

**Personality Cult in Tamil Nadu Politics:
A Study of the Culture of Dravidian Parties**

**Thesis submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**BY
C. LAKSHMANAN**



**Centre for Political Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi – 110 067
INDIA
2001**



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067. INDIA

CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

25/1/2001

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "*Personality cult in Tamil Nadu Politics: A Study of the Culture of Dravidian Parties*" submitted by Mr. C. Lakshmanan in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a bonafide and original work to the best of our knowledge and may be placed before the examiner for evaluation.

Prof. Rakesh Gupta
Chairperson

Prof. Rajeev Bhargava
Supervisor

Dedicated
To
Parents

"HERO AND HERO-WORSHIP"

"Hero-worship in the sense of expressing our unbounded admiration is one thing. To [blindly] obey the hero is totally different kind of hero-worship. There is nothing wrong in the former while the latter is no doubt a most pernicious thing. The former is only man's respect for every thing which is noble and of which the great man is only an embodiment. The latter is the Villains fealty to his lord, The former is consistent with respect, but latter is a sign of debasement. The former does not take away one's intelligence to think and independence to act. The latter makes one a perfect fool. The former involves no disaster to the State. The latter is the source of positive danger to it..."

- Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR

CONTENTS

Page No.

Acknowledgement		
Introduction	1-32	
Chapter I	Theoretical Frame Work: The study of Political Culture in Tamil Nadu	33-44
Chapter II	Personality Clashes and Party Formations of Dravidian/ Non-Brahmin Movements/ Parties: A Brief Historical Background.	45-86
Chapter III	Tamil Cinema, Dravidian Parties and Political Culture	87-130
Chapter IV	Fan Club Networks of Film Stars and Its Role in Personality Cult.	131-158
Chapter V	Cultural Symbols and Political Mobilization of Dravidian Parties	159-183
Chapter VI	Reflections of Personality Cult	184-208
	Conclusion	209-217
	Bibliography	218-241
	Glossary	242-246
	Appendix	247-255

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The academic endeavour coming through this thesis would not have been possible without the sincere help rendered by many people on the way to its completion. It would be extremely imperative on my part first to acknowledge the help of my supervisor Prof. Rajeev Bhargava. I feel greatly delighted to the diligent help rendered by Prof. Bhargava. He discussed all the issues of my thesis at great length in many of my extended discussions with him. His significant comments and suggestions are indispensable into the laying out of the body of thesis, making it substantially solid in its final representation. I enjoyed complete freedom in having full flow of thoughts under his supervision. Indeed, I feel fortunate to have his incredible insights into my writing which made me easy and smooth in cruising through various issues of my thesis. Hence, I express my deep gratitude for his continuous and sincere help as well as his magnanimity in alleviating at times from financial problems.

Apart from Prof. Bhargava's help, I also express my deep and sincere gratitude to his wife Mrs. Tani Shandu Bhargava for her all painful efforts of editing my thesis. I greatly feel indebted to her generosity in sparing enough time to make my thoughts into representable form.

Along with my supervisor, I feel to express my sincere thanks to the Chairperson Prof. Rakesh Gupta as well as all the teaching members of the Centre. Besides, I express thanks to School and Centre Office Staffs Shri. Arora and Asis.

I also acknowledge the help rendered by Prof. A. Kalam, Thiru. V. Annaimuthu, Thiru. Sakthidasan, Thiru. P. Chandrakesan,

Ms. V.Geetha, S.V. Rajadurai, Dr. Thangaraju, Dr. Krishna Annath, R.R. Srinivas, Thiru. Anbu Ponoviyam, Mr. Elagovan, Dr. M S S Pandian, Dr.Thangavelu and Prof. Narendra Subramanian. I want to thank all the Fan Club member who provided significant information through my queries.

I take this opportunity to thank those persons with whom I was associated in some academic institutions. I express gratitude for their support to sustain myself during my Ph.D. years. Dr. Pai Panandiker, Director, Centre for Policy Research and Dr. Ajay Mehra of Centre for Policy Research. Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Dr. Meenakshi Tapan, Dr. Azra, Dr. Mohan Raj, Ramesh Chander and Navnitha Ranganathan of Deptt. of Education (Central Institute of Education), University of Delhi.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my sincere thanks to several Libraries' Staffs. In Madras. Thiru. C.K. Sundradajan, Librarian, Peraachiriyar Ayevaga Nollagam, Anna Arivalaiyam of DMK, Cannimara Library, Adyar Theosophical Society Library, Madras University Library, Periyar Thidal Library of Dravidar Kazhagam, Institute of Development Studies' Library, Madras Christian College Library for their kind help rendered during my field survey.

I also express my thanks to Jawaharlal Nehru University Library Staffs, Staffs of Nehru Memorial Library and Museum, Sahitiya Academy Library for the help rendered to me. I thanks to Mr. Gopalan, and Mr. Narayanan of JNU Library canteen as well.

Coming down to my various friends, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to Dr. Amarjeet Singh of CHS and Rona Wilson of CPS for enabling me in representing my thoughts

into systematic and concerted form. Others who helped in one or the other form, Dr. Ajay Behra's timely financial assistance smoothed my trouble now and then. A person whom I can't forget was, Mr. Sanjay Reddy, whose timely help gave me courage and strength to struggle and study. I am grateful to him. Further, I would like to thank to Mr. Gajendran for the help in editing few of my earlier writings. Others who deserve my thanks are Ms. Jaya Sharma of LSR, Dr. Anis Ahmad, Swarveswaran, Mr. & Mrs. Partyush, Jagdeesh and my cuisines Mohan and Mathivanan.

Further, JNU provided great opportunities to me in interacting with some committed intellectuals, who simultaneously moulded my ideas and thoughts time and again, like Eleanor Zelliott, Gail Omvedt, Gopal Guru, Kancha Ilaiah, Aloysius, Prof. Karthikesu Sivathamby. My thanks also to some activists of Student organisations.

I am thankful to Dr. Parimala for her moral support, affection, faith and courage in making me sail through this academic endeavour. Also I express thanks to my in-laws. and my feelings for my son Siddharthan, for he being source of inspiration.

Last, but not least, my loving Amma Kaliyammal and Appa Chinnaiyan, Annas, Akas Annis and Mamas as well as nephews and nieces for having stood by me and encouraged me at all times to carry on my academic pursuit despite all odds. With most gratitude, I thank all for the love and affection they showed upon me, I am sure they will feel proud of me. For them, I dedicate this thesis.



C. Lakshmanan

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century may be seen as the century of assertion of subordinated peoples. From its very beginning, the oppressed peoples began to assert themselves all across the world. The century has witnessed struggles against oppression of all kind. ¹ For example, (a) colonized nations began to assert themselves against imperialist powers and struggled for independence; (b) the Blacks began resistance against racial oppression, and for their liberation; and (c) subordinated masses began to take up cudgels against 'internal colonialism'; and women started ² demand rights and struggled against the 'domestic colonialism'.

India too witnessed simultaneous movements against colonialism as well as the social subordination. Social movements against various kinds of subordination, profoundly influenced the masses in the southern region of Madras Presidency/ Tamil Nadu. The anti-Brahmin movements of the Justice Party, the Self-Respect Movement (SRM) of Dravidar Kazhagam(DK), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) a significant role in pre and post independent formulation of the economic, political and socio-cultural situation of Madras Presidency/ Tamil Nadu state.

1.C. Lakshmanan, 1999, Social Movements and Subaltern Education in India, Abstracts of the South Asian Conference on Education, Department of Education, University of Delhi, Nov. 14-18.

2. The term 'internal colonialism' is used to describe a hegemonic monopoly of power over vast majority of people by the section or few social classes within a country. 'Domestic colonialism' is used to describe the dominance of male over female, a term introduced by Black Feminist groups.

The Dravidian movements/ parties came into existence in Madras Presidency/ Tamil Nadu politics ostensibly as a constructive progressive socio-cultural force which pitted egalitarian, secular and democratic values against the inegalitarian, feudal Brahmanical dominance and nepotism of the Congress. The objectives of its evolution were translated into an antagonistic anti-Brahmin, anti-Hindi, anti-North and anti-religious movement. At least theoretically the propagation of "self-respect", "rationality and Tamil cultural nationalism" with a secular outlook was emphasized.

At that time leaders had mobilized the masses, particularly the youth among the oppressed who yearned, if not for social change, at least for social reform, that allowed them to live with self-respect and have rights that protected them from the evils of caste and untouchability. The Dravidian parties promised a 'rational democratic polity'. Non-Brahmin caste-Hindus felt that they too could espouse rationality and decry superstitious beliefs and nepotism that pervade the body politic. Premised on this, Dravidian party politics occupied the centre stage for almost a century.

At the end of the day, we need to ask how aspirations of the subordinated masses are to be addressed. Specifically look into the type of socio-cultural and political changes that has been brought about. What type of rational polity prevails in Tamil Nadu today? How far have subordinated classes succeeded in changing the political culture of the Tamils? What kind of alternative political culture is professed during their regime

and how the masses are mobilized ? Although, some of these questions have already been analysed by several scholars, the present study focuses on the specific aspects of the personality cult and the political culture of 'Dravida Parivar'.

It is a well known fact that since independence Tamil Nadu has produced a number of celluloid personalities-cum-politicians. The innovative success story of celluloid personalities in the Tamil Nadu politics can be comprehended. These movements and parties have used mass media extensively for mobilizing the masses. During mobilization, the parties articulated their political propaganda by the expressive use of culture, through writings, speeches, theatre and the cinema. By and large the cinema and its personalities usurped other forms and took important place in the politics of the region.

This chapter introduces the theme of the personality cult in Dravidian parties and explores trends of hero/heroine-worship which culminated in the cult culture in the party politics of the state. Further, an attempt has been made to explain how the political culture and personality cult established a link between Dravidian parties. Besides, the chapter also explains the objectives, hypotheses and the methodology of the study with detailed chapterization.

The members/ supporters of Dravidian parties have continued to exhibit devotional attitude such as, kneeling at the feet of political leaders, ascribing to them quality and power of the gods/goddesses and worshiping them, as well having a tradition of building temples dedicated to them and performing religious rituals. On the other hand, the perpetuation of the feudal system

and the permeation of patron-client ties in the democratic polity culminate into the politics of the personality cult. Thus Tamils have elected celluloid personalities like C.N. Annadurai, M. Karunanidhi, M.G. Ramachandran and J.Jayalalitha to the highest office in their state, i.e., to the position of the chief minister.

The personality cult overshadows substantive social, economic and political issues and debases the cultural milieu. The permeation of the cult in politics breeds corruption, nepotism, irrationality and an authoritarian attitude towards power. The activities of Dravidian parties amply demonstrate the presence and effect of the personality cult which is likely to continue in the future. A country can not remain democratic and a people can not preserve a constitutional government if their political sense is imbued with an immoderate dose of hero/heroine worship which is intrinsically subordinate. Therefore, it is necessary to inquire into the political culture of Dravidian parties, with specific attention paid to the phenomenon of the cult of personality. There is an urgent and serious need to study, understand and address this phenomena.

Political culture is about the predominant beliefs, attitudes, values, sentiments of people. It encircles political parties, their ideologies and their leaders.³ But broadly how are these beliefs, values and sentiments shared across various Dravidian parties? How important are they in terms of the principles

3. Stephen White, 1979, Political Culture and Soviet Politics, Macmilan Press, London.

and values of rationality and self-respect? What are the specific consequences of the politics of personality cult on the fabric of political culture? This study attempts to answer some of these questions.

Generally in the third world countries, and particularly in India, political support is grounded in three major arenas i.e. (a) primordialism - maintenance of caste, community and ethnic basis; (b) personalism - endorsing the lineage of the leader(s); and, (c) performance - issue-based support of a political party connected with its performance. The cultural diversity of India is reflected in various regions through different forms of languages and cultures. As far as independent India is concerned, the first two phenomena dominate democratic political practice.* The very objective of democratic politics undermines or nullifies the domination of traditional power centres. It acts towards the forward movement of society. This objective is severely thwarted by the perils of personality politics.⁴

Emergence of Dravidian Parties

In the Madras Presidency even before India's independence, Dravidian politics, arose as a response to social reforms. Different analyses of the history of Dravidian movement, such as

* Robert Pinkney, 1993, Democracy in the Third World, Open University Press, Buckingham. He uses for analysing third world democratic process. I am referring the same for Indian democratic practice.

4. Atul Kohli, 1994, "Centralization and Powerlessness: India's Democracy in a Comparative perspective", in Joel S. Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vineshue, State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp.89-107.

Murasoli Maran's (1991) extensive data shows the emergence of non-Brahmin movement as a historical necessity; it is a reaction to the monopoly and patronage of Brahmins of Southern India, in the field of education, power and knowledge. Non-Brahmins never stood a chance in the public sphere⁵ a product of the pathology of Hindu social system; it is often compared to the "imperialism" with British patronage.⁶ Non-Brahmin movement was born in order to oppose the Brahmin and Hindi hegemony, non-Brahmin politics aimed at establishing an egalitarian society based on a Dravidian cultural identity. It was primarily led by frustrated non-Brahmin upper castes who manipulated oppressed masses in order to challenge people in power in Tamil Nadu. Much was made of linguistic and racial factors and the Aryan-Dravidian dichotomy of cultural values was placed centre stage.

Many a political and celluloid 'personality' has played a major role in this process effectively showing their ideologies. The issue gained momentum in 1925 when E.V.Ramaswamy Naicker, popularly known as 'Periyar' (Ee.Ve.Ra.), formed the Self-Respect Movement (SRM). Later, in 1944, SRM became DK, the Dravidar Kazhagam (DK). Still later in 1949, C.N.Annadurai, a follower of Periyar, had differences with him and launched a political party

5.Murasoli Maran, 1991, Dravida Iyvakka Varalaru (History of Dravidian Movement), Puthaka Cholai, Chennai.

6.Swami Dharma Theertha, 1992, Hostory of Hindu Imperialism, Dalit Eduactional Literature Centre, Madras. (First edition was in 1942).

called Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK).

Earlier non-Brahmin movements had prepared the ground for the link of DMK to the regional language press - which they extremely used to mobilize the masses. Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam and Kannada were languages where some dominant non-Brahmin castes too had a hold. Besides, they exploited tradition of folklore, ballads, theatre, and film with great vigour. Common people responded positively to Dravidian ideologies. They were supported by women, Dalits, and the OBCs. They achieved political power in 1967 without serious challenge. Their reasons for unchallenged domination in Tamil politics today is the effective manipulation by them of the sentiment and sensibility of the people. They did this by projecting illusions, through demagogical tact and by the support of film industry.⁸

In recent years, the presence of the personality cult in the Dravidian political parties is conspicuous and visible despite of their contrary claims of "rationality", "self-respect" and "social reform". Even in the present democratic age the tradition of respecting elders or persons with social standing as a big-man⁹ (big-woman), is pursued with great zeal. Politicians and cellu-

7.T.M. Parathasarathy, 1993 (6th edn), Thee Mu Ka Varalaru (DMK History), Bharathi Publication, Madras. M.Karunanidhi, 1997 (5th Edition), Nenchukku Nidhi (Justice to Heart), Vol.1 & 2, Thirumagal Nelaiyam, Madras. and V. Geetha & S.V.Rajadurai, Towards Non-Brahmin Millenium: From Iyothee Thass to Periyar, 1998, Samya, Calcutta.

8.Robert L Hardgrave, 1973, "Politics and the Film in Tamil Nadu: The Stars and the DMK", Asian Survey, Vol.xiii, December.

9. Mattison Mines and Vijayalakshmi Gourishankar, 1990, "Leadership and Individuality in South Asia: The Case of South Indian Big-man", The Journal of Asian Studies, 49, no.4, pp.761-786.

loid patrons are projected as infallible hero/heroines or as immortal gods/goddesses. Sara Dickey (1994) described politics in India, particularly in Tamil Nadu as "Person-Centered" or personality oriented. In her study Sara Dickey tries to locate reasons in the emotional psyche of people as well as in the tradition of hero/heroine worship.

Thus, Rajadurai and V.Geetha point out that politics of Dravidian parties depends on (i) the misuse or abuse of language, culture and history of Tamils; (ii) its cinematization,¹⁰ with an idiosyncratic cinema dealing with themes considered close to the heart of the targeted support base; (iii) the entry of film personalities into political parties; (iv) re-feudalization and hero/heroine(ism) and, finally (v) the political leadership assumed by the cinema stars. Eventually, those who became political leaders were ascribed a divine status, commensurate with Hinduism.

As mentioned earlier, the mass media has become a major mediator of political communication. Prestige and authority are bestowed by focussing attention and recognition on particular individuals, issues, organizations and movements. It gives new added emphasis to a particular personality, making it a factor in social and political life. The media becomes a major source and yardstick for identifying and evaluating heroes/heroines and villains and, provides significant role models that serve as

10.S.V.Rajadurai and V.Geetha, 1996, "DMK Hegemony: The Cultural Limits to Political Consensus", in T.V. Sathyamurthy's (ed.Vol.3) Region, Religion, Caste, Gender and Culture in Contemporary India, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

socializing symbols in the society.

The monopoly of the Brahmins has been substituted by a non-Brahmin caste-Hindus¹² through a policy of reservation in government jobs and educational institutions, subsidies to industry, agriculture and films, not to mention the assistance offered to the establishments of rural co-operatives, co-societies and small scale industries that require constant support from the state which can lend capital at low interest rates.¹³ Largely Non-Brahmin caste-Hindu beneficiaries replaced the Brahmins in positions of power, due to this policy of caste-based privileges and patronage. The non-Brahmin caste-Hindus not only replaced Brahmins in the economic and political sphere but also in priesthood. In the religious sphere too, gangs of non-Brahmin priests began to flourish now.¹⁴

The change brought about by Dravidian political parties and leaders in the political culture of Tamil Nadu are: (a) The personalization of politics; (b) the establishment of fan club networks and encouragement of a cult culture; (c) fuelled the

11. Otto N. Lassen, 1998, "Social Effects of Mass Media" in Robert E.L.Faris (ed) Handbook of Modern Sociology, Vol.1, Rawat Publication, Jaipur.

12.N. Subramaniam, 1999, Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Also See, Ashotosh Varshney, 2000, "Is India Becoming More Democracy?", The Journal of Asian Studies 59, No.1. and V.R. Mani, "Periyar Betrayed", The Times of India, New Delhi, 6/9/1995. Krishna Annath too expressed the same in his interview.

13.S. Ambirajan, 1999, State Government Subsidies: The Case of Tamil Nadu", Economic and Political Weekly, April 3, pp.811-821. Also, see, N. Subramaniam, op. cit.

14.V.R. Mani, op.cit.

politics of casteism; and (d) de-politicization of women and the oppressed in particular that paved the way for a politics of personality cult and the nepotism it breeds.

Four Phases of Film and Politics in Tamil Nadu

The development of film and politics in Tamil Nadu can be divided into four phases. The first phase began in the 1930's and lasted into mid 40's. Cinema was a medium of political propaganda during the struggle for independence of the nationalist movement, and in the early decades of the last century. It served as an instrument of political propaganda to spread the message of freedom for the national movement. Anti-British sentiments were portrayed through patriotic songs and were an essential part of Tamil cinema. Many theatre companies and artists participated actively in the freedom struggle and courted arrest.¹⁵

During the mid 40's upto late 60's, Tamil cinema was a catalyst of socio-political mobilisation and played a crucial role in political success and growth of DMK. The leaders of the non-Brahmin social movement understood the power of the medium and used it effectively to attract the common people. The movement aimed at capturing immediate political power through leaders like Annadurai, Karunanidhi and in particular, MGR who did not hesitate in propagating ideology in his films. The Dalits, the

15. Theoder Bhaskaran, S. 1981, The Message Bearers: The Nationalist Politics and the Entertainment Media in South India, 1880-1945, Cre A, Madras. A. Narayanan, 1988, Suthandira Poril Tamil Cinema (War of Independence and Tamil Cinema), New Century Book House, Madras. Karithigesu Sivathambi, 1981, The Tamil Film as a Medium of political Communication, New Century, Madras. C.Lakshaman, 1996, "Fan Clubs Network of Film Stars and Tamil Politics", Mainstream, 4th May.

OBC and women were susceptible too.

The third phase that began in the late 60's and lasted till the mid 80's, saw Fan Club networks and stars becoming a precursor to the formation of political parties. The Celluloid hero/heroine understood the political potential of their mass appeal, strengthened Fan Clubs networking and entered into politics and initiated an ideology based political discourse.¹⁷

Finally, from the mid 80's to the late 90's, functionaries of fan clubs and politicians comprehended the importance and effectiveness of fan clubs networking, and began to use it as means for their political ends. Politicians understood how to use the support base of film stars through their network of fan clubs, and how to exploit the cheap labour of club members to serve their political ends.

Personality Based Parties

Since the formation of DMK, its politics has been dominated by individuals, in particular, celluloid personalities who could cast a spell on the people of Tamil Nadu and thereby establish their own political parties. For instance, in 1972, the 'All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam' (AIADMK) was formed by M.G.Ramachandran. Short-lived parties such as the 'Tamizhaga Munnetra Munnani' (TMM 1989) were established by Shivaji Ganeshan, 'Thayaga Marumalarchi Kazhagam' (TMK 1989) launched by T.Rajendar (now a DMK MLA), 'M.G.R.Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam'

16.M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, Image Trap op. cit., also C.Lakshmanan, Mainstream, May 4, 1996.

17.Ibid.

(1989) by Baghiyaraj, 'MGR AIADMK' of Thirunavukarasu and 'MGR Mantram' of R.M.Veerappan are other such examples. Yet another political party based on an individual personality is the 'Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam' (MDMK 1984) formed by V. Gopalswamy, the fiery orator expelled from the DMK in 1993. Most of these above mentioned political parties came into existence because of personality clashes rather than as a result of any ideological difference and continued to espouse earlier objectives and principles.

For most part of the last century, Dravidian parties like the DMK & AIADMK have occupied the highest office in Tamil Nadu. These people wielded great influence upon the emotional psyche of the masses. This was often accomplished by the personality factor; when the political and celluloid personalities of a person gains a symbolic/ divine status and helps in mobilizing people. For their political ends, these 'personalities' exploited the cultural sensibility of the Tamils that is at once their strength and weakness.

The Socio-cultural Milieu of Tamils

Even today, Tamils have not been able to rid themselves of an excessive adherence to traditions and heritage, their primordial lineages and archaic notions of loyalty/ devotion. Folk tale narratives abound with stories of popular folk heroes and heroines who were part of the oppressed castes/ classes in Tamil

18.Swamy Chidambaranar,(1988 4th edition), Pazhandh Tamilar Vazhvum Vallarchiam (Ancient Tamils Life and Development), Ilakkiya Nillayam, Madras.(Tamil)

19
Nadu. Tamils regard "Tamizh" as a mother equal to 'Bharat
20
Mata. By and large, the Tamil ethos is orthodox, based on the
authority of elders and is temple-centered.

The reading of the Tamil culture Thani Nayyagam (1970), provides a prolific picture of folk deities and cults that establish the trait of hero-worship and a devout society found in Tamils, where deities preside over almost every facet of life. Instances of self-immolation are part of this ecstatic and sometimes hysterical adoration of a hero or heroic ruler, who eventually becomes a demi-god. The fact remains that this abhorrant practice continued even in a democratic polity, when the 'Dravida Parivar' came to power in 1967.

In early Tamil poems there are descriptions of close associates of the king who observed the rite of "vatakkiruttal" - kind of ritual suicide - and preferred to starve to death with him when he chose to die. A person would sit facing Northwards in an act of fasting unto death in order to expiate disgrace.²¹
In the society of ancient Tamils, the kings, leaders, elders and god were an object of reverence. The ethos still prevails in contemporary Tamil politics via its orientation towards the personality-cult. Most Tamil folk heroes belong to the lower,

19.M.S.S. Pandian, 1992 op.cit.

20. The Hindi version of Mother India or mother land, generally used by the Sangh Parivar to mobilize masses on Hindu cultural nationalism. It is to be noted that Dravidian politics too is based on Tamil, Tamilian and Tamil Nadu similar to Hindu, Hindi and Hindutav.

21.P. Subramaniam, 1966, Sangam Polity: The Administration and Social Life of the Sangam Tamils, Asia Publishing House, Madras.

oppressed castes. They rose to protect rights, to put an end to the sexual exploitation of their women and to challenge privileges that occurred to the oppressors. Tamil pride lies as much in ancient culture as in its Dravidian identity.

Contrary to the uninterpreted discourse of a modern democratic polity, Tamils continue to adhere strictly to tradition and religiously emulate orthodox Brahminism/ Hinduism. Brahminism as an ideology is not practiced by the Brahmins alone, but also by all non-Brahmin caste-Hindus. The religious tradition of non-Brahmins and especially, the Dalits is distinct from the Brahmanical one. Henry Whitehead's book "The Village Gods of South India" 1921 makes it clear that the distinctive religious beliefs, practices and culture of exterior castes or depressed classes are quite different from the religion of Brahminical Hinduism. On the one hand, a process of 'accommodation and appropriation' takes place. On the other, imitation of Brahmanical rites by the elites lends it the legitimacy it needs. The sociologist, M.N. Srinivasan described this process as 'Sanskritization'. He elucidated how superstitions and social customs like caste prejudice are observed strongly no matter how educated one may be. Recent caste clashes that expose the practices of untouchability and caste injustices against the Dalits are examples of modern day orthodox Brahminism. Today Tamils are increasingly clamouring for caste privileges in Tamil Nadu. That is evident from the mushrooming of caste based organisations and political parties.

22.M.S.S. Pandian, 1992 Op.cit.

The discourse of Dravidian/ Tamil politics of twentieth century has been one of continuous caste conflicts for power between Brahmins and the non-Brahmin caste-Hindus. On the other hand, there has been a tussle between the Dalits and non-Dalits over basic human rights and dignity. Earlier when there was a conflict between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins, the latter displaced the Brahmins. This was followed by a clash between non-Brahmin upper and intermediate castes. As they came up close to the corridors of power, they began to alienate the Dalits.²³ Presently, the clash became a triangular one i.e., between the Brahmins, the non-Brahmin and the Dalits.²⁴ The subjugation of the Dalits in Tamil Nadu reveals an important feature of contemporary politics because it shows the impotence of the Dravidian movement as well as Brahminical revivalism of caste-Hindus.²⁵

Ambedkar's observations on India aptly explains contemporary Tamil Nadu. He said: "Indeed it is the Shudras (non-Dalits) who

23. David Washbrook, 1989, "Caste, Class and Dominance in Modern Tamil Nadu", in Frankil Francine R and M.S.A. Rao (ed), Dominance and State Power in Modern India, Vol. Oxford University Press, Delhi. Ashutosh Varshney, 2000, op.cit. And N. Subramanian, 1999, op.cit. This has to seen in the context of the emergence of different Dravidian political parties and Vanniar Kula Sangam - the low intermediate non-Brahmins and its political formation of Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK). Also E.V.Ramasawmy's comparison of Justice Party and DMK in K.Kesavan, 1994, op.cit.

24. This has to be seen in the context of Jayalalitha heading one of the non-Brahmin political Party, the vigorous Brahmanic revivalism in opening 'Veda Agamma College" (Vedic Institution/ College) and the growing influence of BJP and Sangh Parivar in the state. The Brahminism was slowly revived by the Dravida parivar. The recent political alliances of BJP-AIADMK and DMK-BJP conforms this.

25. Outlook, 4th May, 1998.

act as the police force of the Brahmins for repelling the attack of the Untouchables on the Hindu social order. This is a strange phenomenon. But it is fact." Adding that "It is to be found in the system of graded inequality whereby the Brahmin is above everybody, the Shudra is below the Brahmin and above the Untouchable. If the Hindu social order was based on inequality, it would have been over-thrown long ago. But it is based on graded inequality so that the Shudra while he is anxious to pull down the Brahmin, he is not prepared to see the Untouchable raised to his level. He prefers to suffer the indignities heaped upon him by the Brahmins to join the Untouchables for a general leveling down of the social order. The result is that, there is nobody to join the Untouchable in his struggle. He is completely isolated. Not only is he isolated he is opposed by the very classes who ought to be his natural allies. This isolation is one more obstacle in the removal of untouchability".

26

Culture of the Dravidian Parties

The evolution of the political culture of Dravidian parties has been a conglomerate of several similar impulses, attitudes, beliefs and practices which have been developed/ changed or replaced. This is evident in perennial features such as self-immolation, culture of cut-outs, hero/heroines worship, populism, caste-patronage and extravaganza that represent the process of personality cult.

26. Vasant Moon, 1989, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writing and Speeches, Education Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, Vol.5, pp.115-116. It is to be noted that current Dalit mobilisation mainly focuses on the practice of untouchability, atrocities and continuation caste discrimination in socio-economic and political spheres.

The Tamizh "Sangam" literature illustrates practices such as self-sacrifice and devotional attitude towards someone/ something close and dear. For example, Silapathikaram's heroine, Kannagi, burnt the city of Madurai for the sake of her husband, who was wrongly implicated and punished by king Pandiya. A latter chapter elaborates on the aspect of how cultural symbols were and are exploited by Dravidian parties.

Friedhelm Hardy (1995) throws light on the Hindu religious culture prevailing in the rural villages and among different regional groups. He narrates various instances of aggressive violence generated by the belief system involving the custom of animal and even human (self) sacrifice. Hardy has a deep understanding of numerous Hindu religious practices, specifically, related to the offering of blood or bodily parts to blood thirsty Gods.²⁷ The Hindu religious practices has made incursions into the social and political fabric of Tamil Nadu.

During the anti-Hindi agitations of 1937, 1962 and 1965, this was exemplified by the self-immolating of nearly thirteen youths in order to protect the Tamizh language. Sumathi Ramaswamy (1998) focuses on how the Tamil language is considered a goddess, mother, maiden and at the same time is used to appeal to the erotic sensibilities of the Tamils. The author uses the concept of "language devotion" to track the many ways in which Tamil was imagined by its speakers who vigorously argued for a cultural history that revealed the structure of sentiments and the ideolo-

27. Friedhelm Hardy, 1995, The Religious Culture of India: Power, Love and Wisdom, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

gy of love with which the Tamil language is imbued.

The interplay of devotion/ loyalty to the personalities have been pointed out by M.S.S.Pandian (1992) and Jakathrakshegan (1984), viz. whenever he faced a political or personal crisis the supporters and fan club members of MGR in the DMK exhibited devotion/ loyalty to him. Also K. Mohan Das (1992) noted tales of sycophancy in MGR's followers, the insane immolations and subsequent political machinations.

There are instances of innumerable sycophancy which pervades politics of the 'Dravida Parivar'. From the death of C.N.Annadurai in 1969 to the more recent instances of fanaticism of the loyalists of Karunanidhi, MGR, Jayalalitha, Gopalswamy or even Karunanidhi's elder son Azhagiri show that sycophancy pervades the politics of 'Dravida Parivar'. Immolations ensure that the follower is exalted to the status of a 'martyr' fit to be worshipped by the devotees.

Existing studies on different aspects of Dravidian Movements are limited and have only a historical approach to the subject.²⁹ Others have attempted to provide a critical account of political culture and history of Dravidian parties, which include the media - Theatre, Film, Popular Press as well as Folklore of Tamil

 28. Sumathy Ramasawmy, 1998, Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891-1970, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi.

29. Irichick Eugene: 1967, Morasoli Maran: 1991, T.M. Parathasarathi: 1993, M. Karunanidhi's autobiography Vol.I & II: 1993, Nedunchizhian: 1996, and V.Geetha & S.V.Rajadurai: 1998.

Nadu. Still others, furnish an account of how politics is
 31
 linked to films in Tamil Nadu.

Pandian tries to explain how MGR constructed a larger than life image for himself through the genre of films. Pandian shows how MGR used folk-lore and ballads, the customs and rural traditions of subordinated masses as ideal types portrayed by MGR in his film. Pandian shows the two faces of MGR i.e. in cinema as a protector of the poor, a saviour of women and as a revolutionary of socio-political struggle. But in politics, MGR was anti-poor and ruthless adversary of revolutionary movements. However, Pandian denies that the DMK leadership patronized MGR. Pandian's observations on current issues, particularly assertion of Dalit politics and culture outside Dravidian discourse that challenged Dravidian politics, are ambiguous. The paradox in Pandian's writings is that: (a) in his 'Image Trap' he holds MGR solely responsible for the emergence of the cult of personality that plagues politics of Tamil Nadu even today; (b) the ideological compromise made by Dravidian parties is an outcome of the problem between the centre and the state which can be read as the problem arising between governments led by the Congress and those led by others; (c) MGR failed to initiate structural changes and Pandian fails to grasp that MGR was politically elevated by the DMK,

30. Robert L. Hardgrave Jr.: 1965, P. Spratt: 1982, J. Pandian: 1987, David Washbrook: 1989, M.S.S. Pandian: 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 1999, K. Mohandas: 1992, Marguerite Ross Barnett: 1994, Pamela Price: 1994, Sara Dickey: 1994 and K. Kesavan: 1994.

31. Arandai Narayanan: 1989, 1994, 1999, N.V. K.P. Aravanan: 1992, Subha Rao: 1992, R.K. Azhakesan: 1999 and Theoder S. Baskaran: 1984, and 1997.

and its leadership, and its ancillary wing - the fan clubs. In his analysis of current Dalit writings that exhort Dalits to find self-dignity outside Dravidian parties' ideology, Pandian calls them as an "expanding corpus of 'transgressive' writing from a set of Dalit.." ³²
³³, as opposed to the DMK Dravidian/Tamil construction of history as progressive.

Pandian's moderate positions is noticeable in his analysis of various issues that pertained to DMK and its leadership. For example, the 1993 personality clash in the DMK between Karunanidhi and V.Gopalswamy on the issue of 'second line leadership'. The personality clash is explained away by Pandian as a 'creation of the pro-Brahmin press' and a 'journalistic hyperbole', far from a crisis in the second line leadership within the party or as a concerted promotion of an heir by the DMK leadership. To view Gopalswamy as an anti-Dalit, Pandian highlights his caste identity and his landed background. He quotes a report from a Dalit organisation on the brutal murder of four Adi-Dravida youths in 1991, by Naidus the same caste to which Gopalswamy belongs (also his neighbouring village, Kurinchakulam). The report accuses him for visiting Jaffna commensurate with Sri Lankan Tamils but for not visiting affected Dalits in his neighbouring village. "Don't the Dalit appear to him as Tamilians? Or don't they appear to him even as human beings?". The article reveals the non-Brahmin

32.The Oxford dictionary meaning offence against a moral principle.

33.M.S.S.Pandian, 1998, "Stepping out of History: New Dalit Writings in Tamil Nadu", in Partha Chatterjee's edited work, Wage of Freedom: Fifty Years of the Indian Nation-State, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.



caste-Hindus patronage of the DMK and Gopalswamy. The fact here is that when the murder of Dalits took place in 1991, at that time Gopalswamy and his 'gang of four', were strong men of Karunanidhi, which Pandian conveniently forgets.

One of the fundamental problems in multicultural India is to not 'address', 'acknowledge' or 'accept' the merits and demerits of the cultural existence of the other in the socio-cultural milieu in which they are placed. In 1994 Guna made a comprehensive criticism of Dravidian politics. He argues that the mostly non-Tamil Dravida leaders, have overlooked the earlier Tamil Nationalism. Thus, Tamil community is a victim of non-Tamil colonists. He argued that the so called "Dravidanad" consisted of four Southern states - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Apart from Tamil Nadu, the other three did not consider the issue of Dravidanad as central to them.

He points towards non-Tamil origin of the leaders of Dravida movement/ parties: E.V.Ramaswamy of Karnataka, Karunanidhi of Andhra, MGR of Kerala, Jayalalitha of Karnartaka and V. Gopalswamy of Andhra. Hospitality is an aspect of Tamil culture. A literal translation of "Vandtharai Vallavaikum Tamilagam" is to give

34.M.S.S. Pandian, 1994, "Crisis in DMK", Economic and Political Weekly, 29 January. See his article in Seminar 401, 1993, on Jayalalitha.

35.In December 18, 1998, Justice Albie Sachs, delivered the fourth D.T. Lakdawala Memorial Lecture: " Post-Apartheid South Africa Truth, Reconciliation and Justice" at Teen Murti Nehru Memorial Library and Museum, Organized by Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi. In his lecture he had said that underdeveloped countries problem mainly rises on three account. Also see, Rajevev Bhargava 1998, Truth Commission and Reconciliation, in Book Review.





life to those who come to Tamil Nadu. Guna (1994) argued that Tamils gave life to the 'outsiders', surrender themselves to them. It is possible that during the British period, the Madras Presidency consisted of four Southern states that paved the way for the domination of non-Tamils' in today's politics. Non-Tamil colonists are squarely responsible for the prevailing political culture. Guna takes the extremist position on Tamil Nationalism.

Even before the establishment of Justice Party, the aboriginal caste group of Pariahs challenged Hindu social system for being inappropriate for the liberation of the oppressed masses. Erattaimalai R.Srinivasan (1860-1945), Iyothee Thassar (1845-1914), M.C.Raja (1883-1947), L.C. Guruswamy (1885), Gna Chaundaryammal, N.Sivaraj (1892-1945) and his wife Meenambal (1902), H.M. Jaganathan (1894-1964) and U.A. Perumal Peter (1885-1960) played a vital role in the socio-cultural and political life of Tamil Nadu. For example, Iyothee Thassar, an untouchable by birth, published a journal for seven years (1907-14) called "Tamilan" , who aimed at social reform, Buddhism and Tamil Nationalism. It was ignored by later non-Brahmin leaders. G. Aloysius' (1998, 1999) work proves existence of Tamil Nationalism and highlights the contradiction between the ideology of Iyothee Thassar and latter day Dravidian politics. He was the one to influence E.V. Ramaswamy in his anti-Brahminism this fact has never been ac-

36.Guna, 1994, Dravidathal Vilthom, (we be fallen of Dravidian-ism) Tamilga Arvuran, Banglore. (Tamil)

37.Yezhutchi Dalit Murasu, nd., 2001. Also interview with Anbu ponooviyam and Sakthidasan.

knowledged.

In the early twentieth century, debates among the Brahmins, non-Brahmins and the untouchables put a historical perspective on the non-Brahmin politics of South India in general, and Tamil Nadu in particular. Even the general hunch among these three major groups is, indeed ³⁸ V.Geetha and S.V.Rajadurai's (1998) portray the non-Brahmin movements and reveals the sensibility of Tamil Brahmins in the early twentieth century. It presents how earlier Tamilar Movements of Dalit leaders, especially, pioneering Adi-Dravidar Buddhist scholars were overlooked by the Dravidar Kazhagam leaders. ³⁹

Nenchukku Nidhi of M.Karunanidhi provides firsthand account of his political experiences. Despite Karunanidhi's 'vast awareness about the world history' he surprisingly ignores Dalit struggles prior to 'Dravida Parivar' politics. In his three volume semi-autobiography, there is no room these movements, though he narrates the events in his life to those happening elsewhere in the world. This indirectly serves self-promotion. For example, when the DMK hosted a reception on his release from Jail after the incident over the renaming of the 'Kallakdi Rail-

38.Vasant Moon, 1989, Dr.Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches, Govt. of India, Vol.5, pp.113-116 and 192-210.

39.V.Geetha and S.V. Rajadurai, 1998, Towards Non-Brahmin Millennium: From Iyothee Thass to Periyar, Samya, Calcutta.

way Station'.⁴⁰ Similarly, the Hindi agitation, Black flag protest against Jawaharlal Nehru and the DMK politics were referred as historical moments to that the American War of Independence, Philadelphia Convention, Boston Tea Party.⁴¹ As Jayakanthan (1976) a reputed Tamil novelist puts it "Karunanidhi exhibited a frenzied craze for personal publicity" in the party.⁴² The study deals in detail with theoretical framework in the next chapter.

Scope of the Study:

The notion of political culture assumes that the attitudes and sentiments that inform and govern political behaviour of a society, are not just random categories but represent coherent patterns which fit together and are mutually reinforcing. In spite of the great potential for diversity in political orientation in any community, there is a limited and distinct political culture which gives meaning and predictability, and forms a part of the political process. The existing studies deals with the -----

40. The Politics of renaming has been one of the major tactics of the Dravidian parties to exploit cultural sentiments of the masses psyche. On this issue the state governments had not only wasted the public exchequer but also number of lives too, whether it was V or JJ Bus Service of Madras in 1980's and early 1990's or Ramachandra Medical College to Tamil Nadu Medical College and Research Centre. Very recently in 1996, an episode of Southern Tamil Nadu, the naming of State Transport Corporation as Veeran Sundralingam, a Dalit freedom fighter, was not acceptable to the caste-Hindus leading to a series of caste violence in the state. Later, the Karunanidhi government withdrew all the bus corporations named after political leaders.

41. M. Karunanidhi's Nenchukku Nidhi, Vol. I & II

42. D. Jayakanthan, 1976, A Literary Man's Political Experiences: Tamil Nadu Politics Since 1946, Vikas Pub. House, New Delhi, p.239. It also give more detail on manipulative politics of Dravida parivar.

political culture of Dravidian parties, but are inadequate in their analysis. For example, there is no comprehensive study on personality cult of Dravida Parivar politics. There is a scope for the study of the phenomenon of personality cult in the politics of Dravidian parties. Moreover, the very phenomenon of "personality cult" requires further analysis in the political culture in democracy; whether or not the cult of personality is inevitable in a traditional society like that of Tamils; how far can it be justified in a democratic polity. The proposed study, therefore, analyses the phenomenon of personality cult in the politics of Tamil Nadu and its place, in particular, within the Dravidian parties.

Objectives of the Study:

- (i) To analyse aspects of the political culture and discourse of Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu;
- (ii) To explore the means by which the phenomenon of personality cult has developed in the Dravidian parties.
- (iii) To explain how cinematic themes influence the masses and enable film stars to catapult themselves into political power.
- (iv) To explain the net-work of the Fan Clubs, their role in the growth of personality cult in Dravidian parties and their manipulative potential in the political culture.
- (v) To observe the political culture of Dravidian parties that contradicts their claim of rationality and self-respect, even as they continue to depend on only a single the personality
- (vi) To enquire into reasons for the creation and persistence of hero worship that perpetuated the continuation of a feudal culture of patron-client relation.

Hypotheses:

The cult of personality in Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu originates through individual centric portrayals of party politics and governance by the mass media, particularly cinema.

However, this is possible by the projection of certain elements within a culture that encourage personality cult, i.e., an emphasis on emotions infused with devotion and loyalty.

The domination of mythological and folklore figures in the Dravidian culture lends support to the phenomenon of personality cult. Dravidian parties accommodate Brahmanical hero-worship substitute their demi-gods with new ones with a celluloid origin. Cinema became epic, cinema halls became temples and heroes/heroines became god/goddesses. Hindu mythological and folklore hero/heroines have been replaced by celluloid hero/heroines and political leaders in Dravidian parties.

Cults and symbols from the history infuse the discourse of Dravidian parties and are meant to reduce social tension and resulted in the phenomenon of personality cult.

Treating leaders as royal monarchs and the inherent populism of the Dravidian Parivar not only promoted the personality cult though, ostensibly, to negate social tensions but directly leading to revivalist Hindu practices.

Methodology:

A descriptive, analytical methodology coupled with a political cultural approach and a psychoanalytical method has been employed in this study. Primary data includes interviews of members of several fan club, academics, some Tamil leaders,

socio-cultural and political activists in Tamil Nadu. I have interviewed several editors of monthly magazines - V. Annaimuth, editor of 'Periyar Era' (English), 'Chinthanaiyalan' (Tamil), Chandrakesan, editor, 'Yezhichi Dalit Murasu' (Tamil). I have interviewed Anbuponnoveeyam, Sakthidasan, President, Republican Party of India, Tamil Nadu. V. Geetha, S.V. Rajadurai noted Tamil political observers. Prof. A. Kalam from the Anthropology Department of University of Madras. Dr. Thangaraju, Senior Fellow, Madras Institute of Development Studies and Dr. Krishna Ananth of 'The Hindu' have been interviewed for purposes of this study. Apart from field work, government records, materials from popular and parallel cinema, audio and video of speeches of political leaders of the DMK, AIADMK, MDMK are primary sources of this study. Secondary sources include books, newspapers, from party organs, journals and magazines. It does not aim to focus on any particular personality but phenomenon of personality cult is examined with reference to the democracy and how it is played out in the political system in Tamil Nadu.

Deliberately, for purposes of convenience and clarity, all Dravidian parties such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) are referred to - by an umbrella term i.e. the 'Dravida Parivar/ Kudombam'. There is another significant reasons why I use this term to bunch them together.

First, these parties had no real ideological differences in their political discourse, even though they resorted to rhetoric over certain issues. For example, DMK had a tactful support to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) whereas MDMK took an

open, more public position on the same. On issues that touch Tamil sensitivity, these parties have taken diametrically opposed, opportunistic positions dictated by political expediency. Second, these parties more or less depend on the demagogic skills of the leader for popularity of their manipulative politics. Thirdly, these parties have cult following, a particular type of political behaviour. Finally, all of them derive legitimacy from the traditions of the Dravidian movement and the exaggerated 'ritual of consecration'⁴³ bequeathed as a legacy⁴⁴ by its leaders - Annadurai, Karunanidhi, MGR and Jayalalitha.

For the self evident reasons mentioned above, I treat these seemingly different parties and persons as a single and ideological/ political unit that I have called as 'Dravida Parivar'. It is essential to mention here that, not all Dravidian party leaders have a cult following of equal scale, e.g. MGR and Jayalalitha of AIADMK have more of a cult following than Karunanidhi of DMK or Gopalswamy of MDMK. Nevertheless it is insignificant to note that nature of cult expression is more or less uniform for all the leaders.

However, during their respective regimes all Dravidian parties initiated important developments in the social sector. This resulted in over 65 per cent, literacy in the state, well over

43.M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, op.cit. p.113.

44. The Dravidian parties exaggerate the support of media and party organs, importantly the cinematic aspects of leadership and culture. Events were publicized out of proportion. V. Geetha too endorses the view in her interview. To cite: Annadurai Rajya Sabha speech on Dravidanad in 1962, Periyar's Self-respect and rationality and Karunanidhi's Nenchukku Nidhi, MGR's popularity and generosity etc.

the national average. Similarly the average age of marriage for women has risen to 26 and 50 per cent of all married couples practice family planning, which are noteworthy in the Indian context. Population rate have fallen in the state in comparison to other Indian states. While improvements in infrastructure like drinking water, road, health care facilities show good results. The rate of tax collection is highest in the country. Tamil Nadu has a developed public transport system which is comparatively better than of other states in India. Tamil Nadu boasts of over twenty-one public transport corporations that provides fairly good service to the public.

However, at the socio-cultural arena, untouchability continues to be practiced rigidly in rural areas though it may not be conspicuous publically in urban Tamil Nadu. The fact remains that the Dalit community continues to be alienated from the mainstream of social, political and economic life of Tamil Nadu.

The government owned TEDAL Park at Tharamani is at the cutting edge of the fast growing Information Technology industry. Regrettably, the IT industry creates and emphasises the yawning gap between the rich minority and the poor majority. It further widens the gap between the rural-urban divide. How has the Dravida Parivar dealt with this polarised situation.

Chapterisation

In order to analyse these issues and objectives, current study is divided into six chapters that include an introduction. Chapter-I: Theoretical Framework: The Study of Political Culture in Tamil Nadu provides the theoretical approach to the study of

personality cults that sprang from the political culture of Dravidian parties. It simultaneously attempts to theoretically explain the phenomenon of charismatic leadership and the political culture that it breeds it and feeds off it too. Further, it explains Tamil symbols of manam (honour), tan-manam (self-honour), antastu (status), anbu (love), viram (valour), karpu (chastity) and rituals of consecration that permeate the Dravidian political discourse of "suya mariyatai (self-respect)" and "pakuthararivu (rationality)".

Chapter-II: Personality Clashes and Party Formations of Dravidian/ Non-Brahmin Movements/ Parties: A Brief Historical Background. While a historical background is provided, the study analyses reasons for the emergence of Dravidian parties such as DMK, AIADMK, MDMK and other sporadic, short lived parties born of personality clashes rather than from irreconcilable ideological differences. The chapter examines three major phases of contestation for power dominance in the state i.e. first Brahmin versus non-Brahmin phase, second non-Brahmin upper castes versus non-Brahmin backward castes and, finally, a phase of a triangular contestation of Brahmins, non-Brahmins and the Dalits.

Chapter-III: Tamil Cinema, Dravidian Parties and the Political Culture: The cognitive and emotive power of symbols is derived from one's culture. The power of symbols to activate cognitive and emotive faculties of people depends much on the extent to which they are rooted in a culture. Therefore, it is necessary to trace the affinity between the cultural roots and the symbols used by Dravidian leaders. It is in fact that the inextricable relationship between Dravidian parties and the film

industry is incontrovertible in view of the recent history of politics in Tamil Nadu. I make an attempt to analyse some issues related to cinematic themes and celluloid personalities. Dravidian parties use cinema as an effective instrument for political propaganda via its songs, and plots that enhances the image of the actors/actress in the psyche of the public, a veritable army of film directors, script writers and often direct or indirect conducts of socio-political propaganda through cinema.

Chapter - IV: Fan Club Net-works of Film Stars and Its Role in Personality Cult, in detail investigates the role played by Fan Clubs of different film stars in the activity of image building of their patron. The chapter presents a critical analysis of various activities of the fan clubs and motives and highlights the symbiotic relationship between fan clubs and political parties.

Chapter - V: Cultural Symbols and Political Mobilization of Dravidian Parties, explains the way Dravidian parties' mobilize people: a method that essentially relies on evoking, reinterpreting and glorifying certain cultural symbols dear to Tamils as well as by recounting popular folklore and ballads of the oppressed. The portrayal of leader as immortal hero and the celluloid personality in cinema and party functions or public ceremonies, ascribes divinity to them and encourages familial affinity that has resulted in a diluted and depoliticized Dravidian ideology.

Chapter - VI: Reflections on the Phenomena of Personality Cults, provides different types of manifestations of cult expressions. Especially, how do incidents of hero worship and self-

immolation. exist side by side with notions of 'Dravidian rationality'? The chapter seeks the opinion of academics, politicians, journalists and leaders of different political movements.

Conclusion: The conclusion summarizes the study and critically analyses the phenomena of personality cult.

CHAPTER - I

Chapter - I

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK: THE STUDY OF POLITICAL CULTURE IN TAMIL NADU

This chapter attempts to theoretically discuss the understanding of political culture in Tamil Nadu with reference to the limitations of existing studies. Effort have been made to highlight linkages between the phenomenon of the cult of personality and the general political culture of Tamil Nadu at large.

Generally, Social reform movements of both the pre and post independence period in Tamil Nadu have aimed at socio-political transformation of its language and culture. It was kick started by a positive response from the masses.¹

On close perusal, the "Suya Mariyatai Iyakkam" (Self-Respect Movement) began as an expression of what transpired in the Dalit social milieu. This movement was a concrete expression of the historical process in which the Dalit fraternity in South India found itself situated. In a sense it reflected a genuine urge of the oppressed masses to reclaim a world denied to them.² But as and when vested political interests or political parties entered

1.V.Geetha and S.V.Rajadurai, 1998, Towards A Non-Brahmin Millennium: From Iyothee Thass To Periyar, Samya, Calcutta. Also the same others, 1996, "DMK Hegemony: The Cultural Limits to Political Consensus", in T.V.Satyamurthy's (ed), Religion, Region, Caste, Class, Culture and Gender in Contemporary India, Vol.3, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

2.G.Aloysius, 1997, Nationalism Without a Nation in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. ----, 1998, Religion As Emancipatory Identity: A Buddhist Movement Among the Tamils Under Colonialism, New Age Intertional Pub. New Delhi. ----, 1999, Iyothee Thassar Sinthanaigal, vol. I & II, Folklore Resources and Research Centre, St.Xavier Colloge, Palayamkottai.

the fray there is an evident, deepening schism between the values espoused and represented by the movement at its start and the practice enforced by the parties ostensibly to win these very values. Radical values of atheism, and self-respect by their intrinsic nature, defy a hegemonising order. However, though dexterously incorporated into a political project there have never been an uncompromising pursuit of such ends.³ Instead, what is evident is a replication of the 'inverted consciousness' of the status-quo which reinforced hitherto hegemonising structures. Through its practice, mainstream politics legitimizes the values of hegemony, loyalty, obedience, and in the process, strengthens dominant relationship. As Marx pointed out a religious relationship is transformed into a cult, a cult of law, of the State, and of course to a cult of the personality. On all sides it was only a question of dogmas and beliefs in dogmas.⁴ The emergence of the cult of personality in the political culture of Tamil Nadu, especially, at its crucial phase as the "Suya Mariyatai Iyakkam"/movement may be seen as a strategy to dislodge/ upturn values espoused by the pioneers of the movement because the very logic inherent in the 'cult' is intrinsically opposed to the very spirit and soul of the pronounced goals of the movement i.e. to dispense unchallenged structures (idols) of hegemony that sanction legitimacy of the Hindu social order.

Before discussing the study of personality cult in Dravidian

3. Interviews with V. Geetha and Krishna Ananth

4. Karl Marx & F. Engels' 1977, Selected Works, (4th edition), Vol. I, p. 18.

parties, it is necessary to understand what it meant by personality cult ? The dictionary meaning of cult is worship; reverential homage rendered to a divine being; a system of religious worship, especially when expressed in ceremonies, rituals, etc.; and devotion or homage paid to a person or thing.

Thus, the personality cult may be defined as an act of a group of persons or a society that adopts certain beliefs, values and sentiments akin to religious ritual practices such as worship, sacrifice and devotion bestowed on social reformers, political and religious leaders, celluloid personality and other popular, charismatic persons.

It can be defined as an act of "surrendering one's self" to individual persons with authority and identification with the "constructed image", abetted by the mass media, and the assimilation of the self of the subordinated, awaiting the hero/leader who would liberate them from oppression and put an end to all their miseries. This mind-set or psyche is supplanted in the image of the personality cult which is endemic to the political culture in Tamil Nadu.

The paradox that the freedom struggle had thrown open, of on the one hand a demand for political freedom from the British Raj

5. Social reformers like Phule, Ambedkar, Periyar become icons of the subordinated masses of India. These personalities have fought against the social evils of casteism, oppression of women and aimed at a just social order. Particularly, in the case of B.R. Ambedkar, his statue has been installed in most of urban and rural areas, they have been worshiped by more than 200 millions of the Untouchables in India.

6.M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, Image Trap: M.G.Ramachandran in Film and Politics, Sage, New Delhi. K.Mohandas, 1992, MGR: Man and Myth, Panther, Bangalore. Sara Dickey: 1994.

by Tilak, Gandhi and others and on the other, the assertive claim by Phule, Ambedkar, Periyar and other social reformers that social freedom from Brahmanic enslavement was a prerequisite for political freedom, is still lingering on today. Even in post-Independent India, political discourses saw the similar visible contradiction between the process of modernity and secular democracy. While the dominant group wanted to preserve the cultural system, the subordinated masses wanted to change it.⁷

Thus in a largely rural, culturally heterogeneous, illiterate and impoverished India, divided horizontally into mutually exclusive primordial collectivities known as castes, it seems three factors have become increasingly critical in the maintenance of political support for governments as well as political parties. These are "primordialism", "personalism" and "performance". The first is found in the continuation of a strong sense of caste and communal identity, and the expectation on the part of the members of particular castes and communal groups that their fellows should and will act collectively in election.⁸ Second, there has been a pronounced increase in the salience of personalism and "leadership effect" in the minds of the electorate. Political commentators have referred at an all India level the "Nehruvian era" and the "Indira wave" and to Annadurai and

7. Vasant Moon, 1979, Dr. Babasheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, vol.1, Govt. of Maharashtra, pp.220-225. Teresa Hubel, 1996, Whose India, Duke University Press, pp.147-178. Ashis Nandy: 1980, Rajini Kothari: 1994.

8. Robert Pinkney, 1993, Democracy in the Third World, Open University Press, Buckingham.

"Karunanidhi wave" and "MGR wave" at the level of Tamil Nadu state.⁹ Similarly, people had frequently remarked that, after Nehru 'only Indira can hold the country together'.¹⁰ Often the non-BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) supporters of the NDA government at the centre have articulated their stand in terms of a support to the personal leadership of Atal Behari Vaipajee, neither that to BJP or its ideology. Thus affinity for political personality¹¹ has replaced party identification. It shows, perhaps, that Indians are more loyal to the individual than to the institutional system or ideology.¹² This mass psyche has generated a kind of personality-centred politics in the country.

The contradiction between democratic social transformation on the one hand and the forced preservation of Hindu values on the other has continued to create conflicts and tension within Indian democracy.

As Lucian Pye (1962, 1965) points out political culture revolves around feelings of anxiety and aggression, there is a

9. Larry Diamond, 1991, Democracy and Political Culture, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 56-59. emphasis mine

10. Praksh Desai, 1985, "Personality Politics: A Psychoanalytic Perspective", in Upendra Baxi and Bhikhu Parekh edited vol. Crisis and Change in Contemporary India, Sage, New Delhi.

11. Pradeep K. Chhibber and Richard Sisson, 1989, "The Rise of the Personal Party: A Evaluation of Congress Dominance in India, 1962-1984", a paper presented at the Annual Meetings of Western Political Science Association, Salt Lake City. cited in Larry Diamond, 1991, op.cit.

12. Rajni Kothari's response to a question posed by Ram Avtar Sharma and Sushma Yadav (1989) on their study on Political Culture in Post Independence India, Published by authors, New Delhi, p.76.

marked tendency to look for charismatic leaders for reas-
 14
 surance. Rajni Kothari argues that Indian masses have been
 mentally or psychologically "superior - subordinate" oriented
 rather than known to possess collective decision making, which
 15
 lacks institutionalized check against self-centered behaviour.
 People seem to lack the capacity to work together to create
 complex organizations required for the development and moderniza-
 16
 tion.

In Tamil Nadu, for instance, self-immolation was used as a
 weapon of protest by young students during anti-Hindi agitations
 in 1938. From the spirit of "Suya Mariytai" (self-respect), under
 the leadership of DMK the political culture of Tamil Nadu had em-
 braced the value of "antastu" and "Samugha antastu" (position/
 standing and social standing) as well as "viram" (valour). The
 leaders of DMK not only elicited protests of emotional nature
 from their followers, solely in order to gain political
 17
 mileage, but also honoured brave heroes, referred to them as

13. In case of Tamil Nadu, it may be popularity or constructed
 image by mass-media.

14. Lucian Pye, 1962, Personality and Nation Building, Yale Uni-
 versity, New Haven, and Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, 1965,
Political Culture and Development, Princeton University, Prince-
 ton.

15. Rajni Kothari, 1995 (edition), Politics in India, Orient Long-
 man, New Delhi, pp.255-298.

16. Ibid. David Selbourne, 1979, "State and Ideology in India",
Monthly Review Associated, December, pp.25-37. Also in Paul
 Cammack, 1997, Capitalism and Democracy in The Third World: The
 Doctrine for Political Development, Leicester University Press,
 London, pp.91-116.

17. Interview with V. Annaimuth, editor, "Periyar Era". Also see
 M. Karunanidhi's Nenchukku Nidhi (Semi-Autobiography in Tamil).

worthy of imitation, and installed their statues in public places. Roads and Bridges were named after them.

18

When MGR fell seriously ill during mid-80's, at least 22 persons either self-immolated or cut off their limbs and offered them as oblation to the gods for their blessing on the ailing leader. Finally, when MGR recovered from his illness and returned from Brooklyn, USA, a public meeting was arranged by the party to honour all these 22 persons. All of them were awarded with cash gifts from the AIADMK party funds. The late cinema idol and political leader MGR, is now virtually worshipped in different parts of Tamil Nadu.

19

During periods of sharp crisis in social and political affairs, the thin line dividing the cult of personality and charisma might as well become insignificant with it getting defined as the 'cult of charisma' or the 'charisma of the cult'. Sidney Hook also finds a relationship between the appearance of the heroes of history and times of "a sharp crisis in social and political affairs". Whoever can show the way is a hero; and in the exigencies of political action men are always looking for someone to save them.

During a sharp crisis in social and political affairs, the need for something to be done and to restore lost values that too

18. Ibid. and also Sumathi Ramaswamy, 1998, op.cit. As mentioned elsewhere, when DMK came to power in 1967, it made a point to honour the memory of these martyrs by installing their statues and naming public utilities like bridges after them. Also, during the election campaign, the DMK staged a propagandist play on the life of one of the anti-Hindi self-immolators, Keezhpazhavor Chinnaasamy. M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, op.cit, p.17

19. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 8 January, 1988.

quickly - naturally intensifies the interests in the hero. No matter what one's political complexion, the 'individual orientation' or the hope for the resolution of a crisis is always bound up with the 'collective orientation' or the hope for the appearance of strong or intelligent leadership to cope with difficulties and perils.²⁰ The more urgent the crisis the more intense is the longing, whether it be a silent prayer or public exhortation. He may be called "savior", "man on horseback", "prophet", "social engineer", "beloved disciple", scientific revolutionary, or even 'darling of the masses' and 'rising star' depending upon²¹ the vocabulary of the creed or party.

Thus political culture has roots both in distinctive national histories and in the personalities of individual. It affects the character and viability of democracy. It is shaped and reshaped by a variety of factors: political learning from historical experience, political socialization, economic and social structure and, of course, the practice of political system itself.²²

The notion of political culture that shapes the attitudes, sentiments and cognition thus informing and governing the political behaviour in any society are not just random categories but represent coherent patterns which fit together and are mutually reinforcing. In spite of great potentialities for diversity in

20. Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, 1965, Political Culture and Development, Princeton University, Princeton, p.7

21. Ibid. emphasis mine.

22. Larry Diamond, 1991, op. cit., p.9.

political orientations, in any particular community, there is a limited and distinct political culture which gives meaning, predictability and form to the political process. The concept of political culture assumes that each individual must, in his own 'historical' context, learn and incorporate into his own 'personality' the knowledge and feelings of the politics of his people and his community. This means, in turn, that the political culture of a society is limited but given firm structure by the factors basic to a dynamic psychology. Each generation must receive its politics from the previous one, each must react against that process to find its own politics, and the total process must follow the laws that govern the development of the individual personality and the general culture of a society.

In other words, the concept of culture is at the heart of the conception of consciousness as conscious existence, in which consciousness is seen both as bound up with an existing state of affairs as a condition which makes it possible to change that state of affairs.

Early Dravidian leaders' focused on reformist and activist traditions in Tamil political history but shaped the anti-Brahmin movement for systematically mobilising the non-Brahmin communities. Leaders like Iyothee Thass, Periyar, Anna had constructed

23.Cited in C. Lakshmanan, 1994, The Culture of populism in Tamil Nadu, Social Reality, Vol.1/No.2/Nov.-Dec. 1994, JNU, New Delhi. Also in Larry Diamond, 1991, op.cit.

24.Ibid.

25.Tom Bottomore and others (ed), 1987, A Dictionary of Marxist Thought, Oxford University Press, Delhi, pp.109-112.

the political culture of non-Bhramins by crafting highly influential political strategies creating social consciousness, stressing on social equality and rationality. It has been proved that in case of later leadership of DMK and AIADMK, "political leaders may also unwittingly strengthen anti-democratic current in political culture".

In DMK politics, there has been a constant interpretation or misinterpretation of cultural history, legitimization of event/things and deliberate mistranslation of the religious texts to indulge in the 'person ²⁶ image building' by consistently evolving the feudal notions of 'mannam' (honour/dignity), Karpu (Chastity for women), 'eenam' (disgrace), perumai (pride) and 'viram' (valour) etc. ²⁷

Thus it is this political process, notwithstanding its earlier drift towards the formation and expression of the values of the secular legal institutions of a nation state that later got translated into the misleading demeanour of unquestioning devotion to the the all powerful leader, who is set apart "from ordinary men/ women and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least specially exceptional powers or qualities. These are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded

26.V.Geetha, S.V. Rajadurai, 1996, op.cit. For Indian context see, Ashis nandy, 1980, The Edge of psychology: Essays in Politics and Culture, Oxford University Press.

27.V.Geetha and S.V. Rajadurai, 1996, op.cit. Pamela Price, 1996, "Revolution and Rank in Tamil Nationalism, The Journal of South Asian Studies, no.2, May, pp.359-383.

as divine origin or as exemplars..." It is this deliberate creation of frenzy, the construction of the superhuman and the constant exhortation to desire for the superhuman, the desire to be the icon that traps the emotional subjugated poor who does not have anything to offer but his life/ self to indulge in self-immolation and thus embrace iconhood.

With the personalisation of politics taking centre stage, and politics the promotion of the personality cult with the back up of the media (print as well as visual) the political hagiology²⁹ (writing about the lives of the saint/person singing to paens to the central character) of the superhuman assumes significance, thus providing the possibilities of the 'great lie' to prevail or evoke the sensibilities of the "will to believe" in the superhuman or supernatural.³⁰

It is the calculated exploitation of this 'problematic relation between a leader and his followers' that gets routinised in due course through the systematic mobilisation by auxiliary social groups and organisations like cultural associations and fan clubs. These clubs in their social gatherings shower paens on the political personality by attributing him/her various titles such as Aringnar (learned), Kalaingnar, Kalaivannar, Kaviarasu, Puratchi thalaivar, Puratchi thalaivi, Navalar, Porval etc. which

 28. Max Weber, 1947, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, Oxford University Press, New York, pp.71-72. Cited in Reinhard Bendix, 1969, "Reflections on Charismatic Leadership, in State and Society, p.620.

29. M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, op.cit.

30. Max Weber, 1947, op.cit.

enhances the social standing/status of the political personality.

Selective projection of Tamil cultural history so as to create stereotypes in consonance with the values that legitimize the disruptive effects of charisma or enhance the appeal of the magico-religious content -in the process discouraging the secular content of the political culture - is resorted to. For instance, the systematic projection of the virtues of the women in Sila-pathiharam "who because of their chastity worked many miracles"

Thus through the fan clubs or cultural clubs the whole project of the politics of personality cult gets institutionalised through kinship (caste/community), heredity (priesthood/family occupation) and office (political parties)

What is being subverted in the process is the conscious activity of the democratic citizen in politics, and his rational approach to what is guided by reason. His source of information is doctored or coloured so as to cripple his decision making ability - for instance his decision as to how to vote on the basis of careful calculation as to the interests and principles he would like to be furthered.

CHAPTER - II

Chapter - II

PERSONALITY CLASHES AND PARTY FORMATIONS

OF DRAVIDIAN/NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENTS/PARTIES: A

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In this chapter an attempt has been made to examine the historical background of the Dravidian/non-Brahmin movements and parties. It focuses on the prevalent personality clashes that led to the formation of different parties and organisations, as well as on some of the policies and programme introduced by Dravidian movement/parties. Finally, the chapter provides a comprehensive assessment of Dravidian polity.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the historical development of the Dravidian parties, along with the issues related to their politics and personality clashes. It aims to provide an understanding on how Dravidian parties were able to win and enjoy mass support by projecting individual leaders rather than the party and its ideologies. The chapter also gives an account of the role played by sycophants, which often resulted in violence and riot-like situations whenever the leadership within a party, or the leaders of opposing parties clashed with each other. For example, Annadurai vs E.V.Ramaswamy, Annadurai vs E.V.K.Sampath, Karunanidhi vs M.G.Ramachandran, Jayalalitha vs V.N.Janaki, Karunanidhi vs V.Gopalswamy and the latest Karunanidhi vs M.K.Azhagiri.

In South India, as in other parts of the country, the social order has three major divisions apart from the religion and minorities-based strata. There are the Brahmins, the non-Brahmins

and the Untouchables. The Brahmins and non-Brahmins who hailed from the same varna system were mutually dependent upon each other in the socio-cultural domain of belief, namely the Hindu fold. Both practiced 'untouchability'. This practice segregated the untouchables from the rest and placed them at the bottom in the social hierarchy. Further, the Indian society was riddled with complex problems stemming from caste/ class dominance of power in education, politics, economics and culture. Generally, the dominance of power has been looked upon as an instrument of oppression perpetrated by the upper caste. Modern education helped develop awareness among the educated non-Brahmins of the South India, particularly the upper caste community, of their social and political rights. In this mass communication, especially the press supported immensely. The nature of was different as compared to other parts of India. In the same period, Northern India witnessed popular a mobilization against the British, where people had risen above community interest and almost every section of society was participating in the freedom struggle. It is also important to note that during this time Gandhi entered into the Indian National Movement, took leadership and strength-

1. B.R.Ambedkar, Writings and Speeches, Vol.2, Dr.Ambedkar Foundation, Govt. of India,p.46. (Tamil Tranlastion by S.Perumal)

2.David Washbrook 1989, "Caste, Class and Dominance in Modern Tamil Nadu: Non-Brahminism, Dravidianism and Tamil Nationalism", in M S A Rao and F.Frankil (ed), Caste, Class and Dominance in Modern India, Oxford Univ.Press, New Delhi, pp.205-263.

3. Irschick Eugene F, 1969, Politics and Social Cocflict in South India: Non--Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separatism 1916-1929, Oxford University Press, Bombay.

4.Ibid.

ened freedom struggle.

The non-Brahmins of Madras presidency had been fast catching up with the Brahmins in education, thereby challenging the Brahmin monopoly in almost every walk of life. As a consequence, non-Brahmins entered into social conflicts with the Brahmin and they(non-Brahmins) did not hesitate to employ political means to solve that conflict.

A group of non-Brahmins argued that because of the British patronage to the Brahmins, the latter had a monopoly in education and thereby in the power structure. The Brahmanical social order gave a higher position to Brahmins and they dominated over non-Brahmin castes in education and other socio-cultural spheres. This dominance led to political rivalry between Brahmins and non-Brahmins in the south India.

The socio-cultural and political rivalry between Brahmins and non-Brahmins was based on the racial theory generated by European scholars as well as the educated non-Brahmin leaders, especially, those who have studied the origins of Tamil language, history and culture. Then, a theory was proposed that the Brahmins were Aryans who had come down from Northern parts of India, whereas the non-Brahmins were the original inhabitants of South India. The Aryans came as conquerors and imposed a Sanskrit-based culture in the form of Brahmanical religion and its caste system. Scholars claim that Brahmins were the guardians of Northern Sanskrit and perpetuators of caste system. The non-Brahmins were

5.Thandavan, 1988, "AIADMK in Tamil Nadu: Its Emergence Unprecedented Growth", in S.Bhatnagar and Pradeeb Kumar (ed), Regional Political Parties in India, Ess Ess Pub., New Delhi.

the original Dravidian race, with their own distinctive languages and culture.⁶ Later, it (the argument of the non-Brahmin or the Dravidian) was narrowed down to issue of the who ownership of Tamil, Tamil culture and Tamil Nadu.⁷

Along with the dichotomies created between the two, there was also the materialist differences which was reflected in urban public life; the relative difference between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins was more apparent. Since, Brahmins had an advantage over the non-Brahmins by virtue of their religious learning and English education, they were able to occupy government jobs. The Brahmins were also encouraged by British patronage. Swamy Dharma Theertha chalked out the following methods by which Britain granted them help, to enable the institution of a Brahmin regime so that it permanently imposed itself upon the subordinated people of India who put their whole trust in British democracy:⁸

(i) they promoted the Brahmins to the highest posts of power and profit.

6. Irschick Eugene; 1969, Murasoli Maran; 1991, T.M. Parathasarathy; 1993.

7. The racial theory of Dravidian and Aryan has been questioned by Daggmar Hellmann-Rajanyagam in their article entitled "Is there a Tamil Race?" they point out that the 19th century scholars not only conflate caste, religion, and race but also postulated a racial dichotomy between the 'superior' Aryan and 'inferior' Dravidian race, which were stratified into castes and took on racial characteristics (Ronald Inden, Imagining India (London, 1990), p.40. Cited in Peter Robb, 1994, The Concept of Race in South Asia, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp.109-145.

8. Swami Dharma Theertha, 1992(5th Edition), History of Hindu Imperialism, Dalit Educational Literature Centre, Madras, pp.159-160.

(ii) they established caste 'Kutcheries', the most dreaded tribunal of the Hindus.

(iii) they unearthed from oblivion the "Manu Shastra" and other spurious texts, which the vast majority of the Hindus had never heard of, and elevated them to the status of authoritative works of Hindu law.

(iv) they brought temples under the control of trustees, and thus facilitated the aggrandisement of Brahminism and the deprivation of the right of the subordinated mass.

(v) through judicial decisions and administrative classifications, and even by legal enactments, the so called Hindu law was made applicable to all Indians, except the Christians and the Muhammadans.

(vi) they gave royal recognition, state protection, enhanced dignity, positive value and significance, and even political importance to caste distinctions.

(vii) they blasted the hopes of reformers and teachers by making it impossible for them to alter that 'status quo' by any practicable means.

(viii) on the pretext of non-interference, they actively strengthened and perpetuated the evils of society which in fact it was their duty to eradicate.

In the face of the unabashed patronage of the British to the Brahmins, the non-Brahmins' distrust of both was expressed through letters in the press. Most of the non-Brahmins' letters were based on personal experiences of caste discrimination. For example, an anonymous non-Brahmin disclosed his humiliation, in

the paper thus: "in Madura he and some Brahmin were to celebrate the granting of honorary title Rao Bahadur to a friend by having a festive meal, and found, to their surprise, that in the club where they went, they had placed Brahmins and non-Brahmins at separate tables about one hundred yards apart..... how can the Brahmin who are responsible for the clamour of Self-Government, be expected to sympathize..." A number of similar kind of public outcry expressing ill treatment and humiliation at the hands of non-Brahmins in socio-cultural spheres appeared in newspapers.

Moreover, discrimination in educational institutions and hostels prevented the non-Brahmins from getting admissions. They started realizing the need for organised efforts to their fight for the rights. The founder of Justice Party gave a slogan to non-Brahmin youth, "Awake, Arise (and March) or be forever fallen".

Fearing nepotism and distrust of non-Brahmins, the British now started thinking of taking initiative to control the dominance of the Brahmins. The non-Brahmins on their part used the situation in their benefit. Thus, emerged the dichotomy of Dravidian-Aryan culture. The non-Brahmin demanded special treatment, constructed the history of their own origins and also started a drive for separatism.

9.Irschick Eugene, 1969. op.cit. p.45.

10.Murasoli Maran, 1991, Dravida Ivakka Varalaru (History of Dravidian Movement), Puthaka Solai, Madras, p.4-15. (Tamil)

11.Ibid.

Educational Initiatives of non-Brahmins

Education is a basic rudiment and essential condition of any society aiming at social transformation. The non-Brahmins too understood the importance of education. In Madras city, C. Natesa Mudaliar, a 'Vellala' by caste (non-Brahmin upper caste) and a medical student, became the secretary of the Madras Dravidian Association (formed in 1912), and demanded the establishment of a non-Brahmin hostel. He argued that enhanced caste group in education was necessary for the upliftment of non-Brahmins. He identified as bad company, evil surroundings, and lack of efficient supervisions the causes of the failure of non-Brahmins. In 1916,¹² he started the Dravidian Association hostel.

Consequently, the Dravidian Association published two books by Sir C. Sankaran Nair namely "Dravidian Worthies" and "The non-Brahmins letters". The latter comprised letters from about 21 persons, some of them being Reddy, Naidu, Mudaliar (Kapu, Baliya and a Vellala) expressing their views as also their aspirations; They argued that since among the Brahmins, (caste) patronage was widely practised, to overcome this system the non-Brahmins too should follow the same practice. They advocated the same kind of (caste) patronage that influence positions in government services to fellow non-Brahmins like Brahmins.¹³

Organisational Initiatives of non-Brahmins:

The real beginning for non-Brahmins was made by Dr. T.M.

12. Irschick Eugene, 1969, op.cit., pp.25-65.

13. Ibid.

Nair and P.Thyagaraja Chetti on November 20, 1916 when they formed a Company, the South Indian People's Association Limited and decided to bring out newspapers in English, Telugu and Tamil. These papers were funded by land-owning non-Brahmin upper caste groups. Soon after the formation, they released a "Non-Brahmins Manifesto"¹⁴ outlining the non-Brahmins' interests, and means to execute their programme. This was followed by the formation of another organisation known as South Indian Liberal Federation.

The non-Brahmin manifesto met a vehement criticism from Annie Besant. The non-Brahmins started with a strong counter-attack which particularly targeted Mrs. Besant. For example, Dr. Nair's article "Psychopathia Sexualis in a Mahatma" noted the sensational case of Jiddu Krishnamurty's¹⁵ father's suit against

14. Non-Brahmin Manifesto: (a) work towards the educational, social, economic and political upliftment of the non-Brahmin castes; (b) all public problems would be discussed and debated in the interest of non-Brahmins' development and protection, which will be brought to the notice of the government on South India. (c) the problems will be discussed in a democratic manner by public meetings. Murasooli Maran, op. cit, p.15. Also see, S.V.Rajadurai and V.Geetha: 1998.

15. Jiddu Krishnamurty was a known philosopher, and had followers in India and abroad. His philosophy is against religious dogmas, he was critical of Hindus, their prejudices and hero worship as well as superstitious belief. In his name, there are reputed educational trusts and schools in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and other parts of India. His father was a Brahmin, from Andhra Pradesh (erstwhile Madras Presidency). While working with Annie Besant, his father took Jiddu Krishnamurty for education to Madras. J. Krishnamurty was brought-up by his father at Annie Besant's residence. She gave all support to his education. Krishnamurty was very attractive and intelligent even in his childhood. In the meantime, Annie Besant and Krishnamurty developed a deep sexual relationship which was not acceptable to Krishnamurty's father, and tried to free him from Mrs. Besant. But she was not ready to leave Krishnamurty, this became a case in Madras High court and in England as well. Dhina Manikathir, (Tamil) nd. January, 1992.

Mrs. Besant for the recovery of his son.

Further, the Dravidian leaders strongly criticised the Home Rule movement, called "Home Rule Brahmin Rule". A series of debates took place between the Brahmins, non-Brahmins and the untouchables in the papers and journals of Madras Presidency. The issues were argued by the three sections. The Brahmins charged the non-Brahmins of being parochial, greedy for power and antagonistic towards them, even more than the British imperialist. The Non-Brahmins countered this by saying that for every social evil only the Brahmins were responsible; and that they will have to eliminate the Brahmin dominance, and also seek the Britisher's consent for this. The untouchables on their part emphasized the elimination of the Brahminical system and upliftment of social status based on the Buddhist tradition in the Tamilagam.¹⁶

Political Initiatives of non-Brahmins

The 'Montague' announcement¹⁷ intensified the political activities of non-Brahmins in the Justice Party and the Congress. As a matter of fact, the English were able to stabilize their position in South India by assisting non-Brahmins and the Justice Party. The non-official British community openly supported the Justice Party and opposed the Home Rule movement.¹⁸

16. S.V. Rajadurai and V.Geetha, 1998, Towards A Non-Brahmin Millennium: From Iyothee Thass to Periyar, Samya, Calcutta and G.Aloysius, 1998, Religion as Emancipatory Identity: A Buddhist Movement among the Tamils Under Colonialism, New Age international Pub. New Delhi.

17. Montague and his colleagues decided to assess political situation of group interests in India.

18.Irschick Eugene, 1969, op.cit.

The Justice Party held several meetings for effective representation not only of caste-Hindu (40/41 million in 1920's) but also the Untouchables who constituted around (10/41 million) 1/4 of total population. In order to muster support for 'Panchamas' / outcaste, as also to project themselves as sole representatives of non-Brahmins, Justice Party leaders O. Kandasamy and Dr. T.M. Nair met the outcaste leaders and held meetings. They assured that a committee would be set to coordinate activists. The Panchamas' political activities of the "Pariah Mahajanah Sabha" rebuffed the Justice Party offer and argued that if Home Rule was granted, Panchamas would be crushed regardless of who attained power, - Brahmin or non-Brahmins. The non-Brahmins should effect a reformation among themselves and treat Panchamas as brethren, said Anchasa, president of the Pariah Mahajana Sabha. He added that Brahmin dominance would continue so long as Brahmins were sought at religious ceremonies.

The Justice Party demanded the communal representation, like the Muslim communal award of 1909, because the Party was opposed the Home Rule. The demand of non-Brahmins was supported by their community men in the Congress. The supporters of the Home Rule among the non-Brahmins formed a new association known as "Madras Presidency Association", comprising of land owning and elites social groups who also headed the association. They also started a new Tamil paper, with Thiru.vi.Kaliyanasunderam Mudaliar taking

19.Irschick Eugene, 1969, op.cit. p.71

over as its editor.

Revival of Tamil Culture and Literature:

The non-Brahmin initiatives in socio-political spheres received considerable positive response. It energized the revival of their language and culture. This development was the result of the impact made by some European scholars like Rev. Caldwell²¹ and G.U.Pope and their works.²² Consequently, to encourage the study of Tamil classics, a number of Tamil cultural/literary associations and sangams were started by non-Brahmins. The association membership was given to both the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins. These cultural associations also gave political support to the Justice Party and the Madras Presidency Association - an outfit of non-Brahmins was support to the Congress. The political context was that of construction of the theory of 'insiders' - non-Brahmins/Draavidian and Tamil culture and history; and the outsiders - the Brahmin/Aryan and Sanskrit culture.²³

As mentioned earlier, the Pariah Mahajanah Sabha had articu-

20. He was a well known Tamil Scholar, and had written several poems which are included in the Tamil Nadu State School text books.

21. He was the earliest European Scholar who had initiated research on Classical Tamil literature. His book Comparative Grammar of Draavidian Language was considered to be the major source for the construction of Draavidian identity.

22. He too was from Europe and had mastered the Tamil language and translated several classical Tamil literature into English. He was also a great admirer of Tamil language and culture. His admiration was evident from his request that the cenotaph should bear the inscription 'a Tamil Student'.

23. Isrchick Eugene, 1969, op.cit. p.279. See T.K. Oomen, 1986, "Insiders and Outsiders in India: Primordial Collectivism and Cultural Pluralism in Nation-Building", International Sociology, San Diego, USA, Vol.1, No.1, March.

lated independent political views of its own. Regarding Tamil cultural and literary revivalism, too, there was a separate movement which was activated by outcaste leaders as well. It has been noted by Aloysius that a Dalit scholar, Iyothee Thass,²⁴ brought out the first journal called "Tamilan" in 1904. In the journal, he had wrote on social, political and cultural themes, specifically emphasized the rejuvenation of Tamil Buddhists traditions.²⁵ His claim was that the Panchamas/ Adi-Dravida were the original Tamils, and were followers of the Buddhist tradition. The Aryan-Brahmin invasions, resulted in the destruction of their traditions.²⁶ Further, he also described how the Brahmins shrewdly destroyed Panchamas history by organising Hindu festivals like the 'Sanrankadi' - during the month of mid January a festival celebrated annually, which included a ritual to abandon and burn old things, like the palm leaf (which was used for writing); and 'Addiperukku' - this is a festival celebrated during the month of mid August and September every year, in which people drop old things in the river or well. Thus, the things associated with Panchamas were thrown into 'Sanrankadi' and 'Addiperukku'.²⁷ The major focus on the revival was a claim over

24. Aloysius, 1999, Iythee Thassar Chindanaigal (The Thoughts of Iyothee Thassar), Folklore Resources and Research Centre, St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu. (Tamil).

25. V. Geetha and S. V. Rajadurai, 1998, Towards Non-Brahmin Millennium: From Iyothee Thass to Periyar, Samya, Calcutta. Anbu Ponnaiyiam's Keynote introductory remarks to Aloysius's edited volumes on Iyothee Thassar Chindanaigal (1999, in Tamil) op.cit.

26. Ibid, also S. V. Rajadurai and V. Geetha, 1998 op.cit.

27. Ibid.

original Tamil or Adi-Tamils in every social group in Madras
28
Presidency.

The Brahmins also disputed the claims made by non-Brahmins who (Brahmin) exhibit their contributions to the growth of Tamil culture and literature, by forming their own Tamil associations/sangams. In the face of accusations and allegations, Brahmins also stopped identifying themselves with Sanskrit. One of the Brahmin society, headed by C. Rajagopalachariar, concentrated upon formulating/ translating scientific terms into Tamil, through his 'Tamil Scientific Terms Society'. This was basically to prove their(Brahmins') loyalty towards Tamil language and culture, as also to counter the non-Brahmin campaign against them.

In due course, non-Brahmins realized the value of their mother tongue and, began using it extensively in public meetings of the Justice Party. Tamil language and culture were exploited as political tools for mobilization of the masses. This use of the mother tongue resulted in electoral gain. From 1916 onwards, all these initiatives and popular efforts of non-Brahmins'

28.Ibid. This debate pertaining to who is the original Tamil and the issue of 'insider' and 'outsider' in construction of Tamil identity and socio-cultural history continues even today in Tamil Nadu politics. The recent Dalit works disapprove non-Brahmin's earlier claim of original Tamil identity. Particularly, Guna (1994), Raj Gowthaman (1994-6), Ravi Kumar (Pondicherry Group) and other Dalit writing in Tamil Nadu. See, M.S.S. Pandian's 1998, "Stepping Outside History? New Dalit Writings from Tamil Nadu", in Partha Chatterjee's (ed), Wage of Freedom: Fifty Years of the Indian Nation-State, Oxford University Press.

29.As Rajaji felt it was necessary for the development of Tamil language and society. Irschick Eugene, 1969, op.cit. pp.301-303

30.Ibid.

caste mobilization, started gaining momentum and helped them gain power in the region.

The power of non-Brahmins had benefited the upper crust among them in all spheres of life. Hence, the Justice Party approached the Madras Presidency with the demand of their community's representation in the legislative council and educational institutions as well as in government jobs. During its four terms i.e. 1921, 1923, 1926, and from 1929-36 for 7 years, the Justice Party ministry brought about some change: ³¹ (a) the Hindu Religious Endowment Act dealing with temple administration; (b) state aid to industries; (c) Indianization of civil service; (d) educational advancement of non-Brahmins; (e) establishing co-operative movement; ^{*} (f) establishing local self government; and finally, (g) extension of the voting right to women on the same basis as men. ³² In spite of their commitments for social reform, the plight of Untouchables remained unchanged, barring the change of name from Pariah to Adi-Dravidar. ³³

Within a few years in power, the non-Brahmin upper castes

31.T.M. Parthasarathy, 1993 (6th edition), DMK History, Bharathi Publication, Madras. (Tamil)

*It is to be noted that Tamil Nadu has very powerful Co-operatives Societies in rural areas. The state government supports these co-operatives substantially. The non-Brahmin caste-Hindus dominate these co-operatives today.

*Those days voting right was granted on the basis of person who hold certain amount of property.

32.Cited Lazar from James Walten, Fiction and Front: Party System in South India, Young Asia, p.100

33.Murasol Maran, 1991, Dravida Iyakka Varalaru. (History of Dravidian Movement) Pothaga Solai, Madras.(Tamil)

acquired almost an inconceivable measure of confidence in themselves and greatly enhanced their social and political position. In due course of time they started enjoying the benefits of government jobs and other provisions. Then, the elite also joined the Brahmins and showed little interest in other sections of the non-Brahmins. Moreover, they were not interested in caste contradictions within the non-Brahmins. This caused the weakening of the Justice Party. As such differences arose in the functioning of Justice Party. Moreover, the death of prominent of the leaders of the Justice Party; saw it adopting resolutions like merging or joining the Congress, further inducing the decline of the Justice Party.

34

The Self-Respect Movement and Dravidar Kazhagam

The Justice Party more or less compromised on its earlier commitment to social reform, and to the cause of non-Brahmin community as a whole. Since it was led by non-Brahmin upper caste land-owning elites, it dropped the agenda of social transformation from its politics. During the same period, E.V.Ramaswamy developed differences with the Congress on the issue of untouchability. He led the "Vaikam Satyagiraha" and left the Congress and formed "Suya Mariyatai Iyakkam" - Self-Respect Movement (SRM)-in 1925. The objectives of SRM were (i) to adopt a similar stand on communal representation; (ii) to inculcate a sense of pride among non-Brahmins with Dravidian past; (iii) to attack the Brahmin on their practice of rituals, superstition and to target

34.Irschick Eugene, 1969, op.cit., and T.M.Parathsarathy, 1993, op.cit.

the Puranas, particularly, the Ramayanam; (iv) to cultivate rationality and social reforms; and (v) to support women's freedom. E.V.Ramaswamy upheld the view that social reforms are an integral part of political reform. His radical positions on various social issues caused differences with Justice Party on three firm grounds, i.e. allowing membership to Brahmin, abandoning demand of communal representation and not addressing the caste system and religion.

In 1937, the Congress declared Hindi as a national language, which evoked strong protests in Tamil speaking areas of Madras presidency. E.V.Ramaswamy's response to this was creating a sovereign and independent Dravidian Republic. He hoped to achieve this along with Indian independence, but by militant means. The reason, he felt, was that North Indian Brahmin would exercise dominance over the South Indian Dravidian through Hindi. When India achieved independence without 'so called' "Sovereign Independent Dravidian Republic" E.V.Ramaswamy declared it a "Black Day". The stand taken by E.V.Ramaswamy, however, created a strong protests within the SRM. C.N. Annadurai, particularly, openly criticised E.V.Ramaswamy's position.

35.Irschick Eugene, 1969; S. Lazar, 1991; S.V. Rajdurai and V. Geetha, 1998.

36.C.N. Annadurai was a prominent young leader. He hailed from the non-Brahmin caste of 'Mudhalier'. He had honorary post graduation from Univeristy of Madras, and possessed multifacted talent in writing and oratory both in English and Tamil. Besides he was a Dramatist, scripted several Dramas and Cinema, and was a good actor. He also edited 'Dravidian', 'Veduthalai' and 'Dravidanad' etc.

37.T.M. Parathasarathy: 1993, op.cit.

C.N. Annadurai based his stand on the following grounds: first, he acknowledged the sacrifices of wealth and lives of V.O.Chidambarnar (V.O.C), Tirupur 'Kodi Katha' (Saviour of Flag) Kumaran and others for the freedom of the nation; secondly, he believed that the celebration of independence would remove strain i.e. "the Slave of British" Tamil youths; thirdly, that the position taken by E.V. Ramaswamy was undemocratic, and it was not taken by the consensus of members of D.K.; and finally, that the Dravidian liberation which needed strong militant mobilization, etc. had not started. In his view, mere ideology amounted to nothing. On these grounds he supported the celebration of Indian Independence. The situation obviously created a rift between Annadurai and E.V.Ramaswamy, but both of them stuck to their respective stand thereafter, even though, Annadurai backed E.V. Ramaswamy during the crises in SRM. He always made his presence felt, because he possessed good skills of handling opponents.³⁸

To cite an example, in the 1944 Salem Conference, he had introduced resolutions to not only tackle E.V.Ramaswamy's opponent but also certain other important factors associated with SRM. The following crucial resolutions were adopted: (i) the members shun the titles given by the British like Diwan Bahadur, Sir, Rao Bahadur, Raja etc., (ii) the members were not to be part of any government committees; those who were associated, should resign; members should also resign from other organisations (caste, cultural and religious bodies) and hereafter, no one would contest in election; (iii) the members should give-up using their

38.Ibid.

caste titles with name; and (iv) change the name SRM to 'Dravidar
39
Kazhagam'. It was the first time that the SRM not only took a
stand against the non-Brahmin land-owning castes but also
seriously focussed on caste differences within the non-Brahmins.
This conference also revitalized popular support among untoucha-
40
bles and other backward sections of the society.

In 1949, a meeting between E.V.Ramaswamy and Rajaji created
strong suspicions among the Dravidar Kazhagam members. Prominent
members of the Dravidar Kazhagam started asking details about the
meeting of two leaders. E.V. Ramaswamy's response was that it was
personal, and had nothing to do with the organisation. Later, he
announced that he was looking for 'varishu', heir for the organi-
sation, who could look after him and the Dravidar Kazhagam Trust.
Because E.V. Ramaswamy did not believe anyone in the Dravidar
Kazhagam. He claimed that it was on this matter that he had
consulted Rajaji, and had planned to marry Maniyammai who was
almost 45 years younger to him. Eventually, the marriage between
Maniyammai who was just 26 years old and E.V. Ramaswamy who was
41
72 was solemnized in the Registrar's office.

E.V. Ramaswamy Vs C.N. Annadurai: Emergence of DMK

The inappropriate marriage between Ramswamy and Maniyammai
widened the gap between the prominent members of DK and E.V.
Ramaswamy, particularly Annadurai and others. Also, the Dravidar
Kazhagam was not functioning for several months as there occurred

39.K. Kesawan, 1994, op.cit, p.26.

40.Ibid.

41.T.M. Parthasarathy: 1993 op cit. pp.80-100

a deadlock between E.V.Ramaswamy and Annadurai. As a matter of fact, even before the marriage, difference of opinion between Annadurai and E.V.Ramaswamy, had surfaced. However, despite the autocratic attitude of E.V.Ramaswamy, Dravidar Kazhagam did not split. Their marriage raised doubts on social reforms advocating woman's liberation. Consequently, Annadurai and others founded a new political outfit called Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) on 17 July, 1949.⁴²

It seems that the DMK was born in 1949 after the E.V.Ramaswamy - Maniyammai marriage. Actually, Annadurai had laid its foundation from the days of SRM, by starting of 'Dravida Actors Kazhagam 1943', 'Dravida Student Kazhagam 1944', and 'Dravidar Writers Kazhagam 1945'. Through these formation Annadurai's strength within Dravidar Kazhagam grew more. All these ancillary bodies found the backbone of Annadurai's DMK.⁴³

On the day of DMK's first official meeting, Annadurai made it clear that DMK is not opposed to the Dravidar Kazhagam, and that the objectives were the same, e.g. to establish a casteless and egalitarian society; to assure a socialist pattern; of society to protect the interest of the region, to work for regional autonomy within the constitutional framework of India. He also mentioned that DMK president's chair should be kept vacant for E.V. Ramaswamy, because "we have been brought up by him as a family and E.V. Ramaswamy was the head". Further, he said that in a joint family the father scolds his children often, and one day

42.Ibid.

43.K.Kesavan, 1994, op.cit.

the elder one goes out of family and starts living separately, but the affection and attachment remains the same. Likewise, we have just separated from the family because of the authoritarianism which was not acceptable to us, but we were not ready to give-up the Dravidian/ Tamil cause.⁴⁴

But E.V.R's response to the formation of DMK was different. He said that DMK is a new blueprint of the old Justice Party, with a slight difference, i.e. while in JP the leaders were upper caste non-Brahmin rich businessmen, landlords, elites, the DMK leaders were from socially backward caste-Hindus. "JP leaders were Sarikai(zikuna) Kula party, DMK leaders ordinary Kaithari(kadi) Vetti party".⁴⁵

It is important to note, that ever since JP tasted power, the debate over the issue of social reforms with participation in the power structure and social reform outside power started among non-Brahmin leaders (like SRM/DK influence the power for the social reforms). Annadurai, like Muthaiah⁴⁶ of the Justice Democratic Party of 1934, and his followers were keen to take part in the government and to occupy positions. In the interest of occupying power through election, they softened their stand on crucial issues - atheism, separate 'Dravidanad' and anti-Brahmin

44.T.M. Parthasarathy, op. cit. pp.100-110. Also, DMK's Principles, Objectives and Rules and Regulation, Head of Office of DMK Publication.

45.K. Kesawan, 1994, op.cit, p.35.

46.Muthaiah was a prominent leader of the Justice Party. He always believed that non-Brahmins should use political power for their upliftment.

stand, and concentrated on mass mobilization, for which they used mass media extensively. Annadurai's calibre and deep understanding of the mass media had driven him and the DMK to exploited for mass mobilization in all possible manners.

In October 1948, acknowledging Annadurai's influence in the DK, E.V.Ramaswamy decided to accorded special honour to him, by arranging a chariot procession for him, in DK's Special Conference at Erode. E.V. Ramaswamy also announced in the conference that he will hand over the key to Annadurai (meaning 'DK leadership'⁴⁷); however, this never happened.

Further, E.V. Ramaswamy's dictatorial attitudes in the organisation also contributed to the formation of DMK. E.V. Ramaswamy never had faith in collective decision; he used to consult with leaders but announced his own decision. This kind of individual domination of politics, showed that he was the one who sowed the seeds of person-centered Dravidian politics in the state.⁴⁸

Religious or Theists / Atheist Issue in DMK:

The issue of anti-religion position of E.V.R:

"There is no God,

there is no God,

there is no God at all.

He who invented God is a fool.

He who propagates God is a scoundrel.

47.K. Kesavan, op.cit. pp. 35-45.

48.Ibid.

48

He who worships God is a barbarian".

While addressing the DMK's first executive meeting at Madras Annadurai said that the Dravidar Kazhagam and DMK was a "double-barrel gun",⁵⁰ in their approach to social reforms and political programme. But Annadurai's position on religious issue was different from that of E.V.Ramaswamy's. He said that the DMK believes in "One Man, One God and One Caste (community) as he borrowed from the earlier Sri Narayanaswami Guru's triplets "one religion, one caste, one god"⁵¹. This position was well suited to their party's electoral and political ends. In Tamil Nadu, there are a number of temples across the state, which owned large scale properties - lands, trusts - revenues controlled by not only the Brahmins but also non-Brahmins. If Annadurai/DMK adopted atheism similar to DK's position, then temple trusteeship holders would not have supported him. Those elites /rich people controlled the rural masses, including their voting behaviour/choice.⁵² The DMK's careful political arithmetic was to gain support from the landlords, the Brahmins and backward castes and few middle

49. Gail Omvedt, 1995, Dalit Visions, Orient Longman, New Delhi, p.56.

50. D. Jayakanthan, 1976, "A Literary Man's Political Experiences: Tamil Nadu Political Since 1946" (English translation by Venkataraman). Vikas Pub, New Delhi, p.33.

51. Gail Omvedt, 1995, op.cit. and K.Karunanidhi's Nenchukku Nidhi, vol.II.

52. This can be clearly seen in 1999 parliamentary election in Chidambaram constituency where Dalits in general were not allowed to cast their votes. Further, in 1998, my personal visit to Baghbad constituency in U.P. also shows the various ways and means adopted to prevent them from voting.

class.

In rural India, caste was related to the exercise of different rights on land. At the top were castes who were either absentee or non-cultivating owners. Next come the cultivating tenants; at the bottom of the hierarchy were the landless labourers. The bonded labourers invariably came from the third categories most of whom belong to the SCs/STs. The relationship between landowner tenant and landless labourers was subsumed under a single category of 'Patron-Client'. This relationship is widespread and crucial to the understanding of rural India. Voting at local and general elections is influenced by the 'Patron-Client' tie.⁵⁴

Even during the later stages of his life, E.V.Ramaswamy had changed his position on the issue of religion. In 1970s he announced an agitation to demand Temple Priesthood for all, irrespective of caste. Later, it was given-up as the ruling DMK government passed a resolution in the State Legislative Assembly known as "Archagar Law 1970". It was challenged by twelve writ petitions in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court upheld the law but suggested that it needed a Constitutional sanction from the Parliament. However, the sanction of the Parliament was never obtained by them, and the reason was stated to be change of leadership in power(AIADMK of MGR)⁵⁵

53. David Washbrook, 1989, op. cit.

54. P.Arul, 1991, The Political and Administrative Aspects of Rehabilitation Programmes of Bonded Labourer: A Case of Kodaikanal, Unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, JNU,p.iii.

55. M. Karunanidhi's Nenchukku Nidhi, vol.II p.221.

In later stages, Dravidian leadership not only diluted E.V.Ramaswamy's ideology but reopened Tamil society once again to Brahmanical rituals. It is important to note that the DMK government started conducting religious functions and established a separate ministerial department of 'Araanillai Durai', Department of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments. However, the reason given to justify the creation of new ministry was the effort to control the Brahmin domination.⁵⁶

For instance, Karunanidhi said that "he who loves and respects humanity he who has God within himself and he who become God her/himself".⁵⁷ Further, he added, "If the God does every good things to the people, then he who does good things to the people is God".⁵⁸ His party also erects number of statues, memorials for historic personalities and Tamil kings, poets, politicians, artists, etc.

On one occasion, the Tamil Nadu government of 1972 decided to erect a statue of the Tamil king Rajarajan inside the Tanjore Pragaswara Temple, which implied giving god-like status to Rajarajan. Later, the Central government refused permission, and subsequently the statue was erected just opposite of the Temple.⁵⁹ These are some of the events that contributed to the present politics of cult in the Dravidian Parties.

As far as MGR was concerned, his position on religion was -----

56. Ibid.

57. M. Karunanidhi, Nenchukku Nidhi, Vol. II, p. 204-206.

58. Ibid.

59. M. Karunanidhi, Vol-II, p. 405-426

well known. He was a staunch devotee of Thai Mukambigai cult. He refused to accept the "Archagar Sattam/ Law 1970", demanded by EVR. It also implied that he preferred a status-quo position in respect of the Hindu caste system. It will be further evident with an instance, when the mass conversion of Dalit to Islam took place in Meenakshipuram in Ramnad district, as a protest and as a search of dignity and a departure from untouchability and caste bias. Instead of realising the gravity of the caste system, MGR rather ridiculed it by terming the Dalit conversion as 'foreign money motivation'. His successor, Jayalalitha, established a Vedic institution for the revival of Brahmanic culture. In 1991, she conducted 'Kumbhabha Mella' at Kombakonam. All the above noted developments suggest that the Dravidian politics was not serious on the religious and the caste question.

The Political Stand of DMK:

Since the 1930's, it has been debated whether social change should be brought about through power or by remaining outside it. On the assumption that power may compels on ideological compromise, E.V.Ramaswamy always held that (radical) social change is possible only if the reform movement did not participate in the electoral process. But he was of the opinion that a political party could also undertake a social cause. Although, in Annadurai's opinion, power was the master key for social change, he did not revolt until 1949. He believed in constitutional means rather than radical and militant methods to fight for the social, political, economic and cultural rights of the poeple. Even the ques-

60. The Hindu, 18 August, 1981, Madras.

tion of 'Dravidanad' was underplayed till E.V.K. Sampath (one of the founder member of DMK) raised the issue in 1961.⁶¹ Further, political mobilization, E.V. Ramaswamy was cautious on the use of culture and especially, of artists who belonged to the world of Drama, film and the media.

Economic Position of DMK

E.V. Ramaswamy's economic policies included large scale industrialization, as against Gandhi's cottage industries. These included nationalisation of Banks, shipping services and, envisaged socialist social order.⁶² Later, the policies of E.V. Ramaswamy as also of Annadurai showed nothing radical in the economic field. Though, they both had a tilt towards socialism, there was not much of it in their ideological content. As in the case of E.V. Ramaswamy, Annadurai's outburst against the evils of profit-oriented capitalist social structure did not hold ground for long.⁶³ His maiden speech in the Rajya Sabha on Dravidanad was pro-capitalistic in nature. During their rule the Dravidian parties never dared to take any step to antagonize the rich; rather,⁶⁴ they taxed the poor in many ways.

61. K. Kesavan, 1994, op.cit, and T.M.Parathsarathy, 1993, op.cit.

62.S. Lazar, 1991.

63. Gail Omvedt, 1995: Dalit Vision, p.57, S.Lazar, 1991 M.Phil. disstertation and Anndurai's Maiden Speech in Rajya Sabha in 1962.

64.M.S.S. Pandian make this point only with regard to the MGR regime. But in my opinion during both DMK and AIADMK rule in the state, there was no structural change brought in the economic sphere. Though, Karunanidhi initiated certain land reform measures at early (Nangavaram land struggle) stage of DMK, which was

Socio-cultural Position of DMK

The DMK's revival of Tamil, Tamilian and Tamil nationalism was its mobilizing tactic. These tactics were continuously adopted and resulted in events like renaming "Madras State" to "Tamil Nadu"; installing the portrait of Thiruvalluvar in the assembly premises and erection of his statue(s) at various places; introduction of Prayer of Mother Tamil (Tamizh Thai Vazhthu); organising World Tamil Conferences; Tamil Archannai in Temples; and Tamil medium of education. Though, it upheld the Tamils' casteless society, in theory there was hardly any effort towards deconstruction of Hindu social order. They claimed not only to re-establish a democratic political culture in the state, but also to break away from the feudal leadership of the Congress. Even to achieve state autonomy, a compromised form of their earlier demand of separate 'Dravidanad' was given-up, merely for ministerial berth in the central cabinet. The political history of Dravidian parties had replaced and continued to introduce competitive populism which led to (a) person-center political culture, (b) culture of heir in politics (c) culture of violence, (d) cut-out and cult culture, and (e) culture of populism, etc. Here, we would briefly look at culture of heir, populism and violence in the politics. The cult and cut-out culture have been taken-up in the following chapter separately.

Culture of Heir/ Personal Politics in Dravidian Parties:

Since 1949, the issue of heir has remained alive and is

...Continued...

completely given up thereafter. M. Karunanidhi, 1997, Nenchukku Nidhi, Vol.I.

found even today in the politics of Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu. As discussed earlier, EVR did not have confidence in any of the DK leaders; for him no one after his death was capable of looking after the organization and its properties. For that he had married a very young woman at the age of seventy two. He had openly claimed that he wanted an heir for the party. It led to a major split in the rank and files, and subsequently the formation of DMK. Later, DMK too had problems on the same issue of heir, first in 1972, and then again 1993, which apart from a number of other cliques within the Dravidian parties, led formation of new political outfits like the AIADMK of MGR and the MDMK of V. Gopalswamy.

Clash Between MGR Vs Karunanidhi: Emergence of AIADMK

Right from its formation, DMK had one objective of occupying the levers of power by electoral means. This, however, demanded mass mobilization to muster support for party. The party used all forms of media and media personalities. Prominent among these was MGR, the celebrated cinema personality in Tamil Nadu. MGR had an image of mass influence, which he had gained via Tamil cinema industry, which in turn was mostly controlled by sympathizers of the Dravidian parties. His strength was grounded in the form of numerous fans and Fan Clubs across the state, in both rural and urban areas. In the 1970's, DMK leadership (M. Karunanidhi) realizing MGR's influence in the party, indirectly planned to curtail his popularity through the same medium i.e., the cinema and Fan club. M. Karunanidhi's elder son M.K. Muthu also joined

65.K. Kesavan, 1994, op.cit., pp.55-70

the cinema and started imitating the image and roles done by MGR. After M.K. Muthu's entry into cinema a number of his Fan clubs emerged in a short span of time challenging MGR's larger than life image. MGR understood Karunanidhi's move and clearly expressed his protest, blaming the DMK leadership and Karunanidhi for bringing-up heir in the party. To pacify MGR, Karunanidhi ordered the removal of all M.K. Muthu Fan clubs. ⁶⁶ Apart from this, after the 1971 DMK victory, MGR demanded the portfolio of Health in Karunanidhi's Cabinet. To accept MGR's demand, he put a ⁶⁷ condition that MGR should give-up acting, which MGR declined.

In 1972, amidst all the bitterness, MGR created a storm in the DMK circle by demanding, in an open public meeting, the account of the party's funds as also the assessment of the properties of ministers and party secretaries, failing which he threatened to go to people and expose them. During 1970's, Karunanidhi was more emphatic in demanding state autonomy which led to a dispute with the Congress; Mrs. Gandhi wanted to overcome Karunanidhi's challenge and wipe out the DMK's base. The Congress indirectly supported MGR. This led to the formation initially of the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (ADMK) which later, became the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). Literally speaking, there is no ideological difference between AIADMK and the DMK, but practically throughout his tenure, MGR was pro-

66. K. Kesavan, 1994, op.cit. and M.Karunanidhi's Nenchukku Nidhi, Vol-II (Tamil)

67.M. Karunanidhi,s Nenchukku Nidhi, Vol.II.

center and the Congress. In connection with the issue of Hindi, MGR played a double role. During MGR's tenure of chief minister-ship, the Centre had indirectly imposed Hindi through Door-darshan, which the DMK opposed and as usual capitalised it for its political gains. To avoid DMK's political tactics, MGR encouraged his party members to oppose Hindi; however, when he became the chief minister, he chose to remain silent. In terms of programmes and policies, he followed the same populism with greater vigour. One of his move introduced a structural change: He abolished the 'Karnam or Munship' - who used to look after the village administration and collection of revenue, and was a hereditary post of the upper caste. MGR made it as centralized local administration at the village level and created a post called Village Administrative Officer (VAO) which accorded formal government recruitment procedures with all reservation norms applicable. ⁶⁹ At a village level, a Dalit exercising his duty as VAO, where upper caste persons too need his certifications for various purposes was remarkable in a caste ridden village community.

In 1980's AIADMK and DMK followed a common trend: introducing and politically nourishing their respective heirs in the party. The AIADMK leader MGR brought J. Jayalalitha, his long-time co-actress in 24 films, into the party as its Propaganda Secretary. Karunanidhi too was nurturing his younger son, M.K.

68.K. Mohandas, 1992, MGR: The Man and Myth, Panther Publisher, Bangalore.

69.V.Suresh, 1993, "The DMK Debacle: Causes and Portents", Economic and Political Weekly, October 17, pp.2313-2321.

Stalin (presently the Mayor of Chennai Corporation) as the Youth Wing Secretary of DMK. Several measures were adopted in order to promote his heir; if he saw a person as having a sizable influence in the party, he was regarded as a challenge to his son's future position in the party.

Contrary to what MGR did for Bhaghiyaraja by making him his cinema heir he did not openly proclaim Jayalalitha as his political heir. After MGR's death in 1987 an open tussle started between MGR's wife V.N. Janaki, who became the chief minister for a short period, and Jayalalitha. But in reality it was a personal clash between R.M. Veerappan (a cabinet minister in MGR's government and a close family friend) and Jayalalitha.

Clash of Karunanidhi Vs V. Gopalswamy: Emergence of MDMK

In 1993, the clash between V. Gopalswamy a DMK Rajya Sabha member, and M. Karunanidhi, DMK president, came to lime light. It was also viewed as yet another issue of heir politics. V. Gopalswamy was a committed DMK worker from his college days possessing good oratory skills which ultimately induced enthusiastic youths to follow him. His speech was always emotional and the youth got easily mesmerized/ emotionalized. Because of this, he commands a large following in the party. Even Karunanidhi called him DMK's "Por Val" (means the sword used in the war). Tamil news-papers started giving more importance to V. Gopalswamy because of his vast political experience, and popularity was similar to that of Karunanidhi. Gopalswamy eventually gained quite an impressive place among the DMK rank and files. His image at Delhi level too eclipsed Karunanidhi's nephew Murasooli

Maran.

The issue became public when the central government intelligence agency announced that LTTE, to master support for V. Gopalswamy, had planned to kill M. Karunanidhi. This was even denied by the LTTE, but the occasion was used to show each other their strength in the party. Consequently, Karunanidhi announced his willingness to take political retirement. This political drama had witnessed unprecedented exhibition of personality cult in the state. Around ten persons self-immolated for the sake of their respective leaders. The long tug of war resulted in the formation of a new political outfit, 'Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam' (MDMK), and came to an end when the Chief Election Commission decided to allot the original DMK party symbol (the Rising Sun) to Karunanidhi.

These instances clearly show that from E.V.R, down to Karunanidhi, MGR and Jayalalitha, a trend had continued to convert the party/ organization into something of a 'family/ personal property'. Similarly, the transfer of leadership in a political party became hereditary. Though, they appear to uphold democratic principles, in reality it was always the other way round. The major reason was over-personification and image building among the members of the party, in violation of professed norms and

70.K. Kesavan, pp.112-125.

71.Dhina Mani, 6 October, 1993 (Tamil Daily), Chennai.

72.In early period of DMK's personality clash between Annadurai and E.V.K.Sampath, Annadurai too made similar announcement of political retirement in 1960. Jagathrakshakan, 1984, Dr.MGR: A Phenomenon, Apollo Veliyeetagam, Madras, p.67.

principles. This culture of heirs was not only associated with DMK but found throughout the country - in the Congress party, RJD in Bihar, and Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh.

In the case of Dravidian parties, every time a personality/ leadership clash occurred, it was followed by an outbreak of violence. It has been even a trend that whenever a political leader faces a situation critical to his/her political or even wellbeing, the sycophants indulge in mob violence and irrational behaviour in public. The following section would explain the violent aspects of Dravidian parties' political culture.

The Culture of Violence in Dravidian Politics:

The non-Brahmin movement of Dravidian parties came as a force in Tamil Nadu politics, supposedly to play a constructive socio-cultural and progressive role. As such, it advocated an egalitarian and secular democratic polity against inegalitarian, feudal, and Brahmin dominance, nepotic rule of the Congress. Moreover, these objectives were simply translated into negativism - anti-Brahmin, anti-Hindi, and anti-religion, judiciously exploited for electoral gain.

The DMK's manifesto, with the aim of countering the Congress, was to end the politics of violence, and to promote a democratic culture in the state. However, whenever the Dravidian parties came to power they were unable to keep its promise. Though, there are several instances to prove this contention, it would suffice here to say that the Dravidian parties not only promulgated the same Congress culture, but dispensed it with much more vigor. Here I would focus only on intra-party clashes between personalities and groups, both inside and outside the

legislative assembly.

In the earlier 1960's, E.V.K. Sampath complained to Annadurai that DMK is confined only to Tamil Nadu, and was not addressing the Dravidanad question. He also cautioned that leaning towards cinema personalities for mobilization of masses was not a good trend, as it has made DMK just a Fan Club organization and has encouraged 'hero cult' in the party.⁷³ He was also opposed to conferring titles to leaders and politicians, as this practice,⁷⁴ for him, was against good political culture. He criticized it for its authoritarian style of functioning. In order to put a check on these, he proposed a resolution for changing the rules and regulations in the Party Executive Committee on 21-22 January, 1961. However, he was not only not allowed to speak but also attacked by pro-Annadurai group. Kannadasan, a well known Tamil film lyricist, condemned the attack on Sampath, and for this he had to face 'sandals missiles' at a public meeting.⁷⁵

As mentioned earlier, MGR's expulsion from the primary membership of the DMK on 10th October, 1972, resulted in a chain of violence. On the one hand, members of MGR's fan club expressed their anguish at their patron's expulsion by self-immolations and riots. On the other hand, the state police as well as Karunanidhi's supporters of DMK, repressed MGR's supporters. As Pandian

73. Jagathgkshakan, 1984, Dr. MGR: A Phenomemon, Apollo Veliyeettagam, Madras, p.67. Emphasis mine.

74. It was actually Annadurai who had introduced the giving-up of the titles and caste suffixes to name at Salem Conference. Later, all the DMK leader had some or other titles (see Appendix)

75. K. Kesawan, op.cit, p.36-60.

expresses "soon after the news (MGR's expulsion from DMK) reached the public, shops were closed throughout Tamilnadu, cinema shows cancelled, DMK flag posts cut down, huge and strident protest rallies organised and state-owned transport buses stoned. Rioting and other form of protests continued for no less than three weeks despite severe police repression unleashed by the DMK government, then headed by Muthuvel Karunanidhi. The protesters cost the state exchequer Rs.60 lakhs in terms of damages to state owned transport buses alone".

76

In 1988, Janaki's ministry was asked to prove her majority on the floor of the house. The Congress sided with Jayalalitha group, which led to the President rule in the state. An open conflict between V.N. Janaki (wife of MGR) and Jayalalitha began, and their respective groups resorted to violence in the assembly itself.

In 1989, during the budget session, unprecedented incidents took place in the legislative assembly like exchange of unparliamentary verbose and abuses accompanied with obscene gestures between the DMK and AIADMK leaders. These were followed by physical attacks and 'partial stripping' of Jayalalitha in the assembly. This incident becomes a major issue in the 1991 general election, Jayalalitha portrayed as Draupadi and Karunanidhi as

76. Dhina Mani (Tamil Daily), 5 December 1972, cited in M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, p.18. Though, the violence may be due to MGR's hardcore followers, they imported the quality from the DMK. Till 1972, MGR did not have a party of his own. This is one reason that the study proposes to analyse Dravidian Parties as a whole.

Duryodhanan, on the election posters.

Apart from these instances, the personality clash was also expressed in callous advises to followers. In 1980's, the chief minister, MGR advised his 1.5 million strong fan club members and party members to carry knives for self-defence and to control the opponents.⁷⁸ In response to MGR's advice, M.Karunanidhi too directed his followers to form a 'self-defence force' (Tarkkappu Paddai). According to a news analyst and observer: "The two leaders, whose rivalry is based upon purely personal factors, should lose no time in retracing their steps. Their numerous followers are willing to make any sacrifice at the bidding. If leaders who command such total and fierce loyalty encourage their minions to arms the consequences can only be disastrous, particularly at a time when the cult of violence is playing havoc."⁷⁹ Dr.K. Kalimuth, in the MGR ministry in Department of Agriculture⁸⁰ confessed that he always carries a knife with him.

The politicization of bureaucracy, police and administrative machineries during the Congress rule was visible but it was rampant in Dravidian parties. The above mentioned incidents further substantiate how the Police force had been politicized in the State. W.I. Dewaram, Madras City Police Commissioner

77. In the epic Mahabharat, when Pandavas lost their wife in the bet to Duryodhanan, Draupadi was brought to Kuarava's Palace, where she was stripped.

78. The Time of India, New Delhi, 16 July, 1986.

79. Deccan Herald, 17 JULY, 1986, Bangalore.

80. Ibid. There are reports of airport official that they finding extremely difficult to disallow them inside the air bus.

issued an intriguing statement that the law prohibits only the carrying of firearms, explosives and other lethal weapons and not knife.⁸¹ Earlier he had been awarded by the MGR government for⁸² combing the revolutionary movements in the state.

The Dialectic of Conflict and Compromise:

A careful examination of the historical background of Dravidian parties and their personality based political culture clearly shows that the politics in the state had become wretched, populist, opportunistic, casteist and cultist. It had, therefore, failed to achieve the structural change in the socio-economic, and cultural sphere of the society.

The ideologies of the Dravidian parties' were instruments to exploit the sentiments and sensibilities of the poeple to overcome personal crises. Whether it was 1960's Annadurai's rhetoric - "Attainthal Dravidanad Ellaiyale Sudukadu - Achieve Dravidanad otherwise we will go to Graveyard", or Karunanidhi's State Autonomy in 1970 and Social Justice in 1990's, communalism were used mainly for personal gains.

In spite of ideological compromises, there had been certain issues of state autonomy, anti-Hindi imposition which were addressed in the Dravidian politics till 1972. But after the formation of the AIADMK, politics in the state became totally personalized; important socio-cultural issues were completely ignored. The objectives of social reform were reduced merely to the question of reservation in government jobs and educational insti-

81.Ibid.

82.M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, op.cit.

tutions, particularly an instrument for the dominance of non-Brahmin caste-Hindus.

Since Annadurai held power for only very few years, he had introduced programme which were very clearly populist in nature. For example, he changed the name of Madras state to Tamil Nadu; constituted Tamil Film Awards for various film personalities; accorded legal sanction for Self-respect marriage; totally abolished Hindi teaching (as optional Language) in government Schools; subsidised the rate of rice to 2Kg for Rs. 1 /= scheme (which was only implemented in Coimbatore). This kind of tokenism was religiously followed by other leaders as well.(See Appendix)

All the leaders of Dravidian parties had four issues in common. First, constant cooperation between film industry and parties. The industry gives them political support and mobilization, and the party renders materialist benefit to industry. Second, the issue of language - the anti-Hindi issue was being kept alive since 1938; even today, the language issue, which involves sentiment and sensibility of the people, provides oxygen to the Dravidian parties whenever the need arises to strengthen their position. Third, the issue of reservation policy; it has

83. Though he changed the name of the state to Tamil Nadu, he did not bother to think over the inappropriateness in a 'Democratic Secular Socialist Republic' of having a "Hindu Temple Tower" as a Government of Tamil Nadu's emblem/ symbol. The Temple tower not only represents the architectural 'pride' but also the oppressive Hindu culture.

84. He grounded the patronage of film personalities and industry, and his successors extended subsidies to films for different categories from the state's exchequer.

been in practice for more than 75 years (since 1927, Dr. Subbar-
 aryan of Justice Party). The Madras presidency was first to
 introduce the reservations for non-Brahmins in government jobs
 and in admissions in educational institutions. It continued to
 increase -- 25 per cent (1930's), 31 per cent (1960's) , 50 per
 cent (late 1980) and to 69 per cent (1990's) with the creation of
 different sub-categories among the caste groups by the different
 leaders of Dravidian parties. ⁸⁵ And finally, the alienation of
 Dalits in the politics. This study deals with this aspect in the
 next section, part II of this chapter, titled "the documentary/
 parallel cinema".

The Reasons for Electoral Success of Dravida Parties

The electoral success of Dravidian parties needs to be look

85.V.J. Prabhakaran, 1994, "Reservation: A Background", Dhina Mani Kathiar(Tamil Daily's Weekly Supplement), 3 July. pp.3-6. After, the Sattanathan Commission's recommendation, in the early 1970's, a quick increasing trend in the population of the Backward Castes, to benefit from reservation. The government accorded the two community into the BC list i.e. Gongo Vellalars and Urdu speaking Muslim.(M.Karunanidhi's Vol.II:213) In a short span of time, a number of castes obtained BC certificates by adding prefix to their caste name, like the 'Vellalar' is Forward Caste and land owners, if he/she added prefix "Gongo" Vellalar becomes BC. Reddy is FC if added "Gonda" Reddy becomes ST. This fact was based on the personal observation which lack empirical evidence. But similar issue was well documented by P. Sainath's Special assignments of The Times of India on a study of the ten most underdeveloped districts in India, and his recent reporting on rural Dalits plight, in The Hindu. During the same period, the Social Welfare Department ministry in Tamil Nadu was bifurcated into two, as a Adi-Dravida Welfare Department (SC/STs) and Backward Class Welfare Department. Funding the new ministerial department of then DMK government diverted from the SC/ST Central allocation. It was questioned by the then Welfare minister Dr.Sathiyavanimuth (one of the founding members of DMK in 1949), as it would affects the SC/ST programme seriously. For this she was expelled from ministry and from the party. Later, she started a new political party called 'Thaldapatore Munnetra Kazhagam'. Who's Who Rajya Sabha, 1975, Rajya Secretariat, New Delhi. Also interview with Sakthidasan.

into the understanding of the cult politics in Tamil Nadu. The question to be addressed here is, what are factor contributed to political monopoly of Dravidian parties in the state since 1967, and how. DMK was formed in 1949, but did not contest in the 1952 election and concentrated more on social reform. But in 1957, it contested and won 15 assembly seats and increased its position further in 1962 to 50 MLAs and 7 MPs. In 1967, DMK became the ruling party. Since then power has remained with either of the two Dravidian parties. In 1972, AIADMK was formed by MGR and in 1977 it came to power. MGR remained the chief minister till his death. In the four cornered contest of 1989 election, DMK once again came to power, but Karunanidhi's government was dismissed in January 1991. In the election in May-June 1991, the alliance of AIADMK-Congress-I won by a thumping majority, Jayalalitha became the first elected woman chief minister of the state. During her five years tenure, phenomenon of personality cult of the Dravidian parties reached its zenith. In the 1996 general election, DMK-TMC alliance came to power once again with Rajnikanth's support and Karunanidhi became the chief minister. It is to be noted that ever since its formation, the Dravidian parties never contested alone and won elections. It has always been the alliances which bore fruit for the Dravidian parties.

The initial success of Dravidian parties was attributed to the issue of bread and butter. Later, it depended mostly on personality impact, influence of the film industry, caste-based mobilization, populist policies and caste patronage. From 1962 to 1967, around 26 movies were produced, most of them by DMK's members and leaders. These movies had serious impact upon the

masses. Further, the weaknesses of non-Dravidian parties, for example, the Congress party's status-quoist attitude, are factors leading to the electoral success of Dravidian parties.

Yet another cause of their electoral victory was 'politics of sympathy'.⁸⁷ For example, in 1967 MGR was shot by DK a member and co-actor M.R. Radha. This incident led to a sympathy wave in favour of DMK. In 1986, Mrs. Gandhi's assassination and MGR's illness had created mass sympathy in favour of the AIADMK and the Congress allies in the state. In 1991, Rajiv Gandhi's assassination and Jayalalitha's appeal to women that her modesty was attacked in assembly by the DMK and Karunanidhi, had made serious impact on the electoral success of the Dravidian parties.

The Dravidian /non-Brahmins' socio-political history is based on the following factors: (a) assertion of caste and linguistic identity and demand for educational and employment opportunities; (b) organizational formation on the plank of caste; (c) radical social reform agenda on self-respect and rationality; and (d) claim of political power on the bases of language and regionalism.

The following chapter would analyse the link between the cinema and politics of Tamil Nadu. The chapter deals with the contribution of cinema (popular and parallel) to Dravidian parties' mobilization and the political culture. It examines a few films, their content as well as songs - to show how they have

86. Jagthrakshakan, 1984, Dr. MGR: A Phenomenon, Apollo Veliyeeta-gam, Madras, pp.63-75.

87. Cho. Ramaswamy, Tuklak Editorial 1 November, 1971, Madras.

influenced people and their political moorings. A brief analysis of the film industry is also produced.

The reason for this analysis is that most of the Dravidian party leadership gained prominence in politics through cinema. Ever since their existence, film has been used as a medium of political communication of the Dravidian parties. Further, cinema has contributed largely for image building and the personality cult. On these grounds we examine the linkages between the cinema and politics in Tamil Nadu. As mentioned elsewhere in the chapter that the issue of Dalit alienation along with current political issues involved in the state would be highlighted through an analysis of a few documentary films.

CHAPTER - III

Chapter - III

TAMIL CINEMA, DRAVIDIAN PARTIES AND THE POLITICAL CULTURE

This chapter seeks to analyse two categories of Tamil cinema - Popular and Parallel- in the context of the political milieu of Tamil Nadu (Parallel cinema is also known as Unknown cinema or documentaries). The former has significant impact on the socio-cultural and political life of Tamil Nadu, while the latter is a recent development as a response to the emerging yet underlying tensions in the society. The chapter would attempt to show how popular cinema is being used by the political parties as a 'potent' tool at one level and how the documentary cinema is an effort towards helping people to know the current issues which concern their everyday life.

This chapter hence intends to explain the continuous linkage between Tamil cinema and state politics. It focuses on how the Dravidian parties have been capitalizing on cinema for the political mobilization of the masses. Further, it would give an account of the impact of cinema on society and politics, and its influence in the development of the personality cult in the political culture of Dravidian parties.

The purpose of this discussion is to show that how problems of the people are cinematised rather than politicized. For instance, DMK and the MGR films in earlier days, offer a kind of solutions for every issues related to caste, gender, working class, feudal dominance. The solution either populist or single hero would solve them without politicizing the people on their

issue. Eventually, to inculcate the idea of heroism, the masses expect a hero to liberate them from the socio-political maladies. Moreover, the Tamils have developed a devotional faith towards film personalities. The same person propagating his/her political programmes added fuel to fire and emulated today's personality cult.

As a film commentator observes that film can stimulate this (tradition of) creativeness by showing the work of hand and brain, by analysing social and political activity and by bringing the deeper issues of human life before the people, who cannot yet read or listen to radio or turn in the television. The vivacity of the film and its direct contact with reality is its most important technical asset. It is a greatest power. In the physical dark, and the dark of the sub-conscious, in which people are involved, when they experience the moving light of celluloid, the illumination of the personality can be more intense, perhaps, than through the printed word, because of the life of feeling¹ which it releases.

According to the statistics, more than 13 million Indians watch feature films every day, and 91 million audience watch feature films every week in a total of 12,978 cinema halls. The state of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu account for 4,707 cinema halls (Andhra Pradesh 2487, and Tamil Nadu 2220). Both the states

1. Jag Mohan, 1990, Documentary Films and Indian Awakening, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, p.xii.

2

produce approximately 150² feature films every year. An interesting fact is that more than in any other part of India, the people of Tamil Nadu are said to have a special relationship with film and film personalities. As a matter of fact, since 1967, quite interestingly the highest elected office in Tamil Nadu has continuously been occupied by the personalities from the film industry. In 1993 alone 152 Tamil films and 141 Telugu films were produced. An estimate data shows that 4,246 Tamil and 4,825 Telugu films were made since 1931.³ A film sold on average 4 crore to 6 crore in three different stages.⁴

Film and politics in Tamil Nadu have had continuous association for almost seventy years. This period can be divided into several phases such as: (a) Indian 'National' Movement and Tamil cinema (1931-1949); (b) Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and Tamil cinema (1949-1972); Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and Tamil cinema (1972-1978); and (d) Tamil cinema from 1978 to 2000. During each stage, film personalities have served their roles for specific purpose. The first two stages were more systematic and were used as a means for direct political propaganda by the respective political parties, the Congress and the DMK.

2. Jag Mohan, 1989, Indian Cinema 1988, Ministry of Information and Boardcasting, Govt. of India, New Delhi, p.6. This figure might have increased or decreased, due to the entry of a number of private and public television channels, that have reached most of the urban Towns and some of the rural places. These channels are producing and telecasting a number of tele serials, which may also have considerable impact on the film industry as well as the masses.

3. Ibid.

4. The Pioneer, 29 May, 1994. New Delhi.

The third stage can be comprehended as the conflict between two personalities, Karunanidhi and M.G.Ramachandran (MGR). To cite a few films "Ulagam Suttrum Vallipan" (Youth on a World Tour), "Needigku Thalai Vannangu" (Bow thy before Justice), "Netru, Enndru, Nallai" (Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow), "Urimai Kural" (Voice for the Right), "Idaiya Kanni" (Fruit of the Heart), etc. were movies with MGR criticizing the authoritarian and corrupt rule of Karunanidhi. After 1977/8 MGR stopped acting, but he had supporters in the industry, who promoted their respective leaders as well as parties. Similarly, in 1980's films like "Pallaivanna Rojagal" (Desert Roses), and "Nidhikku Thandanai" (Punishment to Justice) were meant to expose dictatorial, repressed rule of MGR.

The fourth stage in Tamil cinema witnessed the entry of new personalities with multiple talents; these include some films which are outside the purview of Dravidian politics, e.g. "Thanneer Thanneer" (Water! Water!) of K.Balachandar, "Sigappu Malli" (Red Jasmine) of Vijayakanth, "Enni Oru Suthaindhiram" (Yet Another Liberation) of Manivannan, "Enn Uer Tholan" (My Dearest Comrade), "Vedam Puthidu - New Veda", "Karuthamma - Black Mother" of Bharathiraja, Roja, Bombay of Mani Rathanam and others, which deal with different political issues in the state.

Cinema and its Impact

For nearly 70 years, Tamil cinema in the state has been the dominant form not only of popular entertainment but also has been a vehicle of socio-political articulation. It had its mass appeal in its ability to deliver entertainment on a grand scale to millions by using larger-than-life sets, locations, stars with

characteristics, action/violence packed movies, songs dance sequences and melodramatic narrations. Films have been so central to Tamils' (film) culture; music and songs pervade various ceremonies from birth to death. The film dialogues have explicit reference pertaining to the party politics and to the government in power. The larger than life images of film hero/heroine occupy big street corner hoardings. The hero/heroine power has often got translated into political power. Today, almost every political party, barring the leftists often court cinema stars (hero/heroine) to be their candidates or major campaigners.⁵

Tamil cinema not only reflects culture, but also assimilates the tradition of folk for its aesthetic representation. It is deeply connected to some of the most sentimental feelings of viewers' everyday lives. It not only influences their life style but also propagates eve-teasing and violence.⁶ The Tamils' overwhelming association with cinema is a "purely escapist form of enthusiasm". This "escapist" attitude has played a significant role in state politics, because the cinema (dream) world ap-

5. Manjunath Pendakur, 1990, India (A chapter) in John A. Lent (ed), The Asian Film Industry, Christopher Helm, London, pp.229-252. He describes film in a countrywide context but I am using it specifically in the Tamil context. Film heroines like Lakshmi, Gauthami and Vijaysanthi of BJP (whose candidate was proposed to file nomination against the Congress President Sonia Gandhi if she chose to contest in Andhra Pradesh in the 1998 general election), and Jayapradha of Telugu Desham, Raj Babar of SP etc, are a few recent examples who have made their way to politics through cinema.

6.R.K.Azhakesan, 1999, Tamil Cinema and Tamils Lives, Manivaskar Pub. Chennai.(Tamil)

pealed directly to the hopes and aspiration of the people.⁷ As we see the social constituency of regular film buffs and those people who exercise their franchise regularly are the lower, middle and upper middle class/castes. This 'vulnerable constituency' is not only affected by the fragile and escapist syndrome, but is also swayed by the politics'. The producers were/are the upper and upper middle class whose political interests are manifested in these films.⁸ The 'world' that confines the darkness within the four walls of the cinema hall is extended into the home, the educational institutions - not to say the peer groups who are easy targets to the 'mediations' of this rationality. This leads to the promotion of the evocation and 'personality cult' in real politics.

People are the direct victims of this manipulation. As Mythily Shivaraman wrote in *Mainstream*, the manifold suffering masses "find a vicarious fulfillment in the movies while in reality they are denied a real-life forum for articulation. The close identification between the movies and party... creates the happy illusion among the people that government is on 'their

7. Sara Dickey, 1993, Cinema and the Urban Poor in South India, Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, p.5.

8. Sara Dickey, 1994, op.cit, emphasis mine. As Madhava Prasad pointed out the film distributors are/were professional money-lenders had control over producers and the exhibitors are/were landlords who are at a bargaining position vis-a-vis the government to gain support in the form of institutional credit. Further, the industry is also being controlled by black-marketers and smugglers. See Madhava Prasad, 1998, "The State in/of Cinema", in Partha Chatterjee's (ed), Wage of Freedom: Fifty Years of the Indian Nation-State, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp.123-146.

9
side''.

Tamil cinema has different meanings for different people. While it is a major industry and the most popular form of entertainment its portrayal is immense as a channel encouraging corruption, ruining proper social values. More so when it has a definite educating role, not to mention its potential as a medium of political propaganda.¹⁰

Tamil Cinema and the Independence Struggle:

As has been said, Tamil cinema has always been an integral part of major socio-cultural and political interest of the people. During India's independent struggle against British colonialism, Tamil cinema evoked anti-colonial sentiments among the people. The use of cinema for political purpose started with the first full-length Tamil Talkie, 'Kalidas' in 1931, which used the name of Gandhi and the nationalist slogan "Vande Mataram" in its song.¹¹

A large number of films incorporated themes like anti-British and anti-liquor, while others raised important social issues through songs and stories. In most of the films, the spinning wheel and Congress cap had a common place. Songs have been the

9. Mythily Shivaraman, 1969, "DMK: Kisan Friends or Foe", Mainstream, August 30. Cited in Robert L. Hardgrave, 1973 Asian Survey. Remember Karunanidhi's 'Parasakthi' dialogue and Beggar Rehabilitation Scheme and other DMK films as well as genre of MGR's film and his generosity. See review 'Nalla Thambi', acted N.S. Krishnan.

10. Stephen P. Hughes, "Tamil Cinema Mediations", Unpublished material.

11. M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, The Image Trap: M.G. Ramachandran in Film and Politics, Sage, New Delhi, p.33. Also see, A. Narayanan, 1988, Sudhandirapuril Tamil Cinema, New Century Books, Madras.

most popular medium of conveying political messages to the people. The anti-British sentiments, patriotic songs and songs commenting on current political events were an essential part of Tamil plays and films. Many theatre companies and artists actively participated in the freedom struggle. They staged prescribed plays under different titles or introduced extempore dialogues propagating nationalist ideas. The artists also participated in agitations and courted arrests. The Congress intensified its campaign against colonial power and took up social issues and anti-liquor campaign with equal vigour. It started using film stars to attract crowds. K.B. Sundarambal, an actress known for her devotional songs, regularly appeared on the platform along with the Tamil Congress leader S. Satyamurthi.

During the post-independent period Congress could not utilize films the same way as the Dravidian parties, though cinema artists like Shivaji Ganeshan, Padmini, and B.R. Bandhlu continuously supported Congress ideology, mostly on national integration and lives of historical personalities. B.R. Bandhlu's 'Veerapandiya Kattapoman' (1959) and 'Kappal Lottiya Tamilan' (1961) projecting the life of V.O.Chidambaranar, did make commercial success, but could not attract votes for the Congress. The reasons for that can be attributed to growing prices of food and

12. Baskaran S. Theodore, 1981, The Message Bearers: The Nationalist Politics and Entertainment Media in South India, Cre A, Madras. See the Same author, 1997, The Eye of the Serpent: An Introduction to Tamil Cinema, East West Books, Madras.

13. Hardgrave Robert L, Jr, 1973, "Politics and the Film in Tamilnadu: The Stars and the DMK", Asian Survey, vol.xiii, pp.287-305.

other essential items and black marketing rackets.

Moreover, although the Congress in Tamil Nadu made early use of the film medium and personalities most congressmen viewed them with contempt and shared C. Rajagopalachari's view that cinema was a source of moral corruption. Meanwhile the Communists, produced a film called "Tamaraiikulam" (Lotus Tank) in 1959, which was the first Tamil film with radical fervour. The film was made by a group of hundred agricultural labourers of Chengalpet area. Followed by this was another film made by some petty owners and middle peasants called "Paadai Deriudu Paar", (Behold the Invisible Path) with scenes meant to popularise a writer - Jayakanthan.¹⁵ But both films were not received well by the Tamils. Later, the Communists in Tamil Nadu had given up the film medium.¹⁶ On the other hand cinema was being taken by the Dravidian parties seriously at a much later stage as a vehicle of political mobilization.¹⁷

Tamil Cinema and the Dravidian Movement:

The DMK's involvement in Tamil film industry started with the Dravidar Kazhagam's early days (DK), which aimed to propagate the ideals of DK and upliftment of non-Brahmins in Southern

14. Arandai Narayanan, 1999, op.cit, p.97.

15. Ibid. Jayakanthan was a popular Tamil novelist, and winner of many awards for his novels like "Sila Nerangkalil Sila Manidargal" (Sometimes Somemen), his novels generally espoused radical ideas.

16. Ananda Vikatan, 27 August, 2000 (Tamil popular magazine).

17. Arandai Narayanan, 1999, op.cit, p.97.

India. The Dravidian Movement challenged the Brahmin monopoly of power. Its main goals were to eliminate social evils like untouchability and women's enslavement accomplished through the assertion of Dravidian identity, rationality and self-respect. Prominence was given to the study and development of Tamil language and literature. In order to spread the political and social messages among the people and to expand its mass base, the leadership of the Dravidian Movement utilized all the available means of mass media - use of songs, poems, plays and cinema. Cinema was exploited effectively in all possible ways.

At the time of launching of the Dravidian Movement, writers and actors who had matured in drama/ theatre companies associated with E.V. Ramaswamy's Self-Respect Movement came to dominate the Tamil screen. In 1949, when DMK was formed as a result of the split in E.V. Ramaswamy's DK, many of the film personalities like M. Karunanidhi, (who was much talented), A.K Velan, A.V. Asaithambi, Murasoli Maran, K.R. Ramaswamy, S.S.Rajendran, Sivaji Ganeshan, M.G. Ramachandran and N.S. Krishnan, who had ample experience of script writing, film producing and acting, joined hands with C.N. Annadurai. This was an advantage to both the DMK and Annadurai, who was himself a director, actor, script writer, producer and financier of Tamil films.

Moreover, some Dravidian Movement leaders who owned drama/theatre companies shifted to film production after the

18. Ibid.

19. Arandai Narayanan, 1994, Dravidam Paadiya Theerai Pattangal (Film which had Dravidian Content), New Century Pub., Masras.

arrival of cinema. Several leaders today own cinema companies, for example Karunanidhi's Mekala Pictures Pvt.Ltd, MGR's MGR Pictures and Satya Studio, and R.M.Veerappan's Sathya Movies, etc.
20 *

The use of cinema and artists in the field of politics gave confidence to the leaders and the party. Once, the founder of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, C.N. Annadurai, delivering speech in a film function organised to celebrate the success of MGR's 'Nadodi Mannan' (Vagabound/Nomad King) said, " ...if I am allowed to release four movies without censor see to what Dravidanad can achieve".
21 Film artists not only brought glamour but huge electoral support to the party by appearing on the platform of party rallies. In 1967, in one of the DMK Conferences at Virugambakkam, Madras, Annadurai said: "Younger brother" (Thambi) Ramachandran announced here that he would donate rupees one lakh as election fund to the party. It is not necessary; if he goes on an election campaign all over the state and shows his face to the people we will get lakhs of votes in each constituency he visits. That will

20.M.Karunanidhi, 1997 (3rd edition), Nenchukku Nidhi Vol.II, also see, Arandai Narayanan: 1994; M.S.S. Pandian: 1992.

*It is interesting to note that after the arrival of Cable Television and Satelite Channels, they (Dravidian parties) compete by having channels for political propoganda. For example, the Karunanidhi family's Sun TV(located in the DMK's headquarter office complex), Jaya TV owned by associates of Jayalalitha. Other channels like Vijay TV of pro-Jayalilatha group, and Raj TV (its political affiliation not known) are telecasting the programmes, mostly cinema oriented, round the clock.

21.Arandai Narayanan, 1999, Tamil Thiraipatangal: Sila Sethigal Sila Chindannaigal, Kavitha Pub., Chennai,p.97. And the Same author, 1994, Dravidam Pattiya Thiraipatanghal (Cinema that have sung Dravidianism) New Century Pub. Chennai, p.248. (both in Tamil)

be enough for us".

Dravidanad's professed aim was to not only reduce Brahmin domination but to establish an egalitarian social order. However, this has not happened. Their confidence in the role of cinema to bring about the change is eventually misplaced. Instead of politicising the people through cinema, they have cinematicised politics. As a result caste oppression is still a reality in the state.

23

In the beginning, the DMK and its leaders argued for the need to evolve the 'great traditions' of the "Sangam Age" to regain casteless, non-Aryan social order through non-violent means (arapor-war of Dharma). The current "arapor" was started by the DMK. But later, they started using traditions of folklores (heroes) and ballads, which was actually rooted in the protest culture of the oppressed, particularly, the glorification of the folk heroes like Chinnanaden, Chinnathambi, Jambulingam, Mudraiveeran and Muthupattan who hailed from the oppressed sections of the society.

24

Since politics of the DMK revolved around caste, language and racial dichotomy of Aryan-Dravidian, they extensive-

22. Jagthrakshakan, 1984, Dr. MGR: A Phenomenon, Apollo Veliyeeta-gam, Madras, p.69. Anndurai's statement shows his confidence on film stars than his party's ideology.

23. S.V.Rajdurai & V.Geetha, 1997, "DMK Hegemony: The Cultural Limits to Political Consensus", in T.V.Sathyamurthy (ed) Region, Religion, Caste, Gender and Culture in Contemporary India, Oxford Univ. Press, New Delhi, pp.550-586.

24. M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, op.cit and S.Lazar's 1991 op.cit. These stories are explained in the next chapter.

ly used the institutions and symbols, of family, land, language and kings and the heroes of oppressed masses, through which they evoked strong emotions. These categories operate as instruments enabling people to conceive themselves as part of a collectivity (non-Brahmin/ Dravidian/Tamilian).

MGR evoked emotions by highlighting the caste/class deprivation/inequality in his movies. He always played the poor man from the oppressed/working class who struggles, romantically against exploitation by single-handedly using violence to fight wrong doers, in a typical epic-heroic way, in marked contrast to the organized, collective struggle. As such he not only used folk cultural symbols, but himself became a symbol of the oppressed. ²⁶

Tamil cinema continues to display cultural symbols in general, and folk culture in particular. The following cultural aspects had a serious impact on the masses: (a) racial or linguistic dichotomy; (b) portrayal of valour, love and judicious hero; (c) representation of caste/class conflict between oppressed and oppressor; (d) incorporation of class/caste specific folk cultural elements such as food, dress and taboos; (e) forms of revolt/resistance typically found in the heroic folk ballads;

Political Ideology Through Story:

A number of Tamil film stories were made for the purpose of propagating political ideologies and conflicts of the time. A few

25. Pamela Price, 1996, "Revolution and Rank in Tamil Nationalism", The Journal of Asian Studies 55, no.2, May, pp.359-383.

26. S. Lazar, 1991, p.117. Also see, M.S.S. Pandian, 1997, "Culture and Subaltern Consciousness: An Aspect of the MGR Phenomenon", in Partha Chatterjee, State and Politics in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp.365-389.

films scripted, acted and produced by leaders of Dravidian parties may be worth examining. Annadurai's "Velaikari" (Servant Lady/maid, 1949), with its attack on religious dogma, was regarded as a revolutionary film. In his review of the film, Hardgrave wrote:

A landlord was pressurising a debtor for money, and the man in shame, commits suicide. His son, (played by K.R. Ramaswamy) vows to punish the landlord and devices a plan by which, through impersonation, he marries the landlord's daughter. By design, he then mistreats the girl and develops a reputation for drunkenness and gambling so as to bring disgrace upon his father-in-law. He then encourages the father to forbid an intercaste marriage between his son and a servant girl and, to bring family into final wreckage, succeeds in having the distraught son thrown out of the house. With further complications, our "hero" announces his purpose. Overcome with emotion, the father sees the error of his own ways. He blesses the marriage of his daughter to the revealed son of the debtor, and in final retribution, approves the marriage of his son to the servant maid. The old man never really emerges as a villain but the hero certainly comes out as a dastardly character... After a scene in which the landlord offers 'puja' (prayer) before 'Kali' showing the hypocrisy of religion, Ramaswamy-who had spent all his money in offerings after his father's suicide-upturns the offerings before the goddess. He shakes his fist at the deity and in a long monologue says, "Just as the rich man lives on the sweat of the poor, you do likewise".²⁷

27.Hardgrave Robert L, 1973, op.cit.

The film set trends in many ways. Tamil film dialogues were either highly literary in form and content which the common man could not understand. Annadurai changed it into simple but elegant, cascades of attractive Tamil that flowed beautifully, thrilling the viewers. Never before was such spoken language heard in Tamil movies. This film advanced his popularity. When among the credits of the film 'Velaikari', Annadurai's name flashed on the screen, it was greeted with cheers and applause by the audience; a new foundation had been laid down in Tamil cinema.²⁸ Other films like "Nalla Thambi" 1949 (Good Younger Brother) of Annadurai and N.S.Krishnan, "Mandhrikumari" by Karunanidhi and MGR, "Marmayogi" 1951 (Mysterious Sage), "Sarvathikari" (Dictator) by Annadurai, "Parasakthi" (1951) by Karunanidhi, "Sorgavasal" (1954) by Annadurai, "Nadodi Mannan" (Nomad king)²⁹ (1958) and "Madurai Veeran" (1960) of MGR had strong overtones of party ideological propaganda. MGR alone acted in around 26 films between 1962 to 1967 while being a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA).³⁰

Along film stories, a number of one-act-plays were used for

 28. Govt. of Tamil Nadu, 1991, "History of Tamil Cinema" in International Film Festival of 1991 Booklet, Director of Information and Publication, Madras, p.26-37. It is to be noted that the very flash on the screen of the name/image of favorite actor's/actress', fans not only applause and cheer but perform mini pujas (by break out coconuts, taking arathi etc.,) inside the theater, in front of the screen.

29. The film was produced and directed by MGR. The movies started with the symbol of MGR Picture - man and woman holding a DMK Flag (Black and Red).

30. Jagathrakshagan, 1984, op.cit.

propagating the ideology of DMK. These one-act-plays, generally on the themes of Socrates (469-399 B.C), Julius Caesar, Cheran Senguttuvan (a Chera king in ancient Tamilagam), Chatrapathi Shivaji (a Maratha king from the lower strata of society), Samrat Ashokan (a Mauriya king and Buddhist), Kovalan - Kannaki etc., explicitly incorporate DMK ideals and the leaders' struggle for rights of non-Brahmin. These one-act-plays not only became popular among the youth but were widely used in college and school cultural programmes.

"Nalla Thambi" (Good Younger Brother: 1949) starring N.S.Krishnan is about a villageman becoming a Zamindar and doing all good things to the village poor. Vested interests portray him as a madman who broke all traditional norms of Zamindari. However, in the end Nalla Thambi Zamindar comes-out not only as a wiseman but also a social reformer.

In the film N.S.Krishnan acted as a Zamindar, namely Nalla Thambi and his wife Maduram (Zamindar's lady assistant) visit villages to find out the problems of village. Acting as an ordinary man, the Zamindar (Nalla Thambi) finds out that village women generally possess only one saree. On a visit to a three member family of agriculture labourers, he (Nalla Thambi) is told the plight of village by the villageman. It is only during the conversation that the family realises that the man they are conversing with is none other than the Zamindar (Nalla Thambi). Inside the house their daughter too learn of the Zamindar's visit

31.Arandai Narayanan, 1994, op.cit, pp.215-228.

32.Ibid.

and expresses her desire to see him. The mother goes inside to bring her daughter to see him. However, the daughter take some time to come out. Zamindar inquires the reason for delay. The man replies that they possessed only one good saree, so that the mother who was wearing it needed to give it to her daughter. The Zamindar also finds out from the children that the village does not have a school and villagers walk without shoes. Days later, he returns to the village with lots of clothes and footwear to be distributed among the villagers.

33

Later, he distributes even his land among the villagers. He initiates new reforms such as (a) all land belonging to the Zamindar would henceforth be owned by the public; (b) Farming would be through co-operative means (c) fertilizers, agricultural equipments and other necessary materials would be supplied through co-operatives and joint-farming systems will also be encouraged so as to finally establish an egalitarian socialist Society.

When a villageman is skeptical about his stand on religious belief, the Zamindar takes him to his house where he worships his 'Mother' and 'Father' his personal god and goddess. Then, he tells him that he believes in Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ and Gandhi.

33. It is a fact, at least till mid 1980's, that confirmed that similar kinds of problems existed in the villages as was found during Madras Christian College election survey in 1986, near Udiramerure (Chengalpet district). MGR introduced the free Saree and Dhodti scheme to the poor during Deepavali, Pongal, Annadurai's Birthday and Tamil New Year (mid-April). Later, he also introduced the scheme of free distribution of footwear. Later, Jayalalitha and Karunanidhi followed it. Review is mine.

DMK Films and Their Dialogue:

In Karunanidhi's "Parasakthi" (1952), the young actors Shivaji Ganeshan and S.S. Rajendran are introduced as being associated with the Dravidian Movement. The film is about the family of three brothers who lived in Burma and one sister who lives in Tamil Nadu. The film is shot in the backdrop of the Burmese war. When all the three brothers with their own families were not able to attend the marriage of their only sister, they decide that any one of them may attend the marriage, and if possible the rest would join later. The youngest one named Gunasekaran (Shivaji Ganeshan) was sent to Tamil Nadu. On reaching Madras, he is cheated by a night club worker, losing all the money and valuables. He then acts as a madman to ensure his survival. Meanwhile, he comes to know that his sister had lost her husband and was struggling against the vices of the menfolk. Simultaneously, the other brothers with their families too reach Tamil Nadu but they get separated due to the war. The second brother named Rajasekaran (S.S.Rajendran) loses his leg and literally becomes a beggar.³⁴ However, somehow, the eldest one became a judge.

The film launched a scathing attack on the Brahmins. The film's heroine, who symbolized a young widow, became impoverished and was sexually assaulted by many rich men including a Hindu

34. In film he speaks for welfare of the beggars and organise them to voice their grievance. The dialogues were written by Karunanidhi. Later, when he became the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, he introduced a scheme "Beggars Rehabilitation" and opened up centres in the state. Because of this people tend to believe cinema as a reality of Dravidian politics.

temple priest -- the Brahmin. Living in atrocious poverty, and having lost hope in life, she decides to drown herself along with her child. First she throws her child into the river. But as she is about to jump, the police arrests her and charges her with murdering her own child. When she is presented in court, she asks the judge: "Where did you go when my child and I were living in the street corner? What did you do when my child was sucking my dry breast in vain? Parasakthi (Goddess)³⁵ did not come to the child to feed milk".

Her brother, Gunasekaran is meanwhile charged with attacking the temple priest who sexually assaults his sister, Kalyani. When asked by the judge he explains to him as to why he had attacked the priest. He further says that he was not against the temple but the way in which the temple was made the citadel of criminals. This film propogating DMK ideals proved to be very popular with the viewers.³⁶

In the movie "Nadodi Mannan", MGR very forcefully argues for a democratic polity in place of feudal monarchy. Its dialogues and songs,³⁷ explicitly (see the following pages) explains DMK's policy and programme. In fact, when queried by the press on his policy and programme, after his election as the chief minister of

35.The Parasakthi refers to a famous Tamil literary story which narrates that St. Thirunavukarasu had milk from the Goddess Parvathy, when he was child as he was an orphan.

36. Translation and review is mine and the quotation I borrowed from M.S.S.Pandian, 1991, "Parasakthi: Life and Times of a DMK Film", Economic and Political Weekly, March, pp.759-70.

37.Arandai Narayanan, 1994, op.cit, p.244.

Tamil Nadu, MGR promptly asked to see "Nadodi Mannan".

There were films made by other group(s) on religious movies like "Thiruvellaiyadal", "Kanthan Karunai", "Thirumal Perumai", "Thirumalai Tenkumari", "Thirumankai Azhvar/Alvar", "Thiruvaruselvar". Those movies with religious themes were meant to counter the atheist propaganda. DMK's religious ambiguity at one hand, and orthodoxy of non-Brahmins society on other had indirectly accommodated Saivait and Vaisnavait discourses, which were part of Tamil culture and literature. Moreover, Dravidian parties never initiated any movement against Hinduism as an ideology which the earlier Tamil Buddhist movement initiated by Iyothee Thassar had attempted to.

MGR's Film and his Songs:

The film icon MGR had earned a multi-faceted image which varied from protector of justice, savior of women, messiah of the poor, embodiment of strength and valour, vigor, love, honesty, truthfulness and compassion etc, which had built his political foundation from 'Malai Kallan' to 'Madurai Meetta Sundarapandian'. MGR supported the genre of Fisherman, Rickshaw puller, Cook, Taxi Driver etc., with finesse that had endured the masses. The songs in MGR's films were always significant, and boosted his character, as can be noted from the fact that people listened to music more often with lot of devotion. One of his film Malaikkalan (Mountain Thief: 1954) had the following song:

How long will they fool us
in this land of ours?

38.Arandai Narayanan, 1994, op.cit.p.248

They pretend to be noble men

but swindle whenever possible.
In the garb of the devout
they trap the poor folk.

We'll open schools in every street
and see that there is none unlettered.
We'll teach many vocations
and banish starvation.

Spending days in happiness,
we'll gather knowledge.

Why do people starve and vegetate
in their own land?

Because they don't get even
a glimpse of the hoarded money.

Why do they keep yelling
There is no god?
Because he has not shown himself
for too long.

In "Uzhikkum Karangal" (Toiling Hands; 1976), a song ran thus:

Toiling hands
should rule tomorrow's world
Revolutionary flowers
should bloom all over the land.

We do our duty without fear,
And claim our due without hesitation,
Come join (me) comrades.

It is past
When ploughs burdened our shoulders
And scarcity stayed in our homes.

The time is near
When everything belongs to everyone.
The time of dawn is near;
Dharma is about to pronounce its verdict;
Never do the honest die.

In "Oli Vilakku" (Bright Lamp) another of MGR's films has a song in which the supporting actress prays to God to save the hero (MGR). This song became a kind of prayer all over Tamil Nadu when MGR fell ill in 1984; in almost every corner of the streets,

urban and rural, the song was played at several temples at least twice a day -- morning and evening.

Lord
there are so many lamps
in your temple.
The light of my hope
is at your feet.
I wash your feet with tears
that he may live.

If the heavens beckon unto
this generous and noble man,
what would happen to the earth.

I will come with you
and lay down my life
so that he may live.

Further, the clash of personalities in politics too was used in the songs; in MGR's film "Nettru, Enndru, Nallai (Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow)" a song goes:

39

(Hello!) Brother! Yesterday I studied from Kanchi (puram)
Today I would tell you
What I have Studied
The good fortune comes
Forever to Good persons...
It was said by Aringhar Anna....

Song goes further with direct attack on Karunanidhi

People's welfare! People's welfare!
(He) used to say but
His people's (family) welfare only
He will keep in mind...

Another film song was a very direct call for a debate, as follows:

Come straight to me
If you have courage in heart
Let (him) give answer to my questions
If he has honesty and strength....

39.The DMK members often refer their leader Annadurai as a University to give credit to his 'vast knowledge'.

This was easily understood by the Tamils, because as mentioned in the previous chapter, MGR demanded that the accounts of the DMK be made in public and he had expressed displeasure at the promotion of Karunanidhi family members in the party.

It is to be noted that during the 1970's, audio-cassette player and tape recorder music business boomed in Tamil Nadu. New music outlets sprouted and became the mass culture. During the 1980's, with the rise of the popular press, considerable number of film magazines came up; the reading audience included mostly literates and semi-literates who were strong followers of MGR. At the same time the entry of Television and VCRs to the middle-class households played a vital role in the lives of people in general, and the fans in particular.

Moreover, the late 1980's saw the death of MGR which left a void in politics and the film world. There are a number of actors who tried to fill-up this gap. The list of aspirants are Rajnikanth, Bhaghiyaraj (once MGR himself announced him as film heir), Satyaraj, Vijayakanth, Ramrajan (M.P. AIADMK), Prabhu, Saratku-mar (a DMK candidate in 1999 Lok Sabha elections). All of them in one way or the other, tried to emulate MGR, and also used what is called the "MGR formula" in their movies. Among these aspirants, only Rajnikanth succeeded, to some extent, by mixing his own style with the MGR formula. He claims the largest number of fan clubs all over the state, which is supported by him, with his much awaited entry into the politics in the 1990's. Some of the films in this period had close similarities to that of MGR's.

A number of films on the theme of unemployment "Varumaien

Neram Sikappu" (1980) of K.Balachandar, "Nillalgal" (1980) of Bharathiraja, "Pasi" (1979) of Durai, "Suvariellatha Sithiram" of K. Baghiyaraj etc., have portrayed everyday life of the poor. "Sumai" (1981) "Sikappu Mallie" (1981) of Ramanarayanan, "Kann Sivanthal Mann Sivakkum" portrayed the communist ideology and the problems of the workers of organized and unorganized sector. The film "Capt.Prabhakaran" (1991), "Poollan Visharanai" (1990) of R.K.Selvamani were subjects pertaining to sandalwood Smuggler Veerappan and the Kidney Sale/racket.

To cite e.g. Bharathiraja, a reputed director in the Tamil film industry, directed a number of films, with box office success and drew the attention of Tamil society since 1980's. Some of them deal with issues pertaining to the rural Tamil socio-cultural milieu. A few directly portray present day political culture.

In 1987, his film "Vedam Puthiyadu - New Vedas" portrayed the continuity of caste and superstitious, religious beliefs. The theme was based on an intercaste love marriage between a caste-Hindu 'Thevar' boy and orthodox 'Brahmin' girl. The boy's father Balu Thevar (Satiyaraj) a humane person is an atheist. The people of both the villages (Thevars and Brahmins) are against the marriage. Meanwhile, the boy dies in a river along with the girl's father. Balu Thevar adapts the Brahmin girl and her younger brother, despite opposition of the villagers.

In the film there is a conversation between Brahmin boy and Balu Thevar while they cross a river:

Balu Thevar: Once there was a boatman and a Brahmin crossing the river in the boat. While crossing, the Brahmin asks the boatman: Have you studied the Bhagavad Geeta ?

'No' the boatman replies.
The Brahmin responds: "you have wasted ten years of your life".
Again he asks: Have you studied the Ramayana ? 'No' the boatman replied.
Oh! "you have wasted another ten years of your life".
Again, have you studied the Mahabharat? asked the Brahmin,
The response was not different.
Oh! another ten years wasted The brahmin exclaimed.
Meanwhile, the boat sprung a leak. Now the boatman asked the
Brahmin, do you know to swim ? 'No' the Brahmin said. The boatman immediately retorted: " ho! You have wasted your entire life".

After hearing the story, the small boy asks his name. Balu Thevar satirically reveals his identity. Balu Thevar's gesture is that all along, the kid, who was living in his house and crossed the river on his shoulder had to raise doubt. The child further asks that if Balu is his name, then what does 'Thevar' imply - is it a degree from an educational institution, or a title given by the Government ? The child further ridicules. You claim no caste, no religion, yet you still carry caste as a suffix to your name. The following frame in the movie shows the hallucination of Balu Thevar that he is slapped by someone. Through this symbolic shot the director is putting a poser to the entire tradition of the Dravidian movement which had given the call to put an end to caste, religion and belief in god.

The National award winning film "Karuthamma" (Black Mother : 1994") dealt with the issue of female infanticide, prevalent all over Tamil Nadu. Similarly, another film "Tamilselvan: 1996", is a clear portrayal of the current political culture. In the film the protagonist (Vijayakanth) who being a son of poor parents, belongs to agricultural labourer class. He becomes a collector against all odds. When he starts to address the real

issues - militant movement, eve-teasing in the colleges, bonded labour of quarries in the district, he has to face a number of violent threats from the ruling parties.

A quarry owned by the ruling minister is sealed after the collector interacts with members of a militant group and finds that innocent people are being exploited in all forms. The militants reveal the miserable story that when faced with serious drought in their villages the people there for want of work, migrate to other places, where by putting their thumb impression they take it a contract and get a meager amount just enough for their survival. Later, they come to know that they were working to repay the interest of the money that their parents had borrowed from the quarry owner. They tolerate even then, but when their women are subjected to sexual exploitation, they revolt. Since no one listens to their plea they take arms for their liberation. The collector promises to liberate the workers from the quarry owner (a minister's son-in-law) and he is arrested the
40
culprit.

40. This has conformity with two reasons: (i) In 1985/6 at the Kodaikannal, similar issue had rocked the then ruling AIADMK minister (R.M.Veerappan now in MGR Mantram in association with ruling DMK) its close link with Tan India Co.. It was reported widely in the popular journals particularly, in Tamil magazines and Dailies brought the details on the Kodaikannal bonded labour issue. The issue came open, when Mr.Gurnihal Singh Pirzada IAS was posted there. He tried to liberate around 1000 families of bonded labourers in the area. For that he had to face a lot harassment from the ministry.

Gurnihal Singh Pirzada personally explained to us (B.A.Political Science students of 1984-87 at his residence during our Kodaikannal Trip 1986. See P.Arul, 1991, The Political and Administrative Aspects of Rehabilitation Programme of Bonded Labourer: A Case of Kodaikannal, unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Centre for Politi-

While he enforces the law to liberate the bonded labourers, there is an attempt on his life and his family. In all the attempts on his life by the ruling party MLA (character name Vedimuth) and ministers including chief minister, he narrowly escapes. First he loses his father in a bomb attack by Vedimuth. Second, in an attempted acid attack⁴¹ on him, he is saved by his wife (who is lecturer in Political Science in a government college) and she dies in the hospital. His wife always prevented him from taking arms to eliminate the enemies (ruling party MLA, ministers and chief minister). Finally, he organises all the IAS and IPS officers along with the masses to dismiss the corrupt government. The film gives the message that bureaucracy particularly can do a great service to the masses by curtailing corruption from the polity.

The film clearly exposes the political culture of Dravidian parties. For example, a ruling party cadre meets the TAPCO (Tamil

...Continued...

(ii) Another researcher Mr. Seladurai completing his Ph.D. thesis on rural economy, revealed his field findings to me on a number of occasions about the prevalence of such bonded labour system in Tamil Nadu. Particularly, Bricks kiln and Quarry industry of the rural areas. He had found that it was common practice in the villages that if a person borrowed money from the landlords he and his family had to work to repay the interest of the money. He could only able to repay if another landlord gives some extra amount and then he had to work for his contract.

Also, See P.Sainath's report on ten most underdeveloped districts in India, in which he chose two districts - Ramanad and Pudukottai of Tamil Nadu, Where in 1991/2 Shanth Shila Nair who liberated women quarry workers and encouraged women entrepreneurship.

41.It was a well known fact that Ms. Chandraleka an IAS officer faced an acid attack during the AIADMK regime. It was alleged that AIADMK and Jayalalitha were involved in the attack, because Ms. Chandraleka's refusal to favour a government contract to an industrialist in Tamil Nadu.

Nadu Poultry Corporation) minister to seek a multi-crore contract for supplying Eggs to Nutritious Noonmeals in around three lakh centers all over the state, without proper auction. He (party cadre) asks the minister for favour in return of which he promises to put-up larger than life size cut-outs, do milk abishekam and do a poster campaign for the minister all over Tamil Nadu. ⁴² The hero (collector, now secretary to the TAPCO) ⁴³ inform the chief minister and giving details of the amount that would be lost if the auction is not conducted. But this fails to stop the chief minister hand over the contract to his own kith and kin. The collector also implicitly refers to the scams involved in many areas during the AIADMK ruling.

Another film where Sarathkumar acted in a lead role as "Aravinthan" (the hero in the film) believes in non-violent struggle, eventually turns a militant to take revenge on his friend Tamilvannan (Partheeban - director-cum actor) the marauder and goes underground. While hiding out in a Brahmin's house, he notice the innocent Brahmin and his daughter fall victim to the harassment of the police. Her father died in police station and she became orphan. In order to protect her he(Aravinthan) married her. He suspends the militant activities and finds a job in a factory through an elderly person, who is a supervisor and believer of -----

42. Cut-outs, Posters, Milk Abishekam and special Pujas are omnipresent with Dravidian party politics. Particularly, among the MLAs, Ministers and Party functionaries.

43. This is a usual practice and well known secret in government machinery that uncorrupted or IAS officers those who do not oblige to the political pressures of the ruling party ministers and leaders were victimised by transferring them to less important departments.

non-violence.

He conceals his identity, while he was working but somehow elderman knew him. When factory dispute arises, he voiced for the workers rights and in the process he has beaten the factory owner. Then everyone came to know his identity. On the advice of elderman, he surrenders and goes to jail, where he starts writing about the evils in the government and polity. Thus he becomes popular through his fearless writings. The officer - a lady IPS has to face harassment from a minister in the government, because she had given permission to write. She was also a collegemate and a friend of him. Meanwhile, he was released from the Jail on the birthday occasion of a political leader. Finally, the ruling party leaders plan to eliminate him and they succeeds too. Film had direct references to how corrupt elements who got popularity and power, manipulated electoral politics in their favour. These films basically show the prevailing political culture in Tamil Nadu politics today.

Moreover, a few films projected the conflict between two individuals, or meant to construct an image around the actor who has strong fans. Generally, construction of image is always based on "MGR formula" -story, dialogue and songs. In the film "Mannan" the dialogue between hero (Rajni) and heroine (Vijyashanthi) closely parallels the conflict between Rajni and Jayalalitha. Film "Ajamaanan (Zamindar)" has a song which evokes the personality cult:

With the soil from
The footstep mark of our Zamindar (hero)
We have tilak in our forehead
We are disciplined by his words...

In Rajnikanth's film "Muthu" the song again the goes thus:

Is it life mystery
if so
Who will break this mystery

*

If you (hero-Rajni) want to live in the North (Himalayas)
Where we will go....

Film "Arunachalam" too had political content which much suited
with the speculation that prevailed during 1996.

Lion has come out..
which change destiny of the Tamil...

Similarly, Rajnikanth's own production "Valli" has scathing
attack on populist schemes such as free distribution of sarees
and dhotis and advises the poor to demand education and employ-
ment, not sarees. As MGR used to organise masses against the
establishment namely the Congress and the DMK in his films, every
actor emulates MGR and his genre to exploit his image for their
vested interests.

The MGR's mass base is being exploited even today for the
purpose of survival in competitive personal politics of Dravidian
parties. ⁴⁴ Once Annadurai said, "if MGR just shows his face, that
itself will bring 30,000 votes for DMK and if he participates in
meetings then 50,000 votes for DMK". This was not just a slogan,

*This implicit reference to 'North' is Rajnikanth's annual
"Sanyas" (he has often said) to the Himalayas to break from his
routine life.

44. During 1991 Tamil Nadu assembly election, when Karunanidhi
contested in Madras Harbor constituency, there were a number of
posters depicting his friendship with MGR and he often spoke of
his good old times with the departed cine idol. Jayalalitha too
evokes his glory whenever she faced crisis in politics. Others
suffix his name to their parties 'MGR ADMK' of Thirunavukarasu,
'MGR Mandram' of R.M. Veerappan, and etc.

it implied several things such as; (a) Annadurai's commitment and confidence in Tamils and Dravidian ideology; (b) the personality cult and hero worship prevalent among the Tamils; and (c) the fact that rationality was seriously tempered by DMK and its leaders. As Mahesh Rangarajan observed that " personality cult of MGR was fostered by Annadurai himself"⁴⁵. Karunanidhi manured it, MGR cultivated it en mass and Jayalalitha harvested it.

For Dravidian parties, self-respect and rationality became merely a politicking rhetoric rather than serious principles to bring about social transformation. Dravidian politics seem to us as a force of struggle for power and privilege by the descending hierarchal order of the caste-Hindus. A careful examination shows that days of Justice Party, as the struggle between the Brahmin and upper caste non-Brahmins. The DMK days as the power struggle between non-Brahmin uppercaste and Other Backward Castes. In MGR's tenure, within the OBC, there was tussle among a section of Most Backward Class/ Caste to get powers and privileges. In this power struggle within non-Brahmins (caste-Hindus or touchables), the espoused values for social transformation, self-respect and rationality were compromised. Nonetheless, struggle for self-dignity and basic human rights of the oppressed (untouchables or Dalits) masses found alienation from the Dravidian parties, their plight remain unchanged. The current caste clashes and articulation of Dalits outside the Dravidian politics of the state clearly substantiates this fact.

45. Mahesh Rangarajan, 1995, "Star Crossed Trek", Telegraph, 21 October, Calcutta.

As mentioned earlier, the cinematisation of politics resulted in the fragility of the psyche of masses unable to differentiate between the reality and the cultivated image of the personality. The advancement of (entertainment) cinema industry considerably exploited for the Dravidian parties propaganda, have managed to keep the villagers under illusion. In the 1970s, DMK completed its 20 years in the politics of Tamil Nadu. During this period it had used mass media for the mobilization of the masses, specifically, film and film personalities as their message bearers. Cinema halls had now become temples; heroes, heroines and politicians had become gods and goddesses; and cinema stories had become epics. This image construction cultivated the growth of the 'Fan clubs' and its cult following in the politics.

The following section of this chapter would analyse a few Tamil documentary films to understand how cult politics rebuff the very foundation of the social reform in the state.

Part - II

THE PARALLEL TAMIL CINEMA

In the previous section we tried to show how Dravidian parties use cinema as a medium of political communication. What impact contemporary films had on the masses, and how popular cinema gave rise to personality cult in Dravidian politics already been dealt with. It is imperative now to reveal how Tamil parallel/ documentaries represented the present day Tamil Nadu politics.

In contrast to mainstream popular Tamil movies, the quality of documentary/short films made by a few individuals and film societies has been fairly remarkable. However, despite their quality, documentary films do not reach the people as much as popular cinema. Their ardent love for quality and detail, their humility and love for research has resulted in initiating a few masterpieces; they aim at a greater appreciation of short films as a medium of mass expression and as a means for social awaken-

46
ing. Parallel cinema portray current political issues of the state. Therefore, an analysis of this stream will be all the more significant for the present study.

The significance of documentary films has more or less remained outside the purview of social science research. It is, however, essential to look at documentary films from a wider per-

46. Jag Mohan, Op.cit.

spective. This task cannot be left to a few filmologist or media analysts as they are important not only for their technique but for political and social relevance. It becomes imperative for the social scientists to study these films and assess their impact.

In this context, the contribution of parallel cinema towards social awakening is important. By focusing on the problem of the disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of the society, these films have not only created a strong public opinion but also contributed towards the empowerment of the subordinated masses, especially in a society in which a majority of the adult population can not even read and write, and is still in the darkness of illiteracy. In this situation, the media, particularly the parallel cinema has a large role in awakening the masses. Cinema has been accepted as an art, which not only provides entertainment but also imparts awareness and education. It has also become an instrument of political mobilization.

As long as human exploitation and discrimination on the basis of class, caste, religion and gender exists in the society, there could be no meaningful development possible. The media has a vital role to play in weeding out these historical-cultural wrongs, and stop human right violations. Such an effort has been made by the 'Unknown/ parallel cinema'.

At the all-India level, from mid-seventies onwards, the arrival of socially committed documentary film-maker like Anand Patvardhan, Mira Nair, Rinki Roy Bhattacharya and others did make its impact. Anand Patvardhan's "In the Name of God" criticizes communalism and "Bombay our City" narrates the poor living conditions of the people. Mira Nair has made a number of works high-

lighting human misery; "Far from India (1982)" is about an immigrant newspaper seller working in New York's subway, and his estrangement from his wife after he returns home to find a newborn son. "India Cabaret (1985)" is about the double standards of Indian middle-class men. "Children of the Desired Sex (1986/7)" deals with female infanticide. While Rinki Roy Bhattacharya's "Char Diwan(Behind Closed Doors) 1990" is about victims of wife abuse, "Meera Dewan (Gift of Love) 1982" deals with dowry system.⁴⁷ Thus all these have contributed in a meaningful way towards understanding the issues prevailing in our time.

The documentary method is in fact a method of providing enlightenment, information and education to public. The documentary film has been defined as one which is a creative interpretation of reality. A true documentary must have imaginative drive, original techniques, and the creative spark. In this strict sense, the development of the documentary movement has played some part in solving the problems of the avant garde as well as of the educationists. Documentaries have always been appreciated for bold experiments.⁴⁸ As a matter of fact, in Western countries documentaries courses are offered in Media and Film Studies in schools, colleges and universities.⁴⁹

Tamil Documentary Film Movement

Though Tamil documentary films started in 1970's they became

47.Moti Gokulsing & Wimal Dissanayake, 1998, Indian Popular Cinema: A narrative of culture Change,Orient Longman, New Delhi.

48.Basil Wright, 1987, The Use of the Film, Arno Press, The New York Times, New York, pp.38-42.

49.K. Moti Gokulsing & Wimal Dissanayake, Op.cit. p.120.

prevalent only in the 1980's, ⁵⁰ that too in the form of party propaganda, as Dravidian parties used government documentary film footages of funeral processions of leaders, of party conferences. ⁵¹ Since the 1990s, a number of individuals, groups, artists, activists and academics in Tamil Nadu have mobilized masses on social, political and cultural issues. Among many such groups, one was Kanchannai Cinema Iyakkam (movement) in Tirunelveli. Kanchannai Cinema Iyakkam had a few politically committed people like R.R. Srinivasan, Shankar Narayanan who took upon ⁵² themselves the need to educate people through parallel cinema. This group produced several short films and organised many film functions for screening and discussing documentary films of socio-cultural and political significance, often in coordination with the "South Indian Film Society of Chennai", "Uyre Publication", "Manonmaniam Sundernnar University of Tirunelveli" and "DBICA (Don Bosco Samuga Thotarpu Kalvimaiyam) of Chennai". In March 2000, they organised "Pathivukal-2000", a Tamil Documentary Film Festival at Chennai. Around 40 documentary films on ⁵³ various socio-cultural and political themes were screened.

Nathyin Maranam (Death of a River):

A video documentary by Kanchannai Film Society, namely "Nathyin Maranam" (Death of a River) generated a big controversy as the film dared to expose the anti-people nature of the Tamil

50. Leaflets of Kanchannai Film Society, Trinelveli.

51. M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, Sage, New Delhi.

52. Interview with Shankar Narayanan.

53. Arumbu, May 2000, Madras. (Tamil)

Nadu government. The film documents the brutal killing of about 17 people in the river Tamarabarani; their only crime was to get organised against the exploitation of the Mancholai Estate management. Later, this film was also screened in the National Capital - New Delhi to mobilize public opinion.

A number of reviews and commentaries on this film reveal the impact it had on the print media, not to mention the strong public opinion that it created. The 59 minute documentary deals with an incident involving a peaceful rally of Dalits on 23 July, 1999, in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. This group of Dalits had come to the Collector office demanding wages and the release of 700 bonded labourers of the Manjolai Tea Estate, held captive in Trichy Central Jail.

When the Collector refused to accede to the Dalit demand to meet their leader Dr. K. Krishnasamy - president of Puthiya Tamizhagam (PT), the crowd got restless. All of a sudden the police cordoned off all exit points, leaving only the path to the Tamarabarani river open, and attacked the defenseless protesters. The river was the only escape route and most fell into it. The police mercilessly dragged some of them out and beat them. In the

54. "Marquee: Shocking footage, Unsettling Images", The Business Standard, 4/12/1999, New Delhi. "And Red Flowed the River", The Times of India, 12/12/1999, New Delhi. "Makers of Film on Dalit Massacre in TN, Hounded by DMK", The Pioneer, 14/12/1999, New Delhi. Also Mythily Sivaraman's Article in The Hindu, August, nd. 1999, New Delhi.

55. A political party came to exist after the prolonged caste war in 1990's particularly the Kodyankulam tantrum of 1995. The party has considerable following in the southern part of the Tamil Nadu. It also poses challenge to the Dravidian parties in recent years.

mayhem, 17 lives perished, including that of a women and a
56
child.

Prominent citizens, Leftists, Human Rights and Dalit activists of Tamil Nadu conducted independent investigations into the incident and noted that police brutality was covered up by lies, fake post-mortem and First-Information Reports(FIRs). The official version that the deaths were due to drowning, have been proved false. In fact, the film logically shows through graphic details and narrative (subtitled in English) how drowning was clearly not the cause of death. Most of those who drowned were
57
actually good swimmers.

According to Dr.K.Krishnasamy, in Tamil Nadu about 10 lakh Plantation Labourers are exploited and treated like slaves in the estate management areas such as Manjolai, Coimbatore, Nilgiris, Nagercoil, Theni and Yercaud. The Manjolai Tea Estate alone has 10,000 workers, most of whom are Dalits. These workers are bonded in terms of wages and other amenities and are victims of gross human rights violation. In contrast, almost all plantation owners in the state own the land almost free of cost. It is worth noting that the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation (BBTC) of Ambasamudram, Tirunelveli plantation, which holds about 8373 acres of land, pays only Rs.10/= an acre per year as lease amount. Dr. Krishnasamy is fighting this corruption and organising workers to demand better wages and facilities and also for an appropriate amendment

56.Ibid.

57.Ibid.

in the Plantations Labour Act .

Kanchannai Film Society's efforts towards restoration of human rights, and for a pro-people socio-cultural cause are commendable efforts towards weeding out social, economic and political oppression of the hegemonic class/castes. The DMK government in Tamil Nadu, instead of addressing the plantation labourers' rights have chosen to silence the Manjolai Estate workers and has also been harassing the film producer who have taken up the cause of the labourers.

One Eyed: A Documentary:

A film produced and directed by Gnana Rajasekaran, is based on the following incident: a little five year old Dalit girl child of Kattanickenpati, near Mettur, Salem district in Tamil Nadu, was meted out inhuman punishment by an elementary school teacher. The vicious incident portrays practice of untouchability in the school, was well documented. (It was also reported in the Tamil daily "Dhina Mani".) ⁵⁹ The child's fault was to have drunk a glass of water directly from the school pot more than a crime in the eyes of the caste-Hindu teacher! As punishment, the teacher wounded the girl's eye. Her entire future was plunged into gloom by a teacher who ought to have provided "enlightenment" to the future citizen of India.

The film exposes that in a number of schools in Tamil Nadu,

58. Memorandum of Puthiya Tamizhagam Dr. K. Krishnasamy on December 7, 1998, submitted to Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India. See Appendix for other issues related to Dalit atrocities.

59. Dhina Mani, July 31, 1995.

Dalit students are not allowed to drink water directly from the pot. They are supposed to wait for caste-Hindu students to pour water from pot into a glass and then on to the wanting hands cupped for the purpose. Caste discrimination and untouchability is still very common, not only in the private lives of people but even in government institutions and public places. Government policies have not been effectively translated into practice. The curse of being an untouchable does not die even with a Dalit's death, because caste-Hindus will not allow them to use public roads for their funeral procession. Any number of instances can be cited from the recent past to support this fact.

Melavalavu: A Documentary:

This half-an-hour documentary highlights the crass inhuman nature of caste-Hindus. It is based on the brutal murder of a Dalit Panchayat president K.Murugesan and five other people, in broad day light at Melavalavu (a village in Madurai, Tamil Nadu) on 29 June, 1997. The reason was that along with other Dalits had contested in the reserved constituency for the posts of president and vice-president in Melavalavu Village Panchayat elections. The caste-Hindus severed their head and threw them into a well. They also burnt Dalit houses and destroyed their property. This film was made by Prabalan, Santha and Institute of Social Sciences,

60.V.Geetha and S.V.Rajadurai, 1993, Democratising Death: PMK Experiment Economic and Political Weekly, March 20-27, p.500.

New Delhi.

Murders in A Democracy: A Documentary:

This documentary is about violence against the Dalits in Chidambaram parliamentary constituency in the 1999 elections. It was produced and directed by Enniyan Elangovan, and the 30 - minute documentary gives details of how Dalits were not only prevented from exercising their voting rights but also subjected to physical violence. The film was screened for the press in Delhi by the leaders of Tamil Manilah Congress (TMC) ⁶² - 'Dalit Liberation Panther' alliance. The Chidambaram constituency candidate and 'Dalit Liberation Panther' leader Thirumavalavan narrates the incident during the presentation. These documentaries clearly substantiate the statement in the last chapter i.e. Dravidian parties alienated Dalits by turning a blind eye to caste specific violence as well as oppression that still persists after more than thirty years of Dravida Parivar's rule in the state.

Those who climbed the levers of power in the state have always accused Brahmins for all social maladies, but have completely overlooked the rigid practice of casteism of the non-

61. Also see (i) Mohan Larbeer, 1997, "Atrocities in Melavalavu Panchayat", Panchayati Raj Update, Institute of Social Sciences, July, New Delhi. (ii) E.Santha, 2000, Political Participation of Women in the Panchayati Raj (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Haryana): A Occasional Paper of Institute of Social Science, New Delhi. (iii) A Report by Human Right Advocacy and Research Foundation, New Delhi.

62. TMC was yet another regional political outfit, started by a veteran Congress leader G. Karuppaiah Muppannar, after a disagreement with then Congress-I prime minister P.V.Narasimha Rao over the issue of alliance with AIADMK of Tamil Nadu in the 1996 general election.

Brahmins in the rural areas including in educational institutions and public places. The irony is that the ideology of even those who advocate rationality, egalitarianism, social justice and transformation has remained a rhetoric. The problems were not sincerely addressed principally due to the overwhelming influence of personality cult politics.

In summary, from 1931 to 1950, Tamil cinema had focussed on national liberation, as well as on religious and historical themes. Special importance had been given to the prohibition of untouchability. This was the period when the Congress to some extent was in control of the film industry so this ideology remained predominant.

From 1950 to 1970's Dravidian parties took over the control of the industry. During this period, Tamil cinema focused on Dravidian ideology, Tamil Language and culture, social reforms and rationality, atheist ideals, socialist pattern.

From 1970 to 1980's, the phenomena of storyline, based on 'epic hero' and folklore, replaced the ideology, but it focused on conflicts of class and caste, the hero's portrayal as saviour of the poor, women, oppressed and the struggling masses. Notwithstanding the unrealistic populist and filmy solutions put forth, the people tend to believe these as real and practical. At the same time, the progress of the Popular press, Audio, TV and VCRs has intensified blind faith in the cult of personalities. This period also saw the clash of film personalities and celebrities owing allegiance to the two Dravidian parties.

From late 1980's to 1999 the Tamil film industry has made substantial progress in areas such as technical aspects and

quality of picturisation, and gained a lot from the entry of the talented directors, artists, music composers, etc., whose Pan-Hindu nationalist agenda gained momentum. But despite this development Tamil films again fell back on what they call the "MGR Formula" known for image building. This started with the advent of Rajnikanth, Bhaghiyaraj, Vijayakanth, Sarathkumar, Ramarajan and others, who were able to build their image by having a large number of fan clubs. Content-wise, except for a few Tamil films, others have not been able to make a worthwhile impact upon the masses.

Popular cinema has made an impact on the political behaviour of the masses, particularly the youth, who were overwhelmed by cult formation; one of the promising component is the establishment of peripheral organisations called Fan Clubs for the promotion of the cinema personality-cum-politicians.

The chapter has tried to show that how it reflects various phases of film and politics. The incorporation of political ideology into films had its positive outcome still late 1980's. Though a few films that only focuses on politics of the state have not received well. However, the films based solely on politics did not influence the audience and their admiration as in late 80's. The reasons films for this can be understand by the lack of politics support. In fact, only MGR formula had worked well. Moreover, the entry of parallel cinema in mid 1990's led to the awakening of the mass. It is a positive step towards an

63. Especially director Manirathnam's "Roja", "Bombay" and A.R.Rahman's "Vande Madaram" etc. just an example to the fact.

alternative method to politicize the people.

The next chapter would investigate various aspects of the film stars' fan clubs and their activities. It identifies the motives behind the formation of such clubs and their functioning, and also how these clubs benefited politically as organisations and as members/functionaries. The methods subscribed by the clubs to enhance personality cult in the Tamil Nadu politics would also be looked into. How the Dravidian parties consistently support the film industry for the political gains and how the latter reciprocate need to be studied. Furthermore, it is important to note how film personalities and parties had long standing relationship through their ancillary organisations - the fan clubs.

CHAPTER - IV

Chapetr - IV

FAN CLUB NETWORKS OF FILM STARS AND ITS

ROLE IN PERSONALITY CULT

In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyse the primary data on the organisational structure, composition and activities of film star fan clubs. An important aspect dealt here is the extent of influence cinema bears on the personal lives of individuals and how it succeeded in motivating affiliation to political parties. Further, this chapter focuses on the motivating factors of these organisations and their functioning, as well as their connection and coordination with political parties. Specifically, an attempt has been made to asses how these organisations encourage the entry of film stars into the political arena. A brief account of the methodology used for data collection is explained.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate film star clubs and their role in the socio-political system, and to find out their expression of the political motives. It is well known that these associations help the growth of personality cults by highlighting activities, rituals and their symbiotic relationship with Dravidian parties and the fan clubs in the state.

Methodology and Content of the Queries:

The methodology adopted for primary data collection was through questionnaire, interview and observations. These, along with the secondary materials from early studies on the issue were jointly studied. The questionnaire was based on both structured and unstructured sampling, which sought information related to

the age, education, marital status and occupation/ employment of the fan club members. The questionnaire further investigated the hobbies, reasons and frequency of watching movies and the number of times fans saw a particular movie. The questionnaire sought information related to the formation of fan clubs and their functions such as social services, the political stand taken by them, the support received from parties and patrons, and also opinion on the entry of the respective patrons into politics. Details on their financial base and their activities were also enquired.

Samplings of the Data:

Questionnaires were randomly distributed to Rajnikanth Fan Clubs and Kamalahasan Fan Welfare Association in Madras and Salem. Other stars who are involved in politics through fan clubs and have attained status and glamour in filmdom, and office bearers of such clubs were interviewed. One of them is Bhagiyaraj who initiated and now dissolved "MGR Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam" 1989: T. Rajender, who is now in DMK, had earlier formed the "Theyaga Marularchi Munnetra Kazhagam". Similarly, Sarathkumar presently in DMK who contested but lost the election for Lok Sabha in 1996, and Vijaykanth, a DMK sympathiser, has considerable number of fan clubs in Tamil Nadu. In short, the study had chosen not a particular fan club, but fan clubs of several actors

1. Now, the President of Film Stars' Association. The association play an important role in the film industry and politics. The state support is generally demanded through this association. The conflict between the South Indian Film Producers Council and Film Stars' Association over stars' salary/payment and certain other modalities is very much in limelight.

to find out the diverse causes for their emergence.

A Brief Description on Sampling Areas:

In Tamil Nadu, the film world is concentrated in the metropolitan city of Chennai, producing (approximately) 150 Tamil films per year. The emergence of satellite television channels has introduced a number of tele serials along with films which have become part of the Tamil Diaspora. Since Chennai is the capital of the state, it has been the centre for various political and cultural activities, along with the film industry.

The overwhelming presence of the film hoardings is strikingly obvious to anyone who walks the streets of Chennai. The city is dominated by a constant barrage of glamorous and spectacular images of larger than life cut-outs of film stars and political leaders on the Anna Salai/ Road. A number of film studios such as the AVM, A.L.Prasad and Gemini studio are situated in Kottambakkam. Apart from private studios, MGR Film City owned by the government² has recently been established at Tharamani.

2. A look at the priorities of the Dravidian parties for film industry vis-a-vis burning issues of the common man is worth mention. The Film city was established with crores invested by the Tamil Nadu government during the Jayalalitha regime 1991-1996. It has the state-of-the art facilities for shooting a film on a number of sets. The governments and the Dravidian parties provide financial and material benefits to film industries time and again, as if the film industry is doing social service to the society rather than being an entertainment business in Tamil Nadu. We have to remember that the Dravidian movement was founded on the demand for the establishment of non-Brahmin hostels to encourage education of the communities. In Chennai, there are a number of government Social Welfare Hostels located in the heart of the city. Hostel conditions are pathetic. It would be appropriate to quote a Tamil popular magazine Kumudam (October 1999) here: "If anyone has not got a chance to see the mortuary, make a visit to the M.C.Raja welfare hostel" where around 500 students live and who are pursuing their graduation, post-graduation and

The focus on Salem and its significance comes from cinema and cinema halls. Cinema has a historical legacy in Salem for several well-known reasons. A number of chief ministers and celluloid politicians initially started their film career from Salem and earned popularity. Some of them are M. Karunanidhi, M.G. Ramachandran and Kannadasan and others. Ratna studios and Modern Theatre, the oldest studios were located in Salem.

There are nearly sixty theatres located within a radius of eight sq.Kms of Salem town. Cinema is the only major entertainment for the people as they lack other forms of pastime. As a matter of fact, the number of days a film ran in cinema houses in Salem determined the success of that film elsewhere. ³ Politically, Salem has been a traditional AIADMK base, and barring a few upsets in 1989 and 1996 general elections, the entire constituency votes en bloc for the AIADMK. The district has now been bifurcated into two viz-a-viz Namakkal and Salem 1996/7 for administrative purposes.

Chennai and Salem boasts of the largest number of fan clubs and are socially and politically active. It is due to this significance that these two places have been selected for study. Respondents were male fan club members, in the 20 to 35 age group.

...Continued...

research. The welfare hostels do not have even basic facilities. On the other hand, the Dravidian parties have announced extensive reduction in tax, subsidies rate for films. But the poor student's welfare is met with treachery. See The Patriot, "Harijan Students beaten-up in Tamil Nadu", 18 August, 1977, New Delhi and The New Age, 21 August, New Delhi. Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Budget Proceedings and Government Report 1991-1999.

3.Cinema Express, 16th, May, 1987, Madras. (Tamil)

There were no female members found in any of the fan clubs, even though each political party purports its women wing.

Emergence of Fan Clubs:

Pandian, in his "Image Trap" states that "The first MGR fan club was organised by a Tamil Brahmin, Kalyanasundaram, in 1954. He was, in his early career, selling books of film songs at cinema halls and doing odd jobs at coffee houses and was later given a job at the Sathya Studio in Madras owned by MGR. About films, Kalyansundaram confessed: "It took my mind off my miserable life, the way liquor erases pain for many people." ⁴ Dravidian parties received a positive response from common people and the politicians used celluloid personalities for achieving their political goals because these celluloid patrons had vast network of fan clubs with a significant appeal among the subaltern masses. Some politicians attained their political prominence through these very fan clubs. For example R.M.Veerappan (who currently heads MGR Mandram - his own political outfit), Thirunavakarasu (currently, heads MGR AIADMK), K.K.S.S.R. Ramchandran, Sengottayan, Anna Nambi, and Trichi Soundarajan. In view of the huge political success of the celluloid personalities like MGR, other patrons and fan clubs also were attracted towards a similar political end.

Fan clubs attraction ensured a steady, faithful mass follow-

4. Aside, 1 August, 1986, Madras, cited in M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, Image Trap: M G Ramachandran in Film and Politics. Sage, New Delhi, p.30. As in the earlier chapter I have mentioned that Tamil cinema is an escapist syndrome of Tamils, which actually took off the critical faculty of Tamils especially in terms of their political consciousness.

ing, particularly from the socially, economically and politically deprived youth. Eventually they established organisational networks for the patrons, namely "Rasigar Mantrams" (fan clubs), as politically supportive organisations, through which they could demonstrate their presence and participation in the socio-political activities in the state.⁵

These organisations aimed at consolidating the mass support as a means to political ends of their patrons and subsequently for their own benefit. These fan clubs began to be considered federal wings of the political party, of the patrons and continued to provide favourable political climate for them. This clearly illuminates the path where the patrons convert from their role as cine idols into a powerful politician with the support of a mass fan club.⁶

This study investigates the dialectics between cinema and politics, with an emphasis on the Dravidian political culture and the role of fan clubs in the development of a personality cult by its analysis of the fan clubs of a cine star. In the process of this analytical exercise it is imperative to define what Rasigar Mantram (fan clubs) really is and how it works:

"A Fan Club is a peripheral organisation/association which is different from other mainstream organisations. It exists in the society, for a group of individuals of similar interest based on (or associated to) the popularity, talent, charisma, glamour,

5.C.Lakshmanan, 1996, "Fan Clubs Network of Film Stars and Tamil Politics", Mainstream, May, 1996.

6.Ibid.

fantasy, etc. of an individual (and in turn a common meeting ground) to show their admiration, appreciation and adulation (for the above individual)⁷".

A characteristic tendency in the cinema world has been the growth of fan clubs centered on an actor/actress. These clubs, found in large numbers throughout Tamil Nadu consist mainly of the admirers of a particular star and the film loving public. One finds an uneven distribution of cine-halls both in urban and rural areas. An observed trend is that these clubs exist in areas with a large number of cinema theaters. These clubs maintain a grip over the film audiences, fans and star admirers.

These associations are a forum for bringing together like-minded fans and admirers. They display social concern, a sense of public duty and above all articulate the desire that the cine idol emerge in the future as an important and powerful political leader, hopefully as the chief minister of the state. The entire activity is aimed at acquiring political power in the long run, unsuspecting masses are duped by promises of social service. Interestingly, many fan clubs try to realize what is shown on the silver screen.

Membership and Leadership of the Fan Club:

These associations maintain offices in cities, towns and villages. Formal registration with serial number approved by the head office of the club often in Chennai is maintained by the personal secretary of the patron. Membership is registered by a certain amount payable to the head office that grants admission

7.Ibid.

and sends the prescribed membership form to the individual. The duly filled membership forms are collected and only then is the individual formally a member of that club. People who take initiative effort eventually become office bearers as president, secretary and treasurer of the local unit and some of them even rose to become executive council members. Occasionally, office bearers are selected from the existing fan club members. Certain fan clubs are not even registered formally. The renewal of registration is done annually, with a minimum amount ranging from Rs. 50/= to 100/= per club. Office bearers use printed letter heads with name of the patron to communicate and promote the popularity of the cine idol by organising functions and charity shows.

Many enthusiastic youth are attracted to the stars and exhibit admiration and affection by forming fan clubs. Majority of the fan clubs are named after the chosen hero or heroine. Another trend which can be traced is that of forming the clubs with the name of a new movie as prefix such as 'Annamalai' Rajnikanth Fan Club and 'Pattaiyappa' Rajni Fan clubs, 'Muthu' Rajnikanth Fan Club can be observed. Similarly, 'Sathiya' Kamal⁸ Narpani Mantram, 'Indian' Kamal Fans Association and the like. Another way of naming fan clubs is based on the patrons titles often bestowed by the media e.g. "Superstar", "Stylemanan", "Enghkal Thalaivan - Our Leader", "Varungkala Muthalvar - Future Chief Minister", "Kotaivallal - King of Generosity",

8. Annamalai, Padaiyappa, Muthu are names of Rajnikanth movies while 'Sathiya' and 'Indian' are Kamal Hasan movies.

"Kalaichirpi - Art Champion", "Prachara Biranki - Propaganda Cannon" etc.⁹

Finance of Fan Clubs:

To run such associations, substantial funds are essential. These funds are mobilized through membership subscription collected annually at the rate of minimum Rs. 25/= per year. Generally, office bearers share financial responsibility and control the club. It is generally alleged that office bearers are often selected on the basis of money donated by them. Apart from this, the patron's contribution is also sought from time to time. The Fan Club does not always receive contribution from the patron.

It is customary that collections of the patron's new release for the first day accrue to the fan club. Most office bearers claim that this money is spent on organising functions of celebration on the occasion of the release of the new film. On an average, every office bearer of the club spends a minimum of Rs.500 to 1000 per year and it is an expenditure relative to the change in price index.

The club basically aims at gaining acceptance among local people. It was observed that even low paid labourers, members as well as office bearers, spend hard earned money on club activities even when they constantly struggle for a decent income and livelihood. Members pointed out that apart from regular contribution and expenditure on these activities, they also spend on cine-magazines and "fanzines". The names of some of the fanzines

9.The usage came to existence when Jayalalitha entered politics as the AIADMK propaganda secretary. During 1984-86 elections campaign an actress Radhika became a propaganda cannon of DMK.

are "Rajni Style", "Rajni Rasigan", "Ungal Sathiyaraj", "Kamlaha-
10
san's Maiyam" and "Ungal Prabu", etc.

Social Composition of Fan Clubs:

A majority of the members of the fan clubs are drawn from unemployed literate youth belonging to the Other Backward Classes/ Castes, the Dalits, and the upper caste non-Brahmins. Further, among the one hundred respondents queried, about 78 per cent were unmarried, while the remaining 22 per cent were married; 65 per cent of them were matriculate and above; 28 per cent had primary education and the remainder (7 per cent) were illiterate. So far as employment was concerned, 56 per cent had jobs in government departments or private companies and factories. Respondents included casual labourers too. Around 35 per cent were unemployed and 9 per cent were students studying at the High school or graduate level. The reason for low membership among students in the fan clubs is because most of these clubs are situated in slum areas with poor living conditions. Generally the membership consists of drop-outs from schools, the unemployed or those pursuing non-formal, vocational training in auto-mechanical workshop or factories. In fact, this so called vocational skill training is a mere euphemism for child labour which is the fate of these drop-outs.

With this social, educational, economic background it has

10.Micheal J. Kennedy, 1992, Reading The Popular Text: A Study of Cultural Contestation, an unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Centre for Study of Social System, School Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His analysis of the Fanzines provides detail account about the Tamils film culture, heliography, pirated history of the patron.

almost become an addiction to go to the cinema. 40 per cent of the respondents watched cinema regularly, 24 per cent said they listen to cine-music; 44 per cent saw three to four films every month. An average of 5.4 movies were watched per head in any month. Whereas 43 per cent of the respondents watched movies as a pastime, 19 per cent watched them for entertainment; 22 per cent for the sake of the patrons, 10 per cent for education and 6 per cent for other reasons like interest in story or music or technicalities of the movies (action scenes).

About 40 per cent watched a single movie more than once as a gesture of admiration of the patron and 60 per cent watched it more than three times. This helps the actor to demand more payment from the film producers. Watching the same movies more than once make them box-office hits and gives immense popularity to the patrons.

It was reported in the press that the existence of some of the fan clubs exclusively depends upon the film career of the patrons. When a fan club learns that their patron has lower stakes in the film, the fan club can suddenly vanish. This is a more common trend in the case of the fan clubs of actresses.

Reasons for Joining the Fan Club:

There are various reasons for joining the fan club of a particular patron. Data shows that 43 per cent of the people are attracted to the charisma patron. 19 per cent by the character played by the patron in the movie. Character roles of a gentle-

11. Here charisma is not used in any conventional sense, but it accounts for beauty, fairness, style and attractiveness which depend completely on individual perception.

man, an honest worker, saviour of the poor and women, a hard-working man, generous, law abiding and public welfare, even self-justified law-breakers and reformers, uncorrupt and refined criminals are accepted by the general public. Earlier such characters were portrayed by MGR; today, such roles belong to the 'MGR formula'. Further, 18 per cent of the audience is attracted by the generosity of the patron, 17 per cent fascinate patrons' attitudes towards the fans, and not by what is shown on the screen and the rest for other reasons. The generosity of a patron is exhibited by his acts of donating books and clothes for orphanage schools, and by giving money to those who suffer during natural calamities such as flood, fire or earthquake.

This researcher was informed by some fan club office-bearers, that "Kamalahasan Narpani Iyakkam", Arisipalayam, in Salem Town, distributed Rs. 10,000/= worth of medicines to the Tribes of Bargur in Dharmapuri district, Tamil Nadu. The fans are known to have involved themselves in even sanitation work voluntarily during municipality workers' strike in 1989. Bhaghiyaraj fan clubs, in the same year, engaged themselves in cleaning the streets. They also distributed free clothes to the poor. Further, the fan clubs took up several other issues of public interest, like non-supply of drinking water, inadequate street lights, etc. There were persistent efforts to restore certain public

12. See photograph of saree distribution organised by the Bhaghiyaraj fan club at Salem Town, where the then AIADMK local politician K.P. Ramalingam MLA was the chief guest of the function. Ramalingam is now DMK's member of parliament. In 1989 he along with Bhaghiyaraj strongly opposed Jayalalitha and supported V.N. Janaki - wife of MGR, who led one faction of AIADMK after the death of her husband.

utility services in some areas. In the 1970's and 1980's, Shivaji Ganesan fan clubs raised money and other materials and sent it to the government's relief fund along with their own contributions. They distributed free khadi clothes to freedom fighters every year.

13

In the year 1993, Rajnikanth donated thatched roofs worth Rs.36,000/= to the victims of a fire in the slums, through his personal secretary Sathiyarayan. This aid was channelised through his fan club in Kilapack, Chennai. Sathiyarayan is also current the president of all Rajnikanth fan clubs in Tamil Nadu.

Similarly, in 1990, T. Rajendar contributed Rs. 8,000/= for the Saidapet slum inhabitants at Chennai when the slum was destroyed by fire. When he celebrated the 150th day of successful running of one of his movies, his fan clubs conducted free marriages for 25 couples and gave a sovereign gold Thalli (mangalsutra) to each couple. Most of the actors and actresses involve themselves in one or the other welfare activity.

Influence of the celluloid personality:

To the question whether the movies influence one's personal life, 46 per cent answered in the affirmative, while 54 per cent denied any influence. However, those who said "yes" could not specify the nature of influence. But admitted to the use of certain political dialogues and film songs (casual, satirical, political and perverted) in the course of their chat with their

13.Ethiroli Vishvanathan, 1988, Shivaji Oru Saghapdam, Sri Sunmughapriya Pub. Madras.

friends and even in the family . The songs too have different religious, philosophical or political intent as well as explicitly aimed at eve-teasing/ sexual harassment.¹⁵

One Rajnikanth club office bearer said that in the film, "Mannan" the dialogues between the hero and the heroine indicate the actual conflict between Jayalalitha and Rajnikanth (in early 1990's). The film was produced by Shivaji Production, owned by the actor Shivaji Ganesan, an adversary of Jayalalitha. The controversy, often resulted in confrontation between the actor's fans and the chief minister's security and caused traffic obstruction at the chief minister's Poetas Garden residence. Since, the actor lives in the same area, his fans regularly visited him for 'Darshan'. Similarly, in film 'Annamalai'(1991/2), Rajnikanth's dialogues in the film had obvious references to politics. For example, his dialogue "I am going my own way, if any one robbed me then, I won't spare them".

In the box-office success of Annamalai, Rajni's popularity not only influenced members of his fan club members, but impacted upon the general public and political parties like DMK and TMC (Tamil Mannila Congress) who exploited this for the 1996 general election. They literally used the symbol -the 'Bicycle'- as

14.Anbazhagan, 2000, op.cit.

15.Ibid.

"Annamalai bicycle" during election campaigns. Rajnikanth publically supported the DMK-TMC alliance on the television and in the press, saying that "if the people of Tamil Nadu failed to learn a lesson from the Jayalalitha rule then even God can not save them". He categorically stated that he did not find any fault with AIADMK followers but only with Jayalalitha. This statement became a campaigning slogan during the election.

The story, screenplay, dialogue for the movie "Valli", was written by Rajni himself. Moreover, it was his own production - Rajni Arts, where the popular actor criticized the prevalent politics, particularly schemes like "Free clothes" and "Free Rice", etc. He advised the people to demand jobs and not to be duped by free schemes. Kamala Hasan also expressed similar opinion that "I believe nothing should be given free nothing tied up in red tape. The only free that thing should be given is education".¹⁷ In an interview to a Tamil weekly, Rajnikanth expressed his unhappiness with the present political system and added that he believed in dictatorship (like Hitler) and that he wanted the present political system changed. He even said that the Constitution needs drastic changes. Regarding his entry into

16. The 1996 general election gave birth to yet another regional political party in Tamil Nadu. The TMC was allotted an election symbol - 'bicycle'. Rajnikanth had supported the TMC-DMK alliance, after he had failed to influence the Congress leadership (P.V.Narasimha Rao) on anti-Jayalalitha stands. Even he gave assurance that he would unseat the Dravidian parties from the power. In his box-office movies 'Annamalai' he had used the bicycle in his role as a milkman. The election posters of the DMK-TMC contained 'Annamalai Rajnikanth', which were widespread in the state.

17. The Hindu, 15 August, 1993, Madras.

politics he said, "I was a carpenter first, then a bus conductor, today a film star and I do not know what I'll be tomorrow".

The influence of movies upon the people is explicit in the dressing or hair style and in the imitation of gesture, certain mannerism of the star patron. Some of Rajnikanth fans became the followers of Sri Raghavendra, whose Brindavan Samadhi is at the Mantralaya in North Karnataka merely because Rajnikanth was a devotee. The actor sports a ring with the saints' image. According to V.R. Mani "... Scores of temples of Sri Raghavendra have sprung up in Tamil Nadu". The actor and politician, MGR, once became a devotee of the goddess Mookambika at Kollar in Western Karnataka, following which his fans began to pay obeisance to the Mookambika cult. The grip of the personality cult on the adoring fans of MGR and Rajnikanth is story and they following their heroes into the cults of Devi Mookambika and Sri Raghavendra ¹⁸.

An eighteen (18%) per cent of respondents expressed that they adopted principles proclaimed by their patrons, for example, by being god-fearing, believers of simplicity, respecting elders and showing humanity. These qualities were often highlighted by the popular press and through the praise showered upon them in public by politicians. About 3 per cent of the respondents confessed that they came to know about their patron's life through ¹⁹ cinema magazines fanzines, and the newspapers.

18. The Times of India, 5 October, 1993, New Delhi.

19. For detail see Michael J. Kennedy, 1992, an unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, CSSS/SSS/JNU.

Interests and Activities:

Fan clubs/associations adopt a specific strategy to create enthusiasm and interest among members. The study shows that 76 per cent showed an interest in social services. About 11 per cent had political learning, and only 8 per cent took interest in their patron's political activities. This may be the reason for their flexible party affiliations. The motive behind social service is purely political. It is understood that these clubs function specifically to gain public popularity and sympathy that constitute the base for politics. Sometimes local politicians lend support in organising a patron's birthday celebrations.²⁰ Moreover, these fan clubs provides political parties with votes gained through these associations.

Fan club members concentrate on educational activities, like sponsoring free text books, notebooks, and uniforms for poor students, impressing upon them that these are gifts, and earn publicity through these activities. Everything is done on behalf of a film star. This wins loyalty as well as long-term associations of these poor students who become members of their association and potential volunteers for their party and club.

In the area of health services, fan clubs provide hospital beds, medicine, and organise blood and eye donation camps from time to time. In Salem, a Kamalahasan fan club office bearer

20. See, photograph Rajnikanth Fan club celebrating Rajni birthday on 12/12/93 at Kotturpuram. In the function Rajnikanth Fan Club arranged a distribution of plastic pots to the poor by the local politician and Congress-I candidate 'Karate' Thiyagaraj in Mylapore constituency in 1995. I was informed that similar activities are/were conducted in other parts of Tamil Nadu as well.

demanding a seat to contest the local body (Municipal Corporation Block Member) elections (as MGR used to demand seats for members of his fan club), because he was the one who initiated active social service in Arisipalayam area of Salem. During the 1989 municipality workers' strike, the club members undertook the task of cleaning the streets and drains. Sara Dickey and Aravanan found similar social services in Madurai and Pondyicherry area.

The political involvement of the club depends upon interest of office bearers 38 per cent, 34 per cent interest of patrons, and individual's interest 19 per cent, while another 19 per cent remained undecided. Every respondents desired that their patron should enter into politics, 51 per cent welcomes their patron to cement any one of existing party. But 44 per cent who wanted patrons' launching a new party. The rest were undecided.

Relations Between Fan Clubs and Political Parties:

The Fan clubs phenomenon in Tamil Nadu has emerged with specific interest (political, economic, even mere publicity/popularity) of the film star and its member. The conflict was intense when M.G.Ramachandran and Shivaji Ganeshan were pitted against each other in the film industry and state politics in 1960. This rivalry was reflected in their fan clubs as well and vigorous conflict continued till the mid 1980's. Witnessing MGR's political success, the younger generation in the 1970's and 80's followed similar fan clubs politics. The connection between a political party and a fan club is now well known. It is not of the same kind, that existed during MGR's times. Now, one patron's fan club connects with different political parties at places or in different ways. For instance, Rajnikanth fan club of Chennai

may support TMC, but the Salem fan club may lend support to some other party. The Kottorpuram Rajnikanth fan club supports the Congress-I, but Kilpack fan clubs supports AIADMK or DMK. This shows that there is no uniformity among members of the same patron. The Fan Clubs of MGR and Shivaji Ganeshan displayed uniformity, whatever their location they functioned as auxiliary bodies /organisations of the DMK, AIADMK or the Congress.

Apart from Sarathkumar, Vijayakanth, and Ramarajan, others do not have clear political links. In the case of Sarathkumar, it was only in the 1996 elections that his political affiliation became public. Rajnikanth and Kamalahasan have had no political patronage from the Dravidian parties or the Congress-I. It was only during the 1996 elections that Rajnikanth directly supported DMK-TMC front, after he failed to launch his own political outfit.

This is in contrast to the trend prevalent during the MGR and Shivaji period where a continuous connection existed between the political parties, namely DMK and the Congress-I, and the fan clubs of these stars. Dravidian parties projected MGR as a vote catcher and a leader of mass appeal. In return, parties benefited by attaining power in the state. Later, MGR launched his own party with the support of fan club networks cultivated during his long association with DMK and film career.

In his films, he took extra care in the plot story and songs and by incorporating 'ideal' image building factors systematically assimilating folklore heroes and social issues of the subordi-

nated. Timing was also ideal for them (MGR and Shivaji) i.e., (a) consonances with DMK and its 'manipulative' politics, (b) patronage of strong political leaders, (c) Annadurai and DMK's leaders ambitions and their systematic use of cinema for political ends, (d) overwhelming confidence of the DMK leaders upon film media and a deep understanding of feudal psyche are well collaborated with film personalities. Finally a control of the film industry by the Congress and DMK helped to consolidate for a kind of monopoly of these two stars.

Research revealed that 67 per cent of respondents felt that they do not accept or approve every political decision of their patron, while the remaining 33 per cent accepted their patron's decisions in toto. Generally, the political link of the fan clubs are expressed through public meetings 15 per cent, by raising issues before the concerned authorities 20 per cent, through leaflets and wall-posters 35 per cent, being the most popular means of personality cult propoganda. Remainer 30 per cent embrace other methods.

On the film stars' birthday, or at the release of a new movie, posters depicting the patron as future Tamil Nadu chief minister, and carrying the name of the club and its office bearers, are likely to be printed and pasted all over the city and towns. One such poster printed brought out by Rajnikanth fan clubs of Madras, Madurai, Trichy and Salem declared him: "Yesterday - 'Manidan' (man), Today - 'Thalpathi' (commander) and Tomor-

21.M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, op.cit.

row - 'Mannan' (king)". This poster greatly disturbed the ruling AIADMK and its leader Jayalalitha. The poster was banned and police took strong action against Rajnikanth's fans. The state government even introduced a bill in the assembly prohibiting the sticking of wall posters in public places. An important finding is that even when patrons did not join any political party, the club on its own supported different parties during the election.

In 1996, Rajni fans expected him to launch a new party, some of them claimed that the flag and symbol had been prepared and awaiting his approval. The frustrated supporters of the AIADMK such as R.M. Veerappan and S.Thirunaukarasu backed this move. Rajnikanth had met the then prime minister P.V. Narahshima Rao and announced his ultimate goal was to unseat not only the AIADMK but all Dravidian parties. Ultimately, neither a new party was

22.All these are (Manidan, Thalapati and Mannan) Rajnikanth's box-office success films.

23. From 1991 to 1996 a number of Tamil films were released with glorification of Rajni. A film "Thotta Chinnikki", had song:

See Rajni coming
And see his super style...
Good time has come
A lion is on march...
Our future is his hand
The nation(state) also in his hand...

In other Song: Our Patron is
always super star....

24.He became controversial, in 1995/6. He kept silent on dais, when Rajnikanth remarked on bomb culture in Tamil Nadu at film "Badsha" 100th day celebration (1995). (His reference was that a bomb hurled on Director Mani Rathnam residence). This incident made Veerappan resign from the ministry. Thereafter, an open conflict took place between AIADMK and Rajni fans in the state.

born nor was support lend to the Congress-I. Instead, he opted to directly support the DMK-TCM alliance without joining any party. His fans were bitterly disappointed by his unwillingness to launch a new party.

The club members denied regarding any conflict between different fan club of film stars. However, during the heyday of MGR and Shivaji, fan clubs often fought with each other claiming superiority.²⁵ Nevertheless, it has been reported that Cinema Complex managers of Abirami, Annai Abirami, Baby Abirami or Devi Pradesh of Mount Road, and A.R.R complex in Salem where new movies are released, found it difficult to control the fanatical fights that broke out between members of different fan club. On 14 January, 1994, during the Tamil harvest festival, when almost 15 new movies are released, fans were busy putting-up larger than life size cut-outs of the then favourable star greeting the public in the theatre, for the release of new movies of their respective patrons. Space allocated for posters was violated and led to fights between two groups of fan.

Fan clubs collected money from the public to meet expenses for cut-outs, decoration of chariots, and for the printing of posters. Work by fan clubs begins three weeks prior to the new release movie. The study attempts to ascertain the opinion and knowledge of fan club members about government policy. Generally, respondents knew little about government policies but were well informed about personality clashes. This was caused by lack of education, awareness or even a critical faculty to understand the

25.Ethirolli Vishvanathan, 1989, op.cit.

medium of cinema. Further, a certain psychological self satisfaction of fans has also played a role(See Appendix).²⁷

The reasons for why a star supported these clubs has another dimension. The star who charge a vast amount for a film spends a fraction of that money on his fan clubs. This helps the star to evade income tax, because officially they receive a certain amount and unofficially a lager sum, usually black money is recieved from the producers. Fans are unable to understand this financial game central to the real life of the star.²⁸

Office bearers and members who work during the election campaign with the film star for the victory of a particular party expect certain favours from the candidates. If the candidate becomes Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), Member of Parliament (MP) or gets a position in the party, they help to obtain government benefits to get loans to establish small businesses or shops. This reinforce the feudal "giver-receiver" relationship in the symbiotic relationship between fan clubs and political parties.

The Symbiotic Relationship:

The phenomena of charity, "gift-giving" carries deep cultur-----

26.In this regard some individuals have initiated discussions on cinema, particular to look cinema from a critical angle. Such as Kanchannai Film Society has taken lead in educating people about cinema and reality. They have produced a few documentary films to expose the glaring reality in the spheres of life. Similar, new film societies are trying to portray social reality as it is. These efforts are actually away from the popular genre of Tamil film industry.

27.K.P.Aravanan, 1991, Tamil Samuthaya Noikal: Verrum Velludum, Tamil Kottam, Pondy cherry.

28.K.P.Aravanan, 1991, op.cit, p.101.

al significance that assists in acquiring votes through favours. Giving of material goods as gifts for gaining political support is a long standing tradition in Tamil Nadu politics. In ancient Tamilagam princely tradition, gifts were given to subjects, particularly, to poets and artists. Sometimes these gifts could take the form of honours, titles and land. Acceptance of such gifts encouraged loyalty, or devotion and service to the gift-giver.²⁹

Neither the government nor any party voiced a need for structural change in the socio-political and economic order.³⁰ For example, Dravidian parties constitute the 'Slum Clearance Board' a statutory body of the government of Tamil Nadu. They introduce and implement a number of housing schemes to benefit slum dweller all over state, particularly in cities/ towns. But till now it has only managed to convert 'vertical slums' into 'horizontal slums',³¹ without any substantial change in the life of slum dwellers.

This ancient tradition of Tamils is reflected in the politics of Tamil Nadu today, particularly in the Dravidian parties. Government programme to distribute free clothes - sarees, dhotis

29.Sara Dickey, 1993, "The Politics of Adulation Cinema and the Production of Politicians in South India", Journal of South Asian Studies, May 2. Emphasis mine.

30.P.Chandragesan, editor of a monthly Yezhichi Dalit Murasu', expressed that Tamil Nadu has a larger number of social forest lands, temple lands, uncultivated lands, etc. are available which could be redistributed to landless agriculture labourers to give them a level of self-confidence. Instead of introducing competitive populism - giving free-meal to their children, free saree and dhotis to women and men. The same opinion was endorsed by Dr. Thangaraju.

31. Discussion with Dr.Thangavelu, Delhi University.

and rice reflects the feudal mind-set. The distribution of this free rice or clothes are greatly publicized events, even bags containing the rice would always carry the photograph of these leaders.

Similarly, fan clubs too make it a point to publicize all their social service and 'little' donation to the people by their patron. Dravidian party politics is based on the personality of a leader that hangs on a 'bag of tricks'. Fan clubs survive on a patron's popularity. Thus, the politics and cinema complement each other in the process of image building or creating a personality cult. Here fan clubs play a crucial role.

One of the important tasks of the fan clubs is to install larger than life cut-out of their heroes during the release of a new film. Identical cut-outs are executed during the birthday celebration of leaders, election meetings and party conferences. On the birthday of cine idols, fan clubs distribute free meals to the poor. The actor, in his individual capacity, donates cycle rickshaws, three wheelers sewing machines to the poor and the physically challenged.

The Dravidian parties accord a spiritual status to political leaders and celluloid personalities who are represented as gods and goddesses for whom Hindu rituals are performed and temples are built, 'Samadhis' built for leaders, are considered places of worship - "Anna Samadhi" and "MGR Samadhi" in Madras Marina Beach are examples. The most successful celluloid politician, late the

32. Sara Dickey, 1993, op.cit., pp.354-359.

MGR, had a number of temples dedicated to him in Tamil Nadu.

In the early 1990's, Khusboo, was a top level heroine of the Tamil film industry, had fans who built a temple for her in Tiruchy and installed an idol named Khusbuambikal, similar to the goddess named Mookambikal. One fan member even became the priest
34
of this temple.

It is interesting to learn about the different forms that the strong religious beliefs and practices of the fans take. In 1992, when Kamalahasan's film "Thevar Magan" was released in Trichy, a fan club district headquarters installed an enormous cut-out and performed the "Pal Abishegam" - the act of pouring milk on the deity/ idol. Pal Abishegams are part of normal practice in the Hindu temples. This happened despite, Kamalahasan's
35
announcement on several occasions that he is an atheist and a follower of E.V.R. Ramaswamy. Ranjnikanth's fans too do not lag behind and perform "Aarathi" and "Pooja" on cut-outs, break
36
coconuts as well as perform other elaborate Hindu rituals.

It is a widespread religious practice for devotees to ton-
sure their head on a visit to 'Palani-Lord Murugan', 'Vellankan-
ni- Annai Marry Villangkani' in Tamil Nadu and 'Lord Venkates-
wara' in Tirupati. Devotees purchase 'dollar chains'(that have an
inscribed photograph of the respective Gods or Goddesses) and

33.M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, op.cit.

34.Dhina Thanthi, 16 Feburary, 1993.

35.Vanna Thrai (Tamil Cinema Magazine), January 15, 1992.

36.Nakkeeran (Tamil Weekly) June 30, 1991, Madras and these kind of numerous instances reported widely in popular press.

distribute these chains to others at home on their return. These 'dollar chains' are worn around the neck. Similar dollar chains with pictures of political leaders or celluloid personalities, are worn by the respective party members and fans.³⁷ Though, it has been a popular practice of all parties, the exhibition of such symbiosis is more pronounced in the Dravidian parties.

Ever since the Dravidian parties came to power, even an ordinary leader became a 'great person' himself. Price labeled this as the "royalization" of power. This royalization of power in fact distances the leader from ordinary people. Though, Dravidian parties claim that they command the dominant support of youth, but they failed to politicize them on espoused rational values and beliefs, which were important premises of E.V.Ramaswamy.³⁸ Further, Dravidian leaders, instead of politicizing them, have served only to cinematicized the youths. Moreover, the Dravidian parties have not provided a space for independent youth movements in the state barring a few left wing student organisations. The regional construction posed by the Dravidian parties has deflected the youth from broader political understanding and action. This created a gap between youth and political dynamics of the state on the one hand, and on the other, unprecedented continuation of the populist schemes and patronage system of sycophancy of political parties, which greatly influenced them. The gap was filled by fan clubs by the politically aspired youth all over the state. The youth find the way, in a similar popu-

37.M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, op.cit, emphasis mine.

38.Interview with V.Annaimuthu, edidor, Periyar Era.

list fashion, to participate in the political process. This fashion eventually recognized as a auxiliary body of party, or a precursor to party formation, by the political party and leader or celluloid personality without any apprehension. The recognition of fan clubs and their activities resulted in astonishing politics of the personality cult in Tamil Nadu.

The following chapter will study the existence and use of monarchical as well as religious symbols, and the symbols of subordinated masses as well as the self-immolators/ matyrs by Dravidian parties. In the process, it plans to explain other symbols like mannam, love, valour, chasity/ karppu and their projection in Dravida parivar. Further, an attempt will be made to elaborate certain issues and instances.

CHAPTER -V

Chapter - V

CULTURAL SYMBOLS AND THE POLITICAL MOBILISATION OF DRAVIDIAN PARTIES

A symbol is related to the notion of sign. Psychoanalysts analyse and interpret symbols of social and historical origin. According to Carl Yung, symbols are a reflection of the experiences of the past generation and are embodied in archetypes of like mother earth, motherland, heroes, wise men and women inaccessible to direct observation; they are revealed indirectly when projected onto enteranal objects. There are symbols common to all mankind in the form of myths, religious beliefs, and in works of art and literature.¹

Symbols contain epistemologically relevant imaginaries. They are source of authority that legitimize an individual's choice of a trait as an emblem of identity. Ancient and contemporary Tamil literature reveals us an understanding of Tamil epistemology, and from it can be deduced the cultural logic, or the cultural structure of the interconnection of various symbols and their meaning and use.²

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to show how Tamil cultural symbols are used for mobilisation by the Dravidian parties, and how Dravidian parties define themselves by their -----

1. A.V.Petrovsky and M.G.Yaroshevsky, 1987, A Conscious Psychological Dictionary, Progress Publisher, Moscow, pp.309-10.

2.J.Pandian, 1987, Caste, Nationalism and Ethnicity, popularPrakashan, Bombay, p.12-36.

use, the type of symbols and rituals and their influence, and more importantly whose symbols and rituals does politics draw upon. The system of symbolic representation simply helps people to recognise powerful acts to which they relate and identify with. This chapter provides an account of the symbols used in Tamil cinema, particularly those of ballads and folk heroes. These originate from protest culture of the oppressed masses. An attempt has been made to relocate these traditions of cultural specificities with contemporary Dravidian parties. The purpose of this analysis is to find out symbols of the 'family', 'love', 'language', 'land', 'valour', 'karppu', which infuse the phenomenon of the cult. For a proper the analysis of the politics of personality cult, it is imperative that we understand the traditions, religious rituals, folklore culture linked to Dravidian parties.

A reading of Tamil culture and cultural symbols provides an understanding of factors that are instrumental in perpetuating 'the personality cult' in the politics of Tamil Nadu. So far, only a few studies³ on Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu focuses on this trend that refer to the use of cultural symbols in political mobilisations.

3. The writings of M.S.S. Pandian :1992 & 1999, Marguerite Ross Barnett: 1976, Pamela Price: 1996 & 1999, Sara Dickey: 1994, Mattison Mines and Vijayalakshmi Gourishankar: 1990, S.V.Rajadurai & V.Geetha: 1996, Arandai Narayanan (1989, 1994, 1998), and unpublished work of S.Lazar's M.Phil. dissertation: 1991, J.Pandian: 1987. Some details on Tamil culture are found in works of N.Subramaniam: 1960, X.S. Thani Nayagam: 1970, Neelakanda Sashtri: 1971, Lakshmanan Chettiar: 1973, P. Subramanian: 1999, Mu. Varadarjan: 1972, Karthygesu Sivathamby: 1972, and others, along with original Tamil Literatures.

Mass mobilisation can take place at two levels in the political discourse: (a) at an ideological level - to address the existing reality of the people with a rational approach. (b) Emotions / feelings - that evoke the past and emphasize symbols. (People can hardly be organized exclusively by ideology or emotion.) Any political ideology needs to include emotions if it is to be promoted among the vast illiterate and culturally imbued masses. Associations based on Marxist ideology use emotion with caution and prefer to focus on socio-economic reality.

For example, during the Naxalbari movement, the People's War Group, and the other Marxist Leninists evoked martyrs as symbols of the revolution. These symbols strengthen the struggle for liberation of oppressed masses. They are prepared to give up their lives for a cause, for an ideological commitment but not for any individual. Generally, their sacrifice is the result of feudal oppression or state repression. The movement evokes its martyrs with slogans like "even in death we shall dare", and "they murdered and buried you and thought that they finished you. While, in fact they sowed a seed". This is the martyrdom of a fighter who laid down his life for the liberation of the masses⁴ his life is like a flame that brightened the fire of revolution.

Parties/ movements that address cultural nationalism and identity politics base their arguments on pride and emotional attachment to cultural symbols, rather than emphasise the socio-economic reality of the masses. This does not mean that national-

4. AIRSF, 1999, Even in Death We Shall Dare: In memory of Martyrs. New Delhi.

ist or identity politics lacks an understanding or is ignorant of the reality, but only that they do not focus them due to allegiance to the ruling class. Instead, these parties/ movements confront reality in a populist manner, that helps them keep delude the masses and prevent them from thinking critically.

However, the Dravidian movement/ parties succeed in their ideology by focusing on cultural symbols and highlighting the emotional attachment of the masses towards the symbols. At the level of institutional politics, the use of public speeches, party organs, theatre, cinema, small magazine, the storyteller tradition and other medium. For this they used their own "literary skills" based on the satire of Brahmins, gods, epics. Also stories related to sex are instrumental in enticing young people. This kind of tacts yield some result to seduce attraction of youths - literates, semi-literates and illiterates.

To cite an example, Jayalalitha issued a statement once: "This body was given to us only in order that we may serve all mankind with it. We may not know God, but we know his creation. Service of his creation is the service of God". A DMK functionary Rahman Khan reinterpreted the statement that Jayalalitha's "body is at the service of the public; and young men of Tamil Nadu should come forward". The statement and words have deliberately been taken literally to demean and insult Jayalalitha in explic-

5. Annadurai's 'Panna Thouttam (Garden of Money)', 'Kamba Rasama or Kama Rasama', 'Kumari Kottam', and Karunanidhi's 'Parasakthi', 'Banglore Peran' and other writings. MGR films see Pandian's Image Trap, pp.78-84 and for Jayalalitha's novel "Uravin Kaithigal (Prisoners of a Relationship)", Seminar 401, January, 1993.

itly sexual terms.

Dravidian parties evoke peoples' psyche by invoking epic and religious symbols. It is interesting to note that in the 1980's mega-religious serials like Ramayana and Mahabharat became popular on Doordashan. During the 1989 election campaign, saw the epic characters of Rama and Sita of the Doordarshan Ramayana were invoked on public platforms, and party posters showed MGR and Jayalalitha as Rama and Sita.⁷ In the 1991 general election, Jayalalitha emerged as Droupadi and Karunanidhi as Duryodhana. This served the purpose in her as a victim at the hand of the DMK leadership. Election campaign posters in Katpadi constituency (also other parts of the state) showed cartoons of Durai Murugan of DMK, tugging at the saree 'pallu' of Jayalalitha to seek justice from the electorate.⁸ The Droupadi - Duryodhana discourse invested her with mythic aura and distinguished her from ordinary women from whom she sought political authority.⁹

In 1996 election, the actor Rajnikanth supported the DMK-TMC alliance. The TMC's election symbol was bicycle, and throughout

6.M.S.S. Pandian, 1993, "Jayalalitha: 'Desire' and Political Legitimation", Seminar, 401, January, pp.31-34. emphasis mine. Pandian argues that referring to the personal life of political opponents is not the contribution of Dravidian movements but of the Congress. Even if I agreed with Pandian's argument, the fact remains that the very existence of the Dravidian movement/party providing an alternative political culture to that of the Congress in all respects.

7.Rahul Pathak and Ravi Shankar, 1989, "The God Who Would Not Die", Indian Express, New Delhi, 22, January.

8.M.S.S. Pandian, 1993, "Jayalalitha: 'Desire' and Political Legitimation", Seminar, 401, January.

9.Ibid.

Tamil Nadu, wall-posters showed 'Annamali' on a cycle, singing in a manner characteristic of Rajnikath in a the film "Annamalai", a runaway box-office success of the 1990's.

Ancient Tamil Literature and Culture:

Details of the Tamil way of life is found in literature, the "Ettu Thogai" (the eight anthologies), "Pathu Pattu" (ten Idylls) are the earliest poems of the extant literature. "Pathine keel Kannakgu", "Silappathiharam", "Manimekalai", "Purananuru", and "Thirukkural" are considered authentic socio-cultural, political and historical accounts of the Tamil life. These literary sources throw ample light on the cultural roots of the symbols used by the Dravidian parties.

The writings of Annadurai, Karunanidhi, scripts of the films of MGR and others associated with Dravidian parties indicate deliberate self-conscious use of the cultural symbols of Tamils. This reference point of Dravidian leaders is 'Sangam Age' and its cultural history, which consists "Iyal" (Proses), "Isai" (Music) and "Nattagam" (Drama). It was also called "Muthal, Idai and Kadia (First, Second and Third)". They constantly refer to the Tamil traditions of family, kings, land, language and the people. From these symbols evolve notice of 'Tamil Pride' and a 'Glorious Past' that hinges on Tamil cultural nationalism.

About 'family' and 'love', Margarte T. Egnor observes: without question, to the members of our family, anbu(love) was a good and powerful force. One who had love was in a very real

10. N. Subramaniam, 1986, Sangakala Vazhviyal, New Century Book House, Madras, pp.30-31.

sense 'higher' (uyarantha) than one who did not. A loving heart
was a pure (tuymaiyana) heart.¹¹ In a family, love means "adakkam" (containment) or control upon oneself, and "adimai" (slave). Hence, all Dravidian parties have their relationship of leader-follower as a familial one - Thanthai-Makan (father-Sons), Annan-Thami (elder-Younger brothers) etc. They even address each other as such. Anbu and mannam (love and Honour) govern the family traditions.

C.N. Annadurai and his successor M.Karunanidhi repeatedly claimed that the DMK is a family and not a mere political party. The Dravida Parivar's father was E.V.Ramaswamy and Annadurai, is considered the eldest son and the rest of the followers are 'udan pirappu' - blood brothers. Further, each leader used a personal format or "structure" of addressing party members. For example, Annadurai referred to the congregation as 'Enn Arumai Thambi-gale' - my beloved brothers. Karunanidhi refers to the brethrens as 'Enn Urerinum Mellana Udan Pirappu' - brothers who are dearer to me than my life. And Rathadin-in-Rathadamay and blood-in-blood and Enn Arumai Thaikulamay - loving mothers' community is how MGR spoke of his followers. Further, leader considered himself to be more than a leader. He/She was the teacher, guru, and

11. Margaret T. Egnor, 1985, "The ideology of love in a Tamil Family" A paper prepared for a Conference on Anthropology of Emotions in South Asia, Texas, Houston. Cited in Lazar's M.Phil. dissertation, 1991, Centre for Study of Social System, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Unpublished material.

mentor.

For the DMK, the family signifies Tamil society in general and, in particular, the DMK party. Annadurai writes "I don't consider Kazhagam (DMK) as a mere political party. Believe it or not, I have an unshakable belief that Kazhagam (party) is a family. It is the "Pasam(love)" prevailing in a family that should characterise our Kazhagam"¹³. Karunanidhi said, ...the great leader Anna (our elder brother) had not nourished DMK as political party but as a family. The feeling of brotherhood among the DMK's members is more prevalent than that of being only members of a political party."¹⁴

Language is the unifying force and the most precious treasure of a community, a fact exploited extremely well by Dravidian leaders who portray the greatness of the Tamil language. The anti-Hindi agitation of 1938 began while the Congress led government ruled in the Madras Presidency. It had reached its zenith in 1965 under the DMK leadership. Dravida Parivar's political mobilisation was focused mainly on Tamil nationalism which greatly transformed into Tamil chauvinism with a consciously anti-Hindi slant. As mentioned elsewhere, the linguistic sentiment persistently provided an impetus for the Dravida parivar. The

12. Similarly MGR being a teacher, guru, leader of AIADMK's followers and its leaders. Later, Jayalalitha being Amma, Anni (wife of elder brother or sister-in law). See the writing of Annadurai and Karunanidhi.

13. S. Lazar, 1991, Symbolic Content of the Dravidian Ideology as Expressed by Anna and MGR, Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation, Centre for Study of Social System, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. p.117.

14. Tuklak , 15 November, 1970, Madras.

only difference in the language issue has been that at one point Dravidian parties directly mobilized the masses against the imposition of Hindi. By the 1980's, anti-Hindi mobilization was direct and unmediated. But from 1990 onwards, the compulsory use of Tamil language in public and private spheres was strongly emphasised - on signboards, nameplates and in everyday usage. Though this move had begun in 1970, by 1990 it had gained great momentum. In 1998/9, the DMK government legislated that the medium of instruction all primary schools in the state should be Tamil and English language should be banned till the 5th standard. This was challenged at the High Court by the private school authorities. Dravidian parties showed that they understood the emotional psyche of the Tamils with reference to their language¹⁵

The kings as symbols namely Chera, Chola and Pandiya, are referred to for their valour, judiciousness, generosity and virtue. The king was ascribed divine status in Tamil literature. Particularly, the Tamil 'king's 'mannam' (honour) is a symbol that glorifies the sacrifice of the his life by saving Tamil honour - 'Vadueruthu Urenithal'. The 'Purananuru' points to a number of instances like the Chera king Purunjcheraladan's defeat in battle with wound in his backside, that was considered disgrace/ dishonour (Puram:65, 66), Goperucholan (Puram: 191, 216), Kapilar head of Sangam who sacrificed his life for sake of friend Pari king (Puram: 236), and Saint Poet Kavunthi Adigal (sila-

15.K. Thirunavukarasu, 1993, "Veeravanakgam Selluthuvom! Veerukontu Yelluvom; Veerir!", Murasoli, 25 January. Also see, Sumathy Ramaswamy 1997, op.cit.

pathiharam) - for sake of Kannaki, Govalan.

However, kings of the Pallava dynasty vigorously patronized Hindus and encouraged temple culture, ultimately turning Tamil Nadu into a land of temples. It is hardly surprising then that Tamil Nadu witnessed an extraordinary revival of Hinduism.¹⁷ Temple patronage was done by both Dravidian parties. Government took pride in this activity. During Jayalalitha's AIADMK's rule, 320 temples performed Kumbabichakam, but in DMK's rule (those who learned their Dravidian politics from Periyar's rational movement) 2579 temple performed Kumbabichakam. It is necessary to ascertain the beneficiaries of these rituals and functions. Obviously, the Brahmins and the caste-Hindu harvested the immediate benefits.¹⁸ In ancient times, kings nurtured Tamil literature, patronised writers by appointing them as 'Arachavai Kavi' (official poets). Dravidian parties nurtured poets mostly from the film industry. Just as in ancient times poets wrote songs to praise the king, the poets in the Dravidian parties did the same. For example, "N.Kamarajan, a pro-AIADMK poet, addressing a public meeting in Thanjaur in 1988, said: This dias is a temple; you are the devotees; the revolutionary leader is the deity; I am the priest singing her praise".¹⁹

16.K.P.Aravanan, 1989, Tamilar Tham Marupakkam (The other side of the Tamils), Pari Nilayam, Madras, pp.152-170.

17.S.M.L. Lakshmanan Chettiar, Folklore of Tamil Nadu, National Book Trust, India, New Delhi, pp.7-22, 93.

18. K.Veeramani speech in the D.K's Conference at Trichi, cited in Yezhutchi Dalit Murasu, January, 2001, p.6.

19.M.S.S. Pandian, 1993, Seminar 401, p.33.

The land again was rich in numerous resources and therefore, the ancient Tamilagam was not poverty stricken. This aspect is highlighted by Dravidian leaders. The fact is that this glorification of land yielded good political results. According to several Tamil classical anthologies, the Tamil countryside had five ecocultural zones (Ani-Thinai) representing land and morality.

Table

Zone	Type of Land	Occupation	God/s
1. Kurichi	mountain	hunters	the hills
2. Mullai	forest	herdsmen	the cattle
3. Marutam	plains	cultivators	the sun
4. Neithal	coastal	seafarers	the sea
5. Palai	desert	warriors	goddess of war

Each ecocultural system had a specific culture. Worship of mother goddesses and god of the Muruga was popular among the Tamils. The Muruga cult continues to be popular in the Tamil country. Besides mother goddess, amman worship constitutes the single most important form of religious expression of Tamils even today.

Symbols of Religious Rituals:

(a) Dragging Ther: the dragging of a miniature rath with ropes hooked on the back of the devotee is a symbol of the extent

20. Lazar, 1991, op.cit, p.111

of physical pain people are prepared to inflict on themselves. The devotee walks for miles and miles, pulling the cart in the hot sun for hours, unmindful of the anguish, uttering the name of the deity. Even the tongue is pulled out and a silver pin is inserted to hold the tongue in the desired position. The pin is a miniature Vel or lance, the weapon of Muruga. These type of events take place in mega events of the Dravidian parties like state level Conferences.²¹

(b) Carrying of Agni-c-chatti/ Fire-pot: It is a religious practice prevalent in Tamil Nadu, to make an offering to the deity Marriamman. Women and girls carry these offerings. For this ritual, 21 days prior to the festival devotees eat a single meal a day, sleep on the floor, and remain celibate.²²

(c) Breaking of Coconuts: It is a cultural and symbolic practice into the worship of Ganesh or Vinayaka in Tamil Nadu. People take a vow in the hope of preventing a catastrophe or to offer gratitude for a fulfilled desire; prayers to this deity includes smashing a coconut. It is the symbolic annihilation of undesirable forces.

This is a much visible practice among the fans, coconuts are broken when the heros' image flashes on the screen. His devotees break coconuts near the theater and at the feet of the installed cut-outs of the stars. Other symbolic acts include the application of mud from around this mound on the forehead of children

21.M.S.S. Pandian's Image Trap, p.129.

22. See Tamil News papers and Magazines on 21-28, February, 1995. Also N.V.Subharao, 1993, Tamil Cinema, Consumer's Association of Penang, Malaysia, and K.P.Aravanan, 1992, op.cit.

prior to their admission to school or in order to assure academic success. In the Rajnikanth film "Aajamman" (Zamindar) the male and female elders of village do similarly smear dust from Rajni's footsteps to their foreheads as a tilak.

Symbols of The Oppressed Heroes:

Symbols derive their cognitive and emotive power from culture. The power of a symbol to activate the cognitive and emotive faculties of human beings depends much on the extent to which they are rooted in a culture. As mentioned earlier, DMK leaders such as Annadurai and Karunanidhi used the symbols of ancient Tamil traditions, whereas MGR used the tradition of folk heroes and ballads to stir the aspirations of the masses in Tamil Nadu. In the beginning, the DMK and its leaders argued that traditions of the Tamil past pointed towards a casteless, non-Aryan social order to be achieved through non-violent means. It was a arapor-a war of Dharma. The current "arapor" was started by the DMK.

Films were an important means for political propaganda, mass mobilization, discernibly impacting political behaviour and the consciousness of the people. This was used for political gain. Karunanidhi evoked the folkloric symbol of Nallathangal²³ in his film 'Parasakthi'. When the heroin Kalyani was charged for the murder of her child in court she cited Nalathangal. MGR not only

23.Nallathangal is very popular among the rural folks throughout the state. The Nallathagal represent the cruelty of family feud, of in-laws and the pain of poverty. In the story Nallathangal had killed 7 children to escape poverty, as a last resort, when her attempt failed to yield any result. Wherever, in Tamil Nadu, this 'Thearu Kuthdu'/ Drama is played for audience, women in particular used to literally cry. Having understood this psyche, Karunanidhi invoked this in his film Parasakthi.

incorporated folk heroes and art forms into his films but also drew upon symbols of subordinated masses along with their food and dress culture. These cultural specificities have a semiotic significance for the masses who identify with that person and consequently suffer 'self'.²⁴ Along with this, party symbols, statues of leaders, party flags, dialogues and inferences come to represent party ideology.

MGR even started to use folk traditions and ballads rooted in the protest culture of the oppressed. He played roles that glorified folk heroes like Chinnanadan, Chinnathambi, Jamubulingam, Mudraiveeran and Muthupattan who belonged to the oppressed sections of society.²⁵ It is interesting to note a few illustrations.

Chinnathambi was a Dalit, an untouchable leather worker. courageously, he accepted the local king's offer of a reward for venturing into the forests to kill marauding wild boars who were ruining the crop of the peasants. His valour yielded a successful career traditionally denied to Dalits. He rose to be commander of the king's fort at Thirukkurunkuti. The envy of caste-Hindus, who were the traditional commanders, led them to murder him. People from amongst whom Chinnathambi rose to power immortalized him in

24.M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, op.cit, pp-40-50.

25.M.S.S. Pandian, 1997, Culture and Subaltern Consciousness: As Aspect of the MGR Phenomenon, in Partha Chatterjee (ed), State and Politics in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. and M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, op.cit and S.Lazar's 1991 op.cit.

their ballads which are even today in Tirunelveli district.

Chinnanadan alias Kumaraswamy too belongs to Tirunelveli district. The ballad concerning him touches the issue of girl-child marriage. Initially, when only 18, he married to his much older cousin. Later, he fell in love with a Dalit girl - Ayyamkuty, and refused to accept his cousin as wife. When he was murdered by his own kin, his wife Ayyamkuty committed suicide. The cult of Chinnanadan is alive in four villages and there are shrines dedicated to him around the town of Eral.²⁷

Ballads of the Maduraiveeran cult are popular in Tamil Nadu. He too was Dalits who eloped with the daughter of King Bommanna and fought single-handedly against the king's army. Hearing of his valour, the king of Trichi enlisted him to combat the caste-Hindu Kallar brigands. Maduraiveeraan, a vassal of the Pandyas, is believed to have saved the lives of many in a heroic struggle with a demi-god in Madurai. At festivals held in his honour,²⁸ "Villu Pattu" is sung ballads that depict this tale.

Worship of Heroes and Warriors:

Many warriors and historic personages have won the hearts of people and their memory is perpetuated in the ballads of the folk traditions. For example, Desinghu Rajan of Gingee in South Arcot district, who built two fortresses and died in battle with a

26.V. Vanamamalai, "Interpretations of Tamil Folk Creations", Dravidian Linguistic Association, Trivandrum, pp.161-3 cited in M.S.S.Pandian in Partha Chatterjee's (ed), 1997, op.cit.

27.Ibid.

28.Ibid.

Muslim prince during the 17th century.

As mentioned earlier, Tamil poets are considered cultural heroes. As mythic exemplars, numerous poets and scholars have been canonized. Considering, many Dravidian leaders proclaimed themselves as poets and scholars by conferring upon themselves titles like "Aringnar", "Kalaaignar", "Pulavar". They compared themselves to the great poets, thinkers and scholars. Academic institutions, too, confer honour upon them. C.N. Annadurai and Karunanidhi were awarded honorary doctorate by Annamalai University, MGR and Jayalalitha were conferred 'Honourary Doctorates' by the University of Madras. How far these awards are justified is discussed below.

When Annamalai University conferred an honorary doctorate to Karunanidhi at a convocation in July 1971, Karunanidhi invoked the symbol of a youth who self-immolated for Tamil language, saying that "an innocent face of Rajendran reflects from his statue on the way to University, which was made because of his supreme scarifies of life to save his (mother tongue) language..."³⁰

A group of students belonging to the "Annamalai University Student Congress" and the "Student Federation of India" questioned the authority and validity of university's act of confer-

29.S.M.L. Lakshmanan Chettiar, op.cit.p.42-3.

30.Karunanidhi, 1997, Nenchukku Nidhi, Vol.II, p.312-317 (Tamil).

ring an honorary doctorate to Karunanidhi. To silence the critics, Karunanidhi used his demagogic skills and is quoted at length in Thaa. Pandian's article in "Jana Shakthi" (1/8/1971). Pandian argues to support the decision of the university and cites number of literary legends like Thiruvalluvar, Kamban, Bharithiar and Bharathi Dashan who were men of knowledge but never obtained a university degree from an institution of learning. This according to him means that they did not possess quality. He also said, that this opposition came from 'neo-upper caste arrogance'.³² The contention here, is that a single event Karunanidhi had evoked three symbols (a) Rajendran - a symbol of supreme self-sacrifice, (b) Thiruvallur, Kamban, Bharathi and Bharathi Dashan - as symbols of knowledge and (c) any criticism as a symbol of (neo-upper) caste.

Hence, it has to be seen in the context of, first, mystifying self-immolators and urging youth to recall them; second, self-proclamation and justification of sycophants; and third, spreading resentments to upper caste. Similarly, Karunanidhi mystifies events by exaggeration, for example, the anti-Hindi agitation(s) were compared with the 1776 Philadelphia Convention³³ of American Independence, the 1917 Russian Revolution, and /

31. One of the student leader Udyakumar was leading the movement against the univeristy, "allegedly" killed just before the "Convocation Day" See news report by The Hindu, 21 August, 1971 and Tuklag, 30 August, 1971.

32. Ibid.

33. M. Karunanidhi, 1997, Nenchukku Nidhi, Vol.I, p.321.

the Boston Tea Party.

Hence, on a number of occasions "Tamil valours" as a symbol: is invoked he quotes instances from the Tamil literature in public when a woman/mother "knowing her son was wounded in his back by adversary's arrow in the battle field, exclaimed Oh! what shame! To this coward I had fed my breast milk, it is shame indeed for the breast itself! so she amputated her breast from her body". This is often cited in his writings and speeches to keep alive this myth of honour and valour.

35

Pandian gives a scandalous account of how MGR received his honorary doctorate. The recipients of the honour were informed by the University well in advance to enable them to have the academic gowns stitched in time. However, the selectors of the candidates for Honourary Doctorates were kept in the dark. An hour before the convocation, the Vice-Chancellor, Dr.N.Santappa, presented a list of eleven names to the University Senate and sought its approval. To avert the threat of disruption of the convocation, the Senate approved the list after registering its

 34.The Anti-Hindi Agitations had number of Phases i.e. First: 1938-40, Second: 1948-50, Third: 1953-56, Fourth: 1953-61 and Five: 1963, it is also to be noted that after the DMK came to power they have watered down their issue slowly.

35.As mentioned elsewhere, in 1310 during the invasion of Muslim rulers in the South India, the Catholic Priests witnessed and recorded astonishing events in a village near Trichy. The villagers heard of Malik Kufer's (formerly a slave who later became commander of Ala-Uddin's army). The villagers learned that army marching towards their village, they gathered in open field along with animals and set themselves on fire and died to avoid the shame of Malik Kufer's persecution. (P.K. Aravanan, 1992, op.cit. also see S.Lazar 1991 unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, JNU.) See, Marx Notes on Indian History, 1986 (Third Ed.), Progress Publishers, Moscow, p.19.

protest over the manner in which honorary doctorates had been
awarded.³⁶

Symbol of Chastity:

The Dravidian leaders not only claimed their pride in the notions of honour and valour but also repeatedly allude to symbols of chastity. They consistently invoke the character of the heroine in Silapathikaram, Kannaki, as symbol of chastity. Silapathikaram enumerates stories of chaste women of Puhar (popularly known as Poompuhar - a City) who worked miracles" due to their chastity.³⁷ Even today, political leaders, and film script writers as well as popular magazines portray Kannaki as a goddess of chastity - 'Karppu Deivaam'. This chastity is seen to be of two kinds - "mara karppu" - kannaki and "ara karppu"- where Kopperundevi, wife of Aryappadai Kandende Nedujelian expired the moment her husband ceased to live. It is worth noting that nation and language grammatically belong to the feminine gender as is motherland and mother-tongue. So chastity safeguards honour.

The karppu/chastity is an important and sacred symbol of boundary-maintenance. Female chastity, fidelity and faithfulness are interwoven with supernatural powers, sacrifices, suffering, penance, virtues, morality, justice, ethics, austerity and asceticism. The goddess Kannagi is associated with marakarppu. In the

36.M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, p.117.

37.N. Subramanian, 1966, Sangam Polity: The Administration and Social Life of the Sangam Tamils, Asia Publishing House, Madras, pp.253-288. Also see, K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1966 (3rd Ed.), A History of South India: From Pre-historic Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar, Oxford University Press, Madras. J.Pandian, 1986, op.cit.

classical Tamil epic 'Silapathikaram' often elucidate Tamil notions of fate, love, omens, monarchy, morality and art form heroine Kannagi's life. In their political discourse, leaders of Dravidian parties constantly refer to the myth of Kannagi.

The story is as follows: Kannagi and Kovalan, her husband were members of a merchant community who lived in the city of Puhar in the Chola kingdom. They were temporarily separated due to Kovalan's infatuation with Madhavi, a courtesan. On suspecting Madhavi of infidelity, Kovalan severed his relationship with her. By now, he had lost all his wealth. After Kannagi's reunion with Kovalan, she offered to sell her diamond -encrusted gold anklets for its use as a business investment. Husband and wife proceeded to the city of Madurai in the Pandiya kingdom to start life afresh. They were accompanied by Kavunthi Adigal, a Jain woman ascetic. She recommended that they lodge with Mathari, a woman of the community of herders during their stay at Madurai.

While taking Kannagi's anklets to the bazaar, Kovalan met the chief goldsmith of the Pandiya king. The goldsmith who had just stolen anklets belonging to the queen that resembled Kannagi's. Since, Kovalan had asked the goldsmith for an evaluation of Kannagi's ornament, the goldsmith plotted to blame Kovalan for the theft. The goldsmith lodged a complaint against Kovalan to the king and registered the loss of the Queen's anklets. The king accepted the goldsmith's word and ordered soldiers to recover the

38.J. Pandian, 1987, op.cit, pp50-60

39.Ibid.

jewellery and to summarily execute Kovalan without proper
40
trial.

When the news reached Kannagi, she reached the palace and demanded an audience with the king. The monarch defended the execution of Kovalan. Kannagi proclaimed her husband innocent and produced her anklets with diamonds, unlike the queen's which had pearls. The king asked his soldiers to compare the ornaments. Kannagi threw her anklets and a diamond bounced off the floor and hit king. Unable to bear the injustice committed by him, the king fell down and died. On the death of the king, the queen died immediately too. Outside the palace, Kannagi cursed the city which had wrongfully executed her husband and pleaded with the gods to burn it. Fire broke out in Madurai. On learning about Kannagi's supernatural power, the Chera king and people constructed a temple with Kannagi as the presiding deity. She was honoured as the symbol of chastity in Vanchi - Chera's capital
41
city.

Worship of Personage:

Great poets and scholars are honoured erecting monuments in their name. The memory of Thiruvalluvar is commemorated by a small temple on the outskirts of Mylapore. As recently as in year 2000, Karunanidhi's DMK government in Tamil Nadu installed a 133-
42
ft. high granite statue of Thiruvalluvar Kanyakumari at the

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. The Thiruvalluvar was written couplet consisted of 1330 of 133 heads, in 2200 years ago. It was translated in most of the languages in the world.

southern tip of India. Tamil poets are regarded by the Tamils as heroes, mythical and exemplary models who embody the essence of Tamil values.⁴³

Paradoxically, in the Self-respect movement/ Dravida Kazhagam, E.V.Ramaswamy used symbols from Hindu epics in a negative manner for mass mobilisation. In 1953, he started a movement for the breaking of Vinayak idols in public. Then in 1967, portrait of a Sri Sankarachary of Kanchi Kamakodi Peetam was garlanded with chappals and assorted footwear - a sign of desecration and pollution. Further, the member of Dravidar Kazhagam at Salem held a 'Superstition Eradication Conference' in January 1971 where a procession carrying a picture of Rama was pelted with chappals.⁴⁴

E.V. Ramaswamy believed that a belief in God fate is irrational. He used the 'Tamil past' and Tamil literary symbols with caution to degrade Brahminical culture. His use for the 'Tamil past' was in contrast to the use Annadurai, Karunanidhi, MGR or Jayalalitha put to it. E.V. Ramaswamy develops his argument with emphasis especially with reference rationality to his 'Tamil past'. Periyar said, that "If several of our (Tamil) Pundits do not have rational thinking, it is because of the obscurantism of the ancient Tamil principles. There is nothing at present to be

43.J. Pandian, 1987, Caste, Nationalism and Ethnicity, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, p.45. It is a fact that most of the Dravidian parties' leaders attempt to show that they are poets or literary person first and then politician. Further, they try to prove their 'poetic calibre' by publishing at least one Pudu Kavithai or Novel.

44.K.S.Ramanujam, 1973, Challenge and Response: An Intimate Report of Tamil Nadu Politics: 1967-1971, Sundra Prachuralayam, Madras, pp.167-170

achieved by the talk of ancient Tamils. Therefore, it is an important duty of the people not to give any place for fraudulent speech".⁴⁵

There is a clear and visible contradiction between the Dravidian party leaders and E.V.Ramaswamy on the portrayal of ancient Tamil past and literature of Thirukkural, Silapathikaram, Purananuru. According to Periyar, Silapathikaram is "a text which began in prostitution, grew in 'chastity' and ended up in foolishness and superstition"⁴⁶

As Benedict Anderson notes that "the cultural significance of such(Tomb) monuments becomes ever clear if one tries to imagine,Is a sense of absurdity avoidable? ... If the nationalist imagine is so concerned, this suggests a strong affinity with religious imagines..."⁴⁷ The samadhis of the leaders become symbols of different parties. These Samadhis are shown at the beginning before films as News Reels produced by the DMK and AIADMK governments of Tamil Nadu. These became places of worship for followers, where offering are made, much in the same way as a Hindu would do in the temple.

From the very beginning of their existence, the Dravidian

45.M.S.S.Pandian, 1999, " 'Nation' from Its Margins: Notes on E.V. Ramaswamy's 'Impossible' Nation", in Rajeev Bhargava's et al edited volume, Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp.286-307. As Pandian viewed Periyar's stand as a "journey to this future by appropriating aspects of modernity: rationality and science, history, and human emancipation and progress through struggle". Ibid.

46.Ibid.

47.Benedict Anderson, 1991 (Revised) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Verso, London, p.10.

parties have exhibited extravagance, an idiosyncratic use of cultural symbols and hero-worship. They display the state's large heartedness by giving away free electricity, food, cloth and even free footwear. A sickening symptom in the democratic polity is the encouragement of a personality cult and the fanatical political culture of Dravidian parties that undermine standards of governance. (Refer Appendix)⁴⁸

The temples in Tamil Nadu, as elsewhere in India, not only symbolise cultural heritage but are a sign of the dominance of Brahminism in the social and political order. But the state of Tamil Nadu is the only one in India, which is ostensibly a "Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic" that has a "Hindu Temple Tower" as its state symbol⁴⁹ or official emblem. This itself explains how Tamils in independent India are culturally inclined towards Hindu cultural traditions⁵⁰. The gopuram is not only a distinct architectural and structural symbol but may represent 'pride' of Tamils/ Dravidians and as also be a Hindu religious symbol. It is a fact that Tamil Nadu has highest number⁵¹ of temples in India.

Hence it may be safe to conclude that the challenge posed by

48. Pamela Price, 1996, "Revolution and Rank in Tamil Nationalism", The Journal of Asian Studies 55, No.2, May, p.359.

49. The temple tower as emblem of the state adopted during the period of reorganisation of states by the then Congress government. Temple is located at Sri Vellibatore near Chennai.

50. Periyar's in Viduthalai, 12/10/54. Cited in Vadanadup Periyar and Thennadu Ambedkar, 2000, Dalit Murasu, Chennai, p.67.

51. S.M.L. Lakshmanan Chettaiar, 1973, Folklore of Tamil Nadu, National Book Trust, New Delhi, pp.7-22 & 93.

the Dravidian movement/ parties was not directed towards Brahmanic ideology or Hinduism, but it challenged the power and dominance of a single caste or community - of the Brahmins. But, Dravidian parties failed to deconstruct Hindu culture or to distance themselves adequately from Hindu culture. They preferred instead to be coopted into it.

The following chapter will study the emergence, the impact, and the consequences of personality cult in Dravidian parties. In the process, it plans to explain the phenomenon of cult and its historical basis. Further, an attempt will be made to explain the phenomena of self-immolations and self-sacrifices for political causes, in the light of extremist-related sacrifice, self-sacrifices for religious purposes; and self-sacrifices for the sake of political personalities.

CHAPTER -VI

Chapter - VI

REFLECTIONS ON THE PHENOMENA OF PERSONALITY CULT

"Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves. The masses have a right to change property relations; fascism seeks to give an expression while preserving property. The logical result of fascism is 'the introduction of aesthetics into political life'. The violation of the masses, whom fascism, with its Fuhrer cult, force to their knees, has its counterpart in the violation of an apparatus which is pressed into production of ritual values".

1

WALTER BENJAMIN

The earlier chapters have discussed different aspects of the politics of Dravidian parties', with reference to the history of personality clashes, and its impact on political culture; the inextricable relationship between the Tamil film industry and politics of the state; the activities of fan clubs and their influence on the political culture of Tamil Nadu; and the use of symbols for political mobilization by Dravidian parties that appears to have greatly influenced the politics of personality cult in Tamil Nadu.

The chapter elaborates the social and political expressions of the personality cult as it is manifest in Tamil Nadu. It is impossible to recount every instances of personality cult politics in Dravidian parties. This analysis is based on data, collected from existing studies, newspaper reports, personal interviews and observations as well as from audio and visual sources. However, empirical data is not confined to a specific period, but concentrates on Dravidian parties since their existence.

1.Cited M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, Image Trap: M.G.Ramachandran in Film and Politics, Sage Pub.New Delhi.

The study shows the manifestation of cult-like tendencies in the political variables in (a) the projection of a person primarily through a depersonalized artificial channel operating in Tamil Nadu - via films, party organs, party /government functions, public platforms; (b) by transforming humans into stars and then to a divine being; (c) by the construction of temples dedicated to the end result of this transformation; (d) by performing religious rituals for the wellbeing of film personality, or constructing samadhis for political leader; (d) by self-immolation for the sake of film/ political personality (e) by resorting to mob violence or fanatical expression; and any other such instance that encourages cult like tendencies in the political ethos are the central concern to this study.

Before examining specifically the instances of personality cult in Dravidian parties, it is necessary to understand what is meant by it ? The dictionary describes cult as worship; reverential homage rendered to a divine being; a system of religious worship, especially as expressed in ceremonies, rituals, etc.; and devotion or homage paid to a person or thing, especially a fashionable enthusiasm.¹

The personality cult as defined this study is "any act of a group of persons or a society that adopts certain beliefs, values and sentiments similar to religious ritualistic practice such as worship, sacrifice and devotion that are bestowed on with or without ulterior motive, social reformers, any political or religious leaders, or indeed to a celluloid personality(ies) or -----

1. See, chapter one in this thesis, pp.1-5.

any other popular, charismatic persons".

The personality cult is defined as an act of "surrendering one's self" to an individual person who holds authority and identifying wholly with an "image constructed" by the mass media. The self of the leader assimilates self of the subordinates. This assimilation is seen to liberate them from oppression and put an end to all their miseries". It is this aspect of personality cult lying subsequently within the political culture of Dravidian parties that this work proposes to analyse.

Projecting of Individual(s) by Movement/Party:

The projection of any individual by the party apparatus is a clear sign of cult like behaviour. Leaders of Dravidian parties mutually project and use 'inappropriate titles' as Pandian puts it Annadurai as 'Aringnar' (great scholar), Karunanidhi as 'Kalaigarnar' (literati) MGR as 'Puratchi Thalaivar' (revolutionary and generous actor) and R. Nedunchezian as 'Nadamadam Palkalai-kazhgam' (no less than a mobile university).³

Acknowledging Annadurai's influence in the Dravidar Kazhagam, in October 1948, E.V. Ramaswamy accorded him the special honour when he arranged a 'chariot procession', in Erode at a Special Conference of the Dravidar Kazhagam. E.V. Ramasawmy announced that he will 'hand over the key' to Annadurai, a euphemism for handing over the reins of leadership of the Dravidar

2. Ibid.

3. M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, op.cit., emphasis mine. We must remember that it was in 1944 SRM's Conference at Salem, that Annadurai introduced a set of resolutions, which also include restraint from using titles like Raja, Sir, Bahadur etc.

Kazhagam. It can be argued that a mere 'chariot procession' or the handing over of 'the key' can hardly be considered conclusive evidence of the existence of a cult?⁴ However, if it is understood within the context of the value of rationality, self-respect and social democracy espoused by the Dravidar Kazhagam it is extremely disturbing. Feudal practices of chariot are a processions traditional part of Hindu Temple practice. When utilised for an individual rather than for a religious deity points towards the personality-centred politics in the state.

It is ironic that the chariot processions of a leader was part of the party culture of the Congress too. Leaders were accorded superior status and a larger than life image, a magical aura around him/her was created to manipulate the effect of this on the psyche of the masses. In the 1930's, Annie Beasant was taken out on chariot procession through the streets of Madras by a group of Brahmins belonging to the Congress.⁵ Beasant was an adherer of Hindu culture, Sanskrit and champion of the Brahmins.⁶ It makes political sense to project the star as great or as extraordinary. Anti-Brahmin leaders saw it as feudal aberration and condemned it.

However, the use of cinema and artists in politics is one of the salient features of the Dravidian movement. This link enhanced immensely the stature and confidence of the leaders and the party. In a speech delivered at function organised to cele-

4.K. Kesavan, op.cit. pp. 35-45.

5.Irischick Eugenuie, 1969, op.cit.

6.V.Geetha and S.V.Rajadurai, 1998, op.cit.

brate the success of MGR's 'Nadodi Mannan' (Vagabound/Nomad King) the founder of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, C.N. Annadurai, said, "...if I am allowed to release four movies without a censor see that the Dravidanad can achieve"⁷. Film artists added glamour and their huge electoral support to a political party by sharing the platform on party rallies. In 1967, at a DMK Conference in Virugambakkam, Annadurai referred to M.G.Ramachandran the darling of the masses as Thambi (Younger brother), and said that his announcement that he would donate rupees one lakh as election fund to the party was unnecessary because "if he goes on an election campaign all over the state and merely shows his face to the people we will get lakhs of votes in each constituency. That will be enough for us"⁸. He incessantly portrayed MGR as generous, kind hearted and the beloved of the people. Initially this was mainly a vote-catching technique of Annadurai. Subsequently Karunanidhi and later MGR himself used this technique to delude and mesmerize the people.

In Madurai, DMK celebrated the hundredth day of screening of the film 'Nadodi Mannan' and MGR joined a procession of celebration crowned as a king. In Vidwan V.Lakshmanan put it in his own words:

"That day, a huge procession began from Madurai railway station.

7.Arandai Narayanan, 1999, Tamil Cinema: Some News and Some Thoughts, Kavitha Pub., Chennai, p.97. And the Same author, 1994, Dravidam Pattiya Thiraipattanghal (Cinema that have sung Dravidianism) New Century Pub. Chennai, p.248.

8.Jagthrakshakan, 1984, Dr.MGR: A Phenomenon, Apollo Veliyeeta-gam, Madras, p.69. Annadurai's statement shows that his confidence on film stars steals a march over the ideology of his party.

MGR sat on a chariot drawn by four horses (and was) thronged by the people. The chariot had a background of a rising sun⁹ on a lotus. At the beginning of the procession there were party volunteers carrying festoons. There were also artistes playing 'Silambam'¹⁰. Elephants garlanded MGR twice (during the Procession)"¹¹.

From its very inception, the political culture of Dravida Parivar organised jamborees such as party conferences. Today, due to the advances in technology and artistic skills the personal image is bolstered at conferences through this. These mega events and jamborees flaunt money and muscle power. These extravaganzas exhibit, through the design and decoration of the conference avenue, to resemble a palace or fort of a king, or thousand cars procession,¹² the installation of gigantic cut-outs and the coronation of leaders with crowns made of gold and silver, the presentation of 'Sen Gol' a sceptre of justice or 'Por Val' an ornamental sword and garlanding the leader with 'dindu malai' -- a mega size garland generally used in religious festivals. Followers greet the leaders with 'angapradashnam' i.e. by prostrat-

9. Rising Sun is DMK's party symbol, though that time BJP was not there, but now their alliance well suits this 'Rising Sun with Lotus'.

10. Silambam is popular folk art in Tamil Nadu. 'Elephant garland' is a reference from history when the King Karikala Cholan had been selected by elephant to rule the Chola Dynasty.

11. Vidwan V. Lakshmanan, 1985, Makkal Thilagam MGR, Madras, pp.48-49 (in Tamil), cited in M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, op.cit., p.113.

12. For better understanding one should watch processions of Dravidian parties' conferences (available on video) and RSS's Shakhas and the film 'Great Dictator' of Charlie Chaplin. The obsession with uniform with party colour and flags, marching towards one destination to band music are prominent features.

ing at the feet of the party leader as devotees do in the presence of the deity.¹³ One could have witnessed a revolting competition among sycophants each trying to overshadow the other. It also shows the competition between Dravidian parties of all hues. This syndrome of opulence, hyperbole and exaggeration began to infect the organisations and associations of even the smaller political parties.

In his autobiography, Karunanidhi compares the DMK party procession in Trichy with Caesar's victorious processions in Rome and to the 'Liberation Army March in Algeria.'¹⁴ The description can not be faulted for being understated. He provides a detailed account of the procession, the illuminations and folk art performances. Karunanidhi quotes that an "American student doing research on our movement told me that no political party in the world has wielded public speech, drama, cultural functions, newspapers and poster as powerful weapons. We should add to this list processions also".¹⁵

In the previous chapter, I showed that fan clubs are auxili-

13. An estimation made by *Aside Magazine* (Madras) in 1989, a single malai is made up of over 10,000 roses, and costs anything from Rs. 1,500 to 2000 and requires ten people working for eight hours to make it. It usually requires two strong men to support it on either side of the recipient who would otherwise collapse under its weight. This issue of 18 March, 1989, *Aside* is cited in M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, op.cit., 115.

14. I have witnessed these on several occasions particularly, DMK Conference at Salem, June 1997. Apart from party conferences, there were other occasions such as the International Tamil Conference, in the Dravida Parivar's rule. Those were presided over by Annduarai, Karunanidh, MGR and Jayalalitha respectively.

15. M.Karunanidhi, 1997 (third edition), Nenchukku Nidhi, vol.II, p.227. Cited in M.S.S. Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, op.cit.

ary organisations that support and sustain film personalities and serves the political ends of functionaries of associated fan clubs. The authority of the state is used in several ways. For example, in 1986, when MGR was the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, he organised the All World Fan Club Conference, for which Road Transport Officers of Tamil Nadu Government (RTOs) were instructed to arrange 50 buses with adequate petrol/ diesel to enable functionaries of fan clubs to attend the Conference. .

Since hyperbole is characteristic to the Dravidian parivar I wish to cite an instance here. In February 1986, at Dindivanam there was an allegedly attempt on the life of Karunanidhi, the DMK leader. The incident remained shrouded in mystery and ambiguity. However, a serious anonymous warning had been published in a box column of Murasoli. The warning is translated below:

We are shocked to so hear of an attempt on the life of our Kalaaigner at Dindivanam. Our heart stopped at that moment! ! We are unable to think of a situation if had the attempt of those cowards succeeded.. ho! ho! Karunanidhi is not only a leader of Tamil Nadu but he is the guardian of overseas Tamils. He is the only 'rising star' for the Tamils. If any cowards plan to destroy our rising star, we warn them! If anything happens to Kalaaigner, it will result in the whole Tamil Nadu becoming a dense 'fire forest'. If we use Kalimuthu's (AIADMK) language, a large number of heads will hang on the lamp post. Further, we would like to inform them that when we entered into politics, we performed 'vaekkaarice', (the practice of feeding rice to the deceased by the relatives during funeral rites) from our family! ! Kalaaigner's followers are unable to tolerate his arrest itself and for which they had self-immolated themselves. Now they have come to know the attempt on his life by some cowards for which there will be a fire to finish the cowards! ! The ruling goons should keep this in their mind.
The police also should remember that they are paid salaries from

16. Murasoli, 7 July, 1986.

public tax not from MGR's corrupt money.

In 1967 the first DMK government was established in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu Seithi Thiraipada Pirivu - the Tamil Nadu News Reel Division - relayed to the people populist development programme of government events such as free ophthalmic camps, distribution of cycle rickshaws or the inauguration of buildings or overbridges. From 1967 to 1971 in a mere 5 years, over 40 films each 1000 ft. in length were produced and screened in 1200¹⁸ cinemas across the state. This is a staggering statistics if one realises that a new film was screened every 45 days. The news reel was a propaganda material for the political party ruling the state. The News Reels projected the leaders in close-up shots and captured their skillful rhetoric to which poor masses flocked.

In February 1992, AIADMK government organised the Mahamaham festival at Kumbakonam. The pilgrimage to the sacred tank in Kumbakonam temple used to take place once in twelve years. This became a grand occasion because the government of Jayalalitha extended support to it with an eye to boosting her populist image. Enormous cut-outs were installed and propaganda tactics of other Dravidian parties were adopted. Despite the severe water crisis in the state at that time, the government filled the tank for the holy dip for the pilgrims. The numbers of pilgrims swelled due to the participation of Jayalalitha and her friend

17. This is the literal translation of the Warning Note is mine. Murasoli on 13 February, 1986.

18. K.S. Ramanujam, 1973, Challenge and Response: An Intimate Report of Tamil Nadu Politics 1967-1971, Sundra Prachuralayam, Madras, p.162.

and partner Sashikala were taking a dip in the holy tank too. The resulting chaos caused a stampede in which more than three hundred people died. It was a shameful sacrifice at the altar of their living cine-cum-political god.¹⁹ Anguished relatives expressed anger by demanding why she had participated in the ritual in the first place and cast suspicion over her motivation. Ganeshan, a resident asked that if the chief minister was keen to take a holy dip on her birthday how come she did not come here in 1980 when she was not the chief minister?²⁰ Aspersion were cast on her avowed reasons for taking the dip.

Ascribing Bivine Beings:

Oh! Mother, You are the goddess!

We Worship and Welcome ! Welcome !

one such proclamation at a bill board are common in all over the state.

The media and party organs create euphoria around the leader by specific songs set to film tunes that narrate incidents from the life of the leader. Due to the dubious atheistic attitude of its non-Brahmin ethos, the DMK has had to resort to these 'tricks of the treads'. "Their propaganda music boosting the endless qualities of Karunanidhi, is set to the tune of popular devotional songs. Right now, God is a Tamilian"²¹ .

The articulation of the leaders were set to these tunes

19. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi. 20 Feburary, 1992. Consult Tamil news papers and magazines for details.

20. The Times of India, New Delhi, 23 Feburary, 1993.

21. Rahul Pathak and Ravi Shankar, 1986, The God Who Would Not Die", Indian Express, New Delhi, 22 January.

Karunanidhi, for instance, said that "he who loves and respects humanity, should feel God within himself and he thus becomes God himself"²². Further, he added, "If the God does every good things to the people, then he who does good things to the people is God"²³. This inflation of the self image of himself conformed to the image constructed of him by the public. This 'hero-worship' of the leaders is similar to what happened in the case of EVR, Anna and MGR. The DMK continues to erect statues and memorials in the memory of historic personalities as well as for Tamil kings, poets, politicians, artists, etc.

Constructing Temples:

The existence of innumerable temples throughout Tamil Nadu leaves no one in doubt of the fact that the state is a pioneer of Temple culture. During early DMK days the leaders of the party appeared on the dais at a meeting or conference like 'pudgy Hindu god on a palanquin'²⁴ MGR not only appeared on the dais but had temples constructed for him by the devotees. The advocacy of atheism and rationality by Dravidian parties declined sharply prior to the existence of AIADMK.²⁵ But with the dominance of ADMK in cinema it obliterated issues of rationality and atheism.

22. M. Karunanidhi, Vol.II, p.204-206.

23.M. Karunanidhi, Vol-II, p.295-306. He said that in the introduction of State Planning Commission meeting during his first tenure as the C.M.

24.Charles Ryerson, 1988, Regionalism, and Religion: The Tamil Renaissance and popular Hinduism, pp.154-55. Cited in M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, p.115.

25.For detail see M.S.S.Pandian, 1992, Image Trap, op.cit. pp.18, 115, 130, 138.

Brahmanic Hinduism revived with vigour in Tamil Nadu.

Annaimuthu observes that Tamils have a conservative, deep rooted caste identity. An orthodox attitude and reverence for a leader /person seldom stopped into a short of religious rituals that openly expressed their support to the contemporary politics.²⁷

Similarly, Geetha explains that women folk in Tamil Nadu were excluded from the politics of Periyar's ideals, that are essentially opposed to Hindu religious practices. Moreover, she does not hesitate to point out that Brahminism was thriving even during the peak of the Dravidian movement. The political culture of Dravidian parties co-exists with ease alongside the Hindu temple culture of Tamil Nadu.²⁸

Performance of Religious Rites

During Jayalalitha's birthday celebrations, when she was the chief minister, her cabinet ministers, party functionaries as well as bureaucrats exhibited loyalty in order to remain in her good books and keep their goodwill with her intact.²⁹

Sengottainyan, her Transport Minister, pulled a golden chariot at Thiruvertkadu Karumariyanman Temple to celebrate even a week before her 47th birthday on 24 February, 1995. In the same temple around 47 AIADMK women did 'anagapradakshanam'. This

26. Refer previous chapter for K.Veeramani's statement and DMK and AIADMK's self proclaim.

27. Interview with V. Annaimuthu.

28. Interview with V. Geetha.

29. Dina Mani, 18, February, 1995, (Tamil daily)

happened in Vadapalani Murugan Temple too. Sakkubai did the same in Thiruvallur. Chairman of Salt Board, P. Valarmathi fasted for eleven days and carried a milk pot and flowers 'kavadi' to Kundrathur Murugan Temple. Interestingly, Valarmathi had offered a semi-nude puja - wearing nothing but Neem Leaves in the previous year. At Thandaiyarpur special puja (prayer) was held. In Tiruvatriyur, five hundred loyalists performed the ritual of 'thee meedithal', walking barefoot over embers. ³¹

Social Welfare Minister, Indrakumari, gave earrings to the 'Cradle Babies' of a similarly titled scheme that was introduced by the Jayalalitha government to remedy the scourge of female infanticide in the state. The government maintained cradles at different government hospitals where the evil of female infanticide is evident. The unwanted girl child was supposed to be left there by the parents and state took care of them through 18 different centres all over Tamil Nadu. ³²

Cut-outs and Posters

The electricity minister in Jayalalitha's cabinet, contributed Rs. 30,000/= fantastical Jayalalitha cut-out on the City Mount Road. It was reported that the cut-out caused serious civic

30. It is a kind of religious rite offered generally by women with wet cloths rolling round the temple for number of times.

31. Ibid. Fire-walking is traditionally a Hindu religious ritual. It is performed by staunch devotees to propitiate the goddess during Amman festivals in many parts of Tamil Nadu. The Times of India, 23 February, 1995, New Delhi.

32. Dina Mani, 25, February, 1995. (Tamil daily)

inconvenience and traffic disturbance. The vice-president of North Madras AIADMK, pasted billboards all over North Madras city, depicted Jayalalitha as "Virgin Mary" and incarnation of "Devi Parasakthi". These posters depicting Jayalalitha as a "Virgin Mary" created an immediate reaction and protest from the Christians. Students from Loyola and Stella Mary's colleges organised demonstrations. The Hindu Munnani - an organisation of the Sangh Parivar, came out strongly in support of Jayalalitha and her sycophants and even caused communal tension in parts of the state.

On the behest of Sulakshana Sampath, Small Industry Development Corporation (SIDCO) donated Rs.2,500/= each for 47 destitute women in Sivananda Home at Kattankullathur in Chengalpet. Some de facto AIADMK cadres who held responsible positions in Tamil Nadu government undertakings such as Jasbeer Singh Bajaj, Director of Co-Optexs conducted a fashion show programme to grace the occasion. Jayalalitha's photograph adorned the invitation cards.

Self-Immolation:

The Brahmanic ritual suicide of the Hindu tradition is not an uncommon phenomenon. Suicide by setting oneself on light, or

33. Dina Mani, 22 February, 1995. During my field study I had discussion with a person who works in 'cut-out industry' (or auxiliary industry of political parties, and film productions) provided cost estimation that ranged from a minimum of Rs. 2000/= to maximum of 50,000/= and above depending upon the size (it differ from one leader to a other and from on esponsored to another) and decorations. It goes without saying that such extravagant indulgence in sycophancy can only be done as a quid pro quo by those powerful lobbies who elicit political favours from their political patrons.

by other means, was not unusual. People of all ages, both men and women, have committed suicide, but generally they took this desperate steps due to personal or traditional reasons.

However, self-immolation is not a practice of Tamil Nadu alone and is used as the ultimate representation of one's loyalty to a personality cult. In the past, it has been a weapon of protest too. On December 27, 1966, it was reported that Sant Fateh Singh fasted for ten days to demand the enlargement of Punjab, severing of the common link with Haryana and the inclusion of Chandigarh into Punjab. Later he committed suicide by self-immolation.

35

More recently, a number of students protested against the Mandal Commission's recommendations of reservation of twenty seven percent central government jobs for Other Backward Classes. In parts of Northern India, protest against this took the form of self-immolation. These are a few cases reported from places other than Tamil Nadu. However, all these protests were against the state and self-immolation was adopted as a last resort to the demand heard by the authorities of the state.

36

However, Dravidian politics in Tamil Nadu, except a few incidents does not show any evidence of being anti-state. When young men immolate themselves it is an emblem of loyalty to the

34. Ashis Nandy, 1980, Edge of Psychology: Essays of Culture and Politics, Oxford University Press.

35. The Hindu, 28 December, 1999, New Delhi.

36. A student in Rajasthan, a government employee of U.P. (The Hindustan Times, n.d), a casual labourer in Maharashtra, no. of farmers from Andhra Pradesh and Karanataka were also reported.

personalities and their politics. The self-immolation occurs in full view of the public as a mark of loyalty/ devotion ³⁷ to a particular political issue like anti-Hindi feelings or their strong allegiance to a particular political leader. Tamil politicians call it euphemistically as "theekuliththal" - 'bathing in fire'.

During the anti-Hindi agitation in 1938, two persons by the name of Thallamuthu and Natarajan self-immolated themselves. Esposusing the emotional dictum of Chinnaswamy, a 1965 self-immolator "Ure Tamillukku, Udal Mannukku" - my breath is for Tamil and my body for the Earth" twenty five youths followed his ³⁸ footsteps.

A provocative statement in a book or in sections of the press can lead to self-immolation. When it was reported that, T.N. Seshan in his biography calls Annadurai a CIA agent of the USA, four persons were driven to self-immolation. Of the four, one included Chakarai, Veeramuthaiyanpatti, the secretary of

37. Sumathi Ramaswamy, 1998, Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891-1970, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.

38. Shivalingam of Madras, Aranganathan of Virukampackkam (Madras), Veerappan of Trichy, Muthu of Coimbatore, Chankarbani of Tanjore, Shanmugam of Viralimalai, Muthu of Kiranoor, Rajendran of Sivagangai and Dhandapani of Beelinedu all of them were immolated in 1965. Murugan of Bodi, Kalimuthu of Alliare, Jagajeevanram of Mullure, Pugalleyenthi of Ariyallure, Panneerselvam of Ulluderpeth, Govindarajan of Neetaamangalam, Srivasan of Kulithalai, Balasubramanian of Kattumannar Kovil, Arunachalam of Selam, Mukkan of Maaruthur, Kalaingner Pithan, Mariyappan of Aruppukottai, Devamanigam of Sundrappatti and Natrajan of Mullippattu in 1986. K.Thirunavukarasu, 1993, Veeravanakagam Selluthuvom! Veerukondu Yelluvom! Vaarire" Murasoli, 25, January. Also see, Sumathi Ramaswamy, 1997, op.cit.

South Acort DMK.

Similarly, when the Jain Commissions' Interim Report was leaked to the print media in 1998 and showed the involvement of DMK leaders and 'Tamils as a whole' in Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, the Congress demanded that the DMK ministers be sacked from the United Front Government of I.K. Gujral. This was publicized in Tamil by Murasoli, the mouthpiece of the DMK, which pointed out a news item called "Tamil Makkal Meethu Jain Commission Avaaduru". This led to a public outcry and the protest, five people set themselves alight. One of them B.Thyagarajan belongs to the DMK, from Poovaallur, Trichy.⁴⁰

When clashes arose between Karunanidh and V.Gopalswamy in October 1993, there were ten instances of self-immolation in favour of V.Gopalswamy and Karunanidhi, in order to pressurize the DMK to recant the decision on Gopalswamy. In order to regain the sympathy of party and the masses, Karunanidhi issued a press statement announcing that he would finally quit politics. This created an emotional upheaval among his loyalists and led to the loss of five more lives. Today, both Karunanidhi and V.Gopalswamy are alive and active in politics and are very much part of the present NDA alliance.⁴¹

Those who died include 1. Kannadasan (24 years) of Kodambackam, performed self-immolation in front of Karunanidhi's residence. 2. Krishnaswamy of Thoupur, at the feet of the Anna

39. Murasoli, 5 November, 1994, others names are not mentioned.

40. Murasoli, 24 & 27 November, 1997

41. See Ananda Vikatan, 1 October, 2000. (Tamil Weekly)

Statue in Dharamangalam, Salem, after proclaiming "Hail Kalaighner! ! Don't resign from DMK leadership". 3. Jayachandrian (of T.Nagar 120 Vattam/division) Youth Front Leader, on hearing Karunanidhi's statement, banged his head on the ground died of concussion. 4. Sudarshan of Madras, 5. Muruganatham of Thirumanoor Trichy (15 years),⁴² 6. 'Edimalai' Udaiyan (20 years) of Ariyallur, 7. Veerappan of Uppilipalayam, Trichy 8. Balan of R.S. Kamarajpuram, Coimbatore⁴³, 9. Dhandapani (23 years) of Nochipatti, 10. Jakhahair of Melapalyam, 11. Panneerselvam (36 years) of Bodi, Madurai.

Similarly, in 1969, when Annadurai the founder of DMK and the first Dravidian party chief minister, passed away, DMK members demonstrated bereavement and loyalty by a series of self-immolations. Today, his Samadhi (cemetery) is a sort of place of worship for his devotees. Further, when the 1991 DMK government led by M.Karunanidhi was dismissed by the central government, a number of DMK cadres immolated themselves. Large numbers of vehicles of public transport and property were damaged.

In July 1993, J.Jayalalitha, the then C.M. of Tamil Nadu, sat on a hunger strike on the Marina Beach, near MGR's Samadhi and demanded the release of Cauvery water from Karnataka state. Her party members went on a rampage and over ninety attempted self-immolation.

42. According to Dhina Mani 18, November, 1993, (Tamil Daily) he too self-immolated in support of V. Gopalswamy. But Ananda Vikatan, 1 October, 2000 analysis mentioned only five.

43. For him only the news report had mentioned as Scheduled Caste, Dhina Mani, 18 November, 1993.

Response to Self-Immolations:

How do leaders of Dravidian parties permit such hazardous act of self-immolations? Who are the people involved in self-immolations? Is self-immolation spontaneous or forced one? What is the response of civil society in Tamil Nadu? Is there any movement that discourage and disapprove of these acts? Finally how far one can justify the cult of personality in political discourse? At one level leaders issue statements against such ghastly acts, but the party gave away a sum Rs. 50,000/- to 1 lakh ex-gratia payment for the family of the dead. At another level, the party romanticizes the act and accords them status of martyr and considers them symbols worthy of emulation. I claim that these irrational acts contradict the very first principle of Self Respect Movement or the ideology of E.V. Ramaswamy's Dravidar Kazhagam that underlines self-respect and rationality that subordinated masses aspiring for. The leaders indirectly encouraged such uncivil acts and are directly culpable and complicitous.

In order to ascertain the spontaneity or pre-meditated of these acts of self-immolations each case needs to be investigated carefully and the socio-economic background of the person need to be probed. Questions posed to respondents recalled that there is no study which exists on this aspect. Prof. Kalam indicate⁴⁴ obliquely and V.Geetha is clearly skeptical about some such cases. Information is available through reports in newspapers which do not contain details of the person apart from his names

44. Interview with Prof. Md. Abdul Kalam and V. Geetha.

and native places. Often even these were missing.

In 1990, the film "Enn Ure Thozhan" directed by a reputed director Bharathiraj, dealt this subject at some length. The hero in the film is a semi-literate youth from the slums, a cycle rickshaw puller and staunch admirer of a political demagogue. The protagonist in the role of the politician has characteristics of Dravidian party leader. The rickshaw puller is innocent, sincere and totally committed to the leader. When the leader is arrested by the police, he (leader) is instigated the party functionaries to immolate someone, to pressurize the police for his release. Of course, this does not substantiate questions raised earlier because more evidence than this is required. Prof. Kalam draws a parallel with the agitation against the Mandal Commission syndrome. This is based on a presupposition that Rajiv Gosawmi tried to immolate himself as a protest against recommendation of the Mandal Commission. Different versions exist of his attempt at immolation, that vary from his reluctance, to his being coerced into it. But Kalam is unsure whether similar ambiguity exists in the different acts of self-immolation in Tamil Nadu.

However, the reaction of people is clearly not outraged by such heinous acts forced upon certain susceptible people by megalomaniacs and political demagogues. The people of Tamil Nadu are victims of an unprecedented 'anti-intellectualism'. Since politics has not encouraged any intellectual discourses such acts have not been categorically condemned as repugnant by leaders or

45. Interview with V. Geetha.

the people at large.

After the Dharmapuri incident a question was posed by a news channel to an observer of Tamil Nadu politics: why are such uncivil acts witnessed in the Dravidian party alone? The observer responded by saying that a rich man expression of loyalty/ devotion to the leader takes many forms - usually grand wall posters/ cut-outs in praise of a particular leader, but the poor have nothing to offer but their life.⁴⁶ This study revealed that these acts were usually committed by men. A exception occurred in 1984 when MGR was unwell and a few women set themselves alight.⁴⁷

Cult of Violence:

The violence that accompanies the pathology of cult manifestations in politics in India is undeniable. It is associated not only with Dravidian parties but with many others as well. India has witnessed violence on several occasions, For example in the aftermath of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination, in October 1984, or after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination on 21 May, 1991, Persistent desecrations of Ambedkar's statue in parts of suburban Mumbai violence was unleashed intermittently. Violent protests by the masses shows respect for the statues of those considered as a sacred symbol.

The fanatical Kannada fans of Rajkumar perpetuated violence

46. Interview with M.S.S. Pandian by Sunil Prabu of Star Plus News, n.d (Sunday), February, 2000. The same views were expressed by Prof. Kalam and Dr. Thangaraj, Dr. Krishna Annath in their interview.

47. Jayalalitha who was unable to console herself when MGR passed away, said that she actually planned for "Udan Kattai Yaruthal" Sati.

against Tamils in 1989/90 on the issue of Cauvery Water Dispute. Again in August 2000, sandalwood bandit Veerappan's abduction of Rajkumar led to sporadic violence in Bangalore, Mysore and parts of Karnataka.

In the case of Tamil Nadu, personalities associated with the Dravidian parties command strong affinity from the masses visible in the systematic construction of an image around leaders. Dravidian parties continue to have a familial relation between leaders and the followers which render them venerable. A case in point in the mid 1980's and 1990's, N.T.Rama Rao of Telugu Desham, in Andhra, whose government was dislodged first by Mrs. Gandhi and later by Chandra Babu Naidu. Despite NTR's god-like image in Andhra, yet no cases of self-immolation were reported from Andhra Pradesh, as were witnessed in Tamil Nadu.⁴⁸ In the 1990's, Arun Shourie's disparaging essay on Ambedkar in his book "Worshiping False God" was released and no reports of self-immolation followed. Despite no knee jerk reaction from Dalit intellectuals a strong protest was registered against Shourie for portraying Ambedkar in a distorting manner.

In Dravidian politics, a small statement even an insignificant book or political dramas can provoke a series of violent incidents the state over and can result in a number of self-immolations. Violent protests by MGR loyalists over a period of time relate to certain important incidents around MGR: (a) MGR was shot by his co-actor M.R.Radha on 12 January, 1967; (b) MGR

48. Interview with Prof. A.Kalam, Department of Anthropology, University of Madras.

was expelled from DMK on 10 October, 1972; (c) in October 1984 he looks ill; (d) on 24 December, 1987 he died. Every time Tamil Nadu witnessed indiscriminate violence perpetuated by MGR's loyalists and devotees. Loss of public and private property that was damaged ran into lakhs of rupees.

49

Moreover, political drama of Darvida parivar/ kudombam led to violence and series of violence being orchestrated by loyalists. In early 1990's Jayalalitha announced her protest against Cauvery water issue and sat for indefinite fast near MGR Samadhi, at Marina Beach, Madras. During the period of her fast, throughout the state normal life was completely disrupted by her sycophants.

The most atrocious act of brutality witnessed in recent times occurred at Dharmapuri in February, 2000. When three girls of the Coimbatore Agriculture College were burnt alive on their return from their academic field study. Apparently, this was AIADMK meant to be a reaction to the judgment in the Pleasant Hotel Case where the Special Court convicted J. Jayalalitha, party colleagues and other government officials for ordering one year rigorous imprisonment for violating the law. Sporadic violence all over the state were witnessed. The reaction to the implementation of the rule of law was completely out of proportions. Such cruel act shook the whole country in general and Tamil Nadu in particular. As a yardstick of popularity of the leader and the party the 'Dravida Parivar' proudly claims numerous self-immolations to its credit.

49. See second chapter of this thesis.

Another incident is that of the forcible confinement of the then Chief Election Commissioner, T.N. Seshan, for nine hours at the Meenampakkam Airport because he had dared express an opinion contrary and 'damaging' to Jayalalitha's popularity. The Star Hotel where he was lodged was badly damaged. Yet another instance was that of the lawyer who challenged the government's decision to extend the reservation from 50 % to 69 % being mercilessly attacked.

Even moderate dissent can lead to death as it did in the case of the daylight murder of councillor Ms. Leelavathi of the CPI (M) on 27 April, 1997. All of the six accused belonged to DMK. This dreadful politics of personality cult and fanaticism has been the state of affairs in the state ruled by the two major Dravidian parties, the DMK and the AIADMK. The former one exhorts its followers to mindless mob violence and the latter does not even permit the mildest of dissent.

In 1992, a Union Cabinet minister P.Chidambaram was attacked by 'Dravida Parivar' followers at Trichy Airport, and he had to run for his life. In 1993, an Indian Administrative Service officer Ms. Chandralekha, was the victim of acid-attack by these fascist goons. Dr. Subramaniam Swamy was forced to run for his life in the premises of the Madras High Court.

The existing facts give a clear account and point towards the genesis of a culture of personality cult and violence that plague the state even today. As we have to remember that, pronouncing every dominant relationship as Marx pointed out "a religious relationship and transformed into a cult, a cult of law, a cult

of the State, etc [of course cult of personality]. On all sides it was only a question of dogmas and belief in dogmas".⁵⁰ The emergence of the cult of personality in the political culture of Tamil Nadu, especially, at a crucial phase in the history of the "Suya Mariyatai Iyakkam" should henceforth be seen as a strategy to upturn values espoused by the pioneers of the movement. The very logic of the 'cult' goes against the very soul of the movement, its pronounced goals to do away with structures such as idols of hegemony that of lent legitimacy to inequitable values of the social order of the Hindus.

The subsequent chapter summarizes the thesis and provide an over view of the entire thesis. The emergence of personality cult politics and the political culture which it inherits as well as the role played by films and symbols to promote it. Paradox of the co-existence of Dalit assertion of self-respect and rationality with continued dominance of socio-political structure that perpetuate caste prejudices is examined. Finally, the study seeks possible alternatives to espoused values.

50. Karl Marx & F. Engels' Selected Works, (Fourth Edn. 1977), Vol. I, p. 18.

Conculsion

CONCLUSION

The thesis has focused on the place of politically adored individuals in the matrix of Dravidian politics. Gradually and eventually this particular phenomena culminates into a personality cult with an unprecedented political dimension. The history of personality cult in India has its genesis from the ancient right upto the modern times. However, until the modern period, the phenomena of cult was present only in sacred and religious institutions.

Early rulers derived cultural legitimation by their association with and control over places of worship, or adherence to orthodox beliefs. The use and representation of religious symbols and metaphors by political elites was a conscious and deliberate attempt to rally the masses around their political aims and aspirations. However, a change in political persona was witnessed in post independent India. Instead of its strict association with religious institutions and symbols, the change is tied-up with the issue of secular and communal politics as well as democratic and egalitarian issues. The persona of a ruler is now rooted in secularized notion of caste and community identity. From M.K.Gandhi upto the time of Rajiv Gandhi the persona has developed into an individual cult out of the endeavour of these leaders to represent the issues of secular democratic culture of Indian politics. This invariably carried some negative manifestations through one's attachment with particular caste and community as it was used to mobilize the masses and to create electoral

space.

So rooted is the personality phenomenon in Indian politics and history that this thesis was bound to touch upon it, more so because it focuses on Dravidian politics that remains closely associated with cinematic themes and celluloid individuals. As has been pointed out earlier, Dravidian/ Tamil political ideology initiated by Iyothee Thassar, and later Periyar had the project of restructuring social structure, through indirect articulation of politics rather than direct intervention in political process. The restructuring of the social system of the 'Tamil country' was diverted from its initial avowed promises and began revolving around a hunger for power and privileges. The original premises were distorted beyond recognition by a politics driven by the vested interests of Dravidian politics and cinema personalities.

Thus, the thesis has give a vivid account of the politics of personality cult that remained dominant for over six decades. Many lofty ideals such as secular and democratic credentials of Tamil identity began sliding into corruption, opportunism, hypocrisy, casteism, nepotism and chauvinism. Despite certain developments of the region, Tamil politics degenerated into the domain of celluloid politics.

There has been a focus on personality clash and party formation which had been the end result of mere differences between individuals rather any ideology. It strongly carried the culture of heir into party politics right from E.V. Ramaswamy down to Stalin and Sashikala. The thesis has tried to show how they have compromised the espoused values drastically over the years. It also shows the reason behind their electoral success

since 1967 in the state. It has further show that their populist politics rallied the masses around certain ideals which made Dravida parivar a strong political entity. All the Dravidian parties used the common issues of reservation, language, support to the film industries as their party propaganda to woo the masses. Surprisingly, the thesis has also show the alienation of Dalits from political articulation, and having become victims to the atrocities of the state and societal apparatus.

The politics of personality cult deviated the development of Tamil Nadu from the very inception of Dravidian politics started by DMK. The significance of personality as a powerful force begins from the period of Annadurai the founder of the DMK. My study has tried to show that Annadurai exploited key situations for his own political benefits under the guise of a larger Dravidian politics in Tamil Nadu. When Annadurai split from the DK of Periyar he professed to represent the interest of Tamilians by his new political party. But did he indeed represent Tamil political interests in a broader sense? My thesis has tried to show that the programme of radical social reform of the initial stages was quickly transformed into a mild, compromised form of 'socio-democratic' politics of Annadurai. There is no denying that Annadurai strongly favoured electoral politics over the radical and militant politics of earlier leaders. However, the premises upon which the DMK was established does not strengthen Tamil Nadu as an autonomous region. DMK, an important political entity, was an ideal counter-point to the established dominance of the Congress for over a decade. Annadurai articulated Tamilian interest into a set of political idea's through the use of power. However,

the political culture of Dravidian parties was not very different from that of the Congress. Congress represented traditional and feudal elites whereas Dravidian parties represented the neo-feudals. Both parties represent feudal culture in more ways than one. Dravidian parties came into existence to ostensibly establish a culture distinct from that of Congress. DMK gave politics a pronounced regional twist that threatened Congress hegemony, shaped a regional state under the nomenclature of Tamil Nadu. Henceforth, the individual cult in Dravidian politics acquires unprecedented importance. By stressing the regional constructs, the Dravidian leaders managed to build-up a personal image through the politics of chauvinism. They glamorized and espoused 'Dravidian interests' in a manner that they became a cult to be worshiped as Dravidian/ Tamil heroes. With an admirable understanding of the Tamil psyche, the Dravidian leaders combined issues close to the Tamil people into a comprehensive cultural political ideology to dramatize and personify their own individual political persona.

Existing socio-cultural milieu has much to do with politics of personality cult in Tamil Nadu. The social division of society into the Brahmins and non-Brahmin castes was the single most important plank that provided succour to the polity. Both these caste categories with their privileged position in Tamil Nadu politics were susceptible to the seduction by a cult. The caste/class syndrome and the ritualistic, traditional structure of society was admirably exploited by the non-Brahmin, upper and intermediary castes so that the personality cult often acted as a obscure for good and right upon the psyche of the people as a

whole.

The thesis critically probed the problems and lacuna of earlier studies. Most works address the issues from a certain angle, and are unable to give a pragmatic political accent to Tamil Nadu over its development through ages. My thesis steps beyond such empirical and theoretical orthodoxy, and looks up the issue of political culture and identity of Tamils, in order to expose the fragility of glittering, celluloid form that politics has taken in Tamil Nadu. Further, it situates the theoretical framework in the background of multi-disciplinary approach of political culture, charismatic leadership and psychoanalysis, with concepts of mannam, love, valor, antastu. It simultaneously delves deep into the phenomena of personality cult.

The thesis clearly explored the genesis of all the prominent parties and how in due course they articulated the lofty political ideals to woo and rally the masses. It explained in great detail how the secular democratic ideals espoused by earlier leaders were submerged by feudal, conservative and casteist bias of a later day initiative of a Dravida polity developing with the passage of time. This led to the growth of neagative politics under the mask of Tamil identity.

The thesis tried to explain how political leaders exploited, to the tilt, the sentiments and emotions of Tamils to build an aura or halo of power and privilege around their persona. The thesis discovered that the network of fan clubs is not just an outcome of people's admiration or their craze for film and celluloid personality. The network itself is the outcome of a political aspiration of particularly young individuals, who had earli-

er witnessed the case of MGR. I have clearly observed a declining trend of Fan clubs after the assembly election of 1996. For example in 1993, a large number of politically frustrated individuals nurtured strong political ambition and waited for the entry of Rajnikanth into politics which finally did not happen. The other reason for the decline of fan club networks was the expanding civic activities of some NGOs, the growing caste polarisation within society also reduced the fan followers.

The impact of celluloid personalities can be further contrasted with other important film stars beyond Tamil Nadu, who equally tried their luck but failed to capitalize on their popularity. This is evident in the case of Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachhain. Despite the duo's superstar status, they failed to translate their celluloid image into political success. Even within Tamil Nadu too, no one could make a political impact like MGR. Though there were attempts by different film stars, politically they remained unable to strike a chord.

The establishment of these political parties unfolds a particular kind of politics where a strategy is adopted to prevail upon the psyche of the masses. This strategy worked better than they had anticipated. Indeed it worked so well upon the masses that it led to the emergence of personality cult that appeared to subsume or swallow all the essential social issues of the region. The thesis explored the way how Dravidian party leaders used cinema for political mobilization through incorporating their populist ideals and hence 'constructed heroic' aura around their leaders who gradually become celluloid personalities. This was done through the stories, songs dialogues. symbols

of subordinated masses which were consciously exploited by the political leaders. Moreover, cinema was used not merely as a medium of communication but also as a reflection upon the prevailing socio-political culture.

The thesis clearly showed how it reflects various phases of film and politics. The incorporation of political ideology into films had its positive outcome till late 1980's, though few films focused only on the politics of the state which were not received well by the people. However, films based solely on politics, in early 80's did manage to secure the admiration of the audience. The reason why by late 80's, films were unsuccessful was due to their portrayal of the politics of state, that was not supported by any party. In fact, only the MGR formula had worked well. Moreover, the entry of the parallel cinema in mid 1990's, a positive step led to the mass mobilization and this method can be an alternative to politicize the Tamil people. This particular cinematic form was used for the awakening of the masses and public opinions that gradually undermined personality cult.

In due course the leaders adopted a strategy of certain artistic skills to build celluloid construction of Tamil story, which made tremendous inroads into the psyche of the masses. It led to the emergence of personality oriented politics in a way that people rallied around these leaders not merely with electoral support but more importantly offering their very life in the service of the leader. Hence, this crude abject and slavish politics was bound to breed a politics of extreme corruption and nepotism which was spiced up with a sense of dangerous Tamil chauvinism.

Thus celluloid construction became so strongly embedded in Tamil politics that it led to the growth of mindless worship of film stars so much so that, even a small criticism of the leader sparks off brutal and barbaric killings. Politics was personalized with strong and unimaginable acts of self-immolation and violence. These gradually became an integral part of the culture of Dravidian politics.

Alongwith such acts, the use of monarchical as well as religious symbols, and the symbols of subordinated masses as well as symbols of self-immolators/ 'martyrs' have manifested in Tamil politics till today. The glorification of the Tamil past creates an illusion about the reality of the present. Evoking certain monarchs and religious symbols helped many leaders to ascribe divine being to their political status. On the other hand symbols of subordinated masses helped the leaders to prevail ones populist politics.

The omnipresence of personality cult in Dravida parivar greatly marginalised the main plank of espoused political values which generally spin around the representation of the plight and interest of Dalits in the larger politics of Tamil Nadu. The fundamental question of Dalit identity was often repressed by the state machinery, the people who were/are in power. Dalit issues of land reforms, self-dignity and socio-economic and cultural liberation generally remained mere political rhetoric in supplementing their feudal conservative political goals.

In modern democracy, it seems that Indians in general and particularly Tamilians are strongly attracted by the phenomena

of hero-worship and personality cult unlike other parts of the world. This personality cult not only demean the follower but also leaders. This has created negative beliefs about collective struggle, self-respect and the institution of democracy. Dr.Amedkar strongly suggested the ban personality cult and prevent the growth of personality syndrome, as he felt that, no man/woman can be grateful at the cost of his/her honour, and no nation can be grateful at the cost of its own liberty. Bhakti in religion may be a road to salvation of the soul, but in politics, bhakti is a sure road to degradation and eventual dictatorship.

The thesis hence has already touched upon some very significant issues of Tamil Nadu politics for a span of last six decades. It has been able to reveal the deep seated socio-economic base and cultural constructs viz-a-viz celluloid-cum-political personalities in probing the Tamil identity in better and broader context. However, it seems that some more issues of research can be explored at greater length to get a better grip over Tamil Nadu politics in totality. The issues which immediately strike my mind are (a) a study of the political economy of film industry (b) a study of the political economy of rural co-operative/societies, (c) a research into the socio-economic background of self-immolators and (d) the comparative study of celluloid-cum-political personalities of Tamil Nadu with other regions of the country.

Bibliography

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahmad, Aijaz 1996, Lineages of the Present: Political Essay, Tulika, New Delhi.
- _____, 1999, "The Politics of Culture", Social Scientist, Vol.27., September-October.
- Alan Wells 1970, Social Institutions, Heineman, London.
- All India Revolutionary Students Federation (AIRSF), 1999, Even in Death We Shall Dare: In Memory of Martyrs, New Delhi.
- _____, 1999, AIRSF Conference, Delhi.
- Almond, G and Sidney Verb (ed) 1980, The Civic Culture Revisited, Little Brown & Co., Boston.
- Aloysius, G. 1997, Nationalism Without a Nation in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- _____, 1998, Religion As Emancipatory Identity: A Buddhist Movement among the Tamils under Colonialism, New Age International Pub., New Delhi.
- _____, 1999, Iyotheethasar Sinthanaigal (Vol-I: Politics, Social Reform: Hermeneutics & Vol-II: Religion and Culture), Folklore Resources and Research Centre, St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu.
- Ambedkar, B.R. 1989, Annihilation of Caste, Anand Sahitya Sadan, Aligarh.
- _____, 1989, Thoughts on Linguistic States, Anand Sahitya Sadan, Aligarh.
- _____, 1991 (4th edn.), The Buddha and His Dhamma, Siddharth Publication, Bombay.
- Ambirajan S. 1999, "State Government Subsidies: The Case of Tamil Nadu", Economic and Political Weekly, 3 April.
- Anandhi, S. 1991, "Women's Question in the Dravidian Movement, 1925-48", Social Scientist, May-June.

- _____, 1994, "Collective Identity and Secularism: Discourse of the Dravidian Movement in Tamil Nadu", Social Action, vol.44.January-March.
- Anderson, Benedict 1991, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Verso, London.
- Annadurai C.N. 1997, Anna's Legislative Assembly Speeches of Anna (Vol.I), Manivasahar Pathipagam, Chennai.(Tamil)
- _____, 1996, Annavin Siru Kathaigal" (Short Stories of Anna), Manivasahar Pathipagam, Chennai.(Tamil)
- _____, 1997, Aryavaa Mayai(Aryan Myth), Karthika Pathipagam, Chennai.(Tamil)
- Annaimuthu, V. 1980, Tamil Nattil Panpattu Puratchi (Cultural Revolution in Tamil Nadu), Periyar Nool Pub. Madras.(Tamil)
- Appadurai, A. 1981, Worship and Conflict Under Colonial Rule: A South Indian Case, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- _____ and C.A. Breckenrindge, "The South Indian Temple: Authority, Honour and Redistribution", Contribution to Indian Sociology, No. 10.
- Aravanan, K.P. 1987, Tamilar Mayi Neeagalnatha Panpattu Pattai Eduppu (Cultural Invasion on Tamils), Inthinai Pathipakam, Madras. (Tamil)
- _____, 1989, Tamilartham Marupakgam, (Otherside of Tamilians), Pari Nilayam, Madras. (Tamil)
- _____, 1991, Tamil Samuthaya Noigal: Verugalum Velluthugalum, Tamil Kottam, Pondyicherry. (Tamil)
- _____, 1992, Tamilar Thatangal, Tamil Kottam, Pondyicherry. (Tamil)
- Arendt, Hannah 1970, On Violence, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London.

- Arooran K Nambi 1980, Tamil Renaissance and Dravidian Nationalism, 1905-1944, Koodal Publishers, Madurai.
- Arul, P. 1991, The Political and Administrative Aspects of Rehabilitation Programmes of Bonded Labourers: A Case of Kodaikannal, Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.
- Arun 1996, "Panchami Nilam", Dhina Mani Kathir, 8 December. (Tamil)
- Ayesha, Jalal 1995, Contemporary South Asia: Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi.
- Balagopal, K. 1991, "Perception and Presentation: A Telugu Film on Naxalites", Economic and Political Weekly, 20 July.
- Barnett, Marguarite Ross 1976, The Politics of Cultural Nationalism in South India, Princeton.
- Barkar, Eileen 1993, "Charismatization: The Social Production of 'an Ethos Propitious to the Mobilisation of Sentiments'", in E. Barkar, James A. Beckford and Karel Dobbelaere, (ed), Secularization, Rationalism and Sectarianism, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Baskar, R. 1997, Election Analysis: Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections Result Detail, Kavirani Publication, Madras. (Tamil)
- Barker, J Christopher 1976, The Politics of South India, 1920-1937, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi.
- Barnouw, Erik and S.Krishnaswamy, 1963, Indian Films, New York.
- Basil, Wright 1972, The Use of the Film, Arno Press & The New York Times, New York.
- Baskaran, Theoder S. 1997, The Eye of the Serpent: An Introduction to Tamil Cinema, East West Books, Madras.
- , 1981, The Message Bearers: The Nationalist Politics and the Entertainment Media in South India, 1880-1945, Cre A, Madras.

- Baxi, Upendra and Bhikhu Parekh (ed), 1995, Crisis and Change in Contemporary India, Sage, New Delhi.
- Bendix, Reinhard 1969, "Reflection on Charismatic Leadership", in State and Society, Bendix Reinhard, (ed), London.
- Bhadur, Staish et.al. (ed) 1976, The Context of Indian Film Culture, Film Miscellany, Film and T.V. Institute, Pune.
- Bhargava, Rajeev 1995, "Religions and Secular Identities", in U.Baxi and Bhikhu Parekh's (ed), Crisis and Change in Contemporary India, Sage, New Delhi.
- _____, 1997, "Truth Commission in South Africa", Journal of Book Review, nd.
- _____, 2000, "History, Nation and Community: Reflections on Nationalism Historiography of India and Pakistan", Economic and Political Weekly, January.
- _____, Amiya Kumar Bagchi and R.Sudarshan (ed) 1999, Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Blackburn, Sturat H. 1978, "The Folk Hero and Class Interest in Tamil Heroic Ballads", Asian Folklore Studies, Vol.37, No.1.
- Brass, Paul 1984, "National Power and Local Politics in India: A Twenty-Year Perspective", Modern Asian Studies, Vol.18, No.1.
- _____, 1990, The New Cambridge History of India: The Politics of India Since Independence, Orient Longman, Hyderabad.
- Cantlie, Audrey 1977, "Aspects of Hindu Asceticism", in Lewis Ioan, (ed), 1977, Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-Cultural Studies in Symbolism, Academic Press, London.
- Chakravarty, Sumita S. 1996, National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema: 1947-87, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Chand Attar 1988, M.G.Ramachandran: My Blood Brother, Gian Pub.House, Delhi.

Chandhoke, Neera 1998, "The Mythologies of Civil Society", The Hindu, 5 November.

_____, 1998, "The Indian Polity & Symbolism", The Hindu, 19 November.

Chanrababu, B.C. 1993, Social Protest and Its Impact in Tamil Nadu: With Reference to Self-Respect Movement, 1920-1940, Emerald Publishers, Madras.

Chhibber, Pradeep K. 1999, Democracy Without Association: Transformation of the Party System and Social Cleavage in India, Sage, New Delhi.

Chatterjee, Partha 1989, "Caste and Subaltern Consciousness", in Ranajit Guha (ed. Vol.VI.), Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

_____, 1995, "The Indian Documentary Scene Fraught with Hazards", Cinemaya, No.23.

_____, 1997, (ed), State and Politics in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

_____, 1998, (ed), Wages of Freedom: Fifty Years of the Indian Nation-State, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Chatterji, S.A. 1997, "The Politics of Parallel Cinema", in Deep Focus, Vol.vii, No.1.

Christensen, Terry 1987, Reel Politics, Basil Blackwell, New York.

Claude, Ake 1966, "Charismatic Legitimation and Political Integration", Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol.IX, October.

- David, C.R.W. 1993, Cinema as Medium of Communication in Tamil Nadu, Christian Literature Society, Madras.
- David, E Apter 1981, Introduction to Political Analysis, Prentice-Hall of India Pvt.Ltd., New Delhi.
- Deb, W.C. 1995, The Menace of Hindu Fascism, Progressive Publications, New Delhi.
- Deliege, R. 1997, The World of 'Untouchables': Paraivars of Tamil Nadu, Oxford University, Press, Delhi.
- De Neva, Geert 2000, "Patronage and 'Community': The Role of a Tamil 'Village' Festival in the Integration of a Town" Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute, No.6,
- Desai, Mihir 1991, "A Justification of Reservations and Affirmative Action for Backward Castes In India", South Asia Bulletin, Vol.XI, No.1 & 2.
- D.M.K: , 1997, Principle, Objectives and Rules and Regulations, Head Office D.M.K., Madras.
- Dickey, Sara 1993, "The Politics of Adulation Cinema and the Production of Politicians in South India, Journal of South Asian Studies, Vol.52. May.
- _____, 1994, Cinema and the Urban Poor in South India: Cambridge Studies in Social and Anthropology, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Dirks, Nicholas 1997, "Recasting Tamil Society: The Politics of Caste and Race in Contemporary Southern India", in C.J. Fuller's Caste Today, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Duverger, Maurice 1979, Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activities in the Modern State, B.I.Publication, New Delhi.
- Forester, Duncan 1976, "Factions and Filmstars: Tamil Nadu Politics Since 1971", Asian Survey.

Eley Geoff 1992, Nations, Politics, Political Culture, MIT Press, Cambridge, London.

Egnor, Margaret T. 1985, "The Ideology of Love in a Tamil Family", A Paper presented at a Conference on Anthropology of Emotions in South Asia, Texas, Houston.

Elder Charles, D and Cobb W. Roger 1983, The Political Uses of Symbols, Longman Inc. New York.

Fanon, Frantz 1967, The Wretched of the Earth, Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Fareed, Kazmi 1999, The Politics of India's Conventional Cinema: Imaging a Universe, Subverting the Multi verse, Sage, New Delhi.

Frankil Francine R and M.S.A. Rao (ed) 1989, Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a Social Order, vol.I, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Fuller, C.J. 1984, Servants of the Goddess: The Priests of a South Indian Temple, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

_____, 1985, "Royal Divinity and Human Kingship in the Festivals of a South Indian Temple", South Asian Social Scientist, No.1.

_____, 1992, The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

_____, 1996, Brahman Temple Priest and Hindu Revivalism in Contemporary Tamilnadu, South Indian Studies, No.1.

Geetha V and Rajadurai S.V. 1991, "Dravidian Politics: End of Our Era", Economic and Political Weekly, 29 June.

_____, 1993, "The Swords in a Scabbard: Crisis in DMK", Economic and Political Weekly, 6 November.

- _____, 1998, Towards A Non-Brahmin Millennium: From Iyothee Thass to Periyar, Samya, Calcutta.
- _____, 1996, "DMK Hegemony: The Cultural Limits to Political Consensus", in T.V. Sathymurthy's (ed. vol.3), Region, Religion, Caste, Gender, and Culture in Contemporary India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Geetha, V. 2000, " Pengalum Samaiya Patturum"(Women and Religious Faith), Yezhichi Dalit Murasu, September. (Tamil)
- Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen (ed), Film Theory and Criticism, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Jain, Girilal 1994, The Hindu Phenomenon, UBSPD, New Delhi.
- Government of India, 1991, History of Cinema, Director of Information and Public Relation, Madras.
- Gopalakrishnan, M.D. 1991, Periyar: Father of the Race, Emerald Academic Press, Madras.
- Graber, Doris A. 1994, (2nd edn), Media Power in Politics, An Indo-American Cooperative Publishing, New Delhi.
- Gramsci, Antonio 1996, Selections from the Prison Note books (ed & translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith) Orient Longman, Madras.
- , 1985, Selections from Cultural Writings, London.
- Guna 1994, Dravidathal Veeldhthum, (We Fallen Because of Dravidianism), Tamilga Ayvuaran, Banglore. (Tamil)
- _____, 1994, Tamilar Varalaru (History of Tamils), Tamialga Ayvuaran, Banglore. (Tamil)
- Gunasekaran, K.A. 1995, Dalit Arangiyal (Dalit Theatre), Killaik katru Publication, Madras. (Tamil)
- Gupta, Chandanada Das 1991, The Painted Face: Studies in India's Popular Cinema, Roli, New Delhi.

- Gupta, Dipankar 1997, "Positive Discrimination and the Question of Fraternity: Contrasting Ambedkar and Mandal on Reservation" Economic and political Weekly, August 2.
- Hardgrave Jr. Robert L. 1965, The Dravidian Movement, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
- _____, 1965, "The DMK and the Politics of Tamil Nationalism", Pacific Affairs.
- _____, 1965, "The Riots in Tamil Nadu: Problems and Prospects of India's Language Crisis", Asian Survey, August.
- _____, 1969, The Nadars of Tamilnadu: The Political Culture of a Community in Change, University of California Press, Berkely and Los Angeles.
- _____, 1971, "The Celluloid God: MGR and Tamil Film", South Asian Review, iv, July.
- _____, 1973, "Politics and the Film in Tamilnadu: The Stars and the DMK", Asian Survey, xiii, December.
- _____, 1979, "When Stars Displace the Gods: The Folk Culture of Cinema in Tamilnadu", his Essays in the Political Sociology of South India, New Delhi.
- Hart, Henry C. 1988, "Political Leadership in India: Dimensions and Limits", in Atul Kohli (ed), India's Democracy: An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relation, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Hardy, Friedhelm 1995, The Religious Culture of India: Power, Love and Wisdom, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Indian Women and The Media: The Changing Image in India, 1985, Ministry of Social and Women's Welfare and UNICEF, New Delhi.
- Irschick, Eugene F. 1969, Politics and Social Conflicts in South India: The Non-Brahmin Movements and Tamil Separatism 1961-1969,

- Jagathrakshakan, S. 1984, Dr. MGR: A Phenomenon, Apollo Veliyeetagam, Madras.
- James Massey 1994, Towards Dalit Hermeneutics: Rereading the Text, the History and the Literature, ISPCK, Delhi.
- Janarthanam, A.P. 1978, The Dynamic MGR, by author, Madras.
- Jayakanthan, D. 1976, A Literary Man's Political Experiences: Tamil Nadu Politics Since 1946, Vikas Pub. House, New Delhi.
- Jag Mohan (ed), 1989, Indian Cinema 1988, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi.
- _____, 1990, Documentary Films and Indian Awakening, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi.
- Jeeva Prabhakaran, Veera 1994, "Eda Othukeedu: Oru Pinnani" (Reservation Policy: A Background), Dhina Mani Kathir, 3 July.
- John Carroll, M. 1980, Towards a Structure Psychology of Cinema, Moution Publication, New York.
- Kamalanathan T.P. 1985, Mr.K.Veeramani, M.A.B.L. is Refuted and the Historical Facts about the Scheduled Caste's Struggle for Emancipation in South India, Ambedkar's Self-Respect Movement, Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu.
- Kancha Ilaiah 1996, Why I am not Hindu? A Sudhra Critique of Hindutav Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy, Samya, Calcutta.
- _____, 1997, "Gaddar: Embodying Many Institutions", Seminar 456, August.
- Kaul, Gautam 1998, Cinema and the Indian Freedom Struggle, Sterling, New Delhi.
- Kennedy J. Michael 1992, Reading The Popular Text: A Study of Cultural Contestation, Centre for Study of Social System, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation.

- Kesavan, Ko 1994, Dravida Iyyakathil Pillayugal (The Splits of Dravidian Movement), Allaigal Publication, Madras.
- Karunanidhi, M. 1997, Nenchukku Nidhi, (Vol. I & II), Tirumagal Pathipagam, Madras.
- Krishna Iyer, V.R. 1989, Social Democracy and Dalit Egalite, University of Madras, Madras.
- _____, 1994, "Secularism, Constitutionalism and the Curative Regimen for the Syndrome of Communalism, Religionism and Godism", Social Action, Vol.44, January -March.
- Kishore, Valicha 1988, The Moving Image: A Study of Indian Cinema, Orient Longman, Bombay.
- Kohli, Atul 1990, Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- _____, 1994, "Centralization and Powerlessness: India's Democracy in a Comparative Perspective", in Joel S Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vivieneshue (ed), State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Kothari, Rajni (ed) 1991 edition, Caste in Indian Politics, Orient Longman, New Delhi.
- _____, 1991, Politics and the People: In search of Humane India, Vol.I & II, Aspect Publication, New Delhi.
- _____, 1993, "The Yawning Vacuum: A World Without Alternatives", Economic and Political Weekly, 22 May.
- _____, 1995 edition, Politics in India, Orient Longman, New Delhi.
- Lakshmanan Chettaiar S.M.L., 1973, Folklore of Tamil Nadu, National Book Trust, New Delhi.

Lakshmanan, C. 1994, "The Culture of Populism in Tamil Nadu", Social Reality, Vol.I, No.2. Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, November-December.

_____, 1996, "Fan Club Network of Film Star and Tamil Politics", Mainstream, 4 May.

_____, 1997, "Need for Intellectual Persistence", in Journal of the Third Concept, September.

_____, 1998, Political Parties Blind to Dalit Concerns, The Times of India, 22 April.

_____, 1998, Review the Spirit - Not the Letter, Periyar Era, August, Chennai.

_____, 1999, "Social Movements and Subaltern Education in India, Paper Presented at South Asian Conference on Education, Department of Education, University of Delhi, November 14-18.

_____, 1999, "Activating Social Capital for Dalit Identity", in Ambrose Pinto (ed, Assertion Dalit Identity, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

_____, 2000, "Unknown Cinema: Documentary Films and Social Awakening in Tamil Nadu", A Paper Presented at South Asia Conference on Human Development, Organised by Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi.

Lapsley Robert and Micheal Westlake, 1988, Film Theory an Introduction, Manchester, University Press, New York.

Larry Diamond 1991, Democracy and Political Culture, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Lazar, S. 1991, Symbolic Content of the Dravidian ideology as Expressed by Anna and MGR Centre for Study of Social System, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. An Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation.

- Lewis, Ioan (ed), 1977, Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-Cultural Studies in Symbolism, Academic Press, London.
- Ludden, David 1996, "Caste Society and Units of Production in early - Modern South India", in Burton Stine and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed) Institutions and Economic Change in South India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Maarkku Panchami Nilla Por (Panchami Land Struggle), Mukil Publication, Maduari.
- Prasad, M Madhava 1998, "The State in/of Cinema", in Partha Chaterjee's (ed), Wages of Freedom: Fifty Years of the Indian Nation-State, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- _____, 1998, Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical Construction, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Manickam, C. 1995, Conspiracy of Silence, Dalit Research Centre, Madurai.
- Mohandas, K. 1992, MGR: The Man and the Myth, Panther Publishers, Bangalore.
- Manor James (ed), 1991, Rethinking Third World Politics, Longman Inc. London.
- Manos 1991, Tamilaka Muthalvar Javalalitha, Kavitha Achagam Madras.
- Madurai, Ranga Rao R. 1986, All India ADMK History, Sevai Pub., Madras. (Tamil)
- Maran, Murasoli 1991, Dravida Iyakka Varalaru (History of Dravidian Movement), Poothaka Cholai, Madras.
- Marvick, Dwaine (ed), 1977, Harold D.Lasswell on Political Sociology, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Mathew, George 1982, "Politicisation of Religion: Conversion to Islam in Tamil Nadu", Economic and Political Weekly, 19 June.

Mattison, Mines 1994, Public Faces, Private Voices: Community and Individuality in South India, University of California Press, Berkeley.

_____ and Vijaylakshmi Gourishankar, 1990, "Leadership and Individuality in South Asia: The Case of South Indian Big-Man", Journal of South Asian Studies, No.4, May.

Mencher, Joan P. 1980, "On Being an Untouchable in India: A Materialist Perspective", in Beyond The Myths of Culture, Academic Press, Inc. nd.

Moses, C Brindavan 1994, "Struggle for Panchama Lands: Dalit Assertion in Tamil Nadu" Economic and Political Weekly, 4 February.

Moti, Gokulsing and Wimal Dissanayake 1998, Indian Popular Cinema: A narrative of Cultural Change, Orient Longman, New Delhi.

Mulk Raj Anand 1981, The Untouchables, Arnold Associates, New Delhi.

Nandy, Ashis 1986, "Oppression and Human Liberation: Towards a Post-Gandhian Utopia", in Thomas Pantham & Kenneth L Deutsch, (ed), Political Thought in Modern India, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

_____, 1980, At the Edge of Psychology: Essays in Politics and Culture, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

_____, 1998, The Secret Politics of Our Desires: Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

Nadkarni, M.V. 1997, "Broadbasing Process in India and Dalits", Economic and Political Weekly, August 16-23.

Naipual V.S. 1993, India: A Million Mutinies Now, Minerva, India.

_____, 1997, India: A Wounded Civilization, Andre Deutsch, London.

- Narain, Iqbal 1989, Development, Politics and Social Theory, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi.
- Narayanan, Arandhthai 1988, Suthaindri Porvil Tamil Cinema (Tamil Cinema in Independence Struggle, New Century Book House, Madras.(Tamil)
- _____, 1994, Drividam Pattiva Thiraipadanggal(Films which sang Dravidianism), New Century Book House, Madras. (Tamil)
- _____, 1999, Tamil Cinema : Some News and Some Thoughts, Kavitha Publication, Chennai.(Tamil)
- Narendra, Subramanian 1999, Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Nesiah, Devanesan 1997, Discrimination with Reason? The Policy of Reservation in the United State, India and Malaysia, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. 1966, (3rd edn), A History of South India: From Pre-historic Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar, Oxford University Press, Madras.
- Oliver Mendelsohn and Upendra Baxi (eds), 1996, The Rights of Subordinated People, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Oommen T.K. 1972, Charisma, Stability and Change: An Analysis of Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement in India, Thomson Press, New India.
- _____, 1986, "Insider and Outsider in India: Primordial Collectivism and Cultural Pluralism in Nation-Building", Journal of International Sociology, Vol.1 No.1., March.
- Omvedt, Gail 1995, Dailt Visions, Orient Longman, New Delhi.
- Otto N. Lassen 1998, "Social Effects of Mass Media", in Robert E.L. Faris (ed), Handbook of Modern Sociology, Vol.1, Rawat Publication, Jaipur.

- Pandian M.S.S. 1990, "From Exclusion to Inclusion: Brahminism's New Face in Tamil Nadu", Economic and Political Weekly, 18-25 September.
- _____, 1991, "Parasakthi: Life and Times of a DMK Film", Economic and Political Weekly, 17 March.
- _____, 1992, The Image Trap: M.G. Ramachandran in Film and Politics, Sage, New Delhi.
- _____, 1993, "Jayalalitha: 'Desire' and Political Legitimation", Seminar, 401. January.
- _____, 1993, "'Denationalizing' the Past: Nation, in E.V. Ramaswamy, Political Discourse", Economic and Political Weekly, 16 October.
- _____, 1994, "Crisis in DMK", Economic and Political Weekly, 29 January.
- _____, 1994, "Notes on the Transformation of Dravidian Ideology: Tamil Nadu: 1990-40", Social Scientist, May-June.
- _____, 1996, "Tamil Culture Elites and Cinema: Outline of an Argument", Economic and Political Weekly, 13 April.
- _____, 1996, "Politics of Representation: Women in the Films of M.G. Ramachandran", in T.V. Sathyamurthy (ed), Region, Religion, Caste, Gender, and Culture in Contemporary India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- _____, 1997, "Culture and Subaltern Consciousness: An Aspect of the MGR Phenomenon", in Partha Chatterjee, (ed), State and Politics in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- _____, 1998, "Stepping Outside History? New Dalit Writing from Tamil Nadu", in Partha Chatterjee's (ed), Wages of Freedom: Fifty Years of the Indian Nation-State, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- _____, 1998, "The Fragmentation of the Tamil Polity", The Hindu, 5 March.
- _____, 1998, "Secularism in One Vote", The Hindu, 20 April.
- _____, 1999, "'Nation' from Its Margins: Notes on E.V. Ramaswamy's 'Impossible', Nation, in Rajeev Bhargava, Amiya Kumar Bagchi and R. Sudarshan (ed) Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

- Pandian, J. 1986, Caste, Nationalism and Ethnicity, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
- Parry Jonathan 1985, "The Brahmanical Tradition and the Technology of the Intellect", in Joanna Overing (ed), Reason and Morality, Tainstock Publications, London.
- Paul, Commack 1997, Capitalism and Democracy in the Third World: The Doctrine for Political Development, Leicester University Press, London.
- Pye Lucian 1962, Personality and Nation Building, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- _____ and Sidney Verba, 1965, Political Culture and Development, Princeton University, Princeton.
- Pauline, Kolenda 1981, Caste, Cult and Hierarchy: Essays on the Culture of India, Folklore Institute, Meerut.
- Palanithurai, G and Thandavan R. 1993, Ethnic Movement in India: Theory and Practice, Kanishka Publishing House, Delhi.
- _____, 1994, (ed), Caste Politics and Society in Tamilnadu, Kanishka Publication, New Delhi.
- Pillai, Pandit S. Muthusawmy 1985, Needhi Kachi Varalaru, (History of Justice Party), Periyar Suyamariyathai Prasara Institute, Madras.
- Parathasarathi, T.M. 1993 (6th edn.), Thee. Mu. Ka. Varalaru, (History of DMK) Bharathi Pathipakam, Madras.
- Pathak, Rahul and Ravi Shankar 1989, "The God Who would Not Die", Indian Express, New Delhi, 22 January.
- Ramaswamy, E.V. 1975, Suyamariathai Ivakkththai Thottru Viththen, Periyar Suyamariathai Prasara Neruvanam, Madras.
- _____, 1982, Needhi Kettathu Yaaraal? (Who Subverted Justice), Arivukkadal Achagam, Madras.

- _____, 1982, Samudhaya Seethiruththam (Social Reform), Arivukkadal Achagam, Madras.
- _____, 1987, Hindu Madha Pandikaigal (Hindu Festivals), Arivukkadal Achagam, Madras.
- Pathak, Bindeshwar 1991, Road to Freedom: A Sociological Study on the Abolition of Scavenging in India, Motilal Banarsidass Pub.P.Ltd. Delhi.
- Pendakur, Manjunath 1990, "Indian Film Industry", (a chapter), in John A. Lent (ed), The Asian Film Industry, Christopher Helm, London.
- Peter Robb (ed), 1993, Dalit Movements and the Meanings of Labour in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- _____, (ed), 1995, The Concept of Race in South Asia, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Pinkney, Robert 1993, Democracy in the Third World, Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Pooneelan 1988, Tharkalth Thamizh Illakkiamum Dravida Ivakkach Chidhanthangathum, New Century Book House, Madras.
- _____, 1974, Jeevaavin Vazhkkai Varalaru, New Century Book House, Madras.
- Prakash N.Desai, 1995, "Personality Politics: A Psychoanalytic Perspective", in Upendra Baxi and Bhikhu Parekh (ed), Crisis and Change in Contemporary India, Sage, New Delhi.
- Pranjali, Bandhu, 1992, Black and White of Cinema in India, Odyssey, Trivandrum.
- Price Pamela, 1989, "Kingly Models in Political Behaviour: Culture as Medium for History", Asian Survey
- _____, 1996, "Revolution and Rank in Tamil Nationalism", Journal of South Asian Studies, 55, No.2, May.
- _____, 1999, "Relating to Leadership in the Tamil Nationalism Movement: C.N.Annadurai in Person-Centred Propaganda", South Asia, Vol.XXII, No.2.

- Radhakrishnan, 1961 (first edn.1927), The Hindu View of Life, Unwin Books, London.
- Raj Gowthaman, 1994, Dalit Paarvaiyil (Dalit Perspective), Gowri Pathippagam, Pondicheery. (Tamil)
- Rajendracholan, 1997, Dalithiyam (Dalitism): Dalit Politics, Dalit Literature, Dalit Culture - A Debate, Udayian Publication, Dhindivam.
- _____, 1994, Dalit Panpadu (Dalit Culture), Gowri Pathippagam, Pondicherry. (Tamil)
- Ramachandran, M.G. 1971, Naan Yen Piranthen?, Ananda Vikatan Series, Madras.
- Rangarajan L.N.(edited and translation) 1992, Kautilya: The Arthashastra, Penguin, New Delhi.
- Sharma, Ram Avtar and Sushma Yadav 1989, Political Culture in Post-Independence India, Published by authors, New Delhi.
- Ramachandran, T.M. (ed) 1985, 70 Years of Indian Cinema 1913-1983, Bombay.
- Ramanujam K.S. 1971, Challenge and Response: An Intimate Report of Tamil Nadu Politics 1967-1971, Sundra Prachuralayam, Madras.
- Ranadive, B.T. 1991, Caste, Class & Property Relation, National Book Agency, Madras.
- Rao, M.S.A. 1996, "The Anti-Caste Movement in India and the Discourse of Power", in T.V.Satiyamurthy (ed), vol.III, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- _____, (ed), 2000 edition, Social Movements in India: Studies in Peasant Backward Classes, Sectarian, Tribal and Women's Movements, Manohar, New Delhi.
- Rao, P.V.N. 1993, "Sycolatory and the Cut-out Culture", Prout, New Delhi. 20 March.

- Ravikumar 2000, "Dalit Eda Othikidu: Villai Arikkai, Karunanidhi Arasuin Moochadi" (Dalit Reservation: A Whitepaper Release Karunanidhi's Government's Cheating), Ellichi Dalit Murasu, June. (Tamil)
- Ravindra Kumar 1984, "Gandhi, Ambedkar and The Poona Pact 1932", Occasional Paper, Teen Murti Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
- Ronald, H Chilcote 1984, Theories of Comparative Politics: The Search for a Paradigm Reconsidered, Westview Press, Oxford.
- Rosenbaum, Walter A. 1995, Political Culture, Nelson, London.
- Rudolph, L and S.Hoeber Rudolph 1987, In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State, Orient Longman, Hyderabad.
- Ryerson, Charles 1988, Regionalism, Religion: The Tamil Renaissance and Popular Hinduism, Christian Literature Society, Madras.
- Sampath, P. 1997, Dalit Makkal Urimaikka Marxist Katchin Porattam, CPI(M), Chidambram. (Tamil)
- Selbourne, David 1979, "State and Ideology In India", Monthly Review Associates, December.
- Seshadri, H.V. 1984, Hindu Renaissance Under Way, Jagarana Prakashna, Bangalore.
- Setalvad, Atul 1995, "Demi-Gods Have No Place in Democracy", The Times of India, New Delhi, 6 March.
- Shiva Sundar 1999, Students Movement In India: An Analytical Overview, All India Revolutionary Student Organisation (AIRSF)
- Swami Dharma Theertha, 1992, History of Hindu Imperialism, Dalit Educational Literature Centre, Madras.(first edn. 1942)

- Swami Chidambaranar, 1983, Tamilar Talaivar: Periyar Ee.Ve.Ra Vazhgai Varalaru, Self Respect Propaganda Institute, Madras.
- _____, 1988, (5th edn), Pazhandh Tamilar Vazzhvum Vallarchiam (Ancient Tamils Life and Development), Ilakkiya Nillayam, Madras. (Tamil)
- Sivathamby, Karthigesu 1981, Tamil Film as a Medium of Political Communication, New Delhi.
- _____, 1988, "Understanding the Dravidian Movement: Problems and Perspectives", Kailasapathi Ninavedu (Kailasapathi Commemoration Volume, Jaffna.
- Spratt P. 1966, Hindu Culture and Personality: A Psycho-Analytical Study, Manaktalas, Bombay.
- _____, 1970, D.M.K. in Power, Nachiketa Pub. Bombay.
- Stephen, White 1979, Political Culture and Soviet Politics, The MacMillan Press, London.
- Sattanathan, A.N. 1982, The Dravidian Movement in Tamil Nadu and its Legacy, University of Madras, Madras.
- Srivasan, Mukta V. 1995, Tamil Thiraippada Varalaru (History of Tamil Cinema), Gangai Pattaga Nilyam, Madras. (Tamil)
- Surinarayanan 1999, State Administration in Tamil Nadu, Vikas Publication Ltd., New Delhi.
- Sumathi, Ramaswamy 1998, Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1981-1970, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt.Ltd., New Delhi.
- Subrata, K. Mitra 1999, Culture and Rationality: The Politics of Social Change in Post Colonial India, Sage, New Delhi.
- Subramanian, N. 1966, Sangam Polity: The Administration and Social Life of the Sangam Tamils, Asia Publishing House, Madras.

- Subramanian, P. 1999, Social History of The Tamils: Reconstructing Indian History & Culture, No.7, D.K.Printers (P)Ltd., New Delhi.
- Sundaraju, R. 1994, Periyar on Religion and Society, Emerald Academic Press. Madras.
- Suresh, V. 1992, "The DMK Debacle: Causes and Portents", Economic and Political Weekly, 17 October.
- Swaminathan, Mina 1998, Inventing a Folk Tradition, The Hindu (Sunday Magazine), 31 May.
- Tamil Desiya Puratchil Theendamai Ollippu, 1997, Tamil Desa Pothuvudamai Katchi, Tanjore. (Tamil)
- Thani Nayagam X, 1970, Tamil Culture and Civilization: Readings: The Classical Period, Asia Publication House, Bombay.
- Thanthai Periyarum Thalthappatarum, (Periyar and Scheduled Caste), 1996, Periyar Suyamariyathai Prarsar Nierivam, Madras.
- Thanthai Periyar, 1993, Thanthai Periyare Yallithiya Suyasarithai, (Periyar's Autobiography) Dravidar Kazhagam, Madras.
- _____, 1997, Sumariyatha Iyyakathai Thorivetraduenn?, Periyar Suyamariyathai Prarsar Nierivam, Madras.
- Thapar, Romila 1996 edition, Ancient Indian Social History Some Interpretations, Orient Longman, New Delhi.
- Thomas Pantham & Kenneth L Deutsch, 1986, (ed), Political Thought in Modern India, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
- Thomas, Robbins 1988, Cult, Converts, and Charisma: The Sociology of New Religious Movements, Sage, London.
- Vanamalai, V. (nd), "Interpretations of Tamil Folk Creations", Dravidian Linguistic Association, Trivandrum.

Varshney, Ashutosh, 2000, "Is Becoming More Democratic?",
The Journal Asian Studies, 59, No.1.

Veeramani, K. and P.R. Kuppaswami, 1997, Sattapatie Ennum Naam
Sudhira(Still We are Sudira Under Law), Periyar
Parasara Neruvanam, Madras. (Tamil)

Vishwanathan, E. 1988, Shivaji Oru Sagaptham, Shanmugapriya
Publication, Madras.

Wallas, Graham 1981, Human Nature in Politics, Transction Books,
New Brunswick, USA.

Washbrook, David 1989, "Caste, Class and Dominance in Modern
Tamil Nadu", in Frankil Francine R and M.S.A. Rao (ed),
Dominance and State Power in Modern India, vol.I,
Oxford University Press, Delhi.

_____, 1993, "Land and Labour in Late Eighteenth Century
South India: The Golden Age of Pariah?", in Peter
Bobb's (ed) Dalit Movements and the Meanings of Labour
in India, Oxford University, New Delhi.

Whitehead, Henry 1921, The Village Gods of South India, Calcutta.

Zelliot, Eleanor 1992, From Untouchable to Dalit, Manohar,
New Delhi.

MAGAZINE AND PAPERS IN TAMIL

Dhina Mani
Thina Thanthi
Murasoli
Dhinakaran
Malia Murasu
Ananda Vikatan
Junior Viatan
Nakeeran
Thukul
Tharasu
Kumudam
Chinthanaiyalan
Junior Post
Jamini Cinema
Cinema Express
Thirai Cinema
Vanna Thirai
Payshum Pattam
Rajni Style
Rajni Rasigan
Maiyam
Yezhichi Dalit Murasu
Peratchiyalan
Ennamana Mannavar

IN ENGLISH

The Hindu
The Indian Express
The Times of India
The Hindustan Times
Frontline
India Today
Outlook
The Sunday
The Week
Periyar Era
PUCL Bulletin
New Democracy
People's March

Glossary

GLOSSARY

- Aarti : The waving of lighted camphor to dispel evil effects.
- Abishekam : Anointment
- Agni Natchatra : Approximately a fortnight in the summer; this period is forecast in the Almanac and is the hottest part of the year. Appeals are made to Gods to lessen the intensity of the heat.
- Agraharam : A settlement of Brahmins.
- Alari : Oleander, Indian willow.
- Arai-Mudi : A piece of silver usually leaf-shaped suspended by a waist cord, worn by female children.
- Arasani : Decorated pots placed before the marriage dais.
- Archana : Specific prayer to a deity in the name of a devotee by mentioning his birth star and chanting mantras in Sanskrit or Tamil.
- Arisi pori : Fired Rice.
- Arudhra : The sixth lunar asterism (Thiruvadhirai day)
- Arundhathi : The sixth supposed to be the wife of Vaisishta, famous for her chastity.
- Azhwars (Alwars) : The well-known twelve saints and religious leaders of the Vaishnavas.
- Bali-peatam : An altar for religious offerings.
- Bralunothsavam : The annual grand festival in temples.
- Chank (Conch) : A shell-like piece got from the sea in pearl fishery operations and used as a sacred musical instrument.
- Chaturvedimangalam : Hamlets gifted by cholas to scholars well-versed in the Four Vedas.
- Chithra pournami : The Full Moon that falls in Chithrai, the first month of the Tamil Calendar (April-May).

Devadasi	: Dancing girl dedicated to temple service.
Devas	: Celestial beings.
Eerazh Mundu	: Handloom towel woven with two threads in warp and woof.
Ghee	: Butter processed to serve as (i) cooking material (ii) item of food consumed with rice as the first course of a meal (iii) fuel for lighting temple-lamps on special occasions.
Honam	: Burnt offering; oblation with ghee, grain, etc. to the sacred fire.
Jyotirlinga	: The manifestation of God Shiva as Jyothi (light).
Kaippidithal	: The ceremonial holding of the bride's hand by the bridgroom at the marriage pandal.
Kamandalam	: Mythological pot supposed to be held by a sage and to be the source of rivers.
Karamani or Karugumani	: A necklace made of small black beads.
Karumathi	: The obsequies after burial or cremation.
Kallikudam Udaithal	: A funeral ceremony in which a new pot with water is broken before the corpse.
Kuladeyvam	: Clan duty.
Kuravai	: A joyous ovation given by women-folk of certain communities during ceremonies.
Kuththu Vilakku	: An ornamental lamp, usually made of brass, lighted on auspicious occasions.
Mantras	: Code messages (formulated) or chants known only to select few devotees.
Maru Veedu Puguthal	: Entering the other house. This generally indicates the bride's return to her parents' house on the third or seventh day after her marriage.
Moola-Vigraham	: Stationary idol; it is not used in processions.
Muhurtham	: Auspicious time for conducting ceremonies.

Mulaippari	:	Tender seedlings, grown in small containers and placed before the marriage dais.
Muzhukku Veedu	:	A dormitory in which girls stay during pollution periods.
Naluggu	:	Ceremony performed to ward off the effects of evil eye on the wedded couple.
Nattuvanar	:	Dancing instructor.
Nayanmars	:	The famous sixthree saints of the Shivas.
Navagrahangal	:	The nine planets of Hindu astronomy.
Oor Kattu	:	The imposition of social and economic sanction made by the council of elders, on an offender against social laws.
Panchaloham	:	Five metals, viz. gold, silver, copper, iron and lead.
Panchayat	:	A village council of five members or a council of elders in a caste.
Panns	:	Musical notations.
Parisam	:	Bride-price usually paid by the bride groom's party.
Pidari	:	Fierce Goddess.
Pookkattuhai	:	A superstitious ceremony performed to ascertain whether a proposed matrimonial alliance or other important act has divine approval.
Poornakkumbam	:	Religious welcome offered to dignitaries with silver pots containing holy water.
Poruththam parththal:	:	The scrutiny of the horoscopes of the bride and groom to find out the compatibility of the match.
Pottu	:	Thali worn by Devadasis.
Prabandams	:	Collection of the devotional poems sung by the Azhwars.
Prasadam	:	Cooked rice, and other edibles, offered to the deity and later distributed to the devotees.

Pujas	:	Temples services at the prescribed hours every day.
Rahukalam	:	The inauspicious part of the day under the influence of Rahu, the 8th planet.
Sadas	:	Cultural Forum where scholars, artists etc. are honoured.
Sani	:	The planet Saturn, considered to have a malignant influence.
Santhanakudam	:	A pot, full of sandal solution, carried in procession during a festival by local Muslims.
Saptha sthana festival	:	Festival on the Cauvery at Thiruvaiyaru for seven deities together.
Sathabishekam	:	The occasion on which a man sees the full moon for the 1008th time after his birth, i.e., in the 83-84 the year. (This is celebrated nowadays even in the beginning of the 81st year).
Seemantham	:	A ceremony in advanced pregnancy to instil in the woman a sense of confidence, and to ensure safe delivery.
Shandy	:	Periodical market, generally every week.
Siddhars	:	Men of vision who are masters in the use of herbs.
Sthalapuramam	:	History and legend pertaining to a holy place or a sacred shrine.
Sthlaviruksham	:	A tree with which the local temple is associated in song and story.
Sundol	:	Boiled and spiced Bengal gram (or peas).
Tnayathu	:	A small cylindrical metal box containing an amulet.
Thevaram	:	Devotional songs of the Shaivites sung by the famous trio-Appar, Sundarar and Sam bandar.
Tilak	:	A dot placed on the forehead by elders as a sign of blessing before setting out on important enterprises.

Undial	:	Cash collection box kept in the temple (Hundi box).
Vaikku Arisi Poduthal	:	A ceremony of putting rice into the mouth of a corpse before buying or cremating it.
Valai Kappu	:	A ceremony of bedecking a pregnant girl with bangies of gold, silver or glass.
Valampuri Chank	:	A right spiralled chank. Such chanks are very rare and hence considered sacred.
Valli root	:	A tuber.
Vigrahams	:	Idols used during festivals (portable idols made of material other than stone).
Vimanam	:	Self-moving chariot or vehicles of the Gods.
Yagan	:	A sacrifice; an oblation.
Yantras	:	Mystic magical diagrams engraved on metallic plates.
Yeval	:	Commanding of evil deities to harm a specified individual.

Appendix

APPENDIX - I

In 1988, Bhaghiyaraj Fan Club, Kichippalayam of Salem town organised a public function for free distribution of Saries to the poor. The local politician Mr. K.P. Ramalingam, former minister in MGR cabinet (now he is DMK M.P.), was chief guest.



APPENDIX - II

Rajnikanth Fan Club celebrated Rajnikanth's Birthday on 12.12.93 at Kotturpuram. In that function Rajnikanth Fan Club distributing plastic pots to the poor, through a local politician, Karate Thiyagaraj, Congress (I).



APPENDIX - III

Rajnikanth Fan Club distributed Thatched roofs worth of Rs. 36,000 /= through Mr. Satyanarayanan, (Personal Asst. and State level Fan Club Sec.), at Kilpack slum area of Madras, in 1993.



APPENDIX -IV

A NUMBER OF DAILIES, MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS BY THE PERSONALITIES

Name of the Person	Name of the Magazines
1. E.V. Ramaswamy	Kudi Arasu
2. Dr. T.M. Nair	Justice
3. E.R. Srinivasan	Paraiyan
4. J.S. Kannappan	Dravidan
5. S. Ramanathan	Rationalist
6. P. Balasubramaniam	Sunday Observer
7. M. Singaravelu	Pudu Ulagam (New World)
8. A. Punnambalanar	Puduvai Murasu
9. Purachikavi Bharathidasan	Kuyil
10. V.V. Ramaswamy	Tamil Thendral
11. E.V. Krishnaswamy	Purachi
12. K. A. Vishvanatham	Tamilar Nadu
13. S. Guruswamy	Kuthduchi
14. R. Thirumalaiswamy	Nagara Duthan
15. C.N. Annadurai	Dravida Nadu
16. Needuchelian	Mandram
17. M. Karunanidhi	Murasooli
18. K. Anbazhagan	Pudu Vazhvu
19. N.V. Natarajan	Dravidan
20. A.P. Janarthanam	Thozhan
21. A.V.P. Aasaithambi	Thanni Arasu
22. K.A. Mathiyazhagan	Thennagam
23. C.P. Chittrasu	Ennamuzhakkam
24. Mayavaram Natrajan	Veettri Murasu
25. Pavalar Balasundram	Tamizharasu
26. Kanchi Manimooliyar	Porval
27. Rama. Arangkannal	Arapor
28. K. Veeramani	Veduthalia
29. S. Ramachandran	Urimai Vetkkai
30. A.S. Vennu	Justice
31. V. Annaimuthu	Periyar Era (English)
	Chindaiyalan (Tamil)
32. Iyothee Dassar	Tamilan

Source: R. Needuchelian, 1996, Dravida Ivakka Valararu (Dravida Movement History), Needuchelian Educational Trust, Madras.

50.	Kumasthavinpen	1941
51.	Prithiviraj	1942
52.	MayaJoti	1942
53.	Maanachamracham	1942
54.	Lawvanghi	1945
55.	Vidiyapathi	1945
56.	Naam Eruvar	1947

APPENDIX - VI

LIST OF MOVIES REPRESENTED THE DMK'S POLITICS

Sl.No.	Name of Movie	Year of Release
1.	Velaikari (Maid)	1949
2.	Manthrikumari (Minister Daughter)	1950
3.	Ore Eravu (One Night)	1951
4.	Sarvathikari (Dictator)	1951
5.	Devaki	1951
6.	Parasakthi	1952
7.	Panam (Money)	1952
8.	Naam (We)	1953
9.	Tirumpipar (Look Back)	1953
10.	Illarajoti	1954
11.	Sugam Ennkay (Where is Pleasure)	1954
12.	Annaiyappan	1954
13.	Shorkkavachal (Heaven gate)	1954
14.	Manohara	1954
15.	Rajarani	1956
16.	Rangun Radha	1956
17.	Podumaipithan	1957
18.	Podaiyal	1957
19.	Annain Aannai (Mother's command)	1958
20.	Nadodi Mannan	1958
21.	Sivagangaisimai	1959
22.	Thangaratinam	1959
23.	Mannandi Mannan	1960
24.	Kuravanchy	1960
25.	Ellorum Innattu Mannar (Everyone Ruler of the our country)	1960
26.	Arsingkumari	1961
27.	Kanchithalaivan	1963
28.	Poompuhar	1964

APPENDIX - VII

THE FOLLOWING ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL SATISFACTION OF FANS

1. Recognition of Fan Club Membership
2. Having/Obtaining Signed Photograph of patron
3. Getting Patron's Gift
4. Feeling of happy or honoured by Identify with patron of having photographed him/her at patron's Residence.
5. Acquired importance during the Release day of patron's movies and Celebration day of patron's movie success. Also felt privileged by watching movie freely on the days.
6. Feeling honoured while his/her name and Club names appeared in the Fanzines
7. Feeling of group consciousness to the patron's Fan Clubs and patrons' party.

Source: K.P. Aravanan, 1991, op.cit, pp.99-100.

APPENDIX - VIII

LIST OF FAN CLUB ACTIVITIES

1. Cleaning of the Streets
2. Giving representations to the government authority on problem of public services/ convenience
3. Conducting Blood Bank donation Camps.
4. Eye Donation
5. Conducting Inter-caste Weddings
6. Participating in the Weddings and Death occasions
7. Rendering financial help to funeral
8. First-Aid to Accident victims
9. Distributing Saree to (poor) widows
10. Distributing Cloths -Dhodti, Saree and Rice to poor
11. Distributing Uniform and Books to the poor students
12. Give gift Cash ro Golden Ring to student who secured first place in the School
13. Donating Gift items to the School Functions
14. Donating Rice/Food to the poor who were affected by Rain
15. Giving relief aid Food/Cash to the affected people
16. Organizing Agitation, Procession and Fasting in support of Sri Lankan Tamils
17. Agitation against price hike
18. Assisting the physically handicapped and donating cycles
19. Putting-up Roofs in the Bus stops.
20. Donating Thali-Mangalsutra to Fan Club member's marriage
21. Organizing Temple Festivals
22. On behalf of Club educating upto 10th std. for at least two students
23. Participated in the fasting of Factory Works strike and distributed two 2Kg rice to the work's family.
24. Establishing Night schools
25. Establishing Adult Education centre
26. Putting-up name board of Streets and Roads
27. Establishing Gymnastic centre
28. Resolving family disputes

K.P.Aravanan, 1991,

APPENDIX - IX

A FEW POLICIES OF THE DMK IN 1970's:

1. Tamil thai vazhthu - Prayer for Mother Tamil was introduced;
2. Free housing Scheme for S.C. and Fishing community;
3. Free distribution of optical and medical care for eye patient in rural and urban areas;
4. Lopper Beggars welfare Homes;
5. Physically Handicapped Welfare Scheme;
6. Abolition of Hand-pull rickshaws and Free distribution Cycle Rickshaws;
7. Hearing machine for Deaf children;
8. Widow Remarriage Scheme, which encouraged by government by given Rs. 10,000/= for couple;
9. Inter-caste Marriage Scheme, it provide Rs. 7000 after 5 years of marriage the non-S.C who marries S.C. would be considered as S.C. to benefit in government jobs;
10. Accepted B.C. commission recommendation to increase reserved seats in govt. jobs and educational institution from 25 to 31 B.C. and 16 to 18 S.C.; A longstanding demand of Muslim of Urdu speaking had met i.e. including them in B.C. list; Gongu Vellalar too included in the B.C list;
11. Minimum Wage Law;
12. Distribution Waste Land to Landless Agriculturist;
13. Legalization Govt. land for housing;
14. Nationalization Buses;
15. Establishment of Electricity Board;
16. Establishment of Drinking Water Board;
17. All Castes Archagar Law;
18. Abolition Horse Race & Abolition of Lottery;
19. Electrification Rural Areas;
20. Establishment of Police Commission;

21. Allocation Rs. 10, 000/= for government employees who died during service period;
22. Abolition of ACR of Government employees;
23. Financial Assistant to accident death of Agricultural Labourer, Fishermen, Wood claimer;
24. Establishment of Women Police;
25. Establishment of State Planning Commission,
26. Establishment of B.C. Welfare Department.

APPENDIX - X

A FEW POLICIES OF MGR'S AIADMK:

1. Abolition of Village Karnam Post, (which traditional held by upper caste) and creation village Administrative Officers in accordance with govt. rules.
2. Introduction of Compartmental Sytem in Secondary School Level as well as puls two course in Higher Secondary after S.S.L.C. Earlier, it was 11+1+3 into 10+2+3 pattern, also if a student failed in any one subject of the S.S.L.C she/he have write all the subjects once again to pass exams.
3. Introduced Nutritious Noon Meal Scheme, earlier this only for school going children but also to two year old children as well.
4. Free Saries Scheme, which govt. would give sari to women and Dhodti to man thrice in a year at free of cost.
5. Free Tooth powder, Free Chapels and Free Plastic Pockets to the poor.

APPENDIX

No. of Films Received Tamil Nadu Govt. Subsidy of Rs. 1 Lakh

S.No.	YEAR	No. Of Film
1.	1976-77	3
2.	1977-78	7
3.	1978-79	5
4.	1979-80	2
5.	1980-81	5
6.	1981-82	5
7.	1982-83	3

Total No. of Films Received Tamil
Nadu Govt. Subsidy of
Rs. 2 Lakh in 1989 20

Total No. of Films Received Tamil
Nadu Govt. Subsidy of
Rs. 3 Lakh in 1989 7

A FEW DMK POLICIES SINCE 1996

1. Ullavar Sandhthai (Farmers' Market)
2. Kal Naar Veedu for Slum dwellers
3. Construction of Overbridges all over the state (more than 400)
4. Animals' Health Centres
5. Construction of Cement Roads/Streets
6. Dorvarum Panni (Removal of silt at the bottom of water sources and waterways)

Note: It had been propagated like after the Triple Tamil king only Karunanidhi doing such jobs.
(Source: Tamil Nadu Film Division)

7. Mahalleer Siru Vanniga Kadan (Loan/ Financial Assistance for Small Business to the Women)
8. Naanakku Naamae (Self Help Scheme)
9. Vazholi Scheme (Medical Check up for Govt. School Children)
Note: Children were prize the scheme which is similar to that of the Christians prayer 'Opputhal'.
10. Unorganized Workers Board - To take care of the auto-drivers, Barbers, Lock makers, etc.,
11. Mobile Hospitals
12. Rural Play Grounds
13. Computer Education in Government Schools