CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Caste victimization as a consequential effect of a discriminatory process of a caste society affects the Arunthathiyaars, the lowest caste group, making them sufferers of caste society. The data collected from 450 Arunthathiyaars from the three panchayat unions of Virudhunagar district namely, Rajapalayam, Sattur and Vembakkottai are analysed.

In this study appropriate emphasis has been given to the Arunthathiyaar women who are the worst oppressed among the Arunthathiyaars. This research reveals the fact that the Arunthathiyaars are the worst affected caste victims of the caste crime.

The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To study the socio-economic status of the Arunthathiyaars in Virudhunagar district.

2. To assess the various manifestations of caste victimization of the Arunthathiyaars in Virudhunagar district through socio-cultural, religious, occupational and political discriminations of the caste society.

3. To study the level of caste victimization of the Arunthathiyaars in Virudhunagar district imposed by the high castes, the State and the other Dalits.

4. To analyse the consequences of caste victimization on the Arunthathiyaars in Virudhunagar district.

5. To explore the various ways and means to empower the Arunthathiyaars in Virudhunagar district in the context of caste victimization.
To study scientifically the above objectives, the researcher designed a well framed interview schedule for the data collection form the selected universe. The appropriate and related variables were identified to form precise questions and proper pre-coding was done in order to measure the caste victimization of the Arunthathiyars. The interview schedule was tested to prove its validly and reliability and the appropriate statistical techniques such as univariate, correlation, Chi-square, regression and Path analysis were used to analyse the collected data. Besides the interview schedule, the other techniques like interviews, focused group discussions and a few case studies were also used to collect the primary data.

6.1. The Major Findings of the Study

In this study, there are more or less equal percentage of male and female respondents from villages (74.4% male and 71.5% female) and towns (25.6% male and 28.5% female). The percentage of female respondents from town is slightly higher (3.7%) than the female respondents from the villages. The sex-wise distribution of samples in all the three unions ensures not much disparity among the representation of male and female and makes sure that the views of both male and female have equal importance.

The age wise samplings of the respondents reveal the fact that the study mainly concentrates on the employed and unemployed, and active age group members of the Arunthathiyar community. Such an age-wise division where the experienced people are slightly more than youngsters brings out the experiential knowledge of elders effectively. The active participation of the young female in this study is more than the participation of aged women. The middle aged female group has also contributed much to this study. The
views of the married people are strongly expressed in this study. Religion-wise division
does not make big difference.

Based on the analysis of the collected data the following findings are enumerated:

1. Caste victimization is measured from the contributing variables such as high
castes, State and other Dalits. Responding to 24 questions under these three
variables, among the total 450 respondents 85 per cent of the respondents express
that they experience high level of caste victimization from high castes, State and
other Dalits and only 15 per cent of the respondents state that they experience low
level of caste victimization.

2. Though all the respondents speak Tamil, 8.7 per cent belong to Kannada speaking
Arunthathiyar group and the rest are from Telugu speaking Arunthathiyar group.

3. Among the respondents, only 2.2 per cent belong to Christianity and 0.9 per cent
to Buddhism. The rest (96.9%) of the respondents follow Hindu religion.

4. Out of the total respondents, 44 per cent of the respondents are illiterate. If the
primary educated (18.9%) are also added to the illiterate then the non-literate
category goes up to 62.9 per cent. It is evident that only 4.9 per cent go beyond
school education for higher level studies and only 4.4 per cent of respondents
have done diploma and U.G. courses. Only 0.4 per cent is in the P.G. and
Professional courses. This study reveals that literacy rates among the
Arunthathiyar respondents in Virudhunagar district are as follows: 18.9 per cent
at primary level; 10.7 per cent at Middle level and 10.7 per cent at Higher
Secondary level.
5. The total literate population of Virudhunagar district is 1,421,270 (80.75%). Male and female literates are 773,186 (88.46%) and 648,084 (73.14%) respectively (Government of India, Census 2011). This study reveals that the total literacy rate among the respondents of the Arunthathiyars in the district is 55.9 per cent, and male literates are 56.8 per cent and female literates are 55 per cent. In the same way, the literacy rates of male (88.46%) and female (73.14%) of the Virudhunagar district (Government of India, Census 2011) are 31.66 per cent and 18.14 per cent higher than the literacy rate of male (56.8%) and female (55%) of the Arunthathiyars of Virudhunagar district of this study.

6. Out of the total respondents, 24.2 per cent of the respondents are involved in scavenging occupation, 64 per cent of the respondents are engaged in non-scavenging works and 11.8 per cent of the respondents are unemployed among the Arunthathiyars. The persons who are engaged in scavenging (52.3%) are more from towns than in villages (47.7%) and they are involved in scavenging, sweeping and cleaning the streets of the towns, and employed in hospitals, schools and public institutions for scavenging works. Those who are in the villages mostly (81.9%) do non-scavenging works. The unemployed in villages (77.4%) are much higher than the unemployed in towns (22.6%). Among those who are engaged in scavenging works, the percentage of female (25.5%) seems to be slightly higher than that of male (23.2%). Among the youngsters only 13.8 per cent are involved in scavenging works. Among literates, only 12.7 per cent are involved in scavenging works and 87.3 per cent of literates are engaged in non-scavenging works.
7. Among those who are engaged in scavenging, 64.2% are working in private sectors and 35.8% are as government employees working in government institutions and cleaning the public places. Among the occupation categories of the non-scavenging employees of the Arunthathiyars in the district, about 49.3 per cent of the respondents are involved in self-employment and 49 per cent of the respondents are involved in works of private sectors or companies. Only 1.7 per cent of the respondents have the opportunity to work as government employees.

8. Besides the scavenging works (24.2%), 23.3 per cent of the respondents do only coolie works in private or public sectors. The other main works in which they are engaged are Fire-works (7.5%), Farming (4.5%), working in Mills (4%), Tailoring (4%), Driving (2%) and other works.

9. Only 17.4 per cent of scavenging workers and 33 per cent of non-scavenging workers have permanency in their jobs. Out of the total employed among the Arunthathiyars in Virudhunagar district, daily wage labourers form 63.2 per cent, permanent workers come next with 13.1 per cent, part time workers with 12.8 per cent, and contract labourers come last with 10.8 per cent.

10. Out of 195 youngsters, only 13.8 per cent are involved in scavenging works. The rest (86.2%) are either away from scavenging or not involved in scavenging works. Among the elders who have passed the age 35, nearly 32.3 per cent are engaged in scavenging works. Among literates, only 12.7 per cent of the respondents are involved in scavenging works and 87.3 per cent of the respondents of literates are engaged in non-scavenging works. Among the non-
literates, there are 38.9 per cent of the respondents who are engaged in scavenging works and 61.1 per cent of the respondents are involved in non-scavenging works.

11. Among the total respondents, 32 per cent of the respondents have income below Rs. 2,500/- which is quite low to maintain a family. Nearly 55 per cent of the respondents are in the income group having Rs. 2,501/- to Rs. 5,000/-. The income groups between Rs. 5,001/- to Rs.10,000/- and Rs.10,001/- to Rs.25,000/- have 10 per cent of the respondents and 3 per cent of the respondents respectively. Nearly 32 per cent of the Arunthathiyar families in the district really struggle to maintain their families with the income lower than Rs. 2,500/-. There are only 23 per cent of the respondents having the income between Rs. 5001/- to 25,000/-. There are no Arunthathiyar families in the district having income more than Rs. 25,000/-. 

12. Out of 109 respondents who do scavenging, 89.9 per cent of the respondents come into the income category below Rs. 5,000/- and only 1.8 per cent of the respondents come into the income category of Rs. 10,001/- to Rs. 25,000/-. At the same time, out of 288 respondents who do non-scavenging, 85.7 per cent of the respondents come in the income category below Rs. 5,000/- and only 2.4 per cent of the respondents come into the income category Rs. 10,001/- to Rs. 25,000/-. 

13. Among the 450 respondents, 95.3 per cent of the respondents are landless persons. A small minority (2.4%) has less than 2 acres of land and 9 of the respondents or 2 per cent have 2 to 5 acres of land. Only one respondent has 5 to 10 acres of land and no one has more than 10 acres. Among scavengers, 97.2 per
cent of respondents are landless and the other 2.8 per cent of the respondents have less than 5 acres of land. Among the non-scavenging respondents, 94.1 per cent are landless and the other 5.9 per cent of the respondents have less than 10 acres of land. Almost all the unemployed respondents do not have land. Among the respondents from the towns, almost all, 99.2% of the respondents are landless persons. Even among the 4.7 per cent of land owning group, the literate (4.4%) and the illiterate (5.1%) have more or less the same share in owning land. The condition of landlessness is the same to both the literate (95.3%) and illiterate (94.9%) respondents.

14. Of the total respondents, 233 of the respondents have their own houses but among them 62.7 per cent are tiled houses. 103 of the respondents are still living in rented houses.

15. Among the total respondents, 89.6 per cent of the respondents are not members of any political party. The rest only 10.4 per cent of the respondents state that they are being members of any one of the political parties. Out of total respondents of the Arunthathiyars in Virudhunagar district, 3.3% belong to AIADMK, 2.4% in DMK, 1.8% in Congress and 1.1% in CPI(M). It is to be noted that the membership of the Arunthathiyars in the district in Dalit parties like Viduthalai Chirutthaigal and Puthiya Thamlilagam are only 0.4 and 0.2 per cents respectively.

16. Out of total respondents, 20.4 per cent of the respondents are being members of the Arunthathiyar movements. At the same time 79.6 per cent deny their membership in the Arunthathiyar movements. Of the total respondents 99.6 per
cent of the respondents deny their membership in movements of other Dalits. Only 0.4 per cent of the respondents confirm that they belong to movements other than the Arunthathiyars.

17. Among the total respondents who are members of the Arunthathiyar movements, 66.3 per cent are from the literate respondents and 33.7 per cent are from non-literate respondents. Among those who are in Arunthathiyar movements 77.2 per cent of the respondents are from low income group and only 22.8 per cent are from the high income group. At the same time, among those respondents who are not in Arunthathiyar movements, 90.2 per cent of the respondents are from low income group and only 9.8 per cent are of the high income group. Out of the total respondents who are from high income group, 62.5 per cent of the respondents say no to the Arunthathiyar movements and 37.5 per cent say yes to the movements. Within the low income group 82 per cent of the respondents say no to movements and 18 per cent of the respondents say yes to the Arunthathiyar movements.

18. Occupational discrimination is high among the respondents (81.8%) from the town than the respondents (76.6%) from the villages. But the socio-cultural discrimination (65.3%) and religious discriminations (71.1%) are high among the respondents from the villages than the socio-cultural discrimination (52.9%) and religious discriminations (47.1%) respondents from towns. More respondents from the town (52.9%) state that they experience low level of religious discriminations. But in villages 71.1 per cent of respondents feel high level of religious discrimination in villages. Comparatively caste victimization in towns is
less than in villages but it reveals that still in towns the untouchable and
discriminatory practices on the *Arunthathiyars* are imposed by high castes
(71.1%) and other *Dalits* (69.4%).

19. Among these discriminations, political discrimination is high among both men
respondents (86.4%) and women respondents (90%) and next comes the
occupational discrimination, men respondents (77.6%) and women respondents
(78.5%). Among the total female respondents, 86.5% per cent of female group
experience high level of caste victimization than the 84 per cent of the male
respondents experiencing high level of caste victimization. Of 200 female
respondents 84 per cent and out of 250 male respondents 83.2 per cent feel more
or less equally that caste victimization is high due to victimization by high castes.
Among the female respondents, 91 per cent feel that caste victimization is high
due to victimization by the State. In both cases – the high castes and the State -
female respondents feel more victimization than male respondents. When it
comes to the other *Dalits*, more than female, male respondents 76 per cent feel
that other *Dalits* contribute more towards caste victimization.

20. The older respondents feel that high castes (86.7%) and other *Dalits* (75.7%)
contribute more towards caste victimization of the *Arunthathiyars* but for the
young respondents, the State (91.8%) seems to be on a higher place in
contributing more towards the caste victimization than high caste and other
*Dalits*.

21. The literate *Arunthathiyars* express that there is more socio-cultural
discrimination (62.7%), religious discrimination (66.3%), occupational
discrimination (80.2%) and political discrimination (88.1%) than the non-literate expressing socio-cultural discrimination (61.1%), religious discrimination (62.6%), occupational discrimination (75.3%) and political discrimination (87.9%). There is a slight difference in the percentage of all four discriminations among the literate and non-literate respondents. The literate respondents express that high castes (84.1%), State (90.5%) and other Dalits (75.4%) contribute more towards caste victimization than the non-literate expressing that high castes (82.8%), State (86.9%) and other Dalits (69.2%) contributing to caste victimization. Both literate and non-literate respondents assert that among the three variables, the State seems to be the higher contributor towards caste victimization than high castes and other Dalits.

22. The scavengers express that the high castes (88.1%), the State (95.4%) and the other Dalits (79.8%) contribute more towards caste victimization than the non-scavengers expressing that high castes (82.1%), State (86.8%) and other Dalits (70.4%) contributing to caste victimization. Both scavenger and non-scavenger respondents assert that among the three variables, the State seems to be the higher contributor towards caste victimization than high castes and other Dalits.

23. The high income group says that the high castes (92.9%) and the State (91.1%) contribute more towards caste victimization of the Arunthathiyars. The low income group suggests that among the three variables, the State (88.6%) seems to be the highest contributors towards caste victimization.

24. Landless respondents assert that the high castes (83.7%) and the other Dalits (73%) contribute more towards caste victimization of the Arunthathiyars. At the
same time the land owning respondents feel that the State (90.5%) contributes more towards caste victimization of the *Arunthathiyars*.

25. Both language groups experience more caste discrimination but Kannada speaking *Arunthathiyar* respondents express slightly higher social discrimination (76.9%), religious discrimination (89.7%), occupational discrimination (94.9%) and political discrimination (92.3%) than the Telugu speaking *Arunthathiyar* respondents having social discrimination (60.6%), religious discrimination (62.3%), occupational discrimination (76.4%) and political discrimination (87.6%). Among the Telugu speaking *Arunthathiyars* political discrimination (87.6%) seems to be more and among the Kannada speaking *Arunthathiyars* occupational discrimination (94.9%) seems to be higher.

26. The respondents who are the members of the *Arunthathiyar* movements express high socio-cultural discrimination (68.5%), religious discrimination (78.3%) and occupational discrimination (85.9%) and non-members in *Arunthathiyar* movements express slightly low socio-cultural discrimination (60.3%), religious discrimination (61.2%) and occupational discrimination (76%). Regarding political discrimination the non-members (88.3%) feel slightly high discrimination than the members (87%) of the *Arunthathiyar* movements.

27. The members of the *Arunthathiyar* movements feel strongly that all the three variables high castes (85.9%), State (90.2%) and other *Dalits* (83.7%) contribute much towards caste victimization. Both groups - members (90.2%) and non-members (88.5%) of the *Arunthathiyar* movements-articulate that the State is the higher contributor towards caste victimization than high castes and other *Dalits*. 
28. All discrimination related variables such as socio-cultural discrimination, religious discrimination, occupational discrimination and political discrimination on the Arunthathiyars have relationship with caste victimization of the Arunthathiyars at the significant level of 0.01.

29. Among the four discriminatory related variables, the correlation coefficient between political discrimination and caste victimization is high at 0.556. Besides political discrimination, the correlation coefficient between occupational discrimination and caste victimization is high at 0.501. The correlation between socio-cultural discrimination and caste victimization seems to be weak having 0.238 as the correlation value. Though socio-cultural discrimination on the Arunthathiyars is continued even today, the correlation implies that more than socio-cultural discrimination, the respondents feel, political and occupational discriminations contribute more towards caste victimization of the Arunthathiyars. Among these four discriminatory variables, there is a strong association between occupational discrimination and political discrimination having correlation coefficient value as 0.547.

30. Variables contributing victimization of the Arunthathiyars such as the high castes, the State and the other Dalits have relationship with total caste victimization of the Arunthathiyars at the significant level of 0.01. Among the three variables contributing victimization, the correlation coefficient between the other Dalits and the total caste victimization is high at 0.640 which is slightly higher than the correlation coefficient between the high castes and the total victimization at 0.606. Besides other castes, the correlation coefficient between the high castes and the total caste victimization is high at 0.606. The correlation coefficient between the
State and the total caste victimization is also high having a positive correlation (r value) at 0.527.

31. According to the Chi-square analysis, all four impact variables have 0.01 as their p values which are statistically significant at 1 per cent level. There is a positive relationship between the variable caste victimization and impact related variables. Among the correlation coefficient values of the impact related variables, the correlation coefficient between caste victimization and impact on women is high at 0.404. It is clear from p value and r value of the analysis, caste victimization creates worst consequences on the Arunthathiyar women.

32. A high percentage of the respondents are not aware of or do not know the laws. The amalgamated responses of the respondents about their knowledge of those five laws show that on an average 73.7 per cent of respondents have ‘no knowledge’ of these laws, 12.3 per cent of the respondents know ‘only a little’ of these laws, only 8 per cent of the respondents ‘know’ these laws and 6 per cent of the respondents have ‘full knowledge’ of these laws. It is clear that among these laws, only SC/ST PoA Act, 1989 is known to highest number (34%) of the respondents. The awareness about this law seems to be high among the Arunthathiyars. At the same time, the knowledge about the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 which is very much directly related to the Arunthathiyars is known by a very low (20.8%) number of respondents. In other words, 356 respondents have no knowledge about this Act.

33. A high percentage (73.8%) of respondents agree that the Arunthathiyar movements have made considerable impact on caste victimization and in
empowering the *Arunthathiyars*. Education also plays a role in reducing the victimization of the *Arunthathiyars*. Among the respondents, 59.8 per cent of the respondents acknowledge the view that education has made impact on caste victimization and in empowering the *Arunthathiyars*. Only 23.1 per cent of the respondents accept that reservation has brought impact of caste victimization and in empowering the *Arunthathiyars*.

34. Almost 88.4 per cent or 398 of the total respondents agree that print and electronic media (Newspapers, Television, Radio, Internet...) are not interested in exposing the news about the atrocities, discriminations, exploitations and the caste victimization suffered by the *Arunthathiyars*.

35. According to Path analysis, occupational discrimination as an independent variable directly contributes 0.6772 as the path coefficient to the dependent variable caste victimization. The independent variable political discrimination has come out as the second largest cause having 0.666 as the path coefficient to the dependent variable caste victimization. The third in order contributing to caste victimization is the independent variable religious discrimination having path coefficient value as 0.5632. Socio-cultural discrimination seems to have the lowest path coefficient value as 0.3776 in contributing to caste victimization. According to the casual model, all these four independent variables such as occupation discrimination, political discrimination, religious discrimination and socio-cultural discrimination or causes together are contributing to caste victimization having the coefficient of determination ($r^2$) as 0.768. Among these four causes or independent discriminatory variables, there is a strong association between occupational discrimination and political discrimination of the *Arunthathiyars* having correlation coefficient value as 0.728.
36. Among the consequence variables, the impact on Arunthathiyar women is the strongest consequence of caste victimization with the path coefficient value as 0.5837. Among the psychological variables, fear having the path coefficient value as 0.4319 has emerged as the next strongest consequence of caste victimization. Stress having the path coefficient value as 0.3801 comes out as the third consequence of caste victimization. Low self-esteem seems to be the lowest consequence of caste victimization having its path coefficient value as 0.3611. All the three psychological variables are interconnected and also mutually affecting the other.

6.2. Conclusions

1. Educational statistics expose the grim educational situation of the Arunthathiyars in Virudhunagar district. It reveals that even after 65 years of Independence the government is not able to provide basic education to these so called lesser human persons. The literacy rate among the Arunthathiyars in Virudhunagar district of this study is much lower than the literacy rate of the Arunthathiyars at the state level. The differences between the percentage of men and women literacy rate of Virudhunagar district (Government of India, Census 2001) and this study reveal that the percentage of difference in the literacy rate of the Arunthathiyar women is slightly better than the Arunthathiyar men of the Virudhunagar district.

2. Among the Arunthathiyars, the unemployment problem is less in towns due to various employment opportunities available in towns than in villages. One fourth of the Arunthathiyars are engaged in scavenging works in Virudhunagar district. Since the Arunthathiyars are engaged in scavenging and other filthy and unclean
occupations in towns, the victimization of the *Arunthathiyars* is also perpetuated in towns. It establishes that those who are not educated are more involved in scavenging works. It is being realised that education is a process of freedom from the inhuman scavenging works of the caste society.

3. It is to be noted that nearly two third of the *Arunthathiyars* who are engaged in scavenging works in Virudhunagar district are involved in private sectors. Nearly one fourth of the respondents engaged in coolie works are economically depending on their daily wages. Both independently and totally, daily wage labourers are high in number among the scavenging workers and the non-scavenging workers of the *Arunthathiyars* of Virudhunagar district.

4. More than a half of the *Arunthathiyar* families in Virudhunagar district fall in the income category having Rs. 2,051/- to Rs. 5,000/-. Nearly 32 per cent of the *Arunthathiyar* families in the district really struggle to maintain their families with the income lower than Rs. 2,500/-. There are only 23 per cent of the respondents who have the income between Rs. 5001/- to 25,000/-. There are no *Arunthathiyar* families in the district having income more than Rs. 25,000/- which reveals the pathetic economic conditions of the *Arunthathiyars* in Virudhunagar district. More than a half of the *Arunthathiyar* families in Virudhunagar district fall in the income category having Rs. 2,051/- to Rs. 5,000/-. The *Arunthathiyars* who are considered the lowest caste victims are also kept at the lowest categories of the income groups as poor victims. Among the *Arunthathiyars* in Virudhunagar district, the vast majority (87.6%) is really poor and only a small minority (12.4%) belongs to high income group.
5. Among the *Arunthathiyars* in Virudhunagar district, the low income of female group is 5.3 per cent which is more than the low income of male group. It proves that even among the poor, women are vulnerable to poverty than men. The percentage of the scavenging group decreases as the income of the families of the *Arunthathiyars* in Virudhunagar district goes higher. The *Arunthathiyars* in Virudhunagar district who are literates are slightly better than the non-literates in their income. When education improves the low income group decreases at the same time the high income group increases.

6. It is clear that except a few, almost all the *Arunthathiyars* in Virudhunagar district do not possess land. Land gives power but as landless persons, the *Arunthathiyars* are pushed to be powerless in the caste society. The *Arunthathiyars* in Virudhunagar district, whether they are doing scavenging or non-scavenging or unemployed, or living in village or town, the fact is they do not own land. The landless condition of the *Arunthathiyars* also reflects strongly in deepening caste victimization of the *Arunthathiyars*. It is interesting to note that in owning land, the illiterates are slightly better than the literates. Education has not changed the condition of the landlessness of the *Arunthathiyars* in Virudhunagar district.

7. Only 14.9 per cent of the respondents are living in colony houses which were built by the government on various schemes. It also reveals that the *Arunthathiyars* have not benefited much from the government scheme on colony houses for the *Dalits*. It is a proof that the government schemes for the welfare of the *Dalits* do not reach the *Arunthathiyars* and they are still treated as victims even in the implementation of the government schemes.
8. The statistics (only 10.4 per cent are members of the Arunthathiars in political party) reveal that the Arunthathiars do not involve much in political party. Only 0.4 per cent of the respondents confirm that they belong to Dalit movements other than the Arunthathiars. This situation reflects the reality in the district and raises questions whether the Arunthathiars do not have confidence in the leaders of the movements of other Dalits or whether the Arunthathiars are not treated equally by the other Dalit movements etc.

9. The membership of the Arunthathiars in the movements of Arunthathiars is slightly better than their membership in political parties and in other Dalit movements. The Arunthathiars in Virudhunagar district who are educated seem to have more interest in movemental activities than the non-literate Arunthathiars. This reveals that education gives more political awareness to the Arunthathiars. The Arunthathiars in Virudhunagar district who are from the high income group seem to have significantly more interest in their involvement in Arunthathiyar movements than the low income group of the Arunthathiars. The above statistics bring out the fact that when the income of the Arunthathiars is high then their role in Arunthathiyar movements is also slightly higher than that of the Arunthathiars of the low income group.

10. Regarding caste victimization, it is more in villages than in the town. It reflects that still the age old caste victimizing practices exist more in villages but at the same time it reveals that even in towns these victimizing practices are continued with the same vigour on the Arunthathiars. The literates have high percentage in all four discriminations. Literates feel more caste victimization than the non-literates.
11. More than men, women with their close contact with the government officials due to their SHGs and KARISAL Sangam, realise more victimization of the State. The experience of caste victimization is high among the female respondents. Political and occupational discrimination are higher than the other discriminations among male and female.

12. Caste victimization is being experienced more by scavengers than the non-scavengers. High percentage of scavengers experience caste victimization due to their occupational discrimination than the non-scavengers. Among the age division, old respondents express that there is a high level of caste victimization of the Arunthathyars against young respondents. Caste victimization is slightly low among the low income group than the high income group. Caste victimization is high among landless respondents than the land owning respondents who also feel the same. Landlessness is directly connected to the caste power. The statistics prove that the lowest caste like the Arunthathyars cannot think of owning lands in caste society. Telugu speaking Arunthathyars have more political awareness due to their greater involvement in Arunthathyar movements than Kannada speaking Arunthathyars. The effect of it is revealed that Kannada speaking respondents experience more caste victimization than Telugu speaking respondents.

13. The respondents, who are members of the Arunthathyar movements to some extent, have come away from the political discrimination but continue to experience the other discriminations. They experience more socio-cultural, religious and occupational and political discriminations than the non-members of movements. The members in the Arunthathyar movements feel slightly higher
caste victimization than the non-members in the Arunthathiyar movements. It is because the members in the Arunthathiyar movements take up the caste discriminating issues of the Arunthathiyars and have to face a lot of difficulties in the caste society. There is an increasing awareness among the Arunthathiyars in Virudhunagar district on the State’s role in relation to the caste victimization of the Arunthathiyars.

14. Among the divisions in the demographic variables literate, young people, high income group, land owning group and members of the Arunthathiyar movements articulate stronger than the non-literate, old people, low income group, landless group and non-members of the Arunthathiyar movements that the State is the main contributor to caste victimization.

15. From the correlation coefficient values, it is interpreted that the increase in variables of socio-cultural, religious, occupational and political discriminations also increases caste victimization. There is a very strong relationship between political discrimination and caste victimization and the political discrimination of the Arunthathiyars heavily contributes towards their caste victimization. The reasons for the low level of socio-cultural and religious discriminations are due to the awareness created among the Arunthathiyars about their social, cultural and religious rights and the actions being taken by the movements and NGOs to eliminate such discriminations.

16. The correlation coefficient value reflects the strong relationship between occupational discrimination and caste victimization of the Arunthathiyars. The Arunthathiyars even today are forced to do the filthy works as their caste duty and
suffer discriminations which contribute more towards their caste victimization. Besides both variables strongly contributing to caste victimization of the *Arunthathiyars*, there is also a strong relationship between occupational and political discriminations which are complementing each other.

17. The values of the correlation coefficient between the variables contributing victimization of the *Arunthathiyars* reveal that the variables like the high castes, the State and the other *Dalits* have positive correlation with caste victimization of the *Arunthathiyars*. The increase in these variables contributing victimization of the *Arunthathiyars* increases total caste victimization. Other *Dalits* have stronger association with total caste victimization of the *Arunthathiyars* and it is closely followed by the correlation between high castes and total caste victimization. High castes and other *Dalits* in villages contribute more to the caste victimization of *Arunthathiyars* and in towns, the State seems to be contributing more towards caste victimization of the *Arunthathiyars*.

18. It reveals that caste victimization makes greater impact on the *Arunthathiyar* women which is a vulnerable group than on the other psychological variables. Among the psychological variables, fear seems to have high correlation coefficient value than other variables.

19. The low level of knowledge about the laws among the *Arunthathiyars* is one of the important reasons for caste victimization of the *Arunthathiyars*.

20. As it is already stated, the benefits of reservation have not much reached the *Arunthathiyars*. The *Arunthathiyar* movements play a more vital role in empowering the *Arunthathiyars* from caste victimization than education.
21. The Path analysis of different independent variables contribute much to the dependant variable - caste victimization and as an independent variable - caste victimization also contributes much towards the dependent impact variables. According to Path analysis, the strongest cause for caste victimization of the Arunthathiys is occupational discrimination. Once again it is being asserted that besides both variables - occupational discrimination and political discrimination are strongly contributing to caste victimization of the Arunthathiys. There is also a strong relationship between occupational and political discrimination. The impact on the vulnerable group, namely the Arunthathiyar women has emerged as a strongest consequence of caste victimization than psychological consequence variables. Though caste victimization has caused significant effect on all the four consequence related variables, among them, caste victimization has caused highest effect on the Arunthathiyar women and on fear among the consequence relates variables.

6.3. Recommendations

The untouchability practices humiliate and repress the spirit of the Arunthathiys and fill them with feelings of inferiority and insult and thus make them the most affected victims of the caste society. In spite of the legal and constitutional safeguards, the high castes continue to practise untouchability. All the four causes - socio-cultural, religious, occupational and political discriminations are interconnected and interrelated in making the Arunthathiys as caste victims. This study reveals that among them political and occupational discriminations are the main causes creating more caste victimization of the Arunthathiys. In order to empower the Arunthathiys these two causes need to be addressed more effectively.
Caste power harshly victimizes the Arunthathiyars in making them the most powerless victims of caste system. Caste power is being achieved through various forms of political discrimination. Political discrimination deals with the powerlessness of the Arunthathiyars which makes them unable to decide even about their way of lives, their occupations, customs and behaviours, and obey strictly the orders given by the castes above them. If the Arunthathiyars obey such a caste power, it makes them inhuman beings and if they do not obey then the caste power crushes them making them no persons. Power to decide for herself / himself is essential to human persons and to develop one’s self-identity. Self-identity is the base for building up the empowerment of a victimized person or a victimized community.

When the Arunthathiyars are forced to do the occupations such as manual scavenging, doing cobbbling, burying dead animals, sweeping streets, beating drums etc. which are considered by the caste society as filthy, unclean and polluted, the very act of involving in these occupations makes them victims and pushes the Arunthathiyars to a lower status as lesser human beings in the caste society. The Arunthathiyars need to change such a pain into a power to overcome caste victimization. The process of transforming pain into power is the empowerment. The Arunthathiyar men and women should get the power to make decision for themselves and equal powers to make decisions in the government at all levels.

6.3.1. Searching for Arunthathiyar Identity

Identity is one of the fundamental human needs particularly to the victims of castes who are denied the dignity and respect as human persons. Identity affirms the intrinsic worth of a person. Hence it is fundamental and important to every person and
any threat to identity is likely to produce a strong reaction. But in the case of caste 
victims, though their identity as persons which is fundamental to human persons is not 
recognised or denied by the caste society, caste victimization pushes the Arunthathiyars 
to silently acknowledge the reality without any reaction. The identity of the 
Arunthathiyars which would recognize them as human persons with dignity and respect 
is the urgent demand of the Arunthathiyar movements.

A new identity of the Arunthathiyars which asserts self-esteem, self-image and 
fearlessness, and power to decide for themselves, is to be constructed in order to fight 
against the caste victimization and to assure their equal rights and dignity as human 
persons in the society.

The name Arunthathiyar gives the identity for the ‘Arunthathiyar’ group 
belonging to the lowest category of caste hierarchy which stands as a symbol of unity and 
strength to the Arunthathiyars. Such symbolic identity should be strengthened with due 
recognition by the State. This identity should give a push to establish their social identity, 
cultural identify, political identity and economic identity.

6.3.2. Access to Free and Quality Education 

Education plays a vital role in the process of empowerment of Arunthathiyars and 
as a principal force it has the absolute potential to bring about social change in the caste 
society. The most victimized communities are the ones that are most likely to lack access 
to education. By the Eighty-Sixth Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, Article 21A of 
the Indian Constitution provides Right to education as a fundamental enforceable legal 
right for children. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education, 2009, ensures education 
to the most marginalised children. Chapter 2, 3 (1) states that “Every child of the age of
six to fourteen years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighborhood school till completion of elementary education.” This Act does not provide concrete implementation mechanism, and hence the implementation of the Act remains a challenge.

India is also one of the signatories to the United Nations Convention against Discrimination in Education. It is the responsibility of the government to implement the Act and give free education to the children of the marginalized, particularly the children of the *Arunthathiyars* from primary to tertiary level. The non-discrimination needs to be an objective and monitorable indicator at all levels of education. Teachers and administrators must be sensitized about the norms and standards in non-discrimination to the *Arunthathiyar* children.

In order to reduce the rate of illiteracy among the *Arunthathiyars* a special attention must be given to the *Arunthathiyars* children to bring them to schools, to inculcate a special interest in them to education and to ensure quality education to them. Education is the only way which will put an end to scavenging works.

The central government has introduced the Special Component Plan (SCP) to help the Scheduled Castes develop at a faster rate. The primary objective of this plan is to ensure that there are sufficient funds for the development of the Scheduled Castes. With full financial support of the SCP, high-quality hostel accommodation must be provided to the *Arunthathiyar* students. Hostels should be seen as centres of development and educational learning for the *Arunthathiyar* students who would otherwise not be able to overcome the hurdles of caste and gender discriminations.
Mass awareness programmes should be conducted among the *Arunthathiyars* on the importance of education. State must make human rights and gender education as part of the curriculum of the school.

### 6.3.3. Critical Awareness

Among the *Arunthathiyars* the literate, young people, high income group, land owning group and members of the *Arunthathiyar* movements articulate stronger than the non-literate, old people, low income group, landless group and non-members of the *Arunthathiyar* movements that the State is the main contributor to caste victimization. It reveals the level of awareness among the literate, young people, high income group, land owning group and members of the *Arunthathiyar* movements about the role of government in the process of the empowerment of the *Arunthathiyars* which is really commendable. There is an urgent need to create critical awareness among the *Arunthathiyars* and particularly among the non-literate, old people, low income group, landless group and non-members of the *Arunthathiyar* movements among the *Arunthathiyars*.

The *Arunthathiyar* also feel that the other *Dalits* do contribute to their caste victimization through the socio-cultural, religious, occupational and political discriminations. It is because the other *Dalits* are their immediate neighbours living with them in the same *Cheris* but separately. Every day the *Arunthathiyars* need to interact and relate with them and experience frequently and habitually the impacts of the *varnashrama dharma* from the other *Dalits* and feel that the other *Dalits* also discriminate and victimize them. Creating awareness among the other *Dalits* to stop
discriminating and victimizing the Arunthathiyars should be the urgent act of the leaders of the Dalit movements.

The socio-cultural, religious, occupational and political discriminations from high castes should be critically looked into. The critical awareness and understanding about the varnashrama dharma which victimizes the Arunthathiyars should be developed among high castes. The way it divides the people on the basis of castes and keeps them separate in Oor and Cheri to strictly follow the residential untouchability of the caste system of separate streets, shops, wells, place to take bath in ponds, burial grounds and worship places, should be properly understood from the victims’ perspective. The notion of separate place and space are not solutions to the caste issues rather they are the concrete evidences of the untouchable practices which perpetuate the caste victimization of the Arunthathiyars.

The State has the duty to implement the values of the Indian Constitution for abolition of the separate places on the basis of castes, in order to eliminate untouchability. Such act will create the attitude to have social inclusiveness not only in living places but also in all the other activities of the society and the government. The Scheme of Samathuvapuram (Place of Equality) of the Tamil Nadu government is an act towards the abolition of separate living places and such programmes should be encouraged by the government with political will to develop the attitude of respecting others as human persons.

6.3.4. Equal Power to Arunthathiyar Women

Most of the Arunthathiyar women are forced to take up manual cleaning of open toilets, sweeping streets and public places and some of them work in cremation grounds
burning the dead bodies which are considered unclean and impure. They are also engaged in coolie works, domestic cleaning works, agricultural farms, brick factories and stone quarry. They face sexual harassment and abuse from high caste landlords and employers and live under their control. As per the Article 16 of the Indian Constitution, the State has to ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of caste and sex with regard to government and public employment. The Convention on the Elimination of Forms of All Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, Art.3) invites the governments to take measures to ensure women to enjoy their social, economic, cultural and political rights without discrimination. But still the Arunthathiyar women are the most exploited and victimized by the high caste men and women, and men and women of the other Dalits, and the Arunthathiyar men.

In this situation, the State has a duty to eliminate the worst condition of the Arunthathiyar women. Among the caste victims, government should give first preference to the Arunthathiyar women in education, job opportunities and in politics. According to Articles 9 and 10 of CEDAW, the State has the duty to guarantee all women equal rights with men in the areas of education, economic and social life.

6.3.5. Strengthening the Legal Safeguards

Caste as a crime makes the Arunthathiyars victims of such crime for centuries. The Indian constitution pledges to safeguard the victims of caste. Articles 17, 21 and 46 mandate the State to abolish and protect the rights of SCs. The Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 were enacted specially to protect them from caste atrocities. Though twenty years passed, still the implementation of the SC & ST PoA Act remains
very weak and inadequate. The Central and the State governments ought to appoint high level committees to review the implementation of the Act. Assessing the realisation of the objectives, the government needs to take concrete steps for speedy action to strengthen and effectively implement the Act.

After enacting the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993, the government had constituted the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (Manual Scavengers) on 12th August, 1994 to promote and safeguard the interests and rights of Safai Karamcharis. National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) was set up on 24th January 1997 as an Apex Institution to help the all-round socio-economic upliftment of the Safai Karamcharis/Scavengers and their dependents and to extend concessional financial assistance to the beneficiaries for establishment of income generating projects. From January 2007, the Government had introduced a 'Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers' (SRMS), with the intention to rehabilitate remaining Manual Scavengers and their dependents.

It is sad to note that 79.2 percent of the Arunthathiyars have no knowledge about the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993. The government and the NGOs have to take serious steps to instil the knowledge about this Act among the Arunthathiyars. The Annual Reports of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis clearly state that still the implementation of this Act has not been initiated and has proved to be ineffective in eliminating dry latrines and manual scavenging. The Arunthathiyar movements have strongly initiated the campaign to annihilate manual scavenging. The government has to support such initiatives and help the movements in the process of eradicating manual scavenging.
6.3.6. Enhancing the Capacity for Alternative Employment

The traditional or hereditary occupations make the *Arunthathiyars* unable to come out of the caste clutches and make them the worst victims of the caste system. Caste based discrimination is still practised in private sectors in which the *Arunthathiyars* are the worst affected group. Preventing the inhuman act of manual scavenging should be the immediate action of the state. The benefits of the government schemes for alternative employment programmes do not reach that easily due to the caste powers operating at *panchayat* levels. According to the Civil Society (2012) Inputs for the Approach Paper - 12th Five Year Plan, poverty alleviation programmes of the government such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) and Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), are unable to provide long-term sustainable employment opportunities for the beneficiaries. In this situation the *Arunthathiyars* as victims of the society may not have the access to the benefits of such alternative employment opportunities. Specific skill trainings need to be conducted catering to the needs of the different groups like scavengers, women, non-literate and literate, landless and land owning, young and old.

The Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) affirms that the State has to safeguard the right to work which includes the right of everyone to an opportunity to gain her/his living by work which she/he freely chooses or accepts. It is insisted in the Article 46 of the Indian Constitution that the state has to promote with special care the economic interests of the weaker sections of the society, in particular the SCs. In this context of the *Arunthathiyars* who are engaged for centuries in filthy and impure works of the society like scavenging, cobbling, sweeping.
etc. it is the duty of the government to give new or better job opportunities other than scavenging works to the *Arunthathiyars*.

Through the SCP, a separate fund for enhancing technical skills which are needed according to the current market demands, needs to be allocated with proper planning, monitoring and evaluation with the help of the leaders of the *Arunthathiyars*. Fund allocation through SCP needs to be assigned for the *Arunthathiyars* to initiate new market enterprises in the driving growth of the economy like information technology, communication services, transport etc. There have to be adequate efforts to create capital assets to promote participation of the disadvantaged group like the *Arunthathiyars*.

### 6.3.7. Affirmative Actions: The Prime Role of the State

Article 37 of the Indian Constitution emphasises the obligation of the State to affirm the principles - social, economic and political justice - enshrined in its Preamble and to fight against inequality and ensure dignity to all. In order to remove the stigma ‘the untouchables of the untouchables or victims of the victimised or polluted among the polluted’ on the *Arunthathiyars*, the State needs to plan concrete affirmative actions.

Land grants the identity of ownership but 95.3 per cent of the *Arunthathiyars* in Virudhunagar district do not possess land. The Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) declares that State has to guarantee the right of every one to own property alone or in association with others and not to be arbitrarily deprived of her/his property. The State has to reiterate that people of all walks of life have the right to own and use the common resources of the villages and ensure the lowest groups the right to own land. In order to give an identity and to unchain from caste victimization of the least
in the caste society, the State should provide at least 2 acres of cultivable land to the landless *Arunthathiyars*.

A separate investment of the State for the development of the *Arunthathiyars* in services like education, health, training and skill development to create alternative employment and infrastructure buildings needs to be allocated, planned, monitored and evaluated with the help of the leaders of the *Arunthathiyars*.

Reservation is one of the means of protection against the caste victimization of the *Arunthathiyars*. It is obvious that the other *Dalits* have benefited by the reservation to SCs and again among them the most neglected are the *Arunthathiyars*. After a long struggle for the inner-reservation, the government has given 3 percentage of inner reservation to the *Arunthathiyars*. The memorandum submitted by the *Adi Thamilar Peravai* to the Janarthanam One Man Committee on 18th August, 2008 reasonably justifies that the *Arunthathiyars* should be given 6 percentage of inner reservation.

The Indian Government is a welfare State and it is also the Tamil tradition ‘*Thazhakkidapporai tharkkappathe dharmam*’ – protecting the lowliest is a morally right act. ‘Think of the poor before you decide’ is the vision of Ghandhi. The Preamble of the Indian Constitution upholds the rich values like equality, justice and sisterhood/brotherhood. As the government gives preference to the victimized castes - SCs, among the victimized (SCs) the government has mandate to give first preference to the victims of the victimized – the *Arunthathiyars*, in implementing the government programmes and policies. The government should take initiatives to commence a separate Ministry for the Welfare of the *Arunthathiyars* in order to concentrate more effectively on the development of the victims of the victimized.
6.3.8. Unity among the Movements: A Political Implosion

There are more than fifty well established Arunthathiyar movements which are active at various levels in Tamil Nadu. In general the Arunthathiyars are not much interested in being members of the political parties as well as the movements of the other Dalits. During the last decade a number of Arunthathiyar movements are on the increase and most of them are active at the parochial level. Efforts are being made to bring the Arunthathiyar movements on a single platform which have not yet succeeded. The Arunthathiyar movements coming together as a single movement or at least as a joint action forum is a critical need for the Arunthathiyar movements in Tamil Nadu.

Besides the unity among the Arunthathiyar movements, unity among the Dalit movements is a need of the hour to jointly fight against the caste untouchability and victimization of all Dalits. As victimized castes, it is an urgent need for all Dalit movements to build up the unity among them and to treat equally all those castes that come under the Dalit category. The varnashrama dharma is the cause for caste hierarchy, and even for creating disunity and hierarchy among the Dalits. Realising this fact, Dalits leaving aside the small differences among themselves have to fight against the common force which makes them caste victims, under a single banner.

As the emerging victimization, discrimination, oppression and exploitation of the poor, dalits, tribals, farmers, women, unorganised youth and children are the growing injustices in the society, it is an urgent call for all the victimized, discriminated, oppressed and exploited who belong to different castes, religions and languages to join hands to fight for equality, justice and human dignity and rights. Having realised that endogamy is a main characteristic of Indian caste system, all the movements need to
campaign against endogamy and encourage and support exogamy – the inter caste marriage among Dalit groups and with other OBCs and BCs which is a sign of caste annihilation. In today’s context, in order to achieve their own liberation from caste victimization, the Arunthathiyars need to join forces with the movements of the other Dalits, movements of OBCs and revolutionary movements. All movements which are aiming at creating just and humane society need to come together in solidarity to fight against the caste victimization and to fight for the annihilation of castes.

6.3.9. Right to be Human Persons

The right to be human is the highest form of human rights. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949) emphasises that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (Article 1). Victimization denies the freedom and liberty of the individuals who are victimized. They are forced to be under the control of somebody or some group and deprived of their identity, dignity and rights as human persons. The Arunthathiyars as the most oppressed caste victims are denied the freedom and liberty and deprived of their identity, dignity and rights to be human.

Caste as an institution is built on social inequality based on the ideologies of purity and pollution, hierarchy and hereditary occupational restriction. These stratifying ideologies begin to operate on a person from one’s birth. The socio-cultural, religious, occupational and political discriminations and the untouchable practices make the Arunthathiyars and more particularly the Arunthathiyar women from birth less human persons or no human persons. The other Dalits who are also considered as victims of the caste system have the caste pleasure in treating the Arunthathiyars as victims. Thus the Arunthathiyars become the victims of the victimized or the Dalit of the Dalits.
The Indian Constitution and the International Covenants and Conventions have the norms and guidelines, laws and policies to be followed in order to respect and protect all persons as human beings with their dignity, rights and identity. The caste victimization of the Arunthathiyars must create impact on the Indian Constitution, the International Covenants and Conventions, the Civil Societies and NGOs to generate positive ambience in the society in order to annihilate the inhuman caste system and to accept and respect the Arunthathiyars as human persons with human dignity and human rights.

The Arunthathiyars, the victims of the victimized castes is the subject matter of this research which brings out the real, pathetic and inhuman life condition of the Arunthathiyars in the Indian caste context. This research has brought out scientifically the interconnectedness and interrelatedness among the various discriminations and the victimization of the Arunthathiyars, and the deep rooted consequences of the caste victimization on the Arunthathiyars. This study will provide a model to scientifically analyse and methodologically explore various ways and means to empower the Arunthathiyars in the context of caste victimization. This study presents a model to scientifically analyse the victimization of the various marginalized groups like Puthirai Vannar, Kuravar, Kattunayakkar etc. from the perspective of the subaltern groups. This research will certainly strengthen the knowledge of the Arunthathiyars and other social activists who are actively committed to the noble cause of annihilating the caste system and for social transformation, and to push forward unified actions with scientific approach to create a humane society.