



CHIEF MINISTERS M.KARUNANIDHI AND M. K. STALIN : THE CHAMPIONS OF THE PROGRESSIVE DRAVIDIAN MODEL GOVERNMENT IN TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT:

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.) has demonstrated its influence and presence since its inception on September 17th, 1949. This political party has undertaken numerous significant initiatives aimed at improving the lives of the people of Tamil Nadu.¹ The programmes implemented by its government have empowered individuals to rise above their social circumstances. This paper aims to elucidate not only the Dravidian ideology's impact on South India but also the socio-economic accomplishments of the D.M.K. within Tamil society. The primary aim of the D.M.K. is to focus on the socio-economic achievements of the D.M.K. The fundamental 'Dravidian' ideology emerged and evolved within a socio-political context characterized by three notable features: They were the predominant control of public administration in the Madras Presidency by English-educated Brahmins; their elevation of Sanskrit as a cultural identifier while simultaneously diminishing the status of Tamil identity; and the rise of a form of Orientalist scholarship that portrayed a distinguished Tamil/Dravidian heritage as separate from the Aryan narrative. The interplay of these interconnected elements during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries provided the backdrop for the Vellala-inspired 'Dravidian' ideology'.



KEYWORDS: C.N. Annadurai, M.Karunanidhi, M.K.Stalin, Dravidian Model, D.M.K., Tamil Nadu, Madras.

ADMINISTRATION OF KALAINAR KARUNANIDHI AS CHIEF MINISTER

M.Karunanidhi was a leading politician of Tamil Nadu and the leader of the D.M.K. after C.N. Annadurai. He also made his impact in Indian politics. He was affectionately referred to as 'Kalaingar' (Artist) due to his substantial contributions to Tamil literature, which encompassed poetry, letters, screenplays, novels, biographies, historical narratives, stage plays, dialogues, and films. Karunanidhi, who was a long-time leader of the Dravidian movement and held the leadership of the D.M.K. for ten terms, passed away on August 7, 2018, after a long illness at the age of 94 in Chennai. Significantly, the Indian Parliament adjourned for the first time in remembrance of Karunanidhi, despite his lack of membership in the institution.

Karunanidhi began his career as a screenwriter in the Tamil film industry. His initial work as a screenwriter was the film, *Rajakumaari* (1947), which earned him significant acclaim. He mostly focused on making history and promoting social reform, which was important for spreading the socialist and rationalist thoughts of the Dravidian Movement.

His political ideologies were notably disseminated through the film , *Parasakthi*.² Additionally, two other films he scripted, *Panam* and *Thangarathnam*, conveyed similar themes. In the 1950s, two of his theatrical productions faced bans due to their potent social commentary. His active participation in the 'Kallakudi Agitation' significantly bolstered his standing in Tamil Nadu's political landscape.³ In the establishment of the D.M.K. in 1949, Karunanidhi played a pivotal role in assisting C.N. Annadurai , the founder of the D.M.K.

As a First Term Chief Minister, 1969-1971

Between 1969 and 1971, several notable initiatives were implemented by the Karunannidhi Ministry. The Beggars Rehabilitation Scheme was introduced in 1969, alongside the abolition of hand-pulled rickshaws and the free distribution of cycle rickshaws. The provision of free concrete houses for Scheduled Castes and Tribes was also made, along with the *Kudiyiruppu* Act, which conferred ownership of house sites. In 1971, legislation ensuring fair wages for agricultural laborers was enacted. A Police Commission and a separate Ministry for Backward Classes and Scheduled Castes were constituted in Tamil Nadu as the first state in India.⁴ The Backward Classes Commission was constituted, and the reservation for Backward Classes was increased from 25 percent to 31 percent, while the reservation for Scheduled Castes rose from 15 percent to 18 percent.⁵ Moreover, free education was given to all students who were studying up to the Pre-University Course level. ⁶In 1969, May Day was announced a holiday with pay . The birthday of 'Nabigal Nayagam' was also declared a state holiday. In 1969, the Rajamannar Committee was constituted to examine the provisions of the Constitution of India , with special reference to the distribution of powers between the Central Government and the State Governments.⁷

As a Second Term Chief Minister , 1971-1976

Between 1971 and 1976, several significant politico-socio developments occurred. He was responsible for the establishment of an Agricultural University as first in Coimbatore in 1971. The Family Benefit Fund Scheme for Government Employees was introduced. Additionally, to support children 'Karunai Illam' was organized in temples. He brought the Urdu-speaking Muslims in the list of Backward Classes like that of the Tamil-speaking Muslims. The announcement of the abolition of land tax on dry lands was made. The '*Manu Neethi Thittam*' was started, and in 1974, the Poompuhar Shipping Corporation was set up. The Kongu Vellalar community was also added to the list of Backward Classes. Remarkably , he was the first Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to raise the national flag at Fort St. George in Chennai on August 15th , 1974. The Tamil Nadu Land Reforms (Fixation of Ceiling on Land) Act, 1961, was amended in 1971 and 1972, reducing the ceiling area from thirty standard acres to fifteen.⁸ In 1972, the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation was established. Until then , food supply policies were designed by the Union Government.⁹ By 1976, the entire state was integrated into the Public Distribution System (P.D.S.). Furthermore, Tamil Nadu was the first state to pass a resolution advocating for regional autonomy in the State Assembly in 1974.

As a Third Term Chief Minister , 1989-1991

From 1989 to 1991, the Ministry of Karunanidhi took various initiatives to enhance social welfare. Free education for Scheduled Castes and women, subject to an income ceiling, was announced up to the degree level. In 1989, Tamil Nadu became the first state in the country to implement free electricity for farmers. A law ensuring equal property rights for women was enacted in the same year, along with a provision for 30 percent reservation for women in government services. The First Veterinary and Animal Sciences University was proclaimed in Tamil Nadu. Thus Tamil Nadu became the first state in Asia to start such an university. Financial assistance was provided to impoverished girls for marriage, as well as support for pregnant women. Women's Self-Help Groups were established, benefiting one million women. In 1990, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University was formed, and efforts were made to establish the Cauvery Tribunal. Moreover, a 20 percent separate reservation within the

Other Backward Classes (O.B.C.) quota was allocated for the most backward castes, including denotified communities.¹⁰

As a Fourth Term Chief Minister, 1996-2001

Between 1996 and 2001, a 33 percent reservation for women was implemented in local governing bodies, resulting in 44,143 women, including two women Mayors taking office. One of these mayors was hailed from the Scheduled Caste community. In 1996, the city of Madras was officially renamed 'Chennai'. A new transparent industrial policy was introduced, along with a single-window system for obtaining all necessary licenses to establish industries. The 'M.L.A. Constituency Development Fund' was constituted for the first occasion in India. In 1998, the Periyar Memorial Samathuvapuram (Egalitarian Habitat) Scheme was launched to fight against the discrimination based on caste. On 17th August, 1999, the first Samathuvapuram was emerged at Melakotta close to Madurai.¹¹ The Ambedkar Law University, the first of its nature in India, was started in Tamil Nadu in 1997. In 1999 the Tamil Virtual University was proclaimed to enhance the cause of the Tamils all over the world.¹² Uzhavar Sandhai Thittam (The Farmers Market Scheme) was commenced in 1999. At that times, the '*Vazhvoli Thittam*' was started in schools. The first market was opened on November 14th, 1999 at Madurai and the hundred one was opened at Pallavaram on 14th November 2000. In 2000, a 133-foot high statue of Thiruvalluvar was erected in Kanniyakumari. From the academic year 1999-2000, Community Certificates, Nativity Certificates, and Income Certificates were issued upon completion of the 10th and 12th Standards. The foundation for the Koyambedu Bus Terminal in Chennai, the biggest in Asia, was laid, and a special plan for the development of the southern districts of Tamil Nadu was declared. Additionally, the Women's Small Trade Loan Scheme, which included a savings component, was launched. A memorial for Tamil scholars and martyrs, known as '*Manimandapam*', was constructed. The establishment of a High Court bench in Madurai marked a significant development. The '*Anna Marumalarchi Scheme*' was started in 1997-1998. In the At the same period, the Indigent Family Welfare Scheme was commenced. The nationalization of the literary works of the eminent Tamil scholars was also undertaken. The '*Namakku Naame Thittam*' (Self-Sufficiency Scheme) was a participatory initiative proposed in the 1997-1998 budget aimed at fostering self-help and a self-reliant mindset within the community. In addition, the establishment of a tidal park was achieved in 1999.

As a Fifth and Last Term Chief Minister, 2006-2011

Between 2006 and 2011, several significant initiatives were introduced by the Ministry of Karunanidhi. The '*Varumun Kappom Scheme*' and the Free Land Distribution Scheme were started in a grand manner in 2006. In 2008, a provision allowed rice to be sold for one rupee per kg. A cooperative loan waiver of Rs. 7,000 crores was carried out, helping 22,40,739 farming families. The renewal of 117 existing *Uzhavar Sandhais* and the establishment of 45 new ones were also undertaken. The state's endeavours to interlink its rivers included the Cauvery Gundaru Linking Project, carried out at a financial outlay of Rs. 189 crores, alongside the Tamirabarani-Karumeniyaru-Nambiyaru Linking Project, which was executed at a cost of Rs. 369 crores. Kamaraj's birthday on July 15th, was designated as 'Education Development Day' in all schools, supported by special legislation enacted in 2006. Tamil was made a mandatory subject up to the 10th Standard in schools that same year. The Central Institute of Classical Tamil was transferred to Chennai from Mysore. Financial assistance for the marriages of underprivileged girls under the Moovalur Ramamirdham Ammaiyar scheme was increased from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 25,000. The '*Varumun Kappom Thittam*' conducted 18,742 camps, benefiting 77,05,008 individuals. In 2010, the '*Nalamana Thamizhagam Thittam*' was introduced to promote awareness regarding heart disease, diabetes, and cancer through medical check-ups. The Free 108 Emergency Ambulance Scheme, supported by the central government, assisted 8,08,907 individuals, saving the lives of 42,232 people in 2009. A three percent separate reservation for the Arunthathiyar community was announced.¹³ To foster a casteless society, 145 Periyar *Ninaivu Samathuvapurams* were created, with an additional 95 new ones added. The foundation stone was laid for the new Secretariat-Assembly

Complex in Omandurar Government Estate of Chennai in 2008. The cost of expenditure allocated was Rs. 1,200 crores.¹⁴ The TESMA and ESMA were abolished¹⁵, and concessions previously withdrawn from government employees and teachers were reinstated.¹⁶ The recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission were implemented from January 1st, 2006, incurring an annual expenditure of Rs. 5,155.79 crores.¹⁷ The First World Classical Tamil Conference took place in Coimbatore in June 2010. This event coincided with the celebration of Rajaraja Chola's 1000th Birth Anniversary (Sadhaya Vizha) in the same year. Besides, Additionally, 'raja rajan aayiram', a single paddy cultivation system was initiated. In 2007, the D.M.K. Government assigned a 3.5% quota of reservation for both Christians and Muslims within the 30% OBC reservation quota.¹⁸

The World Classical Tamil Conference 2010 was a significant international assembly of scholars, poets, political figures, and notable personalities interested in the Tamil community, language, and literature. This conference was held at Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, from June 23rd, to June 27th, 2010, with expenditures exceeding 500 crores.¹⁹

The lyric of theme, '*Semmozhiyaana Thamizh Mozhiyaam*', was enacted by the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Karunanidhi with music rendered by A.R. Rahman.

The Dravidian Model Administration of M.K. Stalin As Chief Minister, 2021-Present

During the 2021 Assembly elections, M.K.Stalin, the son and successor of M.Karunannidhi spearheaded the campaign for the Secular Progressive Alliance, resulting in a victory with 159 seats out of 234, including an absolute majority for the D.M.K. with 132 seats. On May 7th, 2021, along with his cabinet members M.K.Stalin took the oath of office as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.²⁰

Ungal Thoguthiyil Mudhalamaichar

An important milestone achieved by M.K. Stalin as Chief Minister is the launch of the '*Ungal Thoguthiyil Mudhalamaichar*' (Chief Minister in Your Constituency), a detailed grievance redressal scheme intended to tackle the petitions and challenges raised by the constituents. This timely response system gained significant attention, as over 2,30,000 out of 4,57,000 grievances were resolved by Stalin within his first 100 days in office. The initiative evolved from the '*Ungal Thoguthiyil Stalin*' programme, which Stalin initiated during his election campaign, where he collected citizens' grievances and committed to addressing them within 100 days of assuming office.

A Department was established as a result of the '*Ungal Thoguthiyil Stalin*' initiative, which was launched by D.M.K.President Stalin during his electoral campaign. During this campaign, Stalin gathered complaints from the public and promised that their concerns would be resolved within 100 days of his assuming office. Experts and journalist, Govi Lenin have described this initiative as a direct embodiment of the DMK's fundamental principle, 'Makkalidam Sel' (Go to the People), which was articulated by the party's founder, C. N. Annadurai.

Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam

On August 5th 2021, M.K. Stalin inaugurated the '*Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam Scheme*' aimed at delivering essential healthcare services directly to the residents of Tamil Nadu. Since its inception, the scheme has revolutionized the approach to primary healthcare delivery, ushering in a new era where vital medical services are readily accessible to the underprivileged, provided right at their homes.²¹

The Scheme includes health screenings for individuals over 45 years of age and those with health issues through regular door-to-door checkups, identifying non-communicable diseases that can lead to sudden fatalities and adversely affect quality of life. The programme relies on the efforts of women public health workers, women health volunteers (WHVs), physiotherapists, and nurses, who will deliver healthcare services directly to households. Through this scheme, conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes, which often go unnoticed in rural areas, are being screened, and monthly medicines are supplied at home. Additionally, physiotherapy services are offered to those requiring such care.

Illam Thedi Kalvi

On October 19th, 2021, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated the 'Illam Thedi Kalvi' scheme, recognized as India's largest volunteer-driven educational programme. This scheme involves 2,00,000 women volunteers who provide instruction to over 3.3 million students across 92,000 locations for a duration of ninety minutes each day.

Experts in the field and data analysts have commended the innovative nature of this programme, noting that it accounts for more than 24% of the overall recovery from learning deficits, with particularly significant progress observed among disadvantaged groups.

Innuyir Kappom - Nammai Kakkum 48

On November 18th, 2021, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin started the 'Innuyir Kappom-Nammai Kakkum 48' scheme. In this scheme state government would meet emergency medical care costs for accident victims for the first 48 hours after an incident.²² In announcing the programme, Stalin emphasized the government's commitment to enhancing road safety, reducing accidents, and preventing fatalities. The initiative aims to decrease mortality rates resulting from road accidents and connects a total of 609 hospitals, comprising 201 government facilities and 408 private institutions. All individuals injured in road accidents, regardless of their coverage under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme (C.M.C.H.I.S.) or their residency status, will receive complimentary treatment for the first 48 hours within Tamil Nadu. A significant aspect of this initiative is the provision for the government to cover emergency treatment costs in private hospitals, as timely medical intervention within this critical initiative can save numerous lives.

Chief Minister's Dashboard

On December 23rd, 2021, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated the 'CM Dashboard Monitoring System' at his office. This system is designed to facilitate the tracking of various welfare schemes, encompassing their implementation status, fund distribution, and the number of beneficiaries.²³ The dashboard aims to enhance monitoring efficiency, reduce delays, and support timely decision-making. Additionally, it will provide the Chief Minister with updates on water levels in significant dams, rainfall statistics, daily crime reports, progress in housing initiatives, employment trends, and civil supply status within the State. Furthermore, the dashboard will reflect the status of requests and representations submitted through the Chief Minister Helpline and the 'CM in Your Constituency' scheme.

Naan Mudhalvan Scheme

On March 1st, 2022, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin launched the 'Naan Mudhalvan' scheme, which seeks to empower approximately one million youth across the State each year by providing them with skills that will enable them to harness their talents for the nation's benefit. A new portal was also introduced for this scheme.²⁴ The programme is focused on identifying, training, and offering career and academic guidance to talented students enrolled in government and State-supported educational institutions. It includes provisions for spoken English training to prepare students for interviews successfully. Additionally, the scheme will provide training modules in coding and robotics to align with technological progress. Psychological counselors and medical professionals will also be available to advise on nutrition, physical fitness, and the holistic development of students' personalities.

Green Tamil Nadu Mission

On September 24th, 2022, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated the Green Tamil Nadu Mission, which aims to enhance the state's green cover from 23.7% to 33% over the next decade.²⁵ This initiative will support tree planting efforts and allow for the online purchase of seedlings through the Green Tamil Nadu Mission portal.

Pudhumai Penn Scheme

On September 5th, 2022, in Chennai, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin began the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme, known as '*Pudhumai Penn*' amidst the Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal. This scheme evolved from the 'Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Memorial Marriage Assistance Scheme', recognizing the low enrollment ratio of girls from government schools in higher education. During this event, Kejriwal publicized twenty-six schools of excellence and fifteen model schools which were dedicated by the Tamil Nadu Government. Under the '*Pudhumai Penn*' scheme, girl students who attended state government schools from Class V to Class XII will receive a monthly assistance of Rs.1,000 until they complete their graduation or diploma. This initiative is expected to benefit approximately six lakh girls annually, with the state government allocating Rs.698 crore in the 2022-2023 Budget for its implementation.²⁶

Additionally, Stalin announced that 25 schools operated by Municipal Corporations would be upgraded to Schools of Excellence in the initial phase, with an investment of Rs.171 crore. The classrooms in these Schools of Excellence will be modernized, and various disciplines such as art, literature, music, dance, and sports will be promoted among students.

Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme

On August 9th, 2022, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin determined to inaugurate the 'Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme' in Coimbatore, which aimed to provide boys from state government schools who enroll in colleges with a monthly stipend of Rs.1,000.²⁷ This initiative mirrors the Pudumaipen Scheme established for female students. Since its launch by the Chief Minister in September 2022, the Pudumaipen Scheme has benefited a total of three lakh girls and has contributed to an increase in female enrollment in colleges. The introduction of the 'Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme' is intended to enhance male participation in higher education institutions, as stated in a press release from the state government.

In Tamil Nadu, approximately 7,72,000 students complete their education in government and government-aided schools, with a notable number pursuing higher education, making it one of the leading states in this regard.

According to the state government, the 'Pudumaipen Scheme' supported 2,09,365 girls in the academic year 2022-2023, with this figure rising to 2,73,596 in 2023-2024. The financial allocation for the scheme was Rs.100.11 crore in 2022-2023, which increased to Rs.271.66 crore for the subsequent academic year. Besides, the scheme was expected to include students of the Tamil medium government-aided schools since the academic year of 2024-2025.

Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme

On September 15th, 2022, M.K. Stalin began the 'Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme' for primary school children in 1500 government-run schools. aimed at combating hunger and nutritional deficiencies among children.²⁸ This programme is designed to enhance the nutritional well-being of students, address issues such as malnutrition and anemia, and encourage attendance among children from economically disadvantaged families.²⁹

The issue of anemia among children, recognized as a significant health challenge in Tamil Nadu, was underscored in the National Family Health Survey-5 (N.F.H.S) report for the years 2019-2021. In response, Stalin's Breakfast Scheme aims to address this deficiency, with the goal of reducing or potentially eradicating it. The initiative will be rolled out at an expenditure of Rs.33.56 crore across more than 1,500 government-operated schools in the state, benefiting over 1,14,000 children enrolled in primary government schools. Stalin envisioned that this education-nutrition initiative would serve as a motivating example for other states to follow.

Egalitarianism and Social Justice in Tamil Nadu

Egalitarianism or social justice are the core ethos of the DMK since it assumed power in Tamil Nadu. Karunanidhi slightly enlarged the reservation pie, and MGR expanded it to maximum. Today the

State Under M.K.Stalin is known for both its paternal populism and reservations.³⁰ On August 15th 2021, M.K. Stalin appointed people from all castes as *archakas* (priests) in the Tamil Nadu's temples, breaking away from the old tradition of employing Brahmin priests.³¹ He promised that those trained earlier by the D.M.K. Government would have a chance to be priests.

Stalin asserted that this initiative would realize the aspirations of former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi and Periyar E.V.Ramasami, who advocated for the inclusion of individuals from all castes in temple priesthood. While this policy has been viewed as contentious by some, it has also received recognition for being a progressive step towards social revolution and the elimination of discrimination in various forms.

The initiatives were conceived as catalysts for long-term social progress and economic development. Under the leadership of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, Tamil Nadu has achieved a significant milestone in governance, attracting national and international attention. Several Indian states have begun to adopt similar models, recognizing their success in improving the quality of life. Even outside India, international observers have recognized Tamil Nadu's model of inclusive, people-centered governance. At the heart of this vision is the legacy of Thanthai Periyar, Perarignar Anna, and Muthamizh Arignar Kalaingar, whose ideals of self-respect, rationalism, and social equity continue to shape the Dravidian governance model. The Chief Minister Thiru M.K. Stalin has exemplified this philosophy, ensuring that governance is not limited to administration, but to the advancement of people and the provision of a just future for all.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on February 15, 2024, listed what he said were ten achievements of the 'Dravidian Model' government of the D.M.K., which he said, had become blueprints for other States to emulate.³³ According to new estimates released by the Indian government, Tamil Nadu has recorded double-digit economic growth, the highest among all states, in 2024-2025. With a revised growth rate of 11.19%, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin praised the economic success, attributing it to the "Dravidian Model Government." The Dravidian Model Government of Tamil Nadu is the only state in India to have achieved double-digit economic growth, Chief Minister Stalin wrote on social media. The last time this was achieved was in 2010-2011 under the Kalaingar (Karunandhi) government. Now, again, it is a DMK government going its own way, he added.³⁴

CONCLUSION

The original ideas and goals of the Dravidian parties, which emerged from the Justice Party and the Dravidar Kazhagam, focused on social changes such as the elimination of unreasonable religious beliefs, the elimination of caste distinctions, women's emancipation, the reduction of Brahmin control over education and government in Tamil Nadu, and the end of northern domination. These rationalist advances and recent changes were not the result of chance, but rather of planned political action. Many young people, growing up in the digital age, may not have a complete understanding of the historical and political context that facilitated their progress. Tamil Nadu did not receive its present name until the formation of the D.M.K. government. Despite numerous petitions and requests, previous governments failed to heed the people's wishes. However, on July 18, 1968, under the leadership of C.N. Annadurai, the decision was made and a resolution adopted to officially change the region's name to Tamil Nadu, an important step that demonstrated the D.M.K.'s determination and the government's efforts to protect the state's identity and culture. Madras State was renamed Tamil Nadu on January 14, 1969, Pongal Day.³²

Tamil Nadu has ranked first in the Export Readiness Index for the fifth time in India. It also leads in electronics exports. M.K. Stalin said the Tamil Nadu government has helped create a business-friendly environment, which has elevated Tamil Nadu from fourteenth to third place nationally.

Tamil Nadu has become a leader in new industries. M.K. Stalin stated that the Dravidian-Model Government has achieved significant improvements for women, youth, and other disadvantaged groups. He noted that whenever he approved a programme, he thought of the people who would benefit. When he learned of the number of people helped, he was overjoyed.

M.K. Stalin also said that the amount invested in various programs and the number of people helped. In thirty-three months, he has allocated Rs 6,569.75 million to various areas. Every month, 11,516,292 women would receive Rs 1,000 through the "Kalaigal Magalir Urimai Thittam" programme and have ridden public buses free of charge 445 million times. The "Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam Thittam" programme has helped one million people, and 1.60,000 students participate in the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Breakfast Programme.

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