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## **The Birth of Justice Party and the Dravidian Legacy**

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### **Abstract**

*A nation can never be dormant or static for long, which can also change the way of its life- either by the internal socio-political economic and religious problems or by the invasions of foreign nations, causing the change by the Mughals and the British in the case of India. Thus change and continuity has been the order of world from time immemorial. Changes can also be effected not only at national level but also at regional levels by the great individuals or originations and associations, reformers and freedom fighters. Such regional history or also contributes to the national history. The Justice Party, which are birth to Dravidian Movement, is one such association, with struggles and agitations launched in the interest of the people, in general and of Dravidians or non-Bramins, in particular, against the domination of Bramin, represented by Rajaji and E.V. Ramasami Periyar, as Bramin and Dravidian-divide widened in the years to come.*

**Keywords : Justice Party, Non - Bramin Movement, Dravidian Movement.**

A movement can be defined as a group of people, with identical mind-sets and network of such persons, either to prevent or support the cause for which its formed. Bramin, the higher caste, in the varanashramadharama system, with different and distinctive language and culture of their own. Dravidian, the lower caste in the varanashrama system, with linguistic affinity and affiliation, living in Southern states.

Indian and foreign scholars have made substantial contribution in the past to the discovery of history and culture of ancient India. There is still an ample scope to throw fresh light on some of the phases and facets of Indian history, regional or national. There are still some broken chains in the existing knowledge about the subject, which can be restored and re-structured with the help of new findings and new discoveries. Historical perceptions are changing in the light of fresh study and research. Many new evidences have come to the fore which need fresh interpretations. In recent past many new facts have come to light which necessitates the historical reconstruction.

Hence, history is an ending dialogue between the past and present and it is called science, for example, the origin and expansion of the Aryans have long been a controversial and debatable subject. Several scholars both Indian and foreign including philologists, ethnologist, historians, archaeologist and indologist have worked on it during the past two centuries. The results of the researches are both positive and negative.

In ancient period, India had been called “Bharatha kanda” or “Bharatha varsha” named after “Bharatha,” the son born to sage Viswamithra and the celestial myth Menaka according to the Hindu mythology.

It was ruled by chieftains and littoral kings, fighting for supremacy and power within them. There was no nation, at all. The empire of Gupta and Magatha were to emerge very later in the history.

The name of India, as a single geographical and political unit, was given by the British rulers. In fact, the people who were living in the banks of Sindu river in Punjab, “Sapta-Sindu” (seven-rivers) were called “Sindu” and in course of time the term got corrupted by the usage of people as Hindu and then India.

The change and continuity of life has been classified by the arm chair historians as the Ancient, the Medieval and the Modern.

The economists divide the process or change as pre-Industrial, Industrial and the post Industrial, at word level.

In terms of overall periodization, the Indian socio-cultural and religions history can be classified as:

1. The Pre-Vedic
2. The Vedic
3. The Post-Vedic
4. Buddhism
5. Jainism
6. Indo-Islamic
7. Indo –Anglican
8. The Pre-Independence

### **Renaissance**

These was radical changes in almost every sphere of life ie., Social, religious, cultural, economic, educational industrial and agricultural, levels in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The pioneer of socio-religious movement in India was Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833), the founder of the Brahmo Samaj. He advocated reforms in various fields like social structure, religion, education and customs. Ram Mohan felt the necessity of scientific western education to help the Hindu society to get rid of superstitions and unnecessary rituals He took lead in 1818, and created a public opinion against the most cruel and gruesome practice of self-immolation by the widows.

The Indian people perceived the British rule, which hampered their normal socio economic and culture growth. The national spirit awakened the people who were ruled by the British.

Historians can be classified into two categories broadly, the one is the conventional historians who write about kings and rulers of the past and other covering the great individuals, associations and movements that changed the society at various phases of history and developments including the contemporary events of importance.

There are many theories behind the Indian National Congress which was formed in 1885 by A.O. Hume, Dada Bhai Naoroji, Fakhruddin Ali Thayabji, Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee.

A.O. Hume, a retired Indian Civil Service, played a crucial role in founding this party. With this, a new phase of national movement started and aim of which was to get more Constitutional rights for Indians. The Aligarh Movement regarded the Congress as inimical to muslims.

There were many political associations in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The British Indian association (1851), Mahajana Sabha of Madras(1884), the Bombay Presidency associations(1885), the Saravajanik Sabha of Poona and the Indian association(1876), based on narrow communal and caste systems, which were not national in character and outlook , with self-centredness of their own.

The Indian National Congress had gained fresh momentum with the arrival of Gandhi to national freedom movement. Gandhi used new ideas and concepts like ‘Satya graha’, ‘Swaraj’, ‘Swadeshi’, Civil Disobedience, Non-co-operation, Non-Vileonce, and boycott against British.

About this, “the non-bramin Federation of Presidency passed a resolution in January 1921, condemning the non-co-operation scheme of Gandhi as calculated to subvert all constitutional agitation and bring the country to chaos and anarchy, calling all the patriotic Indians to oppose it.”

The Federation of Presidency never understood that the above move of Gandhi as a blessing in disguise. The Congress Party had in is fold not only “moderates” and “extremists” groups, but also ‘Bramins’ and ‘non-Bramins’. The Bramins were able to prevail upon the leaders to capture high position in the party as well as in the civil administration which provoked non-Bramins to start South Indian Liberal Federation in 1916, which was called Justice Party later.

Dr. T.M.Nair as president of the Justice Party and Thiyagaraja Chettiar as its secretary read out the manifesto of the party. A common lingua- franka, for whole of India was contemplated and also necessitated for unity and unification of the nation, noted for its diversity. Gandhi was the advocate for imposition of Hindi for uniformity.

### **Hindi Movement**

In 1937, when C. Rajaji alias C. Rajagopalachari, became the Chief Minister of Madras Presidency, introduced Hindi as a compulsory language of study in schools and thereby ignited a series of anti-hindi agitations, organised by Justice Party headed by A.T. Panneerselvam and supported by Periyar, which ended with numerous arrests by Rajaji Government, including Periyar. Women participation during Rajagopalachariar’s period in 1938 anti-Hindi a long march was arranged for from Trichi to Chennai under the leadership Ramamiruthammaiyar. Dr. Dharmambhal and Malar Mugathu Ammaiyar was the other important participant of the march. They crossed 600 kilometres in 42 days and reached Chennai covering 90 public meetings.

On November 14<sup>th</sup> 1938, “Viduthalai”, had given a detailed coverage to the women’s conference and subsequent court arrest had in Chennai. All women leaders of the movement took part in the agitation. They started the procession from Kasi Viswanathan temple carrying Tamil Flag and shouting the slogan “Down Hindi and Long Live Tamil” and were arrested when they reached Theosophical school and sentenced for three months rigorous imprisonment.

Ramamirutham was taken to women’s jail at Vellore. Periyar Pundit Narayani Amman and Ponnambalam were the others who were arrested along with Ramanirutham. (un published theses)

The fear of the imposition of Hindi language had its origin in the conflict between Bramins and non-Bramins divide. Acceptance of Hindi in schools was considered as bondage by Tamilians.

During the same year, the slogan “Dravida Nadu for Dravidians” was raised by Periyar. He explained that the imposition of the Hindi was the dangerous system used by Bramins to infiltrate into Dravidian culture and reasoned out that adoption of Hindi would make Tamilians subordinate to Hindi speaking people and second grade citizens. The Anti Hindi Movement a major role, in the later year, in the socio political cultural history of Tamil Nadu, strengthening the Dravidian movement.

The ancient history of Tami Nadu dates back about 6000 years and the origin of its people is a topic of debate related to the Aryan invasion theory. Those who believe in this theory support the view that the Tamils belong to the Drvidian race and were part of the Indus Valley settlers. Later, with the advent of the Aryan invasions the Dravidian were forced to remain back into the deep south where they ultimately settled the present day states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh constitute the Dravidian culture.

### **Elections and the Justice Party**

The first general election by the legislative council constituted as per the Mont-ford reforms more held at the end of Nov. 1920. In the legislative council, 127 members the Justice Party acquired strength of 81 and formed the first ministry on 17.12.1920.

The second general election was held on 31.10.1923, returned to the power with fewer less majorities. Sir.P. Thiyagaraja Chetty who led the Justice Party to victory in 1920 and 1923, died on 28.04.1925.

The leadership taken up by the Raja of Panagal and in the election held on 08.11.1928 the justice party was defeated. The credit for this primarily goes to the Justice Party as its the first time in the history. When the communal GO introduced by the Justice Party it was struck down by court of law agitation was launched by Periyar E.V.R leading to amendment to Constitution of India.

In the election of 1930 the Justice Party won and Munusamy Naidu formed the ministry and passed communal G.O. of it, “Equality in a society of unequal’s can only be achieved only when certain adventitious aides and like reservations to backward classes and scheduled castes the historically handicapped section of the socially” (Justice Venugopal).

The first election to the legislative assembly as per the government of India Act 1937 took place in Feb 1937 and the Congress Party won 159 out of 215 seats and formed ministry. Thereafter the rule of the Justice Party came to an end.

In 1967 C.N. Annadurai became the chief minister of Tamil Nadu who renamed the Madras State as Tami Nadu, introduced two language formula (Tamil and English) abolishing three language formula with Hindi by Central Govt, legalised the Self Respect Marriage. These are the contributions and mile stones of the D.M.K. After the 1971 general election to assembly, the new D.M.K. ministry sworn in under the Chief Minister of M. Karunanidhi.

### **Resolution on Reservation by Periyar**

Since 1920, Periyar was moving resolutions in Congress conference demanding the communal reservation for Non-Bramins in Government jobs in Tirunelveli in 1920, Thanjavur in 1921, Tiruppur in 1922, Salem in 1923, and Kanchepuram in 1925, but stalled by Bramins, enraged by this Periyar left to the Congress in 1925 and started Self-Respect Movement to protect and safeguard the language and culture of the Dravidian race degraded by the caste system of Bramins.

The Congress boycotted the general election. So the Justice Party came to power. The Justice Party formed independent ministry headed by Dr. Subbarayan, implemented communal reservation scheme in 1928.

The Justice Party was renamed as Dravidar Kazhagam (Dravidian Association) to signify that it was exclusively and for social movement for the emancipation of Dravidians in 1944.

### **Dravidian Party under Anna Durai**

In 1949 C.N. Anna Durai established a separate association called the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam due to the ideological differences that took place between Periyar and the younger generation within the Dravida Kazhagam. Periyar of the view that the Movement which under takes social reforms would lose its vigour and sense of purpose, if it contests in elections for power. The younger generation wanted to contest in elections for better service to people.

When Periyar married young Maniammai (30 years) at the age of 70 on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1948 they parted company with Pariyar, but not with the ideals and goals of Periyar as Anna said that both D.M.K and D.K would work like a double barrel-gun against the Braminism, follow Self-Respect Movement and Tamil language and culture. The D.K continued to counter Braminism and Indo-Aryan propaganda.

In the general election that followed two years later in 1967, the D.M.K captured power with anti-Hindi wave and ruled for nine long years, the longest tenure of a non-Congress ministry in any state of India. In the Centenary Year of Periyar (1978-79) the Government of India issued a Special Commemorative Stamp in his honour and briefly introduced him thus:

E.V. Ramasami or E.V.R., as he was popularly known, was born on September 17 1879 at Erode in Tamil Nadu. He left the school at the age of ten and joined his father in business when he was twelve.

The patriotic fervour of Ramasami led him to give up his lucrative business and join the Indian National Congress in its struggle for freedom. He became an ardent fighter and came to be closely associated with Rajaji. Ramasami Periyar courted imprisonment severe times during freedom movement.

The Satyagraha he launched at Vaikom in Kerala against the despicable practice of barring entry of people of certain castes lived was a success and he earned the title 'Vaikom hero'. He left Congress in 1925 and carried on a crusade against the caste system and advocated prohibition of arrack shops E.V.R. strove for the emancipation of the exploited masses and weaker sections of the society.

The UNESCO recognised Periyar's service as a great humanist, award was presented to him in person by the Union Human Resources Minister then he was known as the Education Minister Dr. Triguna Sen on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1970. Dr. Kalaigar Karunanidhi who was the Chief Minister then presided over the function.

### **Reasons for Failure of Justice Party**

The Justice Party was formed and run by rich landlords, Zamindars and Rajas without the rank and file of the society. The hindi agitation was staged by the support of Periyar, who maintained good relationship with congress and Justice Party. This was the root- cause for its end, though ideology was to eradicate the political and social inequality of Bramins and non-Bramins. Periyar had to take over the mantle of Justice Party and made its president in 1939, while he was in jail. As he was popular to the mass to carry on the crusade with rationalism.

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