



## SPREAD OF THE IDEOLOGY OF DRAVIDIANISM AND DRAVIDANAD

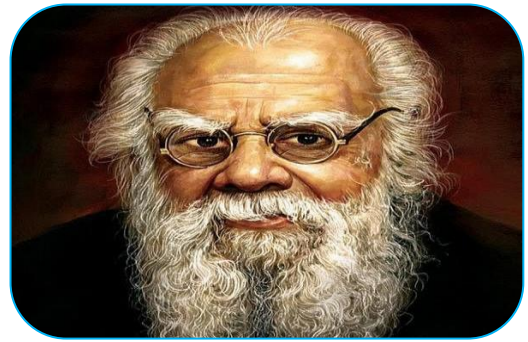
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### ABSTRACT

The persistent endeavour to establish a distinct non-Brahmin identity for the Tamil population emerged as a declaration of uniqueness in contrast to the northern part of India. This distinctiveness was claimed on grounds of culture and the right to retain and, develop the Tamil language formed part of it. As a corollary, efforts for the imposition of Hindi was visualized and was vehemently opposed by the Tamil speaking people in the region of the Dravidanad as visualized Dravidian scholars and the movement headed by the Dravidian Nationalists.



**KEYWORDS:** Dravidanad, Dravidians, Tamil, E.V.Ramasamy, Brahmin, E.V.R., Non-Brahmin.

### INTRODUCTION

In justification of the position of Dravidian origin of the non-Brahmins, a large number of scholarly works were available and more were written during the course of the struggle. Robert Caldwell (1819-1891) and P. Sundaram Pillai (1855-1897) were amongst those who took up the matter for analysis. Robert Caldwell, in his seminal work, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages*, evolved specific concepts concerning the origin and characteristics of Tamil Dravidian culture, distinguishing it as unique from Aryan-Brahminical culture.<sup>1</sup> In his critique of the Ramayana as a biased literary creation, P. Sundaram Pillai, the author of *Manonmaniam*, an immortal Tamil epic play pointed out that it was intended to emphasize the capabilities of the Aryans while representing their opponents, the Dravidians—who had developed a high degree of civilization—in a derogatory way.<sup>2</sup> In Tamil Nadu, Maraimalai Adigal spoke of the separateness of the Dravidian-Aryan identities and concluded that when the Aryans had come into contact with the Tamils, the civilisation of the latter was the primary element at work in effecting a thorough change in the social, moral and intellectual constitution of the former.<sup>3</sup>

In the arguments sustaining the idea of the Dravidian people as distinct from the Aryans, two main pillars were the claims of racial separateness and linguistic distinctiveness.

As early as in 1926, writing in the *Kudi Arasu*, E.V.R. had stated that some interested persons were contemplating getting Hindi recognized as the national language of India. He warned that should such a development take place, the interests of the Tamil people would be adversely affected. Under the penname of Chitraputran, he wrote that nobody need to have any doubt that the major part of the amount spent here for the propagation of Hindi was the money of the non-Brahmins. Nearly 97 per cent of the people in Tamil Nadu who knew Hindi already or who were then studying Hindi were Brahmins.

Though they were only 3 per cent of the population, all the money spent for the propagation of Hindi went to their advantage.

In the neighbouring states the propagation of Hindi was used as a pretext for the propagation of Hinduism. The common people of the country did not know this secret. The few who did, were afraid to express their views.<sup>4</sup>

In 1937, following Rajaji's appointment as the Premier of Tamil Nadu, he mandated the teaching of Hindi in schools, which subsequently sparked a wave of anti-Hindi protests. The agitations were significant in being able to mobilise a wide cross section of people, including the rich and the poor, men and women, urban and rural, literates and illiterate, religious and orthodox, nationalists and secessionists. Several individuals and associations, even without associating with the Self-Respect Movement, threw in their weight in favour of the agitation.<sup>5</sup> At a well-attended women's conference held under the presidentship of A. Narayani Ammal on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1938, the participants vowed to stand by the Self-Respect Movement's efforts to struggle for the withdrawal of the imposition of Hindi in school education.<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that people from different communities participated in the agitation. By March 1940, the total number of people who courted arrest for participation in the anti-Hindi agitation was 1,237, of whom 36 were Muslims, 6 Christians, and 73 women.<sup>7</sup>

A series of articles in condemnation of the governmental policy was published in the *Viduthalai*. In an attempt to stem the agitation, the government, in turn, framed charges against the publisher and editor of the paper. They were put to trial and sentenced to six months' imprisonment each on grounds of inciting anti-governmental activities.<sup>8</sup>

The demand for a separate Dravidian land was in a sense the outcome of the anti-Hindi agitation, embodying the idea of the national identity of the Tamil people. In fact, Tamil, Dravidian and non-Brahmin Shudra identities easily merged into one another wherein the demand of autonomy first of Tamil Nadu, then of a Dravidanad were seen as intended to bring about the fruition of Shudra emancipation from Aryan, i.e., North Indian hegemony. Positing the Dravidian people and their cultural identity as superior to that of the Aryans, the Self-Respect Movement under the leadership of E.V.R. raised the demand for Dravidanad or Dravidasthan, claiming territorial autonomy for the Dravidians.

On 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1938, *Kudi Arasu* carried the message: 'Tamil Nadu for the Tamilians' in bold letters.<sup>9</sup> In the next issue, E.V.R. explained at length the urgency of the demand as the only means of preserving the Tamil's identity against the exploitation of the Aryans and of the north.<sup>10</sup> However, the movement soon expanded as the slogan evolved from 'Tamil Nadu for Tamilians' to 'Dravidanadu for Dravidians.'<sup>11</sup> E.V.R. first put forward his demand of 'Tamil Nadu for Tamils or non -Brahmins'.<sup>12</sup>

The idea of a separate Dravidanadu was elaborated upon through the 1940s. Annadurai, speaking on behalf of the Self-Respect Movement, elucidated the concept of Dravidanadu in both geographical and political terms. Accordingly, the Tamil Dravidians demanded a separate Dravida Nadu. It was their aim to establish an independent Dravidian federation. The Telugus, Malayalees and Kannadigas would join in it, because Tamil was their root language. The four language divisions constituted the federation. But each language, like Tamil, would maintain its separate identity.<sup>13</sup>

In underscoring the need for Dravidanad, the economic exploitation by the Hindi-speaking, Aryan, Brahminical North was thoroughly examined. It was asserted that South India especially the Dravidian region had been converted into a de facto marketplace for goods originating from North India. And, to change this situation, said Annadurai, the Tamil Dravidians demanded a separate Dravidanad where they could utilise the available resources for their progress and development independently.<sup>14</sup>

In 1939, E.V.R. organised the Dravida Nadu Conference for the demand of a separate and Independent 'Dravidasthan'. The demand was again insisted in 1940 in response to the Lahore Resolution demanding Pakistan passed by the Muslim League.<sup>15</sup> Throughout the 1940s, E.V.R. had proclaimed the trifurcation of India into Muslim India, Aryan Land and Dravidanad in his most of the speeches in 1940s. In all the public meetings that he addressed between March and June 1940, he projected the three-nation doctrine as the only solution which could end the political deadlock in the country.<sup>16</sup>

In the third week of April in 1940, the Justice Party in fact organised a Dravidanad partition celebration throughout the province.<sup>17</sup> And, on 20<sup>th</sup> April, meetings were held at twenty six centres of the Madras Presidency.<sup>18</sup> At a special conference held at Kanchipuram on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1940, apart from the adoption of a resolution demanding a separate state for the Dravidians, a map of India showing Dravidanad was displayed. In that map, the whole of southern India and the Deccan, including a portion of Bengal, were shown as comprising Dravidanad.<sup>19</sup> Similar conferences were held in the different districts of the Tamil region. An unique feature of the conferences was the adoption of resolutions demanding the granting of Dravidanad and the display of its map with the obvious intent of evoking public awareness and sympathy.<sup>20</sup>

In August 1941, E.V.R. announced the temporary suspension of the movement advocating for Dravidanad. This decision, made by E.V.R. and his D.K. party, aimed to support the Government in its wartime efforts. It was anticipated that the agitation would resume following the end of the war.<sup>21</sup> Despite the halt in the agitation, the demand for Dravidanad was maintained in a temporary capacity. During the visit of the Cripps Mission to India, E.V.R., along with Soundrapandia Nadar, Samiappa Mudaliar, and Muthiah Chettiar—delegates from the Justice Party—met with the Cripps Mission on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1942, to stress their claim for a separate identity of the Dravidian nation.<sup>22</sup>

E.V.R. carried on his propaganda for Tamil separatism throughout the Second World War .On 27<sup>th</sup> August 1944 at Salem , the Justice Party was formally changed to the Dravida Kazhagam (D.K.)which aimed at the realization of a separate non-Brahmin or Dravidian Country.<sup>23</sup> On 17<sup>th</sup> September 1949 , the broke away D.M.K. form D.K.,<sup>24</sup> Due to the Chinese incursion in 1952, C.N. Annadurai suspended the Dravida Nadu Demand. Annaduarai said that when the country was in danger , the advocacy of separatism would be to give way to the foreigner.<sup>25</sup> In regard to Dravida Nadu, the D.K. of E.V.R. stated that in view of the emergence of Andhra Pradesh and indifferent attitude of the people of Mysore and Kerala, the people in Tamil Nadu would have to be content with Tamil Nadu ad Dravida Nadu. However , E.V.R. remarked that the door would be always opened for all Dravidians to join in a united Darvida Nadu in future if they desired.<sup>26</sup>

To conclude, the ideology of the Dravidian identity was emerged in the late Nineteenth Century and spread in the Twentieth Century. The word 'Dravidian' was well portrayed by Robert Caldwell who also exposed the rich heritage of the Tamil among the Dravidian languages. When the Brahmin and Non-Brahmin controversy emerged with the rise of the Justice Party and Self-Respect League, E.V. R and his followers took the demand of Dravida Nadu in order to free the Dravidians for the clutches of the Brahmin and North Indian hegemony. Both E.V.R. and C.N. Annadurai considered the imposition of Hindi as a tool to subjugate the Dravidian. At last , both of them abandoned the demand of Dravidanad on political circumstances emerged due to the reorganization of States on linguist basis and the incursion of China into India's frontier region.

## END NOTES

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