CHAPTER - 7
CHAPTER 7
Conclusions

Tamil Nadu social structure has been studied by number of social scientists including sociologists. They have also studied peasantry, and various socio-political movements. But very few studies have focussed exclusively on the frequent occurrence of caste conflicts in Tamil Nadu. In the existing literature, perspectives and conceptual understanding pertaining to the social stratification, conflict, assertion etc., have been dealt extensively in this study. The present study, an attempt has been made to analyse the forms and dynamic nature of the caste conflicts between the Dalits and the caste Hindus (the Backward Castes) in Tamil Nadu. This study is modest attempt to fill the gap between the micro and macro-studies on social relations of caste Hindus and Dalits in terms of caste tension and conflicts.

The recent dynamics of caste conflicts between the Dalits and caste Hindus in the southern, western and northern districts of Tamil Nadu are sure signs of transition of society towards a new equilibrium between two caste groups in the state. Signaling the transition, the very intensity of social tension, and violence as well as its character in appealing to the masses beyond geographical boundaries have made a significant transformation in southern parts Tamil Nadu in particular and Tamil Nadu in general in recent years. The roots of the Dalit struggle for equality and liberation can be traced to caste oppression in Tamil Nadu as elsewhere in the country. The impact of socio-economic and political change as well as social mobilization began in the nineteenth century under the British rule. This fundamentally affected the structural equilibrium of the traditional Tamil society with the gradual loosening of the vertical relations of social and economic dependence of the village social structure. The new polarisation of castes has projected itself from the village to the wider social and political arena.

The caste structure in Tamil Nadu has been divided into three broad categories namely the Brahmins, the non-Brahmins and the Adi-Dravidas or Dalits by number of social scientists. A general outlook tells us that the villages have segregated residential areas, maintaining physical distance between the higher caste Hindus and the Dalits. It has been argued by the sociologists that Brahmins live in
houses called 'Agraharam' built with brick and tiles, in comparatively better areas. The Non-Brahmins including Dalits are excluded from these areas or localities. The Non-Brahmins live in separate localities, and 'Cheri' is the name given to the streets of Adi-Dravidas. The Adi-Dravidas or Dalits are described as the third strata and are broadly divided into three categories\(^1\) namely Pallars (field labourers), Paraiyars (drum players) and Chakkuliyars (leather workers). As for the distribution of these groups, in Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Virudhunagar and Tirunelveli, the three southern districts of Tamil Nadu, the Pallars account for a higher percentage of population among the Scheduled Castes. In South Arcot, North Arcot, Chengalpet and Salem, the Paraiyars are in a majority. However in Coimbatore, Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri, Attur and certain pockets of Madras district Chakkuliars dominate.

A profile of the Dalits of Tamil Nadu in general and a background of the Dalits in selected villages of the universe of the study in Tamil Nadu in particular has been given in the Chapter 2 of this study. With reference to the study the Dalits living in the districts of Virudhunagar and Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu are very important, as they are associated with the long history of caste conflicts in the region. The selected villages for the present study such as Mangapuram (Rajapalayam Taluk) and Urvudaiyan Kudiruppu (Tirunelveli Taluk) come under these districts. In order to understand the social and economic aspirations, and upward mobility of the Dalits, we have examined the contribution made by the government programmes and policies and other external agencies in the process of modernization of Tamil Nadu society. It was found in the study that for the last few decades, the Dalits in the region have made their inroads into the different spheres of both public and private organizations. Their early exposure to the processes of modernisation had brought about tremendous change in the socio-economic and political matrix of the Dalits.

Indeed their access to higher education, health services, public and private sector opportunities of employment, communication and transportation, industrialization, rapid urbanization, and other natural resources etc., has ameliorated their socio-economic condition. This process has brought Dalits partially in mainstream of the political sphere. Apart from these aspects, the

government's programmes and policies in Tamil Nadu in general and in these two districts in particular did help to improve the socio-economic conditions of Dalits. Though there are lots of gaps in the implementation of the government polices and their formulations for Dalits in the state. However relative socio-economic betterment and political consciousness among Dalits have made them independent to a greater extent and they do not rely upon the caste Hindus as they used to do say 30 to 40 years back. This, upward mobility of the Dalits and their independence has made the caste Hindus intolerant which resulted in caste conflicts quiet evident in the country side in the state, which has been recorded in the present study.

The study also discusses the socio-historical perspective of the various factors responsible for the emergence of caste conflicts in Tamil Nadu. On the basis of secondary sources an attempt has been made in this study to analyse the political mobilization of several non-Brahmins against Brahmin's monopoly in socio-economic and political spheres. The work also probes into the emergence of non-Brahmin in the aforesaid spheres and the consequent attacks on Dalits by the caste Hindus in Tamil Nadu.

The work has discussed the Dalit assertion during British era. We have found that the Dalits assertion begun in the form of the collective expressions of Dalits depicted through journals and newspapers. Few of the most important journals were Suryodayam (1869), Panchama (1871), Sugir Tavasani (1877), Dravida Pandyan (1885), Andror Mitran (1886), Mahavikata Tuthan (1888), Parayan (1893), Tamil Penn (1916), etc. These Journals and newspapers captured the current social reality to reshape their own ideology the Dalit assertion was also through the independent organization formed way back in the last decade of twentieth century. For instance, the Dravida Mahajan Sabha was formed in 1891; the Parayar Mahasabha of R. Srinivasan in 1892 and Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha came up soon after that. In 1898, the Sakya Buddhist Society was formed under the inspiration and guidance of Pandit Iyothee Thass. Iyothee Thas<., a Paraiyar, by caste, besides being a reputed doctor, devoted his time to the study of Christianity, Jainism and Buddhism. In 1891, he along with his followers revived Buddhism in India. Inspired by Col. Olcott, Madam Blavatsky and Ven Anagarika Dharampala, he began his missionary work under the auspices of the 'South Indian Sakya

Buddhist Association. The data reveals that he was instrumental in establishing a branch of the Sakya Buddhist association at Marikuppam in 1907 and another at Champion Reef Mine, Kolar Gold Field (now in Karnataka) in 1914. According to Thass, that the Dalits were originally Buddhists, as Ambedkar had hypothesised later, and their salvation lay in Buddhism. He set up schools in Madras Presidency for the depressed classes children. In order to create social awakening, he started a weekly newspaper, 'Tamizhan' in 1907, which extensively reported and discussed the incidents of atrocities on the Dalits, politics of the Indian National congress and other social issues. Further, the 'Swadeshi reforms' as has been termed in the 'Orupaisa Tamizhan', a weekly started by Iyothee Thass in the heyday of the Swadeshi radicalism in Madras Presidency, interrogated the politics of Brahmanism or casteism and the brahmanical terror of nationalism. Thus, for Iyothee Thass, the ultimate truth lay in the fact that liberty could be possible only when differences based on caste and classes disappeared. The development of the Buddhist ideology was the contribution of Pandit Iyothee Thass and his early colleagues. After the demise of the Iyothee Tass the second phase of collaboration with the Dalits and caste Hindus coincided with the leadership of G. Appaduraiyar, and the second generation of Buddhist activities. But, with the decline of Buddhism as a religious movement, the mobilized Dalit masses became the foot soldiers of the Dravidian Movement under the leadership of Periyar E.V. Ramasamy. Apart from Iyothee Thass, other leaders who contributed immensely to arouse the Dalit consciousness during this period was M.C. Raja who was one of the active organizers who contributed to the upliftment of Depressed Classes. He was the secretary of the state level "Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha" in 1916. He was the profounder of free and compulsory education to the depressed classes. In his opinion, British rule in India was responsible for as liberating Indian lower classes. He supported Dr. Ambedkar in favour of the separate electorates, the Poona pact for the joint electorate and the reserved seats for the depressed classes or the Scheduled Castes. As mentioned earlier, R. Srinivasan, yet another prominent Dalit leader of this period, founded the 'Adi-Dravida Mahajansabha' in 1891 with the intention of organizing his brethren. He started a magazine named 'Parayan' in 1893.

Because of his versatile talent, he was nominated as representative of the Depressed Classes to the Madras Legislative Council in 1923. During the Round Table Conferences held in London during 1930-31. He was the co-representative of
the Depressed Classes along with Dr. Ambedkar. Similarly, N.Shivaraj, a legal practitioner at the Madras High Court, started his political career as an active member of the Justice Party and was eventually elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1926. However, the ideology and programmes of the Justice party which were away from the Dalit uplift and development forced him to resign the party in 1928 and joined the Dalit Movement under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar. the Adi-Dravidas or Tamil Buddhists already advocated liberation of women and the Tamil nationalism. Later on, it was adopted and carried on under the banner of the non-Brahmin Movement. We found in the study that the first phase, the caste conflict was predominantly between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. The movement opposes the sanskritisatic and linguistic superiority of the Brahmins. Further the conflict developed also in the form of Justice party in 1916. now this movement was lead by the forward non-Brahmins, who were second only to the Brahmins in terms of socio-economic power and ritual status. The Justice party led the non-Brahmins to the identity of Dravidian/Tamilian. The party fought for the representation of non-Brahmins in administrative services and legislature in proportion to their numbers. It is important to note that in the earlier stage, the Brahmins had monopolized educational institutions, administration and politics. The efforts of the Justice party benefited only the forward non-Brahmins and alienated the other sections of the non-Brahmin entity. Though it was the first party to popularize the concept of "Tamil Identity" and its anti-Brahminical slogans, it refused to take any interest in broader social issues, such as caste system, untouchability, and the condition of Dalits. Thereby, it revealed its elitist character.

The decline of the Justice party was due to the disenchantment among various sections and factionalism within the party has been discussed. This led to the emergence of Self-Respect Movement under the leadership Periyar E.V.Ramasamy Naicker who aimed at giving non-Brahmins a sense of pride based on their Dravidian past, which also implied the denial of the superiority of the Brahmins.

The "Suya Mariyadai Iyakkam" (Self-Respect Movement) was founded by E.V. Ramasamy in 1925. For Self Respect Movement (SRM), the Tamil Nationalism had become a prime goal to sustain their hegemony against Brahminical domination. In contrast to earlier social reform movements and the establishment of the Justice party, the SRM identified the reasons for the social degradation of the different marginalised groups such as the backward non-Brahmins, Dalits and
women in Hinduism itself. The burning of 'Manusmriti', temple entry and outright atheism threatened the superiority of Brahmins. SRM's objective was to repudiate the claim of the inherent superiority of the Brahmins to all other people. In the later period, SRM transformed into the more Tamilised Dravida Kazhagam. Annadurai founded the DMK in 1949 due to ideological rift between E.V. Ramasamy and him. Though both were the offshoot of the Justice party, SRM and DK later talked about caste and class injustices in Tamil society and propagated that eradication of Brahminism as well as redistribution of material resources would solve the problem of socio-economic inequality in the Tamil society.

Even though egalitarianism in its economic sense was certainly an article of faith for E.V.R. and his self-respect movement, the Dravidian parties conveniently jettisoned this in many stages, beginning with its ascendancy to power. In other words, during its transition from being an instrument of social reform and social justice, the Dravidian parties sought to construct a Tamil identity and in doing so, the unequal land ownership pattern, which in essence involved the Dalits, was left out of the agenda. The contemporary Dalits' political consciousness and their identity formation, which was witnessed during the 1990s, had a tremendous change in the socio-economic and political history of Tamil society like any other part of India. The popularity of these dominant non-Brahmin castes and their Dravidian parties, however, declined in the 1990's. It is at this point that a new wave of consciousness has pervaded the entire Dalit castes in the state with a sense of identity and assertion. This has also left a dramatic impact on the political scenario in Tamil Nadu. The Dalits who until the 1980s were scattered under different political parties have made a step forward in refusing to be simply identified as vote banks as controlled by others earlier. The polarisation of the Dravidian parties have led to the emergence of various Dalit socio-political movements i.e. The Ambedkar People's Liberation Front, which later became the Puratchi Bharatham led by Mr. Moorthy (late) now led by Jagan the Ambedkar People's Federation led by Balasundaram, the Republican Party of India (RPI), the Dalit Sena led by Chandrakesan, Adhi-Thanizhar Peravai led by Adhiyaman, the Dalit Panthers of India (DPI) led by Mr. Thirumavalavan and the Pudhiya Tamizhagam led by Dr. Krishnaswamy has been discussed. Some of these parties are concentrated in the northern and western parts whereas others in the southern parts of the state. But the two political parties Pudhiya Tamizhagam and Dalit Panthers of India (DPI) have
made significant contributions in mobilizing Dalits and creating to protesting the contemporary Tamil Nadu politics.

We have found that the Devendra Kula Vellalar Federation (DKVF) established in 1995. As a social movement, it has made Dalits conscious to fight against the atrocities inflicted on the Dalits by the caste Hindus. The study reveals that Dalits in southern part of Tamil Nadu had to face lots of caste conflicts in which they have to bear the onslaught of weapons and arms. Their houses were burned, they were beaten up and many of them were killed, their self-respect and their women’s self respect were questioned by the Thevar or Maravar caste. Hence a respondent argued that the aim of the movement was not mere awakening but also to retaliate. Historically, the Pallars (Dalits) of southern parts of Tamil Nadu have taken part in struggle against the state and their caste Hindu counterparts since Immanuel Shekaran (assertive leader of Pallar community), who was inhumanly killed by Thevars in 1957, for his assertive comment against caste Hindus domination. Moreover, the DKVF Movement became a full fledged political party called as Pudhiya Tamizhagam meaning ‘New Tamil Nadu’. Krishnaswamy, the leader of PT argues that the political agenda of Pudhiya Tamizhagam, is to bring equality among caste and to form a new social order, in which there is no of exploitation. Further, he asserted that the social and economic emancipation of Dalits is possible only through capturing political power by the Dalits themselves. We have found during our collection of data that the shift from a social movement to a political party has brought doom to number of powerful social movement in the state. It is true that the Dalit leadership of Tamil Nadu specifically PT had taken a leaf from Bahujan Samaj Party working in Uttar Pradesh. In the words of Krishnaswamy, the PT’s president, “people who do not have political power cannot control the economy. We have chosen the political platform to come to power because caste oppressors blocked most of the welfare measures. Even after fifty years of freedom, they have to starve. They are homeless. So, if you want to obliterate this, you have to seize political power. We have to rule this country. So our people were mobilized not to vote for the parties who are already exploiting us; we will have our own power, our own political party...we want to enter into politics and speak in the Assembly about all the crimes committed on these Dalit people.”

3 An interview with Dr. Krishnaswamy in Dalit International Newsletter, February 1999, p.6.
is important to note that the *Pudhiya Thmizhagam* (PT) talked of social justice to satisfy the needs of all communities. It is interesting to note the PT has specifically appeals to Parayars, Chakkuliars, Muslims, Christians, fishermen and other minority sections.

We have also analysed the role of Dalit Panther of India another political party leaded and dominated by Dalits in the state in identity formation and construction of independent consciousness among the Dalits. DPI was established in Tamil Nadu, influenced by Maharashtra’s Dalits Panthers of India, in the post 1970’s, by advocate Malaisamy of Pallar caste in Madurai. Both Thirumalavan and Kalayanasundaram were also part of that movement. Later on, the Dalit Panthers of India (DPI) was renamed in Tamil as ‘Vidudali Siruthaigal’ meaning ‘Liberation Panthers’ and exclusively led by Thol. Thirummaavalavan, a Paraiyar by caste now leads DPI under his leadership the party concentrated on the women's rights, land issues, labour disputes and other discriminatory issues having a non-political dimension. Like P.T., the Dalit Panthers’ activists visit the “atrocity” sites, organize marches and rallies, and raise slogans of direct militant action against the caste Hindu aggressors to mobilize Dalits. Moreover, the movement has a revolutionary character denouncing parliamentary democracy and in the 1991 elections it came up with a slogan in Tamil, ‘Ungalil yarum yokiyannillai, engalin vottu ungalukkillai’ (from you nobody is honest, our votes are not for you). The party demanded its supporters to go to the polling booth and drop the pamphlet carrying this message. It has been revealed by the respondent that since the mid-1990s, the movement has helped to promote a new Dalit political leadership in Tamil Nadu, unaligned to mainstream political parties. The DPI has also just followed the strategy of BSP and it started witnessing its consolidation after it switched over from social movement to political movement, by addressing the issues relating to the Dalits in Tamil Nadu.

Especially the Pudhiya Tamizhagam (PT) and Dalit Panthers of India (DPI) have created self-awareness, a sense of self-respect and newfound confidence among the Dalits. The protest move waged by the Dalits has played a crucial role in mobilizing the people and developing confidence in them. Disillusioned with the Dravidian parties, both PT and DPI contested along with TMC in 1999. In 2004, they themselves formed ‘Third Front’ without allaying with any Dravidian Parties, thereby they showed their strength to build up their political base in Tamil Nadu in the coming years. Considering the Dalit consciousness and their identity formation...
having significance in Tamil Nadu and particularly in the selected villages in southern Tamil Nadu. Besides the role of Dalit parties in activating the Dalit masses to mobilize and organise themselves against the caste Hindus, there has also been the contribution of the constitutional provisions such as reservation policies, welfare programs and other legal provisions in creating consciousness among the Dalits. However, the fact remains that even with the implementation of the state's "positive discrimination policy," little has changed for the historically marginalised Dalits in the state. Legal provisions such as Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, establishment of special courts for the protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 and the special machinery it entailed to create, have only been a dream for the Dalits owing to its failure of implementation.

In Tamil Nadu, it is found that the incidents of caste-based conflict are on the vise. We have found that the number of atrocities committed on the Dalits by caste Hindus were as high as 750 per year which includes serious offences such as murders, rape and arsons. Although cases filed under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act registered show a slight decline in 1998 compared to the previous year, the number of atrocity-prone States remained relatively high.

The process has empowered Dalits to assert which in term has created caste conflicts with the traditionally dominant caste Hindus. The chapter has recorded how caste conflict in different villages and areas between Dalits and caste Hindus has positively affected the solidarity and consciousness among both the Dalits and caste Hindus. Further, it is true that Dalits get unsettled and loose their property in caste conflict yet they are ready to assert and not ready to take things lying any where. In the same vein chapter also records the emerging autonomous leadership among Dalits because of the caste conflicts. This leadership has broken the monopoly of the Dravida Parties and Congress on the Dalit votes, which has caused them worries. In the process of recording the consequences of caste conflicts the respondents of the universe have exposed the ineffectiveness of each institutions in taking care if their rights and in turn proved the point that they all are yet very far from the Dalits otherwise Dalits would have never expressed mistrust in the democratic and constitutional institution. Similarly, the caste conflicts have changed the residential pattern of the Dalits specifically after the caste conflict with the compensation Dalits have constructed pacca houses in place of their houses in the
slum. Last but not the least, a significant change in the religious life, which occurred in these villages is that the Dalits have got little access to village temple, which was not present before caste conflict. The outbreak of atrocities has two major reasons. First, the socio-economic, political and educational deprivation of Dalits, which forces them to depend on caste Hindus for their day-to-day survival. This gives legitimacy to caste Hindus to exploit Dalits. Being dependent solely on the caste Hindus for survival, Dalits have no other way than to bear the exploitation in terms of atrocities. Second is the rising consciousness among Dalits about their rights. The legal and welfare provisions implemented by the state have somehow helped to raise the socio-economic conditions of the Dalits to an extent. This led to an increase of consciousness and aspirations among them.

Through the findings, it is found that nearly half of the population in both the villages have their own caste identity, i.e. to say that they are having an identity of \textit{pallar} or \textit{Devendrakula Velalar}. However village II revealed that formation of social identity of caste and also class is higher than in Village I. In addition as regard, the elements like culture and political identity, they are very much meager in both the villages. Therefore, responses of both the villages revealed the fact that the caste and class factors influences the social identity.

The phenomenological construction of social identity has been correlated with the educational status of Dalits in the sample area. Majority of the respondents of the villages I & II were under the category of having an education below 10 class, identified themselves as Devendrakula Velalar. At the same time, Dalits were not interested to call them as Pallars as it was an imposed caste name by the caste Hindus. In this respect, educated Dalits were denied the attributes of this imposed identity than illiterates of the same group. The relation between political mobilization and higher education was closely related while analyzing the data. Hence, most of the Dalits started asserting for their proclaimed identity called Devendra Kula Velalar than the imposed identity. The study reveals that the resistance of Dalits against the caste Hindus is more among the youths than the older people. Maximum respondents accepted that Dalits' struggle against caste Hindus became so powerful under the leadership of many Dalit leaders like Emmanuel Sekaran, Krishnaswamy, John Pandian, and Pasupathi Pandian. Above all, educational, economic and political mobilization among Dalits and also reservation policies paved the way for Dalit unity and assertion. In addition, marginalisation has
also led to the formation of social identity. In the Village II, this factor played major role in identity formation than the Village I. The responses reveal that unlike in the previous years, Dalits were very much assertive against all kinds of discrimination and exploitation. Regardless of educational background of the Dalit respondents, the way in which they expressed their assertiveness can be seen as the burning example of the prevailing social condition and exploitation by the caste Hindus.

The responses in both the villages show that, during conflictual situation, the nature of the solidarity (fusion) of the Dalit community is higher than normal conditions. It is so because, sense of belongingness goes up in the crisis situation in which unites the Dalits though there remains the intra- rivalry among them. It is also found that education, economic independence, political mobilization, protective discriminative policies and assertive leadership are the main reasons for the basis of their solidarity. Of them, respondents of the Village II do favour with the aforesaid reason as responsible for social solidarity than the village I. A small section of the population of both the villages explore that it is precisely because of the same kind of social, economic, political and psychological deprivation faced by them for several years, which made them to be in oneness or consciousness of kind with regard to not only conflictual situation during the time. Therefore we may conclude that, as above said reasons are the basis and dimensions of the solidarity (fusion) existing among the Dalits during the conflict situation from latent form to manifest form.

As far as economic issues are concerned, with regard to the dynamics of existing social relationship and conflicts, the researcher has found that the existence of traditional economic system is not that much prevalent in the selected villages like Mangapuram and Urvudaiyan Kudiruppu. Maximum of respondents belong to the Village I than Village II agreed that the contractual and demand basis of the economic relationship is existing between caste Hindus and Dalits, due to the fact that the changing socio-economic process like industrialisation, modernisation, urbanization, migration etc. have made the Dalits not to depend upon the particular caste Hindus for their labour, especially Thevars. Indeed, a limited number of respondents belong to both the villages have informed that the poor Dalits are still depending upon the caste Hindus for their survival. Thus, we can observe that the contractual and demand basis of the economic relationship exists between the Dalits and caste Hindus unlike the tradition of jajmani system. Indeed, it is precisely
because of the changing nature of the socio-economic structure of the village through the internal and external factors as mentioned above. In addition, respondents of both the villages have expressed that the Dalit loyalty with caste Hindus in their working relationship is not as usual.

It is also noted that in the Village II, the caste Hindus less frequently protest against the changes in the traditional occupations of Dalits. Where as in the Village I, Dalits have been targeted whenever they try to change their traditional occupation. It is interesting to note here that the attitude of caste Hindus regarding the occupational changes of Dalits, the caste Hindus revealed that Dalits especially the educated mass refused to engage in their traditional occupation. Moreover, in the Village I, caste Hindus reveal that it is the young people belonging to the Dalit community who stand in forefront in refusing of doing the traditional occupation than in the village II. The same is the result of the Dalit respondents. Caste Hindus reveal that domination of the caste Hindus have been reducing gradually. However caste Hindus argue that though the form of domination has changed through the developmental policies of the state, freedom of expression and courage are still lacking among the Dalits. Majority of the caste Hindus opine that comparatively less number of developmental activities are carried out in caste Hindu dominated areas.

As far as political issues are concerned, the responses show that the caste Hindu organizations play a bigger role in safeguarding the interests of their respective social groups than of the Dalit organizations. The social organizations play their part in all the social activities, which include the village temple festivals, family disputes, conducting marriage functions, providing support during caste riots, and in assisting in developmental activities. The caste Hindu organizations play a more prominent role especially, during caste riots, which is evident through the responses from the people interviewed in both the villages.

Dalit respondents belonging to Village-I and II respectively have more or less expressed their opinion favourably on changing the role of caste organization into political activities for the upliftment of the Dalits. Respondents belonging to the Village-II favourably agree those in the Village I that about the Dalit leaders have self-confidence to form their own government. Here, Village-II Dalit respondents are having higher opinion in favour of above-said view than Village-I. Therefore, the majority of the Dalit respondents belonging to the Village II and I have an optimistic opinion on Dalit leaders in having the confidence to form government. As
far as Tamil Nadu is concerned since 1990, Dalit political movements are really playing vital roles with regard to Dalit issues either about atrocities or conflictual situations or developmental issues. Hence, the consolidation of different Dalit political movements have started coming together irrespective of their sub-caste differences to show their solidarity for Dalit upliftment. Thus we can predict that these Dalit political parties may capture political power like BSP in Uttar Pradesh.

In case of Dalit independent political organisation for socio-economic and political development, both villages have responded that emergence of consciousness and identity formation have resulted in today’s independent Dalit political parties for socio-economic and political equality. Another view expresses that both the villages of Dalits respondents have regretted the deceiving nature of Dravidian political parties which led to the formation of independent Dalit political parties. Moreover, it is important to mention that the post-1990s caste conflicts and atrocities against Dalits have induced them to start their own political movements; it is precisely because of the unresolved methods of mechanism adopted by the Dravidian political parties. In addition, political legitimate marginality has become one of important issues for the emergence of Dalits political movement in contemporary society. That is the Dalit representatives are unable to express the grievances of the Dalits and they have become puppets in the hands of caste Hindus political parties, which resulted in political marginalization of Dalits for several years. Thus, the upward mobility of the Dalits on one hand and their marginalization on other has led to increase of atrocities and ultimately resulted in the emergence of political mobilization, which was quite evident as mentioned in the previous chapters. Hence the emergence of contemporary Dalit political independent movements is the offshoot of the movements that had been initiated by the Dalit leaders during the end of the nineteenth century.

In another case, caste Hindu responses on the politicization of caste and its impact on development of their community give an interesting note when we compare with the Dalits who are having their own political party. In spite of fact that the caste Hindus respondents are having their own caste organization, they are in favour of AIADMK because of the several reasons. In addition, during conflictual situations, this party has helped the caste Hindus by preventing the police, in taking the legal action against them and given them legal protections, which made them to be very faithful to that organization. Even some of the respondents say that
AIADMK is their caste organization. Hence, they are brave enough to attack Dalits easily for the small issues, which arise either within the village or outside the village, which lead to social tensions and social conflicts. Majority of Dalits respondents belonging to the Village I agree that the power structure determines the inter caste relationship either directly or indirectly. Even in dynamic nature of alterations in the village social structure, its indication still directly or indirectly exists between Dalits and caste Hindus. Another reason like power structure of the village determines the inter caste relationship which is still functioning due to fact that caste Hindus are economically and politically strong and more influential than the Dalits. A few among them agree that it has completely abandoned.

With regard to the education and existence of Pachayati Raj institution, the Dalits in the Village I respond favourably than II that changes are not much visible through the introduction of Panchayati Raj system. Where as the caste Hindus however believe that the institution has a positive role. Some agreed that the traditional domination has been replaced with the developmental projects under Panchayat Raj system. Despite the changes in the social structure, there is still a feeling of social differences existing between caste Hindus and Dalits. Respondents belonging to both the villages of caste Hindus and Dalits agree with the fact that there is still a feeling of superiority and inferiority complexes in their attitude, which exist among all the caste groups in the selected villages of Tamil Nadu. Respondents belong to both the villages, the Village I Dalit respondents responses are higher than Village II Dalit respondents. Where as caste Hindus responses are more or less same in both the villages.

The caste-based inter personal relationship with regard to caste practices and differences exist between Dalits and caste Hindus. The respondents belonging to both less number of caste Hindu and more number of Dalits have accepted that even same occupational division of labour could not create the sense of belongingness because they come from different caste groups. For instance, this above-mentioned view has been highly accepted by Village II caste Hindus and Dalits than Village I caste Hindus.

Finally, out of 18.6% and 10.4% of Dalits and caste Hindu respondents belonging to both the villages have revealed that even in the dynamic nature of societal changes, the caste-based identity formation still exists among all the caste groups either inside or outside the village social structure. Here, Dalit and caste
Hindus respondents belonging to Village I have accepted the existing reality higher in number than in Village II.

Therefore, despite socio-economic and political alteration through the endogenous and exogenous factors, the caste Hindus continue to have feelings of superior and inferior tendency. Whereas in the case of Dalits, the younger generation are free from the notion of the above-mentioned prejudice. They assert continuously against any threat or atrocity inflicted by the caste Hindus.

One there has been total domination and monopolization of caste Hindus in the realm of politics, economy and society. The Dalits are highly dependent on the caste Hindus. Because the caste Hindus have been traditionally dominant and they do not like the Dalit assertion, which is emerging because of democratic process.

The second pattern which emerges from the study of the conflict in the two sample villages is that police and general administration have failed to protect life and property of the Dalits. Secondly it was narrated by the villages from the Dalit community that the police has always sided with the caste Hindus. This allegation of the Dalits was recorded by other than Supreme Court of India, when it reprimanded the Tamil Nadu police for siding with caste Hindus. Moreover the fact that the police side with the caste Hindus can be substantiated by the incidences of non registration of atrocity cases on the Dalits. The cases are registered by the police only after an external pressure is applied. Even if the cases are registered then investigation takes time or it is not done at all. Hence the culprit goes free which victim suffers.

The third pattern which has emerged from the caste conflict in the two villages of the study and substantiated by the other examples of village is that after each conflict most of the political parties pay their lip services. The ruling party does so by convincing some compensation for the victims. But the ironical part of this lip service is that the recommendation and guidelines of the constitutional bodies like National Commission for Human Rights and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Commission are never taken seriously and implemented, which undermines their authority. This brings also to fore the status of laws and legislations promulgated to curb the atrocities-like anti-atrocity Act 1989, PCR Act 1955 etc. Lack of stringent implementation of laws have rendered all of them ineffective.

The fourth pattern which can be deduced from the existing pattern of number of atrocity cases emerging out of caste conflict is delay in justice to the aggrieved party. Apart from the delay by the police in investigation, there are no proper
arrangement of special court and layer for dispensing justice to the aggrieved party. Though, there is a special provision for the same in the atrocities Act 1969.

In case of the response from the Government's favour and failure is the responsible for upward mobility and marginality bound to raise social tension and conflict between Dalits and caste Hindus. As far as denial of justice is concerned, half of the respondents belonging to Dalit from both villages opine that the accused involved in the crimes against Dalits, never get punished. Some of the Dalit respondents say that it is because of the negligence of government officials on pretext of investigation crime against Dalits are not taken seriously. For instance, the police official or PCR Unit show insincerity to implement PCR Act with regard to complaints given by the Dalit victims. The least number of Dalit respondent commented that government does not properly implement programmes and policies, which are meant for Dalits. Therefore, we can conclude that casteism is still prevalent among government officials with regard to distribution of social justice.

Another dynamics of social relation is that the caste Hindu respondents belonging to both villages reveals that the earlier generation of the caste Hindus used to abuse Dalits for simple mistakes. Apart from all the reasons, there is another important Act called PCR (Prevention of Civil Rights Act) and POA (Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989) becoming a great threat to the caste Hindus out of 13.9% of respondents belonging to the total sample, only Village I fears of this act. Thus to conclude that government policies and programmes, protection measures and other informal socio economic process not only give upward mobility to the Dalits but give a sense of security against the caste Hindu domination.

Finally, the government and civil society have tried their best to annihilate the differences and prejudices existing between the caste Hindus and Dalits. Respondents from the Village I comment favour only on the work done by the government and civil society during conflictual situation than Village II because in the former Dalits are more affected than Village II. In addition few Dalits respondent have negatively commented against the government failure to address issues related to the atrocities inflicted against Dalits by the caste Hindus and unable to find out the root cause of the caste discrimination. Moreover, the Dalits are not happy with government offices either by the Minister Centre or judiciary or district executives, who are unable to resolve existing differences between Dalits and caste Hindus due to politicization of caste which is very much prevalent in the village.
social structure. They investigate lackadaisically regarding atrocities inflicted against Dalits by the caste Hindus and are unable to find out the root cause of the caste discrimination. Especially, all forms of social discrimination during social conflicts and aftermath of conflicts women are the most affected people as far as Village I is concerned. Here the government's role in the redressal of Dalit grievances and its failures is responsible. On the one hand, the government policies and programme have ameliorated the Dalits not only economically but also politically ultimately resultant into upward mobility of the Dalits. On the other hand, the government failure to implement as aforesaid policies and programmes is the result of the marginality of the Dalits. In many cases of incidences of social conflicts, the government has tried and appointed the commissions with regard to atrocities and caste conflicts, they were unable to succeed precisely because of insincerity towards the Dalits has shown clearly as shown in the past history of social conflicts in Tamil Nadu.

Moreover, the responses from the mainstream political parties and Dalit parties, non-governmental organization like Human Rights Watch Group, PUCL, rescuer and defender of Human rights are involved in the social conflictual crisis. To conclude, it may be said that the essence of the caste class oppression as a characteristic of atrocity in society is hidden behind the caste inequality, which, in turn, is sanctified by Hindu religious social order. Therefore, the general analysis of the incidents reveals that social hierarchy, economic structure and political power are correlated. The caste inequality must be fought at the grassroots level in the villages. The caste-class unity and sharing of power must be brought about. It can therefore be concluded that the relative socio-economic and political deprivation of the Dalits over the ages resulting in the state's protective discriminative policy has been a contributing factor in the awakening of consciousness. The Dalits who in yesteryears were tuned to the whims and wishes of the upper caste, have taken the effort to challenge them to bring about a new social order. This has triggered the resentment of the caste Hindus, intent on maintaining their caste superiority, resulting in the atrocities committed on the Dalits due to the latter's violation of the caste norms. Simultaneously, the emerging Dalit political consciousness and mobilisation of Dalits under a Dalit political party have had retribution effect on the politics of the parties. This has further instigated the fury of the caste Hindus resulting in frequent caste conflicts. Thus, the upward mobility of the Dalits on the
one hand and the State sponsored constitutional safeguards and the relative socio
economic and political deprivation of the Dalits on the other hand, the resentment of
the caste Hindus led to a complex series of atrocities and caste conflicts. While
comparing both Village I and II, the former is the most affected than the later,
because Village II economically and educationally shows different form of assertion
and resistance against caste Hindus, which gives an inference of upward mobility
and marginality which ultimately leads social tension, social conflicts not only in
India and Tamil Nadu but also selected villages of Tamil Nadu.

The selected villages like Mangapuram (Virudhunagar district) and
Voorvudaiyan Kudiruppu (Tirunelveli district) give ample evidences about their
formation of identity, consciousness and mobilization against the practices of
discrimination. In one perspective, we can see the tally of deaths and loss of
property is also marked by an important shift. In the past, the victims of caste
conflicts were mostly the Dalits, but things have changed due to high level Dalit
assertion, identity formation and retaliation against the caste Hindus, which is quiet
evident from the recent social reality. In particular, the Pallar or Devendra Kula
Vellalar in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu, who had all along been silent
victims of atrocities perpetrated by section of people from the predominant caste
Hindus like especially Thevar, were no more prepared to be at the receiving end,
became clear then they hit back with a vengeance in several areas. The backlash
soon spread to other villages and regions of the Tamil Nadu. For instance, the
following villages of southern parts of Tamil Nadu witnessed caste riots for small
spark in one or other reasons. The villages like Malavalu in Madurai district,
Magapuram Muhavoor, (Rajapalayam Taluk, Virudhunagar district), Thachanallur,
Voorvudaiyanpuram (Tirunelveli district), Kodiyan Kulam (Tuticorin district),
Sivakasi, Paramakudi (Ramanathpuram district) etc.

Indeed, to say that this new resurgence and uprising of the Dalit
consciousness and formation of self-substantiating identity is viewed as a social
struggle to liberate themselves from the slavery imposed on them over a period of
thousands of years. The recent social tensions and social conflict are only symptoms
of social transition, which can transform Dalits from slavery to bravery. Another
interesting thing about social dynamics is that wherever the Dalits are numerically in
balance with other castes and educationally sound, economically independent from
other castes and Dalits are not working as agricultural labourer, want to assert their
identity by shaking away the shackles imposed on them. It is not only the upward mobility of the Dalits which shows their resistance towards the caste Hindus but also the marginalized Dalits are also started asserting for their rights, due to prevalence of the Dalit movements. The analysis below may give some idea about the existence of caste conflict in contemporary Indian society.

The theory of social conflicts by different sociological thinkers is relevant for us to understand the caste conflicts between the Dalits and caste Hindus. But it may not be sufficient to apply these theories and perspectives in the context of social stratification system of India. Moreover, the concepts like relative deprivation and reference group; social mobility and social conflict have contributed to understand caste consciousness, social mobility and the caste conflicts in Indian social structure. As the study recorded the upward mobility of Dalits in terms of socio-economic and political realm and marginality of the Dalits succumb to the phenomenally increased atrocities and resistance resulting into dynamics of caste conflicts in the studied villages in particular and Tamil Nadu in general. Despite the presence of both the aforesaid process of mobility, the Dalits are relatively deprived in a degree of variations. In addition, the discontent caused by the objectivity as well as subjectively felt relative deprivation in the socio-economic and political spheres of life of individuals or community ultimately resulted into the emergence of social conflicts is applicable in the case of Dalits and caste Hindus. At the same time, the pronounced attitudinal changes that can be brought by change in relative positions of social groups have been shown to be a potent source of revolutionary change. Here, the contemporary Dalit political movements help Dalits to realize their marginalized conditions in the socio-economic and political spheres and thereby resisting the caste Hindus domination, resulting into dynamics of caste conflicts in rural Tamil Nadu.

With regard to social conflict and violence, Coser delineates about the relative deprivation with violence. For instance, the more deprivations of subordinates are transformed from absolute to relative, the greater will be their sense of injustice, and hence, the more likely are they to initiate conflict. But for Coser, the violence and conflicts provide the positive function of giving a sense of achievement and thus as a method for conflict resolution. This function of social conflicts may be functional for Dalits but may not be for caste Hindus, due to its ascribed nature of stratification not allowing the lower strata par with them, especially Dalits.