

Rise of the Dravidian Movement & Justice Party

Emergence of Dravidian Movement:

- In order to protect and promote the Tamil identity, culture, socio-political and economic interest of non-Brahmins, A movement called 'Dravidian Movement' Was started in Madras Presidency by a Group of non – Brahmins.
- Dravidian and Non-Brahmin Identity in 1801 Madras Presidency was Formed by the colonial regime as a Multilingual province (Tamils, Telugus, Malayalees, Kannadigas and Tulus).
- India's diversity could be noticed in the Political developments of the Madras Presidency.
- In Bengal and in the rest of North India a Sanskrit and Vedic centered Indian culture was projected, besides an Indo-Aryan or Indo-German group of Languages were acknowledged.
- Non-Vedic, Non-Sanskrit cultures were not Recognized.
- The deciphering of Brahmi Script in 1837 by James Prinsep and Researches on south Indian languages (Ellis in 1816 and Caldwell in 1856) came to establish that Indian culture was not Homogeneous; and there existed a (Non-Aryans) group of languages and countries.
- Buddhist and Dravidian traditions also existed in India.
- In the south, especially in the multi-lingual Madras Presidency, Theories on Dravidian group of language and Dravidian cultural heritage led to Assertion of Dravidian identity among the Non-Brahmin.

Two factors:

- Brahmins claiming Superiority over Non-Brahmins and
- Brahmins monopolizing educational and Employment opportunities transformed.
- The Dravidian identity into Non-Brahmin Identity. (In Maharashtra too Mahatma Jyotiba Rao Phule launched a Non-Brahmin movement on similar lines).
- In the middle of 19th century Dravidian also indicated the non-Brahmins in south India.

- The Non-Brahmins of the Madras Presidency had a grievance that the emerging Nationalist leaders paid no heed to non-Brahmin issues.
- In 1852 Gajulu Lakshmi Narasu Chetty expressed this grievance, Seceded from British Indian Association and Floated his own organization named Madras Native Association.
- In the post-mutiny Period, the non-brahmin leaders undertook social reforms rather than political reforms.
- After the introduction of Minto-Morley Reforms in 1909 the non-brahmin leaders of Madras Presidency began to protest the inadequate representations to them in Education and employment.
- Sir Alexander Gordon Cardew, A member of Governor's Executive Council submitted Statistical details (1913) to prove that The Brahmins who formed only three Percent of the population cornered most of the opportunities.
- The Dravidian Movement emerged as a defence of the non-Brahmins against the Brahmin dominance.
- An organisation called the Madras Non-Brahmin Association Was founded in 1909.
- To help the non-Brahmin students.
- In 1912 C. Natesanar, a medical doctor, founded the Madras United League, later renamed as Madras Dravidian Association to support Dravidian uplift.
- The organisation focused on educating and supporting non-Brahmin Graduates and conducting regular meetings to Share their grievances.
- Meanwhile, Natesanar founded a hostel, the Dravidian Home, at Triplicane (Madras) in July 1916 to address the Lack of hostels for the non-Brahmin students which hindered their educational development.
- In addition, the home had a literary society for the benefit of non-Brahmin students.

South Indian Liberal Federation (Justice Party):

- On 20 November 1916 around 30 prominent non-Brahmin leaders including Dr. C. Natesanar, Sir Pitti Theyagarayar, T.M. Nair and Alamelu Mangai Thayarammal came together to form the South Indian Liberation Federation (SILF).

- In the meantime, at a Meeting held in the Victoria Public Hall the Non-Brahmin Manifesto was released in December 1916.
- The manifesto articulated the Voice of the non-Brahmin communities.
- **The association started publishing three Newspapers:** Dravidian in Tamil, Justice in English and Andhra Prakasika in Telugu, to propagate the ideals of the Party.
- The first election, under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, was held in 1920 after the introduction of the Dyarchy form of Government in the provinces.
- The Justice Party Won the election and formed the first-ever Indian Cabinet in Madras.
- A. Subbarayalu became the Chief Minister of the Madras Presidency and the party formed the government during 1920–1923 and 1923–1926.
- In the context the Congress Party boycotting the legislature, the Justice Party continued to remain in office till 1937 elections were held.
- In the 1937 elections the Indian National Congress contested the Elections for the first time and trounced the Justice Party.

Programmes and Activities:

- The Justice Party is the fountain head of the non-Brahmin Movement in the country.
- The Justice Party government widened Education and employment opportunities for the majority of the population and created Space for them in the political sphere.
- The Justicites removed the legal Hindrances restricting Inter-caste marriages and broke the barriers that prevented Depressed Classes from the use of public Wells and tanks.
- The Justice Party government ordered that public schools accommodate the Children of the Depressed Classes.
- Hostels were established for the students belonging to this social group in 1923.
- In the meantime, in 1920 the Madras Corporation introduced the Mid-day Meal Scheme with the approval of the legislative council.

- It was a breakfast scheme in a corporation school at Thousand Lights, Madras.
- The first Justice Government reversed this policy on 1 April 1921.
- Voter qualifications were made gender neutral.
- This resolution cleared the way for Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi's nomination to the council in 1926, when she became the first woman to become a member of any legislature in India.
- In 1922, during the first Justice ministry (before relationships with Scheduled Castes soured), the Council officially replaced the terms "Panchamar" or "Paraiyar" (which were deemed derogatory) with "Adi Dravidar" to denote the Scheduled Castes of the presidency.
- The Justice Party worked towards legislating Provisions for communal representation – Reservations for various communities.
- Two Communal Government Orders (16 September 1921 and 15 August 1922) were passed to ensure equitable distribution in appointments among various castes and communities as a Part of achieving social justice.
- The Justice Party rule established the Staff Selection Board in 1924 for the selection of government Officials and encouraged all the communities to share the administrative powers.
- In 1929, The Government of British India adopted the Pattern and established the Public Service Commission.
- The Justice Party further concentrated on Reforms in religious institutions.
- The Justice Party Introduced the Hindu Religious Endowment (HRE) Act in 1926 and enabled any individual, irrespective of their caste affiliation, to become a member of the temple committee and govern the resources of the religious institutions.
- In 1937, in opposition to the Rajaji's Government's move to introduce compulsory Hindi in schools, he launched a popular movement to oppose it.
- The anti-Hindi agitation (1937–39) had a big impact on Tamil Nadu's politics.
- Periyar Was imprisoned for his role in the movement.
- When he was still in jail, Periyar was elected the President of the Justice Party.

- Thereafter the Justice Party merged with the Self-Respect Movement.
- It was rechristened as Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) in 1944 in Salem Conference.

