INTRODUCTION

PHYSICAL FEATURES

Tamil Nadu, the home land of the Tamils, which has been described a country almost a nation on its own, is situated at the far south – east of peninsular India\(^1\). Geographically it lies between 8.5\(^0\) and 13.3\(^0\) of north latitude and between 76.51\(^0\) and 80.20\(^0\) of east longitude\(^2\). The State is surrounded by the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and the Bay of Bengal and Stretches from Kanyakumari in the south to Pulicat in the north\(^3\). In the north-west an upland rim separates Tamil Nadu from Kerala and Deccan\(^4\). It has an area of 15, 331 square miles\(^5\). The southern part of Tamil Nadu is washed by the Indian Ocean. The two mountain ranges the Western and Eastern Ghats run Parallel to the west and east coasts of the peninsula\(^6\). The small island of Ceylon, South – east of Tamil Nadu, is a geographical and cultural continuation of Tamil Nadu\(^7\).

POLITICAL HISTORY

Tamil Nadu has a very long political history beginning with the age of the Sangam. During the early centuries of the Christian era, the Chera, Chola and Pandya Dynasties held sway in the Tamil country\(^8\). From 300 A.D to 600 A.D the Tamil country passed through a Dark Age which is called the Kalabhra Interregnum.

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8. Pillai, K.K., History of Tamil Nadu, Her People and Culture (Tamil), Madras, 1972, pp. 170 ff.
However, during the last decade of the eighth century A.D. Kadungen revived Pandya rule which lasted for four centuries and then gave way to the Pallavas of Kanchi. As the Pallavas had suffered an eclipse during the last decade of the ninth century, the Cholas under Raja Raja (985-1014) and Rajendra (1012-1044) reasserted their authority. By the end of the eleventh century fortune smiled upon the Pandyas.

Kulasekara Pandya (1190-1216) founded the second Pandyan Empire. The downfall of the second Pandyan Empire started from 1311 A.D because of the war of succession between the two sons of Kulasekhar Pandyan namely Vira Pandya and Sundara Pandya. Internal feuds led to the invasion of Malik Kafur in 1311. In 1323 Muhammad-bin- Tughlag sent Jalaludin Asan Shah to conquer Madurai and the latter sacked Madurai and became its Governor. In 1333 he neglected the over lordship of Delhi and asserted his independence and established the Madurai Sultanate.

The Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar was founded in 1336. In 1378 the Madurai Sultanate fell a prey to Kumara kampana, an younger son of Bukka 1 of Vijayanagar. Thence forth, Madurai was ruled by the Nayak Governors appointed by the rule of Vijayanagar. King Achyutaraya appointed Viswanatha Nayaka as the ruler of Madurai in 1529. The latter adopted the Poligari system. During his reign Ariyanatha Mudaliyar, his General, divided the Nayakdom into seventy two Palayams.

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13 Pillai, K.K., *South Indian History* (Tamil), Madras 1960, pp. 7f.
and assigned them to the Poligars. Since the destruction of Vijayanagar at the battle of Talicotta in 1565, Madurai under Krishnappa Nayak became virtually independent. However the Mughals superseded the Nayaks of Madurai in 1736. Finally the Mughal rule paved the way for the rule of the Nawab over the Carnatic. The nawabs of the Carnatic had to struggle for survival against the thirty – three Southern Poligars until 1792, but failed. A Collectorate for the Southern Poligars was established at Ramanathapuram in that year by the Treaty of the Carnatic. 1792.

Between 1792 and 1801, most of the Tamil country had come under the control of the East India company. The English rulers suppressed the natives and brought the entire Tamil country under their sway and thus Tamil Nadu became a part of Madras Presidency from the end of the eighteenth century.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, Madras has known no regular war; but occasional disturbances called for measures of military repression. The Hindus and Muhammadans of Salem came into collision in connection with a question of religious ceremonials. There was a riot at Villupuram in the South Arcot District. In 1911 a religious riot broke out at Tiruppattur, Salem District. The anarchist movement, thus begun and fed by mischievous and inflammatory writings in the public press, culminated, in June 1911, in a grievous outrage at Maniyachi in Tinnevelly the murder of R.W.D.E. Ashe, the Collector of the District.

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18 Kulasekhara Ran, B.J.M. A Forgotten Episode of the History of South India. Madras, 1924, p. VII.
22 Nambi Arooran, K., Tamil Renaissance and Dravidian Nationalism 1905-1954.
23 David Arnold op.cit., p. 9.
In retaliation to the anarchist movement, the British launched repression against the people on a large scale. A new situation developed in 1914. When the World War I broke out. Great Britain took India to the arena of war. Industrial development and commercial activity suffered a serious setback. The Indian National Congress at its twenty-ninth session held at Madras in 1914, passed a ridiculous resolution in favour of the war effort. In this hour of National humiliation a lady from Ireland Mrs. Annie Besant came to the rescue of the National Movement for freedom. She carried on a crusade against British imperialism. She formed a Madras Parliament to train the people in parliamentary practices. Realising that the national aspirations could not be ignored, the Britishers came forward to concede marginal reforms.

Before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian politics, the growth and development of political consciousness in South India passed through four phases: (i) The growth of English education and the beginnings of mass politics, (ii) the Swadeshi Movement, (iii) the Home Rule Movement and (iv) the Anti-Brahmin Movement and the activities of nationalist minded non-Brahmins. A study of Besant is a fruitful way of investigating the nature and structure of Indian politics and the ideals and aspiration of local groups and leaders and their roles and relationship in politics. Such an attempt is very essential to know the driving forces behind the political activity and political changes in modern India.

The advent of Annie Besant in Indian politics made the British Government take a hasty decision of her, and the internment of Mrs. Besant brought her prestige.

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26 The Hindu, Madras, 3rd September 1972.
28 Commonweal 26th February 1915.
high in India and abroad. That served to place her in the presidential gaddy of the Indian National Congress. Though her term as Congress President benefited the organization to transform itself from an annual gathering into one with activities round the year, the politics of India was changing swiftly. The advent of Gandhiji in Indian politics and the rise of communal interests all over India forced a leadership change in India. Anne Besant soon faded into oblivion. The message of common origin and universal brotherhood preached by Theosophical Society initially found the soil of Madras politics to thrive in. But when its leader began to spread her wings in Indian politics and move away from Theosophy, both suffered. Her deviation from theosophy and indulgence in politics brought her no dividends. The swift change in Indian politics forced her to retreat from both theosophy and politics.

**OBJECTIVES**

- The present work aims at highlighting the comprehensive study of the reform measures of the British Government and the reactions on the part of the native people.

- It also analyses the impact of First World War on Madras Presidency.

- The study makes a mention about the contributions of Mrs. Annie Besant to India's Freedom Struggle in general and Madras Presidency in particular.

- The research also aims at bringing to light the Rise of Regional Politics in the Madras Presidency with special reference to the growth of Non-Brahmin Movement.
It also highlights the functioning of Dyarchy in Madras in association with the Montford Reforms. The work also makes an attempt to explain the Role of Tamil Nadu in Freedom Movement.

**SCOPE**

The scope of the present work is confined to the political and constitutional development in the colonial Tamil Nadu. The meritorious services rendered by the Indian sepoys on the part of Great Britian during the Global War and the consequent changes effected in the Madras Presidency also included in the study. From its scope the present research also includes the achievement of Mrs. Annie Besant through her Home Rule Movement to achieve Home rule for India and the role of Non-Brahmin Movement regarding the regional politics. The functioning of Dyarchy introduced by the Act of 1919 on Madras was also included in the study. It also includes the Role of Tamilnadu in freedom movement of India.

**METHODOLOGY**

Since the present research exclusively investigates the political and constitutional changes in colonial Tamil Nadu, it applies narrative and analytical methodology in observing, recording, describing, analyzing, interpreting and comparing the data collected during the course of the research. The legacy of Mrs. Besant on Tamil Nadu politics, the impact of First World War on Madras Presidency, the achievements of Non-Brahmin Movement on Regional Politics the condition of Dyarchy in Madras and the Role of Tamil Nadu in Freedom Struggle etc. have been studied separately in description method. However, analytical and comparative approaches are also adopted in the suitable contexts.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A large number of books depict the political developments in colonial Tamil Nadu and life history of Mrs. Besant and also her role in theosophy and Indian politics. An attempt is made here to review those studies to find out the gap between the areas mostly covered and those not so far explored methodically and authentically.

C. Jinarajadasa's A short Biography of Annie Besant, written a year before her death, portrays a brief life history of Mrs. Besant. How India Wrought for Freedom is a history of the Indian National Congress in detail till 1914. in Annie Besant's own words. It was an exercise in understanding India and her problems. Sri Prakas's Annie Besant: As Woman and as leader contains his memories about Besant in detail. C.P Ramaswamy Aiya's Annie Besant attempts to recreate the role played by Mrs. Besant in the regeneration of India, from his memory. Prof. M. Venkataramaiya's. The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh is a compilation of data pertaining to the Home Rule League in Andhra. It also gives a picture of the response of Andhra to Gandhi's first call for Non-Cooperation. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's History of the Indian National Congress (1969) highlights Besants attempts to reunite Extremists and Moderates as well as Hindus and Muslims.

V. Sankaran Nair's Role of Students in Freedom Movement, with special reference to the Madras Presidency, has a chapter on Mrs. Besants influence on the students and the impact of her political propaganda on them. verinder Grover and Ranjama Arora's (eds) work Great Women of Modern India- Annie Besant traces the contribution of Besants to India's political, educational, religious and social development. In the Extremist movement in India, Dr. J.N. Vajpeyi tries to picture the role played by Mrs. Besant in India's Freedom Struggle. Ram Gopal's Lokamanya
Tilak highlights the role of Mrs. Besant in reuniting the Extremists and the Moderates, and her relations with Tilak. S.R. Bakshi’s Documents of Home Rule Movement is a compilation of Besant's speeches from her papers. It also contains a number of Government Orders, and serves as a source of Primary data. In Annie Besant's Rise to power in politics 1914-1917, a well-researched and documented work, Rajkumar attempts to analyse the nature and extent of Besant's role in Indian politics during an important period in the history of India. The Publication Divisions some Eminent Indian Editors shows how daringly Besant worked for freedom of the press as an editor and how her newspapers put the Government to trouble. Saroja Sundara Rajan's March to freedom in Madras Presidency 1916-47 traces the political history of the Madras Presidency at that time and the role of Besant in changing the political scenario of the Presidency and the part she played through the Home Rule League in the Freedom Movement. Rajan Mahan’s Women in Indian National Congress traces the political history of Mrs. Besant and the role played by her Home Rule Movement in India's struggle for freedom. Anne Taylor's Annie Besant: A Biography traces the life history of Mrs. Besant and her role in Indian Politics in a limited manner. The book also reveals the policy of repression adopted by the Government against her in 1917 and her bid for political and religious power in India.

A history of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society published by the Theosophical Society in America aims to give the students a resume of Theosophy and its pioneers. It also contains reliable information about the society, the personalities who contributed to the work in its various phases and the difficulties faced by the Society in doing the work. Josephine Ransom's A Short History of the Theosophical Society depicts the story of the Theosophical Society and the role played by Mrs. Besant to spread the teachings of this Society. A series of lectures by
eminent persons, entitled In Honour of Dr. Annie Besant (1990), published by the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society. Varanasi, also contains a number of lectures delivered in memory of Mrs. Besant. Her varied achievements are mentioned in these lectures.

Literature on Mrs. Besant is spread over a volume of documents published by Besant, or on her behalf, or by others, during her time and afterwards. This shows the importance she holds in the study of Indian history. While these writings are Besant's exercises in knowing India herself, the remainder belongs to her well-wishers or her opponents. All these publications are related to aspects of theosophy and political developments.

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

In the preparation of this thesis, several sources—both primary and secondary—have been consulted. The Chief primary sources kept preserved in the Tamil Nadu State Archives, Madras are of different kinds. The Government Order of Political, Public, Home, Local and Muncipal and Legislative Departments. Not only that, the Proceedings of the Madras Legislature, the Country Correspondence and the District Collectorate records give authentic information. Generally, these records contain the proceedings of the Government such as orders, Notifications, Press Notes, Press Communiqués, Instructions issued to the Police, Magistracy and to the Secretaries to maintain law and order and other Governmental measures that were required to tackle the administrative difficulties in the Madras Presidency.

The extracts from Government Orders and Consultation relating to the growth of Non-Brahmin Movement from 1916 to 1919, the Home Rule Movement and the progress of Indian National Congress, in Tamil Nadu provide a wholesome account of
the political activities of the land. The Fortnightly Reports of the Madras Presidency afford ample information about the spread of the Home Rule Movement and its counter Dravidian Movements and other programmes connected with the Freedom Struggle in Tamil Nadu. These Reports contain enclosures and letters despatched by Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Chief Secretary to the Government of India.

The Fortnightly Reports, extracts from Government Orders and Consulations relating to the Home Rule Movement, Non-Brahmin Movement from 1917-1919, Mortford Reforms, Under Secretary's (Secret) Safe File, History of Freedom Movement Bundles, Diary of Important Events, Sedition Committee Reports, the Madras Native Newspaper Reports etc. Contain valuable details about the political changes, reform proposals of the Government and the position of political parties in Tamil Nadu and other issues of vital importance in matters connected with the administration.

The various Newspapers both Vernacular and English-like Justice—Andhropatrika, Tamilian, Lokopakari, Desabaktan, Desamata, Desabhimani, Swadesamitran, Hindu, Vaisyamitran, New India, Hindu Nesan, Shams – ul- Akbar, Jana Bhanu, Sasikala, Sasilekha, Bharati, Ravi, Kerala Sanchari, Samoad Abvudava, West Coast Spectator, Travancore Tmes. Travancore Abhimani, Indian Patriot, Madras Standard, Jaridah – i- Rozgar, Wednesday Review, Sadhvi, Mysore Star, Survodayam, Cochin Argus, Kristnapatrika, Vrittantapatrika etc. give considerable information about the rise and growth of the non-Brahmin Movement as well as the Home Rule Movement. The Vernacular Newspaper highlighted the grievances and uprisings of the non-Brahmans and their pitiable status in the society. Generally, these
Newspapers expressed their views on proposals for reform measures, criticisms and appraisals of the administrative policy and the consequent benefits to the recipients.

In addition to these, the published works by different authors and historians too supply adequate material for filling up gaps wherever it is needed. The important publications related to the political problems of Tamil Nadu have been written by both Indian and foreign authors. David Arnold’s Congress in Tamil Nadu, 1919-1937. Tamil Renaissance and Dravidian Nationalism, 1905-54 by K. Nambi Aroran, B.S., Balica's Studies in Madras Administration. A forgotten episode of the History of South India by B.J.M. Kulasekararaj. The Polities of South India by C.J. Baker, E.P. Irishicks political and social History of South India, K.K. Pillai's A social History of Tamils, History of Tamil Nadu 1565-1985 and South Indian Rebellion by R. Rajayyan, the Emergence of Provincial Politics by D.A. Washbrook provide details on the south Indian political awakening. History of the Freedom Struggle in India by Tarachand, History of India's Freedom Movement 1857-1947, by B.B Majumdar, Montagu Chelmsford Reform by V.P. Menon, the History of Democratic Experiments in Madras State 1909-1935 by S. Singaraja, History of the City of Madras by C.S. Srinivasachari, Nilakanta Sastry’s A History of South India, the Colas An advanced History of India by V.D. Mahajan History of Tamil Nadu by N. Subramanian and the Growth of Public Opinion in the Madras Presidency 1858-1909 by D. Sadasivan throw much light on the political developments in Tamil Nadu.

History of Tamil Nadu by G. Thankavelu, Indian National Liberation Movement by P.B. Sinha, Edmund Mullers India wins Independence, Mohan Mishra's An Unfinished Story, Home Rule Movement in Tamil Nadu by A. Swaminatha, K.C. Sankarakrishna's India's Demand for Home Rule, K.B. Keswani's History of Modern India, V.D. Mahahan's India Since 1526. Tulsi Vatsal's Indian Political History from
Marathas to Modern Times, R.N. Gupta's Indian Constitution and Civil Life, Struggle for Freedom by Majumdar, Mrs. Besant’s Congress Speeches, Southbrough's Reports on Indian Constitutional Reforms, Annie Besant’s Montagu- Chelmford Reform Proposals, Indian National Congress by Sankar Ghose, Swarajist Party and Indian National Congress by S.R. Bakshi, K.K. Chandhari's Maharashtra and Indian Freedom Struggle etc. furnish exhaustive information about day to day political occurrences.

CHAPTERIZATION

The present work is divided into seven chapters excluding introduction and conclusion. The first chapter highlights the Reforms of 1909 and the subsequent changes meted out in the Madras Presidency with special references to the reactions on the part of the people of Madras against the communal electorate. The second chapter analyses the impact of the First World War on Madras Presidency in the field of economic, political and social spheres. The third chapter depicts the Cry for Home Rule for India with special references to the sustained efforts of Mrs. Annie Besant on Madras politics. The fourth chapter symbolizes the achievements of Home Rulers for Indian Nationalism. The fifth Chapter throws light on the legacy of Non-Brahmin Movement in the political picture of Madras Presidency. The Sixth chapter visualizes the functioning of Dyarchy introduced by the Act of 1919 in the Madras Presidency and its utmost failure in the concerned field. The seventh chapter highlights the role of Tamil Nadu in the Freedom Movement of India. While the introductory part highlights the aim, scope, purpose, methodology, chapterization, source of information, physical features, political, social economic and religions conditions of colonial Tamil Nadu and the concluding part fulfills the findings drawn from the research.