CONCLUSION

With the drawn of the present century a new chapter was opened in the political and constitutional history of the Madras Presidency. Inspite of the repressive measures of the British Government, the National Movement for freedom got intensified day by day throughout the Indian Peninsula. At such a time the British diplomacy and tact had their triumphant expression in the constitutional reforms of 1909 and 1919. The communal representation provided by the Act of 1909 had a significant effect on the politics of the Madras Presidency. The provision for separate electorates for the Muslims, subsequently paved the way for extending communal representation to different sections like Sikhs, Indian Christian, Anglo-Indians, Europeans and so on.

The Act of 1909 aimed at the reorganization of the constitution of Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils. As per the provisions of the Act, non official members in the Councils got the power to express their opinion on the budget. The chief merit of the Act of 1909 was the enlargement of the Provincial Legislature. The Act raised the level of national self-respect. Though the Act of 1909 brought about some modification in the Madras Presidency over the existing system of administration, the native newspapers severely criticized the Act, The moderates were satisfied to some extent, by the Act, but the Extremists opposed it. However, the Act enlarged the provincial Legislative Councils, enabled the members to discuss the budget and enjoy the right of interpellation. But neither the right of legislation nor taxation was given to the legislature. No doubt, the Act was intended to win over the
Moderates. But that object was not realized. The rules that were framed in this connection rendered the Act practically unwise and ineffective.

The First World War (1914-1918) exercised a tremendous influence on the politics of the Madras Presidency. It worked as a catalyst to the Freedom Movement in the Presidency. The participation of the people of the Madras Presidency in the Global War was a significant factor. The political parties of the Presidency extended their whole – hearted co-operation to the war efforts of the British. The people of the Madras Presidency fought shoulder to shoulder with the people of other parts of the Empire. Madras contributed nearly eighty lakhs of rupees towards the War Fund. Several War pamphlets were distributed to the people of the Presidency by the Government of Madras. Films on War were shown and War Conferences were held throughout the Presidency.

The War forced Great Britain to make increased demands on the Presidency for men and money and many politicians of the Madras Presidency realized that it was the opportune moment to confront London with their own demands for political reforms.

The effects of the War on the Madras Presidency was more potent. Export, import and agriculture were affected. The industrial growth, weaving, spinning, cotton-ginning etc. received a setback. The earnings of railways declined. The cost of living of the people increased. On the whole, the Madras Presidency was severely affected by the War. However, the people of the Madras Presidency were indeed grateful to His Excellency for their name being specially and honorably associated with the form of relief to the sick and the wounded among the Indian troops. They believed that by sending their people to the war front for the cause of the British,
they would get better treatment but their expectations were falsified as the British continued their policy of exploitation.

Taking advantage of the situation Mrs. Annie Besant, who was very much concerned about the unity and integrity of the people of the Madras Presidency, started the Home Rule Movement in 1916 and formed the Home Rule League to bring together different sections of the people under a common banner. She launched a nation – wide agitation against the British imperialism and sowed the seeds of self – government in the minds of the people of the Madras Presidency. As her liberal propaganda was finding unanimous support every where, she became popular throughout the Presidency. She tried to bring together the Moderates and the Extremists in the Congress. But the Moderates failed to cooperate with her.

In 1915 Annie Besant started the Madras Parliament to train the people of the Presidency in parliamentary practices and political justice. Through her Home Rule League she stressed the importance of swadeshi, boycott of foreign goods, the need for national education and a responsible government.

Her propaganda for self-government exercised a remarkable influence on the people of the Madras Presidency. The repressive policy of the Government failed to deter her from carrying on her propaganda through the newspaper published by her.

The Home Rule Movement spread like wild – fire. Mrs. Besant continued her policy of villifying the government. As her speeches and writings never showed any tendency to be moderate, the Madras Government interned Mrs. Besant on 16th June 1917. But the spontaneous reaction of the people compelled the Government to order her release and the Madras Government unconditionally released Mrs. Besant and two of her associates, Arundale and Wadia on 17th September 1917.
In spite of the several difficulties faced by the Home Rule Movement, it continued its work with determination. It created political consciousness among the people of the Madras Presidency. The sole object of the Home Rule Movement was complete self-government. When Mr. Montagu, the secretary of State for India made a historic declaration on 20th August 1917 promising self-government by stages, much of the purpose of the Movement, seemed to have been served.

The Home Rule Movement was very much responsible for the growth of communal politics in the Madras Presidency. The Brahmanical domination in the League produced a reaction on the part of the non-Brahmins. Some of the influential non-Brahmin leader under the headship of P. Theagaraya Chetty formed the South Indian Liberal Federation in 1916 to ventilate their grievances to the Government. They started three newspapers, Justice, Andhra Prakasika and Dravidan and spread their ideas. The South Indian Liberal Federation later on came to be known as the Justice Party after the name of the English journal Justice.

The Justice Party came out of the social mishmash in the Hindu society and the hotch-potch political situation that prevailed in the Madras Presidency. It strived to achieve social justice. The Justice Party was able to exert considerable influence over the British authorities and created political awareness among the depressed classes. It pursued democratic and constitutional methods at a time when the nations mood was to frown on all constitutional methods. It aimed at securing justice to the oppressed section who were groaning under the rigid stratification of society and the consequent denial of political and economic opportunities.

Inspired by the non-Brahmin leaders of eminence and erudition like P. Theagargya Chetty and T.M. Nair and nurtured by the Public spirited leaders, the non-Brahmin Movement served the cause of the have-nots, though the leadership
was vested in the hands of a few rich caste Hindus. The non-Brahmanical Movement started as a provincial Movement in Tamil Nadu, spread to several parts of South India. In fact, the teachings of the non-Brahmin leaders in Tamil Nadu led to the social transformation throughout the nation which included distribution of jobs, avoidance of caste prejudices, disappearance of social taboos, decentralization of power and equal opportunities to the depressed classes. While continuing their propaganda against the Brahmins, the non-Brahmin leaders tried to obtain political power.

Since the passing of the Act of 1919, the Indian National Congress expressed its dissatisfaction over the provisions of the Act. But the Justice Party made use of the opportunity and contested the elections of 1920 and secured majority of seats in the Madras Legislature. From 1921 the Justice Party led by several non-Brahmin leaders dominated provincial politics in the Madras Presidency.

On 19th August 1942, Mahatma Gandhi, the members of the Congress Working Committee and some other Congress leaders were arrested. The All India Congress Committee and the Provincial Congress Committees were banned. Lord Linlithgow, the then Vice-rey of India followed the policy of repression all over India. The sudden arrest of the Congress leaders left the people leaderless. Gandhiji was held captive in the Agakhans Palace at Poona along with his wife Kasturba.

The action resulted in violent outburst in many parts of India in general and Tamil Nadu in particular. The Government properties were greatly damaged. Some officials and soldiers were killed and 900 civilians lost their lives. In Tamil Nadu, there were hartals and strikes in factories, schools, colleges and public demonstrations. They cut off telegraph telephone wires and railway lines. They also burnt the Government buildings.
As a matter of fact, the Government adopted repressive measures to suppress the revolts. About 60,000 people were arrested all over the state. There were mob violence, lawlessness, riots and disorder in certain places of Tamilnadu. Gandhiji undertook a fast on 10th February 1944. Gandhiji suffered from Malaria. Lord Wavell, the then Vice-roy of India feared that Gandhiji would not survive. So he released him from Jail on 6th May 1944. However, the impact of Quit–India Movement in Tamil Nadu became very severe that resulted for the attainment of Indian Independence in 1947.