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Impact of Social Reform movements in the Socio - Economic Development of TamilNadu.

The Justice Party rule in the Madras Presidency constitutes an important chapter in the history of South India. The ideology and objectives of the Justice Party had been unique and somewhat different from those of the Congress Party. The Justice Party represented the Non-Brahmin Movement and engineered a social revolution against the domination of Brahmins in the sphere of public services and education.

Birth of the Justice Party

Various factors had contributed to the formation of the Justice Party, which represented the Non-Brahmin Movement. The social dominance of the Brahmins was the main cause for the emergence of the Non-Brahmin Movement. Their high proportion in the Civil Service, educational institutions and also their predominance in the Madras Legislative Council caused a great worry among the non- Brahmins. The Brahmins had also monopolized the Press. The rediscovery of the greatness of the Tamil language and literature also provided a stimulus to the non-Brahmins. Particularly, the publication of the book entitled A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages by Rev. Robert Caldwell in 1856 gave birth to

the Dravidian concept. Later the ancient Tamil literature had been rediscovered and printed by various Tamil scholars including Arumuga Navalar, C.V.Damodaram Pillai and U.V. Swaminatha Iyer. V. Kanakasabhai Pillai in his famous historical work, The Tamils 1800 Years Ago pointed out that Tamils had attained a high degree of civilization before the Advent of the Aryans. This led to the growth of Dravidian feelings among the non-Brahmins. These factors collectively contributed to the birth of the Non-Brahmin Movement and the Justice Party.

The precursor of the Justice Party was the **Madras United League** which was renamed as the **Madras Dravidian Association** in November 1912. Dr.C.Natesa Mudaliar played a significant role in nurturing this organization. In 1916 the **South Indian Liberal Federation** was formed for the purpose of 'promoting the political interests of non-Brahmin caste Hindus'. The leaders who stood behind the formation of this organization were Pitti Theagaraya Chetti, Dr.T.M. Nair, P.Ramarayaninger (Raja of Panagal) and Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar. The South Indian Liberal Federation published an English newspaper called Justice and hence this organization came to be called the Justice

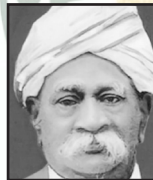
Party. The other news paper which supported the Justice Party was Dravidan (in Tamil). Besides, the Justice Party organized a series of public meetings, conferences, lectures to popularise Non-Brahmin movement. Similarly, the Justice Party formed District Associations, the Non-Brahmin Youth League.

The Justice Movement



The Justice Party's rule in the Madras Presidency constitutes an important chapter in the history of South India. The Justice Party represented the Non-Brahmin movement and engineered a social revolution against the domination of Brahmins in the sphere of public services and education.

The Justice Party, officially known as South Indian Liberal Federation was a political party in the Madras Presidency of British India. This party was established in 1916 by T.M. Nair and Thiagaraya Chetty. During its early years, the party involved in petitioning to the imperial administrative bodies demanding more representation for non-Brahmins in administration. This party published 'Dravidian' in Tamil, 'Andhra Prakasika' in Telugu and 'Justice' in English. Hence it came to be called as the 'Justice Party'.



Justice Party Rule

The Justice Party came to power following the election of 1920 held according to the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. The Justice Party captured sixty three out of ninety eight elected seats in the Madras Legislative Council. As Pitti Theagaraya Chetty declined

to lead the ministry, A.Subbarayalu Reddiar formed the ministry. In the election of 1923 it fought against the Swarajya Party. The Justice Party again won the majority and the ministry was formed by Raja of Panagal. In the election of 1926 a divided Justice Party faced the opposition of a united Congress. Therefore, an independent, A.Subbarayan with the help of the Swarajya Party formed the ministry. In 1930 when the next election was held the Justice Party won the majority and formed a ministry with B. Muniswami Naidu as the leader. In 1932 Raja of Bobbili replaced him as Prime Minister of the Presidency. In 1934 Raja of Bobbili formed his second ministry, which continued in power until the election of 1937. Then Justice party came under the leadership of Periyar E.V.Ramasamy and his self-respect movement. In 1944 at Salem conference. Periyar transformed the Justice Party into a social organization called Dravidar Kazhagam and withdrew it from the electoral politics.

There were many causes for its failure.

- The Justice Party came to power when the world was in economic depression.
- The Nationalist Movement was popular and heading for freedom.
- Caste and Wealth played vital role. Hence the party lost its hold.
- The rise of Congress under the

Thus the Justice Party lost its vitality after a few years of its existence.

Achievements of the Justice Party

The Justice Party remained in power for a period of thirteen years. Its administration was noted for social justice and social reform.

Justice rule gave adequate representation to non-Brahman communities in the public services. It improved the status of depressed classes through education reforms. Justice Party introduced following reforms in the field of Education :

1. Free and compulsory education was introduced for the first time in Madras.
2. Nearly 3000 fisher boys and fisher girls were offered free special instruction by the Department of Fisheries.
3. Midday Meals was given at selected corporation schools in Madras.
4. The Madras Elementary Education Act was amended in 1934 and in 1935 to improve elementary education.
5. The Education of girls received encouragement during the Justice rule in Madras.
6. Education of the Depressed Classes was entrusted with Labour Department.
7. Encouragement was given to Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani medical education.

The government took over the power of appointing district munsiffs out of the control of the High Court. The Communal G.O.s (Government Orders) of 1921 and 1922 provided for the reservation of appointments in local bodies and educational institutions for non-Brahmin communities in increased proportion. The Staff Selection Board, created by the Panagal Ministry in 1924, was made the Public Service Commission in 1929. It was the first of its kind in India. The women were granted the right to vote on the same basis as was given to men. The Hindu Religious Endowment Act of 1921, enacted by the Panagal Ministry, tried to eliminate corruption in the management of

temples. Justice Party Government introduced economic reforms. To assist the growth of industries State Aid to Industries Act, 1922 was passed. This led to the establishment of new industries such as : sugar factories, engineering works, tanneries, aluminium factories, cement factories and oil milling so on. This act provided credits to industries, allotted land and water. This proved favourable for industrial progress.

Similarly, Justice Party Government introduced schemes for rural development to help agrarian population, public health schemes to prevent diseases. To improve village economy village road scheme was introduced. In the city of Madras the Town Improvement Committee of the Madras Corporation introduced Slum Clearance and Housing Schemes. As a social welfare measures the Justice Party Government gave waste lands in village to Depressed Classes. The Devadasi system, a disgrace to women, was abolished. The Justice administration reorganized the working of the University of Madras. During the administration of Justice Party, the Andhra University was established in 1926 and Annamalai University in 1929.

It inaugurated the era of rural development through economic and social reforms.

- The Justice Party government set right the imbalances in the representation of different communities and improved the status of Depressed Classes.
- The Communal G.O's of 1921 and 1922 provided reservation of appointments in local bodies and educational institutions for Non-Brahmins.

- To avoid Nepotism, Favouritism and other influences in the process of selection, this government created a staff selection board in 1924 and it became the Public Service regulate the higher educational institutions.
- In 1925 Andhra University and in 1929 Annamalai University were opened.
- To regulate temple accounts, Temple Committees were created. In 1926 the Hindu Religious Endowment Bill was passed.
- The Women were granted the right to vote in 1921, abolished Devadasi system, prevented immoral traffic of Women and passed Industries Act.
- The system of giving free pattas for housing sites to the poor was introduced.
- By way of introducing mid-day meal schemes at Thousand lights Thiyagaraya Chettiar strengthened the school.
- It gave encouragement to Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani Medical Education.

End of Justice Party Rule

The Government of India Act of 1935 provided for provincial autonomy and the electoral victory meant the assumption of a major responsibility in the administration of the province. K. V. Reddi Naidu led the Justice Party, while C. Rajagopalachari led the Congress in the South. In the election of 1937, the Congress captured 152 out of 215 seats in the Legislative Assembly and 26 out of 46 in the Legislative Council. In July 1937 the Congress formed its ministry under C. Rajagopalachari.

Thus, the rule of Justice Party which introduced important social legislations came to an end. In 1944 the Justice party conference was held in Salem. There Perarinar Anna passed a resolution thereby the name of justice party was changed as Dravidar Kazhagam.

During the 19th and 20th centuries great leaders like V.O.C, Subramaniya Bharathi, Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajaji were actively involved in the Freedom Struggle. Some of the great leaders of Tamilnadu not only fought for political freedom has no meaning when people are denied social justice, self respect and dignity.

Self Respect Movement



E.V. Ramasamy Periyar was the greatest social reformers of Tamil Nadu. He was the first leader, the country had ever seen to inculcate self respect, rationalism, women liberation and social equality in the minds of the people.

E.V. Ramasamy was born on September 17, 1879 in Erode in a very rich Hindu family. He got married at 13th year and renounced his life in his 19th year. by wearing saintly dress, he went to many holy places. He went to Kasi where he noticed that the Brahmins ill-treated the Non-Brahmins. He condemned it and returned to Tamilnadu. He joined the Congress in 1919 to realize his ideas. He was elected as the Secretary of Madras State Congress Committee in 1921 and its President in 1923.

He joined the non-cooperation Temple. Finally the Travancore government relaxed such segregation and allowed the people to enter into the temple. Hence Periyar was given the title of 'Vaikam Hero'.

Periyar visited a school on Gurukulam style run at Sheramandevi out of congress funds. He noticed the segregation of Non-Brahmin students from the Brahmins by providing drinking water and food in separate places. He protested against this anti-social practice and resigned the Secretaryship of Madras State Congress. He moved a resolution for reservation in government services for non-brahmins in the state Congress conference held at Kanchipuram. But this was not allowed. So Periyar left the Conference and started Self Respect Movement in 1925 to spread and execute his ideas and policies.

Aims

- The self respect movement condemned and fought against Brahmin domination over other castes, society, politics and religion.
- It fought to abolish traditionalism and superstitions
- It advocated women education, widow remarriage, intercaste marriages and opposed child marriage.

Achievements

Periyar criticized the meaningless ideas, superstitious beliefs and unbelievable puranic stories in the public meetings. He spread self respect principles through Kudiarasu, Puratchi, Viduthalai. He also published some books against social evils propagated 14 points of the Socialists Manifesto. The Justice Party accepted the same and tried to propagated it.

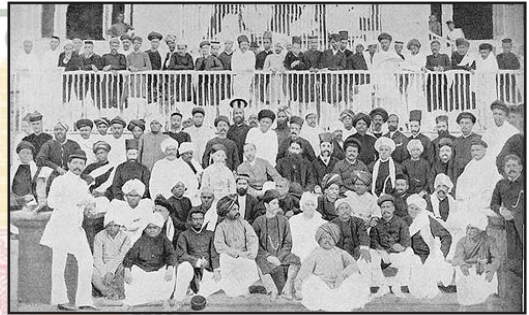
In order to check the growing population and to keep good health, he suggested the family planning. He also encouraged Tamil Script reform and suggested to adopt Roman Script to ensure easy learning. He was given the title of 'Periyar' by Ladies Conference held at Madras.

In 1937 election, the Justice Party was defeated and its decline became inevitable. At Salem conference of 1944, the name of Justice Party was changed as 'Dravidar Kazhagam'. Periyar's ambitions were fulfilled by DMK and AIADMK.

Role of Tamil Nadu in the Freedom Movement Madras

Mahajana Sabha

Association:



It was established by Harley, Lakshmi narasu Chetty and Srinivasa Pillai in 1852. The Association criticized the policies of the East India company. In 1884, the Madras Native Association was merged with the Madras Mahajana Sabha established by S.Ramaswami Mudhaliar, P.Anandacharlu and P.Rangaiah Naidu. The Sabha functioned at the office of 'The Hindu', Ellis Road Junction, Mount Road.

P.Rangaiah Naidu was elected first President of the Sabha. The Sabha adopted a moderate policy in its early days. However, its aims and the objectives were considered seditious. In Dec 1895, on his visit to Madras, the Viceroy of India, Lord Elgin refused to

receive the welcome address from the Madras Mahajana Sabha.

Madras Mahajana Sabha was considered to be a unique one that paved the way for our national freedom. The Sabha voiced out the fundamental rights of our countrymen. It had developed very close relationship with the Indian National Congress since 1920 onwards. Consequently in 1930, the Sabha organized the Salt Satyagraha movement on April 22nd in Madras George town, Esplanade, the High court and beach areas. The members were attacked savagely by the British police. As the Sabha insisted on a legal enquiry about the injustice done towards the participants of the enquired thirty people and submitted its report to the government.

When the British Government banned the Congress party, Madras Mahajana Sabha conducted numerous exhibitions to instigate the patriotic feelings in the hearts of our countrymen such as All India Khadi Exhibition and Swadeshi Exhibition.

The father of our nation-Mahatma Gandhiji had delivered a speech at the meeting of Mahajana Sabha on Oct 24th 1896. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also had participated in the golden Jubilee celebrations of the Sabha.

Tamil Nadu in the Indian National Movement

Tamil Nadu played an important role in the Indian National Movement. Even prior to the Great Revolt of 1857, the rebellion in Panchalam Kuruchi, the 1801 "South Indian Rebellion" of the Marudu brothers and the Vellore Mutiny of 1806 were the early anti-colonial struggles in Tamil Nadu. During the nationalist era Tamil Nadu provided the leaders like G. Subramania

Iyer, V.O.C. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Bharathi, C. Rajagopalachari and K. Kamaraj to the National Movement. Besides, the nationalist movement in Tamil Nadu was as active as elsewhere.

Beginning of the National Movement in Tamil Nadu

The earliest political organisation, the Madras Native Association was started in July 1852. Lakshminarasu Chetty and Srinivasa Pillai were the founders of this organization. The **Madras Native Association** was sharply critical of the policies of the East India Company's rule. Subsequently in 1884, the Madras Mahajana Sabha was established by P. Anandacharlu and P. Rangaiya Naidu. The Madras Native Association was ultimately merged with this organization.

The Madras Mahajana Sabha strongly supported the activities of the Indian National Congress. It had also initiated social reform. G. Subramania Iyer performed the remarriage of his widowed daughter in December 1889. He moved the first resolution in the first session of the Indian National Congress in 1885. He started the nationalist papers like **The Hindu** in English and **Swadeshamitran** in Tamil. In 1892, the Madras Provincial Conference was started to mobilize people in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu. The third session of the Indian National Congress was held in Madras in 1887 under the presidentship of Fakruddin Thyabji. Later a number of such annual sessions were also held in the city of Madras.

Swadeshi Movement in Tamil Nadu

The Partition of Bengal in 1905 led to the beginning of Swadeshi Movement in Tamil Nadu. During this period the important

leaders of the National Movement were – V.O.Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva and Subramania Bharathi. In May 1907 Bharathi brought Bipin Chandra Pal one of the leaders of extremists in the Congress to Madras city. After the Surat split in 1907, V.O.C and fellow nationalists started the Chennai Jana Sangam. Subramania Bharathi was a non-conformist, unorthodox and a revolutionary in social and political ideas. He edited the Tamil Weekly India. He wrote nationalist songs called the Swadesa Geethangal. V.O.Chidambaram Pillai was a lawyer by profession and he joined the nationalist movement in 1905. He was a follower of Bal Ganghadar Tilak. He led the Coral Mill Strike in February 1908 in Tuticorin. In 1906 he launched the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in Tuticorin. Hence he was called Kappalottiya Tamilan. There was competition between Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company and British India Steam Navigation Company. V.O.C advocated the boycott of the British India Steam Navigation Company and this had resulted in the Tirunelveli uprising in March 1908. He was ably assisted by Subramania Siva. Both were arrested and imprisoned. They served six years rigorous imprisonment. They were given harsh punishment inside the prison. V.O.C was asked to draw an oil press and hence he is known as Chekkilutta Chemmal.

The arrest of the nationalist leaders, harsh punishment for the nationalist leaders inside the prison and the collapse of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company led to the formation of a revolutionary organization in Tamil Nadu called the Bharathamatha Association. Nilakanta Bramachari played a vital role in it.

One of the followers of this association Vanchi Nathan shot dead the notorious British official Robert William Ashe at Maniyatchi junction in June 1911.

Home Rule Movement in Tamil Nadu

The Home rule Movement in Madras was organized by Mrs. Annie Besant between 1916 and 1918. The first indication of Annie Besant's decision to launch a Home Rule Movement appeared in New India in September 1915. Besant sought the support of the Indian National Congress at its annual meeting at Bombay in December, 1915. She was supported in her movement by Tilak. Home Rule Movement was vigorous during the First World War.

Non-co-operation Movement

In Tamil Nadu the Non-co-operation Movement was strong during the years 1921–23. Beginning in March 1921 there were campaigns of Non-Cooperation against the foreign regulations. In 1921 and 1922 there were campaigns against the consumption of liquor in many parts of the province. Temperance campaign was particularly prominent in Madurai. Non-Cooperation had been a success in Tamil Nadu. C. Rajagopalachari, S. Satyamurthi and E. V. Ramaswami Naicker were the important leaders of the Non-Cooperation Movement in Tamil Nadu. At that time E.V.Ramaswami Naicker was the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. C. Rajagopalachari stressed that the council boycott was a central part of the Gandhian Programme. However, this view was not shared by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Srinivasa Iyengar, Varadarajulu Naidu and Vijayaraghavachari. In the meantime, Periyar E.V.R. launched the Vaikom Satyagraha in Kerala.

against the practice of social segregation. Later he resigned from the Congress and came out on the social segregation issue at Seramandevi Guru Kulam of V.V.S. Iyer. S. Satyamurthi of Pudukkottai was one of the important freedom fighters. He led the anti-Simon Campaign in 1929 when the Simon Commission visited Tamil Nadu. The other important nationalist leader was K.Kamaraj from Virudhunagar. He participated in the Vaikom Satyagraha in 1924 and thus entered nationalist movement. He was the vice-president and treasurer of the Ramnad District Congress Committee in 1929. From the beginning, Kamaraj was the man of the masses. He spoke in simple and direct language. He had a sound common sense and practical wisdom. He was fully aware of the rural Tamil Nadu. He visited each and every village and understood the different problems of the masses. He always identified himself with the common man of Tamil Nadu. Thus, he really brought the Congress movement to the villages in Tamil Nadu.

Salt Satyagraha

As part of the Civil Disobedience Movement, Gandhi launched the Salt Satyagraha. He undertook the Dandi March in 1930. C.Rajagopalachari became the TNCC president in April 1930. Authorized by TNCC and AICC to direct the Salt Satyagraha in Tamil Nadu Rajaji undertook the famous Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha March. He selected the route from Tiruchirappalli to Vedaranyam in Thanjavur district. The March began on Tamil New Year's Day (13th April). The March reached Vedaranyam on 28 April 1930. Two days later Rajagopalachari was arrested for breaking the salt laws. Some of the other

important leaders who participated in the Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha were T.S.S.Rajan, Mrs. Lakshmipathi Sardar Vedaratnam Pillai, C. Swaminatha Chetty and K.Santhanam. Tiruppur Kumaran who led the flag march was fatally beaten. Since he guarded the national flag in his hands he was called Kodi Kaththa Kumaran. Commemorating his sacrifice the Government of India issued a postal stamp in his honour.

Similarly, the National Movement was encouraged by songs composed by Namakkal Kavinjar Ramalingam Pillai. In his songs he praised the Gandhian methods in the struggle for freedom. He sang that "a war is coming without knife and blood". This highlighted the Gandhian principle of non-violent struggle against the British.

Quit India Movement

Later, in 1937 when elections were held in accordance with the 1935 Act, Congress won the elections and formed the ministry in Madras headed by C. Rajagopalachari. There were nine other ministers in his cabinet. The ministry was in power from July 1937 to October 1939. The ministry had resigned along with other Congress ministries in the different provinces over the issue of the Indian involvement in the Second World War. During Second War, after the failure of the Cripps's Proposals Gandhi had launched the Quit India Movement. In Tamil Nadu Quit India Movement drew the factory workers, students and common people. It was a wide spread movement.

The Buckingham & Carnatic Mills, Port Trust and the Tramway workers joined the movement in large numbers. Quit India Movement was launched in places like North Arcot, Madurai

and Coimbatore. There was police firing at Rajapalayam, Karaikudi and Devakottai. Besides, Subhash Bose's INA had many men and women soldiers from Tamil Nadu. Finally,

when India attained independence on 15th August, 1947 the Madras Government under O.P. Ramaswami Reddiar passed a resolution appreciating the Indian Independence Act.

