CONCLUSION

One of the major hurdles to progress, social scientists like ‘Periyar’ thought and think even today, is the caste system. It is a socio-religious mechanism by which the people of a country are stratified into the higher, lower and the lowest layers for preventing upward and downward mobility. It is a device invented by the Vedic Aryans for maintaining the so-called order, dharma and stability. But where the society is stable there is stagnation, where the society is static, it loses its dynamism and prevents change. The Indian Society for long was static, stereotyped and stagnant. It prevented mobility. This is what David Mandel has written in his two book volume “Change and Mobility” and “Mobility and Change” about Indian Society. In this context, the caste system with all its attendant evils was a bane on Indian Society. Caste system thereby has done more harm than it was expected to do good. Even today, in the twenty-first century, in a scientific world, its ill-effects continue to prevail over decision-makers. The clarion call of a casteless society is heard just in the wilderness. The demand for a caste-based Census reminds us of the hold the caste has on its people. Though a good number of social scientists, social reformers, radical thinkers and writers have cried a halt to all caste considerations, they continue to prevail without much remorse.

Evolved in the Later Vedic Age from the Varnashrama dharma of the Rig Veda, the concept of Catur varna (‘the four fold caste system’) has penetrated into the psyche of every Indian, thereby it prevented mobility in the name of order and cohesion. In the name of religion and scriptures, the people of India were divided into the priestly Brahmins, the fighting Kshatriyas, the earning Vaisyas and the serving Sudras, where the first three classes are ‘twice born’ (dvija) and the last one was only ‘ones born’ (ekaja). Those who were once born were the servile class, therefore the untouchables.
Their main function was to serve the three classes above them. This stratification in the long run has done irreparable damage to the homogeneity of the Indian Society and Culture.

To strengthen further their position, the Aryans have created the concept of purity and pollution, caste rigidity and discrimination among the Indians. Instead of bringing order, it hindered the solidarity of the people, brought inequality, justified exploitation and far removed united human resource development, undermined the human capabilities of the marginalized and shattered human values. It also paved the way for the disunity, enmity and segregation of the people.

For long, until the advent of the Aryan Brahmins, South India, particularly South of Andhra, i.e. the Tamil Society was undisturbed by the caste system, in which the Tamil priests were not Brahmins; nor the Tamil kings were Kshatriyas; nor the Tamil merchants were not Vaishyas and the Tamil agriculturists were Sudras. It was physiographic (tinai) based. The ancient Tamil Society was therefore not caste-based but occupation-based or region-based. The Panar (the bards), the Paraiyar (the drummers), the Thudiyan (another type of drummers) and the Kadanban (Worshippers of Kadambu tree or sea pirates) are said to be the earliest people of the Tamil society. They were grouped on the basis of their occupation and freely moved from place to place. They were superimposed by the Vedan or the Kuravar of the Kurinchi region, the Ayan or the Idaiyan of the Mullai region, the Uzhavan or the Uran of the Marutham region and the Minavan or the Parathavar of the Neithal region. This is how they have come to occupy a particular region on the physiographic setting. These developments are also occupation-based but not birth-based. Though they preferred to profess different occupations and settled in specific regions, there was no barrier to inter-mingling among them. This resulted in the emergence of a composite hybrid population,
but with the penetration of Varnashrama dharma this social freedom was lost. Since the Catur Varna prevented freedom of birth, position and mobility, since all these were based on nature of birth - there arose vehement criticism against this concept. Rigidity of caste was opposed by the universal brotherhood concept of Kaniyan Poonguntranar and the equality of birth propagated by Thiruvalluvar and Avvaiyar.

Tamil texts underscore the idea of equality of birth. Thiruvalluvar has stated Pirappokkum ella uyirkkum, which means “all living beings are equal at birth”. Likewise Avvaiyar also states that there are only two castes in the world, those who contribute positively and those who contribute negatively. There is also another definition to two castes, i.e.; those males and the females. It is inferred that the caste system was alien to the Tamil Society.

In the post-Sangam age, the simple nature-based Tamil Society became a birth-based caste society. The Vedic Brahmins who were driven away by the Jaina and the Buddhist revolutions came down to the South and settled in Tamil Nadu. Since then, they gradually gained an upper hand by performing sacrifices and dominance by the acquisition of land grants and position with the support of the ruling class. By gradual process, the priests of Brahmins from the hermitages of Danda Karanya introduced the concepts of Brahminhood, Kshatriyahood, Vaisyahood and Sudrahood. By acquiring a place in the hearts of the ruling class and conferring on them high sounding titles and doing sacrifices for their longevity of life these priestly Brahmins began to write scriptures in support of their social stratification theory and to prevent mobility of castes. In their attempt at stratifying the society, they newly introduced the concept of untouchability, unapproachability and unseeability. The Pallavas, the Cholas and the Pandyas and even the Cheras were mere pawns in their hands. It was during their rule that the Caturvedimangalas, Agraharas, Brahmadeyas and Devadanas increased in
an unprecedented scale, all for the benefit of the priestly Brahmans. The creation of
*Caturvedimangalas, Agraharas, and Brahmadeyas* introduced the practice of having
separate residential areas for the Brahmans. It helped them to lead a secluded life and to
maintain their concept of purity and pollution which thus consolidating their position.
They taught that the lowest among the society were born to serve the other three castes.
Segregation, oppression and isolation pushed the servile caste to the bottom of the social
hierarchy. In their own lands they became tenants and peasants. They were prevented
from having their settlements in the townships particularly in the temple areas or the
Brahmin quarters. They were forced to have their huts and cottages away in the pale of
the cities, in the outskirts, in the lonely areas far away from activities. Their lands were
confiscated and made *Brahmadeyas, Caturvedimangalas* or *Devadanas*. Forceful
eviction of the tillers of the soil and establishment of the Brahmin settlements were
recorded in inscriptions.

To protect the interests and rights of these oppressed sections, there arose the
need for protest meetings, writings and demand for equality.

The *Alwars* and the *Nayanmars*, who have come from various socio-economic
levels, rejected the caste system and caste-based discriminations. To them wisdom and
piety were not birth-based but mind and right-based. They established that a *panchama*
could also attain Godhood by his steadfastness and conscientious devotion.
St.Ramanuja of the twelfth century A.D., the first radical revolutionary, started the
temple-entry movement by giving *diksha* to some *Sudras*, by converting the *Sudras* as
*Vaishnavites*, naming them as *Thirukkulathar* and leading them to the temple at
Melkote. He even reformed the temple rituals at the Ranganatha Temple at Srirangam
and introduced new rituals so as to give rights to his devotees, newly converted to enter
the temple and do services. These are elaborated in the text called *Udayavar Code*
services. He took them as his bodyguards and allowed them to accompany him wherever he went. It was unthinkable then that a Brahmin saint could make radical and revolutionary changes in the psyche of the upper castes. Attempts were made under the influence of the orthodox Brahmins by the Chola rulers to exterminate St. Ramanuja.

The Brahmin privileges and prerogatives of enjoying the land, priestly benefits, and royal grants, the company of dancing damsels, and polygamy and prostitution were against what they preached to others. This was just pornography and social pollutant. This double standard was disliked by some activists and thinkers. Now the turn was that of the Siddhars to raise the banner of revolt.

The unorthodox Siddhars raised their voice against the caste discrimination and claimed for social equality. The great ideal of one God and one community (என் பெரிய கையிடம்) was propounded by Thirumular. The other Siddhars, like Sivavakkiyar, questioned the dominance of the Brahmins and denied the authority of the Vedas, Sastras and rituals. Further, he went to the extent of asking questions about the difference of coitus of a Brahmin with a Brahmin lady and a Brahmin with an untouchable girl and vice versa. He wanted the society to understand that in sexes or sexual relations there is no difference whether it was between Brahmins or untouchables. This is how he tried to shatter the high caste illusions in society.

Continuing the trend over the centuries, many social reformers have also criticized the caste system and fought for equal status for the untouchables. Jyothi Bao Phule of Maharashtra and Ayothidass Panditar of Tamil Nadu argued that the lower caste people were the original inhabitants of India. By conquering them, they were enslaved. Slavery was for the upper caste convenience. By their writings and organizations, they opposed these rigidities and barriers. The Satyasodak Samaj of Phule and the Oru Paisa Tamilan, a journal of Panditar were mounted attacks on the caste system.
It was during these days that a drastic and radical change took place in approaching the issues of the untouchables. It was a more constructive concept than a destructive programme. This conceptual change came from Vaikuntha Swamigal of Swamithoppu in Kanyakumari district, a man born to a then untouchable caste of Southern Travancore, which was then in a marooned state because of the hegemony of the minority Nambudris, a majority of Nairs and a minority of Tamil Pillaimars. Most lands of Travancore including South Travancore were owned by these high caste men and they kept the large majority under their thumb rule as chattels. The Swamigal himself was subjected to all kinds of tests and tortures. Having come out of them successfully, he wanted to integrate the affected people by giving them a common bond of brotherhood at Swamithoppu. The Swamigal established the **Samathuva Samajam** to unite the people of all castes. To inculcate in them the feeling of universal brotherhood and equality, he established the **Samathuva Kudiyiruppu** and introduced the **Samathuva Bhojanam**. Moreover, he initiated the feeling of self-respect among the downtrodden people by starting the **Nizhal Thankals** all radical deeds indeed!

His contemporary **St.Ramalinga** of Vadaloor near Neyveli was very much mentally weary of the segmentation of Tamil Society and pseudo piety of men. He, in order to seek the unity of hearts, established the **Samarasa Sudha Sanmarga Sangam** to bring equality among the people. Further, he started the **Satya Dharma Sala** to feed the needy and poor. He wanted to eradicate poverty, as he strongly believed that poverty is the root cause of all evils in the society. Through his **Satya Gnana Sabha** he insisted on the principles of **Ahimsa**, the worship of **jyoti** (the light) and joint worship (worship in brotherhood). He said every living creature has life; they need human kindness and love.
By this time the Native State of Travancore, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, had turned to be an ‘asylum of madmen’. It was then groaning and groping under the weight of Nambudhri-Nair domination and bleeding because of outmoded and unacceptable practices and rites and rituals. The society was very much shaken by the caste structure and alienation of the larger majority including the Ezhavas, Tiyas, Chowans and Sanars. They were prevented even from entering the temple streets. At this hour of torture in the name of caste, rehabilitation of the larger majority had to be undertaken without further delay. Thus there appeared on the horizon a mendicant but radical thinker-reformer named Sri Narayana Guru.

To him unity of mankind, oneness of God and equality of justice were the prime ideals. He once said whatever may be the religion, man must flourish. He started his fight against the caste system and inequality by consecrating the Ezhava Siva. One God, One religion and One Community was his principle. His religion is Religion of Humanism. His thoughts and acts did marvelous changes in Kerala, including South Travancore.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the microscopic minority of the Brahmins of about 3.2 percent of the total population of the Madras Presidency, was the highly English - educated class, employed class, land-owning class and ritualistically holding high positions in government offices. They were clerks, dvipashis, deputy collectors, police officers, post officers, judges and lawyers, doctors and professors. They dominated British administration by the ritual position and education. Therefore, the larger majority feared them and obeyed them. They then commanded a high degree of respect from the illiterate, ignorant and landless servile class. By this time, a few English-educated high-caste Non-Brahmins wanted to change this social structure by starting a movement. The services of Dr.T.M.Nayar, Sri Natesa Mudaliar and Sir Piti...
Theagaraya Chettiyar brought about a silent revolution in the Madras Presidency. They founded in 1916 the **South Indian Liberal Federation**, which fought for equality and justice. Since their main motto was social justice, they rechristened their organization as the **Justice Party** and its members were called the **Justicites**. Leaders of the Justice Party strived hard to bring down the dominance of the Brahmins in the Tamil Society. They launched the Non-Brahmin Movement by issuing the Non-Brahmins Manifesto in 1917, whereby it demanded communal reservation of seats in politics. They believed that provision of education and employment could alone guarantee their upward mobility. To provide educational opportunities, the Justice Party Government started the Annamalai University and the Andhra Affiliating University. So the Justice Party government issued the first Communal Government Order on September 16, 1921. It extended and reserved the job opportunities to various castes among the Non-Brahmins. Moreover, for the upward mobility of the non-Brahmins, it brought the much talked about legislations relating to inter-caste marriage, franchise for the common man, irrespective of land owning and tax-paying, abolition of **Devadasi System** and throwing open the temples to the depressed classes. To provide educational opportunities, the Justice Party Government started the Annamalai (Unitary) University and the Andhra (Affiliating) University I 1925 ad 1929 respectively.

The largely accepted criticism about the Justice Party is that when it brought down the powers and functions of the micro-scopic minority Brahmins, it handed over them to the still more orthodox high caste-Hindus of Andhra Pradesh, who never allowed their powers to be shared by the lower castes.

In politics no party could continue to command the respect of the people all the time. After the 1930s the Justice Party had become weak and a strong man was
needed to steer clear the ship. Thus there appeared a young and spirited man with radical and rationalistic thoughts and devotion to social cause.

He was none other than the rationalist, radical thinker ‘Periyar’ E.V.Ramasami. He thundered in a lightning speed his ideas of abolition of untouchability. A spirit of humanism, liberty, equality, fraternity and self-respect echoed the Presidency through his writings and speeches, propaganda and the activities of his Self-Respect Movement, started in 1925. He denounced the inherited social status, ridiculed the economic and political inheritance of the few. His relentless crusade against casteism, untouchability, Brahmin hegemony and enslavement of women, landed privileges of the few, ritual prerogatives, scriptural sanctions and abusive taboos helped to create an awakening among the illiterates, ignorant and the deprived members of the society. Periyar’s Self-Respect Movement largely helped the Backward Classes to take over the powers until then enjoyed by the orthodox high-caste Hindus rather than uplifting the still weaker sections of the society, who neither possessed the right to own property nor wage earning.

‘Periyar’, the ideologue, and K. Kamaraj, the pragmatic politician, jointly brought about commendable social change without much fanfare. Though not literate, Kamaraj, the Congressman, could visualize the consequences of literacy and eradication of ignorance, industrialization, agrarian reforms, particularly that of the land ceiling reform, road-laying, starting irrigation projects, electrification of interior villages and the most acclaimed noon-meal scheme, school uniforms and starting of schools, colleges and universities. Knowing the pulse of the common man, he took the bold step of handing over the police portfolio to an untouchable minister .K.Kakkan, made.Parameswaran, the first Hindu .Religious and Charitable Endowment Minister, and an untouchable .Annamalai, the Trustee of the Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple at Madurai. In fact, he
led a life of a saint – politician more with the commoners than with the bureaucrats. In the words of P.Nedumaran, the erstwhile Congressman, ‘Kamaraj made a silent revolution in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere in India for the sharing of power by the until then powerless, marginalized sections.’

Influenced by the self-respect ideas, rationalistic thoughts, radical social views of ‘Periyar’ about the emancipation of the non-Brahmins, women and the marginalized, C.N.Annadurai, Periyar’s lieutenant came out from the Dravidar Kazhagam of Periyar and started the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) which aimed at the emancipation of all sections of the downtrodden.

Following ‘Periyar’s’ ideologies the Dravidian government too took measures for the eradication of inequality, untouchability, caste discriminations and hegemony of the high caste - Hindus, etc. through their welfare schemes. For encouraging inter-caste marriages, inter-caste marriage schemes were introduced. For the upward mobility of the marginalized sections, free education, noon-meal scheme, nutritious meal scheme, temple-entry to all, reservation in educational institutions and employment opportunities in offices and institutions are also provided.

In course of time, conflicts against one another among the Non-Brahmins arose. Oppression of the Dalits by the higher castes became vociferous and appeared on the surface and the anti-Dalit stance became pervasive. The literate generation of the Dalits was no longer prepared to accept being discriminated against as untouchables. They began to resist their traditional ill-treatment. Political awareness made them contest in elections and often physically responded violence with violence. They organized themselves into political outfits and consequently fought for their rights by communal and caste violence in the 1990s. Tamil Nadu was thus ravaged. The cumulative effect of all these was the launching of the Samathuvapuram Scheme ‘an equality habitat’ by
the DMK government in Tamil Nadu. The Chief Minister Thiru.M.Karunanidhi announced it in the state budget during 1997-1998 as one aspect of the commemoration of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of India’s independence. This is one of his highly matured pet programmes. It is a unique housing scheme, for, it being the first housing scheme in India, which is implemented with the full financial assistance of the state government.

Convinced of the earlier attempts made to bring about social change in Tamil Nadu, (South Travancore upto 1956 not forming part of Tamil Nadu), from the days of St.Ramanujar, Jothi Bao Phule, Ayothidass Panditar, Vaikuntha Swamigal, St.Ramalingar, Sri Narayana Guru and ‘Periyar’, M.Karunanidhi wanted to usher in an era of further social change. With a strong belief in the concept of equality and with genuine concern for the welfare of the downtrodden, and socially and economically weaker sections, the Chief Minister, launched the **Samathuvapuram Scheme** in the budget of 1997-1998. The main objective of this scheme is to promote communal harmony, universal brotherhood and peaceful co-existence. All communities irrespective of caste, colour and religion should gather together in a particular place and share their feelings. This scheme was later renamed as **Periyar Memorial Samathuvapuram** to commemorate the services rendered by ‘Periyar’.

Each **Samathuvapuram** consists of 100 houses with all amenities and infrastructural facilities such as community hall, library, fair price shop, primary health centre, veterinary hospital, road, street lights and so on. Economic upgradation schemes have also been implemented for the upliftment of the residents of **Samathuvapurams**. Houses were allotted as per the guidelines issued by the government. To promote unity, integrity and brotherhood among the residents, houses were allotted to the OC, BC, MBC and SC and ST. This made them have closer contact with each other. For the
maintenance of communal harmony and equality, various welfare committees were formed. Placards containing messages impressing upon communal harmony, elimination of untouchability, etc. have been erected at important places.

The Samathuvapuram or the ‘equality habitat’ cluster is a pioneering scheme in India. To give equal opportunities to all castes and communities, the Government have accommodated 40 houses for the SC/STs, 25 houses for the MBCs, 25 houses for the BCs and 10 houses for the OCs on lot system.

The working of the concept of Samathuvapuram is made on the basis of the analysis of 1350 random sampling of the first 100 Samathuvapurams by interview schedule and the observation method. Transparency and considered norms are strictly adhered to in the selection of the beneficiaries and in allotment of houses. It is found that among the respondents 2.3 percent are the tenant or leaseholders. It means that the beneficiaries have violated the undertaking taken by them at the time of entering Samathuvapuram. In few places, action has been taken on the violators and in some Samathuvapurams the houses are confiscated by the authorities and reallocated to others.

Of all the problems, the lack of conveyance and fleet services that affects the inmates. Though the government has ordered to provide stopover facilities only a few buses stop at Samathuvapurams.

Houses have been constructed with all infrastructure facilities and given to beneficiaries below poverty line at free of cost to the extend of ₹37,000. The quality of the houses is questionable in some places. Leakage and seepages in the rainy seasons are the common problems. Cracks in the wall have also appeared in a few buildings. Moreover, due to neglect of houses in the Samathuvapurams from May 2001 to May 2006, due to political change in Tamil Nadu, they become weak and need some repair. Since the government constructed the houses free of cost, the beneficiaries looked at the
government for undertaking repairs of the houses. To fulfill the expectations of the beneficiaries, the government have announced an allocation of ` 50 crore to carry out basic amenities and repair works in the houses of in 2008.

The **Agamas**, the **Puranas**, the **Sastras**, the **Manasaras** and the **Mayamata** and even the **Vishnudharmamottara Purana** prescribe definite rules for the construction of temples, **mathas**, palaces, forts, halls and houses. They prescribe the rules for the selection of the site, nature of the soil, its features, and kinds, and the methods and materials to be used in the construction technology. The materials used in the yester years were the minutely sieved sand, jaggery paste, lime, **kadukkai** water, white yolk of egg and stone pieces and burnt bricks. The buildings and structures constructed adopting these rules are strong even today. In course of time, due to the influence of the Islamic **Saracenic** style and Western or Gothic style of construction, changes were made not only in the fields of society and culture but also in the field of art and architecture, painting and other arts including the construction technology.

The cost-effective construction technology is used in the construction of **Samathuvapurams**. They are low in cost but not in quality. The **Rat Trap Bond**, **Filler Slab**, **Ferro Cement Channel Roofing**, **Frameless Doors and Windows**, **Fly Ash Sand Lime Bricks** are some of the technologies adopted in the construction of **Samathuvapurams**. These cost-effective technologies certainly reduce the cost of construction, emission of carbon di oxide without compromising on the safety and durability of the building, without sacrificing the aesthetic sense of the building and also improving the quality of the life of the people. These Western technologies are highly durable only when the materials to be used are quality materials and the masons are well versed in the technology. Usually, corrupt practices in quality of materials and poor construction lead to less durability.
Samathuvapuram Scheme has been launched to create an egalitarian habitat to reduce social and economic inequalities and tensions. It was targeted to construct 150 Samathuvapurams in the first phase, in the 28 districts of the state. Due to the change of power in the political level and the consequent change in the state government, that has not been proceeded further; proper care was not taken in maintaining them. They were even left as orphan children, nobody to care for them. Since the construction activities were stopped at 132 in the first phase, the researcher has chosen only the first one hundred Samathuvapurams for this study i.e. from August 1998 to February 2001.

A total of ` 8670.93 lakhs was spent for constructing 100 Samathuvapurams. Of the total expenditure 54 percent has been spent for the acquisition of land, construction of houses and provision of electricity to the houses and the remaining 46 percent has been spent for the provision of basic amenities and other infrastructures such as physical connectivity, safe drinking water, electrification, social infrastructure entry-Arch, compound wall, eco-friendly economic developments respectively. The expenditure towards construction of houses in Samathuvapurams is met entirely through the special grant of the State Government. The government have allotted ` 37,000 per house upto February 2001. The expenditure towards basic amenities and other infrastructure facilities was met from the respective Departments and local bodies through convergence of ongoing programme. On an average, the government have spent ` 85.71 lakhs per Samathuvapuram upto February 2001.

It is observed that out of the total expenditure of ` 5052.60 lakhs incurred on the provision of different components in 60 Samathuvapurams of 28 Districts, the expenditure incurred on house construction (value of house) ranks the top most i.e.
nearly 50 percent (49.96 percent), whereas the expenditure on physical connectivity occupies the next place amounting to 11.27 percent. The next proportional expenditure is on the provision of social infrastructure and safe drinking water facilities, which amounts to 8.51 percent and 8 percent respectively. Expenditure for eco-development comes next amounting to 6.74 percent. Expenditure on land acquisition occupies the next place, which amounts to 5.54 percent, whereas the expenditure on electrification amounts to 4.60 percent. The expenditure towards entry-Arch and compound wall amounts to 1.97 percent. Whereas the expenditure met on commercial infrastructure is 1.71 percent which occupies the next place. Economic infrastructure occupies the next place, which amounts to about 1.27 percent of the total expenditure. Recreation infrastructure occupies the last place amounting to 1.21 percent of the total expenditure.

However, the percentage of money spent under these two heads i.e., acquisition of land, construction of houses, and provision of electricity to the houses and the provision of basic amenities and other infrastructure, sometimes varies due to various factors. In providing housing facilities all Samathuvapurams have not received equal weightage. It does not mean that they have been neglected. The cost escalation is are responsible for the differences noticed in the expenditure incurred towards building houses, like acquisition of land, nature of soil, the labour charge, transportation of material, etc. Similarly, in the provision of infrastructure facilities, the allocation of funds varied from one Samathuvapuram to another. This may be due to so many local factors. The Government have taken all possible efforts to meet the challenges faced by the people of Samathuvapurams. It is interesting to note that in no way the beneficiaries of the Samathuvapurams were / are oppressed for the financial needs indicating thereby that, the very purpose of the establishment of Samathuvapuram is not self defeated.
In the socio-economic sphere, the establishment of **Samathuvapuram** appears as an attempt to conform mutual trust and social gathering. The age-old discrepancies, disparities, disabilities and hiatus between caste groups started as a diminishing gradually. It has generated a feeling of universal brotherhood of mankind. It is a happy trend that once when the beneficiaries have been taught about the purpose and objective of such habitations they are not ready to demolish it. There may be a negligible percentage of beneficiaries who may like to be proud in their caste and having the caste-tag in their names. Once educated and employed, they may have no time to idly while away their time. The people of **Samathuvapurams** are found to possess medium and high level of communal harmony, when the scores of the total samples are analyzed as well as when the scores are analyzed as per the background variables i.e. gender, community, and marital status, number of family members, education, income and area. It means that the present level of communal harmony among the residents of **Samathuvapurams** is encouraging. It is a significant finding that the very purpose of launching the scheme has to a great extent been achieved within a short period. The shelter provided at free of cost, the availability of all infrastructures and other amenities within the premises, better living conditions, peaceful communal atmosphere and the introduction and implementation of various welfare schemes are the major factors that help the promotion of integrated social living and communal harmony. This could be achieved amidst significant differences in the cases of castes, age, religion and occupational levels.

When the scores of the people of **Samathuvapurams** are considered on the basis of age, the people whose age level between 31 and 60 have higher percentage of low scores. This may be due to their affiliation to political parties.
Again, when the scores are analyzed on the basis of religion of the respondents the members of the Christian Community have higher percentage of low scores of communal harmony. It may be due to the minimum number of Christians in Samathuvapurams.

Further analysis on the basis of occupation of the respondents is considered, the agricultural community has higher percentage of low scores. Since agriculture is not a time-bound work, they may not have time to link with other people.

On the whole the perception of the residents of the Samathuvapurams in the field of communal harmony is encouraging. This is a green signal to the Government for extending the scheme to other parts of Tamil Nadu.

The factors that urge the people to move towards the spirit of communal harmony are the socio-economic amity, social integration or non-casteism, social relationship or social rights, personal ideal, inter-mix or inter-personal relationship, social adjustment, peaceful co-existence and social recognition. The Samathuvapurams thus provide scope for personal relationship and mutual adjustments for a happy living.¹

Suggestions

These suggestions are made on the basis of the field survey conducted by the scholar herself in the first hundred Samathuvapurams located at various places. The report attempts to record a few policy suggestions for future action, improvement and implementation. Lastly, some suggestions for the betterment of the scheme are made . The first suggestion is to pluck out all the loopholes, including political interference and bureaucratic indulgences and personal prejudices and party affiliations.

¹. However, it is feared that the fabric of Samathuvapuram should not be disturbed by the latest trends in the caste-based Census taking and the follow up by the communally polarized parties and their fans who are ready to whip up friencces and flare ups.
It is feared, as long as the feudal structure remains in the rural areas, the effort taken by the government may not help to reduce caste tensions. So the government should take steps to remove the feudal structure by giving further support to land ceiling, granting lands to the landless and providing further educational facilities, thereby removing the age-old master-slave relations, high caste and low caste from psyche of the hegemonic and meek submission of the marginalized. For achieving this, educate and employ the marginalized, give them the right to own land, right to till the soil and enjoy the fruit of their labour. Land ceiling should be effectively implemented and the surplus lands should be granted to the landless.

In order to improve the quality of life of the beneficiaries of the Samathuvapurams, social campaign programmes should be conducted to create awareness among them about health, environmental protection, prohibition, small savings, education, government policies and schemes introduced for the welfare of the masses. The purpose of these schemes should reach them.

The government should stop the creation new Adi-Dravida colonies away from villages. Instead it should start constructing more and more Samathuvapurams, linking the village or town main road with the Samathuvapuram main road.

The houses allotted to the beneficiaries should not be allowed to be transferred for a minimum period of 99 years but only on strong grounds. For this, it is not wrong even if the government enters into an agreement with the allottee. In this deed, due role should be given to womenfolk, without whose permission the house should not be transferred. Some exceptional cases may be there where some reliable or trustworthy and socially well-disposed women may be poor as the guarantor. This system will yield good result if adopted with care in eradicating ill-legal sale, misuse of the benefits granted to
them and wiping out the caste feeling among the residents at least for two or three generations. Thus, in the long run, it could help create a strong casteless society.

It is also suggested that for any active programme to take roots, the most important needed input is the much inspired and highly motivated participation of the very target groups. To make the residents aware of and to take them more towards communal harmony, awards like Nirmal Puraskar and Uthamar Gandhi or Kalaignar Vizhippunarvu Parisu may be instituted and the best Panchayat in Tamil Nadu may be awarded the Best Samathuvapuram award every year.

To choose the Best Samathuvapuram, a committee comprising of five members i) an educationist, ii) a social worker, iii) a physician, iv) a press man, and v) a humanist may be constituted. They must in person study the records of achievements or failures, personally visit the places and verify the maintenance and upkeep and know the requirements etc, and the programmes and propaganda conducted by them and submit within a specified period of time to the government for its consideration. In a government organized function, the Best Samathuvapuram award may be presented to the highly responsible member of that Samathuvapuram in the presence of the Chief Minister or his or her representative, the Finance Minister, a Senior High Court Judge, and of all the members of the Committee, social workers, policy makers and educators.

Education and employment are the two real panacea to any society aspiring to progress. Literacy programmes should be conducted to the illiterates and the ignorant in the Kuduyiruppu, schools should be opened and dropouts should be reduced to the maximum possible. Education is followed by employment in some sectors, whether organized or unorganized. While engaged, they may have no time to think about idle talks and involvement in violence. Anti-social elements should be identified and weeded out. Such guarantees alone could enhance the ideal of Samathuvapuram.
Another very important suggestion is to keep away politics from these villages. Political interference, intervention and influence, in fact, work against the functioning of good schemes. Mention may be made of the failure of Slum Clearance, Beggar’s Rehabilitation, Kannoli Scheme, the Veeranam Project, the Cradle Baby Scheme, Arivoli Iyakkam and such other schemes. Started with good intentions, they failed to achieve the goals because of politics.

Humanism, love, compassion and charity are the core values of every religion. So it is essential to inculcate the feeling of respect for other religions and religious systems. Further, every inhabitant should learn to commit to protect, promote and defend the secular, pluralistic, socialist and democratic values of our Constitution. Every beneficiary should be taught to respect the dignity of person, individual rights and collective responsibilities, dignity of labour, and universal brotherhood for which great sages, saints and radical thinkers have laid down their lives. Let Unmai or Satya (‘truth’) Aram or Ahimsa (‘humanism’) Thirupthi and Aparigraha (‘contentment’) of Varthamana Mahavira; Compassion and Humanism of the Buddha, Compassion and Charity of Jesus Christ and ‘Universal Brotherhood’ of Nabigal Nayagam flourish in the Samathuvapurams. Let the Satya Sodak Samaj of Mahatma Jyothi Bao Phule, the Samathuva Kudiyiruppu of Vaikuntha Swamigal and the Sanmarga Sangam of Ramalinga Adikal come true in letter and spirit. Let us work together to make the dream of Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi rise above all petty politics.