Conclusion

An attempt was made to understand the caste occupation, the occupational caste groups their relations with the English East India Company, in so far as the company’s international trade/business is concerned, the right-left hand divisions and caste conflicts and riots occurred in Madras affecting seriously not only the East India Company’s business but also its very survival, in the preceding pages. It has not been possible to quantify and conclusively prove the exactness of caste nature and definition of occupational caste groups; nor has it been possible to evaluate the company’s role in the caste riots in complete forms in the absence of adequate corroborating documents. It is equally difficult to give the exact causes of caste conflicts. However, every possible effort was made to understand the aforesaid subject matters through the records available at our disposal.

In the context of caste, it is such a historical truth which is very complex and very hard to define. It is an institution fraught with considerable internal complexity which has been based on extreme closed criteria and rigid hierarchical social stratification. Caste has many definitions, given by historians, sociologist, anthropologists and social scientists. The traditional notions of caste in India is divided into five main five varnas or five caste groups. First Brahmin, second Kshatriya, Vaishdyia, Sudra and fifth are untouchable. Each caste groups is attached with power which every individual exercises. Caste is more than division, gradations, hierarchy, it
is also a caste of minds, caste hegemony and it is myopic where individuals bound to fail the caste what actually caste is.

In the context of Caste and power, Caste is very much associated with power. Each caste carries power within the caste occupation. With this occupation Castes people were in bargaining position. For instance in Madras Washer men castes were in bargaining positions. Washerman was extremely important for the Company. The English Company’s decided that between ‘gentu town’ or the ‘black town’ and the ‘potters town,’ there was a river which was extremely useful for the Company’s washermen who daily wash, dry their calicos. Not only this, the Company also ordered that “Justice of the Choultry should clear as much as possible of the ground or sand on the North side of river on either side of Mr.Edward Henry’s house and garden, from the houses and gardens that might be useful for the washers.” In a sort of protest, the washermen opposed to make contract with the East India Company and forced the latter to provide a proper space for washing.

Regarding caste and social change, In Madras we can witness the change in the society very well. First of all, the English Company or colonial powers brought new religion that was Christianity. This religion brought new changes in the society. Dubois pointed out that “The European Power which is now established in India is, properly speaking, supported neither by physical force nor by moral influence. It is a piece of huge, complicated machinery, moved by springs which have been arbitrarily adapted to it. Under the supremacy of the Brahmins the people of India hated their government, while they cherished and respected their ruler; under the supremacy of Europeans they

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1 Diary and Consultation, 1672-78, p.76.
hate and despise their rulers from the bottom of their hearts, while they cherished and respect their government. And here I would remark that the rule of all the Hindu princes, and often that of the Mohamedans, was, properly speaking, brahminical rule, since all posts of confidence were held by Brahmins. Apart from that the English company brought new economic policies which led to the social change. The company also brought new legal system which gave great hope to the occupational caste groups which led to the social change.

In the context of Caste and migration, we find that Madras witnessed lots of migration from the neighboring regions like Telugu, Canaresel kannada speaking area, Gujarati and all over south Indian regions. The records of Fort St. Geroge had many instances about the migrations. Slaves were coming and going many places from Madras. So migration was very high. As far as the Caste is concerned, many lower caste people migrated as labourers from the local regions to Madras. Records mentioned it clearly.

In the context of caste occupations and mobility, it has been tried to evaluate that there was definite relations between caste and occupation. It has been argued that occupations or professions improve the power relation of ones status. It has also been contented that caste has been static, stagnant and, therefore, there was no caste mobility. It is not possible to see the mobility in the caste system as noted above. However, the mobility was possible only in the occupation or profession, as we have seen in Madras with several caste groups. For instance, the washermen, the barbers, the

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weaver communities, the carpenters, etc. were practising different kinds of professions trades, which are traditionally not their occupations. Therefore, the term "caste occupational mobility" instead of 'caste mobility' is used. For example, the sudras in which artisan caste, the carpenters, weavers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, and untouchables on which paraiyar caste and leather workers were all becoming dependent because of financial status.

The English East India Company gave this opportunity from its new economic policy. The Company employed them extensively and various castes were adopting new professions such as in shipping, carpentry, weaving and joining many industries like textile industries. In this context, we can see the caste occupational upward mobility. This profession was, in fact, not practices only by the sudras or untouchables groups. The other upper castes were also adopting different professions. For instance, one Brahmin was the chief of dubashes of the Company in Madras.

Another example of upward occupational mobility was in term of merchants. Generally, merchants organized their business independently or in private with the Company or with other groups. But in Madras the famous merchants were appointed as chief merchants of the Company. Becoming chief merchants of the Company means they have official status and power apart from their business. The company provided them all facilities including the estate ownership, palanquin and other honorary symbols which were not available for the ordinary merchants. It shows that they had extra honours as chief merchants of the Company. Therefore, it can be argued that the occupational upward mobility was occurring in all castes from top to bottom.
In the context of occupational caste groups' numbers in Madras, it is again very problematic issue. The Fort St. George Records reported that there were twenty-nine caste groups in Madras. The Census Report of the Town of Madras, 1871, however, gives only nineteenth list of castes. While Edgar Thurston noted in 19th C. that there were three hundred castes and tribes representing more than forty lakhs individuals. The above facts show that the numbers of castes were always increasing throughout the centuries. In early medieval time it increased and during 17th century, it became 29 caste groups at least in Madras, which increased to 300 in 19th century.

Pertaining to caste positions and functions again, it is confusing. As by convention, the lower castes were always in a disadvantageous position to ask for better living and to fight for their own benefits. However, in 17th century Madras, under English Company we have had several instances of the untouchable groups fighting for their wages, claimed for respectable positions and establishing importance of their caste in the society. They were also in a position to threat the English Government in case their demands were not fulfilled. For instance, the washermen, who belongs to untouchable groups, had told the English Government to increase the wages and provide all facilities to wash the calicoes and the company's cloths. They also demanded that the company should also provide securities from any dangers from the seaside particularly. The Company has agreed to provide the demands to prevent the washermen from leaving the town. There was also an instance of strike, which was called by the chief merchants of Madras in which both the left and right hand castes

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3 Diary and Consultation Book, 1706, p.55.
4 Census Reports of the Town of Madras, 1871, p.10.
untouchable participated in 1680-81. We also see that in 1707-08 the right hand caste groups in which the pariah castes protest against the English government and migrated en mass to San Thome.

These untouchable groups were also in a position to take the support from the people of their respective caste divisions. For instance, the pariah caste belonging to the right hand caste had immense support of the whole right hand groups including the Komatis and Chettis merchants. In 1716, a left hand caste boy insulted a pariah caste woman, which resulted into riots between the left and right hand castes.

Pertaining to occupational caste functions, they were not tied by their traditional functions. Rather, they were adopting new jobs and through these opportunities, they gained new form of identity and consciousness through their struggle, strikes, and demanding wages. In fact, they were in a bargaining position which facilitated changing the traditional social relations. Although it was also a fact that the untouchable groups were treated badly and were not even allowed to eat together. Despite that in urban centre untouchability was receding slowly and gradually. They were also interacting with the English officers including the Governor. They also interacted with the chief-dubashes and other European merchants. This was the economic compulsions of all the Company officers, the Chettis, Komattis, weavers, artisans groups, bricklayers, palanquin bearers, washermen, painters, coolies, peons, pariahs, horse-keepers, grasscutters, barbers, hairdressers, water bearers and other occupational caste groups were becoming economically independent.

In the contexts of social and physical space, merchant groups were at the top position while the untouchable groups were at the bottom. In the physical space, the
whole occupational caste groups were settled in the Black Town. However, the chief merchants were in a position to settle outside the Black Town. The whole Black Town was divided into different streets named on the basis of occupational caste groups such as weavers streets, washermen streets, chettis streets, and so on. It also symbolizes the social space of the occupational caste groups.

In the context of commercial relations between the Company and the caste groups many scholars have shown that, the occupational caste groups and the English Company had interdependent relationships. The Company knew their importance and, therefore, the Company employed them largely and contracted with them for commercial purposes. In Madras the Company used the methods of contract with the occupational castes.

In terms of commercial aspects, the occupational caste groups may be classified into five categories such as merchants, artisans, labourers, groups of sea labourers and slaves. These five categories contributed immensely to the Company's trade and commerce. They were engaged in textile trades, shipping, rice, pepper, spices, and other trades of the Company. These groups also worked in the sea as catamaran persons, boatmen, and sea-farers. They also participated in the oceanic trade, particularly in the South East Asia, South Asia, East Africa and throughout the world in general. With this the other occupational caste groups like artisans and untouchables went to these areas with the merchants and governors as skilled labourers and also unskilled labourers. However, these commercial opportunities produced avenues for interaction of the caste groups with different cultures and different peoples, which improved their life drastically.
Coming on divisions between the left and right castes in South India, the whole South India was divided into two vertically differentiated caste groups. The first time we got the evidence of the divisions was in the eleventh century through an inscription. We get the existence of these divisions from the 11th to 19th century. In terms of their origin, there was controversy among the scholars. However, an inscription was the main sources of the origin.

In terms of superiority of the right and left hand caste, it is again controversial matter. Both groups claimed superior positions. Socially, of course, the right hand castes were on the higher positions than the left hand caste. However, economically both the caste groups are in the same positions. As Arasaratnam pointed out that in comparison to the caste, the left hand merchants are very affluent. From the left hand side many big merchants become the chief merchants. For example, many Balija merchants become the chief merchant.

Numerically, the right hand caste merchants were dominant compared to the left hand caste groups. However, because of their influential position and economic status the left hand caste groups started to claim an equitable status on par with the right hand caste. This had brought about constant conflicts between the two groups, which sometimes broke out into open riots. In the contexts of caste conflicts, both right and left hand castes and the English Company were very involved. Apparently, the left and right hands were fighting for physical and social space. However, if we go deeper, we will get the booming economic conditions, which are the roots of the conflicts. Cultural and religious factors cannot be avoided, which was certainly the main components of the conflicts. But economic conditions formed the base for the caste riots and dispute.
especially in Madras. The fact that Madras witness most frequently of those caste riots
vis-à-vis the complete absences of such instances of riots in other parts especially in the
countryside have shown that the flourishing trades and the booming economy of
Madras was the main cause of the conflicts. Interestingly enough the left hand
merchants accepted this fact that the caste riots were because of the economic reasons
which is recorded in the history of English East India Company pertaining to the year
1707-1708.

The English Company also became profoundly involved in the issue of caste
riots as the rulers of Madras. The Company made rules for them so that the peaceful
environment could be maintain in the town. It is equally important to note that the
Company was not interested in intervening in the caste structure. They did get involved
in the situations because of the commercial reasons. Although the Company assumed
that, they were protector for the poor their main motive behind it was for their
profitable commerce.

The other reasons behind the riots were problems pertaining to urbanization.
Generally, in urban setting the professional and economic work was very important.
The urban centre also provides as centre of interaction between all caste groups
irrespective of caste, creed or races and religion. Madras represents one of the best
eamples for this. Therefore, behind all caste riots, the economic conditions and the
pressures of rapid urbanization formed the essential basis. This is not to disagree with
other factors such as caste prides, honours, caste symbols, religion, cultures etc;
however, it appears that these factors were only the outward representations of the
inherent economic conflicts between the left hand and the right hand caste.
Pertaining to the Labouring Head castes and their role, the chief labourer of the English Company enjoyed certain privileges. First, the chief labourer directly participates in the Company trade and administration which far exceeds the trade of other brokers of the Company in Madras. Secondly, the chief labourer mediated between their own people and the Company. Thirdly, they were leaders of their own respective communities. The English Company pointed out their functions and responsibility towards their community indirectly. For instance, on 31th July, 1702, the Governor and council requested the heads of the laboring castes because of disbursement of money, cash towards the charge of the fortifying the black town which was solemnly promised by them should be repaid by a general tax on themselves about which there had been several meetings but nothing effected and whereas the fortifications of the black town were in good part finished which tended much of the security and advantage of the inhabitants. Company believed that they will cheerfully contribute to the charge thereof, in order to which we had directed that paper to be delivered to the chief castes of each caste who were forthwith with ordered to summon to their caste, when that paper was to be read out to them and every man permitted to subscribe what he will give voluntarily towards the aforementioned cause.

Fortifications and such sums to be paid as his subscription to the head of the caste and such others that refuse to subscribe, their names were to be taken in list apart, and given in to the Governor so that a speedy work will go easily. Governor also warned the chief caste that the chief of the each caste should not misuse with the collected money. If done, the severest penalty will be awarded to the heads caste. It was also ordered that what money received for the use of aforesaid by the chief castes, will
be paid from time to time from the paymaster. The Head castes of the caste meet daily with company/council generally. During meeting they discuss about the wages, how they raise money for the Black town and how each caste played a role in the company. Any scandalous things happened in the company, the heads castes were summoned for the meetings, for instance, there had been a scandalous paper dropped in the town relating to the assessing of the town wall money written in a counterfeit hand in English which they judge to be some European who had had some insight into the company's affair, the drift of which could be for no other end than to raise mutinies and insurrections, to prevent the money from being collected for the building, the black town wall, and workers and there being some particular charges against Seraupau, the chief merchant, they summoned all the heads castes before them that morning and examined them to every particular, which they positively denied they knew anything of that. Heads castes were also called on when other castes made complaint to another castes head.

Pertaining to the Judiciary system and the impact on the Occupational Castes, our finding was; The English Company gave new legal system based on the trial system. This system gave new hope for the lower castes and it was greatly beneficial. The English company was having a more or less democratic set-up based on the British government system. Inquiry system and trial system was a great feature of the East

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6 Fort St. George, Dairy and Consultation book, 1702, p.65. Madras Govt. Press, Madras, p.76. (Hereafter Dairy and Consultation.) See also, 1707, p.30. The chief caste of carpenter and bricklayer surveyed the town for constructing the new building. In 1706, pp,53-56, The all the head caste were summoned for the constructing the Black town. All heads were contributed the some pagodas for the constructing the Black town wall. There were 29 castes who had given money to the company.

7 Diary and consultation book, 1703, p.22.

8 Diary and consultation book, 1703, p.25.
India company’s judicial policies. In some cases, towards Indians it was also based upon the race system in which they gave lot of importance to the Europeans but it also gave lots of importance to the Indians ignoring caste and class prejudice. As a result, the English Company played a critical significant role in the field of law, justice, crime and punishment. The occupational castes had a great chance to empower themselves by getting the secular kind of justice system.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, at Madras under the English Company, the processes of investigations were democratic and labourer had every option to complain against the higher classes. As a result of this, the labourer castes were much benefited from the new constitutional legal structure of the British. According to C.K.Mohan Rao, the British Company was politically strong and they brought new constitutional structure of their own in India with what they have had an experience in England to suit their political ends in India. As they felt difficult to ignore the social inheritance of India, due importance was given to the Indian subjects in their political as well judicial administration in India. He further states that The English law was based on the principle of equity and good conscience .In exercise of their discretion they even applied principles of Hindu and Muslims personal laws and even customary laws in many ways.

The Madras Army has given much benefit to the lower caste and it resulted a new identity for them and they become a source of mobility.

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10 Ibid, p.102.