CHAPTER -II
JUSTICE PARTY AND ITS LANGUAGE POLICY

Language is simply a vehicle of thoughts and an instrument to communicate with each other. But nowadays it has become symbol to be proud of that. In a multilingual country like India, language consciousness is more prominent. Every one approaches the language problem with sentiment while expecting others to approach the problem without emotion. This is the peculiar situation prevailing. Without admitting any emotional intervention, a sincere attempt has been made to study the official language problem. And it recommends appropriate solutions to settle it once and for all.1

Tamil

Tamil, the oldest of the Dravidian languages is the state language of Tamil Nadu. Tamil literature goes back to centuries before the Christian era. Tamil language has the special claim of being as old as Sanskrit and rich in literature. Its history can be traced back to the age of Tolkappiyam, the earliest Tamil grammar generally traced to 500 B.C. Among the Dravidian languages, Tamil is least influenced by Sanskrit. The earliest literature of the Tamil is called Sangam literature which is dated between 500 B.C.to200 C.E. In this period, Tamil literature was considerably clear by literary conventions.2 The poets were keen on keeping up the tradition. The land was treated as five regions, for example mountains, forests, fields, coasts and deserts and the theme of love in five aspects for example union, patience, sulking, wailing and separations. The poet dealing with a certain aspect of love restricted himself to a particular region, season, hour, flora and fauna. These literary conventions are explained in Tolkappiyam, the first Tamil Grammar.3

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A considerable part of the early poetry has been lost. However, fortunately, some of the bards and the patrons decided to preserve a part of it in certain anthologies which were compiled appropriately around, Fourth Century C.E. These are Patirrupattu and Ettuttohai. Four hundred and seventy three poets, of whom thirty are women, have been identified. These are mainly classified into two groups, for instance, “Akam” or esoteric dealing with love and “Puram” or exoteric dealing with war. The above fact also confirms that when most of the parts of India and the world had folk literature preserved orally, Tamil had developed literature with script and preserved in written form.  

Purananuru is one of such works preserved from ancient literature. It has 400 verses on Puram themes. It serves as a window on the Tamil people 2000 years ago. Agananuru has 400 poems on Akam themes. The length of these poems varied from 13 to 37 lines. There are other collections like Natrianai, Kuruntogai, Paripadal, Ain-Kurunuru, and others. Tiruvalluvar was one of the greatest Tamil poets and considered as Valmiki or Homer of Tamil Literature. His classic Tirukkural is acclaimed to be the greatest Tamil classic. It expresses the most profound thoughts on the many problems of life. Each verse is a couplet composed with great economy of words. The book is divided into 133 chapters each containing 10 verses. The chapters are arranged to in three books dealing with virtue (Arathuppal), wealth (Porutpal) and pleasure (Inpathuppal).  

Tamil literature took a full turn again during Third Century C.E. The two epics, creation of this era are Manimekhalai and Silappadhikaram. They are the greatest Tamil epics. The author of Silappadhikaram was ElangoAdikal. The title means the story of the Anklet (Silampu) and the epic describe the moving story of Kannagi. Manimekalai on the other hand, has been more or less the continuation of the story of Silappadhikaram. After this epic, the

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5. Ibid., pp. 49-50.
great Tamil poet Kambar took up the translation of Valmiki’s **Ramayana** known as **Kamba Ramayanam**. In spite of being the translation of Valmiki **Ramayana**, it was rendered as if original. Kambar showed a new way of Tamil poetical lyric. Lyrical description of nature, war, human feeling and other aspects are described by Kambar in his **Kamba Ramayanam**. The **Silapadhikaram** and **Manimekhalai** describe various aspects in **Kamba Ramayanam**. It showed a new path of literary style in Tamil. These epics also introduced a new way of devotional literature.⁷

By the Sixth Century B.C. Sanskrit influence had penetrated into the Tamil land. The native style of poetry was changed under the influence of Sanskrit. Tamil poets started to write long poems and called it by the Sanskrit name, **Kavya**. The influence of the Northern culture penetrated the Tamil land silently and stage by stage. Scholars learnt Sanskrit at Kanchipuram and Banaras as well. Ideas relation to literature, religion and theories of art were found in Sanskrit elaborately.⁸

In the historic past Sanskrit played the role of a communication language among the scholars of the Indian subcontinent. For example Dandin the author of **Kavyadurga** in Sanskrit was a scholar from Kanchipuram in the Tamil country. During the Sangam period, prior to the Second Century C.E. only about one percent of Sanskrit words inter-mingled with Tamil. This increased to three to five per cent in the devotional songs of Alvars and Nayanmars in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries respectively. It reached its highest level in the Thirteenth Century when the **Manipravala** style became popular. As a result the number of Sanskrit borrowing words increased in the religious prose works of the Jains and the Vaishnavites.⁹

But the commentators of grammatical and literary works wrote in chaste Tamil with less Sanskrit words. The commentators including Parimelazhakar and others wrote in pure Tamil with the least borrowing from Sanskrit. Their

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⁹ Ibid.
style of writing was similar to present day Tamil. Poet Bharathi composed poems largely in pure Tamil. Thiru. Vi. Kaliyanasundaranar a distinguished scholar and a journalist wrote many literary works. With the advent of the pure Tamil movement he began to write without using Sanskrit words.  

**Tanitamil Iyakkam** (Pure Tamil Movement) Opposition to the use of Sanskrit words in Tamil, scholars like Suryanarayana Sastri and Swami Vedachalam preferred to use only the Tamil equivalents to their Sanskrit names, Paritimar Kalainjar and Maraimalai Adigal respectively. When the Sanskritists claimed that Tamil could not exist without Sanskrit the two scholars took the task of writing Tamil without borrowing from Sanskrit. Suryanarayana Sastri the pioneer of this style of writing died at young age. Maraimalai Adigal continued his task made it as a movement in 1916, since then the movement has been popularly known as the **Tanitamil Iyakkam** or the Pure Tamil Movement. The impact of this movement still exists among the Tamils.

The colonial government introduced English as lingua franca (common language) for administrative purposes. The European contact however, helped the growth of Tamil. The missionary scholar Robert Caldwell, author of *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* (1856) opened a new chapter and induced Tamil grammarians to go further.

**Controversy and Compromise of Telugus and Tamils Dravidian Linguistic Harmony**

There were reasons for the controversy and solutions over the Andhra University Bill between the Telugus and Tamils in the mid of the third decade of the Twentieth Century. Not only have the racial, religious, caste differences been accentuated, but other fresh antipathies have arisen into prominence in the Third decade of the Twentieth Century in the erstwhile Madras Presidency. It was due to the various contributory factors in the political and cultural

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scenario. The solution to the language controversy was sought in the name of racial Darvidian affinity and integrity

A major factor that accompanied the mobilization of opinion for an Andhra province was the development of an articulate Telugu press. Apart from the Telugu papers begun in the 1880s and several important literary journals, the most important innovation in Telugu political publishing was the founding of the **Andhra Patrika** in Bombay in 1908; in 1914 it was moved to Madras. Other Telugu papers such as the **Deshabhimani**, published in Guntur, and the **Krishna Patrika**, published in Masulipatam, helped to spread the views of the Telugu leaders, who complained of the anti-Telugu bias of the English-language **The Hindu** Newspaper. From 1911 onwards the demand for a separate Andhra Province was voiced both by the leaders and the Press in Andhra.

The Andhra group, which had first organized at Bapatla, in Guntur district, in May, 1913, aimed to establish a separate Telugu unit or "circle" of Congress so as to give the Telugus freedom of action and reduce the influence of the Tamils in Andhra affairs. Beyond that, it hoped in time to use the new Telugu Congress as a means of achieving a separate Telugu province, with a university for Telugus.

The pressure of the group on the Congress party, including publication of a pamphlet on the subject, was successful, and on 8th April 1917, Congress granted permission for the establishment of a Telugu unit. The authors of the pamphlet, Konda Venkatappayya and Pattabhi Sittaramayya, stated Andhra's

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12. *New India*, 10 February 1916. It was only on 26 November 1921 that T. Prakasam, an important Andhra Brahman politician, established an English-language paper, the **Swarajya**, to voice Andhra claims in Madras.

13. The Andhra movement for a separate province for the Andhras was started in 1911. The feeling of neglect of Andhras in the educational, employment and economic spheres in the Madras Presidency was the root cause for the rise of the Andhra Movement. From 1911 onwards the movement continued with varying degrees of intensity throughout the period of the freedom struggle. (Narayana Rao, *Emergence of Andhra Pradesh*, Bombay, 1973).
case clearly: "The clear sketch [stretch] of continuous territory, a common language and literature, common traditions of heroes and poets, warriors and kings, and deep down a strong similarity of temper and character - these language-bound communities are to be outlined each into a single race and accorded all those accessories of communal and political institutions which illustrate and feed that unity". 14 Annie Besant and some of her "Tamil friends from the South" had opposed the Telugus proposal at the 1916 Congress session; 15 furthermore, the Home Rule scheme did not put much emphasis on the division of India according to linguistic affinities. 16 For these reasons, many Andhras were cool toward Annie Besant and her ideas, and her popularity in Telugu districts generally was a good deal less than it was in Tamil districts.

Inadvertently, however, Annie Besant's stand on a homogeneous versus a linguistically divided India helped to intensify certain already existing trends in Andhra. Telugu had been used to some extent in political meetings since the 1870s; from the start of the Andhra movement in 1913, political meetings in the Telugu districts were conducted exclusively in Telugu, 17 thus effectively barring non-Telugu speakers from participating. Annie Besant's known associations with Tamil politicians hardly gave her ready introduction to Telugu politics, since Tamils not only were unwelcome but also were incapable of interfering.

The validity of an appeal to former greatness and cultural distinctiveness on the part of the Andhras implied the possibility of other language groups claiming the same regional or linguistic uniqueness and political cohesion. It was a claim that was bound to arise, since, as Pattabhi Sittaramayya wrote in 1913, "the day is not far off when the Indians themselves

14 Commonweal, 6 October 1916, p. 264.
17 New India, 8 May 1916.
will be responsibly associated with the full work of administration. If Home Rule were granted, what parts would the Telugus and the Tamils play in the future administration of Madras presidency? This question, and many others raised by the Home Rule agitation, had implications not only for linguistic groups but also for caste groups which, not for the first time, sought a more substantial place in the political, educational, and administrative framework of the presidency. "The Telugu districts for the Telugus," wrote Kesava Pillai in 1913, "is a good cry, to catch the fancy of some people in the Telugu province."

In this way the claims of linguistic and local patriotism marched towards a new political and cultural trend. During the last three years from 1920-1923, the Madras Legislative Council's energies were utilized in tackling the Brahmin-non-Brahmin problem. In the next triennium the Council had nothing better to do than set up and attempt to solve a Tamil-Andhra problem. The Council seriously engaged itself on that issue and it failed to involve itself on the broader, more useful and national problems.

The years 1920-1923 had indeed been marked by great controversy in the Legislative Council, and The Hindu was perceptive in anticipating a debate between the Telugus and the Tamils. The way in which this debate occurred and the issues that were debated were, indeed, a clear result of the prevailing style of then politics in Madras. In that politics, each group, linguistic or caste, sought to establish its own position and identity in public life.

Bitterness between Tamils and Telugus was not without precedent. The Andhra movement of 1913, and the struggle within the Congress organization for a separate unit for the Telugus had involved considerable bitterness. Congress solved the Tamil-Telugu antagonism in 1917 by granting the Telugus their own unit, giving them control in their own linguistic region and thus

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18. Subba Rao, N., For and Against the Andhra Province, Masulipatam, 1913, p. 53.
19. Ibid., p.106.
providing a measure of insulation between the Telugus and the Tamils to the south. The Andhras had had additional demands, as expressed by Konda Venkatapayya and Pattabhi Sitaramayya (both Neyogi Brahmans), including a separate province for Telugu speakers and their own Andhra University. But agitation for these demands had been put aside at the time first by Montagu's visit, then by the discussion of the Reforms themselves, and finally by Gandhi's Non-Cooperation movement. K. V. Reddi Naidu, speaking in 1925, considered the decline in the Andhra agitation 'for a separate province and university for Telugus a result of the diversion of energies into "the non-Brahmin movement and later the non-Co-Operation movement."'²⁰

A number of Andhras entered the Legislative Council in 1920, and on two occasions, once in 1921 and again in 1922, they questioned the government about its attitudes toward the formation of a separate Andhra State and University. On the second of these occasions, a Telugu Brahman named M. Suriyanarayana from Vizagapatam district introduced a resolution recommending that the Madras Government create a separate Andhra Province.²¹ This resolution provoked a serious difference of opinion among the Executive Council and among the three Justice Party Ministers. It is important to remember in connection with these discussions that the Joint Parliamentary Committee in 1919 had provided for a commission to be appointed by the Secretary of State to inquire into requests made by "any distinctive racial or linguistic territorial unit" for a separate province.²² With this in mind, Sir Charles Todhunter wrote a long minute for the Government of Madras on the history of linguistic demands in the Imperial and Legislative Assemblies in Delhi and in the Madras Legislative Council. When the time came for Suryanarayana to press his resolution, A. P. Patro, the Justice Education

Minister, persuaded him to desist. But Reddi Naidu, in his minute, still felt there was room for the demand and the reality of a separate Andhra Province:

“The Telugus of the Northern Circars have always agitated for a separate Andhra Province and those in the Ceded districts are not in favor of it or, at any rate, are not enthusiastic about it. Personally, I have always been of [the] opinion that an Andhra Province is a necessity. But owing to differences between Brahmans and non-Brahmins in recent years, my attitude has slightly altered. I am still in favour of a separate province for the Andhras provided statutory guarantees are made for a majority of non-Brahmins in the Legislative Council and in the public services of the new provinces”.

Norman Marjoribanks, a senior I.C.S. member, commented that it would be "interesting to see how the proposition is reconciled to the idea of Indian nationalism".

Though a demand for a separate Andhra Province did not arise in the Council proceedings again until early 1927, the idea of an Andhra university was seriously broached soon after the establishment of the first Justice ministry. A. P. Patro, the Education Minister, brought forward a scheme for such a university as an equalizing device to the bill, then pending, to reorganize and strengthen Madras University. For non-Brahmans, at least, Madras University was understood to be a university primarily geared to the interests of

23. G.O. No.82, Public Department, 22 January 1922.
24. Ibid. Todhunter also noted: "Going into the matter I am not sure that the feeling does not come to this also, that the Telugu, say, has for officers one set of foreigners (Englishmen), and if and when they depart he does not want to exchange them for another set of foreigners (Tamils), just as the Burmans want no Indians in their Civil Service."
25. When this resolution came before the Council, the Madras Mail, 17 February 1927 stated a belief that was repeated many times in post-Independence India. Those who wanted a separate Andhra are "advocates of methods which, if followed, may break India up into a series of petty states, jealous of each other, and at the mercy of any powerful central government."
Tamil Brahmans, where non-Brahmans and especially students from Telugu areas were looked upon as unwelcome foreigners. It was natural for the Tamil non-Brahmans to regard the reorganization bill as an attempt by the Brahmans to tighten their hold on an already over-Brahmanized institution. But to the Andhra members of the Council the bill was even more than that - a threat to their hopes for a separate university. The Madras University Reorganization Bill was subsequently passed, but on the eve of its becoming law, in March, 1923, G. Vandanam pointed out that "those of us who supported the organization scheme of Madras University did so on the distinct understanding that the Madras University reorganization would help us to get an Andhra University at no distant date".

When the suggestion to create an Andhra university was first brought up in 1921, C. Natesa Mudaliar, a Tamil Vellala in the Justice Party, raised some strong objections on the grounds that it was impossible to define Andhras or the Andhra Country. In the course of a somewhat devious speech laden with historical arguments, he finally came out with his real objection to the idea. Any resolution, he said, that proposed the creation of an Andhra university "savour of disunion among the members of the non-Brahmin community." Despite reassurances that the establishment of an Andhra university "will not affect our non-Brahmin movement in the least," many Tamil Justice members still had misgivings. One Tamil Sri Vaishnava Brahman, interestingly enough, supported the scheme on the grounds that it would "help to advance knowledge, will help to advance the status and civilization of the people, and it will be the first step and the next step will immediately be another university for Tamil land."

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27. Ibid., Vol. XII, 17 March 1923, p.2413
28. Ibid., Vol. II , 2 September 1921, pp.721-725
Natesa Mudaliar's opposition to an Andhra university epitomized the distrust with which many Tamils in the Justice Party viewed any efforts of the Telugus to enhance their already substantial position in the party. Theagaraya Chetty encouraged the distrust by neglecting the Tamils in the constitution of the first Justice Ministry in 1920, and the antipathy came to a head in 1922. In a stormy party meeting in Madras in May of that year, J. N. Ramanathan, who came from the Tamil District of Madurai, accused Tyagaraja Chetty of failing to recognize the hard work and zeal of many Tamils in the party:

“The Tamilians have been noted for their hospitality, and I am proud that the Tamilians have contributed not a little to the strength of the party in power as is evident from the staunch support within the Council and from the princely and loyal receptions accorded to the Ministerial progress in the Southern [Tamil part of the Presidency; whereas the tours [of the Ministers] have been marked by many hartals and hostilities in the Northern [Telugu] parts. This clearly illustrates that the followers or admirers of Sanskrit have no sympathy with the [non-Brahmin] movement, whereas the movement is held dear by the Tamilians”.

**Warning of Ramanathan**

Ramanathan warned Tyagaraja Chetty that if no Tamil minister found a place in the next Justice ministry in late 1923, the Tamilians in the Justice Party might break away from the party altogether. In August, 1923, at Trichinopoly, a group of Tamil discontents in the party held a Tamil Nadu Non-Brahman Conference, in defiance of the annual Justice confederations held in December. The Rajah of Ramnad, one of the dissidents, told his audience that "the Tamils with an ancient civilization and a tradition of unexampled glory have now

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29. *The Hindu*, 28 May 1922
elected themselves into a distinct political party in order that their interests may be specially safeguarded and advanced." \(^{30}\)

As a peace offering, Tyagaraya Chetty suggested that for the 1923 Justice Ministry Reddi Naidu should step aside as Minister of Development to allow the appointment of a Tamil, T. N. Sivagnanam Pillai, a Vellala from Tinnevelly district. The peace offering was accepted gracefully, and harmony was restored. The Telugus then got their university with the help of the Tamils, who joined them in late 1925 in approving a bill that would establish a university for the "rapid development in the study of Telugu language and literature". \(^{31}\) There was some opposition from the Telugus to the title "Andhra University." Reddi Naidu (now no longer a minister) contended that the bill should be called the Telugu University Bill. Both "Andhra" and "kingdom of the Andhras" were, he insisted, Aryan in origin: “We Telugus have always been recognized as Dravidians hear hear), and when I ask this bill to be named after the Telugus, I appeal to my Dravidian friends, my Tamil friends, my Kanarese friends, my Malayalam friends, not to part with us as different from them". \(^{32}\) Similar appeals to common Dravidian origins were made by others in the debate on the Andhra university in an attempt to prevent a party split between the Tamils and the Telugus. Natesa Mudaliar, who had doubted the wisdom of forming an Andhra university on the grounds that it might tend to divide the party, now appealed for unity: "Telugus can never be separated from the Tamils," he said. "We are Dravidians and will not be separated." Ramaswami Mudaliar also pointed out that the Telugu University would be concerned with Dravidian culture in contradistinction to Sanskritic studies. These attempts to establish a Dravidian identity provoked S. Satyamurti, of the Swaraj Party, to plead that the Council members ought to "show by our votes that Brahmin-hatred must stop at the Staff Selection Board and must go no

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 18 August 1923  
\(^{31}\) M.L.C.P., Vol.XXIV, 20 August 1925, p.366  
\(^{32}\) Ibid., Vol.XXV, 28 October 1925, p.122
further." Reddi Naidu's proposed amendment was rejected, and the bill was passed by the Council on 6th November 1925. The following year Andhra University, after a great controversy as to who should be Vice Chancellor, came into existence with C. Ramalinga Reddy as the Vice Chancellor.

Tamilians now also began to demand that a separate university be created in the heart of the Tamil country to serve the interests of Tamil culture, since Madras University, with its Sanskritic and Brahmanical affiliations, was unable to give Tamil-speakers the right kind of cultural atmosphere and training. Their demand was supported by the Madras University Senate, which passed a resolution recommending the establishment of a university for each "principal linguistic area within the Presidency." As a result of a discussion in the Council on 22nd March 1926, a Tamil University Committee (originally under the chairmanship of the Justice Party Development Minister, T. N. Sivagnanam Pillai) was set up. During the course of 1927 it took evidence from a great many educators, politicians, and others as to the precise nature that the proposed Tamil university should take. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, a Tamil Sri Vaishnava Brahman scholar of considerable academic repute, who had suggested the need for an Andhra university in 1916, told the committee that there was a good deal of popular demand for a Tamil university. Another Tamil Professor S. Somasundara Bharati, said that "the mere fact that the Tamils see the the Andhras have achieved a university of their culture and language has whetted the desire of the Tamilians for a university.

The deciding factor was the receipt of a substantial endowment from Sir Annamalai Chetti, a member of the Nattukottai Chetti caste group long famous for its donations to temples and other religious and educational establishments,

33. Ibid., pp. 124-125, and 128.
34. The vote on the amendment to change the title to "The Telugu University Bill" was 24-26 against. Ibid., p. 129
both non-Brahman and Brahman. Thus Tamil wishes were met, and in 1929 a university, called Annamalai University, was founded at the temple center of Chidambaram in South Arcot district. Under the terms of the grant, the university was to encourage both Tamil and Sanskrit.  

The passage of both the Madras University Reorganization Bill and the Andhra University Bill put great strains on Telugu-Tamil unity within the Justice Party. The problem had no doubt been aggravated by P. Tyagaraya Chetty with his failure to see the necessity of cultivating Tamil sympathies "during the formation of the first Justice Ministry. But its basic cause lay in the desire of each group to prevent the other from getting too large a share of the spoils, either in educational or in administrative spheres, and non-Brahman demands were often characterized by a type of competition along linguistic lines which could only be cemented over by appeals to a common Dravidian origin. This sort of appeal in turn tended to push the Brahmans even further away, making political and social equilibrium between non-Brahmans and Brahmans increasingly impossible.

Generally the term, ‘Dravidian’, usually refers to a family of languages in south India, the main ones of which are Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. In the first and second decades of the twentieth century, the term in south India at least-had both a racial and a linguistic meaning. K. V. Reddi Naidu, a Telugu non-Brahman appealed to Dravidians-that is, not simply to those who spoke a Dravidian language but to those who claimed to possess a common racial heritage to unite them against the so-called Aryan invaders from the north, the south Indian Brahmans. Reddy Naidu, however, was something of an exception, for the Telugus, even in the Justice Party, did not often speak in these racial terms. In its racial sense, Dravidianism, at a very

\[37\] Annamalai University, Silver Jubilee Souvenir, 1929-1954, Annamalainagar, 1955, pp. 146, 148. One witness to the University Committee, Ramaswami Mudaliar, thought the university should be called Dravida University; Report of the Tamil University Committee, op.cit., p. 40.
early stage, was identified with Tamil-speakers, since Tamil was considered to be the most ancient of the Dravidian languages spoken in modern India. Telugus were seldom so eager to claim Dravidian status, because Telugu, unlike Tamil, contained a great many Sanskrit words, which tended to diminish claims that Telugu was a culture independent of so-called Aryan influence. Partly also, the Telugu area did not exhibit the same polarities between Brahman and non-Brahman, such as between the Kapus and the Kammas on one side and the Brahmans on the other, as compared with the feelings of competition and hostility between the Vellalas and the Tamil Brahmans. For these reasons, although non-Brahmins from all the main Dravidian language groups of south India joined the non-Brahmin movement, the use of Dravidanism as apolitical weapon was gradually confined to the non-Brahmins of Tamil Nadu.

**Importance to Hindi**

Moreover, the British rule collected India’s many languages, classified and transformed into grammars, manuals and dictionaries through linguistic survey of India. The rise of Dravidian movement strengthened the position of Tamil. By 1937 the political state of affairs changed in Madras Presidency. The Justice Party lost the election battle to Congress. Rajagopalachari formed the Ministry and introduced compulsory Hindi in 125 schools which paved the way for anti-Hindi agitation.38

The word “Hindi”, according to Grierson, is Persian and not Indian “and properly signifies a native of India, as distinguished from a ‘Hindu’ or non-Mussalman Indian. “It grew up as a lingua franca in the polyglot bazaar attached to the Delhi court.” 39 The history of Hindi starts from the days of the coming of the Mughals to India. When the Mughals established their authority in and around Delhi in 1526, a variant of Apabhramsa form of Sauraseni Prakrit language was spoken by the masses in that region and from this

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38. G.O. 1343, Education and Public Health Department, 14 June 1938.
language the modern Hindi evolved. In fact, at that time, there were many forms of Hindi such as Khari Boli, Braj Bhasa, Bundeli, Kanauiji, Awadhi, Magadhi, Bhajpuri, Bagheli, Chhattisgarhi and some other minor dialects. J.R.Firth, the British linguist, points out that the epoch of Akbar was the period of the formation of the Hindi language. Hence the age of modern Hindi may be approximately fixed as 500 years.

Along with Hindi, another language known as Urdu also evolved from Khari Boli. Since Persian was the official language of the Mughals, its influence was very much evident on the evolution of Urdu language. Persian influenced Khari Boli, written in a variant of Persian script is called Urdu, whereas Sanskrit influenced Khari Boli written in Nagari script is called Hindi. But, in course of time Hindi became more associated with Hinduism and Urdu with Islam. Following this communal twist of languages, there ensued a tussle between Hindi and Urdu for supremacy or the status of official language even during the days of the British regime.

The Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj entered the fray supporting the cause of Hindi, mainly on religious grounds. The Arya Samaj considered Hindi as the symbol of Hindu nationalism and a pure language, whereas Urdu was a Barbarian mixture. Dayananda Saraswathi, the founder of Arya Samaj, propagated the slogan, ‘one nation and one language’, and often said that he was “impatiently waiting for the day when all Indians, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, will be speaking and understanding one language that is Hindi.” It was due to his pressure that in August 1883, Hindi was announced as the official language of Jodhpur State, which was the first in India to take that step.

B.G.Tilak was the first nationalist leader to support the cause of Hindi. In December 1905 he spoke in the Nagari Pracharni Sabha Conference at Banaras emphasizing the need for a common language with a common script. He remarked, “If you want to draw a nation together, there is no force more

powerful than a common language for all.” Further, he advocated the use of Devanagari as the common script.43

Gandhi gives his solution to language issue that a universal language for India should be Hindi. On 20th October 1917, he presided over the second Gujarati Education Conference at Broach, and devoted part of his address for discussing which Indian language should be the national language of India. He stated that the requirements of a national language: It should be easy to learn for Government officials. It should be capable of serving as a medium of religious, economic and political communication throughout India. It should be the speech of the majority of the inhabitants of India. It should be easy to learn for the whole of the country.44

Gandhi’s advocacy for Hindi was based on his knowledge of the position of this language in the country. His article in Young India of 21st January 1920 gives more details of his research. He puts his view as that the Hindustani (Hindi) can only become a national medium for exchange of ideas or for national proceedings.45 Gandhi strongly urged people to give up English and take to their mother tongue and Hindi.46 He further said that a common script for all those who speak the Indo-Sanskrit languages, including the Southern stock. That the Devanagari script should be the common script which is the script known to the largest part of India.47

To make Hindi the national language of India in the full sense, the Dravida region had the foremost place in his mind because it alone presented the real difficulty. After the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan Session, he started the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in 1918 at Madras. An organization charged with the task of propagating the national language in the four linguistic regions of the Madras Presidency.
In November 1947, after India had become independent Gandhi suggested that the first step should be linguistic and political redistribution of provinces. All education must be imparted through the medium of the provincial language. He had asked this to be done as far back as 1938.\textsuperscript{48} The I.N.C. accepted the advice of Gandhi on the language policy. Accordingly, the Congress Working Committee, at its meeting held at Kanpur on 23\textsuperscript{rd} December 1925, resolved that henceforth all its meetings should be conducted both in Hindustani and English. Sarojini Naidu, in her presidential address to the fourth session of the All-India Hindi Conference at Madras in December 1927, said: “You cannot unify a nation by one dress; but you can do so by one language. It is only when there is one language, that the country will be free.”\textsuperscript{49}

Gandhi, earnestly undertook an experiment of spreading the Hindi language to South India. Thus the propagation of Hindi with its projected objectives was moving on the desired lines. But the trouble started once the study of Hindi was made compulsory in the secondary schools in Madras Presidency.\textsuperscript{50}

**First Attempt to Introduce Hindi**

The Government of India Act of 1935 provided for a Federal Government at the Centre and Provincial Governments at the Provinces with a large measure of autonomy. The Congress participated in the general elections held in 1937. In the Madras Presidency, the Congress won 159 seats. C.Rajagopalachari, respectfully called Rajaji, became the leader of the Congress Legislature Party and assumed charge as Premier (Prime Minister) on 14\textsuperscript{th} July 1937. Along with Rajaji, nine Ministers and ten Parliamentary Secretaries also assumed office.\textsuperscript{51}

Rajaji, speaking at a function organized by Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha on 12\textsuperscript{th} July 1937, emphasized the importance of Hindi saying

\textsuperscript{48} Harijan, 2 November 1947.
\textsuperscript{50} Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p 188.
that “it would enable South Indians to understand North Indians better than at present, that Hindi would be found necessary in business and politics in India and that he was of the opinion that Hindi could be made a compulsory subject in schools.”

Their fear was strengthened by the language policy pursued by Rajaji ministry soon after it was formed in July 1937. Rajaji vaguely outlined the language policy at a meet, and at the press session two days before the formation of ministry on 12th July 1937. At that meeting, he stressed the need for a common language and he favoured Hindi to be the lingua franca of the country.

On 10th August, participating in a meeting held at Ramakrishna Students Home, Madras, Rajaji declared that the study of Hindi would be made compulsory in schools. Sathyamurthi, a veteran Congress leader, said that the study of Sanskrit should also be made compulsory along with Hindi to establish ‘Ramrajya’ and to safeguard Varnashrma Dharma. This language policy of the Congress was based on Gandhi’s concept of Swadeshi, which was to replace English by Hindi as the common language of the country.

Objection to Hindi

The next day after Rajaji’s announcement on the introduction of compulsory Hindi, The Madras Mail, leading English daily in an editorial entitled “Nothing in Haste”, warned the Premier against implementing the new proposal without the proper examination of their outcome. It also questioned whether any North Indian Ministry would propose to compel the Hindi-speaking children to learn a South Indian vernacular in order to bring their educational tasks to be equal to those of the school children of the South.

C.N. Annadurai, who later became the founder leader of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.) and Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, registered

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52 Ibid., p. 195.
53 The Mail, 12 July 1937.
54 Young India, 26 December 1924; Mohan Kumaramangalam, S., India’s Language Crisis, Madras, 1965, p. 12.
55 The Madras Mail, 11 August 1937.
his protest against the announcement of Rajaji regarding the compulsory study of Hindi. At the Self-Respect Movement Conference held at Duraiyur in Tiruchi District on 27th August 1937, Annadurai, in his presidential address, made an appeal to the Tamils to oppose compulsory study of Hindi to safeguard their language and culture.56

On the same day in a specially organized meeting, under the presidency of a leading lawyer Venkatachalam, at Karanthai Tamil Sangam in Thanjavur District, well-known Tamil scholars, T.V.Uma Maheswaran, J.M.Somasundaram Pillai, and S.Kuppusamy spoke condemning the introduction of Hindi. On 29th August 1937, under the patronage of the Tamil Academy of Thiruvaiyaru, students and teachers led by S.Govindasamy Pillai and Somasundara Desikar have taken a procession opposing Hindi. Thus both places Karanthai and Thiruvaiyaru are in Thanjavur District.57

Following the events in Thanjavur District, protest meetings were organized in quick succession in Madras and other places. On 5th September, Annadurai addressed a gathering at Soundarya Mahal, Madras with Somasundara Bharathi in chair and explained the reasons for opposing Hindi. Maraimalai Adigal, a great Tamil scholar and saint, in a meeting held at Gokhale Hall, Madras, on 4th October, compared the richness and antiquity of Tamil language and literature with those of the literary heritage of Hindi and called upon the Tamils to prepare themselves for the struggle against Hindi. On 12th October 1937 in a meeting organized at Tirunelveli under the presidency of M.C. Poornalingam Pillai, Annadurai and Somasundara Bharathi urged strongly the Tamil youths to join the struggle against Hindi.58

E.V.R. quit the Congress Party in 1925. Immediately afterwards, he started the Self-Respect Movement and launched a Tamil magazine Kudi Arasu (Republic), in which he wrote many articles opposing Brahmanism and

Hindi. Under his patronage, Self-Respect Conferences were held at Duraiyur, Salem, Rasipuram, Ambur, Namakkal, Thanjavur and Madurai on various days. In all these conferences, resolutions were passed condemning Hindi imposition.59

**Reason for Opposition to Hindi**

In Madras the English educated non-Brahmins, as well as some Brahmins, took an interest in reviving the Dravidian language by interpreting their literature and studying it on modern lines. This revival was shrewdly exploited for political reasons, first, by the provincial Congress and, second, by the leaders of the Justice Party, although their motives and purposes were different. If the former used it for arousing the nationalist spirit, the latter employed it for political purposes. As a result, since 1917 Tamil had been increasingly used as a vehicle of political expression. C.Subramania Bharati, Varadarajulu Naidu, Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, Rajaji, Satyamurthi and other nationalists in Tamil Nadu contributed their share to vernacularizing.60

The Justicites and the Self-Respectors made an attractive appeal to non-Brahmins on racial and communal lines which inevitably strengthened the forces of regionalism as well as Tamil nationalism. In 1937 when Hindi was proposed as a subject of study in the schools, this strong regionalism was revived. There were two main reasons for the Tamil scholars’ opposition to Hindi. In the first place, the introduction of Hindi meant to them the revival of Sanskrit, a language which they traditionally opposed. Secondly, the mother tongue was not a compulsory subject in the curriculum in those days and many passed out of the schools without the knowledge of their mother tongue. Therefore they argued that, without making the mother tongue as a compulsory subject, making Hindi as compulsory subject in schools was not acceptable to Tamils.61

59. Ibid., p. 53.
60. Elancheliyan, Ma., *op.cit.*, pp. 54-55.
61. Ibid., pp.190 & 197.
Tamil Protection Society

While the opposition to Hindi was gaining impetus in the province from different sections of the people, the Tamil scholars organized themselves, purely from cultural considerations, into an association called the ‘Society for the Protection of Tamil Language’ in 1937. Its headquarters was at Tirunelveli, a centre of Tamil revivalism in the early years of Twentieth Century. N.V. Nelliappa Pillai, a retired Tahsildar, was the president. The aim of the Society was to protect Tamil. In order to educate the public, pamphlets were published which discussed what the introduction of compulsory Hindi in the school curricula would mean to Tamils and warned Rajaji not to impose Hindi. It was viewed as a threat to the Tamil language.62

Public meetings were convened at regular intervals, which were often addressed by S. Somasundara Bharati, Eelathu Sivananda Adigal and Kanchi Paravasathu Rajaji. On 5th September 1937, at a largely attended public meeting in Tirunelveli the speakers condemned the compulsory introduction of Hindi. Letters were also addressed by the members of this society in their individual capacity as Congressmen, to Gandhi, Nehru and other North Indian leaders, requesting them to intervene and dissuade Rajaji from introducing Hindi in schools.63

The Anti-Hindi Conferences

On 26th December 1937, the Madras Provincial Tamils Conference was held at Trichy. The Conference, which was started with a mammoth procession of the volunteers and leaders, was inaugurated by an eminent lawyer K. Subramanian Pillai. Umamaheswaran Pillai welcomed the gathering and Somasundara Bharathi presided over the Conference, in which E.V.R. thundered his voice against Hindi. Resolutions were passed condemning the introduction of compulsory study of Hindi and demanding a separate State for Tamils.64

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63. Ibid., pp. 220-221.
64. Ramasamy, A., op.cit., p. 16.
The conference passed one significant resolution that it resolved to appoint a committee consisting of Somasundara Bharati, E.V.R. and T.V. Umamaheswaran Pillai, president of the Karanthai Tamil Sangam, to meet governor.\(^{65}\) It was to explain the discontent of the Tamils in the matter of making Hindi compulsory in public schools, as it will cause great damage to the Tamil language and culture.\(^{66}\) Trichy conference conducted was followed by another significant anti-Hindi conference, which was organized at Kanchipuram on 27\(^{th}\) February 1938 under the presidentship of K.V. Reddy Naidu, the former Prime Minister of Madras Presidency. Resolutions were passed condemning compulsory Hindi, and warning the government not to spend the public fund on Hindi, which would create unrest among the masses.\(^{67}\)

In order to welcome a separate Tamil province to be established, the Tamilian Association with thirty eight members was inaugurated at the conference itself, under the leadership of Somasundra Bharati. Thereafter the Tamil Protection Society seemed to have merged with this.\(^{68}\)

**Introduction of Hindi in 125 Schools**

Rajaji, as Premier and Finance Minister, while presenting the annual budget for 1938-1939 in the Madras Legislative Assembly, announced that provision had been made in the budget for the teaching of Hindi in 125 secondary schools. M.A. Muthiah Chettiar, Justice Party Leader in the Legislative Assembly, demanded the scraping of compulsion clause in the study of Hindi and making it optional.\(^{69}\) In spite of the noisy protest made against the imposition of Hindi both inside and outside the Assembly, the Government ignored this protest and the sentiments against Hindi and ultimately it allocated a sum of Rs. 20,000 for payment of teachers to teach Hindi.\(^{70}\)


\(^{66}\) *The Mail*, 28 December 1937.

\(^{67}\) Elancheliyan, Ma., *op.cit.*, pp. 58-65.

\(^{68}\) Visswanathan, E.Sa., *op.cit.*, pp. 200-201.

\(^{69}\) Nambi Arooran, K., *op.cit.*, p. 195.

The government was adamant in ignoring the mounting opposition and did not make the teaching of Hindi optional. On 21st April 1938 the Madras Government passed an order introducing the study of Hindi compulsory in certain secondary schools in the Presidency.\footnote{G.O. No 911, Education Department, 21 April 1938.} Nine days later on 30th April 1938 the Ministry of Public Information issued a press communiqué which said that for this purpose, 125 Government secondary schools were selected and these were distributed as four schools in Kannada speaking region, seven in Malayalam, fifty four in Telugu, and sixty in Tamil.\footnote{Madras Mail, 30 April 1939.}

\textbf{Initial Reaction to Hindi}

The initial reaction to the government orders came first of all in the form of an individual satyagraha. One Jagadesan (who had adopted ‘Stalin’ as his first name), probably a Self-Respector, residing at Thyagarayanagar in Madras, commenced a fast unto death from 1st May 1938, not only to protest against compulsory Hindi but to force the government to withdrew its orders.\footnote{Madras Mail, 2 May 1938; Kudi Arasu, 8 May 1938.} Since the leaders of the anti-Hindi movement and the Justicites were opposed to the use of fasts as political weapons, they discouraged others from resorting to fasting in their campaigns against Hindi. After ten weeks Jagadesan himself had withdrawn his fast.\footnote{Kudi Arasu, 8 May 1938.} The Madurai District Anti-Hindi Conference was held under the chairmanship of Medai Thalavai Kumarasamy Mudaliar on 8th May 1938, and it requested the parents to boycott the 125 schools, where compulsory Hindi was introduced and send their children to other schools. At the same time a committee was formed, with the avowed object of picketing such schools.\footnote{Madras Mail, 10 May 1938.} Meanwhile E.V.R. wrote series of inflammatory editorials in \textbf{Kudi Arasu} against compulsory Hindi. However, he had intensified the whole anti-Hindi movement.\footnote{Kudi Arasu, 29 May 1938.}

Tamil scholars and political leaders met at Tennur, in Tiruchy on 28th May, and resolved to form a Madras Provincial Anti-Hindi League under the
chairmanship of Somasundara Bharathi with K.A.P. Viswanatham as Secretary and E.V.R., Umamaheswaran, W.P.A. Soundara Pandiyan as members. This was the first state level committee formed to oppose Hindi. It considered the Hindi question in all its implications and decided to launch a campaign. At the conclusion of the meeting the committee formally inaugurated the Madras Provincial Anti-Hindi League with 112 members. Full authority was also given to C.D. Nayagam to launch organized picketing before the Premier Rajaji’s house at Thyagarayanagar in Madras on 1st June 1938.

As expected Nayagam came with 300 volunteers on 1st June 1938 in front of the Premier’s residence and they held a meeting which was addressed by Arunagiri Adigal, Shanmugananda Adigal, Eelathu Adigal and Vimalananda Adigal. Towards the end of the meeting one Ponnuswami of Palladam, began his fast unto death. Ponnuswami’s fast on 1st June onwards attracted the attention of a large number of politicians, for he claimed to be a Congressman. Many Self-Respecters and Justicites, including N. Sivaraj, visited him. The Minister for Public Information, Ramanathan, was one of the visitors.

In continuation, on 3rd June a procession of over 1,000 people started from Kodambakkam staged a demonstration in front of Premier’s residence. The procession was headed by Nayagam and Shanmugananda Adigal. The police arrested them along with Palladam Ponnuswami was on fast from 1st June 1938 in the vicinity of the Premier’s residence and they were brought before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, to be remanded.

They were charged with offences under Criminal Law Amendment Act. It was a comprehensive Act promulgated in the teeth of opposition in 1932 to suppress the civil disobedience movement. All the Congressmen including Rajaji condemned it as the ‘lawless law’. The same law was, however,

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78. *Kudi Arasu*, 5 June 1938.
80. Ilancheliyan, Ma., *op.cit.*, p. 78.
invoked by the Congress leaders to put down the anti-Hindi agitation. All three agitators were charged for inciting people by their speeches and action to loiter in front of the Premier’s residence. 82

Later, Palladam Ponnusamy was sentenced to six weeks rigorous imprisonment. He was the first, in the history of Anti-Hindi Agitations, to be arrested and sentenced. C.D. Nayagam was sentenced to one month simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200/- and Shanmuganantha Adigal to four months simple imprisonment. 83

The Government’s firm stand on the implementation of Hindi in schools and the stern action taken against the civil resisters were criticized by all the leading newspapers in the country. Despite the caution of the newspapers, the government policy was not modified. Demonstrations were held before the schools where Hindi was compulsorily taught on their reopening in July 1938 as well as before the Premier’s residence. 84

Picketing educational institutions had a tremendous propaganda value for the anti-Hindi movement. Students boycotted the Hindi classes. They staged demonstrations at Salem, Trichirappalli and Tirunelveli, causing new problems for the educational authorities. 85

On 9th June 1938, the Government issued a press communiqué to explain the reasons for the introduction of compulsory study of Hindi. It is stated that the government desires to make it clear to remove the misconceptions on this subject. The educated youth should possess a working knowledge of the most widely spoken language in India to be part of national life. Therefore Government decided to introduce of Hindi in the secondary school curriculum of our province. 86

But the volunteers continued to picket schools, where compulsory study of Hindi was introduced. As a result, many leaders and volunteers including

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82. Visswanathan, E.Sa., op.cit., p. 206.
83. Sunday Observer, 3 July 1938.
84. Visswanathan, E.Sa., op.cit., pp. 210-211.
85. Ibid
86. G.O. No. 1343, Education Department, 14 June 1938.
Arunagiri Adigal, Elathu Sivananda Adigal, K.M. Balasubramaniam and Marai Thirunavukkarasu were arrested and sentenced to varying periods of imprisonment.\(^{87}\)

**Anti-Hindi Tamil Brigade’s March to Madras**

The Tamil Brigade started its march to Madras on 1\(^{st}\) August 1938, from Uraiyur in Trichy. I. Kumaraswami Pillai, lawyer of Thanjavur was deputed to lead the Tamil Brigade. The grand old lady Moovalur Ramamirthammal assisted him. The purpose of the marchers was to mobilize public opinion against Hindi and they took a long route, which passed through Trichy, Thanjavur, and South Arcot and Chingleput districts. They covered 234 villages and sixty mofussil towns in the course of their march. Eighty-seven public meetings were addressed; it was stated that over 450,000 people were attended in all.\(^{88}\)

The Anti-Hindi Tamil Brigade’s 42 day painstaking march was significant and strengthened the opposition to Hindi among the masses. The marchers arrived Madras on 11\(^{th}\) September 1938. It resulted in the formation of brigade in other districts. To strengthen this popular awakening E.V.R. made a whirlwind tour of the Tamil districts, giving aggressive speeches against both Hindi and Rajaji’s Ministry.

Anti-Hindi processions were taken out in all the major cities of the Madras Province on various days.\(^{89}\) On 21\(^{st}\) September 1938, Annadurai was arrested on charges of inciting the public to defy the Government orders. After five days of trial, he was sentenced to four months simple imprisonment.

**E.V.R. and Justice Party**

Apart from strengthening the forces of Tamil nationalism, the period between 1937 and 1938 marked the emergence of E.V.R. as the leader of the Justice Party and the beginning of the Tamilization of the party.\(^{90}\) There was a deadlock in the Justice circles; E.V.R. began to dominate the anti-Hindi

\(^{87}\) Elancheliyan, Ma., *op.cit.*, p. 85.

\(^{88}\) Visswanathan, E.Sa., *op.cit.*, pp. 211-212.

\(^{89}\) *Sunday Observer*, 18 and 25 September 1938.

\(^{90}\) *Madras Mail*, 21 August 1938.
movement. The anti-Hindi leaders needed the help of politicians and especially those like E.V.R., because he had an organization with branches in almost all the mofussil towns, two popular Tamil newspapers and a team of speakers in Tamil. Therefore E.V.R.’s Viduthalai and Kudi Arasu acted as unofficial organs of the anti-Hindi League.\textsuperscript{91}

Even Rajaji accused that the anti-Hindi movement which was engineered by Somasundara Bharati and E.V.R, the former motivated by anti-Aryan sentiments and the latter by anti-Congress feelings. Thus by August 1938 E.V.R. built up a strong image, in the Tamil districts of the Madras Presidency. On 11\textsuperscript{th} September 1938, the Raja of Bobbili, in his capacity as the leader of the Justice Party, issued, a ‘very moderate statement’. In his statement he appealed to the anti-Hindi agitators to abandon all forms of coercive methods and suggested to the government that it should make Hindi an optional subject.\textsuperscript{92}

The government acted swiftly to silence the opposition. As a first step it tried to intimidate the newspapers which were supporting the anti-Hindi campaign by raiding Viduthalai office on 5\textsuperscript{th} October 1938. The raid was intended to suppress the only Tamil daily, which had been acting as the unofficial organ of the anti-Hindi campaigners. On the following day the editor, Muthuswami Pillai, and the publisher, E.V.Krishnaswami Naicker, brother of E.V.Ramasami Naicker - were arrested. They were tried and found guilty of disrupting communal harmony in society and sentenced to six months simple imprisonment.\textsuperscript{93}

The Tamil Nadu Women’s Conference was held at Madras on 13\textsuperscript{th} November 1938 under the presidentship of T.Nilambikai, daughter of Maraimalai Adigal. In which E.V.R. was given the title “Periyar.” Resolutions condemning the imposition of Hindi and appreciating the selfless service of the

\textsuperscript{92} Ramasamy , A., \textit{op. cit.},p. 20.
\textsuperscript{93} Visswanathan , E.Sa., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 217.
leaders and volunteers who had undergone imprisonment for the cause of Tamil were passed.\textsuperscript{94}

The next day, on 14\textsuperscript{th} November, 1938 five women Dharmambal, Moovalur Ramamirthammal, Malarmukathammaiayar, Pattammal and Seethamal with her three year old daughter Mangaiarkkarasi and one year old son Nachchinarkkinyan picketed in front of the Hindu Theological High School. All of them were arrested and sentenced to six weeks imprisonment. Following this, a large number of women were arrested and sentenced for picketing.\textsuperscript{95} E.V.R. was sentenced to one and a half-year rigorous imprisonment for his speech at the Tamil Nadu women’s conference. The Governor expressed his regret about the conviction of E.V.R. and intervened to alter the imprisonment from rigorous to simple.

The fourteenth confederation of the Justice Party began its three-day session at Madras on 29\textsuperscript{th} December 1938.\textsuperscript{96} It was attended by large number of delegates and visitors from all parts of the presidency. At the request of the members of the executive committee, Pannirselvan deputized for E.V.R. as the president of the confederation. E.V.R.’s presidential address, which was read by Pannirselvam, outlined the programme of the future activities of the Justice Party. In the first place E.V.R. defended and accepted the communal side of the party as its cardinal principle because of the prevailing discontent among non-Brahmins which was the result of the administrative policies pursued by the government.\textsuperscript{97}

Secondly, the party should defend the ‘rightful supremacy of the Tamil language’ and oppose any ‘incursion of Hindi’ on the Tamil Country. Yet another aim of the party was to agitate for the creation of an independent Tamil Nadu with status similar to that enjoyed by Burma and Ceylon. E.V.R.’s stand on communal justice, his opposition to Hindi and his call for independent

\textsuperscript{94} Madras Mail, 11 September 1938.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{96} Neduncheliyan, R., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 708.
\textsuperscript{97} Ramasamy, A., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 21.
Tamil Nadu were put in the form of resolutions and were adopted unanimously as the future programme.98

Finally, at an informal Justice Party meeting on 3rd January 1939, it was agreed upon that public meetings in the Tamil districts should be held in order to protest against the imposition of Hindi and demand E.V.R.’s release from prison.99

The Congress high command in the Tamil districts directed its volunteers to arrange meetings and processions to counter the activities of the Justicites and to mobilize support for retaining Hindi in schools. One such disturbance took place in the city of Madras on 8th January 1939 when the anti-Hindi agitators led by C.Basu Dev, a pro-Justice Party trade unionist. When the procession of over 12,000 reached Kalingarayan Street, Washermanpet, a number of Congressmen and sympathizers of Hindi shouted rudely at the processionists and called them ‘hirelings’ (Kulippataikal). The processionists retaliated by denouncing them as traitors to the Tamil language (Tamil Turokikal) and slaves of Brahmins (Brahmana Adimaikal). The shouting match erupted into violence.100

The police intervened and arrested 12 persons including six Congressmen. Many persons received serious injuries and some policemen were hit by bottles. Violent clashes of similar nature between the pro and the anti-Hindi volunteers in the Tamil districts became a regular feature.101 While the encounters between the pro and the anti-Hindi volunteers were on the increase the government’s attitude remained unchanged. It refused to revise or modify its language policy.

And by 31st January, 683 men and 36 women were sent to prison under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. At a public meeting Rajaji himself characterized the anti-Hindi controversy as ‘not a fight between Hindi and Tamil but between liberalism and narrow mindedness’. A Brahmin wrote to the

98. Ibid.
100. Madras Mail, 29 December 1938; Kudi Arasu, 31 December 1938.
Hindu that the immediate need of the people was compulsory primary education in their own mother tongue rather than compulsory Hindi.\textsuperscript{102}

This was further aggravated by the death of L. Natarajan, an anti-Hindi agitator while serving seven and a half month rigorous imprisonment at the Madras prison for having picketed before the Hindu Theological High School on 5\textsuperscript{th} December 1938. He was arrested on the same day. But his health condition in prison was deteriorated but he died on 15\textsuperscript{th} January 1939 at the hospital as prisoner.\textsuperscript{103}

According to the medical report, read on the floor of the Madras Legislative Assembly on 18\textsuperscript{th} January, Natarajan was given proper medical attention but died unfortunately of natural causes. Natarajan was the first in the history of Anti-Hindi Agitations to die for the cause of Tamil. Within two months after the demise of Natarajan, another Tamil volunteer, Thalamuthu, also fell ill in prison and died on 12\textsuperscript{th} March, 1939. The death of Natarajan and Thalamuthu made to worry about the health of E.V.R.\textsuperscript{104}

In the first week of February news about E.V.R.’s illness caused grave concern among the Justicites. There was a heavy pressure to government to release E.V.R. in view of his ‘unstable health’. Though the intensity of the agitations was so strong ignoring the continued agitation, the government issued an order on 3\textsuperscript{rd} April 1939 to extend the compulsory study of Hindi to another one hundred schools.\textsuperscript{105}

In May E.V.R.’s condition was serious. The ministry released him from jail without pre-conditions on 22\textsuperscript{nd} May 1939. It also released all the anti-Hindi prisoners before the expiry of their period of conviction in the first week of June. At the same time, Rajaji assured in the legislative council that the government would consider abolishing the scheme of teaching Hindi in schools. On 18\textsuperscript{th} June, when a women’s delegation led by Dharmambal met the

\textsuperscript{102} Kudi Arasu, 7 January 1939.
\textsuperscript{103} Visswanathan, E.Sa., \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 240-241.
\textsuperscript{104} Madras Mail, 9 January 1939.
\textsuperscript{105} Elancheliyan, Ma., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 88.
Premier he once again asserted that ‘no compulsion’ was attached to the teaching of Hindi. 106

The government then took more drastic measures to quell the anti-Hindi movement. On 3rd August 1939, the police raided the house of Dharmambal in Mint Street, forced open a room and confiscated all the files relating to the anti-Hindi agitation. Swami Shanmugananda, a leader of the anti-Hindi movement, was arrested for organizing the picketing before the school. At the same time, the police raided the anti-Hindi headquarters in Peddunaickenpet, Viduthalai and Kudi Arasu office and took possession of some of the back issues, letters and files concerning the anti-Hindi campaign.107

The members of the executive committee of the Justice Party met at the residence of E.V.R. in Erode on 11th August 1939. Being the first meeting since E.V.R. became the leader, much importance was attached to its proceeding as it would be a pointer to the future programme. The language policy was thoroughly discussed. Many agreed that the best way to protect economic and cultural interests of the Tamils was to establish an independent Tamil Country. As a first step to realize this aim the members of the executive committee unanimously decided to ‘work for the overthrow of the Congress Ministry.’108

Resignation of Congress Ministry

The political situation in the country took an unexpected turn owing to the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939. The Congress Working Committee which met at Wardha on 23rd October 1939 took exception to the war being forced on India without her consent. As no satisfactory assurance came from the British Government or the Government of India the working committee called upon the Congress ministries to resign. In accordance with this directive the Premier of Madras moved the anti-war resolution in the

106. Madras Mail, 18 February 1939; Kudi Arasu, 18 February 1939.
107. G.O. No. 775, Education Department, 3 April 1939.
Legislative Assembly on 26th October 1939. The resolution was passed and the Ministry resigned.109

**Future Programme of Justice Party**

When the executive committee of the Justice Party met on 28th October 1939 to consider the resignation of the Congress ministry and to re-evaluate the future programme of the party in the light of changed political climate of the country. Three issues dominated the proceedings. They are: 1) the immediate question of supporting and extending cooperation to the war effort. 2) Deciding to accept the office if the party was called upon to do so. And 3) formulating a firm policy for attaining Tamil Nadu. Without any discussion a unanimous decision was reached to support the British Raj in its ‘hour of trial’.110

Finally the party decided that to work for the independence of Tamil Nadu should be the ‘principal post-war demand of the Justice Party.’ The executive committee’s decision to demand a separate Tamil Nadu and E.V.R.’s vigorous propaganda for it was criticized by the nationalist press. They were unanimous in condemning E.V.R. and the Justice Party for following a regretful policy and undermining the unity of the country.111

The *Mail* felt sorry for the ‘great political party declining into a narrow and separatist sect’ and criticized E.V.R for this act. It called on E.V.R to define Tamil Nadu and its geographical boundaries. Further it was stated that it would be impracticable. The criticism of the *Mail* challenged by E.V.R to justify his demand for an independent Tamil Country.E.V.R. elucidated all details connected with its formation.112

E.V.R. explained the geographical boundary of the Tamil Nation, (Dravidian Nation) which would be approximately the composite territory of Madras State and the adjoining territories where the four major Dravidian linguistic groups lived. A unitary form of government was envisaged for the

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moment. But if that was unsuitable, a federation of linguistic provinces would
be formed. Until its defense potentialities were strengthened it would be a
British protectorate. Furthermore, E.V.R. assured his readers that in the
Dravidian Nation equal opportunity would be afforded to everyone without
caste differences.\footnote{Ibid}

In the first week of January 1940 E.V.R. went to Bombay specifically to
meet M.A.Jinnah and B.R.Ambedkar, the leader of the Muslim League and the
Scheduled Castes Federation respectively. On 6\textsuperscript{th} January 1940 he met
Ambedkar and explained to him Justice Party’s attitude to the Congress, its
stand on Hindi and the need for demanding a separate country for the
Dravidians. On the following day, E.V.R. had a lengthy discussion for three
hours with Jinnah on the same subject. Apart from these two, E.V.R. had useful
discussions with two Maharashtrian leaders, V.P.Jadev and M.R.Jayakar. On
his return from Bombay, E.V.R. became a spokesman for the Muslim League
in the province. Jinnah’s leadership and his statesmanship were praised at all
public meetings held by the Justicites.\footnote{Dinamani, 16 November 1939; Madras Mail, 15 November 1939.}

Again coming to anti-Hindi agitation there was an article in \textit{The Madras
Mail}, on 17\textsuperscript{th} November 1939, in which request was made to the Governor to
repeal the policy of the Congress Government on Hindi. The Governor also in
his fortnightly reports requested the Viceroy, Lord Linlithow and the Secretary
of State, to permit him to revoke the previous Government’s order on the
compulsory study of Hindi. But, both the Viceroy and the Secretary of State
refused to accept the Governor’s views. At the same time, the Congress
Government’s earlier proposal of extending the compulsory study of Hindi to
another 100 schools was cancelled on 27\textsuperscript{th} November 1939.\footnote{Kudi Arasu, 26 November 1939.}

\textbf{New Anti-Hindi League under E.V.R.}

On seeing the inaction of the Government to reverse the earlier
Congress Government’s policy on Hindi, the Tamil enthusiasts wanted to
revive the anti-Hindi agitation. On 3\textsuperscript{rd} December 1939, Anti-Hindi Day was
celebrated. Tamil scholars and leaders met at Kanchipuram on 31\textsuperscript{st} December to decide the future course of action. A new Anti-Hindi League under the chairmanship of E.V.R. with Annadurai as secretary was formed to revive the struggle against Hindi. On 19\textsuperscript{th} February 1940, in a meeting at Gokale Hall in Madras, E.V.R. gave the final warning to the British Government to revoke the compulsory study of Hindi or else face the renewal of agitations, which would be launched with more vigour and strength.\textsuperscript{116}

The Governor again pointed out in his reports to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State that the deep seated bitterness in the Tamil Country against an unwanted North Indian language, the Hindi. At last the Secretary of State yielded to the pressure of the Governor of Madras and communicated the same to Viceroy on 18\textsuperscript{th} January 1940. Jock Erskine pleaded for the approval of his proposal to make Hindi optional instead of compulsory. The Viceroy also in his reply to the Secretary of State agreed to Jock Erskine’s proposal about Hindi.\textsuperscript{117}

\textbf{Withdrawal of Compulsion of Hindi}

The Government of Madras issued an order on 21\textsuperscript{st} February 1940 abolishing compulsory study of Hindi in schools. The Government of Madras abolished compulsory Hindi in an offer to win the cooperation of all political parties.\textsuperscript{118}

The next day, the Government issued a press communiqué clarifying their stand on the study of Hindi. It examined the question of replacement of optional for compulsory Hindi in schools. Orders were issued at once to those schools in which Hindi was being taught compulsorily and the attendance at these classes was optional and not compulsory.\textsuperscript{119} Thus, nearly after two years of trials and troubles, the Government came forward to withdraw the earlier Congress Government’s order making the study of Hindi compulsory.

\textsuperscript{116} Kudi Arasu, 21 January 1940 and 28 January 1940.
\textsuperscript{117} Nambi Arooran, K., \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 215-216; Elancheliyan, \textit{ma.}, \textit{op.cit.}, p.196.
\textsuperscript{118} Ramasamy, A., \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 23-24.
\textsuperscript{119} G.O. No. 300, Education Department, 21 February 1940.
The next day E.V.R. issued a statement welcoming the Government’s decision and congratulating the Tamils on this achievement. Annadurai wrote an editorial in *Viduthalai* paying rich tributes to Natarajan and Thalamuthu, who laid their lives for the cause of Tamil language and culture and to the leaders and volunteers, who faced the sufferings and hardships, imprisonment and insults in the struggle against the imposition of Hindi.  

Sri Kanchi Paravasthu Rajagopalachariar Swami congratulated on the wise decision taken by the Government of Madras in abolishing Hindi which was forced on the reluctant Tamils by the late Congress government. The *Mail* welcomed the decision of the Government in an editorial.  

Jinnah was the first to send his congratulatory message to E.V.R. In his message Jinnah said: “Your efforts to prevent the Congress Government to enforce Hindi upon unwilling people and your sufferings and sacrifices in that struggle have met with well deserved success. I am sure that those who suffered will have satisfaction that their great sacrifices were not in vain.”

The anti-Hindi agitation came to an end temporally. E.V.R.’s role in anti-Hindi agitation was extraordinary. Literally he threatened and issued a warning statement to the Congress government. After taking charge of presidentship of Justice Party he organized many agitations over language issue.

The Justice Party was represented the Dravidans and the party promoted the interest of the people who had spoken the Dravidian languages. In the Justice Party, the Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam speaking people were members. T.M. Nair, was a Malayalee, Natesa Mudaliar was a Tamilian, P.T. Theagaraya Chetty and Ramarayaninar were Telugu speaking leaders. When E.V.R. came out of the Congress, he organized the people against the imposition of Hindi and Sanskrit. When he became the leader of the Justice party, he organized anti-Hindi agitation and procession against the imposition

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120. G.O. No. 301, Education Department. 22 February 1940.
121. *Viduthalai*, 22 February 1940.
122. *Kudi Arasu*, 3 March 1940.
of Hindi by the Rajaji Ministry which was in power form 1937 to 1939. The Tamil scholars and elites backed E.V.R. in his efforts to check the imposition of Hindi in the educational institutions of Tamil Nadu. Because of the mounting opposition to the Hindi in Tamil Nadu, at last the Government of Madras came forward to abolish compulsory study of Hindi in schools.