INTRODUCTION

The study is an endeavour to present the basic policy of the D.M.K. government and its achievements in socio-economic fields. The introduction, spread and development of the D.M.K. represent one of the most interesting phases in the realm of social reform in Tamil Nadu.

The interaction of the Western and Indian social order, the government of India Act, 1919 which paved the way for reservations, the formation of the South Indian Liberal Party, later known as Justice Party, which was converted in stages into Self-Respect Movement, the Dravida Kazhagam and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and its coming to power is a coherent history.

Under Annadurai's leadership the D.M.K. party came to power in Tamil Nadu in 1967. The rationalist and reformist thoughts of Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy were practically implemented during Karunanidhi's regime under the socio-economic and cultural programmes of the government from 1967 to 1976.

The D.M.K. government brought about revolutionary
change in the political, social, cultural and economic life of the Tamilians. The programmes, policies and achievements of the D.M.K. government are a result of the ideologies propounded by Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy and Annadurai. The ideals of Periyar and Annadurai were experimented upon in the laboratory of Karunanidhi politics.

Some public and political analysts have often opined that irrespective of the political party that remains in power in Tamil Nadu, Karunanidhi should always be looked upon as the 'professional Chief Minister of the State'. This is an unsolicited tribute to the diligence, perseverance and administrative ability with which he has carried through the D.M.K. ambitions and constructive programme for a 'fair deal' to all in general, and to the weaker sections in particular.'

The peculiarity of this government is that this was the first atheistic government that came to power on democratic principles and process. Another salient feature is that there was not even a single Brahmin member or a minister in it. It was a radical government that displaced Sanskrit by Tamil in Mushrai temples
through the Religious Endowment Act, 1974. This government moved another resolution in the Assembly requesting the Centre to amend the Constitution to enable the State Legislature to enact a law for the purpose of appointing Archakas and Pujaries in the Hindu religious institutions from among qualified persons professing Hindu religion irrespective of caste, creed, race. Accordingly Brahmins as well as people from other communities, including Scheduled Castes, are entitled to become Archakas now.

This government also established a home for lepers, beggars, the physically handicapped, destitute women, orphan children etc. Free houses for Scheduled Castes were built. The inhuman act of hand-drawn-rikshas was abolished, and enormous social welfare and economic programmes were implemented for the welfare and progress of the general public, backward classes and Scheduled Castes which are elaborately dealt with under Chapters V and VI of this thesis.

The objective of this study is not to praise the D.M.K. party and its leadership though it deserves its own share of praise, but to make a critical appraisal of its programmes and activities. In the course of my
research I have been benefited from conversation with many people in public life, which have greatly contributed to a deepening of my own understanding of the subject. I have also drawn my material from various sources and institutions such as State Information Bureau, Madras; State Legislature Library, Madras; Connemara Public Library, Periyar Thidal Madras; Murosolipathipagam, Madras; Periyar Illam, Erode; Proceedings of State Legislative Assembly; and Legislative Council; Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly: Who is Who?; and a number of books volumes, pamphlets, posters, election manifestos, newspapers, governmental orders etc.

It is hoped that this thesis will prove useful to students of political theory whose interest in the subject is more philosophical than historical and also to the general public to know and understand the hidden, controversial, and contradictory events that took place in Tamil Nadu from 1900 to 1976.

It is on the theme - of an alternative society, with a new set of social political environmental relations - that this thesis lays emphasis.
As a research student, I have tried to present the events factually without bias to make the study more objective, scientific within a set, theoretical frame.

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. In Chapter-I the theoretical frame of the study is delineated with a careful analysis of the philosophy and content of socio-economic justice of both Western and Indian thoughts. A comparative study and definition of socio-economic justice is also attempted. The Marxian concept of economic justice and society, has been elaborately discussed. Finally, the socio-economic order in India and the relative position of the ruling class and the ruled are elucidated. Can the concept of class struggle of Karl Marx be adopted in Tamil Nadu to achieve a just socio-economic order? It has been a most question for over a century. In Tamil Nadu a small new caste association formed by the non-Brahmins demanded reservation of seats etc., from the colonial rulers.

Chapter two deals with the origin of the non-Brahmin movement in the South and its bearing on such a socio-political development. The principle of non-Brahmin movement was one of sharing governmental posts/
jobs according to the numerical strength of population and restricting the entry of Brahmins. The Dravidian Association was founded by Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar in 1916, aiming at political power, but it did not materialise. A new organisation, the South Indian Liberal Federation (later known as the Justice Party) was formed in 1917 by Theyagaraya Chetty to propagate the non-Brahmin Hindu cause. The Justice Party drew its leadership from the elite of the various linguistic regions of the old Madras Presidency (the Andhra, the Tamil Nadu and the Madras area) and attained political power in the 1920 elections under the Montford Reforms, and lost power in the 1937 elections. Periyar, after leaving the Congress, assumed leadership of the Justice Party in 1939 and founded a new, historic movement called the Self-Respect Movement.

Chapter three covers Periyar's struggle for social reformation, emancipation of women, widow remarriages, self-respect marriages, preaching of atheism/rationalism. It also describes the movement of Periyar against imposition of Hindi and his support to various political parties that accepted the objective of the self-respect movement. The Chapter also provides a short profile of Periyar.
Chapter four provides the ecological setting and traces the political development of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam till its coming to power after the general elections of 1967. The D.M.K. is the off-shoot of Dravida Kazhagam of Periyar. A detailed analysis of the organisational set-up, parties, their ideologies, programmes and policies, participation in legislation, agitations, campaigns, their movements and their electoral performances has been attempted. A short profile of Annadurai is also provided.

Chapter five gives a brief profile of Karunanidhi, the then Chief Minister of Madras who had taken the responsibility of and initiative for implementing the cherished dreams of the non-Brahmin movement.

Chapter six explains the programmes for social justice during Karunanidhi's rule during 1969-76. They include: encouragement to social, inter-caste and widow marriages, Archakas legislation, slum clearance, beggars' rehabilitation, welfare programmes for physically handicapped children and women, free eye camps, emancipating the riksha-pullers, creation of memorials and monuments to popular leaders from all walks of life.
without party colour, improvements in Hindu religious temples, development of Tamil language and its culture etc.

Chapter seven discusses programme for economic development launched by Karunanidhi's government in Tamil Nadu such as agricultural development schemes, new industrial policy, small scale industries development, labour policy, Tamil Nadu Khadi and Village Industries, progress of general education, drought remedies, power for prosperity, welfare programmes for labourers under Thozhilar Nala Arasu, welfare programme for police, ex-servicemen; housing and slum clearance, introduction of Manunidhi scheme, road transport and development programme, improvement of national high-ways, a special scheme for scheduled castes and backward castes, one man court/commission etc.

Chapter eight discusses the demand of Karunanidhi for more power to states to enable them to achieve social, economic and political objectives without the intervention of the Centre; and to enrich the lives of Tamils to be active and bright citizens of a self-respecting state. The appointment of P.V. Rajamanner
Commission and its report on state autonomy is also discussed. The dismissal of the D.M.K. government by an order of the President of India is also examined.

Chapter nine is a final estimate of public policy in Tamil Nadu during 1967-76 the first State government which shouldered meticulously hundreds of welfare programmes for its people in the socio-economic spheres. It also brings out how a constitutional break-down of the State machinery in Tamil Nadu was brought about solely with political motives and for political ends, thus frustrating an enthusiastic and full-scale policy for socio-economic justice launched by progressive governments under the dynamic leadership of Annadurai, followed by Karunanidhi. It is hoped that subsequent events bear out the conclusions of this thesis.

A number of select and useful Tables, maps, graphs and bibliography of books, magazines etc., in English and Tamil languages are also appended to the thesis.