CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY
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2.1. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

'Peasant Politics in Tamilnadu - A Socio-Political Analysis of a Pressure Group'.

2.2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS OF PEASANTRY

Agriculture has been the traditional primary occupation of peasantry in Tamilnadu. The prosperity in agriculture was very much discernible and self-sustaining character was revealed due to local dependence and traditional methods in cultivation. This being the case, the village community in Tamilnadu was known for peaceful co-existence of various caste, class, religious, occupational groups and also marked by physical isolation, segregation from the wider world. The village people were also characterised by illiteracy, ignorance and unawareness syndrome by then. The conditions prevailed in villages perpetuated tradition and influenced in the formation of rural social structure and in view of that the people remained by and large unorganised.

During the British period, although the colonial rulers undertook certain measures affecting peasantry, the rural protest remained mostly unarticulated. The dawn of independence later
effected change in agrarian structure owing to imbalanced development. Technological transformation in agriculture created restlessness amongst the landed and landless peasantry. The problems faced by the landless peasantry were exposed by certain political parties known for radical ideologies like communist parties and parties like Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in the wet areas which paved the way for their systematic organisation. However, the problems felt by the landed peasantry in Tamilnadu remained unarticulated and this warranted some knowledgeable people of farming community to spearhead and organise the landed peasantry into Agriculturists' Association, primarily to expose their grievances and seek its redressal from Government. The issues and demands raised by these Associations include reduction in electricity tariff, debt relief, remunerative prices, irrigation facility, crop and cattle insurance, etc.

In order to attract the attention of the Government towards the issues and demands, these Associations adopted certain pressure courses like rally, conference, fast, picketing, no-tax campaign, bundh, etc. Among the non-political peasant organisations in Tamilnadu, the attempts of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam (Tamilnadu Agriculturists' Association) seemed to have exposed the relative deprivation, exploitation and mobilised peasantry in its protest movements. In the course, the Association did succeed in certain issues and suffered serious setbacks subsequently due to Governments policy of division of
peasantry which ultimately led to conversion, from non-political stand to political party identity in the name of Indian Farmers and Toilers Party (IFTP).

The present research was undertaken against this background to study the circumstances, precipitant factors in the emergence of pressure group of peasantry in Tamilnadu, pressure courses of action pursued by the peasantry in the name of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam (Tamilnadu Agriculturists' Association) and its consequences/transformation from non-political to political stand in the name of Indian Farmers and Toilers Party (IFTP) and its impact in rural social structure with specific reference to the study area.

2.3. SIGNIFICANCE

As stated earlier, this research has policy implications with respect to the emergence of pressure groups in Tamilnadu their relationships with political parties, pressure courses of action, lobbying activities and leading to their indirect participation in public policy processes in Tamilnadu.

2.4. SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present research focussed only on the peasant organisation and movements launched by the Tamilnadu landed peasantry in the
name of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam (Tamilnadu Agriculturists' Association) led by Late Narayanaswami Naidu in the early sixties till the year 1982. The study concerns with the early beginning of the Association, precipitant factors, issues highlighted, strategies adopted in mobilising peasantry, peasant participation in various pressure courses of action, state response, organisational strength, effectiveness, consequences of peasant mobilisation and rural social structural change consequent to their participation. The year 1982 was considered as the cut-off year because the Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam (Tamilnadu Agriculturists' Association) converted itself into a political party and named Indian Farmers and Toilers Party (IFTP). The political party's support base since conversion, issues pursued, peasant mobilisation and enrolment in the political party, pressure course of action pursued, peasant response to political party organisation, split in the organisation after conversion, consequence of conversion into political party present state of affairs identified with the Indian Farmers and Toilers Party are covered. The study has also included landless peasantry because the issues highlighted by the organisation also attracted them and led to their participation prior to conversion. Since conversion, the political party (IFTP) also concerned with toilers which included the landless peasantry as well. Hence the study is delimited and specifically focussed on the Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam (Tamilnadu Agriculturists' Association) and later its conversion into a political (IFTP).
2.5. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

2.5.1. PEASANT

The term 'peasant' means both the landowners and the landless who are engaged in agricultural operations of all kinds, as landowners, tenants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers.

2.5.2. PEASANT POLITICS

The political course of action launched by peasants through their formal enrolment in agricultural organisation or in political party with a view to fulfill their aspirations through participation in various pressure courses of action bearing issues relating to their welfare.

2.5.3. PRESSURE GROUP

'Pressure Group' is an organisation composed of people with common interests occupations who seek to secure assistance in order to improve their condition or to seek redressal of the problems faced by them through political course of action. It is characterised by a name, office bearers, aims and objectives, regular meeting, formal membership, subscription, etc. The main purpose of pressure group is
to exert pressure upon the government through their movements for getting fair treatment and redressing their problems.

2.5.4. SOCIO-POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Refers to the social organisational aspects of the pressure group and its political course of action, problems faced and its consequences.

2.6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present research work seeks to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To make a critical analysis of the precipitant factors leading to the emergence of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam (Tamilnadu Agriculturists' Association - Non-political) in Tamilnadu with specific reference to study area.

2. To study the pressure courses of action initiated by the Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, membership participation in various passive and militant activities undertaken by the Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam.
3. To find out the causes and circumstances leading to the conversion of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam (non-political) into Indian Farmers and Toilers Party (political) in terms of its organisation, political course of action and membership participation in different eco-structures.

4. To assess the consequences of the pressure group politics launched by Indian Farmers and Toilers Party since its inception.

5. To identify the rural social structural changes owing to participation in pressure group activities in the study area.

2.7. SELECTION OF STUDY AREA

Selection of study area was based upon certain consideration such as (1) organisational structure and strength of peasant movement; (2) source of irrigation; (3) accessibility, approachability and social relevance. In addition, the discussions with leaders of peasant organisation, published literature like souvenir, newspaper reports, statistics relating to source and extent of irrigation were also kept in mind while selecting of study area. Since the peasant organisation under study has been spread all over state two districts, representative of well and canal/river irrigation were selected where the peasant organisation (Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam) was once
strong and effective participation was reported amongst members. Accordingly, the districts of Dindigul Quaid-e-milleth (now Anna) and Madurai were selected.

By following similar parameters and considerations and two stage stratified random sampling, two blocks within the selected districts were chosen for the purpose of selection of panchayats for field investigations. Vedasendur Block represented well irrigation in Dindigul and Chellampatti Block represented mixed source irrigation in Madurai in its area. Finally, for the purpose of field operations and primary data collection, two Panchayat Boards one in each block were selected by following random sampling procedure and lottery method. The village panchayat selected, accordingly, in Vedasendur Block was Nagampatti which consists of seven villages and hamlets. Those are Ottanagampatti, Chenankottai, Kunnampatti, Lavuganampatti, O.Pudur and Narayanapuram. The village panchayat selected in Chellampatti Block was Thidiyan which consist of five villages and hamlets. Those are T.Uchapatti, Ambattayampatti, Thidiyan, Nallaperumalpatti and Valangakulam.

2.8. SAMPLE DESIGN

As the universe of the research comprises of members, leaders and other office bearers of the erstwhile Tamilnadu
Agricultursits\textsuperscript{1} Association and present Indian Farmers and Toilers Party which has base all over the state, the study involves macro and micro analysis; Multi stage stratified random sampling for leaders and simple random sampling for members were adopted to select the respondents. The leaders of village, who hold office positions like President, Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Committee Members of village, Block, District and State were interviewed in two areas by means of personal interview schedule.

For the purpose of primary data collection from members of these two study areas the list of members of peasant organisation was collected in each area. The list of members in the Nagampatti Panchayat revealed 997 members and the membership in Thidiyan Panchayat villages showed 1006. It was decided to have 10 per cent of the universe as the sample size for the purpose of collection of primary data from the members. By following simple random sampling procedure and random start method 100 members in each area were selected and collected data from the selected members by means of personal interview schedule.

2.9. DATA BASE

Primary data pertaining to the socio-economic, peasant organisation, movements, pressure course of action, nature and extent
of participation, peasant issues, success and failures, rural social structural change etc., were collected from the selected respondents, leaders and members of TVS/IFTF by means of personal interview schedules.

Secondary data pertaining to agricultural census from the Office of Assistant Director of Statistics in the selected districts, particulars on strength of membership, pressure course of action initiated were collected from the records maintained by the IFTP headquarters in the selected districts. Further, the proceedings of the conferences, rallies and meetings sponsored by Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam were also consulted.

2.10 CHAPTER SCHEME

In Chapter I, the introduction of the research is presented which covers such research areas as statement of the problem, survey of literature, concept of peasant as perceived and conceived by various scholars, concept of peasant in the Indian context, political class characteristics of peasantry and peasant politics in Tamilnadu.

In Chapter II, methodology of research is presented.

In Chapter III, the history of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam (Tamilnadu Agriculturists' Association) is presented which gives a
comprehensive understanding of the Association covering the structural and functional aspects such as the organisation's early beginning, issues pursued, demands, agitational strategy, formation of political party and splinter groups.

Chapter IV consists of two parts in which the descriptive analysis and discussion of the primary data collected from the two study areas representing well and mixed sources irrigation are presented. Part I discusses the empirical data collected from the village, representing well irrigation eco-structure (i.e., Nagampatti in Vedasendur Block) which covers the emergence of peasant organisation in the name of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, pressure courses of action of peasantry, women participation and militancy, other related activities of peasantry, downfall of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, division of peasantry, conversion of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam into political party, emergence of another non-political peasant organisation in this area, impact of political party organisation of peasantry and change in rural social structure. Part II in this chapter presents the primary data collected from the mixed sources irrigation village (i.e., Thidiyan in Chellampatti Block) which covers such aspects in peasant organisation and movement as agricultural scenario in Usilampatti taluk and Chellampatti Block, organisation of peasantry, pressure course of action, women participation and militancy, militancy of middle peasants, conversion of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam (non-
political) into political party in the name of Indian Farmers and Toilers Party, political courses of action and its impact and change in rural social structure.

Chapter V presents a comprehensive comparative analysis of the empirical data collected in these two study areas on formation of pressure group and organisational effectiveness with specific reference to socio-political aspects.

In Chaper VI, the summary of findings and conclusions, implications for future research and recommendations are presented.