

# JUSTICE MINISTRY AND SOCIAL REFORM MEASURES IN TAMILNADU, 1920-1931

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## Introduction

The Justice Party seized administrative control in December 1920 in Madras under a dyarchical system. The group, which served as the custodian of non-Brahmin interests, brought about changes in the distribution of power between classes. One of the major changes initiated by the Justices was a public custody policy aimed at reducing Brahminical holdings in the nomination. The British government also provided assistance to the Justice Party, because they wanted to redress social inequalities in Madras and were concerned about preserving Government resources from total Brahmin rule. From 1921 to 1934 the non-Brahmin leaders embarked on a series of administrative and legal actions against social ills. Over time the Justices focused on expanding various forms of social and economic measures for the benefit of the oppressed. Some of their programs provided bursaries and free education to distressed classes and focused on the needs of rural farmers. This paper discusses the Justice and Social Transformation Mechanism for changing social order, Hindu Religious Practices, educational measures and the Kallar Reclamation program. All of these changes helped to balance socio-economic equity.

## Community Orders

The Madras Legislative Council convened in February 1921. It granted separate seats to non-Brahmins in the Council. The Department of Justice was determined to get a large share of government positions from non-Brahmins. To this end the Government issued its first public order on 16 September 1921. It aimed to spread the nomination between the various divisions and communities. The directive ensured all communities with seats allocated to public service. In line with the non-Brahmins, Brahmins, Muslims, Anglo-Indians (including Christians and Europeans) and oppressed classes were given seats in a ratio of 5: 2: 2: 2: 1 respectively. As a next step on August 5, 1922 a second public order was issued under the auspices of Charles George Todhunter, Governor of Madras. As per its provisions the Government extends the principle of equal representation of non-Brahmins in the appointment of public services in respect of promotions.<sup>1</sup> great in each region to be divided into a few communities. The Justice Party felt that the implementation of the above two community ordinances would achieve its grand goals and that the problem of discrimination found by Brahmins could be solved.<sup>2</sup>

However, in the implementation of the public order the Justice Association met with the fiasco in its dreams because between 1922 and 1923 there were no trained non-Brahmin students. They are therefore easily expanded by respected Brahmin students. It has made the Judiciary another step in the field of education. Introducing each Government College

Selection Board assigned the task of caring for and preventing more students from a particular community. In February 1924 the Panagal service formed a Staff Selection Board to direct public appointments on community lines in accordance with two community directives. The Board is made up of three senior Government officials and illegally employed by the Governor. It also forms an exam board to eliminate misconduct in the selection of students in the community. As a major step forward in this alliance in 1929 the Madrasan government set up a Provincial Public Service Commission which conducted an evaluation of the recruitment process. As a result of the above measures in the years that followed non-Brahmin students began to be taught and could easily enter because of community orders. It enables the Judiciary to receive mass support to survive.<sup>3</sup>

Representation of the public by public order in public services and colleges, however, caused controversy in the Council. A.K. Mudaliar, a member of the Council, said that while he wanted the services of the Indians, it would not be fair to seek public representation in the Legislature. New India described the public order as "innocent - handsome but cruel" and warned that it would create far-reaching consequences for the evil character.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from that, Government interference in the admission of students and employment in colleges was unpopular with Brahmin leaders. Satyamurthi, one of the leading leaders of the Brahmin Congress, has expressed his displeasure with the public order. He warned the government that his interference in college liberty in public names would lead to far-reaching results. He further added that he did not like colleges that excluded non-Brahmin students from admission; but their acceptance should not harm qualified Brahmin students. In response to a statement from Saturn, R. Littlehailes, Director of Public Education, said the government did not want the admission of untrained students to university courses. Instead it demanded 50% of the seats for the admission of qualified non-Brahmin students.<sup>5</sup>

### **Acts of the Hindu Religion**

Since 1921 in an effort to reform morality in the administration of the temple the Justice Service passed a number of Hindu Religious Laws and various amendments for the purpose of adhoc. Social ills seem good in South India in general and Tamilnadu especially as it has a number of Saivaite and Vaishnavite temples. The temples owned and stored much of the treasures in the settlements and figures (monasteries). The British had taken control of the temple treasury in accordance with Madras Regulation VII of 1817. The provisions of this Regulation gave the British Government the power to regulate temple transactions. However in the middle of the nineteenth century the British Government withdrew from all contact with the Indian religion and followed the policy of good neutrality by passing the Interfaith Act XX of 1863. By this Act the State exempted itself from all temple responsibilities. gifts. As a result, between 1874, 1876, 1884 and 1894 committees were appointed for better management of the gifts.<sup>6</sup> As a prelude to the above actions various developments were seen as temporary adjustment and meeting time requirements.

At the same time, the misappropriation of temple funds by Brahmin priests and the British negligence of temple interests brought non-Brahmin people into a new perspective and a focused spirit of public awareness. Non-Brahmans organized their Madras State Conference in Bellary in 1905. He suspected the misappropriation of temple funds and required a proper examination by the Devasthanam Committee. These Committees are made up of district collectors. In this regard, honorable Hindu men organized a society known as the Dharma Rakshana Sabha or the Madurai Relief Society in 1907. The non-Brahmin district convention in Coimbatore in August 1917 ruled on the proper use of the Hindu Religious Endowment and Charitable and Institutional Funds. In 1920 a fourth non-Brahmin coalition decided on non-Brahmin figures. Thus seeing the public outrage the service of the Panagal enacted the first Hindu Religious Law Act in 1921. The main purpose of the Act was to address the widespread abuse of Hindu religious gifts.<sup>7</sup>

It also reduced the waste of money on luxury items, vices and competitions. However the Act has not been successful in eradicating corruption in the provinces. In an effort to rectify the shortcomings of the previous Act, the Government in May 1922 appointed a Special Committee to draft a bill proposing ways to improve its operations. The bill was circulated for public criticism and comment in December 1922. In April 1923 the Raja of Panagal successfully reviewed the bill in Madras City Council and awaited the approval of the Viceroy Lord Reading.<sup>8</sup> Even after the passage of the bill was passed on various temples, statistics and other religious groups urged Viceroy to withdraw his permit. It prompted the Governor to urge his predecessors to abandon the bill for public scrutiny in the 1923 national elections. As the Justice Party gained a clear majority in the election the bill was re-introduced in April 1924 and passed with some amendments. Viceroy finally passed the Act in January 1925. In accordance with the provisions of the amendment the Select Committee consists of the members of the Legislative Council.<sup>9</sup>

Establish a Central Endowments Board with authority over all the temples in Madras Province. Regional committees, partially elected and partially appointed, are empowered to oversee and oversee the management of temple buildings by their trustees and to take steps to protect them from mistreatment. The strength of the regional committees was greater. Members of the regional temple committees are appointed by the board and the minister for a temporary purpose. The Amendment Bill also provides for the diversion of temple or mathematical funds, with the permission of the courts, for educational purposes or other charitable purposes. The bill therefore aroused great curiosity and represented a bold and hard-fought effort to tackle the neglected evil practices associated with temples. December 1928 S.Muthulakahmi, Deputy President of the Council of Madras introduced the twelfth amendment to the Hindu Religious Law Act and the Council passed it on 1 February 1929 without opposition.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, since the introduction of the Hindu Religious Offering Act and its various amendments to the Constitution during the Judiciary there have been many disputes and debates in the Council. It has created tensions based on ideologies and tests of power between non-Brahmins and Brahmins in order to gain public support. It also showed a clear

Brahmin and non-Brahmin parallelism and showed a growing non-Brahmin and Dravidian revival that condemned the exploitation of the priesthood in the name of god and religion.<sup>11</sup>

### **Educational Measures**

The contribution of the Department of Justice in the field of education was always trustworthy. With the passing of the Elementary Education Act of 1919, the Governor previously regulated the management of primary schools through new procedures. In this regard the School Inspector had the right to supervise the primary schools. But the recognition of schools is done by the District Educational Council. At the time of the introduction of Dyarchy in Madras, education became a transfer subject and the department of education came under the control of the provincial minister. In December 1920 Lord Willingdon nominated A. SubbarayaluReddiar as Chief Minister and head of education portfolio. In April 1921 the education budget was completely redesigned to meet current needs. On the resignation of A. SubbarayaluReddiar as Minister of Education A.P. Patro took many steps to further his education.<sup>12</sup> As a result of his efforts, a Primary School Council was established in each district. But the Council has not succeeded in developing primary education as expected by the Government as members of the Council have shown little interest. But the minister pointed out that the lack of funding was the reason for the failure. Yet he was criticized by his rivals. They say primary education should be a priority and the minister's statement is irrelevant and inconsistent. May 1923 A.P. Patro called a meeting of education officials in Ootacamund. It suggested that more schools be started and that each district with a population of 500 or more should be provided with a school. In January 1923 the Government issued a decree for all districts to establish a Regional District Education Board except Nilgiris. The Board commenced its work on 1 April 1923. Its functions were natural advice. Each District Education Officer also serves as the Secretary of the District Board.<sup>13</sup>

In 1923 A.P. Patro introduces a bill to the Legislative Council that seeks to reform and reorganize the University of Madras. It was passed into law in February 1923 and the Act came into effect on 19 May 1923. As Governor of Madras served as Chancellor of the University and President of the Senate. A. P. Patro, Minister of Education has served as Vice-Chancellor of the University. In 1925 the bill of the University of Andhra was passed and the University was established in Vijayawada in 1926.<sup>14</sup> Thus under the administration of A.P. Patro from 11 July 1921 to 3 December 1926, the Justice Department left behind a great legacy in the field of education. In 1929 three important developments in the field of education took place. First, the University of Madras Amendment Act of 1929 came into force on 29 October 1929. It abolished the Council of Joint Colleges and the Libraries Committee and expanded the capacity of the Syndicate. Second, the same year Annamalai University was started by three colleges in Chidambaram. Annamalai University law appoints George Frederick Stanley, Governor of Madras as Chancellor and V.S. Srinivasa Sastri as First Vice-Chancellor on 15 April 1929. Third, the Madras Legal Council in 1929 passed the Andhra University Laws Amendment Bill which allowed for the establishment of other first-level colleges in the area under Andhra University.<sup>15</sup>

### Kallar Reclamation Scheme

The Kallars have faced numerous trials and tribulations under the International Criminal Code of 1914, which came into force in Kallarnadu. The operation of the Law ruined the lives of the Kallars. There were also cries and cries among the educated Kallars who were most affected by the Act. As a result the educated Kallars drew the support of the masses and resulted in public opposition to Government policy. In fact, it prompted the Government to reconsider its policy mainly due to two reasons for Kallars awareness due to the gradual promotion of the non-Brahmin organization and the unrest in Kallarnadu due to political awareness. The growth of the non-Brahmin organization, the formation of the Justice Party and the authorization of its ruling ministry also meant the political and social monitoring activities of the oppressed part of society. The Justice Party, which represented the cause of depression, sent envoys to the British Government to highlight their needs. As a result of their ongoing and enduring efforts the Government of Madras established the Department of Labor to address the problems of the weak classes in 1920.<sup>16</sup>

That same year the Government appointed C.F. Paddison, chief executive officer of the Indian Civil Service as the first special officer and was named Commissioner of Labor. In addition, he was assisted by a strong staff and Deputy Human Resources Commissioner to carry out the various needs and functions of dealing with the grievances of the depressed section. A European Labor Advisory Board was also established, one Brahmin and one Adi-Dravida in the same year. Indeed the Department of Labor grew rapidly in size and breadth under the rule of the Justice Department. One of the major functions of the Department of Labor was to manage and solve the problems of international crime.<sup>17</sup>

Since the Kallars were mostly criminals and members of the oppressed 'community' society, it made the Department of Labor pay close attention to improving the status of the Kallars; but work began in 1921 after the Judiciary launched its first service. During the administration of Justice between 1921 and 1931 the work of community development of Kallar greatly increased. During this time the Kallar rehabilitation program was introduced on the one hand and the other was used in the best way to rehabilitate the poorest Kallar under the International Criminal Law. As a first step the Madrasan government issued a circular in 1921 on the Kallars Restoration Program. According to the plan rehabilitation activities cover two major areas. The first was about the settlement of the Kallars and the second was about boosting their economy. The Kallar panchayat system provided protection from the Kallar seat and halted their roaming operations. Educational schemes that integrate industrial and non-academic activities eliminated illiteracy among them. Due to the impact of education small industries started with the myth of co-operative societies. It created confidence in them and eventually opened the way for their economic prosperity.<sup>18</sup>

The restoration program began in 1922. Madurai was chosen as the headquarters for the restoration work. A special department was set up under a special police officer assisted by a THasildar deputy, an auditor, police officers and school administrators. A special department is assigned to the District Collector and the District Magistrate. A.K. Raja Iyyar has been appointed Special Officer. He took trips to all the places and corners of Kallarnadu.



## Conclusion

The establishment of the Department of Justice in 1920 stimulated high hopes among the Back and Depressed classes by gathering a few administrative and social positions. It has therefore made every effort to issue public directives, especially those reserved for the activities of certain communities in the public service and educational institutions. The Justicites also focused on expanding various forms of socio-economic measures to reach oppressed people as quickly as possible. They therefore take certain legal action against the evils that exist in society. During this time the relief efforts of the dictator and the Kallars helped to close the economic gap.

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