

CHAPTER – V

ROLE OF REGIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES AND STATE POLITICS

One of the significant developments both in the real politics and in the academia enterprise of making sense of politics has been the emergence of state politics as the centre of attention. In the initial years after independence, the study of Indian politics involved 'national' level politics alone. State politics was seen as a matter of detail and would be referred only as an unavoidable appendage of 'all India politics'. Delhi, Nehru and the national level political competition used to constitute the fact of Indian politics and the subject matter of the study of Indian politics. Two unstated assumptions led to inform this observation. First, that state politics was different from national politics and second, that state politics from the perspective of state was a matter of interesting detail. Politics at the state level was about power, personal aggrandizement, parochial interests and their protection through lobbying, etc. Reference to states could be relegated to the margins of political analysis. Given the monotonous dominance of Congress everywhere, state politics must have appeared a poor copy of national level politics. As political developments unfolded through the 1960s, the discipline of state politics emerged gradually. The inadequacy of analysis of Indian politics focusing exclusively on the national level became apparent as the states actually started playing a crucial role in shaping the so-called national level politics (Yadav & Palshiker 2006, p. 75).

The study of state politics in India shows that the states of Indian Union share a common legal system, a common constitutional framework, a common administrative structure, and a common international environment, but their internal political patterns vary considerably. It is true that the impact of national policies and parties powerfully influence the form and behavior of state systems. But, it is equally true that this impact strikes different states differently contributing to the oddities and variations in organization and spirit of state politics (Fadia 1984, pp. 4-5).

It is only at the state level that people's participation in government can acquire sense and meaning. In fact, the states of the Indian Union hold the key to the national advancement in economic and social fields. Parallel to this development is the growing pull and swing of state politics which has never been quite unimportant on national politics. With the ending of the "Congress system" trends towards regionalization of Indian politics have become more manifest, and states have become increasingly important and powerful units of the Indian political system (Ibid., pp. 2-3). The states are training grounds for the national politicians. For example, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh, Y.B. Chavan, G.B. Pant, Jai Singh, H.N. Bahuguna, K. Kamraj etc. were minister or Chief Minister in state governments before moving to the central cabinet (Ibid., pp. 1-2).

Now, the states have emerged as the effective arena of political choice if the people voted in the Assembly – Elections held in the 1970s and 1980s as if they were choosing the Prime Minister, they now vote in the Parliamentary elections as if they are choosing their Chief Minister. In their eyes an individual constituency is too small and the country is too big; it is at the level of the state that the voters make their choice. The nature of political choice now varies from state to state. The system has moved a long way from the Old Congress vs Opposition scenario that was replicated all over the country. Nor in all the states a multi-party system has evolved. The Lok Sabha may present the picture of an intensely fragmented multi-party system. But, at the states level there are different kind of contests: bipolar, triangular, four cornered, or even more fragmented take place (Yadav & Palshiker 2009, pp. 46-47).

State-level politics is free of the control of national politics and is often in a position to dictate terms to national politics. This happens in the most visible manner when state wide parties determine the agenda of national politics or enjoy upper hand in their bargain with national parties (Ibid., p. 47).

The growing presence and salience of regional parties is undoubtedly, the most outstanding aspect of political development in India over the past few years. Barely six months after coming into existence, Telugu Desam successfully

stormed the Congress stronghold in Andhra Pradesh. The Assom Gana Parishad was formed in the fall of 1985 and was swept to power by the year end. In 1986, Laldenga signed an accord with the Union Government, abjured insurgency and led his Mizo Front to power in Aizawal (Bombwall 1988; p.10). The study of regional parties like DMK/AIDMK, Akali Dal, National Conference, Assom Gana Parishad, Telugu Desam and Shiv Sena shows that they have now become a force to reckon within the political system of India (Ibid., p. 1). Currently in Jammu & Kashmir there is alliance between Congress + National Conference, in Punjab BJP + Akali Dal, in Maharashtra BJP + Shiv Sena, in Tamil Nadu Congress + DMK: BJP + AIA DMK in Orissa BJD + BJP and so on in many other states (2010). Evidently, regional parties have become and bid fair to stay as a prominent and durable feature of India's political landscape' (Ibid., p. 1).

Keeping in mind the longevity of DMK and Akali Dal along their role in state and national politics both the parties have been analysed to assess the role of regional parties in state politics. Only few states in India do not have regional parties. Party system in Himachal Pradesh has been taken as a sample to analyse the causes why regional parties have not been emerged here whereas Haryana is opted to analyse the causes why regional parties emerged there in bulk.

STATE POLITICS OF TAMIL NADU

Role of regional parties (DMK/AIADMK)

The state of Tamil Nadu known as 'Madras' till 14th January 1969, has been an embodiment of the politics of the regionalism in India. Since independence Tamil Nadu has witnessed socio-economic and cultural revival. Next to Maharashtra, the Tamil Nadu is the most industrialized state of India. The establishment of an oil refinery and of model industrial progress (Fidia 1984, pp. 214-215). It can lay claim for at least one unique feature in Indian politics – it is the only state in which no national party has been in power for the last four decades, to be precise, since 1967. DMK and AIADMK are dominating the state politics of Tamil Nadu since 1967, the reasons for the dominance of these parties lie in a socio-political movement whose origins can be traced back to the Justice Party formed in 1916. Tamil Nadu was then a part of the Madras Presidency of

the British Raj. The Justice Party was formed by P. Thyagarayar to act as a platform for the area's non-Brahmin social elite. In 1944, Naicker was the leader of the party, he renamed the party the Dravida Kazhagam (the Dravidian Federation) and demanded the establishment of an independent state called Dravidasthan. (Thakurata & Raghuraman 2007, pp. 311-312).

The next plank of the Dravidian movement was a logical corollary of these moves. Language became the central focus of the movement. Tamil was eulogised as the oldest 'living' language in the world and the most 'evolved' of all languages. While Sanskrit and Hindi were presented as impositions by the aggressors from the north. It was this, in fact, that provided the real cutting edge for the Dravidian movement in electoral politics. The Congress being an all-India party, could hardly have accepted such a hardline linguistic stance. As the party governing India, it was also committed to the attempt to make Hindi a link language nationally. The language issue was to become the catalyst that precipitated the decline of the Congress in Tamil Nadu and the ascendance of the Dravidian parties. But, before that could happen, EVR himself had lost the leadership of the movement. A group of young DK leaders, led by C.N. Annadurai and including Mathuvel Karunanidhi (both became Chief Minister of the state) left the party over personal differences with EVR. They formed the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in 1949 which remains to this day one of the two main Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu (Ibid., pp. 312-313).

C.N. Annadurai, popularly known as Anna, of Dravidian tradition, carefully blended among the Tamil the primordial concern for the non-Brahmin, Backward communities and the Tamil language. Further, he spelt out a policy of non-Congressism and drew support from all the Conservatives and the centrists. The DMK's anti-religious posture and welfare schemes of leftist implication attracted the people to the party in large number. Besides, the DMK had a technique of political communication of its own through oratory and cinema which fetched not only mass sympathy but also financial strength. The shedding of the demand for Dravidasthan invested the DMK with political respectability and the anti-Hindi agitation that it launched in 1965 provided the immediate spark. Thus, the DMK was destined to win power in 1967 in Tamil Nadu, thereby

enabling the primordialists win the day over the instrumentalists (Thandavan 1988, p. 133).

Thus DMK as a political party originated directly from DK (Drivida Kazhagam) in 1949 as a rebel off-shoot seeking political identity out of a social reform organization. Annadurai who was affectionately called as “Anna’ meaning ‘elder brother’ or by his acronym ‘CAN’ argued that, if the Indian National Congress took sixty years to replace the British Raj by Aryan Rule, Mohammed Ali Jinnah took only six years to win Pakistan. The change argued well for Dravidnadu which could be achieved, he argued, in the shortest possible time after independence. DMK was in no substantial way different from DK, as it was committed to the same basic goal – Dravidanadu – an independent homeland for the Dravidians (Nayak 1976, p. 412).

Neither the DMK nor the DK contested the 1952 elections, though both declared that they would support any party that shared their demand for a homeland for Tamils. Though, the 1952 General Elections kept the Congress Party in power, the regional parties, as effective opposition, and advocates of Tamil nationalism, gained prominence for the first time. In addition, they engaged in a series of agitations to resist ‘north imperialism’. The DK concentrated its attack on the Indian constitution and the National Flag as symbols of ‘Aryan oppression’. They also attacked Hindu relics and images (Mitra 2006, p. 116).

In 1953 DMK launched a ‘three-corner agitation’, with three important objectives namely-to protest against C. Rajagopalachari’s caste-based education system, to rename Trichy as Kallakudi, its original Tamil name, and to dramatise indignation over the derogatory remarks of Nehru about the DMK. The ruling Congress Government responded to the three-corner agitation with great force. The leading figures of Tamil nationalism, C.N. Annadurai, E.V.K. Sampath, Nedunchezian and Mathialagan, were jailed under the Preventive Detention Act. The leaderless DMK activists carried on agitation anyway, leading to the death of nine demonstrators, several serious injuries and the incarceration of 6,000 demonstrators. The agitation and its aftermath produced intra-party division in the Congress Party, especially regarding Rajaji’s educational system. Rajaji resigned

in 1954 and was replaced by Kamraj Nadar (Ibid., p. 116), who was aware of the growing sense of nationality and “Dravidianism” among the people of the Tamil Country. Kamraj appealed to primordial sentiment and Tamil patriotism and included no Brahmins in his cabinet. The new government, while not abandoning the secular unity of the Indian Constitution, took on a new regional image of Tamil nationalism. The increasingly Tamilian character of the Congress ministry under Kamraj, however, robbed the DMK of its claim to represent Tamil nationalism in Madras politics (Fidia 1984, p. 221).

Before 1957 election, the political configurations in Madras took a dramatic turn. Andhra Pradesh was separated in 1953 reducing Madras to only a Tamil-speaking-belt. But Tamil nationalism was no more the monopoly of any single party with the entry of Kamraj into the politics of the state. DK's truck with Congress came to an end with Naicker's call for burning the national flag on 1st August 1955 as a protest against imposition of Hindi. DMK, under these circumstances, had to turn to some other plank. It therefore, launched an educative campaign against Marwari domination, meaning thereby-the north Indian economic domination. Thus, it could atleast mobilize a chunk of urban trading interests by way of its electoral support. At its Tiruchai Conference in 1956, the DMK formally decided to contest the 1957 elections. The entry of the DMK into electoral politics in 1957 constituted challenge to the Congress political style, method of mobilization, and ideology (Fidia 1984, p. 222). The DMK also contested eight Lok Sabha seats and won two. Contesting for the first time DMK won more than its opponents had expected: 15 seats polling nearly 14% of the votes. With the merger of Vanniya parties, Congress representation went up from 133 to 151 seats and percentage of vote from 35.3% to 45%. With the withdrawal of support, Communist votes dropped from 10% to 7.4%. It may, however, be noted that in the 1957 elections, DMK's support was confined to the Madras city and its vicinity. Having established itself as a legitimate constitutional party DMK now tried to consolidate its gains further. At the 1959 elections to Municipal Councils and Madras corporation it made a real break-through (Nayak 1976, p. 414).

The next political event of great significance was the 1962 General Election. The campaign had already begun with the 1960 anti-Hindi agitation, which proved an effective propaganda event for the DMK. It started as a reaction against the Government of India directive to make Hindi the official language of the state administration by 1965. The DMK resolved in a working committee meeting that if the Union Government failed to withdraw its decision before 30th September 1960, it would begin an agitation, and threatened to hold a black flag demonstration during the planned state visit by the President of India. However, when they received an assurance by the Prime Minister that Hindi would not be imposed, the DMK announced victory and organized a victory meeting on the Madras Marina Beach, a conventional venue for major political events (Mitra 2006, p. 117). Though Congress was once again elected to the assembly with a majority, the DMK, with its 50 assembly seats and 7 Lok Sabha seats, established its status as a formidable opposition, a performance that made clear the growing strength of the party (Ibid., p. 117). DMK was able to widen its support base through a strategy of “cautious gradualism”. The party had just experienced a two year factional quarrel which led to a split and formation of another Tamil nationalist organization known as the Tamil National party (TNP) (Fidia 1984, p. 223).

During a debate in the Rajya Sabha on 1st May 1962, DMK’s leader, C.N. Annadurai, alleged that the south had been “ignored” and “neglected” by the Union Government in the successive five year plans for India’s socio-economic development. (Kumar,Ranjan 2009, p. 245). The Congress, frightened by the “growing menace of the DMK”, began to re-evaluate its position, and the Communists, shaken by crushing defeats throughout Madras, considered Ramamurthi’s proposal that the CPI seek areas of agreement with the DMK for a “joint struggle” against the Congress. DMK members in the assembly, in the meantime, pledged allegiance to the constitution. The issue it had taken to the people, that of rising prices, became the focus of its concern in the assembly immediately after the election, and the party gave all indication that it was ready to accept the role of a loyal opposition (Fidia 1984, p. 224). Before the 1967 elections came off, a strategic diversion of organizational resources paid

handsome dividends to DMK vis-à-vis the Congress. As a reaction to the sixteenth amendment, the DMK amended its constitution in 1963 giving up the secessionist plank (Nayak 1976, p. 415).

A key issue in the 1967 elections was language and particularly the state Congress handling of the 1965 language riots. Also crucial were the food shortages and rising prices which had created widespread discontent among the people for two years prior to the 1967 elections. As part of their campaign propaganda, the DMK promised to sell rice at the low price of one rupee per kilograms. DMK candidates portrayed themselves as representatives of economic and social egalitarianism and picked up some support on that score. They claimed to be politically democratic, contrasting themselves with the alleged authoritarianism of the Congress. The DMK also claimed to epitomize the richness and greatness of the Tamil culture and humanitarianism. (Fidia 1984, p. 225).

The 1967 elections reversed the positions of Congress and the DMK in the Madras Legislative Assembly- the DMK won 138 seats out of 234 and the Congress 50. Success of DMK was unforeseen by the most state politicians. (Ibid., p.225). In the Lok Sabha election DMK captured all the 25 seats it contested. On the eve of the Fourth General Elections the DMK organized the United Front of nine political parties viz., the Swatantra, the Communist Party (Marxists), the Muslim League, SSP, the Praja Socialist Party, the We Tamils, the Tamil Arash Kazhagam and the Forward Bloc. The front was formed with the sole purpose of defeating the Congress and the aim was fulfilled. Congress lost its hold in Tamil Nadu. (Mitra 2006, p.119). Reasons for the resounding victory of DMK in state ware: (a) formation of United Front and its strategy of elections. (b) The sky-rocketing prices and the failure of the rationing system in Madras, (c) Active participation of the students in the electioneering, etc (Sharma (ed.), 1995, p. 402).

In bowing out of power, Congress left behind a legacy of steady economic growth at a level higher than that of the country as a whole, recognition of the special needs of the backward classes and scheduled castes, and the surreptitious

accommodation of Tamil identity into the public sphere. The DMK government that followed built on this legacy, replacing the one-party congress dominance with a two-party system in Tamil Nadu (Mitra 2006, p. 119).

DMK had insurgent tendencies besides it participated in the 1957 and 1962 elections. The party failed to gain because of its militant activities. In early sixties they renounced their secessionist demands and joined the mainstream. Result of 1967 Assembly and the Parliamentary elections in Tamil Nadu clearly indicate that people voted for the DMK for its positive people oriented agenda. It is clear from this instance that regional parties can claim support from the masses if they balance national and regional interests. The DMK took office in February 1967 with C.N. Annadurai as the Chief Minister. Its first test in governance came soon when the government was called upon to maintain law and order in the face of the repercussions of an amendment bill presented to the national Parliament on 27th November 1967. It was intended to amend the Official Language Act of 1963 but actually meant to give a legal status to the promise of Nehru not to impose Hindi on the southern states (Ibid., p. 119).

After holding office DMK government faced the challenges like accommodating most of the demands of the students of Tamil Nadu, maintaining law and order in state etc. In March 1968, when the DMK had celebrated its first successful year in the office, Madurai Muthu, a DMK activist and the Minister of Transport, started the Tamil Sena in response to the Shiv Sena led agitation in Bombay against the South Indians. Particular targets were 'Madrasis'.... The Tamil Sena was attacked by the press as a severe threat to the national interest. The DMK government restrained these efforts and balanced them through measures such as the extension of legal validity to 'Self Respect Marriages'. (Ibid., p. 120). After C.N. Annadurai's death in 1969, C.M. Karunanidhi took over as Chief Minister with the support of a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly. Karunanidhi faced tough competition from his rival Nedunchezian, who staked claim on leadership based on his seniority within the party and his service as the party's general secretary in 1956 (Ibid., p. 120).

In 1969, the DMK Government of Tamil Nadu constituted a committee consisting of Dr. Rajamannar, Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar and Thiru P. Chandra Reddy to examine the Centre-State relationship. The committee in its report in 1971, recommended that the Inter-State Council should be constituted immediately and that, no decision of national importance or which may affect one or more states should be taken by the Union Government except after consultation with the Inter-State Council. The committee further recommended that every bill of national importances or which is likely to affect the interests of one or more states should, before its introduction in Parliament, be referred to the Inter-State Council and its views thereon should be submitted to Parliament at the time of introduction of the bill (Inter-state.council.nic.in).

In its tenure DMK made great efforts to fulfill its promises given before the election. Party made intense activities in the field of agriculture industry. A notable achievement in the field of transport had been the nationalization of all long-distance bus services on routes longer than 75 miles, provisions of cheap rice (66 paise per kilograms) in the statutorily rationed cities of Madras and Coimbatore and supply of subsidized wheat for promotion of change in food habits are also noteworthy. As far as planning was concerned, DMK insisted that the state should be treated as the starting point. It resolved to practice the two-language formula which had no place for Hindi and made Tamil compulsory as the medium of instruction in the educational institutions. A genuine social reform that DMK carried out declared priesthood, a traditional preserve of Brahmins, open to all castes, the DMK appointed some of its non-Brahmin followers to important positions on temple boards(Fidia 1984, p. 226). Thus, 1967 elections proved great achievement for DMK. The party had showed its appearance on a large scale. Performance of DMK as ruling party in the state (1967-1971) clearly indicated that government's policies focused to the masses. Government tried to uplift the down trodden.

In mid-September 1970, the DMK convened in Madras city a "State Autonomy Conference" and its leader, V.B. Raju, M.P. criticized "Delhi's attitude" in trying to administer state's subjects, holding the states as its "debtors" and using its "financial strings" to control them. In the last week of April 1971,

Chief Minister Karunanidhi threatened that separation of Tamil Nadu from the Indian Union “would become unavoidable” if the demand for state autonomy continued to be neglected for long. On 19th September, he repeated the threat and said that his party (DMK) was prepared to launch an agitation to secure state autonomy. At one stage, he even demanded a separate flag for Tamil Nadu (Kumar & Ranjan 2009, p. 246).

The 1971 elections, which saw a contest between two coalitions, the DMK-led Progressive Front consisting of Congress(R), the CPI, the Praja Socialist Party, Forward Block, Muslim League and Tamil Arasu Kazhagam, and the Democratic Front-led by Congress(O), the Swatantra Party, the Samyukta Socialist Party, the Tamil Nadu Tailors Party, the Republican Party and the Coimbatore District Agriculturist Association was resounding triumph for the DMK, with Progressive Front winning 52.8 per cent of the votes and the Democratic Front polling 36.7 per cent (Mitra 2006, p. 221). DMK emerged with even greater control over the Tamil Nadu government, winning 184 seats out of 234, Congress(O) won 15 seats. During the 1971 Assembly elections, M.G. Ramachandran, the matinee idol, polled the highest number of votes as a DMK candidate (Fidia 1984, p. 228).

Mrs. Gandhi, who won 1971 Lok Sabha elections, by two-third majority, wanted to build up the Congress(R) in Tamil Nadu. She urged the DMK to give up the demand for greater autonomy to states and called for a joint attempt with the Central Government to create a favourable climate for the implementation of the socialist programme. Karunanidhi agreed with the political ideology of the New Congress and was even prepared to support more progressive schemes like nationalization of the banks. But he continued to oppose the imposition of Hindi in the South state autonomy. The report of the Rajamannar Committee on Centre-State Relationship provided a major political weapon to the DMK Party (Ibid., p. 228). All these proved that the role of DMK was very crucial and important at that time not only at the state level but it also had impact on the national politics. This development in Indian politics indicates that national parties realized the importance of regional parties. Congress as ruling party was convinced empirically that the regional parties controlling the states could not be avoided. To strengthen itself the party has to negotiate with the mass based regional parties.

After 1971 election, the first sign of trouble came with the policy towards prohibition. Karunanidhi favoured the lifting of the 'dry-law', with an eye to the lucrative revenues that the sale of alcohol could fetch. Kamraj Nadar, the head of Congress(O), vigorously opposed it. But, more ominously, the proposal faced opposition from within the party as well, particularly from the M.G.R. faction. Yet Karunanidhi persisted with the proposal and had the dry law taken off the statute book. To weaken MGRs position further, Karunanidhi launched his son Muthu into the film industry and tried to promote Shivaji Ganeshan as the new celluloid face of Tamil Nationalism (Mitra 2006, p. 121).

M.G.R. was quick to counter-attack. He was then the DMK treasure, and while addressing a gathering to celebrate the sixty fourth anniversary of the birth of the late C.N. Annadurai on 8th October 1971, he charged the DMK politicians with being corrupt and questioned their sudden acquisition of wealth. Karunanidhi reacted by suspending him from all the party posts and from primary membership of the party. In response, M.G.R. formed his own political party, the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (ADMK) later renamed as AIADMK (Ibid., p. 121). From that day AIADMK is an important part of Tamil politics. This party became a great challenge for DMK in Tamil Nadu. The Congress lost the possibilities to hold power in the state.

After forming ADMK(AIADMK), MGR announced that his party would work towards the implementation of Anna's policies and programmes including prohibition. Annaism, according to him, comprised a ceiling on urban income, elimination of intermediaries, nationalization of the banks, effective implementation of social goals, nationalization of heavy industries, takingover of the means of production, distribution of essential commodities, demonetization of hundred-rupee note to eliminate black money, and job opportunities in the form of 'guarantee for a living'. In November, as the AIADMK leader, M.G.R. submitted his charges of corruption against the DMK government to the Governor, and later to the President of India. He backed these charges up by organizing hartals, demonstrations and agitations (Ibid., p. 121). The 1972 by-elections in Dindigul constituency resulted in a stunning victory of ADMK over the Congress and DMK

candidates. The ADMK claimed the Dindigul by-election it was a mandate for the DMK cabinet's resignation (Fidia 1984, p. 229).

The state, which had the DMK as the ruling party since 1967, came under President's rule on 31st January 1975 exactly 50 days before the normal five-years term of the state assembly which was due to expire. The DMK commanded majority support in the assembly but the decision to dissolve the DMK government and introduce President's rule was taken by the Central Government on the ground of widespread political corruption in the state. On 31st January, K.K. Shyam, the Governor, sent a report on the Tamil Nadu situation to the President who forwarded it to the Prime Minister for advice. The cabinet endorsed the move to impose the Article 356 in Tamil Nadu, and dismissed the popular government and dissolving the Assembly. The Governor reported that the DMK Government had indulged in serious acts of maladministration, corruption and misuse of power for partisan ends, setting at naught all canons of justice and equality. He complained that it had disregarded the instructions of the centre in relation to the emergency while misusing the emergency powers for its own purposes and, moreover, under the guise of greater state autonomy it held out "veiled threats of secession" (Ibid., p. 230). The atmosphere of manoeuvres, counter-manoevres and unstable alliance saw the emergence of a three-party alliance to fight the forthcoming elections, consisting of the Congress, ADMK and the CPI. In 1976, an all opposition parties team from Tamil Nadu pleaded with Mrs. Gandhi not to extend the DMK rule further. Yet Karunanidhi refused to resign and made a public statement to that effect (Mitra 2006, p. 122).

On 3rd February, 1976 the Centre appointed a one man commission, under the Commission of Inquiry Act 1952, to inquire into and report by 1st February 1977 the allegations against M. Karunanidhi and some members of the DMK ministry removed from office. No action was taken against Karunanidhi since the witness to the Sarkaria Commission (appointed to look Centre-State relations) had turned hostile, Mrs. Gandhi used the Commission report as a political weapon against Karunanidhi (Fidia 1984, p. 230). The period between two General Elections: fifth and sixth, that proved crucial not only for national politics but state politics also affected badly. Regional party, DMK was working under the

pressure. On the other hand Congress was trying to improve its position by supporting AIADMK and other parties which were against the DMK. Minus DMK the regional parties such as AIADMK supported Congress in the state for their own vested interests.

AIADMK captured 130 seats out of 234. The DMK bagged 48, the Congress(I) 27, Janata 10, CMP 12, CPI 5 and the remaining 2 seats went to the independents (Ibid., p. 230). It was the result of Indira Gandhi's role at national level. For a decade DMK remained in power in the state. 1977 was the benchmark period in Indian politics. In the state also anti-incumbency factor played important role. The AIADMK off-shoot of the DMK came into power. The party in its agenda clearly mentioned the socialist goals. The success of AIADMK indicates that regional plus people oriented approach was acceptable to the Tamilian Society.

State politics in Tamil Nadu since 1972 changed from the past. DMK and AIADMK realized the importance of development plan. MGR's development oriented agenda helped him to retain the power till 1989. DMK also shed its policy of secession. Congress - the pan Indian party also realized the importance of joining alliance with the regional parties to maintain its national character. Hence, the process of alliance between national and state parties began.

When the Janata Party (1977) assumed control at the Centre, MGR had strained relations with it. Gradually he started leaning towards it in an attempt to improve relations so much so that when Mrs. Gandhi planned to visit Madurai (Tamil Nadu) during the Janata regime, MGR advised her against it, contending that there was a threat to her life from the DMK party men. However, Mrs. Gandhi did not cancel her visit and infact survived the attempt on her life at Madurai. MGR had provided a lot of police protection to her on that occasion.... MGR's tilt towards the Janata party naturally made Mrs. Gandhi angry. Although General Elections to the Tamil Nadu Assembly were held in 1977 and the Assembly could have continued till 1982, but because of the Congress(I)'s sweeping victory in Lok Sabha elections in the state, the Centre saw a chance of establishing Congress(I) rule in the state by holding fresh elections. So the State

Assembly was dissolved with other Governments in the northern India and elections were held in May 1980(Fidia 1984, p. 231). In both the elections, the Congress had alliance with the DMK, while the AIADMK contested with the left parties as partners. In the Assembly Elections Congress & DMK alliance won 68 of the 234 seats, while AIADMK led alliance won in 156, or two third majority in the assembly constituencies (Thakurata, Raghuraman 2007, p. 316). Thus the policies and programmes of MGR's once again proved successful. The defeat of Congress + DMK alliance was the result of MGR's personality and charismatic leadership and his development programmes.

In the eighth general election held in 1984, there was a tough contest between two electoral alliances, namely, the AIADMK Front and the DMK Front for the state and national elections. AIADMK front consisted of the AIADMK, the Indian National Congress(I), the Gandhi Kamraj National congress, the All India Forward Bloc and the Republican Party of India (Kawai). The DMK front consisted of the DMK, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Janata, the Indian Union Muslim League, the Tamil Nadu Forward Bloc, the Tamil Nadu Kamraj Congress and the Peasants and Worker Party (Thandvan 1988, p. 148). This time Congress changed its partners i.e. AIADMK.

It was radically different approach from what had been practiced all over India till then. Traditionally, the seats share contested by alliance partners remained more or less the same, irrespective of the level of the government. What MGR's 'two-third', one-third formula sought to formalize was the understanding that while the Congress was undoubtedly the only partner in the alliance making a bid for power in New Delhi, in the state the AIADMK would be the one that would form the government if the alliance was voted to power. In effect, MGR was telling Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister and leader of the Congress, 'you keep New Delhi, but leave Madras to me' (Thakurata, Raghuraman 2007, pp. 315-316). Formation of alliances in the state after 1977 is the indication that both the regional parties wanted to alien with the national parties to remain in power in the state along enhancing their bargaining power at the Centre. Regional parties had strong hold in the State. The national parties were not able to compete with the