



# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

ISSN: 2249-894X

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631 (UIF)

VOLUME - 11 | ISSUE - 5 | FEBRUARY - 2022



---

---

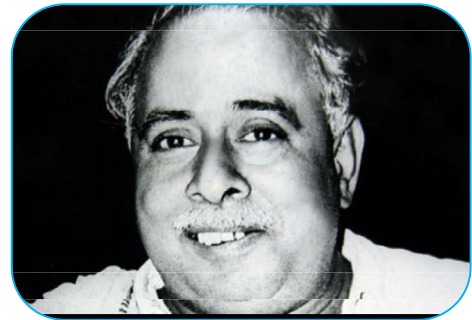
## C.N.ANNADURAI –ICON OF THE DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT IN TAMIL NADU POLITICS

**R. Sudhakar**

Full-Time Research Scholar in History , Department of History ,  
Presidency College (Autonomous) , (Affiliated to the University of Madras),  
Chennai , Tamil Nadu State.

### ABSTRACT:

*C. N. Annadurai was a former Chief Minister of the state of Tamil Nadu in southern India. He was the first member of a Dravidian party to hold that position and was also the first non-congress leader to form a majority government in independent India. As an excellent orator, Annadurai was also a popular Tamil writer and thinker. He had written and acted in several plays. Some of his works were later made into films. Among the politicians of the Dravidian parties, he was the foremost to use widely the Tamil cinema for political publicity. As a middle class man, he served in school as a school teacher and then served as a journalist turned his attention to the political issues which affected the interests of the Dravidians. As a journalist he served as editor many political journals and joined himself in the Justice Party and later became one of the frontline leaders of Dravidar Kazhagam (D.K.). As a staunch follower of E.V. Ramasamy (E.V.R.), by dint of his ability he rose to a higher position the D.K. party. Many differences arose between Annadurai and E.V.R. on the question of request for a separate independent state, Dravida Nadu , and inclusion in the Indian Union. He crossed swords with his political mentor. Annadurai with his supporters broke away from D.K. and launched a political party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.).*



**KEYWORDS:** C.N.Annadurai, Justice Party, D.M.K., Dravida Nadu, Congress, E.V.Ramasamy, Hindi, Tamil Nadu.

### FORMATIVE LIFE OF ANNADURAI

On 15<sup>th</sup> September 1909, Annadurai was born at a middle-class family in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu. Natarajan and Bangaru Ammal were his parents. His sister Rajamani Ammal looked after him during his youth period. While studying as a student, he got marriage with Rani in 1930. They had no issue. So the couple came forward to adopt the grand children of Rajamani Ammal. Annadurai attended Pachaiyappa High School. Later he served as a clerk at the Town's Municipal Office. It was mainly to meet out the financial needs of his family. Annadurai was able to complete his B.A. (Hons) Degree at Chennai Pachaiyappa's College in the year 1934. Thereafter, he successfully finished his M.A. Degree in Economics and Politics. The University of Madras accorded master degree to him. For some period, he served as English teacher at Pachaiyappa High School. As his attention was on politics, he gave up his teaching profession and totally indulged in politics and editor of the political journals.

## POLITICAL ENTRY

Annadurai's passion for politics prompted him to join the Justice Party in 1935. The Justice Party formed in 1917 was the brainchild of non-Brahmin elites. The Party, which had its origin in the Madras United League, was initially established as a task force that provided the non-Brahmin students in Madras with the necessary accommodation. It became a prominent political party due to the tireless efforts of the Dravidian leaders such as T.M. Nair, P.Theagaraya Chetty and C. Natesa Mudaliar, In the beginning it emerged as the South Indian People Association, then South Indian Liberal Federation (S.I.L.F.) and at last as the Justice Party, named after the party's English newspaper *Justice*.<sup>1</sup> The Party had been in power in the Madras Presidency from the implementation of dyarchy in 1920<sup>2</sup>, until it was defeated by the I.N.C. in 1937. When Annadurai joined the Justice Party, E.V. Ramasami (E.V.R.) was serving as Party President. Annadurai became sub-editor of the magazine, *Justice*. Later he was associated with editor of *Viduthalai* (Freedom) as its editor. He even served in E.V.R.'s *Kudi Arasu*, a Tamil newspaper. In due course he founded his own magazine, *Dravida Nadu*. In 1944, E.V.R. renamed the Justice Party as Dravidar Kazhagam (D.K) and renounced the privilege of participating in the elections.<sup>3</sup>

## EMERGENCE OF D.M.K FORM D.K.

E.V.R. was frightened assumed that independent India would lead to the rule of the Brahmins and North Indians. There the interests of the all the South Indians including Tamils would be suffered. Hence he insisted that the rule of the British was better until the achievement of social justice. He asked his followers to observe 15th August 1947, the day of India's independence as the day of mourning because the political and social interests of the Dravidians were ignored. In this context, Annadurai stoutly opposed the decision of E.V.R. and it created a schism among the followers of E.V.R. and Annadurai.<sup>4</sup> The country saw independence as a general achievement and not just that of the victory of the Northern Aryans. Annadurai also opposed the decision of E.V.R. give up participating in democratic elections and hence Annadurai left the party meeting in 1948.<sup>5</sup>

On 9<sup>th</sup> July 1949, E.V.R. married Maniammai who was forty years younger to the former. This unequal marriage aggravated the differences between E.V.R and Annadurai. The infuriated Annadurai determined to launch a political party with the support E.V.K. Sampath and other Dravidian leaders. The new party, 'Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.)' was started on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1949 during the times of political chaos. <sup>6</sup> The D.M. K. determined to adopt the ideology of D.K. the parent party, in the social front since its inception.<sup>7</sup>

In the beginning the activities of the new party were limited to urban centers and their surroundings. Annadurai was able to hasten the Party's reputation by taking interests of the downtrodden, middle and labour, students, women and minorities. He tirelessly worked for social elevation of the bottomline people and for his works he received massive support which also led him to the road of popularity among the all the classes of the Tamils.

## AGITATION AGAINST HINDI

The popular Congress ministry led by Rajaji was in power in Madras Presidency. In 1938, it decided to introduce the compulsory Hindi in schools and this move raised a banner of Revolt from the side of the Dravidian leaders who doubted the intention of Rajaji. Tamil savants also stoutly opposed the step of Rajaji ministry. With support of Tamil fanatics including the poet Bharathidasan, Annadurai, organized processions, demonstrations and meetings to ventilate the grievances of the Tamils in opposing Hindi. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1938, the first anti-Hindi imposition conference was held at Kanchipuram and in it Annadurai participated with a large number of party men. Thalamuthu and Natarajan, the two members who involved in agitation severely wounded because of police atrocities and subsequently died. It created havoc. Due to the overwhelming opposition, at last, the Madras Government was forced to withdraw the implementation order in 1940.<sup>8</sup>

When India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic with its own Constitution in 1950, Hindi gained official status after fifteen years in 1965. On knowing it the non-Hindi Tamil students received

rude shock. Soon Annadurai retorted that majority should not be considered in the matter of the imposition of Hindi. There are a lot of rats which are majority in comparing with Tigers which are in minority. In this situation, Tiger was chosen as national animal. Likewise crow is everywhere in India but peacocks were very meager. The Government chosen only peacock as national bird instead of crow which were majority in number. In condemning the continuous threat to impose Hindi, in August 1960 the D.M.K. under the chairmanship of Annadurai, conducted an anti-Hindi conference in a massive scale at Kodambakkam in Chennai. In the presence of the President of India on his visit to Tamil Nadu, the D.M.K. volunteers staged black flag demonstrations. It happened obviously on the plea of C.N. Annadurai. This became a dangerous political development. In this situation, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister assured the Parliament that the Government would meet the demands of the south Indians regarding the imposition of Hindi. The English was practice as the official language of India without any obstacle.

As violence escalated, Annadurai urged students to leave the protest, but D.M.K. leaders like M. Karunanidhi had greased the wheels of agitation.<sup>9</sup> Annadurai was arrested for instigating the agitation and this agitation itself helped the D.M.K. to win the general election of 1967. Annadurai became the new Chief Minister of Madras State on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1967.<sup>10</sup>

### ANNADURAI'S CONTRIBUTION TO CINEMA AND LITERATURE

Annadurai was one of the popular Tamil speakers of his days. He speaking of Tamil in style of public gatherings and writing Tamil words in a standard way were unique.. He was also best known for his impromptu speeches. He contributed numerous short stories, dramatic plays and novels on socio-political issues enriched the growth of the Tamil literature. During his presence in D.K., he himself acted in some of his plays. The Tamil film media became an important organ for spreading of Dravidian ideals on the efforts of Annadurai. He took much pains in bringing six plays to the Tamil world. *Nallathambi* (1948), was the first film of C.N. Annadurai and in it N.S. Krishnan acted in a notable role. This film focused the necessity of increasing cooperative agriculture and the sufferings of the downtrodden people under the zamindari system and the necessity to end the evils of such system. His reputed novels *Velaikaari* (1949) and *Oor Iravu*, were converted as films and that spread the ideals and principles of the Dravidian Movement and Dravidian politics.<sup>11</sup>

The film *Velaikaari* made direct references to powerful landowners who were traditionally allied with Congress leaders. Annadurai's films contained the elements of Dravidian ideology which work out against traditional beliefs, superstitious practices unreasonable customs and the Brahmin dominated Congress. K. R. Ramasamy, N. S. Krishnan, D. V. Narayanasamy, S. S. Rajendran, Sivaji Ganesan and M.G.R. were renowned stage and cine actors had kept intimate relations with Annadurai because Annadurai emerged as a leading Tamil scripter. His famous Tamil books had a rational approach and the contents were filled with rational thoughts. His famous work, 'Arya Mayai' highlighted his views of bringing a casteless and secular society where there was no place for caste domination and the role of the higher caste Brahmins. Rs 700 was imposed on Annadurai as fine for sedition and he was arrested and was jailed. <sup>12</sup> *Annavin Sattasabai Sorpolivukal* (Anna's Speeches at the State Legislative, 1960); *Ilatchiya Varalaru* (History of Principles, 1948), and *Rangon Ratha* (Radha from Rangoon) were his other interesting works. *Kambarasam* was his critical work on Ramayana of Kamban. His fictional works like *Parvathy B.A.*, *Kalinga Rani* (Queen of Kalinga) *Kapothipura Kathal*, and *Pavayin payanam* (Travels of a young lady) contained the political seeds of Dravidian Movement. . D.M.K. extensively used the movies to spread its political and cultural ideas. However the Congress Government crippled the media activities of the D.M.K now and then. To evade censorship, D.M.K. movies popularly used the name, *Anna*, instead of C.N. Annadurai. Anna also means an elder brother in Tamil. When praises ON Anna were showered on the screen, the crowds shouted with whistle and made applause.

### ANNADURAI 'S NOMINATION TO THE RAJYA SABHA

At Tiruchirappalli, the Second Provincial Conference of the D.M.K. was organized on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1956. Annadurai relinquished his post of General Secretary of the Party. Soon V.R. Nedunchezian was elevated to the position. At this conference, the D.M.K. resolved to involve in the second General Elections of Free India and contested the elections which were held on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1957. In that election, Fifteen Assembly Seats and two Parliamentary seats were won by the D.M.K...<sup>13</sup> To the Madras Legislature, Anna was elected from Kanchipuram, his birth place. It was the first election to Annadurai. He was placed as an opposition party leader the Madras Legislature. As a next major political party to the Congress and a dominant regional party, D.M.K. was able to gain fifty members of the State Legislative Assembly. In this election, even though Annadurai was defeated, he was able to get a Rajya Sabha M.P.seat<sup>14</sup>

### AS THE CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU

The Congress had to lose nine States to opposition parties in 1967 elections. In Madras state that a single non Congress party won the majority of the seats. An electoral fusion of the non- Congress parties was materialized to avoid a scattering of the opposition votes. For a while, Rajaji, a prominent Congress left the Congress and launched the Swatantra Party. He played a remarkable role in the electoral alignment among the opposition parties which paved the way for the decline of the Congress.<sup>15</sup> The victory of the D.M. K. with its allies facilitated C.N. Annadurai as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. He was the first D.M.K. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

### RATIONAL THOUGHTS OF ANNADURAI

The thoughts of D.M.K. leaders were based on rationalism. They inherited rational thoughts much from E.V.R. For the first time in the nation, Annadurai legalized Self-Respect marriages. In these marriages the Brahmin priests were not invited and deliberately avoided to conduct religious ceremonies. Thus the self-respecters refused the role of the Brahmins in their wedding functions. As a true follower of E.V.R., Annadurai advocated self-respect marriages. He discarded the conventional marriages on the grounds that they caused much expenditure to the poor people. Further these marriages placed the poor people in irrecoverable financial misery. The married girls of these conventional marriages also suffered from the dowry tortures. Annadurai highlighted the merits of the Self-Respect marriages. Accordingly, inter- caste marriages and love marriages would eradicate the financial sufferings that incurred in the traditional marriages arranged by the parents. In the wake of the election victory. Annadurai subsidized the price of rice gains. As per his promise in the election manifesto of 1967, he implemented a measure of rice for one rupee but it was in practice for a certain period and later it was discontinued.<sup>16</sup>

In the Independent period, the Madras State was rechristened as Tamil Nadu on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1967. It happened during the Chiefministership of Annadurai.<sup>17</sup> The introduction of a two language policy replace the usage of three language formula. It was also a remarkable achievement of the D.M.K. Government under Annadurai. At that times, most of the southern states followed the three language formula in their educational system. In the southern states like Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, with the regional language, the students compulsorily had to learn English and Hindi, totally three languages. Further, it was during his period of Chief Ministership the Second World Tamil Conference was organized successfully on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1968. On that Occasion, Zakir Hussain, the President of India and Ugal Singh, the Governor of Tamil Nadu and other Ministers graced the occasion with their presence in the conference.<sup>18</sup>

Due to medical ailment, Annadurai was admitted at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in o New York on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1968. There cancer was diagnose in him and he was given medical treated for Cancer. On 6<sup>th</sup> November 1968, he came back to Chennai and addressed at several official functions, neglecting the doctors' advice. So his health condition was deteriorated much and he passed away on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1969.<sup>19</sup> The growth of cancer in his body was obviously due to his habit of chewing tobacco. The highest number of his followers and admirers attended his funeral processions

was recorded in *The Guinness book of Records*. Around fifteen million people attended the procession to pay homage to their leaders. His mortal remains were laid to rest in the northern end of Marina Beach, which is named after him as Anna Square. His death was an irreparable loss to his *thambis* (brothers) in particular and the Tamil people in general.<sup>20</sup>

Annadurai the powerful orator was also a brilliant writer, and an excellent organizer. He made use of play, films, journals, pamphlets and other mass media to spread his message to the populace and was highly succeeded in drawing mass support, especially the rural youth and all the active political activists of various political affiliations. He was strongly anti- Brahmin, anti-North and anti-Aryan. He raised slogan of opposition against the cultural, economic and political dominance of the North. After Annadurai's death, M. Karunanidhi became the Chief Minister. In 1972, the D.M.K. was split, with M.G Ramachandran forming the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (A.D.M.K.) on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1972.

#### END NOTES

- 1 Jadayan, T., *Politico-Economic Developments in Tamil Nadu, 1905-1922*, Ph.D. Thesis, Chennai: University of Madras, 2015, pp.138-150.
- 2 Hardgrave, Robert, L., *Essays in the Political Sociology of South India*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1979, p.19.
- 3 Udhayasankar, I., *Periyar E.V. Ramasamy: Communal Justice and Social Recognition*, Chennai: Anna Centre for Public Affairs, University of Madras, 2006, p.xiv.
- 4 Kannan, R., *Anna, The Life and Times of C.N. Annadurai*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 2010 pp.114-115.
- 5 Rajaraman, P., *Glimpses of Social Movements Peninsular India*, Chennai: Poompozhil Publishers, 2013, p.122.
- 6 Parthasarathy, T.M., *Thi. Mu Ka. Varalaru (Tamil) (History of D.M.K)*, Chennai: Bharathi Pathippagam, 1999, p.97.
- 7 Munavarjan, H., and Kumaran, P., 'C.N. Annadurai and His Impact in Tamil Nadu Politics' in *Proceedings Volume of the Twentieth Annual Session of the Tamil Nadu History Congress*, Thoothukudi : Tamil Nadu History Congress, 2013, p.345.
- 8 Kannan, R., *Anna, The Life and Times of C.N. Annadurai, op.cit.*, p.55.
- 9 Ramasamy, A., *DMK, Rise and Contribution*, Madurai: Puthu Vasantham Pathippagam, 2009, p.131.
- 10 Karunanidhi, Kalaingar, *Nenjuku Needhi*, Vol.I, Chennai: Thirumagal Nilayam, 2000, p.688.
- 11 Aruldhoss, Sivaji Vendra Cinema Rajyam, (Tamil), Chennai: Vikatan Pirasuram, 2009, pp.39-40; Janarthanam, Era, *Dr. Arignar Anna Nadagangal Oar Aaraayichi*, (Tamil) ,Chennai: Nagooram Publications, 1974, pp.106-107.
- 12 Kannan, R., *Anna, The Life and Times of C.N. Annadurai, op.cit.*, p.175.
- 13 Hardgrave, Robert, L., *Essays in the Political Sociology of South India, op.cit.*, pp.60-61
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp.78-79.
- 15 Parthasarathy, T.M. *op.cit.*, pp.456-457.
- 16 Kannan, R., *Anna, The Life and Times of C.N. Annadurai, op.cit.*, pp.315-316.
- 17 Madhavan, S., ' Kanavu Nanavaanadhu' in *Anna Centenary Souvenir*, Dinamani, 2009, p.139
- 18 Kannan, R., *Anna, The Life and Times of C.N. Annadurai, op.cit.*, pp.319-320
- 19 'Five Mourners Killed' in *The Times*. 4 February 1965, p.5.
- 20 Kannan, R., *MGR, A Life*, Penguin Books, Gurgaon, 2017, p.144.