

C.N. ANNADURAI  
THE ARCHITECT OF TAMIL NADU POLITICS



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# DMK AND THE ISSUES OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF C.N.ANNADURAI

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## Introduction

In the present day political vocabulary, the term 'National Integration' occupies a predominant role. This is because most of the developing countries are concerned with this phenomenon. India itself is faced with the formidable problem of achieving real psychological integration in the midst of all the diversities of language, religion and local cultures. The problem is gigantic in view of the varied composition of India's population, the vast distances that separate her different parts, the diverse climatic and physical features that condition the daily lives and occupations of the people, and above all, because of the rapidity with which socio, political economic and technological changes have been taking place since independence. Nation-building in India continues to be an elusive task.

In contemporary world one finds that nation-groups are held together apparently by linguistic affinity, like the English, French, Spanish, Italian, Iranian etc. There are also different nation-groups speaking the same language (e.g) Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt etc. On the other hand, there is the phenomenon of the existence of multilingual nation-states like Switzerland, Canada, Indonesia, and India. This fact goes to show that factors other than linguistic affinity play a dominant role in moulding nations.

Some scholars suggest that opposition to effort towards integration coming from religious, linguistic or other

regional groups at times is not actually directed against the idea of a united nation as such, but rather stems from the fear of loss of identity. It is against this background that the present study makes an attempt to examine the stand of a regional party which has been, since its inception, described or branded as an ethnic party towards the issue of National Integration in India. Specifically, this study aims a systematic and critical presentation of the views expressed in the legislative forum by C.N. Annadurai the founder and the leader of the D.M.K party during the late 60's. This party which had been in the forefront of the movement for 'Dravidastan' had virtually given up that idea at the time it reached the height of its power in Tamil Nadu politics. Several reasons have prompted this study, the most important being the transformation of the D.M.K., an off-shoot of the D.K., from a secessionist movement, under the impact of social mobilization and accommodation by the government, to a political party representing an increasing specificity of interests and a basic acceptance of democratic, electoral and parliamentary values and practices.

### **The Context of Tamil Nadu Politics**

In 1944 a major reorganization took place in the Justice Party under the leadership of Periyar. The party henceforth took the names of Dravida Kazhagam or Dravidian Federation and soon developed into a highly militant mass organization. At the 1945 conference at Thiruchirapalli, the Dravida Kazhagam adopted a constitution and a symbol a black flag with a red circle in the centre; the black to symbolise the mourning for the subjected Dravidian peoples. The Dravida Kazhagam proclaimed as its goal the achievement of a Sovereign independent Dravidian Republic. The party also emphasised its opposition to the British Raj, and Periyar exhorted the party leaders and followers to a renounce all titles conferred on them by the British. This action brought



popularity and prestige to the movement and dealt a severe blow to the criticism that the party was handmaid of the British.

The popularity of the Dravida Kazhagam soon transformed it into a mass movement. The party attracted the youth in large numbers. Powerful speakers and radical writers were among Party's second line leaders. The party had a well-knit organisational structure reaching out in the State through its organisational units. The Party brought the message of Tamil nationality to the masses.

The Dravida Kazhagam, under the leadership of Periyar, boycotted the Independence Day celebrations... Periyar had no faith in democratic government. At the age of 72 Periyar married a girl more than 40 years younger to him. Annadurai, his prime disciple and powerful speaker and writer, quit the party in protest against his leader's autocratic behaviour. After the split in the D.K., C.N. Annadurai formed his own party the D.M.K. in 1949. The ostensible reason for breaking with his mentor was the "marriage episode" and his autocratic style of functioning. C.N. Annadurai and many of his admirers who were the younger members of the party, wanted to enter the electoral politics, and this was the real motivating factor behind the formation of the D.M.K.

The D.M.K. rose to prominence soon and proved that it had an edge over the Congress because the Dravidian movement had been articulating ideas of specific social reforms in Madras Presidency for 40 years. Also the DMK had the potential to become the champion of the interests of non-Brahmins. Thus, as Prof. Fadia points out by the time the country became independent, there were two well-developed political movements in Madras Presidency, viz., the Indian National Congress and the non-Brahmin or Dravidian movement. The Congress stood for loyalty to the

Indian nation-state, social reform and rational economic development. The Dravidian movements called for the overthrow of Brahmin the leaders of domination in political, administrative" cultural and economic spheres. The more radical elements in the movement sought the establishment of a separate state. All sections of the movement, however, view with each other in emphasizing the glory of the Tamil literary heritage and Dravidian culture. The dominance of the Congress party and its victories in the elections of 1936 and 1946 rested on a restricted franchise. Because there was a large number of prominent Brahmins in Congress, the early Dravidian or non-Brahmin leaders rejected the congress ideology. Naturally, in evolving a Dravidian cultural alternative, the early non-Brahmin movement leaders had to work towards building a Tamil cultural nationalism and thus emphasise the view that language and culture constitute the primary basis for a political community[1].

### **The Elections of 1952 and 1957**

The first general elections of 1951-52 did not bring the Congress party in Madras state a decisive victory. Six of its ministers in the state Government were defeated. It could secure only seats in a House of 375. Where as in 1946 it commanded strength of 165 out of 205 seats. Nevertheless, the Congress as still the largest single party, even though it no longer wielded a majority in the Legislative Assembly. The opposition consisted of the Communists with 59 seats, the KMPP with 35, the Socialists with 13, the Krishlok log Party with 15, the Tamil Nadu Toilers with 19, and Commonweel Party with 6 seats. There were 62 independents also. Both the Dravida Kazhagam and the DMK under the leadership of C.N. Annadurai did not contest the elections. The DMK supported independent candidates and two other parties, viz., the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party and the Commonweel Party.



C.Rajagopalachari became the Chief Minister and formed the Ministry in April 1952

Towards the end of the 1950's the political configuration in Madras took a dramatic turn. Andhra Pradesh was constituted into a separate state and Madras had shrunk in size. The DK broke its association with Congress, and periyar issued a call for burning the national flag on 1st August 1955 as a protest against imposition of Hindi. DMK for its part launched a campaign against "Marvari North Indian economic domination" the party having been deprived by the D.K. of the Hindi platform. The DMK entered into electoral politics in 1957 and posed a challenge to the Congress by its astute political style, mobilization techniques and ideology.

### **The Municipal Elections of 1959**

After the 1957 general elections the DMK turned its attention to the Madras City Corporation elections held in 1959. The DMK won 45 of the 100 seats, and with the support of the Communists managed to get its candidate elected as Major. In factionalism within the-Congress party resulted in an independent being elected as Chairman with DMK support. But in Madurai, for the first time in decades, the Congress lost control of the municipality. The Congress had suffered tremendous losses, with its majorities in the 55 municipalities of Madras having dropped from 27 to 22, and out of a total of 1,513 seats it had dropped from 709 to 647. The Congress losses, however, were almost exclusively in urban areas. The DMK's control of the Madras Corporation brought the party to the corridor of power for the first time, and the election of a DMK Mayor and Deputy Mayor was hailed as a big event for the Dravidan movement.

### **Third General Elections, 1962**

The 1957 elections can be said to have initiated the process of emergence of two-party politics in Tamilnadu

where the DMK became the single largest opposition party in the Madras Legislative Assembly. The elections held in 1962 brought the DMK a substantial number of seats in the Assembly. The results showed that the DMK had succeeded in widening its support base. This, despite the fact that there had just been a split in the party which led to the formation of another Tamil Nationalist Organization known as the Tamil National Party (INP). Though there was not much doubt that the Congress party would be returned to power with a good majority, the results of the 1962 elections pointed to the emergence of the DMK as a formidable force. The DMK had won seats in the Lok Sabha and 50 seats in the Legislative Assembly, and become the strongest opposition ever to challenge the congress government in Tamil Nadu.

#### **Fourth General Elections, 1967**

The 1967 elections took the DMK to the pinnacle of victory. The DMK won 138 seats out and the Congress 50. The great success at the hustling which the DMK had registered and came as a surprise to most State politicians, including Rajagopalachari. The results of the elections made Tamilnadu the only Non-congress State to have a single party in power. At the State level, a key issue over which the 1967 elections were fought related to language, particularly the state congress' handling of the 1965 language agitations[1]. Other important issues which figured during the electioneering were food shortages, and rising prices which had created widespread discontent for two years prior to the 1967 elections. During the elections, the DMK promised that if elected, it would sell rice at the low price of one rupee per kilo. The party leaders also drew the attention of the voters to the alleged authoritarianism of Congress. The DMK also portrayed itself as the guardian of the richness and greatness of Tamil culture. The party also mobilized the disadvantaged sections of the society through its claim that it was for a socially and



economically egalitarian society. In short, the party fought the elections behind a cultural, nationalist approach having "a multifaceted, complex sentiment With Pragmatic and emotional elements."

### **The Language Issue and National Integration**

Before it came to power in 1967, the DMK had vigorously pushed, the demand for a separate Southern Autonomous state consisting of Madras, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore and Trivancore. The party maintained that the northern Aryan culture was an alien culture" that Hindi was an alien language and that the North had imposed its culture and language on the South. It thus became the objective of the DMK to fight for the political and cultural autonomy of the South. But the 1963, Chinese invasion and the display of some sensitivity on the part of the Central Government to Southern demands produced a marked change in the party's attitude towards secession. In place of secession the came to plead for greater federal autonomy within the Constitutional framework of India.

When the Chinese overwhelmed the Indian forces and occupied the Indiana territories" C.N. Annadurai, the then DMK leader, stated in an interview with the editor of the *II Illustrated Weekly of India*" in September 1965, as follows: "We have withdrawn the demand for "Dravida Nadu". We first realised its dangerous potentialities at the time of Chinese aggression. We issued a statement to the press announcing the suspension of our agitation in favour of Dravida Nadu". And he further said: "we might march as one people wedded to one principle having one aim that is to chuck out the Chinese and safeguard the country".

What is of importance to note here is that the radical change in the party's attitude was interpreted as a manifestation of the party's faith in the integrity and unity of

India. Referring to the conduct of DMK during the Chinese aggression of 1962, a DMK member pointed out in the State Assembly in 1972 that the DMK could not have come upon a more conducive situation to press successfully for its demand for a separate State and yet, the party had, instead chosen to give up its demand and stand by the Centre. The member said: "We did not stand by the Centre out of fear, definitely not. But because we have faith in the integrity and unity of the country[1].

The party, by its own admission had claimed that it was not fear of reprisal by the Central Government, which lay behind its change of heart but rather its inherent faith in the integrity and unity of the Indian State. The point is that in the context of the fact that since its inception that DMK had been a party which swore by its demand for a separate state. This change of heart in the wake of Chinese aggression cannot be satisfactorily explained merely by pointing to the party's fear of the adverse consequences for itself of following a secessionist course. Rather, a large part of the explanation must be located in the fact that the party's understanding of and approach to the issue of national integration in the context of its espousal of Tamil nationalism was, in its essence, not opposed to the unity and integrity of India. In what follows an attempt is made to examine this hypothesis. For this purpose, the views expressed by members of the DMK in the Legislature in the 4th and 5th Tamil Nadu Legislative Assemblies are examined. For the purpose of the present study the Legislative opinions of the DMK as they pertain to the question of National Integration are analysed by identifying by an issue namely, the Language Issue; . An examination of the Legislative proceedings covering the period of C.N. Annadurai in 4th Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly.



## The Background

India is a vast country characterised by diverse races, cultures, social customs and traditions, regions and above all languages and dialects. In pursuance of the provisions contained in Article 344(1) of the Constitution, President Rajendra Prasad set up in 1955, a Commission known as the Official Language Commission, comprising a Chairman and twenty-one members. The Commission carried on its investigation and deliberation for about one year and its report and recommendations were made public on 12th August 1957, a year after they had been submitted to the President.

According to this report, more people spoke and understood Hindi than any other language. The report, however pointed out that this in no way indicated that other regional languages were in anyway inferior to Hindi in point of development. The Commission recommended that regional languages might be retained for judicial and administrative purposes in the State Governments, but where this entailed dealing with other State Governments or with Central Government, the medium of communication should be Hindi. The other recommendations of the Commission included the setting up a National Academy of Languages" preferably at Hyderabad, for developing India's fourteen major languages.

The reorganization of States on the basis of languages in 1956 made the people conscious of the importance of their own language and they began to feel that the study and promotion of their own language or English was likely to get them better fruits than Hindi. So when the recommendations of the Official Language Commission were made public, they evoked mixed reaction. While the Hindi-speaking States welcomed them, the non-Hindi-speaking people expressed considerable opposition.

In 1950 it was decided that English was to continue as the official language until 1965, when it would be replaced by Hindi. In deference to the strong sentiments of the people in the Southern States on the language issue, Nehru in 1958 gave an assurance that English would continue as long as the Southern States desired it. However, in accordance with the provisions of Article 313 of the Constitution, Hindi replaced English as the official language of the Indian union of January 26, 1965. The Official Language Act, however, permitted the use of English for limited purposes.

The Official Language Act provoked strong protest, mainly from the Southern States. In Tamil Nadu, the DMK decided to observe January 26, 1955 as a day of mourning by flying black flags from party offices and homes of party leaders. Clashes between DMK followers and police occurred in many places in the State. Between January 26 and February 12, five DMK members committed self-immolation and two others poisoned themselves to protest against Hindi. The official language Act caused widespread resentment among the students also. The anti-Hindi "martyrs" became objects of admiration among the student community. The students formed the Tamil Nadu students Anti-Hindi Agitation council and launched a vigorous protest against Hindi. The copies of part XVII of the Indian Constitution dealing with the official language were publicly burnt and offices of Central Government located in Madras city were picketed and several hundred DMK members courted arrest.

Though initially inspired by the DMK, the Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Agitation council took an independent stand as the agitation progressed and the DMK leaders tried to bring the activities of the agitating students within constitutional limits. Clashes between students and police occurred between January 25 and 29. Several hundred people were arrested in Madras and in other parts of the State. C.N.



Annadurai and other leaders of the DMK who were under preventive detention were released on February 1st. C.N. Annadurai stated that the only solution was to postpone indefinitely the introduction of Hindi as the official language and to amend the Constitution to that effect. C.N. Annadurai also demanded that Nehru's assurance should be written into the Constitution. Congress leaders including Kamaraj reacted similarly, and advocated a "go slow" approach in handling the issue of introduction of Hindi. The student agitations meanwhile continued. Annadurai made several appeals to the students to suspend their agitation. In spite of these appeals the State witnessed violent riots for three days from February 10 to 12. Trains, post-offices, police stations, factories and public buildings were attacked and damaged by student demonstrators. Police resorted to firing in several places, and over sixty people were killed. Thousands of people were arrested and assets and properties worth millions of rupees damaged or destroyed. The rioting and arson resulted in the death of seventy persons according to the government's estimate, and one hundred and fifty according to the DMK.

The widespread riots which shook the state were not anticipated by either the political leaders in the North or those in the south, including the leaders of the DMK. It not only the emotional element which could explain the riots. There were also material issues involved. Since the official language is linked to examinations for entrance into government service and since English was the considered the language of opportunity, the introduction of Hindi as the official language led to violent reactions. One of the significant features of the riots was that neither the DMK leaders including C.N. Annadurai nor the DMK students within the students Council which had spear-headed the agitation were in control of situation. The DMK itself did not support the violence. By 1965, the DMK had become a 'responsible' political party.

While it was the DMK which was largely responsible for creating an emotional attitude toward Tamil language among the people, the party by 1965 found itself caught on the horns of a dilemma created by its victories at the polls. It was obvious that the party was no longer willing to endanger its constitutional status through a substantial, radical challenge to the political system on the language issue. Though the Congress leaders, like their DMK counterparts, did not anticipate the magnitude of the riots, their reactions to the situation were quick and effective.

C.Subramanian, Minister of Food and O.V.Alagesan, Minister of Petroleum, resigned their posts in the Central cabinet in the after month of the rejection of their proposal for a Constitutional amendment incorporating Nehru's assurances. On February 11, Prime Minister Shastri reaffirmed the assurances given by Nehru in 1958 to the people of the Southern States -that English would remain an associate language as long as the people of the non-Hindi areas desired it.

Prime Minister Shastri also stated certain policy decisions aimed at making Nehru's assurance operational:

- 1) every State could transact its business in the language of its choice or English
- 2) inter-state communications could be in English or accompanied by an 'authentic' translation;
- 3) non-Hindi States could correspond with the Centre in English;
- 4) transaction of business at the level of the Central Government would be in English.

Following the assurances, the anti-Hindi Agitation Council called off the agitation on Feb 22. The Language issue, however, did not terminate with the end of the agitation. This is because the language issue is related to sentiments connected with Tamil cultural integrity and as such its roots are struck deep. The 1965- language agitation caused a great



deal of loss in political terms to the Congress. The people held the Congress Government responsible for the language crisis and for the destruction of life and property during the agitation. It is against the backdrop of this popular hostility that the 1967 elections were held. The 1965 anti-Hindi agitation, though not the sole reason, was yet a basic reason why congress lost the 1967 elections.

As a result of the 1967 elections, the DMK emerged victorious, capturing 138 out of 234 of the seats in Madras Assembly, and formed the government under the leadership of C.N. Annadurai in 1967. The DMK assumed office in Feb. 1967. Towards the end of that year, (i.e., in November), the new government faced its first severe test, involving the language issue. In 1965, responding to the anti-Hindi agitations, Prime Minister Shastri agreed to give statutory recognition to Nehru's assurance on the continued use of English. On November 27, 1967, an amendment bill to the Official Languages Act of 1963, Section 3 was introduced in the Lok Sabha. The section 3 reads:

“Notwithstanding the expiration of fifteen years of the commencement Constitution, the English language, may as from the appointed day (i.e., January 26, 1965), continue to be used, in addition to Hindi (a) for all the official purposes of the union for which it was being used immediately before that day and (b) for the transaction of the business of parliament.

The Southern States argued that Nehru wanted the “way” in the above section to have the force of “shall”. They demanded an amendment to that effect. The amendment bill of 1967 proposed that English be used for certain purposes (such as communication between the Union government and non-Hindi States, or between States where either has not adopted Hindi as the official language). As such this bill,

originally designed to reassure the Southern States, ended up embodying many provisions that would give the Hindi states the option to dispense with English..

Despite, this, DMK took the stand that it would support the Union Official Language Bill if it was passed without any amendments, since it provided statutory sanction for the continued use of English. Congress leaders including Kamaraj also agreed that the bill "must be passed as it is". There was however strong opposition to the Bill from the Hindi states. The sizable Hindi Contingent in Parliament (led by Setu Govindan and Mrs.Kripalni within the Congress party) forced the Union Government to amend the Bill. A key amendment specified that "compulsory knowledge of either Hindi or English shall be required at the stage of selection of candidates for recruitment to the Union's services or posts, except in respect for special services or posts, for which high standard of knowledge of English alone or Hindi alone or both as the case may be, is considered essential for satisfactory performance of the duties of any such services or posts. On December 16, 1967 Lok Sabha adopted the Official language (Amendment) Bill by a margin of 205 to 41 votes.[1] The new amendment to the Official language Act introduced the three language formula. On December 19, anti-Hindi demonstrations began in Madras and spreaded throughout the state. The DMK government issued an order introducing a two-language formula, and rejecting the Union government's proposal to establish the three language formula throughout the state.

#### **C.N. ANNADURAI, on Language Policy on January 1968 at Legislative Assembly**

An examination of the Proceedings of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly pertaining to the period of late 1960s reveals that C.N. Annadurai the leader of DMK had spoken on the language issue



Participating in the debate in the Assembly on the Official Language (Amendment) Act 1967 and the resolution passed along with that act by Parliament, C.N. Annadurai, Chief Minister, argued that in a country like India marked by cultural and linguistic diversity any attempt to make a particular regional language the language of the entire Union would only lead to be detrimental to the unity and integrity, of the nation. He therefore demanded that Tamil and the other national languages should be made the Union's Official languages and the provisions of the Constitution dealing with language be amended accordingly.

### **C.N. ANNADURAI on 23, JAN. 1968 at Legislative Assembly**

The Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai urged the centre to set aside the resolution on language policy forthwith. He drew the attention of the Central Government to the fact that there was consensus among the different political parties in the state that the resolution in question would bring difficulties and burdon to the non-Hindi speaking peoples. The Chief Minister further made the following points in his speech:

The Union government should convene a high level conference of leaders of all political parties for examining the language problem and discussing the evils arising out of the resolution on language policy. The contention of Congressman in the assembly that they would not allow the country to disintegrate was meaningless because the DMK had no such intention (of working towards the country's disintegration). Steps would be taken to make Tamil as the medium of instruction in all colleges and also to made Tamil the language of administration in all government departments within the next five years. The Chief Minister argued that fighting against the language policy of the government of India could not be interpreted as amounting to a demand for secession.

He further said that those at the affairs in Delhi should decide which was important. Whether achievement of national integration or enthronement of Hindi as the official language of the Union. He drew the attention of the leaders in Delhi to the situation in Canada and recalled how the Canadian government handled the language agitation on the part of the French speaking Quebecois by setting up a Royal Commission to go into the whole question and how the recommendation of the commission that the English language which was spoken in all parts of the country except Quebec and the French language which was confined to Quebec, should be given equal status, were accepted by the federal government. The Chief Minister argued that of national integration was of paramount importance, the Centre should exhibit a 'give and take' attitude in matter of language[1]. He further pointed out that despite the fact that the Centre had neglected the industrial development of Tamilnadu, and concentrated as building the industries in the Northern states as evidenced by the fact that steel plants were set up in Bilait Durgapur and Rurkala and the development of Kandla as Custom-free port and other such instances of locating capital industiest the people of Tamilnadu had been patient and had told themselves that the Northern states were also part of India and that therefore they should not feel unduly exercised about their issue. And this inspite of the fact that the Salem Steel Plant project had not been cleared by the centre and there was also the non-action on the part of the Central Government with regard to the long- standing demand of the Tamil people. It was for this reason that this Assembly had now for resolved to reject the three- language formula, reject Hindi.

He further pointed out that the Assembly was of the view that the resolution adopted by the Centre caused injustice, difficulties and additional burden to the non- Hindi



speaking population that the various political parties are of the one view in this respect and that as such, the Central Government should remove the resolution. Annadurai further said the Assembly felt that the Centre's insistence upon implementation of the three-language formula was actually an attempt to impose Hindi and thus gradually make Hindi, the Union's official language and that as such, the Assembly refuses to accept the Centre's scheme of Hindi imposition. Annadurai further announced that his government would not implement the Centre's language resolution, that the Assembly resolves to remove the three-language scheme in all schools in Tamil Nadu accepting only two-languages i.e., English and Tamil. He further said that the Assembly also resolves to remove the Hindi command words used in NCC and that in the event of the Central Government not agreeing to such a step even disbanding NCC.

### **Conclusion**

One of the first crises that democratic India has had to face related to the question of the All-India medium or media of communication. In view of the symbolic legacies of national movement, the early leaders of the Indian democracy decided against continuing English as the 'Lingua Franca' of the nation. The Constitution provided a 15 years moratorium for the spread of Hindi on an adequate scale in non-Hindi areas so that at the end of the period Hindi could replace English as the official language of the Union. The Constitution had stipulated that while Hindi be designated the official language of the Union, English might continue as the link language until 1965, after which the Parliament was to review the position.

As the end of the 15 year period drew near and the Official Language Commission and the Committee of Members of Parliament set up to examine the language issue, recommended that Hindi should progressively replace English

as the official language, possibly in 1965, great anxiety was aroused in the non-Hindi areas where agitations were organized in protest against the recommended course of action. Bowing to the pressure that ensued Prime Minister Nehru gave a pledge to the non-Hindi areas that English would remain as long as the non-Hind Speaking people wanted it. Nehru's assurances, however, were not clearly translated in to the Official Language Act of 1963. After Nehru passed away in 1964 and when the day of reckoning arrived on January 26, 1965 a precipitous crisis erupted in the Madras State and shock the entire nation. The anti-Hindi agitation led to a policy change which committed the country to a specific formula. The solution - long in the making but clearly formulated only after the violent anti-Hindi agitations, was the "three language formula". The Madras Legislative Assembly adopted a unilateral resolution rejecting Hindi. However, it was realised that this was done mainly to forestall fresh agitations.

What was the approach of the DMK to the language issue? Whether that approach could be said to have run counter to the objective of India's national integration? Certain objective facts have to be considered here before answering the question whether the language politics of the DMK which culminated in the violent anti-Hindi agitations could be ascribed to the language fanaticism and by extension, to the disintegrative orientation of the DMK. First, by the early sixties, that is, by the time 15-Year moratorium on the language issue provided by the Constitution was coming to an end, regional identities, had been sufficiently articulated; secondly the poverty of Hindi as compared to the more richly endowed languages like Bengali, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu had become glaring; thirdly, the 'Hindi Fanatics' had done all they could to push their case in the process, the non-Hindi Speaking people; Finally, non- Hindi areas had



become alive to the fact that Hindi was only one among several regional languages, even though more numerous.[1] In the light of the above circumstances, it should not be surprising that the DMK legislators expressed strong sentiments against the Centre's language policy, and demanded that all the fourteen languages mentioned in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution be made the Union's Official Language and that Hindi be not given a special status, rejected the three-language formula. It is not linguistic chauvinism which should explain the DMK I S approach to and role in the language politics of Tamil Nadu. As such, from the point of view of the language issue, DMK'S approach to the question of national integration cannot be said to have been based on ideas which were potentially disruptive of the Country's unity.

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