INTRODUCTION
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Physiography

Tamil Nadu State, in the beginning of the twentieth century, was known as Madras Presidency under the British Rule. It is the southern most state in the Indian subcontinent. Tamil Nadu is one of the twenty-nine states in India and it is situated between 8°5' and 13°35' northern latitude and 76°15' and 80°20' eastern longitude. The southern border of the State is Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari) and in the northern border lies the States of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. In the west lies the State of Kerala and in the east the Bay of Bengal. In the northwest an upland rim divides Tamil Nadu from Kerala and Deccan. The southern part of Tamil Nadu is washed by the Indian Ocean. It has a coastline of 620 miles and a land boundary of 750 miles, covering an area of 1,30,000 square kilometers. It has thirty districts, and 234 assembly and 39 parliamentary constituencies.

Political History

The history of Tamil Nadu is traceable from the Age of Sangam which is eulogised by a galaxy of scholars. The Chera, Chola and Pandya dynasties were prominent during the Sangam period. The ancient Cholas ruled over Cauvery region and their rule came to an end by about 300 A.D. After the Chola rule, the Kalabhras ruled the land from 300 A.D. to 600 A.D. With the fall of the Kalabhras, the First Pandyan Empire emerged, which extended all over the Southern Peninsula. The imperial sway of the First Pandyan Empire lasted for four centuries and gave way to the Pallavas of Kanchi. The later Cholas ruled the land from eighth century, and the Chola Empire came to an end by the end of the eleventh century and fortune again smiled upon the Pandyas. In the medieval period, the Muslims occupied a part of the region of Tamil Nadu also. It led to the establishment of Madurai Sultanate. The Madurai Sultanate was established in the second quarter of fourteenth century. In fact, from 1330 to 1380, for nearly

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half a century, the Muslims ruled the south and it was terminated by the Vijayanagar Empire and the Tamil Country remained under its control till 1556. Thereafter, the Nayaks’ regime began. Then the Nawabs of Carnatic began to rule the Tamil Country from 1736. The British gradually occupied the territories of Nawabs of Carnatic. Much of the Tamil region came under British rule between the years 1792 to 1801. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, Tamil Nadu became a part of the Madras Presidency. After independence, the Telugu speaking areas of Madras Presidency was constituted as the separate State of Andhra Pradesh on October 1953. On November 1, 1956 the district of Malabar was transferred to the newly constituted Malayalam speaking State of Kerala, and Kannada speaking South Canara became the State of Mysore, which is now known as Karanataka State. After carving out the two states from the Madras Presidency, the remaining part was renamed as the Madras State. Again the Madras State was renamed on January 14, 1969 as Tamil Nadu.

Social Status of Women in Tamil Nadu

The status of women in Tamil Nadu differs according to the caste, class, religion, family structure, ethnic and overall cultural milieus. Influence of religion is strong on Hindu women, including their thinking process and daily practices. The basic rules for women’s behaviour are expressed in the laws of Manu in 200 B.C. The Tamil literary and grammatical works like Tholkappiam, Thirukkural, Purananuru, insisted that a woman must constantly worship her husband as a god, even if he is to be an immoral. Yet, Thiruvalluvar, the famous

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Tamil poet and the author of *Tirukkural*, spoke highly of the position of women in the social set up.

Almost half of humanity is constituted by womenfolk. This half in every age and every land has co-existed with men in a relationship which has varied between complete submission and complete equality. Gender inequalities are pervasive in various layers of social existence and its tentacles are spread across various segments of society.

Women in Tamil Nadu are considered to be soft and obedient since ancient period. In the twentieth century, women obtained jobs in police, military, and forest departments and became pilots and players too. In this way, women overcame the hurdles and changed the impression that they are soft. But there is lower percentage of participation in public life, particularly in political arena because the Indian society, like a number of other classical societies, is patriarchal. Electoral politics, membership of political parties and collective action of women against oppressive patriarchal power with a long-term goal of social transformation alone can ensure women’s liberation from exploitation, degradation, injustice, subjugation and superstition.

In the public life, political participation is the hallmark of a democratic set-up. Democracy largely depends upon the extent to which equal, effective and actual participation is provided by the system to all its citizens. As women comprise about half of the population, this segment of society cannot be ignored. Higher level of women participation ensures democratic functioning and helps

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framing right policies and strategies.\textsuperscript{13} The women's movements have forced egalitarian norms to be applied to the status of women with the ultimate aim of abolishing discrimination and inferior social status that they have been subjected to historically. However, from the perspective of social practice rather than principle, sexual inequalities appear to be particularly persistent and complex. Each new step by women towards public life removes some inequalities but gives rise to new ones.\textsuperscript{14}

**World Scenario**

Twentieth century witnessed a worldwide revolution in the extension of political rights to women. Previously, there was no major country in the world where women were guaranteed the right to participate in politics on an equal basis with men. But in many countries an enormous disparity exists even today between women's formal political equality and their meaningful exercise of political power. Because of the influence of men in politics, women are pushed to a back seat. Under the impact of the West, Indian women experienced an air of freedom and the stir of a new life. In the words of O'Malley, "profound as has been the penetration of the West into men's religion, caste and national status and it has nowhere penetrated more deeply than its revaluation of women and it brought to women a total new concept of themselves as persons individually important and nationally needed".\textsuperscript{15} Men dominate the political party machines\textsuperscript{16}, even though women have more or less equal votes on the electoral roll.


The status of women particularly in the third world countries is characterised by high degree of backwardness.\(^{17}\) The study conducted by UNO on the status of women in the Third World has exposed the appalling conditions of women in terms of nutrition, health, education, employment and political status. India also shares the common features of the Third World Countries with regard to women.\(^{18}\) The near universal recognition of women’s political right and the strength of their voting numbers are nowhere reflected in their direct role in government. In many countries, women’s participation in the most basic of political activities, such as voting, attending meetings, or discussing politics falls far short of that of men.\(^{19}\) Women also tend to choose professions that are culturally an extension of their role as housewives and which allow them to reconcile with their family life. Another consideration to be taken into account is the social devaluation that occurs to those sectors of the job market deserted by men and taken over by women. Though human beings entered into advanced socio-political structures, the subjugation of women to male had become an established fact. Women became second-class citizens in the modern system.\(^{20}\) Indeed, while continuing to be underprivileged in any given socio-political institution, women continue to be the mothers of civilization, culture and religion.\(^{21}\) But in most of the countries women are now actively participating in public activities, practically in every field including advanced technology and satellite communications.\(^{22}\)

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Position of Constitutional Rights

In Tamil Nadu, there is a great hiatus between constitutional guarantees and active representation of women in public life. The right to constitutional equality was supplemented by legal equality by the passage of a number of legislations through which traditional inequalities in respect of marriage, divorce and property rights were eliminated. Notwithstanding these constitutional and legal provisions, women representation is almost negligible even at the lowest rung of political hierarchy. Even though several provisions for empowering women have been made in the Constitution of India, they are not given equal standing that they legitimately deserve in the society. Tamil Nadu still continues to meet out indifferent treatment to women and their special genius is yet to be injected into public life. Women’s entrance into the public life implies that they face a number of hindrances that obstruct their participation. The public sphere has long been assumed to be the concern of men alone and the private sphere defined as feminine. This is a clear case of “Gendering of the Space”. This thought is against political activities of women. This thought still guides the prevailing discourses in the male-dominated societies and creates obstacles for women as men set rules and norms for them in the public arena. This anachronistic paradigm should be closely examined with a view to shaping the desired reforms. It is, therefore, extremely essential to identify and understand the ground realities to eradicate the menace of gender inequality from the society.

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28 Sara Anderson and Susanne Bohman, Women’s Political Participation in Kerala, South India, Bachelor Thesis, Gothenburg University, Autumn, 2000, p.7.
29 Pitam Singh, op.cit., p.2.
the Post-Independence era, India has witnessed overall development and progress in varied fields and sectors but women’s involvement in public life has not made much headway. There are many pitfalls created by culture and religion. The Tamil Nadu State represents Dravidian culture, which is considered pre-Aryan culture but the same situation prevails.

There is a lack of women participation and representation in public life in Tamil Nadu. The participation of women in the political process, one of the most powerful ways of public life, has been far below that of their counterparts. The evolution of human institutions present a dichotomous picture where a few women participated in political activities while the majority of women were content with procreation, rearing of children and looking after the household activities. Only a handful of women could reach the higher place of political power such as Indira Gandhi and Susma Swaraj at the national level, Jayalalithaa in Tamil Nadu, Mamtha Banerji in West Bengal and Mayavathi in Uttar Pradesh and Srimao Bandara Nayaka in Sri Lanka, Golda Meir in Israel, Margaret Thatcher in England, Acquino in Philippines, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan and Begum Khalida Zia in Bangladesh. India had a woman Prime Minister from 1966 to 1984 and Tamil Nadu had a woman Chief Minister from 1991 to 1996 and 2001 to 2006. In other words, very few women are to be found in politically powerful positions. Their participation in political activities was low and continues to be low. The head of the family is not willing to send women to work, particularly in political field. Women’s neglected presence in the various political and decision-making bodies is a reflection of their marginalization. The fact is that women have been marginalized because of several socio-economic constraints. But at the end of the twentieth century, women began to achieve in many areas.

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Reasons for Backwardness

The reasons for this backwardness of women are well known. Traditional practices, religious beliefs and notions, discouragement, denial of education and decadent culture are directly responsible for their backwardness. The patriarchal joint family system, structure of property ownership, and child marriage or state of permanent widowhood are the major obstacles for the development of women. Illiteracy is considered one of the factors responsible for the low level of women's participation in public life. But even developed countries which achieved remarkable success in female literacy, have not achieved much success in political power sharing. These reasons hinder women's active involvement in public life and administrative decision-making. Politics is one field where the evidence of increasing participation by women is still not very impressive in Tamil Nadu.

Usha Narayanan, the First Lady of India and wife of former President K.R.Narayanan, in her keynote address in 1999 made a strong plea for affirmative action to ensure women's full and equal participation in political processes. She felt that political power in the hands of women is a necessary precondition for bringing about changes in the legal, social and economic spheres.

Goals of Feminism

Feminism is defined with two long term goals. The first goal is freedom from oppression which involves equity and freedom of choice and the power to control their own lives within and outside home. This control over their lives and bodies is essential to ensure a sense of dignity and autonomy for every woman. The second goal of feminism is the removal of all forms of inequity and

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oppression through the creation of a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. This also means the involvement of women in national liberation struggles, in plans for national development, and in local and global strategies for change. Charlotte Bunch, the American black feminist, at the International Tribune of Women, an international agency, stated, “Feminism is and must be a transformational politics which addresses every aspect of life.” The feminists accepted the working definition of Alison Jaggars which “identifies feminism with the various social movements dedicated to end the subordination of women”. Many others also agree that feminist theories ultimately are the tools designed for a purpose – the purpose of understanding women’s subordination in order to end it.

The task of tracing the position of women in a historical perspective is difficult, complex and cumbersome due to the diversity of civilizations and cultures. The activity of women in public life and her relationship with the society demands a re-definition of her image because from time immemorial, women occupied an inferior position.

The roots of women’s participation in politics can be traced back to the nineteenth century reform movement. This movement emerged as a result of conflict between the Indian bourgeoisie and British rulers. The movement made attempts to reform the society mainly by campaigning against caste, polytheism, idolatry, purdha, child marriage, sati, illiteracy, widow marriage, devadasi and perceived them as elements of primitive identity. In other words, the impact of western culture and ideas in the wake of the arrival of the British paved the way for social reform movements.

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38 *Young India*, 22 September, 1927.
In the wake of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's movement against women's subjugation to men and British influence on Indian culture and civilization, the position of women had once again undergone a sea change. However, it was only under the enlightened leadership of Gandhi that they re-asserted their equality with men. In response to the call of Gandhi, they discarded their veils and came out of the four walls of their houses to fight the battle of freedom and to rub shoulder to shoulder with their brothers. The result is that the Indian Constitution today has given equal status to women with men and there is no discrimination between men and women.

**Women in Hindu Society**

The structure of Hindu society has become so complex due to the influence of religious dictates. The status of women in Hindu society has changed from time to time. Their position has been variously estimated. Diametrically opposite views have been presented regarding her place in different stages of civilization. Social reform did not totally succeed in Tamil Nadu. Hinduism allows more freedom within a circle but rigidly controls the practices. Many social ordinances continue to be obeyed due to the fear of losing material advantages and social approval.

The view of Hindu women as downtrodden represents the behavioural reality. Generally Tamil women suffer from discrimination in two ways - gender discrimination and economic discrimination. Highly educated women of larger cities are trying to transform themselves into intellectuals in order to play a pivotal role in modern society. Swami Vivekananda was greatly pained at the

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miserable condition of women in India. He said, “Motherhood is the beginning and the end of Indian womanhood”.

Women in Tamil Nadu

Tamil women’s involvement in politics started in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although British imperialism profoundly influenced the political engagement of both elite and non-elite women during this period, its impact on the character and purpose of their engagement was very different. Non-elite women, moved by the hunger of their children, the confiscation of their land and oppressive taxes by British, participated along with men in famine revolt and other revolts in the nineteenth century.

Women’s role in Tamil Nadu in the twentieth century was better than ever before. The political situation posed a challenge for women. They inherited the virtues of the great leaders of the nationalist movement that won freedom for the country.  

Women’s subordinate position in the family and society was reflected in the slow transformation of the society. Gandhi and EVR explored ways for women empowerment and sustaining aptitude. Subramania Bharathi’s (1882-1921) simple Tamil poems, reflecting the life and

aspirations of women, roused a wave of reform in Tamil society. Women's problems, upliftment of women and courage for participation in the freedom struggle were taken as the subject of his poems.46

India, which is the home of millions of illiterate women, has also produced Indira Gandhi, a powerful Prime Minister of India and Jayalalithaa as one of the powerful political leaders from a regional party. Even after sixty years of Independence, Indian women are not able to get 33% reservation in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. The greatest question is, why do some women in India reach the pinnacles of public power and recognition, while women in general are kept out of large areas of public life, and confined to private life?47 These few women are exceptions that prove nothing. Their position is not evolutionary but aberration.

**Meaning of Public Life and Political Participation**

The definition of public life encompasses a large arena comprising a wide range of activities such as social works, trade unions, associations, women’s federation and electoral politics. However the scope of this study is limited to women’s participation in electoral politics from the grass root level to the State Legislatures and Parliament in the State of Tamil Nadu. Public participation, in this study, has been defined to mean and include participation of women in terms of their numbers, the quality of their participation and their involvement in effective decision-making roles in political institutions and in the electoral processes as candidates and as elected representatives.

Political participation in one form or the other has always existed in society and interested and vested individuals and groups have made their wishes and influences known, directly or indirectly, to administrators at various levels of government. The expansion of government has widened the nature and awareness


of participation. Participation is understood in terms of close involvement of 
people in the economic, social, cultural and political processes. Political 
participation is a process by which people take part in political activity with more 
or less clear choice or preference. Attendance at public meetings, taking part in 
agitation activities, attendance at study circles of political parties, voting in 
elections, participation in electoral campaigns, membership of a political party 
and in representative bodies are some of the important indicators of political 
participation. However the studies so far done on political awareness and 
participation are limited compared to the magnitude of the problem. It is more so 
in the case of Tamil Nadu. Though the state has a long history of political 
movements and active participation of women in such movements, there is the 
lack of well documented empirical work on the political participation of women. 
Hence the need to study the role of women in the political process was keenly felt.

**Area of the Study**

The study is confined to the political profile of the State of Tamil Nadu. 
Tamil Nadu is politically a very sensitive and an important State in India. This 
State has always played a significant role in national politics by dominating the 
national scene. Tamil Nadu is represented by as many as 39 MPs in the Lok 
Sabha and considerable number in Rajya Sabha and has 234 seats in the State 
Legislative Assembly. The national leaders have always keenly observed the 
political trends in this State. The State of Tamil Nadu has produced many men 
and women leaders at national and regional parties. A few women members of 
Tamil Nadu had become members in the Central Cabinet. Both formal and 
informal leaders emerged in this State. This State is unique in terms of its 
location, general reputation, social composition, large number of women voters, 
socio-cultural ethos and centers of political activities.

**Statement of the Problem**

The study of Public Life of Women in Tamil Nadu analyses the role of 
women in political sphere as legislators and their involvement in the growth
oriented national political activities. Women enter the public life in a limited number. Women generally meet tremendous opposition from family, community and male political leaders if they opted for entering electoral politics or public life. The present leaders of the public life, in spite of populist rhetorics, want to keep women out of the political scene. Women politicians are still looked upon as appendages to the males in the political arena. However, the participation of women and encouragement to them to enter political life is the need of the hour. They began to play an important role in Tamil society. The work deals with the social status of women, their family life, their liberation struggle, their willingness to participate in political arena, need of proper education to women and socio-economic profiles of women leaders.

**Objectives of the Study**

The major aim of this study is to evaluate factors relevant to women’s participation in the public life and to analyse the role-played by women in the context of changing political trends. This study seeks to document women’s under-representation in the legislatures and to understand the political obstacles on the path of progress for women and trace the feminist power perspective. The study aims to find answers to certain basic questions. What was the real condition of women during the period 1967 to 2002? Did these conditions facilitate further development of women? What are the legislative welfare measures that were undertaken to benefit women in Tamil Nadu? With these questions the following objectives were framed to justify the study.

1. to analyse the nature and extent of role of women in Tamil Nadu.
2. to examine the impact of their political involvement on the society.
3. to highlight the role of women legislators.
4. to highlight the prevailing of disparity and disadvantages that women face in their political participation.
5. to highlight the factors that promote women’s participation in the election to the State Legislature and Parliament, and the barriers that continue to limit or constrain their involvement.
(6) to trace the initiatives that have been taken to increase women’s involvement in the election at all levels.

Hypotheses

The higher social-economic status of women leads to greater level of their participation in public life. The thesis attempts either to prove or disprove the following hypotheses.

1. Whether higher domestic pre-occupation and unawareness of women creates lower opportunity for participation.
2. Whether women have proportionate opportunity in the political arena and in decision-making.
3. Whether many women legislators came from political elite families and led their political life under the influence of their family members.
4. Whether women participation in state legislature is high in the decades after independence.
5. Whether the effective functioning of women representatives in political office is impaired by their spouses.

Methodology

The nature of study is descriptive since it describes the role of women at various points of time in the history of Tamil Nadu. In addition, the study also seeks to bring out the specific role of women and therefore, it is also analytical. The unit of analysis is about the role of women in politics, either as individuals or as a group. This study further attempts some discussions of the factors associated with the way in which women are related to politics within the period of 1967 to 2002 in Tamil Nadu. The primary data was collected from the Tamil Nadu Archives, Tamil Nadu Government reports, orders and proceedings of assembly and election commission of India reports, wherever necessary. In short, the study has made wide use of the printed materials in the form of books, research studies and journals etc.
Limitations of the Study

In the political scenario of Tamil Nadu there was a dramatic political change, in 1967 when the DMK, a regional party came to power. The women folk actively participated in the polity since 1967. The regional party rule was an avenue for multifaceted development in the respective areas. The participation of women in the general election of 1967 and subsequent elections marked the steady progress and significant changes in the political arena of women folk. This transformation and awareness helped them to become assembly members, ministers and even chief ministers. Therefore the study encompasses nearly four decades from 1967 to 2002. It also touches other public fields like social reform movement. Freedom movement and women movement enabled them towards their constructive involvement in the political life.

Review of Relevant Literature

The present study carefully analysed select literatures as background study to enhance the merit of the study.

‘The Political Career of E.V.Ramasamy Naicker’ written by E.Sa. Viswanathan analyses the political career of EVR and his thoughts on women and women’s involvement in SRM and Dravidian Movement.

Narendran Subramanian in his book ‘Ethnicity and Populist Mobilisation’ has recognised women’s power as one of the predominant forces for populist mobilisation but the effect of women on the social movement is not dealt with.

Neera Desai and Usha Thakkar’s, ‘Women in Society’ was intended to be written as a textbook with an interdisciplinary feminist perspective. This book examines the status of women in India.

The book ‘Women in the Indian National Movement’ written by Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, deals with the role of women in freedom struggle against the British Rule.

Letha Kumari’s ‘Women in Politics - Participation and Governance’ highlights a good number of problems women face in their political career, which include money, power, exposure to hostile media and adoption of male norms of behaviour both aggressive and adversarial.

Neera Desai’s ‘Women in Modern India’ is a major work on Indian women and it deals with their involvement in political activities and their remarkable role in the nation building activities.

Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, employs the historical perspective in assessing women’s status. The impact of this report on the research done on women in India has been significant.

V.Rajalakshmi’s ‘The Political Behaviour of Women in Tamil Nadu’ is an attempt to evaluate factors relevant to women’s participation in politics and public activities. This book gives the history of women’s participation in the field of politics from 1920 to 1980 in the State of Tamil Nadu. The role played by them in the post colonial period from the first general election as voters, as contestants, their behaviour and their success in the field are depicted.

Bhawana Jharta investigates women political activists in her book, ‘Women and Politics in India, Impact of Family and Education on Women Political Activists’. It is the result of her painstaking and thorough research. She succeeds in her endeavor to point out that family and education are the two major determinants which influence the participation of women.

Geraldine Forbes analysed in his book ‘Women in Modern India’ women’s status in the nineteenth century India. In this book, the author discusses education for women, women’s movements, modernisation of women and the position of women in independent India.
‘People’s Participation in Indian Politics’ written by R.P. Verma is an analytical and comprehensive study of political consciousness among the Indian women and their participation in the process of decision making and its implementation. To understand the issues involving political participation, at first it becomes necessary to discuss the idea of political participation. Secondly, it is necessary to know the factors involved in making people to participate in politics.

S.R. Bakshi wrote a book entitled ‘Empowerment of Women and Politics of Reservation’. The author discusses the empowerment of women, gender equality in the western world, the special efforts made in the developing world for the empowerment of women in the political, economic and cultural fields, and the special provisions made in the Constitution of India for the empowerment of women through reservation of jobs in administration, legislatures and local bodies.

The book ‘Women Empowerment and Panchayat Raj’ written by S.N. Ambedkar and Shilaja Nagendra, tries to analyse the perceptions of women leaders on various issues pertaining to the new Panchayat Raj system in rural India.

Padmini Sengupta has narrated in her book ‘The Story of Women of India’, the story of great women of Indian history from the legendary Maitreyi to the present day women leaders of eminence. She has also discussed the problems experienced by women as a group.

Rajan Mahan’s ‘Women in Indian National Congress – 1921 - 1931’ seeks to establish the fact that this crucial period witnessed a remarkable mutual reinforcement between the Congress and Indian Women. While women’s participation enlarged the popular base of the former and enriched the qualitative aspects of Indian nationalism, the Congress facilitated and furthered the cause of women’s emancipation in Indian society.
Pitam Singh analyses in his book ‘Women Legislators in Indian Politics’, the democratic system and representation of various sections of population in India. It also reveals that the participation of women in the political process has been far below their counterparts in other parts of the world and also attempts to analyse the role of women legislators and their involvement in two different but related arenas of political process, namely, legislatures and party organisations.

Manmohan Kaur’s ‘Women in India’s Freedom Struggle’ discussed the participation of women in various phases of the freedom struggle from 1847 to 1947.

Chapterisation

The thesis is arranged into six chapters, besides introduction and conclusion.

The Introduction includes physiography, political history, social status of women in Tamil Nadu, women in Hindu society, meaning of public life and political participation, area of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, methodology, limitations of the study, review of relevant literature and sources.

The first chapter entitled Status of Tamil Women deals the transition of women in Tamil society with regard to status and their place in the society through the ages. It also traces the position of women in a historical perspective, reviews gender ideology and reasons for subordination of women etc.

The second chapter is Freedom Struggle and Women Liberation. The contribution of women in the national movement and their social problems are evaluated in this chapter to trace the environment of the society which allowed them to enter into the national struggle for freedom. It also analyses the status of women through the indicators of participation in the freedom movement with reference to India in general and Tamil Nadu in particular and evaluates the importance or need for participation in the public life. Impact of EVR’s
propaganda and the effect of the services of dedicated women leaders of movements are discussed. The formation of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) under the pretext of EVR’s unsuitable marriage is taken as the subject of study since it goes against rationalistic ideas of the SRM.

In the third chapter, Women Movement deals with the formation of women associations in the second decade of twentieth century and the role of women pioneers in Tamil Nadu and India. This chapter narrates the legislations for women in colonial era and deals with the works of women associations in the promotion of the welfare of women. It also discusses the education system for women development in the pre independent India. The history of women’s suffrage movement is also portrayed.

The fourth chapter entitled Problem and Progress of Women deals with constitutional provisions and developmental process for women in the contemporary period. It also highlights the lack of awareness as the stumbling block for their progress. Further, it deals with the developmental process of education and employment process of women. The history of Women Reservation Bill is elaborately discussed in this chapter. Lastly it deals with the socio-economic background of women in politics and the position of such women within the political parties.

Chapter five narrates Role of Women Legislators since 1967. This chapter is confined to the empirical data of women legislators, particularly with regard to their socio-economic background. This chapter analyses socio-economic determinants which have a crucial effect on political attitudes and perceptions. This chapter deals with the proceedings of the legislative council during the period under study focusing on initiation of issues by women members.

Chapter six on Iron Lady of Tamil Nadu narrates the rise of Jayalalithaa in Tamil Nadu. Social and political strategies adopted by MGR to declare J.Jayalalithaa as his political successor are explained. The entry of Jayalalithaa as the propaganda secretary of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
(AIADMK) in 1982 and her steady progress in the party are discussed. As the woman chief minister of a Dravidian party, her services are analysed in respect of principles of women emancipation proclaimed by the Dravidian Movement.

**Sources**

Sources are the real strength of any study. No study would be recognized as a real study unless it recognizes the gaps in knowledge and attempts to fill it up through the proposed research. It is against this background that in writing an account of the *Women in Public Life of Tamil Nadu, 1967 - 2002*, both primary and secondary sources were consulted. Primary sources comprise of Government records which include the records of Election Commission of India, the Acts under the British Regime and Post-British period, legislative debates, and legislative proceedings. They are extensively used as primary source. Different reports of the Government for administrative purposes like Census Report, Reports on Administration of Madras Presidency and *Towards Equality*, a Committee Report in 1974 have also thrown light on the changing status of women and women’s education. The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi, EVR and the various accounts of dedicated social reformers in the welfare of women in India have been used.

In addition to these, newspapers and journals, both in vernacular and English, offer much information. *The Hindu, Madras Mail, Kudi Arasu* (Peoples’ Government), *Viduthalai* (Freedom), *The Modern Rationalist, Dravidian*, and *Revolt* constitute full details regarding the backward conditions of women and their relentless struggle for equal rights with men. Published works of different Indian and foreign scholars and historians provided information for the theoretical framework of the study.

The secondary sources are plenty in number and they are available in the form of published works in English and Tamil. They also provide enough information about the contemporary social and political
conditions which conditioned women in public life of Tamil Nadu in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The published books of both Indian and foreign authors, newspapers, periodicals, journals, dissertations, thesis and research articles form the secondary sources which provide much data on the historical settings for the status of women in the public life of Tamil Nadu.