INTRODUCTION

Madras Presidency and Tamil Nadu

The Madras Presidency of South India came into existence due to the administrative and political needs of the British who by the end of the Eighteenth Century had consolidated to a great extent their grip on the political vicissitudes of South India. The Presidency, as it existed during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, comprised the predominantly Telugu-speaking Andhra region of the north, the predominantly Tamil-speaking country of the south, and the Malabar and South Canara districts of the west. The Tamil Country alone, now equivalent to the state of Tamil Nadu, was made up of a great quadrant, a little over 50,000 square miles (129,500 square kilometres), lying between the sea and the Deccan plateau.¹

The Presidency itself, and to a great extent its Tamil component, were far removed from the Gangetic plain, the heart of political India, and the north–western passes through for centuries, foreigners had made their way into northern India and beyond as invaders or migrants. Moreover, the Vindya Mountains served as a natural barrier that separated northern from the southern India, preventing to a great the political and social convulsions of north India from overflowing into the south.²

In the sprawling polyglot Madras Presidency, the Tamil regions were the dominant element. They constituted a third of the land area and half of the population- 21 million out of nearly 43 million in 1921. Tamil Nadu was more urban than its regional neighbours. On 1931 nine of the fifteen largest towns and cities in the Madras presidency were located in Tamil Nadu, including the four most populous- Madras (6,47,230), Madurai (1,82,018), Trichinopoly (1,42,843), and Salem (102179). Tamil Nadu was further distinguished from its neighbours unlike the other linguistic regions of the Dravidian south, almost the whole of the Tamil speaking area was under one administration. Thus, the Tamil districts of the Madras presidency constituted a relatively compact and homogenous linguistic block, and they correspond closely to the State of Madras (renamed Tamil Nadu in 1969) which was formed by the reorganization of India’s states on linguistic lines in 1956.3

**Concept of Dalits**

In the Indian concept the term ‘Dalits’ of to-day were the ‘Depressed Classes’ of yesterdays. Now the term ‘Dalits’ is a popular term used for the Untouchables of India. This term was first used by B.R. Ambedkar to denote the members of the Mahar Community in Maharashtra and later it included all the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Neo Buddhists, landless labourers and those who were economically exploited. In another words it is defined as follow: The word “Dalit” is Sanskrit form of the ‘broken-men’ or spitted

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group’ from ascender. This was used by B.R.Ambedkar to mean generally all
the Scheduled Castes and the Neo Buddhists, landless labourers and those who
were economically exploited”.

Historically, Dalits were not portrayed truthfully or with fairness, from
the time of Hindu religious literature to contemporary Marathi literature.
Therefore, Dalit writers reject this alienating literary tradition and write with
the objective of explaining to people their own pain, problems and questions.
Because of their commitment, and the inspiration of B.R.Ambedkar’s thought,
Dalit literature has acquired the form of a movement.

After the decline of Buddhism in India, such a class has no traditional
status but only a human status. Perhaps, it is a class which seek a total or a
complete emancipation from the chains of dominance, hegemony and control.
This particular class is the class of proletariat.

**Depressed Classes**

The lowest in social order of the Hindu society were the Untouchables
who were mostly labourers in agriculture and other public works. Since they
were oppressed and depressed by the Caste-Hindus they were called as
‘Depressed Classes’. According to a Government Order the Depressed Classes
consisted of nine endogamous Castes known as Koravas, Chakkliyas, Kuluvas,

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4 Webster, John, C.B., ‘Who is a dalit?’ in Michael, S.M., (ed.), *Dalits in Modern India, Vision and Values*, New Delhi, 1999, p.68.
Valluvas, Madigas, Ma/as, Pallas, Parayas and Semmans. This term was commonly used in British administrative circles and British records.5

**Untouchables**

_The term “Untouchable” is generally applied to a person in the lowest rung of Hindu society. This term first appeared in print in 1909 the word “Untouchability” is a literal translation of the Hindi word ‘Achut’ The Webster Dictionary describes it, “as a member of a large hereditary group in India having traditional Hindu belief and quality of defiling by contact the person, food and drink of a member of a high caste and for merely being strictly segregated and restricted to menial._

**Scheduled Castes**

The Government of India Act of 1935 listed all the hereditary ‘Untouchable Communities’ in different Provinces in a ‘Special Schedule’. An order-in-council issued under the Government of India Act of 1935 designated of the castes in the list as ‘Scheduled Castes’. In the Madras Presidency, eighty six Untouchable Castes came under the category of ‘Scheduled Castes’. Hence the term ‘Scheduled Castes’ become the legal administrative term of the British Government since 1935. In case of providing them political representation, educational and employment reservation, the term ‘Scheduled Castes’ and

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5. Gowthaman, G., ‘Historicising Dalit Organisational Movement in Late Colonial Tamil Nadu’ in *Historiography Sectional President Address of Twenty-First Annual Session of Tamil Nadu History Congress*, Cuddalore, 2014, p.2
‘Scheduled Tribes’ were used and they were incorporated in the Indian Constitution in the articles 366 (24) and 366 (25) respectively.

**Adi-Dravidas**

The term ‘Adi-Dravidas’ is commonly used to denote the Untouchables of Tamil Nadu but it was not found in record prior to 1920. The change in nomenclature of the Untouchables into ‘Adi-Dravidas’ was taken place as a result of the prolonged struggle of the leaders of ‘Adi - Dravida Mahajana Sabha’ and by the keen efforts taken by M.C.Rajah, a leader of the said Sabha.

**Harijans**

The Untouchables were christened as ‘Harijans’ by Mahatma Gandhi. But the Untouchables strongly opposed the term ‘Harijans’ also, because this term was meant as the children of ‘Devadasis’. The Congress Government recognized the term ‘Harijans’ and issued an order in 1947, stating that the Government have directed that the term ‘Harijans’, should be used to denote persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes in all public records except in proceeding of statutory enactments, until the status is amended.

In the Indian context, the Dalits of today were the depressed classes of yester years. Now the term ‘Dalit’ is often used to denote the Untouchables of India meaning the ‘broken people’ in the society. Though this term is used to mention all the marginalised groups in the society, it is widely used to refer to

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the depressed classes. The term ‘Untouchable’ is generally applied to a person in the lowest rung of Hindu society. The Government of India Act of 1935 listed all the hereditary Untouchable Communities in different provinces of British India in a special schedule. An order in council issued under the Government of India Act of 1935 designated all the castes in the list as ‘Schedules Castes’. In the Madras Presidency, eighty six untouchable Castes came under the category of Scheduled Castes. Hence, the term Scheduled Castes became the legal administrative term of the British Government in 1935. The underprivileged masses were called by different names by different people from time to time to denote their position in the society. ‘Harijan’ was another term used by Gandhi to refer to these downtrodden masses. However, the Constitution of free India picked up the word, “Scheduled Castes” to refer to the untouchables. But the word “Dalit” by the Dalit leaders themselves has become popular at present scenario. 

Statement of the Problem

The Dalits in Tamil Nadu constitute a major section of the Hindu society who is considered to be ‘low’ and belonging to ex-touchable communities. Untouchability in the had meant a number of social implications and issues. The Dalits had waged a long struggles for their emancipation from the oppressive caste discriminations and the inhuman social practice of untouchability. In this backdrop, the political experiences gained by the Dalits

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during the rule of Justice Party and the Congress are an interesting phase of the exposition of their grievances and making themselves to face challenges in the Madras Legislature. At the time of the Indian independence in 1947, Dalit politics stood at an interesting phase of protest and accommodation. As the study period is transformation in the political phase of the Dalits, the scholar selects this topic for his doctoral research.

**Universe of the Study**

The present study *“History of Dalit Movement in Tamil Nadu, 1921-1956”*, deals with the emergence of the depressed classes from their disabilities. The role of the state is to reform and uplift the Dalits. The role of the Individuals and the government constitute the main aspect of the study. Since the process is a continuous one, the efforts taken by the various political parties from 1920 to 1960s such as Justice Party, Congress Party and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam are dealt with in the scope of the study.

The Justice Party Government which carried the social ideology of non-Brahmin movement since 1920s introduced a series of reforms in order to uplift the non-Brahmins. As a result of this Governor of Madras Presidency nominated Depressed Class members to the Legislative Council. The passing of Communal G.Os brought some changes in the society which started to think of the “Social Justice” in the society during the period from 1920s-1940s. The Dalits were given constitutional right in the matter of Government appointment. Another measure taken by the Justice Party was the removal of
the civil disabilities of the Dalits. When the Dalits were prohibited from entering into public streets, highways, public places and temples etc., by the social legislations the Justice Ministry attempted to remove these disabilities. Despite the politics of communal violence by caste Hindus on the Dalits, the Justice Party Government has passed such legislations in the Madras Legislative Council in support of Dalits.

The Congress Government which was in power in the state of Tamil Nadu from A.D.1937 to 1967 passed various legislations, one among them was the “Removal of Disabilities Act of 1938” (Madras Act XXI of 1938). Again, the Removal of Civil Disabilities Amendment Bill of 1947 was introduced as the first one became a dead letter due to the resignation of Rajaji’s Ministry in 1939. According to this Bill, the denial of burial and cremation grounds to the Depressed Classes became a “Cognizable Offence”. After the introduction of the Republican Constitution of India on 26\(^{th}\) January 1950 the Parliament enacted “The Untouchable Offences Act of 1955” popularly known as, The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 (Act 22 of 1955). Apart from these, various welfare schemes and ameliorative measures related to education and economic development of the Dalits were introduced during the Congress period in order to bring them to the main stream of the society.

Since education is considered as the key to social progress, the Congress Government tried to impart education through effective ways and means. Giving fee concessions, providing scholarships and offering hostel
accommodations were some of the efforts taken by then Congress Government to give the Dalits an opportunity to come up in the life through education. Removing the social disabilities through legislations and giving the educational opportunities through special concessions made the Dalits to get the chance for their upliftment. Economically special schemes were brought to uplift the Dalits by providing loan and other facilities.

Scope of the Study

An attempt is made to bring out the Dalit Movement in Tamil Nadu from A.D. 1921 to 1955. During this period, the Justice Government, the Congress Government tried to win the support of the Dalits for political gains in Tamil Nadu. Though these governments rendered many political and social measures, the Dalits were not benefitted much. These measures were illusionary to the Dalits who began to emerge a reckoning forcer because of the missionary services and progressive measures of the British Government. The measures aimed at the progress of the Dalits were hindered by the caste Hindus who dominated Justice Party and the Congress. This trend constitutes the scope of the study.

Aims and Objectives

The study attempts to attain the following aims and objectives

1. To trace the position and status of the Dalits in Tamil society
2. To examine the contribution of the missionaries and social organization for the growth of socio-political awakening among the Dalits.
3. To understand the real condition of the Dalits under the rule of the Justice Party.

4. To trace the reasons for the labour strike at Madras and the stand of the Dalits there

5. To know the temple entry issue of the Dalits and measures undertaken by the Congress Governments.

6. To know the efforts of the political organizations like Communist Party of India (C.P.I.) and Dravida Kazhagam (D.K.) to win the support of the Dalit agricultural laboures and the alliance of Madras Scheduled Caste Federation (M.S.C.F.) with the political parties in the Independent Tamil Nadu

Hence, the prime objective of the study is to examine the Dalit politics socio- from A.D. 1921 to 1955.

**Hypotheses**

The study attempts to test the following hypotheses framed by the scholar

1. The Missionaries and social reform organizations worked much for the awakening of the Dalits.

2. The politics of the caste Hindus on the one side and on the other side stand of the Dalit workers under the leadership of M.C.Rajah paved the way for the labour riot in Madras (now Chennai).

3. Every administrative and legislative measure of the politically motivated Justice Party affected the prospects of the Dalits and by that the latter discontented with the Justice Party.
4. By playing an unique politics, Rajaji secured temple entry for the Dalits in Tamil Nadu.

5. The temple entry was considered as the climax of anti-untouchability campaign.

6. To stabilize their position, the C.P.I. and D.K. involved in the politics to win the Dalits in the Independent Tamil Nadu.

7. The end of the Ambedkar’s softer line towards the Congress, had a definite impact on the Dalit politics at the provincial level.

8. The M.S.C.F. strongly opposed the Congress’ claims to represent the interests of the Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu

**Importance of the Study**

The dalit movement in the first half of the Twentieth Century gained significance because of the emergence of the Dalits leaders who played a central stage in the Tamil Nadu Politics. The Dalit leaders like M.C.Rajah, R.Srinivasan, V.I. Muniswami Pillai, Swami Sahajandam, J.Sivashanmugam Pillai played a remarkable role in the politics of colonial Tamil Nadu. The rise of the Dalits was depended upon their continuous play in the politics revolved around the Dalits. When their importance was realized by the Justice Party and Congress, both the partied half-heartedly done some measures to improve the lot of the Dalits in Tamil Nadu. Some non-Brahmin leaders openly put obstacles on the path of the progress of the Dalits. By doing so, they involved in the Dalit politics for political gains.
Area of Study

The Tamil region of the erstwhile Madras Presidency and Madras State forms the area of the present study. Linguistic provinces were formed in the year 1956 and the Madras State was renamed as Tamil Nadu in 1969. Tamil Nadu comprises the districts of Chengalput, North Arcot, South Arcot, Salem, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli, Thanjavur, Madurai, Ramnad and Tirunelveli. Tamil is the mother tongue in all the districts and the dalits spread all over the areas. But strangely enough the dalits shared without any distinction poverty and backwardness and the social disability imposed by the caste ridden society.

Period of Study

This study covers a period from A.D. 1921 to 1956 roughly a period of thirty five years. The year 1921 has been chosen as the anchor of this study, because it was in this year because of the labour politics in Madras the Pulianthope riot took place in which the Dalit workers suffered much and the riot was responsible for the breakaway of the Dalits from the non-Brahmin Justice Party. The end of the study year is also significant. In was in the year 1955 Parliament exercised this exclusive power and passed the Untouchability Abolition (Offences) Act which marks the culmination of anti-disabilities legislation. This Untouchability Abolition (Offences) Act of 1955 outlawed the enforcement of disabilities on the ground of Untouchability. By the early months of 1956, the Communist protest virtually came to an end in Tamil Nadu. The Communist led Kishan Sabbas backed by the Dalits retreated from
the path of radicalism and tried to extract concessions from the government through Constitutional methods. Besides in the early months of 1956, the differences between the Dalits and the political organization like D.M.K. acquired a great deal of prominence. In the provincial conference of the D.M.K., radical Dalit leaders (some of whom maintained connections with the M.S.C.F.) raised the issue of caste.

**Design of the Study**

The study is structured into six chapters besides an Introduction and a Conclusion. The Introductory Chapter deals with the ‘concept’ of ‘Dalit’ and its origin of usage. various nomenclatures on and about the downtrodden masses are dealt with. Besides, scope, significance, aims, methodology and design of the study is given in the introductory chapter. The First Chapter is on the “**Dalit Society**” which deals with the various dalit sub-sects in Tamil Nadu and their awakening. The Second Chapter is on the “**Role of Social Reform Organisations and the Dalit Consciousness**”. The attention of the several social reform organizations on the development of the Dalits and the Government’s efforts undertaken for their promotion, and the steps initiated by the Dalit Organizations form the main aspect of the chapter.

‘Justicites’ Politics over Dalits’ forms the Third Chapter. The Justicites came to power with the help and support given by the Dalits. T.M. Nair played an important role in winning the Dalits to the Non-Brahmin Movement. He established rapport with the Dalit leaders like M.C.Rajah. The relations were
cordial till the days of T.M.Nair. When the Justicites came to power, they gradually became indifferent to the demands of the Dalits. The Justice Party deliberatively avoided leaders like M.C.Rajah and other Dalit leaders and they were not invited for any useful suggestions. Hence Dalit leaders like M.C.Rajah and R.Srinivasan, came out of the Justice Party. The nominated Dalit leaders began to fight either independently or collectively in the Legislature. Later E.V.Ramasamy Naicker (E.V.R.) advocated the cause of the Dalits. His works and activities made a good immediate impact upon them. There were issues over education, scholarship, hostel facility, labour, postings in public service and communal representation of Dalits. In every issue related to the Dalits, the Justicites showed their indifferent attitude towards the Dalits.

The Fourth Chapter is on the “Labour Politics”. An analytical study is made on the labour politics prevailed in the Buckingham and Carnatic mills between the Dalit and non-Brahmin workers. The non-Brahmin workers were backed by the nationalist Congress leaders and Justice Party leaders. The Dalit workers were led by their leader M.C.Rajah. The mill authority prepared the Dalits against the non-Brahmin workers which paved the way for Pulianthope riot. Further, an attempt is made to focus the sufferings of the Dalit workers in the riot and the rise of the Dalit leaders like M.C.Rajah.

The Fifth Chapter entitled ‘Tempe Entry Politics’ highlights the struggle for temple entry and the removal of social disabilities of the Dalits. The Congress under Rajaji waged a relentless struggle against the propaganda
campaign of the Sanatanists (orthodox section) who opposed the temple entry of the Dalits. By adopting many tactics, Rajaji and other local Congress leaders like A. Vaidhyanatha Iyer made a campaign propaganda for the cause of temple entry in Madurai and succeeded in it against the opposition of the Sanatanists. Further legislations were brought in Madras legislature allowing the Dalits into the temple and abolishing the social disabilities of the Dalits. These legislative measures paved the way for the entry of the Dalits into the Brahmanical temples in few places of Tamil Country.

The Sixth Chapter is on the “Crisis of Dalit Politics”. Almost immediately before the Indian independence Adi Dravida politics lost much of its dynamism and became divided along the lines of personality, ideology and political strategy. In the late 1940 and early 1950s, Adi Dravidas aligned themselves with the more dominant public streams within the Madras Province as well as the nation. Therefore, the ‘Brahmins- Bourgeois Congress’ had successfully incorporated Dalit politics during the last phase of its anti-British struggle. This trend was really responsible for the slow down of Dalit politics in Tamil Nadu, Subsequently the lack of colonial patronage of British Government had made this decline an irreversible moment in Dalit politics.
Sources

The sources for writing this thesis can be broadly classified under two major heads, namely, the primary and the secondary sources. The sources used for the present study are mainly archival, preserved in the Tamil Nadu State Archives, Madras. Among the primary sources, the government orders of various departments of Madras State, fortnightly reports from the Government of Madras to the Government of India furnish information of extraordinary value. The secondary sources include both English and Tamil published works, published research articles, souvenirs and magazines. The primary and secondary sources of printed works deals much about the dalit politics prevailed in the colonial and post-colonial Tamil Nadu.

Review of Literature

The Dalit Politics is a recent topic and so the the research works and publications are meager in this areas. Some pioneer research works are found in this area. But these work concentrated only on various aspects of the Dalit Movement and Dalit Upliftment. Hence an attempt has made the Dalit politics of Tamil Nadu.

S.R. Venkataraman’s ‘Temple Entry Legislations Reviewed with Acts and Bills’ (Madras, 1946) sketches the history of Temple Entry Movements in Madras Presidency, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala upto A.D. 1946, and it also deals about the Temple Entry Bills of the State and Central Governments. This
work does not deal about the disabilities of the depressed classes and the social legislations.

‘Notes on the Pariyas of Chingleput’ by the Collector of Chengalpet District, Tremenhere (Madras, 1892) gives the vivid descriptions of the socio-economic and educational conditions of the Dalits of Chengalput District. It helps for the study on ‘Panjami Land’. ‘The Poor Pariah’ by Col. H.S. Olcott (1902) is also a narrative note on the condition of Dalits. Himself as a Theosophist, he started Panchama or Pariah Schools in Madras popularly known as ‘Olcott Free Schools’. These two works and also the books on the services of Christian Missionaries on Depressed Classes simply throw light on the ameliorative measures to uplift the Depressed Classes.

“Minorities in Madras State: Group Interest in Modern Politics” (New Delhi, 1974) by S. Saraswathi is relatively a more useful work than other studies. This book is useful to study the caste-groups in Madras State during 70 years of colonial period. A chapter in the book entitled ‘The Political Role of the Fifth Varna’, highlights the attempts of the Dalits to get their ‘Civil Rights’ and Temple Entry’.

Dr. Babasaheeb Ambedkar - Writings and Speeches (Twelve Volumes) and The Untouchable and the Pax Britannica” (Bombay, 1993) describes the disinterest of the British in eradicating the disabilities of the Depressed Classes under the colonial rule. A. Ramaswamy in his Tamil book, Tamil Nattil Gandhi (Gandhi in Tamil Nadu) (Madras, 1969) covers the tours of Mahatma
Gandhi and his speeches on eradication of “Untouchability” and the question of “Temple Entry”.

David Arnold’s book, ‘Nationalism and Regional Politics in Tamil Nadu 1920-1937 A.D.) (New Delhi, 1973) has highlighted the role of Congress leaders to uplift the Untouchables particularly on Temple Entry and Land Reforms.

Eugene F. Irschick in his book, ‘Politics and Social Conflict in South India; The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1919’ (Oxford, 1960) gives the role of political parties and pressure groups in Tamil Nadu and the official groups between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. His another work, Tamil Revivalism in 1930s gives a picture Gandhi’s efforts to remove the untouchability through his Harija tour in Tamil Nadu in 1930s.

M.C. Rajah in his book, ‘The Oppressed Hindus’ (Madras 1922) vividly describes the plight of the Depressed Classes of Tamil Nadu and his endeavour of bringing out the G.O. on the changing of Nomenclature to Adi-Dravida’, Temple Entry Bills etc.

‘The History of Adi-Dravidas’ (Madras 1923) and ‘The Life Select Writings and speeches of Rao Bahadur M.C.Rajah, M.LA.’, (Madras 1930) by J. Siva Shanmugam Pillai, proved to be a mine of information on the efforts of the leaders of the Dalits to uplift their people.
‘Depressed Classes in the Composite State of Madras: (1909 to 1947 A.D.) A Socio-Political Study’ by G. Thangavelu, an unpublished thesis submitted to the Karnataka University, Dharwad, 1978 traces the origin of untouchability and Untouchables and the early measures of voluntary organizations to uplift the Dalits of the Madras Presidency. The self assertiveness of the Dalits and the ameliorative measures taken by the Government are chronologically traced by the researcher. ‘Tamil Desia Unarvin Munnodi Tamizhan Ayyothi-Doss Pandithar’ (Tamil) (Madras, 1999) by G. Thangavelu traces the self-assertiveness of the Dalits of Tamil Nadu since the colonial rule.

P.E. Mohan’s ‘Scheduled Castes: History of Elevation, Tamil Nadu, 1900-1955’ (Madras, 1993), elaborates the services of Christian Missionaries and the leaders of Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha for the elevation of Dalits in Tamil Nadu. The various legislations for removal of the disabilities of the Dalits that passed by the Madras Legislative Council are accounted in this work.


measures of the Depressed Classes. The Justice Party had abolished the Labour Department and further an important leader P. Theagaraya Chetty had refused to support the “Anti-Untouchability Law in 1922. These activities led the Dalits to conclude that No-Brahmin rule would not protect their interest.

‘Communal Reservations and Constitutional Safeguards in Tamil Nadu’ (Madras, 1999) by Dr. G. Thangavelu and R. Prathaban gives the facts and figures of communal G.O.s in Tamil Nadu since 1920 and vehemently criticizes the policy of Justice Party Government on the reservation to Dalits.

“Social Protest in Tamil Nadu” (Madras, 1993), is a research work by B.S. Chandrababu. This book deals with the ‘Self-Respect Movement and the emancipation of weaker sections in Tamil Nadu’.

‘The Role of M.C. Rajah to Uplift the Dalits in Tamil Nadu, 1920-1947’ an unpublished thesis submitted to the University of Madras, 1995 by A. Kalainesan describes the circumstances under which M.C. Rajah tried to pass the resolution for changing the name of the Depressed Classes into ‘Adi-Dravida’, and Temple-Entry Bill etc. and also the struggle of the Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sahha for Social Justice.

“Aasan and Social Revolution in Kerala” (Trivandrum, 1972) by T.K. Ravindran throws light on the plight of Ezhavans of Kerala and helps to build a theory as a model of the ‘Dalits’ plight. ‘Eight Furlongs of Freedom’ (Trivandrum, 1980) by T.K. Ravindran depicts the authentic documents on
“Vaikkam Satyagraha” and concludes neither the Congress nor any other political parties really wanted to wipe out the stigma of untouchability but utilized the plight of Untouchable as their tool for their propaganda.

‘The Role of C. Rajagopalachari in the Indian Freedom Movement with reference to Tamil Nadu, unpublished Thesis by C. Tamil Chelvi submitted to the Annamalai University 1992, pays more attention to his role in social reform activities.

‘Struggle for Social Justice in Tamil Nadu 1916-1939’ by P.Nagoorkani is a modest attempt to explore the origin and growth of the movement for social justice in Tamil Nadu with reference to the Dalits. Tracing the socio-reform movements which almost supplied the background history, primary emphasis is laid for assessing its impact on the socio-political situation in Tamil Nadu.

R.K. Kshirsagar’s ‘Dalit Movement in India and its Leaders’ reveals the history of Dalit liberation in India during 1857 to 1956. It attempts to find out the causes of the origin of inhuman practice of untouchability. This work also expounds the role of dalit organizations and the leaders individually or collectively for the liberation of the dalits, and their achievements. It covers all aspects of the Dalit Movement.

‘Nandanar’s Children, The Paraiyans’ Tryst with Destiny, Tamil Nadu, 1850-1956’ by Raj Sekhar Basu highlights the historical experiences of the Paraiyans of Tamil Nadu. The author also traces the transformation of the
Paraiyans from an ‘untouchable’ and socially despised community to one that came to acquire prominence in the political scene of Tamil Nadu.

Methodology

The study adopts historical, critical and analytical methods. A scientific approach has been made in the collection of materials and in studying the Dalit Politics in Tamil Nadu from 1921 to 1956 A.D. An analytical approach is made to study the various sources during the period under study. A critical evaluation is also made about the collected sources.