CHAPTER 1
CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Whether in prison or outside, Harijan service will be more precious than the breath of life for me, more precious than the daily bread.

Mahatma Gandhi

The Scheduled Castes constitute 15.8 per cent of the population of India and 18.35 percent of the population of Tamil Nadu (1981 Census Report). In spite of the sizable strength out of the total population they have suffered for a long time from Socio Economic backwardness. They were considered as Untouchables. Hence the Scheduled Castes have become a special concern of the nation since Independence. The Government of India made a resolve to ameliorate their sufferings. To ensure the progress of the Scheduled Castes, the Constitutional measures and Development Programmes, etc are introduced then and there by the Government. Socio-Political movements also evince interests in the Welfare of the Scheduled Castes. Therefore to know the
The progress of Scheduled Castes many studies are being conducted by the researchers. The studies so far conducted about the Scheduled Castes have focused more, only on the discriminatory problems like Untouchability, Intercaste relations, etc. A few attempts only have been made to study exclusively about the changes of the Scheduled Castes. Even the studies which deal about the changes of the Scheduled Castes have not given more details of the changes that occurred in the socio-economic life (in the areas of Education, Occupation, Household Income, Household Assets, Housing and Political participation) of Scheduled Castes. Hence a detailed study is warranted.

Suggestions are also made by Scholars to undertake further research on education, health, housing and economic development. They have also recommended to explore the impact of development programmes. The above necessities can be fulfilled by undertaking an in-depth study of the above problems. Hence this study is undertaken.

The development of any Society or Community is determined by the improvement in the socio-economic condition of the people only. This improvement can be measured by comparing the present socio-economic condition with the previous level.
This study has assessed the development of Scheduled Castes by comparing the socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes, now and a decade ago. This study has also analysed the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Castes in relation to Developed village and the Less Developed village.

The Government implements many programmes for the development of Scheduled Castes and others. This study has attempted to find the impact of these programmes and the benefits availed of by the Scheduled Castes and Non-Scheduled Castes, besides trying to compare the socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Castes and Non-Scheduled Castes in general.

This study was conducted in Thanjavur District since Thanjavur District is one among the Districts in Tamil Nadu with high Scheduled Caste Population. Similarly, the Thanjavur Block is one among the highly Scheduled Caste populated blocks in the District. Thanjavur Block consists of 62 Panchayat Villages (Sixty one Rural Panchayats and one Town Panchayat). Almost all the Panchayats except one belong to the rural area. Vast bulk of the Scheduled Castes live in rural areas only. Hence Thanjavur Block was selected for the study. In Thanjavur Block two
Panchayat Villages were selected for the data collection. (One is a Developed Village and the other is a relatively Less Developed village). These two villages were selected on the basis of the village particulars (Infrastructural facilities, housing, literacy level and the number of households above the poverty line) collected from the Rural Welfare Officer of each village through a Schedule prepared by the researcher. Based on the above details the villages in Thanjavur Block were ranked, and one village from the top ten and another from the last ten were selected as Developed (Chitrakudi) and Less Developed (Inathukanpatti) village respectively for the study. Since these two villages are having more similarities and lesser differences they are taken for the comparative method of experimentation. In the selected villages all (234 Families) Hindu Scheduled Caste families were studied for research in the Census Method. To compare the Scheduled Castes with others a Sub-Sample of Non-Scheduled Castes (126 Families) were purposely selected by using the Stratified Proportionate Random Method (Details of selection of Scheduled Castes and Non-Scheduled Castes respondents, etc are given in the methodology part, chapter-II). The data were collected through Interview, Focused Interview, Case study and
Observation methods. For the Statistical analysis **Chi-Square Test**, **Normal Test** (testing difference of two means-Large Sample) and **Test for difference of Proportion** were employed in the study.

This study is divided into four chapters which relate to all aspects of the life of Scheduled Castes. An introduction about the study, Origin of Scheduled Castes, the role of socio-religious movements for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and the Constitutional Provisions and Welfare measures brought forth in India after Independence for their upliftment are given credence in the **First Chapter**. The general status of the Scheduled Castes in India in the ancient and British periods is also discussed in this chapter which is essential for the comparative analysis of the present status of the Scheduled Castes with that of the past in general. Review of Literature and the Research Design of the study are the Salient features of the **Second Chapter**. A detailed analysis of the study is presented in the **Third Chapter** which is divided into seven sections, viz., a) General features of the selected area and the general profile of the respondents  b) The Socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes (comparison of the general Socio-economic life of Scheduled Castes with Non-
Scheduled Castes). c) Intercaste relation d) Value changes among the Scheduled Castes e) The effects of Development Programmes f) The socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Castes in between Developed village and Less Developed village and g) changing socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes. Findings and conclusions of the study are summarised in the Fourth Chapter. The suggestions made in this study are also highlighted in the same chapter.

WHO ARE THE SCHEDULED CASTES?

The Hindu Society is characterised by the institution of caste. According to this, the society is divided into four major categories. The Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas and the Sudras—arranged in a particular order, Brahmins at the top and Sudras at the bottom. Apart from that there is a fifth category called Untouchables or Panchamas or Outcasts (later stage called as Harijans). Each varna (Category) has the subdivisions called ‘Jati’. (Gough 1981 : 17-19)

The lowest caste of fifth category had been referred to as Chandalas, Antyajas, Dasas, Nagas, etc. in the ancient Indian literature and as Untouchables, Ex-untouchables and Depressed classes during the British rule. (D. Venkateswarlu 1990 : 1)
In 1931, Ambedkar demanded a change of nomenclature for these castes. He proposed that the Untouchables be called Protestant Hindus or Non-conformist Hindus.

In 1933 Gandhiji coined the new term, 'Harijans', meaning 'Children of God'. Ambedkar has earlier opposed the word, 'Harijan'. Finally as recommended by the Simon Commission, the term, 'Scheduled Caste' was adopted by the Government through its Act, 1935. After independence, a different order replaced this, namely Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. This in turn was Supplemented by other orders - Constitution (Scheduled Caste) (Part-C-States) order, 1951 and Scheduled Castes Lists (Modification) order, 1956.

According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act, 1976 (No. 108 of 1976, dt: 18.9.1976) there are 76 Scheduled Castes and 36 Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu (This list is given in the Appendix - V). In Tamil Nadu 'Scheduled Castes' are called as 'Harijans and 'Adi-Dravidar'. The Tamil Nadu Government have issued orders that the term "Adi-Dravidar" should be used instead of the term "Harijan" in all its usages. Consequent on the decision of the Government, the name of

**STATUS OF THE SCHEDULED CASTES IN ANCIENT INDIA:**

In olden days the Scheduled Castes were discriminated in all the spheres of life by the Caste Hindus. B.R. Ambedkar (1948) explains the low status of the Scheduled Castes in the traditional past from the following quotations.

**Manu Smriti**

"X.51. But the dwellings of the Chandalas and the Shivapakas shall be outside the village, they must be made Appapatras and their wealth (shall be) dogs and donkeys.

X.52. Their dress (shall be) the garments of the dead (they shall eat) their food from broken dishes, black iron (shall be) their ornaments and they must always wander from place to place.

X.55. By day they may go about for the purpose of their work, distinguished by marks at King’s Command, and they shall carry the Corpses (of persons) who have no relatives".
Further, the Scheduled Castes were forbidden to enter the temples. They were not served by any of the professional castes and they were denied the use of public wells. Thus they were distinguished by the Caste Hindus.

During the Muslim period also, the status of the Scheduled Castes was not improved.

**STATUS OF SCHEDULED CASTES IN THE BRITISH PERIOD**

The conditions of the Scheduled Castes began to change gradually to a little extent due to the Christian Missionaries arrival and the European rule in India. The Missionaries helped the Scheduled Castes to improve their educational and economic status. They also created a social consciousness among the Scheduled Castes as to their plight, and their social and economic difference with the Caste Hindus. The British rule in India also pursued the policy of non-interference in Social and religious matters. "The British Government introduced certain new legislations like the Castes Disabilities Removal Act of 1850 which provided that a person does not forfeit his ordinary rights of property by loss of caste or change of religion" (G.S. Ghurye 1957).
D. Venkateswarlu (1990 : 4) said "that the British Government issued orders on various occasions admitting into government schools children of all castes without distinction. Their administrative reforms like Morley-Minto reforms of 1909, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 and the Government of India Act of 1935 gave the Harijans political power, economic benefits and educational opportunities."

Inspite of all these measures, the situation was not changed between the Scheduled Castes and the upper castes. The Daily, "Hindu" wrote in 1932 on the plight of the Untouchables. "In Tinnevelly district, there is a class of unseeables, called Purada Vannans. They are not allowed to come out during day time because their sight is considered to be pollution". J.H. Hutton wrote in 1946, that the Kallar in Ramnad imposed some inhuman prohibitions, the disregard of which led to the use of violence by the Kallar against the exterior castes, whose huts were fired, whose granaries and properties were destroyed, and whose livestock were looted.
ROLE OF SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS FOR THE WELFARE OF SCHEDULED CASTES

Socio-religious movements started during the pre-independent and post-independent periods are also trying to help the Scheduled Castes and their efforts for ameliorating the sufferings of Scheduled Castes are mentioned here.

In 1828, Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Brahmo Samaj and through it established a brotherhood wherein members will not be divided on the caste basis. One positive aspect of this movement was the introduction of a new social legislation legalising inter-caste marriages (Soran Singh 1987 : 3).

In the year 1875, Swami Dayanand Saraswati established the Aryasamaj and preached social equality. He devoted his life to the cause of the Untouchables.

The Theosophical Society also worked for the better conditions of the Untouchables and tried to create consciousness among them for their rights.

In the year 1873, Phooley founded the Satya Shodhak Samaj for asserting the worth of man irrespective of caste. He opened a primary school for the benefit of the Untouchables in
Pune. He pleaded before the Hunter Commission in 1884 for compulsory education to the Harijans. (M.S.A. Rao 1979)

In the year 1932, Gandhiji started the All India Anti-Untouchability League. Later, he renamed the league as ‘Harijan Sevak Sangh’. The aim of this society was to bring about a change in the attitudes of the touchable Hindus through peaceful persuasion and to undertake constructive efforts for social, economic and educational progress of the Untouchables. He organised many meetings all over India for the removal of untouchability.

Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) movement was started in Kerala under the guidance of Sri Narayanaswamy. The Ezhavas of Kerala were considered as Untouchables. This movement worked for the welfare of these Ezhavas. The important achievements of their movement were the right of admission to public schools, recruitment to government employment, entry into temple, roads, and political representation.

The Dalit Panter Movement was based on the Militant movement of Dr. Ambedkar. The birth place of this movement was Bombay. This movement was working for the upliftment of
Scheduled Castes. The main objectives of this movement were to fight against the social inequality, social injustice and atrocities wherever noticed. Eradication of the sub-caste system among the Scheduled Caste people was another objective.

Ambedkar People’s Association is working for the welfare of Adi-Dravidas and mostly for the Parayars of Tamil Nadu, under the leadership of V. Balasundaram.

Tamil Nadu Devendra Kula Velalar Sangham was started in the year, 1920 which is meant for the Pallar Caste people in Tamil Nadu. The main aim of this sangham is upliftment of Pallars in the matters of Education, Economic and Political affairs, to eradicate the habit of Alcoholism among their caste people and organise their caste people for the collective action against untouchability and other social injustice and inequalities.

The above Socio-religious movements are of help to the Scheduled Castes in getting their grievances redressed to some extent only.
EFFORTS MADE FOR UPLIFTMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

As already seen, before India could get Independence the Scheduled Castes were treated as Untouchables and they were discriminated in all walks of life and they were undergoing untold sufferings. Soon after Independence the Government of India wanted to ameliorate their sufferings for which they made some safeguards in the Constitution to remove all the disabilities. Various Programmes are also implemented then and there by the Central and State Governments to improve their Socio-economic conditions. These Constitutional Safeguards and various Welfare Schemes of the Government are given briefly in the ensuing pages.

Constitutional Safeguards

The following are the Constitutional Provisions which are made to safeguard the rights and interests of the Scheduled Castes:

Article 15(2) prohibits discrimination in access to shops, public restaurants, hotels, place of entertainment, in use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resorts.
Article 15(4) vests suitable authority in the state for making special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

Article 17 abolishes untouchability and lays down that the enforcement of any disability arising out of "untouchability" shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 46 prescribes that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 330, 332 and 334 refer to representation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the people and in the State Assemblies.

Article 335 prescribes that the claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of
efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the union or of a state.

Article 338 refers to the appointment of a special officer for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by the President to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the SCs and STs under the Constitution and report to the President on the working of those safeguards to be laid before each House of Parliament.

Measures and Schemes Introduced by the Tamil Nadu Government for the Upliftment of the Scheduled Castes

Tamil Nadu Government on its part is also interested to uplift the status of the Scheduled Castes of Tamil Nadu. The Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department was formed in the year 1949 to serve the cause of the Adi-Dravidas (Scheduled Castes) and Tribals. Many welfare programmes for Scheduled Castes are designed and executed through the Adi-Dravidar Welfare Department
and other Departments as well. Under Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes also the Tamil Nadu Government is getting grant from Government of India to implement various programmes in Tamil Nadu.

The Tamil Nadu Government also formed the Tamil Nadu Adi-Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation (TAHDCO) in the year 1974 which is implementing need based comprehensive economic development schemes for the Scheduled Castes. This Corporation also executes the construction work for the welfare of Scheduled Castes.

A brief account of the programmes introduced for the Scheduled Castes are given under various sub-titles. Statistical data is given whenever necessary to substantiate the benefits of the programmes. (The Data pertaining to the following programmes have been obtained after a careful perusal of the records maintained in the office of the Director of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Tamil Nadu - Madras).
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Promotion of education is essential for the individual development and Nation's progress. Government offers educational facilities since independence to all, more so for the Scheduled Castes. The weaker section especially the Scheduled Castes are benefited. These facilities are helpful to the Scheduled Castes to level the social inequalities through good job opportunities.

To encourage the education of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu a major portion (nearly 60%) of the outlay of the Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department is spent on the education. Free education is provided upto post graduate level for SC students. For SC students studying in the courses above the matric level, residential and non-residential scholarships are given besides merit scholarship.

In Tamil Nadu, 1007 schools are run by the Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department exclusively for the SC students and they are also supplied with books, note books, uniforms and are also provided with noon-meals free of cost. 932 hostels are run for the SC students studying in High Schools, Industrial Training
Institutes and Colleges. (SCP-SC, Tamil Nadu, 1994-95). Special Coaching Classes for six months in a year are conducted for the High School Students who are staying in the hostels. Special Coaching Classes are conducted for the SC students in the Pre-Examination Training Centre at Madras to enable them to come out successful in IAS, IPS competitive examinations and entrance examinations for Medical and Engineering Courses.

Book banks established in all Professional Colleges help the SC students who are getting Government of India scholarships.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The following schemes are implemented for the economic development of the Scheduled Castes in Tamil Nadu.

1) Subsidy for Purchase of Plough Bulls

To improve the standard of living, monetary assistance with subsidy is given for the purchase of plough bulls by the Government to agriculturist SCs. Upto the year 1993-94, 7333 Scheduled Castes including converts were benefited by this scheme in Tamil Nadu.
2) Subsidy for Technically Trained Persons

Free supply of tools and implements are given to the technically trained persons in the trades of blacksmithy, carpentry, tailoring and 18 other trades to improve their economic status. Upto the year 1993-94 11723 Scheduled Castes are benefited by this Scheme in Tamil Nadu.

3) Petty Trade Loan

Scheduled Castes are given Petty Trade Loans with subsidy for 21 trades like Shoe Making, Grocery Shop, etc. by the Government. 6415 Scheduled Castes were covered under this Scheme in Tamil Nadu upto the year 1993-94.

4) Milk Producer’s Co-operative Societies

Village level Milk Producer’s Co-operative Societies are formed by the Government and for this monetary assistance is given by the Government and through Banks with subsidy for purchase of Milch Cows by the Scheduled Castes. This helped to generate employment opportunities to them. 61910 Scheduled Castes are so far benefited by this Scheme in Tamil Nadu.
5) Self-employment Scheme

Poor Scheduled Castes are helped by TAHDCO by getting self-employment loans with subsidy. During the year 1994-95, 6264 Scheduled Castes of Tamil Nadu were benefited by the Scheme.

6) Self-employment Training Scheme

Under poverty alleviations programme, this scheme is implemented by TAHDCO. Under this Scheme the Scheduled Caste youths are given training for a period of six months to one year with monthly stipend and free tool kits, which can help them for seeking self-employment with bank assistance. During the year 1994-95, 2800 SCs were benefited in Tamil Nadu.

7) Individual Entrepreneur Scheme

This is a novel scheme implemented by TAHDCO for Scheduled Castes of Tamil Nadu. Under this Scheme TAHDCO provides assets to the tune of Rs. 5 Lakhs to the SCs of Tamil Nadu from Central Assistance. This amount includes subsidy and marginal money. This monetary assistance is given for the income generating activities such as poultry farm, chemical industries, etc.)
TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

To enable the SCs to get job opportunities in the more organised and advanced sectors, training programmes are conducted for various vocations such as Computer Programmes, Marine Radio Officers Course, Aircraft Maintenance Training, etc.

Training to Law Graduates

Under this Programme 4 years training in the administration of justice is given to Law Graduates belonging to SCs with a monthly stipend of Rs. 750/- per head.

AGRICULTURAL AND ALLIED PROGRAMMES

Agriculture continues to shape the economy of SC cultivators. With this view certified seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. are supplied to SC farmers on subsidised rates. Financial assistance is also given to them for the purchase of plough bulls, bullock carts and modern agricultural implements like centrifugal pumpsets, etc.
HOUSING PROGRAMMES

Under this scheme the SCs who are below poverty line are given house sites free of cost. From the year 1949 to 1993-94, 6.67 lakhs pattas have been issued to them. Under housing scheme since 1974, TAHDCO constructed 41668 houses and handed over to the SCs. From 1979 onwards this scheme has been converted into a subsidy cum beneficiaries contribution scheme, the contribution being through labour. Now the Government is providing concrete roofed houses in place of tiled houses. From the year 1989-90 onwards 177861 houses were constructed in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu Housing Board is also implementing this Scheme for economically weaker sections and the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board constructs houses/flats and sells them on hire purchase basis and out of this 18 percent is reserved for SCs.

SPECIAL AREA PROGRAMME FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

1) Integrated Rural Development Programme

The main objective of this programme is to ensure the rural poor to get fuller employment and better standard of living within a definite frame. It plays an important role in the
economic upliftment of the rural poor, particularly the Scheduled Castes. Under this Scheme the main areas where SCs get benefit through IRDP are Agriculture, Minor Irrigation, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Sericulture, etc. During 1993-94, 89195 SCs families were benefited under this programme.

2) Jawahar Velai Vaippu Thittam

The main aim of this programme is to create sizable mandays of employment to rural poor, particularly to SCs and to create permanent assets for them. During the year 1992-93, 9221 houses were constructed under this scheme as assets.

3. Programmes for Community Development

Under Rural Water Supply Scheme drinking water facilities are provided in SC colonies through open wells, hand pumps, ground level reservoirs, etc. For educating the rural people and also for their entertainment, TV sets are provided. At least 20% of the TV sets are located in the SC habitations.
SPECIAL COMPONENT PLAN

The special component plan is designed to channelise the flow of benefits and outlays from the general sector of state plan for the development of SCs in physical and financial terms. Under this plan during the year 1994-95, 3.33 lakhs SC families were covered. Under this plan besides the efforts of the State Government, Government of India also gives monetary assistance. By utilising this amount, employment oriented and income generating Schemes are implemented for the SCs. Their income is generated through Co-operative Spinning Mills, Weavers Industrial Co-operatives, etc. Also, self employment ventures such as establishment of Provision Stores, Cycle Shops, Tea Shops, etc. are sanctioned for the SCs under this Scheme.

OTHER PROGRAMMES

1) Special Measures for Untouchability

To ensure justice and equality among all sections of the community, Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 was enacted. In Tamil Nadu special Courts and prosecuting squads are functioning for effective implementation of this act. SCs, STs Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 is also in force from
31.1.90. Removal of untouchability week is celebrated every year from 24th to 30th January. Publicity units are also functioning to educate the public to eradicate untouchability. Prizes are given to villages where schools show outstanding performance in the field of removal of untouchability.

2) Reservations

18% reservations is followed for filling up vacancies in Government services and in admission for the professional courses in Educational institutions.

3) Land Reforms

SCs are assigned with lands, taken over under Land Reforms Act of Tamil Nadu and the SC landless agricultural labourers who contribute their physical labour for cultivation is given preference in allotment of land. So far 56151 SCs are assigned 24024 hectare of lands.
4) 20-Point Programme

The Prime Minister’s 20-Point Programme, 1986 is implemented vigorously in Tamil Nadu to accelerate the development of SCs. During 1994-95, 339488 SC families are benefited.

5) 10-Point Programme

The Chief Minister’s 10-point Programme is intended for the socio economic development of the SCs in Tamil Nadu. This was initiated in the year 1991-92 to be implemented for 5 years. This covers the important aspects viz housing, unemployment, street light, drinking water, roads, electrification etc.
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As already seen many development programmes are implemented by the Governments for the benefit of Scheduled Castes. How far the Scheduled Castes have availed of these programmes and the extent to which these programmes are useful to improve their socio-economic conditions are studied in this research. The extent of changes in the socio-economic condition of Scheduled Castes is assessed by comparing their past and present levels. As already stated to fulfil the research gap in the areas of education, health, housing and economic development etc., suggested by the scholars are covered in this study. The ways and means for the improvement of the Scheduled Castes are also suggested in this study which will be useful to the planners and administrators in decision making. In view of the above, this study becomes highly significant.