

EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE  
MADRAS PRESIDENCY 1900-'22, THE SOCIO-  
ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE ,

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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "Expansion of Higher Education in the Madras Presidency, 1900-'22, The Socio-Economic Context and Political Significance" submitted by A. Mathew is in fulfilment of eight credits out of the total requirements of twenty four credits for the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) of this University. This is his own work and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

The socio-economic standing of a community determined the extent of its access to Western Education and Western Education in turn, promoted the socio-economic standing of a community. Roughly this proposition was true of the 19th century British India. But towards the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries the economic position of a community began exercising more powerful an influence over the access to Western education and consequently their social position. There was a host of factors at play which were responsible for this, the economic transformation and successive changes obtaining in the political atmosphere being more significant. This study is an attempt to understand this process of change in British India, i.e., when the economic position of a community was beginning to exercise more decisive influence than merely a higher social status as did earlier to the acquisition of Western education. The area of study is confined to the Madras Presidency for a period of 22 years from 1900 to 1922, where such a change was most conspicuous during this time.

Why was it more conspicuous in the Madras Presidency than elsewhere and during this time than earlier?

First of all the social composition in the Madras Presidency and if its Western educated was in many ways far different than the rest of British India. Secondly the change in the

pattern of higher educational growth as influenced by the economic position was faster and more decisive in Madras during this time than earlier and elsewhere.

English education employed as the most powerful medium to Westernize Indian society and the privileges that it offered to the recipients though realised by all was possible to but a few. Initially those who had literary traditions, which always followed a high or social status, were able to take advantage of it more than the others. In the Madras Presidency Western education was spreading on a very narrow social lines than elsewhere in India, i.e., the Brahmins. And the privileges of English education too, viz., public services and learned professions, therefore were enjoyed by the Brahmins. Early in the 19th century, a higher social status and the literary background helped the acquisition of Western education and also privileges to which, under the British rule, English education was the doorway. But towards the end of the 19th and early 20th century, the ability to obtain Western education and its privileges was beginning to be governed by the economic position much more than by mere social status. And therefore the Madras Presidency which had presented a highly Brahmin biased growth and spread of Western education hitherto, was beginning to change and show trends of wealthier non-Brahmin caste Hindus trying to challenge the Brahmin hold over Western education - as a result of the British economic middle class to serve in the subordinate areas of the administration.

But why was it faster and how was it more decisive in Madras Presidency than elsewhere?

The change from a social status oriented to an economic position oriented educational growth, a common phenomenon in British India, was more decisive in Madras. This would be evident from the way in which economic position was reinforced by social and political organisational strength, organised for the purpose of reversing the mere higher social status oriented educational growth.

As a result of the economic transformation (limited though in extent) those who had benefited in this process were also taking to Western education and were looking forward to the ascendance that the Western educated Brahmins were enjoying. And when English education at the Secondary Schools and Colleges began to cost more and more, those with better economic standing were beginning to show symptoms of overtaking those whose strength lay in their higher social status. Thus the economically well off caste Hindus were invading the schools and colleges at a faster rate than the Brahmins.

However despite a faster rate of progress, the principal, wealthy non-Brahmin caste Hindus were unable to compete with the Brahmins. It was here that the Madras Presidency presents certain peculiarities from the rest of British India.

The Brahmins had appropriated to themselves the religious and social pre-eminence and also learning for ages. The rigour with which they guarded the rigidity of the caste system, even after the consolidation of the British rule, and in fact

adjusting themselves to continue their pre-eminence even after the introduction of the caste and religion bar free Western educational system, by taking to Western education and getting deeply entrenched in the public services, had effectively limited the non-Brahmins' capacity to break their monopoly. The most irritating reality was that the Brahmins constituted only 3.5% of the Presidency population. The attempt to break the Brahmin superiority in socio-religious spheres and now the English education and services under the Government needed not competition alone but an organised attempt that would help break the monopoly and reduce their dependence. Thus the non-Brahmin caste Hindus, wealthy and Western educated, but dominated by the Brahmins decided to organise not only to compete, but more important than this, to challenge and overtake the Brahmins. And as individual caste or community's attempt to obtain Western education and compete with the Brahmins did not succeed they felt the need for a collective attempt and an organisation. Then came the Non-Brahmin party, founded for this purpose, organised and conducted its activities and finally captured those places of importance which the Brahmins were holding. But in short, this is the story of the non-Brahmins' advance. The decisiveness of this advance was due to so many other factors. What were they?

There were many factors responsible to the success of the non-Brahmin Movement, whose contribution hastened to disfigure the Brahmin superiority and thus partly added to the decisiveness of this movement. There were also other factors which defied the challenge. Both these forces - forces of support



and opposition to non-Brahmins distinguish this movement from the rest in British India.

The slogan of social equality and freedom from Brahmin domination had powerful appeal to lower castes and untouchables who formed no less than one-fifth of the Presidency population. Secondly the slogans for equality of opportunities in places such as education, 'desire for social justice' in matters of appointments under the Government and demands of "Communal Representation" for political privileges had won them the support of even the non-Hindus like the Muslims, Christians and others. And finally the British hostility with the Western educated nationalists, a large contingent of which in the Madras Presidency were Brahmins climaxed by their decisive contribution to the Home Rule agitations of Annie Besant had complemented the non-Brahmins' opposition to the Brahmin superiority in places of importance, education, profession, social and political. Therefore, to crown their strength came forth the rulers' sympathy and support.

Of the forces that defied the non-Brahmins' challenge, first of all was the Brahmins themselves. Barring a minority of an orthodox opinion which saw no harm in Brahmin domination, the rest though did not deny the disadvantageous position to which non-Brahmins were subjected, but were quite vehement in opposing their "Communal Representation" as a British device to contain the nationalist movement by effectively succeeding in the 'divide and rule' game. But defiance to the challenge was not strong.

On the contrary, the non-Brahmin party though it was a loose combination composed of conflicting interests, it sustained a temporary period of unit precisely for a common purpose of achieving freedom from Brahmin domination. But the leadership of this movement, was borne always by the principal caste Hindus,,who had scaled the 'commanding heights' of intellectual ladder as much as the Brahmins. Yet the non-Brahmin party pleaded on its "backwardness" for support which attracted allies. It claimed proportionate share of political privileges with the rulers on the strength of their economic position and political allegiance and unseated the Brahmins finally, as all these factors helped to overthrow a minority from its dominant position.

In this struggle, English education was only one factor, but crucial and perhaps the central point. And as political importance the Western education had given had often assured a community's, such as the Brahmins, power to safeguard its advance, the non-Brahmin party sought to avail that political importance as which would automatically administer educational advancement.

The growth of higher education reflects this trend during 1900-22, and the political developments sanctions the desired turn finally in 1921-22. The growth of higher education is seen not as mere growth but as expansion - an expansion effected by each caste and community - as an indication of its social and economic position that were to count so much for political privileges. And in fact in order to understand the economic transformation of these communities as could be read in their

educational progress, the period of study has been advanced to the late 19th century.

There have been many studies on the political development during the period under study in general, and the non-Brahmin movement in particular - Eugene F. Irschick "Politics and Social Conflict in South India", Robert L. Hardgrave, "The Dravidian Movement", S. Saraswathi, "Minorities in Madras State", David Washbrook and Baker "South India: Politics and Political Institutions, 1880-1940" are to name but a few. These and other studies touch upon the question of the importance of English education. But they emphasize, with some exception to Irschick's, has often been partial in that the political developments are seen either as a struggle between majority versus minority or as the offshoots of mere social conflicts.

This study attempts to highlight firstly the importance of Western education to the political developments in the Madras Presidency during the period. Secondly here, as elsewhere, the acquisition of Western education was not only dependent upon social status but also and more decisively, on the economic standing of each caste and community. The purpose is not to overlook the importance which this study assumes, was beginning to govern and direct the socio-political feuds.

In this study the politics of the Non-Brahmin Movement is understood as a political struggle between a well endowed socio-economic group, politically powerfully organised and engaged in the task of overthrowing the Brahmin domination in order to ingratiate themselves upon the place. The Brahmin

attitude and reaction in the struggle to the non-Brahmin Movement, and the British has received serious treatment.

However, such a study as this which attempts to understand the social and economic background the Western education and the political significance that the latter had acquired needs serious analysis of sources pertaining to all the three factors. Especially the study of the impact of the socio-economic transformation and its reflection upon the growth of higher education and again their significance on the politics of Western educated poses larger problems and calls for also larger solutions. This study is an attempt to comprehend such problems and solutions at a micro level. It does not claim to be comprehensive. Further paucity of time and scarcity of materials seriously handicapped the scope of analysis, and increased the dependence on secondary works. Especially at the last stage, which deals with the political development the virtual dependence on a major work done by Irschick, viz., Politics and Social Conflict in South India (The Non-Brahmin Movement) will be obvious to any reader. However, while the stress here has always been on both socio and economic context, while Irschick's is social conflict, the sources of information has been throughout his.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND THE PREVALENCE OF EDUCATION AMONG VARIOUS COMMUNITIES PRIOR TO 1900

#### The Brahmin preponderance and the Transformation of the non-Brahmins

The serious efforts taken to survey the prevalence of education in the Madras Presidency during the early decades of the 19th century by Sir Thomas Munro, the Governor and his collectors revealed the nature in which education was spread among various communities. It was found that factors such as the location of indigenous educational institutions, the relative proportion of each community inhabiting around the locality, the economic and social position did not seem to be playing any role in the nature of the composition of the school strength.<sup>1</sup> The reports from various districts, especially that of Mr. Campbell from Bellary showed that of the 6,641 scholars, only 243 were Musalmans and the rest were all Hindoos exclusively.<sup>2</sup> From the series of enquiries of the collectors in all the districts it became very clear that education was sought for either for the sake of knowledge by those like the Brahmins and the Caste Hindoos, and the principal

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1. F.W. Thomas, Growth of Higher Education in Southern India, Down to 1854. Published in the Journal of the Madras University, July, 1931, Vol. III, No.2, p.216. Munro observed that "in some districts reading and writing are confined almost entirely to Brahmins and the Mercantile communities ... and in some they extend to other classes ... principal ryots of villages."
  2. Ibid., Document 2, p.220. The classification such as Hindus, and Musalmans fails to give what were the castes among Hindus, but in another place where he mentions that the instruction was in Sanscrit and the scholars were often persons of far advanced in life, it looks very unlikely to be any one else than Brahmins.

ryots (Zamindars) who had the leisure and the social status to study the Vedas and the Sashthras. And the Musalmans who studied, studied for the sake of religious requirement. On the other hand, to the mercantile communities a knowledge of reading and writing and elementary accountancy was a necessity for their profession. Thus there was a clear difference between the former whose education did not follow a functional utility and at times advanced fairly both as a cause and consequence, and the latter, to whom knowledge for its own sake had neither any meaning nor feasible and therefore what they required was elementary knowledge.

The consolidation of the British rule in India during the second half of the 19th century was accompanied more in the evolution of a complex politico-administrative machinery that were far different from the pre-British days. The process of the introduction of Western education and the disappearance of the existing indigenous education led to one result of far-reaching significance. Communities such as the Brahmins who contributed in bulk of the intellectual and administrative 'know-how', in the pre-British administrations were faced with the dilemma. It was the disappearance of a privilege - that knowledge and functions that demand vigorous intellectual labour in the administration - a walk of life hitherto unquestioned and unchallenged, if not actively patronized in the pre-British days, was no longer their preserve. A decent survival under the British system demanded a radical change of profession in the changed socio-economic atmosphere that the British were elaborating. With an initial advantage of literary tradition

and also with certain amount of 'Brahmanical' inaptitude and indisposition to other, 'manual' pursuits,<sup>3</sup> the Brahmins had taken to Western education and opted for a continuation of the old style of 'learned life'. The other communities had neither this added advantage of literary background to start with nor any compulsion to force on them a new way of life; agricultural and other pursuits, moreover did not fail to attract the non-Brahmins as it did the Brahmins. The beginning of the Western educational system therefore, marks a change in the situation at least for the Brahmins.

Secondly, the British had created a political and administrative set up, the rearing up of which had introduced an amount of natives' association subject to their knowledge of the Western learning given in English style and medium. It was no political opposition to the British as a policy as to which communities came forward to obtain Western education, so long as the learned could become "English in spirit, in taste, in morals and in intellect" though they might be "Indians in blood and in colour"<sup>4</sup> and to whom they might, with confidence trust offices of responsibility; and to them also the responsibility of educating the rest of the natives could be entrusted.

Who this class should be, found some implied reference with the Governors, Governor-Generals and finally the Honourable Company's Court of Directors. The Governor-Generals

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3. Z.U.Ahmad, Systems of Education, England, France and Germany, p.231.

4. Henry Sharp, Selections from Educational Records, Part I, 1781-1839, Macaulay's Minute, p.116.

declared that the great object of the British government ought to be the promotion of European Science and Literature, and this "higher instruction" and not mass education to be imparted "among upper and middle classes". The final voice of authority were to add that "there cannot be any doubt of the justice of the opinion that raising the standard of instruction among those classes who could eventually produce a much greater and more beneficial change than one can hope to produce by acting directly on the more numerous classes". The decision, therefore, was to expend the funds on "higher tuition" in Western Literature and Science upon a few "superior classes" with surest prospects of success and with "their co-operation."

At the Presidency levels arrangements were made to establish 'superior' schools in the provincial towns and headquarters to forge a link between the 'better classes' of the capitals and presidency towns. The process of undoing Munro's efforts of education of the masses and education in the vernacular to English education by a 'filtration' process was decisive and very rapid. It is explicitly clear that Western

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5. Ibid., Lord Bentinck's Resolution, p.117 and pp.130-31.
  6. S.Sathianadhan, History of Education in the Madras Presidency, p.11.
  7. Ibid.
  8. Ibid., p.21.
  9. Macaulay's Minute and Lord Bentinck's declarations are well known. The Court of Directors informed the Governor of Madras and the Governor in turn the Collectors, that though it was resolved already to protect all classes from any possibility of real violation, the circular of the Governor noted not to prematurely be vigorous in enforcing even the right principles of action and to be content in reminding the natives of the Court's principle of equality to all regardless of caste. Ibid., p.22.



education through English medium and not vernacular education to the masses or superior education only to "better" classes of people was its avowed object. While inaugurating the Presidency Institution, later to become the Madras Presidency College, the nucleus of the future University of Madras, Mr. Norton, the President of the University Board declared that although this institution excluded from benefiting from the most useful higher learning of the Science and Literature, no class or quality of the people, yet it obviously concerned most that order of the native public who have "the means and leisure to profit by such instruction."<sup>10</sup> The Governor laid stress upon need for the natives of grasping "the importance of education in the real sense of the word..."<sup>11</sup> Such grasp they were convinced, was possible only to the "superior classes". "The light must", according to Mr. Norton, "touch the mountain tops before it can pierce to the levels and depths."<sup>12</sup>

The British did not at any rate say that Brahmins were the only "superior" or "better classes" exclusively. The implication would fit to "those who have the power, means, and leisure to profit by such instruction." It will not therefore be correct to infer that only the Brahmins had the "power, means and leisure". There were, under the British system more non-Brahmin wealthy, leisured classes under their Zamindari and

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10. Ibid., p.23.

11. Ibid., p.24.

12. Ibid., p.25.

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Ryotwari settlements. Yet it may be asked why then, the Brahmins were the first and largest to respond to Western education. As mentioned earlier, the Brahmin's initial advantage of literary tradition, non-existence of an alternative acceptable to them and finally the advantages obtainable under the British administrations, explained the Brahmins' exodus to Western educational institutions. In the course of the expansion of education in general and higher education in particular, the realisation of the advantages of services under the British was spreading among other communities as well. The factors that encouraged them to obtain Western education should also explain the nature of the incoming social and economic changes.

The new political order under the British rule built around a complex administrative structure both at the Imperial centre, Calcutta, and the Presidency capitals, to efficiently tap the economic resources of the land, mainly land and other revenues, necessitated a very complex machinery, which retained the characteristics of the old methods but clothed in British style; with a new language etc. The introduction of Western education to the natives whose service could be profitably and cheaply employed, profitably because, the natives were familiar with the earlier administrative methods, more than the Englishmen, and cheaply because, it was costly for the Honourable Company to import Englishmen to too lowly administrative tasks. It was because that the Brahmins who were mostly associated with the pre-British administration, revenue administration

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13. Aparna Basu, Growth of Education and Political Development, 1898-1920, p.224.

being almost their favourite, and also were readily willing to sell their intellectual labour power to the British, their taking up to Western education earlier than others became clearer.

Besides administrative expediencies and monetary considerations, the question of concentrating their efforts on imparting Western liberal education only to 'superior classes' was a political issue too. The strict adherence to religious neutrality and secular education, vigorously enforced after the Mutiny of 1857, were efforts to win over the confidence or the loyalty of the upper classes or the native 'gentlemen' to make them allies of the British Government. As a matter of policy, it found references right from the famous Macaulay's Minute and even earlier. This loyalty and alliance was to be forged by inculcating Western liberal values and ideas through Western education - to cast the Western dyos and the English mould to the Indian cloth - so to say. Also as financial considerations imposed severe constraints to a trading establishment, the East India Company, and even after 1857, the British Government - in India, this introduction of liberal education was not possible to be imparted to one and all. Therefore, it was to filter through from top, 'superior classes' to the bottom, the masses.

The British intention was to train Indian personnel to staff the vast politico-administrative structure in order to facilitate the running by serving in the subordinate roles in the Revenue, Judicial, Commerce, Finance, and other such departments. But at the same time even this 'subordinates' were to be strong "British allies" influenced by Western

learning and values educated through English, as the means of communication were English from top to bottom of the administrative hierarchy. It was explicit that only those who were willing to subject themselves to all these conditions, were taking to Western education. Therefore the proportion of each section or community's strength in the educational institutions should reflect its 'preparedness', for these (social and economic) changes.

Detailed study of the pupils, their backgrounds, in the educational institutions was only gradually undertaken in the second half of the 19th century.<sup>14</sup> Classification hitherto were only religious and not according to castes. Growth of education in British India and in every presidency came under comprehensive review a few times for different purposes; some of them were years like 1854, 1858, 1871, 1882, 1901, 1913, and 1917 etc., and those periods serve as convenient points at which the progress in the preceding years can be studied.

In the Madras Presidency particularly, the study of the prevalence of education among various sections (mainly based on castes) was a product of the second half of the 19th century. In an attempt to understand how various classes and communities responded to higher education at the collegiate

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14. Classification of the pupils at various stages of instruction till the establishment of the universities were done generally at the level of religious differences and not at the level of various sections within one community like the Hindus. Only after the undertaking of the census reports, such details were looked into more carefully.

level, the Director of Public Instruction found at the Presidency College, Madras, in the year 1864-65 as follows:-<sup>15</sup>

	Hindus	Muslims	Others	Total
1. General Branch	55	0	6	61
2. Legal Branch	25	1	14	40
3. Collegiate School	<u>134</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>174</u>
Total ...	<u>214</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>275</u>

In the higher classes of the Provincial and Zillah Town institutions he found,

	Hindus	Muslims	Others	Total <sup>16</sup>
Government schools of the higher classes	2,417	284	153	2,859
Government schools of the middle classes	3,680	215	138	4,033
Private Colleges Doveton	12	-	170	182
Private schools of the higher classes	1,945	133	592	2,695

It is evident that nearly three-fourths of the strength was accounted by the Hindus. However, as to which communities among the Hindus shared more of the strength is unclear from this. But from the distribution of the successful candidates according to a division within the Hindus as Brahmin Hindus and 'other Hindus' is more helpful and this is clear from the result of the university examination, for the same year.

15. Reports on Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency for the year 1864-65, Vol.I, p.120. (hereafter it will be referred to as R.P.I.).

16. Ibid., pp.121; 122-24; 126 and 127-28.

Classes	Matric	Per-centage	Arts	Per-centage	B.A.	Per-centage
Brahmins	113	51%	32	63%	7	63%
Non-Brahmins	60	27%	6	12%	3	27%
East Indians	9	-	2	-	-	-
Europeans	10	-	5	-	-	-
Native Christians	22	-	4	-	1	-
Muhammadans	6	-	-	-	-	-
Total ...	<u>220</u>		<u>49</u>		<u>11</u>	

What was vaguely said of the representation of Hindus at the level of the colleges and schools became clearer at the level of the results of the examinations. The Brahmins showed a tendency for preponderance as the level increased.

With incentives given for higher education in the 1854 Despatch especially through the system of grant-in-aid rules and the activities of the Missionaries in the field of higher education, the latter expanded year after year. The position in the year 1871, was helpful as an important issue viz., the Local Self-governments Measures, gave greater freedom to local towns and Municipalities over Primary and Secondary education. A process of increasing government withdrawal and gradual transfer of higher educational institutions to the Boards gave more opportunities to Provincial towns to revise the status of their educational institutions higher, an opportunity hitherto not necessarily aided by the government. Henceforth the opportunities for higher education hitherto available only to Presidency and Provincial big towns were within easy access to

people even in ordinary Tahsil headquarters, even places where there were no colleges and high schools earlier. Therefore, it is a convenient point to review the growth and prevalence of higher education as in 1864-65.

Within 15 years after the establishment of the Madras University there came up 13 colleges, 52 Boys' schools (High schools), 484 Middle schools and only one High school and 84 Middle schools for girls. Along with the Primary schools and other schools there were totally 4,401 institutions and 135,192 scholars of both sexes.<sup>17</sup> Just as for the year 1864-65 the examination results for the year 1871-72 revealed,<sup>18</sup> on a comparison,

Classes	Matric	Arts First <u>1864-65</u>	B.A.	Matric	Arts First <u>1870-71</u>	B.A.
Eurasians & Europeans	19	7	-	51	4	-
Brahmins	113	32	7	354	40	14
Other Hindus	60	6	3	144	23	8
Muslims	6	-	-	8	1	5
Native Christians	22	4	1	54	2	2
Total ...	<u>220</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>611</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>29</u>

In a matter of less than a decade the symptoms of a competitive tendency of the non-Brahmin Hindus with the Brahmins was

17. R.P.I., Madras, 1871-72, p.1.

18. Ibid., p.20.

visible. The non-Brahmin community's entry into the arena of Western education was late and therefore, their capacity to influence the total was restricted. However, their increase as against the Brahmins' looked encouraging: from a position of 27% against 63% as were the Brahmins in B.A., the former maintained around 26% while the Brahmins were having only 50% of the total graduates. In the course of the educational progress for the rest of the period these two 'developments' namely the individual progress of the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins in proportion to the total and the proportional increase between these two communities at different points of time will be kept in mind.

From 1871-1900, i.e., till the time of Lord Curzon's tenure of office, the policy of Laissez-faire competition of the private agencies in educational activities with governments' encouragement given through the Local and Municipal Boards, and the Government's main responsibility over primary or elementary education - all those factors continued unhindered till the time of the present century. The considerable strides made in the field of higher education explained earlier was a product, as it will be noted below, of the increasing demand made by these sections of the populations for English education. An attempt will be made in the following pages to study the progress of competition from different angles.





Table I

Return of Schools and Colleges and of Scholars for the years: 1881-82; 1884-85; 1891-92 and 1895-96, according to the classes of the communities. (taken only for the Brahmins and non-Brahmins)

Arts Colleges

Years	Total	Brahmins	Non-Brahmins
1881-82	1,732	1,540	30
1884-85	2,469	1,649	558
1891-92	3,818	2,600	844
1894-95	3,396	2,325	694

Professional Colleges

1881-82	262	108	75
1884-85	331	361	148
1895-96	980	680	201

Secondary Schools

1881-82	-	-	-
1884-85	50,912	20,214	22,210
1891-92	30,719	14,157	10,479
1895-96	42,154	19,856	14,647

Primary Schools

1881-82	-	-	-
1884-85	332,339	40,805	242,437
1891-92	495,044	58,940	333,481
1895-96	533,124	56,547	354,329

Grand Total

1881-82	339,683	32,724	325,724
1884-85	430,851	68,522	287,136
1891-92	643,930	97,145	430,103
1895-96	791,634	103,206	484,471

Source: Calculated from 1. R.P.I., Madras, 1881-82, Col.II, Part II, Statistical Tables 1 to 4.  
R.P.I., Madras, 1884-85, Vol.I, General Tables No.III.  
R.P.I., Madras, 1891-92, Vol.II, from Subsidiary Tables, pp.1 to 160.  
R.P.I., Madras, 1895-96, Vol.II, from Subsidiary Tables



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The classification for 1881-82 (see Table I) dealing with Hindus generally without driving them as done in later years precludes any possibility of serious treatment of the data. But beginning from 1885-86 to 1895-96, in a decade, the Brahmins had maintained nearly 60 to 65% of the total strength for themselves and they had increased their individual strength to nearly 40%. The non-Brahmins on the other hand, did not show any improvement to the tune of affecting the total favourably for them, but singly registered a growth of only 25% after 10 years though just 5 years before they showed signs of faster advance viz., 50% from 1885-1890.

At the secondary stage it is little unclear as the classification of schools were subjected to the educational rules and the grant-in-aid Codes had undergone different changes and the fluctuation in the total strength itself is obvious. The Brahmins themselves had declined in their number but managed to keep it within a fluctuating range of 10% or so, while the non-Brahmins neither increased individually nor in proportion to the strength of the Brahmins. By sheer strength of their numbers they overwhelmed the Brahmins not only singly but considerably influencing the total number viz., 48% versus 40% of the Brahmins above 60% throughout. It is clear therefore, unlike the pre-1850's when their representation was almost negligible, the non-Brahmin Hindus were approaching towards Western education gradually but steadily.

To examine this from another side of the picture, the results of the university examination at such intervals is helpful. The University of Madras had examined within 30 years from 1870-71 to 1900-01, the following number of<sup>19</sup> candidates.

	Matric passed	F.A. passed	B.A.	B.Law passed			
1871-81	16,870	5,681	2,696	1,141	917	472	114
1881-82 to 1892-93	70,338	20,144	18,261	6,119	5,142	-	428
1893-94 to 1900-01	46,968	12,142	24,862	8,831	6,536	1,911	582
<b>Total</b>	<b>134,176</b>	<b>37,967</b>	<b>45,819</b>	<b>16,091</b>	<b>12,315</b>	<b>2,025</b>	<b>1,058</b>

Not all the results published annually give much information as to the Brahmin and non-Brahmin Hindus' representation in the university examinations.

The increase in the higher stages especially at the First Arts and B.A. levels are patent more than at the Matriculation level. The growth if expressed decennially in terms of percentage, should look more impressive than it is here. It is doubtful whether such rush for university education existed in similar proportion elsewhere. The growth at the last decades must mark the growing demand by all communities for higher education.

However, the classification as was mostly done at the level of the Hindus and non-Hindus like Muslims, Christians and so on,

19. Compiled from the Reports on the Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency, for the years 1870-71 to 1900-01; Statistical Abstracts and Government of India Census, 1901, Vol.III, Madras, Part I, Report.

it is difficult to get a quick idea of which castes or important sections availed of the higher educational facilities more than the others. Such classifications were done both incompletely and not totally for all the university examinations, and also only occasionally and not annually.

Distribution of the scholars as represented by the Madras University examinations and its results. 20

Years	Muslims	Brahmans	non-Brahms. Hindus	Native Christians	Euro-peans	Others	Total
MATRICULATION							
1876-81	81	3,003	1,178	359	257	-	4,778
1885-86	144	4,815	1,989	687	336	10	8,211
FIRST ARTS							
1876-81	9	621	193	82	51	-	949
1885-86	22	1,409	934	143	50	1	1,920
B.A. DEGREE							
1876-81	2	301	87	52	15	-	440
1885-86	10	517	152	58	17	-	754
1886-90	10	563	145	51	13	-	792
1891-95	14	1,021	248	131	25	-	1,439
1896-1900	29	1,453	404	141	23	-	2,020
Total..	65	3,855	1,036	433	93	-	5,455
Percentage of Population	3.8	3.2	85.6	2.7	0.1		
Proportional increase in %		66%	17%				

20. The Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, 1886, Vol.V, --- Minutes of Evidence taken in Madras. Calculated from the Enclosure of Statement of Information of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Secretary, the Public Service Commission, pp.49-50; also for the year 1913, Vol.II, Evidence by Seshagiri Aiyar, p.417.

The non-Brahmans lagged behind the Brahmins in the rate of increase from 1890-95 in their individual increase by nearly 5%: i.e., 70% for non-Brahmins and 75% for Brahmins. However the increase for the non-Brahmins for the later half of the last decade of the last century was greater than Brahmins is evident. Yet, the higher the stage, lesser the number of the non-Brahmins was the position till lately. But as these figures show, though late entrants, the non-Brahmins' acceleration of the speed seems to have been faster than the Brahmins even in the higher stages. The question why the non-Brahmins were so vigorous in acquiring higher education should explain why only the non-Brahmins i.e., the non-Brahmin caste Hindus, felt greater need for Western education of the higher form.

#### Western Education for a new Socio-Economic Order

Western education was introduced as the principal aim of the British Government by a series of edicts culminating in the Woods Despatch of 1854. To understand the socio-economic context in which English education was introduced, it is helpful to enquire why the British chose to introduce Western education with a comprehensive administrative structure to perform this task efficiently, only in 1854 and not earlier in the early 19th century?

The first half of the 19th century was a crucial period of the British rule in India when they were engaged in the task of consolidating the empire they had conquered. The immediate concern to the mercantile establishment of the

East India Company was a politico-administrative task but at the same time ensuring the stability, continuity and profit of the newly acquired sources of income, the revenues from land and allied resources.<sup>21</sup> The creation of the Zamindari landlordism after the British model, introducing property rights for the first time in Indian history, was the first step to create a new economic order as the basis for British 'connection' and permanence in India. The Ryotwari system was a more refined variety of private property rights. Throughout the first half of the 19th century they concentrated their energies in perfecting and assuring the permanence of the system.

A political order of the British framework imported into a colony, was to facilitate in an elaborate scale the economic functions, with the help of a huge administrative machinery. It was found impossible to administer the dependent races in India entirely by the ruling class personnel not only because it would tax the trading establishment's resources to remunerate the imported persons but also because of, and more important, their alienness to Indian languages, culture and social customs etc.

A class of interpreters, employed in the subordinate ranks of administration from among the Indians became a dire necessity as the administration expanded into various departments. The

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21. For a good discussion on the British Indian Government's reluctance to assume direct responsibility to educate the Indians and why Indian education remained a 'backbench subject', see Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, The History of Education in India, During the British Period.

social composition of the class of persons did not matter to the British as much as if this class of persons (Indians) could be transformed into a new 'class' as part of the new socio-economic order they envisioned to create.

Western Science and Literature introduced through English linguistic, cultural and ideological media was to play the crucial role of moulding the socio-cultural outlook and political attitude required for the new order. Therefore, the introduction of modern education with a complex structure was to accompany and follow the elaboration of politico-administrative machinery, thus shaping the economic and social order, and not precede this, as it was felt 'pre-mature' by every declaration and despatches of the honourable Court of Directors,<sup>22</sup> the Governor-Generals and the Governors. The course of villations on the part of the East India Company and the Court of Directors till 1835 is understandable in the light of such developments. The process of legislatively deciding in favour of large-scale involvement in Western education from Macaulay-Bentinck era to 1854 therefore marks the realisation of the urgent necessity to shape the socio-cultural attitudes and

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22. The Marquis of Tweeddale, the Governor of Madras viewed the ill-success of the High Schools Department, of the Presidency College to the unpreparedness and apathy of the natives and warned against any premature attempt to establish the Madras University before the natives had learnt to appreciate the measures of the Government. He considered that the decline in the attendance which decreased from 167 to 48 and in fact never exceeded 180 at any time in 10 years as owing to the indifference of the natives. The Madras Government concurred with his views and opined that the natives had not supported the University to the extent which the Government had been led to expect. S.Sathianadhan, op.cit., p.27.

outlook of the 'important sections' or 'superior classes' of India through 'superior education' of the West. The fact that British initiative was heartily responded by the 'superior classes' to the introduction of Western education was amply borne out not only by Macaulay's 'findings' but also reinforced by Raja Ram Mohun Roy's protest for wasteful obsession with the decadent Sanskrit and Persian learning.

#### The Principal Recipients of Western Education

The backbone of the British power in India were two elements: the landlords and those that serviced the subordinate administrative machinery. The landed classes were to form the social base of the Empire, the educated classes who served the administration in various departments were to provide the intellectual-cultural base, both among the landlords, taking to Western education and moving to urban centres as well as the urban sections. Both of these were to supercede the pre-existing social and economic order where neither landed sections were organised systematically for the purpose of transformation, nor the pre-eminent social groups allowed others to partake knowledge and allied tasks in the administration. Thus, while the concept of private property and competitiveness was to replace feudal forms of overlordism, petty-autocratism in the rural side with the landlords, "wealth, power and means" or in short, only who had the means and the leisure to afford Western education and 'qualify' for administration were to supercede the traditional social pre-eminent castes and communities. It was immaterial



to the British as to which caste came forward to join the rank and file of the 'new order'<sup>23</sup>. It was, nevertheless, of crucial importance, that those who received English education should generate the cultural vitality, the social outlook and belief, embody all that was English. The degree to which the Indians imbibed British language, culture, social outlook and the education of Western Science and Literature would decide the extent to which they could scale the social order, material benefits and privileges.

The process of these policies finding concrete manifestations in practice in the various Presidencies showed some variations. Only a few and lower steps in the administrative hierarchical ladder were open to Indians, and these Indians were to be 'superior classes'. The politically dispossessed erstwhile aristocratic elements, and the Zamindars and principal ryots were not attracted to constitute what Harrison calls, the bureaucratic 'steel frame'<sup>24</sup> the British were creating. The reasons are not far to seek. In the Presidency as a whole, 'Native Chiefs, Zamindars, and other wealthy classes, considering that education and the passing of public examination were only necessary, to those seeking employment, were not generally<sup>25</sup> resorted to the public institutions. And officials and petty

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23. For a similar and a more detailed discussion of this line of analysis, see A.R. Desai, Social Change and Educational Policy, M.S. Gore and I.P. Desai, (ed.), Sociology of Education.
24. Selig S. Harrison, India, The Most Dangerous Decades, p.57.
25. Anil Seal, Emergence of Indian Nationalism, p.109.

officials, whose salary largely being low could hardly entitle<sup>26</sup> them to be ranked 'sons of wealthy parents'. Only those of a moderate means were keenest for English education can be seen from the fact that:-

Parental Income of male students, Madras Presidency,  
1883-84. <sup>27</sup>

	Colleges		S. Schools	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Less than Rs.200 per annum	905	41.6	38,264	62.1
From Rs.200-5,000	1,189	54.7	22,428	36.4
Rs.5,000 & upwards	81	3.7	935	1.5

The correspondence between moderate income groups and the main social groups that competed for higher education can be seen from the caste of the Hindu scholars in various stages of<sup>28</sup> education.

Percentage of total Hindus in:

Institutions	Brahmins	Vaisyas	Sudras	Others including Paraiyas
Colleges	74.6	3.2	21.7	0.5
S. Schools	45.5	5.6	45.8	3.1
Primary Schools	14.4	10.0	68.4	7.2

The expectations of the Government was to turn out the 'superior classes', 'capacitating them to engage in the most liberal departments of active life ... and the cultivation of those faculties, which may render them ornaments or benefactors to their native land.'<sup>29</sup> The contrast was that 'to engage in

26. Ibid., p.110.

27. Ibid., pp.109-10.

28. Ibid., p.107.

29. S.Sathianadhan, op.cit., p.24.

the most liberal departments of active life' at the cost of Rs.4 per mensem was possible to not even one more than 187, at any time for 10 years till 1853. And when the rate was reduced to Rs.2 p.m. there was an immediate accession of 52 scholars in the same year, 1853. The economic background of the scholars was not systematically looked into by the educational authorities earlier. But by the 'seventies and 'eighties of the 19th century, enquiries had shown that it was only the men of moderate means who were the keenest for Western education and Government employment, as the tables dealing with the income of the parents of the scholars noted.

The 'superiors' that the Government desired were in the year 1864-65, could be seen in the various Departments of the Presidency College, Madras:

	Hindus	Muhammadans	Others	Total
General Branch	55	-	6	61
Legal        "	25	1	14	40
Collegiate School	134	-	40	174
Total ...	<u>214</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>275</u>

The results of the University examinations held till 1864-65 likewise showed:<sup>30</sup>

Classes	Matriculation	F.A.	B.A.
Brahmans	113	32	7
non-Brahmans	85	6	3
Native Christians	22	4	1
Total ...	<u>220</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>11</u>

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30. See p.19.

And if by the term 'superior classes' the British meant, 'westernised' natives in the sense that those who had received at least their secondary education and upwards, taking up to Government Professions, enjoying 'offer or clerk' status and style of life and with a social outlook - all of which looked to the West, British educational system had produced only 20,555 of the 61,124<sup>31</sup> which sat for the Entrance examination, highest in India, since 1864-1866 in the Madras Presidency. So also at the end of the B.A. Degree course for 20 years, Madras University had produced 2,158 graduates,<sup>32</sup> higher than other Presidencies. Taking even the failed candidates, and the Europeans, Eurasians, Native Christians and others, the British efforts to create a new social order infused with Western education and living in the Western style of life of office-going, the new social 'tier' stood as one against more than 3,200 natives. And within this fraction each community and caste strength should be far more revealing. The ratio between Brahmins and other non-Brahmin Hindus stood at 74.6 and 25% at colleges, 45.5 as against more than 54% of the non-Brahmins at the secondary schools, the latter accounted for nearly 76% against a mere 14.4% of the Brahmins at the primary levels.<sup>33</sup>

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31. Anil Seal, op.cit., p.104.

32. Ibid. The Calcutta University had qualified 2,153, Bombay 1,014 and Madras 2,158 graduates.

33. Ibid., p.107.

Whether these British intellectual sons from the natives 'gentlemen' were the same 'superior class of persons' that the British wanted, it is worth while to recall the material backgrounds of the scholars. It is evident from the figures that nearly 45.52 and 4 percentages from Middle and Richer classes in the colleges and 62, 36 percentages respectively in the Secondary schools. Further the occupation of the scholars' parents showed that officials and petty-officials together sent nearly 40% to the college and 36% to the Secondary schools; the landholders contributed 38.4% and 30% respectively.<sup>34</sup> The attraction of the new socio-economic order was greatest not among the Zamindars, Native Chiefs and wealthy landholders, but among the upper and middle income groups of officials and landholders.

The Missionaries' Educational Efforts and the Social Composition of the Western Educated Class

Those who had received their education at least till the Secondary Schools through English medium and adopted a learned profession either under the government or independently are meant here as 'Western educated'. The initial acceptance to English education came from the traditional upper caste groups like the Bengali Kayasthas, the Marathi Chippavans and the Tamil Brahmins who transferred their old literate occupations<sup>35</sup> to the task of mastering English to serve their new masters.

34. Ibid., p.110.

35. Karat Prakash, Language and Nationality in India, p.104.

As the new social, political and administrative institutions all necessitated a 'Westernized' native community, the traditional upper caste literate groups outnumbered the commercial and business groups and the traditionally non-literary landlords all of whom were now wanting Western education. While at least till 1871 the government efforts were concentrated in providing schools and colleges to the Presidency and Provincial towns, the educational needs of the District and Tehsil headquarters and small towns were mainly catered to by the Missionaries.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the 'credit' of substantially introducing the rural or at least semi-urban landlords and commercial groups into the orbit of the 'Western educated' and in a limited way, 'Westernized natives' belongs to the Missionaries.

Though the efforts at 'christianizing' were not successful, the educational activities were viewed as the next best and effective means to bring Indians closer to Christian principles. Educating the lower rungs of the society, the

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36. The Report of the Educational Department to the Hunter Commission, 1882, noted "Long before 1854, the demand for a knowledge of English was far from inconsiderable and many schools were in existence in which the instruction given was of European type ... while there are only 3 government advanced schools ... the Missionaries ... by whom the desire for English education had been first kindled, were doing probably more than in any other part of India, to meet the desire they had awakened. In 1851, the Report noted that the Missions in various parts of the Presidency conducted more than 1,000 schools with 30,000 pupils of which at least 3,000 were receiving the elements of a liberal culture while all were being trained after Western methods and long before (even in 1826) any general State system of education was established such schools were roughly ascertained to be at work with more than 12,000 pupils, and that is why the Despatch of 1854 found more than in any other part of India." S.Sathianadhan, op.cit., pp.181-83.

'depressed' classes and the untouchables, through vernacular elementary schools at the village levels, the Anglo-Vernacular schools in the towns and English medium high schools and colleges in Provincial and Presidency towns was to be their objective.<sup>37</sup> The Missionaries educational strategy and system<sup>38</sup> was the product of a long experience in the educational field. By 1881-82, there were 10 Arts colleges under the government administration, and these came down to 4 by 1891-92. The 'aided' colleges were 16 in 1881, of which 14 were under the missions and this number had gone upto 25 in 10 years in which 18 were conducted by the Missionaries, educating nearly 2,000<sup>39</sup> of the 2,566 students in the aided colleges.

Their share in the Secondary and Primary schools likewise was considerable. They were also the main recipients of the grant-in-aid assistance to privately managed institutions.<sup>40</sup>

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37. The first ever educational activities in the Presidency was those of the Missionaries and in fact till the end of the vicillation over the assumption of the educational responsibility by the State. It was the Missionaries who mainly carried on the educational activities in India and in Madras Presidency it was very marked. For details of the number of schools and scholars of the government, and the Missions, see Section I, page 5. The Collective Efforts of the various Missions accounted or educating more than 8,000 scholars in the Presidency. Ibid., p.54.
38. Ibid., pp.207-10.
39. For a detailed account of the Missionaries' educational activities as a personal witness during the 1840s, see Mary Carpenter, Six Months in India, Vol.I.
40. Aparna Basu, op.cit., p.126. In the Madras Presidency the figures collected in 1859 showed the author says, that Mission institution received 5 times as much in grants as all other private institutions put together and that almost all aided secondary schools were under the mission control.

Their initial avowed goal, viz., conversion to Christianity cannot be said to have achieved much success, with their educational activities. But one thing stood out very clear in their focuss on educational efforts. They were pleased to portray the Western ideas and values in general and British in particular through higher education to the less urban provincial district town people. This had helped to broaden the social base of the intelligentsia that the government could hope to have created without their share of educational activities. Therefore, the attraction for a 'berth' in the superior social order offered via higher education in Western Science and Literature spread to the rural side, thanks to the works of the missionaries. As the chief function of schools and colleges was to supply personnel for the 'babu' tasks in the subordinate administration and allied tasks, the missionaries played a crucial role in bringing up an army of the English educated clerks. The attraction left no section of the society untouched as the missionaries were practically the only agency which made systematic efforts to associate all sections of the social hierarchy to literacy. The fact that they centred their efforts in the colleges and secondary schools only in the towns and cities does not deny that they were the first to reach the rural masses through vernacular elementary schools. But at the same time, in their emphasis on morals, principles and character and Western liberal ideas, to turn out more 'Englishman like' or 'Westernized natives', they had objectively played the role as the most effective agents of the British rulers, consciously or unconsciously. And in the ultimate analysis, it is undeniable, that knowingly,



or not, their work centred around showing the more liberal and beneficent side of colonialism and never exposed what it meant to a subject race. From their 'civilizing' mission in the initial stages, the missionaries gradually transformed themselves to be engaged in the task of turning out 'seasoned' (in all respects) recruits to the subordinate administration. And the initial hostility of the landlords and Zamindars forced the missionaries to turn towards the lower classes whose response was encouraging. Though the hostility of the Hindus gradually disappeared, the impetus that the lower classes of the community had received in having access to the government services helped to broaden the social base of the educated.

Towards the last two decades of the 19th century, higher education was no longer the preserve of the Brahmins as it was in the 1850's and 60's and 70's as the following shows:-<sup>41</sup>

	Matric		F.A.		B.A.	
	Brahmins	Non-Brahs.	Brahmins	Non-Brahs.	Brahmins	Non-Brahs.
1864-65	113	32	32	6	7	3
1875-76	744	329	81	29	48	14
1880-81	854	326	97	36	83	19
1885-86	1,184	453	321	91	117	30
1886-90					563	145
1891-95					1,021	248
1896-1900					1,453	404

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41. Aparna Basu, op.cit., p.128.

The increase from 1880's onwards is evident, but it is only at the undergraduate secondary levels that the preponderating influence was being taken over by the non-Brahmins. The argument that the virtual monopoly of the Brahmins at the B.A., M.A., Law levels and every other relatively highly paid offices is bound to gain credibility if either an attempt is made to strike a proportion between Brahmins and non-Brahmins at the levels as colleges and highly paid services. It would be doubly attractive if this difference is compared with their relative strength viz., Brahmins 3% and other Hindus more than 80%. It is precisely to avoid such mechanical inferences it should be understood as to who among the 'other caste Hindus' reach secondary and collegiate levels. Without atleast a fair knowledge of the material background of the various levels in some significant numbers, it will be incorrect to analyse the expansion in mere 'numbers and communities'.

#### Economic Transformation and Elites

In the survey of the expansion of higher education and the social composition of the 'Western' educated, it is impossible to comprehend the main problems without a proper analysis of, (1) what were the economic background of various communities receiving Western education and (2) from what regions and districts did they come from. For such an analysis as resulting from these factors, it is important to note the underlying process of economic transformation. The first section shows that by 1900 the Madras University had

examined nearly 140,000 Matriculates, 67,000 First Arts candidates, 19,000 graduates and 12,000 Bachelors of Law and qualified, 66,500, 16,300 and 11,200; 2,000 candidates in the respective examinations. In addition to these, there were many other Post-Graduates and Under-Graduates in Arts, Profession and Technical Branches. And these were the educated classes, i.e., those who were quite conversant with English, the language of the rulers. By 1900, there were 41 Arts colleges, 750 secondary schools and with others 26,926 institutions in all educating 850,224 scholars, in a population of about 38 million. The colleges and secondary schools alone were imparting education to 3,380 and 100,125 scholars respectively.

The increase when compared to the educational situation in 1858-59, 1870-71 and 1900-01 is more helpful to understand the expansion and its background.<sup>42</sup>

Years	Institutions	Scholars
1858-59	459	14,940
1870-71	3,479	112,776
1880-81	12,878	327,808
1890-91	22,028	644,164
1900-01	26,922	850,224

Why was this phenomenal expansion of educational institutions and scholars, an increase out of all proportions? Was it because of the 'enlightened' government policy and the Indians' attitude? or Did the economic transformation have any effect

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42. Calculated from S.Sathianadhan, *op.cit.*, Appendices I,II and III, and Census of India, 1901, Vol.XIII, Part I, Report, Madras.

upon the educational growth? If the rush for Western education was the result of both the social and economic transformation, in what way the changes in the economic activities compelled resort to Western education and not other profession as in the pre-Western education days of the first half of the 19th century? More fundamentally, was the attraction for a 'berth' in the new social (Westernized natives) order, a social factor in isolation from the changes obtaining from the economic transformation? And why the attraction for Government services and learned profession was more attractive than other forms of activities such as trade and commerce, agriculture and industry etc.? What was the relation between the economic changes and this development i.e., the craze for Western education?

Of all the three Presidencies, Bengal, Bombay and Madras, the difference in the social cohesion of the educated in the Madras Presidency stood marked. Were these the consequences of only the social differences or were the regional, racial, linguistic and social differences have any relation to the economic disparities? Was the economic transformation responsible to this? These and other related questions have to be answered with conclusive data of the economic changes of each region, and community. But for our purpose it is sufficient to know the results of these changes as manifested in the social position, and economic condition of the various communities.

The introduction of Ryotwari and Zamindari systems of landholdings in the rural agrarian sectors had given rise to

what can be broadly called Zamindars, Landlords, peasant proprietors, (or cultivator-landholders) tenants, (of the Zamindars and Absentee landlords) land and landless labourers. In the course of time there emerged the intermediaries between the landlords and the tenants, i.e., merchants and finally the money-lenders. At the towns and urban levels there came into existence the trading and commercial, money-lending and the petty traders-shopkeepers, the industrialists and the labourers.<sup>43</sup> The intellectual buttress of the administration and link to these classes there emerged the professionals of technicians,<sup>44</sup> doctors, lawyers, professors, teachers, journalists and so on. The rise of these classes implies the rapid transformation as resulting from the evolution of a well ramified system, the introduction of a market-oriented and money-based economy, generating powerful changes in the socio-economic relations.

The growth of these forces implied the process of crystallization of the economic disparities not only between the urban and the rural industrial and agricultural spheres, but also within each spheres between one section and another, like the industrialists and the labourers, the wealthy traders

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43. The industrial classes should not be taken to mean as an independent and fullfledged capitalists. In the urban areas, in spheres like cotton and textile industries they had some hold.
44. For a historical analysis of the emergence of these classes, see A.R.Desai, Social Background of Indian Nationalism; B.B.Mishra, The Indian Middle Classes; Anil Seal, The Emergence of Indian Nationalism, Chapter 2, and Tara Chand, The History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol. II.

and commercial groups and petty traders and shop-keepers in the urban centres and the Zamindar-landlords on the one hand and the tenants, land and landless labourers on the other sides in the rural areas. The economic inequalities among various groups often leading to social and economic antagonism - all these implied one thing - that life became a struggle for existence; the wellbeing contingent upon the degree to which either individuals or section could afford. Thus on the rural side, Zamindars and landlords had increasingly entrenched themselves in the Ryotwari zones of the Madras Presidency, a chain of intermediaries, moneylenders, absentee landlords grew up. Fragmentation of holdings, excessive land revenues, the periodical famines and draughts all prevailed on the peasant-proprietors and tenants and landless labourers increasing their vulnerability at the hands of the landlords, inter-<sup>45</sup>mediaries and money-lenders. Those that did not survive this oppression were condemned to swell the ranks of the army of rural pauperised and impoverished sections. The intermediaries, the money-lenders, the landlords, profiting from the process of modernization of agricultural economy, the town and urban economic activities, grew as opposed to the tenants and labourers, richer class of the rural areas. In the urban centres, as noted earlier, the gap between the rich and the

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45. For a revealing account of the conditions of the tenants and agricultural labourers at the turn of the present century and after, see the Minutes of Evidences Taken in Madras, by the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, 1928, Vol. III, pp. 317-18. Also see D. Washbrook and C. Baker, South India, Politics and Political Institutions, 1880-1940. Chapter on 'Country Politics'.

poor kept widening and by the '70s and '80s of the 19th century, the Madras Presidency's socio-economic scene presented very distinct economic entities.

The growth of the 'Westernized' native community, or the educated class and its social composition and economic context should be viewed against this background. Without this it will not be possible to understand the influx of the landlord-trader groups to the Western educational institutions competing along with the officials and petty officials for Western education. The rewards of Western education and the knowledge of English - whose degree of indispensability, were well realised by all sections - as the key to the loves and fishes of the office under the government. Similarly monetarily lucrative and also independent professions like Medicine, Law, and Engineering etc., offered an attraction which had no parallel to any other in a colonial context. All classes of the society, were drawn towards higher educational institutions, by the lure of offices under the government. Moreover a desk in the government office was a solid claim to social status.<sup>46</sup> Though the final object behind the acquisition of Western education was accession to the privileged social order of attractive material means, the economic background from which the various classes and communities represented in the higher educational institutions were

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46. Anil Seal, *op.cit.*, p.115. Agriculture was unprofitable. Trade and industry were mainly in the hands of the Europeans, highly paid administrative, military and other offices in practice was a ban to them. Therefore, within the available and profitable vocations, people either desired government offices and the able professions like Law, Medicine, and so on.

not the same. And therefore to assign a degree of identity to the educated 'class' as a whole would be to obscure their differences in the socio-economic and political set up, (this will be referred to in detail later) and that could be shown from the following:

	Colleges excluding Professional (100)		Secondary (100) Schools	
	1883-84	1892-93	1883-84	1892-93
Landholders	38.4	51	30.0	37
officials	28.5	33	17.5	33
petty "	11.8	6	17.0	10
traders	7.0	7	14.0	1

Secondly, education especially at the higher stages, was made a commodity to be bought and sold; the cost increasing decade after decade in the 2nd half of the 19th century.<sup>47</sup> After all education is a social commodity in a colonial context of acute competition for life and as education in the English schools and colleges either government, private or independent became passport to employment, education began to cost more and more.

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47. S. Sathianadhan, *op. cit.*, p. 139. The Madras Government's order, June 1870 observed, "notwithstanding the increased rates, the fees charged in government schools was still low, probably a good deal lower than compatible with the keen interest and widespread desire for education that had sprung up of late years," government insisted on the school manager to raise the fees.



The scale of fees introduced in 1871, in the Madras Presidency was,<sup>48</sup>

Classes	Govt. Schools		Aided Schools	
	Madras Rs. Ans.	Mofussil Rs. Ans.	Madras Rs. Ans.	Mofussil Rs. Ans.
B.A.	5.0	4. 0	3. 8	2.12
F.A.	4.0	3. 0	2.12	2. 0
Matric or VI	3.0	2. 8	2. 0	1.12
V & IV	2.8	2. 0	1.12	1. 8
III	1.8	1. 0	1. 0	0.12
II	1.0	0.12	0.12	0. 8
I	0.8	0. 8	0. 8	0. 6

The ill-success of the Madras Presidency College and the High School in the 1840's as never reaching more than 180 during any year for more than 10 years of its existence "as a result of the high rate of fees" viz., Rs.4 per mensem and also the immediate accession of 52 scholars in the year 1852, when this rate was reduced to Rs.2 can be recalled to see the increase in the cost of higher education. Fee notification of the later times superceded by others finally left the question of the scale of fees to be levied at all stages of instruction 'the discretion of the managers' in 1892.<sup>49</sup> Within a decade from 1881-92 the total fee receipts from institutions, public and private, advanced from

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., p.236. The fee notification of 1st June 1892, noted the rates of fees and the mode of buying them are left to the discretion of the Managers.

Rs.9,105,505 to Rs.17,270,958.<sup>50</sup> The economic background of the pupils at the higher stages of instruction revealed that in 1883-84, for example,<sup>51</sup>

	College		Secondary Schools	
	Total	Percent-ages	Total	Percent-ages
Less than Rs.200/- p.m.	905	41.6	38,264	62.1
Rs.200-5,000	1,189	54.7	22,428	36.4
Rs.5,000 & upwards	81	3.7	935	1.5

Earlier we have seen that landholders, officials and petty officials and traders shared 4, 3, 1, 1, in a 10 college students and 3, 2, 2,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , at the secondary level. From the above account of the parental income pattern it could be seen that wealthy investors, and rural Zamindars and rich landlords whose income may be fairly compared to be above Rs.5,000 annually, were not as keenly interested as the medium income groups like the officials and the landholders to send their sons to the schools and colleges. Therefore, the economic compulsion in search of a decent living obtainable through English education can be said to have attracted these sections. This is evident from the fact that nearly 42% of the college strength came from the income group of Rs.200/- and less annually. Whether taken by their income or occupation, it could be seen that, what is important is not their caste divisions but economic standing

50. Ibid.

51. Anil Seal, op.cit., p.109.

that determined their capacity to avail Western education offered in the secondary schools and colleges. The analysis that attempts to explain away the disparities and the disproportionate advance of a particular caste or a community as resulting from social disparities without taking into account the material capacity of each community, to 'buy' Western education will only obscure the force of conclusive data as those mentioned above. It is undeniable that the attraction for Western education and the compulsion for service under the government administration was more in those castes and communities, whose economic position was 'poor' and could pay the fees 'only at the cost of a struggle'.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps, to one out of 500 graduates, it did not matter that as soon as they had come out to the world they could get a decent job; but to the rest of them,<sup>53</sup> employment in some form or the other was a harsh necessity.

Perhaps it might look too mechanical an inference of the economic determinism which may tend to obscure powerful social relations. The British officials for their purpose too often political - and the other non-Brahmins in the Madras Presidency attempted to depict the advance of higher education among the Brahmins and the backwardness of other communities as a result of the former's social pre-eminence. In fact, the political development in the Madras Presidency was reared upon social antagonisms often projecting racial,

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52. The Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, 1886, Vol.V, Evidence in Madras, Section II, p.337.

53. B.T.McCully, The English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism, p.188.

linguistic and cultural differences as points of political disputes as these factors were assigned powerful influences in the acquisition of Western education, services under government administration and also independent professions. It was a truism that the Brahmins held a predominant position as the education scale ascended. But the Brahmins' overwhelming presence in the educational institutions and services with both higher economic status and social pre-eminence clouds the reality. Was a temple pujari, a village Kamam, an elementary school teacher - all of them were Brahmins - a constituent or component part of the Middle class? Tanjore and Trichy district had large Brahmin landlords. But there were larger estates and Zamindaris from the non-Brahmins not only in their majority districts like Tinnevely, Madurai, Ramnad, Coimbatore and Salem and so on, but even within Tanjore and Trichy districts. In the case of the Brahmins it was true that they had an initial advantage

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54. The Baliya Naidus of the Telugu region, the Nairs of the Malabar, the Reddis, the Mudaliyars, and the other Vellalas of the Tamil province were wealthy landlords and powerful competitors to the Brahmins. As early as 1886, Mr. Fuckle, the Collector for Tinnevely had transferred the Brahmins who were more in numbers, in the Collectorate, as the Vellalas had complained of the 'domination'. The Vellalas considered the Brahmins as 'recent interpolers' from the North, contested with them for the Local Boards and educational institutions and held the Brahmins influence at check. G.S. Ghurye, Caste and Race in India, p.376. The large landowners, particularly the zamindars and the main peasant groups were all non-Brahmin caste Hindus. The Census 1911 indicates that factory ownership patterns, that mainly the Naidus, Vellalas, Kapus, Chettis, and Komatis, all together owned most of the factories. For further details, see, Eugene F. Irshick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India, p.12

not only because they were early to enter but also with a literary background, in taking to Western education under their new masters, the British. And this fact was made the chief reason for their political privileges. And by the end of the 19th and early in the present century, every educational problem assumed political importance. The crucial point of dispute was the privileges that Western education gave both in terms of economic advancement and social status and political privileges, and recognition.

### The Rewards of English Education

It is perhaps well to begin to review the expansion of education in the Secondary and Collegiate stages with a survey of the 'benefits' that Western education bestowed till the turn of the century. And as political influences prevailed upon both the expansion and the prevalence of higher education it is appropriate to briefly be familiar with the reasons that signalled the advance that each community was trying to make.

The introduction of Western education as 'superior tuition' to the 'superior classes' was, as covered earlier, intended to turn out recruits for the subordinate administrative tasks. The course of such a policy had brought into existence a limited section of influential subordinate professional class. The educated Indians began to increasingly invade upon the Government services scoring success stage by stage. And by the turn of the century, powerful political opinion prevailed upon the government to reserve at least one-third of the administrative services, in all 'stages', to Indians. The growth of such an

opinion was indicative of (1) the rapid progress that the Indians had registered in the field of Secondary and higher education and (2) the realization that they were entitled for more but were denied. Also a related factor which led to this development was the virtual 'ban' on other avenues of life, other than administrative services, because, those like, agriculture was unprofitable, business and industry were incompetent; and not open to talents and military and police services etc. would not admit them. Therefore, that left the public services and all roads led to schools, and from the schools back to the public services and professions. 55 Talented chose independent professions, mediocre and others were destined to the Government offices.

Western Education and Public Services  
and Independent Professions

The British attempt to transform the feudal agricultural economy into a colonial and capitalist sector had meant among other things the introduction of private property rights safeguarded by the British system of Judiciary. British law superseded Indian customs; the former, secular, while the latter's legality was dictated by religions. The secularization of law that guarded the landed and other property rights - which had become so elaborate as the bulwark of the Indian economy - signalled the elaboration of the legal machinery. The English medium secondary schools, colleges and professional

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55. Anil Seal, op.cit., . . .

branches like Law, provided with perennial supply of scholars. Since these two i.e., Government services and learned independent professions were the avenues open to Indian at any rate, the Indians' preponderance in these departments are understandable. The Madras Presidency of the 1850's, for example, had the following numbers of Indians as the Judicial officers, well-versed with the Muhammadan law, with British variation.

Judicial Officers of the Madras Presidency in Madras Presidency, in 1851. 56

	<u>Hindus</u>	<u>Muslims</u>	<u>Others</u>
Principal Sadr Amins	11	2	3
Sadr Amins	15	25	2
Munsifs	102	13	13
Total ...	128	40	18

The growth of the legal professions was the result of the increasing disputes among Zamindars, landlords, Ryots, tenants, and labourers - all of whom sought the mediation of the Indian 'Vakils' versed well in English and the secular law. Therefore, the Indians, mostly Hindus, at any rate in the Madras Presidency as shown above, with an edge over their European counterparts had made concerted attempts to advance their numbers in the legal professions and institutions. The Legal Branch of the Presidency College, Madras, grew rapidly that from 1877-86 the year when the Royal Commission sat to

review the position of the Indians in the Judicial branches of the administration found the following numbers of Indians as Advocates, Attorneys, Solicitors at the High Court of Madras. <sup>57</sup>

<u>Madras</u>	1877		1886	
	<u>Indians</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Indians</u>	<u>Total</u>
Advocates	5	51	12	64
Attorneys and Solicitors	2	33	15	60

And in the Executive and Judicial branches of the uncovenanted Civil Service, with their caste, religion and educational qualifications in 1886-87. <sup>58</sup>

	<u>Total employed</u>	<u>Hindus Muslims</u>		<u>Number who passed</u>				
				<u>Ent- rance</u>	<u>F.A.</u>	<u>B.A.</u>	<u>M.A.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Madras	345	297	14	86	37	43	2	168
Percentage		86.0	4.0					
Madras		<u>Brahmins</u>	<u>Kshatriyas</u>	<u>Baniyas Vaisyas</u>	<u>Sudras</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Total</u>	
		202	2	13	74	6	297	

By the end of the 19th century the growth of legal profession assumed powerful significance by its expansion, unity and political influence. <sup>59</sup> Thus what was said as 'Hindus' and

57. Ibid., p.118.

58. The Educational records reveal that till 1900 approximately, atleast 1,920 Law graduates of the B.L. degree were graduated by the Madras University. The law graduates who had taken their Master's degree in Law and those graduated from Calcutta and Bombay Universities are not included here.

59. The 'Vakil' domination in the Madras politics, an all-India phenomena of the then Indian politics in the Congress wing, was then called the 'Mylapore Clique'.



'non-Hindus' in the 1850's becomes clear by the 'eighties and 'ninetees viz., two-thirds of the Hindus were Brahmins. For example, the distribution of Selected Government jobs in 1912:<sup>60</sup>

	No.	Percentage of appointments	Percentage of male population
<u>Deputy Collectors:</u>			
Brahmins	77	55%	3.2%
non-Brahmins, Hindus	30	21.5	85.6
Muslims	15	10.5	6.6
Indian Christians	7	5.0	2.7
<u>Sub-Judges:</u>			
Brahmins	15	83.3%	-
Non-Brahmin Hindus	3	16.7%	-
<u>District Munsifs:</u>			
Brahmins	93	72.6	-
Non-Brahmin Hindus	25	19.5	-
Muslims	2	1.6	-
Indian Christians	3	2.4	-

The wealthy sections of the non-Brahmins realized their educational backwardness as instrumental for the social and political privileges that Western education and services in the administration and independent profession brought to the

60. The Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, 1913, Minutes of Evidence Taken in Madras, Vol.V, Evidence by A.G. Cardew, pp.103-04.

61

Brahmins was denied to them. While the Western educated, sunk their differences at the national level to achieve a cohesion for the purpose of opposing the British as alien rulers and dominators, the Western educated non-Brahmins of the Madras Presidency sunk their socio-economic differences not to oppose the British who was the common enemy to the all-India nationalists, but the Brahmins, who were made the common enemies. Why?

The Brahmins' ascendancy and entrenchment in the services, professions, and domination in the political affairs - where nationalism was 'Brahmin-dominated nationalism' - imposed a virtual ban on the non-Brahmin aspirations for the same 'position' in the social and political arena. The crucial factor to these privileges was English education, whose availability increased proportionate to the economic standing. The non-Brahmins (Western educated) realized that neither proportionate to the economic standing nor commensurate with their numerical strength did they receive the 'Benefits' of Western education.

It was realized therefore, unless the expansion of education was influenced in their favour, it was impossible to

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61. While in the rural areas the local headmen-landlords' "un-assailable hold" which the British were so unable to control but which was such a potential source of trouble was matched by the powerful professional lawyers in the towns and cities. It was also the lawyers who were dominant in the Presidency and Provincial capitals to organise the Indians. In Madras and the Provincial towns the Brahmins were the prominent lawyers. It was these professional leaders who gave a virtual direction to the political activities. See Eugene F. Irshick, Review Article 'Interpretation of Indian Political Development', in the Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, pp. 468-69.

reach the position of the Brahmins. And for such 'expansion' as natural course of educational growth meant the continuation of Brahmins' preponderance, political influence was sought for interference. As the British were opposed to the Brahmins; - as the Western educated, indispensably entrenched in the administration, socially pre-eminent and politically powerful, the Western educated non-Brahmins found a natural ally with the British. The course of the 'struggle' assumed many logical but nationalistically absurd stances: one of them was the ways and means sought to influence the educational expansion. It is this atmosphere which underlies the growth of education at the beginning of the present century. The course of the struggle was to intensify during the second decade of the 20th century marking the development at every stage with explicit and loud protestations. But the late 19th century socio-political scene serves as the crucial background to developments during the early 20th century.

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## CHAPTER III

### EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, 1900-1922

A study of the expansion of secondary and higher education involves understanding of the multifarious problems purely educational, organisational, financial, policy matters, and often related problems. But the focus here is as far as possible to delineate the process of expansion and the prevalence of secondary and higher education. The purpose is to understand the social and economic context - basically a study of the socio-economic background of those who received secondary and collegiate education. Secondly the measure of educational progress was a major determinant to social position and the extent of political participation. However the educational progress itself was conditioned by other factors such as the economic position, socio-political organisational strength etc., which were used more effectively during 1900-'22, than earlier to influence the educational expansion. Therefore in order to understand the extent of educational progress, both the economic position as well as the articulation of socio-political organisational strength needs to be highlighted. And this would broadly indicate the significance between Western education and political development. The case of the Madras Presidency serves to know a 'case' - the relation between educational progress and political development. Hence the focus throughout will be not

'institutions and scholars' in mere 'increase and decrease', but an enquiry as to how many from which castes and communities availed Western education offered in the Schools and Colleges.

The pre-Curzon era of colonialism marked the zenith of free-trade or laissez-faire policy in the economic activities of British India. Educational institutions were part of the social institutions of a colonial society, and education, as a commodity, reflected faithfully in organisation, administration, curricula and content, the laissez-faire or free trade policy. Higher education especially at the secondary, collegiate and university stages, in the hands of Indians, marked considerable progress. In less than 50 years of the establishment of the three Universities in the Presidencies, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, there sprung up, in the Madras Presidency alone, as many as 21,491 institutions and 861,641 schools. Divided as 'public' and 'private' institutions the numbers stood as 20,792 with a strength of 740,628 scholars and 5,699 with 121,013 pupils respectively. Of the public

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1. R.P.I. Madras, 1901-02, and Ann., 1896-97 to 1901-02, Vol. I, p. 4. There are considerable differences between the Annual Administrative Reports, British India Statistical Abstracts, the Census Reports and the Educational Reports. 1921 Census, for example, states 26,926 institutions and 850,224 scholars, whereas the reports of the Educational Departments show as 26,491 institutions and 861,641 scholars. Since other Departments often draw the information from the Department of Education, the latter is taken as the most reliable source always.

institutions of 1900-01,	No.	Strength
Arts Colleges	41	3,279
Professional Colleges	6	636
Secondary Schools	603	90,057
Primary Schools	20,305	621,627
Other Special Schools	121	5,539
All Private Institutions	5,699	121,013
Total ...	26,491	861,641

The Madras Educational Rules were amended to rearrange the educational structure first in response to the Curzonian 'state control' method where expansion was contingent upon quality and efficiency of management.<sup>2</sup> The Indian University Act of 1904, the Madras Educational Rules, 1906, the introduction of the Secondary School Leaving Certificate in 1911, the Government of India Educational Resolution of 1913, Calcutta University Commission Report, 1917, and various other minor 'reorganisations' rearranged the educational institutions. The status of Upper, Middle, and Lower varieties of schools were constantly undergoing redefinition and classification in the light of new rules from time to time. Therefore, the position of the number of institutions was neither constant nor consistent. The strength of the scholars at each point of time may be taken as a more convenient indication of the expansion of education at each stage.

2. For a very detailed study of Curzon's 'interference' in the educational affairs specially at the University level and the political intensions, see Aparna Basu, Growth of Education and Political Development 1898-1920, and Eric Ashby, Universities, British, Indian, African. Studies in the Ecology of Higher Education.

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Number of Institutions and Scholars  
(selected)

Class of Institutions	1901		1911		1921	
	Institutions	Scholars	Institutions	Scholars	Institutions	Scholars
Arts Colleges	41	3,279	31	3,741	50	7,840
Professional Colleges	6	636	5	890	9	1,784
Secondary Schools	732	100,126	446	105,945	585	169,634
Primary Schools	20,305	621,627	24,686	969,379	34,906	1,146,121
Training Schools	74	1,612	83	2,989	160	9,500
Other Special Schools	57	3,927	93	4,618	94	5,794
All Public Institutions	21,215	731,207	25,344	1,087,562	35,804	1,168,673
" Private      "	5,711	119,017	5,291	128,163	3,927	111,177
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>26,926</b>	<b>850,224</b>	<b>30,635</b>	<b>1,215,725</b>	<b>39,731</b>	<b>1,799,850</b>
Increase:	1. 1900-11, 13%	2. 1911-12 to 1921-22, 29.6%	3. 1900-1922 - 47%			
in strength	42.9%		48.0%		116.6%	

3. Census of India, 1921, Vol. XIII, Madras, Part I, Report, p. 130.

Table II

The Expansion of Collegiate and Secondary Education -  
Quinquennial Progress from 1900-'01 to 1921-22.

Years	Arts Colleges		Prof. Colleges		Secondary Schools	
	Institutions	Scholars	Institutions	Scholars	Institutions	Scholars
1900-'01	41	3,279	6	636	732	106,126
1906-'07	36	4,687	6	935	550	97,576
1911-'12	31	4,922	5	890	378	104,382
1916-'17	41	7,920	7	1,655	449	147,901
1921-'22	50	7,840	7	2,015	535	170,837
Percentage of increase	21%	139.0%	16%	216.0%	-	60.9%

Source: Census of India, 1921, Vol. XIII, Madras, Report, p.130 and R.P.L., Madras for the year 1911-12 and the Quinquennium 1906-07 to 1911-12, Vol. II, p.31; Ibid., 1916-17 and the Quin., 1911-12 to 1916-17, Vol. II, pp.88-91; Ibid., 1921-22 and the Quin., 1916-17 to 1921-22, Vol. II, p.1.

The tables dealing with the expansion of institutions and scholars both totally as well as according to the stages, for the four quinquenniums as given in Table II point out to the considerable growth in the number of students than institutions. The increase for institutions was only 25% but scholars, nearly 110%.

The Social Composition of the Colleges Educated

Though the number of colleges have been fluctuating always the increasing demand for higher education can be seen from the fact that the strength in the colleges has more than doubled i.e., from 3,279 to 7,840 within 20 years. The professional colleges tell the same story i.e., the numbers enrolled had gone upto 2,015 from 636 as is evident from Table II.



How did the various communities contribute to the increase? The following throw some light:

Percentage of male scholars at the collegiate stage, in relation to their total numbers. 4

	Arts Colleges			
	1906-07	1911-12	1916-17	1921-22
Europeans and Eurasians	1	1	1	0.4
Native Christians	9	8	8	9.2
Muhammadans	2	2	2	1.7
Brahmin Hindus	70	68	69	61.5
Non-Brahmin Hindus	19	21	20	27
Others	-	-	-	0.2

None other than the non-Brahmins seemed to have taken as much as an advantage of the expansion; and in fact the Brahmins who maintained a near or above 70% of the college strength for more than the last 50 years were witnessing the slow but steady increase by the non-Brahmins. Each community's strength in the total numbers, as seen here was beginning to be weighed in favour of the non-Brahmins. The number of Arts and Professional colleges have increased from 41 to 50 and from 6 to 7 while the number of

4. Calculated from: R.P.I. Madras, 1906-07 and for the Quin., 1901-02 to 1906-07, Vol.II, p.94; Ibid., 1911-12 and for the Quin., 1906-07 to 1912, Vol.II, p.40; Ibid., 1916-17 and for the Quin., 1911-12 to 1916-17, Vol.II, p.98; Ibid., 1921-22 and for the Quin., 1916-17 to 1921-22, Vol.II, p.10.
5. Eugene F. Irshick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India, p. 18.

scholars in the former had gone up from 3,279 to 7,840 and from 636 to 2,015 in the latter, as noted above. The two principal competitors in the field were the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins. While their relative strength in the college population indicated a favourable turn to the non-Brahmins their individual numbers had grown as follows:

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Brahmin versus non-Brahmin scholars

Years	Arts Colleges		Law Colleges	
	Brahmin	Non-Brahmin	Brahmin	Non-Brahmin
1901-02	2,708	666	290	78
1906-07	3,275	890	302	69
1911-12	3,334	1,014	383	53
1917-18	5,163	1,518	429	105
1921-22	4,789	2,119	-	-
Increase roughly	76.8%	218.1%	47.9%	34.6%

Who among the non-Brahmins i. e., which castes within the block of non-Brahmins and in what numbers shared the phenomenal increase? In the absence of conclusive data this question will remain unanswered. Yet what proportion or say, how many in a 1,000 scholars reached the collegiate stage?

The number at the collegiate stages of instruction in the Public Institutions out of every 1,000 male scholars, belonging to the 5 main sections of the population can be seen from the following:

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6. Compiled from R.P.I., Madras, 1905-06, Vol.II, p.84; Ibid., 1911-12 and for the Quin., 1906-07 to 1911-12, Vol.II, p.40; Ibid., 1916-17 and for the Quin., 1911-12 to 1916-17, Vol.II, p.8; Ibid., 1921-22 and for the Quin., 1916-17 to 1921-22, Vol.II, p.10.

Table No. IIIArts Colleges

<u>Years</u>	<u>Europeans &amp; Eurasians</u>	<u>Native Christians</u>	<u>Muslims</u>	<u>Brahmins</u>	<u>Non- Brahmins</u>
1906-07	4	7	1	33	1
1911-12	7	7	1	30	2
1916-17	8	9	2	41	2
1921-22	7	8	1	37	2

Professional Colleges

1906-07	-	25	6	18	5
1911-12	17	25	6	24	3
1916-17	25	23	7	28	4
1921-22	34	26	8	49	6 (7)

Out of every 1,000 of the scholars, the Brahmins promoted at least 30 when their number was the lowest to the Arts Colleges while the non-Brahmins' ever highest was 2 at any year for almost a generation. In the professional colleges similar picture can be observed. Out of every 1,000 of their scholars, the Brahmins had 33 who could reach the collegiate stage in the beginning and increased it to 37 within 20 years. And even when their number was lowest, 30 out of every 1,000 Brahmin scholars went upto the collegiate level. But the non-Brahmins' position, though at the

7. Ibid. The non-Brahmin scholars at the elementary stages:  
in a 1,000

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
1906-07	943	51
1911-12	936	59
1916-17	922	72
1921-22	920	72

micro level doubled, did not show any appreciable increase. In other words, while 3.7% of the Brahmins were able to go upto the collegiate stage, the position for the non-Brahmins remained at 0.02% for more than 10 years from 1911-12 to 1921-22. Who were this 0.02% of the Non-Brahmins?

The answer to the above question would be to know what material background could bid for collegiate education, be it a Brahmin, non-Brahmin, Native Christian or a Muslim.

Distribution of male scholars at the collegiate stage according to wealth conditions: 8

Years	Total	Richer	%	Middle	%	Poorer	%
1905-06	4,370	174	3.9	3,431	78.5	675	15.4
1911-12	4,892	253	5.1	4,336	88.6	303	6.1
1916-17	7,540	60	8.0	6,349	84.2	554	7.3
1921-22	7,843	552	7.0	6,502	82.9	789	10.5

The point of demarcation among the three is quite ambiguous; below Rs.200 per annum for the poorer classes and an annual income from Rs.200 to 5,000 is indeed such a vast spectrum. The gap between one and the other being so wide, and wide also within a single 'unit', it is difficult to strike at any sensible proportion. The trend looks that (1) the Richer classes were also looking forward to Western education as an additional effective means to boost up their status, by going up to nearly 215% singly.

8. Calculated from R.P.I., Madras, 1905-06, Vol.II, pp.82-3; Ibid., 1911-12 and for the Quin., 1906-07 to 1911-12, Vol.II, pp.38-9; Ibid., 1916-17 and for the Quin., 1911-12 to 1916-17, Vol.II, pp.6-9; Ibid., 1921-22 and for the Quin., 1916-17, to 1921-22, Vol.II, pp.4-7.

The increase, as is evident from the figures inflates steeply in the second decade. We will have occasion to mark as to why the Richer classes, whom if we can identify as the big landlords, Zamindars, big traders and highly earning professionals, who were hitherto a little indifferent to the livelihood-oriented Western education, were now availing it in large numbers. It may not be totally wrong to presume that such invasion to colleges was not so much for the material prospects it offered as the political recognition that the Western educated were beginning to get. Secondly, the Middle classes whose annual income ranged from Rs.200 to 5,000 is indeed so large a range that it is difficult to strike a proportion between the middle classes of Rs.200-1000, 1000-2000, 2000-3000 and so on. Moreover, what percentage from these 'sub-groups' within the Middle classes flooded the colleges? The answer to this question can only be a common-sense work, because neither Rs.200 and upwards nor Rs.5,000 downwards can serve as a convenient base to divide the relative positions of the various sub-units in the collegiate strength. But considering the progress registered by the Richer classes and the ground lost by the Poorer classes i.e., from 20% to 10% the Middle classes had made good by annexing at least 10% more to their initial strength in the total.

That college education was becoming increasingly unaffordable to the poorer classes can be seen not only from the decline in their proportional strength to the total at both points of time i.e., 1905-06 to 1921-22, but also from the narrow marginal

progress they made singly i.e., 17% while the middle classes doubled and the richer classes shooting upto a little less than thrice over their initial numbers. This should also explain that whatever might have been the subjective preferences of individual sections of the Richer, Middle, and Poorer classes, the higher the economic position, easier did higher education become. In the context of a fee-based and competition-oriented educational system, obtaining under a colonial rule, the vulnerability of the poorer classes and the advantage of the Richer and Middle classes is not surprising.

#### Poorer Classes and Western Education

Our concern here is not the progress and expansion of education in its historico-narrative aspect, but the expansion and prevalence of education among various sections of the population, the social composition and the economic context. The social composition of the college strength, in the ultimate analysis depended upon the material capacity of each section to avail education in general and secondary and higher education, in particular, because it was a commodity whose availability increased in proportion to the fees-paying capacity of the recipient. The desire to reach a step beyond the secondary stage remained a vision to those who could not eke out at least 55 to 60% of the cost of collegiate education in the form of fees and donations and subscriptions viled in the garb of 'other sources'.<sup>9</sup> There was no symptoms of any decrease in

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9. H. Sharp, Progress of Education in India, 1906-07 to 1911-12, Vol.II, p.227.

Table IV

Percentage of total scholars (boys) at various stages of Instruction according to the occupation of parents or guardians.

I. Arts Colleges:

Year	Officials	Petty Officials	Traders	Land-holders	Total
1906-07	28.4	3.7	5.3	48.4	4,370
1909-10	34.0	6.1	6.5	45.7	3,905
1912-13	38.3	7.1	7.4	41.5	5,491
1917-18	34.6	7.4	12.1	41.9	7,779
1919-20	31.9	7.2	12.7	43.9	7,960
1921-22	35.8	6.2	10.1	40.6	7,843
Individual increase from 1905-06 to 1921-22	49.3	66.8	70.5	33.5	44.2

II. Professional Colleges:

1906-07	47.6	1.8	7.8	37.8	921
1909-10	48.8	0.5	6.2	35.9	843
1912-13	41.6	1.2	3.2	52.8	1,015
1917-18	43.3	0.7	7.3	36.2	1,734
1919-20	42.7	0.5	6.5	34.7	1,892
1921-22	30.5	5.5	6.1	36.4	1,988

III. Secondary Schools:

Years	Offi- cials	Petty Officials	Traders	Land- holders	Arti- sans	Coolies	Total
1906-07	29.1	9.8	8.8	41.6	0.8	0.5	23,368
1909-10	23.3	15.9	14.6	37.6	2.2	2.9	100,111
1912-13	23.9	14.2	15.5	38.2	1.8	2.8	105,439
1917-18	21.5	14.1	16.5	38.7	7.1	2.7	138,490
1919-20	21.2	14.2	16.8	38.4	2.3	2.7	147,149
1921-22	21.2	13.7	16.9	38.6	2.5	3.4	148,853
Percentage of increase or decrease of each	-27.1	28.4	91.0	- 7.2	212.5	580.0	48.6

IV. Primary Schools:

1906-07	1.9	6.3	12.4	44.8	8.2	24.6	649,481
1909-10	0.9	5.2	11.8	46.4	7.9	26.1	753,312
1912-13	1.1	5.2	12.2	45.9	8.4	25.1	884,309
1917-18	0.9	4.7	11.5	41.8	9.3	29.9	1,084,921
1919-20	1.0	4.8	11.8	40.5	9.3	30.5	1,092,039
1921-22	1.2	4.6	11.6	40.1	9.3	30.6	1,189,049
Increase or decrease	-36.8	-26.9	-6.4	-10.4	15.8	24.3	83.0

Source: Worked out of the figures from:  
R.P.L., Madras, 1906-07, Vol.II, p.84; Ibid., 1909-10, Vol.II, Part I, pp.96-7; Ibid., 1912-13, Vol.II, Part I, pp.42-45; Ibid., 1917-18, Vol.II, Part I, General Statistics, Table No.4; Ibid., 1919-20, Vol.II, Part I, Supplementary Statistics, p.5; Ibid., 1921-22 and Quin., 1916-17 to 1921-22, Vol.II, Part I, p.6.



the cost and in fact the increase in the cost to the scholars was highest in Madras of all the Presidencies.<sup>10</sup> The question of the social composition, therefore, was inseparably bound up with the material conditions. Looked at a related but another angle, (see Table IV), it becomes further clear.

#### The Elitist Character of Education

The tables dealing with the percentage of scholars and at various stages according to the occupation of their parents, shown above reveal certain conclusive points (1) The Artisans and Coolies, forming nearly 8 and 25% individually and easily one-third of the total primary school strength at any point of time for over 15 years had never been able to aspire for one more than 40 of their children educated at the colleges. The condition of the coolies especially was a revelation; never less than nearly one-fourth of the entire primary school strength for almost a generation, they were unable to get even one among their sons educated in the colleges. (2) The coolies had accounted for 24.3% of the 83% increase for 15 years and singly they have increased their number by 161.5%. Yet at the last year when they had nearly 31% of the elementary schools strength of the Madras Presidency, they had none to benefit from the collegiate education in 1921-22.

10. Ibid., p.229. The average annual fee per pupil in Arts Colleges were:-

	1896-07	1901-02	1906-07	1911-12
Madras	55.7	69.9	65.9	85.3
Bombay	64.4	70.5	68.8	72.5
Bengal	47.3	48.6	54.3	64.7

Table No. V

Return of Schools and Colleges and of Scholars for the years 1881-82; 1884-85; 1891-92 and 1895-96, according to the classes of the communities. (taken only for the Brahmins and non-Brahmins)

Arts Colleges:

Years	Total	Brahmins	Non-Brahmins
1881-82	1,732	1,540	30
1884-85	2,469	1,649	558
1891-92	3,818	2,600	844
1894-95	3,396	2,325	694

Professional Colleges:

1881-82	262	108	75
1884-85	631	361	108
1895-96	980	630	201

Secondary Schools:

1881-82	-	-	-
1884-85	50,992	20,214	22,210
1891-92	30,719	14,157	10,479
1895-96	42,154	19,856	14,647

Primary Education:

1881-82	-	-	-
1884-85	332,339	40,805	242,437
1891-92	495,044	58,940	333,481
1895-96	533,124	56,547	354,329

Grand Total:

1881-82	339,683	32,724	325,724
1884-85	430,851	68,522	287,136
1891-92	643,930	97,145	430,103
1895-96	791,634	103,206	484,471

Source: Calculated from R.P.I., Madras, 1881-82, Vol.II, Part II, Statistical Tables 1 to 4; Ibid., 1884-85, Vol.I, General Tables No.III; Ibid., 1891-92, Vol.II, Subsidiary Tables, pp.1 to 160; Ibid., 1895-96, Vol.II, Subsidiary Tables 1 to 4.

This should naturally give rise to the questions, who were the traders, landholders, officials and petty officials? Or what was the social composition of the middle and higher income groups or the secondary schools and college going population? The educational reports compiled by the British give the enrolment break-ups only communitywise or occupationwise. The difficulty over the question of equating the low income occupationists with lower caste people, has never been systematically attempted, and this could therefore, only be arbitrary inferences based on the general, social and economic conditions.

The general tables (Nos.IV) dealing with the occupations and religio-social break-ups (Table No.V) together show some resemblances between low-income occupations like Artisan and coolies with the Panchamas and others and also Muslims, to a certain extent.<sup>11</sup> It should not be assumed however, that the entire non-Brahmin caste Hindus were as a rule a well-off community. A considerable section of them, were also coolies, petty traders and artisans. That was why, holding as they did, nearly or more than 80% of the primary school strength they failed to reach anything beyond one-fifth of the college strength, even in 1909-10. Therefore, who among the non-Brahmins Caste Hindus were able to take advantage of the secondary and college education? We will have occasion to come to this point later. Thirdly combining the three factors viz., the poorer

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11. The Census of India, Madras, Reports for 1901, 1911, 1921 throw much light on the living conditions of the Muslims in the Presidency; they were generally petty traders, shopkeepers, and rural and town artisans. Their capacity to avail higher education was therefore, in a comparable degree to the Panchamas, severely handicapped.

classes below Rs.200 annually with the Artisans and Coolies and further this with the Panchamas or the 'depressed' classes, the following inferences can be made. (1) The majority of the 'poorer' classes were the lower-income-occupation groups like, the Artisans and Coolies. (2) The Panchamas or the Untouchables were the 'poorer coolies'. (3) And because of these reasons, in the context of a heavily-fee-oriented educational system, instruction above the primary levels was beyond their reach. The meagre or smattering of literacy that the lower-castes and poorer classes were receiving even at the elementary level, which cost them at least 10% of the annual cost of a pupil at that stage

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12. The total amount expended on public instruction even by the end of the period was only 12% of the revenues of the Government. During a time when the demand for universal, free and compulsory was renting the skies, the fact that it received no priority could be seen from what proportion of funds were allotted to it: the expenditure on the primary, secondary and colleges increased almost similarly: 125, 111, 125 percentages till the end of the period. For details see, The Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, Appendix to Report, Bombay, 1928, pp.224-25. Also see R.P.I., Madras, 1911-12 and Quin., 1906-07 to 1911-12, Vol.II, pp.28-9, and Ibid., 1921-22 and Quin., 1916-17 to 1921-22, Vol.II, p.53. The fees at the secondary level had remained 56% of the annual cost of educating a pupil even till the end of period.
13. It is interesting to see how a contemporary felt about the socio-economic situation of the Paraiyans, a major component of the Panchamas. The Paraiyans along with their kindred caste the Pallans, numbered nearly one-fifth of the Madras Presidency population. The Paraiyans were 'proletariate' (in the original Latin sense) of their offspring (proles) - more nearly than in the Marxist sense. Possessing no property except the rags worn and the huts they built for themselves, they do most of the work on the rice cultivation in the Carnatic plain from Madras to Cape Comorin ... Borrowing for special occasions, they subjected themselves for a contract to "serve back as "Padiyal" (a form of 'semi serfdom') until the debt was paid. The employer preach the doctrine that a 'padiyals' son ought to be regarded as debts of honour'." Gilbert Slater, Southern India, Its Economic and Political Problems, pp.55-68.

should be due to the efforts of the missionaries. The subject of education to the Panchamas which was almost an anti-social activity of the Caste Hindus and Brahmins in the 19th century,<sup>14</sup> owes its birth to the yeoman service of the missionaries. And it was in their 'Boarding' schools, sometimes chiefly maintained, for the 'depressed classes', the latter had often reached their secondary stages.<sup>15</sup>

At no point of time, and no declaration of the British Indian government did view that mass education of the elementary type was more important than secondary and collegiate education as manifested by their subsequent actions. The implications of the 'expediency' of vernacular education at the Primary stage, Anglo-vernacular at the Secondary stage and Western education in English medium at the Collegiate stage, was as follows:

- (1) a smattering of literacy to the 'depressed' and lower-Caste - lower-income occupationists or the 'poorer' classes,
- (2) Secondary and College education to the Middle and Richer or Higher classes. This was happily coincided more often with the non-Brahmin Caste Hindus, landholders, traders and also Brahmin officials and petty officials. As far as the data permit, the Madras Presidency was yet to have one or two graduates, let alone men of high offices from the Panchamas.

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14. For interesting details on the work of organising the Panchamas, to effect a change in the public opinion, in Chinglepat District and the other parts of the Madras Presidency, and also for the change in the situation as a result of the attempts of the missions to educate the untouchables, see Evidence by Rev. Macphail, E.M., Principal of the Madras Christian College to the Royal Commission on the Public Service in India 1913, Vol.II. Also see Rev. A.Andrew's evidence in Ibid., pp.197-202.

15. Ibid., p.203.

The Inspectors of Public Instruction, often complained of the fluctuations in the rural primary schools, irregular attendances during the agricultural seasons, times of adverse agricultural conditions, and also the 'chronic' problems of 'wastage'<sup>16</sup> (immature withdrawals) of the children from the schools, more acute in the rural areas than towns and urban schools. In the Madras Presidency more than 78% of the population lived in rural areas, and 72% by agriculture. Both the non-working landowners (zamindars) and the non-working tenants (landlords) together, did not count for more than 6.7%. The rest were all peasant proprietors (38%), tenant-cultivators (22.5%) and landless labourers. It was also these sections who were vulnerable to the adverse agricultural seasons.<sup>17</sup>

#### Richer-Middle Classes and Western Education

Going back to the Tables dealing with the distribution of scholars based on 'religio-social' divisions and according to their parents' occupation, two points have to be clarified at the outset. (1) The non-Brahmins' 'momentum' in Secondary and Higher education should not obscure the exclusion of the Artisan--Coolies-lower income and low caste (Hindus) groups, and therefore (2) The 'momentum' was a race between an educationally advanced Brahmins and the wealthy - educated non-Brahmins, to

16. Interim Report of the Indian Statutory Commission 1929, (or Review of the Growth of Education in British India by the Auxiliary Committee appointed by the Statutory Commission) see Chapter VII, Elementary Education.

17. Rajini Palme Dutt, India Today, p.236.

overtake the former. The whys and hows of this question had a colour, extraneous to education, which we shall come to later. But here it is suffice to say that a determined attempt was made to outstrip the other.

Perhaps the most convenient and conclusive proof of this 'determination' of the notable non-Brahmin castes is manifested in the percentage of literacy and those literate in English among the literate in selected castes over this span of time.

18

Male Literacy of Selected Castes, 1901-1921.

(in percentages)

Castes	1901	1911	1921	increase or decrease
Tamil Brahmins	73.6	71.9	71.5	-2.8
Telugu Brahmins	67.3	68.2	59.7	-11.2
Nair	39.5	41.9	42.9	8.6
Chetti	32.0	39.1	39.5	42.9
Indian Christians	16.2	20.4	21.9	35.1
Nadar	15.4	18.1	29.8	20.0
Baliya Naidu (Kavarai)	14.3	20.9	22.3	55.9
Vellala	6.9	24.6	220.2	250.1
Kamma	4.8	12.2	13.6	183.3
Kappu, Reddi	3.8	9.0	10.2	168.4
Velama	2.5	3.6	7.0	180.0

18. Eugene F. Irshick, *op. cit.*, p.16. Also Census of India, 1921, Madras, Vol. XIII, Part I, p.119.

19

Male Literacy in English of Selected Castes, 1901-1921.

(in percentagos)

<u>Castes</u>	<u>1901</u>	<u>1911.</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>increase or decrease</u>
Tamil Brahmins	17.88	22.27	28.21	57.7
Telugu Brahmins	10.84	14.75	17.37	60.2
Indian Christians	2.72	4.41	5.47	101.1
Nair	1.54	2.97	4.57	196.7
Baliya Naidu (Kavarai)	0.98	2.60	3.43	250.0
Vellala	0.19	2.12	2.37	1,147.3
Chetti	0.15	0.98	2.34	1,460.0
Velama	0.06	0.41	0.63	950.0
Nadar	0.05	0.30	0.75	1,400.0
Kappu, Reddi	0.04	0.22	0.41	925.0
Kamma	0.03	0.20	0.45	1,400.0

These percentages in literacy and in English is probably the most systematic changes in the educational expansion and spread among the Brahmins and non-Brahmins. The curious phenomenon of the falling literacy rates among the Brahmins was owing to the fact that a "number of persons of the less educated castes being returned as Brahmins: hence the number of Brahmins had unduly swollen and the number of illiterates increased out of all proportion to the literate"<sup>20</sup>. The Census Commissioner in 1921 noted, 'the desire for social advancement or some more subtle reasons induces various bodies such as a Razus of the Circars, the Pallis (of the Tamil and Telugu branches) or the Nadars to return their caste as Kshattriyas, and he saw the

19. Ibid., p.16.

20. Ibid., p.17.



latter's number increasing to 97.4% from 1901-'11 and 100.8%<sup>21</sup> in 1911-'21 period. If we are to go by the rate of progress in literacy and in English registered by these Caste-Hindus as an index of the progress in the secondary and higher education, the question as to who among the non-Brahmins Caste Hindus were availing modern education of the High Schools and Colleges becomes clearer.

Even with the falling literacy rates, more than 28 Brahmins in a hundred knew English by 1921, as compared to 18 twenty years back. More than half the number of English known Indians were Brahmins in the Madras Presidency. As the other important Caste Hindus like Nairs, Naidus, Chettis, Vellalas (Mudaliars, Pillais) Reddiyars, the Nadars and others, even collectively, did not have as few a number in 1921 as the Brahmins, in 1901. However the fact remains that the rate of progress of English literacy among them was much faster than the Brahmins.

This is evident from three aspects: the expansion of education at the higher stages, (1) in respect of significantly altering the proportion, hitherto unchallengeably held by the Brahmins, in favour of the non-Brahmins; (2) invading upon Western education at a speed which the Brahmins themselves had never been able to achieve, and (3) the accelerated rate at which these selected non-Brahmin Caste Hindus acquired English literacy. As the Brahmins were already entrenched deeply in Western education and were in command of the large areas of public administration, the progress of the important non-Brahmin Caste Hindus did not (rather could not) reverse the picture. Whatever changes were

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21. Census of India, 1921, Vol.XIII, Madras, Part I, Report, p.155.

forced in the prevalence of university and college education, as could be seen by their enrolments and examination results, must be grasped as owing to the efforts of the selected non-Brahmins Caste Hindus and not the entire lot of the non-Brahmins. This point of a faster rate of growth of English literacy and yet a position of 'minority' as compared to the Brahmins was to underly the political developments later.

The growth of higher education among the Brahmins and the non-Brahmin Caste Hindus should be viewed in this background, viz., the Brahmins' stronghold vis-a-vis the selected non-Brahmins' rapid advance. The enrolment and the results of the university examinations are some convenient indicators. The starting point for these was the acquisition of English literacy: to go by the rate of progress and not the state of literacy, the same Male literacy tables can be represented as follows:

Rate of progress seen in percentage

Literacy in Vernacular: Increase from 1901-1921.		Literacy in English: Increase from 1901-1921.	
Vellalas	-250.1	1,400.0%	Chetti
Kamma	183.3	1,400.0	Kamma
Velama	180.0	1,400.0	Nadar
Kappu, Reddi	168.4	1,147.3	Vellalas
Baliya Naidu	55.9	950.0	Kappu, Reddi
Indian Christians	35.1	950.0	Velama
Nadar	29.8	250.0	Baliya Naidu
Chetti	23.4	196.8	Nair
Nair	8.6	101.1	Indian Christians
Tamil Brahmins	- 2.8	60.2	Telugu Brahmins
Telugu Brahmins	-11.2	57.7	Tamil Brahmins

Even by the end of the period under review, the Brahmins held nearly 58.5, 36.6 of the Arts and Professional college enrolments and nearly 67% of the Graduate examinations results and nearly as much in the professional courses like Law, Engineering etc. At the secondary stage their preponderance however seemed less. While they began with 38.0% at secondary stages, they had come down to 37% in a matter of 20 years. The non-Brahmins, on the other hand, had only 18.8% of the college enrolment, divided among the important Caste Hindus to start with in 1905-06. From this position they had increased to 27% in 20 years in the colleges and from 39% in the secondary stages to 47% by 1921-22. The Brahmins had grown by 78.8% in the colleges and 41.7% in the secondary schools and nearly doubled at the primary levels. But their grip over higher education, a near monopoly was lost as their proportion was increasingly annexed by the non-Brahmins Caste Hindus. Thus while the Brahmins had a come down from 70.5% to 58.5% in the colleges and from 38% to 36.7% in the secondary schools, the 'rivals', the non-Brahmins, individually, increased their numbers by 178.9 and 87.3 percents in the colleges and secondary schools respectively. In proportion, the non-Brahmins struck an increase in their numbers and thus administering a decline on the Brahmins' erstwhile monopoly by increasing their proportion from 18.8 to 26.7% in the colleges and from 29.7 to 47.5 in the secondary schools.

The Nairs, Chettis, Nadars, Naidus, the Kamma and the Reddis and the various sub-caste groups of the Vellalas like Reddis, Pillais, Mudaliyars and others, had far lesser percentages

of literacy than the Brahmins and most of them, with the exception of the Nairs, had not even one among a hundred knew English. And nearly all of them had almost 1 to 5 persons knowing English, within 20 years. If the same rate of acquisition is to be read on the enrolment of secondary schools and colleges and the results of the examinations, it becomes possible to know clearly whether all the non-Brahmins or only a few important castes were availing Western education.

The fact of their accelerated progress notwithstanding these principal wealthy non-Brahmin castes began to realise their limitations that however faster they might acquire English education they could not equal and overtake the Brahmins. Such a belief was reinforced by their 'findings' of their shaky positions in the public services. As knowledge of English was essential to the public services, teaching and independent professions like Law, Medicine, Engineering, and so on, and to public affairs like politics, the non-Brahmins made a determined attempt to 'qualify' themselves for these privileges. However, they found that neither their numerical strength, nor the rate of speed with which they competed could outnumber the Brahmins in the educational institutions. And secondly, neither the strength of their numbers in the total population nor their proportion of Western educated could find relative importance in the distribution of administrative and allied services of the Government. Therefore, when neither numerical strength nor educational qualifications answered the question of proportional representation, or at any rate, did nothing to remedy the preponderance of the Brahmins over the

others, the non-Brahmins realised that the question needed a political remedy and not the 'natural course' which they feared would continue unaffected. Their educational advance and the realisation of their meagre share became the ingredients of the animosity between the Brahmins and educated principal Caste Hindus, or a political awareness of the non-Brahmins.

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## CHAPTER IV

### EDUCATION AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

#### Western Education and Non-Brahmins

Western Education introduced via English language was the vehicle and the Western educated natives were to intellectually nurse the new socio-economic order that the British had created in the 19th century. And if Nationalism in India was the product of the social conditions and socio-economic forces generated by the British rule, then it can be said that the Western educated natives had undoubtedly played the pioneer role in shaping and organising this nationalist consciousness. The subordinate areas of functions, assigned to educated Indians led to the confrontation between Indians and the British for 'more for Indians'. Consequently, the 'concessions', in the Services which the educated Indians had secured inflated the attraction for Western education. The late entrants into the Western educational institutions, the non-literary castes, but healthy, nevertheless, landholders, merchants, traders and others (from among the principal non-Brahmins) found their capacity to compete with the educationally advanced castes, not only in the educational institutions but also in the services that English education qualified, imposing severe limitations. This, they thought, was partly due to an extent of consolidation achieved by the early entrants like the Brahmins. The consolidation in

in the educational institutions and large areas of administration by only some communities, led to the resentment of the others between the educationally advanced and those emerging Western educated.<sup>1</sup>

The political privileges that Western education was destined to acquire and naturally the lion's share of which went to the early entrants was a further ingredient to this resentment. Therefore, while the Western educated, and educated to a large extent, as evidenced by the areas of their influence in the public services and professions, the public affairs and the political world, had confronted the British, the Western educated among the educationally backward, from the powerful landlords and zamindars, traders and mercantile classes, sometimes confronted both, but often, the 'westernised natives' - nationalists, as the latter monopolized the areas of influence. The second decade of the 20th century Madras Presidency presented a case in point. The non-Brahmin Movement of anti-Brahminism and agitation revolved around this central point.

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1. The gulf between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins owing to the former's educational advancement and entrenchment in services, is well pointed by M.N.Srinivas: 'The opportunities at the higher levels', he says, 'were usually taken advantage of by the high castes, resulting in a considerable overlap between the traditional and new elites. This had the effect of increasing the cultural and ideological distance between the high and low castes ... In the first place, they were all well paid and prestigious, and in the second, only the high castes had access to them. Eventually this gave rise to the Backward Classes Movement'. M.N.Srinivas, Mobility in the Caste System, in Milton Singer, (ed.) Structure and Change in Indian Society, p. 193.

The Ingredients of non-Brahmins' Political Awareness

The non-Brahmin Caste Hindus' resentment of the Brahmin domination and near monopoly position in the higher stages of schools and colleges, as was evident from enrolments and the university examination results, was only the starting point. It was with this resentment, among other things, they began to look into more areas for 'findings' of similar domination. Points of social, cultural, ethnic, racial and linguistic polarities were effectively deployed to 'expose' the Brahmins' excessive influence, disproportionate to a 'minority community'. Our purpose here is not to see the polarities but the political dividends that such manipulations paid.

Between 1886-1910, the number of Brahmin graduates was 7,013 or some 71% of the total graduates. Between 1903-13 alone, 3,676 Brahmins graduated from the Madras University and the non-Brahmin Caste Hindus were 1,815 in a total of 9,874 during the same period i.e., 71% to Brahmins and 18% to the non-Brahmins.<sup>2</sup> Between 1870 and 1918, some 68 to 71 percent of the students enrolled by the Madras University were Brahmins.<sup>3</sup> And the non-Brahmins averaged, during this period, both in enrolment as well as in obtaining B.A. Degrees, some 18 to 22 percent. In degrees for profession like Medicine, Engineering, Training Colleges, and others likewise, the Brahmins led. In Licentiate

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2. Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, Vol.II, Minutes of Evidence Taken in Madras, 1913. Evidence by T.V. Seshagiri Aiyar, p. 417.
  3. E.F. Irshick, op.cit., p. 19.



of Teaching degree for example, 1,094 were Brahmins as against 163 non-Brahmins. In courses like Law, a basic qualification for entry into the legal professions, the profession of public importance if not the political world as Irshick says, the Brahmins held 74% of the law graduates between 1894 and 1914.<sup>4</sup> Forming but a million and a half in a population of 42 million, the Brahmins were found to be holding, in 1918, 70% of the Arts graduates, 74% of the Law graduates, 71% of the Engineering graduates and 74% of the graduates in the Licentiate of Teaching.<sup>5</sup>

The other areas that Western education led likewise showed a Brahmin preponderance: out of 390 higher appointments in the Education Department 300 were held by Brahmins. In the Judicial Department, 116 out of 171 and in the Revenue Department, 394 out of 679 posts went for Brahmins.<sup>6</sup>

In the Executive Branch:

A.	No. of Posts held by each class held in 1912	Percentage of appointments held in		Percentage of Total Male population in 1911
		1876	1913	
Brahmins	77	53	55	3.2
Non-Brahmin Hindus	30	25	21.5	85.6
Muhammadans	15	6.5	10.5	6.6
Indian Christians	7	4	5	2.7
Europeans and Eurasians	11	11.5	8	0.1

4. M.N.Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India, p.102.

5. Ibid. Also see the Evidence given by Mr. Cardew in Madras to the Royal Public Service Commission, 1913, Vol.II, p.418.

6. Ibid., pp.102-03.

	No. of posts held by each class held in 1912	Percentage of appointments held in		Percentage of Total Male popula- tion in 1911
		1876	1913	

## B. Judicial Branch

### I. Sub-Judges (Permanent)

Brahmins	15	71.4	83.3
Non-Brahmin Hindus	<u>3</u> <u>18</u>	21.2	16.57

### II. District Munsifs (Permanent)

Brahmins	93	66.4	72.6
Non-Brahmin Hindus	<u>25</u> <u>128</u>	21.2	19.5

## Brahmin Influence in the Political World

Between 1892-1904, out of 16 successful candidates for the I.C.S., 15 were Brahmins. <sup>7</sup> The Non-Brahmin Manifesto in 1916 pointed out, Brahmin dominance was vigorous not only in areas which English education led, but also in that of the nationalist movement. The Manifesto further pointed out that only one out of 15 members elected to the All India Congress Committee from Madras Presidency was a non-Brahmin. <sup>8</sup>

7. Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, 1913, Minutes of Evidence Taken in Madras, Vol. II, A.G. Cardew's Evidence, pp. 85-6. Surveying almost all Departments where Brahmins had a lead, Cardew showed that (1) in Provincial Civil Services, the Brahmins had 94%, (2) Mysore Civil Services, 85%, (3) in the P.W.D., 17 were Brahmins as against 4 non-Brahmins and "similar" result in the Accounts Department. From these he concluded that it was owing to "the astonishing intellectual superiority of a small, rigidly exclusive, caste, the Brahman."

8. E.F. Irshick, op.cit., p.25.

The political atmosphere obtaining in the early decade of the 20th century stimulated the political awareness to a great deal and brought into open and vocally, the social feuds existing between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins in the Madras Presidency. (1) The introduction of the system of communal electorates to Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans by the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909, (2) the public opinion during the World War I that when the War ended more political power would be transferred to Indians, as if to reinforce this opinion, (3) the Home Rule Movement started by Mrs. Annie Besant and finally (4) Lord Montagu's proposals for Reform - all brightened the hopes that Indians were going to be increasingly associated in the administration of their affairs. As the Brahmins were politically the most active elements not only in the Nationalist movement but also played a key role in the Home Rule agitations, the principal non-Brahmin Caste Hindus feared that the Brahmins would stand to gain everything if the agitation and the Reform proposals were to come true and that 'they might be left high and dry'. They wanted to make sure they would also benefit and to this they regarded that political power should filter through communal representation.

The birth of 'self-determination', the product of the World War I, and the hopes of the Indians for "responsible government" had strained the nerves of every non-Brahmin leader of public importance in the Madras Presidency. If the British were to

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9. M.N.Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India, p. 107.

confer any measure of politico-administrative responsibility, the non-Brahmins realised and feared that there would be a legal perpetuation of the Brahmin oligarchy. Therefore, they decided to organise themselves to oppose the Brahmin domination in all fields and appeal for intervention and remedy. The change in the political atmosphere was the most appropriate time for such an attempt. The dominant position of the Brahmins in English education at the higher stages, and most of the services that it led to, in politics and also in socio-cultural milieu was made quite apparent by the first decade of the present century.<sup>10</sup> In 1913, while in India, Edwin Montague observed in his Diary,

one has here as elsewhere the majority of the educated Indians, a desire for more power, ... executive opportunity ... If he does not believe in caste, he believes in wealth and division, so acute in Northern India, between Hindu and Mohammadan, is replaced in South India by the vital, almost insurmountable gulf between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. 11

This gulf 'between the two sections was the result of the non-Brahmins' search for political power, administrative position and economic security. The situation by 1913, was made conspicuous when the Royal Commission sat in Madras to review the prevalence of public services among various sections of the population.

The non-Brahmin movement spearheaded by the important non-Brahmin Caste Hindu leaders, thus, was the logical conclusion of the latter's resistance to the Brahmin excessive influence, in an organised and systematic way as previous sporadic and unorganised

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10. E.F. Irshick, op.cit., p.25.

11. S.D.Waley, Edwin Montagu, quoted in ibid., p.25.

'attempts'<sup>12</sup> did not succeed in dislodging the Brahmins from power and influence.

There were a few important developments of crucial help to the Brahmins in fairly getting the situations crystallizing the 'division' and 'disparity'. To crown the British attempt at finding the English educated Brahmins' role at the all-India level, in breeding disloyalty and disaffection against the Raj came Sir Valentine Chirol's "Indian Unrest"<sup>13</sup>. Secondly, the Hunter or Sedition Committee Report which had concluded that the English educated, Brahmins alone in India played a leading

12. Prior to the formation of the Non-Brahmin Party, there were only caste associations which were not organised politically. Thus though there were Caste Sangams like those of the Kammass, Reddis, Naidus, Arya Vaisyas, Nairs, Vellalas of various sub-divisions, Sengunthars, Visvakarmas etc., their activities never crossed the boundary of 'memorializing' and 'petitioning the government', see David Washbrook's Review Article of Robert L. Haedgrave's The Nadars of Tamilnad, in The Modern Asian Studies, Vol.II, 1971, pp.281-82.
13. Of the many "circumstances" which "seriously affected the very classes among whom disaffection is most widespread, Chirol said, "the system of education we ourselves introduced" contributed in no small measure. It was so because, he felt that the system of education "tends to create... a semi-educated proletariat, unemployed and largely unemployable..." who bred the "irreconcilable reaction to all that British". These 'semi-educated proletariat' - the clerk, the teacher, the petty Government official - Chirol 'discovered', were those who constituted the bulk of the 'disaffected'. Another point he found was the strong Hindu element in the Western educated 'disaffected'. He goes on therefore to show that whether it was B.C.Pal's Swadeshi and Swaraj or Aurobindo Ghosh's Secret Societies, whether the Deccan Brahmin (Tilak and others) revival of the 'Chitpavan Empire' through Shivaji cults' or the Poona murders or the Nasik conspiracies, - (in all these he saw the 'reaction' of Western education in a "Hindu mind" and in a 'stronghold of Hinduism', In all these again, except in Bengal, the predominant element was the Brahmin. These 'cults' of violence', be it 'Brahminism in the Deccan, the Arya Samaj in the Punjab, or even the 'Aryan (Brahmin) inflammable material' in Madras, Chirol maintained that the Western educated Brahmin played the leading role.

role in breeding 'sedition' and 'crime'.<sup>14</sup> Added to these was Mrs. Annie Besant's Home Rule agitation to which the Brahmin contribution from Madras Presidency was most important. While this movement launched its campaign for 'likeminded' Home Rulers, the non-Brahmins, who had understood that this would help perpetuate the Brahmin rule in place of British rule, were opposed to it. The political opposition between the two communities eventually crystallized the communal discord underlying the socio-economic and political differences.<sup>15</sup> Our concern is not the activities and agitations of the League but why the non-Brahmins opposed it and how they made political capital out of it for their cause of anti-Brahminism. Certain logical developments of this anti-Brahminism extended to all that involved Brahmin association like the Nationalist movement. And secondly, as the popular saying would have it, the enemy of our enemy, our friend - became true to the non-Brahmins. The British were the enemies of the Brahmin dominated nationalists; the Brahmins were the enemies of the non-Brahmins and therefore, the British were considered the friends of the non-Brahmins.

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14. Incidentally, the only significant terrorist activity worth the name in the Madras Presidency was the murder of Mr. Ashe, the Tinnevely District Magistrate for harassing the Swadeshi Navigation Company of V.O.Chidambaram Pillai. The assassin was found to be a Brahmin. For details see Madras District Gazetteers, H.R.Pate, Tinnevely, Vol.I, 1917, p.345.

15. E.F. Irshick, op.cit., p.24.

Brahmin Intelligentsia and British Bureaucracy

Since the Brahmins came forward first under the British rule to master English language and Western education it was also the Brahmins who entered the public services and teaching and other learned professions in large numbers. By the end of the 19th century their command over large areas of administration and the influence they began to exercise in the Civil Services, the lower administrative offices, in the professions all indicated that they had established a degree of indispensability to the British. In the Brahmin administrator, intellectual, the British I.C.S. officer not only found a rival but a rival who was increasingly outnumbering the British elements in these fields.

The British bureaucracy had left no opportunity to discredit the Brahmin vakil, administrator and politician. Their hostility, beginning from the time of the Royal Commission, in 1913, was going to become, as we shall see later, almost a decisive factor to the non-Brahmins' success on communal representation. At this stage it is sufficient to indicate that the Madras Government and its officials were all opposed to the 'Brahmin image' that was predominant in the services and public and political affairs. Mr. A.G. Cardew, Member of the Governor's Executive Council of the Government of Madras, in his evidence to the Royal Commission in 1913 had concentrated on points like how the system of open competition without 'reservation' to the I.C.S., and the P.C.S. would lead to the total elimination of the European element in the Services. Secondly he contended that the Brahmins, a 'mere 3% of the Presidency's population had annexed' the posts in the last 16 years from 1895-96, and concluded that the only way to

break the 'close preserve of the Brahmin in the services was 'Communal representation' to the 'great bulk of the non-Brahmin Hindus'<sup>16</sup>.

With the formation of the Indian National Congress, the Brahmin intelligentsia played a leading role in the nationalist politics. With increasing rapidity, as a major component of the intelligentsia at the all-India level and at the level of the Presidency, transforming themselves with the changing waves of the trend of political activities viz., Moderate, Militant, Extremist and so on, the Brahmin role offered a near direction<sup>17</sup> of political events. Constituting a bulk of the intelligentsia, a major component of the Indian element in the administration, leading political activists, the Brahmin advance became almost a menace to the Raj.

And the non-Brahmins found that the British animosity over the Brahmins would offer a political ally. Therefore, the British attitude towards the Brahmins was one of the essential ingredients of the non-Brahmin strength. Thus, in the efforts to combat the vulnerability in the face of the Brahmin domination the non-Brahmins gained strength from the officials' sympathy. What had helped to transform this hitherto indirect sympathy into an open support was the Besantine Home Rule Agitation, (whose backbone was the Brahmins) staged at so crucial a time as the War, aimed at damaging the image of the Empire when the energy of every Indian was required to be devoted to preserve her

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16. Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, op.cit., A.G.Cardew's Evidence, p.86.

17. G.Subramanya Iyer, a Brahmin was a founder Member of the Indian National Congress: V.S.Srinivasa Sastri, Gokhale's Lieutenant of the Moderate wing was also a Brahmin. The Besantine Home Rulers were also mainly the (Ramaswami) Aiyars and Rangaswami) Iyengars.



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integrity and strength. The immediate background and the spadework of the Non-Brahmin Movement, in a way was hastened and helped by this process of events.

Non-Brahmin Movement -  
Ideological-Political Dimension

The political associations like the All India National Congress was an association of the English educated Indians whose demands included among other things, also higher government service and rights for a place in the Legislative Councils. And when the process of memorializing and constitutional ways of demanding educational and political privileges became ineffective, the political association assumed more militant stances. Yet the political demands except for a significant minority of Swadeshis, consistently reflected its socio-economic background and the situation conditioned by the colonial set up. 'Prosperity of Indians under the Empire', 'Contempt for extremist, terrorist and revolutionary nationalism as a menace to the stability of the Raj', 'unswerving loyalty to the Empire during the War'; and 'Responsible government of the Dominion model' - thus all marking the continuity in transformation of the socio-economic and political and ideological outlook of the English educated middle-<sup>19</sup> classes.

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18. Gilbert Slater, Southern India, Its Economic and Political Problems, p. 266.

19. Gallagher, Gordon and Seal, Locality, Province and Nation. In this book which contains a collection of essays on various aspects of the Nationalist Movement the authors discuss 'transformation' and 'continuity' of the various phases of the movement. The first essay, especially, by Anil Seal, lays down the theoretical and ideological framework for the other articles.

The non-Brahmin leaders opposed not only the Brahmins and their ideological-political demands but also the Brahmin dominated Congress as well the nationalism that the Congress advocated. This was very acute at the Presidency level in particular. In this context the question naturally arises, what were the non-Brahmins' demands and in what way the character of their demands were different from the demands of the English educated intelligentsia as evidenced by their political associations and activities? In the ultimate analysis such a question will be answered only when the socio-economic background of the non-Brahmin movement as guided by its leadership and its political demands as an integral part of the 'class' background is enquired into.

#### Roots of Non-Brahmin Leadership

It should be laid down at the outset very clearly that the opposition to Brahmin dominance did not come from the low and oppressed castes, but from the leaders of the powerful, rural dominant castes such as the Kammas and Reddis of the Telugu country, the Vellalas of the Tamil country and the Nayars of Kerala.<sup>20</sup> Irshick has observed that 'it is important to note that these non-Brahmins whether from the 'up-country' Telugu areas or from the 'home' Tamil areas were high caste groups, immediately below the Brahmins in caste status, with a position of social prestige among non-Brahmins' ranks and with a

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20. Robert L. Haedgrage, The Dravidian Movement, p.16. "...the early leaders of the movement", says the author, "in talking of the Non-Brahmin Party, who spoke for the illiterate masses of the Madras Presidency, they in no way represented them ..." Also see M.N. Srinivas, op.cit., p.103.

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relatively high English literacy rate. "It can be observed", said in another enquiry that, "the Non-Brahmin movement in one aspect a movement of the later educated classes. The leaders of this group", the observation continued, "were mostly well-<sup>22</sup> educated, middleclass, professional non-Brahmins".

While the advantages of place and power are enjoyed by this one (Brahmin) community, the cost of administration is borne mostly by others.

This was how Koka Appa Rao Naidu said in his pamphlet on "Communal Representation". Though it came two years after the formation of the Non-Brahmin or the Justice Party, it is helpful for our purpose to draw his arguments. Who were the "others" that Koka Naidu talked about? "The others", in his view were, "who, in brief, may be described as non-Brahmins of the Province, including as they do, Zamindars, Landholders, agriculturists, merchants and traders, own the bulk of the property of the Province". "Practically", he says, "the whole of the trade in<sup>23</sup> Indian hands is in the possession of the non-Brahmins". No

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21. Ibid., p.140: quoted from Eugene F. Irshick's The Brahmin and the Non-Brahmin Struggle for Power in Madras.
22. Aparna Basu, op.cit., p.224. The leaders of this group were all those who scaled the 'commanding intellectual heights': Thiagaraya Chettiar was graduate of the Madras University and a Fellow of the University. Dr. T.M.Nair graduated in Medicine in the Madras University, Edinberg and Paris. And of the increase of English literacy among the important castes of the non-Brahmins it has been referred to earlier in p.28.
23. Koka Appa Rao Naidu, Communal Representation and Indian Constitutional Reforms in the Simplified Summary version of The Montagu-Chelmsford Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1918, pp.178-79.

description could reveal the socio-economic position of the politically vocal non-Brahmin leaders, better than as done here by Appa Rao Naidu himself. The Rajah of Panagal and the Rajah of Ramnad were both the leaders, of the movement in its hey days.

Being the 'lords of the soil'<sup>24</sup> and sons of the property of this Province,<sup>25</sup> the non-Brahmin leaders thought that the Brahmins had no right to dominate English education and the fruits that it yielded. The non-Brahmin movement, known as the Justice Party, was therefore, a movement to oust the Brahmins from the intellectual, administrative and political fields as the latter had formed only a million and a half or just 2½% of the population. A minority, pre-eminent in the socio-religious milieu, reaped disproportionately large advantages, while whose economic roots was often shallow; thus the non-Brahmin logic ran. And therefore the non-Brahmins thought that the Brahmins had no longer the right to "represent this Province" because they were not only minority, but also "recent interpollers",<sup>26</sup> to take only one of

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24. Sir A.P. Patro, Rao Bahadur, The Justice Movement in India, in Asiatic Review, Vol. XXVIII, January to October 1932, pp. 29 and 43.
25. Tyagaraya Chetty, the founder-member of the Justice Party was one of the biggest millowners of South India, for further details, see Prakash Karat, op.cit., p. 92; And also see M.N. Srinivas, op.cit., p. 104.
26. Madras District Gazetteers, H.R. Pate, op.cit., p. 345.

the mythologies that the non-Brahmins had deployed to manufacture the racial, social, ethnic, linguistic, theories of differences.<sup>27</sup>

A movement with an overt cover for 'self-expression', a movement styling itself as the struggle of the 'Backward classes' for asserting its rightful place - the non-Brahmin movement's main plank of ideological inspiration as well as practical actions were 'anti-Brahminism'.<sup>28</sup> In essence it was an anti-Brahminism of the Brahmin dominated English education, administrative services, public and political affairs.<sup>29</sup> The demands of the non-Brahmin leaders can be viewed most objectively in the light of the foregoing lines of the character of the non-Brahmin movement and its leadership.

#### Justice Party and Demands

The most effective remedy for the Brahmin domination, the non-Brahmin leaders conceived, was the dispossession of Brahmins from the social-cultural, educational, professional, public and political importance. The immediate remedy was the transfer of the political influence of the Western educated Brahmin-politician-intelligentsia into the hands of the Western-educated non-Brahmin Caste Hindus, (the rich Baliya Naidus, Chettis, Vellalas, Nadars and Nairs). And the best way to effect this change was Communal Representation.

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27. M.N.Srinivas, op.cit., p.104. He quotes from Irshick: "all Zamindars in the Presidency were the non-Brahmins. In 1911, while the Brahmins owned 35 factories, the non-Brahmin castes, like Baliya Naidus, Kapus, Komatis, Vellalas and Nattukottai Chettis together owned 91 factories."
28. S.Seraswathi, Minorities in Madras State, Group Interests in Modern Politics, p.22.
29. Ibid., p.23.

It is perhaps very helpful to see an important political aspect of the non-Brahmins' "Justice" movement. M.N.Srinivas said,

For centuries the Brahmins had systematically exploited the others: this had enabled them to obtain their great lead in education and the new employment opportunities, and leadership of the nationalist movement. If the historically suppressed sections of Indian society were to obtain their share of the new opportunities they would have to be granted some concessions and privileges, at least for a period. This would be infinitesimal compared to what the non-Brahmins had suffered by centuries. In other words, present-day Brahmins should pay for their ancestors' sins. This was roughly the theory of 'social justice' providing the rationale for a policy of preferential treatment of the non-Brahmins and discrimination against Brahmins. 30

This was not only as Srinivas said, the rationale of the non-Brahmins' social justice, but was true also to their 'political Justice'.

Social, religious and other 'distance' between the Brahmins and others were effective weapons to expose the disparity in the matter of political influence between Brahmins and the non-Brahmins. Political power obtainable through communal representation was therefore, to form the major plank of action in 1913, the year when the Royal Commission sat to review the growth of the public services in India. The addresses presented by the non-Brahmin communities of Southern India on the working of the elections under 'Morley and Minto Scheme of Reforms' touched, first of all, and as fundamentally important, as to who benefited from this 'scheme'. The electoral system worked out by the

Morley-Minto scheme, it was noted, helped to return a large percentage of lawyers.<sup>31</sup> And that education was confined mostly to a certain caste, the Brahmins and almost the Vakil population were Brahmins, it was the Brahmin lawyers alone that could gain most of the seats in the general electorates, if the principle of communal representation was not recognised.<sup>32</sup> And for such a position of strength as would result from concerted attempts and action in unity among the non-Brahmins, a movement became imperative - a movement of the important non-Brahmin communities.<sup>33</sup>

Mrs. Annie Besant's Home Rule Movement, a reality in September 1916, after almost two years of efforts, a radical congress wing as the non-Brahmins in Madras viewed it, was to introduce English methods of agitation into India. To obtain Home Rule, Besant contended, that as "agitation and agitation alone, had provoked the British bureaucracy to rescind the Bengal partition: The Partition went, so will England understand a serious-one-pointed agitation for Home Rule by a political league."<sup>34</sup> The demand for Home Rule were propagated by the intellectual-political-Brahmin cadre, the Iyers, and the Iyengars.<sup>35</sup>

31. S.Saraswathi, op.cit., pp.44-45. The author gives the details of the Brahmin and the non-Brahmin Legislators, since 1892, where 8 were Brahmins and 4 were non-Brahmins. The Brahmins "...were all prominent lawyers with extensive practice and large income." But at the same time the non-Brahmins did not lack such influential men like Sir Sankaran Nair, Mr. P. Kesava Pillai who were also influential in as much as the Brahmins.

32. Koka Appa Rao, op.cit., p.178.

33. M.N.Srinivas, op.cit., p.179. By "all important communities" the non-Brahmins' address noted "may be described as non-Brahmins of this Province (Madras Presidency) including as they do, zamindars, landholders, agriculturists, merchants and traders, who own the bulk of the property in the presidency."

34. E.F.Irshick, op.cit., p.33.

35. Ibid., p.34.

Mrs. Besant's 'New India', a daily which attacked the British bureaucracy in India and in Madras. The point to be noted here however is that the Besantine Home Rule agitation was to secure 'justice for India', in the form of only a certain measure of financial autonomy and freedom, and not as 'radical' as the non-Brahmin leaders thought. It was a "freedom" within the fold of the Empire as Mrs. Besant said, "Free India will be the buttress of the Empire: subject, she will be a perpetual menace to its stability". "Political activities", Besant's political philosophy went on to define, "should not overstep constitutional boundaries, ...Home Rule will flourish only under the continuance of the British rule in India".<sup>36</sup>

The alienated British bureaucracy, the unofficial British communities in Madras, and the non-Brahmins - all of them found a common cause in opposing Besant's Home Rule agitation, of course, for different purposes.<sup>37</sup> Thus, by 1916, the scene to encounter the Brahmin dominated political atmosphere was ripe. The non-Brahmins' distrust of the Brahmins' political motive was sufficiently explicit by now, what needed was a beginning for concerted move, and this came in 1916. C.Natesa Mudaliar, a Vellala Medical student in Madras, the Secretary of the Madras Dravidian Association (formed in 1912) started to collect funds

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36. Ibid., pp.35-36.

37. Ibid., pp.34-35. The ways in which all three sections confronted her political demand: To the British bureaucracy, a measure of self-responsibility, in the eventuality of Besant's success, would pose a serious threat by the Brahmins' rivals. To the European non-official business community in Madras, any measure calculated to affect the continuance of the British rule was menace to their vested interests. And to the non-Brahmins, the transfer from British rule will give way to Brahmin oligarchy.



for a hostel in the Madras city for 'non-Brahmin youths, who desire to receive their education from the schools and colleges of the city'. The hostel which was established in June 1916, was as Irshick says, the first practical step of a small but important group of non-Brahmins in Madras to organise themselves.

The 'Non-Brahmin Letters' the chief work of the Dravidian Association, published by one of Besant's opponents, C.Karunakara Menon, dealt in detail the position and the desires of certain Non-Brahmin caste groups in the Madras Presidency. Many of these desires and grievances were to become the principal aims of the Non-Brahmin Party later on. Written by a certain (Kappu) Reddi, Baliya (Naidu) and Vellala, these Letters, (a bunch of 21 in all) were intended to reflect the heartsearchings of those caste groups about their lowly position in public affairs. Emphasizing the non-Brahmins' disunity, jealousy, apathy, and unwillingness to take advantage of education, and remaining attached to other traditional professions, the Letters stated, the non-Brahmins were badly treated by the Brahmins and their non-Brahmin fellow-<sup>38</sup>Western alike. Listing other such 'misfortunes' as arising from their inability to unite against the Brahmins' exploitation, the Letters exhorted, "they must organise a movement to unite the Dravidians" and must establish a 'national' college for Dravidian vernaculars"<sup>39</sup>

A follow-up action of the publication of these 'Letters' was Mudaliyar's attempt to 'unite' the non-Brahmin leaders in the city.

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38. Ibid., pp.46-47.

39. Ibid., p.47.

P.Thiyagaraya Chetti, and Dr. T.M.Nair, both of whom were important non-Brahmin public figures in the city. A vision hitherto, the non-Brahmins' desire to organise themselves became a reality when some thirty or so non-Brahmin leaders including Dr. Nair, and Thiyagaraya Chetti held a meeting in November 1916, a real beginning of the non-Brahmin party, though they have decided only to form a joint stock company called 'The South-Indian People's Association Limited' to bring out English, Tamil and Telugu newspapers to voice non-Brahmin grievances.<sup>40</sup> The organisational cohesion and direction, for corporate action, hitherto an unachieved object, was fulfilled, as Dr. Nair pointed "in the formation of this association in order, for the non-Brahmins to take their 'rightful-place'". Dr. T.M.Nair urged to entrust the leadership in the hands of landed aristocracy and advocated a policy of non-violence as its political outlook.<sup>41</sup>

The 'Non-Brahmin Manifesto' issued in December 20, 1916, was followed by the formation of a political wing to the Association, called the 'South Indian Liberal Federation'. By intent, it was meant to promote the political interests of the non-Brahmins.

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40. Ibid.

41. In accordance with the decision of the Meeting the Dravidian and the Non-Brahman, a Tamil and an English dailies were brought into existence. In its first issue, the Non-Brahman, December 3, 1916, published Dr. T.M.Nair's address in the meeting which could be taken as a fair version of their political attitude, (a) towards British Government, and (b) about the Home Rule movement, the paper wrote, "We do not want 'Home Rule', Dr. Nair spoke, "for it will bring about the condition of ancient India when the Sudra was suppressed ... Our goal is the goal of self-government, but we want to be led there by the British". The Non-Brahmin, December 3, 1916, Madras Native Newspaper Reports, 1916.

The Manifesto began with a note on its political outlook:

The time has come when an attempt should be made to define the attitude of the several important non-Brahmin Indian communities in this Presidency towards what is called 'the Indian Home Rule Movement' which should not be assumed as an action in concert and in agreement of all in India. 42

The Manifesto went on to say that "any measure" which "in operation, is designed or tends completely, to undermine the influence and authority of the British Rulers, who alone in the present circumstances of India are able to hold the scales even between creed and class ... could never have any measure of support from them (non-Brahmins)"<sup>43</sup>. Further, it stated that the Home Rule agitation, under the facade of unity and unanimity, in truth, was only that of a minority (Brahmins dominated) which had everything to gain by Home Rule as it would be a continuation of the present Brahmin domination with a tinge of legality and legitimacy, if self-rule were to come true. Though some of them "such as the Chetty, the Komati, the Mudaliyar, the Naidu and the Nair have been making rapid progress and in a variety of ways contributing to the moral and material progress of this Presidency..." the Manifesto also noted, "but so far have been gropping helplessly in the background because of the subtle and manifold ways in which political power and official influences are exercised by the Brahmin castes". And forming 'the bulk of the tax-payers, including a large majority of the Zamindars, landholders, and agriculturists among others numerically count for

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42. E.F. Irshick, op.cit., p.47.

43. Ibid.

40 of the 40½ millions: the non-Brahmins should", the Manifesto appealed, "in future, educate their boys and girls in far greater numbers than they have yet done"; under the guidance of leading non-Brahmin gentlemen, associations should be started in every popular centre, ... to force a more vigorous educational policy for the non-Brahmins while doing everything to educate and help their fellow non-Brahmins; and alongside must be maintained social and political organisations and with well conducted English and vernacular newspapers to 'push forward their claims'.<sup>44</sup> Elaborately highlighting the 'distance' between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins in spheres of privilege and influence the Manifesto exhorted the non-Brahmins to assert themselves unitedly, not only to dispossess the minority, i.e., the Brahmins' hold over politics, but also as the post-war 'Reform' on India's political future was airing.

The press media, in Tamil, Telugu and in English, was the most effective political weapon for propagating the views and grievances of the non-Brahmin Movement. The 'Justice' as the English Daily, after which, the Non-Brahmin Party was called, the Justice Party, was edited by Dr. T.M.Nair himself, patronized by the non-Brahmin landed interests of the Presidency. The dailies did their best, almost daily, to discredit the Brahmins' socio-cultural, political and public image in all possible ways. Neither the 'Brahmin dominated Home Rule' politics nor the Congress were spared. Personal discredit of the Brahmins and

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44. Ibid., The Non-Brahmin Manifesto, p.67.

Annie Besant was an integral part of the modus operandi of the non-Brahmins' politics.<sup>45</sup>

In August 1917, Lord Montagu, the Secretary of the State for India announced in the House of Commons of the 'Policy of His Majesty's Government as 'that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the general development of self-government institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British empire'.<sup>46</sup> Discussions about the political future of India, was the preoccupation of politicians at the national level. But in the Madras Presidency it sparked off the differences, social and political between the two camps. The main issues centred around the representation in the forthcoming political balance of forces and the infrastructure to such a polity - the electorate.

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45. For interesting details of personal attacks of the most virulent form between the non-Brahmin leaders and the Brahmin Congress Home Rulers, see Ibid., pp.49-51.
46. The Secretary of State's Announcement (August Declaration) in 1917, Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1918, C.H.Philips, ed., The Evolution of India and Pakistan, Select Documents, p.264.

## CHAPTER V

### 'MONTEFORD' REFORMS AND NON-BRAHMIN VICTORY

Irschick had observed that the Tamil Brahmins had so long been powerful in Madras that it is hard to believe that the disorganised masses of non-Brahmin Caste Hindus would ever put together and achieve, as they finally did, a reserved place in the 1920 Legislative Council in Madras. The political activities of the Justice Party from 1917 was a process of gearing its organisational structure, expansion and functional orientation focussed at the communal polls to come after three years in 1920. In this process, our purpose is not to enlist and account the crowd political events, but only certain issues that impinged upon education, services, public affairs and related political developments in order to understand the elitist preoccupation of the non-Brahmin Caste Hindus vis-a-vis, the Brahmins.

At no time and in no country education and educational set-up was autonomous from the social forces; educational institutions being one among many, in the social milieu, education has always been a social commodity. To give it an identity, independent of the socio-economic, political and ideological forces operating and conditioning this entity is to obscure the hard reality. Conditions obtaining under a colonial rule, revealed the unlevelled socio-economic and political disparities. These were further reflected in education and privileges that the educated had received. Conflicts between one another and between the educated of the colony and

the colonial rulers were inevitable because the access to avenues social, political, and material that were open to the rulers were denied to the ruled. And what little was open to them was not commensurate with their socio-economic standing. The confrontation that resulted assumed many a posture not all of them had a direct relation to the initial issues: 'more for Indians'. At any rate it would be difficult to establish one to one correlation between education and political developments. However, the fact remained, that ultimately it was a struggle initiated and spearheaded by the educated, for the privileges to which Western education was the doorway.

Similarly it may be legitimate to question how the Non-Brahmin Manifesto, the establishment of Justice Party, and the plea for Communal Representation and electioneering under the Reformed Council Scheme were related to the problem of English education. If any of these incidents or developments is taken and seen individually, each may not seem related. But when these developments are considered in the light of the central theme of the non-Brahmins' agitation, as pointed, at the Brahmin monopoly of all the educational and professional advantages and with a view to redeem such oligarchy in their favour, each political event was related.

The history of host of events leading upto the non-Brahmin electoral victory in 1920 elections for the Reformed Councils to work out the Reforms under the Dyarchy system was the history of the non-Brahmin Justice Party's victory over

Brahmin domination. Communal representation as opposed to general electorate returned the 'minority' - one class of the community, i.e., the Brahmins. At the all-India level the nationalist movement was experiencing a transition from the Besantine Constitutional struggles that were inclined to work out Montagu's Reforms to the Gandhian form of refusal to accept the Constitutional developments that Montagu suggested - events marking the distance in the political road by milestones like Satyagraha, non-violent non-cooperation and finally Swaraj by 1920-21. It has infused a certain amount of dynamism in the nationalist movement, an element of mass character absent in the Besantine Home Rule League era.

The Justice Party, on the other hand, was wedded to the cause of communal representation and willing to work out Montagu's Reforms if only communal representation was granted. Thus the pre-occupation with the slogan of communal representation basically a provincial issue, and an issue against an educationally advanced community i.e., Brahmins, who were only 3% of the population, had brought upon the Justice Party a conspicuous isolation from the stream of nationalists' activities. It was both a cause and a consequence therefore, the result in the ultimate analysis seemed inevitable to equate the Justice Party's willingness to implement the Dyarchy through communal representation which meant, co-operation with the British. Such a development had concomitantly led to another result; the Justice Party's opposition to the nationalist movement - which in essence was antagonistic to the Justice Party's



ideology. It was an integral part of the Justice Party's ideology that they were politically voiceless majority, and co-operation with the British because, with their innate sense of justice it was they (British) alone who could hold the scales even between class and creed of India and without whom the Brahmins' unchallenged Oligarchy would be perpetuated. And therefore, the nationalists' opposition to British, the Justice Party contended was an opposition 'to orderly government' and eventually 'ordered' progress. This was the central theme of the Justice Party's political activities till 1920. It will suffice for our purpose to illustrate a few instances when this issue became loudest and more effective.

#### Justice Party and the Madras Presidency Association

While the Congress had rejected Besant's plea for acceptance of Montagu's Reform with 'drastic revisions', the Justice Party was willing to co-operate with the British Indian government if only permitted to determine the future by the politically unrepresented non-Brahmins. The Madras Presidency Association, (M.P.A.) a wing of the non-Brahmin Congressmen within the Madras Provincial Committee of the National Congress first were opposed to Brahmin domination of the Congress and politics, but were of the opinion that in the implementation of the Reforms, safeguards must be made to protect non-Brahmin interests, But they opposed the Justice Party's claim for communal representation which

looked like "Hindus claiming separation as a means of safeguarding their interests against the Muhammadans".<sup>1</sup> But by the end of 1917, the M.P.A. leaders considered the 'peculiar conditions in Madras compelled adequate provision in the Congress-League Scheme for communal representation', and with considerable opposition managed this resolution to be passed in the Provincial Conference.<sup>2</sup> The leadership of the M.P.A., Irschick says, came from the same socio-economic groups as those of the Justice Party - mostly well educated, middle class, non-Brahmins, with the difference that there were only a few zamindars and large landowners - and accordingly less money.<sup>3</sup> The like-mindedness on the political outlook is not surprising.

The Justice Party realised that if it were to impress Montagu that they represented the entire non-Brahmin communities of the Presidency, as claimed by their Manifesto, to press for communal representation, then they must organise and win the support of the outcastes who constituted one-fifth of the Presidency population. Dr. Nair and O.Kandaswami Chetti organised a meeting of the Panchamas and suggested to coordinate all the political activities of the Panchamas in the city with the Justice Party giving their advice and friendship.

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1. Eugene F. Irschick, op.cit., p. 68.
  2. Ibid., p. 71. A Christian member of the M.P.A. threatened the Congress that if their resolution was not accepted, many non-Brahmins would desert the Congress.
  3. Ibid., pp. 61-62.

The rebuff to the offer came from the President of the Paraiya Mahajana Sabha, that true was the fact that Brahmin Oligarchy and oppression would continue should Home Rule agitation succeed, but truer would be this regardless of who achieved power, Brahmins or non-Brahmins.<sup>4</sup> The social distance between untouchables and the rest, a distance which the Non-Brahmins no less than the Brahmins had perpetuated till now, was attempted to be bridged by a political expediency rather than social conviction. Fitting were the Pariah Sabha President's reply that if the Justice Party or the non-Brahmins wanted to lead the Panchams, 'they should effect a reformation among themselves, and treat Panchamas as their brethren'.<sup>5</sup> The question why overtures or efforts on social unity such as prohibition, education for females and outcastes, fusion of sub-castes - measures that could collectively weaken Brahmin control over the social system, - were of a communal representation era and not early i.e., prior to 1917, should explain whether it was the realisation of a political need or a genuine concern on the low caste-groups. In this context it is pertinent to note that the leaders of the Justice Party like Thyagaraya Chetty counted them as a separate community and not as one among the Justice Party's

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4. Ibid., p. 71.

5. Ibid. Irschick says clearly that the outlook of the Justice Party towards the untouchables was never consistent and variously outlined by its leaders - all of which did not see eye to eye with their problems.

non-Brahmins of the Presidency for communal representation.<sup>6</sup> It was no wonder that the M.P.A. and the Justice Party both did not impress Montagu in Madras about the non-Brahmin cause.

#### Non-Brahmin Cause in England

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were published in their Report laying down general guidelines or principle to work out the function of the government in the Reformed Councils. The actual working out of the details regarding the Constitutional arrangements were entrusted to the Southborough and Feetham Committees to decide. The final authority was the British Parliament and its Select Committee. The Justice Party's base of propaganda for communal representation therefore became England and not Madras, and their request for 'stringent rules' to be applied for communal representation to Montagu in Madras had not impressed him.

What strikes me so astounding about these non-Brahmins is while in Madras, Montagu observed that although they are vigorous enough to object to the influence of the Brahmins, they lie on their stomach and appeal to the influence of the Government for help instead of fighting, and although there is the beginning of the most promising party system, here, they want to spoil it by the horrible extension of communal representation. 7

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6. For a very revealing character of Thiyagaraja Chetti's social outlook shorn of all their 'Dravidian stances' see his Evidence to the Royal Commission in 1913, Vol.V, pp.458-60. While he strongly urged that 'the tax-payers must be benefitted by getting posts in the services' as at present the majority of the government appointments are held by a select class, who as a rule do not pay as much as the others and therefore, he feels it is fair that the tax-payers who pays more must enjoy the benefits of the appointments. He said the Brahmins who held the majority of the government services paid, 'in fact no contribution' to the state as tax. A miner and experter, P.T. Chetty had more than 100 servants for domestic care alone and in the selection of servants, efficiency weighed and not caste representation.
  7. E.S.Montagu, An Indian Diary, p.117.

But Montagu could hardly foresee that it was the same non-Brahmins who went on their knees and lied on their stomach could organise themselves and win their goal before long and in fact within three years.

The imbalance in the educational and professional privileges between Brahmins and non-Brahmins which was an index to the former's political status and the latter's political minority position, formed the body of the Justice Party deputation's grievances to the Montagu-Report. Dr. Nair's political forecaste in the British Parliament was that as the Report was opposed to communal representation, its implementation would result in an 'excessive over-representation of Brahmins'.<sup>8</sup> Dr. Nair's cause in England was reinforced by the Justice Party's communal representation, 'a reply' to Montagu's constitutional Reforms in Madras. It was perhaps more elaborate than their Manifesto in 1916, which highlighted the political ascendancy and monopoly of the Brahmins and the resultant discrimination of the non-Brahmins in the hands of the former. The purpose was to disagree to all the points or reasons that the authors of the Report disfavoured communal representation.<sup>9</sup>

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8. E.F.Irschick, op.cit., p.92, quoted from Great Britain Parliament Debates (Lords) XXXI, 241.
  9. Koka Appa Rao Naidu, Communal Representation and Indian Constitutional Reform, Madras, 1918, published in The Montagu-Chelmsford Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reforms, a Simplified Summary. Koka Appa Rao had touched upon all professions where there was Brahmin preponderance. Political field was the most fertile for his argument on communal representation. Basing his arguments on the experience of the working of the 1909 Morley-Minto Reforms, he warned that the implementation of the Montagu Reforms without communal representation would result in the continuation of a Brahmin political era and in fact, the Reforms would legitimatize the Brahmin domination (a force unrepresentative of the people's interests) in all places including Legislatures, where the choice of the masses should have a voice.

In their claim for communal representation the non-Brahmin Justice Party had more effective official and non-official British support than the nationalists' opposition. The 'friends' were the Madras Government, the official bureaucracy and non-official English community, largely business and commercial interests. The presence of a dominant Brahmin element in the government services, a base for political opposition, disloyalty, and a political menace, so much vindicated by Chirol, the Rowlatt Committee Report and others, was a standing rival to the bureaucracy in Madras especially, and a 'political nuisance' to the Government. Moreover Montagu's Proposals had no overtures to reverse the electoral-political experience of the Morley-Minto Reforms, i.e., the large scale Brahmin return to the Legislative Council. The Madras Government, Official bureaucracy and the non-official British community in Madras, all opposed Montagu's Report, fearing that it would be like to help vanguard<sup>10</sup> the 'British paramountcy in India'.

However the non-Brahmins' strongest allies were the reactionary and racist elements that dominated the British Indian

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10. The Mail, the organ of the British business interests in Madras, expressed indignation at Mrs. Besant's release, Montagu's visit and the opposition to his refusal for communal representation were all aimed at attacking at the roots of the Brahmin influence. The nationalist movement and in special, the Home Rule agitation which according to them dealt irreparable damage to the British image, were all conducted by the Brahmins. Therefore their continuation, which would certainly be the result of the Reforms, they felt would be to help an enemy.

Association in England. The archpriests of this racist-reactionary and imperialists combine were Lord Sydenham, the founder-member of the Association and Governor of Bombay in 1917, Sir John Hewett and Francis, a retired Missionary of the S.P.G. The avowed purpose of the Association was,

to oppose all measures, tending to destroy or weaken the paramount authority of British rule in India or to transfer power to a small Oligarchy unrepresentative of the masses of the Indian people and having interests opposed to those of the masses. 11

The Non-Brahmin Manifesto noted:

We are not in favour of any measure which in operation, is designed, or tends completely, to undermine the influence and authority of the British rulers ... 'We are of those' the leaders of the non-Brahmin Party declared, who think that in the truest and best interest of India, its government should continue to be conducted on true British principles of justice and equality of opportunity. We are deeply devoted and loyally attached to the British rule. For that rule in spite of its many shortcomings and occasional aberrations, is, in the main, just and sympathetic ....

The unanimity in the political outlook of these two strengthened the Justice Party's political strength and political alliance with the British seemed to the Justicists a blessing and a 'united front' in the Reformed Councils with them would be the most glorious of the political victories they could score.<sup>12</sup> What should be kept in mind is the fact that all of these were aimed at the Brahmins - the political domination a numerical minority.

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11. Ibid., p. 97.

12. The Non-Brahmin Manifesto in Irschick, op.cit., pp.364-65. The Montagu Reforms' basis as the authors intended was to develop the political future of India with British co-operation: the basic unit of this scheme was the Provinces. The Justice Party was the most willing 'Party' to implement such a proposal.

The only difference between the Justice Party and their 'English friends' was that while the former thought Montagu's Reforms was a "revolution of which not one person in thousand in this country realized the magnitude, and which will probably lead by stages ... to the ultimate disruption of the Empire"<sup>13</sup>, the Justice Party was wedded to the communal representation if such a "revolution" was to occur. The Madras Government was opposed to Brahmanizing the Legislative Councils by implementing the Reforms without communal representation. The Madras brigade of the I.C.S., viewed that the 'Indianizing' of the Services could result in the transfer of the direction of administration and also executive and legislative functions to a few politicians from the I.C.S. which the latter believed,<sup>14</sup> went further than the conditions in India could justify. And yet after all its reluctance to introduce a semblance of democratic provincialization it contended that if the Dyarchy was to be a reality the indigenous elements (non-Brahmins) should

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13. Ibid., p.99, quoted from Garzon's letter to Montagu. And also for more naked imperialist version of control of India by the British bureaucracy, see Irschick's details of Vincent Smith. All of these pointed out in essence that if communal representation was to be rejected, the franchise widened, and the Provincial Legislative Councils composed of sizable elected majority there could be only one result; the fortunes of India would be handed over to a group of politicians - an oligarchy - totally unrepresentative of Indian desires. Many believed that this oligarchy would be composed of Brahmins. And also how all those whose anti-Brahmin nationalists combine and collective impact, see Ibid., pp.101-12.
14. Ibid., p.115. quoted from a letter of a retired I.C.S. to the Morning Post.



be represented.<sup>15</sup> The Madras Government had strained all its nerves to make the Brahmin-non-Brahmin political issue a very complex one to the Committees that came to deal with the actual working out of the Scheme's constitutional mechanisms. The insistence of the Madras Government upon communal representation and with a limited franchise, Irschick points out, was in part as a means by which a bureaucratic Government was protecting its interests against pressures to make its Government a more popular institution. And such insistence and refusal to compromise was also basically connected with its fear of a Brahmin take-over.<sup>16</sup> It had given the impression to Lord Southborough, the head of the Committee that the non-Brahmins' demand for communal representation was "as a detailed question, as distinct from an all-overriding difficulty...the most awkward thing we had to deal with".<sup>17</sup> Finally the question had won a "peculiarity" status "in Madras". The Government of India added

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15. Ibid., pp.122-29. The innumerable ways in which the Government of Madras and its Executive Council Members, both officially and unofficially tried to prevent the possibility that would allow the continuation of Brahmin political influence, and the efforts they had taken to ensure the Brahmins' displacement by the Non-Brahmins, see Irschick's detailed accounts, pp.122-29.

16. Ibid., p.126.

17. Lord Southborough also regretfully agreed that "speaking of the Brahmin question ... so far as Madras is concerned ... a very awkward and very difficult and a very pressing question ..." - Lord Southborough's Evidence to the Joint Select Committee, p. 42.

its contribution to strengthen the 'peculiar conditions' in the 'Madras Presidency'.<sup>18</sup> Thus the Government of India, as that of the Madras Government has come down heavily on the side of the non-Brahmins in Madras because, the Reforms would lead to "the establishment of an oligarchy in Madras".<sup>19</sup>

The Justice Party, Congress Nationalism and the British

The political environment at the all-India level revolved around the issue of acceptance or denial of the Reforms and the changes in the political stands taken by the Tilakists, Gandhites, and the Moderates - all of which involved confrontations with the Government, the extent being different with each party. The Justice Party experienced a self-imposed, 'splendid isolation' from these political mainstreams by its unconditional and hearty approval with the Reforms, and communal representation. Logically, therefore, any embarrassment with the Government was out of question, if not impolitic.<sup>20</sup> Thus it had opted for a political exclusiveness from that of the nationalists'

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18. Stressing upon the necessity of 'local Conditions' which it alleged the Committee had ignored, the Government of India opined, 'we cannot expect the co-operation and goodwill from the non-Brahmins so long as provision is made to secure their interests'. As in the face of the fact that "numbers count for little in India as against social educational and especially religious superiority", they were prompted to demand a "fair share" to the non-Brahmins. E.F.Irschick, *op.cit.*, p.129. quoted from Great Britain Parliamentary Papers.
19. *Ibid.*, p.130.
20. The "Non-Brahmin" had made their political attitude towards the Government very clear since the beginning of 1916 when it published Dr. Nair's address by attacking the Home Rule agitation, etc.

activities. It was not a coincidence but the integral political developments during 1918-20.

The recommendation of the Report of the Rowlatt Committee to re-enact the Defence of India Rules roused a new sensation, as the Rules meant to stifle down any political activity which the Government of India considered a menace to the defence of India. What gave rise to the new sensation was the feeling of humiliation and insult that the Recommendations dealt as it was 'the very anti-thesis of what they hoped for under the new reforms.<sup>21</sup> Gandhi's non-violent 'hartal' led to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar by General Dyer. The Martial Law in the Punjab and the Government legislation, which had provoked the Atlantic wave of indignation and protest left the party totally untouched. Dr. Nair and Thiagaraya Chetti, both important leaders of the Justice Party, approved both the government action in the Punjab and the legislation of the Defence of India Act quite emphatically. Chetti said that the central figure to be found by the Report for bad pre-eminence was<sup>22</sup> Brahmin. In such times, as found by the Report, Dr. Nair wondered the political wisdom of a Report for 'popular institutions'.<sup>23</sup> It was thus the Justice Party's addiction to communal

21. E.F.Irschick, op.cit., p.133. Irschick had found 'Ironically the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and the Rowlatt Committee Report are bound side by side in the same volume of Parliamentary Papers.

22. Ibid., p.135. quoted from Madras Mail, 1918: Irschick gives what Thiagaraja Chetti said, "To what community belong most of the persons who find a bad eminence in that Report? Who is the central figure among them? He is none other than the Brahmin gentleman (Tilak) who has been elected to the Presidential chair of the next session of the Indian National Congress."

23. Ibid.

representation and co-operation with the Government was inseparably bound up with the political attitude of friendship with the British and isolation and opposition to Congress politics and nationalism.

The most important point that this study understands therefore is the non-Brahmins' Justice Party's political position: 1) The leadership was equally Western-educated but as the Brahmins had come from an economic background both the moneyed class from the urban centres and powerful rural landlords and Zamindars, or in their own words, 'sons of property' and 'lords of the soil'. The opposition to a minority class, the Brahmins, whose political domination was unproportionate and not in keeping with their position vis-a-vis the majority whose rights were ignored. The political ideology that emanated from this 'grievance' was intent on reversing the existing political environment. Capitalizing on the British contradictions with the Western-educated, indispensably entrenched in the Government machinery, politically hostile elements - the nationalists most of whom were Brahmins in Madras, the Justice Party developed its strategies accordingly. In keeping with their economic background and interests they developed their political outlook which they believed would be best served by the continued British connection in India. Therefore, any measure that would undermine the British paramountcy was ill-calculated to the national progress in their view. The official and semi-official support that came forth from different quarters, though was antagonistic to the Congress nationalism, seemed perfectly

justified to the non-Brahmins. Their calculation of their political future went as that if they were to win their cause, in the legislature of the Reformed self-government, with communal representation, it meant political opposition to the nationalists. And any political measure that the nationalists had calculated to affect the 'orderly progress' that the British government in India, 'who in the main were just and sympathetic' would hinder the realization of their political victory and therefore their political ideology. The non-Brahmin or Justice Party's opposition and hostility to Gandhi's 'hartal', to the legislation of the Defence of India Act, and his Non-Violent Non-Co-operation of the 1919-20, on the one hand and their active support to the government measures to prevent any measure of success for these activities of the nationalists on the other, should be viewed in the light of the Justice Party's background, political interest, both of which were manifest in their ideology, and their subsequent activities. It is the character and content of the Justice Party and its political ideology that won them their support for their pro-Britishness. The communal representation they won finally in 1920, with the Joint Select Committee in England and with Lord Meston in Madras was the process of unfolding their ideological-political/<sup>outlook</sup>into fullest actions. In the process of winning communal representation for the Justice Party what remains to be seen is, briefly, the important, 'developments' during the Joint Select Committee hearing in England and till the time of the election to the Reformed Councils in 1920.

Communal Representation with  
the Joint Select Committee

The authors of the Reforms, the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy were against communal representation. Yet the non-Brahmins' success for their 'cause' must be understood as due to the ascendance of the forces, anti-Reform, ganged up both in India and in England. These forces such as the British press, the Indo-British Association, official support from the Government of Madras whose focuss was said to be the Brahmins, were all very helpful for the Justice Party. Of these forces, the role played by the British press, and the contribution made by Mr. Charles Watney, a principal-mental figure for this, who had practically guided the non-Brahmin delegation cause at every stage in England, was the most decisive of all.

The Justice Party delegation to the Joint Select Committee was headed by Dr. Nair with K.V. Reddi Naidu (a Telugu Kappu), A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar (Tamil Vellala), Koka Appa Rao Naidu (Oriya Telugu from Ganjan) and L.K. Tulasiram, a Sourashtra Community member from Madurai, P. Ramarayananagar (Telugu Vellala) later Raja of Panagal, a Justice member, and representing the All-India Landholders Association and Madras Zamindars and Landholders Association.

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23. Ibid., p.143, Irschick quotes Smith: "India has done much for me and now, before my working day come to an end, I should like to do some thing for India, by contributing my mite towards the solution of the dangerous problem".  
quoted from Smith's Indian Constitutional Reforms Viewed in the Light of History, p. 4.

Dr. Nair already in England, the arrival of the Justice's delegation was greeted with publicity in the press, and public meetings, arranged by the Sydenhams, Col. Yates, Rev. John Sharrocks, and Welbeys, the erstwhile editor of the Madras Mail, and A.G. Cardews, the Madras Governor's Council member. The focus of the propaganda for the non-Brahmin communal representation was implied in the attack on Brahmins. They predicted, if the Reforms were implemented the Brahmins would secure power and inevitably the Brahmins would deny to the masses the only means whereby, with caste in the ascendant, they can never hope to hold their own. <sup>24</sup> Added to the reactionary and racist character of the House of Lords who viewed Montagu's Reform-revolution 'would damage the British future in India' was the 'evangelistic' zeal of Vincent Smith, which <sup>25</sup> had helped to give a cohesion to those views. Smith's 'duty for India' devotion implied their responsibility to save India <sup>26</sup> from Brahmin machination.

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24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. In May, 1919, The Dravidian wrote of the 'havoc' that the Brahmin 'ascendancy' had caused. "The reason for education not spreading in South India" it said "is the wily ways of haughty Brahmins", who by "reasons of their high birth, kept the majority of the people immersed in ignorance. Ninety five percent of the Indians in the Educational Department are Brahmins and they create all manner of obstacles from the lower getting educated...." Therefore if primary education should spread, it said, communal electorates should be established, "Otherwise, only those who do not even care a jot for spreading primary education among the common people will be returned to the Legislative Councils". Dravidian, 21st September, 1919, Native Newspaper Reports, Madras, 1919.

Veiled behind this 'evangelistic' zeal of the bureaucracy was the question of 'India for Britain' and 'British paramountcy' advocates, whose task was to reinforce the colonialist skeleton with imperialist flesh, a task performed by the Indo-British and European Associations. Montagu was fully alive to this both when he visited India and through the times of the Select Committee hearings. Montagu realised that the racist feelings that these associations in Madras and Calcutta so vigorously generated and complemented by that of the bureaucracy, was the underlying factor behind Indian political agitations. He had noted this so early when in India in 1917, he wrote in his Diary about the feelings of alienation caused by the racist feeling, "... and we shall go from bad to worse until we are hounded out of India, unless something is done to correct this sort of thing".<sup>27</sup>

However, it should not be assumed that these anti-Reform elements had no enemies and friends of Montagu. Men like Colonel Wedgewood and Sir Edward Parrot equally vehemently

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27. E.F. Irschick, op.cit., p.145. quoted from E.S.Montagu, An Indian Diary.



attacked the 'anti-Reformists' and supported Montagu's Pro-  
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 posals in the House of Commons.

It was in this atmosphere of 'sympathy and opposition' that the Justice Party awaited its call by the Joint Select Committee. Their friends like Watney, did a great deal almost to visualise, anticipate and prepare themselves for the  
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 Hearings.

The Justice Party leaders' evidences to the Joint Select Committee were a re-statement of their loyalty to the British and political attitude towards the Brahmins, the Congress and the Government of India, perhaps in a more demonstrative way. The basic assumption behind the plea for communal representation was that non-communal-representative Legislatures would mirror the perpetuation of Brahmin oligarchy. The only way

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28. Colonel Wedgewood's appreciation of Montagu's desire is not to deny India her right - freedom and social unity - through the Report. He said, "... The Genuineness and honesty of this Report is shown by the very fact that the whole arguments of the Report are directed against separate representations, and that the Report is based on the genuine desire to see India become a nation where all classes would pull together". While he expressed his rejoice that a fellow-countryman did this but he regretted that Montagu "is a Jew and not an Englishman". Ibid., p.147. quoted from Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates;

Sir Edward Parrot described the archpriest of the opponents of the Reforms, Lord Sydenham, and his clique, as people "who all along have shown themselves opposed at all times, and in all countries and in all circumstances to self-government in any form". Ibid., pp.147-48.

29. Irschick tells that Watney had arranged a meeting of the Justice leaders with Lord Sydenham who supplied the questions which awaited them in the Committee and thus prepare in advance, as that would intimidate the witnesses hostile to communal representation. Ibid., p.149. quoted from K.V. Reddi Naidu's Diary.

of remedying the imbalance of political forces between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins, the latter contended was communal electorates.<sup>30</sup> This devotion to communal representation was borne out of the conviction as could be seen from Reddi Naidu's evidence when he said,

May we not in our turn repeat the argument that if good government by the British is no substitute for self-government by Indians, any good government by the Brahmins is no substitute for self-government by non-Brahmins. 31

Ramaswami Mudaliyar contended that the Madras Presidency should be "treated as the 'political Ulster of India'".

Mudaliyar implied that the only solution to such a 'political Ulster' was communal representation.<sup>32</sup>

When the impressions of the Joint Select Committee were eventually sympathetic to communal representation, Montagu, hoping for a compromise, pressed the Non-Brahmin leaders, in a conference, to come to a compromise-agreement on the issue of communal representation. He offered two alternatives:

(1) six seats as communal representation or 30 reserved seats

30. K.V.Reddi quoted the Resolution passed at the last Non-Brahmin Conference, June, 1919: "That this Conference regards the equal distribution of political power among responsible Government in this country... and .. urges the creation of a Non-Brahmin Hindu electorate as the indispensable foundation for popular government, in the absence of which any constitutional Reform will be unreal, unworkable and sure to give rise to grave discontent". Therefore, "And as communal electorates was the only way to ensure equality between Brahmins and non-Brahmins it should come as "a special device, an adequate share to those who cannot by ordinary means receive their due share of representation". See Reddi Naidu's Evidence to the Joint Select Committee Hearings, Appendix H., pp. 53-54.

31. Ibid., p.63.

32. Ibid. quoted from Ramaswami Mudaliyar's Memorandum to the Joint Select Committee, Appendices. S, p.93.

in a two-seat constituency, where the non-Brahmin with the largest vote from his constituents would win a system of 'plural-constituencies'. As both were very 'small', the Justice leaders refused the offer. Neither did Montagu's efforts for a settlement between the Justicites and the Congressites in Madras succeed. Finally Montagu decided to leave the solution with the Government of Madras.

The Joint Select Committee adjourned to prepare its report. By a series of whirlwind political tours, the Justice leaders did all that they could to impress the English opinion on the necessity for communal representation and were back to Madras by the end of 1919. Tyagaraya Chetti said, while receiving them at the Madras Central Station, the impression they brought was that they had won special representation for the non-Brahmins "with the help of their British friends".<sup>33</sup>

#### The Irony and the Award

The bunch of the British bureaucracy that headed the Madras Government had left long before Montagu announced the arbitration of the issue to be left to the Madras Government. A valuable ally 'ally' of the Justice Party at home was lost and the new Government headed by Lord Wellington did not have either a Pentland or a Cardew. Secondly the balance of political forces at Madras in 1919, was no longer the pre-1916 era of Brahmin 'domination'. Men like Cardew, who had all along predicted that without communal representation the non-Brahmin

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33. Ibid., p.158. quoted from the Madras Mail, December 1919.

had no political future was "surprised" to know that long before the Joint Select Committee heard reasons for communal representation the so-called Brahmin domination was not all that unassailable. The 1919 August elections to the Madras Legislature had returned 11 non-Brahmins as against only 4 Brahmins who had just 4 years ago held 10. The crusade or the tirade against the Brahmins seemed absurd. In January, 1920, the election to the Corporation of Madras further justified this absurd slogan of 'special treatment to the non-Brahmins'. The election returned 19 non-Brahmins and 7 Brahmins, 2 Muslims and 2 Indian Christians.<sup>34</sup> Thirdly Lord Wellington's efforts to bring the non-Brahmins around for an agreement also failed,<sup>35</sup> the Conference marred with political bickerings between the non-Brahmin Justicites and the Madras Congressites.<sup>36</sup>

To top it all came the final rift within the non-Brahmin caste-Hindus combine, i.e., between the various social components of this political body. Mr. Lodd Govindoss, a rich banker in Madras, and Treasurer of the Madras Presidency Association objected to Mr. V. Chakkarai Chetti's, a Christian,

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34. Ibid., p.161. Irschick quotes the Mail to give the details of the 30 elected, 11 were vakils, 6 merchants, 3 landlords, 5 doctors, 2 journalists, and 3 retired Government officials. It is also noteworthy to recall the non-Brahmins' complaints of Brahmin oligarchy to the Royal Commission in 1913.
35. Dravidian, January 28, 1920, Native Newspaper Reports, Madras, Lord Willingdon remarked that the "Brahmins were not as bad a lot as was represented to him by the Non-Brahmin Gentlemen".
36. The Justice Papers like The Justice, Dravidian, the Non-Brahmin, Andhra Prakasika, and others papers sympathetic to the Justice cause like West Coast Spectator had no issue that did not attack the Brahmin.

presence in the meeting convened to decide the allocation of communal seats on the ground that Christians were already granted communal representation. The fact that Chakkarai Chetti was a strong adherent of communal representation and pleaded for the same in London as a member of the Justice Party's Deputation did not matter to Govindoss. L.K. Tulasiram, who had also represented the Justice Party in London, demanded separate electorate for his Saurashtras, an important commercial groups in Madura, regardless of whatever happened to the non-Brahmins. To cap it all came the British community's attitude in Madras, through their organ, the Mail. Disgusted with the way that the Justice Party selfishly behaved and failed to reach an agreement with the Brahmins, the Mail said, in the light of the recent electoral-political experiences, "there seems to be very little need for the non-Brahmins to raise the cry that special representation is needed for the protection of their interests. Mail considered that the non-Brahmins had been overplaying on their "backwardness".

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37. In addition to this, L.K. Tulasiram sparked off a political debate in the Madras Legislative Council to elevate the Saurashtras into 'Saurashtra-Brahmins' status. History has been dug into to prove the merit of his case of how Saurashtrians were as 'Brahmanical' if not more than the Brahmins in their 'way of life'. See Madras Legislative Council Proceedings, 1920, November 19, 1920. Both Brahmins and non-Brahmin legislators agreed that such a thing could be conceded.

38. Eugene F. Irschick, op.cit., quoted from the Madras Mail.

Lord Meston who sat in judgement of the case decided on a mere 28 reserved seats which had stunned the non-Brahmins.<sup>39</sup> Viewing the case in the light of the recent political-electoral experience, which was symptomatic of the non-Brahmin ascendance, Meston decided to ensure a start for them 'as sufficient as not to be outdistanced in the race' because he felt 'the necessity of the case does not go further than the provision of a reasonable minimum number of non-Brahmin seats to be supplemented by the growing political capacity of the community.'<sup>40</sup>

Irschick sums up the political lesson of the Meston's arbitration which implied: (1) Most obviously Meston settled a dispute, that started before Montagu came to India, but in doing so he provoked a stiffening in the attitudes of many non-Brahmins towards Brahmins in political life. A by-product of this political development was the ideological as well as organisational fusion of the leading rank and file of the Madras Presidency Association with Justice party. This had also some reflection upon the Justice party's attitude and role with the Congress politicians and Gandhi's Non-co-operation movement of 1919-20. Also, the Justice party's relation with the Government of Madras, did not enjoy the same amount of political patronage that the pre-Wellington Government has shown. The Justice party's political work for more than four

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39. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar summed up the non-Brahmin feeling editorially in Hindu, on March 25, 1920, thus. Thus decision of Lord Meston "embittered and caused profound disappointment and grave disquiet among the non-Brahmin community". quoted in Ibid., p.168.

40. Ibid., pp.165-66. quoted from Hindu, March, 1920.

years, by a series of well organised provincial conferences, climaxed by its hightened efforts in 1919 had enlivened the potential non-Brahmin political elements, thus reaching its roots to all the rural economically powerful and politically ambitious elements. It was in this atmosphere that the Justice party embarked upon winning the electoral support to invade the Legislative Councils.<sup>41</sup>

#### Towards the Polls, Triumph and After

The political experience during the period 1917 to 1919 impelled Gandhi to resort to what Irschick calls, the 'sweeping boycott' of the British Government Legislatures at the Centre and the Presidencies, law courts, Government schools and social functions.<sup>42</sup> But to those that dreamt of participating in the administration of the affairs with increased share, availing the Montagu Scheme, Gandhi's refusal looked the very negation of their objectives. Of all places in India, the Madras Presidency was the most embarrassing, for, the non-Brahmins' wave that was preparing to overtake the Congress with an alternative and antogonistic ideology even in the eventuality of Congress participation in the Council elections. To the Congress leaders in Madras, most of them being Brahmins, Gandhi's opposition for the Council entry looked like strengthening the hands of the enemy who had thrown a challenge to politically dispossess them. Gandhi's programme of total boycott

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41. Ibid., p. 169.

42. Ibid., . . .

and the Non-Co-operation had widened the cleavages between the pro-Reform and pro-Gandhi Congressmen. Consequently, Madras politics during this period was marked with half-hearted support within the Congress organisational ranks,<sup>43</sup> let alone Justice party's active anti-Non-Co-operation campaign.

To the Justice party's political philosophy of 'prosperity under British progress in India' the Non-Co-operationists were basically enemies to orderly progress of a Government that is just and therefore there was no question of two thoughts over opposing it. On the contrary, the Congress boycott of the Council elections was an important advantage of the absence of a potential enemy. From its inception to 1920, the Justice Party was ideologically committed to communal representation and working out the Reforms. Organisationally also it had geared up its rank and file towards the attainment of this goal. The 1920 Council election therefore was heavily weighted in their favour. The elections returned 63 non-Brahmins for the Justice Party in a 98 elected. Along with the supporters of other nominated non-Brahmin Councillors, the caste breakdown revealed 65 non-Brahmin caste-Hindus, 22 Brahmins, 5 Muslims,<sup>44</sup> 14 Indian Christians and 5 outcastes (official nominees).

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43. Of those who had serious doubts in the political wisdom of Gandhi's boycott and Non-Co-operation tactics were S. Satyamurthi and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, both of whom were important figures of the Congress in Madras. But their chief political opponent in the issue was C. Rajagopalachariar, Gandhi's lieutenant and a strong adherent to this programme. It is also worthwhile to note here that it was with Rajagopalachariar Gandhi resided on the day when 'Satyagraha' had dawned upon his enlightenment. The feeling of alienation forced by "a process of skilful maneuvering and manipulation" within the provincial congress organisation by Rajagopalachari. See *Ibid.*, pp.194-96.
44. *Ibid.*, p.178. quoted from the Madras Government's Memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission, in Great Britain. (London. 1930).



The most pertinent part of the non-Brahmins' political victory, for our purposes, is the analysis of the following factors. These are, among those already covered, the party, leadership, organisation and support in a more closer look. The Justice Party, as said earlier was dedicated to obtaining 'due share' to the non-Brahmin caste-Hindus. The Council entry was the most appropriate opportunity. The political ideology revolved around this point however far it extended. The social advancement naturally would be a natural by-product and anti-Brahminism through 'Social Reforms' was a logical extension. Whether it was indispensable or not, we will see later. But there was no doubt that it was a very effective weapon of support and strength to ideology as well as <sup>45</sup> organisation.

Early in 1916, Dr. Nair outlined the socio-political outlook of his Non-Brahmin Movement: he said,

We claim our social, moral and political rights, our share of Government appointments, not because we think that Government appointments will transform the non-Brahmin communities into the most prosperous of mankind, but because Government carry with them political power, of which, as lords of the soil and inheritors of noble

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45. Interestingly enough L.F. Rushbrook Williams observed "And among all the events, political as well as social of the period under review, there is probably none of greater importance, actual and potential, than the capture of the Reformed Legislative Council of Madras by the non-Brahmin Party. For the first time in the history of India the lower castes of the Madras have asserted themselves against the intellectual oligarchy of the upper, and have seized political power in their own hands ..." L.F. Rushbrook Williams, India in 1921-22, A Report prepared for presentation to Parliament in accordance with the requirements of the 26th Section of the Government of India, p. 221.

traditions, they must have their legitimate share. ... As agriculturists, masters of industry and commerce...., only we cannot give up political power and Government appointments as lying altogether beyond their province. If claiming political, social and moral equality with the Brahmins of this Presidency is an offence, we plead guilty to it. 46

But after Nair, Tyagaraya Chetti did not feel constrained by the pretensions of social equality.

We are nothing but slaves in the hands of Brahmin hierarchy. It is our turn to get the ascendancy. Let us only educate ourselves and in due course we shall have our position of Government service and political power, proportionate to our strength and importance. 47

This is how he thought of the situation. And since Thyagaraya Chetti ingratiated himself into the leadership of the party, the 'social reform' side of the Justice Party's ideology was pushed into the background.<sup>48</sup>

Not only the background of the non-Brahmins' Justice Party, but also its chief supporters, rank and file were of the same ideology. The reasons should be fairly obvious. The only elements that had claims to "the lords of the soil, sons of property and inheritors of noble traditions" were appealed to by Dr. Nair in 1917.

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46. Justice, June 2, 1917, Madras Native Newspaper Reports, 1917.
47. Ibid., p.176, quoted from T. Varedarajulu Naidu, The Justice Movement, 1917.
48. E.F. Irschick, op.cit., p. 176. Irschick tells us that Kandaswami Chetti and Ramanadhan's insistence that the non-Brahmin Hindus should reform their ways in relation to the untouchables, Tyagaraya Chetti ignored them and concentrated on the goal of ousting the Brahmins from position of strength from administrative and political life of the Presidency.

The 1920 electorate was 2.9% of the total population. The eligibility depended upon a certain amount of education but more important was wealth as measured by 'revenues' contributed to the Government. The chief support not only with cadre but also with money therefore, came from landowning groups, such as the Reddis and the Vellalas, who were eminently beneath the Brahmins in the ritual hierarchy. Also there were large numbers of middle-class, educated non-Brahmins from urban areas, and there was no place for the poorer classes. The zamindars and large landowners of the Circars and coastal districts, several important middle-class educated non-Brahmin castes like the Kappus, Kammas, Naidus from Andhra were the backbones of the Justice Party in the Telugu regions. The dominant peasant groups of the Tamil province were Vellalas, like the Reddis, Mudaliyars, Pallis, Pillais and others. The commercial and trading groups like Chettis, the Nadars and others had many of them scaled high in the intellectual ladder and the administrative hierarchy. The Nairs and Menons of the Malabar were powerful rivals to the Brahmins, more than the non-Brahmins of the

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49. Ibid., p.177. K.V. Reddi Naidu, Koka Appa Rao Naidu, A.P. Patro and Tyagaraya Chetti himself were all from Andhra, important non-Brahmin caste-Hindus, received Western education in the Madras colleges and university.
50. Ibid., p.177. J. Ramanadhan, G.Natesa Mudaliyar, T. Sivagnanam Pillai, O.Kandaswami Chetti, Subarayalu Reddiar and others were no less Western educated than the Brahmins. But more important than this was that they had powerful rural influence as dominant landowners. For such details of the Brahmin as well as the non-Brahmin leaders see the section "Important Personalities" in the Encyclopaedia of the Madras Presidency and the Adjacent States.

other areas, Therefore it could be said, that there was a clear landlord-zamindar, wealthy, middle-class, and Western educated compartments within the Justice bogey.<sup>51</sup> But the very fluidity within its ranks was the fact of common commitment, and oneness of purpose - a purpose that sunk all conflicting interests momentarily. In this combine, 'equality with untouchables' had no material advantages, neither politically necessary nor socially helpful. But the fact that the socio-political crusade against the Brahmin domination should gain wide socio-political credibility of opinion, it wore often and on, and half-heartedly, the 'equality to untouchables' garb.

The history of the 'backward' groups' struggle for social advancement, upon material prosperity, claiming higher social status, often imitating the social behaviour of the one immediately higher group is amply borne out the literature. What M.N. Srinivas calls the 'Sanskritization' of the lower classes,<sup>52</sup> and the 'Westernization' of the middle classes or caste groups

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51. It is interesting to note how Robert Hardgrave understands the character of the South Indian Liberal Federation which was later on popularly known as the Justice Party. "The leadership", Hardgrave says, "financially well endowed, was drawn almost exclusively from a socially stable element of the urban population. While Chetty, Nair, Mudaliyar and the early leaders of the movement spoke for the illiterate non-Brahmin masses of Madras, they in no way represented them. This leadership constituted a tightly knit elite, which, while imbued with social concern, had little contact with the people as a whole. Despite its many publications its highly articulate propaganda, and its numerous conferences, the Federation made no attempt to draw the mass following of a popular movement"... Robert L. Hardgrave, The Dravidian Movement, p.16 (emphasis mine).

52. M.N. Srinivas, op.cit., pp.91-92.

was perhaps more true of the Madras Presidency than elsewhere. The non-Brahmin movement was the final unfolding of the "Sanskritization-Westernization" process underway for over 20 years and even earlier. The Justice Party's label of 'Backwardness' of the Non-Brahmin caste Hindus had powerful appeal to the economically powerful, social pre-eminent next to the Brahmins and politically ambitious but hitherto 'powerless' elements.

Composed of these interests whose political ambitions could find fulfilment only in the 'capture of political power' as Nair and Tyagaraya Chetti said, Gandhi's Non-Co-operation and Boycott movements had one meaning; that it was a 'menace' to their political interests. Their opposition to Gandhian-Congress nationalism was at variance from theirs and Gandhi especially was considered politically 'anarchic' advocating 'anarchy and revolution'. 'Consistently' Irschick says, 'the Justice party, both unofficially on the Council and officially through party propaganda, did all it could to oppose Gandhi's ideas'.<sup>53</sup>

Forming the Ministry, the Justice Party had undertaken to administer all the 'Transferred' subjects like Education, Excise, Public Works, Local Boards, Public Health, Municipalities, Co-operative Societies, Fisheries etc. 'The plums of political power' was finally in their hands. Once in power, the Justice Party began to wear off all the 'social equality'

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53. Irschick, op.cit., p.182.

pretensions it had put on earlier. Neither did the Justice Party leaders like Nair and others' overtures succeed in 1917 nor did their consistency of 'friendship and brotherhood' continue after Nair.<sup>54</sup> The Kandaswami Chettis, and Natesa Mudaliyars, if they wanted could continue social reform outside the organisational patronage, but 'decisions from Justice party had shifted from party office to exclusive cosmopolitan clubs and allegiance to their own castes reasserted itself and not equality outlook to untouchables, which was served to recede even further back than backbench subject.'<sup>55</sup>

There could be no better illustration of the Justice Party's or the 'important' non-Brahmin caste-Hindus' (such as the Vellalas, the Chettis, the Naidus, the Kammass, the Kappus and the Nadars and others) attitude towards the untouchables than their behaviour as seen during the troubles, happened between the Caste-Hindus and the untouchables. The trouble arose during a strike in 1921, at the Buckingham and Carnatic textile mills in which both the caste-Hindus and untouchables were workers. When the untouchables returned to work, persuaded rather with less difficulty than the caste-Hindus, the latter charged the untouchables as betraying and breaking the strike and the strikers and therefore attacked them. In the ensuing troubles for two months or so, the police firing had resulted in the casualty of a few non-Brahmin caste Hindus. The Justice Party squarely blamed the Government for 'the undue pampering of the Adi-Dravidas (untouchables) by the Officials of the Labour

54. Ibid., pp. 188-89.

55. Ibid., quoted from Justice, September 1921.

Department'. The Report on the episode by Tyagaraya Chetti, Natesa Mudaliyar and Ramaswami Mudaliyar, not only charged the untouchables as responsible but also included among other proposals, Tyagaraya Chetti's that 'the Adi-Dravidas should not be kept together in one camp or near each other in the affected area. The Adi-Dravida camps should be removed outside the limits of the Madras city and they should not be kept together.<sup>56</sup>

In dismissing the report the Government said that the reporters' 'fears and anxieties' was baseless because 'the history of these troubles is sufficient to rebut any such assumption... and the Government are well aware that feelings of anxiety and terror are wide-spread in the Adi-Dravida community of the city',<sup>57</sup> And to Mr. O. Tanikachala Chetti, (a Justice M.L.C.) who demanded a discussion of the 'labour disputes' Sir Lionel Davidson, the Labour Commissioner put the blame of inciting violence squarely on the caste-Hindus. He said, "it is no longer merely a labour dispute confined to strikers and non-strikers, but a faction fight inflamed by caste prejudices".<sup>58</sup>

M.C. Raja, the nominated representative of the untouchables had no option left when his community was denounced by the Justice leaders as being 'favoured' and 'patronized' by the Government but to sever their connection with them. Refusing to be subjected to denunciations of some Justice leaders he said,

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56. Ibid., quoted from Hindu, September 8, 1921.

57. Ibid., quoted from Hindu, September, 1921.

58. Ibid., quoted from the Madras Legislative Council Proceedings, October 12, 1921, p. 1028.

I appeal with all the force at my command to all the moderate members of this House, to the non-Brahmins, the Brahmins and the Europeans alike in this Council, to say that this campaign to excite public feeling against my community, to deprive them of their legitimate rights and to reduce them once more to the political, social and economic bondage of ages, shall cease. 59

The non-Brahmins' pretensions of brotherhood and social equality, M.C. Raja later on said, was a hypocrisy and a mere posing. "The interests of thousands of non-Brahmin communities are criminally left in the background and a few Rajas and Chettis pose as the representatives of all non-Brahmin communities".<sup>60</sup> By 1923, there was no longer the Untouchables political allies and the non non-Brahmins' anti-Brahmin struggle had no meaning and place for the untouchables, one-fifth of the Madras Presidency population.

The changes in the attitude of the Justice Party towards the Untouchables, Irschick points out, marks two things: First, the alienation caused to the Untouchables by the Justice Party was indicative of its come down in its political outlook to include only those caste Hindoos immediately below the Brahmins in the socio-religious pre-eminence, and established position in the Government services and education and a strong investment in the land and commerce of South India. Its political

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59. Ibid., p.1013

60. M.C. Raja, The Oppressed Hindus, pp.62-3 and Sampad Abhodaya, January 22, 1921, Native Newspaper Reports, 1923, Madras.



ambition was to supplant the Brahmins, while keeping the untouchables at a good economic, social, educational and political distance. Secondly, the social outlook of the Party as the idealistic reform association that Dr. Nair had dreamt of had vanished and instead had transformed itself into a mere political mechanism, a broker for Government jobs for a few select non-Brahmin caste Hindus.<sup>61</sup>

The Justice Party, now with power in the Ministry after 1921, implemented its goals. Initially adopted by a series of resolutions and the subsequent Government orders, the Justice Party had tried to give non-Brahmins the greater part of the Government jobs. It had fulfilled its twin objects - the displacement of the Brahmins from position of strength and influence and taking them on to themselves. By due and just share, their political logic went, 97% of the opportunities to the non-Brahmins. But in practice it meant the practical exclusion of those like the untouchables and the Muslims and only the important caste Hindus would enjoy the administrative power, social position and economic security.<sup>62</sup>

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61. E.F. Irschick, op.cit., pp.192-3.

62. There could be no better illustration of what Srinivas calls the two stages of a Backward Class Movement, i.e., the first when it tries to symbols of high status while in the second the emphasis shifted from the symbols to the real sources of high status, that is, possession of political power, education and a share in the new economic opportunities". The Justice Party's position in 1921 can be said as the culmination of this process. M.N. Srinivas, Mobility in the Caste System, op.cit., pp.192-3.

The British opposition to the Brahmin preponderance in the services was recognised long back by the Madras Government. And this was sought to be reduced by implementing what were called the Communal Government Orders (known as Communal G.Os.) - a means by which appointments could be given not only for merit and efficiency but also with a desire for social justice.<sup>63</sup> These however were not effectively applied. But the non-Brahmin resentment of the Brahmin domination found an opportunity around 1911 when the Government of Madras seriously took up the Communal G.Os. again. A series of pamphlets appeared under a pseudonymous author under the name "Fair Play," highlighting the existing relation or distance between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins. "Fair Play" was anxious for a political organisation to propagate non-Brahmins' views and to secure the "just share" i.e., 97% of the non-Brahmin population must have 97% of appointments in the public services. The non-Brahmins had organized themselves politically within 10 years and had also the desired political power to implement this. The non-Brahmin Party's history of activities was the history of a crusade against Brahminism on all possible directions.<sup>64</sup> They had employed every means within their reach and missed no opportunity to point out the distance between them

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63. The Non-Brahmin, 10th December, 1919. Madras Native Newspaper Reports, also S. Saraswathi, op.cit., p.97.

64. E.R. Irschick, op.cit., pp.234-35.

and the Brahmins to the officials in Madras, when the Royal Commission reviewed the Public Services, when Montagu visited Madras and also during the Joint Select Committee Hearing in England in 1919.

Finally they had scored a victory in the most powerful field, the electorate. Now it was their turn, as said by Thyagaraya Chetti to take the ascendance. So long as they appealed to the Government of Madras to level the imbalance between the Brahmins and the Non-Brahmins.<sup>65</sup> But now they had the power to level it themselves. Then came the first Communal Government Orders, more fundamental than the others, as they touched only particular fields like Judiciary or Revenue. The resolution sought to "increase the proportion of posts in Government offices ... at once be extended to all departments of the Government and be made applicable not only to principal appointments, but to posts of all grades, and that Government should issue orders accordingly and insist on their being enforced ..."<sup>66</sup> Another resolution sought to apply this principle to the Secretariat of the Madras Government which

65. Almost all issues were linked to the 'Brahmin-preponderance': to take only one example, the Dravidian of 21st November 1918 attributed the large failures in the examinations of the Madras University to the presence of large number of Brahmin examiners and demanded either the inclusion of non-Brahmin majority examiners or to have outside examiners. "In the interest of the non-Brahmin students", says Dravidian, "there should be an increase in the number of non-Brahmin Fellows of the University". And as "voting by Graduates would only increase the Brahmin elements, as the majority of the Graduates belong to that caste, it is the duty of the Government therefore to arrange for a non-Brahmin electorate for the University". Dravidian, 23rd September, 1918, Native Newspaper Reports, Madras, 1918.

66. See the Resolution on "Communal Representation" in the Government of India Services, the Government Services in Madras and other Local Boards. Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor of Madras, Second Session, Vol.II, No.5, pp.423-48.

had hitherto was known for its selection only upon merit. Prevailing upon the Government the Justice Party got its resolutions through and the Government Order on 16th September, 1921, extended the principle of increasing the proportion of non-Brahmins to all departments with a provision requiring the appointing authorities to furnish half-yearly reports. Again in August 1922, the Second Communal Government Order had declared that not only new appointments were to be proportional but also promotion of permanent, temporary and acting Government personnel should be brought under this rule so that the appointments could be "divided among the several communities"<sup>67</sup>. Times were ahead when Brahmins were sought to be excluded under the cover of "proportional representations by the Staff Selection Boards, instituted to implement the Government Orders everywhere, so as to fulfil the goals of its Manifesto of 1916. But the dispossession of the Brahmin of their intellectual political and professional hold saw its hey days in the period of the Communal G.Os. The process by which the Justice Party disfigured the Brahmin superiority was decisive, Irschick points out that 'the wheel had turned full circle'<sup>68</sup>.

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67. Eugene F. Irschick, op.cit., p. 237.

68. Brahmins and Non-Brahmins in State Services, 1900-'40.

Year	Gazetted		Non-Gazetted			
	Brahmins	Non-Brahmins	Rs.100 and Over Brahmins	Non-Brahms.	Rs.35 to Rs.100 Brahmins	Non-Brahms.
1900	41	17	30	10	52	32
1910	45	15	53	25	55	30
1920	47	20	56	24	59	27
1930	39	21	51	29	47	37

For further details, see S.Saraswathi, op.cit., pp.94-95.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The assumption of this study that the growth of higher education in mere numbers of increase and decrease of institutions and scholars will not help to understand the reasons why different castes and communities attained different degrees of progress has been proved by this attempt. The belief that the socio-economic background of the scholars determined their capacity to obtain Western education has been tested over a longer period than that which falls within the scope of this study. The fact that (1) a well endowed economic background was more important than merely the high social status, and (2) often economic progress was instrumental for putting forth claims for higher social status, is only part of this study. That this transformation of various castes and communities is to be read correspondingly in their educational progress has been the main task of this work. The whole of the first section has attempted to analyse the impact of the socio-economic transformation of the Presidency as reflected upon the nature of composition of the Western educated Natives as various castes communities.

The coming into existence of caste organisations as those of the Weavers, Artisans, Merchants and Traders, Landholders and Zamindars during the late 19th and early 20th centuries marks the beginning of realisation of the importance of English education as the main promoter in the Westernisation process underway. The privileges that accrued in the process of

Westernisation via English education which held out promises of levelling off the socio-religious imbalances between the Brahmins and the rest had in fact looked to be receiving legitimacy for continuance by the measure of monopoly that the Brahmins had already achieved over the rest. (see the second Chapter). This had provoked resentment in the other castes and communities.

The Non-Brahmin Movement that came into existence in 1916 was the final form of what has been unorganised individually or at best attempts of only caste associations projecting this resentment for very long. The political atmosphere obtaining around 1916 helped a great deal to fuse together the non-Brahmin caste Hindus' socio-political discontent against Brahmin superiority into forming a political party, the Non-Brahmin or, the Justice Party. It was implicit in the non-Brahmin party activities, the struggle for the privileges of English education of various castes would be automatically answered when the Brahmin superiority would be disfigured.

The British hostility to the nationalist movement spearheaded by the Western educated in general, and particularly in Madras where the Brahmin element constituted the backbone of the nationalist activities during the Home rule agitations provided the ideal atmosphere. The principal caste Hindus' grievance of Brahmin domination won the support of the Christians, Muslims, and lower castes and Untouchables because they hoped that the disappearance of Brahmin domination would answer their claims for educational privileges. The appeal to

the Government for social justice in matters of appointments and communal representation to representative institutions had won their sympathy and support and had helped the movement to sustain their political strength. In so far as the Brahmins opposed the sacrifice of educational qualifications and professional merits in the Government services for the sake of social representation and the attack on the Brahminisation of education and services provided a common rallying point for all the non-Brahmins. The demand for communal representation, a principle which the Brahmins considered and opposed as a British attempt to divide a country aspiring for unity accused the non-Brahmin leaders as playing into the British hands, especially came handy for the non-Brahmin leadership to strengthen the attack. The pre-existing social distance and their new political and educational superiority was utilized by the non-Brahmin party to gain the sympathy and support which was readily forthcoming from the Government.

The British strategy of provincializing the political energies of the nationalist movement in order to 'contain' it and further putting various political elements against one another may help explain partly the reasons between the Brahmins' hostility to the British and the non-Brahmins' hostility towards the Brahmins and sympathy and support of the Government. Further this could also be true of the struggles between western educated and politically advanced groups with the educationally backward groups elsewhere. But the difference between a movement of backward castes and communities such as the lower castes and untouchables and that of the

non-Brahmin movement which was initiated and directed by the important caste Hindus nevertheless using all the 'mechanisms' available to Backward Class Movements makes this study interesting and in certain ways different from typical movements of the backward classes.

The Western educated middle class-dominated nationalist movement had failed to draw other sections, particularly the lower castes and communities as well as the rich landlords and Zamindars and the feudal chiefs and nobles in the nationalist mainstream. The claims of the latter two sections tended to unite them for a temporary purpose of displacing the dominant groups, the Brahmins in the case of the Madras Presidency. The initiative for such a movement was always borne by the landlords and Zamindars and the feudal nobles and particularly the most advanced sections within that sections, the important caste Hindus here, and not the lower castes and classes. But as the purpose was 'common' i.e., the overthrow of the dominant group, the Brahmins, had tended to keep them together regardless of their conflicting interests. But such a unity as the non-Brahmins was not born out of a real conviction of social, economic and political justice and equality could be seen by their subsequent action. That in the overthrow of the Brahmin superiority the principal caste Hindus' alliance with Christians, Muslims, lower castes and untouchables was dictated by social necessities and political experiences and not genuine convictions was proved immediately after the main purpose was achieved. The plums of office was shared by principal caste Hindus and the socio-political justice was conveniently cast away by 1921. The Justice Party's opposition include Christians for communal



representation, their attitude towards the Adi-Dravidas etc., need not be explained again here. The non-Brahmin party's demand on communal representation for political power on the basis of their numbers, tax-paying capacity and property qualifications from 1917 onwards had demonstrated sufficiently that the lower castes and communities would be allies without gain. Save their political overtures, the non-Brahmin leaders' consistent attitude which was evident throughout the period of the 'common' struggle and finally when it led to the inevitable severance of relations of the Adi-Dravidas shows that it was not the struggle of the entire non-Brahmins of the Madras but that of the emerging Western educated and politically ambitious caste Hindus against the Western educated and politically dominant Brahmins.

There was never a dispute over the question of Brahmin domination. But that domination, the non-Brahmin leaders accused, was not legitimate to a minority of shallow economic interests. In the attack against socio-religious pre-eminence of the Brahmins, their educational and political superiority and especially the political demands such as Home Rule and Swaraj, the non-Brahmin party thought as also all its constituents believed, that such political developments would lead to the perpetuation of the Brahmin domination than the orderly progress of all the non-Brahmins. And as it believed that it was only in the permanence of British paramountcy their interests will be best served, the non-Brahmin party's conservative political outlook becomes understandable.

But when the Adi-Dravidas, the Christians and Muslims and the more backward sections of the non-Brahmin Hindus themselves realised after the experience of the principle on which the appointments were distributed that it was more a struggle of those caste groups which stood to gain more than others, there were symptoms of cracks within the party. The Adi-Dravidas became enemies of the non-Brahmin party within two years of the non-Brahmin victory. It is only further study that can explain fully how long the Christians and Muslims and other more backward caste Hindus remained with the Non-Brahmin Movements.

However, in the main, these were struggles for the same privileges to which English education was the doorway. For such importance to which English education was the gateway, the non-Brahmin movement shows that mere socio-religious pre-eminence and intellectual superiority alone, that too of a minority, should not have determining say than numbers, tax-paying capacity and property qualifications.

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