

CHAPTER - IX

C O N C L U S I O N

An Estimate of Public Policy in Tamil Nadu

During 1967-76

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A major objective of political science is to study leaders as well as movements. The origins of the non-Brahmin movement till the D.M.K.'s accession to power are particularly interesting but surprisingly very little has been written about D.M.K.'s achievement in socio-economic fields.

This study is an endeavour to present the basic policies of the D.M.K. government in socio-economic fields. The establishment and development of the DMK form one of the most interesting phases in the history of social reform, even on a global scale.

Initially the non-Brahmin movement came into existence with the policy of sharing jobs according to the numerical strength of the population, taking the name of the Madras Presidency Citizen's Association

or the South Indian Liberal Association or the Dravidian Association in the year 1916. Later, the Justice party was born to demand communal representation, but under upper caste leadership in 1918. As the Congress leadership was the embodiment of Brahminism, Periyar E.V.Ramaswamy, then a staunch Congressman was not able to solve the communal representation issue and, after resigning from the Congress, he joined the Justice party.

Periyar E.V.Ramaswamy, a social revolutionary, changed the Justice party into the Self-Respect Movement which came to be called the Dravida Kazhagam party. It was a reformist and rationalist party, which challenged the Vedas, Varnas, castes, communities, religion, Ithihasas, Puranas, gods, legends etc., in the social field. As regards its economic point of view, it claimed a separate Dravidistan, the land for Dravidians - Tamilians, Keralites, Kanarese and the people of Andhra. Besides his secessionalist concepts, Periyar rebelled against the upper castes who had inflicted injustice and ignomy on the lower castes in the name of religion. He introduced rational and

radical ideas into his party and the movement associated with it.

Owing to personal and political differences with Periyar E.V.Ramaswamy, Annadurai a staunch follower of Periyar, left the Dravida Kazhagam with his followers and founded the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, an explicitly political organization.

In the 1967 General Election the D.M.K. came to power. The D.M.K. was essentially a reformist movement for the under-privileged and oppressed people (lepers, blinds, physically handicapped, hand-rikshaw pullers and others), to whom it became the liberator from age-long suffering and subjugation. The D.M.K. party had grown in the soil of Tamil Nadu and drawn its strength from the Tamil traditions of democratic culture.

There are few men of whom one can truthfully say that the world would have been a different place without them. Karunanidhi is certainly one of them. He hailed from the most backward class of Tamil Nadu. Entering politics during the Hindi agitation he became

an ardent follower of Periyar in the Self-Respect Movement and later a sincere disciple of Annadurai in the D.M.K. He rose to the highest leadership through his struggles and sacrifices in the cause of his party.

Unorthodox in his approach to social and economic problems but keenly democratic in his hatred of dictatorship, he wrote impassioned essays on a host of related subjects : politics, history, sociology, religion, literature, and an autobiography Nenchuku Neethi.

Despite his intellectual abilities, he is rarely known beyond his political writings. But he is also a distinguished poet and play-wright who has made a deep impact on Tamil literature and culture. After the demise of Annadurai, the mantle of Chief Ministership fell upon Karunanidhi.

The ideals of the Dravidian Movement right from the beginning had been systematically developed, and it was Karunanidhi's role to implement most of them. Our study of this movement, its leaders and government has arrived

at the following conclusions :

1. The public opinion of Tamil Nadu which had expressed itself mainly in a social, religious and economic framework in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has become increasingly and pronouncedly political in character in recent times. Nevertheless, the communal nature of society continues to dominate its politics.
2. Tamil traditions, culture and language have strong roots in the people. The leadership of Periyar, Annadurai, Karunanidhi and others demonstrates the overwhelming strength and viability of Tamil regional, linguistic culture.
3. The non-Brahmin leadership from the Justice party to the D.M.K. was based not only on the support of public opinion but also on the utilisation of totalitarian political techniques, especially centralised leadership.
4. This movement, in its broadest sense, gave the sectarian government in United India ruled explicitly

on atheistic principles in the nine-year rule of the DMK.

5. The policy of the government was to defend the interests of the downtrodden, and backward sections of Tamil Nadu. The socio-economic programmes were applied mostly to the lowest and the weakest sections of the population.

6. The D.M.K. never failed to demand rights for the Tamil region. It gave a clarion call for state autonomy, and it rallied the people round the anti-Hindi movement.

Within the power vested in the state involving limited finance, the D.M.K. has achieved a significant success. It has brought electric power practically to every village, laid roads linking almost every village, cut pathways to cremation grounds, strengthened minor irrigation systems, provided protected water supply to villages, granted house-sites for landless labourers, distributed land for the landless, strictly enforced the Land Ceiling Act, given 30,000 free houses for the scheduled castes, built houses for fishermen, launched several progressive programmes successfully in the

socio-economic fields in Tamil Nadu.

It was also the policy of the D.M.K. government that the law and order of the state should under no condition deteriorate. This government exhorted officials to participate in the establishment of a socialistic society, maintenance of public peace and tranquillity by preventing lawlessness. Karunanidhi said that violence in any form should not be allowed in a democracy. Society as a whole would be affected by any form of violence. Tamil Nadu was more or less a pace-setter even during the emergency. The tension of emergency in Tamil Nadu was successfully overcome by the policies and programmes of the D.M.K. government.

Shri K.K.Shaha, the then Governor of Tamil Nadu, more than five times during his tenure as Governor of Tamil Nadu, praised the efficient and effective actions of the government and paid glowing tributes to its achievements. He referred to several welfare schemes undertaken in connection with the Chief Minister Karunanidhi's birthdays and said "the idea of celebrating birthday for a social purpose in sharp contrast

to the satisfaction of one's ego on such occasions, was welcome and praiseworthy."

Therefore, after a detailed and objective examination of the history, ideology and the policies of the D.M.K. party in Tamil Nadu, this thesis feels justified in claiming that under Karunanidhi's leadership, the party initiated successfully a large number of socio-economic programmes aimed at the realization of socio-economic justice for the masses of Tamil Nadu. This thesis has also established the close connection between regionalism and national politics in India. Perhaps its most important finding is that good political leadership is an essential prerequisite of a successful programme of socio-economic change through the instrumentality of politics and government.

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