CONCLUSION

The Life and Works of Maria Lourdhammal Simon represented an important era in the history of modern Tamilnadu as a successful administrator and popular leader from among the masses. Generally, history is the study of great personalities or nation or anything else. Carlyle found from the angle of historical personalities, and he asserted that history is nothing but the biography of great men. Charles Firth stated that history is the record of life of human societies, of the changes which these societies have gone through, of the ideas which have determined the behaviour of these societies and of the material conditions which have helped or hindered their development.

Whatever may be but a simple working definition of history is that it is the study of man’s past. It is the story of what mankind did, depicting what had happened, why they had happened and the principles which governed these happenings. In other words it is the study of events in man’s struggle for progress from the past to the present.

Kanyakumari is the southern part of Tamilnadu. Tamilnadu border ends by Kanyakumari district. This was the place which created many great personalities. Lourdhammal Simon was one among them. She was the former Minister of local Administration and Fisheries. In this thesis the researcher deals a biographical study on Lourdhammal Simon. Her achievements were numerous and her vision was high. She had given equal importance to both of her respective departments.

The implementation of several Acts was highly seemed as a positive received in her tenure. The major Acts such as The Madras District Municipalities (Amendment) Bill 1958, the Madras City Municipal (Amendment) Bill in 1958 and 1961, the Madras District Development Councils Act 1958, the Madras District Development Councils and Panchayats Act 1961, Extension of the Term of Office of Municipal Councilors Bill, 1958 and Local Authorities Financial Bill in 1961 were enacted and implemented by
Lourdhammal Simon. The main Act was the Madras Panchayats Act, 1958, that involved three main administrative operations including Completion of Panchayat Coverage, Panchayat Union Constitution and Rural Development Devolution. Its operation commenced on 1st January 1960 in all Blocks. After its completion, all the rural areas of the State were covered with Panchayats. Her main aim about Local Administration was also she believed that “efficient local administration was vital importance to the country.” Even after the independence of India Panchayats were unrecognized. Only in her ministry Panchayats were got rebirth and on her supervision Panchayat election was held.

Modernized City is the dream of most people and but it this was started by Lourdhammal Simon in 1957 itself. Chennai has been one of the developing cities in India. Chennai was modernized by Lourdhammal Simon’s great thought and ambition and planning. She had intended for Town-Planning Scheme in Madras Panchayat Act 1958 and discussed her opinions with her council members to renovate the city and also she had encouraged the officers to construct parks, roads, bridges, etc. Under the stewardship of K.Kamaraj she was able to modernize the city through her master plan and drawn out successfully. Efficient water-supply and drainage facilities, dustless surfacing of roads was heavily concerned in town planning scheme.

The modification of Panchayats, Panchayat Unions, Municipalities assumed greater importance. She divided Chennai into North and South Chennai. Her effective steps had changed Panchayats, villages and Municipalities. Old schemes had been modified through systematic planning. Panchayat elections got rebirth and met gradual developments.

The “White-Paper on Local Administration” represented a remarkable achievement of her period. According to the proposals in the White paper, the
implementation of the scheme of Development and Reform of Panchayat Organization would be linked to the implementation of Scheme of Community Development. By the end of the Second Five-Year Plan period, there should be a Panchayat for every village in the State without exception. Panchayats in a Development Block should be brought together in Panchayat Unions. These Committees should be provided with funds and executive staff, technical and administrative guidance.

The proposals in the White-Paper were evaluated by Lourdhammal Simon. So far as Panchayat Unions were concerned, the Government decided to proceed with the provisional administrative, financial and technical implications. Also she decided to organize a Panchayat Union in one selected Development Block in all the villages. Accordingly, as a first step North Madurai Panchayat Union was organised and inaugurated by her.

Maximum elementary needs were fulfilled by her energetic actions. The proper arrangements, including seat reservation were given accurate importance. Her period was a significant era in the history of Tamilnadu Panchayat elections. In the year 1960, there were 11 district boards and 64 municipalities in the state. Next, the compulsory education among all kinds of students was imparted effectively. The students from different communities were given equal education as well as consideration. Every district boards and municipalities were taken care of plenty of schools. Fund for education was sanctioned with almost concern in her period. Numerous schools including elementary, higher and higher secondary were opened in all the municipalities as well as villages. Additional teachers were appointed and they were given special training.

Lourdhammal Simon concentrated on the health and hygiene of people and worked for the improvement of societies particularly slums. One of the momentous steps in Madras Pachayat Act 1958, was the improvement of slums. Backward class people
and women were given importance in Local Panchayat Boards. Through these amendments made in Madras Panchayat Act 1958, Lourdhammal Simon sowed progressive seeds throughout Tamilnadu. To uplift the life of the slum people, she had taken tremendous efforts through scientific planning.

Lourdhammal Simon’s technical advice, healthy ideas, planning committee, authorities and council members made her ministerial reforms a grand success. Construction, repair and maintenance of all public roads, culverts, road, dams and cause ways on such roads were carried out effectively. The establishment and maintenance of dispensaries, maternity and child-welfare centres, opening, maintenance and expansion or improvement of elementary schools including payment of grants to private managements in respect of elementary schools were the significant outcomes in her era. Preventive and remedial measures connected with malaria, maintenance of statistics relating to births and deaths, maintenance of common institutions for a group of Panchayats, opening of new public markets, maintenance of markets improvement of agriculture, agricultural stock the holding of exhibitions etc promoted the welfare and happiness of the people.

As the Minister of Fisheries Department, Lourdhammal Simon comprehended that sea is the greatest profitable ground. Consequently, many researches had taken both in marine and inland fisheries. She had a vision that the growth and development of the Fisheries Department could mainly based on its research works, so she had decided to start the research procedure in the field of fisheries. She had suggested that various problems connected with proper administration and consumption of the fisheries resources of the State would be solved only through the researches examined by Biological and Technological Research Station. Thus, she started research stations at Tuticorin, Krusadai Island, Cape Comorin, Ennore, Bhavanisagar and Adyar in the State.
The chief items of investigations at these research stations were the Hydrography, Planktology and fisheries of coastal waters, their fluctuations, biology of species of commercial importance culture of edible oysters, marine fish-farming, pearl oysters and chanks. Department of Fisheries attained tremendous growth which was rather unprecedented during the tenure of Lourdhammal Simon.

The establishment of these stations made rapid development. As a result of these researches carried out in these Biological and Technological stations, the fish production in the State had been increased rapidly. Research on various problems connected with the protection, management, development, exploitation and utilization of the marine and inland fisheries resources were continued in the Biological and Technological Stations. Through these institutions she laid a strong foundation for the development of fisheries in the State of Tamilnadu. She had encouraged the studies based on biology of pearl oyster and evolving techniques for the estimation of oyster population in the pearl banks. The studies on the ecology and migration of chanks, biology of sradinella sirm, and plankton of in-shore and off-shore waters, trend of local fisheries and collection of meteorological and hydrographical data and successful progresses were carried out. Chank Fish Farming and its experiments on sea-weed compost were done. One of the achievements in Lourdhammal’s period (1961-62) was that an employment of a new technique on Pearl Culture Experiments which had formerly been carried out in Japan and the same was initiated at Marine Biological Station, Krusadai Island by the Assistant Director of Information and Marine Biology.

Lourdhammal Simon identified that there were a number of brackish water areas in the Madras State that could profitably be utilized for increasing fish production. The research works mainly concentrating on segregation of carp fry, population studies with special reference to Baruus dubius and Macrones car, induced carp spawning, survey of
Cauvery Fisheries, Upland Fishery Investigation Unit (Research Station) at Ootacamund, Limnology of Bhavanisagar Reservoir and Food Value of Fresh Water Fishes were carried out successfully. Adequate staff, officers and scientists were appointed to look after these research works.

Tilapia Mossambica was introduced by Lourdhammal Simon from foreign countries to enable Fisheries Department stronger in production. Fisheries research committees were appointed to supervise the research works. Technical assistance programme was expanded with plenty of well-talented officers. Under the Expanded Technical Assistance Programme of the Food and Agricultural Organisation, an Italian under water expert Dr. Baschieri Salvadori was appointed to conduct exploratory investigations of the pearl and chank beds of Tuticorin and also commenced the first phase of the underwater survey of the pearl banks. In the Second Five Year Plan, sixteen schemes with a policy of development and exploitation of inland, Estuarine, in-shore and off-shore fisheries and of introducing improved techniques and technological methods were implemented by her.

The following objectives like the development of inland, estuarine, in-shore, off-shore and deep-sea fishing through improved fishing methods, technology and research, decisions to provide fishermen with modern craft and tackle at subsidized rates under the hire-purchase system and to provide other equipment like nylon nets, hooks and other facilities like fishing harbours, to provide fishermen with long-term credit facilities through Fishermen Co-operative Societies in order to extricate them from the clutches of traders and middlemen to whom they are indebted, to provide them and their womenfolk with profitable employment, to improve communications to fishing hamlets and to provide all facilities for proper preservation and better marketing of their catches and to assist them to form themselves into co-operative bodies in order that they might get
better credit and trading facilities and thus reap full benefits of their labour guided the working of the Fisheries Department. Lourdhammal Simon formulated effective steps for the establishment of model estuarine fish farm which was also included in Second Five Year Plan. Establishment of Fishermen Co-operative Societies was the great relief of fisherfolk’s life. Through the co-operative societies salt subsidy scheme had received popularity among fishermen.

Construction of fishing harbours, improvements in fishing crafts and boat building yards were conducted systematically by Lourdhammal Simon’s guidance. Nylon nets were supplied in subsidy rates to all the fishermen. Fishery demonstration scheme was emphasized among fishermen society. Fishes were preserved in ice plant and cold storage facilities were the main fish’s preservation steps taken by Lourdhammal Simon. Two ices cum cold storage plants received under the Indo-United States Technical Co-operation Assistance Programme were being installed at Tuticorin and Mettur Dam and also at Cudalore, Nagapattinam and Colachel of the state under the approval of Fisheries Department for the effective means of fish preservation.

Imparting proper training to the staff members about both marine and inland fisheries was carried out successfully. Also theoretical classes were held explaining the working principles of foreshore and hind shore engines, the names of the different parts of the marine diesel engines and the functions of each part. With the theoretical knowledge, the trainees were trained in the dismantling and re-assembling of the various parts of the marine engines. Theoretical classes were conducted on the various gear materials used in fishing industry. The various stages in the operation of the various kinds of nets and the scientific principles behind each stages of operation were demonstrated to each of the trainees by talented staff.
Provision of quick transport facilities for transporting fish from landing centres to marketing and consuming centres was given more importance. Fish markets received keen attention and in Lourdhammal Simon’s tenure they were kept clean as well as hygienic. To assist fishermen returning from their fishing grounds to the landing ground land safely and for the safe life of fishermen guide lights were installed in many coastal districts. She had established several light houses in many coastal areas especially at Kanyakumari, Colachel, Muttom, etc. She had encouraged deep sea fishing by using mechanized boats.

Through the Biological and Technological stations, fish markets, harbours, ice plants, co-operative society fisheries department gained a plenty of benefits in economic, trades and fish production grew gradually. These new changes by Lourdhammal Simon’s well thought out plans were the landmarks in the growth of Fisheries Department.

Lourdhammal Simon’s great vision in the Fisheries Department attained a great deal of benefit and development through pearl fishery. Many Government Orders were issued by her for the welfare of the department and people. Pearl banks in Tuticorin were more profitable places all over the State. Staff were appointed to look after pearl production, condition, studies about pearl, oyster, chank also were given duly to people. Both ministerial and executive officers, special staff Superintends and Assistant Director, the Fisheries Refrigeration Engineer, were drafted for the pearl fishery work sanctioned by Lourdhammal Simon for enhancing fisheries activities. Inspections were carried out correctly by the officers. Remarks were rectified. Along with these all steady developments Lourdhammal Simon also concentrated on several aspects related to fishing industry. She had sanctioned order for establishing inshore fishing unit at Rameswaram. Through chank and the pearl, Fisheries Department as well as Government had received plenty of revenue. To survey the fishing grounds around the
Rameswaram Island and make known to the fishermen, the seasons and potentialities of the ground; to experiment with different types of fishing gear and to study their relative efficiency, to design, introduce and experiment with modern types of fish nets for the benefit of the mechanized boat fishermen. For these ideas Lourdhammal Simon planned well and by her guidance the department had supplied suitable nets and boats for fishing around the island. The nylon nets such as bottom set nets, drift nets, trawl nets, trammel nets and skate nets were supplied for better fishing.

The best thought out plan of Lourdhammal Simon was the production of shark liver oil. From this idea the Government has received reasonable revenue. For people’s well living Lourdhammal Simon the licensing system. It enabled the fishermen to obtain a constant and steady earning in fishing. Numerous inland fishing units like reservoirs, lakes, fish tanks, ponds, dams, and also rural fishing demonstration units were started in all the districts of the state. In these water units quick growing crops such as Rohu and Mrigal were all over the state. These crops are having an ability of quick growing and they could increase the financial level gradually. The delivery was entirely transported by air and distributed for stocking the major reservoirs.

For the development of Fisheries Department, Community Development Project and National Extension Service areas received special consideration under Lourdhammal Simon. By the orders of the Minister the water sources in the different blocks were surveyed and the supply of suitable fish seed formed the main activity of these projects. Seven departmental vehicles including two insulated vans operated in Madras city by the Department of Fisheries for transporting the catches from the production farms to consuming centres. Vehicles were very useful to fishermen, by using these vehicles carrying fish from one unit to another unit became easier at a minimum rate.
By the orders of Lourdhammal Simon, in the years 1957-62 detailed surveys of fresh and cured fish movements and trade practices were accomplished by the department units and fishermen were assisted in their marketing programme. Special measures were made to increase the fish supply to Madras City, by assisting local merchants in procurement of the goods, by establishing model fish stalls and by introducing the house delivery system. Popularization of iced fish, frozen fish, fish meal, shell grit and other bye products were carried out in the fish markets. Fish markets of all the important towns were reviewed and the concerned local bodies were induced to improve the markets to satisfy minimum standards of outlay and sanitation by the department. Clupeids, Ribbon fish, Cat fishes, Sharks, Skates and Rays, Mackerels, Silver bellies, Jew fish and Prawns constituted the bulk of the catches in Madras city throughout the five years of Lourdhammal Simon. And the chief varieties during these periods were Carps, Cat fishes, Murrels and Tilapia and inland fishery resources sustained as customary. By the instructions of Lourdhammal Simon the fish markets in the City were frequently scrutinized to check up their hygienic condition and general up-keep for the entire years. The support of the Corporation Health authorities was sought for taking action against the owners and the lessees for inappropriate maintenance.

Under the Third Five-Year Plan the scheme for economic assistance for improvement of fish markets was executed by Lourdhammal Simon and they were availed of by some Panchayat Boards, Municipalities and Private owners for improving the fish market at Timiri (North Arcot district), Arcot, Madurai, Pudukottai, Melapalayam, Palayamkottai, Tuticorin, Sivaganga, Virudunagar, Sivakasi, Vadasery (Nagercoil), Tiruppur and Coonoor by the department. Also in the Third Five Year Plan Salt Subsidy Scheme was also one of the major schemes concentrated and implemented effectively by Lourdhammal Simon. Under this scheme good quality salt was being
supplied to fishermen at subsidized rates to cure their surplus catches in the Government fishing yards under hygienic conditions.

By the proposal of Lourdhammal Simon the fish stall in the fish market at Vadasery in Nagercoil town was constructed by the Nagercoil Municipality in the year 1960-61. Construction of a fish market of Thoduverry for which a subsidy of rupees 3,900 as disbursed during 1959-60 was commenced in that year. A subsidy of rupees 3,387.50 was given to Colachel Municipality for the construction of a fish market at Colachel and the work was completed successfully. Like wise throughout the State maximum fish markets were constructed by her order.

The greatest development of Fisheries Department was made known to the public through statistics, propaganda, and information. The fisheries library functioned effectively and it continued to provide the needs of departmental offices, trainees, students, research workers and members of the public. During the course of three years from 1959-62, 1665 additions were made, 1452 books and journals were issued by the department for reference and 1141 persons visited the library for study and reference. Eight hundred and sixty three books received from the Fisheries Training Centre, Tuticorin, were also added on to the Library.

Lourdhammal Simon’s healthy relationship with everyone the progress in the implementation of the plan schemes and the relief measures taken in the department were announced regularly through the press to the public. The Tamil monthly newsletter was published by the Department with an aim to help and educate the fishermen in the State about the various activities of the department and to give them technical advice. The happenings in department were made known in all the leading newspapers throughout India about its products, pearl fisheries, chank fisheries and tender notices for fishery requisites. Slides were exhibited in important theatres in the State regarding the pearl
fishery at Tuticorin and the aquarium in Madras. Department had participated in several exhibitions conducted during the Five-Year Plan Publicity Week, Farmers day celebrations, local festivals and other annual exhibitions. Fishery exhibits and instructive posters were displayed by the departments in those exhibitions.

The Department participated in the National Agricultural Fair, held at the Island Grounds from 13th January 1962 to 11th March 1962 conducted by the All India Farmer’s Forum. As an effective medium of propaganda and education regarding the economically important varieties of fish, a museum was maintained at all the important regional offices of the State by the proposal of Lourdhammal Simon throughout the years 1959-62 effectively.

The scientific and popular articles prepared by the departmental officers were published systematically. It became very useful for the pupil for getting knowledge on the department and its new techniques. Through these characteristics and schemes the department had earned plenty of profits economically. The expenditure was high in price though the income was higher than expenditure. Lourdhammal Simon’s brilliance made the department to attain the supreme place.

Socio-economic growth in Lourdhammal Simon’s tenure became a memorable one. Both the Departments Local Administration and Fisheries worked for the betterment of the people. A Fisheries Welfare Officer was appointed by Minister Lourdhammal Simon to give whole time attention to this socio-economic work. He had conducted surveys of several fishing villages and studied their requirements with reference to communication, lighting, medical, sanitation, housing and other facilities and he arranged necessary relief increases through the local authorities to the extent possible.

The fishermen were assisted by the Department of Fisheries to play their due share in increasing fish production and distribution through the co-operative movement.
Besides, several relief measures were given to the fisher folk affected by calamities like cyclone, sea-erosion, fire havoc, accidents in the sea and failure of normal fisheries. Provision of housing schemes and construction of feeder roads to fishing hamlets were also attended to.

The notable credit in her period was the formation of Fishermen Co-operative Societies. Basically, the fishermen are mostly poor and many of them are indebted to the money lenders. In their poverty and indebtedness, it was hard to by craft or tackle or any modern equipment for fishing. Hence to relieve them from their indebtedness and to provide them with crafts and tackles the co-operative societies were started. The Government granted long term loans to the fishermen through Fishermen Co-operative Societies for some reasonable aspects: for clearing partly the prior debts to money-lenders, for mainly purchasing fishing equipments such as crafts and tackles and other requisites for fishing, for purchasing motor vehicles for transport of fish. The loans can also be used for purchasing or constructing buildings such as godowns, curing sheds and tanks for the storing or processing of fish or fish products, and for purchasing, constructing and for erecting machinery, plant or other appliances for demonstration of improved methods of fishing, and for the preservation, processing or marketing of fish and fish-products. Only fishermen, who were members of registered Fishermen Co-operative Societies, were eligible for these loans.

She concentrated on construction of Feeder Roads connecting fishing hamlets with main roads in several coastal villages during her service period. The construction of the feeder roads in Tirunelveli district, Kanyakumari district, Ramanathapuram district and Tanjavvor district had been taken care of and maintenance of these roads were effectively carried out throughout her service period. As a measure of socio-economic development, she concentrated her attention in sanctioning of housing loans to the
fishermen societies. The Housing Scheme for Fishermen was originally sanctioned on the recommendations of the State Housing Board and she carried out this scheme very generously in the State.

Lourdhammal Simon has established many elementary schools in coastal villages and she had elevated these schools into high schools. The Fisheries Department under the council of Lourdhammal Simon in collaboration with other departments did its utmost to improve the economic backwardness of the fishing community. The Minister wanted that the vendors as well as the customers must realize the importance of cleanliness in fish markets and act accordingly. Fishing is one of the dangerous working fields of all. While fishing, fishermen happened to face lot of troubles and natural calamities. Like a way, during the period of Lourdhammal Simon in the fishing field some fishermen had met with calamities as well as fire accidents. For the recovery several relief measures were given and extended to fishermen affected by calamities of sea erosion, fire and accident in the sea and failure of normal fisheries like poor fish etc. Also she enabled the supply of yarn at subsided cost.

Lourdhammal Simon introduced Refrigerator System to retain the fresh condition of fishes and preserve them. She made the fishermen to aware of their privileges. They voluntarily asked for schools, boats and money and this self awareness was possible through her effective administration. The Community Development Programme is one of the most important programmes of her period. It had covered nearly 254 Blocks by the Fisheries Department during the years 1957-62. The formation of Panchayat Unions represented a revolutionary change in community development.

Through Community Development Blocks and National Extension Service Schemes several measures were taken by her to improve rural health and sanitation among the society. Construction of numerous dispensaries, hospitals, child welfare,
maternity centres and rural dispensaries were constructed to give treatment to the all rural people. Along with community development blocks, fishermen co-operative societies and co-operative federations were organized. Through these co-operatives the fishermen have so far been given long-term loans, medium-term loans and subsidy towards credit facilities for the elimination of middlemen, purchase of domestic as well as production requirements, construction of curing sheds, godowns and markets and for marketing of their produce.

Imports and exports of fish products increased exceedingly during her tenure. Fish pond management programme also functioned duly. The public had commenced to show great interest in fish culture. Fish seeds were supplied to people whoever interested. The fishermen were systematically trained. The medium of teaching in the Training Centre was Tamil. Originally the training was intended only to teach the fishermen the use of new types of mechanised boats and operation of engines. They were specially trained in modern fishing techniques and later they realised that, only training helped them to catch more fish and earn more money.

By analyzing the thesis about Lourdhammal Simon and her achievements, it is found true that she is an amazing and genuine human being. Her vision on people as well as Tamilnadu was obviously unforgettable remembrance. But unfortunately, this prominent lady Lourdhammal Simon is forgotten by all the people even by her own society. In fact it is showed the ingratitude of the society.

She had taken more progressive process in the Fisheries department and every scheme introduced and steps taken by her had achieved utmost benefits both administratively and financially throughout her service period. Being a great thinker Lourdhammal Simon had maintained her departments in an appreciating manner. Her honesty and sincerity on her respective departments, Local Administration and Fisheries
had reflected throughout her service periods 1957-62. Each and every people got awareness by her management enthusiastic. All the coastal people sent their children to schools. Tamilnadu had developed for tremendous level. Her passion was honestly an elevated one. These above fames only depended on Lourdhammal Simon. Lourdhammal Simon’s for love humanity, affection for society, patriotism and duty consciousness would always be remembered by the future generations.

Lourdhammal Simon had made an impact on the society. Till now her birthday had been celebrating by most of her followers. In her name a training centre is running by Kottar Diocese. In Tuticorin district there is a place carries a name of her that is “Lourdhammal Colony”. Her 100th birthday was celebrated in her home village Manakudi in a grand manner, and in this celebration Rev. Bishop Peter Remijius was the chief guest. Also in Kanyakumari district Tilepia fish is known as “Lourdhammal Fish”.

The researcher would like to suggest that Lourdhammal Simon is a character who is worth for further researches. Many researches can be under taken on her and her political as well as personal life. In an age of women empowerment and feminism the life and works of Maria Lourdhammal Simon remains a classical example for the further researchers.