CHAPTER III

ELEVATION OF THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

Regarding the depressed classes movement there are contrast opinion among the historians. Some scholars argue that the movement of depressed classes was initiated by the non-depressed classes and some other views that depressed classes started their own movement. L.S.S. O’Malley says that depressed class movement as a movement for the uplifting the “untouchables” initiated and sustained by others.¹ Majumdar describes depressed classes as objects of philanthropic and social work conducted by others.² The latest British History of modern India that of Judith Brown, does monitor the condition of the depressed classes at several points in their history, but makes no reference to any organized efforts by depressed classes to improve their own lot.³ But according to John C.B. Webster “Dalits may not have had a single organization parallel to the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha, but they did have grassroots

organizations; a recognized leadership, pre-eminent among whom was B.R.Ambedkar; and a common demand for political recognition, for their own political representation as well as for dignity, equality and justice.”

According to Sanjay Prakash Sharma “Dalit movement is a protest movement of dalits against the society to undo the injustice done to them over a considerable period of time, in fact for thousands of years.” He again says that “the dalits find the need to organize on their own because they realized that they had to organize themselves in order to embrace equality, justice, dignity and self-respect in the real sense. They had to launch the mass movement of their own, as the movements of the caste Hindu reformers in different parts of the country failed to eliminate anti-caste feelings among the Dalits and caste hindus.” In the then Madras Presidency, during the second half of 19th century, the depressed classes had formed organizations, held conferences and struggled for their liberation from the oppression of dominant castes. In the beginning of 20th century it became a movement called depressed classes movement after their name in British records as depressed classes up to 1935. This chapter explores the movements of the depressed classes in the colonial Tamil region.

**Genesis of the Elevation**

The Christian missionaries and British government played crucial role in the elevation of the depressed classes. The missionaries saw the Indian society

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and culture as always having been corrupt, pernicious, and filled with absurdities.\textsuperscript{7} Despite their prime motive was to spread Christian religion they were mainly responsible for the abolition of some social evils existed in the Indian society. The education provided by them to the depressed classes even before British government helped them to realize their real condition. The British administration which undertook various measures to detect the numerical strength and condition of depressed classes was one of the starting points of their elevation. Establishment of native army, introduction of western education, rapid communication developments were the regenerating effects of British Government, which brought consciousness among Indians.\textsuperscript{8}

As regards the depressed classes were concerned the Parayas who joined the British troops, fought at the Fort of Arcot heroically and secured the victory for the company in 1751.\textsuperscript{9} The experience of army life under the British had a transformative impact on the outlook of many of the untouchables.\textsuperscript{10} The Paraya labourers formed the major factor in uprising to protect the rights of the depressed classes. Of all the migrant labourers from the Presidency, members of the Paraya caste formed a substantial part and unlike other depressed communities they had managed to break away from village control by different means. They were also seasonal migrants to the tea estates in the Nilgiri and

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{7} Bernard S. Cohn, \textit{An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays}, p.146.
\bibitem{9} Sanjay Prakash Sharma, \textit{Dalit Society and Upliftment}, p.45
\bibitem{10} Narendra Kumar., \textit{Dalit Policies, Politics and Parliament}, p.35.
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Anaimalai hills. However, not only Paraya community but also other depressed castes such as the Pallar, Chakkiliar had been migrated from the late nineteenth century to hill stations and important cities where demand for menial services they performed was expanding. Urban territorial growth was coupled with the extensive expansion of sanitary infrastructure and municipal services, which created a demand for scavengers, sweepers and conservancy workers. Moreover British bureaucrats, civil servants and military personnel, who settled in the towns, required domestic servants and retainers. Caste-Hindus were usually declined to perform such work owing to the notions of ritual pollution or loss of status associated with cleansing and menial work, leaving employment in these areas open for the untouchables.

Incorporation of depressed classes rural migrants in the urban labour force marked a change from their past economic and social relations of work in the countryside. In the towns they ceased to be servile labourers of the higher castes and worked instead as paid municipal employees or domestic servants of the British and at times in factories.\(^1\) Their generations got education even though there were strict caste rules forbids the learning and emerged as the leaders of the community. These broad minded well educated leaders wanted to liberate their associates from their pitiable position. The education and experiences received from outside of their village made them bold enough. Thus both British government and missionaries contributed to some extent for the outbreak of the depressed class movement. It is ascertained by a social activist

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Vasanth W. Moon that the growth of the depressed class movement was greatly helped by the influence of the British officials, the effect of Missionary activities among the depressed classes.\textsuperscript{12} Though the activities of missionaries and British government somewhat changed the existing situation the reform movements also played a significant role in awakening the public conscience on the necessity to reform Hindu religion, social customs and taboos. As a result the awakened depressed classes got ready to emancipate themselves from the clutches of caste system. In many respects the depressed classes were pioneers in forming the movements and establishing the organisations.\textsuperscript{13} Thus the yeomen services of these leaders gave birth to various organisations for the depressed classes.

**Organisations and Leadership**

Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha, Paraiyar Mahajana Sabha, Dravida Mahajana Sabha were some early depressed classes organisations worked even before the beginning of 20\textsuperscript{th} century. These organisations were formed by the Paraya caste. But in 1920s the other depressed classes also founded organisations. Arunthathiya Mahajana Sangam was established by H.M. Jahannaham in 1920.\textsuperscript{14} Peter Perumal belonged to Pallar caste established an organisation called Poovaisya Indrakula Sangam in 1922 in Ramanathapuram

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district. In order to organize the youths, an Adi-Dravida Youth Sangam was established in important towns in 1930s. The units of these organizations were founded in the villages. Both men and women were enrolled as members of the organisations. The organizations created by-laws for its functions. Proper records and accounts were managed. Though all the depressed classes brought under common category they did not establish a common organisation instead each caste established organisations of their own which assume their own caste names. There were some efforts carried out to organise all the depressed classes under one organisation but it was not materialised. The sub-caste and caste affinity was a hurdle to unite all castes under single organisation.

The leadership of these organizations were relieved themselves from the traditional caste based occupations. Most of them learned western education, worked in foreign countries and well versed in English language. For instance, the most senior depressed class leader Rettaimalai Srinivasan founder of Paraya Mahajana Sabha worked with Gandhi in South Africa. H.M.Jahannatham, president of Arunthathiyar Mahajana Sabha was the first literate in Arunthathiya community. Another Arunthathiya leader L.C.Gurusamy’s father worked as a contractor under British, and he himself was the general secretary of the Arunthathiyar Mahajana Sabha. A.P.Periyasamy Pulavar worked as a

supervisor in Kolar Gold Field.\footnote{South Indian Buddhist Sangam, Golden Jubilee Celebration, Vol. 1 (Madras: 1977), p.77.} Besides, depressed class leaders such as M.C. Rajah studied in Madras Christian College and worked in Wesleyan Mission College, Perumal Peter lived in Pinangu and Rangoon before his settlement in India and also the founder of Poovaisya Indra Kula Sangam.

Each and every organization had been functioning separately; the leaders addressed the issues of the whole depressed classes’ people. Some individuals or village people together sent letters and petitions to the organisation and its leaders regarding their problems. Based on these petitions the leaders took remedial measures to solve the issues. The organizations conducted marriages, settled disputes within the castes members and families.

**Funding Mobilization**

Holding conferences and meetings, writing petitions and visiting the people etc were some important regular activities in elevating the depressed classes. Since depressed classes did not possess money they faced financial problems in performing the organizational activities. With a view to develop the activities of these organizations meagre amount of money was collected from the people. Adi-Dravida conference convened on 5\textsuperscript{th} July 1931 at Chennai Sinthathiripettai, passed a resolution to create a fund with a sum of Rs 1 lakhs as per the decision already taken during the 10\textsuperscript{th} Adi-Dravida Conference in Madras Presidency. They decided to collect one rupee fund from each Adi-Dravidas and
saved it at the Imperial Bank. Another one conference convened at a same place on 9th July 1932 determined to collect 4 annas from each member to create a fund. In addition to this fund several rationalist non-Brahmin leaders especially from Chettiar and Mudaliar community also donated funds for depressed class sangams to convene conferences and to help the poor students. Some Adi-Dravida conferences were supported by some rationalists particularly the followers of Periyar E.V.Ramasamy and the members of the Self Respect Movement.

**Mode of Addressing for Elevation**

In order to address their conditions to the government and the public and to elevate the depressed classes, the organisations and its leaders followed various modes. Holding conferences and public meetings at village, district and state level, delivering lectures and passing resolutions and there by demanding the government to ameliorate their deplorable condition were the means adopted by them for addressing their issues. In these conferences not only the leaders of depressed classes but also the non-depressed classes’ leaders who were sympathized with them were attended. Submitting petitions, issuing pamphlets, writing letters to the print media, running own print media in which publishing news and articles regarding their problem were also some other forms of addressing.

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21 *Dravidan* (11 July 1932), p.11.
22 *Dravidan* (14 August 1929), p.4.
Conferences Conveyed the Sufferings and Solidarity

The depressed classes’ organizations convened conferences which conveyed their sufferings and also solidarity to the government and public. One of the earliest conferences was held on 1st December 1891 in Ooty which was organized by the Dravida Mahajana Sangam. Subsequent to this they conducted conferences periodically. After 1920s all depressed classes organized number of conferences in the Madras Presidency. The depressed classes conducted conferences not only in Tamil Nadu but also in abroad wherever they migrated to.

The Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sangam conducted conferences in foreign countries particularly in Malasia and Singapore. With a view to attract and induce the feelings of the people, flag designed by depressed classes hoisted and cultural programmes also conducted. In an Adi-Dravida conference conducted on 11th August 1929 in Ramanathapuram John, editor of Kolumbu Indian magazine hoisted flag with slogans of equality, fraternity, liberty and development. Adi-Dravida students undertook procession with flags. Pillars of the conference hall contained banners with the following proverbs to influence the participants 1. kodangikkidankodel (ignore the person who predict future life) 2. kuriparthal tharithram (do not waste the time and money in superstitious belief) 3. suyamariyathai valve suhavalvu (life with self respect is better life) 4. suthamayiru (to be clean) 5. katkudi vilakku (renounce drinking habit)

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6. peyhalukkanchel (do not fear for ghost). Adi-Dravida girls played a reformative drama on stage. The theme of the drama was eradicating the untouchability practice.  

Depressed classes men and women participated in equal number with great enthusiasm. The leaders of non-Brahmin movement also were attended and extended their full support to the depressed classes. Due to the common ideological themes between these two movements they attended each other’s conferences. In these conferences, the leaders narrated the pathetic conditions of the depressed classes and condemned the atrocities of dominant castes that oppressed them. All the conferences passed resolutions, which demanded elementary rights such as fetching drinking water at public wells, tanks and rivers; walking through public road; accessing post offices, courts, admission in schools, travelling in train and bus and wearing dress. It also demanded school fee concession and employment at government services and requested the government that the depressed classes should be chosen to the post of village Munsiffs and Maniakkarars to contact district officers easily and directly for seeking remedial measures of their grievances. The conferences put forth their demands to allot more political representation in Legislative Council and Local bodies and to ban calling them by demeaning caste names such as Paraya, Palla

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25 Ibid., p.2.
27 Kudiyarasu (24 August 1930).
28 Kamalanathan, T.B., Dalit Viduthalaium Dravidar Iyakkamum, pp.58-60.
and Chakkilli and to prevent the dominant castes forcing them to do the lowly jobs such as scavenging, sweeping and so on. In addition, the leaders repeatedly requested the people to give up some tasks such as drum beating, breast beating of women in funerals of dominant castes, tattooing, drinking, child marriage, polygamy, wearing iron and copper jewels, carrying dead bulls, eating the flesh of it and so on. They stressed to study technologies, give importance to reasoning and establish cooperative societies for their development.  

The conferences advocated the whole depressed classes to get education but also to give importance to the women’s education. The leaders advised the depressed class men to give equal right to their wives. The leaders appealed to maintain solidarity among all sects of depressed classes. With a view to improve unity among themselves resolutions were passed to abolish sub-castes. Devendra Kula Vellalar conference held on 2nd March 1935 in Kulithalai passed a resolution to abolish sub-castes of their caste people. The conferences also insisted the importance of solidarity of the depressed classes with the religious minorities.

**Voices of Political Representatives**

Depressed classes leaders believed that their depressed condition could be changed through capturing political power hence they demanded political

31 *Kudiyarasu* (05 July 1931).
representation. While Minto was the Governor General and Morley was the Indian Minister of India the issue of communal representation born.\textsuperscript{33} As a result of Montegu-Chelmsford Reforms Act of 1919 Madras Governor Lord Wellington nominated a depressed class’s representative to the Madras Legislative Council.\textsuperscript{34}

This act introduced diarchy in the provinces and five seats assigned to depressed classes in the Legislative Council. They decided to select the candidates for the five seats through nomination. Rettimalai Srinivasan, R. Veeraian, L.C. Gurusamy, H.M. Jahannatham, M. Devadason, and Swami Sahajanandam were some important leaders nominated to the Madras Legislative Council in the subsequent years. Though most of the Members were belonged to Paraya caste, they addressed the issues of all the depressed classes. They played very crucial role in elevating the depressed classes. Since the traditional untouchability practices prohibited the depressed classes for accessing public sphere, the depressed classes’ representatives in the Legislative Council struggled for making modern Laws and Government Orders which sought legal permission to access the places where ever they were excluded.

Apart from struggling to make modern laws, they voiced against the practice of untouchability, exclusion and violence perpetuated by the dominant castes on the depressed classes. They not only addressed the issues of the depressed class masses but also voiced for their individual issues. If they came to know the depression of the depressed classes by any way, they addressed it in the

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\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Dravidan} (15 June 1932), p.3.
\textsuperscript{34} Kamalanathan, T.B., \textit{Dalit Viduthalaium Dravidar Iyakkamum}, p.88.
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Legislative Council at once. Not only that, they followed the same issue until it would be solved. They also demanded education, housing and employment to improve the downtrodden condition of the depressed classes.

While British government decided to abolish Labour Department it was strongly opposed by the depressed classes. A delegation of depressed classes consisted of Swami Sahajanandam, Sam John, Kannan under the leadership of Muniswami Pillai visited Chennai Governor at Ootacamund on 18 August 1931. The delegation presented a memorandum regarding the deplorable condition of depressed classes, and demanded not to abolish Labour Department. Because they thought that it was the first and only one department established especially for the benefit of depressed classes.

Print Media

During the colonial times both the English and Vernacular dailies and periodicals published the political news in general and the news regarding the British imperialism and national movement in particular. These media have given less importance to the social issues particularly caste problems. Realizing the necessity of addressing the oppressed conditions of the depressed classes to the British government and to the public and creating awareness among their people forced them to start their own media. The leaders of the depressed classes published some magazines in Tamil such as Suryodayam, Panchamar, Dravida Pandiyan, Antor Mitran, Mahavihada Thuthan, Parayan, Illara Ozhukkam,

35 Dravidan (21 August 1931), p.6.
Booloha Vyasan, Tamilan, Dravida Kokilam, Thamilpen. Adidravidan, a magazine published from Ceylon from 1919-1921. It was published by the Paraya caste people who migrated to Ceylon. Tamilan and Parayan were published by Iyothee Thasar and Rettimalai Srinivasan respectively.

R. Veerian published the Adi-Dravida Kavalan as a bilingual in the 1920s. In colonial times only the Parayar caste published the magazines the other depressed castes have not published any magazines. Among the above said print media some magazines particularly the Tamilan and Adi-Dravidan have been documented and others are not available. The print media generally expressed their oppressed conditions, created awareness to get education; economic development, claimed peculiar identity and constructed history. These media played an important role in mobilizing the depressed classes. But due to the financial crisis these print media were short lived.

**Struggle for Education**

Education was considered as one of the important tools for uplifting and liberating the depressed classes from their oppressed condition. The depressed classes’ leaders always advised their people to send their children to schools for learning. All conferences of the depressed classes passed resolutions insisting

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36 Kamalanathan, T.B., *Dalit Viduthalaium Dravidar Iyakkamum*, pp.64-65.
the importance to educate their children, to construct schools at their locality and to admit their children at common schools. They addressed to the government the problem of the depressed classes’ children in getting education. In the Legislative Council number of times they voiced against the denial of admission and practice of untouchability on the depressed classes children in schools.

In 1924 M.C.Rajah and Rettaimalai Sreenivasan gave evidences before the Lee Commission regarding the admission of depressed classes into schools. They also brought to the notice of the government regarding the disability of depressed classes to enter into schools. R. Srinivasan quoted some instances. In that cases he clearly mentioned that if the depressed classes’ boys were admitted into schools by headmasters the caste people would made a hue and cry and threatened the boys to leave the schools. In some cases the dominant castes’ students did not give place to them. Further, they requested that by the award of scholarships to the depressed class boys and by the stoppage of grants to those institutions which do not admit these boys, the object in view may be secured.

Due to the poverty, the depressed classes were unable to afford higher education. Hence Swami Sahajanandam demanded in the Legislative Council to grant scholarship to the depressed classes students without the consideration of age limit. Since mid-day meal was one of the hurdles to the depressed classes children for getting education, they asked mid-day meal. In the year 1923

40 G.O. No. 817, Law General (12 July 1921).
41 G.O. No. 712, Law General (03 March 1925).
42 G.O. No. 807, Education (02 May 1927).
M.C. Rajah asked in the Legislative Council to make provision for mid-day meals to the depressed class students. It was placed before the finance committee which did not recommend the scheme for adoption because the total expenditure estimated by the director of public instruction was about 67 lakhs rupees per annum.\(^{43}\) In order to raise the scholarships of the depressed class students, M.C. Rajah moved another resolution in the Madras Legislative Council on 26 February 1923 stated that the scholarship should be doubled on par with the cost of living.\(^{44}\) Meanwhile the government of Madras was analyzing that the Mid-day Meal Scheme is better than the distribution of scholarships. The matter was discussed and accepted in the cabinet and introduced the scheme first at Tanjore and East Godavari district by the government of Madras.\(^{45}\)

Regarding education of the depressed classes’ children there were two kinds of opinion among the depressed classes’ leaders such as demand for separate schools and abolition of separate schools. The denial of admission, separate seating and class arrangements and other forms of untouchability practice in school premises forced the leaders to think about the separate schools. Thus they themselves established separate schools for depressed classes children. For example, in 1921 Arunthathiya Mahasabha under the leadership of L.C. Gurusamy and Jahannatham established night schools in Pulianthope, Perambur

\(^{43}\) G.O. No. 704, Law Education (21 March 1923).


\(^{45}\) G.O. No. 1899, Law Education (30 October 1927).
and Periamedu for the welfare of depressed classes labourers.\textsuperscript{46} For running the separate school M.C.Rajah demanded grants and lands for the maintenance of well established and purely Adi-Dravida managed institutions like the Nandanar School in Chidambaram.\textsuperscript{47}

As per the report on Chengleput Primary Education (1929-1930) there were 253 Adi-Dravida schools run by Labour Department and Local Boards almost all were established in 1919. Even after the completion of 10 years, only 866 students were studying in 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} standard.\textsuperscript{48} These students could not continue their studies due to the denial of admission in high schools. Thus the leaders appealed the government to take necessary steps to admit the depressed class students in public schools instead of establishing separate schools for them. Some depressed class leaders opposed the formation of separate schools because most of these schools had only one teacher with low qualification compared with the public school teachers. Hence the students could not go to higher education (above 5\textsuperscript{th} standard).\textsuperscript{49}

The most important reason for preferring the common schools was that one of the suitable public spheres to abolish untouchability because students of several communities were able to mingle there only. There by the depressed classes’ fear over high castes and bad impression of higher castes on depressed

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\textsuperscript{47} G.O. No. 1415, Law General (19 May 1923).

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Dravidan} (16 January 1931).

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid}.
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classes could be removed. In order to rectify the difficulties of depressed classes in the field of education, a representation sent by M.C. Rajah to the government and demanded that “We want also to be included in such councils as the District Educational Council, District Secondary Education Boards and the Senate of the Madras University.”

Alternative Employment

The depressed classes organizations and leaders insisted the people to engage in non-traditional woks too. R. Veeraian in the second Madras Presidency Adi-Dravida Conference spoke that the people should do the non agricultural occupation also and they have to learn other profession. In this conference a resolution passed in favour of establishing industries for the welfare of Arunthathiya girls in cities and other places and demanding the government to recruit depressed classes in army and navy. Since getting employment opportunity in modern administrative system was considered as an important tool for improving their downtrodden condition hence the depressed classes attempted to have it.

The 12th All India Depressed Classes Conference held in 1929 at Chennai demanded enough representation in government services. Because of their very low number in government service, M.C. Rajah appealed the government to give more opportunities to depressed classes. In a representation made by M.C. Rajah

50 *Dravidian* (08 September 1931), p.4.
52 *Dravidan* (20 February 1929), p.7.
on behalf of an Adi-Dravidas deputation to the government on 4 April 1923 stated that “the five seats at present assigned not enough. We are entitled to more. We are 1/6\textsuperscript{th} of the whole population and 1/5\textsuperscript{th} of the Hindu population. We should get 15 seats in virtue of our numbers. We require more for safeguarding our interests.

The Muhammadans only 1/15\textsuperscript{th} of the population are given 13 seats. The Indian Christians less than 1/33\textsuperscript{rd} of the population are given 5 seats. Considering the need for special protection on account of caste prejudice against us and the fact that we form the bulk of the laboring population (industrial and agricultural) we require at least 20 seats”.\textsuperscript{53} In addition to that M.C. Rajah asked the government to provide Constable post to the depressed classes those who able to read and write and Sub-Inspector post to the depressed classes those who passed S.S.L.C.\textsuperscript{54} Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha conference convened on 15\textsuperscript{th} September 1931 demanded 1/6 of the posts should be given to Adi-Dravidas in all departments.\textsuperscript{55}

M.C. Rajah claimed that “in the distribution of titles, honours and honorary appointments our men should never be overlooked. Besides being an encouragement to public workers in our community, recognition by government helps to break the special prejudice against our community. Men of independence who have served and suffered for the community should be especially taken

\textsuperscript{53} G.O. No. 1415, Law General (19 May 1923).
\textsuperscript{54} Kudiyarasu (23 May 1937), p.6.
\textsuperscript{55} Dravidan (16 September 1931), p.9.
notice of. This will help the progress and self respect of the community.”

Further he appealed the government to make special arrangements for enlisting a larger number of young depressed class men in the territorial force and pointed out that “brought up in the British army, our young men are eager to grow up as the soldiers of king, country and god”.  

**Age Relaxation**

During colonial period certain age limit was fixed for getting the government employments. On account of the ignorance of depressed classes in the field of education and employment they could not get the employment opportunity at the stipulated age limit. In order to solve this problem they demanded age relaxation to the depressed classes’ youth. In 1932 representatives of Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha met Madras Governor and asked him to rise the age of depressed classes to 30 years for government appointments.  

Thiruchengodu Adi-Dravida Conference demanded to raise the age limit of Adi-Dravidas for getting Service Commission appointments into 30 years and demanded the 2/12 posts in government appointments.

**Giving Up Demeaning Task**

In order to relieve the depressed classes from the socio cultural oppression the organisations and leaders advocated to over throw some task which demeaned

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57 Ibid.  
them. They also requested to give up some habits such as smoking and drinking which affected their body and economy. Thus in the sense of protecting body and saving money the depressed classes was asked to give up such habits. In this regard, a pamphlet issued in Tamil by Jaganatha Swami of Chidambaram had received wide publicity among the depressed classes and made considerable impression on them. This mandate exhorts the depressed classes to be pious, to be clean, to abstain from intoxicating liquor and to give up eating of carcasses and to renounce the practice of sharing and prostrating before the caste men on occasions when death occurs among the latter. Of them the last reform was an important bone of contention between the depressed classes and the dominant castes.\textsuperscript{60}

**Refusing to Carry Carcasses**

The practice of carrying the carcasses particularly the dead bull, removing the skin of animals to make leather rope and eating the dead bull’s meat was forced on depressed classes particularly on the Parayar and Chakkiliyar castes. Since they considered this task demean their lives and affects their health they attempted to overthrow it. The leading members of the Adi-Dravida sangams formed in villages and towns of the Tirunelveli district submitted the following to the government for favourable orders. They said, “it was a habit of our people to carry “dead bulls” to make use of them in obedience to the strict orders of the so called high caste people.

\textsuperscript{60} *HFM*, Vol.106, p.619.
No doubt it is still being dead carried out in some villages. Now we rather feel repent for the great blunder done by our elders and we are trying our level best to put a total stop to this mean act. For, by way of using rotten and decayed meat, we are put into several troubles both in mind and body”. For the following causes they refused to carry carcasses:

1. Taking use of dead bulls create all sorts of contagious diseases like cholera, small pox, plague, leprosy and many other awkward diseases, thus affecting our health to a vast extent. It is why the reason our people look so ugly and filthy

2. They are not taken into societies like others but considered as untouchables and thus kept far off.

3. They are not even considered as human beings but brutal ones on account of this very mean act.

The above mentioned reasons compelled them to make every effort to totally give up carrying carcasses and eating it. But when they began to give up such practice, they were threatened by the Marava community instigated by the other caste Hindus. The depressed classes feared that big quarrels murders and robberies and setting fire to their poor villages will happen. Thus, they requested the government to pass orders to village munsiffs of the villages and towns in Tirunelveli district to notify the Maravas and other dominant caste people not to compel the depressed classes to carry carcasses and not to force to do work at
cremation and burial grounds. To get some important elementary rights and liberate their people from the oppression the leaders of the depressed classes ideologically placed some demands which is discussed in the next chapter.

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61 G.O. No. 1883, Law General (11 November 1921).