

APPOLO STUDY CENTRE

(UNIT- III- HISTORY, CULTURE, HERITAGE)

TEST - V (Social religious Reforms)

10th vol - I

Unit 1- Social and Religious Reform Movements in the 19th Century

- English education, introduced with the object of producing clerks, also produced a new English-educated middle class. This class came under the influence of western ideas and thoughts. Christianity also had its effect on the newly emerging middle class. Though small in number, the educated middle class began to take a lead in political as well as in reform movements. The Indian reformers were, however, quite hesitant to subject their old notions and habits to critical scrutiny. Instead they attempted to harmonize both Indian and Western cultures. Their ideas and their actions helped to mitigate social evils such as sati, female infanticide, and child marriage and various superstitious beliefs.
- The reform movements of nineteenth century in the realm of religion fall under two broad categories: reformist movements like the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj and the Aligarh Movement; and the revivalist movements such as the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Deoband Movement. There were also attempts to

challenge the oppressive social structure by Jyotiba Phule in Pune, Narayana Guru and Ayyankali in Kerala and Ramalinga Adigal, Vaikunda Swamigal and Iyothee Thassar of Tamil Nadu.

Raja Rammohan Roy and Brahma Samaj

- Rammohan Roy (1772–1833) was one of the earlier reformers influenced by the Western ideas to initiate reforms. He was a great scholar, well-versed in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and English apart from his knowledge in his mother tongue, Bengali. Rammohan Roy was opposed to meaningless religious ceremonies and all forms of pernicious social customs. Yet he wanted to preserve continuity with the past. In his religio-philosophical social outlook, he was deeply influenced by monotheism and anti-idolatry. Based on his interpretation of the Upanishads, he argued that all the ancient texts of the Hindus preached monotheism or worship of one God.
- Deeply concerned with the prevailing customs of sati, child marriage, and polygamy he published tracts against them and petitioned the government to legislate against them. He advocated the rights of widows to remarry. He wanted polygamy to end. His opinions were resisted fiercely by orthodox Hindus. He appealed to reason and humanity and compassion of the people. He visited the crematorium of Calcutta to try and persuade the relatives of widows to give up their plan of self-immolation. His campaign played a key role in forcing the Governor-General William Bentinck's legislation abolishing sati in 1829.
- Ram Mohan Roy condemned the subjugation of women and opposed the prevailing ideas that women were inferior to men. He strongly advocated education for women. He gave his full support for the introduction of English language and western sciences in schools and colleges. Rammohan found in the Upanishads a new revelation of one infinite, divine Being, the eternal Brahman, while Hinduism as he saw in the daily life around him was a perversion of their teaching.
- Ram Mohan Roy founded the Brahma Samaj in 1828. On 20 August 1828 he opened a temple in Calcutta, where there was no image. There he laid down that 'no religion should be reviled or slightly or contemptuously spoken off or alluded to.' The Samaj forbade idol-worship and condemned meaningless religious rites and ceremonies.

However, from the beginning, the appeal of the Brahma Samaj remained limited to the intellectuals and enlightened Bengalis. Though the Samaj failed to attract the people from the lower sections of society, its impact on the culture of modern Bengal and its middle class was quite significant.

Maharishi Debendranath Tagore

- After the death of Ram Mohan Roy (1833), Maharishi Debendranath Tagore (1817–1905), the poet Rabindranath Tagore's father, carried on the work. He laid down four articles of faith:
 1. In the beginning there was nothing. The one Supreme Being alone existed who created the Universe.
 2. He alone is the God of Truth, Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, eternal, omnipresent, the One without second.
 3. Our salvation depends on belief in Him and in His worship in this world and the next.
 4. Belief consists in loving Him and doing His will.

Keshab Chandra Sen & Brahma Samaj of India

- Debendranath was a moderate reformer. But his younger colleagues in the Sabha were for rapid changes. The greatest of these, Keshab Chandra Sen, (1838–84) joined the movement in 1857. He was greatly influenced by Christianity, believing in its spirit but not in the person of its founder. But in 1866 a split occurred in the ranks of Brahma Samaj. Keshab left the Samaj and founded a new organization. Debendranath's organization, thereafter, came to be known as Adi Brahma Samaj. After Keshab had his fourteen-year-old daughter married to an Indian prince, in contravention of the Samaj's condemnation of child marriages, the opponents of child marriage left the Brahma Samaj of India and started the Sadharan Samaj, which developed anti-Christian tendencies.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

- An -other outstanding reformer in Bengal was Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820–1891). While Ram Mohan Roy and others looked to western rationalist ideas to reform society, Vidyasagar argued that the Hindu scriptures were progressive. He provided evidence from scriptures that there was no sanction for burning of widows or for the

prohibition on the remarriage of widows. He wrote a number of polemical tracts, and was the pioneer of modern Bengali prose. He played a leading role in promoting education of girls and helped them in setting up a number of schools. He dedicated his whole life for the betterment of the child widows of the Hindu society. The movement led by Vidyasagar, resulted in the Widows' Remarriage Reform Act of 1856. This Act was intended to improve the lot of child widows and save them from perpetual widowhood.

Prarthana Samaj

- The Maharashtra region was another region where reform activities gained Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar steam. A movement similar to the Brahmo Samaj, but founded in Bombay in 1867, was Prarthana Samaj. Its founder was Dr. Atma Ram Pandurang (1825–1898). The two distinguished members of this Samaj were R.C. Bhandarkar and Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade. They devoted themselves to activities such as intercaste dining, inter-caste marriage, widow remarriage and improvement of women and depressed classes. Ranade (1842–1901) was the founder of the Widow Marriage Association (1861), the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha (1870) and the Deccan Education Society (1884).
- While the above reformers worked among the upper castes, during the same time Jyotiba Phule worked for the uplift of depressed castes and the cause of women. His book Gulamgiri ('Slavery') is an important work that condemned the inequities of caste.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj, 1875

- In the Punjab, the reform movement was spearheaded by the Arya Samaj. It was founded (1875) by a wandering ascetic in the western Gangetic plain, Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824–83). Swami Dayanand later settled in the Punjab to preach his ideas. His book, Satyarthaprakash, enjoyed wide circulation. He declared the practices such as child marriage, the prohibition of widow remarriage, and the alleged polluting effects of foreign travel had no scriptural sanction. The positive principles enunciated by Dayanand were: strict monotheism, condemnation of idolatry, and rejection of Brahman domination of ritual and social practices. He also rejected

superstitious beliefs in Hinduism, especially Puranic literature and his cry was “go back to Vedas.”

- Arya Samaj attempted to check the incidence of religious conversion in British India. One of its main objectives was counter-conversion, prescribing a purificatory ceremony called suddhi, directed at Hindus who had converted to Islam and Christianity. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a period of great turmoil in undivided Punjab with intense debates between Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. The primary achievements of the Arya Samaj were in the field of social reform and spread of education. The Samaj started a number of Dayananda Anglo-Vedic schools and colleges.

Ramakrishna

- As we saw earlier, the Brahma Samaj, as a response to Christian and rationalist criticism had criticised idolatry and other orthodox Hindu practices. The popularity that Ramakrishna (1836–86), a simple priest of Dakshineswar near Kolkata, gained in the latter half of the nineteenth century was a response to this. He emphasised the spiritual union with god through ecstatic practices such as singing bhajans. An ardent worshipper of goddess Kali, the sacred mother, he declared that the manifestations of the divine mother were infinite. In his view, all religions contain the universal elements which, if practised, would lead to salvation. He said, “Jiva is Siva” (all living beings are God). Why then talk of showing mercy to them? Not mercy, but service, service for man, must be regarded as God.’

Ramakrishna Mission

- Ramakrishna’s primary achievement was his ability to attract educated youth who were dissatisfied with the rational orientation of religious reform organizations such as the Brahma Samaj. After his death in 1886, his disciples organised themselves as a religious community and undertook the task of making his life and teaching known in India and abroad. The chief spirit behind this task was Vivekananda. Following the organizational structure of Christian missionaries, Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Mission which did not restrict itself to religious activities but was actively involved in social causes such as education, health care and relief in times of calamities.

Swami Vivekananda

- Narendra Nath Datta (1863–1902), later known as Swami Vivekananda, was the prime follower of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. An educated youth, he was drawn to Ramakrishna's message. Dissatisfied with conventional philosophical positions and practices, he advocated the practical Vedanta of service to humanity and attacked the tendency to defend every institution simply because it was connected with religion. He emphasized a cultural nationalism and made a call to Indian youth to regenerate Hindu society.
- His ideas bred a sense of self confidence among Indians who felt inferior in relation to the materialist achievements of the West. He became famous for his addresses on Hinduism at the 1893 World Congress of Religions in Chicago. Despite his fame, he was condemned by orthodox Hindus for suggesting that the lower castes should be allowed to engage in the Hindu rituals from which they were traditionally excluded. Vivekananda's activist ideology rekindled the desire for political change among many western-education young Bengalis. Many of the youths who were involved in the militant nationalist struggle during the Swadeshi movement following the Partition of Bengal were inspired by Vivekananda.

Theosophical Movement

- During the nineteenth century, Hindu religion and culture were being discredited in the West, especially due to missionary propaganda. However, some Western intellectuals looked to the East for spiritual salvation as a remedy to the materialistic orientation of the West. The Theosophical Society, founded by Madame H.P. Blavatsky (1831–1891) and Colonel H.S Olcott (1832– 1907) played a key role in this. Founded in the USA in 1875, it later shifted to India at Adyar, Chennai in 1886. Theosophical Society stimulated a study of the Hindu classics, especially the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. The Theosophical Society also played an important role in the revival of Buddhism in India. Western interest in Hindu scriptures gave educated Hindus great pride in their tradition and culture.

Contribution of Annie Besant

- In India the movement became further popular with the election of Annie Besant (1847–1933) as its president after the death of Olcott. She played a role in Indian nationalist politics, and formed the Home Rule League demanding home rule to India on the lines of Ireland. Annie Besant spread Theosophical ideas through her newspapers called New India and Commonweal.

Jyotiba Phule

- Jyotiba Govindrao Phule was born in 1827 in Maharashtra. Phule is chiefly known Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule as the earliest leader of the non-Brahman movement. He opened the first school for “untouchables” in 1852 in Poona. He launched the Satyashodak Samaj (Truth-Seekers Society) in 1870 to stir the non-Brahman masses to self-respect and ambition. Phule opposed child marriage and supported widow remarriage, which was prohibited particularly among high-caste Hindus. Jyotiba and his wife Savitribai Phule devoted their lives for the uplift of the depressed classes and women. Jotiba opened orphanages and homes for widows. Unlike many contemporary nationalists he welcomed British rule and missionary activities on the ground that British rule enabled lower castes to challenge the supremacy of Brahmins. His work, Gulamgiri (Slavery) is an important text that summarized many of his radical ideas.

Narayana Guru

- Born to poor parents in Kerala, Narayana Guru (1854– 1928) evolved into a poet and scholar in Malayalam, Tamil and Sanskrit. In his days the people of depressed classes had no access to temples, streets, public tanks and wells and educational institutions. Men and women belonging to lower castes were not allowed to wear the upper garments. Disturbed by the terrible caste tyranny, that the lower caste people suffered, he dedicated his whole life for the betterment of the oppressed. He set up the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, an organization to work for the uplift of the “depressed classes”. He established a grand temple at Aruvipuram and dedicated it to all. His movement inspired a radical transformation of Kerala society, especially among the Ezhavas. Thinkers and writers such as Kumaran

Asan and Dr Palpu were influenced by his ideas and carried forward the movement.

Ayyankali

- Nineteenth - century Kerala region was plagued by caste discriminations of worst kind. Certain social groups were not only considered untouchable but also un-seeable. However, the strident campaigns by thinkers such as Narayana Guru and Ayyankali (1863–1941) in the context of larger political and economic changes ushered in tremendous social changes, especially in the caste structure. Ayyankali was born in 1863 at Venganoor in Thiruvananthapuram then in the princely state of Travancore.
- The discrimination he faced as a child turned him into a leader of an anti-caste movement and who later fought for basic rights including access to public spaces and entry to schools. Ayyankali challenged many caste conventions such as clothing style; he wore clothes associated with upper castes that were prohibited for lower castes. He rode on an ox-cart challenging the 'ban' on untouchables from accessing public roads used by caste Hindus. Inspired by Sree Narayana Guru, Ayyankali founded the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangam (Association for the Protection of the Poor) in 1907 which campaigned and raised funds to educate the lower caste Pulaya people.

Islamic Reforms

- After the suppression of great revolt of 1857 Indian Muslims looked to Western culture with suspicion. The community feared that Western education, Western culture and Western ideas would endanger their religion. Therefore only a small section of Muslims accepted the new avenues for modern education. Consequently, Indian Muslims as a community lagged behind in comparison to the Hindu elite of various parts of India.

Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan

- As Indian Muslims steadily lost ground in education, in the public services and in general leadership in India, there was a realization that there was no alternative but to accept modern education if the community was to go on the path of progress. The man who gave life

and soul to it was Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817–1898). Born in Delhi into a noble Muslim family, Sayyid Ahmed Khan thought that lack of education, especially modern education, had harmed the Muslims greatly and kept them backward. He exhorted the Muslims to accept Western science and take up government services. He founded a scientific society and translated many English books, especially science books into Urdu. He believed that the interest of the Muslims would be best served if they bonded with the British Government rather than pitch in with the rising nationalist movement. So he advised the Muslims to take to English education and to concentrate on it.

Aligarh Movement

- Say id Ahmed Khan’s m o v e m e n t , the “ Aligarh movement ,” is so called because it was centred around the Aligarh Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental college founded by him in 1875, which is a landmark in the history of Indian Muslim education. The college was raised to the status of a university in 1920. Aligarh produced a huge body of intelligentsia over successive generations who played a key role in public life.

Deoband Movement

- Deoband was a revivalist movement organized by the orthodox Muslim Ulema with the twin objectives of propagating the pure teachings of the Quran and the Hadith as well as encouraging the spirit of Jihad against the foreign and un-Islamic elements. The Ulema under the leadership of Muhammad QasimWanotavi (1832-80) and Rashid Ahmad Gangotri (1828-1905) founded the school at Deoband in the Saharanpur district of the U.P in 1866. The school curricula shut out English education and western culture. The instruction imparted was in original Islamic religion and the aim was moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community. The Deoband School did not prepare its students for government jobs but for the preaching of Islamic faith.
- In politics, the Deoband School welcomed the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. In 1888 the Deoband Ulema issued a religious decree (fatwa) against Syed Ahmed Khan’s Organisation called “The United Patriotic Association” and “The Muhammeden

Anglo - Oriental Association.” It is said the Deoband Ulema were mainly influenced by their determination to oppose Sir Syed Ahmed’s activities. Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hassan became the new Deoband leader. The Jamait-Ul-Ulema (council of theologians) led by him gave a concrete shape to Hassan’s ideas of protection of the religious and political rights of the Muslims in the overall context of Indian unity.

- In the middle of the nineteenth century the reform activities of the educated Parsis (the Zoroastrians who had fled from Iran in the tenth century in the face of religious persecution) began in Mumbai. Furdunji Naoroji founded the Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha (Parsis’ Reform Society) in 1851. Rast Goftar (The Truth Teller) was the main voice of the movement. The leaders of the Sabha criticized elaborate ceremonies at betrothals, marriages and funerals. They opposed both infant marriage and the use of astrology. Behrramji Malabari organized a campaign for legislation against the practice of child marriage. The community produced many leaders such as Pherozeshah Mehta and Dinshaw Wacha who played a big role in the early Congress.

Sikh Reforms Movement (Nirankaris and Namdharis)

- The wave of reform movements did not leave any community untouched. Among the Sikhs of Punjab too there were attempts to reform. Baba Dayal Das, founder of the Nirankari Movement, stressed the worship of god as Nirankar (formless). Rejection of idols, rejection of rituals associated with idolatry, reverence for the authority of Guru Nanak and of the Adi Granth formed the essence of his teachings. He reiterated the prohibition on meat-eating, and liquor consumption. The Namdhari Movement, founded by Baba Ram Singh, was another socio-religious movement among the Sikhs.
- The Namdharis insisted on wearing the symbols of Sikhism except the kirpan (sword). Instead Baba Ram Singh wanted his followers to carry a lathi. It considered both men and women equal and accepted widow remarriage. It prohibited the dowry system and child marriage. In the wake of the gathering influence of Arya Samaj and the Christian missionaries, the Singh Sabha of Amritsar was established. Its main objective was to restore the purity of Sikhism.

With the support of British, it established Khalsa College for the Sikhs in Amritsar. Singh Sabha was a forerunner of Akali Movement.

Ramalinga Swamigal

- Popularly known as Vallalar, Ramalinga Swamigal or Ramalinga Adigal (1823–1874), was born in Marudhur, a village near Chidambaram. After his father's death, his family moved to his brother's house at Chennai. Despite having no formal education he gained immense scholarship. Ramalinga emphasised the bonds of responsibility and compassion between living beings. He expressed the view that 'those who lack compassion for suffering beings are hardhearted, their wisdom clouded'. He showed his compassion and mercy on all living beings including plants. This he called jeevakarunya.
- He established the Samarasa Vedha Sanmarga Sangam in 1865 and it was renamed "Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Satya Sanga" which means "Society for Pure Truth in Universal self-hood". Ramalinga also established a free feeding house for everyone irrespective of caste at Vadalur (1867), in the wake of a terrible famine in south India in 1866. His voluminous songs were compiled and published under the title Thiruvarutpa (Songs of Grace). His radical views deeply disturbed Saiva orthodoxy, who condemned his writings as Marutpa (songs of ignorance).

Vaikunda Swamikal

- Vaikunda Swami (1809–1851), one of the earliest crusaders for social justice in south India was born at Sasthan Koil Vilai, the present Samithoppu, a village near Kanyakumari. His original name Mudichudum Perumal was changed to Muthukutty by his parents due to objection raised by the upper caste Hindus. Muthukutt had no opportunity to have any systematic school education but acquired knowledge of various religious texts. He preached the ideas of equality and advocated the rights of depressed class people in the face of stiff opposition from upper castes as well as the princely state of Travancore. Vaikunda Swamikal criticised the rule of the British and the rule of Rajah of Travancore as the rule of White devils and Black devils respectively.

- He visited Tiruchendur temple and experienced a new vision. Calling himself Vaikundar, he requested the people to give up all the irrelevant rites and rituals in their worship. His preaching's against the prevailing religious order brought about a considerable change in the attitude of the lower caste people. In 1833, Vaikundar commenced his meditation at Samithoppu for the abolition of caste differences and social integration of the society. During this period, he led a life of a hermit. In south Travancore, there were many restrictions on lower caste people such as what they could wear and not wear. At a time when there was prohibition on certain sections on wearing headgear he advocated the wearing of a turban in protest. It gave a sense of honour to the oppressed people and offered a spirit of self-respect.
- A new confidence was installed in the minds of his followers. Like the other contemporary reform movements of India in the 19th century, Vaikunda Swamigal condemned the worship of idols. The low caste people had no temples for their gods, they erected small pyramids of mud or bricks in their honor, plastered and white-washed. He considered this kind of worship as an uncivilized custom. The people sacrificed goats, cocks and hens. He condemned these religious customs and campaigned against animal sacrifice.
- Vaikunda Swamigal founded Samathuva Samajam to unite all the people of various castes. He organized inter-dining to accomplish it. Even though he was imprisoned by the Maharajah of Travancore, he never gave up his principles. His followers called him respectfully as Ayya (father). His cult was also known as Ayya Vazhi (The Path of Ayya). His message emancipated the people from the unjust social customs and superstitious beliefs. His ideas are collected into a text called Akila Thirattu.

C. Iyothee Thassar

- Pandithar Iyothee Thassar (1845–1914) was a radical Tamil scholar, writer, siddha medicine practitioner, journalist and socio-political activist. Born in Chennai, he was fluent in Tamil, English, Sanskrit and Pali languages. He initiated a new knowledge practice by using journalism as a tool to make inroads into the print public sphere, which, was hitherto an upper caste domain. He campaigned for social

justice and worked for the emancipation of the “untouchables” from the caste clutches.

- He worked for the construction of a casteless identity and castigated caste hegemony and untouchability. He considered education as an important tool for empowerment and became the driving force behind the establishment of several schools for the “untouchables” in Tamil Nadu. Pandithar Iyothee Thassar founded the Advaidananda Sabha to raise the voice for the temple entry of the “untouchables”. In 1882, John Rathinam and Iyothee Thassar established a movement called, Dravida Kazhagam and launched a magazine called Dravida Pandian in 1885. He founded the Dravida Mahajana Sabha in 1891 and organised the First Conference of the association at Nilgiris.
- He started a weekly journal, Oru Paisa Tamilan, in 1907 and published it until his demise in 1914. Pandithar Iyothee Thassar was disappointed with the Hindu dharma, which served as the basis for propagating and validating caste in Hindu society. Influenced by the Theosophist organizer, Colonel H.S. Olcott, he went to Sri Lanka in 1898 and converted to Buddhism. In the same year, he founded the Sakya Buddhist Society at Madras to construct the rational religious philosophy through Buddhist religion. He argued that the so-called untouchables were originally Buddhists who were stigmatized by Brahminism.
- He further constructed an alternative history through the interpretation of Tamil literature and folk traditions of Tamil from a Buddhist standpoint. In addition, he stated that the revival of Buddhism could liberate the people from the evil of caste that afflicted the Hindu society. He called the “untouchables” Sathi Petham Atra Dravidar (Casteless Dravidians) and urged them to register as casteless Dravidians in the Census.

NOTE

- ❖ It was also to the credit of Vidyasagar that the first age of consent Act was enacted in 1860. The age for marriage was fixed as ten years. It was raised to twelve and thirteen years in 1891 and 1925 respectively. Sadly, as reported in the Age of Consent Committee (1929), the law remained on paper and the knowledge of it was confined to judges, lawyers and a few educated men.

- ❖ In 1893 Arya Samaj split over the question of doctrinal purity. Swami Shraddhananda (1857-1926), a charismatic figure after Dayananda, accused the group running the DAV School of being too Westernized and thereby ignoring the founder's ideology. From 1900 onward, he established his own network of schools, the Gurukulas, which were outwardly modelled after ancient Hindu seats of learning, emphasising the study of the Vedas.
- ❖ Ramalinga bore witness to hunger and poverty in the country: "I saw poor people, emaciated with hunger and terribly weary, going to every house, yet their hunger was not removed, and my heart suffered intensely. Those who suffer with relentless disease, I saw them in front of me and my heart trembled. I saw those people, poor and of unmatched honor, their hearts weary, and I grew weak."
- ❖ Vaikunda Swamikal criticised the rule of the British and the rule of Rajah of Travancore as the rule of White devils and Black devils respectively.

(Role Of Tamil Nadu In Freedom Struggle)

10th Vol II

Unit – 6- Early Revolts against British Rule in Tamil Nadu

Learning Objectives

To acquaint ourselves with

- Palayakkarar system and the revolts of Palayakkarars against the British
- Velunachiyar, Puli Thevar, Kattabomman and Marudhu Brothers in the anti-British uprisings
- Vellore Revolt as a response to British pacification of south India

Introduction

- After defeating the French and their Indian allies in the three Carnatic Wars, the East India Company began to consolidate and extend its power and influence. However, local kings and feudal chieftains resisted this. The first resistance to East India Company's territorial aggrandisement was from Puli Thevar of Nerkattumseval in the Tirunelveli region. This was followed by other chieftains in the Tamil country such as Velunachiyar, Veerapandiya Kattabomman, the Marudhu brothers, and Dheeran Chinnamalai. Known as the Palayakkarars Wars, the culmination of which was Vellore Revolt of 1806, this early resistance to British rule in Tamilnadu is dealt with in this lesson.

Resistance of Regional Powers against the British

(a) Palayams and Palayakkarars

- The word “palayam” means a domain, a military camp, or a little kingdom. Palayakkarars (Poligar is how the British referred to them) in Tamil refers to the holder of a little kingdom as a feudatory to a greater sovereign. Under this system, palayam was given for valuable military services rendered by any individual. This type of Palayakkarars system was in practice during the rule of Pratapa Rudhra of Warangal in the Kakatiya kingdom. The system was put in place in Tamilnadu by Viswanatha Nayaka, when he became the Nayak ruler of Madurai in 1529, with the support of his minister Ariyanathar.
- Traditionally there were supposed to be 72 Palayakkarars. The Palayakkarars were free to collect revenue, administer the territory, settle disputes and maintain law and order. Their police duties were known as Padikaval or Arasu Kaval. On many occasions the Palayakkarars helped the Nayak rulers to restore the kingdom to them. The personal relationship and an understanding between the King and the Palayakkarars made the system to last for about two hundred years from the Nayaks of Madurai, until the takeover of these territories by the British.
- Eastern and Western Palayams Among the 72 Palayakkarars, created by the Nayak rulers, there were two blocs, namely the prominent eastern and the western Palayams. The eastern Palayams were Sattur, Nagalapuram, Ettayapuram, and Panchalamkurichi and the prominent western palayams were Uthumalai, Thalavankottai, Naduvakurichi, Singampatti, Seithur. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Palayakkars dominated the politics of Tamil country. They functioned as independent, sovereign authorities within their respective Palayams.

Revenue Collection Authority to the Company Rule

- The Nawab of Arcot had borrowed money from the East India Company to meet the expenses he had incurred during the Carnatic

Wars. When his debts exceeded his capacity to pay, the power of collecting the land revenue dues from southern Palayakkarars was given to the East India Company. Claiming that their lands had been handed down to them over sixty generations, many Palayakkarars refused to pay taxes to the Company officials. The Company branded the defiant Palayakkarars as rebels and accused them of trying to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the country. This led to conflict between the East India Company and the Palaykkarars which are described below.

Palayakkarars' Revolt 1755-1801

(a) Revolt of Puli Thevar 1755-1767

- In March 1755 Mahfuzkhan (brother of the Nawab of Arcot) was sent with a contingent of the Company army under Colonel Heron to Tirunelveli. Madurai easily fell into their hands. Thereafter Colonel Heron was urged to deal with Puli Thevar as he continued to defy the authority of the Company. Puli Thevar wielded much influence over the western palyakkarars. For want of cannon and of supplies and pay to soldiers, Colonel Heron abandoned the plan and retired to Madurai. Heron was recalled and dismissed from service.

Confederacy and Alliance with Enemies of the British

- Three Pathan officers, Nawab Chanda Sahib's agents, named Mianah, Mudimiah and Nabikhan Kattak commanded the Madurai and Tirunelveli regions. They supported the Tamil playakkarars against Arcot Nawab Mohamed Ali. Puli Thevar had established close relationships with them. Puli Thevar also formed a confederacy of the Palayakkars to fight the British. With the exception of the Palayakkarars of Sivagiri, all other Maravar Palayams supported him. Ettayapuram and Panchalamkurichi also did not join this confederacy. Further, the English succeeded in getting the support of the rajas of Ramanathapuram and Pudukottai. Puli Thevar tried to get the support of Hyder Ali of Mysore and the French. Hyder Ali could not help Puli Thevar as he was already locked in a serious conflict with the Marathas.

Kalakadu Battle

- The Nawab sent an additional contingent of sepoy to Mahfuzkhan and the reinforced army proceeded to Tirunelveli. Besides the 1000 sepoy of the Company, Mahfuzkhan received 600 more sent by the Nawab. He also had the support of cavalry and foot soldiers from the Carnatic. Before Mahfuzkhan could station his troops near Kalakadu, 2000 soldiers from Travancore joined the forces of Puli Thevar. In the battle at Kalakadu, Mahfuzkhan's troops were routed.

Yusuf Khan and Puli Thevar

- The organized resistance of the palayakkarars under Puli Thevar gave an opportunity to the English to interfere directly in the affairs of Tirunelveli. Aided by the Raja of Travancore, from 1756 to 1763, the palayakkarars of Tirunelveli led by Puli Thevar were in a constant state of rebellion against the Nawab's authority. Yusuf Khan (also known as Khan Sahib or, before his conversion to Islam, Marudhanayagam) who had been sent by the Company was not prepared to attack Puli Thevar unless the big guns and ammunition from Tiruchirappalli arrived. As the English were at war with the French, as well as with Hyder Ali and Marathas, the artillery arrived only in September 1760. Yusuf Khan began to batter the Nerkattumseval fort and this attack continued for about two months. On 16 May 1761 Puli Thevar's three major forts (Nerkattumseval, Vasudevanallur and Panayur) came under the control of Yusuf Khan.
- In the meantime, after taking Pondicherry the English had eliminated the French from the picture. As a result of this the unity of palayakkarars began to break up as French support was not forthcoming.
- Travancore, Seithur, Uthumalai and Surandai switched their loyalty to the opposite camp. Yusuf Khan who was negotiating with the palayakkarars, without informing the Company administration, was charged with treachery and hanged in 1764.

Fall of Puli Thevar

- After the death of Khan Sahib, Puli Thevar returned from exile and recaptured Nerkattumseval in 1764. However, he was defeated by Captain Campbell in 1767. Puli Thevar escaped and died in exile.

Ondiveeran

Ondiveeran led one of the army units of Puli Thevar. Fighting by the side of Puli Thevar, he caused much damage to the Company's army. According to oral tradition, in one battle, Ondiveeran's hand was chopped off and Puli Thevar was saddened. But Ondiveeran said it was a reward for his penetration into enemy's fort causing many heads to roll.

(b) Velunachiyar (1730–1796)

- Born in 1730 to the Raja Sellamuthu Sethupathy of Ramanathapuram, Velunachiyar was the only daughter of this royal family. The king had no male heir. The royal family brought up the princess Velunachiyar, training her in martial arts like valari, stick fighting and to wield weapons. She was also adept in horse riding and archery, apart from her proficiency in English, French and Urdu.
- At the age of 16, Velunachiyar was married to Muthu Vadugar, the Raja of Sivagangai, and had a daughter by name Vellachinachiar. In 1772, the Nawab of Arcot and the Company troops under the command of Lt. Col. Bon Jour stormed the Kalaiyar Kovil Palace. In the ensuing battle Muthu Vadugar was killed. Velunachiyar escaped with her daughter and lived under the protection of Gopala Nayakar at Virupachi near Dindigul for eight years.
- During her period in hiding, Velunachiyar organised an army and succeeded in securing an alliance with not only Gopala Nayakar but Hyder Ali as well. Dalavay (military chief) Thandavarayanar wrote a letter to Sultan Hyder Ali on behalf of Velunachiyar asking for 5000 infantry and 5000 cavalry to defeat the English. Velunachiyar explained in detail in Urdu all the problems she had with East India

Company. She conveyed her strong determination to fight the English. Impressed by her courage, Hyder Ali ordered his Commandant Syed in Dindigul fort to provide the required military assistance.

Gopala Nayak, the Palayakkarar of Virupachi

Gopala Nayak spearheaded the famous Dindigul League, which was formed with Lakshmi Nayak of Manaparai and Poojai Nayak of Devadanapatti. He drew inspiration from Tipu Sultan who sent a deputation to show his camaraderie. He led the resistance against the British from Coimbatore and later joined Oomaidurai, Kattabomman's brother. He put up a fierce fight at Aanamalai hills where the local peasants gave him full support. But Gopala Nayak was overpowered by the British forces in 1801.

- Velunachiyar employed agents for gathering intelligence to find where the British had stored their ammunition. With military assistance from Gopala Nayakar and Hyder Ali she recaptured Sivagangai. She was crowned as Queen with the help of Marudhu brothers. She was the first female ruler or queen to resist the British colonial power in India.

Kuyili, a faithful friend of Velunachiyar, is said to have led the unit of women soldiers named after Udaiyaal. Udaiyaal was a shepherd girl who was killed for not divulging information on Kuyili. Kuyili is said to have walked into the British arsenal (1780) after setting herself on fire, thus destroying all the ammunition.

(c) Rebellion of Veerapandya Kattabomman 1790-1799

- Veerapandya Kattabomman became the Palayakkarar of Panchalamkurichi at the age of thirty on the death of his father, Jagavira Pandya Kattabomman. The Company's administrators, James London and Colin Jackson, had considered him a man of peaceful disposition. However, soon several events led to conflicts between Veerapandya Kattabomman and the East India Company. The Nawab, under the provisions of a treaty signed in 1781, had

assigned the revenue of the Carnatic to the Company to be entirely under their management and control during the war with Mysore Sultan. One-sixth of the revenue was to be allowed to meet the expenses of Nawab and his family. The Company had thus gained the right to collect taxes from Panchalamkurichi. The Company appointed its Collectors to collect taxes from all the palayams. The Collectors humiliated the palayakkarars and adopted force to collect the taxes. This was the bone of contention between the English and Kattabomman.

Confrontation with Jackson

- The land revenue arrear from Kattabomman was 3310 pagodas in 1798. Collector Jackson, an arrogant English officer, wanted to send an army to collect the revenue dues but the Madras Government did not give him permission. On 18 August 1798, he ordered Kattabomman to meet him in Ramanathapuram. But Kattabomman's attempts to meet him in between proved futile, as Jackson refused to give him audience both in Courtallam and Srivilliputhur. At last, an interview was granted and Kattabomman met Jackson in Ramanathapuram on 19 September 1798. It is said that Kattabomman had to stand for three hours before the haughty Collector Jackson. Sensing danger, Kattabomman tried to escape, along with his minister Sivasubramanianar. Oomaithurai suddenly entered the fort with his men and helped the escape of Kattabomman. At the gate of the Ramanathapuram fort there was a clash, in which some people including Lieutenant Clarke were killed. Sivasubramanianar was taken prisoner.

Appearance before Madras Council

- On his return to Panchalamkurichi, Kattabomman represented to the Madras Council about how he was ill-treated by the collector Jackson. The Council asked Kattabomman to appear before a committee with William Brown, William Oram and John Casamajor as members. Meanwhile, Governor Edward Clive, ordered the release of Sivasubramanianar and the suspension of the Collector Jackson. Kattabomman appeared before the Committee that sat on 15 December 1798 and reported on what transpired in Ramanathapuram. The Committee found Kattabomman was not

guilty. Jackson was dismissed from service and a new Collector S.R. Lushington appointed. Kattabomman cleared almost all the revenue arrears leaving only a balance of 1080 pagodas.

Kattabomman and the Confederacy of Palayakkarars

- In the meantime, Marudhu Pandiyar of Sivagangai formed the South Indian Confederacy of rebels against the British, with the neighbouring palayakkars like Gopala Nayak of Dindigul and Yadul Nayak of Aanamalai. Marudhu Pandiyar acted as its leader. The Tiruchirappalli Proclamation had been made. Kattabomman was interested in this confederacy. Collector Lushington prevented Kattabomman from meeting the Marudhu Brothers. But Marudhu Brothers and Kattabomman jointly decided on a confrontation with the English. Kattabomman tried to influence Sivagiri Palayakkarars, who refused to join. Kattabomman advanced towards Sivagiri. But the Palayakkarars of Sivagiri was a tributary to the Company. So the Company considered the expedition of Kattabomman as a challenge to their authority. The Company ordered the army to march on to Tirunelveli.

The Siege of Panchalamkurichi

- In May 1799, Lord Wellesley issued orders from Madras for the advance of forces from Tiruchirappalli, Thanjavur and Madurai to Tirunelveli. Major Bannerman commanded the troops. The Travancore troops too joined the British. On 1 September 1799, an ultimatum was served on Kattabomman to surrender. Kattabomman's "evasive reply" prompted Bannerman to attack his fort. Bannerman moved his entire army to Panchalamkurichi on 5 September. They cut off all the communications to the fort. Bannerman deputed Ramalinganar to convey a message asking Kattabomman to surrender. Kattabomman refused. Ramalinganar gathered all the secrets of the Fort, and on the basis of his report, Bannerman decided the strategy of the operation. In a clash at Kallarpatti, Sivasubramanianar was taken a prisoner.

Execution of Kattabomman

- Kattabomman escaped to Pudukottai. The British put a prize on his head. Betrayed by the rajas of Ettayapuram and Pudukottai Kattabomman was finally captured. Sivasubramanianar was executed at Nagalapuram on the 13 September. Bannerman made a mockery of a trial for Kattabomman in front of the palayakarars on 16 October. During the trial Kattabomman bravely admitted all the charges levelled against him. Kattabomman was hanged from a tamarind tree in the old fort of Kayathar, close to Tirunelveli, in front of the fellow Palayakkars. Thus ended the life of the celebrated Palayakkarars of Panchalamkurichi. Many folk ballads on Kattabomman helped keep his memory alive among the people.

(d) The Marudhu Brothers

- Periya Marudhu or Vella Marudhu (1748–1801) and his younger brother Chinna Marudhu (1753–1801) were able generals of Muthu Vadugar of Sivagangai. After Muthu Vadugar's death in the Kalaiyar Kovil battle Marudhu brothers assisted in restoring the throne to Velunachiyar. In the last years of the eighteenth century Marudhu Brothers organised resistance against the British. After the death of Kattabomman, they worked along with his brother Oomathurai. They plundered the granaries of the Nawab and caused damage and destruction to Company troops.

Rebellion of Marudhu Brothers (1800–1801)

- Despite the suppression of Kattabomman's revolt in 1799, rebellion broke out again in 1800. In the British records it is referred to as the Second Palayakkarar War. It was directed by a confederacy consisting of Marudhu Pandyan of Sivagangai, Gopala Nayak of Dindugal, Kerala Varma of Malabar and Krishnaappa Nayak and Dhoondaji of Mysore. In April 1800 they meet at Virupachi and decided to organise an uprising against the Company. The uprising, which broke out in Coimbatore in June 1800, soon spread to Ramanathapuram and Madurai. The Company got wind of it and declared war on Krishnappa Nayak of Mysore, Kerala Varma of Malabar and others.

The Palayakars of Coimbatore, Sathyamangalam and Tarapuram were caught and hanged.

- In February 1801 the two brothers of Kattabomman, Oomathurai and Sevathaiah, escaped from the Palayamkottai prison to Kamudhi, from where Chinna Marudhu took them to Siruvayal his capital. The fort at Panchalamkurichi was reconstructed in record time. The British troops under Colin Macaulay retook the fort in April and the Marudhu brothers sought shelter in Sivagangai. The English demanded that the Marudhu Pandiyars hand over the fugitives (Oomathurai and Sevathaiah). But they refused. Colonel Agnew and Colonel Innes marched on Sivagangai. In June 1801 Marudhu Pandiyars issued a proclamation of Independence which is called Tiruchirappalli Proclamation.

Proclamation of 1801

- The Proclamation of 1801 was an early call to the Indians to unite against the British, cutting across region, caste, creed and religion. The proclamation was pasted on the walls of the Nawab's palace in Tiruchirappalli fort and on the walls of the Srirangam temple. Many palayakkars of Tamil country rallied together to fight against the English. Chinna Marudhu collected nearly 20,000 men to challenge the English army. British reinforcements were rushed from Bengal, Ceylon and Malaya. The rajas of Pudukkottai, Ettayapuram and Thanjavur stood by the British. Divide and rule policy followed by the English spilt the forces of the palayakkarars soon.

Fall of Sivagangai

- In May 1801, the English attacked the rebels in Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli. The rebels went to Piranmalai and Kalayarkoil. They were again defeated by the forces of the English. In the end the superior military strength and the able commanders of the English Company prevailed. The rebellion failed and Sivagangai was annexed in 1801. The Marudhu brothers were executed in the Fort of Tirupathur near Ramanathapuram on 24 October 1801. Oomathurai and Sevathaiah were captured and beheaded at Panchalamkurichi on 16 November 1801. Seventy-three rebels were exiled to Penang in Malaya. Though the palayakkarars fell to the English, their exploits

and sacrifices inspired later generations. Thus the rebellion of Marudhu brothers, which is called South Indian Rebellion, is a landmark event in the history of Tamil Nadu.

Carnatic Treaty, 1801

- The suppression of the Palayakkarars rebellions of 1799 and 1800–1801 resulted in the liquidation of all the local chieftains of Tamilnadu. Under the terms of the Carnatic Treaty of 31 July 1801, the British assumed direct control over Tamilagam and the Palayakarar system came to an end with the demolition of all forts and disbandment of their army.

(e) Dheeran Chinnamalai (1756–1805)

- Born as Theerthagiri in 1756 in the Mandradiar royal family of Palayakottai, Dheeran was well trained in silambu, archery, horse riding and modern warfare. He was involved in resolving family and land disputes in the Kongu region. As this region was under the control of the Mysore Sultan, tax was collected by Tipu's Diwan Mohammed Ali. Once, when the Diwan was returning to Mysore with the tax money, Theerthagiri blocked his way and confiscated all the tax money. He let Mohammed Ali go by instructing him to tell his Sultan that "Chinnamalai", who is between Sivamalai and Chennimalai, was the one who took away taxes. Thus he gained the name "Dheeran Chinnamalai". The offended Diwan sent a contingent to attack Chinnamalai and both the forces met and fought at the Noyyal river bed. Chinnamalai emerged victorious.
- Trained by the French, Dheeran mobilised the Kongu youth in thousands and fought the British together with Tipu. After Tipu's death Dheeran Chinnamalai built a fort and fought the British without leaving the place. Hence the place is called Odanilai. He launched guerrilla attacks and evaded capture. Finally the English captured him and his brothers and kept them in prison in Sankagiri. When they were asked to accept the rule of the British, they refused. So they were hanged at the top of the Sankagiri Fort on 31 July 1805.

Vellore Revolt 1806

- Before reducing all palayakkarars of south Tamilnadu into submission the East India Company had acquired the revenue districts of Salem, Dindigul at the conclusion of the war with Tipu in 1792. Coimbatore was annexed at the end of the Anglo-Mysore War in 1799. In the same year the Raja of Thanjavur whose status had been reduced to that of a vassal in 1798 gave up his sovereign rights over that region to the English. After the suppression of resistance of Kattabomman (1799) and Marudhu Brothers (1801), the British charged the Nawab of Arcot with disloyalty and forced a treaty on him. According to this Treaty of 1801, the Nawab was to cede the districts of North Arcot, South Arcot, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Tirunelveli to the Company and transfer all the administrative powers to it.

(a) Grievances of Indian Soldiers

- But the resistance did not die down. The dispossessed little kings and feudal chieftains continued to deliberate on the future course of action against the Company Government. The outcome was the Vellore Revolt of 1806. The objective conditions for a last ditch fight existed on the eve of the revolt. The sepoys in the British Indian army nursed a strong sense of resentment over low salary and poor prospects of promotion. The English army officers' scant respect for the social and religious sentiments of the Indian sepoys also angered them. The state of peasantry from which class the sepoys had been recruited also bothered them much. With new experiments in land tenures causing unsettled conditions and famine breaking out in 1805 many of the sepoys' families were in dire economic straits. The most opportune situation came with the sons and the family members of Tipu being interned in Vellore Fort. The trigger for the revolt came in the form of a new military regulation notified by the Commander-in-Chief Sir John Cradock.
- According to the new regulations, the Indian soldiers were asked not to wear caste marks or ear rings when in uniform. They were to be cleanly shaven on the chin and maintain uniformity about how their moustache looked. The new turban added fuel to fire. The most

objectionable addition was the leather cockade made of animal skin. The sepoys gave enough forewarning by refusing to wear the new turban. Yet the Company administration did not take heed.

(b) Outbreak of the Revolt

- On 10 July 1806, in the early hours, guns were booming and the Indian sepoys of the 1st and 23rd regiments raised their standard of revolt. Colonel Fancourt, who commanded the garrison, was the first victim. Colonel MeKerras of the 23rd regiment was killed next. Major Armstrong who was passing the Fort heard the sound of firing. When he stopped to enquire he was showered with bullets. About a dozen other officers were killed within an hour or so. Among them Lt. Elly and Lt. Popham belonged to His Majesty's battalion.

Gillespie's Brutality

- Major Cootes, who was outside the Fort, informed Colonel Gillespie, the cavalry commandant in Arcot. Gillespie reached the fort along with a squadron of cavalry under the command of Captain Young at 9.00 am. In the meantime, the rebels proclaimed Fateh Hyder, Tipu's eldest son, as their new ruler and hoisted the tiger flag of Mysore sultans in the Fort. But the uprising was swiftly crushed by Col. Gillespie, who threw to winds all war ethics. In the course of suppression, according to an eyewitness account, eight hundred soldiers were found dead in the fort alone. Six hundred soldiers were kept in confinement in Tiruchirappalli and Vellore awaiting Inquiry.

(c) Consequences of Revolt

- Six of the rebels convicted by the Court of Enquiry were blown from the guns; five were shot dead; eight hanged. Tipu's sons were ordered to be sent to Calcutta. The officers and men engaged in the suppression of the revolt were rewarded with prize money and promotion. Col. Gillespie was given 7,000 pagodas. However, the commander-in-chief Sir John Cradock, the Adjutant General Agnew and Governor William Bentinck were held responsible for the revolt, removed from their office, and recalled to England. The military regulations were treated as withdrawn.

(d) Estimate of Revolt

- The Vellore Revolt failed because there was no immediate help from outside. Recent studies show that the organising part of the revolt was done perfectly by Subedars Sheik Adam and Sheik Hamid and Jamedar Sheik Hussain of the 2nd battalion of 23rd regiment and two Subedars and the Jamedar Sheik Kasim of the 1st battalion of the 1st regiment. Vellore Revolt had all the forebodings of the Great Rebellion of 1857. The only difference was that there was no civil rebellion following the mutiny. The 1806 revolt was not confined to Vellore Fort. It had its echoes in Bellary, Walajabad, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Nandydurg, and Sankaridurg.

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Unit - 9

Freedom Struggle in Tamil Nadu

Learning Objectives

To acquaint ourselves with:

- Anti-colonial struggles in Tamil Nadu
- Contribution of Christian missionaries to the development of education and amelioration of the depressed classes
- Challenge of the Justicites to the Congress in Tamil Nadu
- Militant mass movement of the Congress in Tamil Nadu

Introduction

- Tamil Nadu showed the lead in resisting colonial rule. As early as the late eighteenth century the Palayakarars, resisted the English attempts to establish their political hegemony in Tamil Nadu. Even after the defeat of the Palayakarars, an uprising was organised by Indian sepoys and officers in Vellore Fort in 1806 that had its echoes in several cantonments in south India. Thanks to the introduction of Western education and eventual emergence of educated Indian middle class, the struggle against the British took the constitutional path. The freedom struggle in Tamil Nadu was unique, because from the beginning it was not only a struggle for independence from the English rule but also a struggle for independence from social disability imposed by the obnoxious caste system. In this lesson we shall study the role played by nationalists wedded to diverse ideologies in Tamil Nadu.

Early Nationalist Stirrings in Tamil Nadu

- By the middle of the nineteenth century a group of educated middle class emerged in Madras and began to show interest in public affairs. As in other parts of India, they formed political associations, such as

the Madras Native Association and the Madras Mahajana Sabha to articulate their grievances.

(a) Madras Native Association

- The Madras Native Association (MNA) was the earliest organisation to be founded in south India to articulate larger public rather than sectarian interests. It was started by Gazulu Lakshminarasu, Srinivasanar and their associates in 1852. It consisted primarily of merchants. The objective was to promote the interests of its members and their focus was on reduction in taxation. It also protested against the support of the government to Christian missionary activities. It drew the attention of the government to the condition and needs of the people. One of the important contributions of the MNA was its agitation against torture of the peasants by revenue officials. These efforts led to the establishment of the Torture Commission and the eventual abolition of the Torture Act, which justified the collection of land revenue through torture. However, by 1862, the Madras Native Association had ceased to exist.

(b) Beginnings of the Nationalist Press: The Hindu and Swadesamitran

- The appointment of T. Muthuswami as the first Indian Judge of the Madras High Court in 1877 created a furore in Madras Presidency. The entire press in Madras criticized the appointment of an Indian as a Judge. The press opposed his appointment and the educated youth realized that the press was entirely owned by Europeans. The need for a newspaper to express the Indian perspective was keenly felt. G. Subramaniam, M. Veeraraghavachari and four other friends together started a newspaper The Hindu in 1878. It soon became the vehicle of nationalist propaganda. G. Subramaniam also started a Tamil nationalist periodical Swadesamitran in 1891 which became a daily in 1899. The founding of The Hindu and Swadesamitran provided encouragement to the starting of other native newspapers such as Indian Patriot, South Indian Mail, Madras Standard, Desabhimani, Vijaya, Suryodayam and India.

(c) Madras Mahajana Sabha

- Madras Mahajana Sabha (MMS) was the earliest organisation in south India with clear nationalist objectives. It was the training ground for the first generation of nationalist leaders. On 16 May 1884 MMS was started by M. Veeraraghavachari, P. Anandacharlu, P. Rangaiah and few others. P. Rangaiah became its first president. P. Anandacharlu played an active role as its secretary. The members met periodically, debated public issues in closed meetings, conducted hall meetings and communicated their views to the government. The objective of MMS was to create a consensus among people of different parts of the Presidency on various issues of public interest and to present it to the government. Its demands included conduct of simultaneous civil services examinations in England and India, abolition of the Council of India in London, reduction of taxes and reduction of civil and military expenditure. Many of its demands were adopted later by the Indian National Congress founded in 1885.

(d) Moderate Phase

- Provincial associations such as the Madras Mahajana Sabha led to the formation of an all-India organisation, the Indian National Congress. Leaders from different parts of India attended several meetings before the formation of the Congress. One such meeting was held in December 1884 in Theosophical Society. It was attended by Dadabhai Naoroji, K.T. Telang, Surendranath Banerjee and other prominent leaders apart from G. Subramaniam, Rangaiah and Anandacharlu from Madras.

Prominent Nationalists of Tamil Nadu in the Moderate phase

The early nationalists believed in constitutional methods. Their activities consisted of conducting hall meetings and deliberating the problems of the country in English. These views were communicated to the government in a language couched in a liberal discourse in the form of petitions, prayers, memoranda, and as evidence in various government commissions of enquiry. When, at the time of Partition of Bengal, Tilak and other leaders adopted popular methods such as mass public meetings, and used vernacular languages to address the

larger public, the early nationalists came to be known as moderates. The distinguished Tamil Moderates from Madras: V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.S. Sivasamy, V. Krishnasamy, T.R. Venkatramanar, G.A. Natesan, T.M. Madhava Rao, and S. Subramaniam. The primary contribution of moderates lies in exposing the liberal claims of the British: they exposed how the British exploited India and their hypocrisy in following democratic principles in England and imposing an unrepresentative government in the colonies.

- The first session of the Indian National Congress was held in 1885 at Bombay. Out of a total of 72 delegates 22 members were from Madras. G. Subramaniam through his writings advanced the cause of nationalism. He ranks with Naoroji and Gokhale for his contribution to the understanding of the economic exploitation of India by the British.
- The second session of the Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta in 1886, with Dadabhai Naoroji in the Chair. The third session was held at Makkis Garden, now known as the Thous and lights, in Madras in 1887 with Badruddin Tyabji as president. Out of the 607 all India delegates of 362 were from Madras Presidency.

Tamil Nadu was then part of the Madras Presidency which included large parts of the present-day states of Andhra Pradesh (Coastal districts and Rayalaseema), Karnataka (Bengaluru, Bellary, South Canara), Kerala (Malabar) and even Odisha (Ganjam).

Swadeshi Movement

- The partition of Bengal (1905) led to the Swadeshi Movement and changed the course of the struggle for freedom. In various parts of India, especially Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra popular leaders emerged. They implemented the programme of the Calcutta Congress which called upon the nation to promote Swadeshi enterprise, boycott foreign goods and promote national education. The Swadeshi movement made a deep impact in Tamil Nadu. The Congress carried on a vigorous campaign for boycott of foreign goods.

(a) Response in Tamilnadu

- V.O. Chidambaranar, V. Chakkaraiyar, Subramania Bharati and Surendranath Arya were some of the prominent leaders in Tamilnadu. Public meetings attended by thousands of people were organised in various parts of Tamilnadu. Tamil was used on the public platform for the first time to mobilise the people. Subaramania Bharati's patriotic songs were especially important in stirring patriotic emotions. Many journals were started to propagate Swadeshi ideals. Swadesamitran and India were prominent journals. The extremist leader Bipin Chandra Pal toured Madras and delivered lectures which inspired the youth. Students and youth participated widely in the Swadeshi Movement.

Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company

- One of the most enterprising acts in pursuance of swadeshi was the launching of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company at Thoothukudi by V.O. Chidambaranar. He purchased two ships Gallia and Lavo and plied them between Thoothukudi and Colombo. However, due to cutthroat competition from the European company and the blatantly partisan role played by the government, V.O.C's efforts ended in failure.

Tirunelveli Uprising

- V.O.C joined with Subramania Siva in organising the mill workers in Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli. In 1908, he led a strike in the European-owned Coral Mills. It coincided with the release of Bipin Chandra Pal. V.O.C and Subramania Siva, who organised a public meeting to celebrate the release of Bipin, were arrested. The two leaders were charged with sedition and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. Initially V.O.C. was given a draconian sentence of two life imprisonments. The news of the arrest sparked riots in Tirunelveli leading to the burning down of the police station, court building and municipal office. It led to the death of four people in police firing. V.O.C. was treated harshly in prison and was made to pull the heavy oil press. Others to be arrested included G. Subramaniam and Ethiraj Surendranath Arya. To avoid imprisonment Subramania Bharati

moved to Pondicherry which was under French rule. Bharati's example was followed by many other nationalists such as Aurobindo Ghosh and V. V. Subramanianar. The brutal crackdown on Swadeshi leaders virtually brought the Swadeshi Movement to a close in Tamil Nadu.

(b) Revolutionary Activities in Tamil Nadu

- As elsewhere the Swadeshi movement inspired the youth. Left leaderless, they turned to the revolutionary path. Pondicherry provided a safe haven for the revolutionaries. Many of these revolutionaries in Tamil Nadu were introduced and trained in revolutionary activities at India House in London and in Paris. M.P.T. Acharya, V.V. Subramanianar and T.S.S. Rajan were prominent among them. Revolutionary literature was distributed by them in Madras through Pondicherry. Radical papers such as India, Vijaya and Suryodayam came out of Pondicherry. Such revolutionary papers and Bharati's poems were banned as seditious literature. These activities in Pondicherry intensified with the arrival of Aurobindo Ghosh and V.V. Subramanianar in 1910. These activities continued till the outbreak of the First World War.

Ashe Murder

- In 1904 Nilakanta Brahmachari and others started Bharata Matha Society, a secret society. The objective was to kill British officials and thereby kindle patriotic fervour among the people. Vanchinathan of Senkottai, was influenced by this organisation. On 17 June 1911 he shot dead Robert W.D'E. Ashe, Collector of Tirunelveli in Maniyachi Junction. After this he shot himself. Divorced from the people these young revolutionaries, despite their patriotism, failed to inspire and mobilize the people.

(c) Annie Besant and the Home Rule Movement

- While the extremists and revolutionaries were suppressed with an iron hand, the moderates hoped for some constitutional reforms. However, they were disappointed with the Minto-Morley reforms as it did not provide for responsible government. Despite this the

Congress extended support to the British war effort in the hope of getting more reforms.

- Thus when the national movement was in its ebb, Annie Besant, an Irish lady and leader of the Theosophical Society, proposed the Home Rule Movement on the model of Irish Home Rule League. She started Home Rule League in 1916 and carried forward the demand for home rule all over India. G.S. Arundale, B.P. Wadia and C.P. Ramaswamy assisted her in this campaign. They demanded home rule with only a nominal allegiance to British Crown. She started the newspapers New India and Commonweal to carry forward her agenda. She remarked, "Better bullock carts and freedom than a train deluxe with subjection". Under the Press Act of 1910 Annie Besant was asked to pay hefty amount as security. She wrote two books, How India wrought for Freedom and India: A Nation and a pamphlet on self-government.
- Students joined the movement in large numbers who were trained in Home Rule classes. They were formed into boy scouts and volunteer troops. Annie Besant and her coworkers were interned and prohibited from making public speeches or involve in any political activity. Annie Besant was elected the President of the Congress session of 1917. Members of the Home Rule Movement such as B.P. Wadia played a key role in organising the working classes by forming trade unions. Not only did they succeed in improving their working conditions, they made them part of the struggle for freedom. However, with the rise of Gandhi as a national leader Annie Besant and the Home Rule Leagues were eclipsed.

Non-Brahmin Movement and the Challenge to Congress

- In the meanwhile, there was rapid growth in education in the Madras Presidency. There was an increase in the number of educated non-Brahmins. Intense political and social activity discussed above politicised the educated non-Brahmins. They raised the issue of caste discrimination and unequal opportunities in government employment and representation in elected bodies, which were dominated by Brahmins. Further, the Congress was also overwhelmingly composed of Brahmins.

(a) The South Indian Liberal Federation

- The non-Brahmins organised themselves into political organisations to protect their interests. In 1912 the Madras Dravidian Association was founded. C. Natesanar played an active role as its secretary. In June 1916 he established the Dravidian Association Hostel for non-Brahmin students. He also played a key role in bridging the differences between two leading non-Brahmin leaders of the time, Dr. T.M. Nair and P. Thyagarayar. Both of them were earlier part of the Congress and were disillusioned by how non-Brahmins were sidelined in the organisation. On 20 November 1916 a meeting of about thirty non-Brahmins was held under the leadership of P. Thyagarayar, Dr. T.M. Nair and C. Natesanar at Victoria Public Hall in Chennai. The South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF) was founded to promote the interests of the non-Brahmins. They also launched three newspapers: Justice in English, Dravidian in Tamil and Andhra Prakasika in Telugu. Soon the SILF began to be popularly known as Justice Party after its English daily. The Justice Party also held several conferences throughout the Presidency to set up branches.

Demand for Reservation

- The Non-Brahmin Manifesto was released outlining its objectives viz., reservation of jobs for non-Brahmins in government service, and seats in representative bodies. It opposed the Home Rule Movement as a movement of Brahmins and feared that Home Rule might give them more power. It also criticised the Congress as a party of the Brahmins. Montagu's announcement of political reforms in the Parliament in 1917 intensified political discussions in Tamil Nadu. The Justice Party demanded communal representation (i.e. representation for various communities in society). The Madras Government was also supportive of the Justice Party as the latter believed that English rule was conducive for the development of the non-Brahmins. The Act of 1919 provided reservation of seats to non-Brahmins, a move criticised by the Congress but welcomed by the Justice Party.

Justice Ministry

- The Congress boycotted the elections of 1920. The Justice Party won 63 of 98 elected seats in the Legislative Council. A. Subburayalu of the Justice Party became the first chief minister. After the 1923 elections, Raja of Panagal of the Justice Party formed the ministry. The Justice Party introduced various measures for the benefit of non-Brahmins. They were reservation of appointments in local bodies and education institutions, establishment of Staff Selection Board which later became the Public Service Commission, enactment of Hindu Religious Endowment Act and Madras State Aid to Industries Act, abolition of devadasi system, allotment of poromboke lands (waste government lands) to the poor for housing and extension of primary education to the depressed classes through fee concessions, scholarships and mid-day meals.

(b) Government's Repressive Measures: Rowlatt Act

- Given the important contribution of India (especially the soldiers who fought in far-off lands in the cause of Empire) in World War I Indians expected more reforms from Britain. However, a draconian Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, popularly known as the Rowlatt Act, after the name of Sir Sidney Rowlatt, who headed the committee that recommended it was passed in 1919. Under the Act anyone could be imprisoned on charges of terrorism without due judicial process. Indians were aghast at this. Gandhi gave voice to the anger of the people and adopted the Satyagraha method that he had used in South Africa.

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- On 18 March 1919 Gandhi addressed a meeting on Marina Beach. On 6 April 1919 hartal was organised to protest against the "Black Act". Protest demonstrations were held at several parts of Tamil Nadu. Processions from many areas of the city converged in the Marina beach where there was a large gathering. They devoted the whole day to fasting and prayer in the Marina beach. Madras Satyagraha Sabha was formed. Rajaji, Kasturirangar, S. Satyamurty and George Joseph addressed the meeting. A separate meeting of workers was

addressed by V. Kalyanasundaram (Thiru. V. Ka) B.P. Wadia and V.O.C. An important aspect of the movement was that the working classes, students and women took part in large numbers.

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Non-Cooperation Movement

- Tamil Nadu was active during the Non-cooperation Movement. C. Rajaji and E.V. Ramaswamy (EVR, later known as Periyar) provided the leadership. Rajaji worked closely with Yakub Hasan, founder of the Madras branch of the Muslim League. As a result, the Hindus and the Muslims cooperated closely during the course of the movement in Tamil Nadu. A Congress volunteer corps was set up

to distribute pamphlets, carry flags during processions and to maintain order in the meetings. They also played an important part in picketing of liquor shops.

(a) No Tax Campaigns and Temperance Movement

- As part of the non-cooperation movement, in many places, cultivators refused to pay taxes. A no-tax campaign took place in Thanjavur. Councils, schools and courts were boycotted. Foreign goods were boycotted. There were a number of workers' strikes all over region, many of them led by nationalist leaders. One of the important aspects of the movement in Tamil Nadu was the temperance movement or movement against liquor. Toddy shops were picketed. Demonstrations and hartals were organised in all parts of the Presidency. There were also agitations by communities against the Criminal Tribes Act. In November 1921 it was decided to organise civil disobedience. Rajaji, Subramania Sastri and EVR were arrested. The visit of Prince of Wales on 13 January 1922 was boycotted. In the police repression two were killed and many injured. The Non-Cooperation Movement was withdrawn in 1922 after the Chauri Chaura incident in which 22 policemen were killed

(b) E.V.R. and the Constructive Programme

- E.V.R. played an important role in Tamil Nadu during this period. He campaigned vigorously for the promotion and sale of khadi. In his opposition to consumption of liquor he cut down an entire coconut grove owned by him. He also played a key role in the satya graha for temple entry in Vaikom, then under Travancore. It was a time when the depressed classes were not even permitted to walk on the streets around the temple or come within a certain distance of the upper castes. After the major leaders of Kerala were arrested, EVR went to Vaikom and galvanised the movement. He was arrested and sentenced to one-month imprisonment. He refused to leave Vaikom even after his release. He was arrested again for making inspiring speeches and was sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment. When he returned to Erode after his release he was arrested for his speeches to promote khadi. In June 1925, the ban on the roads around the temple in Vaikom was lifted. For his contribution against caste

discrimination and temple entry agitation in Vaikom, Periyar was hailed as 'Vaikom Hero'.

Cheranmadevi Gurukulam Controversy

- However, by this time E.V.R. had become increasingly dissatisfied with the Congress. He felt it was promoting the interests of the Brahmins alone. The Cheranmadevi Gurukulam controversy and opposition to communal representation within the Congress led E.V.R. to leave the Congress.
- To further the cause of national education, a gurukulam was established in Cheranmadevi by V.V. Subramanianar. It received funds from the Congress. However, students were discriminated on the basis of caste. Brahmin and Non-Brahmin students were made to dine separately and the food served too was different. The issue was brought to the notice of E.V.R. who questioned the practice and severely criticised it along with another leader, Dr P. Varadarajulu.
- In the Kanchipuram Conference of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee held on 21 November 1925, he raised the issue of representation for non-Brahmins in the legislature. His efforts to achieve this since 1920 had met with failure. When the resolution was defeated, he left the Conference along with other non-Brahmin leaders who met separately. Soon E.V.R. left the Congress and started the Self Respect Movement.

(c) Swarajists-Justicites Rivalry

- Following the withdrawal of the Non- Cooperation Movement, the Congress was divided between 'no-changers' who wanted to continue the boycott of the councils and 'prochangers who wanted to contest the elections for the councils. Rajaji along with other staunch Gandhian followers opposed the council entry. Along with Kasturirangar and M.A. Ansari, Rajaji advocated the boycott of the councils. Opposition to this led to the formation of the Swaraj Party within the Congress by Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru. In Tamil Nadu the Swarajists were led by S. Srinivasanar and S. Satyamurti.

(d) Subbarayan Ministry

- In the elections held in 1926, the Swarajists won the majority of the elected seats. However, it did not accept office in accordance with the Congress policy. Instead they supported an independent, P. Subbarayan to form the ministry. The Swarajists did not contest the 1930 elections leading to an easy victory for the Justice Party. The Justice Party remained in office till 1937.

Agitation for Removal of Neill Statue (1927)

James Neill of the Madras Fusiliers (infantry men with firearms) was brutal in wreaking vengeance at Kanpur ('the Cawnpur massacre', as it was called) in which many English women and children were killed in the Great Rebellion of 1857. Neill was later killed by an Indian sepoy. A statue was erected for him at Mount Road, Madras. Nationalists saw this as an insult to Indian sentiments, and organised a series of demonstrations in Madras. Protesters came from all over the Madras Presidency and were led by S. N. Somayajulu of Tirunelveli. Many were arrested and sentenced to prison. Gandhi, who visited Madras during the same time, gave his support to the agitation. The statue was finally moved to Madras Museum when Congress Ministry, led by C. Rajaji, formed the government in 1937.

(e) Simon Commission Boycott

- In 1927 a statutory commission was constituted under Sir John Simon to review the Act of 1919 and to suggest reforms. However, to the great disappointment of Indians, it was an all-white commission with not a single Indian member. So the Congress boycotted the Simon Commission. In Madras, the Simon Boycott Propaganda Committee was set up with S. Satyamurti as the president. There was widespread campaign among the students, shopkeepers, lawyers and commuters in train to boycott. The arrival of Simon Commission in Madras on 18 February 1929 was greeted with demonstrations and hartals. Black flags were waved against the Commission. The police used force to suppress the protest.

Civil Disobedience Movement

(a) Towards Poorna Swaraj

- In the 1920s, Congress with Gandhi in leader ship, was transforming into a broadbased movement in Tamil Nadu. The Madras session of the Indian National Congress in 1927 declared complete independence as its goal. It appointed a committee under Motilal Nehru to frame the constitutional reforms in opposition to the Simon Commission. In the 1929 Lahore session of the Congress, Poorna Swaraj (complete independence) was adopted as the goal and on 26 January 1930 the national flag was hoisted by Jawaharlal Nehru on the banks of river Ravi as the declaration of independence.

(b) Salt March to Vedaranyam

- When the Viceroy did not accept the demands put forward by Gandhi, he launched the Civil Disobedience Movement by setting out on a Salt Satyagraha with a march to Dandi on 12 March 1930. The Civil Disobedience Movement was a mass movement with the participation of students, shopkeepers, workers, women, etc. Demonstrations, hartals, staging of swadeshi dramas and songs were the order the day in both rural and urban areas. Tamil Nadu was in the forefront of the Civil Disobedience Movement. In the city of Madras, shops were picketed and foreign goods boycotted. Rajaji organised and led a salt saty agraha march to Vedaranyam. The march started from Tiruchirappalli on 13 April 1930 and reached Vedaranyam in Thanjavur district on 28 April. A special song was composed for the march by Namakkal V. Ramalinganar with the lines, "A War is ahead sans sword, sans bloodshed...Join this march." Despite a brutal crackdown by the police, the marching satyagrahis were provided a warm reception along the route. On reaching Vedaranyam 12 volunteers under the leadership of Rajaji broke the salt law by picking up salt. Rajaji was arrested. T.S.S. Rajan, Rukmani Lakshmipathi, Sardar Vedarathnam, C. Swaminathar and K. Santhanam were among the prominent leaders who participated in the Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha.

(c) Widespread Agitations in Tamil Districts

- The satyagrahis under the leadership of T. Prakasam and K. Nageswara Rao set up a camp at Udayavanam near Madras. However, the police arrested them. It led to a hartal in Madras. The clashes with the police in Tiruvallikeni which lasted for three hours on 27 April 1930 left three dead. Volunteers who attempted to offer salt Satyagraha in Rameswaram were arrested. Similar attempts at Uvari, Anjengo, Veppalodai, Thoothukudi and Tharuvaikulam were stopped. Mill workers struck work across the province. Women participated enthusiastically. Rukmani Lakshmi pathi was the first woman to pay penalty for violation of salt laws. Police used brutal force to suppress the movement. Bhashyam, popularly known as Arya, hoisted the national flag atop Fort St. George on 26 January 1932. Satyamurti actively picketed shops selling foreign clothes, organised processions and distributed pamphlets. N.M.R.Subbaraman and K. Kamaraj also played an important role.

Martyrdom of Tirupur Kumaran

- On 11 January 1932 a procession carrying national flags and singing patriotic songs was brutally beaten by the police in Tirupur. O.K.S.R. Kumaraswamy, popularly Tirupur Kumaran, fell dead holding the national flag aloft. He is hailed as Kodikatha Kumaran. Thus, civil disobedience movement was one of the largest mass movements in Tamil Nadu with participation of people from all sections of the society.

(d) First Congress Ministry

- The Government of India Act of 1935 introduced Provincial Autonomy. The Council of Ministers, responsible to the legislature, administered the provincial subjects. However, the Governor was empowered to disregard the advice of the elected government. In the 1937 election the Congress emerged victorious. The Justice Party was trounced. Congress victory in the elections clearly indicated its popularity with the people.

- Rajaji formed the first Congress Ministry. He introduced prohibition on an experimental basis in Salem. To compensate for the loss of revenue he introduced a sales tax. On the social question, he opened temples to the 'untouchables'. Efforts of T. Prakasam led to the appointment of a committee to enquire into the condition of the tenants in the Zamindari areas. However, excepting debt conciliation boards to reduce rural indebtedness, no other measure was adopted. When the British involved India in the Second World War without consulting the elected Congress ministries, the latter resigned.

A temple entry programme with "harijans" in Madurai Meenakshiamman temple was organised (9 July 1939) by Vaidyanathar, L.N. Gopalsamy, President and Secretary of Madurai Harijana Sevak Sangh respectively. The Temple Entry Authorisation and Indemnity Act, 1939 for the removal of the civil and social disabilities against the "depressed classes" was passed.

(e) Anti-Hindi Agitation

- One of the controversial measures of Rajaji was the introduction of Hindi as a compulsory subject in schools. This was considered to be a form of Aryan and North Indian imposition detrimental to Tamil language and culture, and therefore caused much public resentment. E.V.R. led a massive campaign against it. He organised an anti-Hindi Conference at Salem. It formulated a definite programme of action. The Scheduled Castes Federation and the Muslim League extended its support to the anti-Hindi agitation. Natarajan and Thalamuthu, two of the enthusiastic agitators died in prison. A rally was organised from Tiruchirappalli to Madras. More than 1200 protestors including E.V.R. were arrested. After the resignation of the Congress Ministry, the Governor of Madras who took over the reigns of administration removed Hindi as compulsory subject.

Quit India Struggle

- Failure of the Cripps Mission, war time shortages and price rise created much discontent among the people. On 8 August 1942 the Quit India resolution was passed and Gandhi gave the slogan 'Do or Die'. The entire Congress leadership was arrested overnight. K.

Kamaraj while returning from Bombay noticed that at every railway station the police waited with a list of local leaders and arrested them as they got down. Kamaraj gave the police the slip and got down at Arakkonam itself. He then worked underground and organised people during the Quit India Movement. Rajaji and Satyamurti were arrested together when they went about distributing pamphlets. The movement was widespread in Tamilnadu and K. Kamaraj there were many instances of violence such as setting fire to post offices, cutting of telegraph lines and disrupting railway traffic.

Undying Mass Movement

- All sections of the society participated in the movement. There were a large number of workers strike such as strikes in Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras Port Trust, Madras Corporation and the Electric Tramway. Telegraph and telephone lines were cut and public building burnt at Vellore and Panapakkam. Students of various colleges took active part in the protests. The airport in Sullur was attacked and trains derailed in Coimbatore. Congress volunteers clashed with the military in Madurai. There were police firings at Rajapalayam, Karaikudi and Devakottai. Many young men and women also joined the INA. The Quit India Movement was suppressed with brutal force.
- The Royal Indian Navy Mutiny, the negotiations initiated by the newly formed Labour Party Government in England resulting in India's independence but sadly with partition of the country into India and Pakistan has formed part of the Lesson in Unit VIII.

Unit - 9 - Freedom struggle in TamilNadu

(Evolution of 19th and 20th century)

Non-Brahmin Movement and the Challenge to Congress

- In the meanwhile, there was rapid growth in education in the Madras Presidency. There was an increase in the number of educated non-Brahmins. Intense political and social activity discussed above politicised the educated non-Brahmins. They raised the issue of caste discrimination and unequal opportunities in government employment and representation in elected bodies, which were dominated by Brahmins. Further, the Congress was also overwhelmingly composed of Brahmins.

(a) The South Indian Liberal Federation

- The non-Brahmins organised themselves into political organisations to protect their interests. In 1912 the Madras Dravidian Association was founded. C. Natesanar played an active role as its secretary. In June 1916 he established the Dravidian Association Hostel for non-Brahmin students. He also played a key role in bridging the differences between two leading non-Brahmin leaders of the time, Dr. T.M. Nair and P. Thyagarayar. Both of them were earlier part of the Congress and were disillusioned by how non-Brahmins were sidelined in the organisation. On 20 November 1916 a meeting of about thirty non-Brahmins was held under the leadership of P. Thyagarayar, Dr. T.M. Nair and C. Natesanar at Victoria Public Hall in Chennai. The South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF) was founded to promote the interests of the non-Brahmins. They also launched three newspapers: Justice in English, Dravidian in Tamil and Andhra Prakasika in Telugu. Soon the SILF began to be popularly known as Justice Party after its English daily. The Justice Party also held several conferences throughout the Presidency to set up branches.

Demand for Reservation

- The Non-Brahmin Manifesto was released outlining its objectives viz., reservation of jobs for non-Brahmins in government service, and seats in representative bodies. It opposed the Home Rule Movement as a movement of Brahmins and feared that Home Rule might give them more power. It also criticised the Congress as a party of the Brahmins. Montagu's announcement of political reforms in the Parliament in 1917 intensified political discussions in Tamil Nadu. The Justice Party demanded communal representation (i.e. representation for various communities in society). The Madras Government was also supportive of the Justice Party as the latter believed that English rule was conducive for the development of the non-Brahmins. The Act of 1919 provided reservation of seats to non-Brahmins, a move criticised by the Congress but welcomed by the Justice Party.

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(b) Government's Repressive Measures: Rowlatt Act

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committee that recommended it was passed in 1919. Under the Act anyone could be imprisoned on charges of terrorism without due judicial process. Indians were aghast at this. Gandhi gave voice to the anger of the people and adopted the Satyagraha method that he had used in South Africa.

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Cheranmadevi Gurukulam Controversy

- However, by this time E.V.R. had become increasingly dissatisfied with the Congress. He felt it was promoting the interests of the Brahmins alone. The Cheranmadevi Gurukulam controversy and opposition to communal representation within the Congress led E.V.R. to leave the Congress.
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Unit 10

Social Transformation in Tamil Nadu

Rise of the Dravidian Movement

- In India, Brahmins enjoyed a high social status, based on their birth, and held great social privileges. In Madras Presidency, Brahmins dominated all the fields of society, especially politics, education and job opportunities in the government. The 1911 census showed that Brahmins were slightly over 3 per cent of Madras Presidency's population, and non-Brahmins 90 per cent. Yet in the ten years from 1901 to 1911 Madras University turned out 4,074 Brahmin graduates compared with only 1,035 non-Brahmin graduates. Numbers for other groups, based on how the population came to be classified then, included Indian Christian 306, Mohammedan 69 and European and Eurasian 225.
- In this context, the Dravidian movement emerged as a defence of the non-Brahmins against the Brahmin dominance. An organisation called The Madras Non-Brahmin Association was founded in 1909 to help the non-Brahmin students. In 1912 C. Natesanar, a medical doctor, founded the Madras United League, later renamed as Madras Dravidian Association to support Dravidian uplift. The organisation focused on educating and supporting non-Brahmin graduates and conducting regular meetings to share their grievances. Meanwhile, Natesanar founded a hostel, the Dravidian Home, at Triplicane (Madras) in July 1916 to address the lack of hostels for the non-Brahmin students which hindered their educational development. In addition, the home had a literary society for the benefit of non-Brahmin students.

South Indian Liberal Federation (Justice Party)

- As World War I was in progress the British government was considering the introduction of representative institutions for Indians after the War. Fearing that such political reforms would further strengthen the political power of Brahmins, educated non-Brahmins decided to organise themselves politically. On 20 November 1916

around 30 prominent non- Brahmin leaders including Dr. C. Natesanar, Sir Pitti Theyagarayar, T.M. Nair and Alamelu Mangai Thayarammal came together to form the South Indian Liberation Federation (SILF). In the meantime, at a meeting held in the Victoria Public Hall the Non-Brahmin Manifesto was released in December 1916. The manifesto articulated the voice of the non-Brahmin communities and surveyed the general condition of the non-Brahmins in Madras Presidency.

- The association started publishing three newspapers: Dravidian in Tamil, Justice in English and Andhra Prakasika in Telugu, to propagate the ideals of the Party.

The Non-Brahmin Manifesto pointed out that though “Not less than 40 out of the 411/2 millions” of the Madras Presidency were non-Brahmins, “in what passes for the politics in Madras they have not taken the part to which they are entitled”. Arguing that a government conducted on “true British principles of justice and equality of opportunity” was in the best interests of India, it declared, that “we are deeply devoted and loyally attached to British rule”.

- The first election, under the Montagu- Chelmsford Reforms, was held in 1920 after the introduction of the Dyarchy form of government in the provinces. The Justice Party won the election and formed the first-ever Indian cabinet in Madras. A. Subbarayalu became the Chief Minister of the Madras Presidency and the party formed the government during 1920–1923 and 1923–1926. In the context of Congress Party boycotting the legislature, the Justice Party continued to remain in office till 1937 elections were held. In the 1937 elections the Indian National Congress contested the elections for the first time and trounced the Justice Party.

Programmes and Activities

- The Justice Party is the fountain head of the non-Brahmin Movement in the country. The Justice Party government widened education and employment opportunities for the majority of the population and created space for them in the political sphere. Tamil Nadu’s legacy of

social justice owes its existence to the formative years of Justice Party in power.

- The Justicites removed the legal hindrances restricting inter-caste marriages and broke the barriers that prevented Depressed Classes from the use of public wells and tanks. The Justice Party government ordered that public schools accommodate the children of the Depressed Classes. Hostels were established for the students belonging to this social group in 1923. In the meantime, the Madras legislature under the Justice Party government was the first to approve participation of women in the electoral politics in 1921. This resolution created space for woman and thus facilitated Muthulakshmi Ammaiyar to become the first woman legislator in India in 1926.
- The Justice Party worked towards legislating provisions for communal representation – reservations for various communities. Two Communal Government Orders (16 September 1921 and 15 August 1922) were passed to ensure equitable distribution in appointments among various castes and communities as a part of achieving social justice. The Justice Party rule established the Staff Selection Board in 1924 for the selection of government officials and encouraged all the communities to share the administrative powers. In 1929, the Government of British India adopted the pattern and established the Public Service Commission.
- The Justice Party further concentrated on reforms in religious institutions. Tamil Nadu has a large number of temples and these commanded huge resources. In general, the resources were monopolised and exploited by the dominant caste in the society and led to mismanagement of public resources. The Justice Party introduced the Hindu Religious Endowment (HRE) Act in 1926 and enabled any individual, irrespective of their caste affiliation, to become a member of the temple committee and govern the resources of the religious institutions.

Self-Respect Movement (Suyamariyathai Iyakkam)

- The Self-Respect movement, while critiquing the then prevailing social, political and economic relations, introduced a programme of non-Brahmin uplift in Tamil Nadu. The movement was concerned with the marginalised sections of the society and criticised Brahminism and the cultural hegemony of the Brahmin. It advocated a casteless society devoid of rituals and differences based on birth. The movement declared rationality and self-respect as the birthright of all human beings and held these as more important than self-rule. The movement declared illiteracy as a source for women's subordination and promoted compulsory elementary education for all. It campaigned for the empowerment of women and questioned the superstitious beliefs in the society.
- The movement demanded women's emancipation, deplored superstitions, and emphasised rationality. The movement also advocated self-respect marriage. Race was central to self-respect concept, which argued that the non-Brahmin Dravidian people had been systematically subjugated by Aryan- Brahmins over the course of their long history.
- The Self-Respect Movement championed not only the cause of the non-Brahmin Hindus, but also that of the Muslims. The Self-Respect Movement extolled the lofty principles of Islam such as equality and brotherhood. They exhorted the Muslims to admit into their fold the depressed sections of the Hindu society, in order that they might enjoy the equality and brotherhood of Islam. Muslim elite considered the Tamil Muslims as Dravidians. Yet Periyar did not hesitate to attack certain customs like wearing of purdah by Muslim women. He wanted the Dravidian Muslims to follow Mustapha Kemal Pasha of Turkey and Amanullah of Afghanistan who initiated reforms in Islamic society.