INTRODUCTION

Cinema constitutes an important medium in the political and social change of a nation or region. Since the middle of the 20th century, it emerged as a determining factor in the political change of Tamilnadu because film personalities began to dominate the politics of the state. Film emerged as an easy, understandable and speedy medium. It reached quickly to all sets of people irrespective of their literacy, standard of living and economic status. It paved the way for the socio-economic and political change in Tamilnadu and other parts of India. By the dint of their performance in cinemas, the film personalities emerged so popular among the mass and captured the Government.

Cinema, one of the powerful electronic media of communication had its birth on 20 December 1895 by Thomas Alva Edison in Paris. It gradually reached Madras in 1897 at Victoria Public Hall in Madras where it was performed by an English man M. Edwards, who set a novel instrument for giving the show. Subsequently, in 1905 Dupont, a French man came from Ceylon to Madras after holding film shows there. Vincent brought Dupont’s instruments and conducted shows in the St.Joseph school at
Trichy. He called his unit “Edison’s Cinematograph” and toured to Madurai, Tirunelveli and Ramanathapuram and held film shows there. In 1909, R.Venkiah, a photographic studio owner at Mount Road in Madras imported a film projector and screened films. In 1914 he put up a permanent cinema house at Madras called ‘Gaiety’, the first cinema house in Madras to be built by an Indian. Film production began to develop by the efforts of Venkiah and his son Prakash who produced the first silent film in 1921 entitled “Bhima Prathigna” which was screened all over India.

Since its humble beginning, the film industry began to grow rapidly due to the growth of science and technology. After the introduction of movies with sound system, film personalities became very popular among the people who began to imitate the life style of actors and actresses. M.K.Thiagaraja Bhagavathar, P.U.Chinnapa, Kittappa, M.G.Ramachandran, Sivaji Ganesan and writer-cum-actors like C.N.Annathurai and M.Karunanidhi became very popular among the people. The popularity among the film personalities made them to utilize the opportunities and enter into the arena of politics. Accordingly, they contested in the general elections at Madras and formed the Government in 1967. The political scenario of Madras presidency till the first
quarter of the 20th century was not conducive due to the nationalistic movement organized and activated by the Congress party. The formation of justice party and its ministry in 1920 on the basis of Montague Chelmsford reforms (1919 constitution) gave a new impetus to the development of Dravidian movement which became a crusader against the congress party since 1952. The food crisis, Anti-Hindi agitation and mal administration of congress government since the Kamaraj rule in 1963 paved the way for the decline of the congress Government and it was overthrown in 1967 election by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

The film personalities properly utilized the opportunities for popularizing the Dravidian ideologies and policies through cinemas and established a unique place in the minds of the people which reflected in the elections since 1952 onwards. Before the development of cinema, C.N.Annathurai and M.Karunanidhi started their career as writers of Dravidian ideologies in the “Kudiyarasu” and scripts in stage plays. C.N.Annathurai acted in many stage plays and his famous plays ‘Velaikkari’, ‘Or Iravu’ and ‘Parvathi B.A’, became films. Like his master C.N.Annathurai, M.Karunanidhi also wrote plays and scripts for quite a number of films. His first and popular film was “Parasakthi”, released in 1952 and Sivaji
Ganesan was the hero of the film. After acquiring enough popularity through films, the film personalities like C.N.Annathurai, M.Karunanidhi, and M.G.Ramachandran, began to concentrate on politics and occupied prominent position. Their preaching of Dravidian ideologies and eloquence in oratory changed the attitude of people of Tamilnadu who decided to change the congress government for establishing DMK government in 1967.

Thus cinema and its personalities changed the politics of Tamilnadu in 1967 and the change continued till date. In this sphere, the field leaders like C.N.Annathurai, M.Karunanidhi, M.G.Ramachandran and J.Jeyalalitha ruled Tamilnadu from 1967. Accordingly, in the 1967 general election, the D.M.K. party secured an absolute majority and C.N.Annathurai became the chief-minister of Tamilnadu till 1969. After the death of C.N.Annathurai in 1969, M.Karunanidhi became the chief-minister of Tamilnadu and continued till 1975 when emergency was promulgated.

In 1972, there was a split in the D.M.K. party which led to the formation of All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) headed by M.G.Ramachandran. He got a tremendous victory in the 1977
election and became the Chief-Minister of Tamilnadu and his office continued till his death in 1987. After that M.Karunanidhi became the chief-minister of Tamilnadu till 1991. In 1991 general election, M.Karunanidhi was defeated by a Film actress J.Jeyalalitha who continued till 1996. Again M.Karunanithi became the chief-minister (1996-2001). In the 2001 general election, again M.Karunanidhi was defeated by J.Jeyalalitha and became the chief-minister till 2006. Thus from 1967 onwards film personalities made political changes in Tamilnadu and continuing the same till date.

**SCOPE**

The area selected for the study is in Tamilnadu and occasional references would be made on the other parts of the former Madras Presidency because the records cover the Madras Presidency. The period fixed for study is a span of 49 years starting from 1952 when the film ‘Parasakthi’ was released and ending in 2001 when J.Jeyalalitha captured the Government for the second time. The method followed in the study is Historical and Analytical.
HYPOTHESIS

The study is critically examined on the basis of the following Hypothesis. What were the factors that caused political change in Tamilnadu? Who were the important film personalities and what revolutionary changes did their films make in Tamilnadu politics? What were the factors that paved the way for the defeat of the congress party in the 1967 election and how far the film personalities were responsible for the defeat of Congress? How did the film personalities rule Tamilnadu and how did their films reflect in their administration of the state?

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES

power’ by Spratt, ‘All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam’ by R.Thandavan, ‘Vetti Selvi Jeyalalitha’ by P.C.Ganesan, ‘Dravida Eakathil Pilavugal’ by Ganesan, ‘Erantandugalil Irunta Tamilagam’ by Prabhakaran are some of the secondary sources which talk about the reason for the political changes in Tamilnadu.

CHAPTERIZATION

The first chapter of the Thesis tells about the EVOLUTION OF CINEMA IN TAMILNADU AND ITS IMPACT. Because of the development of science and technology the Drama evolved into cinema. The evolution of Cinema started from Drama. In the early stage the silent cinema, namely the movies, emerged. But due to the scientific development, the Talkies came into existence in which the actors could speak. It created a turning point in the Cinema field by which several notable themes were insisted in it and it created some changes in the minds of the people. The recent development of Cinema and the ideas predicted in it created changes in political field also.
The second chapter explains the ENTRY OF FILM PERSONALITIES INTO POLITICS. After the introduction of the film ‘Parasakthi’ in 1952 several writers and scholars began to think about the despotic and high class domination of the Congress Government. So several leaders in the Dravidian party decided to enter into the politics of Tamilnadu to crush the attitudes of the Congress Government. The Dravidian party leaders like C.N.Annathurai, M.Karunanidhi, M.G.Ramachandran and J.Jeyalalitha brought out political changes in Tamilnadu.

The Third chapter FILM AND THE 1967 ELECTION TOWARDS THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT tells about the political changes that took place in Tamilnadu after the 1967 general election. Before that several political parties joined with the Congress government and mostly the Brahmins dominated in the politics. But after the emergence of the Dravidian parties the political situation was totally changed. In the 1967 general election, the DMK party secured a tremendous victory by which C.N.Annathurai became the Chief-Minister of Tamilnadu. After independence, this was the first non-Congress government which came to power in Tamilnadu.
The fourth chapter explains about M.G. RAMACHANDRAN AND THE FORMATION OF AIADMK PARTY AND ITS GOVERNMENT. In the early days, during the congress rule in Tamilnadu M.G.Ramachandran was a true supporter of Congress party. But after accepting the principles of the Dravidian party he became the member of the DMK party. By his ability and efficiency he rose to the top most position as a Treasurer of the DMK party. He was the man who introduced Black and Red colour flag of DMK party in several films. But due to some misunderstanding between the leaders of the DMK party, M.G.Ramachandran was suspended from the DMK party in 1972. So he started a new political party called ADMK. In the way of exposing the corruption he got a high reputation among the people. He contested in the general election held in 1977. In the election, the ADMK party secured a tremendous victory and M.G.Ramachandran became the Chief-Minister of Tamilnadu in 1977. During his period of administration he worked for the welfare of the poor people. He implemented so many schemes by which the lower section of the people benefited.
The fifth chapter tells about the RISE AND FALL OF JEYALALITHA GOVERNMENT. After the demise of M.G.Ramachandran the AIADMK party was dominated by its former propaganda secretary selvi J.Jeyalalitha. In the 1991 general election, the AIADMK party contested under the leadership of J.Jeyalalitha. She strongly criticized the activities of the DMK party in the election campaign and the people accepted her statement. When the election result came, AIADMK party secured a thumping majority and J.Jeyalalitha became the Chief-Minister of Tamilnadu. At the initial stage, she introduced several schemes for the betterment of the people. But after a certain period, she began to act like a despotic ruler. She conducted the marriage of her foster son Sudhakaran by spending an amount of Rs.100 crores. Wall Posters were pasted at various places depicting her equal to God of various religions. So she got a serious blow in the 1996 election. After a gap of five years in 2001 again for the second time, she became the Chief-Minister of Tamilnadu.