutional safeguards for protecting the communal G.O. The Dravidian outfits organized extensive agitation transversing the entire territory of the state. Periyar reacted strongly against the cancellation of communal reservations and considered the developments as sinister manifestation of Brahmin cunningess. On 8th August 1950 he appealed to the non-Brahmins to carry out agitations for communal reservation. In a retrospective mood he recollected passionately the events preceding the 1925 Conjeevaram Conference and his subsequent departure from the congress over the communal reservation issue. A conference of non-Brahmins was convened at Thiruchirapalli on 3rd December 1950 to which leaders and representatives from the entire kaleidoscope of non-Brahmin firmament attended and demanded the unequivocal restoration of the communal G.O.

The non-Brahmin president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, himself perturbed at the course of the events rushed to Delhi, to apprise the Prime Minister of the disturbing developments in the state and its possible detrimental consequences to the fortunes of the party in the state especially in the context of imminent General Elections. He sought a meeting with the prime minister and delineated the details about the historical dynamics of the Communal government order and its emotive repercussions in the state politics. He, an avid advocate of the positive discrimination to achieve obliteratiun of caste, succeeded in convincing the Prime Minister about the need for amending the constitution to provide protection to the communal reservation scheme in the state. As a result the constitution was amended through the First Constitutional Amendment Act to overcome the constitutional objections raised by the inviolability of the fundamental rights. Articles 15 (1) and 15 (2) of the constitution which forbade discrimination on caste, religion etc., were amended by supplementary provision that
nothing in the article would prevent the state from making any special provision for educational, economic or social advancement of any backward class of citizens.

The constitutional amendment was the product of the collective bargaining strength of the Non-Brahmin faction of the congress party within the higher echelons of the congress party organization and concomitant diminution of political power and influence of Brahmins whose position was on the irreversible downward trajectory from the heady days of the Mylapure and Egmore centric congress party. The controversy and its beneficial settlement created the congenial atmosphere whereby Periyar and Kamaraj came to establish an enduring symbiotic political association.22

Education Policy and Ascendancy of Region in Congress

The Rajaji Government introduced a new education policy, a modification of Gandhian Basic Education to which congress was committed and that had its historical roots in the nationalist upsurge against the western educational scheme of the British administration. The Gandhian scheme of education as delineated in the Wardha scheme provides for moral education in indianized context where professional training to the children would also be simultaneously provided even while empowering them with moral character and attitude.

The Rajaji scheme was comprised of two fundamental attributes. One as there was the paucity of teachers and infrastructure to provide universal education to all children immediately the government thought of introducing a shift system where by children instead spending the whole day time in the school would utilize only a few hours for the purpose of learning. As learning time was limited more number of children would derive the benefits of education even with the available limited infrastructure. Secondly the children would be learning the traditional professions of their parents in the considerable amount of free time now at their disposal because of the truncated school hours. The objective of educational scheme was to provide universal education to all children below 14 years of age by the way of implementation of article 45 of the
constitution especially with adequate infrastructure and simultaneously to provide scope for acquisition of professional skills by children.

As the details of the scheme were delineated the floodgates of non-Brahmin anger were opened and the leaders of the Dravidian movement opposed the plan on the grounds of its pernicious, sinister implications. Periyer considered the scheme as brahminical, anachronistic and castiest and characterized it as *Kula Kalvi* scheme meaning caste-based education. He attacked the scheme as it in a cleverly disguised manner sought to perpetuate duty according to caste or *Varnaashrama Dharma*.\(^{23}\)

Unfortunately, Rajaji did not understand the genuineness of the objections raised against his scheme or the intensity of the fears entertained by those who felt that it would affect the educational future of their children.\(^{24}\) The DMK launched a new style of agitation described as three-corner agitation. Besides opposing the educational scheme of Rajaji administration, the agitation had two more objectives of changing the name of a Trichy town from Dalmiapuram to Kallakudi (Dalmiapuram was named after a north Indian cement magnet while kallakudi had been the original Tamil name of the town) and expressing party's indignation over certain derogatory remarks made by the prime minister.\(^{25}\)

The raging controversy had its own internal implications in the congress where the Non-Brahmin factional leaders became concerned over the long-term implications of the scheme to the Tamil society. A bulk of the Non-Brahmin congress members of the state Legislative Assembly was against the educational plan of the government. They demanded overtly the instant jettisoning of the scheme. Dr. Vardharajalu Naidu, V.K. Ramasamy Mudaliyar, K.T. Kosalaraman, T.G. Krishnamurthi, A.M. Sampantham etc., were in the vanguard of the members opposing the educational policy of the government.\(^{26}\)

O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar, the former chief minister addressing Rajaji in the Madras Legislative Council said, "Please give up the scheme without any more ado. It is
a new handle to the black shirts. Persistence will only sound the death knell of the party.²⁷ Kamaraj too had been critical of the scheme and advised Rajaji to withdraw it. The anti Rajaji faction adopted the tactics of procrastination in the Legislative Assembly and repeatedly postponed the final voting on the burning conundrum. As Rajaji was a member of the Legislative Council he could not have much leeway and the anti-Rajaji faction postponed inordinately the final voting leading to prolonged discussions ultimately paving the way for the crystallization of mounting anger against the scheme.²⁸

On September 6th the beleaguered but stubborn chief minister announced that a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party would be convened to decide over the continuance of his dispensation but later on after a meeting with Kamaraj backtracked and explained that Kamaraj had consented to the continuity of his administration and especially the new education policy. But in a discordant note Kamaraj denied swiftly that he had ever expressed such a support.²⁹

Meanwhile the opposition parties in the Legislative Assembly mobilized support for the passage of a No-confidence motion against the chief minister and in turn the chief minister strove to organize his support against that emerging No-confidence motion. Concerned over the developments in the southern state the congress high command summoned the two prominent leaders of the state Kamaraj and Rajaji to thrash out a settlement and at the conclusion of the meeting the Prime Minister declared that Rajaji would continue as chief minister in the state.³⁰

The congress legislature party members in turn sent to the high command their resolution that they were in fact for a change in the chief ministership as they had lost confidence in the leadership of Rajaji. This resolution was taken to Delhi by Non-Brahmins T.G. Krishnamurthy, A.M. Sampantham, Panchandra Chettiyar to be submitted to the high command to register the enormity of opposition to Rajaji’s chief ministership. These aggrieved congressmen went to Delhi and conversed with the Congress Parliamentary Board, Prime Minister and President of the Congress Party and impressed upon them the indispensability of changing the chief minister. Ultimately the convinced
Prime Minister and the President of the congress party announced that the Congress Legislature Party of Madras state could decide about the issue of Chief Ministership.\textsuperscript{31}

The lukewarm attitude of the Prime Minister towards the beleaguered chief minister also contributed to the compounding of the problems for the chief minister. P. Ramamurty, the communist MLA who became the opposition leader in Madras after the separation of Andhra Pradesh thought that Nehru's reluctance to come to help Rajaji over the education scheme produced a sharp bitterness in the later.\textsuperscript{32}

The speech of the Chief Minister in Madurai amidst the raging controversy too served to deepen the suspicions of the Non-Brahmins towards Rajaji. There was a function in Madurai city organized by the T.V.S. Motor Company to mark its foundation day. Many prominent personalities participated in that celebration that included Kamaraj and Rajaji. Here Rajaji in his speech asked a question to the business family of the motor company why they, being Brahmins were engaged in motor company business, which basically was an occupation of Sudras according to the Varnaashrama Dharma. In that same speech he also said that old, elderly people should delegate their responsibilities and power to the younger ones.\textsuperscript{33}

Kamaraj who was on the podium was annoyed by the overt message delivered by his bitter rival and appreciated Rajaji for his advise that elderly people should step down in favour of the young people and in a teasing manner said that this should be followed not merely in business but also in politics. This anecdote brought out the subterraneous political animosities between the two important leaders of Tamil Nadu congress, which essentially meant a rivalry between national political culture of Rajaji and regional culture of Kamaraj.

Even the anti-Kamaraj Non-Brahmin leaders did not condone the chief minister on the question of his education scheme. Muthuramalinga Thevar, the leader of Forward Block and a prospective partner of Rajaji in the pragmatic politics of opposition to Kamaraj too attacked the education scheme calling it a manifestation of the anti
democratic, dictatorial attitude of the chief minister. The arguments of Thevar against
the scheme were comprehensive and not caste centric. He took strong exception to
Rajaji’s statement that the great sages of Shankara and Ramanuja did not consult any
body while expounding their philosophy and hence he did not consult any one about the
educational scheme and he replied with more aggression. He considered the remarks of
the chief minister as arrogant, self-flattery and an insult to the great theological tradition
of Shankara and Ramanuja. Thevar also criticized the scheme as being repugnant to the
spirit of modernity and democracy. He also said that the scheme would have more
detrimental impact on poor rural children as they suffered already from the educationally
uninspiring atmosphere. Thevar was also against the scheme as it degraded the quality of
education available to the children of lower castes leading to the perpetuation of their
socio economic backwardness.34

Congress, Periyar and DMK

Along with the relentless march and gathering strength of Dravida Kazhagam internal
dissensions began to emerge in the organizational structure of the movement. The
dynamic, younger crop of leaders led by the Kanchipuram born C.N. Annadurai
demanded the democratization of leadership and decentralization of power within the
organization with increasing vigour and voice. But Periyar, in the tradition of Plato
rejected these demands for internal democracy not only in the organization of the
movement then but also in the future if the demand for Dravida Nadu materialized.

In 1948, Dravida Kazhagam conference itself Annadurai walked out protesting
against Periyar’s political autocracy and totalitarianism.35 The incumbent leadership of
the movement denounced these pro-democracy activists as renegades but alarmed at the
possibility of a split Periyar settled for a compromise by appointing Annadurai as the
president of the conference held later that same year. However he steadfastly refused to
concede to the demands of the rebels for a democratic party organization.
These growing contradictions between the incumbent and aspiring leaders exploded into a formal, overt outburst in 1949 over the seemingly innocuous event of Periyar’s marriage. He then at the age of 72 married a 28-year-old woman who had been an active member of the party. He also gave the reason of his sudden marriage by stating that as he had no faith in his lieutenants he wanted to marry this lady so that in future the movement could be run smoothly.

The younger group of leaders condemned the marriage, as it was contrary to the avowed social objectives of the movement that included the elimination of the practice of unequal marriages. These leaders including C.N. Annadurai, N.V. Natarajan, Karunanithi, E.V.K. Sampath broke away from the movement to form their own political party in 1949 called Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. To emphasize the democratic credentials of the newly formed party it was consciously provided in the party constitution that the post of General Secretary would be rotated among the top leaders to avoid the kind of totalitarianism that characterized the parental Dravada Kazhagam.

Through its elaborate structural organization, it broadened the social base and through various conferences and campaigns it sought a mass membership as the base for capturing political power. Later the party at its Trichy conference decided to enter electoral arena of democracy to participate in the Second General Elections. The split in the movement in 1949 was triggered by the question of electoral participation too, apart from the issue of internal democracy. Periyar traditionally declined to accept the strategy of direct involvement in politics and elections because of the many compromises he would be forced to make with in his radical ideology to be more acceptable to the electorate. He always maintained that compromises and adjustments in the programmes would result in the gradual abandonment of the entire social plank of the movement in favour of obtaining political power. He always pointed out the educative example of the erstwhile Justice Party, which in pursuing the fishes and loves of office adopted the strategy of electoral participation and in the quagmire of electoral politics compromised its own social commitments and in the process became rootless, disappearing into the realm of political oblivion.
But the new outfit DMK chose to enter electoral democracy as the founders were strongly convinced that participation in electoral democracy and the subsequent capture of political power would enable the party to implement more rapidly and substantially the basic programmes of social and economic development.

Periyar never condoned nor forgot the defectors who split the social organization of Dravida Kazhagam. He in a language of derision called the rebels as “Tear drops”. When the defectors left the party they wrote a letter to the leader saying that with tear drops in the eyes and heavy heart they had undertaken this political expedition because of the extenuating circumstances. To heap scorn on rebels the wounded leader Periyar till 1967 elections always called DMK as tear drop party.

He attacked DMK in all his meetings and speeches. He opined, “The objectives of the tear drop party are to enjoy a great life full of comforts. They will do anything and everything to satisfy their personal interests. If there has been no anti Brahmin movement in this land, then the teardrop party would not have any political space hear. The teardrop party survives only because of our sacrifice. But the party and its leaders have betrayed the ideology of the anti Brahmin movement”. As DMK gained strength and popularity Periyar began to support congress and Kamaraj in a bid to counter its growth.

**Dravida Kazhagam and Communism**

Periyar had close interaction with communism in the third decade of the 20th century. He was deeply influenced by the Marxist doctrine and Soviet Union where he had undertaken a visit. In 1932, at a meeting of the General Body of the Self Respect Movement in Erode a communist agenda called *Fourteen Points Programme* or Erode programme was adopted. It envisaged the formation of two separate wings within the body of the Self-Respect Movement; the Self Respect Party and the Self Respect League Samadharma Party of South India.
The publication of literature on communism, popularization of May Day celebrations, formation of Samadharma Party's local branches, projection of intrinsic and innate similarities between Communism and Self Respect Movement etc were the important activities undertaken by Periyar to favour the establishment of communist style of society in South India. The Erode programme advocated nationalization of all means of production, distribution and public transport, amelioration of the conditions of the industrial workers and agricultural labourers and propagation of the original basis of the Self Respect Movements.\(^{40}\)

The Samadharma Party had salient objectives that included adoption of adult suffrage, provision of minimum wages and security of service, distribution of reasonable share in the agricultural produce to industrial workers, removal of caste distinctions, participation of the party in the election, utilization of the income of religious institutions for education etc.\(^{41}\)

The colonial government alarmed by the growing upsurge in the communist activities arrested and imprisoned Periyar on the charges of sedition. Once released from the prison after the completion of the sentence Periyar concentrated on Self Respect Movement alone, eschewing the communist angle considering it imprudent to Indian conditions prevailing at that time. From then on till the adoption of our republic constitution the Non-Brahmin movement of Periyar never had any interaction with communist movement in the state.

The Dravida Kazhagam supported the Communist Party of India in the First General Elections in 1952. As the general elections became imminent after the commencement of the constitution, the executive committee of Dravida Kazhagam met at Trichy in 1951 and passed a resolution to work in tandem with the Communist Party to achieve common objectives and interests. The resolution identified the defeat of the congress party in the ensuing elections as its primary objective and to achieve it favoured an alliance with the Communist Party. The resolution also stated that in the event of non-availability of communist candidates or in the context of the weak prospects of
communist candidates other parties and even independents should be supported to defeat
the omnipotent congress party.

Periyar justified the alliance with the communist party with the help of the old
maxim; ‘my enemy’s enemy is my friend’. He likened his support to communist party to
a train journey. The passengers traveling in the same train and compartment became
friends and this friendship would last till they reached their respective destinations. Each
passenger would get down at his station and would go in his own way. There was no
need to keep the relationship after it had outlived its utility.\textsuperscript{42}

The Communist Party of India too decided to take the support of Dravida
Kazhagam based on the commonality and compatibility of interests. It specifically
identified the salient features where symmetry of views could be established between
Communist Party and Dravida Kazhagam. Opposition to congress, support for civil
liberties, support to the struggle of the workers and peasants, friendship with Soviet
Union, China and the anti-colonial liberation movements were some of the objectives
adduced by the communist party for accepting the support of Dravida Kazhagam.

The party also appreciated the efforts of Periyar who had formed a huge mass
organization after his courageous departure from the Justice Party. More significantly the
party expressed its genuine appreciation of the fact that the Dravidian Movement had its
origin in the revolt against severe caste oppression. In a momentary mood of
condonation, the leaders of the Communist Party brushed aside the unconcealed anti-
Brahmin attitude of the Dravida Kazhagam by explaining that the agrarian revolts in the
South were naturally, inevitably anti-Brahmin since the Non-Brahmins and untouchables
constituted overwhelmingly the social collectivity.\textsuperscript{42} In brief, it could be said that the
Communist Party of India characterized the Dravida Kazhagam as one that was more
progressive, egalitarian than communal or primordial.

The communist leader S.A. Dange himself a Brahmin said “on this question of
anti-brahminism and ‘Dravida Nadu’ we don’t agree with the Dravida Kazhagam. But
our alliance will bring to it the proletarian leadership, which will ultimately change those features for the good of both parties and the people as a whole.\textsuperscript{44}

Ajay Ghosh, General Secretary of the CPI feeling it necessary to justify the alliance to leftists critical of communist association with a communal party emphasized that the CPI would never make truce with communal parties such as the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha or the Jansangh but Dravida Kazhagam was essentially a progressive rather than a communal party.

Both parties worked out the alliance by emphasizing on the areas of commonality and compatibility and by ignoring the issues of irresolvable contradictions. Both parties were acutely aware of the fundamental dichotomy on issues of caste, class, power, state, nation etc. In the heat of electoral campaign even on the contentious conundrum of the separate Dravida Nadu demand both parties steered clear of any controversy. The communist party was more obliging as its leader Ramamurthi, while delivering a speech along side Periyar referred to the right to secede from the union on the basis of language, culture and contiguity of territory.

The electoral alliance was neither permanent nor universal in all the constituencies. As outlined in its executive council resolution the Dravida Kazhagam in a discriminatory mood supported the communist party only in one third of the constituencies and declined to deliver its vote bank in the remaining seats to the communist party. This arrangement between Dravida Kazhagam and Communist Party proved to be a success as it halted the electoral juggernaut of congress in the southern state. The rather lackluster performance of the congress party in the Madras state, in comparison with its performance elsewhere could be adduced by the strategy of electoral adjustments made by these parties. As a result, the Congress Party was unable to achieve the simple majority on its own.\textsuperscript{45}

But soon after the elections the tenuous arrangements broke down, as the two reluctant allies became implacable opponents, triggered by their dichotomy on
fundamental issues. The alliance ended when Periyar accused the communist party of political treachery. He attacked the Communist Party of the entertaining sinister designs to infiltrate into the organizational structure of Dravida Kazhagam under the mask of electoral alliance to convert the local branches of the organization into communist party units. The Trichirappalli district unit of Dravida Kazhagam passed a resolution that blamed the communist party's opposition to the separate Dravida Nadu demand for the rupture in its relationship with them. It said that its support to the Communist Party was extended only after it was convinced that communist party could be persuaded to accept the validity of the demand for a separate Dravida Nadu. As now after the elections the communist leaders denounced the Dravida Nadu demand the party decided to end relationship.46

Though a plethora of causes could be cited for the breakdown of this transitory political alliance the most paramount factor was the caste question. The Dravida Kazhagam objected to the preponderance of Brahmins in the leadership domain of the communist party. It argued that the Brahmin dominated communist leadership would surreptitiously and cunningly work for the welfare of the Brahmins at the expense of the Non-Brahmins. Periyar claimed that communist party would bring the subservience and downfall of Non-Brahmins and promote the North Indian hegemony and exploitation.

Periyar cited the example of a Legislative Assembly constituency in the composite Thanjavoor district where the communists had surreptitiously supported a congress candidate against the candidate of the Dravida Kazhagam choice, primarily motivated by caste affiliation as the former though a congress man was a Brahmin by caste. He argued, "Most of the communist leaders are Brahmins. Ramamurthi is a pucca Brahmin. The editors of Janasakthi (Communist Tamil Weekly) are Brahmins. Wherever a Brahmin goes, into the communist party or anywhere else he wants to support caste distinctions".47

Periyar had soft corner for the Non-Brahmin communist leaders in the state. He told them to stay within communist ranks but to begin to behave as Non-Brahmins. The
Dravida Kazhagam attempted to adopt the old communist strategy of remaining within congress to capture its leadership, organization and policies. Periyar now wanted Non-Brahmins to capture the communist party so that the Non-Brahminized party would achieve the welfare of all Non-Brahmins. For a long time the Dravida Kazhagam had special attachments with Non-Brahmin communist stalwart of the state, Jeevanandam, a former supporter of Periyar. When Jeevanandam expounded an inclusive definition of Tamil identity whereby even Brahmins of Tamil Nadu were entitled to be called as Tamils in contradiction to the exclusively Non-Brahmin identity of Tamil in Dravidian discourse, Periyar rejected it instantly. He said that the communist Brahmins were exploiting the poor Non-Brahmin Jeevanandam just as the Soviet, for all their claims to National Justice exploited the hinterland outposts.

After the disintegration of the political alliance Periyar attacked communism as an inadequate ideology and Communist Party of India, especially its provincial unit as a braminical party. His attacks on Tamil communist leaders became bitter and harsher and he described their commitment to communism as “spurious”. He contended that while communism as an ideology rejected beliefs in God, the Tamil communists were diabolically devotional as they were controlled by Brahmin minds.48

He argued that a communist should not possess any love or interest towards narrow identities like language, caste, nation, religion and god and should be committed to the basic communist principles of classlessness and statelessness. He criticized the communist Tamil leaders as possessing only shallow commitment to communism as they were embroiled in the quagmire of outdated religious practices. He condemned them for evincing interests in the classical epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana that were proliferating superstitious practices. He questioned the practice of putting religious marks on forehead and wearing sacred thread as practiced by Brahmin communist leaders in the state.49

He considered the communist party as an organization conceived and created by Brahmins and Brahmanism to subvert and halt the onward march of rationality, equality
and humanism passionately advocated by Dravida Kazhagam. He strongly believed that the rationalist, egalitarian attack of Dravida Kazhagam on the foundations of Brahmanism provoked the Brahmins to start the communist party so that the narrow, iniquitous interests of Brahmins could be protected. He often argued that the communist party in the state was the B team of Brahmins while congress functioned as their A team.

He claimed that the communists created the false consciousness of class struggle so that the scientific and pragmatic reality of Brahmin exploitation could be safeguarded. He sought to reach out to the common man through a Tamil proverb that says that when one is unable to catch the hen on the rooftop he proclaimed that he was going to show heaven. That meant that if the eradication of Brahmanism was beyond the capacity of communism how they could implement equality in this benighted land.

He also criticized the commitment of Indian communism to Indian nationalism and argued that any true communist would consider nation as an anachronistic tool to exploit the poor classes. He argued that any true commitment to communism would be in tandem with Dravida Kazhagam to deny the reality of the Indian nation. Often Periyar attacked the ideology of communism itself leave alone the Indian or Tamil communist. He said that the warm cloths of western countries would not be apposite to Indian conditions. Similarly the communist ideology of western societies could not be applied in India. He believed that the establishment of a new society on the principles of rationality, science and technology would automatically eradicate economic inequality and exploitation.

The breakdown of the relationship between Dravida Kazhagam and the Communist Party of India after the First General Elections created conditions congenial to the blossoming of relationship between Periyar and Kamaraj. As the DMK and the Communist Party of India began the political journey of friendship and cooperation compelled by the necessity of challenging DMK, Periyar started forging political alliance with the Kamaraj faction of the congress. This new alliance was symbiotic and beneficial to both parties that were proved by the political dynamics of the state in the 50s and 60s.
Emerging DK-Congress Relationship

A close symbiotic relationship started building up between Dravida Kazhagam and Non-Brahmins in the congress party with the achievement of independence and the increasing ascendancy of the Non-Brahmin faction within congress. The sympathetic Non-Brahmin congressmen were provided with a suggestive nomenclature by the Dravida Kazhagam as *Dravida Congressmen.*

One of the chief architects of this budding relationship was Kuthusi Guruswamy, the firebrand editor of *Viduthalai*, the Dravida Kazhagam’s journalistic organ. Guruswamy was widely known for his aggressive articles on the twin goals of the Dravida Kazhagam, rationalism and anti-Brahmanism. These aggressive articles earned him anonymous letters of intimidation from some Brahmins in his native areas of Pudukottai and Pattukottai. These letters merely singed as Brahmins warned him of dire consequences for his continued vituperation against Brahmins.

Guruswamy contacted some of his friends who were Dravida congressmen and informed them of these letters of intimidations. The alarmed congressmen of Non-Brahmin origin concurred with the editor of *Viduthalai* and told him that in the party organizational structure and governmental machinery many Brahmins were engaged in secret measures to suppress his Non-Brahmin crusade. The Dravida congressmen also told him that they would thwart any such attempt of the Brahmins aimed at harming Dravida Kazhagam. They also assured him that the Non-Brahmin congressmen would work with firm resolve to prevent the emergence of Brahmin hegemony in the party organization of the congress.

The editor of *Viduthalai* in turn told the congress non-Brahmins that they should work from within the party to realize the objectives of debrahminisation of the congress party while the Dravida Kazhagam worked towards achieving the debrahminisation of the Tamil society outside the congress party. The editor also said that the Dravida Kazhagam and Congress (Dravida Congress) were the two eyes of the beloved Tamil
mother and hence they should work with a spirit of cooperation. He also said that the Dravida Kazhagam was the latch, lock of the house of Non-Brahmin security and if the latch was to be removed or broken the security of the Non-Brahmins and their welfare would be affected. He argued that Dravida Kazhagam was the protective armour of all Non-Brahmins, including the congress Non-Brahmins. Without this protective armour the Non-Brahmin congressmen would be left at the mercy of the Brahmins.

The budding relationship between these partners of dissimilar orientation grew more intimate with the progress of the Brahmin - Non-Brahmin rivalry within congress. On March 22nd 1953 the Dravida Kazhagam organized a conference titled “Abolition of Caste Conference”. The kazhagam put forth a condition for those who were interested to participate in the conference. Only those people who had proven commitment in breaking the rigor of caste system could attend the conference. In a deliberate move the organizers invited Rajaji to preside over the conference as he had broken caste barriers through the marriage of his daughter to the son of Mahatma Gandhi.

Sensing trouble Rajaji declined to accept this invitation from the conveners of the conference who had regularly and with mounting anger attacked him in their editorials and articles. Then the organizer contacted Kamaraj and requested him to preside over the conference, which he accepted promptly and gladly. This conference brought together the Kamaraj faction of congress and Dravida Kazhagam even while furthering simultaneously the distance of mistrust between the Rajaji faction and the apolitical organization and the future dynamics of an evolving regionalization of congress party in the regionalized landscape of the state politics.

**Kamaraj as Chief Minister and Dravida Kazhagam**

As the events of 1954 gained momentum and the controversy over the educational scheme of Rajaji administration neared its logical conclusion, the lynch pin of the provincial congress was grappling with his own doubts about the right choice for the chief ministership. When the loyalists and friends of Kamaraj impressed on him the need
to put himself on the chief ministerial chair he was extremely reluctant to accept it especially given his conspicuous disassociation from administrative posts in the past. The leaders of Dravida Kazhagam Periyar and Gurusamy played an important role in the persuasion of Kamaraj to accept the post of chief minister.

K. Veeramani the general secretary of Dravida Kazhagam argued that the reluctant Kamaraj accepted the chief ministership only because of intense persuasion from Periyar and the veteran congress man Varadarajalu Naidu. When Rajaji resigned his chief ministership Periyar was in Chidambaram, a temple town to attend a public meeting. In the afternoon of that day suddenly a phone call came from Madras to Periyar and after that Periyar rushed that to the capital city postponing his scheduled meeting in Chidamparam. He met Kamaraj at the residence of Dr. Varadarajalu Naidu and convinced him through exhaustive persuasion to accept the chief ministership. Periyar asked Kamaraj to accept the post so that the controversial educational scheme of Rajaji Government could be nullified. Kamaraj told Periyar that already he occupied the position of the President of TNCC, a Member of Parliament and hence he intended to choose a loyalist to the chief ministership and through a loyalist chief minister all unpopular programmes of Rajaji Government including the education scheme could be abolished. More ever Kamaraj also argued about his inexperience in administration. But Periyar and Varadarajalu Naidu ignored these reasons of reluctance from the mind of Kamaraj and persuaded him to accept the chief ministership of the state.53

Once Kamaraj became the chief minister he cancelled the controversial educational scheme of Rajaji, which was welcomed by the leaders of Dravida Kazhagam. Periyar wrote an editorial on 01.06.54 in his Viduthalai appreciating Kamaraj for showing urgency and sensitivity in abolishing that scheme.

"Today we have received the news about the cancellation of the educational scheme of Rajaji. The whole nation should be proud of this achievement and felicitate the chief minister for this noble action. Some people criticize me saying that I am supporting the government. I ignore them. For me ideology is more important. As Kamaraj implements my ideology I support him and provide him encouragements and rejuvenation. I have two important objectives now. Firstly
the diabolic Kula Kalvi Thittam should be cancelled. Secondly the communal reservation scheme should be implemented. Kamaraj had achieved the objectives hence I support him. Earlier Kamaraj came to me to assure his support in achieving these objectives and now he had fulfilled his promises. hence I support him”.

As Periyar started to support Kamaraj the Dravida Assembly party, a loose conglomeration of Members of Legislative Assembly who had active support of Periyar began to get disintegrated. Those members who were sympathetic to the Dravidian ideals of rationalism, atheism, anti-brahminism etc formed this Dravida Assembly party after the 1952 elections. These members acted as an important vehicle of expression of Periyar’s thoughts in the Assembly. This party faced serious strains and directionlessness in 1954 as Periyar proposed the members to disband this organization so that it could be merged with Kamaraj faction of congress. Hence this outfit gradually disintegrated as most of them joined congress to strengthen Kamaraj faction.

After the acceptance of chief ministership Kamaraj constituted his council of ministers. The composition of his ministry drew applause and plaudits from the Dravida Kazhagam as there was no representation to the Brahmins in the ministry. It is pertinent to remember that Brahmins dominated the Rajaji’s first Cabinet in 1937 and then Peiryar was vehemently critical of it. In fact not only Periyar but even a section of Non-Brahmins in congress viewed the formation of the congress ministry under Rajaji’s leadership as an indication of the resurgences of Brahmin domination in the politics of the province, particularly considering the disproportional number of positions given to Brahmins. The formation of an exclusively Non-Brahmin ministry was probably a conscious attempt to retain the support of the Dravida Kazhagam and the segments of the society sympathetic to the cause of non-Brahmanism.

Periyar was particularly impressed with the induction of a dalit in the council of ministry and the allocation of the portfolio of Hindu Religious Endowments to him. Many orthodox individuals manifestly and latently expressed their misgivings and unhappiness over the appointment of a dalit to this important portfolio arguing that such a
portfolio should be given to only orthodox and devotional people and this choice would offend the sentiments of the people. But the chief minister refused to budge from this appointment and attacked the opponents for their conservatism. Periyar welcomed this appointment, as it would promote caste obliteration and empowerment of traditionally suppressed groups. The appointment of Parameswaran as the minister to this portfolio had historical significance too as he was the grandson of Rettamalai Srinivasan, a dalit leader of the preceding decades.57

As per constitutional requirements the Chief Minister was to get elected to the State Legislature within six months. He contested the bye-elections held in Gudiatham constituency vacated by the sitting congress member to enable the election of the Chief Minister to the legislative assembly. The Dravida Kazhagam and even the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam supported the Chief Minister, as he was a Non-Brahmin. They actively campaigned for him in the elections. Only the Communist Party of India put up its candidate against the incumbent Chief Minister. Periyar took offence at the communist party and called its candidate a traitor to the Tamil community as he competed against the glorious son of the Non-Brahmin communities. It is significant to remember that only two years back Periyar had supported the Communist Party of India in the General Elections. Kamaraj won by an overwhelming majority in the bye-elections and the opposing communist candidate forfeited his deposit. This election cemented the growing relationship between Dravida Kazhagam and Kamaraj.

Periyar explained the reasons for his support to Kamaraj in the bye-elections. He said, "This is a golden opportunity for the objective of eradicating caste. I know personally that Kamaraj is interested in the mission of caste abolition. He had talked about eradicating this menace many times. Moreover my memory tells me that he has not attended any caste conferences. Now such a noble man has been installed as the chief minister he will achieve the obliteration of caste through his actions. I think that he had already started this mission. The purely caste based parties like the Common Wheel Party and Tamil Nadu Toilers Party have been disbanded and absorbed in to congress. Though politically the disintegration of these parties had different causes, motives and
implications yet the very fact of their dissolution and disappearance should be welcomed as it has erased the shameful presence of caste based parties in Tamilnadu. Its impact on society should be appreciated as it is positive and functional”.

He also said that the opportunity had arrived in the form of the chief ministership of Kamaraj to abolish caste and the activists and synthesizers of Dravida Kazhagam should assist Kamaraj in this mission through their routine propaganda. He believed that a congenial atmosphere created by Dravida Kazhagam would help Kamaraj to abolish the caste order through legislative action. He argued that the great reformers like Budha, Sittars and Brahma Samaj were not able to abolish caste and hence the cadres should keep in mind the enormity of the task ahead and help Kamaraj to achieve it.

**Restoration of Interview System**

Periyar was highly impressed by the administrative measures of Kamaraj government, which provided political and administrative relief to Non-Brahmin grievances. After abolishing the controversial educational scheme of the predecessor government Kamaraj ordered the restoration of the erstwhile interview system in the entrance examinations of the professional educational institutions and this measure further strengthened the bond between Periyar and Kamaraj.

There was a social justice oriented scheme of interview for admission to Medical and Engineering colleges in the state. The interview component of the exam was for 150 marks. The interview panel awarded these marks after evaluating the social and educational background of the competing students. Weightage was given to candidates who were aspiring first generation graduates and who came from socially, economically underprivileged communities.

The objective of the scheme was to increase the intake of students coming from these communities. In 1953 the Rajaji government in a provoking move whittled down the total marks of the interview component of the examination to 50 marks from the
original total of 150 marks. This reduction precipitated a critical situation where there was a large-scale exclusion of Non-Brahmin students from the professional colleges.

The Dravida Kazhagam and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam conducted vigorous and at times violent agitation against this measure calling it a brahminical conspiracy. The Dravida Kazhagam leaders like Periyar, Kuthusi Gurusamy met the president of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and impressed upon him the need to jettison the iniquitous move of the government. Kamaraj too was saddened by the reduction in the intake of the Non-Brahmin students in the professional colleges then and asked the college authorities to furnish him the details of the admission especially about the number of students from the Non-Brahmin communities.

After his appointment as chief minister Kamaraj rendered administrative remedial measure to rectify this situation. He ordered the restoration of the erstwhile 150 marks to the interview component of the entrance test. When journalists asked him the reasons for this restoration the chief minister in a cryptic statement said that the restoration of the erstwhile system was for the same reason, which precipitated the earlier reduction there by implicitly stating that his predecessor had decreased the interview marks to harm the Non-Brahmins and he restored it to benefit them.59

Kamaraj and Convictions

Kamaraj had convictions and beliefs, which located him in any ideological continuum closer to Periyar and far away from Rajaji. His views on religion, caste order, society, leaders and organization were closer to the agnostic Nehru and atheist Periyar than the intensely pious and culturally orthodox Rajaji. Like a dyed in the wool agnostic Kamaraj exhibited more significance to humanism than devotional tenets. He succinctly conformed his agnostic personality by stating that it was better to be a morally upright and socially conscious, committed humanist then a rigidly orthodox, profoundly devotional being. Not infrequently he negated the very existence of God and so often he had stated that if god existed and created the caste divisions then he was no God at all.60
He had candidly admitted that he never celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights. It was a crucial admission on his part as the festival was vilified in the Dravidian discourse as a festival celebrating the Aryan victory over the indigenous Dravidians in the ancient past. The Dravidian movement attacked the Diwali festival and exhorted the people not to take the traditional oil bath associated with the festival. More significantly Kamaraj often characterized the Pongal festival as one where he enthusiastically participated. He called the Pongal festival as the festival of agriculture and Tamil community, a confirmed preposition of the Dravidian movement. The fact that Kamaraj personally did not celebrate the Diwali and considered Pongal as the festival of Tamils placed him in idyllic Dravidian surroundings.

Kamaraj also attacked the religious superstitions of people in the rationalist fashion of the Dravidian movement. He criticized the people who dropped huge amount of money in the hundis of famous temples like Tirupathi. He blamed the accumulation of unaccounted black money as the essential reason for people putting money in the hundis of temples. He advised people to spend that money in social welfare activities like establishment of schools, construction of roads etc. He also attacked the holy fire walking ceremony, milk abhiseka etc as superstitious and wasteful. He accused frequently religion of creating hatred, divisions, superstitions and fear psychosis among people rather than encouraging the flowering of the qualities like self-confidence, rationalism, humanism, equality etc.

Like the leaders of Dravidian movement Kamaraj ridiculed the South Indian habit of tonsuring head in temples as a kind of religious offerings. He honestly admitted that he had also tonsured his head once in Tirupathi when he went there along with Sanjeeva Reddy, the Telegu congressman. But later he recalled that incidence with ridicule and regret. He asked whether instead tonsuring they could provide propitiously any other limb to God especially if these limbs would have no possibility of regrowth and regeneration like hair. The tone and tenor of his argument evidently located him on the side of Periyar in any ideological continuum. If differences between Periyar and Kamaraj
existed on the domain of religion then these differences were only peripheral, only in
degrees in not in kind. 63

Kamaraj opposed the religious tradition of pilgrimages as functions of lazy,
jobless, irresponsible men. He asked rhetorically to tell him the name of any God, which
had asked the devotees to come and meet him on pilgrimages. He considered these
pilgrimages as activities undertaken by people to show off their status. As even poor
people undertook these pilgrimages they were faced with indebtedness. The money spent
in religious pilgrimages could be spent more positively and productively in establishing
orphanages for children, old age people etc., was his firm belief.

True to the rationalist tradition of Periyar he considered the milk spent in
Abhisekams as wasteful. It was his sound proposition that the millions of litres of milk
spent wastefully in religious practices should be diverted to feed the undernourished
children of the downtrodden background.

The country is afflicted with many evils like unemployment, poverty, inequality,
exploitation and inadequate sanitation. Though Gods are in abundance in this land no
God had so far come to rescue the down trodden from these evils. 64 He rhetorically
asked why these Gods had gone silent over these intractable evils. He considered the
pictures of Gods and Goddess as mere paintings and imaginations of mortal men. He
believed in the Anthropological principle of Anthropomorphisation whereby human
identity was given to Gods. These Gods, Kamaraj averred must have been noble,
powerful men of ancient period who evoked admiration and adulation from the common
masses for their exemplary deeds and posthumously they had been elevated to the status
of Gods by the admirers, friends and relatives.

In a pragmatic interpretation Kamaraj considered religion as a mere political
party. It was his opinion that religion could not feed man or eliminate his hardships.
Moreover religions on competitive grounds precipitated conflicts and communal
violence. Far from being a positive functional instrument of social cohesiveness religion
was the reservoir and repository of venom, hatred, exploitation etc., was the opinion of Kamaraj.⁶⁵

Views on Caste System

Like Periyar Kamaraj too attacked the caste system with all its attendant invidious traits like untouchability, inequality etc. He considered caste as baneful to the consolidation of national resources and emergence of a politically stable, socially egalitarian and economically prosperous India. He condemned caste system as a creation of fertile minds of vested interest and considered the development of Sudras and untouchables as his political mission. His unparalleled, unwavering commitment to the educational development of the masses, especially lower castes was part and parcel of his mission to subvert the ascriptive caste order.

In reformist zeal Kamaraj attacked the then prevalent custom of hotels bearing the names of castes. In the Madras state hotels, especially Brahmin owned ones would prominently display the caste identity of the owners in their name boards. He considered such caste coloration in hotels as awkward and anachronistic and argued for the elimination of such practices.⁶⁶

Kamaraj supported reservation policy so that societal transformation could be achieved and debilitating blow to the caste edifice could be delivered. He firmly believed that equality in competitive examinations in recruitment to governmental employment and professional courses should be implemented only after achieving the empowerment of disprivileged groups through positive discrimination. He argued that no doctor belonging to backward classes, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, who received medical education because of reservation system, had killed any patient through inefficiency and carelessness. He also rhetorically asked about any proven incidence of any engineer belonging to dispreveleged background building a bridge in an inefficient way that had collapsed due to faulty engineering.
He passionately argued that talent, skill and expertise were not the exclusive endowments of selective social groups. He lamented that the concepts of talent, skill and merit were deliberately distorted so that some groups could claim a perpetual monopoly over them to the permanent exclusion of access to other social groups. Furthermore he argued that this deception and simulation had gone for an inordinately protracted period of time and it is time that such deleterious discriminations were eradicated. Through the calculated manipulation of magic, religion and supernatural beliefs, the lower castes were portrayed as meritless people and the highly deplorable reality was that these lower castes themselves under the impact of pervasive indoctrination were convinced of the apparent absence of merit in them. He lamented the fact that the same vested interests attempted covertly and overtly to keep these people in psychological and economic subordination by manipulating economic opportunities.

**Kamaraj and Tamil Language**

Kamaraj’s explicit thoughts on the status of Tamil Languages too positioned him in the same ideological plane as Periyar. He lambasted the studied indifference of caste-ridden bureaucracy to the introduction of Tamil in official communication. He lamented the lackadaisical attitude of anglo-centric bureaucracy towards accepting Tamil Language in day-to-day administration even after the passage of legislation many years ago. According to Kamaraj the upper caste people dominated bureaucracy was averse to using Tamil as it would democratize social aspects of administrative recruitment and consequently undermine their monopoly over administrative apparatus.

Kamaraj was obvious of the dangers of Hindi imposition and obliquely many times hinted at it. Once there was a heated discussion taking place in the Legislative Assembly about the necessity and desirability of substituting Tamil in place of English as the language of education in higher secondary schools and colleges. The Communist Party of India stalwart Kalayasundaram passionately argued for the elimination of English form the educational landscape of the state so that Tamil could be implanted in its place. The chief minister Kamaraj who was patiently observing the emotionally
surcharged deliberations gesticulated to the Dravidian Leaders C.N. Annadurai and Karunanidi to come and sit near him. Then he conversed with opposition leaders and emphatically denied the allegations from some quarters about his dubious commitment to Tamil language. In his own imitable way the chief minister told the Dravidian Leaders that he was not in favour of deporting English from the educational premises in the state and this was so not because he possessed any love for English but solely because in such a scenario Hindi, and not Tamil would be the language of substitution. The leader of DMK Karunanidi reminisced over this episode to emphasize the point that Kamaraj was much closer to Dravidian movement on the question of Hindi then the people normally believed him to be. Bound by party discipline Kamaraj acted with astute discretion over the Hindi controversy.  

Agitation politics of DK and Kamaraj

The Dravida Kazhagam, which had earlier carried on hostile campaign against congress party and chief minister Rajaji out of deference to Kamaraj, declared that no agitation would be staged in 1954. In 1955, however, as a reaction to the central government's moves towards the establishment of Hindi as official language, Periyar appealed to members of Dravidia Kazhagam to burn the national flag. This agitation was in order to express Dravidian opposition to the compulsory imposition of Hindi on an unwilling people. Periyar declared that the people of Tamil Nadu had not received justice under the flag of the Indian union.

He repeatedly emphasized that the action was not to undermine the Chief Minister but to register our discontent and anguish over the lurking danger of Hindi imposition. But the chief minister of condemned the proposed agitation and arrested Periyar and his followers but instead sending them to jail put them in hospital for treatment.

A group of prominent leaders including the rationalist Kuthusi Guruswamy, Chengalvarayan and Mohan Kumaramangalam met Kamaraj and discussed the situation. The Chief Minister assured them that until all states agreed to adopt Hindi, English would
be continued to be joint official language and he would strive to ensure these safeguards
to be implemented by raising the issue in the Congress Working Committee. He also told
them that protection would be provided to be continuance of Tamil as the official
language at the state level. He also assured them that he would review the stern measures
of the state government towards the agitating college students.72

It is said that during the agitation the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru asked
Kamaraj when he visited Delhi that why despite being his friend Naicker conducted
agitations against congress party in the state. The Chief Minister replied to the Prime
Minister that Ramaswamy Naicker was a friend only to him and not to Hindi. Moreover
he informed the Prime Minister that Naickar considered the implementation of Hindi as
detrimental to Tamils, Tamil Language and Tamil Nadu and hence he agitated.73 During
the course of this intensive meeting after prolonged discussions the Chief Minister
convinced the Prime Minister of the need to provide some assurances to salvage the
volatile situation. Consequently the Central Government gave an assurance that Hindi
would not be implemented on the unwilling and unyielding people which locally led to
the stoppage of the anti Hindi agitation.74

In 1956 August first, Dravidia Kazhagam asked the volunteers to burn pictures of
Lord Rama as the organization considered Ramayana as anti-women and anti lower
castes etc. one Dravidia Kazhagam leader in the name of Thiruvarur Thangaraj wrote a
new version of Ramayana way Rama was portrayed as a villain. The Dravidia Kazhagam
film star M.R. Radha staged the play throughout the state. The Government led by the
Chief Minister Kamaraj immediately banned the play but Dravidia Kazhagam after
obtaining court’s permission staged the play in selected towns.

In 1957 Dravidia Kazhagam agitated to burn the constitution as it was based
allegedly on ‘Manudharma’. The government arrested the Dravidia Kazhagam volunteers
but kept Periyar and Kuthusi Guruswamy in hospital and not in jail. The relationship
between the acerbic Guruswamy of Dravidia Kazhagam and the Chief Minister was
profound and symbiotic. The Madras Mail, in a language of political derision
commented that whatever Guruswamy wanted in the Viduthali News paper the Chief Minister Kamaraj implemented it in the corridors of St. George Fort, the seat of governance in Madras.  

During the aforementioned agitations many volunteers of Dravidia Kazhagam were arrested and imprisoned with sentences ranging from six months to three years. Two volunteers passed away in Trichy Central prison where they were lodged. To handle the overcrowding in the jail the Chief Minister ordered the transfer of the imprisoned volunteers to the Coimbatore prison in the western part of the state. As he relatives and sympathizers of the detainees found it difficult to go to Coimbatore to see them the wife of Periyar and a few colleagues went and requested the Chief Minister to keep all the detainees in Trichy prison itself. The Chief Minister, in a tone mixed with affection and respect asked the leaders of Dravidia Kazhagam to reconsider the request as such a transfer of detainees would affect them. The relatively cool climate of the western city of Coimbatore would be definitely more comfortable to imprisoned activists then the hot, humid prison of Trichy city. Convinced by the warm persuasion of the Chief Minister the wife of Periyar went back with drawing her request.

Realm of Bureaucracy and Dravidia Kazhagam-Kamrajar Alliance

The symbiotic relationship between Kamrajar and periyar promoted Non-Brahmins interests in administrative machinery. Periyar profusely eulogized the Kamaraj Ministry for providing greater representation to Non-Brahmins in the higher echelons of bureaucracy. The Inspector General of the Police Service was a non-Brahmin Tamil. The public prosecutor and the Chairman of Public Service Commission, the judge of the City Civil Court, the majority of judges of the High Court were all non Brahmin Tamils and such a greater representation of Non-Brahmins was unprecedented in the annals of the Madras State. Periyar adduced the commitment of Kamarajar to social justice as the factor for this unprecedented success of the Non-Brahmins.
There were instances when affected non-Brahmin officials would approach the government, especially Chief Minister through Dravidia Kazhagam leader Periyar. One Mr. Rajendran was working in the Information Department in Government. There were allegations that he was deliberately leaking out official information to the opposition parties. An official enquiry was ordered and it was found out that he was guilty of leaking out the official information. The government was thinking of suspending the concerned official for his dereliction of duty. The Non-Brahmin official went and sought the assistance of Dravidia Kazhagam leader Periyar. Ultimately Periyar went and met the Chief Minister to persuade the Government not to suspend the concerned official but to give a lesser punishment. Conceding to the request the Chief Minister ordered the transfer of the official to some other department.  

The Chief Minister appointed N.D. Sundaravadivelu as Director of Public Instruction in 1955 overlooking the claims of several seniors in the department. This set of a big controversy as Sundaravadivelu came from a strong Self Respect Movement and Dravidia Kazhagam background. He had married the sister of the wife of Kuthusi Gurusamy the staunch Dravidia Kazhagam leader ardently supporting Kamaraj. His marriage was blessed by Periyar and was conducted without any brahminic rituals and in a manner typical of any Self Respect Movement marriage. He had also attended the first Self Respect Conference held at Chengulpet in 1928. More than the formal appointment what precipitated the controversy was the fact that the Chief Minister gave a carte blanche to him as Director of Public Instruction to do whatever he deemed fit to bring about an educational revolution. The officer who had a good grasp of educational psychology opened a high school within radius of every 5 miles and an elementary school in any place with a population of over three hundred. He, in the administration represented the fusion of Kamaraj’s administrative measures and Periyar’s ideological principles.
Kamaraj– Periyar Alliance and Dakshina Pradesh Proposal

The relationship between Dravida Kazhagam and Kamaraj congress was not confined to the electoral politics but extended into political domain too where Periyar propelled Kamaraj to accept a particular choice or jettison a particular stand depending on the benefits accruing to Kamaraj faction. The issue of Dakshina Pradesh and the shifting stand of Kamaraj epitomized the weightage Kamaraj gave in his political considerations to Periyar’s advice.

As there was a considerable uproar against the principle of linguistic reorganization of states in the early 50’s as exhibited by the reactions of different groups to the recommendations of Fazl Ali commission, the Prime Minister came up with the proposal for the formation of polyglot provinces. The nation was to be territorially organized into four regional provinces of mammoth size and the borders of these provinces were not to be determined by linguistic considerations but the factors of administrative viability and financial health. The paramount objective of the proposal was to check the fissiparous tendencies within the country.

In 1956, the issue of heterogeneous provinces was discussed in the Amritsar session of the All India Congress Committee. As a result of the deliberations the Dakshina Pradesh was visualized for the southern region. There was to be an amalgamation of all southern states including Madras, Mysore, Andhra, Kerala and Hyderabad to form the polyglot Dakshina Pradesh.80

The former chief minister of Madras Rajaji immediately welcomed the formation of Dakshina Pradesh as it would further his standing in the politics of the southern areas and at the same time undermine the position of his rival Kamaraj. The Congress Working Committee met in Bangalore in the same year to discuss the implementation of the new proposal. The southern chief ministers participated in the deliberations including Kamaraj did not oppose the formation of Dakshina Pradesh. But in the afternoon session of the conference there was a total change in the position of Kamaraj who began to oppose the
formation of the new state. What catalyzed the change in the stand of Kamaraj was the telegram he received from Periyar in the lunch break. Periyar had advised Kamaraj to oppose the polyglot province as in the heterogeneous state Tamils would be a minority and hence would be subjugated by others and the leadership of Kamaraj himself would be endangered. Hence in the post-lunch session of the Congress Working Committee meeting the chief minister of Madras spoke against the formation of Dakshina Pradesh state. This controversy and the shifting stand of Kamaraj clearly showed the depth of the symbiotic association between Periyar and Kamaraj.

**Kamaraj Congress**

Periyar supported congress because of Kamaraj and not vice versa. He was discerning and discriminatory in his support to congress candidates. He did not extend Dravida Kazhagam support to all congress candidates. He went out of his way to campaign against those congressmen who were not friendly to or happy with Kamaraj Ministry. In the 1957 elections Periyar was harsh in his attacks on those who chose not to remain with the party and joined Congress Reforms Committee. Repeatedly he made a distinction between Kamaraj and congress party. In 1957 he stated, “I will be happy if the congress party dies. I do not support the congress party in the elections. My wish is the continuance of Kamaraj leadership alone. I am not a communalist. I have supported Srinivasa Iyer in Kanjeepuram (where Annadurai was candidate). In Madras city I support T.T. Krishnamoorthy”.  

Periyar asked Brahmins to support Kamaraj. While campaigning in the 1957 elections Periyar said that at this time of crisis Brahmins should support Kamaraj. He dangled before them ministerial posts to get their support.

The octogenarian Periyar in 1961 called on the people of Tamil Nadu to vote for all candidates be they donkeys or Brahmins. He said that “ultimately it is Kamaraj who counts – no others, candidates or even voters who are any way unfit to judge what is right and good for them. Take my word, vote congress and you will be well. If you do not then
the ingenious Rajaji, riding the Dravidia Kazhagam horse will trample you all without mercy.\textsuperscript{84}

Periyar argued that Kamaraj promoted the development and education of Tamils and Non-Brahmins not because he was a congressman but in spite of being a congressman. He asked a pertinent question as to why the congress predecessor to Kamaraj in Tamil Nadu had not done anything to develop Tamils. He also proclaimed that if Kamaraj was either defeated or replaced by a Brahmin or even a Non-Brahmin stooge of Brahmins, he would not continue the good work of the \textit{Pachai Thamilan}.

Periyar justified his support to Kamaraj and his efforts at distinguishing Kamaraj from congress with a simple imagery. My house was engulfed in fire. There was no water in my house to put off the fire. But there was water in the well belonging to my enemy. If people drew out water from that well to extinguish fire in my house, it would be foolish on my part to reject that water as it came from my enemy’s well. Similarly I couldn’t oppose Kamaraj nearly because he was a congressman. I would support him for his constructive contributions to the building of a new egalitarian, educated and enlightened Tamil society.\textsuperscript{85}

The Dravidia Kazhagam conducted a conference known as Voter’s Conference 1962 when the General Elections were imminent. In his speech at the conference, Kuthusi Gurusamy argued that Kamaraj should be voted back to power in the ensuing elections. The Dravidia Kazhagam members should vote and campaign for congress as it was led by Kamaraj in the state. In a lengthy clarification he said that Periyar didn’t support congress party per se. If Periyar wanted to support congress party for its programmes, then Periyar would go to Karnataka to campaign for congress, as he was basically a Kannada speaker. If he wanted to support only congress party because of its ideology, then he would go to Kerala as he was the “Hero of Vaikom”. He did not go to these places to campaign for congress, as he didn’t have any faith in congress policies and programmes. He supported the congress party only in Tamil Nadu as here it was a party of Kamaraj. Later that year Periyar in an announcement in Viduthalai said that the
members and sympathizers of Dravidia Kazhagam could now join congress party formally as Kamaraj congress delivered development and progress to the Tamil people.

**Justification of Kamaraj about Dravidia Kazhagam Alliance**

Many Brahmin congressmen expressed their discontent over the close rapport between TNCC and Dravidia Kazhagam individually and collectively. Once when Kamaraj visited the Cauvery delta district of Thanjavur a Brahmin congressman popularly known as “Thiruthuraipoondi Rajaji” came and complained to Kamaraj in person about the growing and overarching influence of Dravidia Kazhagam over congress government and congress party organization. He asked Kamaraj about the moral rectitude of his political proximity to Dravidia Kazhagam as its basic principles were quintessentially contradictory to the political culture and ideology of congress party.

Kamaraj quietly answered the complaining Brahmin congressman that he never expounded or supported anti Brahmanism. He also stated that it was his considered view that both Brahmanism and anti-Brahmanism were condemnable and derogatory to human rights and hence should be eschewed. The aggressive postures and attitudes of Non-Brahmins emanated only from revulsions to dehumanizing Brahmanism. The hierarchical caste order was the source of Non-Brahmin anger and hatred against Brahmins. He also said that those who sowed the seeds of caste hierarchy and structures of exploitation in India society should reap the fruits of venomous political, social evils of untouchability.

According to Kamaraj the major responsibility of all socially conscious people was to eradicate the evil of the invidious caste structure and to promote equality. Dravdia Kazhagam and its leader Periyar were active participants in this social mission. Only blemish one could identify in their activities was the element of aggressiveness. Otherwise the objectives and activities of Dravida Kazhagam were socially egalitarian and productive. He said that he condemned the extreme aggressiveness of the movement; nonetheless he respected the social commitment of the movement towards equality, liberty, rationality, women education, empowerment etc. He concluded that long lecture
to the aggrieved Brahmin congressman by stating that all outmoded, obscurantist, superstitious beliefs and practices should be fought against and eradicated.

More than the personal rapport between these two leaders many members of the congress party had an active association with Dravidia Kazhagam, often participating in its conferences as speakers advocating anti-Brahmin ideas. One such member was Sirkali Ethiraj, a Member of Legislative Council. He had appeared on numerous conferences advocating rather forcefully anti god, anti-religion and anti-Brahmin ideological propositions. He had also functioned as the Secretary of The District Congress committee in Thanjavur.

Many Brahmin congressmen complained to Kamaraj about this undisciplined Secretary of the District Congress Committee. But Kamaraj defended the actions and speeches of this congress non-Brahmin by stating that the concerned member has spoken about periyar at a Dravidia Kazhagam meeting highlighting his contribution to the development and consolidation of the congress party in the early part of the twentieth century.

Very often Kamaraj defended Periyar and said that he should be appreciated as he had implemented Gandhian programmes like untouchability abolition, alcohol prohibition, swadeshi etc during the days of the Non-Cooperation Movement and moreover Kamaraj said that Periyar’s activities and ideals in the fifties were continuation of that commitment to Gandhian principles. As a pragmatic politician Kamaraj told the detractors of the district congress committee secretary that it would be an act of indiscipline if he had participated in a meeting of Dravidia Munnetra Kazhagam and not Dravidia Kazhagam. The absolved secretary of the district congress committee who firmly considered nationalism of congress and the rationalist regionalism of Dravidia Kazhagam as his two eyes was so overwhelmed with emotions of gratitude that he called Kamaraj as “Periyar in congress clothes”. 87
Kamaraj, sensitive to the widespread opposition to Periyar’s steadfast support declared that he had never sought his support. Furthermore, he said that as a political strategist he would not decline to receive the unsought but considerably productive support from Periyar.

Kamaraj Plan and Periyar

Once Periyar came to know about the details of the Kamaraj plan with much alacrity and promptness sent a telegram to Kamaraj delineating its negative implications. The telegram said that either on his own will or because of his friend’s motivation he had resigned the Chief Ministership of the state. Periyar added that this resignation of Kamaraj would be suicidal for Tamils, Tamil Nadu and even for the political career of Kamaraj. Hence he requested Kamaraj to give up his moves.88

On 10-08-1963 Periyar wrote an editorial in his Viduthalai expressing his anguish and disappointment over the implementation of the suicidal Kamaraj plan and resultant resignation of Chief Ministership by him. He said that no one could exceed Kamaraj in commitment to party discipline and social values like equality, humanism etc. His resignation could not be condoned or appreciated on any ground. Whoever filled up the position vacated by Kamaraj would not be able to sustain for long and no person could act with the kind of ethnic pride and spirit like Kamaraj. He said that he didn’t like Kamaraj’s resignation, as it would lead to the emergence of political instability as in Kerala. The state would not continue to have the development in education, industry, and agriculture, as it had under Kamaraj governance was the opinion of Periyar.

He also said that Kamaraj plan would be beneficial only in those states where party factionalism, confusion, cheap politicking were rampant and not in Tamil Nadu where there was peace, order, tranquility and development. Periyar continued that Kamaraj should not resign from the Chief Ministership to reveal his commitment to Kamaraj plan as “Kamaraj is like a doctor. Kamaraj plan is the medicine. The party is the
patient. The doctor should give medicine to the patient and not eat himself the medicine.\textsuperscript{89}

Periyar believed that in that critical situation the consensus in congress was for the continuance of Jawaharlal Nehru's Prime Ministership and in Tamil Nadu similarly the Chief Ministership of Kamaraj should be continued. Moreover, he argued that the national leadership of congress party should realize the indispensability of Kamaraj Chiefministership in Tamil Nadu and should not accept his resignation. Periyar through his article appealed to Kamaraj to consider the welfare of the Tamil people as his primary objective, keeping the welfare of the party as his secondary objective.\textsuperscript{90}

Despite these prolific implorations Kamrajar resigned the post of Chief Minister. Though National level considerations had a role in the conception and implementation of Kamaraj plan the evolving political scenario in the state too had its share in it. The Dravidia Munnetra Kazhagam, which appeared as a dim speck in the electoral political atmosphere of the state in 1956 had gathered enough luminance in the 1962 elections. With the onward march of Dravidia Munnetra Kazhagam in gaining more popularity and social acceptance the electoral threat was distinctly looming large over the political calculations of Kamaraj. But the political prophesy of Periyar about the suicidal nature of Kamaraj plan came true in the 1967 elections and Kamaraj himself had admitted to Periyar about the negative follow out of the plan. The General Secretary of Dravidia Kazhagam Veeramani confirmed that Kamaraj when he met Periyar in the post 1967election phase conceded about the validity of Periyar's objections to Kamaraj plan.

**Congress High command and D.K- Kamaraj Alliance**

The national leadership of congress faced acute discomfiture and dilemma over the alliance between TNCC and D.K that sounded ideologically repugnant but electorally beneficial. The problem of regional caste lobbies and dominant political personalities asserting themselves against the congress high command was not unusual then but still the political scenario in Tamil Nadu was different as there was not much political space
left for central leadership of the party to manipulate the situation. This unusual scenario was due to the preponderance of support enjoyed by Kamaraj faction in Tamil Nadu unparalleled elsewhere both within the congress party organization and outside in the general society.

There was only deliberate indifference from the congress president U.N. Dhebar towards this controversial connection between Kamaraj faction and Dravida Kalazhagam as exemplified by the fact that “For from condemning Nadar, Dhebar averred that he could not imagine Kakkagi or any one else in a position of leadership in Tamil Nadu working for the Kazhagam”. The cultivation of Independent base by Kamaraj Leadership and the regionalization of the congress party organization in the state contributed to the aura of invincibility exhibited by the Local Congress Unit from the active intervention of the High command.

Reaction of Brahmins

Many Brahmins both within and outside congress party expressed their mounting disappointment over the close rapport between TNCC and anti-Brahmin Dravida Kazhagam. Both individually and collectively they voiced their opposition to this alliance. They initially complained to the national leadership about the local congress unit’s predominant faction’s highly discriminating attitude against Brahmins. The national leadership of the party was lukewarm and tentative in its remedial action as here in the state the politically assertive caste lobbies gained political ascendancy and placed its ascendancy behind congress and more significantly the predominant Non-Brahmin faction of Kamaraj for all purposes came to constitute the entirety of the party. The national party leaders looked the other way when the Non-Brahmin political landslide pushed out Rajaji from the chief ministership of the state. Outraged at the uncommon alliance of nationalist congress and separatist Dravida Kazhagam united by their commonality of anti-Brahmin stand the Brahmin congressmen and faction seceded to establish a splinter group called as “Congress Reforms Committee”.

157
On the eve of the 1957 elections the Congress Reforms Committee accused the Kamaraj faction of denying seats to tried and loyal congressmen and in turn offering these seats to the sympathizers and associates of Dravida Kazhagam. “An instance which caused much criticism was the adoption as a congress candidate of Raja Sir Muthiaya Chettiyar, a former member of the Justice party, instead of Mr. Ganesan, a congress man of many years standing”. 93

**SwantantraParty**

The Swantantraparty was formed in Madras in 1959 by Rajaji so as to provide political articulation to the organized apolitical interest groups like Forum of Free Enterprise (FEP) and All-India Agriculturalists’ Federation (AIAF).

The party was visualized as an embodiment of political opposition to the socialism oriented congress party. Rajaji explained the meaning of Swantantraas “a self employed life free from the interference of ignorant officialdom”. 94 The formation of the party consolidated the already deepening friendship between Periyar’s Dravida Kazhagam and Kamaraj Congress. In Tamil Nadu the Swantantrawas essentially a political medium of Brahmins against this alliance between Periyar and Kamaraj. “The identification of the Brahmins with the Swantantraparty is a conscious one. It cuts across the boundaries of class, occupation, income, education and generations. Whether he is a Mirasdar or a servant in a coffee shop, college educated or relatively unlettered, an orthodox elder or a progressive young man, the Brahmin feels it his duty to be loyal to the Swantantraparty”. 95.

The official weekly of the party ‘Swarajya’ and sympathetic journals like ‘Kalki’ were subscribed by mostly Brahmins. Only Brahmins largely attended the party meetings and conventions. Though the Vanniyar party Tamil Nadu Toilers party led by Ramaswamy Padaiyachi had merged initially with Swantantraparty, later on the leader withdrew his party from the political alliance in protest against Brahmin ascendancy in the Swantantraparty.
The Dravida Kazhagam considered the Swantantraparty as the manifestation of Brahmin anger against Kamaraj. Periyar criticized the fundamental principles of Rajaji about liberalism, anti-statism as essentially Brahminical devices to secure the welfare of Brahmins and to undermine the Non-Brahmin development through governmental patronage.

In 1959 Periyar said “Rajaji so far had utilized the existing political parties to achieve the interests of Brahmins. He made use of all political parties Communist Party of India, Indian National Democratic party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam for furthering Brahmin welfare. As Kamaraj could not be defeated by these political parties Periyar now had started his own Swatantrato achieve that purpose”. He advised Rajaji to name the party as Brahmin welfare party or Tamil welfare abolition party.

His attack increased in stridency latter and he called the Swantantraparty as counterfeit party arguing that the objective of counterfeiters was to deceive the people and as Swatantrahad the same objective to deceive the Tamils it should be renamed as counterfeit party.

As third general elections approached Swatantraand DMK began alliance negotiations. Rajaji who had always condemned strongly the anti- Brahmin stand of DMK now began to understand the beneficial implications of an alliance with DMK to unseat the congress in the state. He justified such an alliance by arguing that the DMK had abandoned its communal bias. His supporters claimed that due to the persuasion of Rajaji the DMK had jettisoned its anti-Brahmanism and separatism.

When critics and congressmen questioned Rajaji for taking the help of parties like DMK to defeat congress, Rajaji remarked rather pungently that Lord Rama has taken the help of Hanuman, a monkey to defeat Ravana. Periyar reacted strongly to this callous remark and said that Rajaji had in a daring display of Brahmin arrogance had equated Kamaraj with Ravana and said that it was the fundamental duty of Tamils to protect Kamaraj or otherwise the fate, which befell Ravana, would fall on Kamaraj too. He also
teased DMK to react to the description implied in Rajaji statement about DMK being a monkey.97

**Cow Slaughter Issue**

There was an agitation in New Delhi against cow slaughter on 07.11.66 in which thousands of sadhus and naked holy men participated in an atmosphere surcharged with emotions. They demanded the immediate enactment of legislation to ban cow slaughter. They came from different regions of the country to register their strong emotions against cow slaughter. The agitators carried away by emotions indulged in violent activities which included even arson. They particularly targeted the office of All India Congress Committee and the residence of the Congress President. As violence reached unmanageable proportions when agitators spread their attacks on All India Radio, Reserve Bank of India etc., the police resorted to firing in which many people were killed.

When the violent mob attacked the residence of the congress President the incumbent resident of the house Kamaraj escaped narrowly. The crowd had chosen to attack Kamaraj as he had earlier spoken against anti-cow slaughter legislation in the Congress Working Committee meeting. He was predominantly active in the prevention of the passage of any resolution in the Congress Working Committee banning cow slaughter. This precipitated the anger of the agitators against Kamaraj.

Kamaraj was for a long time only tangential in his reference to the attempted assassination. But one month later while delivering a speech in salem he accused directly the reactionary, feudalist and anti-socialist forces as responsible for the attack. Though not holding Rajaji responsible for the attack personally he castigated him for leading these reactionary forces in the politics of the country. He made a vitriolic attack on the reactionary agenda of Rajaji and Swantantraparty and described him as a king of kings in closing down educational institutions.98
The reaction of Dravida Kazhagam to the attack on Kamaraj was aggressive and swift. Periyar saw the attack as the blatant manifestation of Brahmin anger and hatred against a sudra who had defeated them to become the most successful leader the country. Moreover, Periyar castigated the disgruntled Brahmins as they chose New Delhi to mount their counter attack on Kamaraj and considered it a cowardly and diabolic move. He challenged them to undertake such an execrable expedition in Tamil Nadu. In a threatening posture, he forewarned that any attack on this shining star of India’s political firmament would invite overwhelming retaliation from Non-Brahmins that would definitely exterminate the race of Brahmins in the state.

The Dravida Kazhagam held Rajaji responsible for the assault on Kamaraj by cow protection protagonists and called him agent provocateur. It linked the unfortunate incidence of Delhi with the political speech of Rajaji made in Chennai Marina beach in 1966. In that speech Rajaji exhorted people to teach a lesson to Kamaraj “if we hit with stone and drive away the black crow that has gone to Delhi from Tamil Nadu the other crows will automatically fly away frightened and congress will be defeated”. Rajaji disguisedly referred to the swarthy Kamaraj by the word “black crow”. That electoral speech of Rajaji in Marina Beach was picked by Dravida Kazhagam as evidence of Brahmin, Rajaji diabolical conspiracy to assassinate Kamaraj.

Tamil Desiya Katchi

The rapidly emerging DMK faced an intra-party factionalism of crippling kind in the early 60s. One of the founder leaders of the party E.V.K. Sampath opposed the shifting stands of the party on the controversial issue of Dravida Nadu. He also opposed the enormous influence exercised by the film personalities over the decision-making apparatus of the party. The film based group led by Karunanidhi, M.G. Ramachandran and S.S Rajendran actively mobilized support against the Sampath group. In January 1961 the General Council of DMK met at Vellore and there was a fracas as the anti Sampath group organized no-confidence motion against the chairman Sampath.
The injured leader E.V.K. Sampath resigned his post as chairman of DMK and undertook a political tour throughout the state to gather public support. In one of the meetings at Trichy he was attacked by the members of the rival group. As the contradictions became unbridgeable between the chairman E.V.K. Sampath and General Secretary C.N. Annadurai, the former walked out of the party.

“In withdrawing from the DMK Sampath took a large body of his following with him, including a number of general council members and 7 of the DMK’s 47 Madras city councilors including the Mayor Munuswami”.

The rebels formed a party called the Tamil Nationalist party and the party preferred to adhere to the concept of an autonomous Tamil state with a right to secede from the federal structure. The party through its election manifesto recognized the territorial integrity of India as a Federal Republic even while demanding the right of secession on the soviet model.

A series of cascading events catapulted the former chief minister Kamaraj to be the President of Indian National Congress starting from the implementation of the organization centric Kamaraj plan. The Tamil Desiya Katchi began to cultivate a close contact with Kamaraj and Indian National Congress. As Kannadasan opined they were attracted by the political phenomenon where a Tamil determined the dynamics of national politics. When Kamaraj gave a clarion call to all the socialist supporters who had drifted away from congress in the past for various reasons to come back into the party for the sake of organizational regeneration and socialist solidarity, the Tamil Desiya Katchi was tempted to join congress. The party had protracted discussions on the ways and means of responding to the call of Kamaraj. A dominant faction led by E.V.K. Sampath and Kannadasan advocated a merger with congress event though another faction led by Kovai Cheliyan opposed such a move. The pro-merger faction advocated the merger stating that congress under Kamaraj represented all that the Tamil Desiya Katchi stood for. The general council of the party was convened in Trichy to discuss the issue of merger and after intense deliberations the party decided to merge with congress.
The merger led to a spirit of rejuvenation in the ranks of congress. A new young generation coming from a regional tradition having loyalty to some of its earlier ideas came into congress. They participated vigorously in the electioneering in the 1967 election and one of the new members Shivaji Ganesan brought his band of fans to campaign for congress. Its leader E.V.K. Sampath was appointed as the General Secretary of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.

**Congress and Tamil Language**

The contribution of the congress party to Tamil language in the context of increasing ascendancy of Non-Brahmins was another manifestation of the gradual infusion of regionalism in the party. Exactly eight months before independence, the congress party established Tamil Valarchi Kazhagam or Tamil Development Council with the interrelated objectives of promoting Tamil Language and combating the political challenge of the aggressive regional Dravida Kazhagam. T.S. Avinashilingam Chettiar, who later became the Education Minister in the state, was appointed as the president of this Council.

The Tamil Development Council celebrated with exuberant enthusiasm every year in the month of August to bestow honour on Tamil poets and litterateur. In 1948 the congress government opened the great memorial in Ettayapuram for the great poet Bharathiar, in his birth place. To honour the great poet, the government announced that poet laureate would be appointed to the Government of Tamil Nadu. Accordingly the Chief Minister Omandur Ramasamy Reddiar appointed the Namakkal Kavignar as the poet laureate.

Tamil language was declared as the official language of administration at all levels in the state through a legislative enactment in 1956. The Education minister C. Subramaniam introduced the bill with overwhelming emotions. The Minister glorified the contribution of a number of poets who in the past cherished a fond dream of making the language a medium of administration. He took great pride in recalling their names as
majority of them came from Congress tradition. He mentioned Bharathiar, Vedaranyam Pillai, and Maraimalaiyadiagal etc specifically. The Education Minister of the Congress Government expressively proclaimed that it was great honour for him as destiny had chosen him to pilot this monumental measure. He, overwhelmed with emotions profusely expressed his gratitude to the Almighty for giving him his momentous opportunity to introduce the Tamil centric legislation.106

The Kamaraj Government was also the first in the history of Tamil Nadu to prepare and present the budget in Tamil in the Legislative Assembly.107 In 1957-58 it was presented in English and Tamil, in the Assembly. In 1959 the congress government established Tamil Development Research Council that was constituted by the researchers and scholars of Tamil Language as members. The primary objective of the council was to introduce Tamil as medium in collegiate education. The council prepared the Tamil medium books on college education in different subjects and to publish these books a society called Tamil Book Publishing Council was also formed. In the following year in 1960-61 Tamil medium was introduced as a pilot scheme in Government Arts College, Coimbatore that later on was extended to many other colleges.

The Tamil Development Research Council formed a sub committee named Collegiate Tamil Council which was led by G.R. Damodaran and had T.P. Meenakshi Sundaram and Aram as its members. This committee prepared and published Tamil lexicons in many subjects like Psychology, Commerce, Chemistry and Statistics.108 Moreover scholarship was offered to these students who received their education in Tamil at the college level. The education minister C. Subramanium argued that preference should be given to Tamil language in public employment so that in the future the needs of the administration could be satisfied especially in the context of the adoption of Tamil language as the official language of administration in the state.

When skepticism emerged from some quarters about the feasibility of providing education at the college level in Tamil language the education minister in a passionate defense not dissimilar to any DMK leader emphasized that Tamil is endowed with
necessary qualities to meet this challenge. He even wrote a book title as *Tamil can do it*. The contemporary emphasis on Tamil as a medium of instruction in college education as a fundamental maxim in Tamil Nadu has its roots in the congress assimilation of Tamil nationalism in 1950s.¹⁰⁹

**Renaming Tamil Nadu**

There was a growing demand, especially after the linguistic reorganization of states for the renaming of the Madras State on the ground that its name was not indigenous but exogenous and hence erroneous. While the political Dravidian outfit DMK stridently advocated the immediate adoption of the Tamil nomenclature, other groups too gradually joined the stream. Sankaralinganar, a congress leader launched a fast into death struggle on 27.07.1956 to press the demand to change the name of the state to a Tamil title for satisfying people's aspirations. Sankaralinganar was a veteran congressman who had participated actively and enthusiastically in various phases and struggles of national freedom movement. He was associated intimately with Gandhian movements in the southern districts of Tamil areas.

His epic fast created a volatile atmosphere in the politics of the state and many leaders of the congress party visited him during his fast and sought to dissuade him from his obdurate course. Kamaraj the Chief Minister, Kakkan the president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee attempted to persuade to abjure this stubborn fast. M.P. Sivagnanam the cultural nationalist of Tamil identity and Indian integrity too attempted to convince the fasting congressman.

But Sankakalinganar was adamant in his demands. He put forth a series of amorphous demands, which included

1. Renaming of Madras state as Tamilnadu.
2. Establishment of linguistic provinces
3. Introduction of uniformity in Railway travel and abolition of class based differences.
4. Adoption of vegetarianism.
5. Prescription of Kadar dress to government servants.
6. Adoption of simplicity and avoidance of extravagance by congress leaders.
7. Reforms in education system.
8. Implementation of prohibition.
9. Introduction of technical education.¹¹⁰

But unfortunately the fasting congress leader expired as the congress government was unable to meet all his demands. His death precipitated a grave crisis in the state. In 1961 the congress government announced in the state legislature that the Madras State hereafter would be called as Tamil Nadu in intra-state communication while the old name of Madras would be continued to be used for the purpose of inter-state communication and communication with the central government.¹¹¹ The congress party assured the opposition members that congress was neither reluctant nor inimical to rename the state. It reminded the opposition party that it was congress, which, in the second decade of the century itself had named its provincial committee as Tamil Nadu Congress Committee even before the fragmentation of the erstwhile Madras Presidency. Moreover, the party stated that the old name Madras State would be continued for inter- state communication as that name had been already popular and had been in vogue for a long time and as any abrupt conversion would precipitate confusion. The party in an exuberant mood presented the state budget 1961-62 in the Legislative Assembly in the name of Tamil Nadu.

Regionalization of Congress Unit on Hindi Controversy

At the time of Indian independence there was no consensus within the congress party on the question of official language for the young independent nation. Though a powerful lobby led by the congress leader Puroshottam Das Tandon passionately argued for the immediate declaration of Hindi as the only official language of India so that freedom
from linguistic enslavement could be achieved, there were other groups and leaders who had openly opposed such a move. The southern leaders argued that though the objective of Hindi as the official language of India was a final destination the journey was rather long and that could happen only after the acceptance secured from the people of non-Hindi regions especially the south.

T.A. Ramalinga Chettiyar who had joined congress in the 1930s from the Justice Party spoke grimly in the Constituent Assembly about the unilateral imposition of Hindi as the official language of India. He called it a matter of life and death for south India. He continued, “If there is the feeling of having obtained liberty, freedom and all that, there is very little of it felt in the south. Sir, coming here to the capital in the northern most part of the country, and feeling ourselves as strangers in this land, we do not feel that we are a nation to whom the whole thing belongs. It is not even the thing that are said– we have given up our language in favour of Hindi – but the way in which the Hindi speaking people treat us and the way in which they want to demand things which is more galling”.

Another congress member from Tamil Nadu in the Constituent Assembly Dr. P. Subbarayan spoke about the danger of Hindi with the help of a Tamil proverb “if a man comes and asks for a little place on the verandah and if you grant it, he will next ask for entry into the house itself”.

**Avinashilingam Missive**

J.S. Avinashilingam Chettiyar, the former education minister and the president of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya located in Coimbatore, a stanch congressman wrote a letter to the Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1965 drawing the attention of the central government to the Hindi controversy. He welcomed the announcement made by the Prime Minister in Thiruvananthapuram promising that no central government servant would be compelled to study Hindi and no increment cut or promotion skipping would be imposed on them to force them to learn Hindi. But he drew the attention of the
prime minister to the bitter fact that his assurances were violated in some of the
departments of the central government. For example in the Railway department, he said
in his missive circulars had been sent that no increment and promotion would be given to
the servants who had not learnt Hindi within three years. Moreover, the Ministry of
Broadcasting and Information had sent a circular stating that hereafter all routine
circulars should be sent only in Hindi.

The former education minister of the state requested the Prime Minister that in the
departmental exams the candidates belonging to the non-Hindi areas should be allowed to
write the exams in their mother tongue or regional languages as the prevailing system
whereby only Hindi and English were allowed had created inequalities between Hindi
and non-Hindi people.\textsuperscript{115}

**Congress Working Committee Resolution**

In 1965 the Congress Working Committee meeting under the presidenship of Kamaraj
passed a resolution reiterating the firm resolve of the congress to adhere to the assurances
given by the late prime minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru regarding the continuance of
English in addition to Hindi for all the official purposes of the Union, not withstanding
the expiry of 15 year period provided by the constitution. The resolution also said that
every state would have complete and unfettered freedom to continue to transact it own
business in the language of its choice, which might be the regional language, Hindi or
English.

The CWC resolution echoed the words of the Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Sasthri
delivered to the nation a few months earlier about the continuance of English as the
official language even after 1965 and had a calming effect on the anti-Hindi education in
Tamil Nadu where the Anti-Hindi Agitation Council called off its agitation.

"Kamaraj, like Annadurai emphasized that Nehru had assured the non-Hindi areas
in 1963 that English would continue as an associate language as long as the people of the
non-Hindi areas wished. In other words, the public statements of Annadurai and Kamaraj differed little in their position on possible solution to the language issue". Not only Hindi on other issues too Kamaraj succeeded in regionalizing Congress making it acceptable in Tamil Nadu.

**UPSC Examinations**

The Tamil Nadu Congress Committee passed a resolution requesting the central government to allow the candidate to write the UPSC examinations in English, Hindi and the regional language so that an equal opportunity could be given to candidate from all parts of the country. Moreover, such a measure would remove any fear of discrimination between Hindi and non-Hindi regional languages. While explaining the need for the resolution by TNCC Kamaraj said that candidates from rural areas of non-Hindi region would find it difficult to express themselves in English as adequately as urban students. The resolution was sent by the TNCC to the congress high command and Union government for further consideration and adaptation.

The Congress Working Committee under the leadership of Kamaraj met in July 1965 and inspired by the resolution from the TNCC passed its own resolution recommending that as soon as possible examinations for the All India Services should be held in Hindi, English and the principal regional languages and that candidates might be given an option to use any of these languages for the purposes there of.

As a result of these recommendations and resolutions the candidates appearing in the civil services exams of Union Public Service Commission were allowed to write in their regional languages and this regulation had a strong impact on the people of Tamil Nadu as Tamil could be used as the medium of examination in the All India Services Exams.
1965 Hindi Crisis

In 1965 the 15 year period time limit set by the constitution for the replacement of English by Hindi ended and the central Government, especially the zealous Union Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda along with other enthusiasts sought to take administrative and constitutional measures to achieve this objective. These measures evoked a strong protest from Tamil Nadu where the opposition DMK and politically conscious students expressed their opposition to the adoption of Hindi as the solitary official language of India. As the stir appeared to gather momentum the Tamil congress members in the central ministry C. Subramaniam and O.V. Alagesan decided to resign their posts. The ministers wanted to register their opposition to the compulsory implementation of Hindi as the only official language of the union. The ministers also met the President of the Republic and explained to him the main purpose of their resignation, which was to express solidarity with anti Hindi agitation.\textsuperscript{119}

These two ministers toured Tamil Nadu and met the agitationists to pacify them. When there was pressure from other congressmen that they should take back their resignation, these ministers decided to concede to their demand but wanted a guarantee from the prime minister that the Hindi policy of the aggressive home minister should be discontinued and the earlier Nehruvian assurances should be strictly adhered to. The Union Council of Ministers later on decided to adhere to the Nehruvian assurances and the rebellious ministers from Tamil Nadu took back their resignation.\textsuperscript{120}

The action of the congress ministers from the state in solidarity with the Anti Hindi Agitation in the state had a calming impact and opposition parties and college students gave up the agitation. The Anti- Hindi Agitation of 1965 contributed to the defeat of the congress party in 1967 elections basically because of the repressive policies of the state congress government. The restoration of the Nehruvian policy would have negated any negative impact the stir had created for the congress but for the repressive measures of the state government. And it is for this reason that two decades latter in 1989 when congress mounted a serious independent bid to capture power in the state it
scrupulously avoided mentioning the name of congress chief minister Bhathavatchalam during the agitation.

**Subramaniam Speech In 1978**

The congress Member of Parliament C. Subramaniam gave a forceful and detailed presentation of the views of the party in the parliament in 1978. This speech symbolized the extent of impact the state unit of party had on the national party organization on the Hindi controversy. In this impassioned speech the congress leader cautioned the new Janata party government not to impose Hindi in the non-Hindi areas. He argued that if Hindi was implemented as the singular official language of India eliminating English altogether from the scene then the very parliamentary democracy would be severely undermined in the country. Once Hindi became the sole official language of India, all discussions, debates and deliberations in the national parliament would be conducted in Hindi and the non-Hindi representatives in the parliament would became mute spectators of the parliamentary process.\(^{121}\)

The deleterious impact of the compulsory, only Hindi policy on the functioning of the central council of ministers could be easily visualized as the non-Hindi members of the ministry would be at a considerable disadvantage to meaningfully participate in the decision making process. Similar liabilities would befall on non-Hind people who were recruited to administrative and managerial services in the central government was the argument of the Tamil congress leader.\(^{122}\)

He also highlighted the genuine apprehensions of non-Hindi speaking people of Tamil Nadu once the acclaimed speech of the Indian Foreign Minister in the United Nations Organizations was delivered in Hindi. Though this gesture of the Foreign Minister promoted the happiness of Hindi champions the south looked at it with trepidation taking it as the bad harbinger of future Hindi chauvinism in all areas of national life.
He also focused on the perceived alienation of southern and non-Hindi people who came to the capital city as all conferences, meetings of government were held only in Hindi and English was totally conspicuous by its absences. He rhetorically asked a question in the parliament whether New Delhi was a city of Hindi people or a city of all Indians irrespective of their linguistic differences. He cautioned the avid champions of Hindi language in the Janata government not to endanger the unity and integrity of nation by its extreme devotion to Hindi and its dissemination. The congress leader from Tamil Nadu also advocated amending article 343 of the constitution so that English could be retained without any time limit as the official language along with Hindi.123

The anti-Hindi implementation sentiments of the Tamil congressmen like C. Subramanian were entirely on grounds of national integration. Yet their stand reflected the extra distance the congress party traveled to solve the apprehensions of Dravidian regionalism about the complex issue of Hindi imposition.

In summery we can say that there was a gradual regionalization of congress leadership structure in the decades preceding and succeeding independence as the regional Non-Brahmin leaders and communities supplanted the Brahmins at all rungs of the congress organization. The protracted rivalry between Rajaji and Kamaraj essentially represented the subterranean rivalry between regional groups and national elites in the domain of congress leadership. The intellectually gifted, urbane and cosmopolitan Rajaji symbolized the interests and aspirations of national elite while Kamaraj firmly rooted in the soil of indigenous social categories symbolized the forces of the region. The assumption of chiefministership by Kamaraj in 1954 in the aftermath of the controversial education scheme of Rajaji dispensation signified the culmination of this protracted struggle and the regionalization, traditionalisation and indigenization of congress leadership was completed.

The intense symbiotic relationship between the regional Dravida Kazhagam and national party of congress in Tamil Nadu was both a cause and consequence of the regionalization of the congress party in the state. The support extended by Dravida
Kazhagam to the Non-Brahmin faction euphemistically described as Dravida Congress directly and indirectly aided the Non-Brahmanization of the party and subsequently congress began to contribute to the growth of Tamil language in education and governance, Tamil representation in Industry, politics, bureaucracy etc., The representation and recognition given to region in the congress party in 50's and 60's heralded the age of congress dominance in the state.
NOTES

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6. Ibid., p.179
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17. Ibid., p.219.
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31. Ibid., p.251.
32. Ibid., p.251.
36. Spratt, P. Op-cit, P.91
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42. Kudi Arasu, 1 January 1933.
43. Viswanathalai, 27 November 1951.
47. Ibid., p. 186.
48. Ibid., p.187.
50. Ibid., p.137.
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105. Ibid., p.330.
107. Ibid., p.102.
113. Ibid., p.1398.
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121. Ibid., p.367.
122. Ibid., p.368.
123. Ibid., p.369.