

Justice Party - Justice Movement, Formation, Works, Decline

July 4, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



The Justice Party, officially known as the **South Indian Liberal Federation** was established in 1916, and emerged as a significant political force in the **Madras Presidency**. It primarily represented the interests of **non-Brahmin** communities. Founded by **Dr. T. M. Nair**, **P. Tyagaraja Chetty**, and **C. Natesa Mudaliar**, the party sought to challenge the prevailing Brahmin dominance in government jobs and education.

The Justice Party advocated for social justice and affirmative action to enhance representation for marginalised communities. The party's influence was marked by its pioneering efforts in promoting reservation policies for backward classes, educational reforms, and various social initiatives.

Justice Party Background

The backdrop to the beginning of the Justice Movement lies in the deep-rooted **caste hierarchy** in South India, where Brahmins, though a minority, held significant power in administration and education. Non-Brahmin communities felt marginalized, which led to the rise of organizations advocating for their rights. The Justice Party emerged out of this environment as a platform to represent these non-Brahmin communities.

Justice Party Formation

On November 20, 1916, a significant gathering of non-Brahmin leaders took place at the residence of Advocate T. Mudaliyar in Vepery, Chennai. This meeting led to the establishment of the **South Indian Liberal Federation** (SILF) as a political movement aimed at addressing the grievances of non-Brahmin communities. The movement later became widely known as the "Justice Party," named after the English daily **Justice**, which championed non-Brahmin causes.

- In December 1916, the association released "**The Non-Brahmin Manifesto**," which expressed its loyalty to the British Raj while condemning the bureaucratic dominance of the Brahmin community.
- The manifesto urged non-Brahmins to assert their rights in the face of Brahmin hegemony, emphasizing the need for political representation and equity.

Why was the Justice Party formed?

The Justice Party was formed in response to the systemic inequalities and marginalization faced by non-Brahmin communities in the Madras Presidency. The party aimed to challenge the political and bureaucratic hegemony of Brahmins, who occupied a disproportionate number of positions in government and education. The other key reasons for its formation include:

- In the 1916 election for the Imperial Legislative Council, non-Brahmin candidates T. M. Nair and P. Ramarayaningar were defeated by their Brahmin opponents.
- Similarly, P. Theagaraya Chetty and Kurma Venkata Reddy Naidu lost local council elections to Brahmin candidates backed by the Home Rule League.
- These defeats fueled resentment and highlighted the necessity for a political organization dedicated to representing non-Brahmin interests, ultimately leading to the formation of the Justice Party.

Justice Party Major Works

During its early years, the Justice Party actively petitioned British officials to demand greater representation for non-Brahmins in governance. With the introduction of the diarchial system following the **1919 Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms**, the Justice Party participated in presidential governance. In 1920, it achieved a significant milestone by winning the first direct elections for the presidency, forming the government, and serving as the main political alternative to the nationalist Indian National Congress in **Madras**.

- Theagaraya Chetty requested Montagu for communal representation in the provincial legislature for non-Brahmins, advocating for a system similar to the separate electorates and reserved seats granted to Muslims by the **Minto-Morley Reforms** of 1909.
- During its time in power, the party enacted several impactful laws, including the **Madras Elementary Education Act of 1920**, which introduced compulsory education for both boys and girls while increasing funding for elementary education.

Justice Party Decline

The Justice Party began to decline in the 1930s due to internal conflicts and the rising prominence of the Indian National Congress. The Congress's focus on national independence overshadowed the Justice Party's caste-based agenda. Additionally, the party's association with the British government during the independence struggle alienated it from the growing nationalist sentiment. By 1944, the Justice Party transformed itself into the **Dravidar Kazhagam**.

Other Related Posts	
Socio-Religious Reform Movements	Faraizi Movement
Raja Ram Mohan Roy	Deoband Movement
Brahmo Samaj	Ahmadiyya movement
Swami Vivekananda	Akali movement
Ramakrishna Mission	Kuka Movement
Arya Samaj	Jyotiba Phule
Dayanand Saraswati	Savitribai Phule
Young Bengal Movement	Paramahansa Mandali
Henry Vivian Derazio	Pandita Ramabai
Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar	SNDP Movement
Prarthana Samaj	Justice Party
Gopal Hari Deshmukh	Self Respect movement
Dharma Sabha	Temple Entry Movement
Theosophical Society	Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar
Aligarh Movement	Gandhi vs Ambedkar
Wahabi Movement	Mahad Satyagraha

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/justice-party-justice-movement/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.