The practice of "Positive Discrimination" started in India under specific socio-historic conditions. Indian Society practised mainly a hierarchic social structure. At the bottom of the caste hierarchy are found the 'untouchable' communities with the lowest ritual standing and economic position. They were subject to several social and ritual exclusions. They have also borne the brunt of several civic disabilities over a long period of time and often were victims of violence.

There were several attempts to overcome these historical injustices starting with the British period. That was the starting of the concept of "Positive Discrimination". Since then the concept of Positive Discrimination has been in use, more so in the post - Independence period, and it remained a very sensitive issue. This is popularly perceived as the policy that lies at the bottom of the changing nature of the Indian polity, economy and society as a whole.

In India, the Policy usually refers to "Special treatment"; special provisions, concessions, privileges and preferential treatment for certain groups. The term "Protective discrimination" was first used by Alexander Rowiesz in 1957. But using the term to mean special treatment and concessions does not refer directly to the policy taken up by the government. Galanter (1984) prefers the use of "Compensatory discrimination" for purposes of his research and feels it appropriate for the Indian situation.
He also said:

"In common usage, the generic term for the groups entitled to receive preference is the "Backward Classes" ("weaker sections" is a rough equivalent for this usage). This group in turn may be broken down into the Scheduled Caste ("untouchable"), the Scheduled Tribes, and a diverse and less well defined residuum known as the "Other Backward Classes" or sometimes the "Backward Classes" ..... Thus "Backward Classes" = Scheduled Castes + Scheduled Tribes + Other Backward Classes; "Backward Classes" = Other Backward Classes." (Galanter; 1984: 3)

Although the concept of "Positive discrimination" started being used right from the British period it was only after Independence that founding fathers of our Constitution incorporated this policy in to the Constitution and guaranteed special rights for certain groups paving the way for equality to all.

This intention of our Constitution - makers is rightly put as:

"The main objective behind the positive action in the form of preferential treatment through special provisions is the amelioration of the status of Backward Classes for the purpose of the redressal of backwardness. It may be part or compensatory justice appropriately compensating the victims of past discrimination. It may be required to qualify the test of distributive justice seeking to ensure that community resources are more equitably and justly shared among all classes of citizens (Prasad, 1970: 120).

Thus it is clearly seen, that the aim of this Policy is Constitutionally to provide reservation in appointments and not to alleviate poverty but to give due share in the state power to those who have remained out of the

Positive discrimination/Affirmative action/Protective discrimination/Compensatory discrimination/Reverse discrimination are all used as synonymous.
reckoning for quite a long time. This, in turn, may definitely account for social, educational, and economic upliftment as a whole of such groups historically deprived.

After fifty years of such a Policy in operation, the question that arises is what result it has produced? An evaluation of this Policy during the specific period of our Independence is necessary at this stage.

The benefits of "Compensatory Discrimination" are supposed to accrue to Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe and "Other Backward Classes". The first two groups are easily identifiable. Whereas the category of Other Backward Classes is heterogeneous, varying greatly from one State to the other. Other Backward Classes (OBC) are Backward in terms of education, economic condition and have low social status. But they are not "Untouchable". Reservation for OBC, however, became a national controversy as the various political parties differed in their views and there were emotional/violent outbursts. Hence it is important to examine the Policy of reservations for OBC in all its ramifications.

In evaluating this Policy, some scholars are of the opinion that the Policy had produced substantial re-distributive effects, while others feel that it had not reached the set goal.

Andre Betteille (1992 : 24) says, that the policy of protective discrimination raises two issues, which will be useful in making any assessment of its success or failure in India. First, how far it is going to reward merit? and how it is going to balance the claims of the individual
with those of the community who are treated as backward. He feels, at the end, the policy of "Protective discrimination" sets out inequalities between caste and communities, but increasing the inequalities between the individual members of each caste and community. He further argues (1992: 32) that it would be wrong to provide equal opportunity or equalization opportunity among those unequally placed castes and communities who are absolutely heterogeneous.

PaiPanandiker (1997: 7) says that the "Compensatory discrimination" has not worked out any where in the world and also in India. He adds that the problem of social justice remains exactly where it was and feels the system of corruption has developed strongly due to it. He further claims that the reservation has affected the efficiency in education and academic standards. Thus the policy of Protective discrimination is controversial largely because it presents and reflects several of the most critically unresolved moral conflicts within the society.

The concept of "Positive discrimination" has been and still is a very sensitive issue; behind the "reservation" issue, as it is popularly perceived, lies the changing nature of the Indian polity, economy and society as a whole. The major question that arises is "where does it lead to?". This is a question addressed by many scholars. Many studies, articles and reviews have been written on the issue of reservation policy, but for the purpose of this study, the literature reviewed has been confined to relevant items. The concept is not new or unique to Indian situation but widely carried out by various other countries namely USA, Malaysia, and Srilanka to mention a few.
Affirmative Action in Other Countries

In USA the policy is known as "Affirmative action" and "Reverse discrimination". Taylor (1991) effectively combines empirical and normative approaches in his study. The author carefully analysed the moral and ethical values underlying the formulation and implementation of "Affirmation action" policy in the California State Department of Parks and Recreation. By following the Writing of prominent social theorists, Taylor explores the central empirical concepts and questions concerning Affirmative Action.

The methodology which he relies on is his participant observation and in-depth personal interviews with carefully selected individuals and a standardized questionnaire for Parks Department employees. Using sampling survey research, and data analysis technique the author finds a surprising pattern of support and opposition to many of the Parks Department Affirmative action policies and guidelines. One of the most surprising findings for example is the apparent opposition to Affirmative action voiced by American Indian men. Taylor presents a comprehensive picture of the cross-pressure at work in the minds of agency personnel. This work, theoretically and methodologically makes a significant contribution to the literature of "Affirmative action" and "Anti-discrimination policy".
Taylor (1991) states:

The history leading to the implementation of Affirmative action programme in largely the history of the civil right movement beginning with the abolition. It showed brief but frustrated promise during the period of reconstruction after the civil war, followed by a gradual awakening of conscience, beginning especially during the late "New Deal Period". It gained the momentum after the Second World War and got a decisive impetus in 1963, when over 200,000 people gathered in Washington, D.C., for what was then the largest civil rights demonstration in U.S. history, a demonstration that expedited passage of the Civil Right Act of 1964.

Several specific legislative events stand out during the above periods. The Civil Right Act of 1899 seems to prohibit a broad range of private as well as public acts of discrimination. This act was followed by the all important Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of USA, ratified in 1866, section 1 of which guarantees to all citizens 'equal protection' under the law, 'due process' of all law, and the rights to life, liberty, and property. Equal protection of the laws to all citizens is expressed in legal literature as the 'anti-discrimination principle'. This principle dis-favours decisions dependent on racial classification and is the ground of subsequent civil right law. (pp.16-17)

The basic principle that underlies Affirmative Action is to benefit the racial minorities and women in particular. The author also mentioned the two important types of law that was associated with Affirmative action. "The land mark of Civil Right Act of 1964, Public law 88-352 (1964) definitively prohibits discrimination invoking, public accommodation, public education, and employment. Title VII & the Act prohibits job discrimination and places a priority on equal employment opportunity" (1991: 17).
Keeping in view the Affirmative Action Policy of USA, Prasad (1997) states that:

"The Basic difference in American and Indian social structure attracts different consideration. In America tiny number of minority of Negroes had suffered discriminatory treatment at the hands of white people. In India the majority of population had suffered discriminatory treatment at the hands of a handful of dominant caste people controlling the levers of power. Thus the American style of justification for positive discrimination or protective discrimination is based on ground of utility where as the Indian style of justification is made on the ground of Constitutional rights, under Article 15(4), 16(4) 46 and so on. The moving spirit behind reservational justice is not equaliteration but equalisational justice" (p. 279).

In Srilanka, the problem arose on the basis of linguistic criteria and not on the basis of racial factors as in the case of USA. Satchi Ponnambalam (1983) states that: "From early times, the Tamils took to education not so much as a means of gaining knowledge but to acquire a qualification for a job, mainly in the Government Service" (p.173). Indians from the beginning, even in India, seem to have the opinion that government jobs are higher in position as well as secure than the other kinds of employment. Ponnambalam also mentioned that in the system of meritocracy, the Tamils entered the higher civil service in substantial numbers in Sri Lanka. To the Tamil people education was the central artery of life, and nothing arouse deeper despair among the Tamils than the feeling that they are systematically squeezed out of higher education. Thus as a result, the Tamils entered the higher civil service in substantial numbers.
The Sinhala government decided to change to "Swabasha" policy, that is either Sinhala or Tamil as the medium of instruction in schools or colleges. This Policy dictates that children must be educated in their mother tongue; Sinhala for sinhalese children and Tamil for Tamil Children. Educationalists lent their support to this on the ground that there should be no linguistic gap between home and school and that the cultural influence of the child's home environment must operate in the learning process as well. The practical objective of using education to gain employment was relegated to the background.

Until 1970, no distinction was made between Sinhalese and Tamil students seeking admission to the university, and admission was strictly by merit on the basis of open competitive examination held in the English medium. Under this policy special "steps" were taken to "standardize" the admission to provide equal opportunity to Sinhala and Tamil students thus:

1. Standardization in 1973
2. Standardization and district quotas in 1974
3. Standardization and 100% district quotas in 1975
4. Standardization and 70% on marks and 30% district quotas in 1976.

All these resulted in large numbers of Tamil students, who had passed the examination with high percentage of marks, not qualified for admission to the University. Each of these schemes created a great controversy. The Sinhalese emerged as the main beneficiaries through these schemes. This discrimination is also recognized as one of the factors for the present ethnic problem in Sri Lanka.
In the case of Malaysia the Policy of protection to indigenous people is meant to benefit the Malay. Gord and Means (1970) emphasize that:

Ever since the first British administration originated, it has been the Government policy to give the Malays certain privileges on the assumption that they alone were indigenous to Malaya and needed both political and economic protection. Under the Federation agreement of 1948, Malay privileges continued in main areas of public policy:

1. The system of reservation of certain lands for Malay only;
2. The operation of quotas within the public services;
3. Reserving of certain business, chiefly those related to road and transport; and
4. Special quotas for public scholarship and education quotas.

The Alliance Government decided to continue these traditional grants, and in the terms of reference to "Reid Commission" to provide means for safeguarding the special position of Malays. However these terms of reference also called for the creation of a "Common Nationality". The Commission expressed some difficulty in reconciling these two principles. Special rights to one community precludes equality before the law and creates separate rights for two classes on the basis of race. Although the commission expressed a preference for equality, it also realized that the Malay would suffered if these special privilege should be continued for substantial period but should ultimately cease" (pp177-18).

Thus the concept of positive discrimination i.e. special privileges for a category of people is practised in many parts of the world. The problem in India is something different from the developed societies like United State of America, where the claim raised by African-Americans who were neglected and treated as slaves till recently by the majority Whites.
The Indian Situation and Issues

In India a majority of the population are backward and oppressed by the upper/dominant castes who hold higher position in social structure. For over fifty years India has been engaged in a massive and far-reaching effort ever undertaken by a democratic nation to integrate an oppressed and excluded population into the mainstream of national life. The beneficiaries of an elaborate system of Compensatory discrimination are categories such as SC, ST and OBC groups. This policy gives them the legislative representation as well as preferential treatment in employment and education.

India has a long history of ‘Protective discrimination’ policy for uplifting the socially and educationally backward sections of the population. In order to understand and appreciate the significance of the role played by the government in improving the socio-economic and educational conditions of SCs/STs, OBC and minorities in the country, it is necessary to review the history of reservation both at the All-India level and also, particularly, at State Level.

OBC in Different States

It is obvious that the history of Backward Classes can be studied at two levels. One at All India level and the other at State level. The Government of India opted a two pronged approach to tackle this problem. On the one hand it formulated five year-plans for the overall development
of the country and the other is that it made special provisions under Articles 15(4) and 16(4) for the upliftment of all the sections of Backward Classes. The Government took direct responsibility for framing and implementing certain policies for the Backward Classes.

Agarwal and Agarwal (1991) state that: "Tamil Nadu and Karnataka had a long history of Backward Classes movements and various measures for their welfare were taken up in a phased manner" (p.50). Compared to the North, the South has a larger and better organization of the OBC and this leads to unified and strong OBC movement in South and not in North so far. They also examine the key issues of upliftment of the Backward Classes particularly OBC.

Chopra (1997) states that "the origin of 'reservation' lies in what is now Tamil Nadu and in the protest of the non-brahmins, all Non-Brahmins whether Hindu or Muslims, Christians or any other against the overwhelming predominance of Brahmins in government services" (p.13). The contemporary social and political history of Tamil Nadu has been dealt with by many western scholars, like Hardgrave (1969), Eugene Irschick (1976), Arnold (1978) and Gough (1978). Their studies drew a brief sketch of the policy of the communal representation followed by the British and Justice party rule for the upliftment of depressed commnities. But their focus of attention was mainly on the general trends and turns of the political history of Tamilnadu.

The Commissions

The First Backward Classes Commission was set up by a Presidential order under Article 340 of the Constitution of India, on January 29, 1950 under the Chairmanship of Kaka Kalelkar which submitted its report on March, 1955. On the basis evolved by it, the Commission listed 2,399 castes as Socially and Educationally Backward. It recommended various welfare measures for OBC including reservation in governmental services and educational institutions. The Government felt, that the Commission had classified a very large section of people and if provisions had to be extended to all these people, the really needy will be swapped by the multitude.

The Commission failed to submit a unanimous report. The Commission interpreted the term’s Socially and Educationally Backward Classes’ as relating to social backwardness of a class to its low position in the traditional caste hierarchy of Hindu society. But a few other members of the commission opposed the view of linking caste with backwardness.
The then Government of India directed the Deputy Registrar General of Census to conduct a pilot survey to see if backwardness could be linked to occupational communities instead of caste (see Mandal Commission Report). But the Deputy Registrar General reported after the survey that it was impossible to draw up any precise or complete list of 'occupations' the members of which could be treated as socially backward. Thereafter, the Government of India authorized the state Governments to render assistance to Socially Backward Classes until determination of more satisfactory norms.

In 1978, the President appointed a Backward Classes Commission under the chairmanship of B.P. Mandal. The main terms of reference of the commission was to determine the criteria for defining the Socially and Educationally Backward and recommend steps to be taken for their advancement.

In the Mandal Commission report (1980), eleven indicators for determining Social, Educational and Economic Backwardness were listed. These indicators were given different values. In the social indicators, there were four criteria, there were three education indicators and there were four economic criteria. The weightage that was given to each indicator was arbitrary. The social indicators were given a weightage of 3 points each. Thus the total value was 22 points. All Castes which accrued a score of eleven points and above were listed as Backward.
The Commission submitted its report on December 31, 1980. The main recommendation of this commission was to reserve 27% seats/job for OBC's. In 1982 it was discussed both by the LOKSABHA and RAJYASABHA and later refereed to a committee of secretaries for examination.

There was lot of debate, often acrimonious, about Mandal Commission Report. "There was no certainty, first of all, that the method followed by the Mandal Commission had been able to cover all the castes which claim to exist within the country" (Pai Panandiker, 1997:50). Due to various drawbacks of the Report and the sudden announcement of accepting its recommendations are described as a political decision of the then Prime Minister V.P.Singh, taken without an in-depth study of various issues arising out of its implementation. The decision of the Government to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendations on reservation for the Backward Classes has met with resentment among a section of the students. In such a situation the decision to reserve jobs on the basis of Caste for an additional 27.0% to the existing quota of reservation of 22.5% for SC and ST has created further frustration among the youth. The youth went on a rampage often ending in violence.

Legal Position

The Nine-Judge-Bench of the Supreme Court was constituted for the first time to settle the Constitutional and legal position on reservations. The main question dealt by the Bench was "who should be treated as belonging to the Backward Class and how and what should be the scope of reservation".
The Mandal Commission exercised its choice to take caste as the basic unit of our society and so based its identification of the 'Backward Classes' on caste rather than 'Class'. The Supreme Court has sought to re-introduce the distinguishing element of 'class' rather than 'caste' by ordering the exclusion of the 'Creamy layer' from the special measures that are taken in favour of the Backward Castes. There is a difference between the quota for a group based on its overall backwardness and the selection of individual beneficiaries from the group. On this Mandal commission is very silent. The Supreme Court has spoken out and gave directions to Government to identify the criteria for creamy layer.

At the conceptual and theoretical level the work of Beteille and Marc Galanter provide a comprehensive outlook on the policy of 'Protective discrimination. Andre Beteille stated, "that the fact still remains that extensive caste quotas in favour of the south for a longtime, and are widely accepted, or at least tolerated them, whereas the prospect of their introduction has found unprecedented resentment and hostility in the north" (1992;102)

After V.P.Singh's and Chandra Shekar's Governments, when Narasimha Rao's Government came to the power in 1991, it proposed and issued a notification on September 27,1991 that within 27% of the Union Government civilian jobs reserved for the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, preference will be given to the poorer sections of such classes. Apart from this 10% of the vacancies in civil posts and services shall be reserved for other economically backward sections of the people who are not covered by any of the existing schemes of reservations.
In Tamil Nadu

Each state has got its own commission to improve status of OBC. For the purpose of the present study, here the concentration is history of the Backward Classes movements in Tamilnadu.

The beginning of the 20th century was a crucial period in the history of the Backward Classes in Tamilnadu (The then Madras Presidency). "Movements of the middle castes against the cultural predominance of Brahmins had emerged in the 19th century, now focusing on Brahmin predominance in education and government service, they took on political form. The justice party, the organ of the Non-Brahmin movement in Madras was found in 1916; the organization of the Non-Brahmin party in Bombay got underway in 1917. The Princely state of Mysore initiated a system in which all communities other than Brahmins were denominated as 'Backward Classes' from 1918." (Galanter, 1987:27). Thus Galanter, provided the history of origin and details about the Protective discrimination. He further analyzed the unique feature of inequality encountered in every walk of life in Indian society and the need for recognizing the policy of Protective discrimination as a method of achieving equality. His work drew attention to the difficulties inherent in the identification of the Backward Classes and the complex nature of the problem of the Backward Classes.
Radhakrishnan's work on this subject of Protective discrimination traces the origin of the Backward Classes categories. He says:

"During 1853, the British Government found the virtual monopoly of a single caste in public service. The Revenue establishment in Nellore district was controlled by fifty Brahmins all from the same family. Because of the influence and family connection of these people, the European District Collector was powerless either to detect fraud and misdeed on their part and punish them or to protect the public from their exploitation and oppression. It was against this background that Board of Revenue issued its standing order (BSO) 128 (2) of 1854" (1993: 1586-1587).

He further says:

In fact Muslims were the first to be treated as a Backward Class in Madras Presidency. They were then not labeled as a Backward Class. But the idea was to treat them so, by holding not, as reported in a subsequent resolution, special inducement to a Backward Class for promoting their education and employing those qualified among them in the public service. (1996: 509).

Four full decades lapsed from the time between the laying of the Constitutional underpinnings i.e., after 1950, and the notification of reservation in public employment as an element of national policy. In that period, a number of states put in a place to develop systems of their own reservation, based upon often divergent perceptions and criteria of backwardness.

As Muralidharan (1998) rightly says: "Both the Kaka Kalelkar Commission in 1955 and the Mandal Commission in 1980 utilised the findings of the last detailed community based census of 1931 to explore the population of the Backward Classes. The Mandal Commission also utilized a sample survey to identify the social attributes of backwardness. Yet these
two exercises remain contradictory in many crucial respects and also inconsistent with many of the findings of the Backward Class commission appointed by various State Government" (p.78).

The Madras Presidency had maintained a Reservation Policy in 1885 in the form of Grant-in-aid to poor students of certain castes. There were separate rules under the Madras Educational Rules (MER) for regulating fee concession to children belonging to Backward Classes in Secondary School and colleges. In 1952, the Madras Government published two lists (i.e.,) Depressed Classes and Castes other than Depressed Classes eligible to get half-fee concession under 92 of Madras Educational Rules (Government order Ms.No.855, Law (education), Government of Madras, May 19, 1925) This order permitted the converts to Christianity from Scheduled Caste to enjoy half-fee-concession while the same concession was denied to converts from Backward Classes. The two lists maintained by the Government in 1952 differed considerably from the present lists as some of the communities of the caste Hindus or Savarna group were included in the list of Depressed Classes. So the census commissioners of India laid down certain criteria for distinguishing Depressed classes from Backward Classes. A separate list of Depressed classes was prepared in 1935 which was included in the list of Scheduled Caste in the M.E.R. (Government order MS.No.2116, Law Education, Government of Madras, October 23, 1935).

The focus of my study is to make an attempt to understand the Policy at the ground level in Tamil Nadu.
Other Backward Classes in Tamil Nadu

"The evolution of Backward Class lists in Tamil Nadu clearly show that, far from being a creation of the Indian Constitution, these were created by the British administration, supported and sustained by missionary educationists. Understanding the emergence and growth of these lists is crucial for rationalising the present Backward Classes categories. For it is these lists, and not any others arrived at after proper enumeration, which have been used to fill the three Backward Classes categories envisaged by the Constitution. More importantly, their adoption for dispensation of the far-reaching special treatment provisions of the Constitution has in effect reduced the perception and practise of these provisions to a mere concessionist policy". (Radhakrishnan, 1990 : 509).

The evolution of the policy for the upliftment of Backward Classes runs in two parallel streams, (i) relating to reservation of posts in Government service, and (ii) relating to scholarship, fee concessions and reservation in educational institutions. "Infact the British attempts to go along with this class long preceded its educational efforts. As early as in 1814 the Court of Directors has ordered exclusion of Indian christians, then mostly of the ‘untouchable’ castes, from certain officers such as of ‘munsiff’, ‘vakil’ and officer, in Bengal Presidency and also of ‘sudder amean’ (civil judge) and cavalry in Madras Presidency (Radhakrishnan, 1993 : 1585).
"Soon after Independence, the Government of India suggested to the State Governments that the existing system of recruitment for public service on communal basis should be abrogated at an early date as it was inconsistent with the letter and spirit of Art. 16 of the Constitution and that suitable provisions within the meaning of the art. 16(4) and Art.335 should be made for protecting the interest of the weaker section of the society" (Government of Tamil Nadu, The Second Backward Class Commission (Ambashankar, 1982, Vol.I, p : 10).

There was also discontentment among the various communities against their inadequate representation in the public service and against the over-representation of one particular community. In 1904, the Board of Revenue obtained from collectors a statement of caste wise list of employees and found that in superior service the proportion of Brahmins to Non-Brahmins was 70:30. The Board instructed the Collectors to arrange the recruitment of Non-Brahmins in such a way as to ensure that appointments were more fairly distributed. The Board also advised certain collectors about the desirability of increasing the number of the Non-Brahmin Deputy Tashildars in their districts, if qualified men were available.

The Communal system followed in the admission of students to professional colleges, which was in Vogue as per the G.O.No.3437 dated 21st November, 1947, was challenged as being violation of the rights guaranteed in the Art 16(1) and (2) of the Constitution by Champakam Dorairajan in 1950 (A.I.R. Tamil Nadu, June 7, 1950).
The System of Communal reservation had helped a number of candidates from Backward Class families to enter into the Government service for the first time which was hitherto considered impossible by them. Table 1.1 reveals the extent of benefits enjoyed by the Backward Classes as a result of the communal rotation of appointment.

**TABLE NO. 1.1**

**RECRUITMENT BY COMMUNAL ROTATION IN MADRAS PRESIDENCY/TAMIL NADU**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Director Recruitment</th>
<th>Recruitment by Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Total Recruitments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gazetted</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Non-Gazetted</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>1341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-BC Gazetted</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Gazetted</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Reserved gazetted for B.C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non Gazetted</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Open competition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>B.C.Appointed Gazetted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Open competition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Gazetted</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Source: Sarawathi S., 1975;143.

In 1916 the British Government relaxed the age limit for entry into Public Service, and qualifications for some of the entrance examinations, simplified some of the entry tests, and abolished some others. This measure was basically to ensure the participation of Non-Brahmin communities in Public Service.
The success of the Justice Party in the year of 1920 election brought this subject in the newly constituted Legislative Council. "In Madras Presidency, the justice party set about distributing administrative appointments among the various castes and communities from 1921 onwards. These procedures were codified in the communal G.O. of 1927 which laid down a roster system that operated till 1947 when it was revised" (Beteille, 1992: 103).

In 1924, the government constituted the Staff Selection Board to regulate appointment to Public Service. In 1925 Government appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Thiru. Krishnan Nayar to enquire into the working of the system of communal representation. The committee functioned for about three years and did not submit its report. In 1934, the Madras Provincial Backward Classes League was founded.

In 1947, the Government passed an order giving separate quota for the Backward Hindus and also increased the then existing representation of one out of twelve allowed for Depressed classes. For the first time in the history of appointments to Public Service, the group of Backward Hindus came to be recognised and a separate allocation was made for them.

The year 1951 marks a watershed in the history of Backward Classes Movement, when the Constitution of India came into being. There was opposition to the application of the "Communal Government Order". The Supreme Court struck down the communal Government Order as unconstitutional. E.V.Ramasamy Naicker, the Dravida Kazhagam leader, organised mass processions and meetings and observed "Communal
Government Order day”. The point forced the state to take up the matter with the centre. The result was the First Amendment to the Constitution introducing Article 15(4).

During the rule of Dravida Munetra Kazhagam, in 1969, under the leadership of M.Karunanidhi the question of reviewing the Reservation Policy came up in view of the representations made by a number of castes for inclusion in the Backward Classes list and also of the increase in the population of the state (Government of Tamil Nadu, Government order No.842, Social welfare). In response to the demand made by various communities M.Karunanidhi, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, appointed the first Backward Class commission of Tamil Nadu in March 1969 under the chairmanship of A.N.Sattanathan to examine the welfare measures to be taken by the Government to promote the welfare of the Backward Classes and to improve the conditions of the Most Backward Classes in education and other spheres.

The Commission was asked to prepare a list of Backward Classes and to set out their population and their regional distribution as well as to assess the progress made by each class, particularly in education, economic status and employment in Government service. The commission used educational, social backwardness and traditional occupation pursued by a majority of the members of a caste as the main criteria for backwardness. The commission in its report of 1971 used educational and Social Backwardness and the nature of the occupation pursued traditionally by the majority of the members of a caste as the main criterion of Backwardness. (Government of Tamil Nadu, 1971, Report of the Backward Class Commission, A.N.Stanathan, Chairman).
The commission recommended 33 percent reservation for the Backward Classes. Another important recommendation of the Commission was to divide the Backward Classes into (a) Backward Classes and (b) Most Backward Class recommending 17 percent reservation for the Backward Classes and 16 per cent for the Most Backward Classes. It was not in favour of making reservation on the basis of population as in the case of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. It also recommended the deletion of nine communities which in its opinion made sufficient progress as a result of concessions enjoyed by them so far. Based on the recommendations of the Backward Class Commission, which submitted its report in 1970, the Government revised the percentage of reservation as follows:

- Scheduled Castes and Tribes = 18%
- Backward Classes = 31%
- Open competition = 51%

"In its report submitted in 1970 the Commission had observed that, just nine out the numerous communities listed as backward, accounting for only about 11% of the total BC population, had cornered much of the benefits available to the entire BC population, viz 37% of the non-gazetted and 48% of the gazetted posts, 44% of the Engineering and 47% of the medical college seats and 34% of the scholarships. It was to prevent this creaming effect of the reservation policy that the commission recommended income limit of Rs.9,000" (Radhakrishnan, 1989;1266).
As per the Commission’s Report, the total population of the Backward Classes was 52% of the total population, for which it recommended 33% of reservation.

Many of the recommendations of the Commission were accepted by the Government from time to time and some of the orders were challenged in the Supreme Court. The next phase in the history of Reservation Policy in Tamilnadu began with a demand for separate reservation for separate communities. The Vanniyakula Kshatriyar began to voice their demand for 20% exclusive reservation for them. The AIADMK Government under the Chief Ministership of M.G. Ramachandran realized the need for rationalizing the reservations. "It was in persuance of this directive that M.G.Ramachandran constituted, on December 13, 1982, the Second Backward Classes Commission, associating with it as many shades of politicians as it could find within the state through as many as 13 member a little later" (Radhakrishnan, 1989: 1266). Thus the AIADMK Government realized the need for rationalizing the schemes so as to give benefits to the poverty stricken sections among the Backward Classes. The Government order introduced the economic criterion for deciding was severely critized by the opposition parties. After revoking the G.O.M.S.No.1156 dated 2.7.1979. Which imposed income ceiling for enjoying the benefits of reservation by G.O.M.S.No.72, social welfare Department, the AIADMK raised the percentage of reservation for Backward Classes from 31% to 50% by a G.O.M.S.No.73 dated February 1980.

The Terms of Reference to the Commission were:

i. To review the existing list of Backward Classes as approved in G.O.M.S.No.72, social welfare, dated 1st February 1980, in the light of the provision of article 15(4) and 16(4) and supreme court decision on the matter.

ii. To make a factual and scientific investigation of the conditions of the Backward Classes in the state and to recommend specific measures for their advancement.

iii. To review the welfare measures taken by the State Government for the welfare of the Backward Classes and to assess the effective of such measures in the improvement of the conditions of the Backward Classes particularly in the sphere of education and representation in public service of the state.

iv. To examine the concession, privileges and benefits given to the most Backward Classes and their effectiveness.

v. To make recommendations regarding the measures to be taken by the government of Tamilnadu to improve the conditions of the Backward Classes in respect of,

   a. Education including reservation of seats in professional colleges and institutions of higher learning.

   b. Representation in public service.

   c. Trade, commerce and industry.
d. Rural credit, marketing and Co-operation.

e. Housing

f. Grants and community development.

vi. To suggest long-term and short-term measure to be taken by the state-government for improving the Backward Classes.

vii. To examine and recommend on the basis of the survey and analysed of details whether the reservation ordered in G.O.M.S.No.73 social welfare dated 1st February 1980 may continue or will need any modifications and

vii. To include all such questions and issue as to have a having upon.

a. The question of numeration and classification of Backward Classes in the state.

b. The question of reservation in admission in educational institution including college and institutions of higher learning.


The Ambashankar Commission visited several centres for more than 30 days, heard and recorded the evidence of more than 2000 witnesses. Two seminars were held. One was held at Madurai whose members and experts in various fields met and exchanged idea abouts the identification of backwardness.
The Chairman had recommended compartmental reservation under article 15(4) and article 16(4) of the Constitution. He arrived at this conclusion from the survey conducted by the Commission which revealed a wide disparity in the level of Backwardness among the several Backward Classes. The review of admissions to professional colleges and selection for Government posts by the TNPSC reveals that a large number of castes (i.e) more than 125 have failed to get any representation for three consecutive years. Though the Chairman took note of the disapproval of the classification of Backward Classes into ‘backward’ and ‘more backward’ by the Supreme Court in the Balaji case, he asserted that the existence of several layers among the Backward Classes could not be ignored and justice to the weakest sections of the Backward Classes denied.

Ambashankar suggested deletion of these castes / classes from the list of Backward Classes and when the social and educational backwardness of any caste / class exceeds the prescribed percent of the state average by conducting a detailed and scientific study periodically not exceeding ten years. He believed that this recommendation will have the merit of providing a self-liquidating mechanism.

Another controversial suggestion of the Chairman of the Commission is related to the limit of reservation. But it was opposed by the other members firmly.
Position of some communities in Professional Courses

The commission has pointed out how candidates of some communities were not able to get selection in the professional courses thus necessitating the compartmental reservation. (i) More than 125 castes in the list of Backward Classes could not have even a single student selected in three consecutive years. As many as 65 out of 70 Denotified Communities have not secured admission at all in all the three years during 1980-83. In the admissions to medical colleges in the state there are only 77 communities figuring in the selection during 1980 to 83. This leaves a large number of 144 Backward Class Communities not gaining even one seat in the medical colleges for three years in succession. Nineteen out of thirty nine Most Backward Communities and 68 out of 70 Denotified Communities were not able to get even one seat in the medical colleges during these years. In the admission to law college, 143 castes in the Backward Classes list did not have even one candidate in law course during these three years, Except one, no Denotified community secured admission. Seventeen out of 39 Most Backward Classes did not gain admission at all. In Industrial Training Institutes 38 castes enjoyed a higher representation than the state average. Forty Eight castes had a representation lower than the state average. Major communities like Vâniakulakshtriya, Agamudaiyar, Nadar, Yadhavas and Kongu Vellala had a lower representation than the state average (see Ambashankar Commission Report, 1985).
During 1989, fresh election were announced in the month of January. M.Karunanidhi the DMK President promised the Vanniars a better deal by his party if elected. When the DMK came to power, he ordered a fresh scheme of reservation for the Backward Classes comprising 20% for Most Backward Classes, 30% for Backward Classes, 18% for Scheduled Caste and 1% for Scheduled Tribe in March 1989. Thus by 1989, the reservation quota stood at 69% in Tamil Nadu.

The scheme of reservation (69%) in the state was challenged in the Supreme Court. Its judgement on 16.11.1992 quashed the scheme and ordered to limit the percentage of reservation to 49%. The then Chief Minister J.Jayalalitha moved a resolution in the Tamilnadu Legislative Assembly on 9.11.1993, which requested the Government of India to bring in a Constitutional Amendment providing for the policy of 69% reservation. A review petition and a classification petition were filed in the Supreme Court on 22.3.1993 and 23.4.1993 respectively. The Tamilnadu Assembly also passed a bill providing for 69% reservation. The Act was called the "Tamilnadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 1993" (Government order MS.No.1564, social welfare; Government of T.N.30 July 1985; and Government order MS.No.242. BCW, NMP, SW Department dated 28.3.1989).

OBC : The Problem of Definition

Andre Bettille states that, "the moral basis of the claim for special treatment of the Harijans and Adivasis are quite different from the moral basis of the claims made by the various castes and communities which seek
inclusion among the "Other Backward Classes" (Beteille, 1992: 72). The concept of 'Reservation for OBC' has become a national controversy with its attendant ramifications. The problem can be traced to the definition of the term Backward Classes, the criteria which can be used and to what extant, who can be classified as beneficiaries. Hence, it becomes imperative to evolve a national consensus on the issue of Reservation Policy for the Other Backward Classes (OBC). A set of guidelines are needed which can regulate the future evolution of the OBC Reservation Policy.

The Constitution of India has made adequate provisions for granting, "Protective discrimination" to certain weaker section of the people. This is a conditional tool which has been designed by the framers of the Constitution to bring about social equality by removing the persisting social contours and by establishing an equilibrium between different situations and unequal nature in the society.

The term "Backward Classes" is a comprehensive one and consists of three broad divisions each having its own characteristic features, distinctive background and particular problems. The three broad divisions are the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Classes. "The Act of 1935, the Constitution of India nowhere specifically defines the terms" (Kumar, 1982: 142) As Chitnis rightly says, "it does not define the terms Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe, or Other Backward Classes. Nor does it provide detailed criteria by which these groups may be identified. It only prescribes that in the first instance these groups shall be designed for each State by Presidential order, in consultation with the Governor of each State with subsequent modification by an Act of Parliament" (1997:89).
The term Scheduled Caste was first used by Government of India Act, 1935 and defined as follows: "The Scheduled Castes" means, such castes, races and tribes, corresponding to the classes of persons formerly known as the 'depressed classes' as His Majesty in Council may specify, (Act of 1935, Section 24 of first schedule, part I). "The Indian Independence Act 1947 defined the term as: "The Scheduled caste means such castes, races or tribes or part of groups which appear to the Governor General to correspond to the classes of persons formerly known as the "depressed classes" as the Governor General may by order specify." (Indian Independence Act, 1947) the term Scheduled Caste defined in Article 366 (24) of the Constitution means "such castes, race or tribes or parts of groups within such castes, races or tribes as are deemed under Article 341 to be Scheduled castes for the purpose of this Constitution. (Kumar, 1982 : 143).

"When the President of newly Independent India promulgated the Scheduled Caste Order in 1950, he basically conformed to the list of 1936 with two major additions: some Sikh castes and castes from areas that had not till then been included in the Schedule. In 1951 and 1956 a few changes were again made, but those were mainly in the inclusion at 1956 of all Sikh, "untouchable" in the list. There were no other policy changes" (Chitnis, 1977 : 103).

The next category of the 'Backward Classes' is the Scheduled Tribes. This term is also nowhere defined in the Constitution. "All the logic regarding welfare, and acculturation would depend on the definition of a Tribe atleast in India. The 'Tribes' that are recognized by the State and
Central Government are those which have been scheduled by the President ‘Scheduled Tribes Order’ 1950 (Nayek, 1988 : 32).

The term, ‘Scheduled Tribes’ is defined under Article 366 (25) as:
"Scheduled Tribes means such tribes or tribal communities deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of Constitution (Kumar, 1982 : 144).

"The term ‘Backward Classes’ occurs in Article 15(4), 16(4) and 29(2) of the Indian Constitution. Article 15 (4) refers to what are called Socially and Educationally Backward Classes of citizens only. Article 29 does not formally use any such word, but there is a mention of it in clause 4 of Article 15" (Kumar, 1982 : 145).

No where in the Constitution, the term "Socially and Educationally Backward Classes" is defined. Though there are no definitions for the term ‘Scheduled Castes’ and ‘Scheduled Tribes' comparatively there is not much controversy regarding the application of the criterion of caste or tribe in the case of Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes. While there has been a good deal of difference of opinion about the determination of status of backwardness among the Other Backward Classes. Some have to ascertain the meaning of the phrase "Socially and Educationally Backward Classes" and see what criteria or factors must be taken into consideration to determine the ‘Social backwarders’ of the people to use the Constitutional tool of equalize the advantage of the really social backward citizens of the country.
Galantar who has done intensive analysis of the concept observes, "the term had never acquired a definite meaning at the All-India level. There had been no attempt to define it or employ it on the national level, and there were no nation wide Backward Classes organization or spokesman. The term had definite meaning in social context although these differed somewhat. After the listing of Scheduled Castes, the usage as a synonym for untouchable drops away. Two major species of usage emerge: (1) as the more inclusive group of all those who need special treatment (2) as a stratum higher than the untouchable but none the less depressed. This double usage continues today : the former in the usage of Backward Classes in the wide sense, the latter in the usage as equivalent to Other Backward Classes". (Galantar, 1984 : 159).

Thus Backwardness is considered problematic and sought to be removed through State action. If the State has to play a role and initiate action in that regard, then the problem arises on what basis need the State recognize backwardness. The term Backward Classes has become very much emotionally charged. Both academicians and politicians debated but still they have not reached unanimity regarding the definition and criteria to identify Backward Classes. But at the same time attempts have been made by men with diverse professional and ideological orientations like the legal experts, bureaucrate and political leaders to define Backward Classes. The commissions set up for the purpose of defining the criteria of backwardness have come up with the idea related to their own experience. For example Mandal Commission evolved eleven ‘indicators’ or ‘criteria’ for determining Social and Educational backwardness.
The Report admits that it has "no pretensions to bring a piece of academic research, and that a rough and ready tool has been evolved for identifying social and Educational Backwarders. (Mandal commission report, Vol. I. Section 11 : 27). Hence, the academic discussions of Backwardness and Backward Classes point out the need to evolve appropriate criteria for the identification of Backward Classes. Due to the elusive position of the definition, several people sought legal remedies. Court decisions in several well known cases have altered and emphasised that the caste can not be the sole criterion of backwardness.

The next issue in this field is associated with nearly 100 years of implementing of special programmes by Provincial Governments of India for the welfare of Depressed and Backward Classes. Madras Government took the first step by formulating Grant-in-Aid Code in 1885 to regulate financial aid to educational institutions for Backward Classes students. The Princely State of Mysore was the first State to follow the reservation schemes, but now all the Southern States are implementing this Scheme for OBC.

The decennial list of the Backward Classes from 1883 right upto 1994 collected as an alphabetically arranged matrix fully captures the lengthening of the Backward Classes list for over a century now.
11 names in - 1883
39 names in - 1893
46 names in - 1903
122 names in - 1913
131 names in - 1923
182 names in - 1933
238 names in - 1943
270 names in - 1953
302 names in - 1963


This growth of the list indicates the increasing concern for their social amelioration and their emerging identity as a separate category within the Backward Classes. "After considering the commendation of the Tamil Nadu Second Backward Classes Commission the Government published three lists of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes for the purpose of reservation under Article 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution. A comprehensive list of Backward Classes including the Most Backward Classes and Denotified communities approved in G.O.MS.NO. 1564, Social Welfare Department dated 30.7.85. A separate list of M.B.C. and denotified communities were approved in G.O.Ms.No. 1566 Social Welfare Department dated 30.7.85 and G.O.Ms. No. 28, the following notification contains 143 communities classified as B.C., 38 communities as M.B.C. and 68 communities as denotified communities" (Source : the respective Government orders. Department of Backward Classes). Though the list has gradually increased, a factual analysis shows that there are only few communities in the list who are enjoying the facilities given by the government.
This has resulted in an argument about the concept of 'creamy layer'. The main issues related to it are that it is advisable to oust the 'creamy layer' of OBCs. By skimming off creamy layer, the 'real' OBCs can benefit most. If the creamy layer is taken away, will the non-creamy layer be able to compete for the reserved seats/posts and how far economic criterion is worth applying to those amongst them who have already benefitted by it, and improved their socio-economic and educational status. Hence, it is sure, that the issue of 'creamy layer' among OBCs is not simple and requires lot of empirical study to ensure the facts.

The concept of creamy layer was much in contemplation of Mandal Commission. "The Commission was aware of the fact the major benefits of reservation and other welfare measures for OBC will be corresponded by more advanced section of Backward communities, but it conceded that was a universal phenomenon. Anyway, human nature being what it is a "new class" ultimately does emerge even in classless society. And therefore, priority has to be fixed". (Prasad, 1997 : 121-122). Though the author says it is eventual, finally it has to be kept in mind the prime objective of scheme, that it should reach the real beneficiary who is Socially Economically and Educationally Backward. Reservation in one or other form has been there for decades. If a survey is made with reference to families in various castes, the benefits would have been snatched away by the top creamy layer of OBC. So it is worth refusing preferred treatment to those among them who have already benefitted by it and improved their status.
The doctrine of social equality would be meaningful in Indian society, if "positive discrimination" privileges are given to those who are too weak, socially, economically and educationally. If they are availing the advantage properly, we can guarantee freedoms on a footing of equality. This equalizer must lead to social justice. When it fails to do, it ceases to be an equalizer and loses its legal efficiency.

It is a matter of surprise that the no State government has bothered to assess the impact of the reservation policy on various communities in the field of education and in the wider socio-economic sphere.

The Second Backward classes commission of Tamil Nadu discusses a wide range of issues pertaining to every community such as population, social status, educational attainments, representation in public service, economic progress and housing conditions. At this juncture, I would like to mention from Radhakrishnan's work on reservation, where he has pointed out that "Though the commission has recommended compartmental reservation, that in grouping to the degree of their backwardness and allowing representation out of the reserved quota to the several groups, it has not made any suggestion for preventing this 'creamy effect' of reservation by income limit or any other measure'. (Radhakrishnan, 1989 : 1268). The concept has been identified right from the first as well as by the Second Backward Class commission but neglected completely to carry out effectively. Added to this, I had an opportunity to work as a part-time
lecturer at the "Special Training Institute for Backward Classes. Most Backward Classes and Denotified Community" which prepares students for Civil Services and other All-India Services Examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission.

I had analysed the applications received by the Institute over a period of three years i.e., 1995, 1996 and 1997. The total number of applications received by the Institute in these three years were classified community wise to find out the communities frequently finding a place in the Institute. Those communities in which more than 10 applications were found were listed (Table 1.2).

**TABLE - 1.2**

**CASTEWISE LIST OF APPLICANTS FOR SELECTION TO THE "SPECIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR BACKWARD CLASSES"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agamudayar</th>
<th>Thuluva Velalar</th>
<th>Kongu Velalar</th>
<th>Nadar</th>
<th>Total Application Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>21 (8.60%)</td>
<td>23 (9.42%)</td>
<td>16 (6.55%)</td>
<td>17 (6.96%)</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>10 (6.17%)</td>
<td>10 (6.17%)</td>
<td>17 (10.49%)</td>
<td>19 (11.73%)</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>16 (7.44%)</td>
<td>15 (6.98%)</td>
<td>18 (8.37%)</td>
<td>26 (12.09%)</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is seen from the table that during the year 1995 totally 244 application were received. During 1996 totally 162 applications and during 1996, 215 application were received.
More than ten applications were received from candidates of Agamudayar, Thuluva Velalar, Kongu Velalar and Nadar communities. During 1995 applicants from Agamudayar community were 8.60% of the total applicants. In the year 1996 this has come down to 6.17% and again in the year 1997, 7.44% of the total application received belong to Agamudayar community. Applicants from Thuluva Velalar community in the year 1995 were 9.42% of the total applicants. This has reduced to 6.17% in the year 1996 and marginally increased to 6.98% during the year 1997. In Kongu Velalar community 6.55% of the total applications were received during the year 1995. In the year 1996 of the total application received 10.49% belong to Kongu Vellalar community. But again this has come down to 8.37% in the year 1997. During the year 1995 of the total application, 6.96% of application received belong to Nadar community. In the year 1996 it has increased to 11.73% and in the year 1997 to 12.09%. From the data it is seen that Nadar community people were more aware about reservation facilities, than other communities. This is evident from the steady increase in the percentage of application received over three year by the special Institute for Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities.

The classification of total Backward Class Communities listed by the State Government of Tamil Nadu through a letter G.O.Ms. No. 28 contains 143 communities classified as B.C., 38 communities as Most Backward Class and 68 communities as Denotified Communities. So totally the Other Backward Classes has 249 communities in the list.
The present study is attempted to assess the effect of "Creamy layer" among a particular community, which has been statistically proved to be using the provision of reservation in education over a period of time. The focus of this study is to understand the grass-roots level details about the concept of Positive Discrimination as applied to Other Backward Classes in Tamilnadu. The unit of my study is a family. Nadar Community, which has utilized the reservation in education considerably, is studied at three generation level. The following are the main objectives of the study.

Objectives

* To study the working of 'Positive discrimination' at the ground level with reference to OBC;
* To study the utilization pattern of reservation in education within a community over a period of time;
* To find out whether 'Positive discrimination' produces any 'Creamy layer effect'; and
* To find out how the 'Creamy layer' effect if any manifests itself at the inter-community and intra-community levels.

METHODOLOGY

The present study depends for its basic data in terms of presenting the historical and contemporary issues of Positive Discrimination on secondary sources. Various facets of these issues are called out from various studies and analysed. Firsthand analysis of contemporary issues, such as
the legal problems, is attempted based on the detailed legal documents and published materials. Various viewpoints, not only pro and anti-creamy layer but shades of it, regarding the creaming effect are brought together to present the broad picture, at the same time pointing out the lack of grass roots level studies to support or reject various arguments.

To bring the debate to centre stage, a field level specific study among one community was conducted to generate data on households with an emphasis on educational levels, occupation and income over a period of three generations. This enabled the researcher to interpret the field reality and link it to the general viewpoints.

Household has been chosen as a unit of study. Data were collected mainly about the respondents educational qualification, educational institution in which he or she has studied, Occupation and the income level. In the same way details about respondents’ parents, respondents’ spouses’ parents, respondents’ siblings, respondents’ spouses’ siblings and finally his own children were collected. These data form the prime factors for analysis.

To bring out the clarity about the problem, after the initial rapport building, interviews were conducted. Wherever it was necessary in depth interviews were conducted, so as to gain the insight on economic class variations. The interviews were mainly with Key Informants and their inmates separately to identify the cases for intensive study.
Various case studies were recorded. This was basically used to understand the individual experiences and variations which were difficult to capture with other technique. The case studies facilitated to understand ideas and practice about the traditional occupation and the social mobility. The qualitative and quantitative method helped for an intensive data of respondent attitudes.

The present study is conducted among the Nadar / Shanar of Tuticorin district in Tamil Nadu. The field study proper has started during November 1993, and culminated during 1996.

Selection of Study Area

The study is restricted to Nadar/Shanar Community in Tuticorin town and two selected rural areas which fall under Tuticorin District. The purpose of selecting this particular town is, as Hardgrave (1969 : X) who has done a historical study of Nadar mentioned that south eastern Tiruchendur and Tuticorin are the heart of the Nadar home land. Hence the researcher felt it is appropriate to select that particular district as a field of concentration (Fig.1). The rural areas are selected mainly in-order to compare the data generated from urban and rural areas. This will give us a comprehensive picture of socio-economic and educational status of the Nadar / Shanar community.
Since Tuticorin town is too wide for the study and small pockets were selected based on the ward wise total Nadar population generated. The population was roughly estimated to be 67,050. Few pockets from the four direction of the town were selected as study area.

The other factor in selecting the study area is the concentration of Nadar population. Thus the ward number 6 in the north, Number 48 in South, Number 17 in the east and finally number 1 in the west of the town were selected. The total number of households is 324.

The major criterion for selecting villages in rural area is, a village completely dominated by Nadar/Shanar who are still following the traditional occupation of 'Palmyara Climbing'/Toddy Tapping and the next village is the one undergoing transformation or change from their traditional occupation.

In order to have almost equal distribution of the economic classes 75 household which are involved in traditional occupation in the rural area and 75 households undergoing the process of induce change fall under the category of lower economic class. Roughly 100 households are selected from town area which fall under the middle class and finally 74 upper economic class households from the town area are also selected.

Computer Aid in Analysis

Household schedules were not pre-coded but later they were coded. The comprehensive data were fed into Fox-Pro. The SPSS - Package was used for analysing the household data for generating frequency and bivariate tables.