Women in Employment
CHAPTER - VII
WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT

In ancient days women enjoyed more rights and powers and did many duties. They were the bread-winners. At a later time, they were reduced to the status of mere reproductive organs and were controlled within the four walls of a house or a cottage. They gradually lost their powers of pre-eminence and employment. In Tamil Nadu, they seemed to have joined men and shared their burden of tending cattle, looking after grains and grainfields from wild animals and birds, in addition to taming animals, cultivating, seeding, transplanting, weeding out, watering the corns, harvesting, winnowing, or gathering roots, fruits, honey, bamboo rice. They also enjoyed the right to reading, writing and accounting (arithmatic), the three R’s. This is what we are able to gather from Tolkappiyam and other Sangam Classics. This liberal and secular social position of Tamil women underwent radical changes due to the impositions from outside. In the field of education, Gurukula pattern was the accepted form, not for girls, but for boys. They lived for a specific period of time under the supervision of guru and did him service or helped the guru’s wife. Education took the form of a private property of the high castes, while throwing the basic structure to illiteracy, ignorance and superstition. Women of the royal family were also taught the arts, but employed in statecraft. Sometimes, they took the reigns of the state like Chembian Mahadevi\textsuperscript{1121} and Kundava\textsuperscript{1122}. Mostly royal women were not even allowed to give their counsel in diplomatic or administrative matters. Education and employment were the privileges of the devadasis, the high caste Brahmin and high cadre Muslim families and the affluent Hindu households. Even if they were educated, they were not to be employed but they were exploited.

The social evils like female infanticide, child-marrige, dowry, widowhood and sati were prevalent and women lived a life of total surrender to the whims and fancies of their

\textsuperscript{1122} Ibid., p.653.
male members. If that was so, imagine, what would have been the education and employment opportunities of the larger majority of women. They were just housewives, meant to cook their food, look after the domesticated animals and share the beds with their husbands and procreate. That was all!

Knowing well that women were mostly denied of the right to education and employment, the Missionaries made good of this in their Missionary institutions in Tranquebar, Palayamkottai, Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli, Ambur and Serampore in Calcutta. These educated women were employed as teachers, nurses, at the start and then some of them were sent to European Countries to become Doctors, Social service workers, Professors, even as Judges in the long run. Mostly, women were employed as teachers, care-takers in the women hostels, preachers of the Gospel, etc. when the flood gates of education was open, the high caste women got the first opportunity to enjoy the benefits of women education by becoming example under the serf.

Earlier, women were not appointed to the Government jobs. Though they actively participated in the national struggle for freedom, they were disqualified for certain posts in government services. Periyar demanded employment and reservation for women in government posts and involved in propagation against sexual discrimination right from the inception of the Self-Respect Movement. Periyar said that women can do all sorts of jobs and services equally with men. Before doing this, they should remove their craze for jewels and costly ornamental dresses which are responsible for their subjugated, disgraceful and disrespectful life. Due to Periyar’s propagation on the importance of women’s education, their percentage of education has increased. The next step to their liberation and progress is to acquire lucrative jobs.

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Since women were discriminated to hold some government posts, the question was raised in the Madras Legislature gradually after 1941\textsuperscript{1124}. In the Madras Province, women were disqualified for appointment to the government services and for posts like ICS, Indian Police, Posts in the Men’s Branch of the Educational and Medical Services and certain other minor posts and other services for which women are obviously unsuitable under section 275 of the Government of India Act of 1935. In the Madras Legislative Council, where a male member observed that women were unfit for certain sensitive departments for the reason that they would not keep confidentiality and secrecy, Begum Amiruddin criticised it. But there was no statutory bar for the employment of women in all other services and posts. All posts in the Women’s Branch of the Medical and Educational Services were held by women\textsuperscript{1125}.

*Periyar* said that there should not be any discrimination on the basis of sex in the Government appointments. Regarding sexual discrimination in jobs, On 25 November 1950 there was a heated argument in the State Legislative Assembly about the recruitment of women in Government Services\textsuperscript{1126}. *Periyar’s* idea of equality and equal opportunity is enshrined in the Article 16 and 16 (2) of the new Constitution of India without any discrimination on the basis of caste, sex, race, creed and colour. Consequently, the jobs given to women and to which they were previously prohibited from appointment was relaxed- first in the field of Medical and Education and later in other fields also\textsuperscript{1127}.

**Indian Administrative Service**

Initially, women’s employment was confined only to the department of Teaching and Medical. Mrs.Begum Mir Amiruddin raised the question about the steps taken by the Government to remove the statutory bars for the appointment of women in certain posts, to which Minister responded that the Government of India has removed sex disqualification for

\textsuperscript{1125} G.O.No. 2271, Public (Service) Department, dt., 26.09.1945. Government of Madras.
\textsuperscript{1126} Madras Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Vol.VI, Madras, dt., 25.11.1950, p.875.
\textsuperscript{1127} Ibid.

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the appointment of the IAS & IPS post\textsuperscript{1128}. Only because of Periyar’s thought on equality of sexes, the Government of India has also re-examined the removal of statutory bar in some services like

- Clerks and typists including Steno-Typist in the Madras Judicial Ministerial Service (Outside the city of Madras).
- Inspectors to the Madras Factor Service (Men’s branch).
- Clerks & typists (including Steno-typists) in the Registration and Excise Department
- Clerks in the Revenue Deptartment including Board of Revenue (Land Revenue)\textsuperscript{1129}

**Women in Civil Services**

*Periyar* advised the parents to educate their daughters well and to impart them professional knowledge. Women must be sent to do profession and be trained to live independently even before their marriage\textsuperscript{1130}. Consequently, parents provided education and availed the schemes of Government and empowered their daughters to occupy jobs in various Civil Services. Therefore, some women had occupied higher posts in different departments in civil services. But, only a few women have worked in the Agricultural Department.

**Reservation**

Employment in government service is very important thing. It must be distributed in accordance with the proportion of every caste in the total population. Provided there was the minimum prescribed qualification, every post must be made available to the people in

\textsuperscript{1128} MLAD, Madras, 21 Aug 1948, Vol.XIV, pp.646-647.
\textsuperscript{1129} MLAD, 1949, Vol..XX. p.261.
proportion to their population\textsuperscript{1131}. \textit{Periyar} demanded the Government to reserve 50% of
government jobs for women who occupies equal proportion with men folk in the society\textsuperscript{1132}.

Since the Government was not following the Communal Government Order for the
recruitment of women to services; it led to the dominance of one particular community in all
the posts\textsuperscript{1133}. Therefore, reservation for women in employment was questioned by a member
in the Madras State Assembly in 1950. To which the Minister stated that 25% to 33\textfrac{1}{2}\% would
be reserved in the next recruitment. As the reservation was not executed till 1986, a question
was raised in the Assembly in 1986 during the AIADMK Ministry and a demand was made to
introduce at least 25% reservation to women in Government jobs because most of the women,
who were degree holders either remained idle at home, battered or deserted by their husbands
without any job opportunities\textsuperscript{1134}. Though the AIADMK government generated a lot of job
opportunities for marginalised women, it could not introduce reservation during its Ministry.
The growing demand for women in employment forced the DMK government to introduce
reservation in 1989 and the then Chief Minister M.Karunanithi said in his Budget Speech that

“Women can be emancipated from their subjection and awareness can be
created amongst them only if they are given opportunities and rights in the
social and economic sphere”.

“Recalling the resolution of the first Self-Respect Conference held in
Chengleput in 1929 under Thanthai \textit{Periyar} which called for equal employment
opportunities for men and women and for property rights for women, We have
issued orders receiving 30% of employment opportunities in Government
offices, Public Sector Corporation and local bodies for women. We have also
decided to appoint only women teachers in the first and second standards in
schools. Reservation in jobs was not enough by itself; in order to utilise it,

\textsuperscript{1131} \textit{Periyar} EVR, \textit{The Salvation to Shudra Slavery}, Dalit Sahitya Academy, Bangalore, 1986, p.16.
\textsuperscript{1132} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1133} MLAD, Vol.II, Madras, 17\textsuperscript{th} March 1950, pp.151-153.
\textsuperscript{1134} TNLAD, Vol..xxvi, Madras, 6 May 1986, pp.48-49.
educational opportunities need to be promoted. Accordingly, in accordance with
its election promise, free education would be provided upto the graduate level
for girls from poor and middle class families from the coming year1135.

So, to fulfill Periyar’s aim to provide 50% of reservation to women, the “DMK
Government took the initial step by issuing a G.O. to reserve 30% of the posts for women in
Government Departments, Government undertakings and also in local bodies. The usual
communal rotation should be followed in the appointments”. It is the significant landmark in
the history of women’s movement in Tamil Nadu towards empowerment as well as gender
equality1136.

**Women Teachers alone for Primary Schools**

Periyar stated that the employment in some departments should be exclusively
reserved for women. Women should be recruited in more numbers in ‘Teaching Profession’
which should be reserved for women upto high school standards1137.

Periyar was of the opinion that women were good teachers and recommended that
they would be more capable than men in handling primary sections. He also insisted on
employing women alone in primary schools. He passed a resolution in the Chengleput
Conference in 1929 to appoint women teachers in primary schools. This objective was also
achieved during the DMK rule by appointing women teachers to the first and second standard
classes in the school1138.

As a result, the female work participation rate had increased from 22.95% in 1971 to
32.41% in 1981 and to 34.41 % in 19911139. There was a **women’s wing** in the Regional
Employment Exchange to assist ex-service women in finding employment and giving them
suitable advice.

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1136 G.O.No. 89, Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department, dt., 17.2.1989.
1138 Thalaivar Kalaignar, Sathathai Sarithram (TI), Dravida Munnertra Kazhagam, 2001, p.360 and see also
The Tamil Nadu State Social Welfare Board implemented a project in 1987 for employing physically handicapped girls in preparing quality sweets and arranging to market them through Government undertakings, Co-operative Super Markets etc. The government was also examining proposals to start Aavin Parlours employing handicapped girls with the assistance of Voluntary Agencies. Besides, the poor working women in rural areas were supplied with free foot wear from the Child Welfare Centres.

Police Department

Periyar passed a resolution in the Third Provincial Self-Respect Conference held at Virudhunagar in 1931, suggesting the government to recruit women to the Police and Military Service apart from recruiting women to the profession of Doctor and Teacher.

But the demand for appointing women in the Police Department was raised in the Legislative Assembly only from 1949 onwards. Again, the matter was discussed in the State Assembly in 1950 after the introduction of Constitution which abolished all forms of discrimination and established equality in the society irrespective of caste, class, sex etc. When there was a discussion on physical fitness of women to police service, the then minister said that the Educational Department should take steps to improve the physique of men and women by encouraging them to participate in national sports. The Minister emphasized the idea of Periyar.

The first woman appointed in the Indian Police Service (IPS) was Mrs. Kiran Bedi in 1972. Since then women have joined the Indian Police Service and showed their talent and efficiency in governance on par with men. In this regard, the National Police Academy had made unique development in the history of police in India. To realize the dream of Periyar

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1141 Ibid., p.10.
resolution in the Third Provincial Self-Respect Conference held at Virudhunagar in 1931, the DMK Ministry established the First Women Police Service in Tamil Nadu in 1973\textsuperscript{1145}.

The recruitment of women police in the State of Tamilnadu has been carried out in three levels. Women Police Constables and Sub-Inspectors were recruited through Uniform Service Recruitment personnel Board (USRB), which was responsible for recruiting personnel for all the uniformed services. Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission recruits Women Police Officers at the level of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSPs). Other officers of the level of Assistant of Police (ASP) were recruited through the All India Competitive Examination conducted by UPSC\textsuperscript{1146}.

Two women IPS Officers and one more were allotted to Tamil Nadu in 1976 and in 1980 respectively. Mrs.Thilakavathi became the first woman from Tamilnadu who got appointment in Indian Police Service\textsuperscript{1147}. The Womens’ wing of the police has been strengthened by the AIADMK Ministry during the year 1981-82. The Government has sanctioned the employment of the 60 women sub-inspectors, 60 women Head Constables and 600 women police Constables\textsuperscript{1148}. There were four IPS Officer in Tamil Nadu in 1986\textsuperscript{1149}.

Judiciary

The patriarchal system prevented women to practise Law. An appeal was made in 1921, by Miss Hazra, B.A. B.L. to the Privy Council to recognize her for Barrister profession in the High Court of Patna\textsuperscript{1150}. Miss Sornelia Sorabji was the first woman to become a

\textsuperscript{1145} Tamilarasu, Madras, July 1976, and Murasoli, Madras, December 4, 2000. All women Police Station which was established in Tamil Nadu has created now awakening and renaissance in the society. The philosophy of gender equality has attained new dimension in the world by the establishment of AWPS. Tamilarasu, Madras, October 16, 1995, p.8.


\textsuperscript{1147} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/g_Thilakavathi_dt_,_02/08/2011. Women were also recruited into the military service from 1990 onwards.

\textsuperscript{1148} Budget Speech for 1981-82, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, p.32, Speech of Thiru V.R. Nedunchelian, Minister of Finance, on 21\textsuperscript{st} March 1981.

\textsuperscript{1149} In 1976, Mrs. Letika Saran and Mrs. Thilakavathi Kumaran were allotted to Tamil Nadu. Mrs Archana Rama Sundaram and Mrs. Lakshmi Rao were allotted in 1980 and 1986 respectively. Women were recruited into military sevice from 1990 onwards. Tamil Arasu, Madras, July 1976 and Murasoli, Madras 4.12.2000.

\textsuperscript{1150} Stri Dharma, Madras, September 1923, p.172.
pleader\textsuperscript{1151}. In Madras, women demanded the passing of a resolution to permit women to become Lawyers. The Government of India introduced and passed the amendment to the Legal Practitioner’s Act, and removed the disqualification on the basis of sex from its provisions for the enrolment of \textit{Vakils} and \textit{Barristers}. Two women were enrolled by the Courts of Allahabad and Patna\textsuperscript{1152}. For the first time in Indian History a woman had been appointed as an Honorary Magistrate, and she took her seat in a quorum of Three First class Bench Magistrate\textsuperscript{1153}. Despite the good service of Honorary Magistrates, women were not appointed to the post of stipendiary Magistrate in the city of Madras. Regarding this, a woman member raised a question in the Legislative Council\textsuperscript{1154} for which the Law Minister replied that there was no rule preventing women to the post of salaried Magistrates like Probationary Magistrates in the Mofussal and city Magistrates in the Presidency town. But, for applying to the post of Chief Presidency Magistrate, women should practise as advocate of High Court for not less than 10 years under the provision of Indian High Court besides passing the eligible tests. No women possessed such qualification in 1936 even though there was no sex disqualification followed by the Government\textsuperscript{1155}. To establish equality in every field, the DMK Government established Law colleges in Tamil Nadu in 1971 to equip women to become lawyers\textsuperscript{1156}. Consequently, the number of Female Lawyers in 1982 was\textsuperscript{331} and Women Judicial Officers (District Judge, Sub-Judge, District Munsiff, I Class Magistrate, II Class Magistrate) in Tamil Nadu during the year 1985 was 13 whereas the number of Men Judicial Officers was \textsuperscript{506}\textsuperscript{1157}.

\textsuperscript{1151} \textit{Ibid.}, January 1922, p.43.
\textsuperscript{1152} \textit{Ibid.}, October 1923, p.184.
\textsuperscript{1153} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{1154} M.L.C., Proceedings, Vol.XXXI, Madras, 13\textsuperscript{th} March 1936, p.185.
\textsuperscript{1155} Ibid. Till 1996, there was no woman to occupy the post of Judge either in Supreme Court or in High courts from Tamil Nadu whereas Kerala and Andhra Pradesh sent each one to it. Mumbai has produced 3 Judges to the High court. And India had produced only 3 Female Judges among the 137 retired Supreme Court Judges. \textit{The New Indian Express}, Tirunelveli, April, 3, 2011.
\textsuperscript{1157} Status of Women in Tamin Nadu, The Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women Ltd, Madras, 1986, pp.254-255.

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Religion

Women as priests

In spiritual matters women were discriminated due to their cycle of menstruation. A natural phenomenon was considered as a period of pollution. So, women have not been permitted to perform religious rituals independently. Otherwise, women are more powerful than men; more resilient than men; more pain-bearing than men. Gaining momentum of Periyar’s rationalistic thought, sex discrimination was questioned. Though women served as priests in private temples like Adhi Parasakthi Amman Temple in Maruvathur, they are disqualified in such services in temples under the control of H.R & C.E.1158

Administration - Women Welfare Department

Initially, Women held the administrative posts only in the Department of Women’s Welfare1159. The officer of this department was allocated the duty of visiting the places where the Madras Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act of 1930 was in force1160. Subsequently, several women were recruited to the office of Women Welfare Department as Women Welfare Officers and Assistant Women Welfare Officers during the year 19561161. Besides, women occupied the posts of Assistant Collector, Magistrate, District Munsif, Secretary of Agricultural Department, Commissioner of Labour, Joint-Director of Social Welfare Department, Chief Educational Officer for various districts, Principal of Colleges, Joint-Director of Government Examinations, Deputy Director of Collegiate Education and so on from 1970s1162.

1158 Women were not eligible even for applying the post of Executive Officers in temples under the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board until the service rules were amended in 2002. Frontline, Vol. XXV, Chennai, November, 2008, pp. 98-100.
1159 Miss. Mackenzie was appointed as first Women Welfare Officer from 1.9.1936 to November 1937 to train local workers and to carry on the duty related to rescue work. G.O. No. 1007 Home Department, dt., 17.6.1936.
1160 G.O.No. 2360, Home Department, dt., 28.4.1939, Government of Madras.
1162 History of Services of Gazetted Officers in the Civil Department serving in Tamil Nadu State, Corrected upto 1985, Vol. V.
Training Centres

The Department of State Social Welfare Board was merged with the Women’s Welfare Department. The programmes for Women and Children were implemented successfully by their combined efforts. Tmt. Champakalakshmi Venkatachalam became the Chairman after the re-constitution of the State Social Welfare Board in December 1968. To popularize its work and to create awareness among women, Women’s Welfare Department published a Tamil Magazine namely, Bagyalakshmi in 1968-69 and later Thittam. The contributors of the article were mostly by Mukhyasevikas and Gramasevikas besides authors from outside. Thereby, Women’s Welfare Department empowered these women not only to canvass the people but also to encourage them to express boldly what they have gained in experience during the field work. The Government encouraged WWD to continue this activity by following the foot print of Periyar who involved women Self-Respecters to contribute articles on various topics on women’s positions in all his magazines and dailies.

The government permitted the Director of Women’s Welfare Department deputed 20 grama sevikas for 15 days’ training course on bakery from 10.06.72 to 17.06.72 at T.Kallupatti training centre with the stipend of Rs.25/- paid by the organizer of the training course, Wheat Associates, U.S.A.

II. Mahalir Manrams

In order to bring together the women of rural areas cutting across the various social and economic barriers, Mahalir Manrams have been organized. The strength of Mahalir Manrams in 1966-67 was 12,461 and it was increased to 12,688 during 1968-69. It was supplied with craft equipments mostly sewing machines and two groundnut decorticaters to give training to more number of women, 9,579 Mahalir Manrams upto the year 1969. To

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1164 G.O.Ms.No.442, Social Welfare Department, dt., 17.05.1972.
carry on the activities like *Balwadi*, Social Education and Craft Programme during 1968-69, the government sanctioned a grant of Rs. 74,023 to it\textsuperscript{1165}. For this, the DMK Government appointed additional 725 Craft Instructresses in 1970 to impart craft training to women.

*Periyar* stated that women didn’t think about getting liberty from their subjugated life. We should only equip them to be a free living being. For this, we have to provide them a sound education and to train them in any kind of job to become bread winner of her needs\textsuperscript{1166}.

The DMK Government implemented the *composite programme* for women and pre-school children with the financial assistance given by the Government of India for developing specified economic activities which was suited to local conditions, such as, sewing, poultry and food preservation, soap making, handloom etc. The Women Welfare Department of Tamil Nadu conducted competition among *Mahalir Manrams* and provided cash award\textsuperscript{1167} to the best performer of the *composite programme*. The cash awards to *Mahalir Manram* were utilized only for the promotion of economic activities which may be undertaken on a group basis\textsuperscript{1168}. The type of activities were Vegetable and Fruit-gardening, Poultry-rearing, Fishery, Fruit and Food preservation, Tailoring, Spinning, Weaving, Knitting, Soap-making, Decorating of edible oil-seeds, Paddy de-husking, Mat-making, and Basket-making. A sum of Rs.4,000/- per annum per block was released towards various welfare activities of *Mahalir Manram*\textsuperscript{1169}.

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<tr>
<th>Financial</th>
<th>Physical</th>
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<td><strong>Target (1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Achievement (2)</strong></td>
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<td>Rs.1,50,400/-</td>
<td>Rs.13,63,000/-</td>
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*Mahalir Manrams* are used to aid social awareness among women. The Convenor of the *Mahalir Manrams* was paid an honorarium of Rs.90/- per quarter. These Convenors conducted training camps (about 8 per annum), baby shows and undertook study tours. Social


\textsuperscript{1166} *Viduthalai*, Chennai, February 2, 1969.


\textsuperscript{1168} G.O. No. 393, Social Welfare Department (ww), dt. 5.5.1970.

\textsuperscript{1169} Tamil Nadu State Administration Report 1982-83, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1984, p.527.

\textsuperscript{1170} Ibid., p.528.
Education among women was also taught through the purchase of books, magazines, etc. These convenors discussed with the local women about various subjects like child care, health, environmental sanitation, kitchen gardening, household arts, etc. Demonstrations were held on hygienic ways of cooking.

**Women’s Cottage Industries Co-Operative Society**

To provide employment to the women of rural areas, the Cottage Industries Co-operative Society was established even during the Justice party Ministry. The Societies did several kinds of work such as tailoring, needlework, embroidery, Crochet Knitting, etc., and produced articles like shirts, jumpers, skirts, blouses, knickers, lace embroidered pillow cases, pappadams, pickles, etc. The average monthly production and sales was nearly Rs. 5,000 and the members earned Rs. 1,500 as monthly wages\textsuperscript{1171}. Following this, the Dravidian Governments established several Cooperative societies to increase the employment opportunities to women. They are Stationery Cooperative Societies in 1979-81\textsuperscript{1172}, Co-operative Stores of Consuming goods in 1985-86, Footwear Co-operative Societies in 1987-88,\textsuperscript{1173} Weaning Food Cooperative Societies in 1988-89. All these Societies provided employment exclusively for women. The Government provided 2/3 of employment to women belonging to SC and ST and 1/3 of BC through these societies.

**Tailoring Co-operative Society**

Since Periyar incessantly fought for the eradication of widowhood, the Dravidian Governments introduced a good number of employment schemes to provide rehabilitation and encourage them to live independently with determination.

\textsuperscript{1171} Madras Information, Madras, May 24, 1947, Vol.I, No.12, p. 31-32.

\textsuperscript{1172} Performance Budget 1993-94, Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, 1993, p. 8 and see also TNLAD, Madras, April 21, 1989, p.650. Around 700 members benefitted during the year 1989-90.

\textsuperscript{1173} TNLAD, Madras, April 21,1989, pp.648-649. 2,000 Adi Dravida women got employment through these societies.
With a view to increase the employment potential and to lead a decent life, sewing machines were supplied free of cost under Sathiyavani Muthu Ammaiyr Ninaivu Free Supply of Sewing Machine Scheme to widows, deserted wives and destitutes below poverty line and to physically handicapped women. Initially, one Tailoring Society had been registered in Madras City to provide employment to 75 women. Then the Government set up three societies at Thanjavur, Madurai, and Erode to provide employment to 800 women. These societies have undertaken the stitching work of uniform to students of Adi Dravida, Scheduled Tribe and Backward Class. About 64 lakh sets of uniforms were stitched every year during the DMK period. About 22,000 women got employment through these Societies. A member suggested in the Assembly that if the government would offer stitching work of police uniform and took measures to export the stitched dresses to foreign countries their standard of life would be improved. By this scheme, every member roughly earned Rs.400/- to Rs.500/- per month for 3 to 4 months per year. During the year 1989-90, Rs.4 crores was distributed as wages for 23,009 women workers through the co-operative societies.

Industries & Commerce

To empower the Harijan women, the DMK Government sanctioned the continuance of Training Centre in Tailoring at Conoor for a period of one year from March, 1972 to July 31, 1972. It imparted training for 10 trainees at the expense of Rs.2320/-1178. Till 1972, 77 Harijan girls completed training in 8 batches. The Harijan Welfare Department supplied sewing machines to 19 candidates. They engaged themselves in part time job and supplemented their income, besides working as coolies in the Estates. A demand was made to shift the training centre from Conoor to Kil-Kottagiri from August 1st, 1972.1179

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1174 Policy Note on Social Welfare 1982-83, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, p.3.
1175 Ibid., p.591.
1176 Ibid.
1179 Ibid.
Assistance to Destitute Widows

Since the government was much concerned with the upliftment of women at the grass root level, it introduced a scheme to assist destitute widows to start mess in the premises of large factories, railway stations, bus stands, etc. The willing persons were supplied with food grains, oil and other articles through the Civil Supplies Corporation\textsuperscript{1180}. Out of the total expense 25% would be given freely by the Social Welfare Department and the remaining 75% investment would be received from the bank in minimum interest rate. As a result, 150 women got employment under this scheme from 72 units. A member of the Assembly pleaded to the government to open atleast one I.T.I Centre in every district to impart education to the daughters of poor widows instead of giving small petty employment opportunities to widows\textsuperscript{1181}.

III Guidance Bureau - Madras City

A Guidance Bureau had been set up in the District of Madras City, Madurai, Thanjavur and Coimbatore under the Department of Social Welfare. The bureaus have been functioning from February 1978 onwards. The objectives of the bureau were to assist widows in obtaining L.I.C., and Provident Fund benefits, advice on educational and employment opportunities and guidance regarding admission for their children through voluntary organizations and educational institutions. As most of the women were illiterate or semi-literate, they may approach the bureau mainly for securing suitable job on salary basis. In view of the acute unemployment problem, four bureaus had been actually engaging themselves in providing self-employment to the poor women especially widows, destitute and the deserted. They assisted them by getting small loan amount of Rs.200 to Rs.1,000/- with a nominal interest of 4 per cent per annum from various Nationalised Banks. By this assistance, women were able to earn their livelihood and also re-pay the loan amount. For the years 1979

\textsuperscript{1180} Policy Note on Social Welfare 1982-83. Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1982, p.3.
\textsuperscript{1181} TNLAD, Vol. XXIV, Madras, April 26, 28, 29, 1986, p.83.
to March 1983, 10,933 women belonging to weaker sections have received loan assistance to an extent of Rs.23 lakhs\textsuperscript{1182}.

IV Seva Illam

\textit{Periyar} wanted to establish \textit{Widows’ Centre} to extend support to the widows in the way of giving shelter and training in employment\textsuperscript{1183}. The AIADMK Government introduced a scheme to provide safety and shelter to the deserted widows in \textbf{Seva Illam}. This scheme provided education, job training and uniform to a widow and later it was extended to her two children who could stay there for the maximum of three years\textsuperscript{1184}.

Six service homes have been functioning each at Tambaram, Cuddalore, Thanjavur, Tirunelveli, Salem and Tiruppathur (Pasumpon Muthuramalingam district) under the Women’s Welfare Department\textsuperscript{1185}. These homes offered training in typewriting and shorthand to poor widows, deserted wives, destitute women and physically handicapped women in the age group of 18 to 40 years. The State Government took the responsibility of their entire expenditure for providing free shelter, food, clothing, text books, note books and medical care. In 1989, the D.M.K Government increased the annual clothing allowances from \textrupee 0.60 and \textrupee 0.35 to \textrupee 0.100 and \textrupee 0.60 per adult and child respectively. The physical and financial target and achievements for 1989-90 were\textsuperscript{1186}.

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<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>810 adults</td>
<td>619 adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>265 children</td>
<td>148 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs.29.88 lakhs</td>
<td>Rs.37.20 lakhs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV Special Programmes for Employment of Women

The AIADMK Government had sanctioned a scheme to train and employ rural women in a large scale under ‘Special Programmes’ with the idea to supplement the family

\textsuperscript{1182} Tamil Nadu State Administrative Report 1982-83, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1984, p.529.
\textsuperscript{1183} Kudi Arasu, Erode, September 28, 1930.
\textsuperscript{1184} TNALD, Madras, 1 July 1985, Vol.II, p.126.
\textsuperscript{1186} Ibid., p.363.
income by at least Rs. 700 per annum\textsuperscript{1187}. The areas where the raw materials were available with lesser capital investment were selected to provide training in industries with minimum technical know-how. Women were provided training in the industries and crafts by forming Industrial Co-operatives and they were given a stipend of Rs. 50-75 per month. The beneficiaries of this scheme were 4,035, out of them 1,815 women got employed\textsuperscript{1188}. Therefore, the Programme of Employment and Income Generating Production Units were started in 1982-83 to provide employment to women. The industries which gave self-employment as well as entrepreneurial training to women were the Match Industries, Palm Based Industries, Note Book-making, Chalk-making and Candle-making and Rural Textile. Besides, other schemes which were introduced to empowered women through employment were Coir Industry and Sericulture\textsuperscript{1189}.

These training programmes increased the self-confidence of women to increase their family income.

V) Vocational Training Programme for Poor Women

\textit{Periyar} advocated women to get sound education – equipping themselves with training for any kind of job by which they do not have to depend on anyone, even their husbands in future. She should not be afraid of her future if her husband abandoned her\textsuperscript{1190}. So, the AIADMK Government introduced Vocational Training Programme for poor women.

\textbf{Assistance to poor women for vocational training}

Under this scheme, vocational training was given in Typewriting for 1000 poor women\textsuperscript{1191}, Short-hand for 500 women per year\textsuperscript{1192}, Book-keeping and Accounting for 1000 poor women\textsuperscript{1193}.

\textsuperscript{1187} Policy Note on Social Welfare 1982-83. Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1982, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{1188} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1189} TNLAD, Vol.XXIV, Madras, April 26, 28, 29, 1986, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{1190} \textit{Viduthalai}, Madras, July 4, 1968.
\textsuperscript{1193} Budget Speech for 1981-82, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1983, p.27.
Production cum-Training Centres

The Social Welfare Department opened Production-cum-Training Centres and Production Units to impart training to rural and urban destitute women for one year in tailoring, woollen weaving, palm-leaf, mat-weaving, carpet-weaving, bamboo and cane works. This training was provided to women who were in the age group of 18-35 years in order to supplement their family income. They were paid Rs.30 per mensem during the training period. These trained women can appear for government Technical Examinations in December every year. There were four Tailoring Training Centres located in Jamunamarudhur (North Arcot District) and three at Kolli Hills, Kalrayan Hills and Yercaud (Salem District) for the benefit of tribal women\textsuperscript{1194}.

i) Job-Oriented Training Course

To develop scientific knowledge among women as said by Periyar, the DMK Government launched a scheme of providing job oriented course in 1989. Accordingly, 50 Boys and Girls belonging to Backward Classes and Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities were imparted Computer Training in Madras Institute of Technology, Madras, for a period of six months. Free Boarding and Lodging facilities were provided to them. The ceiling of income prescribed for admission was Rs.6000 in respect of hostellers and Rs. 9000 in respect of Day Scholars\textsuperscript{1195}.

ii) Computer Training for Women

The government provided a scheme of training 500 women in Computer Programme and spent Rs.1,500 for each head during the year 1989-90\textsuperscript{1196}.

\textsuperscript{1196} TNLAD, Madras, 21 April 1989, pp. 652-653.
VII Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women

During the AIADMK Ministry, a proposal was made to set up the Tamil Nadu Women’s Employment Development Corporation with a cost of Rs.200/- lakhs to provide job for about 10,000 women for a year. Accordingly, the Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women Limited (DEW) was established in 1983 with the objective of empowering women in Social, Economic and Political field and promoting their employment opportunities. The Corporation did different activities and training to empower women during the year 1986-87 by establishing unit in the fields like The Printing Press, Screen Printing, Electronics, Khadi and Village Industries and Palm brush-making. The Corporation also promoted the entrepreneurial skill of women by conducting various demonstrations-cum-training programme as well as motivational campaign.

Chief Minister’s Nutritious Meal Programme

The AIADMK Government had established 28,106 meal centres in Tamil Nadu under the Nutritious Meal Programme and provided jobs to 56,000 women who were working in the centres all over the state. Out of this 5,383 were scheduled caste women, 1083 were widows and 1,173 were destitute women. In 1987 this number was increased to 1.99 lakh persons. The AIADMK Government had a plan to have one full time female community worker for every 5,000 population. Accordingly, infants in the age-group 6 months to 36 months would be given health care, preventive vaccination and wherever necessary special nutrition. As a result of the various employment programme of the AIADMK Government, the number of female persons in employment increased. For instance,

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1201 Ibid.
Number of persons employed by Major States between July 1987 to June 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Current Rural Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Weekly Rural Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Status Urban Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Currently Rural Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Daily Rural Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Status Urban Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Status Urban Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>151</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>139</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>178</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>All-India</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


On the basis of the initiatives taken by Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh, the Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, formulated a scheme to assist other State Governments to establish women Development Corporations.\(^{1202}\) The Corporation achieved in formulating Women’s Development Schemes through various financial agencies like Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD), Support to Employment Programme (STEP), Special Central Assistance (SCA), Special Programme Funds, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), etc.\(^{1203}\) Tamil Nadu Women Development Corporation was regarded as the best unit in 1989 with an authorized capital of Rs.10 million\(^{1204}\).

VIII DWRCA - Development of Women and Child in Rural Areas

This programme was adopted as the strategy of group information and group approach to bring women together for an economic activity suitable to their abilities and skills in planning and implementation. It also inculcates in them a spirit of community approach. This programme was implemented by Tamil Nadu Women Development Corporation\(^{1205}\) in the area which is selected on the basis of backwardness, incidence of child mortality, level of literacy, etc.\(^{1206}\).

\(^{1204}\) Ibid., p.139.
\(^{1205}\) Tamil Nadu State Administration Report, 1984-85, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1986, p.293.
The State Government had allotted Rs.20.40 lakhs for this scheme during the year 1989-90. The government had proposed to form 100 groups of women and to extend the scheme to the Salem District during the year 1989-90\textsuperscript{1207}.

The DWCRA Scheme includes the income generating work like Dairy-Farming, Sheep-breeding, Woollen-weaving, Rope-making, Bee-rearing, Silk-worm-rearing, Brick-making, Manufacturing Foot wears, Manufacturing dresses, Producing incense sticks, Manufacturing cane baskets, Doll-making, gloves, Manufacturing polythene bags, mat-weaving, manufacturing dolls, Poultry- rearing, pisciculture, etc.\textsuperscript{1208}

The beneficiaries of DWCRA during the year 1986-87 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Groups formed</th>
<th>Women Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dharamapuri</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>3,060</td>
<td>2,06,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periyar</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>2,646</td>
<td>1,50,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiruchirappalli</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2,796</td>
<td>1,92,18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>8,502</td>
<td>5,49,527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Around 8,502 women have been given a regular employment during 1986-1987. It was set up with a focus on socio-economic empowerment strategies for women. Till 1989, the Corporation had assisted 1,10,190 women below poverty line by creating income generating activities through IFAD assistance scheme\textsuperscript{1209}.

Self-Employment Programmes for Women

A special programme of self-employment was introduced during the year 1988-89 to give preference to widows, destitute and deserted women. But the beneficiaries must be 2/3 of low caste people and the remaining 1/3 must be from backward class people. They were given with Rs.600/- subsidy. Out of this amount, 2/3 part of investment was given as bank loan and one part was the subsidy given by the Government. Under this scheme, women were encouraged to start small Tiffin Centre or business connected with Pickles-making, knitting,
Cane basket making, binding work, selling of vegetables, ironing centre, preparing snacks, etc. Nearly 11,600 poor women benefitted from this scheme\textsuperscript{1210}.

A proposal was made to introduce a new scheme during the year 1989-90 i.e., to provide Auto-Rikshaws to women following the other states where women owned Auto-Rikshaws and managed the family. According to this scheme, the Government, initially, would provide Auto-Rikshaws at the cost of Rs.13,60,000 through the Social Welfare Department. These women would involve in a job of taking children to schools safely\textsuperscript{1211}. But this scheme was not implemented by the government. Similarly the government would provide Cycle-Rickshaw fitted with a motor to women. For this scheme government expense was Rs. 60 lakhs. In another scheme, the government would provide Sugar-cane juice extracting machine, ice-cream vehicles and plastic-mat knitting to women. To encourage women in these jobs, the government allocated Rs.33 lakhs\textsuperscript{1212}.

Apart from these above mentioned works, women employed in other tertiary sectors too. The following table shows the figure of women employed in industries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment of Women in Public Sector by Industrial Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry, Fishing etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and Quarrying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, Gas, Water and Sanitary Services, etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and Retail Trade and Restaurants and Hotels</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, Storage and Communication Services</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Business Services</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community, Social and Personal Services</td>
<td>209.7</td>
<td>217.9</td>
<td>225.8</td>
<td>238.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>258.6</td>
<td>268.7</td>
<td>279.1</td>
<td>292.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{1210} TNLAD, Madras, 21 April 1989, p.653.
\textsuperscript{1211} Ibid., p.620.
\textsuperscript{1212} Ibid.
Promotion of employment opportunities by Central Government

National Rural Employment Programme

National Rural Employment Programme was introduced in Tamil Nadu from October 1980 onwards as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with the purpose of providing employment opportunities to the unemployed men and women in rural areas during the non-season period. Consequently, the government tried to increase the standard of life of the rural people as well as their income.

IRDP

Under Integrated Rural Development Scheme, the AIADMK Government provided employment to 3,800 women in Periyar district and 3,600 women in Dharmapuri district as stated by Social Welfare Minister in the Assembly\textsuperscript{1213}.

Integrated Rural Development Programme is implemented in all the blocks in the State and credit linked subsidies were given to alleviate the sufferings of the people who were below poverty line. It identified families to set up their own employment programme. 86,921 women were covered under this programme during the year 1986 – 1987,\textsuperscript{1214} whereas 77,336 women got benefit during the year 1989-90\textsuperscript{1215}.

TRYSEM

Training of Rural Youth for self-employment programme was introduced to provide technical skills to rural youth from families below the poverty line. This programme enabled them to take up self-employment in the fields of agriculture and allied activities, industrial services and business activities. During the year 1986 -87, 5,183 women were given training. Out of the trained women 1,556 were self-employed and 2,160 were wage earner\textsuperscript{1216}.

\textsuperscript{1213} TNLAD, Vol. XXIV, Madras, 28,29,&30 April 1986, p.112.
\textsuperscript{1214} Tamil Nadu State Administration Report 1986-87, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1989, p.388.
\textsuperscript{1215} Tamil Nadu State Administration Report 1989-90, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1993, p.345.
\textsuperscript{1216} Ibid., 1989, p.388.
Jawahar Velaiyaippu Thittam

A new programme known as Jawahar Rozgar Yojana was introduced in 1989 by merging the National Rural Employment Programme and the Rural Landless Employment guarantee programme. The target group of this programme was people below the poverty line and SC/ST people. 30% of the employment opportunities are reserved for women. This programme targeted to generate 776.4 lakh mandays of work. The highlights of its actual performance were significantly higher than the targetted level. It gave priority to women and landless labourers. The financial outlay spent was Rs. 778.59 lakhs to generate employment to women during the year 1989-90. The significant feature of this scheme is providing equal remuneration to both men and women workers.

Unemployment Subsidy

Despite the introduction of a number of employment programmes, the number of unemployed was also increased. So, the AIADMK Government provided unemployment allowance of Rs.50/-, Rs.75/- and Rs.100/- to the unemployed persons on the basis of their education like S.S.L.C, +2 and Graduates respectively. About 23,000 graduates were the beneficiaries of this scheme during the year 1984. This scheme enhanced literacy among women. After the introduction of 30% reservation in employment in 1989, the number of women who had registered for seeking employment has been increased in 1990.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
EMPLOYMENT APPLICANTS ON LIVE REGISTER—OCCUPATIONAL BREAK–UP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>As on 31st March</th>
<th>Absolute change during 1990-91</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Professional and Technical</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Administrative and Managerial</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Clerical and related Workers</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Sales workers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Craftsmen</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Other Skilled Workers</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Unskilled Workers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Persons without Vocational Training</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 2,199 829 139 42 235 134


*Periyar* questioned: How can a woman become free and experience progress without money, independence and equal rights on par with men in social affairs? These obstacles were permanent hindrances to the progress of women. So to remove such obstacles both the DMK and AIADMK Government introduced a number of training programmes to improve their economic condition.

**Training Programmes for Women in Industries**

**Sophisticated Industries**

The AIADMK Government offered training to women in Electronics, Electricals and small chemical formulations so that they can work in sophisticated industries and take part in national production. It also encouraged them to develop self-entrepreneurship in a large scale.

**Electronic Industries**

The government introduced a scheme to train 30 women in Electronic Industries at a cost of Rs.63,000/-. Women were trained in the fundamentals of Electronic Industries to

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repair Television sets, radios, transistors, amplifiers, record players and assembling of transistors. Later, a syllabus in Business Management, Financing, Marketing and Salesmanship were added. The government encouraged them to open their own shop rather than finding placements in various production centres in the city\textsuperscript{1222}.

**Garment Industries**

The government established 2 tailoring centers for giving training to Girls belonging to Most Backward Classes to make ready made garments and embroidery. Consequently, 70 students benefitted during 1989-90\textsuperscript{1223}.

**Small Saving Scheme**

*Periyar* named those who were unable to live within their income as prostitutes. *Periyar* reiterated the couples in all marriage functions, to lead a simple way of life and to save money. In accordance with this, the Government introduced Small Savings Scheme throughout the State. 185 convenors of the *Mahalir Manrams* were employed to take up this task. So, a sum of Rs.4,57,569.28 was collected during the year 1968-69. Hence, the government instituted a rolling shield to award the best *Madhar Sangam* in the district for carrying on their work successfully\textsuperscript{1224}. One of the main objectives of *self-help group* is also to mobilize small savings (micro-credit) among poor rural women.

**Kuzhandaigal Kappagams**

*Periyar* wanted women to deposit the amount which was spent for jewels and dresses unnecessarily, in the bank to get minimum rate of interest. He questioned: Why did not women maintain a servant to take care of their children out of the interest gained from the deposited amount in the bank? Why did not father take of care of his own children? So,

\textsuperscript{1222} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1223} The Tamil Nadu State Administration Report 1989-90, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1993, p.57.
Women should take care of the children through servant-maids so as to work in higher posts like men. They should become neither a doll nor a jewel stand\textsuperscript{1225}.

The DMK Government established the \textit{Kuzhandaiyal Kappagams} (Children’s Care Centres) to help the rural working women to attend their work freely without any anxiety about their children. Besides the functioning of 1,015 \textit{Kuzhandaiyal Kappagams}, the government established additional 200 Kuzhandaigal Kappagams in 200 blocks. The trained \textit{Balasevikas} were entrusted with the task of taking care of the children and were paid an honorarium of Rs. 20 per month\textsuperscript{1226}.

The Central Social Welfare Board implemented the Central Scheme of \textit{Crèches} for working / ailing mother’s children since 1975-76 through voluntary social welfare organizations and two other national level voluntary welfare organization namely Indian Council for Children Welfare and Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh\textsuperscript{1227}. The Integrated Child Development Services not only took care of children below the age of six years but also provided essential requirements to pregnant women and nursing mothers\textsuperscript{1228}.

\textbf{Law Protection}

\textbf{Maternity Benefit Act: 1958}

Sri R. Venkatraman, Minister for Industries moved in the Legislative Council, the Madras Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 1958. It sought to provide for the payment of increased maternity benefit to women workers for a maximum period of 12 weeks and at the rate of 75 naye paise (N.P) per day or 7/12 of the average daily wage whichever was higher, for the actual days of absence during the period immediately preceding during and following for confinement\textsuperscript{1229}. The bill was passed in the Legislative Council\textsuperscript{1230} and sought to raise the

\textsuperscript{1228} \textit{Ibid.} p.148.
\textsuperscript{1229} G.O.No.212 Law Department, dt., 25.7.1958.
\textsuperscript{1230} \textit{The Hindu}, Madras, dt.10.03.58.
lump sum medical bonus from Rs.10 to Rs.50, to fix the missing breaks at half an hour instead of 15 minutes, to increase the period of prohibition of employment from six weeks to eight weeks following the day of confinement and to raise the rate of allowance to a woman worker on account of illness due to pregnancy\textsuperscript{1231}. But these acts did not apply to women in unregistered economic activities in the informal sector. Following this, the Central Government introduced the Maternity Benefit Act in 1961 which provided measures to protect the health of pregnant women and their children seeking to minimize fatigue by the reorganization of working time or to protect women against dangerous or unhealthy work. It aims to impact Social Justice to women employees. It protects the dignity of motherhood by providing full and healthy maintenance of the women employee and their children during the period of her confinement\textsuperscript{1232}.

**Maternity Assistance Scheme**

Apart from this Act, the AIADMK Party under M.G. Ramachandran in its election campaign in 1984 promised to give financial assistance to the poor mothers. When there was a delay in implementing the scheme, it was questioned in the Assembly by a member who pointed out that the Government did not provide Rs.50 as assistance to the pregnant women from the month of pregnancy and two months after delivery as per the announcement in Election. But the government servants had a privilege to take maternity leave upto 4 months with full salary and after that they get half salary. On the otherhand, women labourers working in agricultural sectors had employment only for 90 or 60 days annually\textsuperscript{1233}. The Social Welfare Minister explained that the government has been giving nutritious meal to the pregnant as well as feeding mothers from their 7\textsuperscript{th} month of pregnancy and also providing free vaccination and health care costs of Rs.50/-\textsuperscript{1234}.

\textsuperscript{1231} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1233} TNLAD, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, July 1, 1985, pp.119-120.
\textsuperscript{1234} Ibid.
Working Women from poor households in towns and villages lose earnings at the
time of pregnancy and child birth. This accentuates their poverty. Therefore in 1989, the
DMK Government introduced *Maternity Assistance Scheme* in accordance with the election
promise to assist the poor pregnant women during pregnancy by granting Rs.200 each. This
maternity relief was given to them on the basis of Rs.50 from the eighth month of pregnancy
upto the second month after delivery. A provision of Rs.4 crores has been made for this
purpose. The beneficiaries of this scheme were 1,83,918 mothers during the year 1989-
90. This Maternity Assistance Scheme was known as *Dr.Muthulakshmi Ninaivu
Mahapperu Uthavi Thittam*. Women employees were also assisted during the time of
pregnancy.

**Equal Remuneration Act, 1976**

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 enacted by the Central Government has been
followed in Tamil Nadu to pay equal remuneration to men and women and for the prevention
of discrimination on the grounds of sex against women in the matter of employment. This
Act requires employers to pay equal remuneration to both men and women for the same work
or work of a similar nature. It was for the first time women’s contribution to economy was
recognized and it was less than that of men. A member suggested in the Assembly that
Equal Wage Remuneration should be given to women workers in the field of agricultural and
construction work also. The Minister of SWD explained that equal wage should be given to
women workers when they were doing the same type of work in similar nature. But in the
field of agriculture and building construction, men and women were doing different types of
work. So there was discrimination in remuneration.

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1235 Ibid.
1237 *Brief Note on the activities of the Department of Social Welfare 1989-90.*
1238 The AIADMK Government issued an order in 2011 to increase the pregnancy Assistant amount to
Rs.12,000/- to the pregnant women under poverty line and six months Maternity leave to Government
Women Employees to safeguard maternal and child health.
1239 Ibid.
1241 Ibid.
Self-Help Group

Periyar said that no other changes would give benefit to the womenfolk as much as the revolution did. Three important steps should be done immediately to enable women to move freely as human being. Initially, women should shed off their kitchen life (house hold work). Secondly, they should ward off themselves from their greed in jewels. Thirdly, the complication in the present marriage system should be removed. The administrators should take measures for providing them opportunities to acquire the jobs as they desire without any hesitation.\textsuperscript{1241}

Since the progress of women is one of the chief aims of the Dravidian Governments, it has envisaged an empowerment programme called Mahalir Thittam to enable women to come out in a mass level from the kitchen work, bring them under a group and to provide them training to start self-employment through government loans. By this splendid policy, the DMK Government made both men and women shoulder the economic responsibilities of family life and established equality of spouses.\textsuperscript{1242}

In 1989, the Chief Minister announced in the Assembly that a major scheme for women’s development was proposed to be undertaken shortly with the assistance from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). This project would be implemented over a seven year period in Salem, Dharmapuri and South Arcot districts at a cost of Rs.45.8 crores to benefit about 40,000 women.\textsuperscript{1243} This Scheme was implemented through Tamil Nadu Women Development Corporation.\textsuperscript{1244} It was introduced in Tamil Nadu only after watching the marvellous work done by Mohamed Yunuz, the recipient of Nobel Prize in Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{1245} He founded the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{1246} Thiru M. Karunanidhi stated in the Assembly that

\textsuperscript{1242} Tamilurarasi, Madras, November 16-30, 1999, p.37.
\textsuperscript{1243} Budget for 1989-90, Speech of Thiru M. Karunanithi 26\textsuperscript{th} March 1989, p.32.
\textsuperscript{1244} G.K.Gariyali and Vettrivel, \textit{Women’s Own}, New Delhi, 2004, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{1245} Dinakaran, Madurai, November 2, 2010, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{1246} \url{http://www.flyhighonline.com/flyhigh/contentlinks/dt. 03.02.2011}.
“The Government introduced integrated project for women’s development by providing employment in agriculture, sericulture and small enterprises with assistance from the International Fund for Agricultural Development at a cost of Rs.45.8 crores, 40,000 women in Salem, Dharmapuri and South Arcot districts will be provided with employment opportunities under this scheme in the next Five Year"\textsuperscript{1247}.

Later this scheme was extended to Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts where 90,000 women have been formed into women SHG in the First Phase under this system\textsuperscript{1248}. These members of self-help group were known as Bangaru Ammaiyyar Women Groups, named after Arignar Anna’s mother. SHGs have emerged as an important local institution in villages. A group of 10-20 women of similar economic class, generally poor, mostly women organize themselves into a cohesive group to improve their social and economic position through collective action\textsuperscript{1249}.

- Each group has one motivator who is elected by the members of a group. IFAD donated Rs.180/- to this motivator every month. There is one supervisor for every 12 to 15 motivators.

- The supervisor of SHG is only the degree-holder. She gains Rs.1300/- as permanent salary\textsuperscript{1250}.

- She plays a dynamic role in the effective functioning of all SHG to attain all kinds of progress\textsuperscript{1251}.

Periyar observed that people should acquire more wisdom by learning worldly matter rather than getting educated from school. They may learn technological advancement and

\textsuperscript{1247} Budget for 1990-91, Speech of Honorable Chief Minister on 17\textsuperscript{th} March 1990, pp.39-40.
\textsuperscript{1248} Tamilarasu, Madras, January 16-31, 1993, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{1249} Tamil Nadu Human Development Report, Government of Tamil Nadu, Social Science Press, Delhi, 2003, p.107.
\textsuperscript{1251} Ibid., p.13.
other matters which took place in the world. This type of learning shall extend their wisdom, but the knowledge which is acquired from school will help them to get a profession\textsuperscript{1252}.

The SHGs have produced a tremendous physical mobility among women, increased their bargaining capacities, self-confidence, self-reliance, life skills in areas such as accounts-keeping, money management, savings and credit, awareness about health, nutrition, immunization, education and so on. In addition, SHGs are empowered to deal with important social problems like alcoholism, domestic violence, abandonment, dowries and female infanticide\textsuperscript{1253}. This scheme increases social involvement of women by which they discuss not only family and public relations but also they get the capability to solve the problems amicably. The SHGs inculcate capacity building through

- Improved functional literacy, numeracy
- Better communication skills
- Better leadership skills
- Self-help and mutual help.

Consequently, SHG is very helpful to empower not only the family and the community but also the development of whole village in the long run as it is \textit{multi-dimensional in its approach}. The government also encourages the NGO of respective region to give self-employment training to SHG to earn independently. Its primary concern is creating awareness among women about social welfare programmes and environment health\textsuperscript{1254}.

To empower women, the DMK Government created market exclusively for women as well as women federations at the district-level for women traders and producers under the \textit{Poomalai Programme} of the rural development\textsuperscript{1255}. The government introduced the award of

\textsuperscript{1252} K. Veeramani, \textit{Rights of Women}, (II), Part – iv, p.143-144. And See also \textit{Viduthalai}, Madras, 8.7.1968.

\textsuperscript{1253} Tamil Nadu Human Development Report, Government of Tamil Nadu, Social Science Press, Delhi, 2003, p.107.


\textsuperscript{1255} Tamil Nadu Human Development Report, Government of Tamil Nadu, Social Science Press, Delhi, 2003, pp. 109- 110.
Manimegalai which is given to the best SHG for performing the best service in the corresponding year\textsuperscript{1256}.

**Working Women’s Hostel**

*Periyar* advised women that they should not indulge themselves in household chores and bringing up their children. Instead they should go for work to live an independent and autonomous life\textsuperscript{1257}. They should arrange some servant-maid to look after the children and they may stay in Hostel to take up the employment.

The Congress Government had sanctioned permission to start a Hostel for working women in 1966\textsuperscript{1258}. The Working Women’s Hostel at Madras had started its functioning with the strength of 25 from 1967-68. It was established to give accommodation facilities exclusively for working women in both government and private offices or concerns, who had earned not more than Rs. 500 per month\textsuperscript{1259}. To meet the incidental charges, the government sanctioned a permanent advance of Rs.20/- for Working Women’s Hostel at Madras\textsuperscript{1260}.

There were 6 hostels for working women in the State. The hostel at Egmore (Madras) provides boarding and lodging facilities to 35 working women, the other five hostels at Guindy (Madras), Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Tuticorin and Hosur have got the strength of 50 each. A total number of 285 working women can be accommodated in these hostels\textsuperscript{1261}. In order to encourage the private individual to establish Hostel, the government had been following the scheme 75\% assistance from the Central Government and 10\% by the private owners. These hostels were giving safety and security to working women,\textsuperscript{1262}

To meet the needs of working women, especially the middle income group whose salary do not exceed Rs.2000/- per month and faced the problem of seeking a safe and

\textsuperscript{1256} Murasoli, Madurai, November 16, 2009.
\textsuperscript{1258} G.O.Ms.No.1213, Rural Development and Local Administration, dt. 11.05.1966.
\textsuperscript{1262} TNLAD, Vol.-II, Madras, 1 July 1985, p.126.
reasonably priced accommodation, the governmmt had established Working Women’s Hostel at Madras, Cuddalore, Tiruchirappally, Madurai, Hosur and Tuticorin. 340 girls were benefitted under the scheme. The expense towards running of 6 Hostels for Working Women by the Government was 5.34 lakhs during the year 1989-90\textsuperscript{1263}. The working women had to pay mess and electricity charges in dividing system and proportionate rent for the building\textsuperscript{1264}.

**Number of persons who stayed in the Working Women’s Hostel from 1980 -81 onwards:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980 – 81</td>
<td>Chennai</td>
<td>75 Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 – 81</td>
<td>Madurai</td>
<td>50 Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 – 81</td>
<td>Hosur</td>
<td>81 Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981 – 82</td>
<td>Tiruchirappalli</td>
<td>50 Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981 – 82</td>
<td>Tuticorin</td>
<td>50 Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987 – 88</td>
<td>Cuddalore</td>
<td>35 Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992 – 93</td>
<td>Chennai</td>
<td>75 Persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


They should stay in the hostel for the maximum of three years only and their salary should not exceed more than Rs.10,000/- p.m.\textsuperscript{1265}.

Employment means to emancipate women from all shackles in the society. The first thing education does is that it makes women come out of their seclusion and exclusion. It develops women personality and attitude to shoulder responsibilities, to participate in decision making inside the family and to decide on children education. It also enables them to get rid of all traditional customs and emboldens them to compete equally with men in every field. Employment has made women more responsible by dismissing the view that women could not maintain confidence and secrecy. Infact, women getting employment increasingly

\textsuperscript{1263} Brief Note on the activities of the Department of Social Welfare 1989-90, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, p.2.


\textsuperscript{1265} Citizens Charter 2009, Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, 2009, p.17.
in all fields was competitive to men. This development wouldn’t have been possible if not for
Periyar’s Self-Respect Movement and the measures taken by the Dravidian Governments.
Despite women’s physical hindrance and other obstacles made by men in work places for
women, they have shown their capabilities and responsibilities in personal, family, social and
national positions. The house-wives became home-makers. Their position changed from pro-
creating machines to child-developing personalities, from within the four walls of houses to
the vast space of the cosmos, from nurses to scientists, from disciples to disciplinarians, from
sales girl to mistresses of commanding respects. Thus, the dream of Bharathi became true
that women acquired abilities to occupy different kinds of jobs and empowered to participate
in politics to frame laws and to rule over the country. (மு.சங்கா குறளாயிற், மு.சங்கா ஓய்வுத்துறையார்,
மாநிலிய முதலைகள் இந்துமன்றம்)