

INTRODUCTION

Non-Brahmin regeneration in Southern India and the D.M.K. is a study in the origins of the Non-Brahmin movement as such. D.M.K. which has its origins in the Justice Party, established in 1916, provided the basis for the D.K., established in 1944. A split in the D.K.; resulted in the formation of the D.K. and D.M.K. in 1949. After a deep study of the D.M.K., movement, its origins and the present politics, it can be argued that the "Justice Party" from which D.K. and D.M.K. have emerged is in turn influenced heavily by the Non-Brahmin movement itself of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency. In this connection the original 'correspondence' and other documentary materials available at the Kolhapur Record Office -- (Kolhapur) is of immense help and this study is based entirely on these original documentary evidences. Several international, national and local newspapers of both the Madras Presidency and Bombay Presidency which have relevance to various events in shaping the Non-Brahmin Movement in Southern India, have been examined. Important letters of the leaders of the Justice Party in Madras Presidency have referred to "Kolhapur" as the ideological centre of the Non-Brahmin



Movement. An author like P.Spratt in his book has expressed thus: "A partial exception is Jotiba Phule; a Maharashtrian of the gardener caste; 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 unlikely, that Mr.Naicker owes something to Jotiba Phule." (P.Spratt - D.M.K. in Power, page-31.)

Another well-known scholar on a related topic has expressed thus: "Though the Non-Brahmin sentiment was not a new phenomenon in Madras Presidency; why the Justice Party was established only in 1916, and not twenty years earlier." With the main intention to understand this, it is felt essential that the origin of the Justice Party needs a fresh and a better appreciation. Hence in search of the right approach, the thesis is divided into eight main chapters, in the course of which it is examined as to how the D.M.K. is a regeneration of the Non-Brahmin Movement.

In chapter I the origins of the Caste System itself right from the Vedic and the Purusha Sukta period have been examined. In order to find out the origins of the caste system; it is pointed out, wherever essential, as to how

the caste system was a Brahminisation process; and how the different divisions were popular right from the Rig-Vedic period itself. Here it is also examined as to how the spiritual sacrifices, customs, etc., were pressed into use. It provides ample evidence to show that caste system did exist in Rig-Vedic period itself. Further it is also pointed out as to how the colour prejudice which is not an intriguing problem of to-day only, but a problem which is centuries old started.

In the second chapter, an attempt is made to show how Brahminism has survived through the ages; though it was confronted by various movements or 'isms', like Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, etc., which tried to confront Brahminism, but in turn remained sectarian because of the influence of Brahminism. Further in this chapter it is pointed as to how the Moghul invasions forced the Brahmins to enter Southern India, which brought the Brahmins under the protection of the Marathas and the Deccan Cholas. It is further inferred as to how the Maratha empire spread itself wherever it went to drive out the Moghul rulers; and the Maratha empire is another important factor for the spread of Brahminism in Southern India -- from Baroda to Quilon. This is illustrated with the help of a map showing



specific areas which were under Maratha empire (which coincide with the areas of the spread of Brahminism) that came under Brahmin domination. From this it is pointed out that these areas of (Madras and Bombay Presidencies) under Maratha rule became a problem under British rule also.

Under the British rule the Brahmins were the first to be benefited by English education. The British realised the hold the Brahmins had on Indian society, and in the interest of their own stability they selected most of the government servants from this class, which in turn only helped to widen the gulf between Brahmins and the Non-Brahmins. British rule had its pros and cons, because the egalitarian outlook of the British rule, as far as education was concerned, helped a section of the Indian society to analyse the defects of the caste system, which gave rise to the Non-Brahmin Movement. This is discussed in chapter III.

Jotiba Phule was the first man to rise in revolt against the Brahminism as such. Jotiba Phule stands first amongst the Non-Brahmin leaders who wrote against the Brahmins half a century before E.V.R.Naicker of Madras wrote. It is Jotiba Phule's writings that heralded the Non-Brahmin Movement. Non-Brahmin Movement got started

when Jotiba Phule established the Satya Shodhak Samaj in 1873; but his reform works were started right since 1848, when he first established a school for the untouchables. A study of Jotiba Phule's efforts are as important as the study of the Justice or the Dravidian movement; because many writers on Non-Brahmin Movement have pointed to Jotiba Phule as the first Non-Brahminist. Satya Shodhak had upset the balance of Brahmin's position in Bombay Presidency; and Jotiba Phule's movement under Satya Shodhak banner went a long way in influencing the British politics and the social and political thought in Madras Presidency. These thoughts of Jotiba Phule actually anticipated the political programme of the Non-Brahmin-oriented political parties of Madras. The Justice movement can be said to have started in 1916. But the gap between Jotiba Phule's death in 1889 and the birth of Justice Movement in 1916 is also important. This gap was filled up by the role played by H.H.Shahu of Kolhapur in the spread of the movement which had its impact not only all over the South but the whole nation, in a way. The role of H.H.Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur is examined in chapter IV.

H.H.Shahu of Kolhapur took up the Non-Brahmin cause after the death of Jotiba Phule in 1890. The chapter is



based mainly on original sources (the correspondence of H.H.Shahu with the British officials and other princely chiefs). This chapter is divided into two parts; i.e. H.H.Shahu and the Brahmin domination in his native state, and the second part H.H.Shahu's efforts in raising a Non-Brahmin Movement beyond his native state. H.H.Shahu established the Satya Shodhak Samaj branch in Kolhapur in 1912 and spread the movement with all the strength and vigour at his command. His movement reached an important stage in the year 1916, and this coincides with the birth of the Justice Party in Madras. Here most of the views, regarding the rise of Justice Party in 1916, the local views and views of writers like P.Spratt, Hardgrave, E. Irschick and others have been assessed. Further it is pointed out how the original leaders of the Justice Party and South Indian Liberal Federation were associated with H.H.Shahu in connection with the Non-Brahmin Movement. This is substantiated in chapters V and VI with reference to the correspondence, newspapers and also many of the opinions on the origins of the Justice Party which find relevance to the collected documents. I have also tried to assess with reference to the British politics of the period. It is shown that Non-Brahmin Movement had influence all over the South from which the Justice Party emerged.

In chapter VII the socio-political thought of the two movements are examined to find parallels among them if any. It is, again on the basis of newspapers and documents attempts are made to examine the relation between the two movements. There were various conferences of the Non-Brahmins both in Bombay Presidency and Madras Presidency. There was a parallel development in the socio-political thought of the two movements. The events make it amply clear that the two movements had much to give and take mutually; and they were in total agreement on the very purpose of the movement. Here some speeches delivered by leaders like Dr.T.M.Nair and the resemblances it has with the socio-political thought of the Satya Shodhak Samaj are examined. The two movements worked unitedly and the two well-known conferences which they unitedly organised in Amroiti and Madras bear ample testimony to this view. It was mainly due to the inspiration of the Satya Shodhaks which had launched the very movement in 1916 itself that there was a great deal of unity between them. Further, the abstract of speeches in newspapers and letters show how the movement worked and on the other hand indicate as to how certain things were concealed from the public eye.

In this chapter VIII the Non-Brahmin Movements (Justice



and Satya Shodhak) and their policy towards the Brahmins are examined to show how they were social-reform-oriented-movements. Here again an examination of some of the speeches delivered on various occasions by the originators of the movement in the Madras Presidency would make the policy towards the Brahmins quite explicit. Further, from the speeches themselves the deficiencies in the Justice Party after 1925 are apparent, and it is clear as to how E.V.R.Naicker introduced this idea of the Dravidian movement. The Justice Party loses its importance after 1925. This study is divided into three phases. The Justice Phase (1916 - 1925), the Dravidian Phase (1925 - 1944) and the D.M.K. Phase (1944 - 1967).

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, it can be stated that the Justice Phase can be studied as a separate unit which stands in contrast to the other two phases. It is hence proper to state that D.M.K. is nothing but a regeneration of the Non-Brahmin movement which was merely social reformist in outlook and not a Dravidian movement to start with. Dravidian Movement actually starts with E.V.R.Naicker and D.M.K. had to propagate the same. Justice Party (1916 - 1925) was a much

reform-oriented party having much to give and take with the Satya Shodhak Samaj movement. The Justice Party was not regional-minded as D.K., or D.M.K., became in the latter phases.

The spread of Home Rule Movement and the co-operation between Mrs. Annie Besant and Tilak in this regard also contributed to the two Non-Brahmin units to come together. The Justice Phase had been greatly influenced by the Satya Shodhak ideals as such.

It was also the motivated British politics which contributed to the rise of the Non-Brahmin movement. Even in this respect, the ground was first prepared in the Bombay Presidency and later in Madras Presidency. Most of the Governors and the British officials who served in Madras Presidency like Lord Willingdon, Lord Sydenham and others, who supported the movement in Madras, had their first lesson in Bombay Presidency. British had the practical experience of playing Brahmin against the Non-Brahmin in the Bombay Presidency first. From these findings it can be inferred that D.M.K. is the culmination of the Non-Brahmin regeneration in Southern India.