CHAPTER III
THE MONTAGUE - CHELMSFORD REFORMS AND
DEMOCRATIC UPHEAVAL

Even though the educated classes enjoyed the loaves and fishes of the Minto-Morley reforms, they had taken with misgivings some of the redeeming features of the reform, like the concession to a large number of communities. They had viewed the reforms as if it had fallen flat on the educated classes. They criticised the councils as debasing influences. The extremists continued to talk of Swaraj and Self-Government, when Mrs. Annie Beasant also joined them.

Annie Beasant’s concept of self-government

In 1908, Mrs. Beasant started the ‘Sons of Indian Society’ with the object, to prevent the spread of seditious ideas among the students of the land and to divert their new aspirations through peaceful and constitutional channels. But in the first issue of the paper published by the society, named after it, she expressed the view that the system of self-government should be broadened as India could not hope to have complete independence for many centuries and doubted whether it would ever materialise. She believed that complete independence for India would be harmful and espoused the cause of a World Federation, each nation depending on each other, than to enjoy on isolate independence. She was for Home Rule or Colonial Self-Government and not Swaraj. Indian Public opinion showed resentment at Besant’s statement and she was reminded of the necessity of every nation to become free and equal, for a federation to take shape.
In 1909, while she was in England, she made a statement to the press that Aravinda Gosh was a fanatic and a source of danger, for she held, he would not care to employ even violent means to destroy the British Empire. For this, she was criticised severely by a section of the Indian Press which asked her to substantiate her charges. As an explanation, she wrote\(^1\) in the Central Hindu College Magazine, it was Aravinda’s unrolling news to work in co-operation with Englishmen that prompted her for the indictment.

In 1910, in her crusade against sedition, she appealed to Lord Minto and Europeans to be tolerant, kind and sympathetic towards Indians. Extremists criticised\(^2\) her activities as sowing seeds of love between the rulers and the ruled and destroying the chances of a revolution, which was the aim of a section of the extremists. At this time, her comment, that Britain made a serious mistake in giving Self-Government to the Boars, before they were fit for such a responsibility, was resented as an indirect hit on India, especially by the Swarajists. For these reasons, there had been a counter attack on the Theosophical Society;\(^3\) it was criticised as exercising a pernicious influence over some members of the educated classes.

In 1914, when Germany declared war, she wrote in New India, that all political activities that would endanger the position of England should be abruptly stopped and that England and India should stand together in defence of the Crown. India should support the cause of the Empire by restoring peace at

---

home and establishing co-operation with England. It was her opinion that it was on the loyalty of the English educated Indians that the stability of the British rule in India depended⁴.

By 1915, there was a great change in her attitude towards England when the war was in progress. Referring to an article in the Daily Mail, London, on ‘Liberty and Security’, she said that Britain was fighting to retain a free and self-governing nation, but posed the question whether she would play the same part in Asia. She argued that Indian blood was poured into European battle fields for safeguarding the freedom of Britain and France and not India⁵. The change in her stand made her position difficult in Congress, and when her name was proposed for the Bombay Congress in 1915, even though many admitted that she was person’s in-grata with the Government, yet thought of her as more useful outside the Congress and thus dropped her name⁶. Sinha was elected against the mechanisation of some Congressmen, who fought for the ‘impossible woman’.

Towards Congress

It was significant that the Congress in 1915 did not accept the proposition of Home Rule. It was commented that Mrs. Annie Beasant’s favourite scheme was knocked on the head. It was thought that much would not be heard of the Home Rule Movement thereafter. But Mrs. Beasant worked in union with Tilak

⁴ The Indian Patriot, 3 Aug., 1914, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1068.
⁵ New India, 7 Sept., 1915, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1579.
⁶ The Hindu, 3 Dec 1909.
which was generally considered as an ill-advised course to work her scheme independently of the Indian National Congress.\(^7\)

**Towards Government**

She became an all-out critic of government. As an instance, she made a scathing attack on the government in reference to the Hindu-Muslim question and said, it was a deliberate creation of the British. She never cared to take into consideration the historic role of Hindus and Mohammedans in India and the two distinct civilizations to which they belong. She traced to Sir John Strachey the policy of divide and rule when there were two parties in a community and a third party ruled. As perfect impartiality was impossible, the policy of the third party, especially in time of difficulty, would be to set one against the other, and more conveniently when the preferences went by religion.\(^8\) However, one can notice the change in the tone of her criticism. Speaking to the Fabien Society in London in 1911, Mrs. Besant described separate representation for Mohammedans as ‘unfair’.\(^9\) However, in general, she gave the impression that Indians were moderate in their demand for political and economic reform; but as a contrast, in later years she turned out a bitter critic of government as on the Hindu-Muslim question.

New India,\(^10\) the official organ of the Home Rulers described the rule of the East India Company in the first half of the 19th century as dishonourable, a

---

\(^7\) *The Malabar Herald*, 8 Jan, 1916, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 90.

\(^8\) Jitavagadesa. C. A Short Biography of Dr. Annie Beasant. Theosophical Publishing House Adayar, Madras, 1932 pp 64 – 66

\(^9\) Annie Beasant D.L. *The Future Of Indian Politics*, Theosophical publishing House Adayar, Madras 1922.

\(^10\) *New India*, 17 Aug., 1915, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1456.
breaker of treaties and creator of disputes for its own profit, in spite of the
unification of the country and declaration of British Indian Administrators to train
India for Self-Government. It referred to the period of consolidation from 1832 to
1853 as a period of company’s ‘excesses’. It quoted Lord Derby that the pledges
and promises by Britain to India had been broken and cited the minute of Lord
Lytton as mentioned by Naroji as an evidence of cheating India. All the
restrictions of an unbridled Press and legislation to maintain peace were referred
to as fresh fetters imposed on India only to take political demand difficult. The
officials were dubbed as Anti-Congress\textsuperscript{11} without appreciating the contributions
of British Statesmen and admitting the drawbacks in the Congress.

Home Rulers in general believed that the political and economic interest
of Britain and India were antagonistic to each other\textsuperscript{12}. All the trainers and scarcity
for food grains which occasionally visited India were also attributed to British
Rule\textsuperscript{13}; they never took into account, the natural calamities and the traditional
backwardness of the Indian peasantry and the apathy of the educated classes to
work for the general uplift of the masses. Home Rulers in general failed to
compliment the creative role of Britain and the work of re-generation started in
India after British rule.

\textbf{Beasant’s contention}

It was the contention of Beasant, that England should not reject the
loyalty of India and grant her Home Rule. The Irish example had been looked

\textsuperscript{11}The Hindu 18 Aug 1915 Madras News paper Report, pp 35-36
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{13}Annie Beasant, R. L., The Future of Indian politics, Theosophical publishing House, Adayar,
Madras, 1922, pp. 16 – 18.
upon as a source of inspiration by the Home Rulers. The Head quarter of the
Home Rule Movement in Madras was the Theosophical Society in Adayar.
Mr. Govinda Raghava Ayyar, Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. C.P. Ramaswamy Ayyar,
Mr. Kesava Pillai, Mr. B.R. Sharma, Arundale and Vadia were her followers. The
Home Rulers believed that the method of gradual and progressive improvement
had been tried for 32 years and in that the educated classes instead of gaining
anything had lost everything. So they concluded that the alternative was Home
Rule after war, which the British Parliament should confer\textsuperscript{14}. To Beasant, the
Social deficiencies and the social practice, like child marriages were evils for the
sake of which India need not feel sorry\textsuperscript{15}.

In 1917, speaking at a Russian Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries,
General Smuts in an analysis of world events expressed his satisfaction that, even
if nothing further happened as a result of the war but the Russian Revolution,
posterity would say that the war had not been in vain. To Mrs. Besant, if India did
not gain her freedom, the war would have been in vain. Referring to the statement
of Boner Law about an independent Poland as declared by the provisional
government\textsuperscript{16}, of Russia, Mrs. Beasant said if an independent Poland has some
guarantee for durable peace in Europe, a self-governing India within Empire
would be some guarantee for durable peace in India\textsuperscript{17}. The Home Rule League
assumed that political reforms prepared the way for reform in all other spheres.
To them social reforms need precede not political reform.

\textsuperscript{14} New India, 22 Jan., 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{15} New India, 5 June 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 1605.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{17} Annie Beasant, R.L. Op .cit.,
Passive resistance

The Madras Home Rule League decided to inaugurate the passive resistance movement after a plethora of perfidious eloquence and bragging utterances. Besant was interned in June 1917. A protest contenting was held in Madras. Mr. B. R. Sharma presided. They criticised Government for arresting Mrs. Besant, Arundale and Vedia. The Government of Madras had obtained the sanction of the Secretary of state for dealing with the Home Rulers promptly\(^\text{18}\).

In July 1917, Chamberlain resigned as Secretary of state. The Home Rule League attributed the internment of Besant to the Secretary of State who was said to have sanctioned it without the knowledge of His Majesty. However, Montague took a liberal view of the Home Rulers, and when he became the Secretary of State, Mrs. Besant and her followers were released.

At the Calcutta Congress Besant presided. She was given a tremendous ovation. The extremists gained an upper hand\(^\text{19}\). She had created an uproar, which resounded through the whispering galleries of this that sub-continent, the creation of a single woman.

But the Moderate school well realised that Mrs. Besant had become the autocratic leader of an emotional people\(^\text{20}\). They wondered at the metamorphosis in Mrs. Besant’s career. They reminded, that only a few years ago, she was an uncompromising opponent of Indian nationalism, a staunch supporter of the

\(^{18}\) New Delhi, 25 June, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 1917.

\(^{19}\) Prakasa, Sri Annie Beaseant As Vocan And As Lender, Theosophical Publishing House, Adayar, Madras, 1941, pp61.

\(^{20}\) The West Coast Spectator, 18 June, 1918, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 929.
Indian Press Act, and justified it in the Christian Commonwealth, the disciplinarian who punished those boys who shouted ‘Vande Mataram’, the defendant in the ‘Hindu’ versus Besant suit and as one, who in her statement admitted that ‘Hindu’ owned a grudge to her because she had always attacked nationalism, had at last become the President of the Congress.

In 1918, she described the Congress League Scheme as suited to produce deadlocks. Even after the Montague Chelmsford in 1923, the convened the Delhi Conference of the best minds of India on her own initiative in her campaign for ‘get swaraj quick’. For the impracticability of her scheme, it was rightly commented, for assiduous ploughing of arid sands Mrs. Besant was unequalled.

She was an unsparing critic of men and matters. Referring to the book of Mrs. Srinivasa Raghava Ayyangar on the plight of India before the establishment of British Rule said, even if those grossly exaggerated accounts were true, it did not deny India that right to self-rule. To her Britain had no authority to judge India’s fitness or unfitness. According to her Britain was autocratic and she did not deserve to be admitted in the League of Nations.

She placed Britain in the list of autocratic powers along with the Czar over Russia, the Emperor over Austria, Kaiser over Germany and British Emperor over India. Of them, she wrote, two had fallen; the fell of the third was imminent and Britain the fourth was yet to fall, only to the amusement of the

---

21 Ibid.,
22 Hindu, 15 Feb. 1923, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 197.
23 New India, 12 Nov. 1918, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1632.
24 New India, 12 Nov. 1918, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1632.
world, which would be set free, and which so far had been menaced by her. With the British rule, more especially in the wake of the Reforms, Non-Brahmins realised the perfect equality of treatment noted out to all communities, they believed in British Justice and the benefit that accrued to the down-trodden communities in their gradual emancipation. In their struggle they thought that the presence of British, till all the communities were placed on perfect equality, was a necessity. The sincerity with which the Non-Brahmins leaned towards British Justice made them believe that “India will one day have Independence but not so soon as the advocates of Home Rule think”\textsuperscript{25}. India was never free from foreign invasion and it was doubtful whether her people enjoyed any freedom and independence under an oriental despotism. Moreover, the Non-Brahmins felt, 1917 was not the proper moment for any precipitate action in Indian when Britain was engaged in war for the cause of independence and democracy. As Count Ckuma said that if Indians gave up their evil customs and came up to the standard of the English character, they need not toil for free government, but it would come of itself\textsuperscript{26}.

After all, British aim was not for the perpetuation of British rule in India, nonetheless, to rule India with force. In 1917, even Generals like Smute admitted that “No part of the British Empire should be ruled by the sword; the main principle of the Empire must be fellowship fostered under mutual independence”\textsuperscript{27}. It was also evident, that, what the Non-Brahmins criticised was

\textsuperscript{25} Justice, 19 July 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1980.
\textsuperscript{26} Andhra Patrika, 6 July 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 2010.
\textsuperscript{27} Krishna Patrika, 14 July 1917, p. 2010.
not the larger aims for Home Rule but the sectarian nature of the demand which
was undemocratic. Home Rule would have meant, some Rule for the Brahmin
aristocracy. An Anti-Home Rule meeting was held at Erode. In October, 1917,
the South Indian Liberal Federation passed a resolution stating that Indians were
not prepared to have immediate Swaraj.

The anti-thesis of Beasant’s political philosophy was the birth and growth
of a Non-Brahmin movement, proved to be one of the greatest political forces in
the history of Madras, opposed to Brahminism in all inheres of life. She landed
her followers in a world of contempt, Beasantine Home Rule was the dying song
of the Swan, the last cry of Brahminism for post-haste Home Ruler for them.

In 1917, Dr. T. M. Nair appealed to the Panchamas to wake up to
organise and advance; and contended that until every member of the Depressed
Classes were educated and brought to a condition when they could realise their
responsibilities and exercised their vote discriminately, till such time the British
should remain and continue to hold the scales between classes and classes,
instead of leaving them to the tender mercies of the so called superior castes. He
rightly indicated, the object of the Government as the greatest happiness of the
greatest number. Non-Brahmins in imparting political education to the depressed
classes announced that the secret of the scheme for Home Rule was Brahmin

---

28 Swadesamitran, 24 Sept. 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 2445.
Rule and propagated that the religious scriptures had been mutilated to serve the Brahminical ends, only to subjugate the people to social tyranny\textsuperscript{31}.

**Brahmin concept of democracy**

The whole character of the Home Rule Movement could be well understood by the statement of the Home Rulers themselves in November 1917. They estimated their strength as 52,000. This included the members scattered throughout the whole of India after the appeal of Beasant after her scheme. It was a bare collection of educated classes. It was evident, to them, democratic system was a purely Aryan system as democracy was unknown in ancient times\textsuperscript{32}.

**The testimony of Dr. B.C. Roy**

Eminent Indian leaders who had bestowed thoughts on British policy towards India and who had acquainted with British Statesman admitted that British aim in India was inevitably to grant her all the privileges which and had extended to other Self Governing colonies. No less an authority, that Dr. B.C. Roy came out as an exponent of British Policy in India. In July 1912, at a dinner given in his honour by the Lord Nayor or Sheffield, he announced his impression that Britain of late bestowed valuable privileges on the Indians. This was in reference to the privileges conferred on the Indians by the 1909 Act. He clarified British Policy and conveyed their desire that Indians and British subjects should enjoy the same kind of privileges. He expressed his belief that “when time comes for deeming my country to be fit for Swaraj, I feel sure that England will grant

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{32} Dravidian, 25 Nov. 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 2815.
her all the privilege now conferred upon the colonies’\textsuperscript{33}. Thus, it was only the question of fitness and time for Britain to grant Home Rule for India. 1917 was the early for Home Rule and Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras, made it perfectly clear in the Madras Legislative Council in May 1917 that Home Rule than was beyond the range of practical politics\textsuperscript{34}.

The history of the Home Rule Movement is an unfailing evidence of the great gulf that existed between the desires for Home Rule and its attainment. Home Rule had to be attained by patience\textsuperscript{35}. Indian Society was divided and hence weak and unless the people were united there was no hope of any immediate political advancement. Resolutions on political ideals were applauded enthusiastically, but the enthusiasm disappeared as if by magic\textsuperscript{36}. The nascent spirit died of social strangulation. Neither they enthusiasm survived nor the ideal attained. India could not become a nation unless the people discarded their social prejudices and become closely knit\textsuperscript{37}.

Intellectually, a small fraction of the people might have been fit for Self-Government, but their interest and the interest of the masses were opposed to each other and unless the masses were lifted up, Self-Government would not be advantageous. In the circumstances of 1917, India was better ruled than the many of the Self-Governed countries\textsuperscript{38}.

\textsuperscript{33} The Swadesamitran, 16 July 1912, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1039.
\textsuperscript{34} The Swadesamitran, 29 May 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1630.
\textsuperscript{35} Prakasa Sri \textit{op.cit.}.
\textsuperscript{36} The Andhra Patrika, 5 Jan. 1915, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 170.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{38} The Western Star, 21 Dec. 1915, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1813.
The Non Brahmins Awakening and the Great Democratic Upheaval

The character and course of the Home Rule Movement provoked the Non-Brahmins and produced in them a great awakening. The social backwardness of the Non-Brahmins and Depressed Classes and the great hurry with which Mrs. Beasant carried out an agitation, when Britain was confronted with one of the greatest enemies of democracy abroad, created a fear and suspicion about the motives of the Home Rulers\(^{39}\). No doubt under the Minto - Morley Reforms the Non-Brahmin communities was politically benefited in securing representation but the Home Rule Movement resulted in a general Non-Brahmin awakening\(^{40}\). The practical effect was, they realised, that unless they came up by education, patronage and political organisation to the level of Brahmins, it was impossible to think of Democracy or Swaraj. These was the historic circumstances under which the pioneering organisation of the Non-Brahmins, namely the Justice Party was born.

The Birth of the Justice Party

In December 1916, the Non-Brahmin leaders in Madras under the leadership of Sir P. Thyagaraja Chetty and Dr. T.M. Nair who were the founders of the Non-Brahmin Movement founded the South Indian Liberal Federation\(^{41}\) to advance, safeguard and protect the interests of the Non-Brahmin communities, which worked in co-operation with a joint stock company started at the same time

\(^{39}\) New India, 5 July 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1885.

\(^{40}\) The West Coast Spectator, 28 Dec. 1916, in Madras Newspaper Reports, 1917, p. 20.

under the name of ‘South Indian People Association’\textsuperscript{42}, which had as its Secretary, at the time of the inception, Sir P. Thyagaraja Chetty. The party known in the country as the Justice Party was organised and controlled by the South Indian Liberal Federation and the South Indian Peoples Association\textsuperscript{43} which issued the newspaper justice, to advance the cause of Non-Brahmins. Dr. T.N.Nair\textsuperscript{44} was the first Editor of the Justice, the official organ of the party. The first manifesto of the Non-Brahmins was issued in December 1916\textsuperscript{45}.

**Its Aims**

The objects\textsuperscript{46} of the South Indian Liberal Federation were

a) To obtain Swaraj for India as a component part of the British Empire as early as possible by peaceful and legitimate and constitutional means.

b) To promote good-will and unity among the different Non-Brahmin classes and communities or Southern India through safeguarding their interests by means of adequate and communal representation as well as social amelioration and reorganisation with a view to the ultimate fusion of all castes.

c) To promote the educational, social, economic, industrial, agricultural and political progress of all Non-Brahmin communities in Southern India.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{43} Fortnightly Report, First Half of November, 1923
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p.51.
\textsuperscript{45} New India, 20 Dec. 1916, in Madras Newspaper Reports, 1917, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{46} Justice Year Book, 1929, Justice Printing Works, Madras 1929, Part II, pp. 1 to 4.
d) To effectively organise public opinion and to express it on all questions which were deemed by general consent to be of importance and to act as authoritative and representative mouthpiece.

These broad declarations of objectives, the first of its kind in the History of India, was the most popular, positive and constructive programme for the great majority of the population throughout South India towards their social emancipation. It aimed at the evolution of society by a comprehensive formula of social regeneration and political power guaranteed to them, for which they were legally entitled. The provisions for economic, social and political uplift of the masses which was necessary for the attainment of Swaraj, a problem which had been hanging fire over since the inception of the Congress was embodied in the Non-Brahmin Manifesto. What the Brahmins and the Congress failed to perform, the Non-Brahmins wanted to achieve.

**The New Concept of Justice**

The Justice Party aimed at the social, political and economic justice to all the communities. The Justice Party was not for the perpetuation of caste distinctions, but it advocated for the ultimate fusion of all castes. This was the Historic Mission to which the Party dedicated itself. This was the paramount need of the hour and a practical solution to the problem of caste and community. If all communities became free and independent of each other, good-will and unity could be the next stage in the evolution. If all communities they achieved perfect equality, there was no difficulty in their interestingly and ultimately the fusion of

---

all castes. The guiding factors were an enunciated, good will and unity and the Justice Party did not fall to endeavour to include the Brahmins also. The Justice Party included Muhammadans and Christians and at the Nellore Conference48 in October 1929, there was a proportion to throw open the membership to Brahmin also. The proposition that was moved was lost by one vote, 13 for the proposition and 14 against it49. It only aimed at undoing the injustice prevalent and was not unjust even to the Brahmins. Paying a tribute to the Raja of Panagal Mr. Sethurathnam Iyer pointed to the justice done to the Brahmin community by appointing a Brahmin in the Justice Party Cabinet50.

The Party was born as a result of a revolution but avoided a revolution. In opposing conservation, it laid the foundation for social regeneration. The birth of the new party was the signal for the establishment of democracy in Madras. It augured well for the evolution of a new social order well deserving to receive the new boon that awaited them after World War I.

The formation of the Justice party was a welcome break through in the monotony and failures that characterised the solitary cry of the Brahmins for Swaraj. It had taken out the freedom movement from the narrow groove in which it was moving. The great social reformation it had brought about carried the thoughts of freedom to the hearts of millions who were victims of social evils so far. It undoubtedly paves the way for responsible government and independent government.

British Statesman no doubt willingly helped to evolve a social democracy and welcomed it. Lord Pentland extended a helping hand in the great struggle of Non-Brahmins to rise in the social and political life of the country, and had his smile of favour in the formation of the Justice Party. In July 1916, Sir Alexander Cardex is laying the foundation stone of the Sowrasstra High School, Madras, said “It was in order to testify to all of them and to the world generally the sympathy with which the government regarded that important section of the Non-Brahmin community that he was glad to be there.” He was a member of the Executive Council of Madras and the word “Non-Brahmin” was supposed to be used for the first time officially in a public function, to show the consideration shown by government for the legitimate claims of the Non-Brahmin community. The Indo-British Association formed by Lord Sycenham extended its sympathy to the Non-Brahmins in securing their rights.

**The impact of the Justice Party on Brahmins and Non-Brahmins**

The formation of the Justice Party had produced a psychological effect among the Brahmins. There was a claim dawn, and they concluded to be sharing the offices and wealth of the country with Non-Brahmins. They declared that they were prepared to withdraw their claim to any position in the State, high or low and leave the wealth of the country for the exclusive enjoyment of the Non-Brahmins, and revert back to their heritage of mendicancy. They also expressed a desire to live by hard labour also. They even went to the extent of stating that

---

51 *The Hindu*, 13 July, 1926, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 967.
52 *The South Indian Mail*, 30 July 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 2130.
they were to serve Nadar Non-Brahmins. In the spur of the moment, most of the Brahmins came forward to give up public services, completely and which remained the bone of contention. This was the result of the claims to distribute offices equally among all classes of people.

In 1917, to a question asked in the Legislative Council by the Bon. Mr. Ahamad Tambi Marakkayar about the proportion of appointment of communities, the government reply was, Brahmins 64.5, Non-Brahmins Hindus 1.9%, Muslims, 1.7%, Christians 10.6% and the rest to all other communities including Europeans. This anomaly of a dis-proportionate representation in services was pointed out and justice was demanded from government.

Titles and honours were received by the Non-Brahmins is 1917 which had been a Brahmin monopoly so far. These honour gave a new impetus to the Non-Brahmin awakening Non-Brahmins were conferred the titles of Diwan Bahadur. In that year, it was significant that Vijaya Raghavacharia of Salem wrote to the Private Secretary to the Governor to withdraw the Gazette notification as he was unwilling to accept the title.

At the first Non-Brahmin Conference held at Coimbatore in August, 1917, it was resolved that compulsory primary education should be imparted in Madras. They recommended that the departments of education, health,

---

56 Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council 1916-1917, pp.1056-1084
58 Justice, 2 Jan. 1918.
agriculture, co-operation and registration should be placed at the control of the non-official members of the legislative councils in the provinces and in the Indian Legislative Council. They also wanted freedom of action to the municipalities and Local Boards. It was believed that these demands concurred with the moderate demands and did not differ much in regard to the aspirations for self-government if not Home Rule. Some non-Brahmins agreed with the Congress League Scheme but placed emphasis on separate representation to all communities.

The non-Brahmin movement opened the eyes of orthodoxy. It was felt that Home Rule should be practised in regard to Hindu religion also. There was a popular sentiment to excommunicate those who wanted to retain social divisions. It was also felt that Brahmins should give up higher appointment in favour of Non-Brahmins and accept only such of those left to them. People openly preached that for the sake of communal harmony Brahmins should give up government service altogether and live by agriculture, industry and trade, if that could remove all ill-feelings, and their talents utilised for the benefit of the country. In response to the general feeling, members of the Brahmin community began to echo the popular statement, “to shall never prosper if we quarrel among ourselves”.

By 1918, the official organ of the Justice Party had become a powerful member of the Fourth Estate. Onsite first anniversary, it was recognised, that it

60 Justice Year Book, p. 30.
61 The Justice Year Book 1920.
had done an excellent service in wrecking the ambitious designs of the Brahmin oligarchy. It was admitted that, had it not been for the influence it had exercised, in bringing home to those concerned the real political needs of the Indian masses, an infinitesimally small clique of political agitators would have had their way in undoing the good that had been done by British rule. It was significant that, Mr. Kelby, the President of the European Association heartily co-operated at the anniversary of Justice.\footnote{Swadesamitran, 5 Nov. 1918, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 473.}

As already pointed out the election results of 1918 were an eye-opener to the dramatic changes in the field of politics. This might appear a total eclipse of fortune to the educated classes, but this was not. This was only the beginning.

In August 1919, Lord Wellington nominated Mr.C.Krishnan and Mr.Rajan to represent the Thiyyas and the Adidravidan respectively in the Legislative Council. This was the greatest landmark in the political history of Madras State. This was nothing but a revolution, based on a principle of equality, the untouchables were brought within the scope of practical politics. They were given the concession to participate in a political assembly. This was a forecast of the onset of the social upheaval which had been already adumbrated, and the great experiment that has yet to come\footnote{Willington to Montague, 19 August 1919, Willington Papers, MSS EUR, p.93}. However, as it was a beginning the appointment speaks for the statesmanship of the British in general and Lord Wellington in particular. Where the Congress had been, unjust, justice had been done by the government. It should be understood that the Justice Party as it was
intimately associated with the great social changes; it quickened the process of
evolution in society. As Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar described, democratic principles
were the foundations of the party, no wonder it became one of the causes of the
great democratic upheaval.\textsuperscript{64}

Montague and the new angle of vision in 1915

The aid given by Indians in men, material and money for the successful
conduct of war received a well paid compliment from Montague. Referring to the
help India rendered, he said, “This cannot but alter the angle with which we shall
view the Indian problems in future”\textsuperscript{65}. India had not only sent an army, but taken
the burden of its expenditure also on her shoulders. In spite of Indian economic
conditions, Indian contributions were heavy. This had naturally placed England
under a debt of obligation, and for which England was forced to strengthen the
bonds of its relations with India. He declared that England was prepared to make
India a councillor and partner in her affairs.\textsuperscript{66}

His Second visit to India in 1917 and the remark of Pollack on the ultimate
goal of India

In July 1917, Montague proposed to constitute a committee of members
from both Houses of Parliament to consider reforms to be introduced in the
administration of India. In the same year Montague visited India second time to
her all leaders and representative assemblies.

\textsuperscript{64} Swadesamitran, 17 May 1923, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 643.
\textsuperscript{65} Birken Head Papers, MSS EUR D 703 NMML
\textsuperscript{66} Montague Chelms Ford Reforms Report, Simla, p. 199.
The Non-Brahmins of South India declared that the Congress and the Muslim League alone did not represent the view of Indian public. The view of Lord Ishlington bore testimony in favour of separate representation for the Muhamadans and Non-Brahmins which reflected the views of Non-Brahmins.\(^{67}\)

In spite of all the best intentions Mr. Polak said, “Whatever help he and Mr. Montague may render to India, India’s future lies in the hands of the Indians and if they make the necessary sacrifices and show their fitness, they would undoubtedly reach the goal”\(^{68}\). This was unquestionably a reference to the degrading social inequality and the untouchability existed which the educated classes purposely kept in abeyance without suggesting a solution.

A section of the Anglo Indian papers, no doubt, held out a threat, if Montague should recommend self-government for India all at once the Europeans and moderates would see to his removal from office. This only showed the much advanced views of Montague compared to his contemporaries\(^{69}\).

In India, Montague declined an invitation to be present at the Congress held in December 1917. In Madras, Diwan Bahadur Kesava Pillai, as the head of the Madras Presidency Association, which though a Non-brahmin organisation which was in consort with the Home Rule Movement, was refused an official interview and later a private interview with Montague\(^{70}\).

\(^{67}\) *Andhra Pradesh*, 28 Aug. 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 2266.

\(^{68}\) *The Hindu*, 25 Aug. 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 2278.

\(^{69}\) *Andhra Patrika*, 30 Aug. 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 2298.

\(^{70}\) *The Swadesamitran*, 21 Dec, 1917, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 2918.
On of the highlights of Montague’s visit to Madras was that, many anti-
Home Rule Addresses were presented from all parts of the Presidency in spite of
the fact Madras remained the chief centre of the Home Rule Movement. The
Adi-Dravida Mahasabha declared that it would fight unflinchingly to see that
self-government was not given. The Moslem Associations expressed
themselves against the great of Self-Government71.

Montague was a strong critic of the bureaucracy and at the dinner given in
honour of Lord Sinha by Lord Sydenham, Montague posed the question whether
the interest of the civil servants or that of Parliament should prevail. As Lord
Sinha said, the educated classes in India at the time were not against British rule
but opposed to the British officials72.

The measure of Montague’s liberality vis-avis the Indian society

Thus, his speeches in Parliament, his views expressed on Indian
constitutional problems bore testimony to his desire reforms. The Montague
Chelmsford report on the Indian Constitutional reform was, and is, a classic in
itself, the striking feature of it was his sincere efforts to overcome the great
problems that confronted him. He agreed with Lord Dufferin on the difficulties
posed by the problems of caste and communities and the time necessary for the
complete attainment of responsible government. A great majority of the people
did not ask for it and were not yet fit for it. The people who asked for it did not
exceed 5% and the British were not to stir the 95% of the population. He said that

it was difficult to create a sense of nationhood to the poverty stricken people living is placid contentment and in deliberately disturbing them, they were working for their own good\(^{73}\).

Lord Crew, even though approved the despatch, was silent on the issues involved, and his statement in July 1912, in the House of Lords created a great amount of controversy. However, encouraged at the despatch of Hardings, at a dinner given to him by his Indian friends in England, Gokhale said, “I have never had a clearer and brighter vision about the future of India than what I have now”. Whatever may be the opinion of other regarding on third paragraph of the Despatch of Lord Hardings, the Indians are determined to work for the acquisition of Swaraj for the provinces as a first step towards the attainment of Swaraj for India\(^{74}\).

**Declaration of British aims by Lord Hardings**

In October, 1915, Lord Hardings\(^{75}\) in one of his speeches declared that England had instilled into India the culture and civilisation of the west with all its ideals of liberty and self-respect. Hence it was not enough for her to consider only the material outlook of India. According to him, it was necessary for her to cherish the aspirations of which she had herself sown the seeds. He admitted that English officials were gradually awakening to the fact, that high as were the aims and remarkable the achievements of their predecessors, a still nobler task was ahead of them, in guiding the uncertain and faltering steps of India along sure and

\(^{73}\) Montagu Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reform, 1918, Para 144 – 70 – 71.

\(^{74}\) Despatches of Lord Hardings 9 Oct, 1914.

\(^{75}\) The Loka Prakasan, 11 Oct. 1915, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 1789.
safe paths. He wanted them to assume the new role of guide, philosopher and friend which was opened before Englishman, which was enviable and worthy of their greatest efforts. In enlightening them, he said that, this required in them gifts of imagination and sympathy and indicated the need for self-sacrifice. It meant that slowly but surely they had to divert themselves of some of the powers they had hitherto wielded. He spoke on the greatness of England’s responsibilities in the past, but the more glorious task to fulfil in the future in encouraging and guiding the political self-development of the people. He cautioned that, the goal which India might attain might still be distant, and many vicissitudes in her path, but he foresaw India as a true friend of the Empire and not held in trust as a dependent. He wanted the officials to turn their eyes to this direction, and warned that success in this along would speak of British prestige and efficiency\textsuperscript{76}.

The constitutional proposals of Govt. of India

In September 1916, the Government of India submitted the draft proposals to the Secretary of State. The nineteen elected members resented that they were not consulted and they submitted a memorandum\textsuperscript{77} by which they proposed the enlargement of the Imperial and provincial legislative Council a large amount of metonymy for provinces, and the Imperial vested with powers to deal with all subjects except Defence, Foreign Affairs and Declaration of War and Peace. Mr. Bhupendranath Banu, one of the signatories said later that the memorandum was written in a hungry\textsuperscript{78}.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{77} Keith A.B, \textit{Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy}, Oxford University Press, England 1922.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.,
Opinion of Brahmins

During the Reform Proposals, franchise inevitably become the cardinal point of controversy between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. The different Non-Brahmins communities themselves were interested in securing separate representation. Brahmin opposed Communal Representation on the ground that Non-Brahmins formed a majority of the electorate and they need not be provided with separate electorate. They expressed the fear that if communal representation was introduced Brahmins would be isolated\(^79\). Moreover, it was pointed out that the Brahmins by heredity formed a very few answering to traditional description. Those who came under the rigid definition were in a minority. It was also pointed out that the days of lawyers had died out in the first decade of the twentieth century\(^80\). They admitted that enormous changes had done in Society and Politics ever since the working of the Minto-Morley Reforms and most of the Non-Brahmins Communities had realised their responsibilities and legitimate claims as testified by the fact that most of the members returned from the Taluq Boards hailed from only from them\(^81\). Moreover, Non-Brahmins did not trust the words of Brahmins.

Non-Brahmins and the demand for Communal representatives

Every Non-Brahmin Community was careful to safeguard their interests and pointed out that if elections were to be real, separate communal electorate was to be provided. Their fear was the Brahmin lawyer and the nearest Brahmin


\(^80\) Ibid., p. 4,

official supported by the village trio, the Brahmin Darman, the Brahmin document writer and the Brahmin prohibit who would exercise an enormous power over the illiterate and superstitious villages, is influence elections. Hence in that stage of social evolution, the agricultural population needed protection by way of communal representation. They argued, neither nomination nor reservation in plural member constituencies would be of any utility to them, for, in a mixed electorate the political minded Brahmin would be in a majority. They admitted that separate electorate could be gradually abolished as Non-Brahmins became enlightened\(^{82}\), and as Self Governing institutions were developed, along Montague’s three roads.

In the social circumstances of the times, it appeared, that communal representation had caught the imagination of the people of India\(^{83}\), and those who argued that communal electorates would tend to perpetuate Brahmins were the very people who were interested in perpetuating it. Minority communities among Non-Brahmins apprehended that in the absence of communal representation, the interests of the less advanced communities were bound to suffer at the hands of those who were in power. In fact, the problem was not of balancing the claims of Brahmins on the one hand and the Non-Brahmins on the other, but of safeguarding the interests of all communities. It was significant to notice that the Nadars who had a population of 3.2% of the total population of 6.5 lakhs and thus constituted a greater strength of population than Brahmins who account for only 3%, proposed to Government that if its population was too small, it could be

\(^{82}\) Ibid., p. 52
\(^{83}\) Ibid., p. 72.
clubbed with the Thiyyas and Illava Communities whose social and political interests were similar to those of the Nadars.  

In spite of the logic behind the demand for communal representation, social Reformers pointed to the cleavage in society and earnestly pleaded for the abolition of the caste system. The society was so incoherent that India was not in the true sense of the term a Nation, which was repeatedly pointed out of Montague. The difference of caste and religion with the differences of aims made the Indian society to differ greatly from the rest of the people of the Empire. Yogi Gitananda, subscribing to this view observed that whenever India could prove at the Bar of Parliament that her social ills were cured by education and the people discarded the social differences forming a joint electorate, Parliament would grant more and more powers to Indians. For a social reformation, it was India paintable for the women of India to be properly educated and it was realised that it was the females living at home in ignorance, frustrated the attempt of their husbands and the society in general to avoid caste customs. The ignorance of women had also led to an unquenchable thirst for gold. The sorrowful plight of women in Indian Society aggravated the social maladies. However, leading persons like Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy wanted to extend franchise for women.

In spite of Montague, in the working of the Act of 1919 in Madras, separate electorate were provided for Mohammadans, Indian Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians. The other constituencies were generally named

---

84 The representation of the Nadar Mahajana Sangham., p. 72.
85 Ibid., p. 23.
Non-Mohammedan, all of them pertaining to constituencies for the Hindus. In the Non-Mohammedan Constituencies 28 seats were reserved for Non-Brahmins in a house of 124, with 96 elected members.

There was no statutory provision in the Indian constitution still 1919 for the protection of the birth rights of the people. But the Act of 1919 was hailed as a guarantee of the birth-rights of the people and of India. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Ayyuvar who presided over the electorates Conference at Calcutta in December 1919 subscribed to this view. In the working of the reforms the truth of the statement was proved. In Madras Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. C.P. Ramaswamy Ayyar and Mrs. Beasant rallied to the side of government. How the people realised their rights under the 1919 Act could be seen in the Legislative History of Madras in its implementation.

The realisation of rights by Non-Brahmins

The first elections to the Reformed Legislative Council under the 1919 Act was held in December 1920. Congress boycotted the elections and hence a portion of the electorate did not exercise their franchise in spite of the Brahmins versus Non-Brahmin content. The Justice Party secured a fair majority of seats. In spite of the boycott by the Congress, out of 1.248 million voters, polling in the Landholders constituencies was 72%, in the Non-Muhammadan 70 and in the rural constituencies 50. In the elections to the Madras Legislative Council in 1920, 61 constituencies elected 98% members, of which 65 were general seats and 33 represented communal or special electorate. Out of the 33 special

86 Legislative Department, G.O. No. 280, 12 Dec. 1921, p. 3.
electorate, 28 reserved for Non-Brahmins from which 15 returned un-opposed. It was significant that not a single Non-Brahmin entered the Council by the mere virtue or help of the reserved seats and that all the Non-Brahmins got in did so by being at the top of the polls. The total effect of the Non-Brahmin feeling was that out of 74 Hindus elected, 15 were Brahmins and out of 15 non-officials nominated only 3 were Brahmins. The one official nominated was a Brahmin. Thus out of 90 members only 19 were Brahmins and the rest non-Brahmins. But in the Legislative Assembly, out of 14, there were 8 Brahmins and to the Council of State out of 5 members, 2 were Brahmins. The President of the Legislative Council, P. Rajagopalachari was a Brahmin and out of 2 Indian members to the Executive Council, N. Srinivasa Iyengar was a Brahmin, and Khan Bahadur Muhammad Habib-ul-lah, a Muslim.

To the elections in 1923 and 1926, non-Brahmins were returned either unopposed or by being at the top of the polls. The Government of Madras said, however, the same result would not have been achieved if there had been no reservation of seats. Communal electorates were provided for the Mohammadans, Indian Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians. The special electorate were for the constituencies of the landholders, Commerce and Industry.

---

87 Ibid., p.4.
88 Law Legislative Department, 1922, G.O. No. 162, and letter No. 163. Ordinary (Miscellaneous) dt. 01.07.1922.
90 Fortnightly Report, First Half of November, 1926.
The First Democratic Ministry

It was significantly that in the constitutional history of Madras, the first popular Ministry formed was a Justice Party Ministry. A. Subbarayalu Reddi was appointed Chief Minister after the elections in 1920. Ramaraynagar and K.V. Reddi were the other two ministers. Subharayalu Reddiar died after a few months after the formation of the Ministry. The leader of the Justice Party Sir P. Thyagaraja Chettiar himself declining the offer, recommended the name of Ramaraynagar the Raja of Panagal, ho become Chief Minister of Madras and continued in the same capacity till 1926, when the second council was dissolved. In 1922, A.P. Patro took the place of Ramaraynagar and he continued till 1926. In 1923, K.V. Reddy ceased to be a Minister and T.N. Sivagnanam Pillai became Minister.

The Reform Act unshered in an era of national progress. The Royal visit of the Duke of Cannaught to inaugurate the Legislative Council of Madras and the Indian Legislative Assembly were looked upon as national functions as one recognising, that India had won her right to an equal status in the commonwealth. Indians really felt proud of the fact that the Royal House of England was associated with her constitutional progress. On the 12 morning January, 1921, the Duke opened the Madras Legislative Council, an event which won the respect of all democrats the placed above all conventional criticism.

91 Goschen to Briken head, 13 May 2921, Briken head and South India, 1924.
92 The Hindu, 8 January, 1921, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 54.
93 The Hindu, 12 Jan. 1921, Madras Newspaper Reports. p. 55.
This was a moment of triumph to the revote, traders, artisans and the masses of the people. One of the most powerful revolutions had taken place in the history of Madras, for politics had passed from the hands of the English educated classes especially the Brahmins to the vast majority of the Non-Brahmin population. There was a great democratic agitation still proceeding lower down, embracing the downtrodden. The rule also inaugurated the Chamber of Princes, and the council of state.

**The democratic machinery**

Under dyarchy rules and regulations were framed which provided for the President, Vice-President and Secretaries. In 1922, Sir P. Rajagopalachari was the President of the Madras Legislative Council and Mr. P. Kesava Pillai was the Vice-President and L.D. Swamikannu Pillai as the Secretary of the Legislative Council, Madras. The office of the Secretary was made a permanent office, by approval of the Secretary of State. The President should be a member of the Council and elected by the Council. He was considered a nominated official.

In 1922, Dr. Subbarayan was one of the Council Secretaries and as per his resignation, it was evident that this office was meant to be a training ground for young men. He wanted to give room for others. R.K. Shanmugam Chettiar succeeded him. In 1928, there were three Council Secretaries appointed to

---

95 Law Legislative Dept.1922, G.O. No. 111 dt. 10.04.1922 (Ordinary Series, Government of Madras).
96 G.O. No. 335 dt. 19.11.1923, Law Legislative Dept. (Ordinary Series), Govt. of Madras.
97 G.O. No. 41 dt. 10.02.1922, Law Legislative Dept. (Ordinary Series), Govt. of Madras.
98 G.O. No. 41 dt. 10.02.1922, Law Legislative Dept. (Ordinary Series), Govt. of Madras.
cope with the work in the Legislative Department; Rao Sahib Thankavelu Pillai, M. Abdullah Ghatale Sahib and Arpudaswami Udayar.

The stand taken by Government in refusing franchise to subjects to native states revealed the sanctity that the government attached to the Legislative Councils. The Government of Madras firmly declared that the Councils were no longer to be a collection of individual advisers but were to be representative bodies. It was significant that the government strongly indicated that no one was entitled to assist in making the laws of a country but citizens of that country. It made it a condition that the citizen of any state should become first a British Indian subject to claim that privilege.

The position was that, the new popular assemblies were to interpret wisely the wishes of those, whom they represented. It was the aim of Britain, that members of the Reformed Legislatures should have in their mind, the interests of the masses, who could not be admitted to franchise immediately. The proclamation of the Emperor\textsuperscript{100} in 1919 carried this vital message into the heart of every democrat. It could be seen that Britain relied on the leaders of the people, especially the ministers of the future, to face the responsibility. They were asked to endure misrepresentation; to sacrifice much for the common interest of the State and look to general welfare. They were reminded of the need to be possessed of true patriotism, to develop a healthy state of mind to transcend the interest of the party and community. Confidence was placed on the

\textsuperscript{99} G.O. No. 106, dt. 10.03.1924, Law Legislative Dept. (Miscellaneous Series), Govt. of Madras.

Legislatures, to co-operate with the government for the common good, to sink essential differences to maintain “the essential standards of a just and generous government”\textsuperscript{101}. It was under these inspiring and ennobling circumstances of a responsible government, that the Justice Party in Madras assumed office.

**Democratic Changes under the Justice Party**

The first great aim of the Justice Ministry was to achieve equality in services\textsuperscript{102} between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins in the Secretariat either as officer or as clerk. In 1918, out of 36 Superintendents, there were 29 Brahmins, out of 215 subordinate services, there were 142 Brahmins and only 53 Non-Brahmins. Out of 167 clerks, there were 121 Brahmins and only 32 Non-Brahmins. The resolution\textsuperscript{103} to effect equality was moved by Mr. Tanikachalam Chettiar. Even Mr. C. Venkataraaka Iyengar declared, that the complaint of all communities should disappear. Voting\textsuperscript{104} on the resolution was 49 for, and 29 against. Non-Brahmins complained even in 1925 that in spite of the best of intentions, this remained a dead letter\textsuperscript{105}.

**Social, Religious revolt pertaining to validation of marriages**

In 1922, leave was not given to Bill, which Dr. Natesa Mudaliar wanted to introduce, to declare the validity of marriage performed without Brahmin Priest. The Secretary to the Legislative Council, Swamikannu Pillai said that

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p. 331.
\textsuperscript{102} Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council, Second Session, Vol. II, Nos. 1 to 9, 1 Aug. 3 Sept. 1921, p. 433.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., p. 436
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{105} Dravidian, 4 March, 1925, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 343.
prior sanction of Government was necessary. This was an attempt by Non-
Brahmin members to let themselves free of the Brahminical domination. The Bill
in question undoubtedly manifested the great revolution that had taken place in
the thinking of Non-Brahmins. This was nothing less than a revolt of the Non-
Brahmins against Brahminical customs\textsuperscript{106}.

**Franchise to women**

In 1921, Diwan Bahadur, Mr. Krishnan Nair moved a resolution\textsuperscript{107} to
recommend to government that sex disqualification under the Madras electoral
rules of women should be removed. The resolution was admitted. The resolution
gave the women right to vote but not the right to be a candidate in the elections.

In the discussion, Dr. C. Natasa Mudaliar\textsuperscript{108} said that he stood for the
social and political emancipation of women and the removal of all restrictions in
the way of freedom for women. However, he himself argued, women were not so
politically conscious as men, to whom concessions were given only recently. He
pointed to the social restrictions and the seclusion of women and the lack of
opportunity for them to come into contact with others, like men. He, however,
expressed that as a first step that as a first step that franchise could be extended to
the women of the Christian community and the women of Malabar.

Thus, even when progressive minded Indians did not advocate immediate
franchise to women, it would appear doubtful whether Government would

\textsuperscript{106} Law Department, 1922, Ordinary Series, Government Order, No. 43, dt. 12.05.1912.
\textsuperscript{107} G.O. No. 139, dt. 04.07.1921, Law Legislative Department (Ordinary Series), Govt. of
Madras.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p.4.
venture to accept such a sweeping reform. The Hon. Lional Davidson\(^{109}\), on behalf of Government stated that the reform was premature and the Government was not prepared. But, it would be surprisingly that when the resolution was carried out, it was given effect to immediately, franchise was extended to women also\(^{110}\). The voting on the resolution was 44 to 13 with 10 abstentions\(^{111}\). It should be pointed out, that in England franchise to women was granted only in 1918 and in less than three years, the same privilege was extended to women in Madras. In developing the chief features of a democratic set up which was worked out with caution and care, the essential features were readily conceded. It was the Indian social condition which had hampered any large scale concessions and not the unwillingness of the Britishers who always showed sympathy to Indian demands. One of the great evils of caste restrictions was the seclusion of women. They were kept in ignorance; prevented from intermingling, inter dining or intermarriage. How could political matters, where men had failed, women could succeed with revolutionary changes?. However, franchise to them was a gift. It was evident, that emancipation of women was a prime requisite in India. Their seclusion, went to proper education and training and above all freedom and equality in society was necessary for a change in society. In this context, franchise to themselves was one of the progressive and revolutionary measures for the social emancipation by conferring political power.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., p. 5.

\(^{110}\) G.O. No. 108, dt. 10 May 1921, Law Legislation (Ordinary Series), Govt. of Madras.

\(^{111}\) G.O. No. 139, dt. 04.07.1921, Law Legislative Department, 1921 (Ordinary Series), Govt. of Madras.
The Hindu religion endowment Bill

The most comprehensive piece of Legislation aimed at the eradication of the organised system of corruption, civil suits and mismanagement of temple trust and trust funds was introduced in 1922 by the Chief Minister, the Raja of Panagal. Popularly known as the Madras Hindu Religious Endowment Bill\textsuperscript{112} it was one of the pioneering piece of Legislation in the Legislative History of Madras. The credit of reforming the administration of the temple trusts and Mutts and placing them on a new footing should go to the Raja of Panagal and to the Justice Party. The Hindus supposed to be a set of religious minded people, pious and devoted had engaged themselves in organised corruption and disputes in the management of the trusts.

The bill pointed out to the great selfishness and greed, want of honesty and above all a respect and sanctity for public funds\textsuperscript{113}. This had only resulted in the moral, and religious and social degeneration of the Hindus and a failure to manage public affairs with disinterestedness. This had out at the very root of national consciousness and social uprightness. The failure\textsuperscript{114} of the Hindus to manage local affairs was too well known after 1882. Most of these temple trusts were in the hands of Brahmins, the privileged classes, who had stoutly opposed any change in their administration. The non-Brahmins had no share in the administration and the untouchables were denied admission into temples. It was

\textsuperscript{112} G.O. No. 272 dated 05.12.1922, Law Legislative Department, Govt. of Madras.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p.5.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
the absence of a larger social interest and a religious seal that had resulted in the sorrowful state of affairs.

The Bill\textsuperscript{115} introduced by the Raja of Panagal stated that the inadequacy of the provisions in section 3 and 4 of the Government of India Act II 1863 to check the misuse of the trust properties was largely responsible for the degeneration. It started that Committees were appointed in 1874, 1876, 1888 and in 1884 to make suggestions for improvement. Private Bills were also introduced. But all of them were rejected either too wide in their applications, or were too elaborate or inconsistent. According to the new bill, the chief defect in the earlier bills was that, there were no provision for supervision, no alterative than suits to guard against dishonesty of trustees, no provision to raise additional funds, no change in trustees become of life concernship of trustees and no proper provision for election.

\textbf{The Great Reformation}

The Religious Endowment Bill relieved the Brahmins from the age long corruption largely, if not completely. It saved the Hindu religious trusts and the surplus funds. It diverted the attention of all sections of the society and not to look to public trust with any selfish motive. Hindu religion itself was raised largely above the temptation of these who earned a living on misappropriation of temple funds. The Bill, in short, saved the Brahmins, the Hindu religion and the fund. The Superintendence and control of the Hindu Religious Endowment by Government was the first great measure which put an end to the licentious,

\textsuperscript{115}Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1923.p5
aristocratic and exclusive control of these institutions. This was the first great step in making Hindu religion to become progressively democratic in regard to their administration. The Bill was the crowning achievement of the Raja of Panagal and could be considered as the greatest piece of social and religious legislation achieved in the century.

Opposition to the Bill

The Satyamurthyl organised the Endowment Protection League as one started earlier by Dr. Subramanya Iyer to oppose the Bill. He even tried to revoke the religion endowment Bill by another Bill, but failed. Non-Brahmins rallied under the Raja of Panagal, as he had been praised as the saviour of religious fund, not being wanted on vakils, toddy stops and brothels and to enable the fund for the promotion of Hindu religion and social welfare of the people. It redeemed the ancient Butts, which had become the breeding place for drink, falsehood, lust, murder, robbery and other heinous crimes. Under the Hindu Religious Endowment Act, Sir. T. Sadasiva Ayyar was appointed the First President of the Board.

Whether the Raja of Panagal was justified in passing the Act could be seen from this proposal in 1925 to start a new university from out of the Tirupathi Temple Funds. There was already a surplus fund of Rs.40 lakhs lying idle and the temple had an annual income of seven or eight lakhs of rupees. Education

---

116Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1926,p4
117Ibid.,
118Ibid.,
was the primary need of the country and the surplus funds could not be better utilised for the enlightenment of the nation and her advancement. This diversion of fund by statutory control was nothing but a revolution in Indian context. The proposals of the Raja materialised and Tirupati became the centre of both pilgrims and learning.

**University education and the founding of new universities**

Allied to the problem of separate linguistic state for the Telugu speaking people which came to the forefront from 1911, there was also the question of a separate university for them. In 1921, Mr. Suryanarayana Pantulu introduced a resolution in the Legislative Council stating early action should be taken for carrying into effect the recommendations of the Senate of the University of Madras in its resolution dated 15th October 1920, in regard to the formation of a separate University to serve the needs of the Telugu speaking districts of Madras Presidency at least on the lines of the existing University in the Presidency. Most of the members who spoke on the resolution supported the Bill. Mr. A. P. Patro, the Minister in charge of Education said that Lord Pentland had accepted in 1917 the proposition for such an University, provided the Government was in a position to organise them. He appointed a committee to going to the question and the resolution was to withdrawn. The whole question was considered in to and in August, 1925, A.P. Patro prepared the Andhra University Bill and the University organised. Mr. K.V. Reddy, the Ex-minister become the first Vice-Chancellor.

---

121 G.O. No. 599 dated 28.05.1931 (Misc.) Public Services Dept. 1931, Govt. of Madras.

122 Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1926, p40

166
When the Andhra University Bill was under discussion, it was pointed out, that Mr. Patro did not refer in the Bill about the need for a separate university for the Malayalam speaking people. In answer Mr. Patro said, when the Travancore University would be established and which was under consideration, for which the report of the Travancore university Commission was ready, the interests of Malayalees in all the Districts would be taken into account. In due course, the Travancore University became a reality. The proposal for a separate Tamil University also took shape in the came period and the Annamalai University became a reality.

**Industrial advancement of the Presidency**

If the Justice Party played a significant role in the economic sphere as well, it laid the foundation for the industrialisation of Madras by passing a Bill to regulate State Aid to Industries and thus giving an impetuous for the economic progress. The Bill moved by the Hon’able Minister K.V. Reddy in August 1922 envisaged the establishment of a Board of 12 members to assist the local government in dealing with the application for aid, to advise Government on matters concerning assistance to nascent industries.

The object of the Bill was to afford state assistance to industrial enterprise in Madras, partly by financial methods and partly by providing on favourable terms raw materials, fire wood and water, being the property of Government. The Bill referred to the special circumstances which at each stage of

---


124 G.O. No. 1914, 25 Aug. 1922, Law Legislative Department, Govt. of Madras.

125 Ibid.,
India’s economic growth retarded the development of industries, the deficiency in business experience and practical knowledge which arrested progress, the general ignorance of industries and of banking on the part of the major portion of the population and the timidity and conservation of the investing public, were causes which handicapped the industrial advancement.

The scope of the Bill\textsuperscript{126} was extended to new or nascent, undeveloped one other deserving cottage industry. The forms of assistance were loans, subsidies, the cost for the purchase of machinery and for the conduct of research, state guarantee either for return or paid up capital etc. The Bill envisage the appointment of Directors for the control of larger concerns.

In a backward country, State aid to industries was in fact giving a impetuous for the growth of indigenous industries. The Bill was also an answer to the Swadesists. But the Bill unfailingly numerated the vital problems of the country like the general ignorance and antipathy of the people, the want of technical know – how and the necessity for the mobilisation of capital. Under these circumstances, the regudial measures in the Bill was an incentive for the industrial enterprise and the general advancement of the society.

The development of irrigation and power by government, the Mettur Dam and its importance

The general pattern of economic development reflected in the execution of important irrigation and power projects in Madras initiated by Government when the Justice Party was in power. In 1925, the Government of Madras

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.,
sanctioned the execution of the Mettur Reservoir conceived by sir Arthur Cotton a century ago. This was to make the supply of water regular to the areas under cultivation in Tanjore and to irrigate those areas remaining barren in the same district. Thus the scheme was to ensure a proper supply of water throughout the year. The work was delayed because of the need for an argument with Mysore over the flow and the execution of the Kannambadi Das. Government proposed to operate the hydro-electric scheme for themselves\(^{127}\). No doubt irrigation was under the reserved half, but the project materialised when the Justice Ministry was in power showed the enthusiasm of the Ministry to persuade Government in the quick prosecution of this mighty work.

The Raja of Panagal\(^ {128}\) worked for the Indianisation of services, reorganisation of the Public Health Department by assuring rural medical relief to the villagers. He endeavoured to help medical men to settles is remote parts of the Presidency among the common folk. He had taken special care for water supply and communication for the municipalities and Local Boards. He was one of those social reformers who helped the promotion of the welfare of the Depressed Classes.

During his Chief Ministership, the Depressed classes acquired Large number of seats in the local bodies, and by 1926, there were five –Dravida Numbers, one Barber, one Fisherman, one Kallar, one Thiyy and one Nadar.\(^{129}\) No doubt, they were dominated members, but the work of Justice Party among

\(^{127}\) *Swadesamitran*, 22 July 1925, Madras Newspaper Reports, p. 983.

\(^{128}\) *Justice Year Book*, *Op.cit.*, 

\(^{129}\) Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1926,p40
the lower classes could not be overlocked. By June 1926, it was decided that there should be not less than 13 nominated members from the Depressed Classes. This was in spite of the franchise to a percentage of a backward classes who were very backward to increase their franchise intelligently.\textsuperscript{130}

Among other achievements of the Non-Brahmin Ministry were compulsory education, vocational training, expansion of elementary education, the organization of Universities, Public health, medical, engineering, agricultural and industrial services. Dr. A. Lakshmiswamy Mudallar and Dr. Grurswamy Mudallur were sent to England for training.\textsuperscript{131}

The Raja’s conception of the station was realistic. Presiding over the Non-Brahmin congress at Amraoti in 1925, he rightly declared “that in the village lives the nation and that democratic self-government will be hallow mockery if the ryot in the village is not given his proper there in the working of it”. As he was in charge of Local Self-Government, he was familiar with the problem of the villages. He pointed out, that the problems of the villages were the real problems of the nation. He complained that after so many year of self-government water supply for drinking purpose was not served. He wanted to build the old village government. To him nation building should start upward from the village.\textsuperscript{132}

**His constitution for the development of the machinery of Self-Government**

The Raja and the Justice Party had done more than my other party in India to illustrate that while the great problems of the creation of a constitution for the

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{131} The Indian Quarterly Registrar, 1924, Nitra, Vol. II, July to Dec. p. 500.

\textsuperscript{132} Indian Annual Register 1925, Calcatta ,p7
\end{footnotes}
whole of India was being solved, very great strides could be made in the development of machinery of self-government. Though the Raja was an aristocrat by birth, he was desecrate in social relationship.\textsuperscript{133}

The dualism in Government under diarchy had no doubt irritating contradictions and limitation. But the Raja recognized that a term of probation was good enough for the probationary period. That was significant, the rontferd Reforms containing redeeming desecrate features which the Justice Party wanted to work out by rendering equal justice to all communities. The Raja unfailingly endeavoured to this ideal. On behalf of the Muslims Mr. Muhamed Schahinad,\textsuperscript{134} M.L.C said that but for the Raja of Panagal the Muslim would not have achieved so much of advance as they did when the Justice Party was in power. He was the leader of a great democratic upheaval that arose in the presidency and it became a matter of duty to help the democratic evolution still further. The Raja was more than a politician in the ordinary sense of the term. Indeed, he was Statesman\textsuperscript{135} who with great vision comprehended the consequences of the decisions that the Justice Party made from time to time and it was this foresighted judgment which accounted for his success in office. Non-Brahmins rightly anticipated in the Raja of Panagal the course of events to come, a succession of Non-Brahmin Chief Ministers, and Cabinets, representative of different communities. In aiming at social justice, he laid the foundation for nation-building. His office of Chief

\textsuperscript{133} Patro, A.P., Justice Year Book, 1929, 1930, Section I, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{134} Justice Year Book, 1929, 1930 Section I, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Ibid.},
Ministership in Madras assured as honoured place to every Non-Brahmin community, thus establishing their rights and providing security for their future.

The Self Respect Movement and the Social Revolution in Madras

The Self Respect Movement started in 1926, with its first conference in 1929, pointed out the enormous improvement it had to do in the Non-Brahmin Community, for their social advancement, and before they could become Self-Respecting and rational. Mr. E.V. Ramaswamy became the Leader of the Self Respect Movement. In 1929, M.P.A. Soundra Pandiyan presided over the first Self Respect conference. The self Respect Movement in South India had carried out many social reforms for the emancipation of Non-Brahmins from superstitious beliefs associated with the Hindu religion and more especially with caste system, which invariably had a direct and indirect bearing on politics. He was, as he is, one of the greatest revolutionary social thinkers and philosophers, who had brought the Non-Brahmin communities to a higher level of thought by a tireless and unceasing endeavour. To them he remained the torchbearer. He carried the work of the Justice Party to an important stage further.

---