

## History of the Demand for Dravida Nadu

### What is the issue?

The recent statement of an MP from Tamil Nadu that if the central government did not give greater autonomy, there is a chance to revive the demand for a separate state, has spurred controversy.

### What parties/platforms were involved in the concept of Dravida Nadu?

- **Justice Party** - The South Indian Liberal Federation, popularly known as Justice Party was founded in 1917 by Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetty, Dr T M Nair, and Dr C Natesa Mudaliar
- It was the first to raise the flag of anti-Brahminism, and oppose the caste system that put Brahmins at the top of the social hierarchy.
- In 1920, the Justice Party won the first legislative council elections held under the Government of India Act, 1919, and formed the government.
- The Justice Party remained in power until 1926, and then from 1930-37.
- **Self-Respect Movement**- Periyar was the founder of the Self-Respect Movement (1925) and was anti-caste and anti-religion.
- He advocated major social reforms, including equality for women in society, and supporting birth control for women for their health and well-being.
- He also opposed the domination of Hindi and emphasised the distinct cultural identity of the Tamil nation.
- He envisaged an independent Dravida Nadu, comprising Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada speakers.
- **Dravidar Kazhagam**- In 1938, the Justice Party and Self-Respect Movement came together.
- In 1944, the new outfit was named Dravidar Kazhagam.
- DK was anti-Brahmin, anti-Congress, and anti-Aryan (North Indian), and launched a movement for an independent Dravida nation.
- During the anti-Hindi agitations in 1938, Tamil scholars including Maraimalai Adigal and Somasundara Bharathi, at a public meeting held on Marina beach raised the slogan Tamil Nadu Thamizharukke (Tamil Nadu is only for Tamils) for the first time.

### How was the idea of an independent Dravida Nadu weakened?

- **Post independence**- In 1949, Annadurai split from Periyar due to ideological differences, and his DMK joined the electoral process.
- The DMK's platforms were social democracy and Tamil cultural nationalism, but Annadurai was silent on Dravida Nadu.
- **Linguistic nationalism**- The Linguistic Provinces Commission (S K Dhar Commission) set up in 1948 argued against a linguistic basis of reorganisation of states, as it could lead to further division.
- In 1952, the freedom fighter Potti Sriramulu died at the end of a 56-day hunger strike

undertaken to demand a separate Telugu state.

- In the face of intense public anger, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru announced an intention to create a separate Andhra state.
- In 1953, the States Reorganisation Commission was constituted under Justice Fazl Ali, K M Panikkar, and H N Kunzru which favoured the linguistic division of states based a balanced approach.
- The States Reorganisation Act, 1956 redrew the boundaries of states along linguistic lines, and created the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore and Kerala in southern India.
- In the process, a major demand of the linguistic movements was fulfilled, and the idea of an independent Dravida Nadu was weakened.

## **How did the demand for Dravida Nadu evolve after 1960?**

- DMK dropped their demand for a separate Tamil Nadu in 1962, in the wake of the Chinese aggression to show solidarity in facing an external threat with a unified face.
- Also, 16th Amendment to the Indian Constitution was passed in 1963, which placed a demand upon every Member of Legislature or Parliament to pledge him/herself to uphold the unity and integrity of the Indian Union.
- Since 1967, the preservation of Tamil culture and language has been a major focus area of successive state governments.
- The state opposed the three-language formula in 1966, and has continued to protest the introduction of Hindi in education.
- The demand for Dravida Nadu was gradually replaced by a demand for greater autonomy in education and cultural practices.

### **References**

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