

# Critical Evaluation on Tamil Nationalism

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## Article Info

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## Abstract:

A Demand for separate homeland by people having tamil as mother tongue is termed as Tamil Nationalism. Tamil nationalist feel separation necessary to preserve and protect their culture. Tamil Nationalism is observed to have emerged as an outcome of linguistic discrimination in multilingual countries. On the other side, Politicians use this aggression to play foul games. The Primary Objective of the research is to trace out the phases of Tamil Nationalism in India. The Secondary Objective of the research is to understand the concept of Tamil Nationalism. A study has been conducted among 1213 respondents to extract their opinion. The collected data has been analysed by using SPSS package. Independent variables used in this research paper are name, age, gender, educational qualification, occupation and monthly income. Dependent variables are 'Do you agree that Tamil nationalism will annihilate the caste?' and 'Do you agree that Tamil nationalism concept will lead to separation of tamil population from India?'.  
**Keywords:** Culture, dravidian, ideologies, language, movement, subjugation

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Tamil is a Dravidian Language, spoken mostly by people of Tamil nadu origin. Tamil is one among the 22 scheduled languages in Indian Constitution. It is the Official and Administrativelanguage in the State of Tamil Nadu and Union territory Puducherry. Tamil is also the official language of Sri Lanka and Singapore.

The Idea of Separate country-hood or separation from Indian Nation to protect their cultural identity have hit many parts of India. The Sikh Community of India demanded for a separate nation called Khalistan. Khalistan movement became a viral movement in India with Operation Blue Star and assassination of Indira Gandhi. The Naga National Council (NCC) campaigned a movement demanding sovereign and autonomous state for Naga People. National Liberation front of Tripura (NLFT) asked for separate country Tripura. United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), formed by few assamese

rebels fights to make Assam a Seperate Nation and has even fought against Indian Army at various instances. Muslim united Liberation tigers of Assam (MULTA) is a group of islamist immigrant from bangladesh with a motive to form a separate islamic state.

People with Tamil as Mother Tongue are demanding a Separate homeland as an effort to protect their Language Ideologies and Culture. This can also be seen as a Political game involving various political leaders. This Concept of Tamil Nationalism is not aware by half the population of Tamil People, which is an evidence to call this a Political Game.

## II. OBJECTIVE

The Primary objective of the paper is to discuss the phases of tamil nationalism in India. The Secondary objective of the study is to learn the concept of Tamil Nationalism.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Tamil Nationalism sets back to 19th century. ("Dravidian Languages," n.d.) Tamil Nationalism or Dravidianism could be defined as politically partitioning the state from the nation with the objective of preserving Tamil culture and ideologies. (Roberts 2005)

The Non-brahmins movements or Anti-Brahminism gave rise to Dravidianism. 20th Century was eventful in the history of India, based on racial and linguistic consciousness. Back in 20th century, the term Dravidians meant Non-brahmins caste and Dravidian Nationalism was recognised as a movement against Brahmanism and their dominance. (Vaithees and Ravi Vaithees 2015c, [d] 2015) The Dravidian movement led by E.V.R. Periyar and C.N. Annadurai fought against 'Aryan' Brahmin domination and Hindi Imposition. They demanded separation from India. They believed that Dravidian-Tamil civilization was casteless, which got corrupted by Aryan-sanskrit civilization. (Anand 2016)

There was another type of Tamil Nationalism with different ideologies in the 20th century. This was started by Maraimalai Adigal who was also known as "Father of Tamil Puritanism". ("Eleven. Toward a Nationalist Sociology of India: Nationalism and Brahmanism," n.d.) He led various movements like Pure Tamil movement which aimed at removing the usage of sanskrit words in Tamil language. (Ling 1980) His idea of Tamil Nationalism was common with Periyar's concept, except the later believed in Atheism while Adigal believed in shaivism. (Vaithees and Ravi Vaithees 2015c)

Anti-Hindi sentiments was an important reason behind Tamil Nationalism. Imposition of Hindi over Tamil Nadu started even before the British rule ended. (Ambedkar 2018) When the British government introduced local provincial government during the last decades of British rule, C. Rajagopalachari of Congress government was the

first to impose Hindi on Tamil people in 1937. (Rasaratnam 2016) This Act led to subsequent protests. After the independence of India, The Congress came to power and imposed Hindi as a compulsory subject in schools all over India as the British did with English. Later the government planned to make Hindi as the national and official language of India, which led to strict objections from leaders from South India. (Anand 2016; Nithiyanandam, n.d.)

The Current Tamil script contains 12 uyirezhuthukal (vowels), 18 Mei Ezhuthukal (consonants) and 1 Ayutha Ezhuthu. Uyirezhuthukal and Mei Ezhuthukal combine to form 216 Uyir Mei Ezhuthukal. Tamil Language is well known for its Literatures with numerous prominent writers and poets. The Oldest known Tamil inscription, Tolkappiyam was composed in 200 BC. Thirukkural, a fascinating work done by Thiruvalluvar consisting of 1330 couplets with each kural (couplet) having only 7 words, dealing areas of Virtue, Wealth and Love. In 2004 Tamil language was declared a Classical Language of India, based on three criteria - Ancient Origin, Independent Tradition and Possess a considerable body of ancient literature. The Re-discovery of Sangam literature (A collection of 2381 Tamil poems belonging to 300 BCE based on love, war, governance, religion, trade, bereavement, etc, composed by 473 poets, both men and women, belonging to various professions and classes of society.) Various Tamil renaissance movements, and Resistance to Hindi Imposition has resulted in intense devotion of Tamil people on Tamil Language. (Vaithees and Ravi Vaithees 2015a) (Natarajan 1977)

The Concept of Tamil Nationalism in India re-emerged in the 21st century, Political leader Thirumavalavan of Viduthalaichiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) believed that Tamil Nationalism would annihilate Caste and spread equality over Tamil Nadu. (Gorringe 2019) Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) also supported this thought. (Marga Institute 2001;

Barnett 2015)(Nagambal 1998) In Issues like Jallikattu, neduvasal hydrocarbon Project, NEET, sterlite, Neutrino, 2017 Tamil Nadu Farmers Protest, Cauvery River Dispute, etc, where the Central Government failed to take adequate actions for the suffering Tamil Nadu, The thoughts of Tamil nationalism got triggered.(Vaithees and Ravi Vaithees 2015b).

Tamil Nationalism was also observed outside Indian territory. After Ceylon (present Sri Lanka) gained independence from British in 1948, Sinhalese speaking majority discriminated Tamil speaking minority legally in Sri Lanka. (Jeyaratnam Wilson 2000) This led to continuous protest in Sri Lanka and India. During the Sri Lankan Civil War, Indian Government did not support the Tamilians in Sri Lanka, rather allied with Sri Lankan government which increased anger among Tamilians. This disturbed Tamil-India relationship. (Jeyaratnam Wilson 2000; Cheran 2009) Velupillai Prabhakaran, the founder of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was also a Tamil Nationalist. (Marga Institute 2001) He fought for an independent homeland for Tamil minorities living in Sri Lanka. During 'May 17 movement', Thirumurugan Gandhi and Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) leader Seeman demanded Tamil Nationalism again. (Sivarajah 2000)

#### IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS & RESULTS

This research has adopted empirical study. Empirical research is based on observed and measured phenomena and derives knowledge from actual experience rather than from theory or belief. Key characteristics of an empirical research is specific research questions to be answered and Description of the process used to study this population or phenomena, including selection criteria, controls, and testing instruments (such as surveys). The statistical tools are used for this research work is chi square, correlation. SPSS graphics and diagrams are attached in this research work. Cross table has been used for this research work. The essence of survey method can be explained as "questioning individuals on a topic or topics and then describing their responses". Random sampling method was used for the purpose of this study. There are totally 1213 samples collected for this study. Independent variable were Name, age, gender, educational qualification, occupation and monthly income. Dependent variables are 'do you agree that Tamil nationalism will annihilate the caste?' and 'Do you agree that Tamil nationalism concept will lead to separation of Tamil population from India?'

#### V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION & RESULTS

##### Frequency Table

##### Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid ILLITERATE	116	9.6	9.6	9.6
SCHOOL EDUCATION	131	10.8	10.8	20.4
GRADUATE	600	49.5	49.5	69.8
POST GRADUATE	225	18.5	18.5	88.4
PROFESSIONAL	129	10.6	10.6	99.0
DEGREE				
OTHERS	12	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	1213	100.0	100.0	

This Frequency table indicates educational qualification of the respondents to understand their mentality on tamil Nationalism. The Study was conducted among 1213 respondents. Out of the total 1213 respondents, 9.6% (116 respondents) were illiterate , 10.8% (131 respondents) were educated upto School education, 49.5% (600 respondents) were graduates , 18.5% (225 respondents) were Post graduates and 10.6% (129 respondents) held a professional degree.

*Crosstab*

Count

	do you agree that Tamil nationalism will annihilate the caste					Total
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
Education ILLITERATE	17	9	28	60	2	116
SCHOOL	9	33	67	15	7	131
EDUCATION GRADUATE	19	113	335	91	42	600
POST GRADUATE	33	114	60	17	1	225
PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	27	82	7	4	9	129
OTHERS	3	3	3	3	0	12
Total	108	354	500	190	61	1213

This Table is a summary of the Research Analysis. Though the highest number of respondents remain neutral, the second largest number of respondents (354 respondents) feel tamil nationalism to not be an intense tool to eradicate caste. Post Graduates and graduates are the top supporters for this statement.

*1.Education \* do you agree that Tamil nationalism will annihilate the caste?*

**Null hypothesis:** There is no significant association between annihilation of caste due to Tamilnationalism and education.

**Alternative hypothesis:** There is significant association between annihilation of caste due toTamil nationalism and education.

Tamil Nationalism will give rise to linguistics discrimination and regional discrimination additional to caste discrimination. Moreover, Linguistic and Regional subjugation on Tamil has been a major reason behind unity of tamilians and hence it may get disturbed.

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	422.831 <sup>a</sup>	20	.000
Likelihood Ratio	415.392	20	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	113.301	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1213		

a. 5 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .60

The Pearson Chi Square value mentioned in the above table is 42.831. P value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no association between the dependent and independent variables.

*Education \* Do you agree that Tamil nationalism will lead to separation of tamil population from India?*

### Crosstab

Count

	Do you agree that Tamil nationalism concept will lead to separation of tamil population from India?			Total
	YES	NO	MAYBE	
Education ILLITERATE	74	36	6	116
SCHOOL EDUCATION	34	81	16	131
GRADUATE	138	394	68	600
POST GRADUATE	108	86	31	225
PROFESSIONAL	64	52	13	129
DEGREE	5	4	3	12
OTHERS	423	653	137	1213
Total				



653 respondents of total 1213 have voted 'No', which says Tamil Nationalism concept will not separate the Tamilians from India. The Concept is less supported by Dravidians which assures unity,

until the time this gets high level of support. The Top supporters for this statement are Graduates. While, 423 of the total respondents have a contrary view.

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	125.588 <sup>a</sup>	10	.000
Likelihood Ratio	124.609	10	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.058	1	.810
N of Valid Cases	1213		

a. 2 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.36.

The Pearson Chi Square value mentioned in the above table is 125.588. P value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no association between the dependent and independent variables.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The Concept of Tamil Nationalism is not much familiar among Dravidians. From this it is understandable that the concept has developed as a part of Political game with time. Forming a separate country has its own difficulties. Separating a part from India, would make the newly formed country prone to difficulties in security, trade, etc. India is known for its 'Unity in Diversity'. Giving separation for one part of the nation will give rise to various groups demanding new homeland, which will eventually break the country's Identity. The concept 'Unity is Strength' is as real as reality. India as a whole is less prone to Subjugation of Other countries. The Mentality of the people is the one in need of change, not the geographical structure

of the Nation. Citizens need to think them whole as a 'Indian and notice the similarities instead of noticing the differences between them. Every state in the country has its own advantages and Problems. The Political system needs to strengthened, which will suppress separation thoughts, which emerges as a result of unequal treatment. Tamil language is being appreciated all around the world. Many Universities outside India has started to train their students in this language. Thus, Tamil Nationalism is not necessary for preserving the Language.

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