

## **The Dravidian Model**

A discussion on The Dravidian Model was organised by the Dravidian Professional Forum on The Dravidian Model with Dr A. Kalaiyaran a post-doctoral fellow at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs in Brown University and Dr VijayBhaskar a Professor at the Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai. as the speakers and TKS Elangovan and A S Pannerselvan as the guest speakers. Puhazh Gandhi moderated the session.

Mr Puhazh Gandhi started the discussion by explaining the development trajectory of Tamil Nadu through the Dravidian Model. Dr VijayBhaskar and Dr A. Kalaiyaran wrote a book on the Dravidian Model which interprets the political economy of Tamil Nadu. After the Kerala, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh models the discussion, it was Tamil Nadu's model which was most discussed as it was an instrument democratising the social and economic equal opportunities to its citizens. As the Kerala model was able to bridge the gap between haves and have not so does the Tamil Nadu model in an efficient way. The fundamental of the model is that economic inequality is the root cause of discussion and emphasis on social justice to eliminate discrimination. The reason why the state is a forerunner in the socio-economic indicators like education, healthcare, women empowerment is this Dravidian model and its fundamentals.

Dr A. Kalaiyaran deduced the essence of the book in a concrete and crisp manner with a presentation. He, first of all, talked about the two types of consent amongst the people which are some countries are doing well in every sphere with growth and development while some like Africa are still striving hard to find ways to align with the development trajectory of the developed nations of the world. The interesting fact is that this situation is not just restricted to the countries but to the people residing in those territories with wide gaps based on race, gender, caste and economic conditions. The second is the question of caste-based identification and polarisation for political purposes leading to the struggle and fight against discrimination.

The first consent also spreads over to the states where some like Kerala and Tamil Nadu perform better than the others like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar due to the difference in governance and the policies adopted and implemented. Also, he stated a fact that some states do well in growth but it doesn't always necessarily imply the prosperity and well-being of the social life of the people living there. Tamil Nadu has not just focused on the growth but on holistic development and during the pandemic as well the state emerged as an example to other states with broad government structure in Tamil Nadu and Kerala in a pattern. He also told the question that the

book tries to answer which is how Tamil Nadu was able to combine growth and development together. He said that the success of Tamil Nadu is due to the idea of equity and fundamental transformation being epicentral to every policy of the government while states like Bihar and UP despite larger population and resources lagged behind due to caste-based mobilisation which created a ground for the rise of majoritarianism in the society harming the peace and harmony of the state. The next question which he talked about is how Tamil Nadu was able to achieve a fundamental transformation in such a small period of time and how diverse groups of people made a common consensus on the policies adopted in the state. This was possible as it has its origin from the Periyar itself and DMK was successful to revive and rejuvenate the same by following the path different from nationalist mobilisation and enabling the underprivileged and deprived to raise their voice for rights and justice.

He explained the complete journey and the implementation of the model which followed a conceptual grid path starting from the heterogeneous communities with differing opinions and aims which led to the formation of a historic bloc. These groups came under the umbrella of the Dravidian movement fostering with similar interest and leading to the institutionalization of the Population intervention which could be split up into two parts economic popularity which has roots in patronage and emanates from governmental imperatives driven by the electoral cycle and the social popular with rights-based intervention enabling inclusive access to modern sectors and public goods and redistributing content. The formation of the Tamil Welfare Board for the recreation and development of the Informal sector is unique to the state.

He also talked about the education reforms which was an inversion of the elite bias following the process which emphasised Primary Education (Inversion of Myron Weiner's thesis) majorly. The government tried to use the economic popular institutional intervention to make education affordable and tried to incentivise the same through a socially inclusive bureaucracy. Also, education is relatively a better indices of the social infrastructure hence, one of the primary goals of the government was to education. With education, social inclusion was also one of the elements which grasped attention in this model with affirmative action policies in education and employment leading to a 69% increase in employment which is highest among all states. Also, the focus was on expansion which implies an increase in the share of seats (about 48% GER in higher education and deepening which is there to address the differences within lower castes.

Focusing on the health sector which followed the countering elite bias stressing upon preventive Public Health over Curative care for elites. During that period this sector observed better outcomes despite relatively not so high average per capita

health expenditure. The government innovated a system of a socially inclusive pool of health professionals feeding into public health infrastructure. The sector could retain doctors in rural areas due to responsive reservation and incentive policies in college admissions and in the appointment of medical professionals in state medical services which helped to improve the rural health infrastructure and also it pioneered to develop a template for the corporatisation of medical services in the country but yet both private and public co-exist. Expanding its horizon the model also sustained accumulation with socially inclusive entrepreneurship by focusing on productive ethos as common sense and development with capital demanding entry for lower caste Tamils as well fostering the idea of inclusiveness. The state also succeeded in the infrastructure for capital accumulation wherein it was successful in recasting state agencies as facilitators of resource mobilisation for growth in the post-1990s and translating returns to education into investments and achieving simultaneity in growth and development. He also explained the phases of industrialisation which are:

1) Phase I

Colonial interventions and limited autonomy till 1947 which includes

- Productive ethos
- The Basel Mission- Hosiery industry
- Alred Chatterton- modernising caste-based industries.
- Port enclaves
- Evolution of Agro Commercial Capital

2) Phase II

1947 to 67 Dravidian Demands and Planned Industrialisation

- Bargaining with union government in establishing public sector clusters.
- Industrial licenses to Local entrepreneurs.
- DMK, campaign invoking southern Italy question.
- Formation of the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development and the Tamil Nadu Small Industries Corporation Limited in 1965.

3) Phase III

1967 to 90: Institutionalised Populism and state-led industrialisation

- Formation of the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu and the Tamil Nadu Small Industries Development Corporation.
- Establishing industrial cluster- Hosur
- Energising TANSI in Karur and Namkkal.
- The Tamil Nadu Dairy Development Corporation.
- Formation of first state planning commission of subnational level in India.

4) Phase IV

#### Post- reform Interventions and the New Professional Elite

- Formation of the Tamil Nadu Urban Development fund.
- Building Information Technology corridor.
- Automobile Corridor.
- A set of SEZs.

Dr VijayBhaskar explained the rural land and labour which observed a decline in most parts: De facto land reform- transfer of land from the upper to the intermediate castes and to a much-limited extent to Dalits. Some of the important reforms are:

- Abolition of hereditary administrative positions.
- Rural wage rates are one of the highest and closer to urban wage rates than most states.
- Diversified rural livelihoods through infrastructure and education which facilitated movement into the urban areas.
- Undermining coercive labour relations due to welfare interventions like PDS and MNREGA in particular.
- Reduced economic disparities between castes to an extent in the rural areas collectively.

He also threw light upon the urban condition which has a higher wage in Gross value added in the factory sector than most states: at 22% during 2008-15. It is about twice that of Gujarat (10%) and Maharashtra (12%) and has lower contractualisation. Some other features are:

- Relative caste inclusive entry into high-end services through affirmative action.
- Workers are more politicised with connections to political parties and as a result, are able to bargain better with capital.
- Pioneer along with Kerala innovates the welfare board as a social security institution for informal sector workers.
- Economic popular has cushioned against income shocks.

He also stated some of the limits and possibilities of them are:

- Three sets of constraints- Domain of federal relations, the logic of modernisation and finally the logic of populist mobilisation of a heterogeneous set of social groups.
- Limits to Social Popular: From the Logic of Equivalence to the Logic of Difference.
- Emerging Disparities: Intra-caste, Inter-caste and Spatial implies Fissures in the Dravidian Bloc.
- But TN demonstrates the potential for “Left Populist” mobilisation in a status-unequal society in the global south.

- Also establishes that demand for sustaining dignity can be realised through demand for development.

## Q and A

Q1) Dharanidharna asked Despite some of the socialist movements in Bihar and UP, they could not replicate what TN could do and most people believe that TN could develop because of the work of DMK but it was a combined work of DK and Justice Party who were there in power in the past then why did this happen?

Dr A. Kalaiyaran answered saying TN performed better than Bihar and UP because of the work and the policies adopted by the government and the role of the movement in breaking the barriers to development. Tamil Nadu did not focus on caste mobility but on transforming polity through politics in TN based on reservation and expansive understanding of social justice while UP and Bihar have focused on caste mobilisation and mainly upper-caste favouritism without any structure.

Q2) What lessons could be taken from the other developed countries to take the existing Dravidian model to the next level?

Dr Vijay Bhaskar addressed this question that even the developed countries could not sustain social welfare through their models of providing social security to improve the condition of the people after working life. Hence, the country needs to imagine alternatives to the models of the 80s adopted by Europe of industrialisation with the objective to move out people from agriculture to other manufacturing sectors and labour-intensive manufacturing base which is failing gradually with the evolution of technology and AI in the field and hence the economy has reached a point where the demand differs from the past and thus the models can't be replicated.

Q3) Dravidian model promotes the idea of economic independence as women empowerment but how the representation of women in politics could be improved to bring them into the mainstream?

TKS Elangovan answered stating that the government needs to bring changes and amendments to the constitution. The representation of women could be increased in the local parties but for the legislative assemblies there are requirements of the amendments to be done and particularly DMK takes this initiative of having Deputy Secretary as women in every unit of the party in direction to work for increase the representation of women in politics but the problem faced is even if a woman wins the election the real power to rule is enjoyed by her husband as she surrenders herself voluntarily to him. So there is a need to give real powers to women.

Q4) Are there numbers on quality to measure the happiness of life on the basis of socio-economic factors?

A. Kalaiyaran said that one of the factors to measure this is the labour force participation of women and the factors to measure the social relation or the quality of life have challenges especially through the gender lens and there are no specific data to measure them there is just intuition which the countries from abroad try to perform in the country.