

# MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE



# **MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE**

**Group Interests in Modern Politics**

**S. Saraswathi**



**Impex India**  
**Delhi**

© S. Saraswathi, 1974

September, 1974  
Price: Rs 50.00

Published by Sita Ram Goel for Impex India, 2/18 Ansari Road, Delhi-6,  
and printed by Naya Hindustan Press, Chandni Chowk, Delhi-6.



*To the memory of Prof. P. Bhaskaran  
my teacher and guide*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is substantially based on my thesis entitled "Minorities in Madras State : A Study of Group Interests and their Organisation in Madras Politics since 1890", which was awarded the Ph.D. Degree of the University of Madras in 1965. The research was done in the Department of Politics and Public Administration of the University under the guidance of Professor R. Bhaskaran. I am very grateful to the University for granting me necessary facilities for conducting the research and for permitting me to publish the thesis. I am thankful to the Government of Madras for according me permission to peruse the records pertaining to the subject, and to the Curator and staff of the Madras Record Office, the officers of the libraries of the University, the Madras Legislature and the Secretariat and the Connemara Public Library for the consistent and kind help received from them. The prompt and valuable assistance rendered by the leaders and officials of the Justice, the Dravida Kazhagam, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Tamilnad Toilers Parties by allowing me to peruse their literature and furnishing me with facts and figures is gratefully acknowledged.



## INTRODUCTION

(The word 'minority' in the now familiar sense goes back according to the New English Dictionary to the second half of the eighteenth century. Johnson and Burke had used it; Burke spoke of a "large minority" (1789) and Herbert Spencer, the stout individualist was the first to say he did not mind being "in a minority of one" (1894). The meaning of the word in English usage was fixed in the context of a homogeneous society which had accepted by that time both parliamentary government and the party system.) In areas influenced by Britain, these institutions have acquired such compulsive force that it is assumed that a parliamentary democracy with a two party system in which the ruling party is legitimised by obtaining a majority in parliament while the opposition is a minority hopeful of becoming a majority is the original and the only possible model of modern democracy. With such a political philosophy in the background there is a general reluctance in our country to look at several minority groups in our society as anything but obstacles to political progress, democratic government and national integration. On the other hand because of the international history of minorities since World War I, the problem of national minorities which sparked off World War II, and the growing care for the underprivileged—either new nations or unassimilated groups in the old nations—as exhibited in the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, there is a general disposition to be humane and generous to minorities.

The traditional social groups in our 'developing society' are clearly visible *varna* and *jati* groups none of which is capable of successful self-assertion in the political field in its own name and right. And every such group is anxious to avoid the hostility which it is the prevailing fashion of the westernised elite and national politicians to express towards 'groupism'

'communalism' or 'casteism'.<sup>1</sup> Thus our groups made up of castes assume the name of 'minorities' which evokes political approval and sympathy. A study of minorities in Madras is virtually a study of caste groups. The numerous castes, each by itself too small to be effective in the new political context, coalesce into bigger groups, whereby each caste can by association with similar castes, strengthen its claim to certain political advantages.) The history of 'minorities' is therefore a history of the formation and operation of politicised social groups.

The traditional arrangement with an upper 'Brahmin' caste and the segregation of the 'outcastes' became incongruous and progressively unacceptable in a democratic system whose primary postulate is human equality. Dr. Ambedkar in his book *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah* spoke of the Hindu religion as "a religion which is not intended to establish liberty, equality and fraternity. It is a gospel which proclaims the worship of the superman—the Brahmin by the rest of the society." There is truth in this indictment by the Harijan Buddhist scholar who helped to write liberty, equality and fraternity into our Constitution. Since caste did not disappear before Western political institutions were transplanted here, and has not disappeared still, it plays a political role in virtue of its being a 'given' and ubiquitous group or association. This work is an attempt to trace the assumption of the political role by such 'groups' in Madras. S.C. Mehta writing on "Persistence of the caste system: vested interest in backwardness" in the *Quest* (Winter 1962-63) rightly points out that "it is the economic gain, which is expected to follow the establishment of political power that motivates caste political rivalries, especially when increasing economic opportunities coincide with increased government regulation in economic life." His argument that there is now a strong vested interest in backwardness and his suggestion that the economic motivation for it increases in a progressively

1. "Though caste is today ceasing to be social evil, it has become a political evil; it has become an administrative evil. We are utilising these caste loyalties for the purpose of winning our elections or getting people into jobs ." (Dr. S. Radhakrishnan at the National Integration Conference, 1961.)

government-directed economy justifies the hypothesis that this phenomenon will last a considerable time and therefore will bear close study. The study attempted here is of the aetiology, morphology and behaviour of these groups without any bias for or against them on grounds of social ethics or political necessity.

# CONTENTS

	<i>Introduction</i>	ix
1	<b>GROUP INTERESTS AND THEIR ORGANISATION</b> The Brahmin <i>varna</i> —The Panchama <i>varna</i> —Non-Brahmin <i>varnas</i> —Traditional caste alliances—The largest caste Vanniakula Kshatria—The non-Hindu castes—Political grouping of castes.	1
2	<b>THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT</b> Formation of the South Indian Liberal Federation—The dominance of Brahmins in 1916—Beginnings of non-Brahmin Politics—(Circumstances leading to Non-Brahmin Manifesto.)	36
3	<b>THE GROWTH OF THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT</b> Political philosophy of the Justice Movement—The Communal G.O.—Anti-brahminism in social life.	68
4	<b>THE BACKWARD CLASSES</b> The split within the non-Brahmin—The backward concept—Political disunity of non-Brahmins—The emergence of backward classes—The race for backwardness—Revision of the Communal G.O.	103
5	<b>THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA</b> Early British policy—The Labour Department—Assimilation of the depressed minority—Caste consciousness of the casteless—The policy of political concessions.	145



6	PATTERNS OF ADJUSTMENT TO MODERN DEMOCRACY	181
<i>Appendices</i>	I MAIN CASTES IN MADRAS STATE	197
	II THE NON-BRAHMIN MANI- FESTO	199
	III CASTES ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT	210
	IV LINGUISTIC REPRESENTA- TION IN SERVICES	224
	<i>Bibliography</i>	227
	<i>Index</i>	239

## TABLES

I	Census Classification of Castes—1881	7
II	Social Precedence of Castes—1901	12
III	Depressed Classes—1921	16
IV	Caste Nomenclature Changes	25
V	Traditional Caste Alliances	28
VI	Socio-Political Groups in Madras State	35
VII	Brahmin Gains in Elections—1916	46
VIII	Subordinate Government Posts—1916	48
IX	Madras University Graduates—1918	49
X	Government Appointments and Caste—1881	<u>57</u>
XI	Elected Members of the Legislative Council (1920-26)	80
XII	Brahmin and Non-Brahmin in State Services (1900 40)	95
XIII	Memorandum by Backward Classes League— 1944	121
XIV	Backward Classes and Government Appointments	143
XV	Caste Groups in the Legislative Assembly	<u>144</u>
XVI	Scheduled Castes and Tribes and Government Appointments	179

## Group Interests and their Organisation

THE term 'minority' denotes more or less distinct groups living within a state which are dominated by other groups. There are minorities in all countries of the world, for political boundaries made by historical conditions do not always coincide with ethnic, religious and linguistic boundaries. When two or more groups distinct from one another by race, religion or language live within a political state but not on equal terms, the problem of majority and minority arises. The term 'minority' is defined in the *Oxford Dictionary* as "the condition or fact of being smaller, inferior or subordinate; a smaller number or part; a number which is less than half the whole number." Such minorities were originally created by wars and migrations, but the mere fact of numerical inferiority or subjection to the rule of an alien group did not in the past create the political problem of minorities anywhere in the world. The Roman Emperors who ruled over the Greeks, the Persians and the Egyptians did not face a problem of minorities; nor did the multi-national character of the Holy Roman Empire threaten its political existence. The problem of minorities is a problem of democracy and minorities have come to acquire international political recognition only since the enunciation of the famous principle of national self-determination by President Wilson in 1919.

In the Western democracies minorities arising from a mixture of population through wars and migrations have been dealt with in various ways—assimilation, segregation, elimination or federation. The diverse nationalities that migrated to the New World were assimilated with one another so thoroughly as to form a new homogeneous society, perhaps in anticipatory realisation of the political principle later enunciated by Mill that "free

institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities." Long association, inter-marriages, fusion of cultures and adoption of a common language have completed that assimilation to a high degree. It is the practice since the abolition of slavery of segregating the Negroes, who claim equality and desire to be assimilated with the White people that has given rise to a serious problem of Black minorities in the United States of America. Segregation as a policy tends to keep the minority in a permanent state of frustration and bitterness. Elimination has been adopted at times as a drastic way of settling a minority problem in the form of transfer of population or frontier revision. Frontier revision though a difficult process is still 'the most satisfactory' and 'the traditional method'; transfer of population in experience has been found a "painful operation" involving "many a secondary injustice".<sup>1</sup> Both these methods wherever they were adopted with the object of carving out uni-national states with homogeneous populations put the minorities to extreme inconvenience. But they do solve the problem in the most effective manner. Finally, (cultural pluralism as evidenced in the multi-national state of Switzerland points to the most humane, lasting and democratic way of accommodating minorities. Constitutional and traditional safeguards secure the equal rights of the different ethnic and religious groups and the peace that prevails in the country proves that cultural diversities need not in themselves be barriers to political unity or economic progress.)

None of the solutions adopted in Western countries with regard to minorities seems immediately or indubitably relevant to Indian conditions. The character of our problem finds no parallel in any part of the world. For it is a problem of a divided society—a society divided from time immemorial into numerous hereditary

<sup>1</sup> O.I. Janowsky, *Nationalities and National Minorities*, 1945, p. 138.

## GROUP INTERESTS AND THEIR ORGANISATION

groups called castes. Etymologically, the term 'caste' is derived from the Latin *castus* meaning 'pure'. It was first used by the Portugese to describe the Indian social stratification. Yule and Burnell quote the definition that caste is "the artificial division of society in India, first made known to us by the Portugese and described by them under their term 'caste', signifying 'breed, race, kind', which has been retained in English under the supposition that it was the native name."<sup>2</sup> The Decree of the Sacred Council of Goa in 1567 said that, "in some parts of Goa the Gentoos divide themselves into distinct races or castes (castas) of greater or less dignity holding the Christian as of lower degree and keep them so superstitiously that no one of a higher caste can eat or drink with those of a lower."<sup>3</sup>

Caste may better be described than defined. It is an endogamous group or a collection of such groups, bearing a common name and believing in a common origin, having a hereditary occupation (whether all members follow it or not), possessing common rituals, ceremonies and forms of worship, the members of which consider themselves and are considered by others as belonging to a social group, distinct, separate and identifiable from other such groups.<sup>4</sup> The Indian caste has economic, social and religious aspects. As an economic order, it prescribes and prohibits occupations; as a religious system it outlines the sacraments and rituals of each caste; as a social arrangement it defines the status of a person in the society with reference to the ritualistic practices and secular occupations pertaining to his caste. In the pattern of society which has evolved by the interaction of all these elements of caste, inter-caste relationship is very restricted, there having been till modern

2. Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*.

3. *Ibid*.

4. The elements of caste according to the definition in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* are endogamy, common name and origin, traditional occupation, and homogeneity.

times, no social or political pressure to doubt or cast aside the popular belief that the customary hierarchy was divinely ordained. It is this received faith which has been the effective sanction behind caste. To the Hindus, *Dharma* primarily denotes the fulfilling of caste duties. The inexorable law of *Karma* in which the orthodox place implicit faith, assigns to each man his work and status in accordance with his deeds in previous birth. They hope that by a strict discharge of caste duties one could raise oneself in social scale in a subsequent birth. Dr. Dube elucidates the point, "the concepts of sin, merit and pollution are fundamental to the concept of *Dharma*. *Dharma* which means 'that which is right' covers all the phases of human life cycle and fixes several details of intra and inter-group life. Acceptance of caste traditions and the general rules of piety can be said to constitute the *Dharma* of the people and it is through *Dharma* that one can look forward to shaping one's destiny."<sup>5</sup>

The twin aspects of caste—hierarchy and division—are perpetuated by a scrupulous adherence to the rule of *endogamy*, which serves as a *centripetal* force within the walls of a caste and a *centrifugal* one between different castes. It has sustained the caste system against all adverse forces—the Buddhist schism, the pressure of Islam, Christian missionary efforts, the spread of Western education and the impact of modern ideologies—that have made inroads on the Hindu way of life. The peculiar blend of status and function, characteristic of Indian caste is sustained mainly by the continuing preference of the individual to marry within his caste. Inter-caste marriages are still very exceptional. Indian caste, based on the tie of kinship, is a biologically self-perpetuating

5. S.C. Dube, *Indian Village*, 1955, pp. 92-93.

M.N. Srinivas in *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*, 1952, pp. 24-26, explains how certain Hindu theological notions like *Karma* and *Dharma* contribute to the strengthening of the idea of hierarchy inherent in the caste system.

unit; a Hindu can neither choose nor change his caste. Modern sociologists and cultural anthropologists also stress this factor of endogamy as the very foundation of the caste system.<sup>6</sup>

(The economic transformation of India during the last one hundred years, the growth of transport and industries, the spread of education and increasing urbanisation have shaken the fabric of the indigenous social order.) An apparent relaxation of the rigorous rules of caste is noticeable. A man's occupation now is not necessarily his hereditary calling because of the profusion of new jobs that have sprung up. A free admixture of castes is inevitable in public life; this has loosened to a remarkable extent the rigours of caste regulations regarding commensality and theories of purity and pollution. Among the educated sections of all castes, there is undoubtedly a considerable loss of faith in the old restrictions on inter-caste relations. Overt expression of the notions of untouchability and pollution now entails criminal prosecution; and social backwardness is actively sought to be removed by a Welfare State. Yet caste seems incapable of vanishing of its own accord or being destroyed by the corrosive influence exerted by modern education, socialist economics, popular regimes and legal pressures. This may be because caste still satisfies many needs of an individual, material and spiritual. Taya Zinkin emphasises this 'necessity' when she writes, "to break caste is to cut oneself off from one's group, which means from one's family, from one's friends, and from all those who live exactly as one does oneself, and cut oneself off without any hope of

6. Irawati Karve defines caste as an extended kinship group in which every member is either an actual or a potential kin of another. She reaffirms this idea after some field studies and says that "caste is a group of 'actual' kins where every member of the group can be shown as the kin of another on a genealogical chart." (*The Economic Weekly*, January 1958). Panikkar in *Hindu Society at Cross Roads*, 1955, describes caste as an extended joint family.

(being adopted by another group..."<sup>7</sup> Caste is valuable not only to the individual but also to society because it educates its members and takes care of the young, the old, the invalid, the delinquent and the insane within its confines by the ties of kinship and shared faith and ritual. The abolition of caste would require fundamental reorganisation of society, the individualisation of the citizen and the establishment of a vaster and wide-ranging state in the context of a new society homogenised by new ideals.)

Another significant factor about caste is its very number. Castes, since the earliest times, were said to grow in number by endless mutations and minglings.<sup>8</sup> Deviation from established caste practices, adoption of a new occupation, migration, adoption of changes in social conventions, religious cults, rituals and ceremonies were some reasons that contributed to the formation of new castes by the process of fusion or fission.<sup>9</sup> The compilers of the *Census* of 1881 who made a thorough investigation into the ramifications of caste have noted the incredible figure of 19,044 denominations of sub-castes in the Madras presidency alone. The table below gives some idea of caste divisions in the state then.

7. Taya Zinkin, *Caste Today*, 1962, p. 8.

cf. Drekeimer's remarks in the *Kingship and Community in Ancient India*, 1962 "Caste was not the result of brahman design alone, but the continuation of a variety of factors rarely, if ever, found in continuation elsewhere." (p. 73) "...Caste must be understood an equilibrating factor of remarkable potency." (p. 80)

8. N.K. Dutt in *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, pp. 280-294, mentions that Megasthenes noticed that the population of India was divided into seven castes, viz., philosophers, husbandmen, shepherds and hunters, those engaged in trade vendwares and physical labour, fighting men, inspectors, and councillors and assessors.

9. Risley, *People of India*, 1915, p. 76 He enumerates seven types of castes giving examples of each type. Tribal (Vellala, Paraiyan); Functional (Brahmin), Sectarian (Lingayat); Mixed (Anglo-Indian); National (Maratha); Migration and new occupation (Valluvan and Jatapu). The formation of castes and sub-castes by the process of fusion and fission is dealt with in detail in the *Census Report* of 1911, Vol. I, Part I by E.A. Gait, pp. 374-376.



GROUP INTERESTS AND THEIR ORGANISATION

TABLE I  
Census Classification of Castes—1881

<i>Main Caste</i>	<i>No. of Sub-Castes</i>	<i>No. of Castes</i>
Brahmin	19	1,036
Kshatriya	6	319
Shetty	6	788
Vellalar	54	3,389
Idaiyar	13	764
Kammalar	10	683
Kanakkar	9	198
Kaikolar	11	632
Vanniyan	15	1,498
Kushavan	1	191
Satani	17	1,400
Sembadavan	4	405
Shanan	6	416
Ambattan	2	343
Vannan	1	280
Pariah	7	1,327
Others	76	5,375
<b>Total</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>19,044</b>

It is with this background of social division, that the political unity of India has to be built up.<sup>10</sup> The existence of a heterogeneous population need not by itself create the antagonism of majority and minority as the history of India in the past has shown. Until there arises a real conflict of political interests between the parts of a plural society there is no minority problem; for each group is a numerical minority against all other groups. As long as the constituent parts are politically irrelevant or politically equal there is tolerant co-existence and no apprehension. Even a hierarchy of social ranks may remain intact if the interests of all the members of the society are believed to be secure under it. But social life can be affected by the impact, intrusion or

10. Appendix I gives the strength of major castes in Madras state.

reception of new ideas and practices such as those of human equality and individual liberty, as well as by the adoption of new institutions such as parliamentary government, territorial constituencies and universal franchise. These create problems of understanding and adjustment too novel and complicated for easy solution. Therefore social tension and group conflicts arise. The old groups called upon to play new roles as well as the individual, legally and ideologically alienated from the group to which he was habitually affiliated, must find new terms and conditions of reorganisation. While groping towards them they tend to think in the familiar terms of caste. Thus caste permeates political life for good or for evil,

In their political life, which dates roughly from the late nineteenth century, i.e., from the beginning of a move towards representative government, these innumerable 'groups' have manifested an unmistakable tendency to ally with one another and form majorities and minorities. Such alliances were governed by certain sociological factors resulting from the existence of caste, an analysis of which may substantiate the theory that the problem of minorities in Madras is essentially a problem of caste. Political combinations have led to the division of this plural society into four groups, viz., the Brahmin, the Non-Brahmin, the Backward Classes and the Scheduled Castes. It appears at the outset that this classification is full of defects, that it is not exhaustive, clear-cut and mutually exclusive and that it lacks any precise basis at all. It seems to confuse *varnas*, *jatis* and economic classes. But a probe into the political process in Madras during the past six or seven decades may show that the terms, Brahmin, Non-Brahmin, Backward Classes and Scheduled Castes are significant political names used to denote real, specific groups. The units of this apparently socio-economic stratification are fundamentally made up of individual castes. A study of the factors that have helped the

growth of this classification of castes is relevant to a study of our minorities which are based on castes.

The development of this political grouping, paradoxically enough, proceeds on lines of casteism and yet overlooks caste differences. It has preserved and consolidated the Brahmin *varna* at one end and the Panchama at the other end and totally disregards *varna* and *jati* differences in between the two ends.

In Sanskrit, the term *varna* denotes the four-fold classification of the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra, while *jati* refers to the several castes that have developed from the four *varnas*. In English, the terms 'caste' and 'sub-caste' are in use, the latter to denote the various sub-divisions of the former, there being no practical occasion in English to refer to the original *varnas*. In common Tamil usage, the term *jati* is used indiscriminately to mean a '*varna*', a 'caste', or a 'sub-caste', although strictly considered, it is equivalent to the English 'caste'.

The concept of *chaturvarnya* is not applicable to post-vedic Hindu society, first because a fifth *varna*, the 'Panchama' has evolved by the inclusion of those originally considered *avarnas* i.e., outside the old *varna* system, and also because *varna* distinctions, especially among the Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras of the original four-fold system had become confused by the proliferation of castes within them and the attempts of some castes to promote themselves in the *varna* order. The Kshatriya and the Vaisya *varnas* appear in Madras to have receded into oblivion and the popular image is of a society consisting of only three *varnas*, the Brahmin, the Sudra and the Panchama.<sup>11</sup> It is this evolution that gives us the new grouping of castes in the Madras state.

11. It is recorded in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1885-87* (Indian Empire, Vol. 2, p. 323) that in Southern India the population is "either Brahmin, Sudra or Pariah". Kathleen Gough, on the social structure of a Tanjore village also speaks of three broad sets of castes, Brahmin, non-Brahmin and Adi-Dravida (exterior castes). See *Village India* edited by McKim Marriott, 1955, p. 37.

## The Brahmin Varna

The Brahmin was no exception to the general rule of *varna spawning jatis*. Linguistic, territorial and sectional castes sprang up within the brahmin *varna*, which came to comprise a number of mutually exclusive, endogamous groups, differing from one another in ritualistic practices. Broadly it is divided as 'Vaishnavaites' and 'Saivaites' and the former is subdivided into Tengalai and Vadagalai while the latter falls into many categories such as Vadama, Brahacharanam, Ashtasahasram, Vattima, Kaniyala, Viliya, Kesika and Prathamasakha. The census of 1871 noted forty-three sub-divisions of the Tamil brahmins.<sup>12</sup> In subsequent censuses, classification of castes made on the basis of occupation, social precedence or territorial distribution did not take into account the internal divisions of the brahmin *varna*, except the linguistic differences in what was then a quadrilingual province. No elaborate enumeration of all sub-divisions of castes was attempted after 1881 and the castes within the brahmin *varna* which constituted not more than 3.5 per cent of the population were not recorded. The enumeration of castes as such was stopped in

12. (A total of 223 sub-divisions of the Brahmin of four linguistic groups of which forty-three were Tamil, eighty Telugu, twenty Malayalam and eighty Canarese was recorded in 1871. Many of these are only different names of the same sub-caste or sub-division. Still the sub-divisions among the Tamil brahmins cannot be less than a score at least. It seems that the caste column in the census was filled by the name returned by the individual. Writing about North Indian castes, Blunt has also observed that the names of *varnas*, occupational groups and endogamous units have all been used as caste names.) (E.A.H. Blunt, *Casteism of Northern India*, 1931, p. 8.)

The following were the sub-divisions of the Tamil brahmins noted in the *Census of Madras Presidency, 1871*, Vol. II, p. 108, viz., Ayyangar, Ashtasahasram, Aruvarai, Anda, Ahobilam, Brahmana gurukkal, Soliia gurukkal, Vadama, Panditar, Gouda, Kasi, Vaishnava, Brahmakulam, Brahmarajasanni, Brahacharanam, Gurukkal, Hindu Kasi brahmin, Jaine brahmin, Kannadiya brahmin, Kanganpatti brahmin, Kongapatti brahmin, Kulunta brahmin, Madhva brahmin, Madhva vediyar, Maharashtra brahmin, Modiya, Nambimar, Nandari vaishnavan, Niyogi brahmin, Pandita brahmin, Pa'par brahmin, Pattava brahmin, Rayarkulam brahmin, Smarta brahmin, Siva brahmin, Sankarachariya, Srutiman, Tengalai brahmin, Vedyar, Vadama brahmin, Vadagalai brahmin, Velanti brahmin and Vaiganasulu brahmin.

1951. The official habit of treating the brahmin as one caste coterminous with a whole *varna* reflects a general practice of looking upon the brahmin group as a unit distinct from the several castes of the non-brahmin *varnas*. Both in official records and in common usage, the term 'brahmin' has come to mean any *jati* belonging to the Brahmin *varna*. The indiscriminate use of the name 'brahmin' for the *varna* as well as its *jatis* looks like a confusion of the two and in reality has had a far-reaching political consequence by sustaining the conviction that all brahmins constitute a solid homogeneous unit.

The speciality of this apparently homogeneous group is its traditional primacy in the caste structure. *Manava Dharmasastra* recognised the brahmin as the "lord of all creation" since "he sprang from the most excellent part of Brahma," the Creator of the Universe, since he was the "first born" and since he "held the Vedas" It declared in very generous terms that the brahmin by his "superiority and eminence of birth" was "entitled" to "all the property" in the world, and the brahmin's property was inviolable.<sup>13</sup> Corporal punishment could not be inflicted on a brahmin for any sin, and death penalty even for the most heinous crime was unthinkable.<sup>14</sup> The *Chaturvarnya* of ancient days with its graded inequality was not merely religious, social or notional but was made legal and penal at the hands of Manu, the law-giver of the Hindus. The functions assigned to the brahmins by the Hindu law-giver were "teaching, study, sacrifice, and sacrificing for others, giving and receiving."<sup>15</sup> A brahmin alone could become a priest; but he could also become a soldier, an officer of the state or a farmer but never a domestic servant.

More than the sanctity attached to the profession of

13. F. Max Mueller, *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, G. Buhler, "The Laws of Manu", chapter I, no. 100.

14. *Ibid.*, chapter VII, no. 380.

15. *Ibid.*, chapter X, no. 75.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

priesthood, what gave the brahmin a pre-eminent status in society was the doctrine of purity and pollution according to which the brahmin in ceremonial purity was held the purest. The gradation of castes in society in the descending order of *varnas* was determined in relation to a 'distance-scale' based on ideas of 'pollution'. This was kept in mind, when in 1901, a graded classification of the social rank of castes was made. The resulting pattern may be considered derogatory to the self-respect of non-brahmin castes, questionable as to its correctness and doubtful regarding its utility for any practical purpose, but it is a very interesting indicator of the then prevalent notions of social status and prestige. The classification itself was called "social precedence" and was the basis of the following statement.<sup>16</sup>

**TABLE II**  
**Social Precedence Of Castes—1901**

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Caste</i>	<i>Percentage of Population</i>
1.	Brahmin and allied castes	3.50*
2.	Kshatriya and allied castes	1.00*
3.	Vaisyas and allied castes	1.50*
4.	Sat sudras and good sudras	31.00
5.	Sudras who habitually employ brahmins as purohits and whose touch pollutes to a slight degree	16.25
6.	Sudras who occasionally employ brahmins as purohits and whose touch pollutes	11.00
7.	Sudras who do not employ brahmin purohits and whose touch pollutes	5.75
8.	Castes which pollute even without touching but do not eat beef	8.25
9.	Castes which eat beef but do not pollute except by touch	3.50
10.	Castes which eat beef and pollute even without touching	14.75
11.	Castes which deny the sacerdotal authority of brahmins	3.00

The figures show that in the Madras Presidency at the beginning of this century, the first three *varnas* constituted 6 per cent of the population. The rest belonged to the fourth (Sudra) and the fifth (Panchama) *varnas*.

16. *Census of India, 1901*, Vol. XV, Madras, Part I, Report by W. Francis.

The notion of a social ranking with the brahmin at the top is no longer accepted and ideas of pollution and purity are generally discarded. The preponderance in Madras of brahmins in the public services and the learned professions in the late nineteenth century is regarded as a continuation of an ascendancy attributed to them in Vedic times. Here is the core of the modern political conflict between the brahmin and the non-brahmin considered as a revolt of an *oppressed* majority against a *dominant* minority.)

### The Panchama Varna

Analogous to this development is the homogenisation of the castes of the Panchama *varna* into a minority group at the bottom end of the social scale. Politically, while the brahmin group appears to be an insignificant minority occupying an unduly predominant position in society, the panchama group appears as a substantial minority reduced to an intolerable condition of servitude.

As a contrast to the primacy of the brahmin in the social order, stands the segregation of the panchama. According to the convention of ancient society, the fifth *varna* comprised those outside the circumference of the *chaturvarnya* and were deemed 'untouchable'. The injunctions of Manu segregated these 'outcastes' and even the food and clothing considered decent for castemen were forbidden to them. Orthodox historians trace the origin of untouchability to the racial prejudice of the early Aryans against the native aboriginals. The prejudice must have been confirmed by allotting degrading occupations to them, as Fick mentions two types of 'despised castes'—'ethnic' and 'low-professional'.<sup>17</sup> Originally outsiders and casteless, the panchamas too developed their own castes. Malas and Madigas did not take water from the same well; Paraiyas and Pallans did not intermarry; and the touch of a Cheruma carried pollution to a

17. Richard Fick, *The Social Organisation in North-east India in Buddha's Time*, 1920, pp. 314-15.

Tiya. The exhaustive list of untouchable castes made in the *Census* of 1935, which was adopted for official use for purposes of recruitment to public services, included a total of eighty-six castes among the untouchable panchamas.<sup>18</sup>

Since 1900, several names have come into use to denote these classes collectively, the *Adi Dravidas*, the *Depressed Classes*, the *Scheduled Classes* and *Harijans*. These new names were invented for two broad reasons, to supersede old caste names which carried associations of low social status and to bring together and homogenise several low castes into one group identified for special treatment by the government.

The term '*Adi Dravida*' (*Ur* or first or *autochthonous* or original *Dravida*) denoting the untouchable castes was not in common use before 1910. The *Adi Dravida Mahajana Sabha* which advocated the cause of the untouchable castes in the second and third decades of the present century claimed to have been founded in 1892; but the name *Adi Dravida* was unknown then and what the *Sabha* probably meant was that it was the same as the *Pariah Maha Jana Sabha*, a public association which was actively engaged in the uplift of these classes in the 1890s. On many occasions, the *Sabha* represented to the government the grievances of the *Pariahs*. (In 1918, a memorial presented by the *Dravida Maha Sangham* requested the government "that the ancient and the proper name *Dravidian* shall be given and recognised by the Government instead of the name of *Paraya*." In the 1921 *Census*, 15,025 returned their caste names as *Adi Dravida*. A mass meeting of *Adi-Dravidas* was held in 1920 to support Dr. C. Natesan's motion in the *Madras Corporation* to change the designation '*Panchama*' to '*Adi Dravida*'.<sup>19</sup> In 1922, the provincial legislative council passed a resolution recommending that the name *Adi Dravida* should replace *Panchama* and *Paraiya*.

18. See Appendix III c.

19. *The Hindu*, July 19, 1920.



The Superintendent of Census Operations, M.W.M. Yeatts, said, "there is something infinitely pathetic in the vain idea that a change of name can reverse the stigma of centuries; it is a mistake to encourage terms which obscure real social units. That so ugly and clumsy a term as *Adi Andhra* should come to obliterate such real and lively distinctions as *Mala* and *Madiga* is hardly to the good. Communities of such numerical importance and pronounced individuality should be encouraged to retain and develop a pride in their cognomens."<sup>20</sup> Yeatts was right in his own fashion; but this passion for another name, 'pathetic' for a student of history, was also prophetic from the political point of view. It signified the emergence of real political units of the future from the caste units of the past. It is not possible to say what were the castes attracted by the new title *Adi Dravida*, *Adi Andhra* and *Adi Karnataka*. In 1921, none of these names was established outside Madras city and the neighbouring areas in Chingleput. However, in a number of meetings arranged to press the claims of the classes considered socially depressed, the term *Adi Dravida* was generally used as the synonym for these classes in the second and third decades of the present century. The government recognised the new name by an order issued in 1922 which directed that the term *Adi Dravida* in Tamil districts and *Adi Andhra* in Telugu districts should be adopted in official documents in place of the words '*Panchama*' or '*Paraya*' or similar names.<sup>21</sup> From the historical overtones carried by the prefix '*Adi*' and the reassuring and fortifying effect it conveyed, it may be inferred that the new name came from within the group itself.)

'Depressed Classes' is obviously another kind of name springing out of administrative exigencies. It was in

20. *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XIV, Part I, para 26.

21. G.O. 817, Law (General), March 25, 1922. (G.O. in this work refers to the proceedings of the Government of Madras.)

MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

official vogue between 1920 and 1935; the census of 1921 enumerated a total of 6,372,074 people under this title, and covered the following castes.

TABLE III  
Depressed Classes—1921

<i>Castes</i>	<i>Persons</i>
Adi-Dravida	50,015
Chakkiliyan	549,807
Cheruman	248,397
Holeya	91,558
Madiga	737,427
Mala	493,129
Pallan	862,685
Parayan	2,337,036
Semman	2,020
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,372,074</b>

No specific definition of the term 'depressed' was attempted and the figures in the first enumeration under this category could only be an approximation. A more systematic attempt to estimate the strength of the depressed classes was made in 1931 and the criterion adopted to determine the status of 'depressed' was the stigma of 'untouchability'. About 7,300,000 or 15.5 per cent of the population of the presidency was returned as 'depressed', and this figure, according to the census operator could not be reckoned as the absolute figure of those to whom the peculiar social disabilities attached.<sup>22</sup> The Report observes that, "viewed primarily regarding the existence of social disabilities, the figure is a minimum, considered strictly as personal polluting power, the figure is a maximum."<sup>23</sup>

22. *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XIV, p. 346.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 339. The castes classified as 'depressed' on the basis of untouchability in the *Census* of 1931 were named the 'Scheduled Classes' for purposes of franchise.

It is doubtful whether the depressed classes constituted a homogenous unit when they were so grouped in the census, but such classifications and their recognition by interested leaders insensibly led to the emergence of an important and a consolidated political minority in a very short time. Since there was unanimous concern about the welfare and uplift of the depressed classes, administrative convenience and political interest pointed to the speedy integration of the untouchables who could see the manifest advantages to themselves of this process. They were integrated into a self-conscious and demanding 'minority'.

### Non-brahmin Varnas

In the middle region of the social scale which originally consisted of the Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra *varnas*, a combined process of integration of *varnas* and their disintegration into *jatis* has taken place. The simple functional division as the warrior, the trader and the servant was not appropriate to a society made up of many territorial, occupational and linguistic castes. Many historians and sociologists have held that even from early times there was probably no distinct Kshatriya group and that the line between Vaisya and the Sudra had always been unclear. A Hindu myth ascribes to Parasurama, a brahmin warrior, the extinction of all Kshatriyas. It appears that whoever was capable of acquiring domain over a community called himself a kshatriya and so was initiated by brahmin priests.<sup>24</sup> The descendants of royal dynasties founded by brahmins, such as the Sisodias of Mewar and Senas of Bengal were recognised as kshatriyas. The Rajputs of the eighth century were a people of warlike temperament from different alien clans but were looked upon as kshatriyas by all including the brahmins. According to

24. Writing about the non-kshatriya origin of Shivaji, Irawati Karve (*Economic Weekly*, July 1958) says that the usual role of brahmins was to raise many sudra families to kshatriyahood.

Smith, "in ancient times the line of demarcation between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, that is to say, between the learned and the warrior groups of castes was not sharply defined."<sup>25</sup> He cites several cases of brahmin dynasties such as the Sunga and Kanva and comments that "when a brahmin succeeded in founding a dynasty and so definitely taking up a Kshatriya work, his descendants were recognised as Kshatriyas and allowed to intermarry freely with established Kshatriya families." He further adds that brahmins themselves were of diverse origin and that many of them as for example the Maga brahmins and the Nagar brahmins were descended from the priestly or the learned class of the foreign hordes.<sup>26</sup>

The smallness of the Kshatriya population and the fluctuation in their recorded strength in recent decades in Tamilnad may point to the vagueness that has always surrounded the term 'Kshatriya'. Commenting on this, Charles Molony said, "In 1891 when the Kshatriya stalked abroad a military and dominant person, he numbered 155,155. In 1901, when forsaking war, he was concerned with social precedence alone, he diminished to 80,311. In 1911 when no one cares particularly for his warlike abilities or his social standing, he has recovered his losses and presents a solid phalanx of 158,521."<sup>\*</sup>

The huge size of the Sudra population on the other hand, is a no less conspicuous phenomenon. In the early censuses of 1881 and 1891, the population was classified according to caste as brahmin, kshatriya, vaisya, sudra and outcastes and the sudra sub-divided on main occupational lines comprised nearly 70 per cent of the total population. The census of 1881 registered a total of twelve occupational groups among sudras totalling 143

25. V.A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, 1920, p. 173. The upgrading of the Mauryas and the ritual elevation of Shivaji the Maratha chieftain are instances of promotion of kshatriyahood.

26. *Ibid.*

\* *Census of India, 1911*, Vol. XII, Madras, Part, I, p. 159.

sub-castes and 10,199 sub-divisions of them. The sudras "have always been a miscellaneous group, the mass of people within the Hindu pale, who did not have the *Samskara* of the Holy Thread," says Panikkar who argues that the four-fold division is a "sociological fiction" and that it can be historically proved that it never existed in fact.<sup>27</sup>

(The origin and status of the sudra forms a subject of current political controversy. In 1847, it was suggested by Roth that the Sudra might have been outside the pale of the Aryan society. The theory of racial difference has not, however, been accepted by many scholars. Some believe that many Aryans and pre-Aryans were reduced to that position through external and partly through internal conflicts and the term 'sudra' was a collective name given to the heterogeneous working class, which stood in a relation of servitude to the members of the three upper *varnas*.<sup>28</sup> In our own day a new thesis has been propounded by Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the depressed classes, on the basis of the ancient scriptures that originally there were no sudras and that they were kshatriyas degraded by brahmin stratagem. Briefly his thesis is: "(1) The Sudras were one of the Aryan communities of the Solar race; (2) There was a time when Aryan society recognised only three *varnas*, viz., the Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya; (3) The Sudras did not form a separate *varna* in the Indo-Aryan society; (4) There was continuous feud between the Sudra kings and the Brahmins in which the Brahmins were subjected to many grievances and indignities; (5) As a result of the hatred towards the Sudras generated by their tyrannies and oppressions, the Brahmins refused to perform the *Upanayanam* (initiation by investiture of the sacred thread) of the Sudras; (6) Owing to the denial of *Upanayana* the Sudras who were Kshatriyas, became socially degraded, fell below the rank of Vaisyas and they came

27. K. M. Panikkar, *Hindu Society at Cross Roads*, 1961, p. 30.

28. Ram Sharan Sarma, *Sudras in Ancient India*, 1958, p. 280.

to form the fourth *varna*.”<sup>29</sup> This is a plausible and ingenious theory which creates a serviceable myth of original oppression.)

The application of a collective name ‘sudra’ for all non-brahmin castes, suggests the existence of a homogeneous group composed of castes of the middle region of the social hierarchy, which by operating as a political entity, may ultimately become a social reality as well. (But the name ‘sudra’ in itself hurts the feelings of the people so designated because it recalls a *varna* which is at the opposite end of the four *varna* scale from the brahmin. Objection to this nomenclature among Tamil non-brahmins is one of the main tenets of the Dravidian political parties in Madras today. Particularly it is the object of the founder leader of the Dravidian movement, E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, to battle against this term ‘sudra’, which according to him is a synonym for a slave and carries the implication that all sudras (non-brahmins) must do all the manual work from which brahmins alone are exempted by brahmanical doctrines.<sup>30</sup> By ceaseless propaganda, he attempts to make people conscious that the shame of the Dravidian is that he has been made a ‘sudra’ of the Hindu social order.<sup>31</sup> A racial difference is attributed to the local *varna* system; and historical evidences are quoted to establish that all Tamilians other than brahmins are Dravidians, a people of a distinct race, with a distinct religion, language, and culture of their own and the brahmins are the descendants of Aryans who invaded and conquered the Dravida country and imposed on Dravidians an alien system of social life in the name of God and *Dharma*. It is argued that this system enforcing social, legal and functional distinctions on the basis of caste, a thing unknown to the

29. B. R. Ambedkar, *Who Were the Shudras?*, 1947, preface, p. v.

30. Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Thalavivar—Periar E. V. R. Vazhkai Varalaru* (Leader of Tamilians—life of Periar E.V.R.), 4th ed., 1960, p. 202.

31. *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

Dravidians, was an Aryan system imposed by the Aryans; and brahminism and the code of Manu which sanctioned discrimination and exploitation by brahmins were foisted on the native Dravidians.<sup>32</sup> It is said that the migrating Aryans in order to establish their supremacy, to expand their power and to remain a non-labouring class living on the labour of the conquered Dravidians designed a social order in the name of God and religion which came to be known as caste and that it was in the interest of the brahmins as lineal descendants of the Aryans to uphold and maintain this order. The Dravidians were said to have fallen victims of Aryan wiles and became the servile or the 'sudra' caste of the four-caste order; the religion of the Aryans clouded the Dravidian mind with superstition and "crippled their intellects and talents." The reverence paid by brahmins to Sanskrit, the language of the Aryans, is cited as proof of the Aryan descent of brahmins. Caste is totally an Aryan institution and Dravidians, it is asserted, are not Hindus. "The word 'Dravidian' cannot and shall not mean 'Dravidian Hindu' which is a contradiction in terms. A Hindu in the present context of understanding may be a Dravidian but a Dravidian in the real sense of the term cannot and shall not be a Hindu...The modern Brahmin is the offshoot of ancient Aryanism," it was propagated.<sup>33</sup>

The bitter hostility to brahmins expressed by the Dravidian leaders is symbolic of a larger Dravidian protest against the entire social structure and the religious institutions at the top of both of which the brahmin is identified and at the bottom the sudra (meaning all non-brahmins). The leaders propagate the notion of two distinct races of brahmins and non-brahmins co-existing in the roles of oppressor and oppressed over the centuries. History and anthropology today may not support this

32. E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, *Dravidar Aryar Unmai*, (The truth about Dravidian-Aryan), collection of speeches.

33. A. S. Venu, *Life of Annadurai*, 1954, p. 31.

view, but its popular acceptance is not unreasonable considering that many scholars in the past had held that with the exception of "Brahmins, Marathi and the Musalman immigrants," the population of Madras was entirely Dravidian, and also that the caste system as expounded by Manu was altogether foreign to the Dravidian races.<sup>34</sup> Yet neither of these theories is very relevant to the problem of today. Whichever caste or race originated this ingenious social hierarchy, its perpetuation which is more significant than its invention, must be attributed to popular acceptance and practice. But if the intention is to destroy caste it may be useful to present it to the masses as an alien incubus to be cast away in anger than a native practice to be abandoned in the light of reason. It would be equally useful to present a small and vulnerable minority within the society as the progenitors and sole beneficiaries of an evil system which must be abolished.

While the semblance of sudra unity had created a political schism between the brahmins and the non-brahmins, the real differences within the sudra group have also been politically significant. The inherent inequalities among the sudra castes, nurtured by such factors as dignity of occupation, ritualistic ranking, economic condition or educational standard have promoted a sharp contrast between the 'forward' and the 'backward' among them. The upsurge of the latter (a majority) against the former (a minority) constitutes the second phase of the political history of the minority movement in the state of Madras. Pride in one's own caste, alliance with castes of nearly equal status, repudiation of brahmin superiority are the common attitudes of a resourceful caste attempting to realise its political ambition. As a result, the bonds of caste tend to get stronger and induce other castes to do likewise. The latest trend in this movement is a race

34. *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XIII, Madras Report by H. A. Stuart, p. 211.



among the sudra castes for recognition as backward castes. That this pattern and process of mobility in the caste ladder is not very new can be seen from the old Tamil proverb which says that a Kallan may in course of time become a Maravan, a Maravan an Agamudaiyan and an Agamudaiyan a Vellala. This shows that while in this 'birth-status' group, viz., caste, a formal change of caste is not possible, informal, unproclaimed promotion can and does take place. In this manner not only do individuals go up but they also take their castes with them to newer and higher designations. By giving up meat-eating and by wearing the sacred thread and having their own family priests and performing rituals and ceremonies, many Vellala castes have been brahminised.<sup>35</sup> They trace their origin from the first ploughman created by the God to teach cultivation, claim to be Vaisyas comprising three stocks of Govaisyas, Bhuvaisyas and Dhanavaisyas (shepherd, cultivator and merchant), and adopt respectable titles such as Mudali, Kavandan, Pillai, etc., and particularly those known as Saiva Vellalas lead a thoroughly brahminised way of life. The weaving community of Madura district, the Patnulkar, claiming to be brahmin and supporting their claim on a *sasana* issued by Queen Mangammal, said that they had migrated from Sourashtra to Vizianagar and from there to Madurai and preferred to call themselves Sourashtra brahmins. They imitate the brahmin way of life to a great extent, wear the sacred thread and adopt typical brahmin titles such as Ayyar, Ayyangar, Rao, Bhagavathar, and Sastrigal.

So also the artisan castes attempted to raise themselves in the caste hierarchy. "The five artisan sections, the goldsmith, the brassmith, the carpenter, the stonemason, and the blacksmith, collectively known as

35. The District *Gazetteers* of the southern districts published in the nineteenth century mention that there had been a close competition between brahmins and vellalas for social prestige where the former were looked upon as alien immigrants.

Kammalans in Tamil areas have always maintained a struggle for a higher place in the social scale than that allotted to them by the Brahmanical authority," reported the Madras Census Commissioner of 1871.<sup>36</sup> Thurston says that the "Kammalans claim to be descended from Viswakarma, the architect of the Gods, and in some places claim to be superior to brahmins, calling the latter Go-brahmins and themselves Viswabrahmins."<sup>37</sup> They have adopted the caste titles 'Achari' and 'Pathar' similar to the brahmin titles 'Acharya' and 'Bhatta'. The male members of the Tamil Kammalans wear the sacred thread and many of them observe the regular thread investiture ceremony like brahmins and both men and women of the caste wear clothes in the style of saivaite brahmins. Many of them are strict vegetarians and take pride in following the customs and manners of brahmins.

More remarkable is the behaviour of the Shanans, the toddy-drawing community of Madura and Tirunelveli, who described themselves as 'Valamkai Uyarkonda Iravikula Kshatriyar' meaning the 'Kshatriya of solar race belonging to the right hand faction' and claimed that the term 'Shanan' was a corrupt form of *Sanvor* a classical Tamil word meaning 'learned men'. A.J. Stuart, in the *Tinneveli District Gazetteer*, has observed that the Shanans had "arrogated" to himself titles which "imply a higher place in the social scale than that assigned to him by the general accord of other castes." This has always been a matter of constant dispute between the two big castes of the district, the Shanans and the Maravar and is carried on even to the present day and into the strife of political parties in that region. As early as 1874, the Shanans tried but in vain, to enter the great shrine of Madura. In the next year, they

36. *Report of the Census of Madras Presidency, 1871*, Vol. I by W.R. Cornish.

37. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. 3, 1909, p. 113.

## GROUP INTERESTS AND THEIR ORGANISATION

asserted their right to take up a procession through the streets of other castes.<sup>38</sup> Many members of this status-conscious community, classified under the label "polluting without eating beef" in 1901 were suspected of returning themselves in 1911 as 'kshatriya'.<sup>39</sup>

In this process of acquiring promotion in social rank, changing the name of one's caste and getting it notified in the *Gazette* seem to be very common; the nominative singular ending in 'n' is considered derogatory and the honorific plural ending in 'r' is insisted upon, e.g., Vannan must be called Vannar, and Vannian, Vanniar.<sup>40</sup> Special mention may be made here of the following castes that obtained recognition from the government regarding the change in their names.

TABLE IV  
Caste Nomenclature Changes

<i>Old Name</i>	<i>New Name</i>	<i>Year</i>
Idayar	Yadhava	1935
Ambattan	Maruthuvan	1939
Sembadavan	Parvatharajakulam	1947
Vannan	Rajakas, Vannar	1948

The progress of this kind of caste self-consciousness can be studied in the literature of the late nineteenth century dealing with the origin, ancestry and mission of particular castes. Books and pamphlets setting forth theories about the origin of the different castes from the 'Sun', 'Moon', or 'Fire' and tracing their ancestry to

38. A J. Stuart, *Tinneveli District Gazetteer*, 1917, p. 125.

39. *Census of India, 1911, Madras*, Part I, Vol. XII, Report by J. Charles, p. 159.

40. Vannian is third person singular in Tamil. There is the practice of employing honorific plural in the language and the use of the singular in such cases can be taken to be a deliberate insult. Language and idiom are important in Tamil politics in a way which cannot be imagined in modern western languages where the scope for giving and taking linguistic offence is very much less.

Epic heroes, 'Rama', 'Lakshmana', and the 'Pandavas' were published in large numbers. Thus *Karunakar Puranam*, *Bharata Kula Malai*, *Sanar Vikarpha Vina Vidai*, *Savror Kula Marabu Kaathal*, *Pandikula Vilakkam*, *Baliya Varu Puranam*, *Vaisya Puranam*, *Senaikulathar Pattayam*, *Senaithalivar Marabu Vilakkam*, *Velalar Puranam*, tended to displace the *Manava Dharmasastra*. Such books have served to bind the members of the caste especially the literate younger generation together and to inculcate among them a sense of pride in their origin and connections. Efforts at upward mobility in the first phase tended to proceed along ways of 'sanskritisation'. As Srinivas remarks, in between the two ends of brahmin and panchama, there is mobility as well as nebulousness.<sup>41</sup> This nebulousness permitted castes to move on the rungs of the ladder. But a new possibility opened up in recent decades when a secular concept of backwardness has gained currency and has been accepted by the government. Castes which previously asserted a status of equality or even superiority to brahmins for reasons of social prestige were tempted to bracket themselves with the pariah for economic and political advantage. The Kammalan, the Patnulkar and the Shanar may once again be cited as outstanding examples of energetic castes changing the goals of their upward thrust from higher social status in a brahmanical or Sanskritic context to economic advantage and elective leadership in the context of an egalitarian welfare state.

### Traditional Caste Alliances

While individuality has been asserted, established and manifested by each caste in various ways, the expediency of mutual combinations has never been lost sight of. Joint action for a common cause irrespective of mutual differences has been known even in the olden

41. Aiyappan and L.K. Bala Ratnam (ed.), *Society in India*, 1956, M.N. Srinivas, "Sanskritisation and Westernisation", p. 91.

days; the grouping of castes as 'Right-hand' and 'Left-hand' noticed in public records since the early eighteenth century is an instance in point. Occupation and status seemed to have had nothing to do with this strange division of castes in South India into two warring groups, the 'Right-hand' and the 'Left-hand' or *Valangei* and *Idangei* early in the eighteenth century. The cause of this division is unknown and the origin of this distinction is lost in obscurity. Pasquier, the celebrated author of a history of India, wished to investigate the subject and approached influential brahmins of Pondicherry to assist him. They referred the question to the Chief Guru of Chidambaram, who referred it to the learned pandits of Tanjore. They in turn, it is said, consulted the Arch-brahmin of Jagernath who passed on the question to the Brahmanical College of Banaras. The elaborate enquiries failed to throw any light on the subject.<sup>42</sup>

Faction fights between the two groups were said to be very common and Love says that from 1707 to 1790 claims and counter-claims by the Right-hand castes and the Left-hand castes in regard to rights of precedence in temples and processions and the use of ceremonial panoply led to quarrels disturbing the peace of Fort St. George.<sup>43</sup> Yule and Burnell quote the authority of Sir Walter Eliot who considers this feud to be "nothing else than the occasional outbreak of the smouldering antagonism between Brahminism and Buddhism, although in the lapse of years both parties have lost sight of the fact," and describe that the points of conflict were trifles such as parading on horseback or in a palanquin in processions, erecting a *pandal* or marriage-shed on a given number of pillars and claiming

42. *Report of the Census of Madras Presidency, 1871*, Vol. I, p. 129. It is mentioned in the *Salem District Gazetteer, 1918*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 125, that reference to the Right-hand and Left-hand castes is found in an inscription of the reign of Deva Raya II of Vijayanagar (A.D. 1446-1447) and privileges of the left were described in an inscription of Kulottunga I (A.D. 1117).

43. Love, *Vestiges of old Madras*, Vol. 3, 1913, p. 385.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

the right to carry certain flags, etc. The Right-hand was said to be headed by Brahmins and to include Pariahs also and the Left-hand was believed to be led by Panchalars followed by Pallars.<sup>44</sup> According to Cornish, the Census Superintendent in 1871, the more important castes that took part in the faction fights between the two rival hands allied as shown below.

**TABLE V**  
**Traditional Caste Alliances**

<i>Left-hand Castes</i>	<i>Right-hand Castes</i>
Chetties	Vellalars
Artisans	Kavaries
Oil mongers	Komities
Weavers	Accountants
Patnavars	Silk Weavers
Leather Workers (Males)	Pullies (Males)
Pullies (Females)	Pariahs
	Leather Workers (Females)

The brahmins, kshatriyas, shepherds and mixed castes (Satani) were said to be generally neutral. During the seventeenth century, quarrels between them were so frequent and serious that it necessitated demarcation of the boundaries of the two parties in the town of Madras.<sup>45</sup>

In 1717, in an attempt to settle a prolonged dispute between them, the government proclaimed the absolute right of both the parties to the free exercise of their religious rites and customs and threatened punishment for breach of peace.<sup>46</sup> This curious and inexplicable division of the principal castes, not found in ancient treatises, is an index of the growth of complexities within the caste system and the rise of factions in growing and populous

44. Yule and Burnell, *op. cit.*

45. *Report of the Census of Madras Presidency, 1871*, Vol. I, pp. 129-130.

46. Love, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, chapter X, p. 141.

urban centres like Madras city. The historical phenomenon, still rather obscure in its detail, is interesting as evidence that the social hierarchy of caste is not so rigid as to prevent tactical cooperation of diverse castes and sections of these castes, when it came to a question of faction fight in the political field. Strange combinations of castes can be expected when the old society is agitated and divided by new questions of politics or administration.

### **The Largest Caste—the Vanniakula Kshatriya**

The role of the Vanniakula Kshatriya in modern Madras politics is a paradigm of non-brahmin political behaviour described above. The Vannia community has practically become the pace-setter of the 'backward' by virtue of its numerical strength augmented by the coalescence of castes strikingly akin to one another in occupation and status. Vanniakula Kshatriya is a name adopted by castes known by several names, Palli, Vanniar, Naickar, Padayachi and Gounder, whose traditional occupation is mainly field labour. The term 'Palli' became a sort of a general synonym for a caste of a lower order in brahmin usage and this caste which was the largest in size became increasingly conscious of its importance in society and therefore progressively resentful of the note of inferiority which the caste appellation 'Palli' was supposed to carry. As early as 1833, Pallis tried to procure a decree in Pondicherry declaring that they were not a low caste.<sup>47</sup> Attempts to unify the members of the caste scattered under different caste names were made since the late nineteenth century and a conference for the purpose was convened in Madras in 1888.\* A treatise *Vanniar Kula Vilakkam* was published on the divine origin and royal descent of Vanniar castes in 1892. A 'sanskritising' process began calling for the giving up of drink and meat-eating, encouragement

47. *South Arcot District Gazetteer*, Vol. I.

\* *Vanniakula Kshatriya Mahasangam, Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1933.

of child marriage and prohibition of widow re-marriage. Many men of the community started wearing the sacred thread and claimed relationship with the famous rulers of Tamilnad, the Naikars (sixteenth century) and Pallavas (eighth century); they claimed to be the warrior caste, the 'Kshatriya' of Tamilnad and assumed the title of Vanniakula Kshatriya or Agnikula Kshatriya. Known as Pallis or Vanniars in 1891, they had a strength of 2,151,074. Their number\* rose to 2,554,316 in 1901 and to 2,820,156 in 1921. The list of principal communities given in 1931 *Census* does not contain the name Palli who till then formed one of the biggest castes of the presidency. By 1931, Pallis along with Vanniars had adopted the title of Vanniakula Kshatriyas and recorded a strength of 2,944,014. Constituting about 33 per cent of the total population of the Madras presidency, the Vanniakula Kshatriyas were the biggest caste in many Tamil districts in 1931 forming 21 per cent of the total district population of Chingleput, 26 per cent of North Arcot, 33 per cent of South Arcot, 9 per cent of Tiruchi and 24 per cent of Salem. The largest group in each district has always had considerable local influence, and wherever the largest caste was much bigger than the next in numbers it could take the lead in all public matters. Thus Vanniakula Kshatriyas, owing to their superior numbers had very good chances of becoming the dominant pressure group in many districts, especially, South Arcot, Chingleput and North Arcot.

### **The Non-Hindu Castes**

The sociological development in the traditional *varna-jati* order described above, viz., the segregation of the Brahmin and the Panchama at either ends and a total confusion about the Sudra, has led to the emergence of political 'majorities' and 'minorities' such as 'non-brahmins' and 'brahmins' or 'backward' and 'non-backward' non-brahmins. Principally this refers to the



Hindu castes. A question may therefore arise about the place, in this political sorting out, of the non-Hindu population, which is 12 per cent of the total population of the state. The term 'Hindu' has defied many attempts at definition. The *Census* of 1921 reports that the Imperial Legislative Council which set up a committee to find out an adequate definition of the term Hindu gave up the attempt as futile for Hindu was used to mean not only a religion, but a certain nationality and a certain social organisation.<sup>48</sup> Alfred Lyall had much earlier made a similar observation that Hinduism meant "a civil community quite as much as a religious association."<sup>49</sup> Mac Iver said that the word "Hindu includes a complex congeries of races and creeds"—a remark that became a subject of political controversy between the British administrators who repeated it as an argument that representative system of the British pattern was not suitable for the pluralist society of India and the Indian politicians who denied the fact for political reasons.

However, in the census records, the word 'Hindu' has been used to refer to all Indians who owed no allegiance to any definite non-Hindu creed. (Indeed, Hinduism has no prescribed code of doctrines, no teacher or school of teachers, no institutional or religious chief or even a single God worshipped by all. While as Ketkar remarks no amount of deviation from established doctrines will lead to theoretical ex-communication from Hinduism,<sup>50</sup> it has been possible for many tribes to move into the Hindu fold *en masse*.) The frontier between the tribal, animistic population and the Hindus proper could never be drawn as can be seen in the wide fluctuations in the number of animists recorded in the various censuses.

48. *Census of India, 1921*, Vol. VIII, Madras, Part I, Report by G.T. Boag, p. 57.

49. Quoted in *Census of India, 1911*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 116.

50. S.V. Ketkar, *Essay on Hinduism*, 1911, p. 34.

Not only the animists but also the Christian and Islamic population of Madras who are mostly converts from native castes have fallen under the influence of Hinduism and so of casteism. By abjuring Hinduism, the converts would have believed that they could improve their social status. But in the course of evolution, caste has become a question of birth, behaviour and occupation, and a change of religion was often of no account. Writing about the Punjab castes, Denzil Ibbetson observes that "in the east of the Punjab conversion has absolutely no effect upon the caste of the convert" and concludes that social rank being determined by birth and occupation, a mere change of creed can have no effect upon it.<sup>51</sup> The converts retaining their Hindu customs and conventions could not have freed themselves from their caste in spite of their formal renunciation of Hinduism and adoption of a new religion. Their social behaviour, cultural outlook and economic conditions revealed the caste to which they belonged. John Strachey remarked that many of the Muslim converts were so little devoted to the tenets of Islam that they could be grouped along with the numerous sections of the Hindu castes.<sup>52</sup> This was especially true of the converts in the Madras presidency who were found to retain their Hindu habits and temperament to a remarkable degree. Curiously enough, there is a temple at Uraiyur near Tiruchi, called Nachiar Kovil dedicated to the worship of a 'Tulukka Nachiar' (Muslim goddess) believed to be a Muslim wife of the Hindu god Ranganatha. In the ancient temple of Srirangam, certain Muslim conventions are still in practice. And the local stories trace the origin of this to the memory of a Muslim princess who lived and died worshipping the Hindu god of the famous shrine. While stray facts of this order do not point to any merger of Islam and Hinduism, there are

51. Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, 1883, p. 13.

52. John Strachey, *India—its administration and progress*, 4th ed., 1911, p. 332.

innumerable local traditions, temple practices and social conventions which prove the perennially tolerant attitude of the Hindus and the continuing propensity of the Hindu who changed his faith to retain many Hindu ways, to consult Hindu astrologers, to believe in Hindu superstitions, and to value Hindu traditions, just as the Hindu who remained a Hindu added Muslim saints to his own calendar of worshipful figures.<sup>53</sup> Again change of religion did not *ipso facto* mean renunciation of caste. Not only *did* the convert not get free but he *could* not. Some Christian missions especially the Roman Catholic did not disapprove of the caste system among their converts. In the Catholic churches, panchama converts were segregated to rear seats and legal battles were waged over such discrimination. The early Jesuits tolerated the continuance of some Hindu customs including caste among their converts to facilitate easy conversion.<sup>54</sup> One of them confessed, "the native congregations of Southern India have been founded on the principle, that to be baptised, a man need not renounce his caste and nationality; so that though they are not Hindus if that word be used in a religious sense, they are Hindus as well as their countrymen. They have always been so and are accepted by all to be so with the rank and rights of their respective castes."<sup>55</sup>

53. At Nagore, the Hindus actually join in the rituals of the Muslims.

54. The first successful Jesuit missionary Robert de Nobili who came to India in the early seventeenth century and worked in Madura adopted the name Tattva Bodakar (the teacher of philosophy), presented himself as a *sanyasi* from Rome and assumed the dress and diet of a Hindu ascetic. He permitted his converts to wear tufts and even the sacred thread. He was recalled to Goa but after some years permitted to resume his mission in his old way. (W. Francis, *Madura District Gazetteer*, 1906, p. 76.)

55. J. Hough, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. II, p. 60, quoting from the *History of Telugu Christians* by a Father of the Mill Hill, St. Joseph's Society.

Paradoxically, the Muslims themselves, belonging to a casteless and classless religion, did not form a homogeneous body but were divided into several groups, very similar to Hindu castes. According to the census returns, they were divided broadly as Dudekula, Labbai, Mappilla, Pathan, Saiyad and Sheik<sup>56</sup> and Charles Molony reports that there were also some communities among converts to Muhammadanism in many districts considered 'low' by others.<sup>57</sup>

### Political Grouping of Castes

Thus caste permeating into and dominating over casteless religions, the formations of groups in the Madras state for political action naturally followed the caste lines. The groups on the political stage are (1) Non-backward classes (including brahmin and non-brahmin castes), (2) Backward classes, and (3) Depressed classes and Scheduled Castes.

In 1951, in the composite Madras state 49.3 per cent of the population was estimated to be 'non-backward' and the rest 'backward'. Of the latter, the scheduled castes and tribes constituted 16.1 per cent and the other backward classes 34.6 per cent of the population. Twenty-three Hindu castes were listed as non-backward, viz., Adi Velama, Balija, Brahmin, Bunt, Gounder, Gramani, Kamma, Kapu, Karkaters, Kavara, Lingayat, Mudaliar, Nadar, Nattukottai Chettiar, Nayar, Padma Velama, Raju, Reddi, Telaga, Thiyya, Udayar, Vaisya (Chetti Komatis) and Vellalas. Christians other than Harijans and tribes converted to Christianity and Muslims with the exception of Dudekulas, Labbais and Mappillas were listed as non-backward. Table VI shows a rough percentage strength of these groups in the total population of each Tamil district.

56. *Census of India, 1911*, Vol. XII, Madras, Part II, p. 116. For a list of Muslim Castes in Madras, see Appendix I b.

57. *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 55.

GROUP INTERESTS AND THEIR ORGANISATION

TABLE VI  
Socio-Political Groups in Madras State

District	Brahmins*	Non-backward Non-brahmins	Backward** Classes	Scheduled† Castes
(Percentage to Total Population)				
Madras	9	62	16	13
Chingleput	2	38	32	28
North Arcot	2	54	24	20
South Arcot	2	45	27	26
Tiruchi	3	43	36	18
Tanjore	5	29	43	23
Salem	2	49	34	15
Coimbatore	2	59	24	15
Nilgiris	1	36	44	19
Madura	3	41	41	15
Ramnad	2	37	46	15
Tirunelveli	2	49	33	16
Madras State	3.0	45.1	33.3	18.6

\* Based on 1931 and 1921 census.

\*\* As given in the *Report on General Election in Madras State 1957*.  
The estimation seems to be grossly low.

† Based on the census of 1961.

The estimation of the 'backward' population appears to be low especially in North Arcot and South Arcot, where the Vanniakula Kshatriyas themselves, one of the backward castes, constitute more than one third of the population. Since this estimation, more castes have been added to the list of backward and so in the above table, on an average another 15 per cent of the population in each district may be taken to comprise the backward classes.<sup>58</sup>

58. In these estimates, it is assumed that population increases have not varied sharply from group to group and that the ratio therefore has remained constant. This table omits Kanyakumari district added to Madras in 1956. Hindus form only 59 per cent of the population in this district

## The Non-Brahmin Movement

“NORMALLY, the term ‘minority’ has a certain numerical significance. It usually refers to a smaller number of individuals than the number included in the remainder of the population. However, there are instances in which the numerical majority of the population, whether homogeneous or composed of differentiated groups, is in the position of a minority, the state being dominated by a numerically smaller group which imposes its own language, culture, etc.” This remarkable and sophisticated definition, in terms of power rather than numbers of a ‘political’ minority comprising a numerical majority set out by the United Nations Organization in 1950 is relevant to the political history of Madras in the opening decades of this century, when a movement of the non-brahmin majority arose to resist and end the domination of the brahmin minority in the public and political life in the presidency.<sup>1</sup> And if ‘domination’ can be demonstrated by membership in the legislature, the rolls of the Madras legislature from 1890 to 1920 show that brahmin ‘domination’ grew and continued in that period. Since 1920 there was a sharp decline and near complete disappearance of that element.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Census of India, 1911*, Vol. XII, *Madras*, Part II.

Total Population = 41,870,160

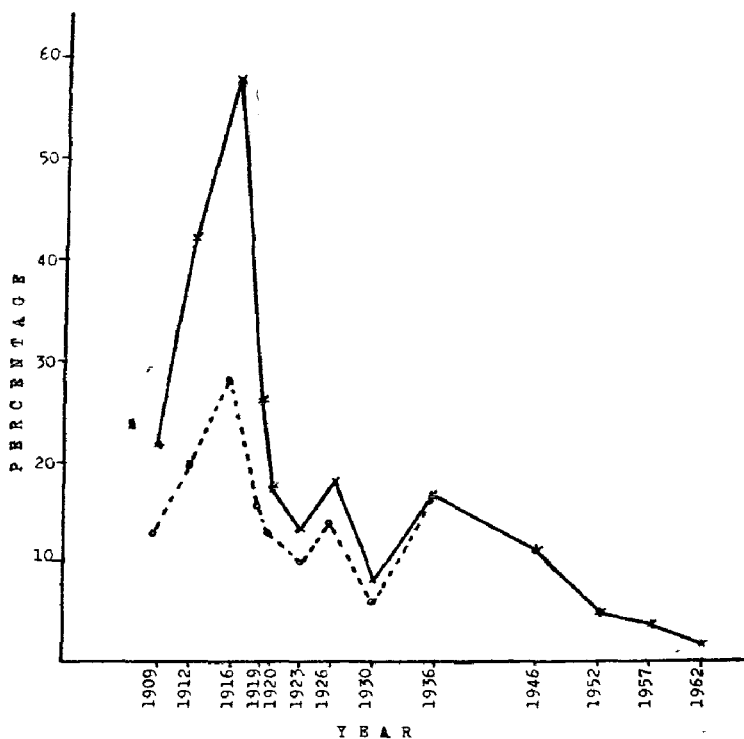
Hindus = 37,230,034

	Total	Percentage to total population	Percentage to Hindu population
Brahmin	1,310,360	3.1	3.5
Non-brahmin	35,919,674	85.8	96.5

2. The graph on the next page illustrates the position of brahmins in the legislature of Madras.

## THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

### Brahmins in the Madras Legislature



*Note:* The graph relates to the lower House of the Madras legislature. Till 1935, there was only one House.

— shows the percentage of elective seats held by Brahmins to total elective seats.

- - - shows the percentage of seats held by Brahmins to total seats. It includes official and nominated members also. From 1936 this line merges with the other as all seats became elective.

This political development reflects the social recognition of a homogenised Brahmin in the system of *varna* and *Jati* explained in the previous chapter irrespective of differences of septs within. No doubt there were several endogamous sub-divisions among Brahmins based on language, religious sect and philosophical dogma, but the social and cultural differences among

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

them were much less than those between them and the non-brahmin groups. Thus the brahmin appeared to the outside observer a compact and homogeneous social group and therefore a group with distinct political interests and ambitions desiring to capture and retain political power. The group's traditional social primacy derived from its specialised function in intellectual and religious matters seems to be furthered and extended into the political field by its early start in the pursuit of modern English education and its consequent entry into lucrative and significant governmental and professional occupations.<sup>3</sup> The brahmins were numerically the smallest group and the brahmins who got into the government service and the professions were a microscopic minority of the total brahmin population.<sup>4</sup> Still this 'minority' appeared as a menacing 'majority' because it very nearly monopolised all positions supposed to be politically influential, and therefore very close to the alien sovereign authority. This must be recognised as the reason for the rise of the conception of a 'sudra' or 'non-brahmin' condition of common oppression by the higher caste. The sense of contrast between the brahmin and the non-brahmin sharpened communal bitterness to the point where it became possible to conceive of them as two distinct and hostile races. Thus began the hard political struggle between a small minority occupying a 'majority' or dominant position and a large majority suffering a backward or 'minority' status in the political field. The entire course of modern Madras politics

3. In 1901 (*Census of India, Madras, Part I, p. 203*) it was noticed that of all castes the brahmins showed the greatest divergence from traditional occupation and that only 11.4 per cent of the total members of the caste were priests.

4. Total Brahmin population—1,310, 360

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>No of brahmins</i>	<i>Percentage to total brahmins</i>
Public administration	4,701	0.36
Lawyers, doctors and teachers	5,541	0.42

(The figures pertain to 1911. See *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XII, Part II, Table XVI.*)



can be traced as a story of the organisation of the non-brahmins to diminish and end the political and social domination of the brahmin and the brahminised. The year 1916 is a turning point in this history ; the domination of the brahmin was challenged and his decline began.

### Formation of the South Indian Liberal Federation

On December 20, 1916 the Associated Press furnished the following news item : "At a conference held on 20th November, it was resolved to start a company for publishing a newspaper advocating the cause of the non-brahmin community and also that a political association be formed to advance, safeguard and protect the interests of the same community. In accordance with this, a Joint Stock Company has been started under the name of 'South Indian People's Association' for conducting a daily newspaper in English, Tamil and Telugu, respectively, and also a political association under the name of 'South Indian Liberal Federation'.<sup>5</sup> A manifesto was issued under the signature of its Secretary, Rao Bahadur Pitty Theagaraya Chettiar addressed to the "Non-Brahmin gentlemen throughout the Presidency" with a view to "defining the attitude of the several non-brahmin communities in the Presidency towards...the Indian Home Rule Movement." The manifesto dealt at length with the "practical monopoly of political power and high government appointments" by a "small fraction of the population of this Presidency" and putting emphasis on the numerical strength of the "non-Brahmins" made an appeal that "had they and their communities always acted in concert even in the matter of government appointments and political power, they would have been at the top, which was theirs by right."<sup>6</sup> It was the first public declaration about the existence of special non-brahmin political interests as

5. *The Hindu*, December 20, 1916.

6. *Ibid.* For the text of the Manifesto see Appendix II.

distinct from those of the brahmins. An institution to consolidate the activities of the non-brahmins and to serve their interests and an organ to publicise their views were formed simultaneously in Madras.

Two leaders particularly dedicated themselves to this cause, (Dr.) T.M. Nair and P.T. Chettiar (later Sir), whose guidance and influence more than anything else reared the movement at its inception. They were the founding fathers of a Non-Brahmin political party. Dr. Nair was a well known physician and a member of the Madras Legislative Council and he took up the editorship of the party's daily the *Justice*. Unfortunately for the movement he died in 1918 before it could establish itself on a firm footing ; it was due to the ceaseless toil of P.T. Chettiar that the movement took firm root in the presidency. He had once been a member of the Indian National Congress but had left it to found the non-brahmin party in order as he put it "to release the non-Brahmins from the dominance of Brahmins,"<sup>7</sup> and became the secretary of the South Indian Liberal Federation. The two leaders have been described as the 'Sakti' and 'Siva' of the movement by P.T. Rajan, a surviving veteran of the Justice party who says that it was the spirit of democracy that united the two who had many differences and had never before worked together to serve the people from the same organisation.<sup>8</sup>

In the journalistic world of Madras, the appearance of the *Justice* had a great impact. The *Hindu*, *New India*, *Swadesamitran* and *Andhra Patrika* which were pro-Congress were regarded as brahmin newspapers. The *Justice* and the *Non-Brahmin* were the main spokesmen of the non-brahmin party and many vernacular journals *Dravidan* and *Tamilan* in Tamil, the *Andhra Prakasika* in Telugu and a host of small Malayalam magazines like the *Kerala Sanchari*, *Keralodayam* and *Malayali*

7. *The Hindu*, April 29, 1925, editorial.

8. *Gangai*, December 1959. A series of articles on his "political experiences" was published by P.T. Rajan in *Gangai* 1959-60.

propagated and promoted the ideals of the Justice movement. Several small dailies and weeklies as for example the *Deshabhimani* and *Desabhaktan* deprecated fissiparous tendencies and endeavoured to heal the breach between brahmins and non-brahmins. The Justice movement gave rise to a continuous debate among these three groups. The vigour with which they carried on their verbal battles and the storm they created in Madras were unparalleled.

The vernacular press helped much in the propaganda of the Justice party, and the influence of these journals cannot be discounted for though their circulation was small, their readers were numerous and were faithful followers and propagators of the creed of the journals. Unlike the readers of the English papers, the subscribers to the vernacular papers often subscribed as well to the creed of the journals. The circulation of the *New India* was remarkably growing from 3,000 in 1916 to 8,500 in 1918 but all the subscribers could not be expected to be Mrs. Besant's followers willing to take any risks for the sake of Home Rule; but the 2,000 subscribers of the *Dravidan* would have contained many staunch adherents of the Justice party forming a band utterly devoted to its principles. English-educated Indians (predominantly brahmins) tended to be prejudiced against vernacular writings and they imagined they could promote nationalism best by dismissing parochial sheets in the local languages as unworthy of consideration; this attitude has not wholly disappeared even today. Therefore the great impact produced by vernacular thinking at that time went unheeded. This lack of sympathetic understanding by the 'educated' Indians of the genuine fears and apprehensions of Madras non-brahmins expressed in their journals probably hardened the temper of the non-brahmin leaders and led them to seek that understanding from the British. Thus brahmin public leaders helped to widen the gulf between themselves and the non-brahmins without seeking to find a compromise.

*The Hindu*, the established English daily of Madras felt obliged to exclude from its columns anything that smacked of 'communalism', and so it refused to give publicity to the Justice party. On the manifesto issued by the South Indian People's Association, it commented, "it is with much pain and surprise that we perused this document. It gives a manifestly distorted and unfair representation of many of the matters to which it makes reference. It can serve no good but it is bound to create bad blood between persons belonging to the same great Indian community..." It added that there was nothing more suicidal and perilous to the national cause than to create causes for mutual discord and to play into the hands of the enemies of national progress.<sup>9</sup> The commentary was remarkably brief and the *Hindu's* view of the significance of the subject can be guessed from the fact that it appeared as a fourth sub-leader. In order to discourage sectional politics which it thought was the way to consolidate national patriotism, the *Hindu* declared unequivocally, "we do not wish to open our correspondence columns to a discussion on this subject, as it cannot but lead to acrimonious controversy and as it would indirectly promote the invidious objects of some of those who are engineering this movement."<sup>10</sup> This Canute-like attitude of non-recognition and the tactics of smothering a movement by blacking it out now appear politically immature and maladroit. Our society is still far away from being an 'open' society and it is not surprising that the 'nationalists' of those days presumed that they could overcome opponents by pretending that they were not there. But neglect is the biggest provocation which one can offer an enemy. "Let the scoffers come to scoff... When the Pacific Ocean community is moving, it moves with a force that is irresistible," retorted the *Non-Brahmin*.<sup>11</sup>

The *New India* of Mrs. Annie Besant was an open

9 and 10. *The Hindu*, December 20, 1916.

11. *Non-Brahmin*, January 28, 1917.

enemy of the *Justice*. In a rather aggressive manner it described the Justice party as a "mischievous movement" started by some non-brahmin leaders who had found in Rao Bahadur P.T. Chettiar "an instrument to denounce the work of the Indian National Congress and the Home Rule League" and could not be considered friends of the nation or even of their own community.<sup>12</sup> It condemned the movement as "unpatriotic", "short-sighted" and "narrow-minded", and suggested that it was a mere stunt created by disgruntled politicians, and called upon every lover of India to discourage that source of mischief with the utmost of his power.<sup>13</sup> Mrs. Besant said that there was no Non-Brahmin Movement but only an Anti-Home Rule Movement created by Justice Sankaran Nair. Such cynical and contemptuous remarks only earned her the wrath of all those who supported the Justice movement. Day in and day out the *Justice* attacked *New India* and ridiculed its editor as an "Irish Brahmani", the leader of the Madras brahmins invoking a spirit from God to suppress the Justice but all in vain.<sup>14</sup> As the organiser of the Home Rule in Madras, Mrs. Besant was perhaps annoyed at opposition to it from Indians themselves and was therefore rather vehement in criticising the anti-Home Rule policy of the non-brahmin party. The combat between the *Justice* and *New India* abounded in personal rebukes, and reflected the strong political passions that had been roused. Thus began the first stage in the active political life of Madras when the concept of a homogeneous 'brahmin group' to be counterbalanced by a concert of 'non-brahmin castes' emerged. The Non-Brahmin Manifesto clearly stated that the places which legitimately belonged to the non-brahmins were being occupied by the brahmins, and to gain the places due to them, the non-brahmins should combine against the brahmins.

12. *New India*, December 20, 1916.

13. *New India*, January 6, 1917.

14. *Non-Brahmin*, January 14, 1917 and January 28, 1917.

## The Dominance of Brahmins in 1916

That the brahmin group occupied most of the elective positions and appointive places in Madras in 1916, was of course an indisputable fact. It was the result of the rapid absorption of the new education by brahmins in the preceding decades. Between 1893 and 1909, fifty-seven officials served in the Madras Legislative Council of whom fifty-one were Europeans. The six Indian official members were V. Bashyam Ayyangar, P.S. Sivaswami Ayyar, R.V. Srinivasa Ayyar, S. Srinivasa-*raghava* Ayyangar, P. Rajaratnam Mudaliyar and C. Sankaran Nair and of these the first four were brahmins. On the non-official side seventy persons served during the period, some recommended by the bodies recognised for the purpose and some nominated by the government. Of these, seventeen were brahmins<sup>15</sup> and thirteen non-brahmin Hindus.<sup>16</sup> The Senate of the Madras University recommended two Indian scholars, V. Krishna-swami Ayyar and P.S. Sivaswami Ayyar and both of them happened to be brahmins. The representatives of most of the district boards and municipalities which approached nearest to territorial constituencies under the Act of 1892 happened to be brahmins who possessed landed interests also and were invariably drawn from modern professions, particularly legal. There were also prominent lawyers in the council belonging to non-brahmin Hindu castes, C. Sankaran Nair, M. Krishnan Nair and P. Kesava Pillai. But the presence of brahmins like V. Bashyam Ayyangar who had the longest

15. V. Bashyam Ayyangar; K. Kalyanasundaram Ayyar; S.R. Ramasubbier; S. Sankarasubbier; N. Subba Rao Pantulu; G. Venkataratnam Pantulu; C. Vijayaraghavachariar; V.C. Desikachariar; L.A. Govindaraghava Ayyar; K.R. Guruswami Ayyar; V. Krishnaswami Ayyar; B. Narasimheswara Sarma; K. Perraju Pantulu; G. Srinivasa Rao; K. Srinivasa Rao; K. Vasudeva Ayyangar; and K. Venkata Rao.

16. C. Jambulinga Mudaliyar; R.V. Ranga Rao; Raja of Bobbili; P. Rangayya Naidu; Ratnasabhupati Pillai; A. Sabhapati Mudaliyar; C. Sankaran Nair; P. Kesava Pillai; M. Krishnan Nair; C. Muthukumaraswami Mudaliyar; R.N. Prakasa Mudaliyar; P. Thiagaraya Chettiar and the Raja of Vengnad.

## THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

career in the council<sup>17</sup> and of eminent lawyers with extensive practice and large income such as L.A. Govindaraghava Ayyar, K. Kalyanasundaram Ayyar, P S. Sivaswami Ayyar N. Subba Rao Pantulu and C. Vijayaraghavachari, was striking enough to create an image of brahmin predominance. But no tinge of communalism either in favour of or against any particular communities could be traced in the questions put by these members—the right of interpellation being the most important right granted by the Act of 1892. The brahmin members were mostly interested in general questions of a public nature and often took up the cause of the depressed castes. Many of them were members of the Indian National Congress.

The composition of the Madras Legislative Councils of the period 1910 to 1920 confirmed the impression that the brahmin lawyer element would dominate the councils unless something was done to prevent it. During this period nine Indians served as official members and of these eight were brahmins.<sup>18</sup> About one-fifth of the total non-official members of this decade belonged to brahmin castes. A steady rise in the number of brahmin gains in elections was noticeable. In the nine constituencies of municipalities and taluk and district boards brahmin gains showed a rapid increase from three in 1909 to six in 1912 and eight in 1916. M. Ramachandra Rao Pantulu set up an enviable record by being elected four times by the Municipal Councils and District Boards of Godavari, Krishna, and Guntur. The

17. V. Bashyam Ayyangar was nominated four times as an official and four times as a non-official member. Between 1892 and 1907 he served in the council for over nine years.

18. T.S. Balakrishna Ayyar (Dec. 24, 1909 to Dec. 23, 1912); L.A. Govindaraghava Ayyar (Aug. 1, 1912 to Jan. 2, 1913); P. Rajagopalachari (Aug. 25, 1914 to July 20, 1915, Jan. 25, 1916 to May 31, 1916, Aug. 1, 1916 to Feb. 26, 1917), P. Ramachandra Rao (April 3, 1917 to Mar. 12, 1918; April 23, 1918 to July 31, 1919); P.S. Sivaswami Ayyar (Dec. 31, 1909 to Feb. 26, 1912); K. Srinivasa Ayyangar (Feb. 24, 1920 to Dec. 16, 1920); S. Srinivasa Ayyangar (Jan. 18, 1916 to May 31, 1916, Aug. 1, 1916 to July 31, 1919, Aug. 1, 1919 to Feb. 23, 1920); N. Subrahmanyam (Dec. 31, 1909—Died on Jan. 4, 1911).

MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

Corporation of Madras which selected a non-brahmin candidate in 1909 and 1912 chose a brahmin in 1916. The following statement shows the electoral position of brahmins and non-brahmins between 1909 and 1916.

TABLE VII  
Brahmin Gains in Elections—1916

<i>Electorate</i>		1909	1912	1916
Corporation of Madras		NB	NB	B
Municipalities and District Boards				
Group 1		B	B	B
Group 2		B	B	B
Group 3		M	B	B
Group 4		NB	NB	B
Group 5		NB	NB	NB
Group 6		NB	B	B
Group 7		NB	NB	B
Group 8		B	B	B
Group 9		NB	B	B
Zamindars				
Group 1		NB	B	B
Group 2		NB	NB	NB
Landholders				
Group 1		NB	NB	NB
Group 2		NB	NB	NB
Group 3		...	NB	NB
	Total	B 3 NB 10 M 1	7 8 Nil	10 5 Nil
B—Brahmin	NB—Non-Brahmin Hindu		M—Muhammadan	

The influence of brahmins on the electorate could indeed be decisive; as priests, school-masters, government servants and journalists, the brahmins had acquired great influence and this influence coupled with their traditional authority in socio-religious matters apparently gave them a high status and unchallenged leadership. An analysis of the elections of



1919 in Madras was undertaken by Alexander Cardew to show the preponderating influence of brahmins in elections. In this investigation, he took into account not merely the figures supplied, but all the sociological factors influencing the polls. The general constituencies included nine seats and an electorate of 3,640 (including 752 brahmins) of which 2,900 exercised their franchise. Among those returned, four were brahmins, four non-brahmins and one described as a non-brahmin of "advanced views". Though the non-brahmins had gained more seats than brahmins as Montagu pointed out, a closer scrutiny disclosed that the non-brahmins were on the whole defeated by brahmins at the polls. For among the 2,900 votes polled, a majority of 1,457 were cast in favour of brahmins, 355 for the non-brahmin of "advanced views" and 1,088 for other non-brahmins. Of the four victories for non-brahmins, one only was secured on their own strength. In two constituencies, the non-brahmin success was due to the split of brahmin votes, and in one place, the locally influential Vellalas, a high non-brahmin caste, decided the issue. Exceptionally remarkable was the victory of a brahmin in a straight contest with a non-brahmin belonging to the South Indian Liberal Federation in a constituency of 485 voters, of whom only 55 were brahmins. This was regarded as a clear instance in support of the position taken by the South Indian Liberal Federation in demanding special electoral protection for non-brahmins.

While the legislature was getting filled more and more by brahmins, the subordinate posts in the public administration became almost a brahmin monopoly by 1916. A statement placed on the table of the House in 1917, in reply to an interpellation showed how the higher grades of subordinate posts in the main secretariat departments, viz., the Chief secretariat, the Home secretariat, Local and Municipal Department, the Public Works Department, Revenue secretariat, the Madras

MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

collectorate and the Board of Revenue swelled with brahmin members. The general position was as follows.<sup>19</sup>

TABLE VIII  
Subordinate Government Posts—1916

<i>Salaries</i>	<i>Non-brahmin</i>	<i>Muham- madan</i>	<i>Indian Christian</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
(Number of posts held)						
Rs. 50-99	52	8	18	128	2	208
Rs. 100-299	18	1	7	78	6	110
Rs. 300-499	3	—	2	8	—	13
Rs. 500 and above	—	—	2	7	18	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>358</b>

The progress made by the small brahmin group far ahead of other groups was strikingly remarkable in certain departments and especially in higher posts. In various periods during the second decade of the century, the brahmin group occupied nearly 74 per cent of positions in the Public Works Department, 50 per cent in the Revenue, 66 per cent in the Judicial and 79 per cent in the Educational departments.<sup>20</sup> The 'brahminisation' of subordinate government services stemmed from the predominance of that community in educational institutions. In 1918, group-wise composition of graduates on the rolls of the Madras University in some faculties was as shown below:<sup>21</sup>

19. *Journal of the Legislative Council, Madras, July 1917 to 1918*, proceedings of the meeting held on November 20, 1917.

20. *G.O. 22, Public, January 27, 1919.*

21. *Ibid.*

THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

TABLE IX  
Madras University Graduates—1918

<i>Faculty</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Non-Brahmin</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
Arts and Science-B.A.	10,269	3,213	1,748	15,209
Arts and Science-M.A.	389	65	55	511
Teaching	1,094	163	241	1,498
Law	48	4	2	54
Engineering (Civil)	121	15	23	160

Besides these, public associations and popular organs which had a good deal of political influence were chiefly manned by the brahmin. The editors of the popular dailies, *The Hindu* and *Swadesamitran*, were brahmins; and *New India* was a good friend of the brahmin group. A steady increase of the brahmin element in the provincial Congress was also noticeable. In 1914, fourteen out of sixteen elected representatives of the Congress committee were brahmins. Thus, when the brahmin influence was at its peak in 1916 the historic Non-Brahmin Manifesto was issued.

### **Beginnings of Non-Brahmin Politics**

It cannot be concluded that the genesis of the 'Brahmin-Non Brahmin' question lies in this manifesto. Long before 1916, the British bureaucracy foresaw the trend towards brahmin dominance, suggested policies to check it, and also took steps to arrest its pace and Indian leaders also pointed to the regional communal problem likely to emerge in Madras politics.

British statesmen who had always doubted the wisdom of introducing a territorial representative system for the pluralist society of India did not fail to notice the dominance of brahmins in the Madras legislature. To them, no system of representation in India which failed to take into account the lack of homogeneity in the population or to provide for the expression of the

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

diverse views of a mixed electorate, could succeed. In 1907 the Home Department of the Government of India drafted a scheme of representative government intended to secure "the widest representation of classes, races and interests" For the provincial Legislative Council of Madras, it recommended seventeen non-official seats to be filled by special electorates of communal interests and functional groups. Of the seventeen, one was to be selected by barristers, advocates, vakils or certified pleaders, one by brahmins and one by "all others".<sup>22</sup> Since Muhammadans and Christians were given separate representation, "all others" evidently meant all the non-brahmin Hindu castes. That the brahmin and the non-brahmin (all others) constituted separate "classes, races or interests" requiring separate representation in the legislature of Madras was thus officially recognised and accepted in 1907, nearly ten years before the Justice party pleaded for non-brahmin representation. Evidently the intention behind the proposal was to fix a maximum for brahmin membership in the legislature and not to guarantee a minimum and this is a rare instance of a scheme of communal representation designed to the disadvantage rather than advantage of a numerical minority.

National associations condemned vehemently the principle of class representation embodied in this scheme. The Bombay Presidency Association, categorically asserted that the intention of the government was to create a counterpoise to the educated, particularly the lawyer element which had tended to dominate the legislative councils formed after 1892. The association took strong exception to the government's remark that territorial representation was unsuitable for India and declared that the attempts to base political institutions on class interests, caste prejudices or religious differences

22. *Papers Relating to Constitutional Reforms in India, Vol. II, 1908*, Home Department's letter to local governments, no. 2310-17, August 24, 1907.

were entirely dangerous to the nation at large. The association maintained that the scheme involved a radical departure from the traditional British policy of neutrality in communal matters. It stated, "these measures are bound to create in the public body feelings of race and religious animosities dangerous to peace and contentment; and in the legislature itself a spirit of faction which will mar the utility and lower in public esteem the character of the Legislative Council."<sup>23</sup>

In Madras this scheme of communal representation met a cold reception. Excepting some Muslim sections, the press of Madras as well as individuals called upon to give their opinion on the scheme unanimously declared it as repugnant to national interests and a bad foundation for a democratic order. National newspapers, English and vernacular, started a campaign against the scheme of political reforms propounded by the Home Department. To them the ideal type of government was one based on the British model. They condemned the system of class representation as a vile design calculated to prevent national unity and bade the public beware the British diplomacy of creating caste and class divisions. In Madras the Tamil magazine *Swadesamitran* took a lead in protesting against the government's scheme and making it unpopular. "Compliance with this demand is inconsistent with the general advancement of the country, for the other communities in India, will also ask for the same privilege of exclusive representation and if it be granted...the consequence will be disintegration and degeneration instead of the unity and regeneration we all look for..."<sup>24</sup> commented the journal in a leading article. It carried on a ceaseless propaganda that the policy of the government was *divide et impera* and exhorted the people not to fall a prey to the Machiavellian tactics of a scheming government.

23. *Ibid.*, communication from the Bombay Presidency Association, pp. 483-530.

24. *Swadesamitran*, September 6, 1907.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

In the latter half of 1907, the subject was of continuous topical interest and indeed not a single issue of the journal came out without carrying an attack in the strongest terms on the government and its formula for communal representation. It was generally believed that racial, religious and caste differences were no bar to political unity. In a leading article, the *Hindu* pointed out the discrepancy in the British policy of condemning caste for social purposes and advocating it for political organisation. Asserting that communal representation was opposed to the facts of history, it hinted that "the political nostrum which the rulers now wish to apply to prevent the consolidation of the various popular interests in the land and to break the continuity of the national force which has already begun to make itself felt is too obvious to be mistaken."<sup>25</sup>

The Government of Madras circulated the scheme to prominent men in all walks of life belonging to the European and the Indian sections in the various districts and collected a volume of opinions. The records show that no aspect of the government's scheme received as much criticism as the proposal to construct constituencies on communal basis. There was a general denunciation of the principle of class representation as a pernicious system bound to accentuate caste differences. With the exception of some Muhammadan respondents, both officials and non-officials belonging to different castes were united in holding that representation by territorial constituencies as it obtained in all well established western democracies was the ideal form of government. In conveying to the Government of India the reaction of the Madras public to this scheme, the Government of Madras said, "No part of Government of India's proposals has been received with more general and more decided disapprobation than... this... suggestion. The principle of race, caste and

25. *The Hindu*, December 9, 1907.

religious representation has been almost universally condemned as likely to perpetuate and to strengthen the barriers which the growth of civilization is gradually removing..."<sup>26</sup> One official observed that he would rather forego political privileges than have them on the basis of distinctions and differences, which in practice would have the effect of bidding them stay for ever as if they were right, true and just. Lawyer politicians like V. Bashyam Ayyangar (Advocate-General) and C. Vijayaraghavachariar warned that communal representation would have the most deleterious effects both on the state and the body politic by encouraging fissiparous tendencies and obstructing individual and collective progress.<sup>27</sup>

On the contrary, some Muslim sections of the presidency welcomed the scheme as a great boon which would relieve them from their constant dread of a Hindu oligarchy rising under the guise of democracy. The intention "to secure the direct and personal representation of as many classes as possible" which underlay the government's proposals was heartily greeted by them. A leading Muslim journal commented that communal representation was essential to prevent members of one community presuming to advocate the interests of another and was the most appropriate method of making a beginning in representative government.<sup>28</sup> The Prince of Arcot, one of the influential Muslim leaders in the province approved the principle of communal representation, not only for Muslims but for Hindu castes also and said "until India could metamorphose itself into one homogeneous mass of national unity devoid of caste and its multiformities it will be the constant concern of government to see that one caste does not preponderate over another either in

26. *Papers Relating to Constitutional Reforms*, Vol II, 1908, letter no. 222. p. 49, para 9.

27. *Ibid.*, annexures 1 and 16 to letter no. 222.

28. *Muslim Patriot*, September 5, 1907.

influence or in the monopoly of benefits and the fostering hand of the State is very necessary to save the non-influential castes from sinking into oblivion devoid of any sort of State recognition so far as state assemblies are concerned"<sup>29</sup> The Hindu spokesmen, brahmin and non-brahmin, who rejected communal representation altogether were especially opposed to the extension of this system to divisions within the Hindus. Not a single voice was raised in favour of the proposal to reserve one seat for brahmins, but on the contrary all the respondents without distinction of caste considered the suggestion as the most mischievous element of the principle of class representation. The Board of Revenue itself felt that there was no need to create caste constituencies except for Muslims. In a lengthy letter, the Board explained to the Government of India that the public viewed the proposals with "intense and universal suspicion as a Machiavellian device intended to widen the existing lines of cleavage."<sup>30</sup>

In the interest of the quality of the new legislature, Alexander Cardew (Secretary to Government, Revenue Department) pointed out that the scheme would result in inadequate representation to the ablest and best educated class. A brahmin member of the legislative council, V. Krishnaswami Ayyar, remarked that it was highly objectionable as a "forced plan to minimise the natural influence" which "culture and intellectual leadership and long hereditary attainment" had conferred upon that community. Even some of those who demanded separate representation for non-brahmins in the second decade of the century totally rejected the proposals in this regard in 1907. The *West Coast Spectator* for instance insisted in 1914 that something should be done to allay the fears of non-brahmins about brahmin dominance; but in 1907, it had said, that representation by castes and sects could

29. *Papers Relating to Constitutional Reforms*, Vol. II, 1908, letter no. 418, annexure 3, p. 265.

30. *Ibid.*, letter no. 222, annexure XX.



have "no political or administrative significance," and that it would "prevent men of acknowledged merits and ability from being returned to the councils."<sup>31</sup> M. Krishnan Nair, a member of the legislative council, who later became a prominent member of the non-brahmin movement said that caste representation was objectionable in principle and would help the growth of sectional divisions kept under control by the British Rajaratna Mudaliar (Retired, Inspector-General of Registration) wanted functional constituencies and not caste. The Raja of Venkatagiri feared that the division as brahmin and non-brahmin in the franchise system would counteract the unifying forces which had to be strengthened.<sup>32</sup>

The practical difficulties anticipated in operating the system of class representation were immense. The number and the nature of divisions within the Hindu society precluded any reasonable system of communal representation. The population was so diverse that to construct caste constituencies for the whole country was almost impossible and even the small brahmin caste was divided into many smaller sub-sects. The Board of Revenue itself felt that it was inconceivable that such widely different communities as the brahmins of Kumbakonam, the Oriya brahmins of Ganjam and the Nambudiris of Malabar could ever agree on a single representative.<sup>33</sup>

Lack of homogeneity within the electorate was more pronounced in the case of the non-brahmin Hindus who were divided into innumerable castes, distinct, separate and mutually exclusive. M. Krishnan Nair claimed that according to the reasoning behind communal representation each caste of 'non-brahmin' was entitled to

31. *West Coast Spectator*, September 7, 1907.

32. For details regarding comments received by the government on the scheme, see the annexures to letter no 222 mentioned earlier.

33. *Papers Relating to Constitutional Reforms*, Vol. II, 1908, letter from the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue) no. 466, para 13. Then the Madras presidency stretched over a large area and comprised five linguistic groups, each of which had the same complex caste divisions.

separate representation and demanded one seat exclusively for the Nairs of Malabar.<sup>34</sup> The unpopularity of the scheme of extending communal representation so as to separate the brahmin and the non-brahmin was formally made known to the Government of India by the provincial government in their communication of 13th March, 1908 and the scheme was given up.

The dominance of brahmins in the public services was noticed long before the emergence of the Justice party and the official policy of encouraging sections other than brahmins can be traced far back to 1854. The Board of Revenue issued in that year a Standing Order No. 128 (2) that the district collectors should be careful to see that the subordinate appointments in their districts were not monopolised by the few influential families. It laid down that "endeavour should always be made to divide the appointments in each district among the principal castes," that a proportion of the tahsildars should belong to castes other than the brahmin and that it should be a standing rule that the two chief revenue servants in the collector's office should not belong to the same caste. The Standing Order was evidently not strictly enforced in practice for suitability for the job and not communal origin was the prime consideration of the British government. One can only trace ideas such as reduction of brahmin preponderance or assistance to backward sections but there was nothing done even remotely like establishing communal preferences or proportional representation in state services. It was officially noted that the brahmins had always monopolised the best places in the government employ," and commenting upon this, the Census Superintendent, W. R. Cornish wrote in 1871 that, "politically, it is not to the advantage of the Government that every question connected with the progress of the country should be viewed through the medium of Brahmin spectacles... The true

34. *Ibid.*; letter no. 222, annexure No. XII.

## THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

policy of the State would be to limit their numbers in official positions and to encourage a large proportion of non-brahmin Hindus and Muslims to enter official service so as to allow no special pre-eminence or great preponderance of any particular caste."<sup>35</sup> He suggested that the state should come forward and accord special privileges to ensure that in the distribution of offices connected with the administration of the country, no one caste enjoyed a monopoly. He also noted that 55 per cent of those matriculated during the preceding fifteen years belonged to the brahmin caste, and hinted that encouragement of education among the Muhammadans and non-brahmin Hindu castes would in course of time reduce the preponderance of brahmins in public offices. To estimate the relative progress made by different communities, the government decided in 1881 to collect information on the number of employees of various castes in state services. The position in 1881 was as shown below.<sup>36</sup>

TABLE X  
Government Appointments and Caste—1881

<i>Caste</i>	<i>Percentage of total population</i>	<i>Percentage of appointments over Rs. 10</i>	<i>Percentage of appointments under Rs. 10</i>	<i>Total</i>
Brahmin	3.6	42.2	4.4	19.2
Other Hindus	87.9	36.5	67.7	55.4
Muhammadan	6.2	5.5	24.1	16.8
Native Christian	2.2	4.9	3.5	4.1
European and Eurasian	0.1	10.9	0.3	4.5

In relation to their numerical strength, the share of brahmins in services especially in the higher grades was said to be disproportionately excessive and the need to

35. *Report on the Census of Madras Presidency, 1871*, Vol. I, p. 197.  
36. G.O. No. 386 and 387, Education, July 27, 1887.

check this trend and reduce the disparity between the brahmin and non-brahmin castes was felt essential. "The Government are unable to regard this increasing share of the administration in the hands of a single class with entire approval. In certain departments the proportion of Brahmins must be considered excessive," it was said thus accepting the policy of arresting brahmin dominance well over forty years before the commencement of the Non-Brahmin Movement. The government stated that "it is obviously inexpedient to permit any single class to monopolise the whole patronage of Government. An increase in the proportion of appointments held by the great non-brahmin portion of the Hindu community would therefore be a ground for satisfaction."<sup>37</sup>

At the same time in making this observation, the government was anxious to avoid creating an impression that they were in any way hostile to the admission of brahmins into the public service. It was admitted that the large share which brahmins had obtained was undoubtedly due to their own energy and ability and that "it was impossible to ignore manifest superiority in considering the recruiting of the public service." The motive behind the collection of caste statistics, it was said, was just to estimate the relative progress made by the principal communities and not to bestow special favours on any one community in particular.<sup>38</sup>

Whatever be the motive behind the collection of such statistics, it is certain that the bureaucracy which ruled India was not unaware of the 'brahmin-non-brahmin' question. Indian thinkers too realised this factor and foresaw the widening of the gulf between the brahmin and the non-brahmin. (Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) often referred to the need to end the dissension between castes particularly between the brahmin

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*

and the non-brahmin. He told the brahmin that the day for "privileges and exclusive claims" had gone and that it was now his "duty to work for the salvation of the rest of mankind in India."<sup>39</sup> He held that the theory about racial difference between the Aryan and the Dravidian was "entirely unfounded". According to him the "whole of India was Aryan" and therefore the theory about the Aryan descent of the South Indian Brahmin and the non-Aryan descent of the non-Brahmin was "illogical" and "irrational".<sup>40</sup> While emphasising the common origin of the brahmin and the non-brahmin, he observed that the *chaturvarnya* had been practically reduced to two, the Brahmin and the Sudra. He also preached that the modern brahmins in secular jobs were not the real brahmins deserving respect and regard. Emphatically denouncing the idea of brahmin superiority in modern days, he said that according to the *Sastras* "the Brahmin must not live in a country where there are only Sudras", and asked them to "depart bag and baggage"<sup>41</sup> for the brahmins who lived in a Sudra country should "burn themselves as a penance."<sup>42</sup>)

The question of brahmin and non-brahmin was not debated as a matter of social reform only but raised itself as a political question and the political contest seems to have divided the brahmin and the non-brahmin even during the last decade of the last century. Writing about the reformed legislative council in 1897, C. Karunakara Menon remarked about the communal system that "the evil is aggravated when the demand for communal representation descends into a desire for the representation of caste; and it has been only too apparent of late that the elections are at times apt to be influenced by considerations of caste. The most common thing that one hears of in connection

39. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III, 1963, p. 297.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 293.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 339.

with elections is the distinction between the brahmin and the non-brahmin and when a non-brahmin is elected against a brahmin, satisfaction is openly expressed by people interested in keeping up caste and sectional differences, not that a really worthy candidate has been elected but that there is one non-brahmin against one brahmin." He concluded that as far as public affairs were concerned, to what caste or creed a man who had to represent general public in the legislative council belonged, was a matter of no significance.<sup>43</sup>

### **Circumstances Leading to Non-Brahmin Manifesto**

While the awareness of the disparity between the brahmin and non-brahmin sections had no doubt a longer history, the institutional embodiment of this came only in 1916. (The rise of the 'Non-Brahmin Party' is purely a political incident and had its basis in the hopes and fears created among the politically conscious members of these communities on the eve of the grant of a substantial measure of self-government.) Madras politics in 1916 flatly contradicted that of 1907. What happened during the intervening period was the passing of the Morley-Minto Reforms, some experience in working it and a promise of further dose of self-government.

(Between 1908 and 1915, there were signs of a new awakening among the non-brahmin leaders; some of them began to think seriously about social divisions which might prevent political cohesion.) In his Convocation Address to the new graduates of the Madras University in 1908, Justice C. Sankaran Nair said that unless the barriers of *varna* and *jati* were removed, political progress would be impossible.<sup>44</sup> He felt that the British rule in India would continue as long as the heterogeneous elements persisted and were held together by the foreign rulers and said, "to imagine that any change in the political

43. *Modern Review*, 1897, p. 349.

44. C. Madhavan Nair, *A Short Life of Sir C. Sankaran Nair*, 1964, p. 171.

status, wrested as a mere concession from her rulers will transform her into a homogeneous whole, is the fashion of certain politicians, but such a conception can only be classed among the chimeras of subject races," and advised the students to sweep away the social barriers and "try to make India a natural kingdom whose subjects are held together by unity in interest, character and social intercourse."<sup>45</sup>

(The predominance of brahmins in public affairs engendered the fear that the brahmins might use their power and influence to perpetuate brahminism in its original form and hamper the growth of the democratic ideal of equality which would overturn the caste system. The *Pioneer* remarked that the brahmin must "either give up his uncompromising attitude towards the lowest castes or he must be content to forego his political ambitions."<sup>46</sup> (Distrust of brahmins in the professions and in public life was matched by distrust of brahmin officials as well in their official relationships.<sup>47</sup> Justice Sankaran Nair, then the only non-brahmin judge of the Madras High Court, propounded a thesis that as legislators the "brahmin reactionaries" would oppose tooth and nail any attempt at reforms likely to weaken the priestly class. He accordingly suggested the formation of different legislative councils to deal with different social questions. But it met with strong disapproval in the press—which again appeared to Justice Nair as an unconcealed opposition of brahmins to social reforms (the press in those days being manned mainly by brahmins), and a proof of the incapacity for self-government reflected in the inability to face

45. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

46. *The Hindu*, September 12, 1911 quoting *Pioneer*.

47. C. Madhavan Nair, *op. cit.*, p. 198 It is quoted that Sankaran Nair said that "almost all the castes carry their mutual dislike to such an extent that in government services, failing their own castemen, they would more willingly serve a European than a member of another caste."

conflicting social interests.<sup>48</sup>) The opinion created a stir among those who regarded it as nothing short of a "wholesale and indiscriminate condemnation of Brahminism."<sup>49</sup>

(Public propaganda against brahmins had thus commenced in the opening years of the century and popular leaders and vernacular journals devoted to the exposure of brahmin dominance sprang up in the city of Madras. Institutions in which brahmins were found in large numbers were censured as strongholds of casteism and brahminism. For instance, when in 1910 Mrs. Besant sponsored the foundation of a Hindu University in Banaras, an acute controversy arose over the desirability of establishing sectarian universities when Hindu-Muslim relations were not satisfactory. To Justice Sankaran Nair, it was much more than a Hindu-Muslim problem; he discerned in it an opportunity for the brahmins to restore brahminism and to foster further divisions in the caste system.<sup>50</sup> Supporting the stand of Justice Nair certain local journals spread the view that such institutions were likely to strengthen the supremacy of brahmins.<sup>51</sup> Anti-brahmin propaganda seems to have been primarily directed to diminishing the confidence which the foreign rulers had in their brahmin subordinates; rumours were circulated that brahmins were given to seditious activities and therefore their loyalty to the government was doubtful. Attempts were made to convince the rulers that to entrust the administration in the hands of the brahmins was a suicidal policy.) "Hinduism teaches obedience to the king or the State only when the State adopts the view of the *Sastras*, i.e., of the priestly class," and "civil allegiance

48. Justice C. Sankaran Nair, "Indian Laws and English Legislation" in *the Hindu*, August 19, 1911.

49. *The Hindu*, August 19, 1911, editorial.

50. *The Hindu*, November 10, 1911.

51. *Tamilan*, November 22, 1911.

*Kerala Sanchari*, December 6, 1911.



must be precarious indeed when it was avowedly at the mercy of a religion of which the members of the priestly class alone are the authorised exponents," wrote Justice Sankaran Nair in a letter to Mrs. Besant which was regarded by the *Hindu* as a "strongly expressed antipathy to brahminism and the priestly class."<sup>52</sup>

{ Representations were made that to check the predominance of brahmins, there was need for some kind of communal representation in state services. } (In a memorandum to the Royal Commission on Public Services<sup>53</sup> appointed in 1912 to examine the question of Indian participation in civil services, P.T. Chettiar (the founder leader of the Justice party), then a member of the Madras Legislative Council stated that simultaneous examination was unsuitable for India and would not secure due representation of all castes and communities. ) "The system...will only result in the service being monopolised by one caste to the exclusion of other castes and communities," he said and referred to the practical monopoly of all posts by brahmins in the provincial civil service after the introduction of recruitment by examination.<sup>54</sup> A revenue divisional officer, T. Balaji Rao Nayudu expressed a similar opinion on the basis that unless each community was represented by its own member in the service its interests would not be safeguarded.<sup>55</sup> On behalf of the Madras Presidency Muslim League, Yakub Hasan pleaded that it was

52. *The Hindu*, November 10, 1911.

53. The questionnaire issued by the Commission to important officials and prominent citizens of the Presidency included a question: "Are all classes and communities duly represented in your provincial service? Do you consider that this is desirable? What arrangements do you recommend to secure this object?" The Commission met in Madras during January 8 and 18, 1913. Forty-two witnesses were examined of whom 19 were officials and 23 non-officials. Classified according to caste 19 were brahmins, 7 non-brahmin Hindus, 2 Muslims, 3 Christians and the rest Europeans. Eight witnesses supported fully the principle of class representation and 17 rejected it.

54. *Royal Commission on Public Services in India, Oral Evidence and Examination of Witnesses, Madras, 1913*, p. 453, para 1901.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 161, para 2273.

"absolutely necessary that all classes and communities should be duly represented in the provincial civil service."<sup>56</sup> One of the central issues of the 'brahmin-non-brahmin' conflict came up for public discussion and exposed the bitterness of feelings on either side. No brahmin examined by the Commission had anything to say in favour of communal distribution of high offices. Their contention was that merit and efficiency and not birth should be the criterion in selecting responsible officers. Communal considerations, it was feared, would "lower the prestige of the service" and "introduce an element of discontent in the service itself." It was also pointed out that once communal principle was adopted it would be difficult to fix limits and stop its application.)

(The incident shows the awakening among the forward non-brahmin castes to assert themselves against the brahmin.) for the advocates of communal representation did not contend the absolute justice of the principle on all occasions for all jobs and were unwilling to extend the principle to the panchamas.<sup>57</sup> The issue became significant as the justice in the demand of non-brahmins was conceded by an English official. (Alexander Cardew, a member of the Governor's Executive Council observed that, "it is impossible to apply a system of open competition to the recruitment of the civil service in India unless a monopoly is to be accorded to the brahmins." He suggested that fixed percentage of vacancies might be ascribed for different communities and competition restricted to members of the same community.<sup>58</sup>) The idea of communal representation, however, was thought of only in respect of service under the state.<sup>59</sup>

56. *Ibid.*, p. 303, para 5054.

57. *Ibid.*, para 2291-2297. T. Balaji Rao Nayudu stated that panchamas would have their chances when they get qualified.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86, para 1184. Cardew said that the system of open competition was unworkable because of "the astonishing intellectual superiority of a small, rigidly exclusive caste."

59. Questioned about recruitment policy in his own factory, P. T. Chettiar himself admitted that he did not and could not apply the communal principle and considered efficiency as the sole test of qualification.

Anti-brahmin feeling arose within the Indian National Congress itself which was regarded by non-brahmins as a sectarian institution of brahmins that had no direct link with the non-brahmin masses.) The Congress session held in Madras in 1914 was dubbed as a "Brahmin Congress" and it was ironically remarked that it would not hesitate to masquerade under the name of the Indian National Congress and make representations on behalf of the people."<sup>60</sup> A Malayalam journal forecast that "the non-brahmin Hindus following the striking example of the Muslims, would form their own organisation for the representation of their own interests as against those of any particular caste or class."<sup>61</sup> A fear was openly expressed that "Home Rule will degenerate into Brahmin rule,"<sup>62</sup> and a charge was made that a whole regiment of non-brahmins, in no way "inferior either to the Triplicane clique or the Mylapore cabal,"<sup>63</sup> was excluded from the ranks of the Congress while many brahmin non-entities were included filling 98 per cent of the seats with brahmin members. A prominent pro-non-brahmin magazine gave the timely warning that "if this aggression goes on and the spirit of toleration and compromise does not dominate the political atmosphere, we shall not be surprised if we see in the near future a sharp division in the political camp as between Brahmins and non-Brahmins."<sup>64</sup> (The unfriendly relations between the brahmin and the non-brahmin political leaders developing fast since 1910 reached a climax in 1916. Justice C. Sankaran Nair may be considered the first to identify the menace of brahmin supremacy and to urge the need to nip it in the bud. He was appointed a member of the Imperial Executive Council in 1915 and

60. *Malayali*, August 1, 1914.

61. *Ibid.*

62. *West Coast Spectator*, November 28, 1916.

63. *Ibid.* (Triplicane and Mylapore are parts of Madras city known to be brahmin localities in those days)

64. *Ibid* (*West Coast Spectator* was a tri-weekly of Calicut with a circulation of about 1,250.)

was given the portfolio of education.) With the acceptance of an important post in the capital, Nair was for a time away from Madras and away from the centre of the brahmin-non-brahmin controversy.<sup>65</sup>

In August 1916, the election of members to the Imperial Legislative Council was held. Under the Morley-Minto scheme, the council included twenty-five elected members of whom eleven were to be elected by the non-official members of the provincial legislative councils. Two were to be elected from Madras in 1916 and the following seven candidates contested the elections, viz., C. Karunakara Menon, B.N. Sharma, Dr. T.M. Nair, V.S. Srinivasa Sastry, C. Vijayaraghavachariar, N. Subba Rao Pantulu, and Nawab Syed Mohomed. The task of the electors was not simple since all the candidates were competent and popular public figures. "Seven candidates for two seats to be selected by a constituency of a most composite character in which the elements representing the most diverse interests exist, is one of the curiosities of the Indian Councils system,"<sup>66</sup> remarked the *Hindu* and urged the voters to give territorial representation as well as to consider the merits of individual candidates. In the contest B.N. Sharma for the northern districts and V.S. Srinivasa Sastry for the southern came out successful.

(It was a shock to the non-brahmin sections, who depending on the support of the brahmin members of the Legislative Council who formed the majority, had put up Dr. Nair as a candidate against Sastry. The defeat of Dr. Nair was regarded as a defeat of non-brahmins at the hands of brahmins.) Unless the brahmin phalanx in

65. C. Madhavan Nair, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-106. Sankaran Nair's views on the Non-Brahmin movement are stated in his minute of dissent to the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. He said, "I support non-brahmin communal representation but I demur entirely to the proposition that it should be regarded as an essential preliminary to any responsible government for the reason given." (See *Fourth Despatch on Indian Constitutional Reforms*, 1919, pp. 17-19)

66. *The Hindu*, August 1, 1916, editorial.

the Legislative Council was shattered, it was thought, there was no scope for the rise of non-brahmin leaders. The election only served to aggravate the growing feeling that the brahmin legislators formed a rigidly exclusive group relentlessly opposed to non-brahmin interests. Thus this election became an important turning point in the political history of Madras. The brahmins exonerated themselves by saying that Sastry was elected mostly on non-brahmin votes and that there was no brahmin-non-brahmin question involved in it. The non-brahmins on the contrary denied this and considered Sastry as a representative exclusively of Madras brahmins. Perhaps more than the defeat, the disappointment caused by the failure of the brahmin support expected by Dr. Nair was behind the rise of the non-brahmin political party. A non-brahmin journal remarked, "Let Mylapore, Egmore and Triplicane search their hearts and honestly say they have done nothing to create fear in the non-Brahmins."<sup>67</sup> While many other factors contributed to the rise of the non-brahmin movement, it is now apparent that the brahmin leaders of the time failed to allay the growing apprehension in the mind of the non-brahmins that brahmins wanted to preserve in modern times and in the context of a Western political and administrative system the precedence they had formerly enjoyed.

67. *West Coast Spectator*, December 28, 1916.

## The Growth of the Non-Brahmin Movement

“...Yet a time will come when there will be the rising of the Sudra class, with their Sudra-hood; that is to say, not like that as at present, when the Sudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaisya or Kshatriya, but a time will come when the Sudra of every country, with their inborn Sudra nature and habits...not becoming in essence Vaisya or Kshatriya, but remaining as Sudra...will gain absolute supremacy in every society...”<sup>1</sup>

—Vivekananda, 1899

**A**LTHOUGH the modern Non-Brahmin Movement was in essence and inception a political movement, it was powerful enough to touch the political, social and cultural life of the people also; and it helped towards a radical reorganisation of the social system. In 1916 was established a political creed which had for its ultimate object the supremacy of the Sudra *varna*. An analysis of its political and social objectives, its methods of propagating them and the steps taken to realise them is necessary to show how the *varna* system lies at the base of Madras politics.)

### Political Philosophy of the Justice Movement

(In 1916 as the British were inclined to concede an instalment of self-government and to pay heed to the views of Indians in this respect, the non-brahmins thought that they should no longer remain silent and that the time had come for them to define their policy

1. Vivekananda, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 468.

(My thanks are due to Dr. B.B. Majumdar of Patna who recommended a study of this publication.)

## THE GROWTH OF THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

on public matters. The absence of an organisation to publicise their views, it was thought, had given room to a false impression that the non-brahmins had no separate views on public questions. The opinions expressed by the members of the Congress and the legislative council and the high officials of the state and passed on as Indian views were declared to be the opinions of brahmins. The Manifesto of 1916 pointed out, that the non-brahmins numbered more than 40 million in the total population of about 41½ million in the presidency and included "the bulk of the tax-payers, the majority of zamindars and agriculturists" but had remained with "little or no use among the masses to influence political development." (The political policy of the Justice party was based on the apprehension that self-government would mean brahmin government under which the position of non-brahmins would become worse than under the British government; therefore the Justice party had no sympathy for movements calculated to reduce British control over India.) "We are not in favour of any movement to undermine the influence and authority of British rulers, who alone in the present circumstances are able to hold the scales even between creed and class..." read the non-brahmin declaration of 1916. The British principle of even-handed justice as between classes of the population was preferred and damage to that principle feared under self-government.

(The primary task of the Justicites was therefore to neutralise the Home Rule Movement, which they regarded as "an urban and principally a newspaper movement."<sup>2</sup> The *Non-Brahmin* said, "We do not want Home Rule, for it will bring about the condition of ancient India, when the Sudra was kept suppressed... Our goal is the goal of self-government, but we want to be led there by the British."<sup>3</sup>) Repeated protests were

2. *The Justice*, January 9, 1917.

3. *Non-Brahmin*, December 3, 1916.

made against the Home Rule League in the press and on the platform so as to prevent the English from responding to the agitators. (The Home Rule League was described as a class movement that had no following from the bulk of the people.) "Unless this most reactionary movement and its pretensions are thoroughly exposed, some harm may be done," (the Justicites said and appealed that every patriotic Indian should join the non-brahmin movement and "fight the self-constituted agents of reaction in this country."<sup>4</sup>)

(The Justicites thought that Home Rule was not suitable for India because of the pluralistic nature of the society and the uneven development of its component parts.) "Popular representation can represent at best sections large and small, a few or many of the teeming population," stated the South Indian Liberal Federation in a memorandum submitted to the Government of Madras on Indian Constitutional Reforms and argued that the talk about the Indian Nation might serve to "soothe the patriotic instincts and to bluff the Government," but that there was in reality no Indian nation but only Indian people.<sup>5</sup> (Some leaders seemed to be convinced that Home Rule would be directly harmful to the non-brahmin masses and pleaded that it should not be granted unless unanimously demanded by all castes and communities.<sup>6</sup>)

(The Justice party therefore stood for slow progress towards self-government giving adequate time to all sections of the people to prepare themselves for political responsibilities; meanwhile, it desired British rule to

4. *The Justice*, November 27, 1917.

Similar apprehensions regarding Home Rule and self-government were also expressed at the time by the Muhammadan population of Madras. Certain Urdu journals of Madras (*Qaumi Report*, *Jaridae-i-Razgar*) with missionary zeal, spread the belief that Muhammadans were weak and poor and would be wholly crushed by self-government and vehemently opposed the views of the All India Muslim League which allied itself with the Congress in 1916.

5. G.O. 854-855, Public, September 19, 1918.

6. *Dravidan*, November 19, 1917.



continue.) Dr. Nair speaking at a crowded meeting held in Madras at Victoria Hall under the auspices of the Muthialpet Muslim Anjuman on March 14, 1917, said that there was no tradition of self-government in India and that therefore Indians needed training by gradual stages towards self-government.<sup>7</sup> In an article in the *Justice* on "Political Reconstruction in India", he sketched a scheme of political reforms to enlarge the legislative councils, to provide training for people from different castes, and to place initially subjects like education and local government under popular control and asserted that Home Rule could not be achieved at one bound.<sup>8</sup> Those who wished to join as members of the South Indian Liberal Federation had to sign a declaration accepting the creed of the party that they were "averse to any violent and sudden constitutional changes" and were "in favour of progressive political development."<sup>9</sup> (The Justice party professed to have as much interest in progressive reforms as the Congress but feared that the extremist demand for immediate Home Rule would mean Brahmin Rule and would actually amount to the "handing over the majority of the people into the hands of the few."<sup>10</sup> The alliance with the British was justified as a temporary tactics of self-defence against the impending brahmin oligarchy.<sup>11</sup> The non-brahmins were afraid that unless communal safeguards were devised, increased power bestowed on the people would lead to the concentration of power in a few and a greater disparity between the few and the many<sup>12</sup> As it was firmly asserted that no non-brahmin could successfully contest a brahmin in elections and as non-brahmin interests could not be represented by brahmins, the Justice party held that

7. T. Varadarajulu Naidu, *The Justice Movement 1917*, 1931.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.* "The S I.L.F. the constitution as it stood in 1917".
10. *Dravidan*, November 30, 1917.
11. *Non-Brahmin*, April 15 and May 16, 1917.
12. *G.O. 854-855*, Public, September 19, 1918.

political reforms should provide for communal electorates for non-brahmins on the basis of their numbers, their tax-paying and property qualifications.) Reforms without communal representation, it maintained, would relax British control only to tighten that of the brahmin upon the masses and produce "a British guaranteed and lawfully constituted Brahmin oligarchy...pledged to give practical effect to the Brahmanical doctrines of *Varna-shramadharmā*."<sup>13</sup> Such a situation, the party warned, would incite the non-brahmins into revolt against the government. The rapid brahminisation of government services, viewed in the context of democratic self-government appeared to portend the inevitability of an era of brahmin sovereignty. (It was to avert such a development, the Justice party was founded; the impending political change was the immediate cause.

The Secretary of State for India announced on August 20, 1917 that the policy of the British government was to increase Indian participation in the governance of the country. The announcement was followed by a series of "Non-Brahmin Conferences" in different parts of the province to urge moderation in reform so as to secure training for self-government and equal opportunity for all groups in the community. ) A confederation of non-brahmins was held in Madras in December 1917, in which over 1,500 delegates participated. It passed a unanimous resolution that "any step taken for introducing responsible government in this country which does not provide for the full representation of the non-brahmins on a communal basis, having regard to their numbers, their tax-paying capacity and their property qualifications, is bound to end in failure and disaster." Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, and Montagu, the Secretary of State came to Madras in December 1917 to discuss the reform with local leaders. The South Indian Liberal Federation presented an

13. *Ibid.*

## THE GROWTH OF THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

address to the Viceroy restating its political views. It was in favour of political reforms but not out-right grant of self-government, and in fact demanded that the legislative council should be expanded and as an experiment the departments of local self-government, agriculture, sanitation, co-operative credit and industries could be placed under the control of the legislative councils. The Montagu-Chelmsford report rejected its plea for special non-brahmin electorates.

In 1918, the Government of India formed a committee under Lord Southborough and empowered it to examine questions relating to the electorates, constituencies and franchise. Two Indian members were included in it but both of them, V.S. Srinivasa Sastry and S.N. Banerjee were brahmins and members of the Congress. The non-brahmins of Madras felt that the Committee was communal in composition on the ground that there was no non-brahmin in it and that the brahmins were over-represented in it and that it included "a pronounced Madras Brahmin."<sup>14</sup> Letters and telegrams were sent to the government opposing the committee in general and Sastry's membership in particular. The non-brahmins were said to be alarmed and distressed at the announcement of the constitution of the Southborough Franchise Committee and the South Indian Liberal Federation at an extraordinary session held in Madras in October 1918 passed a resolution conveying the deep resentment caused in the minds of the non-brahmins. Objection was more to the individual chosen from Madras than to the caste to which he belonged. "If it is assumed that Mr. V.S.S. Sastry is in any sense a representative of non-brahmin interests, we strongly and emphatically repudiate any such suggestion... This brahmin was returned to the Imperial Legislative Council by the brahmin members of the local Council... and the non-brahmins of this Presidency had

14. *The Justice*, May 16, 1919.

practically no share in electing him," said the communication from the non-brahmins to the Viceroy.<sup>15</sup> The selection of Sastry wounded their pride and self-respect and was particularly resented because they were aware that Sastry was personally opposed to the principle of communal representation.<sup>16</sup> (A second Non-Brahmin Confederation held in January 1919 called upon all self-respecting non-brahmins to desist from giving evidence or in any other way cooperating with the Franchise Committee unless one or more non-brahmins belonging to the South Indian Liberal Federation were appointed to it.) "In view of its partial and partisan character and in view of the studied silence of the Government towards the influential and indignant protest of non-brahmins in this matter, in view of the homage paid by the Government to the advocates of Brahmin oligarchy in preference to Indian democracy which depends for its evolution upon British authority," the South Indian Liberal Federation decided to boycott the Franchise Committee.<sup>17</sup> Similar objections to the composition of the committee were raised by the Adi Dravida Jana Sabha, an association of the depressed classes. It said, "we would fight to the last drop of our blood any attempt to transfer the seat of authority in this country from the British hands to the so-called high caste Hindus, who had been oppressing us in the past and who would do so again but for the British Government."<sup>18</sup> A political alliance of "Non-Brahmins" as against the "Brahmins" was presented to the rulers; the concept of minority and majority was evolved; and the fact that brahmins formed

15. Nos. 1019-1020, Public, November 7, 1918.

16. In a pamphlet on *Self-government for India*, V.S.S. Sastry deprecated the divisions between Hindus and Muslims nurtured by separate electorates in some provincial councils and local bodies and had expressed a hope that this disintegrating principle would not be extended to other communities and other provinces.

17. *Report of the Franchise Committee*, 1918, appendix XV, letter dated January 12, 1919 from P. Theagaroya Chetty to the Government of Madras.

18. *Ibid.*, appendix XIV.

## THE GROWTH OF THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

only 3 per cent of the population was emphasised. The Reforms of 1919 bear the imprint of all these factors.

The Southborough Committee held that it would be unreasonable to adopt the expedient of communal representation for protecting a community which had an overwhelming electoral strength. So, while approving the need for special representation of the minorities such as Muslims and Indian Christians, it rejected the demand of the non-brahmin majority for a communal electorate for itself. According to its calculations, the non-brahmin population, barring the untouchables, outnumbered the brahmins in the proportion of 22 to 1. On the basis of the electoral qualification recommended in the Report, it said, that the non-brahmins would predominate over the brahmins in a ratio of 4 : 1. The Committee felt that by organising their strength, the non-brahmins would secure the election of their own candidates. It further added that separate electorates for non-brahmins would place the brahmins practically in a separate communal electorate, a position in which they were "not prepared to place a community against its will."<sup>19</sup> But the Government of India found the objections of the Franchise Committee to the creation of non-brahmin communal electorate untenable. Their Despatch on Constitutional Reforms said that the committee had failed to understand the electoral power of brahmins in combination and held that "numbers count for little in India at present against social, educational and especially religious superiority which has behind it the sanction of centuries. We shall find it hard to meet the charge that we are acquiescing in the establishment of an oligarchy in Madras unless something is done to secure to the non-brahmins a fair share in the legislature."<sup>20</sup> It recommended that at least thirty out of sixty-one general non-Muhammadan seats in the Madras legislative council

19. *Ibid.*, para 20.

20. *Fifth Despatch on Indian Constitutional Reforms*, para 26.

should be reserved for non-brahmins, leaving the rest for unrestricted contest.

(In 1919, a joint parliamentary committee was appointed in London to make recommendations regarding constitutional reforms for India. A memorandum setting forth the case for non-brahmin representation was presented to this committee by K.V. Reddi. The Government of India Act of 1919 which soon followed provided for reservation of seats for non-brahmins in the Madras legislative council but left it to the contending parties to decide the number of seats to be so reserved.) Owing to sharp differences in the approach to the question, the parties failed to arrive at a settlement. (Two conferences were held and both turned infructuous. On behalf of the brahmins, C.P. Ramaswami Ayyar held that the non-brahmins required special protection lest they should be wiped out in the new legislative councils and so reservation should be limited to guaranteeing a minimum number of seats and not arranged to secure representation in proportion to their number in the population.) The Governor of Madras, Lord Willingdon, consented to the reservation of 50 per cent of the total seats for the non-brahmins. P.T. Chettiar, the delegate of the South Indian Liberal Federation stuck to his original proposition of reserving 75 per cent of the seats for non-brahmins and rejected the offer of the Governor<sup>21</sup>. (Following the failure of the conferences, the relations between the two communities deteriorated. Some regretted that the trend had tarnished the reputation of the presidency as a whole and were much perturbed at this gradually widening split when the nation required unity and concerted action.<sup>22</sup> There were others who accused the brahmins that they were putting over-ambitious claims to an undue share of seats in the legislature.) The behaviour

21. *The Hindu*, February 6, 1920.

22. *The Hindu*, February 7, 1920, editorial.

of brahmins appeared to them to be a proof that the gulf separating non-brahmins from brahmins was far wider than that between non-brahmins and Muhammadans or Christians. Lord Willingdon who presided over the conferences remarked that the "brahmins were not as bad a lot as was represented to him by non-brahmin gentlemen."<sup>23</sup> The remark was immediately interpreted by a leading non-brahmin journal as only indicating that the Governor had turned a "Brahmin Lord".<sup>24</sup> Since no agreement could be reached by the parties, the Government of India, at the request of the Government of Madras appointed Lord Meston to arbitrate and bade the brahmin and non-brahmin castes select six persons each to represent their view-points.<sup>25</sup> While brahmin delegates maintained that there was no genuine case for special non-brahmin representation in the legislature, the non-brahmin delegates insisted on the reservation of at least forty-two out of sixty-five seats in favour of their castes.

The Meston Award which granted twenty-four seats for non-brahmins came as a rude shock to the non-brahmins and caused a grave disquiet among them.

23 and 24. *Dravidan*, January 28, 1920.

25. The talk of selecting representatives of brahmins and non-brahmins overlooked the basic difficulty of selection in a society in which castes were not organised bodies. They had no association, no office, no heads, no rules and regulations—indeed no visible organisation binding together all their members. Moreover, the term 'non-brahmin' was not defined at any stage of the discussions. The inclusion of the casteless Hindus—the Panchamas—within it was inexplicable. The arbitration had to be undertaken with the help of particular leaders who posed as 'representatives' of either brahmins or non-brahmins but who had no visible mandate from any source. Such a situation however was inevitable and irremediable in Indian conditions then and now because there is no native 'infrastructure' for a democratic society. There was no elective local organisation and hereditary caste leadership had decayed and disappeared.

T.B. Ramachandra Ayyar, B.V. Narasimha Ayyar (both of them members of the Legislative Council), K. Rama Ayyangar, P. Narayana Murthi, C.P. Ramaswami Ayyar, and Ramachandra Rao represented the brahmins. The non-brahmins were represented by L.K. Tulsi Ram, A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, and P. Theagaroya Chettiar, chosen by the South Indian Liberal Federation and P. Kesava Pillai, Chakkarai Chettiar, and Lodd Govind Das chosen by the Madras Presidency Association.

It fell far short of their demand and was less than the earlier offer of the Governor to reserve 50 per cent of the seats. Lord Meston observed that it was impossible to overlook the overriding electoral power of non-brahmins over brahmins which the former themselves admitted to be eight times that of the latter. He said, "the claim of the non-brahmins is based on the apprehension that they would otherwise be left in a minority at the polls, despite their superior voting power, by reason of the social influence and electioneering tactics of the brahmins. To avert such contingency, it does not appear to me necessary to guarantee the non-brahmins a large majority of seats or indeed any majority. It seems sufficient to ensure them such a start in the race as will prevent their being out-distanced if they exercised ordinary energy and intelligence."<sup>26</sup> He added that reservation of an absolute majority would tend to "impair their cohesion and encourage sectional differences." The Justice party found it hard to accept the Award and felt that all its labours for over three years had turned futile. "It is a tragedy. It can never afford them protection, while however the stigma of special protection sticks to them," wrote the *Justice*.<sup>27</sup> The reference made by the arbitrator to the numerical strength of non-brahmins was considered irrelevant as the Justicites believed that numbers were of little value in an unorganised state. Protest meetings were arranged by the non-brahmin associations and resolutions rejecting the Award were conveyed to the government.<sup>28</sup> Some condemned it as a brahmin influenced Award, intended to build up a brahmin oligarchy.<sup>29</sup>

The arguments advanced by the non-brahmin leaders in 1919 at every stage of the consideration of the

26. *The Hindu*, March 18, 1920.

27. *The Justice*, March 18, 1920.

28. *The Hindu*, March 23, 1920.

29. *Dravidan*, March 24 and April 7, 1920.

*The Hindu*, March 23, 1920, letters to the editor.



problem reveal the peculiarities of the minority problem in the Madras state. It was essentially an attempt to combine a status of majority and minority—majority by number and minority by political backwardness. Distrust between the brahmin and the non-brahmin turned out to be much deeper than people had thought it possible. The solution provided by the government was a compromise between the extreme views of the contending parties and the handling of the question by the government on the whole must be considered satisfactory because though it did not satisfy either party it did not further embitter their relations. The method of reservation of seats in plural-member constituencies provided a *via media* between the separate communal electorates demanded by the non-brahmins and the free general constituencies desired by the brahmins. The brahmins had reason to be happy that the evil of communal electorate was not extended to them and to the non-brahmins the statutory recognition of their case for special protection was the first political victory. The principle of reservation of seats in general constituencies, while guaranteeing a minimum number of seats to the protected, avoided at the same time the grouping of communities in water tight compartments. Since the non-brahmins formed a big majority, their demand for reservation on the basis of their strength produced a very curious situation. Reservation of over 50 per cent of the total seats, in any scheme of elective government, would have itself assured an absolute majority for the protected community. The community, however, was not to be prohibited from contesting the unreserved seats also, in which, however backward it might be, it could in virtue of its numerical majority obtain a considerable number of seats. This practically meant an assurance of majority for non-brahmins in any election. Seats are usually reserved for minority groups which cannot hope to win an election against the numerically stronger groups so that the minorities may secure a

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

minimum number of representatives to voice their interests in the legislature. In such minority representation, its numerical share of the total population serves as the basis for determining the number of seats to be reserved for it. But in Madras, it was a majority of 85 per cent of the population, that demanded special protection. If 85 per cent of the seats were to be reserved for that community leaving only 15 per cent for the rest, it would have meant only the segregation of the minority that was not non-brahmin. If the non-brahmins insisted on reservation in proportion to their numerical strength, it can only be understood as a demand for a statutory guarantee of *majority status* and *power* for them. In Madras it was not a question of protecting a minority and letting it be heard in the legislature but one of preventing a majority of the population from becoming a minority in the legislature. All these political calculations presupposed the homogeneity of the 'non-brahmin' and the 'brahmin' groups.

Within a few years after the inauguration of the dyarchic constitution by the Government of India Act, 1919, it became evident that the 'non-brahmin majority' did not need the special protection granted to it by the law. The table below shows the composition of the elected part of the first three legislatures under

TABLE XI  
Elected Members of the Legislative Council (1920-26)

<i>Caste groups</i>	1920	1923	1926
Brahmin	17	13	18
Non-Brahmin	57	61	56
Others	24	24	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>98</b>

dyarchy. Also because of the Congress party's 'non-cooperation' the field was clear for the non-brahmin

(Justice) party to accept ministerships and man the 'transferred half' of the state executive. Therefore in 1927 the party intimated to the government that the reservation granted to the non-brahmins was no longer required.

The history of the legislature since 1920 shows that even after the decline of the Justice party at the polls its ideology has survived. In the first Council elected under the Act of 1919 a big majority was won by the Justice party and the opposition was provided by the brahmins. In the second Council, the Justice party had a majority, but the opposition consisted of not only brahmins, but also non-brahmins belonging to the Swarajist party (a dissident Congress group averse to the boycott of legislatures). By 1923 there was a split among the non-brahmins between the "ministerialists" who supported the leadership of the Justice party and those opposed to them.<sup>30</sup> In the third elections, the Swarajists (who had been legitimised by the Congress at its Cawnpore meeting in 1925) gained heavily securing forty seats while the Justice party got only twenty. Its political end was sealed in 1937 (in the first elections held under the Government of India Act of 1935) when it won only twelve seats out of the eighty-six it contested and became a minority of 6 per cent in a House of 215 members. Actually the Justice party had ceased to be an effective electoral machine capable of putting its leaders in office by 1926. But the political trend which it represented, and promoted while in power, viz., the elimination of brahmin domination was not halted or reversed under successive administrations since. It is the Justice party that is behind the creation of a consensus in which brahmin aspiration to political leadership is inconceivable. Between 1920 and 1937, out of a total of seventeen persons who held ministerial offices in

30. A no-confidence motion moved against the ministry in 1923 found twenty-three non-brahmin supporters.

Madras, one only was a brahmin. In the short-lived Congress ministry formed by C. Rajagopalachari in 1937 there were four brahmins, and the legislature contained thirty-seven brahmins out of a total of 215. This was a parenthesis resulting from the then political situation in the country at large and not a turn in the affairs of the state. Since 1952, a more rapid decline in the number of brahmins in the Madras legislature is noticeable.

With the realisation of its political idea of putting an end to brahmin dominance, the Non-Brahmin Movement did not come to an end; it sought new objectives in order to survive and function as a political party. The Justice party elected E.V. Ramaswami Naicker,<sup>31</sup> a radical leader with strong leftist convictions as its President in 1938. He enunciated and propagated a theory that in the name of nationalism, a small group of Aryans (his name for the local brahmins) was dominating over and exploiting a large Dravidian (non-brahmin) population.<sup>32</sup> Presiding over the Justice confederation held at Tiruvarur in August 1940 he said that, "for the liberty and freedom of our people we are to

31. (Born 1879 at Erode; 1918 became Chairman Erode Municipality; 1919 joined the Congress; 1920 joined the Non-Cooperation Movement; 1921 led Prohibition Movement in Erode; 1922 joined the Vaikham Campaign of Travancore against the practice of untouchability and was arrested; 1922-24 attempted to move a resolution on communal representation in the T.N.C.C. and failed; 1924 started *Kudi Arasu* for propagation of "self-respect"; 1925 left the Congress; 1927 told Gandhi that Congress, Hindu religion, and Brahmin rule should be destroyed, 1929 inaugurated the first Provincial Self-respect Conference, 1936 published anti-Hindi articles; 1937 at a Women's Conference in Madras received the title "Periyar"; 1938 became the leader of the Justice party; 1938 arrested for anti-Hindi agitation; 1939 met Sir Stafford Cripps and put the demand for Dravidanad; 1940 presided over the Justice Confederation at Tiruvarur and passed the resolution on Dravidanad; 1952 led anti-Hindi agitation; 1953 campaign to break idols, 1955 opposed Elementary Education Scheme of C. Rajagopalachari; supported Kamaraj as Chief Minister; 1957 convicted for inciting non-brahmins to kill brahmins; 1962 supported Kamaraj as a true Tamilian and the Congress party in Madras as acceptable under his leadership during the general elections. (See Chidambaranar, *op. cit.*)

32. *The Presidential Address of Periyar E.V. Ramaswami Delivered at the Fourteenth Confederation of the S.I.L.F., December 1938.*

undertake the important work of separating the Dravida country from the rest of India”<sup>33</sup> The conference passed a resolution that for the cultural and economic well being of the Dravidians, the Madras presidency, the home of the Dravidians should be constituted as a separate state directly governed by the Government of India. This resolution was the starting point of the Dravidian secessionist movement which began about the same time when the ‘two-nation’ theory was formulated by the Muslims.

In 1941, C.N. Annadurai, a junior member of the Justice party who was for some time its official propagandist and who had by then earned great popularity through his writings and speeches, started a Tamil weekly *Dravidanad* with the assistance of E.V. Ramaswami Naicker. The journal began as the mouthpiece of the Justice party, but soon started propagating a new doctrine that, “non-brahmins were first and foremost Dravidians.”<sup>34</sup> This led to a split between the conservative and the radical elements of the South Indian Liberal Federation, the former represented mainly by the old aristocracy of landed and professional interests and the latter by the new leadership arising from the underprivileged. In the conference of the South Indian Liberal Federation held at Salem in 1944 under the Presidentship of E.V. Ramaswami Naicker it was decided after prolonged discussion that the members should give up offices under the government and titles earned under the British and that the name of the party should be changed to “Dravida Kazhagam” (Dravidian Association).<sup>35</sup> Thus the year 1944 marked the birth of the Dravida Kazhagam and the transference of non-brahmin

33. *The Presidential Address of Periyar E.V. Ramaswami Delivered at the Justice Confederation, Tiruvarur, August 1940.*

34. A.S Venu, *Life of Annadurai, 1954*, pp. 30-32.

35. *Namadu Kurikkol*, (our goals) Viduthalai publication, 1948, p. 36 and pp. 40-43.

leadership from the old elite to a new class of young and resourceful persons with revolutionary views.<sup>36</sup>

(The Dravidian movement described as "populist radicalism"<sup>37</sup> reflects at once a national resurgence of 'Dravidians' defiant of 'Aryan' domination, a renaissance in Dravidian faith repudiating Hinduism as the priestcraft of brahmins, and also the hard economic conflict between the haves and have-nots. It stands for a complete change in the life and outlook of the Dravidians. Behind its enunciation of a new doctrine of life lies a strong socialist and levelling impulse common to mass movements. In the general elections of 1952, the Dravida Kazhagam did not put up candidates of its own but formed an alliance with the Communist party in Madras which found it expedient to explain the Dravida Kazhagam's sharp hostility to brahmins, as stemming not from caste but as protest against the economic exploitation of workers and peasants by brahmins,<sup>38</sup> thus providing a communistic interpretation of caste conflict in terms of the familiar class struggle.<sup>39</sup> Between 1952 and 1954, the Kazhagam through intensive propaganda earned great popularity as the 'Tamilian' opposition to the brahmin-headed 'Aryan' rule in the Madras state which was how Rajagopalachari's Congress government was represented to the public. A scheme for the reform of the system of elementary education was conceived by Rajagopalachari, a scheme of part-time education at school enabling the pupils to assist their parents in their customary work, an arrangement designed to provide home apprenticeship to

36. A revival of the Justice party was attempted by P. T. Rajan, P. Balasubramaniam and others; a journal *Sunday Observer* was started; but as a separate party it failed in the elections of 1952.

37. Lloyd I. Rudolph, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, XX, 3, May 1961.

38. *The Mail*, October 20, 1951.

39. *Ibid.* Dange accused brahmins in South India of maintaining a "particularly vicious form of Brahminism". This shows that ideologically oriented parties also think in terms of caste.

pupils while at the same time making it possible to double the enrolment in the schools without additional cost to the exchequer. The Dravida Kazhagam saw in the scheme a brahmin trick to revive the old *Varnashramadharm*a and confine pupils of the lower castes to their lowly occupations. E.V. Ramaswami Naicker was said to have incited his followers to assault brahmins if the scheme was not withdrawn in thirty days.<sup>40</sup> The progressive wing of the party known as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam established in 1949 under C. N. Annadurai also condemned the scheme as one likely to destroy the life and future of Dravidians and one introduced in a dictatorial manner and it resolved to carry on a peaceful agitation against the proposed change.<sup>41</sup> A Dravidian propagandist argued that by this educational scheme the young would be pushed back into hereditary occupations and said, "It is also another move to perpetuate old *Varnashramadharm*a. The son of a cobbler was to be a cobbler...by this Rajaji in his heart of hearts felt that non-brahmins would ever be suppressed. But the Dravidians are awake."<sup>42</sup>

The rising Dravidian patriots made timely political capital out of the propaganda that caste was again being imposed by brahmins trying to stage a political comeback. The brahmin Chief Minister could not be backed by the great non-brahmin majority of the Congress party in the face of this opposition and so he had to be replaced and his scheme abandoned. This illustrates the operative force of caste feeling which could override the formal authority pattern of a political party and compel acceptance of the viewpoint expressed outside the legislature. It was the culmination of the movement started in 1916 in opposition to the minority

40. Chidambaranar, *Periyar E.V.R. Vazhkkai Varalaru*, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

41. Ramnad District Conference of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Resolution 3, see *Vetri Murasu* (triumph of victory) by C. N. Annadurai, p. 100.

42. A.S. Venu, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

community of brahmins holding power and influence out of all proportion to their numerical strength, which had grown in strength to establish in 1954 that no leadership of any political party would be acceptable if it was not truly 'Dravidian'.

This principle has been illustrated in various ways since 1954 particularly by the Periyar's<sup>43</sup> unflinching support to the Congress after Kamaraj Nadar succeeded Rajagopalachari as the Chief Minister of Madras. The Kazhagam suspended its parliamentary ambitions, gave up its demand for a separate Dravidian state and decided to remain as an institution whose function was to expose the deficiencies, drawbacks, and conspiring nature of brahmins from time to time. (The Central Executive of the Kazhagam resolved in 1957 that since Kamaraj had done his best to serve Tamilians, since he had changed Acharya's educational system, since he had conferred many jobs and benefits on Tamilians in the educational and other spheres and since the brahmin and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam people were trying to oust him from power, it had become the duty of all Tamilians to support Kamaraj and his followers in the election. About this alliance of the Kazhagam and the Congress, the American writer Selig S. Harrison remarks that "Tamilnad exemplifies at once the short term political advantages in doing business with ascendant parochialism as well as the long term dangers to political unity."<sup>44</sup> The "short-term" advantage is real and substantial and the "long-term" danger may not after all materialise.) As a non-parliamentary party, the Dravida Kazhagam is able to devote great attention to social questions and its principal organ, the *Viduthalai* (meaning 'liberation') gives most space to them. This Tamil daily carries on a ceaseless

43. A Tamil term meaning *Mahatma* or the Great One, by which title Ramaswami Naicker is popularly known in Madras.

44. Selig S. Harrison, *India—The Most Dangerous Decades, 1960*, p. 288.



## THE GROWTH OF THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

propaganda that in no context should the brahmin be allowed to exceed his proportionate share of 3 per cent of the government jobs.

During the elections held in 1962, Periyar created some apprehension among brahmins about their lot in a 'Dravidian' dominated state. Through the columns of *Viduthalai* and in his personal campaign in many districts he canvassed for the return of Kamaraj for the reason that he was a non-brahmin and under his regime "brahmins were put to a good deal of trouble." In a signed article in *Viduthalai*, he made what he called a friendly appeal to brahmins not to go anywhere near the polling booths during the elections and at Erode, Salem, Dharapuram and other places he was reported to have campaigned against the brahmin community. The brahmin minority thus continued to be the target of attack and every attempt was made to prevent it from exercising any political influence. In 1920 P.T. Chettiar started the slogan, "don't vote for the brahmin," and in 1962 slogans were raised to prevent the brahmin from exercising his franchise even. C. Rajagopalachari remarked that, "in the light of Naicker's previous speeches and writings which embodied an unbroken campaign of intimidation against brahmins... his present appeal has only one meaning for the people referred to, viz., that their physical safety would best be safeguarded if they abstained from exercising their franchise and avoided insults and annoyances from Periyar's followers."<sup>45</sup> The brahmin castes alarmed by this threat to equal rights of citizenship, realised their position as an insignificant, persecuted, and vulnerable minority.

As the Dravida Kazhagam which had broken away from the Justice party, gradually found its social objectives so compatible with the politics of the local Congress party as to give up its own parliamentary activity, a section of its membership seceded in 1949 to

45. *Swarajya*, January 20, 1962, p. 9.

found a parliamentary political party called the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. It started by demanding a separate Dravidanad.<sup>46</sup> In 1957, the party fought the general elections and secured fifteen seats in the state Legislative Assembly. It did better in 1962 securing fifty seats and emerging as the main opposition party. Unlike its parent, the Dravida Kazhagam, which identified 'brahminism' with the 'brahmin' and carried on a propaganda against both, the DMK distinguished between the two and was willing to admit non-brahministic brahmins in the party.<sup>47</sup> It did not join the DK in the campaign of erasing caste names on the name boards of restaurants, and it condemned the Kazhagam's assault on brahmins in 1957.<sup>48</sup> But, "if the DK succeeds in expelling brahmins from 'Dravidam', the DMK will not bring them back," confessed the party men.<sup>49</sup> This attitude seems to be a diluted form of the central communal issue in Madras. After 1957 when the DMK won its first success at the polls, it stopped anti-brahmin propaganda and it found several brahmins supporting it against the Kazhagam-oriented local Congress party. The support given to the DMK by the leader of the newly-organised Swatantra party under Rajagopalachari during the general elections in 1962 and the municipal elections in 1964 tended to further allay anti-brahminism in the DMK.<sup>50</sup>

This development, in terms of the caste groupings is to be interpreted (and it has been so described in DK attacks on the DMK) as an alliance of forward non-brahmin castes (many of the leaders of the DMK belong

46. Secessionist demands were declared unconstitutional by a law passed by the Indian Parliament in 1963.

47. DMK's discriminating opposition to brahminism without malice against particular brahmins is clarified in a party catechism published in a party organ, *Manram*.

48. *Manram*, June 2, 1957.

49. *Manram*, June 15, 1954.

50. It must be noted, however, that in 1953, the DMK had joined the DK in the caste-based opposition to brahmin Rajagopalachari's attempted reform of the system of elementary education.

to forward non-brahmin castes) and the brahmin castes (conspicuous in the Swatantra party) against the combination of the backward non-brahmin castes championed by the Dravida Kazhagam and steadily encouraged by the Congress party. A revealing side act was furnished by the secession of E.V.K. Sampath (nephew of Periyar E.V. Ramaswami Naicker) from the DMK in 1961 to found a separate political party, called the Tamil National Party which after a very poor performance at the elections was absorbed into the Congress. Caste does seem to be king in Madras politics still.

### **The Communal G.O.**

In the field of administration also, the concept 'non-brahmin' has been steadily advanced. One of the principal objectives of the Justice party was to bring about 'communal justice' in the appointment to public services. The manifesto issued by the South Indian Liberal Federation in 1916 pointed out the extraordinary predominance of brahmins in all departments of the government and declared that this should be ended. The leaders of the non-brahmin movement repeatedly pointed out the gross inequality between brahmins and non-brahmins in the matter of government service and in the address presented to Edwin Montagu, the S.I.L.F. demanded that "stringent rules" should be framed to secure adequate representation of all communities and interests in all branches of administration. "The party stands for equal opportunities for all communities in the Presidency and where in the distribution of public patronage, gross inequalities have sprung up, preference shall be given to competent candidates from the communities which are affected until the inequalities are removed,"<sup>51</sup> stated a prominent member of the party, T.A. Ramalingam Chettiar in the Legislative Council.

51. *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor of Madras*, Vol. 22, 1925, p. 600.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

When the first real step towards popular government was taken in 1920, the non-brahmin party, as representing the castes which together constituted the bulk of the population, had to give priority to the sectional interests of non-brahmins. Communal justice became a principle which could unite all the castes other than the brahmin and serve as the watchword of a political party in a system of parliamentary government established for a society divided into numerous endogamic caste groups.

The non-brahmin members of the Legislative Council took every opportunity to press upon the administration the need to make a statute to ensure communal justice in recruitment to the services. (Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliyar, a member of the Justice party recommended to the government that "all appointments of all grades and departments in future should be given only to non-brahmins till the proportionate communal representation is reached.") He suggested the formation of a committee "to inquire into the Madras services and to formulate proposals with a view to securing proportionate representation of all classes in the Madras services. But his resolutions were withdrawn.<sup>52</sup> To hasten the process of de-brahminisation of the services, B. Muniswami Nayudu proposed that the appointing authority should give preference to a non-brahmin candidate, provided he possessed the minimum qualification, even though he might be less qualified than other candidates.<sup>53</sup> A communal order that had then been passed by the

52. *Ibid*, Vol. 2, 1921, p. 423.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 423-424.

B. Muniswami Nayudu gave notice of a resolution intended to secure the representation of non-brahmins at district offices and in all services carrying a salary of Rs 100 and above to at least 50 per cent of the total strength, and in all inferior services to at least 60 per cent of the total and suggesting issue of suitable instructions to the appointing authorities. The resolution, however, was not moved.

## THE GROWTH OF THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

Mysore government<sup>54</sup> was held up as a worthy precedent to be followed and it was argued that a similar one was necessary in Madras to provide a "remedy for a long-standing, deep-seated and festering sore from which the non-brahmins were suffering"<sup>55</sup> On August 5, 1921, O. Thanikachalam Chettiar, a non-brahmin member moved a resolution in the Legislative Council recommending to the government that a standing order should be issued to every officer or board or body of officers authorised to make appointments to the public service to give preference to candidates from non-brahmin communities including therein Christians, Muhammadans and depressed classes, provided they possessed the minimum qualifications prescribed though less qualified than brahmin candidates until a proportion of at least 66 per cent amongst the officers drawing a monthly salary of one hundred rupees and upwards and a proportion of 75 per cent among those drawing a monthly salary of less than one hundred rupees were reached within a period of seven years. The resolution was seconded by Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar, who raised the democratic slogan, "no taxation, no representation."<sup>56</sup> On the suggestion of the Finance member A.R. Knapp the resolution was amended so as to provide for the extension of the Revenue Board's Standing Orders of 1854 to all departments under the government and to posts of all grades. The amended resolution was supported by several members and was carried unanimously.<sup>57</sup> O. Thanikachalam Chettiar whose original resolution was diluted, however, succeeded in passing another resolution on the same day that appointments to all offices in the secretariat should

54. *Ibid.*, p. 426. The preamble to the Mysore Order stated that "as there is at present a large preponderance of the brahmin community in the public services it is the desire of the Government of His Highness The Maharaja that all other important communities are adequately represented therein."

55. *Ibid.*, p. 424.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*, p. 433.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

be made only from non-brahmins.<sup>58</sup> Following this, an order was passed by the government extending the principle prescribed by the Revenue Board's Standing Order 128 (2) regarding the distribution of appointments and directing that "all heads of departments and other officers empowered to make appointments are requested to adhere strictly to this principle in filling up vacancies in future." All these authorities including collectors and judges were required to submit half-yearly returns showing the number of persons newly entertained in the permanent services classified as Brahmins, non-Brahmin Hindus, Indian Christians, Muhammadans, Europeans, and Anglo-Indians and others.<sup>59</sup>

In 1922, recruitment to services on a communal basis was regularised and a definite quota for different communities in posts under the government was prescribed. It was decided that if qualified and suitable candidates were available from the communities recognised for the purpose, a unit of twelve appointments should be so filled up as to ensure five places for non-Brahmin Hindus, two for Brahmins, two for Muhammadans, two for Anglo-Indians and Christians including Europeans and one for others including the Depressed Classes in a

58. *Ibid.* Another resolution was moved by O. Thanikachalam Chettiar that appointments to all offices in the Secretariat (except those held by members of the I.C.S.) should be made only from among non-brahmins. The brahmin members who supported the first resolution opposed the second one. P. Siva Rao warned the mover of the resolution "against making the decision of the Legislative Council the laughing stock of the whole world." He said, "Let it not be said.. for a moment that because the non-brahmins have returned to power and can pass successfully any measure they like, they are parties to an unwholesome resolution like this if he presses this resolution I would simply characterise it as abuse of power." L. A. Govindaraghava Ayyar said that this resolution was unnecessary in view of the fact that a similar one had already been adopted by the house and that any further discussion on the subject would intensify communal antagonism. The resolution was supported largely by non-brahmin members of the Council. R. K. Shanmukham Chettiar described that, "by passing this resolution, I feel confident that posterity will consider us as the men that gave the country their liberty." The motion was put to vote and carried by 49 voting for and 22 against. Among the Noes were 13 Brahmins, 6 Europeans, 1 Muslim and 2 non-Brahmins. The Ayes consisted of 42 non-Brahmins, 2 Europeans and 5 Muslims.

59. *G.O. 613.* Public, September 16, 1921

## THE GROWTH OF THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

cyclical order running (1) Non-Brahmin Hindu (2) Muhammadan (3) Non-Brahmin Hindu (4) Anglo-Indian or Indian Christian (5) Brahmin (6) Non-Brahmin Hindu (7) Others (including the Depressed Classes) (8) Non-Brahmin Hindu (9) Muhammadan (10) Non-Brahmin Hindu (11) Anglo-Indian or Indian Christian and (12) Brahmin so that the caste that had nearly monopolised the public service could fill up only the 5th and 12th vacancies in every dozen.<sup>60</sup> If no qualified and suitable candidate was available from a community in the turn allotted to it, a candidate from the next community specified in the communal cycle should be appointed and the community which lost its chance, would have preferential claim at subsequent chances until its quota was filled.) The starting point of the rotation was to be determined by the last appointment made at the date of the order. All the departments had to submit annual returns showing the actual extent to which the six main divisions were represented in the public services. It was said that the order of communal rotation would apply at the time of initial recruitment and at every point at which men were promoted wholly by selection and not by seniority.<sup>61</sup> An effective step towards achieving "proportionate appointments", a familiar slogan in those days, was taken by fixing a maximum to the number of entrants to the services from the hitherto dominant community.

The Communal G.O. by which name the order distributing appointments to public services to different caste groups was known, thereafter became the prime point of conflict between the brahmins and the non-brahmins of the state. *New India* described it as "innocent-looking but thoroughly mischievous" and forewarned that the "government had committed themselves to a policy fraught with far reaching consequences

60. G.O. 733, Public, August 3, 1925.

61. *Proceedings of the Legislative Council*, Vol. 22, 1925, p. 615.

of a sinister character." It remarked that this would practically abolish standards of qualification.<sup>62</sup> *Swadesamitran* said that it would create a split among the educated classes and government servants and thereby hinder the progress towards the national freedom and added that the British were following the ancient policy of 'divide and rule' by alliance with the non-brahmins through offers of special favours and thus dividing the brahmins and the non-brahmins.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, the non-brahmin press welcomed the order and urged upon the government to expedite its effective implementation. Some notion of retribution for past injuries was widely held by several non-brahmin leaders. *Dravidan* said, "It is but right and proper that in consideration of the impropriety of their (brahmins) having entered the public offices in excessive numbers they should suffer a little at present."<sup>64</sup> Non-brahmin agitation was continued outside the legislature, and individual cases of alleged discrimination against non-brahmin officials were published from time to time in the *Justice*. To help effective implementation of the G.O. immediately, the non-brahmin members of the legislative council suggested appointment of a "Protector" and constitution of a standing committee to safeguard the rights and interests of non-brahmin officials in public services.<sup>65</sup> A resolution moved by a non-brahmin member T.A. Ramalingam Chettiar and seconded by Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar was carried in the Legislative Council on February 7, 1925 which recommended the appointment of a committee of the legislature to enquire and report as to the working of the policy laid down by the government relating to recruitment to public services and to suggest means to effectively provide for preference to competent candidates

62. *New India*, August 29, 1922.

63. *Swadesamitran*, September 7, 1922.

64. *Dravidan*, August 31, 1922.

65. *G.O. 584*, Public, September 10, 1921.

*G.O. 480*, Public, June 16, 1923.



## THE GROWTH OF THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

from communities which had not their due share of appointments in public service till the removal of existing inequalities. Not committing itself to any pronouncement either as to the adequacy of those measures or to the justifiableness of the measure suggested, the government agreed to setting up a committee for the purpose requested.<sup>66</sup> The government also undertook to furnish necessary information to guide the deliberations of the committee.

As a result of these orders, the process of de-brahminisation of state services formally began and slowly picked up vigour. No instantaneous change could however be effected since persons already holding permanent posts could not be retrenched and since qualified brahmins available for new appointments far outnumbered similarly qualified non-brahmins. But on the whole, in respect of new entrants to government services, there was a noticeable decline in the proportion of brahmins with a corresponding increase in that of non-brahmins since 1920. The statement below may illustrate this trend.

**TABLE XII**  
**Brahmin and non-Brahmin in State Services—1900-40**

Year	Gazetted		Non-Gazetted			
	B	NB	Rs. 100 and over		Rs. 35 to Rs. 100	
			B	NB	B	NB
1900	41	17	30	10	52	32
1910	45	15	53	25	55	30
1920	47	20	56	24	59	27
1930	39	21	51	29	47	37
1940	36	26	45	33	44	40

<sup>66</sup> The first committee consisted of the following members: M. Krishnan Nayar (Chairman), O. Thanikachalam Chettiar, R. S. Krishna Rao Pantulu, B. Muniswami Nayudu, T. Narasimhacharlu, M.C. Rajah, M. Abdulla Ghatla Sahib Bahadur and S. Arpudaswami Udayar.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

The trend continued without a break and by the time full popular government was achieved, non-brahminisation of the services had become nearly complete. In 1950 for instance, of those selected for various posts by the Madras Public Service Commission directly, not more than about 21 per cent for the gazetted posts and 29 per cent for the non-gazetted posts were brahmins. In the case of recruitment through competitive examination, no brahmin was appointed to state services and only 19 per cent of the total recruited to subordinate services were brahmins. Still the demand for communal representation in the sense of de-brahminisation is kept alive by the Dravida Kazhagam which insists that the minority community of brahmins should get no more than its share (3 per cent) on a population basis.

### **Anti-brahminism in Social Life**

These developments towards bringing down the brahmin minority to its minority status were accompanied by a social movement aiming to remove the values and customs traditionally associated with the brahminical system. One of the basic objectives of the Justice movement according to one who was closely associated with the party since 1920 was to obliterate caste inequalities from public life, to put an end to the discriminations openly shown between man and man in thousand different ways in daily life and in ordinary social relations.<sup>67</sup> It was the aim of the founders of this movement to strike at the notion of inequality by birth. The presumption to a higher status, it was remarked, caused many hardships to members of other castes, besides being indecent and insolent in itself.<sup>68</sup> In the non-brahmin conferences it was mentioned that the funds of temples and religious mutts donated mainly by non-brahmins were used exclusively for the benefit

67. *Gangai*, October 1959, P. T. Rajan on his political experiences.

68. *Ibid.*

of the brahmins and that this should be stopped.<sup>69</sup> Enlightened non-brahmins resented the practice of reserving separate places and giving special treatment to brahmins in temples, restaurants, hotels and even social clubs. The educated among the non-brahmins refused to submit to such discriminations in daily life.<sup>70</sup> There was also an attempt to remove the traditional leadership of brahmins in religious matters. Brahmins were said to be thriving mainly on non-brahmin bounty as priests in temples endowed by non-brahmins and as family *purohits* (priests) in non-brahmin households. Non-brahmins were called upon to boycott brahmin priests altogether. "Our men still trust brahmins and allow themselves to be duped. These brahmins attempt to join together and completely root us out. I hope... hereafter at least you will not allow them to conduct the ceremonial rites on the occasion of marriage...etc., in your houses," propagated the *Dravidan*.<sup>71</sup>

(The attempt to reconstruct the society with the object of liberating the vast non-brahmin majority from subjection to a small clique of brahmins has been proceeding mostly on the social plane and has to a great extent succeeded in removing signs of brahminism in Dravidian life and in boycotting the services of brahmin priests at weddings and funerals. E. V. Ramaswami Naicker was the founder of the Self-respect Movement, a non-political movement which was started in 1925. The founder-leader claimed that its basic aim was promotion of rational thinking, the basis for self-respect and self-confidence, without which social and

69. T. Varadarajulu, *The Justice Movement, 1917, 1932.*

70. P. T. Rajan, *op. cit., Gangai, October 1959.*

In 1907, two leading advocates, Barrister Lobo and Barrister Carappa joined the Madurai Recreation Club. But grieved by the discriminatory treatment meted out to different castes, they withdrew from the club and formed the Madurai Cosmopolitan Club. This grew to be a great centre for social gathering where no racial, religious and communal differences were observed.

71. *Dravidan, July 17, 1917.*

political freedom would be meaningless.<sup>72</sup> The first provincial conference of the Self-respect Movement was held in February 1929 at Chingleput and it passed resolutions calling for the eradication of caste and all its symbols such as caste titles and caste marks and all its practices such as untouchability and the priesthood of brahmins. The conference was opened by the Chief Minister, Dr. P. Subbaroyan, and P. T. Rajan, a prominent member of the Justice party explained that the object of this movement was to destroy the social system that was responsible for the practice of discrimination between man and man.<sup>73</sup> A vigorous propaganda to spread the self-respect ideals throughout Tamilnad was carried on by E. V. Ramaswami Naicker between 1925 and 1931 and many conferences were held and local associations formed. A Tamil weekly by name *Kudi Arasu* was started; and for a short period an English journal *Revolt* was also published; and the two served as the organs of this movement. Among those who took a leading part in the campaign against the *Varnashramadharma*, were Kumararaja Muthiah Chettiar, A.T. Pannirselvam, Vallattarasu, W.P. Soundarapandian, S. Ramanathan and M.K. Reddi some of whom later became ministers. In Madras was established in 1929 the "Self-respect Youth Association." The weekly debates held in this association attracted the educated non-brahmin young men and C.N. Annadurai, the founder of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, who was then a student in a Madras college, was said to be a regular participant in the deliberations.<sup>74</sup>

#### Anti-brahminism, anti-Aryanism and anti-casteism

72. *Viduthalai*, Periyar's 84th birth anniversary number, 1962, pp. 70-71 (article by E.V.R. written in 1937 reproduced).

73. *Justice Year Book 1929*. In 1927 was published a Tamil book *Gnana Suryan* to "expose the conspiracy committed by the brahmins for generations to exploit the wealth of the non-brahmins in the name of Hindu religion" and to bring home to the non-brahmins the need to relieve themselves from the grip of the brahmins.

74. T.M. Parthasarathy, *D.M.K. Varalaru* (The history of the DMK), 1963, pp. 26-27.

combined in the rise of Dravidianism. These feelings expressed commonly in terms of a rational interpretation of religion sounded blasphemous and atheistical to religious Hindus. E.V. Ramaswami Naicker stated that he could not remember a single day in his life when he believed in God, religion, heaven or hell or in doctrines such as *karma* and rebirth.<sup>75</sup> Boycott of religious festivals, public ridicule of the Hindu pantheon and mythology and public demonstration of disbelief and defiance by burning of holy books like the *Ramayana* and 'breaking of idols' are important items in the programme of the party of Dravidian resurgence. In 1943, a debate on *Kamba Ramayana* was held under the presidentship of C.M. Ramachandra Chettiar, who was Commissioner of the Hindu Religious Administration. C.N. Annadurai, who initiated the discussion, said that the *Ramayana* was the story of the defeat of Dravidians at the hands of the Aryans, and the way it was written gave a false impression that the Dravidians had accepted Aryanism, and that by reading it, Dravidians would lose their self-respect and self-confidence. This being detrimental to the progress of the Dravidian nation, burning of the *Ramayana* was suggested.<sup>76</sup> In 1953 E.V. Ramaswami Naicker led a campaign of breaking the idol of Vinayaka as part of the programme of liberating the people from superstitious beliefs said to have been originated and propagated by the brahmin caste. To these progressives, puranic stories are inventions of the brahmins to perpetuate their special privileges. "The vast majority of the people professing Hindu religion in the South are treated as social inferiors, while the small community of non-Dravidian origin known as the Brahmin is vested with extraordinary rights and privileges,"<sup>77</sup> it was said and to free the masses from the

75. Chidambaranar, *op. cit.*, p. 9 quoting E.V.R.'s article in the annual number of *Nava Mani*, 1937.

76. C.N. Annadurai, *Thee Paravattum* (let the fire spread), 6th ed., 1954, p. 12.

77. S. Vedaratnam, *A Plea for Understanding—a reply to the critics of the Dravidian Progressive Federation*, p. 13.

dominance of the privileged few a revolt against established practices in temples and festivals was also preached. The object of the Dravidian movement, it is said, is "to release the people from the clutches of superstitious beliefs and practices instilled into their minds by Brahmanic *Puranas* and *Sastras*" and to "resuscitate and reconstruct society on a rational basis."<sup>78</sup> Series of articles repeatedly appeared in *Kudi Arasu* and later in *Viduthalai* and *Manram*, ridiculing Hindu legends. Sages and gods considered venerable by the orthodox sections are pictured as morally debased characters. It has been proclaimed that the object is to establish a society free from all kinds of evils, the members of which are bound by love, and that such a society would be nurtured not by *bhakti* based on tradition but by *rationalism* based on the spirit of enquiry.<sup>79</sup> A movement known as *Pagutharivu Iyakkam* (Rationalist Movement) is silently in operation with its headquarters in Madras (*Pagutharivu Pasarai*). A journal *Nastikam* (Atheism) aiming to destroy traditional religious beliefs and practices is also being published.

An effective demonstration of wiping out signs of brahminism is to adopt a *rational* name for oneself in the place of the *customary* name given by parents. This changing one's name originated at the turn of the century by certain Tamil scholars wishing to purify Tamil of all alien, particularly Sanskrit influence, has become one of the favourite rites among the 'self-respecters'.<sup>80</sup> Many political leaders of this Dravidian movement (as for example Nedunchezian and Mathialagan) have set examples by changing their names. One enduring result

78. *Ibid.*, p 19.

79. *Manram*, January 1, 1955.

80. Swami Vedachalam, a well known Tamil Pandit, was one of the earliest to change his name as Maramalai Adigal, a literal Tamil translation of his first name. In the early part of the century a brahmin Tamil Pandit by name V.K. Suryanarayana Sastri changed his name from the Sanskrit to its literal rendering in Tamil, Parithimal Kalaignan, he was greatly admired for it by non-brahmins who called him Dravida Sastri. (*Manram*, January 15, 1955, p. 18.)

of this Self-respect Movement is the celebration of weddings without priests and without the customary worship of fire. The Self-respect marriages are conducted by eminent Dravidian leaders, usually with prior announcement in Dravidian papers, and the ceremony consists in merely reading out a life contract known as *Vazhkai Oppandam*. Such marriages have become very common, and there is a possibility that the self-respecters may come to form a new caste distinguished by this custom of priestless and ritualless marriage

Another manifestation of anti-brahminism can be seen in the anti-Sanskrit movement, since Sanskrit is associated with Aryanism and therefore held to be a symbol of brahmin domination. "Brahmanical strategy used Sanskrit as a main tool of their social control," says B.N. Nair who describes the brahmin as the "cultural conqueror."<sup>81</sup> While the language of the Vedas is rejected as a shameful reminder of ancient tutelage, the local language, Tamil, is sought to be restored to its pre-Sanskrit status, purged of borrowings from the Sanskrit, its ancient literature revived and modern usage improved and expanded. The glorification of the regional language currently common in all the new linguistic states of India, takes a special turn in Madras where not only do all parties and groups support it but it is also a special concern of the non-brahmins whose passionate preoccupation with it is a reflection of their hostility to Sanskrit and the brahmins with whom that language is associated in their minds. As Sanskrit is believed to be "the restricted and sole vehicle of a sacerdotal class who jealously preserved it from the corroding influences of non-brahmin languages,"<sup>82</sup> its degradation from its exalted status as a language of the gods and as cultural treasure of the Hindus has become necessary as an expression of anti-brahminism. This is not an unprecedented phenomenon. Reformist movements

81. B.N. Nair, *The Dynamic Brahmin*, 1959, pp. 78-79.

82. *Ibid.*

in the past, like Buddhism and Jainism employed the language of the masses and were conspicuously anti-brahmin.<sup>83</sup>

The traditional association of Sanskrit and the brahmin engenders an opposite association of Tamil and the non-brahmin and a political expression of this identification is the Tamil Arasu Kazhagam founded by a former member of the Congress party, M.P. Sivagnana Gramani. It started as an association of workers and volunteers who had pledged themselves to serve Tamilian interests and language and that its objective was a Tamilnad ruled by Tamilians. "To consolidate Tamilians, to revive the lost glory and prestige of Tamil, to make it the official language of Tamilnad, to achieve the ideal of *Aikya Tamilagam*" (united Tamilnad) were declared to be the basic aims of the Tamil Arasu Kazhagam<sup>84</sup> when it transformed itself as a political party in 1954 from a purely voluntary cultural association established in 1946.

Thus in the political field the principle of non-brahmin leadership and even monopoly grew rapidly and established itself as a settled doctrine. In the field of administration, the principle was also deliberately applied but quick results could not accrue because the process of displacement had to be spread over several years as recruitment could be made only as vacancies arose. The concepts first championed by the Justice party became readily acceptable to the rival political parties also.

83. Vivekananda however seems to have thought otherwise; he held that Ramanuja, Chaitanya and even the Great Buddha had made a false step when they did not try to spread the Sanskrit language among the masses. He said, "Knowledge came but the prestige was not there, culture was not there..." and appealed to the masses, "I tell you who belong to the lower castes, the only way to raise your condition is to study Sanskrit..." (*Complete Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 290-291.) A school of modern Hindu thinkers also plead for widespread cultivation of Sanskrit as the means to national integration and social equality.

84. *The Hindu*, June 12, 1954. A political session of the Tamil Arasu Kazhagam was held at Nagercoil in Kanyakumari district.



## The Backward Classes

**T**HE Non-Brahmin Movement and the formation of the Justice party symbolised an alliance of the castes of non-brahmin *varnas* against those of the brahmin *varna*; they were brought about and sustained by a common feeling among non-brahmins that they suffered socially and politically from the domination of the brahmin. This feeling of oppression was bound to weaken when statutory steps were taken to check brahmin domination. This happened and the movement tended to lose progressively its initial impetus.

### The Split within the Non-Brahmin

The term 'non-brahmin' points to the negative criterion by which an aggregate was distinguished from one group in society. This aggregate was composed of a wide variety of castes and sub-castes differing from one another in language and ritualistic practices, territorially separated, different by profession and unequal according to notions of 'purity' and 'pollution'. (These castes being endogamous and therefore static groups, the 'non-brahmin' was in no sense a new homogeneous social group but only a political category consisting of all the old castes that were not brahmins. In view of the heterogeneity among the non-brahmins the political coalition expressed by the Justice party in 1916 could be sustained only so long and so far as the conflict between the brahmin and the non-brahmin took precedence over all other considerations and the mutual differences among the non-brahmins were subordinated to the need for united effort to end brahmin supremacy. Since this effort could be effective on the political plane (when decisions were made by foreign rulers) without any corresponding social effect at social integration (which would have been necessary

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

for political success in an independent and self-governing state), differences among the non-brahmin castes did not diminish or disappear.)

That such was the actual case was experienced by the non-brahmin soon getting split into two broad groups, the larger claiming to be 'backward', and the rest formally styled 'non-backward' or occasionally called 'forward'. The growth of the statutory distinction among the non-brahmins, as 'forward' or 'non-backward' castes and 'backward' castes may be traced to a Government Order of 1947 which recognised 'backward classes' as a category separate from 'non-brahmins' and eligible to separate turns in the order of communal rotation governing recruitment to the public services. The country had just then obtained freedom and the first action which the democratic government took was to concede the claims and protect the interests of the backward castes that constituted a majority of the population. After the new Constitution of free India was made and adopted, the position was settled in accordance with its provisions, whereby 25 per cent of places in the public services were reserved for 'backward classes' which meant that out of twenty vacancies, three would go to erstwhile 'untouchables' and tribal people (called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes), five to Backward Classes (i.e., non-brahmin castes distinguished by executive orders of the government as eligible for this privilege or concession) while the other twelve were open to all including members of the classes who had reservations made for them. According to the established practice, a pattern of rotation was established as follows:

- (1) O.C.\* (2) S.C. and S.T.\* (3) O.C. (4) B.C.\* (5) O.C. (6) O.C. (7) B.C. (8) O.C. (9) S.C. and S.T. (10) O.C. (11) O.C. (12) B.C. (13) O.C. (14) B.C. (15) O.C.

\*O.C. = Open Competition

B.C. = Backward Classes

S.C. and S.T. = Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

(16) S.C. and S.T. (17) O.C. (18) O.C. (19) B.C. (20) O.C. It was laid down that the rotation should start invariably at the first turn and that if a qualified and suitable candidate belonging to the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe or Backward Classes was not available for appointment in the turn allotted for them in the cycle, the turn would lapse and no account would be taken of any passed over turns. At the same time, the three groups eligible for reserved seats could contest the unreserved seats also, and if they were selected on the basis of merit, the reserved seats would not in any way be affected.<sup>1</sup> The reservation has been modified in course of time and the rules published in 1961 provided that in a unit of 100 appointments, sixteen should go to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and twenty-five for other backward classes and fifty-nine should be filled in the order of merit and also prescribed a rotational scheme as before for every twenty-five appointments.<sup>2</sup> Castes constituting the three distinct groups in the order, the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and the other backward classes have been enumerated.<sup>3</sup> While the old stigma of 'untouchability' (forbidden and penalised by the Removal of Civil Disabilities Act 1938 of Madras) was the criterion adopted to determine the scheduled castes, and tribal communities were individually enumerated as scheduled tribes on the basis of traditional census criteria, there was no definite criterion to determine backwardness. One of the questions referred to the Backward Classes Commission appointed by the Government of India in 1953 was how to determine backwardness; and

1. G.O 2432, Public (Services), September 27, 1951.

2. *Madras Services Manual*, Vol. 1, 1961, pp. 113-114. The turns prescribed in every twenty-five appointments are as specified below: Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes: 2, 9, 16 and 22, Backward classes: 4, 7, 12, 14, 19 and 24, Open competition: 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23 and 25.

In every fourth cycle, the 25th turn will be reserved for backward classes.

3. For a list see Appendix III a.

the commission reported that social backwardness was the result of racial, tribal, caste and denominational differences and recommended that the following criteria should be adopted in determining backwardness, viz., (i) low social position in the traditional social hierarchy, (ii) lack of general educational advancement among the major section of a caste or community, (iii) inadequate or no representation in government service, and (iv) inadequate representation in trade, commerce and industry.<sup>4</sup> It described backward communities other than the scheduled castes and tribes as follows: (i) nomads who do not enjoy any social respect and who have no appreciation of a fixed habitation and are given to mimicry, begging, jugglery, dancing, etc., (ii) communities consisting largely of agricultural or landless labourers, (iii) communities consisting largely of tenants without occupancy rights and those with insecure land tenure, (iv) communities consisting of a large percentage of small land owners with uneconomic holdings, (v) communities engaged in cattle breeding, sheep breeding or fishing on a small scale, (vi) artisan and occupational classes without security of employment and whose traditional occupations have ceased to be remunerative, (vii) communities, the majority of whose people, do not have sufficient education and therefore have not secured adequate representation in government service, (viii) social groups from among the Muslims, Christians and Sikhs who are still backward socially and educationally, and (ix) communities occupying a low position in social hierarchy.<sup>5</sup>

The Government Order virtually equated the forward non-brahmins and brahmins and restricted governmental concessions to the backward non-brahmin castes. It differed from the original order of 1922 and changed the older classification as Brahmin, non-Brahmin, Anglo-Indian,

4. *Report of the Backward Classes Commission, 1955, Vol. I.* p. 46.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

Indian Christian or non-Asiatic and Muhammadan. The continuous evolution of this pattern demonstrates the fundamental role of *varna* and *jati* in the political process in Madras.

### The Backward Concept

The administrative policy as distinct from the legislative and constitutional schemes, has a longer history. The appellation 'backward' was first employed in Madras to the Muhammadan population during the Governorship of Lord Hobart (May 1872 to April 1875). The Governor's ideas on the need to popularise modern education and employment among the non-Hindus were similar to those of Lord Mayo, the Viceroy (January 1869 to January 1872). In 1872, the Madras government collected educational and employment statistics and found that in comparison with the Hindus, the Muhammadans were underrepresented in government employment in grades other than the lowest and were backward in education.<sup>6</sup> Finding that Muslims had objection to, and did not utilise the facilities for public education, the Government of Madras instructed the Director of Public Instruction to take steps immediately to establish without delay separate elementary schools and corresponding classes in other schools at the principal centres of Muhammadan population, where instruction might be given in Urdu language. The Madras University granted recognition to Arabic and Persian and wished also to institute special prizes for proved excellence in these languages.<sup>7</sup> Special efforts were also taken to increase the number of Muhammadans in the state services. The government sent circulars to all heads of departments advising, "We are anxious to see them (Muhammadans) take part in it in proportion to their numbers and intelligence and that with this

6. G.O. 288, Education, October 7, 1872.

7. G.O. 215, Education, July 7, 1873.

view we desire that the claims of those Muhammadans who have satisfied the prescribed tests should be the subject of special consideration when vacancies occur." The circulars were accompanied by two lists—one of qualified, unemployed Muhammadans, and another of Muhammadans employed in various branches of the government service and the heads of departments were requested to draw from the first when making new appointments and from the second when making selections for promotions.<sup>8</sup> Thus the idea of 'backwardness' and of employment in public services as a remedy to remove such backwardness entered Madras administration in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The concept of backwardness first employed in the field of recruitment to government jobs was then logically extended to the area of public education which produced the candidates for the public services.

The term 'backward' came into regular use in the Education Department in the late nineteenth century. The Grant-in-aid Code offered small stipends of the monthly value of one or two rupees or even half-a-rupee to pupils in elementary schools coming from "illiterate" and "indigent castes" and labelled them the "backward classes".<sup>9</sup> For the purpose of this Code, all schools for Muhammadans including Mappillas were treated as poor schools irrespective of the proportion of poor pupils therein. Schools in which the majority of pupils belonged to the backward classes enumerated in the Code were admitted to the privileges of special educational facilities. For the purpose of this Code, caste was held to be unaffected by change of religion.<sup>10</sup> The Director of Public Instruction was authorised to add to the list any caste following "similar occupations" as

8. *G.O. 288, Education, October 7, 1872.*

9. *Fort St. George Gazette, no. 40, November 5, 1895, Education Department.*

10 *Ibid.*

## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

the castes already recognised as backward. Applications from several castes requesting admission to the list were received by the government; these were referred generally to the district collector or the local authority concerned to report on the position and status of the caste in question; and on their favourable recommendation the castes were admitted to the list of the backward. In the year 1907 alone, more than ten communities, Bondilis,<sup>11</sup> Vettuvas (Malabar district),<sup>12</sup> Mappillas,<sup>13</sup> Mukkuvas (Malabar district),<sup>14</sup> Puslars,<sup>15</sup> Kharvis,<sup>16</sup> Gamalas, Idigas,<sup>17</sup> Ariya Mahrattas, Gollas and Kumbans<sup>18</sup> were recognised as backward. In the next year, Thorians of the Coimbatore district, Valaiyans of Tanjore, Agambadiyans of Madura, Padayachis of Tanjore and Kadaiyans were admitted to the list by separate orders of the government.<sup>19</sup> The number of backward castes which was thirty-nine in 1895 rose to 113 in 1913, 128 in 1920, and reached the figure of 152 in 1950. This does not mean that more castes became backward as years rolled. Rather, more and more castes learnt to demand and receive the special educational concessions offered by the government.<sup>20</sup>

The practice of giving scholarships and grants on the basis of caste and not by individual desert which

- |  |   |           |
|--|---|-----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. G.O. 615, September 17, 1907.</li> <li>12. G.O. 247, April 26, 1907.</li> <li>13. G.O. 135, March 12, 1907.</li> <li>14. G.O. 26, January 12, 1907.</li> <li>15. G.O. 368, June 12, 1907.</li> <li>16. G.O. 669, October 4, 1907.</li> <li>17. G.O. 695, October 14, 1907.</li> <li>18. G.O. 737, November 4, 1907.</li> <li>19. G.O. 164, March 7, 1908.</li> <li style="padding-left: 2em;">G.O. 629, September 3, 1908.</li> <li style="padding-left: 2em;">G.O. 640, September 7, 1908.</li> <li>20. G.O. 511, August 7, 1907.</li> </ul> | } | Education |
|--|---|-----------|

The only case in which a caste objected to the "indignity" of being called "backward" was that of Kollakars, converts to Roman Catholicism from the fishermen caste of Travancore. About a proposal for including the caste in the list of backward castes in 1907, the government on enquiry found that the caste was averse to the proposal on the ground that it would place them on a level with the people of a low caste.

became regular by 1890, had grown to be a permanent feature of the educational system in the presidency. The origin of this practice may be traced to the ancient idea that no man could rise above or fall below his caste; the individual was inseparable from his caste for all material and spiritual purposes and his standing on any plane was a function of his caste. Though the complete identification of the individual with his caste was not possible in the political and administrative order established by the British, the propensity to overlook the individual and concentrate on his caste has persisted and even grown in the provincial politics and administration of Madras.

It cannot, however, be held that the policy of giving educational concessions to the backward sections is the sole factor behind the emergence of backward classes as an important interest group in the division of the non-brahmin castes into two categories, backward and non-backward. The contemporary 'backward classes' do not comprise castes which were deemed untouchables, while in the first instance 'backward' meant mostly 'untouchable' castes. They represent a group among 'non-brahmins' protesting to the domination of the 'forward' within them. The conception of the 'non-brahmin' as a single category consisting of all castes except the brahmin was useful politically in 1916 when the Justice party was founded but it was not sociologically viable. Indeed the first objection to the appellation 'non-brahmin' came from the caste of the Kammalans, the five artisan castes, (later known as Viswabrahmins) as early as 1897. In a memorial presented to the Government of Madras, they prayed for special economic and educational facilities and reservation of one seat in the legislative council for a representative of their community. They said that while the brahmin and the pariah were given attention as separate groups, the "great bulk of the so-called non-brahmin classes" were "set down all under one heading and



viewed as one mass" and demanded that the individuality of the Kammalan should be "recognised in truth and justice."<sup>21</sup>

### Political Disunity of Non-Brahmins

The justice party was never the only and all-comprehensive party of the non-brahmins of Madras. There were individual non-brahmins and castes of non-brahmins who repudiated its political ideas. Sir Sankaran Nair had sympathy with the Non-Brahmin Movement; but he did not support its stand regarding political reforms in 1920. On the question of non-brahmin representation, he said, "it is essential to recognise two divisions among non-brahmins, the high caste Hindus and the lower classes," and added that, "if the proposed reforms are carried out in their proper spirit and proper rules are framed, I have not the slightest doubt that the non-brahmin higher Hindu castes will be gainers. I fail to see how they will be worse off."<sup>22</sup>

The first denunciation of the manifesto issued by the South Indian Peoples' Association from among non-brahmins came from P. Kesava Pillai, a member of the Madras Legislative Council. No sooner was the party manifesto released than he repudiated it as one "calculated to be harmful to the common cause" and hardly likely to promote the best interests of the classes whom it sought to serve. Many non-brahmins, "pained and surprised at the reactionary manifesto," dissociated themselves from it. Lest the Congress should look upon the declaration of P.T. Chettiar and his friends as the general non-brahmin manifesto, Kesava Pillai and his associates sent a prompt message to the Congress that the Madras non-brahmin communication was intended only for private circulation among some non-brahmin leaders but was used by some designing people as a

21. G.O. 970-971, Public, July 20, 1897.

22. C. Madhavan Nair, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-106 (Sankaran Nair's second minute of dissent).

manifesto.<sup>23</sup> These public men organised a 'nationalist meeting' at Gokhale Hall, Madras, on September 20, 1917, to show that there was a large number of non-brahmins in favour of Home Rule and that the South Indian Peoples' Association represented only a minority of non-brahmins.<sup>24</sup> A resolution was adopted to the effect that in order to promote and safeguard the interests of the various communities in the Presidency other than the Brahmin, an association should be formed with Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai as President.<sup>25</sup> Among those who welcomed the new party, which was named the Madras Presidency Association, was E.V. Ramaswami Naicker, who then belonged to the Congress. He volunteered his support to the new association offering financial contributions and providing suggestions for carrying on the anti-Justice campaign.<sup>26</sup> The association fully endorsed the post-war reforms demanded by the Congress and dissented from the remarks of the South Indian Liberal Federation disparaging movements for Home Rule.<sup>27</sup> It allied itself with the Congress and called upon Dravidians to rally round the Home Rule Movement.<sup>28</sup> But at the same time, like the South Indian Federation, this association also demanded increased representation for non-brahmins in the Legislative Councils, local bodies, and government services.<sup>29</sup> Though in temperament and approach, there was a marked difference between the two bodies they agreed on the basic question of communal representation. While the

23. *The Hindu*, December 28, 1916.

24. *The Hindu*, September 17, 1917. The meeting was first convened on 15th September, 1917. Some leading members of the South Indian Peoples' Association led by O. Kandaswami Chettiar created disturbance in the hall and the meeting ended in fiasco. A second meeting was convened on September 20, 1917 (*The Hindu*, September 21, 1917).

25. *The Hindu*, September 21, 1917.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *The Hindu*, December 28, 1916.

28. *Swadesamitran*, November 24, 1917.

29. This development also signifies the growing split within the Tamilnad Congress over communal question.

South Indian Liberal Federation assumed an aggressive pose intent on destroying the predominance of brahmins, the Presidency Association played down communal hatred and tried to persuade the Congress to adopt the communal principle. It cooperated with the Franchise Committee by delegating five members including its President. The Association ridiculed the Federation as a puppet of the British bureaucracy and the Federation considered the Association a collection of non-brahmin blacksheep. The emergence of these two parties signified the beginnings of an anti-Brahmin movement; and their mutual differences portended the weakness of the 'non-brahmin' concept.

Besides the members of the Presidency Association, there were several castes which denounced the Justice party; and in the Andhra districts, the Justice movement had little popularity. A local newspaper of Telugus said, "Vaiyas of Northern Circars are not for the non-brahmin movement...Andhra Panchamas stay away...Kshatriyas do not join it. So the expressions the 'Non-Brahmin Movement' and 'Non-Brahmin Conference' are meaningless in the Andhra country."<sup>30</sup> It was reported that at a meeting in Bezwada in 1917 many Kshatriyas, Arya Vaisyas and Viswabrahmins expressed their approval of the Congress;<sup>31</sup> at Kurnool, about 2,000 non-brahmins assembled and approved the Congress scheme.<sup>32</sup> Non-brahmin meetings were held to condemn the stand of P.T. Chettiar on political reforms.<sup>33</sup> Vanniakula Kshatriyas, Arya Vaisyas and many others "plainly expressed to the Secretary of State their solicitude for political reforms."<sup>34</sup> Many non-brahmin leaders in Madras and Tanjore district and the numerous and influential caste of Vanniakula Kshatriyas gave support

30. *Dharmasadhani*, November 1, 1917.

31. *Kistnapatrika*, November 17, 1917.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Andhrapatrika*, September 17, 1917.

34. *Ibid.*

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

to the Congress.<sup>35</sup> Sourashtra Brahmins protested against the government communique declaring them to be non-brahmins for electoral purposes; at a public meeting in Madura, the communique was criticised as "illegal, *ultra vires*, unnecessary and calculated to affect prejudicially the well-established social and religious status and privileges of Sourashtra Brahmins in the Madras Presidency."<sup>36</sup> Similar meetings were convened for the same purpose in many other places, at Tanjore, Kumbakonam, Salem and Madura.<sup>37</sup> A letter in the columns of the *Hindu* pointed out that Rajus and Velamas called themselves 'Kshatriyas' and Komatis and Vanians called themselves 'Vaiyas' and so it was necessary to ascertain who was a brahmin and who was a non-brahmin.<sup>38</sup>

Reservation of seats for non-brahmins in the legislature did not satisfy those castes which desired to be represented in the legislative council by a member of their own castes. The Nambudiris<sup>39</sup> and the Nattukkottai Chetties<sup>40</sup> sent memorials to the government to nominate members from their respective castes. Vanniyars said that they numbered 3 million and belonged to an ancient royal race but were politically backward and claimed a place in the legislative council through nomination.<sup>41</sup> The Oriyas of Ganjam, a linguistic minority in a predominantly Telugu area pressed for separate electorates.<sup>42</sup> Since the government did not concede them their request, the question of nomination had to be considered. The Madras government had started the practice of nominating members to the Legislative Council to represent particular castes

35. *Kistnapatrika*, September 15, 1917.

36. *The Hindu*, July 6, 1920.

37. *The Hindu*, June 22, July 3, 8, 12, 14, and 20, 1920.

38. *The Hindu*, March 1, 1920.

39. G.O. 65, Legislative, May 30, 1916.

40. G.O. 130, Legislative, September 29, 1916.

41. *Vanikulamitran*, October, 1919.

42. G.O. 110, Legislative, August 9, 1916.

## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

even before the 1919 Act set apart ten seats for nomination of members to represent the depressed classes. In 1919 M.C. Raja was nominated to represent the Adi Drāvidas, a move which was hailed by the spokesmen of the depressed classes, and condemned by the nationalists.) It stimulated demands from certain other castes for nomination of their members also. Under the Reforms of 1919 the Governor of Madras was instructed to nominate one each from the following castes generally considered 'depressed'—Paraiyans, Pallans, Valluvans, Malas, Madigas, Chakkilhyans, Tottiyans, Cherumas and Holeyas.<sup>43</sup> The Government of Madras, however, was of the opinion that the non-officials to be nominated to the Council should represent interests and communities which were "not likely to have any chance of representation otherwise than by nomination."<sup>44</sup> In this connection Nambudiris, Tiyas, Jains, Kallars, Lingayats, Nadars, Anglo-Indians, Protestant Christians, Oriyas and Kammās were mentioned. Opinions, however, differed as to which communities should be given nominated representation; some collectors recommended minor communities such as weavers, toddy-tappers and potters.<sup>45</sup> There was a scramble among many castes for the few nominated seats; small communities such as Jains<sup>46</sup> and Mahrattas,<sup>47</sup> backward ones like the barbers<sup>48</sup> and field labourers<sup>49</sup> and influential ones such as Viswābrahmins<sup>50</sup> and Sengunthars<sup>51</sup> convened caste meetings and appealed to the government to be considered for

43. *Memoranda Submitted to the Indian Statutory Commission by the Government of India*, Vol. IV, chapter VI, p. 152.

44. *G.O. 521*, December 8, 1926.

45. *Ibid.*

46. *G.O. 32*, June 23, 1924.

47. *G.O. 379*, September 24, 1924.

48. *G.O. 33*, January 23, 1924.\*

49. *G.O. 271*, July 10, 1924.

*G.O. 216*, May 12, 1924.

50. *G.O. 39*, January 25, 1924.

*G.O. 40*, January 25, 1924.

*G.O. 76*, February 16, 1924.

51. *G.O. 314*, August 15, 1924.

} Law (Legislative)

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

the nominated seats. Since the number of castes competing for seats far exceeded the number of seats provided, they had to take their chances in turns. In 1923 for instance, the following communities had a representative nominated in the Council: Nadars, Mukkuvars, Arundhateeyas, Lingayats, Nambudiris, Maruthuvakulars, Jains, Kallars, Tiyas, Setti Balijas, Anglo-Indians, Protestant Christians and Adi Dravidas.<sup>52</sup> These nominations were specially valued by Vanniakula Kshatriyas and Viswabrahmins who frequently complained that they were very backward compared to some castes of non-brahmins but not so backward as to be clubbed along with the depressed classes or the Adi-Dravidas. To them nomination seemed to be the sole means of securing representation.

The Justice party which came to power as a 'non-brahmin' political party did not promote the concept of non-brahmin unity. On the contrary a feeling spread that the Justice politicians in office with their friends and supporters formed a class exclusively benefiting by

52. *Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. 22, 1925, p. 4.

<i>Nominated member</i>	<i>Caste represented</i>
P.K.S.A. Arumuga Nadar	Nadar
J.A. Davis	Anglo-Indian
N. Devendrudu	Adi Dravida
P.V. Gopalan	Mukkuvars or Fishermen
L.C. Guruswami	Arundhateeyas
Hony Lt. Madurai	Adi Dravida
T. Malesappa	Lingayats
Narayan Nambudiripad	Nambudiris
B. Obalesappa	Maruthuvakulars (Barbers)
K.S. Ponnuswami Pillai	Protestant Christians
G. Premayya	Adi Dravida
K. Raghuchandra Ballal	Jains
P.S. Rajappa Thevar	Kallars
S.P. Raman	Tiyas
P. Sagaram	Setti Balijas
R. Srinivasan	Adi Dravida
P.V. S. Sundaramurthi *	Adi Dravida
R. Veerian	Adi Dravida

The Commissioner of Labour and Protector of Depressed Classes was also a nominated member. Official information as to the castes represented by the nominated members in the Legislative Council was published only in the case of the Council of 1923-26.

the non-brahmin rule. Those who remained outside, whose lot had not improved, turned hostile. It was said that "the party had turned into a Ministerialist party and its organs turned into Ministerialist organs."<sup>53</sup> It was alleged that the Ministers conferred power and offices on their own friends, filled up the municipal councils and local boards as they pleased and in the enjoyment of their newly won power and offices forgot the people whom they were supposed to represent.<sup>54</sup> Even ardent and loyal workers of the Justice movement were shocked at the way the spoils system corrupted public life. A prominent anti-ministerialist stated in 1923 that the split within the party was visible in 1922 itself. He said that leading members of the South Indian Liberal Federation had then made a protest against the first Minister, upon which the ministers had called a meeting, apologised for their errors and promised to frame a constitution for the party.<sup>55</sup> In the deliberations of the legislative councils, the non-brahmins did not hold together. A non-brahmin member J.N. Ramathan put it strongly that, "the Justice party is a misnomer...it is a myth...There is no party, no organisation, no constitution, no members."<sup>56</sup> The split within the party was further widened at a Workers' Conference held in May 1923 in Madras.<sup>57</sup>

The depressed classes who first welcomed the non-brahmin movement as a movement for democratic liberation later began to feel that their condition had not improved at all while high caste non-brahmins replaced brahmins in power and positions. They were also

53. *The Hindu*, July 12, 1923, a letter.

54. *The Hindu*, June 5, 1923, report of an interview with Arokiaswami, a member of the South Indian Liberal Federation.

55. *The Hindu*, June 1, 1923.

56. *The Hindu*, July 26, 1923.

57. The conference was opened by P. T. Chettiar. To his embarrassment, a letter from T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar was read which described the Justice party as one without organisation or constitution; and P. T. Chettiar walked out of the meeting.

aggrieved that non-brahmin rule was not promoting their interests. The abolition of the Labour Department and P. T. Chettiar's refusal to support anti-untouchability laws in 1922 were adduced as proofs that non-brahmin rule would not protect the interests of the depressed classes. A non-brahmin from Ganjam nicknamed the party as "Injustice party" and P.T. Chettiar as an "incompetent leader."<sup>58</sup> At a conference in Tirunelveli, a pertinent issue was raised, "The Brahmin was driven away to make room for the Chetty, the Naidu the Reddi and the Pillai. What about the millions of the depressed classes?"<sup>59</sup> A motion of no-confidence was brought against the ministry by the dissidents in 1923; but it was defeated by sixty-five votes against forty-three.

The constitutional recognition and the administrative concessions granted to the non-brahmins since 1920 could not of course benefit all non-brahmin castes equally nor was it possible to divide evenly among the several non-brahmin castes the places formerly occupied by the brahmins. Brahmins in the legislature and public services were naturally replaced by members of the forward non-brahmin castes next to the brahmin in the traditional hierarchy. During the period of Dyarchy (1920-1935) the Madras legislative councils consisted mostly of forward non-brahmins bearing the caste titles Mudaliyar, and Pillai. Nearly all non-Muhammadian rural seats (except a few won by brahmins) went to these upper castes. Among the castes who could not join the race or were left behind, a feeling of discontent arose and resistance to the use of the term 'non-brahmin' developed.

### The Emergence of Backward Classes

The common consciousness of backwardness among

58. *The Hindu*, June 28, 1923.

59. *The Hindu*, June 13, 1923.



## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

certain non-brahmins led to the formation of the Backward Classes League in 1933 to unify the backward classes.<sup>60</sup> The more enlightened among them speaking on behalf of all the backward castes approached the government through the association and through the members of their castes in the legislature to revise the Communal Order so as to provide separate turns for 'backward non-brahmin Hindus'. The break-up of the non-brahmin as forward and backward and the isolation of untouchables as a distinct category were the most important results of the continued use of the 'non-brahmin' criterion, particularly for the purpose of recruitment to government service. )

In November 1933, Basu Dev, a member of the Legislative Council led a deputation to the Governor and represented that the appointments reserved for non-brahmin Hindus went to a few upper castes such as Reddis, Vellalars and Mudaliyars and so the backward non-brahmins stood in need of special reservation.<sup>61</sup> Many resolutions repeating the demand were sought to be moved in the legislature and the nominated members of the backward communities particularly belonging to the castes of Vanniakula Kshatriyas and Viswabrahmins who considered themselves as constituting this undefined 'backward non-brahmin' class took great interest in the subject. In March 1934, M.A. Manickavelu Nayagar moved a cut motion on the point of special representation of Hindu backward classes in the services and suggested three methods of securing the job interests of backward sections, viz, "(i) the backward classes may be classified separately in the communal rule as an additional group making a total of six groups in all, (ii) that they may be classified separately and called backward class group, the remaining non-brahmin Hindus who are advanced and the brahmins being clubbed

60. *The Hindu*, August 23, 1935.

61. *G.O. 838, Public (Services)*, August 9, 1934.

together and called non-backward class group, and (iii) The Madras Service Commission may be asked to give preference to backward Hindus in the turn for non-brahmin Hindus." In support of the resolution C. Krishnan, a member of the Legislative Council, wrote in the *Mail* urging the need for revising the Communal Order because the backward classes which formed nearly one-third of the total did not derive even as much benefit as the depressed classes.<sup>62</sup> He was in favour of clubbing together brahmins and high caste non-brahmins and providing for separate representation for the backward castes. The Vatakkat Nair Samajam of Malabar sent a petition to the government that unless a few posts were set apart for the backward castes, Vaniars (known as Nairs in Malabar) could not hope for any progress in their position.<sup>63</sup> A memorandum by the Yadhava Sangha of the Krishna district, a deputation of Kallars of Madura, a representation from the Maravar Valibar Sangham, a memorial on behalf of Kammas—all prayed for relaxation of general rules with regard to appointment to the services and special concessions in the matter of education for the members of their own castes.<sup>64</sup>

Thus began an alliance among the lower non-brahmin castes who began to repeat the same charge against forward non-brahmin leaders as these had levelled against the brahmins in the past. Once again caste provided a basis for political action. A new political classification of Hindus into three parts viz., (1) brahmins and some high caste non-brahmins, (2) backward non-brahmins, and (3) 'untouchables' named later the 'Scheduled Classes' was evolved. The distinction between the high caste and backward non-brahmin was not precise and their identification was not attempted and even Basu Dev who took initiative in this matter did not

62. *The Mail*, March 19, 1934.

63. G.O. 858, Public (Services), August 11, 1934.

64. G.O. 247, Public (Services), February 4, 1939.

## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

furnish a list of backward classes eligible for special consideration, though he had promised to supply one. Despite the persistent demand of the backward classes, the government did not alter the communal order. In the dyarchic system of government which then prevailed, administrative concern over a more than tolerable level of dilution of efficiency by progressive addition of sub-standard recruits on the basis of caste made the 'Reserved Half' (the appointive and official half of the Executive) object to the extension of the principle. The 'Transferred Half' (the political and elective part of the Executive) was not likely to be sympathetic to the claims of the lower castes which in effect repudiated the leadership of the higher non-brahmin castes and questioned their good faith. It may be inferred that the political considerations likely to have weighed with the Ministers and the administrative considerations likely to have prevailed with the Executive Councillors must have tallied to produce the common conclusion of the government that no change need be made in the existing Communal Order.

The Backward Classes, however, did not give up their efforts but renewed their demands in 1944. Efforts were made to bring about the unification of all backward communities. A memorial submitted by the Backward Classes League furnished the following statement:

**TABLE XIII**  
**Memorandum by Backward Classes League—1944**

<i>Social group</i>	<i>Population</i>		<i>Gazetted posts</i>	
	<i>number</i> <i>(in lakhs)</i>	<i>percentage</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Brahmin	15	3	820	37
Forward non-Brahmin	113	22	620	27
Christian	20	4	190	9
Muhammadan	37	7	150	7
Backward Classes	245	50	50	2 ½
Depressed Classes	70	14	25	1.5

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

The League concluded from it that the forward non-brahmins had arranged to aggrandise themselves at the cost of the backward classes. The statement also stressed that the backward classes were worse off than the depressed classes. The petition suggested the revision of the communal order so as to divide a unit of twenty-four vacancies into one for brahmins, two for Christians, two for Muslims, four for scheduled castes, five for forward non-brahmins and ten for backward non-brahmins.<sup>65</sup> "Opportunities to serve the Government as well as the public may be given to the different groups of communities of the province as far as possible on the basis of the population of each group. Working out on this basis, Brahmins may be given 3 per cent, Christians 4 per cent, Muslims 7 per cent, Scheduled Classes 14 per cent, Forward non-Brahmins 22 per cent, and the Backward Classes 50 per cent," the petition suggested. A list of backward classes containing more than 100 castes was also presented to the government.

While the pressure for distributive justice in filling administrative jobs was directed along established channels, a corresponding and parallel evolution took place in the political field of election and popular representation. When, by the Government of India Act 1935, the executive became wholly elected, the backward communities had greater occasion and the opportunity to ventilate their grievances and demand redress. They complained that the Act had enabled the forward castes to establish their sectional rule over the vast majority of the Hindu population. The communities declared that, unless proper safeguards were provided "to enable them to have a legitimate share in the administration of the country both in the centre and the province... Independence, Dominion status, Swaraj or whatever it may be called would mean nothing to the backward classes and would only result in the perpetual bondage and slavery of the vast dumb millions who constitute

65. G.O. 190, Public (Services), January 20, 1944.

## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

the bulk of the masses in the country.”<sup>66</sup> A memorial from the Backward Classes League prayed for the recognition of the backward classes as a separate entity not only for representation in the services but also for representation in the legislature and the local bodies, and suggested the adoption of a system of functional representation. But the government sternly opposed the move to sub-divide communities for electoral or any other purpose.<sup>67</sup> The League suggested to the government that wherever posts were reserved for scheduled castes and no suitable candidates of those castes were available, the next preference should be given to the backward classes. But as this also required a revision of the Communal G.O., the government rejected it.<sup>68</sup>

By consistently resisting the pressures from many sides to revise the Communal Order, the government prevented for the time being the outbreak of certain communal-political conflicts and the worsening of certain administrative complications. For any authority, not only political, amending an established rule presents more difficulties than framing one and it is at the stage of amendment the original rule is subjected to severe criticism from all angles and in the light of the experience gained in its working. Had the government shown the slightest inclination to amend the order, conflicting claims and suggestions would have increased, for it was a vital question that excited all communities. It was not possible to find a just or equitable solution for the communal question since it originated in the distrust and jealousy among the communities and in the desire for recognition, individuality, and importance in anticipation of complete self-government in the near future. In the circumstances, no change acceptable to all communities could be invented; even if the government

66. G.O. 690, Public (Services), March 14, 1945, memorial from the Madras Provincial Backward Classes League to the government.

67. *Ibid.*

68. G.O. 929, Public (Services), April 7, 1945.

had disregarded all prevalent views and carried out an amendment on their own principles, the communities whose interests happened to be adversely affected thereby would not have hesitated to call the government unjust, partial, prejudiced, and arbitrary. The government could save itself from unpopularity and prevent deterioration in inter-caste relations only by refusing to revise the Communal Order. And during war time it was perhaps the most prudent policy.

But government resistance to the ceaseless demand for change in the communal allocation of appointments prescribed in 1922 could not continue for ever; the facts of political life after Independence obliged it to revise the Communal G.O., which it did in November 1947. The revision conceded one of the long-standing demands of the backward non-brahmin Hindus, who formed the majority of the population. In the context of democratic government and a system of universal adult franchise, such revision was inevitable and it was also a significant portent of change in electoral politics. The revised order provided that a unit of fourteen vacancies should be distributed as two for brahmins, six for non-brahmin Hindus, two for backward Hindus, two for Harijans, one for Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians and one for Muslims. Wherever the old communal rotation was in practice it was changed thus:

1. Non-brahmin Hindu
2. Harijan
3. Backward Hindu
4. Non-brahmin Hindu
5. Brahmin
6. Non-brahmin Hindu
7. Muslim
8. Non-brahmin Hindu
9. Anglo-Indian or Indian Christian
10. Non-brahmin Hindu
11. Harijan
12. Non-brahmin Hindu
13. Brahmin and
14. Backward Hindu.

For the purpose of this rule, 145 communities were listed as backward Hindus and excepting these and the brahmins all other Hindus were regarded as 'non-brahmin Hindus'.<sup>69</sup> "The result of the revised allocation

69. G.O. 3437, Public (Services), November 21, 1947.

is that while the Harijans gain appreciably, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians and Muslims lose likewise but it must be realised that the revised allocation is roughly in conformity with the percentage of population of these communities in the Province," said the Government Order. But proportionate share was far from being achieved even by this revision; the brahmins, for instance, who were  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the population got  $\frac{1}{7}$  of the places, and the backward castes forming nearly of the population also got the same  $\frac{1}{7}$  share.

### The Race for Backwardness

The concept of 'non-brahmin' as a single political category or aggregate was weakened by the extension of the franchise to all adults and the intensification of the political ambition of the 'lower' non-brahmin castes who greatly outnumbered the 'higher'. The non-brahmins could not cohere as a group of distinct *varnas* against the pressure of the caste groups within its fold and the competition for social status and political power among them. While the *varna* failed to hold individuals together by a loyalty transcending caste, the individuals too could not break away from their castes to found new political aggregates on purely political or economic terms. The active political unit thus continued to be the caste and not the individual; this was particularly true of the castes forming the category of backward classes. It became attractive to have one's caste status downgraded to attain 'backward' status and its privileges; this new downward 'social mobility' is a process exactly opposite to that of 'sanskritisation'. Many *jatis* of the Sudra *varna* which had formerly been socially motivated to assert claims to superior status now found it politically and economically advantageous to demand and obtain inclusion in the lowest category of the fourth *varna*. There was a mass downward migration resulting in a steady expansion of the list of castes officially recognised as 'backward'. Governmental recognition was

obtained easily by most of the castes but some had to fight hard and long to win that recognition. The competition for this status was continuous, beginning in the operation of the Education Department and extending to appointments in the public services.

Intensification of caste consciousness and unification of members of the same caste accompanied this race for backwardness which may be said to have begun in the closing years of the last century. Caste associations were formed and caste conferences were held. It is interesting to note that in this kind of political development, the Muhammadans were the first to avail of the policy of the government to encourage the backward sections. The Madras Muslims formed the Anjuman-i-Islamiah in 1876 and the Muhammadan Association in 1886 and amalgamated the two in the next year. The Association came into existence mainly to protect and advance the interests of the Muhammadan community and to promote their well-being by legitimate means and united action. One of its declared objects was to further education among the Muslims and to secure their "fair share in public services." It prepared a list of Muhammadans seeking employment or promotions in state services and with the permission of the government distributed it to the heads of departments.<sup>70</sup> Leading Muhammadans of Madura town met together and sent a petition to the government in 1893 praying for the formation of a special committee to find suitable measures to improve the general welfare of the community pleading that without the help of the government it would not be possible for them to keep up with the other races.<sup>71</sup> The government responded favourably and immediately appointed a committee.<sup>72</sup>

This pattern of group behaviour exhibited first by

70. G.O. 677, Education, December 7, 1882.

71. G.O. 239, Education, April 12, 1893.

72. G.O. 359, Education, May 27, 1893.



## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

the Mahammadans was soon copied by the Hindu castes. The lengthening of the list of backward classes eligible for educational concessions was due chiefly to the pressure brought upon the government by leading members of these castes through their respective caste associations or by means of a concerted action on the part of the members of the caste. The Vanniakula Kshatriya Mahasangam and the Sourashtra Brahmana Mahajana Sabha were examples of influential political pressure groups and many castes had formed their own associations early in the century such as the Nadar Mahajana Sangam, the Provincial Ilathar Sangam, Siva Rudra Pillaimar Sangam, the South Indian Maruthuva Sangam, Veerakodi Vellalar Sangam, Veera Saiva Mahajana Sangam, Rajakulothamar Sangam and Viswakarma Samajam, to mention a few. Between 1910 and 1915, the Viswabrahmins (mostly gold and silversmiths) sent many petitions and held many conferences to impress upon the government the need to recognise them as backward for educational concessions. In 1902, along with Ganigars, the members of the group in South Kanara presented an address to the Governor praying for inclusion in the list of backward classes but their request was rejected while the Ganigars were recognised as backward.<sup>73</sup> The government maintained that Viswabrahmins were neither poor nor under any special disabilities. "The concession requested is neither called for nor expedient...The community is not backward in any sense. It is neither depressed, despised nor poor. Their request, if granted will benefit a very small proportion and induce them not to excel in their hereditary callings, but to swell the ranks of low paid clerks...It is doubtful if it will be really doing good to the community to brand it as backward and class it with Panchamas, Khonds, and Savaras," it was remarked and the plea rejected.<sup>74</sup> Requests from Tamil and Canarese

73. G. O. 165, Education, March 22, 1902.

74. G. O. 336, Education, June 1, 1911.

Viswabrahmins were treated likewise and the coveted status of backwardness was denied to the community. The caste revived its claim for backward status in the 1930s when the question of communal representation in the public services was widely debated. Ganala Ramamurthi, throughout his career in the legislative council as the nominated member of the Viswabrahmin caste put many questions to elicit information regarding the number of Viswabrahmins in various branches of government service and moved resolutions seeking special concessions and preferences to enlarge their number in government jobs. He demanded constitutional protection for the backward castes and special representation for them in the central and provincial legislatures and in all public bodies.<sup>75</sup> He stated that his caste was "as much depressed as any untouchable," and pleaded that it should be given all the concessions granted to the untouchable castes.<sup>76</sup> By privileges he meant relaxation of the age limit for admission to service commission examinations and for recruitment to services, financial and other facilities in technical colleges, and inclusion of the caste among those eligible for special ameliorative activities undertaken by the Labour Department. Between 1931 and 1933 many associations of Viswabrahmins sent petitions to the government requesting the inclusion of the caste in the list of depressed classes.<sup>77</sup> A conference of Viswabrahmins in 1935 in Tirunelveli district made a similar request.<sup>78</sup> The need for revising the Communal G.O. so as to provide separate turns for backward classes was insisted upon, but in vain.<sup>79</sup> The government was firmly opposed to any sub-division of the communities recognised in the Communal Order and

75. *Proceedings of the Legislative Council*, 1931 and 1932.

76. *Ibid.*, Vol. LXX, February-March 1934, pp. 155-161.

77. G.O. 388, Public (Services), February 24, 1937.

78. No. 1027, Public (Services), October 5, 1935.

79. *Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council*, Vol. LXXI March 1936, pp. 522-528.

said that Viswabrahmins did not stand in need of special protection as backward or socially neglected caste. It was only in 1950, this community finally succeeded in getting admission to the list of backward classes in the Madras Education Rules.<sup>80</sup>

The behaviour of the Viswabrahmins exhibits an interesting aspect of caste in political life. They had always been eager to ally themselves with that group of social hierarchy which was at that time most advantageously placed, socially or economically. The Viswabrahmins who once took pride in calling themselves brahmins, when brahminism was respected everywhere, did not hesitate in later decades to seek equation with depressed castes or untouchables. This also shows that opportunities offered by political changes are not viewed so much from the *amour propre* of the individual directly as from the angle of general advantage to the caste as a whole and therefore caste attitude rather than personal vanity determines common caste action.

The Vanniakula Kshatriya, the largest caste in the state, which had demonstrated its caste consciousness by uniting its members known by different names such as Gounder, Padayachi, Vanniar, Naicker, etc., and by organising caste meetings had been acting as a leader of this movement of the backward classes. It is due to the ceaseless demands of the leader of this caste in the legislature, M.A. Manickavelu Nayagar, that the backward classes obtained recognition as a social group eligible for special administrative treatment. The Vanniakula Kshatriya Mahasangam, established in 1888, became politically powerful at the time the Government of India Act 1935 came into force. It sent a lengthy memorandum to the government, describing in detail its very backward condition and praying for special representation for Vanniakula Kshatriyas in the

80. G O. 1934, Public (Services), April 24, 1950.

legislature and the services. It made an appeal that this social group with a strength of 29.5 lakhs had but three representatives in the Legislative Assembly and none in the Council and said that "the members of this community on account of their illiteracy and poverty are made a cat's paw by the members of the forward and influential communities during the election." Representation of the community in the district boards and municipalities was said to be less adequate. The Sangam complained that the community entitled to 108 gazetted jobs on the basis of its number held only three and pointed out that smaller communities such as brahmins, Muslims and Christians were in a far better position.<sup>81</sup> The idea of shares in public bodies and government service proportionate to the numerical strength of a community in the total population had come to be part of a conception of social justice. The community resented the "indiscriminate" grouping of large and small communities under the "artificial head non-brahmin" on the ground that it reduced the chances of the large community of Vanniakula Kshatriyas and encouraged appropriation of all the places by a few forward castes. The Sangam felt that it was unreasonable to deny separate turns for Vanniakula Kshatriyas in the Communal Order, while smaller communities such as brahmins and Christians had separate chances. It prayed also for raising the age limit for their castemen from 25 to 28 for admission to the services. But the government refused to sub-divide and make compartmental provisions for castes covered in the non-brahmin group.<sup>82</sup> Despite the dismissal of their demands, the Vanniakula Kshatriyas persisted in their statement that the term "non-brahmin" was "loose and mischievous" and was used by "politicians to suit their convenience." They repeated their demands in another memorial and interviewed the Premier. A public meeting was held

81. *G.O. 1532, Public (Services), September 12, 1938.*

82. *Ibid.*

## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

in Park Town, a crowded locality in the city of Madras, with Krishnaswami Nayakar, a member of the Legislative Assembly as president to consider ways and means of obtaining proper representation of the community in the services. The meeting passed resolutions similar to those embodied in the memorial and communicated them to the government.<sup>83</sup> But the government firmly maintained its original objection presumably because it thought that the better educated classes among those backward communities would monopolise the suggested new turns and then there would be further demands for separate representation of the less educated.

While some particular castes were pioneers in this movement and became leaders of the emerging group of the backward classes, political development attracted sympathy and support from other directions too. In January 1949 the Government of India requested the state government to furnish them with a list of backward classes other than Scheduled Classes and Scheduled Tribes, "who were educationally, economically and socially very weak," so that the population of the castes might be ascertained during the census of 1951 and proper measures taken for amelioration of their conditions. A circular was sent to the districts and the collectors were asked to prepare up-to-date lists of backward castes in their districts with suggestions for additions, if any. The collectors recommended ninety-two names to be included to the already lengthy list of 152 castes. As many as twenty Tamil castes through their associations or their leaders sent petitions to the government requesting inclusion among the backward.<sup>84</sup> The largest

83. G.O. 247, Public (Services), February 4, 1939.

84. G.O. 2419, Education, September 10, 1951. Representations for inclusion in the list of backward were received from the following castes—Adiyan, Battariar, Bhumanchi Reddi, Dasabalinjiga, Ganithapulavar, Gramani, Gudugudupan, Konda Reddi, Odde\* and Veddars, Padayachi\*, Palnati Velama, Padmanayaka Velama, Pahyan, Perumkella, Pandaram, Shanan or Nadar, Tantuvaivaish, Thokkulavar Rampala, Vanniar\*, Veera Saiya. (\*These castes were already included in the the list of backward classes.)

number of such petitions came from Nadars a caste that manifested a strong tendency to unify all its members known by different names such as Nattar, Shanan and Gramani. In fact, the name Nadar is not found in any of the censuses taken prior to 1951 and in that year they were enumerated as a "non-backward class". An association of Nadars was said to have been established as early as 1910. The extent to which this desire to benefit by government policy actuated the people may be guessed from the unusually enormous size of the government records in two volumes containing petitions from various castes to be treated as backward. Even a beggar caste like Pandaram came to put in claims on the basis of its extreme backwardness. The Tamilnad Pandaragula Sangam sent a petition to the government saying, "In the whole of Tamilnad we are sure that if at all there is a most unrepresented community even in these days, it is this particular 'Pandaram' community which is not found in the list of backward classes. We are few in number and poor in financial, educational and social conditions," and requested the government to treat them as a backward community and give them educational facilities, preference in the matter of admission to government jobs with no restrictions of age and to allot special funds for the general welfare of Pandarams.<sup>85</sup>

The widespread desire to get one's caste registered among the backward classes was publicly demonstrated when the Backward Classes Commission appointed by the Government of India was making its enquiry. That the commission toured all the states of India, spent about twenty-five days in Madras state, covering an area of 2,849 square miles and sitting in twenty different places reveal how the subject matter has been increasingly engaging the attention of the central government. Public response was quick and in

85. *Ibid.*

## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

Madras itself, the commission received 102 replies to its questionnaire and 384 memorials and interviewed 179 persons.<sup>86</sup> According to a member of the commission, it actually appeared at one stage that 70 per cent of the population was backward.<sup>87</sup> In view of the difficulty of listing all these classes, it was suggested by a member that the non-backward could be enumerated instead of the backward.<sup>88</sup> The commission after a thorough study recommended 156 castes in Madras to be treated as backward. At the conclusion of the investigation of the Backward Classes Commission, a list of communities eligible for preferential treatment in admission to colleges and services was issued in 1954. It comprised seventy Scheduled Castes and forty Scheduled Tribes enumerated by the Census of 1951 and 152 Backward Classes. To the extent that it included certain backward castes of Muslims such as Labbais, Lambadis and Mappillas, it could be said that the list was drawn without any religious bias. But from the fact that it did not include very backward sections of brahmins such as the Mukkanis of Tiruchendur, the Dikshitaras of Chidambaram and the Nambudiris of Malabar—recommended even by R.V. Swaminathan, a leading advocate of the backward non-brahmin sections in the legislature<sup>89</sup>—it seems that the original prejudice against the brahmin *varna* was not dead. This list was replaced in 1957 by a larger one which included the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes of the Kanyakumari district and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli district added to the Madras state after the 1956 linguistic reorganisation of

86. *Report of the Backward Classes Commission, 1955*. It is reported in the *Hindu*, August 23, 1954, that in the district of Madurai several representations were received from the Nadars, Sourashtras, Pillaimars, Labbais, Vaisyas, Palanimalai Adivasis, Washermen, barber, and potter communities, Christian Harijans, Twenty-four Manai Telugu Chettiars, Kallars, Illuvars, Pandarams, Viswakarmas, Okkaligars, Catholics and Protestants.

87. *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 9.

88. *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 42, minute of dissent by S.D.S. Chaurasia.

89. *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. I, 1950, p. 706.

states.<sup>90</sup> In 1960 Twenty-four castes omitted in these lists but enumerated as 'most backward' for educational concessions in the Education Department were added.<sup>91</sup> Thus by 1963 communities eligible for preferential treatment in educational institutions and government services in the Madras state numbered seventy-eight Scheduled Castes, forty-two Scheduled Tribes and 212 other Backward Classes.<sup>92</sup>

A democratic government sensitive to electoral prospects can do nothing to prevent the expansion of this list of privileged castes though an 'irresponsible' British government confronted by this problem could declare that no more additions to the list should be made. In 1914 the progressive increase in the number of applications for admission to the list of backward classes alarmed the government which called a halt to the process of automatic admission of any caste on its application to the list of backward classes. When Kammalans of Malabar applied for recognition of their backwardness, the government rejected their request on the ground that there was always a tendency to go on increasing the number of backward classes and a line must be drawn somewhere.<sup>93</sup> The line was drawn and further applications were dismissed for some time.

When the Backward Classes Commission applied 'caste' as the criterion of backwardness, it was doing an obvious thing and following the precedents of half a century; but this procedure tended to strengthen rather than weaken caste and the consciousness of caste. It was suggested to the commission that occupation and economic condition should be the considerations for determining backwardness and not membership of a caste; but the commission held that it was social backwardness resulting from racial, tribal, caste and denominational differences

90. G.O. 2299, Public (Services), July 29, 1957.

91. G.O. 1025, Public (Services), June 28, 1960.

92. Appendix III.

93. G. O. 1413, Education, December 12, 1914.



that led to economic, educational and general backwardness.<sup>94</sup> It set down the criteria determining the backwardness of a community laying down that when a "known and distinguishable class or section" was found to conform to those criteria, the community could be declared backward and no account could be taken of individual backwardness.<sup>95</sup> Having accepted caste as the basis of distinguishing the backward and the non-backward, the commission recommended that complete information on caste should be collected in the census of 1961 and a permanent staff of sociologists and ethnologists should be attached to census offices.<sup>96</sup> This recommendation was not accepted by the Government of India which continued its 1951 policy of not enumerating caste as a means of ending caste.

The anomaly of fighting caste differences by according recognition to the very principle of caste and tribe and the inevitable social and political results of the humanitarian principles embodied in the Indian Constitution have been pointed out by the Chairman of the Backward Classes Commission who felt that the remedy itself had strengthened the evil to be eradicated.<sup>97</sup> This opinion expressed in the report did not prevent him from agreeing with the commission which he headed and its recommendations. A race for 'backward status' ensued; leading members of various communities have vied with one another in labelling themselves backward and demanding preferential treatment from the state. There is no sense of shame in proclaiming backwardness and they are rather proud of their success which is a tangible expression of their political strength. Regretting this trend, *the Hindu* remarked, "a certain amount of glamour and respectability appears to be

94. *Report of the Backward Classes Commission*, Vol. I, 1955, pp. 41-42.

95. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-13.

97. *The Hindu*, June 18, 1953.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

gathering around backwardness itself. It would be a sorry consummation indeed, if in the process of eradicating 'backwardness' we actually end up by enthroning it as a mark of distinction to be achieved by political pressure and agitation."<sup>98</sup>

Even the Christians and Muslims in this state, mostly converts from Hindu castes, are classified as backward and non-backward on the basis of their original caste. This shows the persistence of the social-political influence of caste among groups of persons who had gone over to exogenous and casteless religions. The members of the Backward Classes Commission discovered that untouchability prevailed even among the Indian Christians in the southernmost parts of the

98 *The Hindu*, May 28, 1961, editorial.

Note:—Already the *reductio ad absurdum* of this practice of giving special concessions on the basis of backwardness has been reached in the state of Mysore. Since the Leslie Miller Committee made its report in 1919, the position was that all communities other than brahmins (who numbered nine lakhs and formed 4 per cent of the population) were regarded officially as backward. After the reorganisation of the state in 1956, a revision of the practice became necessary as some castes formerly considered backward suddenly became forward just by the enlargement of the caste by additions from areas newly joined to it. By a G.O. issued on 26th July, 1958, all communities other than the brahmin were declared 'backward' and in 1959, 57 per cent of posts in government offices and in technical institutions were reserved for backward classes, while Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were provided separately. But the lack of definite criteria was successfully challenged in the court and the order had to be abrogated. A committee appointed under Dr. Nagan Gowda in 1961 suggested a distinction between the 'backward' and the 'more-backward', listed 81 communities of the former and 135 of the latter and said that in the existing circumstances, the only practicable method of classifying the backward classes was on the basis of castes and communities and the government also agreed that "this criterion was the most equitable and satisfactory." The committee reported that "the general demand put forward by almost every community was that it was extremely backward." (*The Hindu*, June 10, 1961) The Lingayats, declared a forward community by the committee, claimed to be backward and the government reversed the decision of the committee on the basis that the Lingayats were mainly agricultural labourers, illiterate and poor (*The Mail*, July 12, 1961). The recommendations of this committee also did not go unchallenged and in September 1962, Justice Gajendragadkar, Judge of the Supreme Court, while dealing with the Mysore Government's order regarding admission to technical colleges pronounced that it contravened the provisions of the Constitution. This illustrates the constitutional difficulties that have to be considered in connection with the operation of the communal principle.

## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

country. Converts to Islam and Christianity informed the Commission that they were no less caste-ridden than Hindus. While dealing with this problem, the Chairman of the Commission remarked, "I started thinking anew and found that backwardness could be tackled on a basis or a number of bases other than that of caste...Once we eschew the principle of caste, it will be possible to help the extremely poor and deserving communities."<sup>99</sup> According to the list of backward classes currently in use, among the Christians, those who are themselves converts from any of the listed scheduled classes are regarded as backward; among the Muslims, Labbai, Mappilla and Dudekula are included in the list.<sup>100</sup>

The strength of the group of backward classes lies in the caste consciousness of the individual communities concerned and in their collective numerical significance. The collection styled 'backward classes' constitutes a near majority of the population and in a democracy with universal franchise and territorial constituencies can hope to be the ruling or the dominating group in the society.<sup>101</sup> And no party government in a democratic society can overlook the wishes of the numerically larger groups and the backward classes thus have come to receive extraordinary solicitude from the government since Independence. Communal allotment of seats in colleges became a matter of crucial interest. Principals of colleges were instructed by the government to "exercise the greatest care in seeing that due representation

99. *Report of the Backward Classes Commission, 1955, Vol. I, p. xviii.*

100. In 1956 the government listed the following Muhammadan castes as non-backward. 1) Arab 2) Bora 3) Dakui 4) Jonagan 5) Khilji 6) Khoja 7) Lodi 8) Marakkayar 9) Memon 10) Mughal 11) Musalman 12) Navayat 13) Pathan 14) Ravuttar 15) Saiyad 16) Sait 17) Sharif 18) Sheikh.

101. "The Harijans, the Grijans and the backward classes together form what may be called the *Bahujan*, i.e., the great majority... The new leadership (*bahujan*) must unitedly organise the whole nation against the institution of caste," wrote the Chairman of the Backward Classes Commission in an article in *the Hindu*, January 26, 1955.

is given to non-brahmins, to all minority communities, to Muslims, to Harijans and to women." Disclosing this in the Legislative Assembly, the then Education Minister added, "it has also been laid down that the fact that candidates from backward communities do not possess equally good marks as candidates from forward communities should not stand in the way of deserving candidates from such communities being given due consideration."<sup>102</sup> )

### Revision of the Communal G.O.

The policy of bestowing special treatment to the backward classes was accepted as a constitutional principle in 1951, when the old Communal G.O. was challenged as violating a Fundamental Right to 'equality' guaranteed in Article 16(1) of the Indian Constitution. On the basis of this article that, there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state, writ petitions were filed in 1950 in the Madras High Court<sup>103</sup> challenging the competence of the state to ration seats in colleges among various communities, thus raising a basic constitutional issue.<sup>104</sup>

A full Bench of the Madras High Court heard the case and decided that the Communal Order discriminated against citizens on grounds of caste, community or religion and therefore violated Article 15(1) of the

102. *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 19, 1948-49, p. 5.

103. Champakam Dorairajan, a candidate seeking admission to the Madras Medical College, filed a petition for issue of a *writ of mandamus* restraining the government from enforcing the Communal G.O. by which admission to the Medical College was regulated. A similar petition was filed by C.R. Srinivasan, an applicant to the Engineering College where also admissions were regulated in the manner prescribed for state services.

104. The Communal G.O. was generally interpreted as a measure of discrimination against the brahmin in particular; the writ petitions were filed by brahmin candidates. The Salem Brahmana Seva Sangam sent a petition to the President praying for a declaration that the Communal G.O. was "*ultra vires*, illegal and opposed to the Fundamental Rights" guaranteed by the Constitution (*The Hindu*, April 16, 1950).

Constitution, which states that "the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them." Holding that the Communal Order made caste and religion the grounds for admission or rejection, the judgment stated, "It denies equal treatment for all citizens under like conditions, both in the privileges conferred and disabilities imposed. In its effect and operation, the Communal G.O. discriminates markedly against the members of a particular caste and shuts out students having high qualifications, solely on the ground of their caste or religion and lets in others with inferior qualifications on the same ground. The 'charter of liberties of the student world' which the sponsors of the Constitution proclaimed they were erecting has been so abridged and mutilated by the Communal G.O. as to reduce it to a 'charter of servitude' for a class of deserving students who have the misfortune to belong to a particular caste or religion."<sup>105</sup>

The Supreme Court upheld the judgment of the Madras Court when the state government made an appeal to it. The Advocate-General of the Madras state argued that Article 46\* of the Constitution authorising the government to promote educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people could override Article 29(2)\*\* according to which religion, race, caste or language should not be the basis for denying admission to any one in the educational institutions of the government. It was argued that the communal distribution of seats in colleges was tantamount to assisting the weaker

105. *The Hindu*, July 28, 1950.

\* Article 46: "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and forms of exploitation."

\*\* Article 29(2): "No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them."

sections of the population, nothing more and nothing less. The Supreme Court rejected the argument and said that the Directive Principles of State Policy (among which Article 46 is included) were expressly made unenforceable by a court whereas Fundamental Rights were made enforceable by appropriate writs, orders and directions under Article 32 and concluded that the "Fundamental Right is sacrosanct and not liable to be abridged by any Legislature, Executive Act or Order except to the extent provided in the appropriate article of the Constitution."

To overcome the constitutional objections raised by the inviolability of the Fundamental Rights, the Constitution was amended in 1951.\* Article 15 (1) and (2) of the Constitution which forbade discrimination on caste, religion and like differences were amended by an additional provision that nothing in the Article would "prevent the State from making any special provision for education, economic or social advancement of any backward class of citizens." Special assistance to the backward classes has thus become a constitutional right in India. It appears to be a political decision and had no general acceptance as a necessary welfare measure. A section of the press criticised the injustice involved here to large numbers of individuals,<sup>106</sup> the grave danger to efficiency and public interest, and the impropriety of amending the Constitution to reverse judicial interpretations.<sup>107</sup> It was said that the retention of the communal order was "actuated not by any urgent desire to promote an equalitarian society, but by the obvious anxiety of the party in power not to lose a political advantage."<sup>108</sup>

The Government Order regulating recruitment to state services on communal basis (whose legality was established by constitutional amendment) was based on the

\* This was the first amendment of the Constitution (1951).

106 *The Hindu*, May 31, 1951, editorial.

107. *The Hindu*, April 14 and May 15, 1951, editorial.

108. *The Hindu*, May 19 and 26, 1951, editorial.

principle originally embodied in the Communal G. O. of 1922; but there is a difference in the way the order is being implemented in practice. The dyarchic government, when confronted by practical difficulties in implementing the Communal Order, chose to relax the rules on many occasions. In fact there were many adaptations of the principle in practice; and it appeared as though the British government was reluctantly committed to the policy because it was associated with a local party which insisted on it and was evidently not in favour of laying down hard and fast rules which would fetter the discretion of the secretaries to government and collectors in the matter of appointments in their offices. The order was interpreted and applied casually and without any scrupulous regard for its letter; and it was also decided that the order should be applied only at the stage of 'initial recruitment' and not at the stage of 'confirmation'.<sup>109</sup> While the British government attempted this to mitigate the rigors of the communal regulations, it also respected and accepted to some extent radical suggestions such as the one put forward in the Legislative Council in 1921 to limit future appointments to non-brahmins only and to make transfers and repostings to secure communal justice.<sup>110</sup>

Steps were taken to reduce the number of brahmins posted in the Secretariat by transferring some of them to the districts and to appointments under the central government. It appears that while the recommendations of the Legislative Council to reduce brahmin preponderance in state services were accepted on the whole, care was taken to ensure that no injustice to individuals resulted and qualified persons of any caste were not rendered jobless. A review of appointments made during the period of dyarchy did not in fact show, as the Minister confessed in the legislature, "any tangible

109. G. O. 226, Public, February 27, 1929.

110. *Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council*, Vol. VIII, pp. 433-436.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

change in the strength of the various communities in the services since the promulgation of the Communal Order."<sup>111</sup>

The order that the communal rotational rule was to be applied at initial recruitment only was not favourable to securing immediate communal balance; at the same time the proposal to resort to direct recruitment to higher (gazetted) positions in the provincial services to rectify communal imbalance was not found practicable. In services which carried very few posts, fewer than the total number of communities (five)<sup>112</sup> recognised for individual turns under the order, and in services which required technical or specialised qualifications, the rule could not be applied at all.

Because of the hesitant policy of the dyarchic government in regard to communal representation, the non-brahmins did not obtain at once their proportionate share in the services; a contrast is furnished by the record of the government after India became really self-governing, a record which shows that backward classes have very nearly secured their share in political and administrative positions in proportion to their numerical strength.

The principle of distribution of public offices, of elective and appointive positions among communities in proportion to their relative size in the total population is a generally accepted principle in governmental operations. Thus among the sixty permanent deputy collectors in the Madras Civil Service (executive branch) in 1962, there were seven brahmins, twenty-two non-brahmin Hindus, six members of the scheduled castes,

111. *Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council*, Vol. XLV, November 1928, pp. 207-210.

The implementation of the Communal Order became more difficult when a linguistic rule was adopted in 1935. A note on this is given in Appendix IV.



## THE BACKWARD CLASSES

twenty-one members of the backward classes, two Christians and two Muhammadans.<sup>112</sup> The number of members of the backward classes rose from 270 in 1956 to 510 in 1960 among gazetted officers in the state.<sup>113</sup> A review of the appointments made by the Madras Public Service Commission, the constitutional recruiting agency of the state services, during the last ten years reveals the rapid progress made by the backward classes. As the Commission recruits large numbers to gazetted and subordinate services and as it is strictly bound by communal regulations, the appointments made by it can be taken as indicating how government policy in regard to the representation of the backward classes in the public service is executed. A sample of recruitment given

**TABLE XIV**  
**Backward Classes and Government Appointments**

Posts	Direct recruitment			Recruitment by test			
		1950-51	1958-59	1962-63	1950-51	1958-59	1962-63
Total recruited	Gaz	296	203	60	11	6	13
	Non-Gaz	832	782	1,341	267	1,006	191
Non-BWC recruited							
No	Gaz	56	82	24	1	3	10
	Non-Gaz	139	335	614	103	580	97
% to total	Gaz	19	40	40	9	50	77
	Non-Gaz	17	43	46	39	58	51
Reserved for BWC	Gaz	—	—	22	—	1	4
	Non-Gaz	—	191	468	—	243	50
BWC appointed in open competition							
	Gaz	—	2	4	—	2	5
	Non-Gaz	—	132	229	—	287	44

(Note: Gaz=Gazetted posts; Non-Gaz=Non-Gazetted posts; BWC=Backward Classes.)

112. *Annual Civil List, 1962.*

It shows that while 'non-brahmin Hindus' occupy forty-three out of sixty posts, 'the backward classes' are nearly equal in number to the 'forward non-brahmin'. Among the several thousands in the lower grades of public service, the backward classes have done much better and it may be expected that with the increase in education their proportion in the higher services will increase correspondingly.

113. *Madras Annual Civil List, 1956 to 1960.*

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

in Table XIV shows that the classes have been able not only to fill the turns granted to them but also have been increasingly successful in open competition.<sup>114</sup>

The rapid and remarkable progress of the backward classes in securing jobs in the public services especially in the case of fresh recruitment by examinations much beyond their share according to the rules of reservation points to a possibility that the backward as a unit may have no reason to claim special concessions in the near future and a probability that the more backward among them may need protection against the more forward of them.

In the elective offices the backward classes do not need any protection as they have obtained their due share by virtue of their numerical strength which prevails at the polls. During '20s and '30s, the 'non-brahmin' group dominated the legislature and in '50s and '60s, the 'backward classes'. The former had felt it was in need of reservation of seats in the legislature because the franchise was then restricted; the latter, however, does not stand in need of any special protection as the figures given below show a steady increase in their number.

TABLE XV  
Caste Groups in the Legislative Assembly

Group	Percentage of total members		
	1952	1957	1962
Brahmin	5	4	1
Non-brahmin Non-backward	55	34	31
Non-brahmin Backward	22	39	47
Scheduled Castes	11	20	18
Others	7	3	3

Note: The figures for 1952 are taken from Lloyd I. Rudolf, *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XX, May 1961. The figures for 1957 and 1962 are collected from different sources by enquiry.

The principal social groups numbered (see *General Election in Madras State 1957, Election Data Analysis*, p. v.): non-backward classes 85, unscheduled backward classes 80, scheduled castes 39, and scheduled tribes 1.

<sup>114</sup>. The figures furnished in Table XIV represent a rough calculation from the annual reports of the Madras Public Service Commission.

## The Political Role of the Fifth Varna

IN the pattern of political grouping that has evolved with the growth of representative self-government in Madras state, the part played by the 'panchamas' or the fifth varna (those outside the original system of *chaturvarnya*) has been steady without the periodic ups and downs exhibited by the brahmin and non-brahmin *varnas*. This 'fifth' group constituting 15 per cent of the population and appearing homogeneous because of the common disability of 'untouchability' has throughout the history of democracy in Madras remained a 'minority' both in number and in socio-economic-political status. This group, originally supposed to be outside the pale of caste Hindu society, developed castes within itself and also ideas of mutual untouchability. The social structure of this group was faithfully patterned on that of the rest of Hindu society, notions of endogamy, commensality, pollution and hierarchy dividing it into myriad small cells. Still the social and cultural differences within it being not so much as those between the panchama and the other *varnas*, an image of compactness and homogeneity is presented by the panchamas. They had established what Panikkar called a 'parallel society',<sup>1</sup> the members of which lived on the outskirts of villages, having their own roads and wells, their own shops and hotels, their own barbers and washermen, their own deities and priests, their own burial grounds—from all of which the caste Hindus kept away. It is this elaborate system of *apartheid* which segregated the members of this small society and kept them at the greatest physical, cultural and economic distance from

1. K.M. Panikkar, *Hindu Society at Cross Roads*, 1955.

the larger society of caste Hindus that served to integrate the untouchables. Owing to its general backwardness, this group had never been politically dominant and owing to its smallness in size could scarcely hope to become a ruling class. But a combination of these two factors—backwardness and minority position—has proved to be a political asset which has enabled it to acquire and retain an independent stand in the Madras politics. For, this group, as already noted, has a strength five times greater than that of the brahmin and constitutes a substantial minority which no group wishing to rule in a democratic order can safely ignore. An obvious way of securing the support of this substantial minority has been to offer it political and administrative patronage and promise of relief from its backward situation.

Similar to the continuing force of non-brahminism, a pro-panchama trend may also be traced in Madras politics. In both, basic social factors indicate directions of political growth; in one case it was a growing protest against the traditional primacy and early dominance in modern British administration of the small brahmin minority, whereas in the other, it was a regular outflow of genuine sympathy (not untouched by political calculation) towards the totally backward and ill-used group of people, a minority no doubt, but not negligible at the polls. As regards the panchamas themselves, their leaders showed from the beginning a tendency to maintain the separate identity of the group, although keen at the same time on ensuring an egalitarian society without social barriers. The group had its own associations, such as the Pariah Mahajana Sabha (later known as the Adi Dravida Mahajana Sabha), the Depressed Classes Society of South India, and the Depressed Classes Mission of Mangalore to champion its cause and assert its rights. During the 20s of this century, many small vernacular newspapers devoted mainly to the cause of the panchama sprang up in Malayalam speaking

districts, where the rigors of untouchability were particularly severe.<sup>2</sup>

### Early British Policy

"In times prior to British rule, the whole of the Pariah community without exception were the slaves of the superior caste. The luxurious Brahmins, the Chetties, the Vellala of the southern provinces waxed fat on the proceeds of the labour of a people with whom ...contact would be horrible pollution," wrote Cornish, the Superintendent of Census Operations in 1871. Fifteen kinds of such slaves mutually differing in the degrees of freedom they possessed were then identified.<sup>3</sup> The Madras Manual of Administration also described the pariahs of the presidency as a community of hereditary slaves whom the British government had freed from a state of bondage and its concomitant legal disabilities but still at a low depth of social degradation.<sup>4</sup> These statements are not strictly true for while their condition may be called 'agrastic serfdom', it was not 'slavery' in the usual sense of the term. Neither the political nor the social reformers of the late nineteenth century in India had real 'slavery' to deal with. But the background of servitude aggravated their sense of isolation and created in the context of a representative system of government a distrust of other classes.

Certain English administrators took keen interest in the uplift of pariahs. In 1892, the Collector of Chingleput, Tremenhere sent a long note to the government on the very low state of Pariahs whom he described as "always badly nourished, clad if at all in the vilest rags, eaten up with leprosy or other horrible disease; huttet like pigs; untaught, uncared for and unpitied..."<sup>5</sup>

2. *Mitavadi, Malayala Manorama and Mathrubhumi* published from Calicut did noteworthy service for the cause.

3. *Census of the Madras Presidency, 1871*, Vol. I, p. 169.

4. *G. O. 1010-1010 A*, Revenue, September 30 .1892.

5. *Ibid.*, review of the condition of pariahs in Chingleput.

He felt that the pariahs should be freed from the semi-servile conditions under which they lived by such measures as allotment of land for tilling and special facilities for education. This interest of a collector and his thesis on pariahs became the starting point of a positive policy of the government towards improving the lot of these sections. The Educational Report of 1891 said that the "agencies and means available for the spread of education among the aboriginal and backward races are few and small and even where agencies and means are available the extreme indifference of those races to the institutions and the aversion they display to any change in their modes of life are insurmountable barriers in the way of schoolmasters." Separate primary schools were established for pariahs and the Presidency Administration Reports gave information regarding the caste wise strength of pupils under instruction classified as Europeans, Brahmins, Muhammadans and Backward Classes.<sup>6</sup> In origin these separate schools were not devised to perpetuate social cleavage but to improve the lot of the backward people in a social system not yet ready to give up segregation. Approving the institution of separate schools for pariahs, *the Hindu* wrote in 1891, "it is impossible to expect caste Hindu children and these classes to study together in the same school. Nor can much be expected from local boards...Government is perfectly justified in showing special consideration to a class, whose conditions must be a blot on any civilised social system."<sup>7</sup> But there were difficulties in conducting even separate schools, because of the caste prejudices of the officers. Most of the inspecting staff belonging to higher castes, were reluctant to enter pariah colonies and inspect their schools.) An Indian

6. G.O. 68, Education, February 1, 1893

The Education Department regarded Chachadis, Chakkilies, Chamaris, Chandalas, Godaris, Holeyas, Madigas, Malas, Mochis, Paidis, Pallars, Pallies (in Nellore), Panus, Parayas, Pulayas, Pellis, Totis and Valluvas as belonging to the "Pariah and kindred classes."

7. *The Hindu*, June 3, 1891.

## THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA

Christian Missionary Society true to its mission brought to the notice of the government in 1905, that the caste-conscious inspector declined to enter pariah villages and called up the school well beyond the village and examined even written answers of pupils from a distance, not less than ten feet and wished to get through "the bother as soon as he could." It suggested appointment of Eurasians or Native Christians or Panchamas as special assistant inspectors. "If India's conditions are understood, it would be readily admitted that the brahmin or other high caste inspector can never as a rule bring himself to do justice, much less to treat with sympathy the pupils who are untouchable outcastes," added the Christian Missionary.<sup>8</sup>

The suggestion regarding a special inspecting agency raised an important socio-political issue—whether the administration should make provision to accommodate private feelings such as caste of its officers or whether the government servants should change their attitudes to render their official duties. The crux of the problem was the legality of discriminatory caste practices in discharging one's official duties. David Duncan, the Director of Public Instruction in 1893 was of the opinion that the government should not recognise the caste taboos of an officer paid out of public funds and instructed his subordinate inspecting officers accordingly.<sup>9</sup> Such orders were not sufficient to remove caste prejudices from educational institutions. In a leading article, the *Madras Mail* (August 13, 1908) commented that too often, as the Government of India had confessed, it was found that the officials even of educational departments were displaying a hostile attitude towards the education of the lower classes.

While the British government tried to end caste observances among its servants in their official capacity,

8. G.O. 763, Education, November 22, 1905.

9. G.O. 68, Education, February 1, 1893.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

it had no intention to bring about a general social reform towards eradicating untouchability and the law also permitted traditional caste practices to a large extent. Disposing of a case about the right of way of an 'untouchable' caste in Malabar in 1879, the Sessions Judge said that, "however fastidious and fanciful the prejudices" of the brahmins might appear to be, he could see no reason why they should not be allowed to maintain their privacy, and the government observed that the "judgment of the Sessions Court secured all the privacy for *agraharams* and formed an authoritative ruling for the guidance of all concerned."<sup>10</sup> This appears to have become almost a judge-made law and the municipal council of Palghat for instance in April 1901 adopted a resolution by which the custom that the *Cherumas* and other untouchable castes should not enter the Big Bazaar Road of Palghat was expressly recognised.<sup>11</sup> This significant judgment of 1879 was recalled even in 1918 in a petition from the Hindu merchants and traders of Big Bazaar in Palghat and the inhabitants of the neighbourhood requesting the government to check the intended procession of *Cherumas* through the road stating that it would be "polluting the memorialists and defiling temples situated in that locality."<sup>12</sup>

At the turn of the century, social and political leaders began to stress the need to extend philanthropic activities towards the lowest castes.<sup>13</sup> The *Hindu* frequently pointed out the need to improve the living

10. *G.O. 115*, Public, January 31, 1918 and *G.O. 2310*, Judicial, September 8, 1879.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, petition to the Governor Lord Pentland dated December 13, 1917 with 306 signatures.

13. A strong reformist impulse was articulated and accelerated by discourses such as that of Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, p. 193). He said that all money should be spent on the education of the pariah and no more money should be spent on the brahmin's education since he was clever and had an aptitude for learning and so could educate himself. His appeal, "arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached" was addressed to the lowest classes.



## THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA

conditions of these people and in a leading article, said, "...the material as well as the spiritual well-being of the Pariahs has been found from time immemorial outside the solicitude of the Hindu legislation and philanthropy. Indeed, the writer in the *Times* employs no exaggeration when he charges the Hindu as looking upon these despised people as an altogether inferior race of mankind." (The Indian members of the Madras Legislative Council established under the Act of 1892, many of whom were brahmins, often championed the cause of the lowest castes and advocated the need to improve their economic condition and open schools to educate their children. The castes of the first *varna* were the first to show sympathy and care towards the lowliest classes. A brahmin lawyer, who had been moved by the description of pariahs in the work of Abbe Dubois and agreed with it, appealed to his castemen to shed caste prejudices as he believed that unless the brahmins changed their attitude, no amount of governmental help would be of any use to the pariahs.<sup>14</sup> A brahmin of Madura district came forward to sink a well for the use of the pariah castes.<sup>15</sup> Sir Sankaran Nair said in the Indian National Conference in 1906 that the emancipation of the downtrodden masses or other classes could not be safely entrusted to those who could not divest themselves of their mental habits. G.A. Natesan, a brahmin leader in Madras city, stressed that it was the duty of the government as well as public men to see that such a large proportion of the population was not left in its hopeless condition. Addressing the Depressed Classes Conference in 1911, he pleaded that special efforts should be taken to spread among the members of the community knowledge about the special concessions offered to them by the government.<sup>16</sup>)

14. C. Y. Chintamani, *Indian Social Reform*, 1901, K. Ramanujachari on "The condition of low castes".

15. *Swadesamitran*, October 7, 1911.

16. *South Indian Mail*, July 17, 1911.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

It may be said that public opinion was being prepared before World War I to demand and welcome administrative and legislative action to ameliorate the condition of the people in the lowest rung of the Hindu social order; there was at the time a genuine urge for social welfare and it was not mixed with any political or electoral calculations. Everyone who was affected by Western education directly or indirectly was in favour of this programme of social reform publicly and no objection was expressed by any 'orthodox' or 'reactionary' group. And the leaders of the panchamas too had begun to speak for their caste group and demand special treatment by the government in the last decade of the last century. The Pariah Mahajana Sabha sent a petition to the government in 1890 requesting some agrarian concessions for the pariahs. In 1898 it made a specific request for lowering in the case of pariahs the standard of the qualifying test prescribed for admission to subordinate medical services.<sup>17</sup> It complained that admission to pariah pupils in the schools in Madras city was difficult and the school fee concessions were not being given effect to in several institutions.<sup>18</sup> In 1914, the panchamas of South Canara requested admission to schools which were closed to them.<sup>19</sup> In 1916 the Depressed Classes Society held a conference and requested the government to "enquire into the exact condition of the depressed classes and to make recommendations for measures which will secure freedom and justice for the depressed classes."<sup>20</sup> The question attained political importance on the eve of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and led to a coalition between the 'panchamas' and the 'non-brahmins' of the Justice movement against the brahmins and Home Rule. References were made frequently to the deplorable condition of the depressed castes in the

17. *G.O. 33*, Education, January 25, 1899.

18. *G.O. 205*, Education, March 30, 1899.

19. *G.O. 1144*, Home (Mis), November 6, 1917.

20. *G.O. 85-86*, Home (Mis), August 25, 1916.

## THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA

Non-Brahmin Conferences and the need to improve their conditions was stressed. In October 1917, Dr. Nayar addressed the panchamas at the Spurtank in Madras at their own request when he made a stirring speech inspiring them to assert their equality with other castes and shed the habit formed by long submission to social injuries. He explained how the proposition of immediate Home Rule was as harmful to panchamas as to non-brahmins in general. "Our contention is that until all the members of your community and the educated are brought to a condition when you can realise what is going on, realise your responsibility and use your votes in a discriminating manner, the British power must continue to hold the scales even between classes and classes instead of leaving you to the tender mercies of the so-called superior castes in this country... You must at least have the courage to resist all attempts on the part of the small oligarchy in this country to snatch the powers of government in their hands," he said and exhorted them to organise themselves and establish a committee of representatives from various areas so that the "Non-Brahmin Party" and the "Panchama Party" could move in line in politics.<sup>21</sup> On behalf of the Madras Dravidian Association, the Raja of Panagal presented an address to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India when they visited Madras in August 1917, pointing out the educational backwardness of the lower castes and the need for the continuance of the British rule to protect them against suppression by the upper castes. The political association of the panchamas agreed broadly with the stand taken by the South Indian Liberal Federation as regards constitutional changes and a delegate representing its case before the Joint Parliamentary Committee demanded election instead of nomination of panchama candidates to the legislatures.<sup>22</sup>

21. *The Hindu*, October 7, 1917.

22. *Joint Select Committee on Government of India Bill*, Vol. III, p. 96.

### The Labour Department

(The Madras government was ahead of the political leaders and legislators in this matter and was making elaborate arrangements for special departmental care of the depressed classes. In the Imperial Legislative Council on March 16, 1916, a resolution was moved by a Congress member, recommending to the government that "measures be devised with the help, if necessary, of a small representative committee of officials and non-officials for amelioration in the moral, material and educational condition of what are known as the depressed classes and that as a preliminary step, the local governments and administrations should be invited to formulate schemes with due regard to local conditions.") Moving the resolution, he said that the provincial governments should be encouraged to adopt a definite policy of improving the material prosperity of these classes and made mention of the special attention given to this problem in the Madras presidency. He meant by depressed classes "untouchable castes, and aboriginal, criminal and wandering tribes" and estimated roughly their strength at 70,000,000, i.e., about one-fourth of the total population of India. Emphasising the need for the government to take initiative in the matter, he said that the "whole administration in relation to these unfortunate classes is marked by the absence of a definite policy... The result is that there has been unequal development among the different groups... Unless the stimulus comes from the government, the provincial administration will not undertake any proper scheme of reforms." The first debate on the subject in the central legislature followed the moving of this resolution, in which both European and Indian members participated. There was unanimity on the point that the uplift of the depressed classes was a national problem of prime importance. Official members of the council regarded caste Hindus as being responsible for the practice of untouchability and the consequent degradation

## THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA

of these classes, while non-official members laid the blame on the local governments for neglecting a grave social problem.<sup>23</sup> However, governmental action to elevate the lowest classes was then for the first time suggested and seriously considered. Though this resolution moved in the Imperial Council was not passed but withdrawn, the Government of India took up the matter and enquired from provincial governments as to what had been done and what further could be done for the depressed classes.<sup>24</sup> The Government of Madras had already taken initiative in the work and was anxious to furnish a comprehensive reply to the Government of India and to announce a forward policy in the matter and undertook an exhaustive enquiry with all local authorities. It was learnt that the local bodies, the district and taluk boards were quite alive to this problem and were already taking special care of the depressed classes by providing sites for houses and sinking wells and tanks.

While the government was conducting an investigation of the economic condition of these classes, the Board of Revenue recommended the appointment of a special agency for the promotion of the interests of these classes. It observed that however liberal might be the attitude of the government towards them and whatever might be the facilities created for the improvement of their conditions, the effect desired could not be produced as long as there was no separate agency to carry out the policy of the government in this respect. "Proposals for improving the condition of these classes have in the past, from time to time, received the approval of government but owing to the lack of special organisation of effort they have failed of effect. There is

23. The official member, who supported the resolution under discussion, maintained that the charge levelled against local governments was "void of foundation". The official opinion was that the caste Hindus were solely responsible for the problem of depressed minorities. Madan Mohan Malaviya, resented this sweeping generalisation about Hindus and raised an objection that the Legislative Council was not the place for discussing Hindu prejudices.

24. G.O. 1675-1676, Home (Misc), December 2, 1919.

generally indifference and often hostility to measures calculated to uplift the depressed classes and if the Collector is not keenly interested and has not the force of will to carry such measures, they became entirely inoperative owing to the persuasive obstruction or indifference of his subordinates. It is therefore essential that a special officer with a suitable staff under him should be appointed as Protector of the depressed classes," remarked the Board of Revenue. Such an officer it added would "impart continuity to all the remedial measures which government have already sanctioned or may sanction in the future and prevent good intentions of the government from being rendered ineffective by local indifference or opposition."<sup>25</sup> The Board thus made it clear that the government should take the lead and give continuity to the spasmodic work carried on in the past thirty years and prevent matters drifting for lack of organisation. The government agreed with these views and sanctioned the appointment of a special officer for the work and specified certain aboriginal and hill tribes and untouchable castes as falling within the scope of the duties of this special officer.<sup>26</sup> The functions of this officer were to study the economic condition of these classes and submit proposals to the government for improving it, to see that philanthropic bodies working in the field received such help from the government as they required, and to promote education and also the standard of living of these classes by allotting lands for cultivation, sites for building houses and providing better water supply. C. F. Paddison, a senior officer of the Indian Civil Service with wide and varied experience was appointed as the first special officer

\* 25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.* The following castes were specified: Aboriginal and Hill Tribes: Khonds, Savaras, Panos, Yanadis, Koyas, Yerukalas, Lambadis, Chenchus, Sugalis, Malayalis, Javadi, Irulars, Malasars, Shalagars, Kurumbas, Panis, Pulayans, Kanis, Badagas, Todas. Untouchables: Adi Dravidas, Chakkiliyans, Cherumas, Holeyas, Madigas, Malas, Pallans, Parayans, Semmans, Haddis, Bavuris, Dandasis, Madaris, Valluvans, Nayadis, Koragas.

and was designated the Commissioner of Labour. To carry on the multifarious duties assigned to the officer a strong staff was required and a Deputy Commissioner of Labour was appointed in 1920. A Labour Advisory Board composed of one European, one Brahmin and one Adi Dravida was also constituted in the same year.<sup>27</sup> A District Labour Officer was appointed in 1922 in the districts where special work had been commenced. They were selected generally from deputy tahsildars and tahsildars and those who had completed the deputy collector's tests, and appointed by the collectors, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Labour. The subordinate labour staff was also appointed by the collectors. Although this staff worked directly under the supervision of the collectors, the Commissioner of Labour had the full power of supervision of the work of the district labour officers both in matters of policy and detail. The Labour Department grew fast in size and scope under the rule of the Justice party. It started work in Tanjore, Godavari, and Chingleput districts in 1920 and extended it to Chidambaram taluk of South Arcot in 1921. Between 1921 and 1924 extensive activities on a gradually increasing scale were undertaken in six more districts, South Arcot, Krishna, Guntur, Bellary, Tiruchi and South Kanara. In 1925, an Honorary District Labour Officer was appointed to Malabar. By 1931 fifteen districts were covered. Thus the Labour Department of the Government of Madras came into being and expanded, not as the name may suggest for the benefit of industrial workers, but for the uplift of the depressed classes. It was a pioneering effort in the direction of a modern welfare state in a society whose life and work had been based on caste. The constitutional necessity of legislative approval and sanction underlay the formation in 1923 of an Advisory Committee consisting of some

27. Gilbert Slater, K. Ramanujachariar and M. C. Raja were members of the first committee.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

members of the legislative council specially interested in the welfare of the depressed classes. The Commissioner of Labour and the Secretary to the Public Works and Labour Department were ex-officio members of the committee and the president was authorised to temporarily nominate to the committee local members for the discussion of local subjects.<sup>28</sup> Several proposals were made in the Legislative Council to constitute such advisory committees in the districts with members from each taluk to assist the district labour officers. Such a committee, the government felt would not be as thoroughly conversant with the needs of the people as the regular labour staff constantly in contact with the people. The idea of constituting the committee with members of the depressed classes was also rejected by the government on the ground that suitable men in sufficient numbers would not be available.<sup>29</sup>

The legislatures of the '20s were keenly sensitive to the problem of the depressed castes and eager to extend state aid to them in various ways. Promotion of elementary education was a primary concern of the Labour Department which started separate primary schools for the depressed classes called 'labour schools'. The number of these schools increased with the general expansion of the activities of the department. It was also the policy of the Labour Department to assist pupils of the depressed classes to get admission to public schools. It was repeatedly urged that no elementary school under public management or receiving aid from public funds should exclude any community; but the department found that caste prejudices were strong in rural areas and separate schools were necessary for the depressed classes. According to the annual reports of the Labour Commissioner, separate schools were started only in cases where refusal to start them would have meant in practice

28. *G.O. 1000*, L, Public Works and Labour, May 5, 1927.

29. *G.O. 2883*, L, Public Works and Labour (Misc.), November 16, 1928.



## THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA

denial of education to the depressed classes. Measures were taken and orders issued to ensure that schools aided or supported by public resources were really accessible to all classes of people. Local bodies were warned that subsidies paid on behalf of schools under their management would be withdrawn if they were situated in places inaccessible to the depressed classes.<sup>30</sup> It was also ordered that permission should not be accorded to separate schools unless a local body could show that it was impossible despite persistent propaganda to persuade caste Hindus to admit pupils of depressed classes into caste Hindu schools.<sup>31</sup> Caste prejudices were strong in some places; an extreme case was recorded in a village in North Arcot district where caste people pulled down a shed put up for the school on the pretext of some dispute over the site on which it was built.<sup>32</sup> News came from another place that the president of a taluk board was compelled to discontinue the employment of two Adi Dravida teachers in caste Hindu schools owing to the ill treatment of the teachers by caste Hindus who refused to send their children to the school.<sup>33</sup> Although the government observed that the president should have taken a firm stand and not yielded to the coercion of caste Hindus, yet it was obvious that in the absence of a law prohibiting discriminatory practices, it was not easy to run common schools for all castes. In 1934, ten instances of withdrawals of caste pupils on account of admission of depressed class students were brought to the notice of the government.<sup>34</sup> Few schools really admitted pupils from these classes though many schools were legally accessible to them. In 1926-27, 38 per cent and in 1931-32, 37 per cent of the public schools had depressed class students on their rolls.

30. *Grant-in-aid Code 1920.*

31. *G.O. 740, Education, April 23, 1930.*

32. *G.O. 2434, Public Works and Labour, October 26, 1927.*

33. *G.O. 251, Education, February 6, 1933.*

34. *G.O. 1288, Education, May 21, 1934.*

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

This was a period when the Labour Department was most active in many districts but the department could make no substantial progress towards achieving castelessness in educational institutions. To enforce admission of the children of depressed castes in common schools the government issued an order in 1935 refusing recognition to any school situated in a locality inaccessible to members of any class or community and denying grants-in-aid to schools which refused admission to any pupil merely on the ground of caste or community.<sup>35</sup> Such rules were not very effective and collectors of many districts continued to report that caste prejudices still persisted in many villages and that consequently the social progress of the Adi Dravidas had not advanced to the desired extent.<sup>36</sup> But with the abolition of untouchability by law, the resistance to the mixture of castes in public schools faded out. In the '30s, these departmental schools were transferred to the local authorities who were able and willing to take them over, for it was never the intention of the government to relieve the local bodies permanently of their responsibility in the matter of providing educational facilities for the depressed classes. The government undertook to share the financial burden cast on the local bodies by this transfer of all labour schools, but said that this concession should not be made the ground for throwing on the government the entire financial responsibility for elementary education in respect of the depressed classes.<sup>37</sup> Besides instituting separate schools, the Labour Department as an inducement to the poorer sections of the depressed classes to keep

35. Rule 15A of the *Rules Framed under Madras Education Act 1920 (Corrected up to 1937)* says, "If no pupils belonging to the scheduled castes are attending a school, it will be deemed to refuse admission to such pupils unless the management of the school show that no such pupils are residing within a distance of one mile from the school or adduce other satisfactory reasons for the absence of such pupils from the school."

36. *G. O. 2196*, Public Works and Labour, September 5, 1938.  
*G. O. 2109*, Public Works and Labour, August 25, 1939.

37. *G. O. 2283*, Public Works and Labour, October 20, 1933.

their children at school, undertook to supply books and other requisites up to a certain limit and even clothes to deserving pupils.<sup>38</sup> Poor students of the depressed classes were exempt from payment of examination fees.<sup>39</sup> In 1928, a member of the legislative council recommended to the government that midday meals be supplied for pupils in labour schools. His resolution, however, was not moved and the government was not then prepared to undertake the charge because of the administrative difficulties, the cost involved and the restrictions regarding commensality practised among the depressed classes.<sup>40</sup>

Though the government, through its Labour Department undertook measures for social and educational advancement of the backward sections which included several lower castes besides the 'untouchables', the separate political identity of the 'untouchable castes' was not established during the '20s and there was no political or administrative recognition of a border line between the 'touchable' and 'untouchable' constituting the 'depressed classes'. Indeed the Non-Brahmin Movement had a political interest in covering the depressed classes under the term 'Non-brahmin' to segregate the Brahmin minority. The ten seats reserved for the 'depressed classes' by the Government of India Act of 1919 were shared by all lower castes which could not secure election in open contest. The Communal G.O. of 1922 gave one seat to the 'depressed classes and others', 'others' indicating all communities not given separate turns in the order. For the purpose of this rule, the depressed classes included thirty-five 'untouchable' castes, twenty-four 'criminal tribes' and thirty-five 'aboriginal and hill tribes' according to an order issued in 1930; and in the next year the list was modified to comprise

38. G.O. 918, March 20, 1930.  
 G.O. 178, January 21, 1931.  
 39. G.O. 2396, October 20, 1927.  
 40. G.O. 1149, April 27, 1928.

{ Public  
 Works and  
 Labour

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

thirty-five 'hill and aboriginal tribes' and eighty-two 'others'.<sup>41</sup>

The Labour Department also extended its assistance to some caste Hindus, who were found to be as backward as the classes defined as depressed in many respects. There were actually twenty-two schools in 1928 maintained by the department exclusively for caste Hindus nearly all of which were meant for 'fisher children'. Regarding allotment of house sites, the government was often obliged to consider the case of caste Hindus, especially in the southern districts. Padayachi labourers of Pandhi village in Tanjore district sent a petition to the department claiming equal consideration along with Adi Dravidas in the matter of allotment of house sites on the plea that they were no better in respect of work and wages. In certain districts, particularly Tanjore and South Arcot, allotment of house sites had to be extended to castes other than untouchables on precisely the same considerations as those which were held to justify allotment on behalf of the untouchable classes. The authorities found it difficult to define these matters strictly and were often obliged to use their discretion in regard to the inclusion of other classes. This extension of Labour Department's assistance to caste labourers induced very many castes to look to state aid for improvement of their economic conditions. These demands could not be turned down nor could all of them be taken up and so with regard to the acquisition of house sites for Settibalijas, the government instructed in 1929 that the initiative should come from the collectors of districts and not the Labour Commissioner and that the matter should be dealt with by the ordinary revenue staff and not the special labour staff.<sup>42</sup> The Labour Department was

41. G.O. 777, Public (Services), June, 27 1930.

G.O. 719, Public (Services), July 2, 1931. For the list, see Appendix III d.

42. G.O. 514, Public Works and Labour, February 18, 1929.

## THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA

thereafter required to restrict its activities to the depressed classes and such aboriginal and hill tribes, criminal tribes and untouchables placed under its special care.

Nevertheless it was difficult to enforce this principle rigidly because there were many castes technically 'non-depressed' as they were not 'untouchables', but actually as much 'depressed' as any 'untouchable' caste. A satisfactory definition of 'depressed class' was not possible as it was not one integrated group. A curious situation arose wherein the non-depressed were able to get free house sites from the district authorities or the Board of Revenue which the depressed were not given by the Labour Department.

As the status 'depressed class' carried certain material advantages, there developed by 1930, a popular desire to be counted among the 'depressed'. The president of the Ramnad district board forwarded to the government many petitions received from barber communities and stressed the "imperative necessity of including" them in the list of depressed classes on account of the backward state in which they lived; but the government rejected them.<sup>43</sup> A Vanniar member of the Legislative Council, M.A. Manickavelu Nayagar moved a resolution in the council in 1931 recommending to the government that the ameliorative work carried on by the Labour Department should be extended to Agnikula Kshatriyas in Andhra districts and Vanniakula Kshatriyas in Tamil districts. Similar requests were repeatedly put forward in favour of the Viswabrahmin caste by their representative G. Ramamurthi.

Depressed class converts to Christianity in most cases found their material condition no better than that of many Hindu castes, and it was not easy to decide whether to treat them as a depressed caste and include them as eligible to the special care of the Labour

43. No. 1122, Public Works and Labour, April 4, 1930.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

Department or exclude them as Christian. In the beginning, the government took a human rather than legalistic view of this issue because it realised that there was a real difficulty in the case of Indian Christians who by their conversion had lost their claim to be untouchables but were not free from social disabilities.

The policy followed by the Labour Department was to include among the depressed classes, such of them as had become Christians also, and in 1925 the educational assistance available to the Hindu depressed classes were extended to Christian converts among them. In 1926, the government decided that educational concessions to converts from the depressed classes should be operated by the Education Department and the Labour Department was instructed in 1928 to confine the scholarships which it distributed to the Hindu depressed classes alone.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the Christian depressed classes became an 'eligible community' for all ameliorative measures except education undertaken by the Labour Department and were entitled to half-fee concessions in schools granted to the backward classes. But in recruitment to the state services, Christian depressed classes had to take their chance along with Christians and not with the depressed classes.<sup>45</sup> This minority within a minority complained that even after conversion to Christianity they were subject to the same social disabilities as before. Whenever a subject associated with the Labour Department was debated in the legislature, the Indian Christian members promptly stressed the need to treat converts from the depressed classes on the same lines as members of their original castes.

During '30s the government could not formulate a precise or consistent policy in identifying the communities to benefit by its ameliorative steps. Christian depressed classes throughout insisted that they were

44. G.O. 1648, Public Works and Labour, July 5, 1928.

45. G.O. 879, Public (Services), August 29, 1931.

equally depressed as the non-converted; certain castes such as Padayachis and Meenawar in particular, insisted that there was practically no difference between themselves and the 'untouchable' castes. But whenever the administration attempted to aid communities not officially recognised as 'depressed', the 'untouchables' and their spokesmen readily complained that the funds exclusively reserved for them were being diverted to other purposes. The matter was at last settled when under the Government of India Act of 1935 a list of depressed classes on the basis of untouchability, termed 'Scheduled Classes', was drawn for electoral purposes. Since then the scheduled classes alone became eligible to take the turns reserved for the 'depressed classes' in the public services.<sup>46</sup> But the ameliorative activities of the Labour Department were extended not only to the scheduled classes but also to certain aboriginal and hill tribes,<sup>47</sup> and it was decided that these castes should be designated simply as "communities eligible for the ameliorative measures undertaken by the Labour Department."<sup>48</sup> Thus a clearly defined category composed of 'untouchable castes' came into being for political and administrative purposes.

### Assimilation of the Depressed Minority

Between 1920 and 1935, political opinion in Madras among all major parties and groups favoured the assimilation of the depressed minority with the rest of the population through legislative and administrative regulations. The Justice party claimed that it was due to its efforts that the Labour Department was instituted.<sup>49</sup> There were others who denied this and even accused the Justice party of misusing its power, and

46. *G.O. 1949*, Public (Services), December 6, 1938.

47. *G.O. 2601*, Public Works and Labour, December 4, 1935.

48. *G.O. 1320*, Development, May 19, 1939.

49. *Swadesamitran*, January 1, 1926, Raja of Panagal's address at the All India Non-Brahmin Congress.

told the depressed classes that nothing had been done to remove their social disabilities. Public opinion in Madras was in favour of pulling down the old social barriers to the advancement of these classes. But the alien government hesitated to go the whole length with the local social reformers in effecting far reaching social or religious changes. In 1925, a violent dispute arose over the right of entry of Ezhavas into the *agraharam* (brahmin) streets of Kalpathy. The government directed that where *agraharam* streets formed a natural means of access to a main road or a business centre, the persons using the streets as thoroughfares should be ordinarily supported against any attempt to obstruct them. A condition was, however, added that the local officers should not regard themselves as necessarily bound to take action in support of the entry into an *agraharam* when the entry was dictated merely by the "desire to assert an abstract right and not for business or practical convenience."<sup>50</sup> The spokesmen of the depressed classes condemned this neutral and non-committal attitude of the government. *Dravidan* regarded this as a proof that the Madras government was brahmin-ridden,<sup>51</sup> *Mitavadi* and *Navasakti* pointed out that this vague order would only increase litigation.<sup>52</sup> *Swarajya* wrote, "Government is unwilling to accept the logical conclusion of its oft-repeated concern for the dignity and status of the depressed classes...and what is more, where there is opposition to the legitimate rights of the depressed classes, it makes the assumption that the opposition is right and natural except when it is proved to be wrong by those who suffer from it."<sup>53</sup> These comments by organs of public opinion in 1925 show how far such opinion had progressed and became articulate while the incident shows the

50. G.O. 37, Public, January 9, 1925.

51. *Dravidan*, January 14, 1925.

52. *Mitavadi*, January 19, 1925, *Navasakti*, January 16, 1925.

53. *Swarajya*, January 12, 1925.



last-ditch resistance of social die-hardism and the Government Order illustrates the legal and administrative problems faced by what had been a wholly foreign government addicted to strict socio-religious neutrality just then in the process of transformation into a native and democratic government.

Local political leaders were anxious to assure to this minority not only legal equality but also social equality. On November 1, 1932, Dr. P. Subbaroyan, the Chief Minister of Madras, introduced a resolution in the Legislative Council on the right of the 'untouchables' to enter Hindu temples and it was seconded by T.A. Ramalingam Chettiar. Many members supported the resolution which was considered in essence a means to rectify an injustice of the past and a move to lift the untouchables to a status of social equality with caste Hindus. Fifty-six members voted for the resolution and nineteen remained neutral.<sup>54</sup> Orthodox Hindu opinion evidently not aware of or interested in the political implication of the move to merge the untouchables with the rest of Hindu society disapproved the resolutions as opposed to the *agamas*, revolting to the Hindu doctrines of *karma* and rebirth, and condemned the government action as undue interference of politics in religion and inconsistent with the declared policy of religious neutrality.<sup>55</sup> A deputation of the Varnashrama Swarajya Sangam waited on the Governor and made a strong appeal against any hasty conclusion on the subject. It argued that the legislative council had no mandate from the electorate to pass a law on this subject and added that temple entry was not related to the question of the uplift of the depressed classes.<sup>56</sup> All-caste public protest meetings were held in urban and rural places and both laymen and priests strongly protested against

54. *G.O. 114*, Public (General), March 31, 1933.

55. *G.O. 140*, Public (General), February 7, 1933, representation of the Varnashrama Swarajya Sangam.

56. *Ibid.*

legislative interference in a religious matter. The opposition to temple entry was not confined to the brahmins or to high castes but was expressed by the orthodox of all castes including the backward (but not 'untouchable') non-brahmin castes. A meeting of Viswabrahmins at Kancheepuram and Sengunthars at Pillai-palayam protested against the legislation.<sup>57</sup> Memorials to the government opposing the legislation far outnumbered those supporting it. Those aware of the futility of opposition outside the parliament when supporters of the measure in the legislature were in a minority, questioned the competence of the legislature to recommend a policy to the government in the matter. The Madras Advocates' Association remarked that decision by legislative majority on this question was not valid.<sup>58</sup> Sankarācharya Swami of Puri declared that in matters of religion the majority had no right to coerce the minority.<sup>59</sup> A Temple Defence Day was observed in Triplicane in Madras in this connection.<sup>60</sup> It was one of the instances when popular opinion contradicted and expressed itself strongly against the majority opinion of the legislature. The Madras government concluded that the proposed reform was opposed to *Sastras* and custom, that orthodox opinion was strong and to flout it would only create dissensions between caste Hindus and untouchables. Probably it believed that the measure was the result of agitation by the Congress with ulterior political motives and the Viceroy in accordance with the Queen's proclamation regarding religious freedom could not assent to this legislation.<sup>61</sup> The Government of India was not in favour of the resolution and instead agreed to suggest that new temples, accessible to both caste Hindus and Harijans should be opened and observed

57. G.O. 93, Public, January 24, 1933.

58. *The Hindu*, April 4, 1934.

59. *The Hindu*, February 19, 1934.

60. *The Hindu*, May 7, 1934.

61. G.O. 93, Public, January 24, 1933.

that if the vast majority of the Hindu population from all over India visited these new temples to the exclusion of the old ones, then either the conservatives would revise their stand on the entry of Harijans to these temples or their temples would be gradually deserted.<sup>62</sup> Apparently the Government of India regarded the issue in administrative terms and wished to avoid trouble and consequently opposed the very progressive measure that came from Madras; the Governor-General refused assent to Dr. P. Subbaroyan's Bill passed by the Madras Legislative Council.

In this controversy over temple entry, more than religion and orthodoxy, the political calculations behind it were of importance. Those who championed this cause were the nationalist Hindu leaders of the Congress; but they advocated it manifestly as a measure of democratic social reform. The foreign government naturally felt disinclined to enter the field of socio-religious reforms. This attitude appeared to the nationalists a British device to hinder the unification of Hindu society. The *Hindu* discerned an imperialistic motive of the English when it said that the serious economic and social disabilities suffered by the depressed and untouchable castes had been a forceful argument against granting self-government.<sup>63</sup> To *Swarajya* the Government of India's decision seemed, "neither legally nor morally justifiable."<sup>64</sup> The nationalist Tamil magazine *Swadesamitran* expressed surprise at the decision of the Viceroy which it considered as one designed to the advantage of the British government rather than to that of the *Sanatanists*.<sup>65</sup> With the sole exception of some Urdu journals<sup>66</sup> which supported the government's stand, the press of Madras, English and

62. *G.O. 205*, Public (General), March 4, 1933.

63. *The Hindu*, January 23, 1933.

64. *Swarajya*, January 24, 1933.

65. *Swadesamitran*, January 24, 1933.

66. *Qaumi Report*, January 18, 1933, *Rahbari-i-Deccan*, February 21, 1933.

vernacular alike, condemned the attitude of the government.

The participants in the controversy were mainly caste Hindus and not the depressed classes, for temple entry was neither sponsored nor demanded by any depressed class leaders.<sup>67</sup> Dr. Ambedkar was not particular about the right to enter temples but instead advocated mass conversion of untouchables to Buddhism. The Self-respect Movement in Madras was propagating total destruction of the Hindu religion and all its practices as the only way of ending many social evils including untouchability. Temple entry was a question that agitated the minds of Congress leaders, who wished to conciliate the depressed classes and thus prevent their secession from Hinduism which would reduce the electoral strength of the Congress besides creating a 'minority' problem like the one posed by the Muslims. The question of temple entry was quite different from other problems of untouchability such as right of way through caste Hindu roads or access to schools and law courts. Since in Hindu temples there was no congregational worship and different castes worshipped different gods, the untouchable castes were not keen on 'temple entry'. The political object of temple entry agitation was to establish that the untouchables too were Hindus and thus prevent mass conversion to other religions reducing the number of Hindus. At the same time it was an attempt by the Congress to forge a firm alliance with a minority group suffering inferior social status by promises of equality which would prove fruitful in electoral politics and demonstrate to the alien rulers the essential integrity of the nation.

67. Early in 1934 Gandhiji undertook a tour of Madras and Travancore preaching abolition of untouchability and he said that Hinduism would suffer extinction if untouchability continued and that the *Sastras* did not warrant untouchability. (*The Hindu*, January 4, 1934.) He asked with reference to the Tirupati temple, "when Europeans ascend the hills, why not Harijans?" The temple officials promptly replied that no Harijan had sought permission to do so. (*The Hindu*, January 2, 1934.)

**Caste Consciousness of the Casteless**

During the same period the depressed classes were getting class-conscious and class-organised and endeavouring to establish themselves as a social group with distinct political interests entitled to special consideration by the government. They began to feel that their political interests should not be entrusted to the Justice party. A deputation of Adi Dravidas headed by M. C. Raja, a nominated member of the Madras Legislative Council, presented a memorandum to the Governor Lord Willingdon in 1923, which stated that the Justice party had not done justice to the depressed classes in the matter of nomination of members to the legislature and the local boards and appointments to government services.<sup>68</sup> It was even alleged that the professed object of the Non-Brahmin Movement, viz., the uplifting of the masses, was a "mere sham" and the intention of the high caste non-brahmins was to keep the depressed classes for ever under subjection.<sup>69</sup> In fact, no member of these classes found admission into the central legislature or into the provincial ministry. A Malayalam newspaper, particularly interested in these classes, frequently complained that under the rule of the Justice party, the power of the already powerful classes had been enhanced.<sup>70</sup> With the prospect of further advancement towards self-government appearing brighter by 1930, the leaders of these classes felt the need to define their political policy. A. S. Sahanandam, N. Sivaraj and V. I. Muniswami Pillai repeated in conferences that in the interest of the depressed classes, the British government should not part with power because Congress Raj would crush the Adi Dravidas.<sup>71</sup> It was believed that the British government stood as a shield protecting the panchama from the

68. *Andhrapatrika*, April 6, 1923.

69. *Dheenabandhu*, April 11, 1923.

70. *Mitavadi*, January 24, 1921.

71. *India*, August 5, 1931.

high castes;<sup>72</sup> and M.C. Raja stated that the one reason why English rule should continue in India was to secure just treatment for the depressed classes.<sup>73</sup> The Adi Dravida Mahajana Sabha presented a memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission of 1927 requesting the constitution of separate electorates for the depressed classes. It stated that the system of joint constituencies was worse than nomination and that the depressed class candidates elected to the council with the support of caste Hindu voters would not work for their castes. The provincial conference of the Madras Depressed Classes Federation endorsed the demand and condemned the system of nomination. It urged the need to make provision for proper representation of these classes in state services and to include one of their members in the Viceroy's Executive Council. The conference was one of the biggest of its kind in which several leaders specially interested in the uplift of the depressed classes, members of the legislature and ministers participated. It discussed at length the social, economic and political disabilities of the depressed classes and stressed the need to intensify the relief operations of the provincial government. Similar requests were repeated in a series of conferences during this period making it incumbent on the authorities to meet them in the new Constitution. The Simon Commission rejected the plea for separate electorates for the depressed classes but the question was opened again at the Round Table Conference by Dr. Ambedkar and R. Srinivasan who were nominated to represent these classes. They presented a scheme of political safeguards for the protection of the depressed classes in the future Constitution laying down the terms and conditions on which they could "consent to place themselves under a majority rule in a self-governing India." These comprised equal citizenship,

72. *Mitavadi*, June 28, 1926.

73. *The Hindu*, April 5, 1924.

## THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA

free enjoyment of civic rights, protection against discrimination, adequate representation in the legislature and the services, redress against prejudicial action or neglect of interests, representation in the cabinet and special departmental care of the depressed classes. The authors of the scheme suggested incorporating certain Fundamental Rights in the Constitution guaranteeing the right to equality.

The preoccupation of the nationalists was to rebut the British argument that social divisions militated against self-government while Hindu political leaders wanted to prevent a political split in the Hindu community which might weaken it at the polls and/or add to Christian or Muslim numbers by defections from the Hindu fold. The claim of the depressed classes to be considered as a political minority was not admitted by the Indian National Congress which asserted that it represented the depressed classes also as much as any other group.<sup>74</sup> Gandhiji opposed the idea of special constituencies for the depressed classes and suggested a scheme of reservation of seats for them in general constituencies; and to secure the adoption of this scheme, he undertook 'a fast unto death' while he was in prison at Yeravda. The leaders of the depressed classes accepted Gandhi's scheme by the Poona Pact (September 26, 1932) and the terms were incorporated in the Government of India Act, 1935. Under it thirty seats were reserved for the Depressed Classes named thereafter the Scheduled Classes in general Hindu constituencies of the Madras legislative assembly.

74. When the question of creating separate electorates for the depressed classes was discussed, Gandhiji said, "I can understand the claims advanced by other communities, but the claims advanced on behalf of untouchables, that to me is the unkindest cut of all. It means the perpetual bar sinister. I would not sell the vital interests of the untouchables even for the sake of winning the freedom of India. I claim myself to represent the vast masses of untouchables. Separate electorates and separate reservation is not the way to remove this bar sinister, which is the shame, not of them but orthodox Hinduism. I want to say with all emphasis that I can command that if I was the only person to resist that thing I would resist it with all my life."

These castes formed a self-conscious 'minority group' not only aware of its political power but anxious to establish itself as the original people of the land. M.C. Raja had strong objection to the name 'Harijan' given to them by Gandbi. He felt that this name meaning 'the son of God' was applicable to any Hindu and therefore inappropriate. To denote their separateness and antiquity, he chose the names 'Adi Dravida', 'Adi Andhra', and 'Adi Karnataka' which many members of these castes had already adopted. He asserted that it was the right of the castes concerned to adopt a name for themselves and others had no right to give them a name.<sup>75</sup>

### **The Policy of Political Concessions**

Starting from the statutory recognition of the Scheduled Classes in 1935 as a minority entitled to special consideration, a liberal policy of extending socio-economic and political concessions has been regularly pursued by the government. Such concessions include relaxation of the general rules regarding qualifications (age and academic) for admission to the public services or eligibility for freeships in educational institutions. Already in 1932, the government had raised the upper age limit from twenty-five to twenty-seven for backward classes and Muslims in respect of appointments to the posts of clerks and typists.<sup>76</sup> The concession was granted after much discussion because the government feared that while it might not substantially help the classes to whom it was intended it would encourage similar claims to concessions from other classes. This waiving of the age limit by one or two years confined in the beginning to subordinate positions in government employment was extended in 1936 to the state medical service raising the age limit for scheduled class candidates and fixing it as

75. G.O. 849, Development, April 1, 1939, discussion in the Madras Legislative Assembly.

76. G.O. 10, Public (Services), January 5, 1932.



## THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA

thirty-five. while the general rule prescribed thirty years for others.<sup>77</sup> This age concession originally limited in operation for a period of four years was extended for another period of three years<sup>78</sup> in 1936 and again at the end of that period for one more year.<sup>79</sup> The extension was intended to help the castes concerned to make good the loss of turns incurred in the rotation of communal representation in public services in previous years, which numbered nearly to 339 chances in the case of Scheduled Classes; but it could not help to make good the loss within the time stipulated.<sup>80</sup>

Similar to the age concession was mark concession introduced in 1932. But it was found that this favour too benefited only the Christians and to a less degree Muslims and least of all the backward classes for whose special benefit it was made. Statistics prepared by the Madras Public Service Commission in 1937 showed that forty-one Christians, thirty-six Muslims and one Scheduled Class candidate had benefited by the relaxation of educational requirements<sup>81</sup> This concession too originally limited to a period of four years was later on extended. And both types of relaxation have not so far been repealed. In 1965 for instance, the rules for Madras Public Service Commission provided that candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes would be eligible to appear for the examinations even if they had obtained only 35 per cent of the allotted marks in the qualifying school examination, whereas others must show a minimum of 40 per cent.<sup>82</sup> Further, for the appointment of upper division clerks in the Madras Secretariat Service, for which generally a

77. G.O. 1077, Public (Services), June 15, 1936.

78. G.O. 754, 755 and 756, Public (Services), April 21, 1937.

79. G.O. 1249, Public (Services), July 20, 1938.

80. *Ibid.*

81. G.O. 842 and 843, Public (Services), April 29, 1937.

82. *Madras Public Service Commission, Instructions, etc...to candidates, rule 4, annexure i. a.*

first class degree was required, it was declared in 1943 that in the case of a person belonging to the Harijan community or any of the backward classes, a mere pass would be sufficient because the candidate had to strive against so many social and other disadvantages that his pass degree could be deemed equal to the first class or Honours degree acquired by the non-backward.<sup>83</sup> Besides these concessions, the government exempted the backward communities from payment of application fees prescribed for jobs. This facility given to Harijans in 1939 has since been renewed every three years.<sup>84</sup> In 1948, this concession was extended to the Backward Classes and in 1951 to the Scheduled Tribes.<sup>85</sup> From time to time several suggestions were made to further the *assimilation* of the Harijan element in government offices and thereby expedite their general social assimilation. A repeated suggestion was to reserve all inferior posts to the scheduled classes.<sup>86</sup> Several high officials believed that if such reservation was practised for even a period of ten years it would probably do more to break down the barriers of caste than all the declarations against untouchability. But it was not acted upon probably because the government felt that such an order would be resented and opposed by other communities.

By 1935 the central government too became concerned about representation of scheduled classes in its services. The Government of India stated in a resolution in 1934 that in the then state of education among these classes, they did not consider that any useful purpose could be served by reserving for them a definite percentage of vacancies. However, in order to secure fair

83. G.O. 957, Public (Services), April 22, 1948.

84. G.O. 27, Public (Services), January 6, 1939; G.O. 1004, 1005, 1006, Public (Services), June 20, 1939. The concession was extended to Harijans qualified from any university.

85. G.O. 974, Public (Services), April 26, 1948 and G.O. 157, Public (Services), January 19, 1951.

86. G.O. 1829, Public (Services), November 5, 1938, petition from Harijans of Tirupati, G.O. 394, Public (Services), March 5, 1938, letter from the American College, Madura.

## THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA

representation of the scheduled classes, it was directed that duly qualified members of these classes might be 'nominated' to a service under government even though recruitment to that service was to be made by 'competition'. This was found inadequate to bring about a substantial increase in the number of scheduled classes in the services and expressly recognising this, the Government of India adopted a resolution in 1943, reserving  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of posts on an all-India basis for these classes. The maximum age limit for recruitment was raised by three years and fees prescribed for admission or application were reduced to one-fourth. In 1951, the quota of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was fixed as 15 per cent and in 1956 it was increased to 16 per cent of the total posts and to secure the quota, concessions were offered both for initial recruitment as well as for promotions. A candidate for appointment to a public-service who claims these concessions, "should provide a certificate from a Revenue officer not lower in rank than a Tahsildar or an independent Deputy Tahsildar that the applicant belongs to a community (to be specified) which is included in the list of Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes...or Backward Classes..."<sup>87</sup> The Government Order authorising the officers to issue community certificates instructed them also to "check false claims" and directed them to "fully satisfy themselves by actual verification" as regards the community to which the candidates belonged before issuing the certificates.<sup>88</sup> This is an indispensable administrative arrangement to give effect to a social policy, but necessarily places much patronage in the hands of officials and helps to make a concession take on the features of a coveted privilege.

In addition to these administrative concessions, a

87. G.O. 483, Public (Services-A), February 14, 1957, *Madras Public Service Commission, Instructions, etc., to candidates* 9(d) and (e).

88. G.O. 483, Public (Services-A), February 14, 1957.

separate department called the Harijan Welfare Department was set up in Madras in 1949 to deal with the Harijan policy of the government in the place of the Labour Department. It is coordinating the Harijan welfare work of district collectors, who are assisted by district welfare officers in the matter. Constitutional provision is made for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes in the state legislatures and the parliament. This provision initially made for ten years has also been extended. (The Madras Village Panchayats Act of 1950 also provided for reservation of seats for these castes in proportion to their local numbers. This was modified by the Panchayats Act of 1958 which abolished reservation but provided for co-option of scheduled caste members both in the village panchayats and the panchayat union councils, wherever they failed to secure seats in the elections.)

Notwithstanding the special treatment meted out to them, the Harijans have not yet been assimilated with any section of the Hindu population to make a numerically significant factor unlike the several non-brahmin castes who had politically united to make a ruling group in the '20s or the lower non-brahmin castes who had united under the rubric 'backward classes' to displace the 'non-brahmins' and became a politically dominant element after 1952. The Scheduled Castes (the current appellation of former 'untouchables' or Harijans) have remained an unassimilated minority. They have not sufficient localised strength to facilitate absorption with the more backward of the backward classes to challenge the current dominance of the 'backward' which includes the more and the less backward but not the former 'untouchable' castes. These have had therefore to be content with one or two seats in the state cabinet which is again a *concession* rather than a reflection of electoral *power*. In the legislature too their representation arising from open elections has not increased to justify contemplating the ending of the reservation without reducing

THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE FIFTH VARNA

TABLE XVI  
Scheduled Castes and Tribes and Government Appointments

	Direct recruitment				Recruitment by test	
	1950-51	1958-59	1962-63	1950-51	1958-59	1962-63
Total Recruited	Gaz 296 Non-Gaz 832	203 782	60 1,341	11 267	6 1,006	13 191
SC & ST Recruited	11 15	4 24	1 59	8* 6	1 15	1 17
No.						
% to Total	Gaz 4 Non-Gaz 2	2 3	2 4	73 2	17 1	8 9
Reserved for SC & ST	— —	— 121	16 312	— —	2 160	1 31
SC & ST appointed in open competition	— —	— —	— 2	— —	— —	— —

Note: Gaz=Gazetted SC=Scheduled Castes ST=Scheduled Tribes

\* In many vacancies, it happened to be the turn of Harijans according to the Communal G.O. then in force, and hence the large number of recruitments.

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

the number of their representatives much below their share according to the population count. In the services, they have not yet attained a share proportionate to their numerical strength. This is true of the central as well as the state services. This conclusion is supported by the position in the Madras public services shown in Table XVI.

As the progress made by the scheduled caste has been slow, it is believed that there is every reason to continue the special treatment given to this minority.

## Patterns of Adjustment to Modern Democracy

THE history during the past seventy years of the several groupings of castes which are all 'minorities' with reference to the total population of the Madras state shows regularities in the techniques employed by the groups in securing their interests and in the resulting patterns of order; this may point to the possibilities of the future. The social structure of the region leading to the formation of majorities and minorities on the scene, the patterns of group action and reaction in the context of representative self-government and Indianisation of services and the accommodation of group behaviour in evolving political framework and the administrative machine provide clues from which a projection can be attempted of the type and nature of the political order that is likely to establish itself.

The first notable fact is that the caste divisions of the society are such that there is no prospect of a numerical 'majority' in the Western democratic sense ever emerging but only of 'groupings' on the basis of compatible political, social and economic interests. The Hindu system of caste still divides society into several clearly identifiable, hereditary and endogamous groups which consequently are permanent and unalterable, and people living within this system do not seem conscious of any abnormality in it nor are they desirous of breaking the system and forfeiting the security and status which it affords them. The common man is attached to his caste which in the new political order seems to continue to provide for him an occupation, a place in society, friends and colleagues and a sense of security and belonging. This traditional pattern and the attitudes which it sustains only appear to be reinforced by the accrual to the common man of a new individual political

significance with the introduction of parliamentary institutions and elective government. The power of the old system to prevent the 'individualisation' posited by Western-style political development survives to secure that the individual's response to the new order should be in terms of his traditional identification with his caste. Thus ancient caste has assumed a new role and entered modern politics; just as individuals unite to form political groups, caste alliances came to be formed to influence the course of politics. On the basis of such combinations, (the population of Madras has been for practical purposes divided into (1) brahmins, (2) non-backward non-brahmins, (3) backward non-brahmins and (4) the depressed classes or "scheduled castes"<sup>1</sup> Among these, the backward non-brahmins form nearly half of the total population.)

The ground for the formation of these caste alignments and their operation as political entities has to be sought in the local social situation. Analogies with European classes can be misleading because 'social mobility' of the Western kind is as strange to India as endogamous castes can be abroad. The customary ascendancy of brahmins, the social subjection of the sudras, the segregation of the panchamas, the hereditary nature of several occupations, and above all, a notion of status by birth are certain features that distinguish the system of castes. These social concepts, and the social order which they make and reflect are not compatible with the egalitarian and libertarian principles and practices of modern Western democracy. To operate the institutions of modern democracy therefore the castes had to establish new (non-traditional) relations with each other and

1. The non-Hindu, i.e., the Christian and the Muslim sections of the population in so far as they are religious communities have some special interests which are protected by the adoption of the principle of the secular state. But, as regards the internal ordering of groups in the political picture of Madras they have been assimilated into the 'caste pattern' that has evolved over half a century.



seek alliances with other castes having like interests, ambitions and claims.

Such political groupings of castes have made majorities and minorities to form political parties and pressure groups, to guide and direct electoral politics, and to influence decisions by democratic governments. The old division of society into *varnas* and *jatis* did not break down in the absence of real revolutionary movements and the peaceful evolution of democratic political institutions has made possible not only the survival of the *varna-jati* scheme but also political groupings of the population on lines analogous to that social scheme. Since the line dividing the castes of the highest *varna*, viz., the brahmin from all other groups was clear and sharp the new political division followed that line. As with the head, so with the tail; the panchamas were originally aliens to the *varna* order and they had suffered 'social segregation' for centuries. They stood out as a distinct and identifiable political unit calling for amelioration and uplift. Thus in the local society undergoing political change towards democracy, the first and the fifth *varnas*, regardless of the several castes within each of them were 'given' groups deserving respectively demotion and promotion. Between these extremes, the *varna* lines had traditionally wavered, were crossed and re-crossed and had grown dim. This blurring of *varna* distinctions in the middle region sharpened and heightened the contrast between the brahmin and the non-brahmin *varnas*, and furnished the political image of 'the non-brahmin' while the fifth *varna* of oppressed 'untouchables' came to be a ready-made political minority.

*Varna* lines dividing the Sudras, Vaisiyas and Kshatriyas had never been clear and therefore there was scope for castes to achieve mobility up or down as social or political circumstances dictated. This facilitated the movement of 'forward' and 'backward' classes. When scheduling the classes in society for political and administrative purposes the more 'forward' tend to get

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

assimilated in the first *varna* while the more 'backward' came to be treated on a par with the fifth *varna*, the first and the last *varnas* acting like two poles towards which the *jatis* of the middle *varnas* are drawn. The model of a social democracy encouraging personal mobility along a ladder of economic classes (with distinctive cultural images) when it is worked in a society, whose units are still consanguineous *groups* rather than *persons*, operates in the traditional idiom of that society; *groups* take the place of *individuals* in the matter of mobility and personal ambitions have to be realised in the context of the inescapable group of one's birth, not in an open arena where one voluntarily plays in a team of one's choice. Therefore it is that alliances of castes for political purposes became traditional in a society like that of Madras; such combinations were not unknown in the past as can be seen in the history of the conflict of the Right-hand castes and the Left-hand castes recorded in the eighteenth century and dating back to earlier times. The reception of the non-Hindu groups, Muslims and Christians, into appropriate categories in social stratification for political purposes reflects the strength of the idea of caste even outside the Hindu fold. The contemporary grouping of the people for political action in Madras follows and reflects the social developments in the pattern of *varna* and *jati*. Its roots lie deep in the social scheme of endogamous, self-perpetuating groups where the individual cannot be separated from his caste in regard to all that he can do or hope for, materially and spiritually.

The impact of the West enforced some changes and encouraged more in the traditional social system of castes. Firstly, the brahmin castes which formed the only learned group had the opportunity and the incentive to go beyond their customary limits and avail themselves of the openings for modern education and service in government offices. Being the first group of natives to acquire the new skills, the brahmin castes also entered political

life in advance of other castes. Between 1894 and 1920, when Indians were given greater share in the administration, most of the higher positions went to brahmins who were already filling a large number of places in the learned professions, the services and the educational institutions. They also assumed leadership in society and were pioneers in political activity. They were closely followed by the higher castes of non-brahmins who were culturally 'brahminised' and had the same attitudes and capabilities as the brahmins. But they were a small minority of the population, while the masses lower down in the social hierarchy continued in their traditional way of life ignorant and careless of the new dawn. A strikingly uneven development of society resulted with the Western educated brahmins at one end of the scale and at the other end the 'depressed classes'. Between 1910 and 1920 this condition became too obtrusive to be neglected. Liberal democratic ideas springing from modern education spread among the traditionally ignorant and isolated groups; and the growing impact of Western political and legal institutions clashed with the indigenous social order. This created political problems which demanded solutions. Problems and solutions, however, appeared in terms of caste and combinations of castes. The remedy seemed to be, to secure caste-wise representation in government jobs, in the legislature and later in the cabinet, to acquire similar proportionate shares of admission to higher educational institutions which were avenues to public employment and professional advancement, and to remove social disabilities in order to promote the assimilation of the depressed classes with the rest of the population.

In the development of the modern political process in Madras the first challenge was to the dominance of the brahmin minority (3 per cent of the population). Some forward and educated non-brahmins, speaking for the rest (97 per cent of the population) fought for

proportionate share in public affairs for all other castes. They claimed and obtained statutory safeguards for the representation of the non-brahmin majority in the state legislature. The Justice party which conducted this revolution formed the government (the half of it transferred to elected representatives) when the first instalment of self-government in the form of Dyarchy was inaugurated in Madras. As the party in power, it carried out measures calculated to check the preponderance of brahmins in public administration. This procedure was held to be based on a political principle, that it is intolerable that a 'minority' (the brahmins) should usurp the right of a 'majority' (the rest) thereby converting a majority into a minority. This confusing and apparently paradoxical formulation was due to the fusing of two conceptions, (1) a fundamentalist appreciation of democracy as affirming that no government which was not by a numerical majority could be legitimate, and (2) a naive understanding of 'majority' and 'minority' in terms of the numerical strength of castes entirely ignoring individuals except as victims or beneficiaries of caste-determined policies and programmes.

The pattern of political behaviour, starting with the conflict between the brahmin and the non-brahmin initiated by the Justice party in 1916, has established itself in the public life of Madras. It can be discerned in the activity of parties like the Dravida Kazhagam and its off-shoots and rivals; and it has governed the strategy and tactics of the state unit of the Indian National Congress as well. Nothing has happened since by way of review or reconsideration of the basic principle. Neither in the political nor in the socio-religious fields has there been any attempt at giving a new direction towards Western secular principles of individualist voluntarist political action.

The non-brahmin political movement is paralleled and ideologically supported by a social movement which repudiates the entire socio-religious beliefs and practices

of the traditional society in so far as these express brahmin values and admit the role of the brahmin as an example-setter. The political movement to render the brahmin 'minority' ineffective has marched with a wider social movement seeking to rid society of the last traces of brahmanical influence.

The solidarity of the original alliance of protesting non-brahmin castes ranged against the brahmin castes did not last after the initial success of the Justice party. There was internal schism because the measures adopted to bring about 'communal justice' were relevant only to the forward and the 'brahminised' non-brahmins and meant little to the backward non-brahmins. To win more and higher places in government and public life, the backward non-brahmin classes went on to identify themselves with the depressed or the 'untouchable' classes, attempting a new integration in pursuit of the educational and other benefits flowing from the ameliorative activities of the government. The 'backward non-brahmin' group of castes which had mounted ceaseless political pressure in this direction till 1947 became with no special effort the dominant political group in the new political order based on universal adult suffrage. The group now constitutes a near majority of the population much larger than any other group or possible combination of groups at either end or both ends of the old hierarchical scale.

Thus in the story of the evolution of representative democracy in Madras, the 'Brahmin group' provided political leadership at a time when there was little self-government; it was displaced by the 'Non-backward Non-brahmin group' when a substantial amount of self-government was achieved; and this group, in turn, started losing ground to the 'Backward' with the establishment of a fully democratic system. The last and lowliest group consisting of the former 'untouchables' has remained a 'minority', which is socially and economically

weak, but numerically not insignificant, and therefore an object of interest and solicitude to any ruling group. Classified under the title 'Scheduled Castes and Tribes' (in the language of the Indian Constitution) this residual social group remains a political minority with a marginal political capability whenever the balance of power in caste-based politics is tilted at the polls.

The group of backward castes accounts for nearly one half of the total population of the state, and can be a permanent ruling class provided its solidarity is maintained. A common sense of backwardness is the primary bond of union keeping together numerous castes which are mutually exclusive, do not intermarry, and in some cases, cannot even eat together. This unity is a *political* unity in the common pursuit of the special privileges which law and usage currently confer on the *backward*. A certain social condition resulting from certain practices of the caste system has become the basis for the rise of a political unit, and therefore, this political unit can survive only so long as that social condition and its source, the caste, last. The natural propensity under such circumstances will be to perpetuate the social conditions which provide the basis for political power, by continued use of the political power already gained. Thus there may arise a new type of caste dominance. If the higher castes can be seen as having set up and maintained a system in the past that subserved their interests, it is reasonable to forecast that in the future the lower castes would likewise endeavour to sustain the new order which so well serves their purpose. Since their past social pre-eminence has become a definite political liability, brahmins and other high castes may hide or deny their caste and even attempt to eradicate the caste system altogether; but they will be opposed by the backward castes whose past social disability is a present political asset and who will not cooperate in any endeavour to overthrow the criterion which gives them a pre-eminence which their united

numbers can guarantee for them in an elective democracy.

This possibility of democratic domination by the backward is further confirmed by the current efforts of many castes to get their backwardness registered and the generous policy of the government to enlarge the beneficiaries of its programme of concessions to the backward sections. The unavoidable imperative of the electoral system establishes a mutual relation between the policy of appeasing the backward sections by the politicians and the need to depend on the support of the backward classes to acquire and retain political power; the two operate as cause and consequence of each other. (This has been most openly demonstrated in the politics of Mysore where the backward are backward only in a technical sense and the effective political pressure of the classes has resulted in continuous clashes between the government and the law and the Constitution. Such is not the case in Madras. But here the dominance of the backward castes is less open but more pervasive and effective. Therefore a challenge to the backward castes which may rise from a combination of castes higher and lower to them, i.e., the brahmins and the brahminised non-brahmin castes and the scheduled castes, is unlikely to take place. So far as Madras is concerned the hegemony of the united backward non-brahmin castes can be lost only by their own fault such as internecine feud among the castes themselves. Or, more remotely, the inability of the politico-economic system in India to sustain the preferred pattern of distribution by failing to secure the necessary production can upset the social structure and the political order along with it.)

If such a situation were to arise the 'backward classes' may get divided into 'forward backward' and 'backward backward', just as the 'non-brahmins' divided in 1935. A pointer to such a division is provided by the group behaviour of Vanniakula Kshatriya, the

largest caste in Madras, which has grown to be one of the biggest pressure groups today. It was noted in the first chapter, that for a century at least, the caste Palli, by occupation agricultural labourers, and known by various names such as Padayachi, Vanniar and Nayakar in different districts, was far more enthusiastic than others to unify its *jatis*, better its social status by adopting brahmanical ceremonies and seeking promotion to the Kshatriya *varna* and state recognition thereof. This caste has all along maintained its individuality; it did not join the Non-Brahmin Movement or the Justice party; it claimed nomination of a member in the legislature; it stood forth as the champion of the cause of the 'backward non-brahmin castes' identifying itself with the most backward, and remaining throughout the most politically conscious of all castes. Soon after the new Constitution of India came into force the Vanniakula Kshatriyas formed the Tamilnad Toilers Party in the southern districts and the Commonweal Party in the northern districts, and contested the elections of 1952 and secured eighteen and six seats respectively. The Congress won 165 seats out of a total of 376, twenty-four short of a majority. C. Rajagopalachari who was nominated to the Upper House and commissioned by the Congress to form the ministry in 1952 prepared for the absorption of the Vanniar parties in the Congress by offering ministerships to their leaders. Thus the nationalist Congress attempted to deal with 'communalist' pressure groups by openly encouraging mass defections, although it condemned communal parties and their ideologies.

The Vanniar sangam and Vanniar members of the legislature continue to be a political pressure group with a predominantly communal interest. This indicates further the possibility of leadership and group pressure emerging from one section within the backward classes from a caste claiming to be not only more backward than the rest but also numerically larger. A resolution



moved in the Assembly recommended to the government to confer upon the deserving Vanniakula Kshatriyas high government posts for a period of at least ten years so that they may be on a par with other advanced communities. Another recommended reservation of 15 per cent of all government posts in favour of Vanniars. Thus the tradition established in the first Montagu-Chelmsford legislature over a generation ago is faithfully maintained. And the democratic process and elective governments cannot ignore the manifest influence of the combined strength of the backward castes for political purposes.

Though the Vanniar political parties that contested 1952 elections were dissolved by the absorption of the leaders in the Congress, the pursuit of Vanniar interests again seemed to demand the revival of a Vanniar political party; a conference of Vanniars was therefore held in July 1963 at Cuddalore in which the old leaders of the community and ex-ministers, S.S. Ramaswami Padayachi and M.A. Manickavelu Nayagar participated. The latter said that it was generally felt that for the progress of the *Vanniar race*,<sup>2</sup> it was necessary to frame a new Constitution and that if the caste was socially united, it would in course of time grow as a political power. The meeting resolved to integrate the two earlier caste-political parties under a new name 'Toilers Commonweal Party'.<sup>3</sup> Thus two leaders of the Vanniars, one of them a Member of Parliament belonging to the Congress party (M.A. Manickavelu Nayagar) and another, a member of the Swatantra party (S.S. Ramaswami Padayachi) could transcend their ideological differences and could found and refound political parties expressly based on caste. The party was formally inaugurated at Vellore on January 11, 1965 with the object of unifying the members of

2. The word employed was *Inam* which literally means species. It can be translated as race.

3. *Nam Nadu*, July 30, 1963.

the caste as a political party. "All these years other political parties had exploited the community, and so they had decided to stand on their own legs and fight for their privileges,"<sup>4</sup> said the president. A prominent leader of the caste said that the caste was entitled to be the ruling group by virtue of its numbers and explained that Vanniars, known by different titles such as Padayachi, Vannian, Tevan, Nainan, Vandayan, Kalinga Rayan, Malava Rayan, Pillai, Udaiyar, Servaikaran, Nayakkar, Rajali, Anjadasingam—all belonged to the same endogamous caste of Vanniar. He added enthusiastically that *Vanniakulam* was a bond above that of religion and said that among Vanniars, inter-marriage was possible between Hindus and converts to non-Hindu religions. The Vanniar leaders seem to be hopeful that by unifying their caste members, they would come to power by their numerical strength.<sup>5</sup> Two Tamil journals devoted to the spread of their ideals, *Pallava Nadu* (suggesting the royal descent of the caste from Pallavas) and *Uzhaippali* meaning 'toiler', have appeared off and on. For electoral purpose, this caste manifests casteism more openly than any other; and the new party resolved to support candidates from its own community irrespective of party differences.<sup>6</sup>

These recent developments in the state politics lend support to the view that there exists a process of displacement of the forward by the backward. If this process were to continue, logically the time must come when the caste at the bottom of the social ladder will constitute the ruling group. That would be in accordance with the cyclical theory favoured by ancient writers; but there is no historical reason to suppose that

4. *The Mail*, January 14, 1965.

5. The leaders even claim that Vanniars are entitled to a separate state in virtue of their number.

6. *The Mail*, January 14, 1965.

An election slogan in 1952 denied the Vanniar vote to *Anniyar* (which means 'anyone else')—*Vanniar vottu anniyarkillai*.

## PATTERNS OF ADJUSTMENT TO MODERN DEMOCRACY

the pace and direction of change must be uniform, and the unexpected often happens. Moreover the higher castes in the past acquired political power under a political and constitutional order different from that of today. The modern ruling group is based on majorities in ballot boxes in a system of territorial constituencies. By that calculation a fairly long and undisturbed sway can be predicted for a stable combination of the *middling* social group consisting of castes which are not brahmin or brahminised but also not untouchable or depressed. They occupy a middle social position and economically are more than middle and educationally now nearly middle, while politically at the top. Comprising nearly half of the total population they are in an invulnerable position in a democracy; they have therefore a vested interest in government by votes.

Political attacks on caste can hardly succeed in this context. An economic attack on caste is conceivable and some progress can be posited from the fact of great change in available occupations and caste mobility in the matter of industrial and business occupations. Many will look to economic development to provide an answer to the problem of caste by obliterating caste. It is not possible to be dogmatic here; but one should not forget that in a developing economy, economic patterns are set by political chiefs and it is doubtful whether any political party in a democracy can pursue an economic policy capable of undermining the very basis of its political life. This is an aspect of the broad question of securing social homogeneity and significant economic development at the same time. If economic growth and development proceed to establish *individualism* in the place of *groupism*<sup>7</sup> or *casteism* in our country, caste may lose its importance and survive, if at all, as a vestigial social institution preserving some cultural traits.

7. A question here will be whether the necessary value of individualism can be secured in the context of urgent economic development by statist means with 'socialist' rather than 'individualist' values in mind.

[A frontal attack on the entire premise of the traditional approach to the communal question has been opened by some recent proposals to determine 'backwardness' by the condition of the individual and not of his caste. At a conference of State Chief Ministers held in Delhi in 1959, the Chief Minister of Madras, K. Kamaraj Nadar expressed the opinion that economic condition and not caste should be the criterion for determining backwardness.<sup>8</sup> The Maharashtra state was already working on the principle that those whose monthly income fell below Rs. 75 were to be considered backward.<sup>9</sup> If the problem is an economic one of eradicating poverty and substandard living, it demands remedies offered by some kind of socialism that will construct a classless, casteless society. Modernisation and industrialisation in Western society were facilitated by an earlier breaking away of the individual from the medieval social pattern and the practice of like-minded individuals coming together to found new trades and enterprises. Our modernisation, however, began not with the revolt of the individual as such, but of the category to which he belonged, viz., the caste. The success of the revolt was registered in the political system and is evidence of an aspect of politics in a traditional society emphasised by Myron Weiner who wrote that, "political organisation in itself is a means of preserving the identity of the group. For, what is involved is not the creation of a political organisation to govern the community, but rather a political organisation to deal with the outside world."<sup>10</sup>

The Indian government has, however, sought to end casteism in politics by amending the Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Representation of Peoples Act to punish certain malpractices of a communal nature during elections. It is held that legal ban

8. *The Hindu*, May 2, 1959.

9. *The Hindu*, May 23, 1959.

10. Myron Weiner, *The Politics of Scarcity*, 1962, p. 69.

## PATTERNS OF ADJUSTMENT TO MODERN DEMOCRACY

on communal parties from participating in elections would contradict legal and constitutional provisions under Article 19 (1) (c) of the Constitution which conferred on all citizens the right to form associations or unions. In 1961, the Indian Penal Code was amended to confer additional powers on the government to check fissiparous, communal and separatist tendencies. Under it anyone "who promotes, or attempts to promote feelings of enmity or hatred between different religious, racial or linguistic groups or castes or communities will be committing an offence punishable with three years imprisonment or fine or both."<sup>11</sup> A careful reading of the situation preceding the enactment as well as the language of the new law will show that the intention was to give some legal protection to the politically powerless minority groups who could be hurt by stronger groups. Other devices adopted by the union government to end or mitigate casteism were the directive to omit caste classification in the census count,<sup>12</sup> and the direction to delete statement of caste in forms of application for jobs, admission to schools, etc. Such regulations cannot prevent casteism as long as caste is recognised as the factor determining 'forwardness' and 'backwardness' of individuals and as long as the spirit of casteism, i.e., the bond of kinship and the practice of endogamy survives. Meanwhile whatever is done by way of inducements to the backward castes to take to education and enter jobs under the state cannot but discriminate against members of non-backward castes. Indeed in the past there was no dispute over the question of granting special treatment to the backward castes to help their progress in all fields. But there is a

11. *The Mail*, September 1, 1961.

12. "Important decision taken by the Government of India in connection with the 1951 Census was that castes and tribes should not receive any undue and artificial prominence in the Census report and that the data collected and tabulated should be confined to what is required for implementing the provisions of the Constitution of India, in regard to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes." (Census of India, 1951, Vol. III, p. 3.)

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

real danger of a permanent policy of concessions to redress inequality creating a new inequality. Especially is the danger great when the beneficiaries cease to be a small group at the bottom of the social ladder but settle as a large and even a majority group of castes with enough political power and the disposition to dominate the rest. It may give rise to a new 'minority' problem in a new society which practises new oppressions in the place of the old and traditional.

Even the staunchest 'nationalists' who openly condemn casteism in principle cannot overlook its power in practical politics nor neglect it in choosing candidates or canvassing votes. An appeal to caste is the one still most readily understood and answered by the voter. The enlightened forces operating against group politics based on caste are comparatively weak and ineffective against the forces of casteism which show no sign of decline in Madras.

# APPENDIX I

## Main Castes in Madras State

Data on caste was collected in the census till 1931. This was stopped in 1951 in pursuance of a policy decision by the government. But the strength of castes was estimated by the government for various purposes. Column 2 below giving the estimated strength of some castes in 1951 has been taken from available statistical records. It has been determined by applying the percentage increase of the general population of the state to the latest available census figure of each caste. The estimated figure of the population of each caste has been adjusted in order to make the total tally with the enumerated total population of 1951. Only those Hindu Tamil-speaking castes which have a population of not less than 10,000 or those which show a significant variation in their numbers are included here out of a total of over 300 castes identified in the old Madras presidency.

<i>Caste</i>	<i>1951</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1921</i>	<i>1911</i>
<i>a. Hindu Castes</i>				
1. Adi Dravida	1,953,669	1,619,227	50,105	...
2. Agamudaiyan	517,790	..	368,639	349,753
3. Ambalakaran	231,405	...	164,748	185,177
4. Ambattan	13,079	10,242	227,224	213,050
5. Andi	98,701	...	70,270	82,123
6. Brahmin	1,400,103	1,096,400	1,312,869	1,162,887
7. Chakkilian	732,101	606,775	549,807	526,451
8. Idaiyan	1,148,888	899,677	743,603	734,771
9. Kaikolan (Sengunthar, Sengunda Kshatriya)	529,611	414,731	406,638	368,347
10. Kallan	651,090	509,859	533,972	535,227
11. Kshatriya	442,037	.	314,707	146,458
12. Kuruba	196,231	...	139,706	231,819
13. Kurumban	211,852	...	150,827	144,095
14. Kusavan	221,889	...	157,973	153,127
15. Malaiman	89,031	...	63,385	57,034
16. Malayali	87,164	...	62,056	63,487

MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

Caste	1951	1931	1921	1911
17. Maravan	540,186	423,012	450,013	364,762
18. Melakkaran	2,785	...	1,983	10,925
19. Mutracha	319,597	...	227,536	153,422
20. Muttiriyar	140,915	...	100,324	86,856
21. Nadar	920,367	...	655,252	...
22. Nattaman	226,417	...	161,197	162,786
23. Nattan	18,622	...	13,258	12,751
24. Nayar	686,538	537,618	489,563	412,102
25. Pallan	995,669	825,224	862,685	866,132
26. Pandaram	90,595	...	64,499	66,868
27. Panisavam	18,611	...	13,250	19,553
28. Paraiyan	1,347,948	1,117,197	2,337,036	2,363,803
29. Pariyaram	13,897	...	9,894	20,785
30. Pariyari	19,459	15,238	...	...
31. Patnulkaran	133,717	...	...	92,840
32. Pattanavan	33,418	...	23,792	35,475
33. Pattapu	18,787	...	13,375	13,375
34. Pullavan	12,018	...	8,556	8,533
35. Sale	457,443	...	325,675	345,191
36. Sembadavan	88,567	...	63,055	64,403
37. Senakkudaiyan	19,124	...	13,615	38,133
38. Shanar	924,638	...	...	641,976
39. Sudarman	62,075	...	44,194	46,707
40. Uppiliyan	58,870	...	41,912	45,331
41. Urali	70,057	...	48,877	61,747
42. Vaisya (Chetti, Komati)	523,209	409,917	860,151	824,183
43. Valaiyan	485,291	...	345,501	358,848
44. Valluvan	71,430	59,202	59,163	63,493
45. Vaniyan	129,790	101,637	200,507	194,802
46. Vannan	253,984	198,891	250,557	242,025
47. Vanna, Palli, Vanniakula Kshatriya, Agnikula Kshatriya	3,759,506	2,944,014	2,767,314	2,769,399
48. Velama	609,596	...	433,943	405,913
49. Vellala	3,727,492	...	2,653,775	2,535,791
50. Yanadi	189,350	...	134,807	119,264
b. Muslim Castes				
1. Arab	1,107	...	788	5,513
2. Jonagam	9,523	...	6,780	8,780
3. Marakkayar	3,622	...	2,579	2,461
4. Moghal	25,925	...	18,457	18,628
5. Musalman	2,032	...	1,447	28,837
6. Pathan	168,497	...	119,961	106,920
7. Saiyad	246,631	...	175,588	170,125
8. Sheik	1,304,963	...	929,064	889,553

1926



## APPENDIX II

### The Non-Brahmin Manifesto

(December 1916)

**A**T a conference held in Madras on the 20th November 1916 and attended by several non-Brahmin gentlemen of position and influence both in Madras and in the mo'ussil, it was resolved that measures be taken to start a company for publishing a newspaper advocating the cause of the non-Brahmin community, and also that a political association be formed to advance, safeguard and protect the interests of the same community. In accordance with this, a Joint Stock Company has been started under the name of "South Indian People's Association" for conducting a daily newspaper in English, Tamil and Telugu, respectively, and also a political association has been formed under the name of "The South Indian Liberal Federation".

The South Indian People's Association has issued the following Manifesto addressed to non-Brahmin gentlemen throughout the presidency under the signature of its Secretary, Rao Bahadur P. Theagaraya Chettiar.

#### **The Manifesto**

The time has come when an attempt should be made to define the attitude of the several important non-Brahmin Indian communities in this presidency towards what is called "The Indian Home Rule Movement", and also to indicate certain facts with respect to their present political position. Not less than 40 out of the 41½ millions who form the population of this presidency are non-Brahmins, and the bulk of the tax payers, including a large majority of the zamindars, landholders and agriculturists, also belong to the same class. But in what passes for politics in Madras, they have not taken the

part to which they are entitled. They make little or no use of their influence among the masses for the general advancement of the country. In these days of organised effort, they maintain no proper organisations for protecting and promoting their common interests and for preventing professional and other politicians, with hardly any corresponding stake in the country from posing as their accredited spokesmen. Nor have they a press of their own to speak the truth on their behalf. Their political interests, therefore, (as compared with those of the Brahmins who number only about a million and a half), have materially suffered.

### Public Services

The Hon. Sir Alexander (then Mr.) Cardew, now a member of the Madras Executive Council, in his evidence before the Public Service Commission in 1913, described in detail, the relative positions of the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins in the Public Service of this province, not certainly as a champion of non-Brahmin interest, but with a view to show that if simultaneous examinations in England and India for admission into the Indian Civil Service were introduced, the Brahmins, whom he characterised as "a small rigidly exclusive caste," would swamp that Service. He is reported to have stated that in the competitive examinations for the Provincial Civil Service which were held between 1892 and 1904, out of sixteen successful candidates fifteen were Brahmins, giving a ratio of 94 per cent of Brahmin success. In the Mysore State, where open competitive examinations for the Mysore Civil Service were held during the preceding 20 years, Brahmins secured 85 per cent of the vacancies. In the competition for the appointment of Assistant Engineers in Madras, the number of successful candidates, during the same period, was 17 Brahmins and four non-Brahmins. Similar results were produced by the competitive examinations for the Accounts Departments. Out of 140 Deputy Collectors in Madras at the time, 77 were

Brahmins, 30 non-Brahmin Hindus, and the rest Muhammadans, Indian Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians. It is curious to note that even where competitive examinations did not exist, as for instance in the Subordinate Judicial Service of the presidency, the major portion of the appointments was in the hands of the Brahmins. Sir Alexander Cardew stated that, out of 128 permanent District Munsiffs in 1913, 93 were Brahmins, 25 non-Brahmin Hindus and the rest Muhammadans, Indian Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians. From these and other figures of a like nature, he naturally concluded that an open competition for the Civil Service in India would mean almost complete monopoly of the service by the Brahmin caste and the practical exclusion from it of the non-Brahmin classes. Of course, he did not invite the attention of the Public Service Commission to what prevailed in the important Native States directly under the control of the Madras Government, where too, the preponderance of Brahmins in the Government service then, as now, was not less marked. Nor did he go into the figures relating to the subordinate services, which are recruited under a system almost wholly of patronage. Surely, in these services the preponderance of Brahmins would be still more striking.

With regard to what obtains at the present moment in the various branches of the Government service, it is needless to go into the figures. But we cannot help calling attention to the highest appointments open to the Indian in this presidency and the principle upon which they are distributed. Since the Executive Council of H.E. the Governor has been opened to Indians, three Indian gentlemen have been admitted into it in succession, the two latter being Brahmin lawyers. Of the five Indian Judges of the High Court, four of them, i.e., all the Hindu Judges are Brahmins. In 1914, a new Secretaryship to Government was created, and a Brahmin official was forthwith appointed to it. The Indian Secretary to the Board of Revenue is a Brahmin; and of

the two Collectorships open to the members of the Provincial Civil Service, that which has fallen to the share of the communities other than the Muhammadan, has nearly always gone to a Brahmin official.

### Public Bodies

What is true of Government Service is equally true of local and other public bodies. Where an electorate is composed of a large number of Brahmins, the non-Brahmin Indian has hardly a chance. It nearly always happens that while the non-Brahmins do not concentrate upon a single candidate, Brahmin, or non-Brahmin, the Brahmins nearly always unite and support their caste man. The Madras University, of which the majority of Indian fellows, classified under the several Indian groups, are Brahmins, has never returned a non-Brahmin Indian to the local Legislative Council, so much so that no non-Brahmin Indian, however well qualified otherwise, indulges in the hope of getting elected as member for the University in the Legislative Council, unless it be with the support of the European Fellows. At a meeting of the Madras Legislative Council held in November 1914, in reply to an interpellation by the late Mr. Kunhi Raman Nayar, it was stated that the total number of registered graduates of the University was 650 of whom 452 were Brahmins, 124 non-Brahmin Hindus and 74 belonged to other communities, and that since 1907, when election of Fellows by registered graduates began, 12 Fellows were elected, of whom with one exception all were Brahmins. We are now aware that neither before 1907, when a sort of election of a few Fellows by graduates of a certain number of years' standing was allowed, nor since 1914, when the statement referred to was made in the Legislative Council, the graduates of the Madras University, of whom the majority have always been Brahmins, elected a non-Brahmin as a Fellow of the University, so that the non-Brahmin, however distinguished, has little or no chance

of getting into the Senate of the Madras University through what is called the open door election. In the election to the Imperial and local Legislative Councils and to municipal bodies one finds the same truth illustrated so far as these elections could be controlled by the "rigidly exclusive caste." If, occasionally, a fair-minded ruler endeavours to correct the inequality arising from the preponderance of Brahmins on any public body by having recourse to nominations of individuals from comparatively unrepresented interests, he is severely criticised in the Brahmin press. How His Excellency Lord Pentland was dealt with by some of the papers in connection with the recent nominations to his Legislative Council may be cited as the latest example of this kind of hostile and unfair criticism. Outside these responsible bodies more or less under the control of the Government, even in the case of political organisations in the city of Madras as well as in the districts, the figures regarding election, if gone into, will tell the same tale. To quote one of the latest instances, of the 15 gentlemen elected from this presidency to represent it on the All India Congress Committee, with the exception of one solitary non-Brahmin Indian, all are practically Brahmins and yet the decision of this committee, which is the executive of the Congress, upon matters of grave import, such as the revision of the Indian Constitution after the war, will be held up to the world's admiring gaze as the considered opinion, among others of the 40 millions of non-Brahmins of this large and important province. It is our unfortunate experience also that as concessions and rights are more freely bestowed, the rigidly exclusive caste grows still more rigid and exclusive.

### **Non-Brahmins and Education**

In defence of all this practical monopoly of political power and high government appointments which make for that power, it is pointed out that though the Brahmins are only a small fraction of the population of this

presidency, they are far ahead of other communities in regard to university qualification. No one denies this. Old established traditions, the position of the Brahmin as the highest and the most sacred of the Hindu castes, the nature of their ancient calling and the steady inculcation of the belief, both by written texts and oral teaching, that they are so many divinely-ordained intermediaries without whose active intervention and blessing the soul cannot obtain salvation and their consequent freedom from manual toil—all these helped them to adapt themselves easily to the new conditions under British Rule, as under previous epochs, in large numbers and far more successfully than the other castes and communities. Apart, however, from the question of English education, are large material stakes, traditional and inherited interests in the soil and the social prestige that goes with it, influence among the masses, quiet and peaceful occupations that tend to the steady economic development of the province, and overwhelming numerical strength itself, to count for nothing? Should not the classes and communities that, from time immemorial, have stood for these, receive encouragement from the Government? In the matter of education itself, the advantage is not all on the side of the Brahmin castes. Though rather late in the field, the non-Brahmin communities have begun to move. They now represent various stages of progress. Some of them, such as the Chetti, the Komati, the Mudaliar, the Naidu and the Nayar, have been making rapid progress; and even the least advanced, like those who are ahead of them, are manfully exerting themselves to come up to the standards of the new time. The spirit of educational progress is aboard, and it is a significant circumstance that among some of the non-Brahmin communities the development is more harmonious and less one-sided than among the Brahmins. In spite of the singular solicitude, which for reasons not apparent, the Department of Education has been showing for the education of Brahmin

girls especially of Brahmin widows as if the Brahmins were a backward class, the percentage of literates among the women of such non-Brahmin communities as the Nayars is higher than among the Brahmins. In a variety of ways and in different walks of life, non-Brahmins will now be found unostentatiously, and yet effectively, contributing to the moral and material progress of this presidency. But these and their brethren have so far been groping helpless in the background, because of the subtle and manifold ways in which political power and official influences are often exercised by the Brahmin caste

### **Want of Organisation**

We do not deny that in these days of fierce intellectual competition the skill to pass examinations is a valuable personal possession. But it passes our understanding why a small class, which shows a larger percentage of English knowing men than their neighbours, should be allowed almost to absorb all the government appointments, great and small, high and low, to the exclusion of the latter, among whom may also be found, though in small proportions, men of capacity, enlightenment and culture. The fact cannot be gainsaid that, in spite of the numerous obstacles in their path, as executive and judicial officers, as educationists, lawyers, medical men, engineers, public men and as successful administrators of large and important estates, the non-Brahmin communities have produced men of distinguished attainments and unquestioned eminence, some of whom have found no equals in the Brahmin caste. Guided by their own sense of self-respect and enlightened self-interest, had they and their communities always acted in concert, even in the matter of government appointments and political power, they would have been at the top, a place which is theirs by right. As it is, for want of efficient separate organisations of their own and of the instinct or the inclination to make the freest and the most effective use

of the modern weapon of publicity their interests have not received their proper share of attention and recognition.

**Progressive Political Development Wanted and not Unauthorised Constitution-Making**

Not satisfied with the possession of the key to the present political position, the radical politicians of this presidency who are apparently never so happy as when they ask for fresh political concessions, irrespective of their suitability to the existing conditions, now ask for Home Rule, and from previous experience, we fear that, if a discordant note is not sounded at the proper time, it will, of course, be made out that all India is keen about Home Rule. It is not necessary for our purpose to go into the details of this extravagant scheme, or into those of the other submitted to His Excellency the Viceroy by nineteen members of the Imperial Legislative Council. We are not in favour of any measure, which, in operation, is designed, or tends completely, to undermine the influence and authority of the British Rulers, who alone, in the present circumstances of India, are able to hold the scales even between creed and class, and to develop that sense of unity and national solidarity, without which India will continue to be a congeries of mutually exclusive and warring groups, without a common purpose and a common patriotism. While we dissociate ourselves entirely from unauthorised Indian Constitution-making, which seems to be a favourite occupation with a certain class of politicians, we must say that we are strongly in favour of progressive political development of a well-defined policy of trust in the people, qualified by prudence, and of timely and liberal concessions in the wake of proved fitness. In the early days of the Indian National Congress, when that movement was directed and controlled on the spot by such sagacious and thoughtful men as the late Messrs A. O. Hume, W. C. Bonnerjee, Budruddin Tyabji, S. Ramaswami Mudaliar,



Rangiah Naidu, Rao Bahadur Sabhapathi Mudaliar and Sir Sankaran Nair, enlightened non-Brahmins all over the presidency gave it their hearty and loyal support. It was then, though not in form and name, but in spirit and method, a truly national institution. Some of the old ideals are still there. But the spirit in which, the method by which and the persons by whom it is at present worked cannot, all of them, commend themselves to the thinking and self-respecting section of the non-Brahmin public of this presidency. The social reactionary, and the impatient political idealist who seldom has his foot on solid earth, have now almost taken complete possession of the Congress. Democratic in aims, an irresponsible bureaucracy now manipulates its wires. We sincerely hope that sane and sober politicians, who know the country and its people, and who feel their responsibility to both, will soon assert their mastery over the Congress machine, and direct it in strict accordance with the living realities of the present.

### **No Caste Rule**

For our part, we deprecate, as we have suggested, the introduction of changes not warranted by the present conditions. We cannot too strongly condemn caste or class rule. We are of those who think that in the truest and best interests of India, its government should continue to be conducted on true British principles of justice and equality of opportunity. We are deeply devoted and loyally attached to British rule. For, that rule, in spite of many shortcomings and occasional aberrations is, in the main, just and sympathetic. We, indeed, hope that our rulers will, as their knowledge of the country expands, be more readily responsive to public feeling, when, of course, that feeling is clearly manifest and decidedly unambiguous, and that before they take any action they will examine the interests and wishes of each caste, class and community with more anxious care than heretofore and in a less conventional

manner. When the spirit of social exclusiveness and the rigidity of class and caste begin to disappear, the progress towards self-government will unquestionably be more satisfactory. But, for the present, the practical politician has to concern himself with what lies immediately in front of him.

### **Self-Government Based on Equal Distribution of Power**

After the triumphant conclusion of the war, the Indian Constitution will doubtless come before the British statesmen and British Parliament for revision. India has earned the right to demand that the basis of her constitution should be broadened and deepened, that her sons representing every class, caste and community, according to their acknowledged position in the country and their respective numerical strength, should be given a more effective voice in the management of her affairs, that she should be given fiscal freedom and legislative autonomy in matters affecting her domestic policy and economic position, and that, lastly, she must be accorded a place in the Empire conducive to the sense of self-respect of her children as British subjects and not inferior in dignity and power to that occupied by any self-governing colony.

### **The Immediate Duty of Non-Brahmins**

We appeal to the enlightened members of the non-Brahmin community to be up and doing. Their future lies in their own hands. Great and pressing is the task with which they are confronted. They have, in the first place, to educate their boys and girls in far larger numbers than they have yet done. Associations under the responsible guidance of leading non-Brahmin gentlemen should be started and maintained in a state of efficiency in every populous centre, not merely to induce the various non-Brahmin communities to avail themselves more freely of the existing facilities for education, and to create such facilities where they do not exist, but also to find adequate funds for the education of such of their

poor but intelligent boys and girls as cannot obtain instruction without extraneous pecuniary help. Indeed, a more vigorous educational policy for the non-Brahmins has long been overdue. Side by side with the starting of associations for the advancement of the education of the non-Brahmin classes, must also be maintained social and political organisations, and where they are needed, well conducted newspapers of their own, both in the vernaculars and in English, to push forward their claims. By their attitude of silence and inaction they have failed to make their voice heard and others more astute than they have used them for their own ends, with the result that there is a great deal of discontent among the non-Brahmins about their present lot as compared with that of their Brahmin fellow countrymen, of which, perhaps, the Government is not fully aware. The discontent is growing every day, and the attention of the Government will be drawn to it. But the non-Brahmins must first help themselves. Let them do everything needful to ensure a continued educational, social, political and economical development on a broad and enduring basis; and then, their future as British subjects will be brighter and more prosperous than it is today. What is designated as "Nation building" is a laborious task involving, and indeed necessitating, in the slow process of evolution, the due performance, in the proper time by each class and community, of the duty it owes to itself first and foremost. It is our firm conviction that in India, for some time to come at any rate, every community has primarily to put its own house in order, so that, when it has to co-operate with other communities, possibly with higher social pretensions, it may do so, not as a dependent and helpless unit to be made a figurehead or cat's-paw of, but as a self-respecting and highly developed social organisation, offering its willing co-operation for the promotion of common objects on terms of perfect equality.

**P. Theagaraya Chetty**

## APPENDIX III

### Castes Eligible for Special Treatment

The list comprises castes identified officially from time to time for administrative, educational, political and rehabilitation purposes.

#### a. The Position in 1964

##### *List of Scheduled Castes*

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| (1) Throughout the state  | 14. Devendrakulanathan              |
| 1. Chakkiliyan  | 15. Dom, Dombara,<br>Paiidi or Pano |
| 2. Kuravan, Sidhanar  | 16. Godagali                        |
| 3. Nayadi   | 17. Gosangi                         |
| 4. Pallan   | 18. Godda                           |
| 5. Paraiyan, Parayan<br>(Sambavar)  | 19. Holeya                          |
| 6. Valluvan   | 20. Jaggali                         |
| (2) Throughout the state<br>except Kanyakumari<br>district and Shencottah<br>taluk of Tirunelveli<br>district | 21. Jambuvulu                       |
| 1. Adi Andhra   | 22. Kadaiyan                        |
| 2. Adi Dravida  | 23. Kalladi                         |
| 3. Adi Karnataka  | 24. Karimpalan                      |
| 4. Ajila  | 25. Koosa                           |
| 5. Arunthathiyar  | 26. Kudumban                        |
| 6. Baira  | 27. Madari                          |
| 7. Bakuda   | 28. Madiga                          |
| 8. Bandi  | 29. Mailla                          |
| 9. Bellara  | 30. Mala                            |
| 10. Chalavadi   | 31. Mavilan                         |
| 11. Chamar or Muchi   | 32. Moger                           |
| 12. Chandala  | 33. Mundala                         |
| 13. Cheruman  | 34. Nalakeyava                      |
|   | 35. Pagadai                         |
|   | 36. Pampada                         |
|   | 37. Panchama                        |
|   | 38. Panniandi                       |
|   | 39. Puthirai Vannan                 |
|   | 40. Raneyar                         |

APPENDIX III

41. Samagara
  42. Samban
  43. Sapari
  44. Semman
  45. Thoti
  46. Thiruvalluvar
- (3) The Nilgiris district
1. Kanakkan or Padanna
- (4) Coimbatore and Salem district
1. Pannadi
  2. Vathiriyar
- (5) Kanyakumari district and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli district
1. Ayyanavar
  2. Bharator
  3. Domban
  4. Kakkalan
  5. Kavara
  6. Kottan (Koodan)
  7. Mannan
  8. Padannan
  9. Palluvan
  10. Panan
  11. Pathiyar
  12. Perumannan
  13. Pulayan or Cheramar
  14. Thandan
  15. Ulladan
  16. Uraly
  17. Vallon
  18. Vannan

19. Velan
  20. Vetan
  21. Vettuvan
- (6) Thanjavur district
1. Koliyan
  2. Vettiyan

*List of Scheduled Tribes*

- (1) Throughout the state
1. Kadar
  2. Irular
- (2) Throughout the state except Kanyakumari district and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli district
1. Adiyar
  2. Aranadan
  3. Kammara
  4. Kattunayakan
  5. Konda Kapus
  6. Kondareddis
  7. Koraga
  8. Kota
  9. Kudiya or Melakudi
  10. Kurichchan
  11. Kurumans
  12. Maha Malasar
  13. Malasar
  14. Malayekandi
  15. Mudugar or Muduvan
  16. Palliyar
  17. Paniyan
  18. Pulayan
  19. Sholaga

MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

20. Toda

- (3) North Arcot, Salem and Tiruchirapalli districts

1. Malayali

- (4) Coimbatore district and Tirunelveli district except Shencottah taluk

1. Kaniyan or Kanyan

- (5) The Nilgiris district

1. Kurumbas

- (6) Kanyakumari district and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli district

1. Eravallan
2. Hill Pulaya
3. Kanikaran or Kanikkar
4. Kochu Velan
5. Malakkuravan
6. Malai Arayan
7. Malai Pandaram
8. Malai Vedan
9. Malayan
10. Malayarayar
11. Mannan
12. Muthuvan
13. Palleyan
14. Palliyar
15. Ulladan (Hill dwellers)
16. Uraly
17. Vishavan

*List of Backward Classes*

1. Agamudaiyans (including Tuluva Vellalas)
2. Agasa
3. Ambalakaran
4. Annadan
5. Are Mahrati
6. Arya (South Kanara)
7. Atagara
8. Archukatlavandu
9. Bedaga
10. Balolika
11. Bestha
12. Bhandari
13. Billaga
14. Bissoy
15. Bondil
16. Boya
17. Chaptegara
18. Chatadi (Chattada Srivaishnava)
19. Dasari
20. Devadiga
21. Devalkar
22. Devanga
23. Dhakkada
24. Dommara
25. Dudekula
26. Enadi
27. Galada Konkani
28. Gandla
29. Gangavars
30. Ganika (including Nagavamsam)
31. Gatti
32. Gavara (including Kavara Naidu of

### APPENDIX III

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
|     | Coimbatore district)                                | 58. Kharvi  |
| 33. | Godaba  | 59. Khatri  |
| 34. | Gonde   | 60. Kohdala   |
| 35. | Gowda (including Gammala or Kalali)                 | 61. Kolaries or Muniyanies                                      |
| 36. | Gudigars  | 62. Koppalavalamas  |
| 37. | Hegde   | 63. Koracha   |
| 38. | Idiga (including Setti Balija)                      | 64. Koteyar (Sheragara Kshatriya of South Kanara)               |
| 39. | Işai Vellalar or Melakkarar                         | 65. Kulala (Kosava Potter)                                      |
| 40. | Illuvan (Ezhuvan)                                   | 66. Karuba or Karubar (Tamil districts)                         |
| 41. | Irulas  | 67. Kurumba   |
| 42. | Jandara   | 68. Labbai  |
| 43. | Jangam  | 69. Lambadis  |
| 44. | Jhetty  | 70. Madivala  |
| 44. | Jogi  | 71. Mudugar or Madavar or Vethakkara of Salem district          |
| 45. | Kabbora   | 72. Mahendra (Medara)   |
| 47. | Kadaiyan  | 73. Mahratta (non-Brahmin)                                      |
| 48. | Kaduppattan (Malabar)                               | 74. Malaiyali   |
| 49. | Kaikolan (Sengunthar)                               | 75. Malayan (Malabar)   |
| 50. | Kalavanthula  | 76. Male  |
| 51. | Kalingi   | 77. Mangala   |
| 52. | Kallan (including Esanattu Kallar)                  | 78. Mappilla  |
| 53. | Kammalans (Kamsalas, Viswa Brahmins and Viswakarma) | 79. Marati of South Kanara district (Hill Tribe)                |
| 54. | Kani or Kaniyan and Kanisu or Kaniyar Panikkars     | 80. Maravar (including Karu-Maravar of Tiruchirapalli district) |
| 55. | Kannadiyan  | 81. Maruthuvar  |
| 56. | Kavuthiyan  |   |
| 57. | Kolasi  |   |

MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 82. Melakudi or Kudiyan  | 108. Patnulkaran  |
| 83. Modi Banda   | 109. Pattanavan   |
| 84. Mogaveera  | 110. Pentias  |
| 85. Moili  | 111. Perike   |
| 86. Moniagar   | 112. Peruvannan   |
| 87. Muduva   | 113. Picchigunta  |
| 88. Mukhari  | 114. Poraya   |
| 89. Mukkuvan or Mukanyan alias Mogayan (including Bovis)                   | 115. Pulluvan   |
| 90. Mutracha or Muthuraja  | 116. Pusala (Pusalavadu)  |
| 91. Muttiriyam or Muthiriyar   | 117. Rajapur (South Kanara)   |
| 92. Nagaram  | 118. Reddi (Ganjam)   |
| 93. Nakkale  | 119. Ronas  |
| 94. Nalkedaya  | 120. Sadhu Chetty (including Telugu Chetti or 24 Manai Telugu Chetty) |
| 95. Namdev Mahratta  | 121. Saliyan  |
| 96. Oddea (Donga)  | 122. Sedan  |
| 97. Odde (Vodde or Vadde or Voddai)  | 123. Paravatharajakulam   |
| 98. Odiya  | 124. Senaithalaivar (Senaikudayan)                                    |
| 99. Oiulu  | 125. Siviari  |
| 100. Omanaito  | 126. Sourashtra   |
| 101. Oriya   | 127. Srisayana  |
| 102. Padayachi   | 128. Sugalis  |
| 103. Palli   | 129. Tatapu   |
| 104. Pomula  | 130. Telikula   |
| 105. Pangadikara   | 131. Thegata Veerakshatriya   |
| 106. Panniyar or Pannayar  | 132. Theluva Naicker and Vettalakra Naicker                           |
| 107. Parakavakulam (Surithiman, Malayaman, Nathaman, Mooppanar and Nainar) | 133. Theriyan   |
| 107-A Paravan  | 134. Thurpu Kapus   |
|  | 135. Tigala (Tigla)   |
|  | 136. Tondaman   |
|  | 137. Rajaka   |



APPENDIX III

138. Uppara  
 139. Ural Goundan  
 140. Vaduvan (Vadugan)  
 141. Vakkaliga  
 142. Valaiyan  
 143. Vaniar (oil-monger caste all over the state)  
 144. Vannan  
 145. Vanniakula Kshatriya including Vanniya, Vanniyar or Vanniar, Gounder, Kander or Vanniya Gounder and Vannia Kander (other than Vellala Gounder) belonging to Vanniakula Kshatriya caste  
 146. Velakatalavin  
 147. Veluthadan  
 148. Virakodi Vellalars  
 149. Vathis  
 150. Yadava  
 151. Yerukula  
 152. Converts to Christianity from the Scheduled Castes (only persons who are themselves converts)  
 153. Ambika  
 154. Andiapandaram  
 155. Bahtaraju  
 156. Eravallar  
 157. Gramani-Shanan  
 158. Jambuvanondai  
 159. Kongu Chettiar (Coimbatore district)  
 160. Kosavans  
 161. Kunnuvar Mannadi  
 162. Kuruhini Chetty  
 163. Mond-golla  
 164. Mutlakampatti  
 165. Narikoravan  
 166. Navundian  
 167. Nokka  
 168. Pannan Vettuva Gownder  
 169. Parel Madivala  
 170. Sozhia Chetty  
 171. Telugupathy Chetty  
 172. Thottia Naicken (including Rajakambalam, Gollavar, Sillavar, Thockalavar and Naicker)  
 173. Vettaikaran  
 174. Vettuva Gownder  
 175. Vikurup  
 176. Yoggeeswara
- Kanyakumari district and Shencottah taluk of Tirunelveli district
1. Arayas
  2. Boyans
  3. Chavalakarans
  4. Chekkalas (whose normal avocation is oil crushing like vaniyans)
  5. Chetties

MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 6. Ezhavas                             | 22. Odans                           |
| 7. Ezhavathy                           | 23. Pattriyas or Pattiariars        |
| 8. Ezhuthachans                        | 24. Perumkollans                    |
| 9. Hindu Nadars                        | 25. Saliyas                         |
| 10. Kalairikurups<br>(Kalari Panicker) | 26. Saurashtras                     |
| 11. Kammalas (Viswakarmala)            | 27. Senai Thalaivar<br>(Elavaniyas) |
| 12. Kanian                             | 28. S.I.U.C.                        |
| 13. Kerala Mudali                      | 29. Tholkollans                     |
| 14. Krishnavaka                        | 30. Valans                          |
| 15. Kudumbis                           | 31. Vaniyas                         |
| 16. Kumbarans                          | 32. Veerasaivas                     |
| 17. Kusavans                           | 33. Velans                          |
| 18. Latin Catholics                    | 34. Veluthedathu Nairs              |
| 19. Maravans                           | 35. Vilakkathala Nairs              |
| 20. Mukkuvans                          | 36. Yadava                          |
| 21. Naikkans                           |                                     |

**b. Backward Classes as in Madras Education Rules 1950**

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Agamudaiyans (including Thuluva Vellalas) | 17. Chaptagara                       |
| 2. Agasa                                     | 18. Chatadi (Chattada Sri Vaishnava) |
| 3. Ambalakaran                               | 19. Chenchu                          |
| 4. Annadan                                   | 20. Dasari                           |
| 5. Are Mahrata                               | 21. Devadiga                         |
| 6. Arya (South Kanara)                       | 22. Devalkar                         |
| 7. Atagara                                   | 23. Devanga                          |
| 8. Archukatlavandu                           | 24. Dommara                          |
| 9. Badaga                                    | 25. Dudekula                         |
| 10. Bagata                                   | 26. Ennadi                           |
| 11. Balolika                                 | 27. Galada Konkani                   |
| 12. Bestha                                   | 28. Gondla                           |
| 13. Bhandari                                 | 28-A Gangavar                        |
| 14. Billava                                  | 29. Ganika                           |
| 15. Bondil                                   | 30. Gatli                            |
| 16. Boya                                     | 31. Gavara                           |
|  | 32. Godaba                           |

APPENDIX III

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 33. Gondo  | 60. Kolaries or Muniyanies           |
| 34. Gowda (including Gamalla or Kalali)            | 61. Konda Dora (Aboriginal Tribe)    |
| 35. Gudigara                                       | 62. Konda Dora (Criminal Tribe)      |
| 36. Hegde  | 63. Konda Kapu or Manya Kapu (A.T.)  |
| 37. Idiga (including Setti-Bahga)                  | 64. Kondh                            |
| 37-A. Isai Vellalar                                | 65. Koppalavelamas                   |
| 38. Illuvan (Ezhuvan)                              | 66. Koracha                          |
| 39. Irula  | 67. Kota                             |
| 39-A. Jakkulas(Guntoor district)                   | 68. Koteyar (Sheragara)              |
| 40. Jandara  | 69. Kotiya                           |
| 41. Jangam   | 70. Koya                             |
| 42. Jatapu   | 71. Kulala                           |
| 43. Jhetty   | 72. Kuruba                           |
| 44. Jogi   | 73. Kurumba                          |
| 45. Kabbara  | 74. Deleted                          |
| 46. Kadaiyan                                       | 75. Labbai                           |
| 47. Kadupattan (Malabar)                           | 76. Lambadi                          |
| 48. Kaikolan (Sengunthar)                          | 77. Madivala                         |
| 49. Kalavanthulu                                   | 78. Madugar or Medavar               |
| 50. Kalingi  | 79. Mahrata                          |
| 51. Kallan   | 80. Malaiyali                        |
| 52. Kammalan (Kamsala, Viswabrahmin)               | 81. Mateeyan                         |
| 53. Kani or Kaniyan and Kanisu or Kaniyar Panikkar | 82. Male                             |
| 54. Kannadiyan                                     | 83. Mangala                          |
| 55. Kavuthiyan                                     | 84. Mappilla                         |
| 56. Kalasi   | 85. Marati South Kanara (Hill Tribe) |
| 57. Kharvi   | 86. Marava                           |
| 58. Khatri   | 87. Maruthuvar                       |
| 59. Kohdala  | 88. Melakudi or Kudiyar              |
|  | 89. Bodi Banda                       |
|  | 90. Moite                            |

MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 91. Muduva   | 121. Sadhu Chetty  |
| 92. Mukhari  | 122. Saliyan   |
| 93. Mukkuvan or Muk-<br>ayan alias Mogayan<br>(including Boris)                      | 123. Savara  |
| 94. Mutracha   | 124. Sedan   |
| 95. Muttiriyam   | 125. Parvatharajakulam   |
| 96. Nagaram  | 126. Senaithalaivar<br>(Senaikudiyan)  |
| 97. Nakkade  | 126-A. Setti Balija<br>(Vizagapatam, East<br>and West Godavari<br>and Krishna) |
| 98. Nalkedaya  | 127. Sholagar  |
| 99. Namder   | 128. Siviari   |
| 100. Odden (Donga)   | 129. Sourashtra  |
| 101. Odde  | 130. Srisayana   |
| 102. Odiya   | 131. Sugarl (Sukalai)  |
| 103. Oriya   | 132. Jatapu  |
| 104. Padayachi<br>(Villayan Kuppam)  | 133. Telikula  |
| 105. Pamula  | 134. Thogata Veera-<br>kshatriya   |
| 106. Pannan (Malabar)  | 135. Tholuva Naicker and<br>Vettakara Naicker                                  |
| 107. Pangadikara   | 136. Thorian   |
| 108. Paniyas of Ponnani<br>taluk (Malabar)   | 137. Tgala (Tigala)  |
| 109. Paniyar or Panna-<br>yar  | 138. Toda  |
| 110. Parkarakulam (Suri-<br>thiman, Malayaman<br>Nathaman, Moopa-<br>nar and Nainar) | 139. Tondaman  |
| 111. Patnulkaran   | 140. Tsakala   |
| 112. Pattanavan  | 141. Uppara  |
| 113. Perike  | 142. Ural Goundan  |
| 114. Peruvannan  | 143. Vada Balija (Ganjam<br>and Vizagapatam)                                   |
| 115. Pichigunta  | 144. Vaduvan (Vadugan)   |
| 116. Poraya  | 145. Vakkaliga   |
| 117. Pulluvan  | 146. Valaiyan  |
| 118. Purala (Puralavadu)   | 147. Vaniar  |
| 119. Rajapuri  | 148. Vannan  |
| 120. Reddi (Ganjam)  | 149. Vanniakula Kshat-   |

APPENDIX III

riya (in Tamil districts) and Agnikula (in Telugu districts)	151. Veluthandan
150. Velakatalavan	152. Virakodi Velalars
	153. Yadava
	154. Yerukala

**c. The Position in 1936**

Depressed Classes as Scheduled for purposes of franchise in Madras—Appendix VIII of the White Paper

1. Adi Andhra	31. Holeyá
2. Adi Dravida	32. Jaggali
3. Adi Karnataka	33. Jambuvulu
4. Ajila	34. Kadan
5. Aranadan	35. Kalladi
6. Arundhatiyan	36. Kanakkan
7. Baira	37. Karimpalan
8. Bakuda	38. Kattunayakan
9. Bandi	39. Kodalo
10. Bariki	40. Koosa
11. Battada	41. Koraga
12. Baruri	42. Kudiya
13. Bellara	43. Kudibi
14. Byagari	44. Kudumban
15. Chachaili	45. Kuravan
16. Chakkiliyan	46. Kurichchan
17. Chalavadi	47. Kuruman
18. Chamar	48. Madari
19. Chandala	49. Madiga
20. Cheruman	50. Mailla
21. Dandasi	51. Mala
22. Devendrakulanathan	52. Male
23. Dombo	53. Malasar
24. Ghasi	54. Matangi
25. Godagali	55. Mavilan
26. Godari	56. Moger
27. Godda	57. Muchi
28. Gosangi	58. Mundala
29. Haddi	59. Nalkeyara
30. Hasla	60. Nayadi

## MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

- |               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 61. Pagadai   | 74. Pulayan         |
| 62. Paidi     | 75. Puthirai Vannan |
| 63. Painda    | 76. Raneyar         |
| 64. Paky      | 77. Rilli           |
| 65. Pallan    | 78. Samagara        |
| 66. Pambada   | 79. Samban          |
| 67. Pamidi    | 80. Sapari          |
| 68. Panchama  | 81. Semman          |
| 69. Paniyan   | 82. Thote           |
| 70. Panniandi | 83. Tiruvalluvar    |
| 71. Pano      | 84. Valluvan        |
| 72. Paraiyan  | 85. Valmiki         |
| 73. Paravan   | 86. Vettuvan        |

### d. The Position in 1931

List of Depressed classes identified for representation in the services of the Government of Madras

#### *Hill and Aboriginal Tribes*

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Annadan                          | 19. Kurichan  |
| 2. Badaga                           | 20. Kuruba  |
| 3. Bagata                           | 21. Mudugar   |
| 4. Chenchu                          | 22. Muduva  |
| 5. Domba                            | 23. Malasar   |
| 6. Dodaba                           | 24. Malayali (Pachimalai hills of Salem and Trichy districts) |
| 7. Gond                             | 25. Marati  |
| 8. Jatapu                           | 26. Mavilan   |
| 9. Kada                             | 27. Melakudi  |
| 10. Kani                            | 28. Panian  |
| 11. Kapu (Vizagapatam and Godavari) | 29. Pane (Pano)   |
| 12. Kumban                          | 30. Polaiyan  |
| 13. Kattunayakan                    | 31. Porija  |
| 14. Kondh                           | 32. Savara  |
| 15. Konda Dora                      | 33. Sholagar  |
| 16. Kola                            | 34. Toda  |
| 17. Koya                            | 35. Vettuvan  |
| 18. Kudubi                          |   |

### APPENDIX III

#### "Others"

1. Amagunta Poligar (Chittoor)
2. Ambalagars (Trichy)
3. Ane Bojinapalli Malas (Nellore)
4. Anipey Malas (Godavari, East and West)
5. Attur Kilnad Koravars (S. Arcot, Salem and Trichy)
6. Attur Melnad Koravars (Salem)
7. Bavuri (Ganjam, Vizagapatam)
8. Bavira (S. Kanara)
9. Bakuda (S. Kanara)
10. Bellara (S. Kanara)
11. Bhattu Turkas (Chittoor)
12. Boyas (Anantapur, Bellary, Chittoor and Kurnool)
13. Budabukkalass (Guntur)
14. Chakala (Guntur)
15. Chalavadi (Bellary)
16. Chengampundi Koravars (N. Arcot)
17. Cheruma (Malabar)
18. Chettinad Valayars (Ramnad)
19. Chuckler (Tamil districts)
20. Dandasis (Ganjam)
21. Dasari (Ananthapur, Bellary, Cuddalore, Nellore, Kavali settlement)
22. Debi Koravars (N. Arcot)
23. Dommaras (Ananthapur, North and South Arcot, Chittoor, Kurnool, Nellore, East and West Godavari, Tanjore)
24. Dubbai Koravas (North Arcot)
25. Gandarvakottai Koravars (Tanjore)
26. Ghasis (Jeypore)
27. Godda (S. Kanara)
28. Gudu Dararis (S. Arcot and Coimbatore)
29. Gundlapad Woddars (Guntur)
30. Haddi (Ganjam and Vizagapatam)
31. Holeya (S. Kanara)
32. Inji Koravars (Trichy)
33. Iranis (all districts)

MINORITIES IN MADRAS STATE

34. Irular (N. and S. Arcot, Trichy)
35. Jambuvandi (Trichy)
36. Jamulapalli Malas (Kurnool)
37. Jarugaballi Madigas (Guntur)
38. Jogamalai Koravars or kepmaris (N. and S. Arcot, Bellary, Cuddapah)
39. Jogula and Jogi (N. and S. Arcot, Chingleput, Chittoor and Nellore)
40. Kallars (that portion of Tanjore district where special reclamation activities have been extended)
41. Kaladis (Trichy)
42. Kal Karavars (Trichy)
43. Kal Oddars (Chingleput)
44. Kanakkan (Malabar)
45. Kepmaris (Chingleput)
46. Kintali Kalingas (Vizagapatam)
47. Korachas (Bellary)
48. Koraga (S. Kanara)
49. Koravars (Salem, Chingleput, Tirunelveli)
50. Kottapal Kallars (Tanjore)
51. Kunjar Bhat (all districts)
52. Kurumbarava (Ramnad)
53. Lambadis (Guntur)
54. Madari (Ganjam and Vizagapatam)
55. Madigas (Arundateeyas of Telugu districts)
56. Maila (S. Kanara)
57. Malas (Adi Andhras of Telugu districts)
58. Maravars of Pulam (Tirunelveli)
59. Moger (Mera or Kaipudas or Mogerars of S. Kanara)
60. Monda Koravas (Salem)
61. Mundala (S. Kanara)
62. Muthurachas (Nellore)
63. Nakkalas (E. Godavari)
64. Nalkedaya (S. Kanara)
65. Nattan Korachas (Chittoor)
66. Nayadi (Malabar)



### APPENDIX III

67. Nirshikaris (Bellary and Kurnool)
68. Nokkars (Chingleput)
69. Oddars (N. Arcot)
70. Paidis (Vizagapatam)
71. Pallan (Tamil districts)
72. Pambada (S. Kanara)
73. Paraiya (Adi Dravida of Tamil districts)
74. Paravan (S. Kanara)
75. Pedda Boyas (Ananthapur and Cuddalore)
76. Pennagaram Perumalai Koravars (Salem)
77. Periasuriyur Kallars (Trichy)
78. Picharis (Bellary)
79. Pichi Guntlas (Cuddalore)
80. Piramalai Kallars (Madras and Ramnad)
81. Ponnai Koravars (N. Arcot)
82. Ranayars (S. Kanara)

*Note* : This list includes the tribes notified under section 3 of the Criminal Tribes Act and was subject to variation as tribes were notified under the section or removed from the operation of the Act.

## APPENDIX IV

### Linguistic Representation in Services

In Madras, not only communal but also linguistic considerations weighed in the selection of government servants. The presidency was a multi-lingual area with four principal languages, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Canarese. As early as 1910, the Telugus grumbled over their backwardness in comparison with Tamils in political leadership and public services. One of the demands of the Andhra Movement started in 1913 was fair representation for the Telugus in the Madras services. The Madras Public Service Commission at each selection found that there was always an excess of eligible candidates in certain districts and a deficiency in some. In 1935 an order was passed by the government prescribing linguistic rotation in government appointments according to which in a unit of twelve appointments, five should go to Tamil, four to Telugu, one to Canarese and two to Malayalam. If no suitable candidate was available in the turn allotted to it, the linguistic group next in the cycle could be appointed and that which lost its chance would have a preferential claim at subsequent chances until it secured its turn. This rule was immediately applied in offices where there was a fairly large staff. After a year, it was found that Telugu and Canarese candidates were not available in sufficient numbers to fill up the chances allotted to them. The linguistic rule combined with the communal rule complicated the system of appointment of clerks and reduced the standard of efficiency. However, in 1940, the annual statements of the departments where the linguistic rule was in operation were examined and it was found that there was no great difficulty experienced in following the rule. But still the question of continuing the system and extending it to other departments was left to be decided after a trial for a further

#### APPENDIX IV

period of five years.<sup>1</sup> In March 1944, the Andhra Maha Sabha waited in deputation on the Governor of Madras and requested proper representation of Andhras in the services.<sup>2</sup> In 1945, the linguistic rule was made permanent in the departments in which it was introduced.<sup>3</sup> When the communal order was revised in 1947, the linguistic order was also revised to ensure six for Tamil, six for Telugu, one for Malayalam, and one for Canarese, to be distributed in a rotational scheme so that in a unit of fourteen, the Tamils could fill the vacancies 1, 3, 6, 9, 11 and 13 and Telugus 2, 4, 7, 10, 12 and 14, and the Canarese would get the 8th and the Malayalese the 5th turn in the cycle.<sup>4</sup> The order was in force till the formation of linguistic states.

1. *G.O. 961*, Public (Services), May 10, 1940.
2. *G.O. 3234*, Public (Services), November 7, 1944.
3. *G.O. 1812*, Public (Services), July 31, 1945.
4. *G.O. 2001, 2002*, Public (Services), August 18, 1948.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## 1. Public Records at the Madras Record Office

Proceedings of the Madras government, particularly of the Public Department, Education Department and the Public Works and Labour Department.

## 2. Printed Reports and Documents

(a) Published by the Government of India

✓ *Papers Relating to Constitutional Reform in India*, 1908, Vol. I and Vol. II.

*Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms*. Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

*Indian Constitutional Reforms—Report of the Franchise Committee, 1918-1919 and V Despatch on Indian Constitutional Reforms (Franchise)*.

✓ *Report on the Working of the Reformed Constitution 1923*.

*Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee 1924*.

*Local Government on the Reforms in India 1927*.

✓ *Government of India's Despatch on Constitutional Reforms 1930*.

*Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*

Vol. I, *Survey*.

Vol. II, *Recommendations*.

Vol. IV, *Memoranda to the Indian Statutory Commission by the Government of India*.

Vol. V, *Memoranda to the Indian Statutory Commission by the Government of India*.

✓ Vol. XV, *Selections from Memoranda and Oral Evidence, Madras*.

Vol. XVI and XVII, *Selections from Memoranda and Oral Evidence by Non-officials*.

*Indian Round Table Conference*

*Proceedings of the Sub-Committees, Minorities*, Vol. 3, 1930-1931.

*Second Session*, Vol. 4.

*Second Session*, Vol. 5.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Royal Commission on the Public Services in India*. Vol. II, 1914.

Government of India. *Report of the Backward Classes Commission*. Vol. I, II and III, 1955.

Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs. *Memo-randum on the Report of the Backward Classes Com-mission*.

*Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes*, annual reports.

(b) Published by the Government of Madras.

Government of Madras. *The Working of the System of Government*. 1928.

*Administration Reports of Madras Presidency/State*. annual.

*The Madras Civil List (List of Government Officers)*. annual.

Madras Public Service Commission. annual reports.

*Madras Services Manual*. 1954, 1961.

*General Election in Madras State*, 1957.

*Harijan Uplift in Madras (Government Aid to Harijans)*. 1960.

*Report on General Elections 1962*.

*Madras Legislature who is who 1957*.

*Madras Legislature who is who 1962*.

### 3. Legislative Proceedings

*Questions and Answers at the Meeting of the Council of the Governor of Fort St. George for the Purpose of Making Laws and Regulations*. 1893-1920.

*Journal of the Legislative Council, Madras*. 1916-1920.

*Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council*. 1921-1936.

*Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*. 1937-1960.

### 4. Census Reports

1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1951, and 1961. *District Census Handbooks*, 1951 and 1961.

### 5. Gazetteers

*Imperial Gazetteer of India, Madras*. 1885-87.

*District Gazetteers*.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 6. Newspapers and Periodicals

- ✓ *The Hindu*. 1910-1963.  
*The Mail*. 1920-1963.  
✓ *Madras Newspaper Reports—Extracts from English and Vernacular Newspapers by the Government of Madras*. 1874-1936.  
*Kudi Arasu*. 1928-1936.  
*Manram*. 1953-1963.

### 7. Collected Documents (compilations and other secondary sources)

- Bannerjee, A.C. *Indian Constitutional Documents, 1917-1939*. 3 Vols. 1949, A. Mukherjee and Co., Calcutta.  
Gwyer and Appadorai. *Speeches and Documents on Indian Constitution, 1921-1947*. 2 Vols, 1957, Oxford University Press.  
Mitra, Nripendra Nath. *Indian Annual Register*. The Annual Registrar Office, Calcutta, annual.

### 8. Books and Journals

- Aiyappan, A. and Balaratnam, L. K. (ed.) *Society in India*. 1956, S.S.A. Publication, Madras.  
Ambedkar, B. R. *Who were the Shudras?* 2nd ed., 1947, Thackers, Bombay.  
Anantakrishna Ayyar, L. K. *Cochin Tribes and Castes*. 1912, Government of Cochin.  
— *Mysore Tribes and Castes*. 1935, Mysore University.  
Anderson, G. and Subedar, M. *Development of an Indian Policy 1818-1858*. G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., London.  
Annadurai, C. N. *Ilatchiya Varalaru* (The history of ideology). (Tamil), 3rd ed., 1957, Dravida Pannai, Tiruchi.  
— *Thee Paravattum* (Let the fire spread). (Tamil), Dravida Pannai, Tiruchi.  
— *Vetri Murasu* (Triumph of victory). (Tamil), Dravida Pannai, Tiruchi.  
Bailey, F. G. *Caste and the Economic Frontier*. 1953, Oxford University Press.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- , *Tribe, Caste and Nation*. 1960, Oxford University Press.
- ✓ Baliga, B. S. *Studies in Madras Administration*. 2 Vols, 1960, Government of Madras.
- Bannerjea, Sir Surendranath. *Nation in Making*. 2nd ed., 1925, Oxford University Press.
- Blunt, E.A.H. *The Caste System of Northern India*. 1951, Oxford University Press.
- Bower, The Reverend H. *Essay on Hindu Caste*. 1851, Missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.
- Bulsara, J. F. "Implications of a casteless and classless society". *The Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, XI, 1, 1959.
- Carstairs, G. M. *The Twice Born—a study of a community of high-caste Hindus*. 1957, Hogarth Press, London.
- Chailley, Joseph. *Administrative Problems of British India*. 1910, Macmillan and Co., London.
- Chandra, Jag Paresh. *India's Socialistic Pattern of Society*. 1956, Metropolitan Book Co., Delhi.
- Chesney, General Sir George. *Indian Polity*. 3rd ed., 1894, Longmans Green and Co., London.
- ✓ Chidambaranar. *Tamilar Talaivar Periyar E. V. R. Vazhkkai Varalaru* (Leader of Tamilians—life of Periyar E.V.R.). (Tamil), 4th ed., 1960, Kudi Arasu Padippakam, Erode.
- Chinnaswami. *Tamil Nadu*. (Tamil), Selvam Padippakam, Madurai.
- Chintamani, C. Y. (ed.) *Indian Social Reform*. 1901, Thompson and Co., Madras.
- , *Indian Politics since the Mutiny*. (lectures delivered at the Andhra University on 28th November to 1st December 1935), 1937.
- Claude, Inis L. *National Minorities—an international problem*. 1955, Harvard University Press.
- Coupland, R. *Indian Politics 1936-42—constitutional problems in India*. 1944, Oxford University Press.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dalal, M. N. *Whither Minorities?* 1940, D. B. Tharaporevala and Sons, Bombay.
- Desai, A. R. *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*. 2nd ed., 1954, Oxford University Press.
- Deshmukh, Durgabai. (ed.) *Social Welfare in India*. 1955, Planning Commission, New Delhi.
- Dravida Pithan. *Dravida Nadu Dravidarukke* (Dravidanad for Dravidians). (Tamil), 1960, Noor Pathippu Kazhagam, Madras.
- Dreikmeier, Charles. *Kingship and Community in Early India*. 1962, Oxford University Press.
- D'Souza, Victor S. "Caste and endogamy—A reappraisal of the concept of caste". *Journal of Anthropological Society of Bombay*, XI, 1, 1959.
- Dube, S. C. *Indian Village*. 1955, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London.
- . *India's Changing Villages*. 1958, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London.
- Dubois, Abbe. *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*. (translated by Beauchamp, H. K.) 2 Vols, 1891, Oxford Clarendon Press.
- Dutt, Nripendra Kumar. *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*. Vol. 1, 2000 B.C.-300. 1931, The Book Company Ltd., Calcutta.
- Gandhi, M. K. *Communal Unity*. 1949, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.
- Garrat, G. T. *An Indian Commentary*. 1928, Butler and Tanner Ltd., Great Britain.
- Ghurye, G. S. *Caste and Race in India*. 1932, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., London.
- . *The Scheduled Tribes*. 2nd ed., 1959, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
- . *Caste and Clans in India*. 3rd ed., 1961, Popular Book Depot, Bombay.
- . *Anthropo-sociological Papers*. 1963, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
- Griffiths, Sir Percival. *The British Impact on India*. 1955, Macdonald and Co., London.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- .*Modern India*. 3rd ed., 1962, Ernest Benn Ltd., London.
- Hardgrave, Robert L. *Dravidian Movement*. 1965, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.
- Harrison, Selig S. *India—the most dangerous decades*. 1960, Oxford University Press.
- Hsu, L. K. *Clan, Caste and Club*. 1963, D. Van Nostrand Co., Princeton.
- Hunter, W. M. *Our Indian Muslims*. 1871, London.
- Hutton, J. H. *Caste in India*. 3rd ed., 1961, Oxford University Press.
- Ibbetson, D. C. J. *Punjab Castes*. 1883, Government of Punjab.
- Ilbert, Sir Courtenay. *The Government of India*. 2nd ed., 1907, Clarendon Press, London.
- Janowsky, Oscar L. *Nationalities and National Minorities*. 1945, Macmillan and Co., New York.
- Jinnah, M. A.—*his speeches and writings 1912-1917*. 1918, Ganesh and Co., Madras.
- Karve, Irawati. "What is caste?" *Economic Weekly*, January, March and July 1958.
- .*Hindu Society—an interpretation*. 1961, Deccan College, Poona.
- Ketkar, S. V. *The History of Caste in India*. Vol. I, 1909, Taylor and Carpenter, New York.
- .*An Essay on Hinduism*. Vol. II, 1911, Luzac, London.
- Kogekar, S. V. and Park, R. L. *Report on the Indian General Elections 1951-1952*. Popular Book Depot, Bombay.
- Kohn Hans. *The Idea of Nationalism—a study in its origins and background*. 3rd ed., 1946, Macmillan and Co., New York.
- Krishna, K. B. *The Problem of Minorities or Communal Representation in India*. 1939, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Leach, E. R. *Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan*. 1960, Cambridge University Press.
- Legislature Congress Party, Madras. *Directory of the Madras Legislature 1938*.
- . *Three Years Work of Madras Ministry 1946-1949*.
- . *Directory of the Madras Legislature 1950*.
- Love. *Vestiges of Old Madras*. 1913, John Murray, London.
- Lovett, Sir Verney. *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*. 1921, John Murray, London.
- Ludlow, John Malcolm. *British India, etc.* 2 Vols, 1858.
- Lyall, Sir Arthur. *Asiatic Studies*. 1st series, 2 Vols, 2nd ed., 1899, John Murray, London.
- Macartney, C. A. *National States and National Minorities*. 1934, Oxford University Press.
- Madhavan Nair, C. *A Short Life of Sir C. Sankaran Nair*. 1964, author.
- Majumdar, D. N. *Caste and Communication in an Indian Village*. 1958, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
- Maran, "Murasoli". *En Vendum Inba Dravidam?* (Why want the happy Dravidam). (Tamil), 4th ed., 1962, Muthuvel Padippakam.
- Marriott, Mckim. (ed.) *Village India*. 1955, University of Chicago.
- Mathur, K. S. *Caste and Ritual in a Malwa Village*. 1964, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
- Mehta, Subash Chandra. "Persistence of the caste system—vested interest in backwardness". *Quest*, Winter 1962-63.
- Minto, Mary. *India—Minto and Morley 1903-1910*. 1934, Macmillan and Co., London.
- Morley. *Indian Speeches—1907-1909*. 1909, Macmillan and Co., London.
- Morley. *Speeches on Indian Affairs*. 2nd ed., G. A. Natesan and Co., Madras.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Morris-Jones, W. H. *Parliament in India*. 1957, Longmans Green and Co., London.
- Mueller, F. Max. (ed.) *The Sacred Books of the East*. (translated by various oriental scholars), Vol. XXV, G. Buhler. *Laws of Manu*. 1886, London.
- Mukherji, P. *The Indian Constitution*. 1920, Thacker Spink and Co., Calcutta.
- Nair, B. N. *The Dynamic Brahmin*. 1959, Popular Book Depot, Bombay.
- Nanavati, Sir M. and Vakil, C. N. (ed.) *Group Prejudices in India*. a symposium. 1957.
- Nathan, T. V. *Justice Year Book*. 1929.
- Nedunchezian. *D.M.K.* (Tamil), 1961, Metropolitan printers, Madras.
- Nesfield, J. C. *Brief View of the Caste System of the North-West Provinces and Oudh*. 1885, Allahabad.
- O'Dwyer, M. F. *India as I knew it 1885-1925*. 2nd ed., 1925, Constable and Co., London.
- O'Malley, L. S. S. *Indian Caste and Customs*. 1932, Cambridge University Press, London.
- Panikkar, K. M. *Hindu Society at Cross Roads*. 1955, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
- Parthasarathy, T. M. *D.M.K. Varalaru* (The history of the D.M.K. (Tamil), 2nd ed., 1963, Pari Nilayam, Madras.
- Phillips, C. H. *Politics and Society in India*. 1963, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London.
- Pillai, G. K. *Origin and Development of Caste*. 1959, Popular Press, Bombay.
- Prabhu, P. M. *Hindu Social Organisation*. 4th ed., 1963, Popular Press, Bombay.
- Prasad, Rajendra. *India Divided*. 3rd ed., 1947, Hind Kitabs, Bombay.
- Raman, V. P. "Politics in Madras". *Quest*, III, 3, December 1957—January 1958.
- Ramaswami Mudaliar, A. *The Mirror of the Year*. (a collection of the leading articles in the *Justice* in 1927). Huxley Press, Madras.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ✓ Ramaswami Naicker, E. V. *S.I.L.F. Eleventh Justice Conference 1938, Presidential Address by EVR*. B.N. Press, Madras.
- *The Presidential Address of Periyar EVR Delivered at the Justice Confederation*. 1940, Tamilan Press, Erode.
- *The Ramayana—Unmai Vilakkam* (Truth explained). (Tamil), 1959, Rationalist Publication, Madras.
- *Acharyarun Atchi Kodumaigal* (Atrocities of C.R.'s rule). (Tamil), 1961, Kudi Arasu Padippakam, Erode.
- *Dravidar Aryar Unmai* (The truth about Dravidian-Aryan). (Tamil), (a collection of speeches), Kudi Arasu Padippakam, Erode.
- *Kamarajarai En Adarikka Vendum?* (Why should we support Kamaraj?). (Tamil), (speech by EVR), Arivukadal Padippakam, Madurai.
- ✓ Rice, Stanley. *Hindu Customs and their Origins*. 1937, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London.
- Risley, H. H. *The People of India*. 1915, Thacker, London.
- Rudolf, Lloyd I. "Urban life and populist radicalism—Dravidian politics in Madras". *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 3, May 1961.
- and Susanne. "The political role of Indian caste associations". *Pacific Affairs*, XXXIII, 1, March 1963.
- and Susanne Hoerber. "Consensus and conflicts in India's politics". *World Politics*, XIII, 3, April 1963.
- Ruthnaswami, M. *British Administrative System in India*. (Sir William Meyer Endowment Lectures 1936-37 at the University of Madras), Madras.
- ✓ Senart, E. *Caste in India*. 1930, Mathuen and Co., Ltd., London.
- Sharma, Ram Sharan. *Sudras in Ancient India*. 1958, Shri Jainendra Press, Bombay.
- Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi. *The History of the Congress 1885-1935*. 1935, Law Printing House, Madras.
- Sivagnanam, M. P. *Tamizhan Kural* (The voice of the Tamilian). (Tamil), 1947, Inba Nilayam, Madras.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Sivaswami Ayyar, P. S. *Indian Constitutional Problems*. 1928, D. B. Tharaporevala Sons and Co., Bombay.
- Slater, G. S. *Dravidian Element in Indian Culture*. 1924, Ernest Benn Ltd., London.
- Smith, V. A. *Indian Constitutional Reforms—viewed in the light of history*. 1919.
- . *The Oxford History of India*. 1920, Clarendon Press London.
- Srinivas, M. N. *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*. 1952, Oxford Clarendon Press.
- . *India's Villages*. 2nd ed., 1960, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
- . *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*. 1962, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
- Srinivasa Ayyangar, S. *Problems of Democracy in India*. (Rt. Hon'ble V.S.S. Sastri Endowment Lecture for 1938-1939 in the University of Madras).
- Strachey, Sir John. *India—its administration and progress*. 4th ed., 1911, Macmillan and Co., London.
- Thurston, E. *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*. 1909, Government of Madras.
- Vairana Pillai, M. S. *Are we Two Nations?* 2nd ed., 1948, Diocesan Press, Madras.
- Varadarajulu Naidu, T. *The Justice Movement 1917-1932*, Justice Printing Works, Madras.
- Vedaratnam, S. *A Plea for Understanding—a reply to the critics of the Dravidian Progressive Federation*. Vanguard Publishing House, Kancheepuram.
- Venkataraman, S. R. *Harijans through the Ages*. 1946, Bharat Devi Publications.
- . *Temple Entry Legislation with Acts and Bills*. 1946, Bharat Devi Publications.
- Venu, A. S. *Dravidasthan*. Kalai Manram.
- . *Life of Annadurai*. Kalai Manram.
- Vivekananda, Swami. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. birth centenary edition, 1963, Gouranga Press, Calcutta.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Weiner, Myron. *Party Politics in India* 1957, Princeton University.
- . *The Politics of Scarcity*. 1962, University of Chicago.
- Whitehead, Henry D. D. *Indian Problems in Religion, Education, Politics*. 1924, Constable and Co., London.
- Zinkin, Taya. *India Changes*. 1958, Chatto and Windus, Ltd., London.
- . *Caste Today*. 1962, Oxford University Press.
- . *Reporting on India*. 1962, Chatto and Windus Ltd., London.





# **Index**



# INDEX

- Adi Dravida**  
number, 14  
name, 14, 15, 174  
nomination to the council, 115, 116  
in Labour Advisory Board, 157  
as teachers, 159  
and Justice party, 171
- Adi Dravida Mahajana Sabha, 14,**  
74, 146, 172
- Ambedkar, Dr , 19, 170, 172-173**
- Andhrapatrika, 40**
- Andhraprakasika, 40**
- Anglo-Indian, 92, 93, 115, 124, 125**
- Animist, 31**
- Annadurai, C. N , 83, 85, 98, 99**
- Aryan, 13, 19-20, 21, 59, 82, 84, 99**
- Avarna, 9, 17**
- Backward Classes**  
political group, 8, 34-35, 182, 188-189  
majority, 22, 137, 187, 188  
race for recognition, 23, 26, 109, 125-126  
number, 34, 109  
split of non-brahmin, 104, 110  
communal representation in services, 104-105, 119-120, 121, 122, 123, 124  
criterion, 105-106, 134-135, 194  
beginning of the concept, 107, 108  
emergence, 118-125, 187  
list, 124, 131-133, 134, 135-136  
concessions, 138, 176, 195-196  
constitutional amendment, 140  
in services, 143, 144  
in legislature, 144  
and caste, 188-189
- Backward Classes Commission, 132-135, 136-137**
- Backward Classes League, 119, 121-122, 123**
- Balaji Rao, Nayudu, 63**
- Banerjee, S. N., 73**
- Bashyam Ayyangar, V , 44, 53**
- Besant, Annie, 41, 43, 62, 63**
- Board of Revenue, 54, 55, 56, 91, 92, 155-156, 163**
- Brahmin**  
political group, 8, 37-38, 43, 120, 182, 183  
in varna system, 9, 11, 18, 183  
castes within, 10, 55  
functions, 11  
status, 12, 13  
as dominant minority, 13, 36, 38, 49, 61, 184-185, 187  
and EVR, 20-21  
considered Aryan, 21  
and right-hand castes, 28  
non-backward, 34, 133  
in professions and government jobs, 38, 47-48, 56, 57-58, 63-64, 121  
conflict with non-brahmin, 38, 41, 59-60, 103  
legislative council members, 44, 45-46, 82  
influence in elections, 46-47, 66, 87  
in education, 48-49  
on communal representation, 50, 64  
Vivekananda's theory, 59-60  
propaganda against, 61, 62, 64  
and Congress, 65, 85  
in the ministry, 81-82  
and DMK, 88  
and Communal G.O., 90-96, 124, 125, 141, 142  
and Self-respect Movement, 96-100  
and Sanskrit, 102

## INDEX

- and panchama, 151, 152, 157  
and caste system, 188
- Cardew, Alexander, 47, 54, 64
- Caste  
*see also* Jati  
definition and description, 3-4, 5-6, 9  
number, 6-7  
political group, 8, 22, 34-35, 120, 125, 181-182, 183, 184, 185  
majority and minority, 8-9, 186  
classification in census, 10-11, 18-19, 135  
grades, 12  
origin, 21, 22  
struggle for rank, 23, 24, 25  
claim for backward status, 26, 109, 127-128, 131-134  
combinations, 26-29, 189  
in casteless religions, 32-33  
non-backward, 34  
statistics in state services, 57, 58  
groupings in political parties, 88-89, 191-192  
and Communal G. O., 92-93  
objectives of the Justice party, 96  
and Self-respect Movement, 98  
split within non-brahmin, 103-104  
criterion for backwardness, 105-106, 108, 109, 134-135, 136  
basis for scholarship, 109, 110  
forward and backward, 110, 111, 118, 119, 120, 121, 126  
demand for nomination to the legislative council, 115-116  
in panchama, 145  
observance in official duty, 148, 149, 150  
in schools, 158-160  
and Labour Department, 162-163  
meetings on temple entry, 167-168  
and backward classes, 188  
and political power, 188, 189, 193, 194  
abolition, 193, 194-195, 196
- Census  
1881, 6, 18  
1871, 10, 147  
1901, 12  
1931, 14  
1921, 16, 30, 31  
1931, 16, 30  
1891, 18, 30  
1911, 18  
1951, 133  
no caste enumeration, 195
- Chaturvarnya, 9, 11, 13, 59, 145
- Chelmsford (Lord), 72
- Christian, 32, 33, 34, 57, 92, 93, 105, 115, 116, 121, 124, 125, 136-137, 142, 143, 163-164, 184
- Civil Disabilities Act, 105
- Commissioner of Labour, 156-157
- Commonweal Party, 190
- Communal G. O., 89, 92-93, 94, 95, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 128-129, 129-130, 138, 141-144, 161
- Communal representation  
1907 scheme, 50, 52-56  
in public services, 63, 64, 121, 128  
demand by Justice party, 71-72  
recommendations of the Franchise Committee and Government of India, 75-76  
separate electorates and reservation of seats, 79-80  
for depressed classes, 172
- Communist Party, 84
- Congress, 40, 45, 65, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 102, 111-112, 113, 114, 168, 169, 170, 173, 186, 190
- Cornish, W. R., 56-57
- Criminal Tribes, 161, 163
- Depressed Classes  
*see also* Scheduled Classes and Scheduled Castes)  
name, 14, 15  
number, 16  
definition, 16, 163  
integration, 17

## INDEX

- political group, 34, 182  
 and Communal G. O., 92, 93  
 representation in the legislature,  
 115, 173  
 and Justice party, 117-118, 171  
 discussion in the Imperial Legis-  
 lative Council, 154-155  
 education, 158-161  
 enumeration, 161-162  
 and Non-Brahmin Movement, 161  
 reservation of seats, 161  
 list, 163, 165  
 converts, 163-164  
 as minority, 165, 174  
 removal of untouchability, 166-  
 167  
 and political policy, 171-172  
 and Congress, 171-172, 173
- Depressed Classes Mission**, 146  
**Depressed Classes Society of India**,  
 146, 152
- Dharma**, 4, 20
- Directive Principles of State Policy**,  
 139-140
- DMK** 85, 86, 88
- Dravida Kazhagam**  
 birth, 83-84  
 in politics, 84, 88  
 opposition to C. R., 85  
 and brahmin, 86, 186  
 support to Congress, 86  
 in '62 elections, 87, 189  
 and Communal G. O., 96
- Dravidan*, 40, 41, 94, 97, 166
- Dravidanad**, 83, 88
- Dravidanad*, 83
- Dravidian**  
 movement, 20, 84  
 made sudra, 20-21  
 population, 22  
 Vivekananda's theory, 59  
 EVR's theory, 82-83  
 opposition to C.R., 85  
 party leadership, 86  
 and Self-respect Movement, 99-  
 101
- Franchise Committee**, 73-74, 75, 113
- Fundamental Rights**, 138, 139, 140,  
 173
- Gandhi**, 170n, 173, 174
- Harijan**, 34, 124, 125, 138, 168-170,  
 174, 176, 178-179
- Harrison, Selig S.**, 86
- Hill and Aboriginal Tribes**, 162
- Hindu**, 4, 5, 21, 31, 33, 55, 63, 103,  
 107
- Hindu*, 40, 42, 49, 52, 63, 66, 114,  
 135-136, 148, 150, 169
- Hinduism**, 31, 32, 62-63, 84
- Home Rule**, 39, 43, 65, 69, 70, 112,  
 152, 153
- Ibbetson, Denzil**, 32
- Idangei**, 27-29, *see also* Left-hand  
 castes
- Imperial Legislative Council**, 31, 66,  
 154
- Jati**, 8, 9, 17, 30, 37, 60, 107, 125,  
 183, 184, 190
- Justice*, 43, 71, 78, 94
- Justice Party**, 40, 41, 43, 68-72, 78,  
 81, 82, 83, 89-90, 96, 102, 103,  
 111, 113, 116, 152-153, 165-166,  
 171, 186
- Kamaraj Nadar**, 86, 87, 194
- Kammalan**, 24, 26, 110-111, 134
- Karma**, 4, 99, 167
- Karunakara Menon, C**, 59-60, 66
- Kesava Pillai**, 45, 110, 111
- Krishnan Nair, M**, 45, 55
- Krishnaswami Ayyar, V.**, 45, 54
- Kshatriya**  
 in varna system, 9, 17, 19-20, 183  
 shanar claiming to be Kshatriya,  
 25  
 and caste alliances, 28  
 and Justice party, 113
- Kudi Arasu*, 98, 100

- Labour Department, 118, 156-157, 158-161, 161-162, 163, 163-164, 165
- Left-hand castes, 27-29, 184, *see also* Idangei
- Love, 27
- Lyll, Alfred, 31
- Mac Iver, 31
- Madiga, 13, 15, 115
- Madras Dravidian Association, 153
- Madras Legislative Council  
 resolution on the name Adi Dravida, 14  
 Composition, 44, 45, 46, 80, 81-82, 114-115, 118  
 1907 scheme, 51-56  
 and 1916 elctions, 66-67  
 on communal representation in services, 89-92, 94-95, 141  
 and backward classes, 119, 120, 128  
 on pariahs, 151  
 on Labour Department, 158, 161, 163  
 on temple entry, 167, 168
- Madras Presidency Association, 112-113
- Madras Public Service Commission, 96, 143, 175
- Majority  
 formation by castes, 8  
 oppressed, 13  
 backward, 22, 104, 137, 187, 196  
 in varna system, 30  
 in Madras, 36, 38, 79, 181  
 evolution of concept, 74, 186  
 and temple entry, 168
- Mala, 13, 15, 115
- Manavadharmasastra, 11, 26
- Manickavelu Nayagar, M.A., 119-120, 129, 163, 191
- Manram, 100
- Manu, 11, 13, 21, 22
- Maravar, 24
- Meston award, 77-78
- Minority  
 definition, 1  
 in the West, 1-2  
 problem of caste in India, 2-3, 7-8, 8-9, 79, 181, 183, 196  
 dominant, 13, 36, 38, 185  
 depressed classes, 17  
 forward, 22  
 in varna system, 30  
 brahmin, 36, 38, 187  
 position for non-brahmin, 38  
 evolution of concept, 74, 186  
 panchama, 145-146  
 Christian converts, 164  
 and temple entry, 168  
 scheduled castes, 187-188
- Molony, Charles, 34
- Montagu, 71, 89
- Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, 73, 152
- Morley-Minto Reforms, 60
- Muhammadan, *see* Muslim
- Muniswami Naidu, 90
- Muslim, 32-33, 34, 53-54, 57, 92-93, 105, 107-108, 121, 124, 125, 126, 136-137, 138, 142, 174, 175, 184
- Muthiah Chettiar, 98
- Mysore, 136n, 189
- Nadar, 34, 115, 116, 132
- Nair, T. M., 40, 66, 67, 71, 153
- Nastikam, 100
- Natesa Mudaliar, C., 90, 91, 94
- Natesan, C., 14
- Natesan, G.A., 151
- New India, 40, 41, 42-43, 49, 93
- Non-backward non-brahmin, 34, 104
- Non-brahmin  
 political group, 8, 182  
 as sudra, 21  
 non-backward, 34-35, 187  
 conflict with brahmin, 38, 41, 74-75, 97, 184-185, 187  
 concept, 38, 43, 113

## INDEX

- political policy, 39, 60, 61, 68-80  
 in the legislature, 44, 80, 81, 118  
 in elections, 46-47, 66-67  
 and communal representation in  
 legislature, 50, 75, 76-77, 114-115  
 divisions and split, 55-56, 103-  
 107, 110, 111, 118, 120, 189  
 and government service, 57, 58,  
 64  
 Vivekananda's theory, 59  
 in Congress, 65, 85  
 leadership, 83-84, 102  
 forward and backward in parties,  
 88  
     backward, 89, 120  
     and Communal G.O., 90-96, 124,  
     125, 141, 142  
     opposition to Justice party, 113,  
     114, 116-118  
     and depressed classes, 152, 171  
     political power, 187  
*Non-brahmin*, 40, 42, 69  
 Non-brahmin Conference, 72, 74,  
 96-97, 113, 153  
 Non-brahmin Manifesto, 39-40, 42,  
 43, 49, 60, 69, 89, 111-112  
  
 Padayachi, 29, 109, 129, 162, 165,  
 190  
 Pagutharivu Iyakkam, 100  
 Pagutharivu Pasarai, 100  
*Pallava Nadu*, 192  
 Palli, 29, 30, 190  
 Panagal, Raja of, 153  
 Panchama  
     in varna system, 9, 30, 183  
     as minority, 12, 145-146, 183  
     status, 13  
     number, 14  
     name, 14, 15  
     converts, 33  
     and Justice party, 113, 152, 153  
     demand for special treatment,  
     152  
 Panikkar, K. M., 19, 145  
 Pannirselvam, A. T., 98  
  
 Pariah, 13, 14, 15, 28, 115, 147, 148  
 Pariah Mahajana Sabha, 14, 146, 152  
 Patnulkar, 23, 26  
 Periyar, 86, 87, 89, *see also Rama-*  
     *swami Naicker, E.V.*  
  
 Raja, M.C., 113, 171, 172, 174  
 Rajagopalachari, C., 82, 84, 85, 86,  
     87, 88, 190  
 Rajan, P. T., 40, 98  
 Rajaratnam Mudaliar, 44, 55  
 Ramachandra Rao, Pantulu, 46  
 Ramalingam Chettiar, T. A., 89, 94,  
     167  
 Ramamurthi, Ganala, 127, 128, 163  
 Ramanathan, J. N., 117  
 Ramanathan, S., 98  
 Ramaswami Ayyar, C. P., 76  
 Ramaswami Naicker, E.V.  
     *see also Periyar*  
     objection to the name sudra, 20  
     and Justice party, 82, 112-113  
     founding of Dravida Kazhagam,  
     83  
     opposition to C. R., 85  
     and Self-respect Movement, 97,  
     98, 99  
 Ramaswami Padayachi, S.S., 191  
 Ramayana, 99  
 Rationalism, 100  
 Reddi, K. V., 76  
*Revolt*, 98  
 Right-hand caste, 27, 184, *see also*  
     Valangei  
 Round Table Conference, 172  
 Royal Commission on Public Servi-  
     ces, 63-64  
  
 Sahajanandam, A. S., 171  
 Sampath, E.V.K., 89  
 Sankaran Nair, C., 43, 44, 60-61, 62-  
     63, 65-66, 111, 151  
 Sanskrit, 21, 100, 101, 102  
 Sanskritisation, 26, 29, 125  
 Scheduled Castes  
     *see also Scheduled Classes*

## INDEX

- political group, 34-35  
 and communal representation in  
 service, 104, 105, 142, 143, 179-  
 180  
 criterion, 105  
 recommendations of Backward  
 Classes Commission, 133  
 list, 133, 134, 174  
 concessions and reservation in  
 services, 175, 176, 177, 178-179  
 minority, 178-180, 188
- Scheduled Classes**  
*see also* Scheduled Castes  
 name, 14, 120  
 list, 165  
 concessions, 174, 175, 176, 177
- Scheduled Tribes**, 104, 105, 133, 134,  
 175, 176, 177, 179-180
- Self-government**, 69-70, 71-72, 73
- Self-respect Movement**, 97-98, 99-  
 102, 169
- Self-respect Youth Association**, 98
- Shanar**, 24-25, 26, 132
- Sivagnana Gramani, M.P.**, 102
- Siva Raj, N.**, 171
- Sivaswami Ayyar, P.S.**, 44, 45
- Smith, Vincent**, 18
- Soundarapandian, W.P.**, 98
- South Indian Liberal Federation**,  
 39, 40, 47, 70, 71, 72-73, 73-74,  
 76, 83-84, 89, 112-113, 117, 153
- South Indian People's Association**,  
 39, 112
- Srinivas, M N.**, 26
- Srinivasan, R.**, 172
- Srinivasa Sastry, V.S.**, 66, 67, 73, 74
- Strachey, John**, 32
- Subbarao, Pantulu**, 45, 66
- Subbaroyan Dr. P.**, 98, 167-168
- Sub-caste**  
 number, 6-7, 18-19  
 meaning, 9
- Sudra**  
 in varna system, 9, 19, 183  
 population, 19  
 condition, 20-21, 22, 23
- unity and diversity, 22  
 mobility, 23  
 conception, 38  
 Vivekananda's theory, 59, 68  
 and Home Rule, 69  
 race for backward status, 125-126
- Swadesamitran*, 40, 49, 51, 94, 169
- Swarajist party**, 81-82
- Swarajya*, 166, 169
- Tamil**, 100, 101
- Tamilan*, 40
- Tamil Arasu Kazhagam**, 102
- Tamilian** 20, 84, 86, 102
- Tamil National Party**, 89
- Thanikachalam Chettiar, O.**, 91-92
- Theagaraya Chettiar, P.**, 39, 40, 43,  
 63, 76, 87, 111, 113
- Thurston, E.**, 24
- Tiya**, 14, 34, 115, 116
- Toilers Commonweal Party**, 191-192
- Toilers Party**, 190, 191
- Untouchability**, 13, 105, 145, 150,  
 160, 165, 170
- Untouchable**, 13, 14, 17, 104, 110,  
 120, 146, 154, 161-162, 165, 167,  
 187-188
- Uzhaippali*, 192
- Vaisya**, 9, 17, 23, 34, 113, 114, 183
- Valangei**, 27, *see also* Right-hand  
 caste
- Vallattarasu**, 98
- Vanniakula Kshatriya**  
 role in politics, 29-30, 116, 189-  
 192  
 number, 30, 35  
 and Justice party, 113, 114  
 interest in backward castes, 118  
 covered by Labour Department,  
 163
- Vanniakula Kshatriya Mahasangam**,  
 127, 129-130
- Vanniar**, 25, 29, 30, 114, 129, 190,  
*see also* Vanniakula Kshatriya



## INDEX

- Varna, 8, 9, 12, 19-20, 30, 37, 60, 68,  
103, 107, 125, 145, 183, 184, 190
- Varnashramadharma, 72, 98
- Vellala, 23, 34, 47
- Viduthalai*, 86-87
- Vijayaraghavachari, C., 45, 53, 66
- Viswabrahmin  
name, 24  
and Justice party, 113  
nomination to the council, 115,  
116  
interest in backward castes, 118
- request for inclusion in the back-  
ward list, 127-128, 129  
covered by Labour Department,  
163  
on temple entry, 168
- Vivekananda, Swami, 58-59, 68
- West Coast Spectator*, 54, 65, 67
- Willingdon (Lord), 76, 77, 171
- Yeatts, M.W.M., 15
- Yule and Burnell, 3, 27
- Zinkın, Taya, 5