CHAPTER III

REMOVAL OF SOCIO-RELIGIOUS DISABILITIES OF THE DEPRESSED CLASSES UNDER THE JUSTICE PARTY’S RULE (1920-1937)
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During nineteenth century most of the Government jobs were monopolised by certain community of people. When the Indian National Congress wanted Indianisation of the services, the non-Brahmin Community in the Madras Presidency wanted Communal representation in the Government services. They wanted representation as per the population of Brahmins, Non-Brahmins, Muhammadans, Indian Christians and others. When the Non-Brahmin wanted Communal representation, it was opposed by the Indian National Congress on the pretence that it would divide nation on the basis of castes because most of the Congress leaders were from Brahmin Community. Inspite of the opposition the Non-Brahmins repeatedly demanded for the Communal Government Order (G.O.). Therefore, the Government had to accept their demand and issued the first Communal G.O. in 1921. The Justice Party to give due representation in the Government services to Depressed Classes and Backward Communities including Brahmins on the basis of population. Though, the Depressed Classes are Hindus, the Hindu temples were closed to them merely on the basis of their birth. By amending the Hindu-Religious Endowment Acts the Justice Party Government removed this bar of entering into the Hindu temples and thus, the civil right was awarded to the Depressed Classes.
COMMUNAL GOVERNMENT ORDER

In its first attempt of passing the Communal G.O., the Justice Party Government constitutionalised the due rights of Depressed Classes, Backward Classes, Indian Christians and Muhammadans in public services. Hence, the disabilities of the Depressed Classes were removed and they were given green signal to enter into Government services irrespective of their caste and colour disabilities. By amending the Hindu-Religious Endowment Acts of 1925 and 1927, as a first time in the history of India, the Depressed Classes religious disabilities were removed.

Early British Measures

Even before the awakening of the Non-Brahmin Community and formulation of the South Indian Liberal Federation (Justice Party) in 1916 the British rulers thought on the pattern of Government services were monopolised by a particular Community, the British rulers in 1854 sent a Standing Order to the District Collectors stating that they (District Collectors) should be careful to see that subordinate appointments in their districts should not be monopolised by few influential families and the appointments should be divided in each district among the principle castes.¹

The Backward Classes who were not fully qualified found themselves ineligible to occupy the Government jobs. When such

¹ Standing Order No.128(2), Revenue Board, Madras, 1854.
was the case, the Depressed Classes who were traditionally forbidden even to move or touch others and kept away from schools could not dream of any Government jobs. The above said standing order was not exactly based on proportional representation on population. It was a good beginning for a good cause.

In 1871, the Census Superintendent W.R. Cornish stated, "Politically, it is not to the advantage of the Government that every question connected with the progress of the country should be viewed through the medium of Brahmin spectacles...... the true policy of the State would be to limit their numbers in official positions and to encourage a large proportion of Non-Brahmin Hindus and Muslims to enter official service so as to allow no special pre-eminence or great preponderance of any particular caste".2

He suggested that the State should distribute the Government jobs equally to all the Communities. It noted that 55 per cent of the officials in the Government services the Brahmins who had the minimum qualification and suggested that the State should encourage education of Muslims and Non-Brahmin Hindus so as to reduce the Brahmins dominance in the public offices.3

3 Ibid.
In 1881, the Government collected the following information to estimate the relative progress made by different Communities.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENT AND CASTE – 1881

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Percentage of total population</th>
<th>Percentage of appointments over Rs.10</th>
<th>Percentage of appointments under Rs.10</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other Hindus</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Muhammadans</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Native Christians</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>European and Eurasian</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Depressed Class population was included in the non-Brahmin Hindu population. Though the Brahmins, Non-Brahmins and the Depressed Classes were Hindus, all the three were in separate compartments. But according to the Census Reports the 3.5 percent of Brahmin Community occupied a dominant position of Government services, relegating over a large majority of 96.5 per cent to the status of backwardness.


5 Royal Commission on Public Service in India - Oral Evidence and Examination of Witness, Madras, 1913, p.453.
There were signs of new awakening amongst the Non-Brahmin Classes. It was at this time the Royal Commission on Public Services was appointed in 1912 to examine the question of Indian participation in Civil Services. The Commission held its enquiry at Madras from 1st to 18th January, 1913 and forty-two witnesses were examined of whom nineteen were officials and twenty-three non-officials; eight witnesses supported fully the principle of class-representation and seventeen rejected it. P. Theyagaraya Chettiar who was then the member of the Madras Legislative Council exposed the monopoly of all posts by Brahmins in Provincial Civil Service after the introduction of recruitment by examination. On behalf of the Madras Presidency, the leader of Muslim League, Yakub Hassan pleaded that it was "absolutely necessary that all classes and communities should be duly represented in the Provincial Civil Service". But the Brahmin Community disagreed with the formula of distribution of high offices. The Brahmins said, that the merit and efficiency and not birth should be the criterion in selecting responsible officers. They feared that Communal consideration would lower the prestige of the service and introduce an element of discontent in the service itself. This stand of Brahmins awakened the pro-Brahmins i.e., the forward Non-Brahmin castes (non-Backward and non-Brahmin) and they raised against the Brahmins and wanted Communal C.O. But they were unwilling to extend the principle

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., p. 303.
of communal representation to the Depressed Classes. 8 A Revenue Divisional Officer T. BalaJI Rsc Nayudu said, that unless each community was represented by its own member in the service its interests would not be safeguarded. The Depressed Classes would have their chances when they get qualified. 9 Thus, from the beginning the non-Brahmin Caste Hindus aversion against the Depressed Classes even at their beginning stage at the hands of the British. 10

When the demand for communal representation in the state service began to grow, the communal tension between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins, was also strengthened day by day. The anti-Brahmin propaganda by the non-Brahmin leaders like not less than the High Court Judge Justice Sankaran Nair clearly exhibited the anti-pathy to Brahminism and priestly class. 11 Alexander Cardew, a member of the Governor's Executive Council suggested that fixed percentage of vacancies might be ascribed for different communities and competition restricted to members of the same community. 12 Thus the idea of communal representation in the services was born. It is to be noted, the communal representa-

8 Ibid., p.303 - Para 2291-2297.
9 Ibid., p.161 - Para 2273.
10 RajaL.M.C., The Oppressed Hindus, Madras, 1922, p.62.
11 The Hindu, 10th November, 1911.
12 Royal Commission on Public Services in India - Oral Evidence and Examination of Witness, Madras, 1913, pp.85-86.
Representation of the Depressed Classes in the Public Services and Politics

When the question of Communal representation arose, the Forward Caste Hindus supported the idea against Brahmins but were not willing to extend the same to the Depressed Classes. They wanted to be equalised with the Brahmins but not with the Depressed Classes. That was the social justice that non-Brahmins demanded from the Colonial rulers. But even before their demand for Communal representation, the British took steps to uplift the Depressed Classes. The Christian Missionaries took keen interest in educating the Depressed Classes. The British administrators were aware of the peculiarities of the social conditions in the Madras Presidency. They were dismayed at the inhuman treatment meted out to about one-fifth of the total population by the Caste Hindus. The interest shown by certain administrators like the Collector of Chengleput, Tremenbre, became the starting point of positive policy of the Government towards improving the lot of these sections. 13

The Charter Act of 1813 may be regarded as the first legal instrument which tried to bring the Depressed Classes to the level of others in the society in a limited way. This Act

prescribed that employment opportunities should not be denied on grounds of religion, place of birth, caste or community. It prompted the Government to take steps to improve the status of Depressed Classes. In 1892, Government of Madras passed a G.O. to safeguard the Depressed Classes against the Communal atrocities. 14

Communal Representation in Politics

The Indian Muslim League was formed on 30th December, 1906. The First Annual Conference of the League was held at Karachi on 29th December, 1907. It requested the Government to include four Muslim members in the Imperial Council of India. As a result of this, the Muslims were given Communal representation and separate electorate, the reservation of certain number of seats in the State and Central Legislatures and also in local bodies by the Minto–Morley Reform Act of 1909, out of 21 elected members in the Madras State Legislature two Muslims were elected exclusively by the Muslim themselves. This gave an impetus to the Depressed Classes. They began to demand Communal representation in the Legislatures. 15 In 1917 the members of the Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha went on Deputation and met the Viceroy, Governor and other high officers and submitted their

14 G.O.Ms.No.733, Revenue, 17th November, 1892; Seraswathi,S., Minorities in Madras State, Delhi, 1974, p.144.
15 Thangavelu,G., op.cit., pp.497-98.
Memorandum. They asked for special representation in local bodies and also in the Legislative Councils and Communal representation in any scheme of reform that may be given to the country as a whole.\textsuperscript{16} Here, it is to be noted that the Justice Movement of course desired the educational upliftment of the Adi-Dravidas and for free use of public wells, streets and tanks (civil rights) but not their Communal representation in politics.\textsuperscript{17} In 1918, the Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha submitted to the Southborough Committee, that the Adi-Dravidas were against the reform scheme and the transfer of power to popular control. They were keen on educational benefits. The Indian Ministers if appointed, would be from higher caste and the interest of the Depressed Classes would be neglected.\textsuperscript{18}

The Indian Constitutional Reforms Committee accepted the ideology of Communal representation.\textsuperscript{19} Under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Act of 1919, ten seats were reserved to the Depressed Classes in the Madras Legislative Council. These ten seats were distributed as follows: Paraiyar, Pallar, Velluvar, Mala, Madiga, Chakkiliyar, Tottiyan, Cheruran, Holeya and

\textsuperscript{16} Varadaraaju Naïdu,T. (Compiled), \textit{The Justice Movement 1917. Section I, Madras}, 1932, p.73.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.162-164.

\textsuperscript{18} Rajah,M.C., \textit{op.cit.}, p.84.

\textsuperscript{19} Fifth Despatch on Indian Constitutional Reforms (Franchise). Para 13, Delhi, 1918, p.367.
The Franchise Committee further accepted 'Separate Electorate' of Muslims, Anglo-Indians, Indian Christians and Europeans. Out of thirty-four nominated members of the Council, ten were the Depressed Class members and one more Depressed Class member was from Backward districts. These eleven representatives were the veteran leaders of the Depressed Classes who spearheaded the ruling party for their civil rights, representation in Government services, etc. When their political representation was constitutionalised by the Act of 1919, their reservation in the Government services became inevitable.

Earlier, the British Government formed a separate department called 'Labour Department' on 29th March, 1919 to look after the welfare of the Depressed Class. George C.F. Paddison, the seniormost I.C.S. officer was appointed as the "Protector" of the Labour Welfare Department. He started separate labour schools with 'Mid-day meal facility' to the Depressed Class pupils. Thus, the welfare of the Depressed Classes was guaranteed and protected by the British Government even before the Justice Party Government came to power on 17th December, 1920.

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23 Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir, Madras.
Communal G.O. of 1921

The prime object of the Justice Party was to bring out 'Communal Justice' in the appointment to public services. The Non-Brahmin Manifesto issued by the 'South Indian Liberal Federation' (SILF) in 1916 pointed out the extraordinary dominance of Brahmins in the Government services and declared that this should be ended. In the very first Non-Brahmin Conference held at Coimbatore in 1917, in a resolution on Public Services, it demanded that "stringent rules" should be framed to secure adequate representation of all Communities in all Departments of the Government. The Justice Party stood for equal opportunities for all classes of people in the Presidency. But the public services were found distributed unequally. T.A. Ramalingam Chettiar stated in the Legislative Council, that Communal representation should be given to the candidates who were affected until the inequalities were removed.

In the first Non-Brahmin Conference held on 20th August, 1917 at Coimbatore, the following resolutions were passed on the line of the recommendations of the Public Service Commission:

"The applicant belonging to a Community which has not had due

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25 Ibid.
Chalam Chettiar stated in his resolution that preference should be given to all Non-Brahmins including Christians, Muhammadans, and the Depressed Classes, even though they were less qualified than Brahmins. This was supported by all members including Brahmin Legislators. But in his second resolution, O. Thanikalachalam Chettiar stated that appointment to all offices in the Secretariat (except those held by members of the I.C.S.) should be made only from among Non-Brahmins. This was opposed by the Brahmin members who supported his first resolution and said that this was abuse of power and communal antagonism. Then started conflicts and controversy between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. Then it was compromised and the Communal G.O. was passed on 16th October, 1921 and carried by 49 for and 27 against. Among voted against were 13 Brahmins, 6 Europeans, 1 Muslim, 2 Non-Brahmins and others. The yeses consisted of the 42 Non-Brahmins, 2 Europeans and 5 Muslims but not even a single Brahmin.

Though the Communal G.O. was passed with majority votes, it was visible that there was different of opinion even among the Non-Brahmins, Muslims and Europeans. But the solidarity of Brahmins shows, that they were against de-brahminisation that was the cause that Brahmins were given communal reservation.

31 Ibid.
representation in the office or service should be given priority; appointments should be so distributed that not more than forty percent of the appointments were held by the same Community in the same office or service; and one-third of the appointments of Sub-Magistrates and Deputy Tahsildars and Deputy Collectors should be thrown open for direct recruitment and preference should be given to deserving young men belonging to Communities not duly represented in the Services.\(^27\)

The Princely State of Mysore passed a Communal G.C. in 1920 and it became precedent to the Government of Madras. C. Natesa Mudaliar, a member of the Justice Party, recommended to the Government that "all appointments of all grades and departments in future should be given only to Non-Brahmins till the proportionate Communal representation is reached". He suggested the formation of a Committee, "to enquire into the Madras Services and to formulate proposals with a view to securing proportionate representation of all classes in the Madras Services".\(^28\) But this resolution was withdrawn. B. Munuswami Nayudu proposed that preference should be given to a Non-Brahmin candidate, provided he possessed the minimum qualification even though he might be less qualified than other candidate.\(^29\) C. Thanika-


over and above of their population.

The roster system that suggested in the first Communal G.O. was as follows: (1) Non-Brahmin Hindu (2) Muhammadan (3) Non-Brahmin Hindu (4) Anglo-Indian or Indian Christian (5) Brahmin (6) Non-Brahmin Hindu (7) Others (including Depressed Classes) (8) Non-Brahmin Hindu (9) Muhammadan (10) Non-Brahmin Hindu (11) Anglo-Indian (or) Indian Christian (12) Brahmin. 32

The Brahmin Community that had nearly monopolised the public service could fill up only the 5th and 12th vacancies in every dozen. 33 The Government of Madras issued this first communal on 16th September, 1921 and gave direction to all the Heads of Departments to implement the G.O. as directed in the standing G.O.Ms.No.128(2) of Board of Revenue.

Direction of the Board of Revenue

1. The Government of Madras in accordance with the G.O. directed to follow the principles prescribed in the above G.O.;
2. All the castes and communities should be provided appointments of all grades in several departments of Government;
3. All heads of departments and other officers empowered to make appointments were requested to adhere strictly to this

32 G.O.Ms.No.613, Public, 16th September, 1921.
33 G.O.Ms.No.733, Public, 3rd August, 1925.
principle in filling up vacancies in future; and

4. The G.O. required Heads of Departments, Collectors and District Judges to submit half-yearly returns showing the number of vacancies filled up the following communal roster system: Brahmins, Non-Brahmin Hindus, Indian Christians, Muhammadans, Europeans and Anglo-Indians and others. 34

Further a detailed guideline was issued as follows:

1. If no qualified and suitable candidate was available from a community in the turn allotted to it, a candidate from the next community specified in the communal cycle should be appointed and the community which lost its chance would have preferential claim at subsequent chances until its quota was filled;

2. The starting point of the rotation was to be determined by the last appointment made at the date of the order;

3. All the departments had to submit annual returns to which the six main divisions (1) Brahmins (2) Non-Brahmins (3) Indian Christians (4) Anglo-Indians (5) Depressed Classes and (6) Muslims, were represented in the Public Services;

4. It was said, that the order of communal rotation would apply at the time of initial recruitment and at every point at which men were promoted wholly by selection and not by seniority. 35

34 G.C.Ms.No.613, Public, 16th September, 1921.
The Communal G.O. was brought to distribute appointments in public services to different caste groups but in later stage, the conflict and controversy was started between Brahmin and Non-Brahmin groups of the state. The Brahmin press had vehemently criticised this G.O. as sinister character. It remarked that this would practically abolish standards of qualification.\textsuperscript{36} Swadesamitran stated, that it would create a split among the educated classes and Government servants and thereby hinder the progress towards national freedom and led the British to follow the 'divide and rule' policy by alliance with Non-Brahmins through offers of special favours and thus dividing the Brahmins and Non-Brahmins.\textsuperscript{37}

Whereas the Non-Brahmin press welcomed the Communal G.O. and urged upon the Government to follow its effective implementation. Dravidan said, that since the Brahmins had monopolised the Government services before, they should suffer a little because of the present system.\textsuperscript{38}

The Non-Brahmin members in the Legislative Council suggested the appointment of 'Protector' and constitution of a 'Standing Committee' to help effective implementation of the G.O..

\textsuperscript{36} New India, 29th August, 1922.

\textsuperscript{37} Swadesamitran, 7th September, 1922.

\textsuperscript{38} Dravidan, 31st August, 1922.
and to safeguard the rights and interests of Non-Brahmin officials in Public Services. 39

A Committee was set up to enquire and report the matters relating to recruitment to public services and to suggest means to effectively provide jobs to competent candidates from communities which had not having their due share in public service. The following members of the Legislative Council were appointed as the members of the Committee: M. Krishnan Nayar (Chairman), O. Thanikachalam Chettiar, R.S. Krishna Rao Pantulu, B. Muniswami Nayudu, T. Narasimhacharlu, M.C. Rajah, M. Abdulleghatla Sahib Bahadur and M. Arpuda Swami Udayar. 40 As a result, since 1920, the number of Brahmins began to reduce and the Non-Brahmins began to increase in the Public Services.

Effects of the Communal G.O.

Thus the de-brahminisation of public service began to increase day by day. The pressure groups like Suyammariyathai Iyakkam (Self-Respect Movement) wanted the Brahmins not to get more than their share (3 per cent) on the basis of population. When the Non-Brahmin slowly raised their heads and occupied major portion of Government jobs, 'anti-Brahminism' in social life became inevitable. The Non-Brahmins began to act against

39 G.O.Ms.No.584, Public, 10th September, 1921.
40 G.O.Ms.No.480, Public, 16th June, 1923.
the custom and usage of socio-religious traditions. They openly passed resolution at the Non-Brahmin Conferences that the funds of temples and religious Mutts donated mainly by Non-Brahmins had been used exclusively for the benefit of the Brahmins, and this should be stopped. 41

After the implementation of the Communal G.Os. in 1926, The Hindu complained that the passing of the Communal G.Os. and the advent of Non-Brahmins into power in Madras had shut off many avenues of employment for Brahmins. 42

Whatever might have been the merits and defects of these communal safeguards, they showed the Non-Brahmins that their access to political power through Justice Party could help them to accomplish much more for the Non-Brahmin cause. A. Ramaswamy Mudaliar, a member of the Justice Party, said, that the very basic principle of Justice Party was communal representation and it was accepted by the British Government; when the Indian wanted the indenisation of the services, naturally the policy of communalisation should be accepted; therefore it was issued. 43

As a result, the Hindu Religious Endowment Acts of 1925 and 1927 were amended and passed accordingly. The traditional

42 The Hindu, 25th November, 1926.
43 Madras Mail, 9th November, 1922.
respects or reverences given to the Brahmins were refused to
them. The Non-Brahmins were called upon to boycott Brahmin
priests altogether and they shuld not be engaged to conduct the
ceremonial rites on the occasion of marriage etc., in the Non-
Brahmin houses. E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker founded his Self-
Respect Movement in 1925 and he wanted a Dravidian Society,
free from Brahminical ideology with rational thinking, self-respect
and self-confidence. Thus the Communal G.O. directly encouraged
the Non-Brahmins to rise up in their socio-political ladder and
dump the progress of the Brahmins. M.C. Rajah, the leader of
the Depressed Classes said that the Communal G.O. was a double
edged axe, cutting the Brahmins and the Depressed Classes at
one stroke. Therefore he started agitation against the performance
of the Communal G.O. stating that the G.O. was not justified on
the basis of population of each communal group. The population
of Brahmins was 3.5 percent of the total Hindu population but
they were given 17 percent of reservation. Whereas the population
of Depressed Classes was 16 percent, but they were given only
8 percent of reservation.

Hence, this Communal G.O. was not for social justice or

44 Rajan, F.T., Ganga, October 1959.
45 Dravidan, 17th July, 1917.
46 Viduthalai, Periyar's 84th Birth Anniversary November, 1962, pp.70-71.
47 Rajah, M.C., op.cit., p.66.
social equality, but with ulterior motive to uplift the particular community i.e., Backward Classes, and so M.C. Rajah, the President of the Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha started anti-propaganda and agitated for revision of Communal G.O.\footnote{Ibid.}

The Government wanted the G.O. to be implemented true to its spirit, but the heads of departments evaded the G.O. and violated. They made confusion in their returns and so the Government was not in a position to know the exact statistics of the appointments of communal basis. Thus, the inadequate nature of returns inspite of detailed guidelines, also forced for its revision. Hence, the second Communal G.O. was issued on 15th August, 1922. This G.O. was with more details, more definitive in its instruction than the earlier one.\footnote{Irschick, E.F., \textit{op.cit.}, p.237.}

This order directed that the appointments in each district should be distributed among several castes. In the first Communal G.O. it was stated that the distribution of appointments should be adopted only at the initial stage of recruitment. But this second order directed that the distribution should be done both at the recruitment and promotional stages as per the standing order of the Board of Revenue (G.O.Ms.No.128(2)); Heads of Departments were directed to submit their returns showing the progress of each six main sub-divisions of the communities in
each department. The returns should contain non-Gazetted Officers divided into two categories, (1) drawing Rs.100/- and above, and (2) drawing from Rs.37/- to Rs.100/-. The list of Gazetted Officers could be published in the "Quarterly Civil List".

As far as possible, the Justice Party Government appointed Indians in the place of Europeans and began to fulfil the policy of 'Indianisation of the Government job'. But this Communal G.O., had not brought justice to the Depressed Classes. According to this G.O. out of every twelve Government posts, five had to go to Non-Brahmin Hindus, two to Brahmins, two to Muslims, two to Anglo-Indians or Christians and one to the Depressed Classes.

As a result of these orders the Non-Brahmins (Backward Community) slowly picked up vigour, whereas the Brahmin strength in the Government servants began to decline. The statement below illustrates the noticeable increase of Non-Brahmins and decrease of Brahmins.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Brahmin</th>
<th>Non-Brahmin</th>
<th>Rs.100 and above</th>
<th>Rs.35 to Rs.100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Non-Brahmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Communal G.O. and the Depressed Classes

The position of Depressed Classes in the Government services was not satisfactory. To cite an illustration, in 1926, in the Office of the Director of Industries, twenty Brahmins, five Non-Brahmin Hindus, three Christians, one Muhammadan, one Adi-Dravid and one Anglo-Indian clerks were employed. M.C. Rajah in his *The Oppressed Hindus* summarises the condition of the Depressed Classes as follow. "Why should they (Depressed Classes) remain heivers of wood and drawers of water for ever and the Caste Hindus remain lords over them for ever? The

wheel of progress is moving and the wheel must resolve full cycle. Adequate representation should be given to these classes in the public services as an incentive to their education. Sixty three percent of the Government appointments, both in the higher and lower grades, have been reserved for Non-Brahmins. At least thirty percent should be reserved for the Depressed Classes and that the minimum qualifications required under the Public Service Notification should be considered sufficient".51

He also insisted as a matter of fact, considering the gross injustice that meted out to them, public service to be entirely recruited from them for at least a quarter of a century to come.52 There was justification in the demand of M.C. Rajah for more representation for the Depressed Classes.

It was pointed out by R. Veerayyan in the Legislative Council that very few were selected to the Police Force from among the Depressed Classes. He said, that during 1924-'25, none was selected in the districts of Vizagapatnam, Kurnool, Godavari, Krishna, West Godavari, Guntur, Nellore, Cuddapah, South Arcot, Ramnad, Tinnevelly, North Malabar and South Canara. In Coimbatore only one was selected in 1924 and none in 1925. Only 30 persons were selected in 1924 and the figure went down to 28 in 1925.53 In the year 1929, out of 2,000 Police Constables

51 Rajah,M.C., op.cit., p.50.
52 Ibid., pp.51-52.
recruited in the Presidency there were 113 belonging to the Depressed Classes. In 1930, the total recruitment stood at 2,467 of which 151 belonged to the Depressed Classes.\footnote{M.L.C.P., Vol. LV, 1931, p.158.}

During 1900-'27 there was none from the Depressed Classes in the Gazetted All India Services, and in the year 1927 of the 1,148 posts in the Gazetted Provincial Services, there was only one post held by a member of the Depressed Classes and there were 6,957 posts in the Non-Gazetted Cadre in the salary range of over Rs.100 per month. Of these, a meagre five posts were held by people of the Depressed Classes. In the same year there were 20,610 Non-Gazetted posts in the salary range of Rs.35 to 100 per month. Among these there were 57 posts held by men of the Depressed Classes. The following figures show no appreciable improvement in the position of the Depressed Classes:
GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS AND CASTES - 1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Gazetted Officers</th>
<th>Non-Gazetted Officers Pay Rupees per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Erahmins</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>4,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Non-Erahmin Hindus</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>2,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Depressed Classes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Anglo-Indian and Europeans</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Indian Christians</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Others</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1932, the upper age limit for appointments to the posts of clerks and typists was raised from 25 to 27 for the Depressed Classes and Muslims. 55

When the statutory recognition was given to the Depressed Classes as 'Scheduled Castes' in 1935, Government began in a liberal way, to extend concessions to these classes. In 1936, the age relaxation was extended to the State Medical Service in which the age limit for the Depressed Classes was raised to 35, while

55 G.O.Ms.No.10, Public (Services), 5th January, 1932.
it remained 30 for others. This age concession which was originally intended for a period of four years was extended for another period of three years, again extended for one more year.

This extension was meant to help the Depressed Classes to make good the chances they had lost in the relation of communal representation. The Depressed Classes had lost 339 chances. But the extension of age concession did not help these classes to make good the loss within the stipulated time.

Thus, the Depressed Classes which met with grave social injustice started agitating for an equal share in the Government services as per their population.

M.C. Rajah said, while sixty three percent was reserved for Non-Brahmins, at least 30 percent should be reserved for the Depressed Classes. In his presidential address in the Tinnevelly, South India Adi-Dravida Conference held on 21st and 22nd July, 1922 M.C. Rajah said, "it was we the Adi-Dravidas

56 G.O.Ms.No.1077, Public (Services), 15th June, 1936.
57 G.O.Ms.Nos.754,755 and 756, Public (Services), 21st April, 1937.
58 G.O.Ms.No.1249, Public (Services), 20th July, 1938.
59 Ibid.
60 Rajah, M.C., Presidential Address: Tinnevelly South India Adi-Dravida Conference, 21-22 July, 1922, p.5.
who helped the Caste Hindus masquerading as Non-Brahmins to secure communal representation. It was by our hearty co-operation with them and by appearing to be co-operative with us they were able to convince the democratic people of England. The Non-Brahmins with our support were able to secure a respectable hearing in England and convinced the Parliament that they were more democratic than their opponents. Let not the Caste Hindus forget their simple formula that the Caste Hindus with the Depressed Classes form Non-Brahmin Community and the Democratic Party (Justice Party) and the Caste Hindus without the Depressed Classes form a mere oligarchy destined to be washed away by the rising tide of democratic passion throughout the world".\(^61\) He also said, "the Non-Brahmin Caste Hindus will monopolise all Government posts to the detriment of the Depressed Classes. Before it is too late 30 percent, of this should be again specifically sub-renewed for the Depressed Classes. The predominance of any particular class in the public services is a danger to the country".\(^62\)

Thus, the Depressed Classes began to agitate against the Communal G.O. and passed resolutions for its revision in every conference. In their 12th Madras Presidency Adi-Dravida Conference held in the Victoria Public Hall, Madras on 25th February, 1929, presided by B.C. Mandal of Bengal, they passed a resolution to revise the Communal G.O.

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\(^61\) Ibid.

\(^62\) Ibid.
By this Communal G.O. the most benefitted class was the Backward Classes. Next came the Depressed Classes. However, the Backward and Depressed Classes were given confirmation of reservation in the Government services. This could be major the impact of Communal G.O. on the weaker section of the society. Those who dominated so far in the Government services now found difficult to monopolise the services and came down to be balanced.

When the Congress Party began to rule over the Presidency, though it was not in favour of Communal G.O. it took interest in allotting more seats for Depressed Classes. It was not satisfied with the Communal G.O. because it divided the citizens of India into various caste groups and thereby caused the decline of communal harmony and national unity. As eradication of Untouchability and upliftment of Harijans were dear to Gandhiji, the Congress Government had increased the seats to the Depressed Classes and had done good justice to them.

REMOVAL OF CIVIL DISABILITIES

The Depressed Classes had been deprived of their civic and civil rights for centuries together. They were prohibited from entering public streets, highways, public places buildings, choutries, offices, hospitals, courts, wells, tanks, fountains, hotels, temples etc. There were countless instances which showed how these unfortunate people were prevented from using above facilities. They were treated as sub-human beings and segregated from the
rest of the Hindu society.

The incident of a Magistrate in Kodaikanal Court imposing a fine of rupee one on an Adi-Dra\textit{v}ida boy for singing a song on untouchability in the public road, was reported in the vernacular daily "Dr\textit{v}idan",\textsuperscript{63} and the matter was also raised in the Madras Legislative Council in 1921.\textsuperscript{64} From this, it is inferred that the Depressed were denied even the right of using public roads. Nayas\textit{d}is and Pulai\textit{y}as in Kerala were not permitted to go to the public markets. This was brought to the attention of the Legislative Council by R. Veerai\textit{y}yan on 8th February, 1926.\textsuperscript{65} Kerala was the worst place where the caste system and untouchability was openly visible in the whole of Madras Presidency. In the Kalpathi Ag\textit{r}eharam not even the police constables or police officers belonging to Depressed Classes were not allowed even though they were on bandobust duty in connection with the Kalpathi festival.\textsuperscript{66} Thus, the civil right was denied even to a Government servant on duty.\textsuperscript{67} Such instrumental for the passing of a resolution demanding the right to use public roads, at the Adi-Dra\textit{v}ida

\textsuperscript{63} Dr\textit{v}idan, 30th May, 1921.
\textsuperscript{64} M.L.C.P., Vol. II, 1921, p.141.
Mahajana Sabha Conference, held at Pennathur in Chidambaram taluk, South Arcot District on 27th March, 1921. Inspite of a standing order (G.O.Ms.No.37, Public (Misc), 9th January, 1925) the Depressed Classes were denied the right of walking in public roads. R. Veeraiyyan on 6th February, 1926 stated in the Council that Inspite of another G.O. passed with the efforts of R. Srinivasan stating that the Caste Hindus should not prevent the Depressed Classes from using the public pathways even through *Agraharams. 68

It was alleged by R. Veeraiyyan in the Legislative Council that the Depressed Classes were prevented from using the Nellothachera tank in Calicut by Caste Hindus, though the tank was cleaned and desilted by the Calicut Municipal Council from its funds. 69

It was brought to the notice of the Legislative Council by R. Veeraiyyan that while giving evidence in the Vediikapalayam Village Court, in Pollachi taluk, Coimbatore District, the members of the Depressed Classes were made to stand outside the premises under the blazing sun and in rain. 70 In 1927, during elections to local bodies in Walajapet, North Arcot District, the voters belonging to the Depressed Classes were made to stand in a


*Agraharam - residential place of Brahmans.


70 Ibid.
separate queue under the scorching sun by the officers conducting the elections.

Another pathetic example of the treatment meted out to the Depressed Classes was cited by V.I. Munuswami Pillai in the Legislative Council. It was stated that patients belonging to the Depressed Class Community were given separate wards in thecut-houses of the Women's and Children's Hospital in Calicut.71

It is to be noted that even in jails, convicts belonging to the Depressed Classes were segregated. The practice of operating separate mess for the Depressed Class convicts in the District Civil Jail of Madurai was alleged in the Legislative Council.72 Rule No.464 of the Jail Manual insisted that the Depressed Class convicts in the jails should discharge all the menial jobs, such as carrying night soil and urine of the Caste Hindu convicts. This rule was highly objected by the First Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha Conference held at Ootacamund, Nilgiris under the Chairmanship of Pandit C. Ayodhi Daser and demanded the Government that this rule should be immediately repealed.73

In Chidambaram and Villupuram towns, the Depressed Classes

were denied access to public tanks and wells. This was brought to the notice of the Labour Welfare Department Minister in the Council by S. Satyamurthy Iyer.\textsuperscript{74} A dead body of an Adi-Dravida in Ellamanoor Village, Villupuram taluk was prevented by the Caste Hindus on the order the health Inspector to be carried to the customary burial ground by passing through the public path leading to the burial ground.\textsuperscript{75}

Thus, the numerous inhuman treatments of the Depressed Classes by the Caste Hindus stood testimony to the pathetic condition of the Depressed Classes.

In March 1930, the Kallars (Most Backward Class) of Ezhuvankottai Village of Ramnad District held a Conference, at which it was decided to impose eight prohibitions on the behaviour and general appearance of the Depressed Classes. The prohibition thus imposed were absolutely inhuman. Members of the Depressed Classes who refused to observe these prohibitions were brutally assaulted and fines were imposed. The cattle of the Depressed Classes were forcefully taken away. Kallars openly plundered the Cheris\textsuperscript{*} and assaulted the inhabitants. Huts and granaries of the Depressed were set on fire. Even the Thalis (Mangala

\textsuperscript{74} M.L.C.P., Vol. XIX, August 1924, Question No.345, pp.613-14.


\textsuperscript{*}Cheris - the residential place of Depressed Classes.
Sutraj of women were forcefully wrenched away from their necks. To add severity to the whole problem, eleven more prohibitions were added in 1931.\textsuperscript{76}

Atrocities continued unabated. The rules framed by the Kallar Sangam for the observance of the Depressed Classes were the significance of the reign of terror.\textsuperscript{77} During the festivals of Kallar women of the Depressed Classes were asked to sing nakedly. When it was reported, the District Magistrate and the police did not care of their complaints. The Ramnad branch of Adi-Dravida Mahajane Sabha presented a Memorandum to Government in January 1931. Till August, 1931 Government had not taken any action on the Memorandum. A resolution moved by M. Devadasan, a Depressed Class member of the Council, was taken for discussion on 30th January, 1931. He asked for the appointment of an impartial committee to probe the matter.\textsuperscript{78}

Swami A.S. Sahajananda a famous Saint of Nandanar Meths, Chidambaran and a member of the Congress Party was of the view that because of the inaction of the Justice Party Government such atrocities were multiplying and spreading throughout the Presidency.\textsuperscript{79} Swami Venkatachalam Chetti stated that the Justice Party

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Vide Appendix-IX.
\item Ibid., p.157.
\item Ibid., p.158.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Government had failed to discharge its fundamental duty of protecting the interests and safety of the Depressed Class people.\textsuperscript{80}

M.T.C. Srinivasa Ayyangar was of the opinion that lack of vigilance on the part of police and District Magistrate was the cause for the acts of atrocities.\textsuperscript{81} N. Siveraj, a Depressed Class leader, and a member of the Council, attacked both the Justice Party Government and the Congress Party for their crocodile tears on the miseries of the Depressed Classes. He hated their lip services with deep-rooted hatredness against the Depressed Classes.\textsuperscript{82}

Abdul Hameed Khan, V.T. Arasu and many other members of the Council said that Justice Party Government was responsible for the continuance of the atrocities for a period of over eight months. When J.A. Davis, a member of the Council asked the Government to institute a searching enquiry by an independent body of people. The debate on the resolution came to an end and the Council recommended to the Government to form an enquiry committee.\textsuperscript{83} Sixty votes were polled in favour of the resolution and twenty two votes against it. Hence, the resolution of M. Devadesan was declared, carried.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p.159.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., pp.171-172.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
Even after the adoption of this resolution Government did not take any step to appoint a committee of enquiry. Hence, another resolution was tabled in 1932. At the instance of the Home Minister, V. I. Munuswamy Pillai, Daniel Thomas and M. Devadasan toured the areas and submitted a forty page report to Government, the receipt of which was not even acknowledged by the Government. Mohamed Usman Sahib Bahadur, the Home Minister, refused to appoint an Enquiry Committee stating that cause of trouble was the arrival of a party of American Missionaries and their work of evangelism. Therefore, no enquiry was conducted. 85

Some of the Justice Party members out of ignorance said that the Depressed Class people and the Kallars were the same communities but actually they were separate groups or castes. The Christian Missionaries were present throughout the Presidency but it did not cause such widespread arson, looting, burning and killings elsewhere except in Ramnad District. Therefore, the Depressed Class leaders said, it was due to the inaction of the Justice Party Government and so they had done more injustice than justice to the Depressed Classes.

Thus, the politics of violence first threatened the Depressed Classes to enter the street, tank and even to their own burial ground and then this particular incident happened during regime

of the Justice Party Government looted their personal belongings and killed them. 86

The age-old atrocities on the Depressed Class people had been continued even after the popular Government formed by the Indian Ministries. Since the Government was ruled by the Backward Classes they were not much interested in the protection of Depressed Classes.

It was the Congress Government that paid more attention on the removal of disabilities of the Depressed Classes passing enactments. It became the policy and ideology of the Congress. In this regard both the State and Central Government had tried their best to gather public opinion and the reports of the mass media to do away with the disabilities of Untouchables.

**TEMPLE ENTRY MOVEMENT**

When religion became costly, complex and splendid, numerous deities came into existence. "The Bhakti age led to the proliferation of temples, multiplicity of deities and the growth of Agamic literature". 87

The Saints of Bhakti Movement, the great philosophers like Sankara, Ramanauja and their followers had brought no casteless society. The people stood disunited on the basis of their sects

86 *Fortnightly Report, Second Half of June, 1934, 6th June, 1934, pp. 4 and 17.*

87 *Subramanian, N., History of Tamilnadu to A.D. 1336, Madurai, 1975, p. 385.*
and castes. The philosophers including Thiruvalluvar had strongly believed in the theory of Karma and they often remained the people that nobody would escape from the Karma. Hence the Bhakti and spiritual wisdom nothing to offer to communal harmony. Ramanuja renamed the Harijans as Thirukulathar and took them into temples. But he did not advocate the abolition of the caste system and untouchability, but only spoke about the equality of opportunity in the presence of the divine grace.88

The total effect of the religious movement was the increased number of temples and methods of worships. The growth of numerous temples and maths socially strengthened the caste divisions and untouchability in Tamilnadu. Whenever the social reformers wanted common worship in the temples, the Trustees, Priests and Madathipathis used to quote Agamas and denied the entry of certain castes of the people in the temples.

The birth of man in the Hindu society was based on the theory of Karma. But for the birth by accident, the Untouchables had committed no crime to deny them to enter into temple. Some people used to quote some Sastras, Puranas and such scriptures are denied the entry of certain castes into temples. It was believed that the Untouchables were not clean and ate cow's flesh which was the cause for their non-admittance into the temples.

88 Ibid., p.187.
All these lame excuses were not logically connect. It was the selfishness of certain upper caste people which denied this fundamental liberty to the Untouchables. Due to the Western education these people were awakened and began to demand the temple entry. Such demand was first started in Kerala. Moreover, their demand was supported by the freedom strugglers. Gandhiji glorified the Untouchables as Harijans (people of God) and advocated their right to enter the temples.

The Madras Presidency consisted of a large number of big and small temples and maths. According to the Hindu Religious Endowments Board, during 1937-’38 there were 11,407 major temples and 13,038 minor temples. And they were 151 major maths and 93 minor maths in the Presidency. During 1935-’39 there were 11,625 major temples and 11,569 minor temples under the jurisdiction of the Hindu Religious Endowments Board. The Depressed Classes were not allowed to enter the temples and the maths.

Temple Entry Movement was started first in 1919 by the Ezhavas in Travancore. Their leader T.K. Madhavan, Member of the Strimulam Assembly, urged the Government to admit Ezhavas into Hindu temples. But the Government refused to interface in the religious matter in accordance with the 'Non-intervention Policy'.

69 Hindu Religious Endowment Board, 13th Administration Report, July 1937 to June 1938, Madras, 1939; Vide Appendix No. VIII.

90 The Mail, 9th July, 1939.
brought to light by the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. So, the question of temple entry remained unanswered.

The question of temple entry was absorbed by the Congress Party as the national problem and so the Congress Party had taken it as its primary duty to make the temple entry as a successful one. When it was going on, certain individuals and organisations also joined in the Temple Entry Movement and awakened the public.

On 4th February, 1927 J.N. Ramenathen a Congressman originated with Madurai with 2,000 people attempted to enter into Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple but failed. 91 Because, when they tried to enter into the temple, the priest and the trustees had shut all the doors and prevented their entry. Followed by this incident a grand procession of Justice Party men along with Adi-Dравidas tried to enter into the Arunachala Iswara Temple at Thiruvannamalai on 4th February, 1927 but the doors were shut and they could not enter. This enraged the public because, as per the General Law no devotee should be prevented from entering into the temple. So, they lodged a criminal complaint for wrongful restraint against the temple authorities. 92

After this incident Justice Party people convened a Conference at Coimbatore on 2nd July, 1927. A resolution was passed, stating


92 Ibid.
that the Non-Brahmins should not engaged Brahmin Priest and Brahmin lawyers. This resolution was disapproved by M.C. Rajah, the leader of the Depressed Classes and his members.\textsuperscript{93}

This action of the Depressed Classes had clearly revealed that their direct opponents were not the Brahmins alone, but the Backward Classes also. There was a temple entry attempt by fishermen. J.N. Ramanathan of Madurai, who specialised in 'Temple Entry' Movement took fishermen from Mattankuppam to enter into the Parthasarathy koil, Triplicane, Madras, but the doors were shut and they returned without entering into the temple.\textsuperscript{94}

In March 1930, B.R. Ambedkar launched the struggle for temple entry at Nasik, but he did not pursue this movement as he was more concerned about the Depressed Classes gaining political power. The agitation on temple entry was taken by the Congress and various national organisations began to work for its success. "The Servants of Untouchables League" at the instance of V. Venkata Subbiah of "Servants of India Society" with C. Rajagopalachari and K. Nageswara Rao had convened meetings in various places, urging the public to open the temples to Depressed Classes. They urged the people to support the entry of Depressed Classes at

\textsuperscript{93} \textit{Fortnightly Reports, First Half of August, 1927, 16th October, 1927, pp.1 and 3.}

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Fortnightly Reports, First Half of July, 1928, 17th July, 1928, pp.4-11.}
Guruvayur. 95

Legal Obstacles in the Way

Sahanars or Nedarars who belonged to an Untouchable Community were not entitled to enter and worship in the temple. The main profession of Sahanars and Nedarars was toddy-tapping which was considered as one of the Panchama Pathagas (five sins). As early as 1874 one Mooke Nedar tried to enter into the Meenakshi Amman Temple at Madurai. But, he was prevented from entering into the temple by Sannatanists. 96 The Nedarars of Kamuchi in Ramnad District were not permitted to enter into the local temple. They filed a case in the Local Court, but did not get justice. When they appealed in the Madras High Court it confirmed the judgement of the Local Court. So the case was taken to the Privy Council in London, but the Apex Court also upheld the previous judgements and denied the right of entering the temple to the Nedarars. The decision of the Privy Council was resolved as follows:

1. Custom observed in the temple shall be the only test;
2. The Trustee of any religious or charitable institution has no power to alter such custom, however unreasonable or antiquated it may be;

95 Fortnightly Reports, First Half of February, 1933, 15th February, 1933, p.4.
96 G.O.Ms.No.2017-18, Judicial Department, 2nd December, 1899.
3. Even a single worshipper at the temple can compel the Trustee to abide by and enforce such customs, however reasonable the proposed alteration may be;

4. If a Trustee alters or departs from such custom he will amount to breach of trust and he will be liable to removal from office; and

5. Any compromise made in this connection modifying or altering the prevailing customs will not be recognised by Law".97

Therefore, the British Indian Courts upheld the customs and usages ignoring the reason and justice.

Further Section 295 of Indian Penal Code considered that the entry of an Untouchable into the temple was defilement.

"Whoever destroys, damages or defiles any place of worship or any object held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class or persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction damage or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine or with both".98


Therefore, the conflict between state and religion arose in the case of temple entry by Untouchables. The Orthodox Sanyasis (a Section of Society) were also adamant. If at all the Temple Entry Movement was to be successful, the disability of the Untouchables should be removed. The disability of untouchability, that became a pollution to the Sanyasis. If the temple entry was to be allowed, the disability would have vanished. Thus, it became a controversial question.

However, the Congress was very keen in removing the disabilities of the Untouchables first, and then to go for their temple entry. So, M.R. Jayakar, a member of the Central Legislative Assembly wanted to introduce a Bill to remove these legal obstacles. This sought to abolish obstacles created by Courts in British India for the rural welfare of the people. Depressed Classes were Hindus and no person belonging to the Hindu Community shall be deemed to be incapable by reason of his caste, of sharing the benefit of religious institutions. Though Lord Irwin in 1929 and Lord Willington in 1931 gave previous sanction, the Bill was not moved.

Poona Pact, 1932

With the Historic Fast of Mahatma Gandhi in September 1932, a new era was started in the history of the Temple Entry Movement. Soon after the Poona Pact, a meeting of the representatives of Caste Hindus was held in Bombay on 25th September,
1932 in which a resolution of significance was passed unanimously. The resolution said, that the Depressed Classes should be admitted to temples. The untouchability came to exist not by any reason or logic but by birth. All the Caste Hindus were using roads and other public institutions. Without any discrimination, this right should be given to the Depressed Classes as their statutory right. It should also be made a Law in the Swaraj Parliament. 99

The Poone Pact and the Bombay Conference gave impetus to the Temple Entry Movement in the country. Guruvayur Temple Entry Struggle by Keleppan was also suspended at the request of Mahatma Gandhi. Public opinion was in favour of temple entry. But Zomorin of Calicut, who was the Trustee of the Guruvayur Temple, refused to open the temple to the Untouchables. Because, Section 40 of the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act, which compelled Trustees to maintain existing usages, stood in his way of throwing open the temple to the excluded classes, even though the majority of the worshippers of Guruvayur Temple were in favour of temple entry for Untouchables.

Therefore, attempts were made to secure an amendment of the Hindu Religious Endowment Act in the Madras Legislative Council. Two Bills were sought to be introduced in the Madras Legislative Council. In 1st November, 1932 P. Subbarayan introduced his Bill called Temple Entry Disabilities Removal Bill.

When P. Subbarayan introduced his Bill it was seconded by T.A. Ramalingam Chettiar. The public who had preconceived notion did not accept the Bill. The Justice Party Government decided to be remained neutral.

The resolution read as follows: "The Council recommended to Government that they might be pleased to recognise the strong and growing public feeling in the Hindu Community that disabilities either to be imposed by usage on certain classes of the community in regard to social intercourse and common worship at temples should be removed and justice rendered to them." 100

He said that, that was our bounden duty to respect the Poona Pact and the voice of the public and to throw open the temples to the Depressed Classes. He wanted a suitable legislation should be made to remove all the obstacles of the temple administration. He pointed out that Section 40 of the Hindu Religious Endowments Act was quoted by some Trustees of temples as preventing them from allowing the Depressed Classes in the temples. Section 40 of the Hindu Religious Endowments Act read as follows: "If custom and usage, as understood generally, is violated, the Trustees may be removed from office." 101

Subbarayan asked the Minister for Hindu Religious Endowments to get rid of the offending Section 40. If equal religious rights

101 Ibid.
were not extended to the Depressed Classes, the Caste Hindus should stop including the Depressed Class among the Hindus. Subbareyan said, that the Caste Hindus were very much interfering with the Depressed Class brothers for having accepted the Poona Pact to save the life of the greatest man of the country, and for that magnanimity the Caste Hindus must always be indebted to them. To pay back their gratitude they must recognise the right of Depressed Classes. 102

All the members who participated in the debate on this resolution supported it. The resolution was carried in the Council with 56 members supporting it and 19 remaining neutral. 103 But there was widespread opposition to the resolution from Orthodox Hindu sections of the community. 104

Meetings of protest by Caste Hindus were held all over the Presidency in which opinion was expressed against legislative interference in religious matters. They said, that the Untouchables should not be put far with that of Caste Hindus and also should not ignored the values of Agmas and the Hindu doctrines of Karma and rebirth. They condemned Government for mixing the politics with religion and asked the Government to maintain religious neutrality. The Madras Advocates' Association remarked that the

102 Ibid.
103 G.O.Ms.No.114, Public (General), 31st March, 1933.
104 G.O.Ms.No.140, Public (General), 7th February, 1933.
decision by legislative majority on this question was not valid. It was the opinion of Sankaracharyya of Furl that in matters of religion, the majority had no right to coerce the minority. On 6th May, 1939 Temple Defence Day was observed in Triplicane, Madras. Representation of the Varnashrama Swarajya Sangam submitted a Memorandum stating that the Legislative Council had no mandate from the electorate to pass a Law of encroaching the religious freedom and there was no connection between temple entry and the upliftment of the Depressed Classes.

Views Brahmins (Kemmala) who wanted their names to be included in the list of Depressed Classes for concessions and scholarship and the Keikkoles of Kancheepuram protested against this legislation.

Thus, the attempt made by P. Subbarayan, the First Minister of Madras Presidency was opposed by all and it created discussions between Caste Hindus and Depressed Classes.

The Government of Madras submitted the Bills of P. Subbarayan and Nambiar for the previous sanction of the Governor-General under Section 80-A(3) of the Government of India Act of 1919 as they were related to central subject. A Civil Law could not be

105 *The Hindu*, 4th April, 1934.
107 *The Hindu*, 7th May, 1934.
introduced in a Provincial Legislature without the previous sanction of the Governor-General. But the Governor-General refused sanction to the introduction of these Bills in the Madras Legislative Council on the following grounds:

1. The disabilities imposed on the Depressed Classes by custom and usage, and the common features found all over India;
2. The question of temple entry for them was an All India Character and could not be dealt with by a Provincial Legislature; and
3. Several temples of the Madras Presidency, like Tirupathi, Rameswaram, Kancheepuram, Madurai, Srirangam etc., are visited every year by thousands of Hindus from all parts of India and it will not be possible to ascertain their views on the matter. 110

These arguments were opposed because certain social legislations passed by the Provincial Governments were having all India character because they were based on the all India problems for example:

1. When Mrs. Muthulekshmi Reddy moved a resolution before the Council to raise the marriage age of girls to 16 years it was passed without protest. This was also all India character;
2. Though Tenancy rights and Agricultural Loans Acts were all India problems, some Province had passed Tenancy and Agricul-

tural Loans Acts to solve the peculiar problems of their own
Provinces; and added to these

3. C. Rajagopalachari answered to the objection raised by Governor-
General in the following manner:

(a) The public temples in Madras were placed under a Statutory
Board; The local customs and usages, rules and regulations
were framed by the authorities of the Hindu Religious
Endowments Act of Madras; In fact, the Bill was specifically
described as intended to amend the Madras Hindu Religious
Endowments Act;

(b) Therefore, the point raised about the all India Character
of Temples in the Madras Presidency was not relevant
to subject;

(c) Regarding caste, the pilgrims from north to south and south
to north were not care to know about the caste of their
fellow worshippers, provided an Untouchable put on clean
clothes and tilak on his forehead, he was passed off for
a Caste Hindu. But it was not possible for an Untouchable
in his locality who was known to all. Therefore, the
Province had got every right to introduce such Bill, because
it had got Provincial Character; and

(d) Moreover, a pilgrim from north had no right to assert
his claim over the temples in South India. Therefore,
it was a priority of the people of Madras to effect reforms
in their temples. Pilgrims from outside Madras had no
locusstandi.\footnote{111}

P. Subbarayan Bill of 1932 to remove the disabilities of
the so-called Depressed Classes regarding the entry into Hindu
temples did not interest some Depressed Classes. Their leader
B.R. Ambedkar was not particular about the right to enter temples
but instead, he advocated mass conversion of Untouchables to
Buddhism. Most of the participants in the controversy were mainly
Caste Hindus. Those opposed were mostly Non-Brahmin Hindus
like Viswa Brahmins, Kaikkolas and the like Backward Communities.

When this Bill was introduced Depressed Classes leaders
like N. Sivaraj, V.I. Munusamy Pillai and Alamelu Mangei, Thai
Ammal participated in the debates, but they were not much
interested in the subject. N. Sivaraj, while participating in the
debate said, that there should not be any calculated degradation
upon the Depressed Classes. Many of them adopting the creed
of self-respect by which they really did not want to have anything
to do with temples. He proclaimed "I do not think that the
question of temple entry will be finally solved even as regards
the Non-Brahmins are concerned."\footnote{112}

While temple entry question was discussed in the Legislature,

\footnote{111} Venkataraman, S.R., \textit{op.cit.}, Quoted from C. Rajagopalachari's
\textit{The Plighted World}, pp.10-11.

the Self-Respect Movement in Madras was propagating the total destruction of the Hindu Religion and its practices, as the only way of ending many social evils.

The Muslims after the Lucknow Pact prepared their mind for separation. The Christians and other minorities were not concerned with this question. Therefore, the Congress leaders were deeply involved with the question of temple entry because they did not want the Depressed Classes to leave the fold of Hinduism and thereby reduce the electoral strength of the Congress. The Congress, by championing temple entry, wanted to forge an alliance with the Depressed Classes and increase its electoral strength.

Though Lord Wellington, the Vicerey, refused assent to P. Subberayen's Temple Entry Bill, he permitted the introduction of Rangaier's Untouchability Abolition Bill, in the Central Legislative Assembly. Rangaier formally introduced the Bill on 24th March, 1933 in the Central Assembly. The Congress members extended their support to the Bill and G.D. Birla and Rajaji gathered support for the Bill from the non-Congress members also. But when the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the Bill was being prepared, the Government of India suddenly dissolved the Assembly and ordered fresh election. Therefore, Rangaier's Bill met with premature death. From this, it could be inferred that even at the centre, the question of temple entry was treated as a political issue and not a reform issue.
The Bill was introduced by Rangaier on 24th March, 1933 but it was taken for discussion at the end of June, 1934 and became an abortive one with the same year. Even before it was introduced by Rangaier, B.R. Ambedkar issued his famous statement on Temple Entry Movement on 12th February, 1933 and sent a copy to Gandhiji in the Yeravada Jail. Referring to Rangaier's Bill Ambedkar said, that untouchability was a sinful and immoral custom. It must have been destroyed, even if it was accepted by the majority of the people. In this way, the Bill must have also done if that was by legislation, untouchability must have been destroyed. But it was not done so.\textsuperscript{113} Further he said, that material benefit was more important than the temple entry to the Depressed Classes. If they became reach automatically they would be respected in the society even by the religious minded and Orthodox Hindus.\textsuperscript{114}

Gandhiji was imprisoned for a year for his political activities in 1933, but, when he was in jail, the facilities to carry on Harijan work was curtailed. Immediately after his release he started a tour to make propaganda to remove the social and religious disabilities of Harijans. He warned the Hindus, if they did not remove untouchability, Hindus and Hinduism would perish. The main motive of his tour was to collect money for the Harijan welfare and to prepare the public opinion for the temple entry

\textsuperscript{113} Dhananjay Keer, \textit{Dr. Ambedkar - Life and Mission}, Bombay, 1954, p.221.

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Ibid.}, p.222.
of Harijans. The Orthodox were opposed to his temple entry propaganda; Muslims remained indifferent. The Self-Respect League was busy organise meetings to protest against his tour. The Depressed Classes suspected the bonafide of this encouragement. At Mangalore he laid a foundation stone of a temple for all castes, and proposed solution for temple entry question, but the doubt was expressed by many whether the temple would ever be completed. A rival tour undertaken by his Holiness Puri Sankaracharya.

But, when the Sanatatis, Heeds of muths and Puri Sankaracharya threatened Gandhiji, he restricted his movement. He suggested, a separate temple for Harijans, which belittled him in the eyes of the Depressed Classes.

It was felt that Gandhiji's firm alliance with Harijans was only for political gain, and to demonstrate to alien rulers the integrity of the nation.

Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill of 1933

There were several enactments of the Indian Legislation which prevented Untouchables from exercising the lawful rights as members of the public. Steps were taken to amend Section 295 of the Indian Penal Code. In March 1933, M.C. Rajah brought a

115 Fortnightly Reports, Second Half of December, 1933, 31st January, 1934, pp. 4-5.

Bill to amend Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code. This was called the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill of 1933. But this Bill was not moved in the Assembly by M.C. Rajah, because a similar Bill, the Hindu Temple Entry Disabilities Removal Bill of C.S. Rangasvar was pending.

Custom and Usage

The British Indian Courts applied the legal obstacles custom and usage to prevent the Untouchables to enter into Hindu temples. Therefore, in order to remove these words M.C. Rajah introduced The Untouchability Abolition Bill of 1933 in the Legislative Assembly at Delhi on 24th March, 1933.

The Bill merely wanted no Criminal and Civil Court and no officer acting under Government authority to base any judgement or order on a recognition of the custom by which some human beings were, by reason of their birth in particular castes, deemed as polluting what they touched or which was near to them. 117

This Bill was opposed by the Senatamists, stating that it was an ultravires of the Indian legislature: Secondly it was also against the promises given by Lord Canning in 1858 and the Proclamation of Queen Victoria in 1858, stating that the Government should not interfere into religious matters. And thus the religious neutrality was guaranteed by the British Government. The Law Minister

Brijendra Mitter also opposed the Bill on the grounds that the Bill was against the custom and usage of Hindu Society. He said, that the custom and usage were ruling England and Ireland because the unwritten laws of U.K. were purely based customs and usage. The Indian customs and usage were from unknown dates. The untouchability that has been practiced in India was by custom and usage, therefore, it should not be removed by passing this Bill. As the Sanatanist and Law Minister also opposed the Bill, M.C. Rajah did not move his bill further.

C.S. Rangaswar Bill could not become an Act on the following grounds: It was not approved by the majority of Caste Hindus. Moreover this Bill was introduced in the Central Assembly (Indian Legislative), whereas the Religious and Charitable Endowments were treated as Provincial subjects in the Government of India Act of 1919. The Governor-General could not deal with transferred subject unless it was revoked. Therefore, it was considered as ultravires;

2. The Untouchables themselves did not want temple entry;
3. The temple entry question was left in the hands of Trustees;
4. The customs and usages should not be disturbed;
5. The Orthodox people would not go to temples if the Untouchables were permitted;
6. The religious matters ought not to be decided by votes;
7. The Untouchables were not clean; and
8. There would be breaches of peace if the Bill was passed.
The above objections raised by some members were suitably replied by their co-member Rao Bahadur Rettaimalai Srinivesan said, that all the ancient temples of Tamilnadu belonged to the Depressed Classes but they were driven out from them. The Jambukeswara Temple was built on the cremation ground of Sambava Samban and the Tyagarajaperumal Temple was built on the ground where Tyaga Samban was cremated. His daughter was married by Chola Raja. He said that their community had produced dozens and dozens of saints and sages in the past, Nandener, Thiruvalluvar, Avaiyar and Mariamman were the sons and daughters of Adi-Dravides. Poverty drove them to be unclean. But uncleanness was not the monopoly of Adi-Dravides alone. Therefore, entry should not be denied to Depressed Classes on the basis of cleanliness.118

Thus, the conflicts became inevitable between the members but when they became compromised, the Government officials did not take part in the discussion and remained neutral. At the end, this resolution was not approved by the Governor-General. P. Subberayan hoped that this resolution would be passed as an Act in future. The vitality of a religion, society or state lay in its capacity to adjust itself to the changing times without injury to the fundamentals.

Temple entry was not the demand of Untouchables. It was the Congress that started Temple Entry Movement to fulfill the

provisions of Poona Pact. Temple Entry by Harijans was connected with the Hindu society and religion. So, public opinion became an essential co-operation. The followers of Gandhiji and the liberal Hindus wholeheartedly co-operated towards this goal. They organised public meetings and published articles in the leading newspapers and journals.

P. Subbarayan primarily a Congress man, turned to be a betrayer to the Congress by joining the Swarajya Party. He was the prime mover of this Bill. Despite, his betrayal, the Congress Party supported his Bill for the sake of national unity. The Orthodox insisted, that the Congress had to function only as a political body and it could not canvas for and support legislation affecting religion and religious beliefs.

At one stage, most of the Non-Brahmins disapproved the Bill and agitated for its withdrawal. They celebrated Temple Defence Day in various places. But on the other hand the Brahmin Community was not very much against it. Some of them supported the Movement. The Movement gained more vigour during the Congress period, Acts were passed for the entry of the Depressed Classes into the Hindu temples.