CHAPTER 9

THE NON-BRAHMIN REGENERATION -

AN ASSESSMENT
The role of the Justice Party in Non-Brahmin regeneration cannot be underestimated because it provided the very basis for the birth of the Dravidian movement. Every new movement in the world, however, progressive it may be, passes through various stages of cavil and abuses, misunderstanding and misrepresentation before it succeeds in its aims and ambitions. No wonder, the Non-Brahmin Movement which is manifest today as the Dravidian movement, viz., the D.M.K. and the D.K., had to pass through the classical experiences known to history before it succeeded in revetting its attention upon its aims.

To examine the origins of this movement it is necessary to go into the genesis of the movement itself, specially into the historical and ethnical aspects of the mutual relations that existed between the Brahmins and the Non-Brahmins. The conflict between the two (Brahmana-Non-Brahmana) is as old as the caste system itself. The study of the conflict between the Brahmin and Non-Brahmin can be scientifically understood in the perspective of the Vedic period. The Non-Brahmin Movement which became strong under the British period was not without specific background. Though the roots of this problem can be traced back to the Rig-Vedic period, the conflict between these two groups during the
pre-British period, was one of traditional politics. The study presents a very unique picture of the traditional politics of the caste system during this period. Indian politics of the twentieth century is essentially agitational politics; but it has been certainly influenced by the traditional politics during the pre-British period, when the conflict became wider.

Under the British, Indian politics was quite different from that of the politics in the pre-British period, but there was no difference whatsoever in the position enjoyed by the Brahmins. It has been the same always. Before the advent of the British, the history of India was full of social reform movements, and most of these movements originated with the sole purpose of checking the dominance and evils of the caste system in the Hindu society. Various movements like Buddhism, Jainism, Veerashaivism, Aryasamaj, Brahma Samaj and Missions of various kinds came forward with their own programmes for reforms. In turn these movements resulted in adding further to the divisions of the Hindu society. Even under the impact of Islam or under Moghal invasion the caste system went unheeded. The Moghal Empire had a hard time with the Marathas, which again led to the establishment of the Brahminical hold over the Hindu
society. Perhaps Brahminism flourished and spread in all those areas where Shivaji established his kingdom. (Refer Map on page No. 73 which illustrates the areas under the Maratha empire and which in the latter period became the area of Brahminical dominance. The areas which fell under the British rule were also the areas under the Maratha empire. The downfall of the Maratha empire resulted in the expansion of the British rule in India.)

Under the British rule the Brahminical influence again enhanced, because the British who were in search of loyal administrators relied much on the high castes. "The British could look for collaboration of a more instructed sort from those men who were being educated in their schools and colleges. Like other alien regimes before them, the British required collaboration from a large body of native Bureaucrats, who were mainly Brahmins. Under this impact the first revolt against the Brahmins took place in 1875, when the Maratha peasants of Poona and Ahmadnagar broke heads and contracts in a series of free for all ... the peasants faced with mounting debts and shrinking fields, they marched, not against the foreigner, but against the
landowners and money-lenders, who were mainly Brahmins. It was this rising known as the Deccan riots that not only made a great impact, but also sowed the seeds of the Non-Brahmin Movement. On a scientific study of the Non-Brahmin Movement one can conclude that the origin of this movement was not merely because of the "Divide and Rule" policy of the British. Under the British rule, there were various types of collaborations, and no movement in this period can be classified as nationalistic or anti-nationalistic, but the Non-Brahmin Movement was classified as anti-Swarajist movement.

The Non-Brahmin Movement was one which was to a large extent the result of the awakening among the Indians under the impact of Western education. Under the British rule, the Missionaries also played an important role in the development of socio-political thought, especially in Maharashtra and Madras. The British rule had foreseen that introduction of English education would go a deep way in influencing the religious beliefs, because of which "the company was not only reluctant to introduce English education,

it also tried deliberately not to influence Indian customs or religious beliefs since it felt that to do so might upset the Indians and interfere with profits."\textsuperscript{2} The Missionaries who followed the English rule in India, no doubt were much interested in the spread of Christianity, because of which the lower classes, for the first time, had been treated with sympathy. Touched by these influences and the treatment meted out to the untouchables by the high castes, Jotiba Phule who felt the contrast in the missionaries' treatment, decided to advocate the cause of the downtrodden sections of the society. In this direction, Jotiba Phule, was the first to write angry attacks on the caste system. Jotiba Phule was a man of great vision, who felt that unless the weaker section of the society was made conscious of human dignity and its strength, India would never progress. Philip Spratt has very aptly pointed out that "a partial exception is Jotiba Phule who wrote angry attacks on Hinduism half a century before Mr. Naicker. He had little influence in his time, but he is the original source of the Non-Brahmin Movement in Maharashtra. It is possible, but

but unlikely that Mr. Naicker owes something to Phule."

The study of the Non-Brahmin Movement, therefore, cannot be separated from the role played by Jotiba Phule in the late nineteenth century. The first exponent of this school of thought was Jotiba Phule. He welcomed Western education. Jotiba Phule traced the causes for the backwardness of the Hindu social structure. Caste system had proved a great hindrance in the path of individual's progress. He was much influenced by the liberal approach of Western culture and the attitude of the Missionaries towards the backward people. He had all praise for the British, and he himself started a social reform movement, the well-known 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' movement. Jotiba Phule was not interested in merely bringing about a change in the religious practices. He wanted to eradicate Brahminism which, according to him, was the sole cause for perpetuating social inequality. He felt that various reform movements or Samaj's (societies) advocated social reforms without giving up their Brahminical interpretations. To advocate his ideals, Jotiba Phule felt the need for an institution, and on 24th September 1873, he established the 'Satya Shodhak

Samaj' (The Truth-Seeking Society). The 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' under his leadership awakened the masses everywhere. He advocated social reforms which came to have a deep impact on and implications for the British policy itself. The impact of the rise of Jotiba Phule's movement should be clearly understood by examining the British policy towards Non-Brahmin risings. Jotiba Phule's influence during the 1840's may be negligible in so far as public following is concerned, but his influence on British policy was immense.

Satya Shodhak Samaj and the British Policy

The British policy in India was much influenced by the rise of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj'. British could learn that the Brahmins on whom they had relied much in the initial period, were not loyal, and hence the British thought of helping the cause of the Non-Brahmins. Besides this, "the European Missionaries have testified to the hold of the Brahmins over the bulk of Hindus and this had to be broken if Christianity was to make headway in India." In these circumstances, the social thought advocated by Jotiba Phule

came to have a large following, and for the first time the Non-Brahmins, the down-trodden and the backward classes could find a leader of their own community. The British had relied much upon the members of the upper caste who had been exposed most to the Western education in the British commercial companies, administrative services and colleges. Realising the role played by Jotiba Phule and the wide awakening he had created, the British rule in India was pressed upon to alter and change their outlook towards Indian politics. It was this situation which influenced British politics, and because of which, in the latter period, they decided to rely much on the Non-Brahmins. During the 1900's the British rule was also influenced by the growing nationalist movement which was dominated by the higher castes. In terms of social background there was little difference between the early nationalists and the Indians who served the British as partners and subordinates. "Both those who agitated for reform and those who collaborated with the British were drawn from the groups which traditionally enjoyed high status." Under these circumstances the British, fearing the growth of the nationalist movement, thought of relying

upon various other political forces, and the Non-Brahmin factor was considered important for the stability of the British rule in India. It does not mean that the "Divide and Rule" policy of the British was the only factor responsible for the birth of a Non-Brahmin Movement, because one cannot deny that it was felt equally essential by reformers like Jotiba Phule and Shri Shahu to break the caste hold on the society which had affected the social progress of the Hindu society. Perhaps the masses saw in this movement a better opportunity for revolting against the age-old caste system.

Philip Spratt is, therefore, right in looking upon Jotiba Phule as the original source of inspiration for the Non-Brahmin Movement, but whether E.V.R. Naicker owed anything to Jotiba-Phule is to be examined. This aspect of P. Spratt's opinion provides the ground for further research. If the Non-Brahmin Movement is scientifically examined, it is felt that in the history of this movement there is scope and need for studying the period especially from 1900 to 1922 (the Shahu era). In the absence of such a study, many scholars on this movement have not been able to calculate and understand the movement in its proper perspective. It is this aspect on which this study tries to throw much light.
and seeks to establish the unity which prevailed between Shri Shahu and the leaders of the Justice Party like Dr. T. M. Nair, Sir P. T. Chettiar and others.

P. Spratt has expressed a doubt whether E. V. R. Naicker was influenced by Jotiba Phule of Maharashtra at all. Whether Periar E. V. R. Naicker who was a prominent figure in the Dravidian movement (of which the Dravida Kazhgam and Dravida Munnetra Kazhgam are the off-shoots) owed anything to Jotiba Phule is yet to be assessed, but one cannot deny the fact that the Justice Party owes much, if not to the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' of Jotiba Phule, but certainly to Shri Shahu's 'Satya Shodhak Samaj'. In this direction it can be stated that if Periar's Dravidian movement owes something to the Justice Party, then certainly E. V. R. Naicker owes much to Jotiba Phule. On an analysis of the Non-Brahmin Movement in its proper perspective, it can be noted that in the history of the Non-Brahmin Movement, after Jotiba Phule follows the glorious role and period of Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur who worked on the ideals of the Satya Shodhak Samaj as laid down by Jotiba Phule. Shri Shahu's contribution to the propagation of the Non-Brahmin cause was unnoticed largely due to the fact that he lacked the tools of publicity, besides being "averse to
the arts of self-advertisement. He was less known in India or in England than many other Princes. Shri Shahu after the death of Jotiba Phule in 1890, recognised education as the greatest boon of the British rule in India. Though he was a prince of a small kingdom, he dreamt of a fully educated free India. The correspondence Shri Shahu had with the various Non-Brahmin leaders and organisations throw ample light on this aspect, which goes to establish and prove beyond doubt that the Justice Party owes its origins to the efforts of and inspiration from Shri Shahu of Kolhapur.

Shri Shahu and the Satya Shodhak Samaj

Shri Shahu though a Prince of a small native state had spread the movement and brought about awakening in Deccan India. It is the role of this leader which is very often ignored in understanding the Non-Brahmin Movement in its proper perspective. To clear the doubt expressed by P. Spratt, as to whether E.V.R. Naicker owes anything to Jotiba Phule, an assessment of Shri Shahu vis-à-vis the Non-Brahmin Movement would help us to draw certain

6 Latthe A.B., Memoirs His Highness Shri Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaj of Kolhapur, Times of India, 1924, Vol.I., p.VII.
conclusions. It would also help us to remove the lacunae in the field as pointed out by scholars like P. Spratt and Eugene F. Irschick, whose contribution is quite significant. The present study owes much to E. F. Irschick in analysing the movement in its proper perspective.

Shri Shahu of Kolhapur after the death of Jotiba Phule in 1890, took up the Non-Brahmin cause and the cause of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj'. Shri Shahu, it should be noted, was not only influenced by the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj', but along with this influence there were various other factors that influenced his socio-political thought. For a good deal of time Shri Shahu was keeping himself aloof from all movements. This can be substantiated from the fact that when Shri Shahu ascended the throne in 1894, he was not yet a follower of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj'. He had, no doubt, realised the defects of the Samaj. He took up the cause of the Samaj only after lapse of a good deal of time. Shri Shahu was essentially an orthodox and a religious man. Right since 1873, with the establishment of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' by Jotiba Phule, the Non-Brahmins had started to organise themselves. But Shri Shahu had remained aloof from the Samaj, and he did not establish the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' branch in Kolhapur.
upto 1913. Besides, a study of this period indicates that there were several incidents such as the Vedokta problem, Ambabai Prakarna etc. Shri Shahu was immensely influenced by all these events. Shri Shahu, during this period, had thought of keeping himself away from movements of such a nature, and was busy introducing reforms in his own Native state, in which he was always interested. Shri Shahu was dragged into this movement largely due to the hurdles created in this endeavour of his. The reforms which he introduced were challenged by people of the upper castes. Though Shri Shahu always tried his best to maintain good and cordial relations with the Brahmins, he found that they were incorrigible. (Refer Appendix 16 ) Ultimately he saw the discontent, and was left with no alternative but to break it by introducing the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' and Arya Samaj Movements. Perhaps Shri Shahu placed the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' on proper footings, since it deviated from the original lines which Jotiba Phule had set for it. After the death of Jotiba Phule in 1890 the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' was used only to show the black side of the Brahmin dominance. Shri Shahu established Satya Shodhak branch in Kolhapur in July 1913.

Ever since Shri Shahu took up the Non-Brahmin cause or
the Satya Shodhak cause (from 1913 to 1922), he spread it in all those areas in which the caste structure was the bane of public life. While assessing his influence, it is to be made clear that from 1900 onwards the British policy had created an environment which was most favourable for various weaker groups to organise themselves for bettering their position in the political life of the country. Shri Shahu felt that unless the weaker sections of the society were made conscious of their democratic rights, of their rightful place in the society, India would not be in a position to work on democratic principles. Because of this approach only Shri Shahu could awaken the Non-Brahmin masses and make them so much conscious that a movement was started in the Deccan India. Shri Shahu, it can be stated, prepared them to be the real citizens of free India. According to Shri Shahu, protection of these backward and depressed Hindus was more important than Independence or Swaraj. He feared that Swaraj might turn into slavery for Hindus if the prevailing conditions of the society did not undergo a change. The environment in which Jotiba Phule advocated social reforms differed from the environment in which Shri Shahu advocated his social reforms, but the cause was the same. Shri Shahu, besides advocating social reforms, was much interested in getting Communal Representation.
Shri Shahu's 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' was growing in influence because the British government had started making provision for introducing self-government in India.

Shri Shahu and the Communal Representation

After the First World War, the British desired to introduce democratic institutions in India gradually. The British wanted that various sections of the society should be equally prepared to share the responsibility of running the British administration. Hence they wanted to provide representation to the several communities, especially the backward ones, in the governance of the country. From 1913 onwards Shri Shahu started developing contacts with all those areas in which the suffering of the downtrodden sections of the society was acute. In this direction he proposed various constitutional schemes to the British. The correspondence he had with various Native states speaks volumes for the impact he had made on these problems. He contacted almost all those areas in which caste system was practised rigidly and severly (Refer Appendixes 1,2,7,8,14). With these contacts Shri Shahu could create a large volume of public opinion in Deccan India itself, from where various Non-Brahmin organisations, and especially the Justice Party in Madras have their roots.
Those persons who came in contact with Shri Shahu belonged to various walks of life, i.e., Rulers of States, Jahagirdars, European Officers, leaders of various communities from almost all the areas. Prominent among them were His Highness Mir Saheb of Khairpur, the Maharaj of Indore, Bhavanagar, Dewas, Dhar, Rajesheb of Mudhol and Savantwadi, and Chiefs of Sangli, Akalkot, Palthan, Bhor etc. Among his prominent European friends stands out the name of Ex-Resident of Hyderabad, Sir Stuart Fraser, K.C.S.I., who was "for a number of years His Highness's tutor and guardian, and for whom he entertained to the last, feelings of most reverential friendship and affection... The name of Shri Shahu Chhatrapati has become a household word specially among the backward and the depressed communities, not only in this state or in this Presidency, but outside in the distant parts of India, like Punjab, the Central Provinces and the Madras Presidency." ^7 Such was the impact of the Maharaj's personality. It was a period of serious constitution-making, and in these efforts Shri Shahu of Kolhapur advocating the cause of equal representation extended the

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movement to Madras too. He established relations with the leaders of the Madras Presidency such as Dr. T. M. Nair, Sir P. T. Chettiar, Raja of Panagal, Sir Ramswami Mudaliar and others who were considered as the principal leaders of the Justice Party in Madras. Besides this, European officers like Sir Stuart Fraser, Lord Sydenham, Lord Curzon, and later Lord Willingdon, helped a great deal in making the movement a great success.

Shri Shahu and the Rise of the Justice Party

From 1913 onwards Shri Shahu can be considered as a moving spirit of the down-trodden. When Shri Shahu took up the Non-Brahmin cause he also reformed and purged the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' of its defects. (See Appendixes /3, /6 ) Otherwise the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' would have been under severe limitations. Shri Shahu was not interested in any movement. Between 1894-1913 he kept himself aloof from all movements. It was his fondness for Shikar that brought Shri Shahu into contact with the common people and he could learn by experience as to what extent his Native State was under the strong-hold of the Brahmin. His contact with the poor people made very clear the bad effects of the caste system on the society. Shri Shahu naturally turned his attention to the breaking of the caste system itself. In
these efforts he was severely criticised by the Brahmins. His state's policy and his efforts in this direction were attacked by no less a leader than B.G.Tilak himself. In this context it is worthwhile to quote from a report which appeared in The Times of India on 11th August 1924, which throws some light on the relations between Shri Shahu and Tilak.

"This enlightened Prince encountered stiff opposition to his efforts to broaden the basis of Indian nationalism. His efforts were thwarted, his policy misrepresented, his character vilified, and for what reason? Simply because he strove to break down the dead-hand of the Brahmin domination, and to admit Non-Brahmins to a share in the administration of their own state. It would seem incredible to the future historian that such a policy should have conflicted with the nationalism of the late Mr.Tilak, but such is indeed the case. Throughout his life the Maharaj was the victim of Brahmin malevolence. He was a good Hindu, a wise and enlightened ruler and a patriotic Indian. But he would not allow the Brahmin claim to rule over the earth, heaven and hell. All his virtues were outweighed in the eyes of the nationalist party by this so-called single defect. In any other country he would have been the idol
of all who hoped for political progress, his educational policy would have been the inspiration of countless emulators, his liberalism in social matters would have marked the beginning of a new era.  

Heavily influenced by the antagonistic views of B.G. Tilak and the criticisms levelled against him, a conflict between the two ensued. The conflict between Shri Shahu and B.G.Tilak had both historical and contemporary grounds. This conflict became wider when Shri Shahu started pressing upon the British for Communal Representation, which had an all-India impact. There are also reasons for Shri Shahu and the Madras leaders to come together, and that was the rise of the Home Rule Movement, which was unitedly launched by Mr.B.G.Tilak and Mrs.Annie Besant respectively in Bombay and Madras Presidencies. "Struggle, not reform, was the keynote of Tilak's message." Shri Shahu in his fight against his alliance between the two advocates of the Home Rule Movement never made any difference between the two  

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8 The Times of India, (Bombay), 11th August, 1924 (Refer Book Review).

presidencies. The leader of the Home Rule Movement even advocated violent methods, terrorism, to force the hand of the British. It was this aspect that brought Dr. T.M. Nair and Shri Shahu close to each other, which resulted in establishing the South Indian Liberal Federation and the Justice Party in 1916. Shri Shahu was well-known in this direction of establishing Non-Brahmin organisation, printing presses, educational institutions and also financing them. In this context an examination of various opinions, both in appreciation and criticism, would throw ample light as to how much of a help Shri Shahu was to the Justice Party in various ways.

In Madras it was Dr. T.M. Nair who opposed the views of Mrs. Annie Besant, and Shri Shahu opposed B.G. Tilak for which he was criticised in both the Presidencies.

Shri Shahu was, on more than one occasion, criticised for spreading the Non-Brahmin Movement in Madras. He was criticised very often for being more popular in other states rather than in his own Native-state. In this context DNYANA PRAKASH (Poona) had severely criticised Shri Shahu. The article appeared after Shri Shahu's death and when Rajaram Maharaj had succeeded him. The article stated that "the leading gentlemen that were present on the occasion whose names have not been published, a majority belonged to the
districts outside the Kolhapur State. ... Anyone while thinking over the cause of the considerable rush of the outsiders and the outside bodies at the time of the installation, would realise the fact that the Shahu Chhatrapati had directed the course of his money especially to the outside area... The receipt of the several addresses at his accession by the Rajaram Maharaj from people outside his state is simply the fruit of the popularity which his father gained outside the state. There was no reason for anybody to find fault with the late Maharaj if he could also have gained popularity by keeping his people contented and doing acts conducive to the general advancement of the state."¹⁰

Along with this, it is also necessary to consider the letter received by Rajaram Maharaj from A.Ramswami Mudaliar.

Sir A.Ramswami Mudaliar, congratulating Rajaram Maharaj, states... "The late Maharaj, whose acquaintance I had the privilege and honour of possessing, had set such a high standard, and had brought the House of Kolhapur so prominently before the public, and had done so much in the social

¹⁰ Refer DNYANA PRAKASH, Poona, June 1922. (This article throws much light on the activities of Shahu.)
field to give hope and cheer to the depressed and backward classes, that, in the Madras Presidency, Kolhapur stands for all that is equitable." Shri Shahu prepared the ground from which there sprang the Non-Brahmin Movement revolt, particularly in Madras and the Deccan, against a spiritual tyranny which threw a dark shadow over almost every phase of life." An analysis of the impact of the efforts of Shri Shahu throw ample light on the origins and evolution of the Justice Party. Besides this, even if the different opinions expressed by the various scholars on the origins of the Justice Party are taken into consideration, it can be found that they fail to agree upon the origins of the Justice Party.

The most recent contribution towards this study is that of Eugene F. Irschick, which has certainly contributed much to an understanding of the Non-Brahminism and its politics. Irschick has rightly commented on the origins of the Justice Party as follows:

"Even though feeling against Brahmins, and particularly

11 Ramswami Mudaliar to Rajaram Maharaj, K.R.O., 25th June, 1924. App No 44.
12 Scotsman, Sunday Supplement, date
against Tamil Brahmans - became recurrent and ever louder theme, it was not until 1916 that a Non-Brahmin organisation came into existence. A complete answer to this question must await further research in late nineteenth century Madras politics.  

An assessment of the huge awakening by Shri Shahu since 1913 in advocating Communal Representation and the period of Shri Shahu's climax of popularity makes it amply clear that, though the feeling against the Brahmins was quite popular in Madras, it was only in 1916 that it became more vocal and because of which the Justice Party, a Non-Brahmin organisation, came into existence. It could not take shape twenty years earlier as Irschick has pointed out, because it did not have the required organised efforts which it got to a large extent from the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' under the leadership of Shri Shahu. "His Highness, in combating a system based upon religion hallowed by tradition, undertook a task of stupendous magnitude in which the social and religious issues were later on interwoven with the question of political reform. His aim was nothing less than to

educate the masses, and to break down the barriers between man and man created by caste."\(^{14}\)

Further, Shri Shahu's contacts with the Justice Party and the South Indian Liberal Federation can be established by going through some of the condolence messages sent from Madras Presidency when they lost their beloved leader. The message sent from Madras by P.T.Chettiar states: "this meeting of the Non-Brahmins of the city of Madras expresses warm appreciation and gratitude for the invaluable services rendered by him in the cause of the country, and especially for the progress and the welfare of the "Non-Brahmin Community".\(^{15}\) Besides this, the Justice (Office) in Madras also conducted a condolence meeting, which was presided over by Hon'ble Dewan Bahaqur P.Ramanarayannaigaar, Minister for Local Self government. The Chairman said that in the death of the Maharajah, they had lost one of their valued friends. He was one of those who realised the importance of the South Indian Liberal Federation and its activities. He befriended the leaders of that movement and he tried his very best to

\(^{14}\) The London Times, (February Supplement) 12th February, 1925.

\(^{15}\) K.R.O. P.T.Chettiar to Rajaram Maharaj of Kolhapur, refer Appendix 42.
espouse the cause of the depressed classes. It was their duty to take steps to commemorate the memory of the late Maharajah ... A committee to commemorate his memory was also formed, which included, the Hon.P.Ramanarayanaigars, Hon.A.P.Patro, the Hon.M.K.Venkataraddi Naidu, Sir P.T. Chettiar and Mahomed Usman."¹⁶ Another meeting for the same purpose was conducted by the South Indian Liberal Federation (Branch Trichinopally) on 5th July 1922, which stated that "the loss sustained by Shri Shahu's death was irreparable by the Non-Brahmins. It further feels confident that the present Highness (Rajaram Maharaj, Heir Apparent) will carry on the noble cause of the uplift of the Non-Brahmins."¹⁷ With such tributes paid by the Justice leaders, the regards that they have expressed and the criticisms levelled against Shri Shahu by the Maratha and the Citizen in Madras help to conclude that Shri Shahu's movement had much to do with the birth of the Justice Party in 1916. On the other hand, the study of the role played by Shri Shahu contributes to fill the gap left unfilled by various scholars

¹⁶ The Madras Mail, Maharajah of Kolhapur, May 22, 1922.
¹⁷ K.R.O., Refer the letter of General Secretary: South Indian Liberal Federation, Trichinopoly Branch to Rajaram Maharaj.
including that of E.F. Irschick who expresses his doubt regarding the timing of the origin of the Justice Party. Shri Shahu's influence provided an impetus to the already existing anti-Brahmin sentiments in the social, economic and especially in the political life of the Madras Presidency. The history of the movement is, as well, the history of the man himself and the movement is that of 'Non-Brahmin regeneration' itself.

Shri Shahu, during his twentysix years of rule, was always eager for the amelioration of all classes by emancipating them from the domination of the caste system. To this end much of his time and energy were devoted and he propagated the Non-Brahmin cause with one purpose. He regarded social reforms and the education of the backward classes as the first plank upon which to build the Non-Brahmin structure for their elevation. Eugene Irschick also repeatedly states that the answer to the question on the origin of the Justice Party "must await further research in the late nineteenth century Madras politics." 18 This aspect can be made clear by assessing the aims and the policy of 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' under Shri Shahu's leadership.

18 Eugene F. Irschick, op.cit., p.352.
which also became a part of the politics in the Madras Presidency. The social reforms which Shri Shahu introduced since 1900, can throw much light on his policy and the reforms which he introduced in the early period became the programme of all Non-Brahmin organizations later. In matters of appointments, "it was since 28th July 1902, Shri Shahu had directed that 50% of the vacancies that may occur shall be filled with recruits from among the backward classes." 19

There are various aspects which can be further examined regarding Shri Shahu's efforts in this direction, but this would divert the study from the movement to a study of the personality. Even then a complete chapter is allotted to the study because of the importance of the role played by Shri Shahu. The study has also considered the two movements, the Justice and the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' and assessment of the cooperation and the intimate connections between the two movements is made. Non-Brahmin Confederations and Conferences did take place, through which leaders of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' and the Justice Party came in close contact with each other. Eugene Irschick's assessment

in this direction is that "When the Justice Party was established it had an all-India perspective."\textsuperscript{20}

If an examination of the movement is made chronologically right from Jotiba Phule era and the establishment of the Justice Party in 1916, the conclusion goes contrary to the view expressed by Eugene Irschick, that 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' of Maharashtra established by Jotiba Phule and further developed by Shri Shahu reaching the zenith of its popularity in 1916, resulted in an All-India Movement with a great impact on South India. It was not the Justice Party that had an All-India perspective, but it was the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' which had attained All-India prominence. How far this movement gave rise to Muslim sentiments can also be examined as a separate study. But suffice to state in this context that the Muslim League also had its roots in this Brahmin-Non-Brahmin conflict.

The two Non-Brahmin organisations worked together, and together contributed considerably to the political awakening in India. They worked hand in hand during the period 1913-1925 when Shri Shahu not only influenced Madras politics

\textsuperscript{20} Eugene F. Irschick, \textit{op.cit.}, p.2.
but also the British politics. It was during this period that the Non-Brahmin unity between the Justice leaders and the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' leaders was brought about as testified to by the various joint conferences.

British Politics and the Justice Party

An assessment of the role played by Jotiba Phule and Shri Shahu clearly establishes two main aspects of the Non-Brahmin Movement.

In the first place, it establishes the fact that Jotiba Phule was the first reformer to attack the evils inherent in the Hindu caste system. Jotiba Phule made a significant contribution in bringing about a great awakening among the Non-Brahmin masses.

Secondly, it was the role of Shri Shahu who advocated social reforms and communal representation that resulted in giving a definite direction and strength to the Non-Brahmin Movement. This is proved by the rise of Non-Brahmin organisations both in the South and North India.

Shri Shahu was often criticised, because of the hold the Brahmins had on the vernacular press in Bombay Presidency. In such a situation the British had rightly
considered Bombay Presidency as an important centre of Non-Brahmin politics, with its repercussions throughout the British India. In this connection it is worthwhile to examine the politics behind the transfer of the Governor Lord Willingdon from Bombay to Madras Presidency. Shri Shahu had impressed upon Montagu to avoid the transfer. Still the transfer was effected. The Justicites came to have great regards for Lord Willingdon and this makes it clear as to the role the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' played in influencing the British politics in India, and the transfer was made because it was realised that Bombay politics was influencing the politics of the Madras Presidency.

Further it can be pointed out that the principal leader of the Justice Party Dr. T.M. Nair, sailed to England in 1915 to educate the British statesman about the realities of the political situation in South India and to urge the inclusion of the principle of Communal Representation in any scheme of political reforms. Quite unexpectedly, when he arrived in London, he was served with "gagging order" restraining him from addressing or participating in any public meeting. The question was raised in the House of Lords by Lord Sydenham, a former Governor of Bombay, which eventually led to the withdrawal of the order. This once again establishes
the cordial relations between Shri Shahu and Lord Sydenham, a former Governor of Bombay Presidency (Refer Appendix A). This shows how eager Shri Shahu was to hear from Lord Sydenham, when Dr. T. M. Nair arrived. This also throws much light on the origins and propagation of the Justice Party. The different views expressed regarding the Justice Party fail to establish the fact that the Justice Party was a result of the huge awakening among the Non-Brahmin masses in the Deccan under the influence of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' and under the leadership of Shri Shahu. Influenced by this and the rise of the national movement, the British also contributed in their own way by encouraging the Justice Party of Madras. This objective was clear in the Lord Willingdon which was very timely. The Justice Party could achieve various legislative measures because of this encouragement, and also because it was in power during this period.

The other aspect of the Non-Brahmin Movement is the launching of the Home Rule Movement jointly by B. G. Tilak and Mrs. Annie Besant. This factor also contributed to the unity between the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' and the Justice Party as they were opposed to the Home Rule Movement. The alliance of these two Home Rule leaders forced the
Non-Brahmin Movements—the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' and the Justice Party of Madras to unite against it. Shri Shahu was in fact criticised for his growing influence in the Madras Presidency.

**Genesis of the Non-Brahmin Movement**

Non-Brahmin Movement ('Satya Shodhak Samaj' and the Justice Party) besides its historical roots, was the result of the awakening to the new ideals of the national life since the advent of the British rule. They considered that Western education was the greatest boon to India. The goal of responsible government augured well for the Non-Brahmin Movement. The Non-Brahmin Movement in its various aspects was the natural result of all these factors. It was mainly a social-reform movement. It was an emphatic protest against the domination of one section of society by another and the spurious claim of a community to superiority due simply to birth. It was not a movement to level down others. What the Non-Brahmin Movement wanted was Social Justice to one and all, man or a woman, rich or poor, high or low. They wanted that everyone should be treated equally. As social reformists, they complained against the injustices and, therefore, they strove for universal education. The firm policy of the Non-Brahmins in both the Presidencies was that the needs of the
many should be given preference over the needs of the few.

An understanding of the various aspects of the Justice Party and the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj', clearly indicates that, though they complained of the injustice done by the priestly class, it was only a means and it was their object to prevent unfair treatment given to the Non-Brahmins. It was not a movement that was intended to embitter the relations between the two, Brahmins and the Non-Brahmins, by carrying on a fratricidal social war. Both the movements considered it important that social reform ought not to lead to chaos and confusion in the social life of the nation. Most of the leaders like Jotiba Phule, Shri Shahu, Dr.T.M.Nair, Sir P.T.Chettiar, Raja of Panagal, Sir Ramswami Mudaliar considered social reforms as an important goal of the Non-Brahmin Movement.

The movement under these leaders reached its zenith. The representative form of governments elected on the principle of Communal Representation in both the Presidencies achieved much through various legislative measures. An examination of these measures would also lead to the conclusion that the Non-Brahmin Movements in the two Presidencies were united and owed much to each other. But this
co-ordination and co-operation was too short lived, because of the bad luck of the movement itself. It lost most important of its founding leaders like Dr. T. M. Nair in 1919, Shri Shahu in 1922, Sir P. T. Chettiar in 1925 and Raja of Panagal in 1928. The loss of these leaders coincided with the change in the British policy in 1925 when it was decided to give up the system of Communal Representation.

As the Non-Brahmins had relied much on the British policy and support, they had not developed a mass footing especially in Madras. Besides the Justice Party’s claim as the sole Non-Brahmin party was challenged by the rise of other Non-Brahmin organisations in Madras. But this was not the case with the Bombay Presidency. With the loss sustained in the passing away of the original leaders of the Justice Party, it certainly lacked good leadership. While in search of good leaders, who could propagate and develop a mass footing for the Justice Party, ultimately the Madras Presidency found in Periar Ramaswamy Naicker an able leader to propagate the cause of the Justice Party and save it from decline.

It is in this context that P. Spratt is certainly right in expressing a doubt whether Periar Naicker owes anything
to Jotiba Phule, and to the movement further propagated by Shri Shahu which resulted in a strong Non-Brahmin Movement leading to the birth of the Justice Party. So it can be stated that Periar E.V.R.Naicker owes something to Justice Party, which in turn, was inspired by the Non-Brahmin Movement.

Periar E.V.R.Naicker is well-known as the leader of the Dravidian movement in Madras. He was an agnostic and an aggressive one at that. But it is interesting to note that he was formerly the member of Indian National Congress which he left in 1925 to join the Justice Party when it was very badly in need of a leader of the stature and dynamism of Mr.Naicker. It was hoped that the Justice Party would be retrieved from its weaknesses. But E.V.R.Naicker was more interested in starting his own 'Self-Respect Movement' for which he utilised the Justice plank. Here was the turning point for the Non-Brahmin Movement in Madras when it came to be converted into a Dravidian Movement under the leadership of Mr.Naicker. So Robert Hardgrave is right in stating that the Dravidian Movement actually starts with Non-Brahminism. In other words the Dravidian Movement starts from the day Periar E.V.R.Naicker enters the Non-Brahmin Movement through the Justice Party after he came out from
the Congress. So it is very clear that the Dravidian Move-
ment and its leader Mr. Naicker are the products of the
Non-Brahmin Movement which was started by Jotiba Phule and
nourished and spread by Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur. This
is borne out by the various correspondence, copies of which
are appended to this study. This conclusion is also
historically tenable.

The Non-Brahmin Movement in Madras Presidency can be
divided into two main parts: a) Non-Brahmin Movement from
1916 to 1925, i.e. before Periar E. V. R. Naicker's entry; and
b) Non-Brahmin Movement after 1925 under Periar's leadership.
Hence the Dravidian Movement of Naicker starts from 1925
onwards. Periar E. V. R. Naicker's contribution to the achieve-
ment of the Justice Party is nothing but his contribution to
the Non-Brahmin Movement, especially the Dravidian phase of
the movement. His contribution to the Non-Brahmin cause is
as important as the contribution of the principal leaders
like Dr. T. M. Nair, Sir P. T. Chettiar and others because he
sought to revive the cultural pride of the Dravidian past.
When Periar took up the cause of this movement he had to
rebuild the Justice Party on mass lines. He had to evolve
his own machinery in this task with which the movement came
to be called the anti-Hindi, anti-North, anti-Sanskrit and
not in the least a clear anti-Brahmin philosophy itself. It is in this context that the Non-Brahmin Movement of Madras i.e., D.M.K. and D.K. is a regeneration of the Non-Brahmin Movement which was already a force to reckon with in South India and which had its hey-days between 1913-1925.

The Dravidian Phase of the Non-Brahmin Movement starts not with the Justice Party but it starts with the entry of Periar into the movement. After Periar entered this movement, it departed from its original social-reform outlook. Periar joined this movement after a bitter controversy in the Congress, and doing so, it can be stated, Periar could not play both the roles i.e., of anti-Congress and a pro-British role as that of the Justice Party. Justice Party, which was a social-reform-oriented party, became an instrument in the hands of the Periar and since then it could not win any of the elections it contested (after 1925). It was because of the fact that the Dravidian thought was propagated with all vigor by Periar E.V.R.Naicker and most of the Justicites who followed him from 1925 onwards disagreed with his approach. Prominent among them was C.N.Annadurai. Though C.N.Annadurai followed Periar, he always disagreed with him, because of which at last in 1949 when Periar formed the 'Dravida Kazhgam', C.N.Annadurai, formed his own
C.N. Annadurai and Dravida Munnetra Kazhgam

C.N. Annadurai popularly known as "Anna" (Elder brother) was a versatile genius. He was a powerful orator, a great writer, and a voracious reader. He was a matchless playwright. He was also well-known as an able administrator. In brief, he was a rare combination of many qualities in a single individual because of which he had a great following among the Non-Brahmin masses. Annadurai was much attracted by the Justice Party activities as a student of Pachaiyappa's College. This college was a centre of the Justice Party activities. Under the influence of the activities of the Justice Party he decided to serve the Non-Brahmin cause. He had only one choice and that was to join the Periar's Self Respect Movement, because by this time the Justice Party's programme was being carried on by Periar E.V.R. Naicker. The Justice Party was on the decline because of the change in the British policy and their outlook towards the Non-Brahmin, and the Congress was gaining grounds.

Annadurai joined the Self Respects, with all the background knowledge of the activities of the Justice Party. Annadurai's thoughts had been much influenced by the social
reforms of the Justice Party and he was aware of the decline of the Justice influence. He understood the need of the Madras politics at that time and felt that it was in need of a good political party. In this behalf as early as February 3, 1937, C.N. Annadurai speaking at Parvalipur had said that "any political party, if it is to serve the interests of the country aright, should have a definite policy, detailed programme and last but not the least in importance, a method of effectively carrying out its programme." Annadurai as an active Self Respect worker had his own plans for the future of Madras politics. It is needless to say that he disagreed with the Self Respect Movement of Naicker. Besides, Periar's influence had helped the Justice Party very little. Mr. Naicker's influence on the British, or on the Madras politics, or on the masses can be assessed from his meetings with Sir S. Cripps in 1942. Mr. Naicker with the objective of constructing a mass base for the Non-Brahmin Justice Party, lead the movement in his own directions and even by 1942, Periar had not gained confidence of contesting elections with success. This is clear from his talks with Sir S. Cripps.

21 Justice, Madras, Mr. C. N. Annadurai's Speech at Paravalipur, February 3, 1937.
The delegation was led by Periar Naicker and eminent personalities like Sir Muthiah Chettiar, Mr. N. R. Samiappa Mudaliar and Mr. W. P. A. Soundrapandia Nadar, met Sir S. Cripps on 30th March 1942, and pressed on him for separate electorates on such a scale as to give them automatically the majority position in the Province. He stated that "it would be in the interests of the population of Madras to secede from the main Union in order to have a Union of their own in which the Non-Brahmin Hindu can hope to get power. In this interview, Periar also pointed out that owing to lack of education, wealth and opportunity, they were unable to stand up in any election against the more wealthy and powerful Brahmin population." 22

This fact throws much light on the origins of the Dravidian Movement. The Dravidian Movement was launched in search of an ideology by which to hold the masses and to gain political power. Another fact which can be stated here is that Periar Naicker neither played a pro-British role, nor did he play the anti-British role, nor the nationalist role.

This reality certainly made a great impact on the mind of persons like late C.N. Annadurai, who had determined to have a political party with a different policy outlook. He disagrees on the tactics of Mr. E.V.R. Naicker. By 1944, Mr. C.N. Annadurai had already become an influential member, who pressed for a policy more in accord with the nationalist sentiment. It was the social reformist factor of the Justice Party which had a great influence on Anna. But by that time the Justice Party's break-up was inevitable. At its Salem Conference in 1944, there was a split in the Party and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhgam was formed. Periar Naicker's party came to be called the Dravida Kazhgam. This sounded the death-knell of the Justice Party.

Annadurai felt that "Brahmin baiting was of little use as far as the cause of the Non-Brahmins was concerned. He had no desire to widen the gulf on the colour-line which Periar E.V.R. Naicker had exploited by pointing out that "The Ramayana" as based upon the very substance of Hindu mythology in which Rama's march towards the South, calling king Ravana as abductor of Sita is to paint Aryan triumphs and progress over the Dravidian inhabitants of India. Instead, Mr. C.N. Annadurai tried to project a secular image of it without compromising its Dravidian character, whatever
it meant. "The D.M.K. had to retain its Tamil Chauvinist, anti-Brahmin image but could not afford to estrange the Brahmin voter."\(^{23}\)

Various conclusions can be drawn from this study. It clearly goes to prove that the 'Non-Brahmin Movement' in India has passed through various stages of development. It was a small force to start with, under the leadership of that great social revolutionary of Maharashtra Jotiba Phule and culminated in the Dravidian Movement in Tamil Nadu. It is proved beyond doubts that the Non-Brahmin Movement of Madras - the Justice, the D.K. and D.M.K. - did not originate only to revive the Dravidian past. It was a continuation of the Non-Brahmin Movement, which had a more comprehensive goal.

The Justice Party, established in 1916, was the result of the influence of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj', established by Jotiba Phule in 1873, and later on propagated by the late Shri Shahu Maharaj (1894-1922) of Kolhapur. Shri Shahu was known in and beyond his Native State for his progressive social and educational policy, and the leadership he provided in demanding Communal Representation. His progressive

\(^{23}\) The Hindu, (Madras), June 22, 1956.
policies and views had influenced the British so much that they had to concede Communal Representation to various castes.

The Non-Brahmin Movement under Shri Shahu of Kolhapur was a consolidated movement and the various Non-Brahmin organisations in the South owed their origin to Shri Shahu. He was, of course, criticised for this by the vernacular newspapers both in Bombay Presidency and Madras Presidency (The Citizen of Madras and the Maratha of Poona).

The present study of the Non-Brahmin Movement is based on the correspondence Shri Shahu had with the British dignitaries and the Non-Brahmin leaders, both in the South and the North.

The study, besides assessing the individual leaders of the Non-Brahmin Movement i.e., Jotiba Phule and Shri Shahu, has also attempted to analyse in an objective way the British Policy towards the movement. The findings go to establish that the British dignitaries like Lord Sydenham, Lord Curzon and Lord Willingdon contributed much to bring together the Non-Brahmin leaders from Bombay and Madras Presidencies, which further proves that the rise of the Justice Party in 1916 was not because of the Dravidian
past alone. Its purpose was not to revive the Dravidian past, but the Justice Party was more influenced by the already popular phase of 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' under Shri Shahu of Kolhapur. In this direction, it would be better to quote Sir A. Ramswami Mudaliar, who states that "Kolhapur stands in the eyes of the people of this Presidency for all that is just and equitable." (Refer Appendix 44).

Hence in conclusion it may be stated that this is a study covering the various other factors which influenced the rise of the Justice Party, which was certainly a social-reformist party in its early or the Justice phase; but it departed considerably from the original policy later on. The Justice Party departed from its original policy to a large extent ever since Periar E.V.R. Naicker started the Self Respect Movement. It is also found that Periar E.V.R. Naicker contributed much to the origin and growth of the Dravidian Movement which can be a separate study by itself.