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DRAVIDIANIZATION: A TAMIL REVITALIZATION MOVEMENT

by

E. T. Jacob-Pandian

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Foreword

I gratefully acknowledge the goodwill and kindness of my closest friend, Ms. Susan M. Parman, and my teachers, Professors Edward Norbeck, Mary E. Sheldon, Frederick C. Gamst, Stephen A. Tyler and Ronald Provencher. I am also thankful to Dr. and Mrs. Clive Kileff, Mr. and Mrs. Warren Beman, Professor Douglas Uzzell, Dr. Richard Blanton, Mr. Mun W. Lee, Ms. Barbara Podratz, and Miss Marjorie Samuelson.

Travel and other expenses incurred in the research were met by a summer grant and graduate student fellowships awarded by Rice University. I am thankful for this financial aid. It is possible that this work will give the greatest satisfaction and happiness to my brother, George A. Jacob. I dedicate this study to him.

All Tamil words (including personal and place names) incorporated in this study are transliterated to English in the following way:
Romanized Tamil | English value
---|---
aa | a
ii | i
uu | u
ee | e
oo | o
c | ch
T | t
N | n
T | th
R | k
L | l

However, when N, R and L occur at the beginning of a word, they have the English value of N, R and L, and when T is used in the beginning of a word, it has the English value of th.

In the sections where references are made to currency, the value of the Indian rupee is converted to its American equivalent. According to the international exchange rate, one American dollar is equal to seven rupees. However, the actual purchase value of a rupee in Pulicat village approximates one dollar in the United States; i.e., if a food commodity costs one dollar in the United States, it costs one rupee in Pulicat village, rather than seven rupees.
Preface

The Tamil number about 40 million people and occupy an area called Tamil Nadu in southern India. "Tamil" is a linguistic term, but it also means a culture. Despite centuries of exposure to the powerful influence of Brahmanical Hinduism, the Tamil tradition has persisted and the Tamil remain culturally distinct from the rest of the population of India. This distinctiveness has in recent times been consciously emphasized by several organized movements in the process of Dravidianization, which may be seen as a means of revitalization of Tamil culture. Dravidianization is the process through which Brahmanical beliefs and rituals are discarded, and Tamil values are strengthened. The goal of this study is to examine and interpret Dravidianization in the Tamil village.

The several organized movements, including South Indian Liberation Federation, Suya Mariatay Iakkam (Self-Respect Union), Justice Party, TiraviTa KaRagam
(Dravidian Association) and TiraviTa Munnetra KaRagam (Dravidian Advancement Association), may be lumped together under the title, "Dravidian movement."

According to the ideology of the movement, all non-Brahmin jathis (endogamous groups) constitute a distinctive ethnic group, and Brahmanical Hinduism is an alien trait that has debased Tamil culture. The leaders hold that Brahmanical Hinduism has retarded the technological and economic advancement of the Tamil, and that the Brahmanical model of social relationships has contributed to injustices which must be rectified. The movement's explicit goal is to rejuvenate the Tamil language and Tamil culture (tamiRin marumalarcci and tamiRar vaarkavil marumalarcci) by eliminating all Brahmanical forms from Tamil culture.

This study documents the various adaptations in economic, political, religious and status relationships made by the jathi groups in the Tamil village, and interprets these trends of socio-cultural change as exempletive of Dravidianization.
The generally accepted explanation of the emergence of nativistic and socio-religious movements is that they occur in times of rapid social change and that the movements are responses to cultural deprivations or oppressive sociocultural conditions. This interpretation sees the movements as popular among socially uprooted people rather than among well-integrated populations in the traditional village setting. The Dravidian movement arose early in the 20th century when rapid changes occurred in the economic and political aspects of Tamil culture. Initially, the movement had the support of educated and wealthy members of non-Brahmin jathis (endogamous groups) which were opposed to the economic and political hegemony of Brahmins, and the movement was essentially urban-based, with adherents who were principally migrant laborers and students from rural communities. In recent times, however, the movement's support has come largely from the villages. The Dravidian Advancement Association, which is the chief exponent of the Dravidian movement, has made enormous inroads into rural areas, and in the 1967 general elections the Association was voted to political power in Tamil Nadu.
The essential feature of the Dravidian movement is vitalization of Tamil culture through social reform, although the movement is also nativistic or revivalistic. The leaders of the movement emphasize themes which were present in Tamil culture since ancient times, such as female chastity and deification of heroes and mothers. However, many forms of social relationships that are made relevant to the villager by the Dravidian movement are modern and secular. The incorporation of these modern and secular forms in the Dravidian movement is legitimized by the belief that they, too, existed among the ancient Tamil. The leaders of the movement claim the authority of ancient Tamil texts, and present themselves as the guardians of Tamil culture.

Data for this study were collected primarily in Pulicat, a village in the northeastern part of the state of Tamil Nadu, over a period of 12 months during 1970-71. This village was chosen as suitable because of its history of colonization by Arab, Dutch and British traders, and because of the existence of Muslim, Hindu and Christian traditions. For purposes of comparison three other villages in the western part of Tamil Nadu were
studied for a month during the same year; and I visited twenty villages in the vicinity of Pulicat to gather data on the Dravidian movement. A stay of one month in the capital city of Madras enabled me to collect comparative information from people informed about conditions in central and southern parts of Tamil Nadu.

I recorded patterns of behavior related to economics, politics, religion, education, family and the Dravidian Advancement Association with reference to jathi group membership and economic status of the participants. The history of Pulicat village and of the region in which Pulicat village is located was reconstructed by interviewing informants and using documents, and I collected biographies of the founder-leaders of the Dravidian Advancement Association in Pulicat village. During 1970-71, I participated in all the activities of the Dravidian Advancement Association at Pulicat, and my interviews with the local and regional leaders of the Dravidian Advancement Association were tape-recorded. Within the framework of reference group theory, I classified the self-identification symbols of 60 high school students and about 100 male adults belonging to different jathi groups in Pulicat.
The main focus of my study is the sociocultural system of the Tamil village wherein several jathi groups co-exist. Part I describes the culture history of the Tamil and the antecedents of the Dravidian movement are described, and Part II the activities of the movement in the village. The village is conceptualized as an adaptive system, and the adaptations by jathi groups during the period in which the movement has been functioning in the village are separately described at the end of each chapter. Part III provides a discussion of the causal conditions which facilitated the functioning of the movement in the Tamil village, and of the process of revitalization in Tamil culture.

It is my hope that this study contributes to knowledge about the nature of nativistic and reformistic movements as well as of the broader subjects of sociocultural change and acculturation. The research also attempts to contribute to our understanding of factors that foster the development of certain nativistic and reformistic movements into powerful political associations that gain support of relatively well-integrated populations in the
villages and limit the popularity of other movements to only culturally uprooted urban residents who are migrants from rural areas.
PART I: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

Culture History of the Tamil

For at least 2,500 years the Tamil have inhabited the southern part of India. Diffusion of Sanskritic culture in southern India began about 2,000 years ago, but only in the 10th century, during the CoRa dynasty of Tamil kings, were permanent Brahmin settlements established throughout the country of the Tamil. By the 15th century, Tamilians living on the southwestern coast were speaking a dialect of Tamil which became known as the Malayalam language. Since then, the territory in which Tamil proper is spoken has been the southeastern area and the deep south of India.

The social organization, religion, and values of the ancient Tamil are known to us mainly through Tolkappiam, a treatise on Tamil grammar, and Tirukkural, a book of aphorisms and morals, both of which were
probably written in the 1st century B. C.; and through the epics, particularly *Silapatikaaram* and *MaNimeekalay*, which were probably written in the 3rd century A. D.

In Tamil tradition, the land was divided into five ecological zones (*ayn-tinay*), in which there were five distinctive cultural adaptations. (The Tamil term *tinay* means both land area and morality; from this it may be inferred that the Tamil probably conceptualized that there were cultural variations associated with specific ecological adaptations.) The people living in the mountain ecological zone (*kurincci*) were identified as hunters (*kuravar*); the people of the forest (*mullay*) as herdsmen (*aayar*); and those of the fertile plains (*marutam*) as cultivators (*veLLaLan*). The people on the coast (*neyTal*) are described as seafarers and divers (*paravar* and *mukkuvar*), and in the desert (*paaalay*) as warriors (*maravar*).

In large settlements, such as political and commercial centers, there were classes of people known as nobles (*araSa parambaray*), literati (*antaNar*), merchants (*vaNikar*) and messengers (*paravar*). These and other such categories were not closed, hereditary groups, but it was common practice to identify people by their occupation.
No hereditarily separated and ranked groups existed. The Sanskritic term *jati*, which denotes endogamous groups, was not used by the Tamil in ancient times.

Men renowned for their bravery (*viirar*) were deified after their death and worshipped as "culture heroes" and guardians of the village. Spirit worship and worship of demons were also common. Today, idols of *viirar* may be seen in a few villages and the worship of spirits and demons is widely prevalent in Tamil culture.

These forms of supernaturalism varied somewhat from village to village, but the people in each of several ecological zones worshipped a common deity: in the coastal zone (*neyTal*), the god of the sea (*VaNNan*, or *VaruNan*, or *VishNu*); in the fertile plains (*maruTam*), the god of the sun (*Veentan*, or *Indiran*, or *Sivan*); in the desert (*paalay*), the goddess of war (*Kottavy*, or *Amman*, or *Turga*); in the mountains (*kurincci*), the god of hills (*Ceeoon*, or *Murgan*, or *Sivan*), and in the forests (*mullay*), the god of cattle (*Maayoon*, or *KaNNan*, or *VishNu*).
Before the Christian era and before references were made to Tamil deities in the Tamil epics and other historic accounts, it may be assumed, a "fusion" occurred of the nature deities of the Tamil and the nature deities of Vedic Hinduism. The Vedic gods such as VaruNan (god of clouds and rain) and Indiran (lord of the sun) corresponded to such Tamil gods as VaNNan (sea) and Veentan (king). At a later date, the Tamil started worshipping deities with attributes other than the personified characteristics of nature, and gods such as VishNu (who replaced VaNNan and VaruNan) and Sivan (who replaced Veentan and Indiran) became the "great" gods.

Worship of Murugan (god of hills) and Amman (goddess mother and goddess of war) continued as distinctive features of Tamil supernaturalism.¹ In recent times, particularly after the decline of Brahmanical Hinduism

¹"The undoubted antiquity of his (Maruga's) cult among the Tamils is attested by the discovery at the pre-historic urn-field at Adiecanallur of bronze cocks, iron spears and mouthpieces of gold leaf similar to those employed by modern worshippers of Muruga when they are at a pilgrimage carrying the kavadi in fulfillment of a vow. The oldest stratum of Tamil literature mentions a Velan-ādal, an ecstatic dance by a priest possessed by Velan. The Murugan cult never lost popularity in the Tamil country (Nilakanta Sastri 1931: 21-22)."
in Tamil culture, the worship of Murugan and Amman has become popular and common in Tamil territory. Much has been said about the "uniqueness" of the Tamil in conceiving of supernatural power as a female principle:

kaTavuLai peNNaka vaRipaTuvaTu thamiRakathukee urittu

("It is the unique feature of the Tamil to worship god as woman"). The Tamil conception of "chastity goddess" (pattini teivam) is related to the worship of Amman; a chaste woman is believed to possess supernatural powers.

Evidence in ancient texts indicates that the Tamil believed that supernatural power was inherent in chaste women. Many Tamil poets and philosophers were women. Several Tamil textbooks published in recent times deal primarily with the virtues and greatness of Tamil women who lived in ancient times. For example: Ilakkia MaatarkaL (women of the epics); Peria PuraaNa PeNmaNikaL (women of the classical period as depicted in ancient Tamil literature); NaTaanTa Nangayar (women rulers); MaaTavi (a central woman character in two ancient epics); Tavaccelvi MaNimeekalay (the heroine of an ancient epic); PeNkaL ORukkam (morality of women); Ilakkia makaLir (women of the epics); TamiR VaLarta MakaLir (the women
who fostered Tamil language); and Kannaki (the chastity goddess). (The Dravidian movement, which emerged in the 20th century, emphasizes this aspect of Tamil culture.)

Between the 3rd century and the 9th century A. D., very little Tamil literature was produced. Much of Tamil territory was under non-Tamil kings (Pallavas) during this period; the period is often referred to by historians as the "dark age" of the Tamil. From the 9th century onwards, Tamil writings consisted mainly of lengthy apologia of Jainism, Buddhism, Shaivism or Vaishnavism. The authors seldom referred to social conditions, although some decried the existence of jathi and religious distinctions.

Through the powerful influence of Brahmanical Hinduism, which most of the Tamil kings and literati adopted, a process of ritualization of occupation occurred in Tamil culture. Occupations were ritualized, which led to the perception of people who performed relatively pure or impure occupations as themselves relatively pure or impure. By at least the 10th century, each occupational category had become a distinctive endogamous group (jathi), and each jathi group was accorded special
privileges by the prince in such matters as dress, house-decoration, crisis rites, and so on. Jathi groups were ranked on the basis of these privileges, which indicated the relative social position of each jathi. Inter-jathi relationships were thus hierarchical, but intra-jathi relationships were organized principally on the basis of kinship.

Sometime in the 12th century (Croake 1879: 33), the population was divided into two segments, each with an equal number of jathis. This division, between the "right-hand" or "male" segment and the "left-hand" or "female" segment, was most clearly evident in the region known today as Chingleput district. Disputes between the two segments were frequent, particularly during festivals and religious ceremonies, and each segment had unique privileges. Writing on this aspect of social organization, Croake (1879: 33-34) notes:

The tradition is, that Karikalochola divided the people into those (left-hand and right-hand) parties, assigning 98 tribes to each, and appropriating to their use distinctive flags and musical instruments for use at festivals and funerals. This distinction, established at first for political reasons, or to prevent disturbances, has for the last several centuries been the constant source of contentions, and has even given rise to serious tumults.
Disputes over jathi privileges and prerogatives were common, and upward social movement of members of a jathi or of an entire jathi was also prevalent. Ramanuja, a social reformer of the 11th century who founded a religious sect, is thought to have helped many members of lower jathis become part of the Brahmin jathi. Stein (1968: 78) states that "Medieval Indian history appears to present widespread persistent examples of social mobility. It is known that members of lower rank ethnic units assumed roles and statuses which are usually reserved for higher units and with the consent of such higher groups."

Brahmanical Hinduism had the patronage of Pallava, Tamil and Telugu kings who ruled the Tamil territory at various times, and during the past two millenia many of the Brahmanical rites and beliefs have been assimilated by the Tamil. Several Brahmanical Hindu temples sprang up in Tamil territory during this period. The kings often invited Brahmanical religious practitioners from northern India to officiate over the rituals in these temples, and several of these religious practitioners were given entire villages as gifts.
Hindu temples were usually built by rich merchants or kings who endowed the temples with property, and the maintenance of the temples was entrusted to those families claiming descent from the founders. Maintenance involved collection of funds from the endowed property, and providing for the upkeep and for the salaries of religious practitioners and other servants of the temple. The custodians of the temples were called Tarmakartaas (upholders of the moral order), known today as trustees. The temple custodians rarely spent for the temples the funds they collected for their upkeep and often used them for their personal needs. This caused a number of disputes, with claims and counter-claims over custodianship. Custodians often claimed to be the "owners" of land that had been attached to temples.

In the medieval Tamil kingdoms, territory was divided into small "states," governed by chiefs (NaaTTukkoon or Kurunilamannar) who recognized the king (arasan) as their ruler and paid him tribute. However, in some areas of the Tamil territory the king ruled directly. The village (uur, or graamam) was the smallest administrative unit that was self-sufficient; the village
was part of a larger section called naaTu, or kooTTam (country), and the "country" was within a larger "country" called valanaaTu or maNTalam, which were the major divisions of the kingdom. (See Sastri 1964: 51-53.)

Arab traders supplied the Telugu and Tamil-speaking kings with horses, which were much in demand, in exchange for precious stones, pearls, textiles and spices. There was also an uninterrupted trade between the peoples of Tamil territory and the Straits Settlements. In the 13th century one of the Tamil kings sent an Arab trader as the Tamil emissary to China (Sewell 1932: 169).

The king was entitled to receive one-sixth of all agricultural and other produce, but seldom received this much. Appointees of the king charged with this task often devised their own modes of collecting revenue; landlords or retainers gave a part of the collection to the over-lord (the appointee of the king), who in turn gave only part of the reduced amount to the king. The Muslim rulers who replaced Telugu and Tamil kings in some areas about the 17th century generally continued these practices of collecting revenue, and their appointees
were mostly Hindus. The landlords (mirasidars) dealt only with the appointees or over-lords (naayaks).

Under the British, who became the political masters in the 18th century, the territory was ruled by a British governor, and was divided into districts, headed by revenue collectors who had judicial and executive powers. The district was divided into taluks, headed by native officials known as tahsildars. Villages were grouped into revenue-villages on the basis of population and revenue. The head of the revenue-village was the munisiff whose powers were similar to those of the collector of the district, but were confined to the village level. The post of munisiff was hereditary, as it also was during the Muslim rule when it first came into being. The village munisiff was generally a wealthy man who was already recognized as headman of the village. A clerk assisted him in collecting revenue, and two or three watchmen (talayaari and veTTian) helped him to police the area.

The power of the revenue collector was greatly reduced when separate judicial and executive authorities were established. After the departure of the English in
1947, parliamentary democracy was established and the landlord system was abolished, but in almost all other aspects the British pattern exists today.

The English had instituted a semi-autonomous body called the Hindu Religious Endowment Board which looked into matters of fraud, and into the finances of temples with endowed property. The Board took many "rich" temples under its jurisdiction, replacing the hereditary Tarmakartaas (temple custodians, or trustees). The powers and jurisdiction of this board grew over the last 100 years, and today there is a cabinet minister whose special duties are supervision of this board.
Chapter 2

The Dravidian Movement in Tamil Culture

By the 19th century, after the expansion of channels of communication and the spread of western education, industrialization and urbanization, many changes had occurred in jathi organization and relationships. Occupational, religious, educational, and political variability within jathis became more pronounced than it had previously been; thus, variability between jathis, with regard to these characteristics, became less noticeable. Several members of the Brahmin jathis acquired western education, and established themselves in the academia and in the judicial and executive branches of the British government of India. A few members of occupationally specialized and unspecialized non-Brahmin jathis sought employment in industry, and some founded commercial enterprises in the cities. Conversion to Christian faith provided protection and employment for a large number of persons from non-Brahmin jathis.
Opportunities for geographical and social mobility led to an increase in intra-jathi variability. The category of jathi now assumed a new function; it transcended the village setting, and became an "adaptive structure" in a much wider regional or provincial level. Persons who belonged to non-Brahmin jathis were able, when they acquired wealth, to promote the prestige of their jathi identity. Several jathi organizations came into being on a regional level, a process often referred to as the development of caste movements. Through these organizations, wealthy and educated members sought to adapt everyone in the jathi to the new opportunities available for enhancing the jathi's economic and political fortunes. Wealthy and educated members of non-Brahmin jathis continued to identify themselves with their less fortunate brethren, and often strove to help them.

Conflict between non-Brahmin jathis occurred over the right to have specific privileges in ceremonial practices, and these privileges were, in some instances, competed for openly through jathi organizations. The participation of Brahmin jathis in these conflicts was limited, although some Brahmins served as arbitrers in the
disputes; Brahmins were isolated as spiritual leaders. However, their increasing involvement in the secular affairs of the society (i.e., their competing for economic and political power—an activity in which they seldom participated before the 19th century) created a new situation in Tamil culture. They represented less than 3% of the population, but because of British patronage had become economically and politically powerful. Their participation in the all-India national movement for independence made them appear to be the future political masters of India. The Brahmin jathis were perceived by non-Brahmin jathis as an upper class. The non-Brahmin jathis became conscious of themselves as a class which had been deprived of legitimate power by the Brahmin class.

When various changes were occurring in economic, political and religious aspects of Tamil culture, a number of ancient Tamil texts, which had been buried in private libraries, began to appear in print. The Tamil epics and other forms of literature, some of which had been written before the Christian era, thus became accessible to a large number of educated and wealthy members of
non-Brahmin jathis. Around this time, an English missionary named Caldwell, who was a self-taught linguist, published extensively on Dravidian grammar and customs. In his view, Tamil was the most ancient of all Dravidian languages, and the least altered by Sanskritic influence. He suggested that Dravidians originated on the lost continent of Lemuria that was supposed to have existed south of present-day Tamil territory. Caldwell's English heritage gave credibility to the myth of the "primordial Tamil," and the non-Brahmin jathis accepted his speculation as scientific truth. The pristine glory of Dravidian culture suddenly dawned on the non-Brahmin jathis. (It is interesting to note that since the adherents of the Dravidian movement acquired political power, they have "canonized" Caldwell and other Englishmen who studied Tamil. Their statues adorn the scenic beaches of Madras city today.)

Educated and wealthy members of non-Brahmin jathis found in the writings of Caldwell and in the Tamil epics an ideology that was adaptive, in that it could be used to enhance the economic and political viability of non-Brahmin jathis. Brahmins were identified as "Aryans,"
in contrast with non-Brahmins, who were identified as "Dravidians"; the former became the scapegoats for all suffering in southern India. Non-Brahmin politicians identified themselves racially and culturally as Dravidians.

The Dravidian movement emerged in these unique circumstances. A political party known as South Indian Liberation Federation was founded in 1916, principally to oppose Brahmin economic and political power. The party was later named Justice Party. The party's stated goal was to render social justice to non-Brahmins as "Dravidians."

In order to gain the support of the masses, non-Brahmin politicians began propagating an ideology of equality among all non-Brahmin jathis; Brahmins were blamed for the existence of inequalities among non-Brahmin jathis. It was argued that a classless Dravidian society existed before the immigration of Brahmins to southern India. Brahmanical Hinduism was considered responsible for the decay of Dravidian culture.

In their effort to curtail the economic and political interests of Brahmins, the non-Brahmin politicians had the
tacit support of the British. The British had become disenchanted with the Brahmins, who through their involvement in the all-India nationalist movement for independence posed a serious political threat to the British. Non-Brahmin politicians supported the British, arguing that the departure of the British from India would result only in the complete domination of Brahmins.

Non-Brahmin politicians claimed and secured "communal representation" or protected employment opportunities for non-Brahmins in the British government, and protected non-Brahmin electoral constituencies. They justified their preference for British political hegemony by saying that once the non-Brahmin jathis acquired enough economic power and educational skill, they could liberate themselves from the foreign yoke, both British and Brahmin. Politically and economically powerful non-Brahmins and non-Brahmin jathi organizations deserted all-India politics in favor of the quest to establish a separate political entity in southern India composed of all the Dravidian linguistic groups. In the later stages of its history, the Justice Party preached the secession of southern India to form a separate nation-state called
TiraviTa NaTu (Dravidian country) or TiraviTastaan (Dravidian territory).

In 1926, a charismatic leader named Periyar (a Tamil title which means "the great") E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker launched an open revolt against Brahmanical Hinduism and Brahmin jathis. In contrast with the Justice Party, which had the support of only the very wealthy and well-educated members of non-Brahmin jathis, Periyar attracted thousands of non-Brahmin jathi youth who were mostly semi-literate and poor. Periyar's association was called Suya Mariyaatay Iyakkam (Self-Respect Union), and its main goal was to give pride and dignity to the non-Brahmin youth of southern India.

Periyar was a rationalist and a social reformer. His main thesis was that Brahmins had debased the Dravidian culture, which in turn had demoralized the non-Brahmin youth; in order to salvage Dravidian culture from its impure state, Brahmanical Hinduism must be destroyed and Brahmin religious practitioners expelled from Dravidian society. Young people were exhorted to stop performing religious ceremonies in the temples and at home. They were encouraged not to employ the services of
the Brahmin priest to officiate over crisis rites, and marriages were often solemnized by the leaders of the movement in the absence of a Brahmin priest. It was pointed out that in the "primordial" Dravidian culture, only the elders of the community officiated over crisis rites. These marriages were called "self-respect marriages" or "reform marriages" (suya mariatai kalyanam, or siirtirutta kalyanam).

The writings of Ingersoll and other rationalists were serialized in the Association's journal. The Brahmanical ideology of hierarchy (status differences between jathis), commensal separation (segregation of jathis) and occupational ritualization (jathi vocations) was characterized as alien to Dravidian culture, and non-Brahmin youth were asked to disregard notions of pollution and rank in social intercourse. Books on Tamil culture and ancient Tamil literary works were made available, and young men were given training in Tamil rhetoric. The most popular slogan of the Self-Respect Union was, "If you see a snake and a Brahmin, beat the Brahmin" (paam-bayum paarpanayum paarta paarpanai aTi).
In 1937, when a Brahmin-headed government required that the Hindi language of northern India be taught in the school system, Periyar organized opposition to this policy. Brahmin "domination" and Hindi (northern Indian) "domination" implied the oppression of "Dravidians" by "Aryans." After 1937, the Dravidian movement derived considerable support from the student community. In later years, opposition to Hindi played a major role in the politics of Tamil Nadu. The fear of the Hindi language has its origin in the conflict between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. To the Tamil, "acceptance" of Hindi in the school system is a form of bondage. Other Dravidian groups such as Telugu, Kanndiga and Malayalee are less opposed to Hindi being taught in the school systems; in these other regions, opposition to Brahmins and Sanskrit was never expressed in the same form as in Tamil country.

The Justice Party weakened in the absence of mass support, and Periyar took over the leadership of the Party. Under his tutelage the party prospered, but almost all the Party's conservative members, most of whom were rich and educated, withdrew from active participation. In 1944, Periyar renamed the party TiraviTa KaRajam
(Dravidian Association). Dravidian Association became immensely popular with the urban masses and students, and many villages came under the influence of its propaganda. The Hindi language, and ceremonies that had become associated with Brahmanical Hinduism, were identified as alien symbols that should be eliminated from Tamil culture; Brahmins, who were regarded as the guardians of such symbols, came under verbal attacks. It is likely that hostility and frustration arising from cultural deprivation in the cities, and from the conflict between the economically privileged and underprivileged, found expression in the Dravidian movement. The "alien" symbols served as effective scapegoats.

In 1949, Periyar's chief lieutenant, Aringar (a Tamil title which means "the wise") C. N. Annadurai established a separate association called TiraviTa Munnetra KaRagam (Dravidian Advancement Association). Dravidian Advancement Association was generally referred to as the DMK. The DMK channeled the hostility of the underprivileged and the urban masses in much the same manner as the Tiravida KaRagam, but in a more sophisticated way. The efforts of Periyar and his Self-Respect Union were made
relevant in a meaningful and coherent order to the Tamil, particularly the male students. Many leaders and students changed their "Aryan" names to Tamil names; the common procedure was to translate the original name into Tamil. Students were told that the Tamil language was immensely richer than Sanskrit and Hindi in content, and thus was a key which opened the door to all the subjects there were to be learned. The DMK appealed to the school-going and educated youth in the village.

The leaders of the DMK were great orators in Tamil, and many had done original research on Tamil culture. Most of these leaders had been trained to do public-speaking in Periyar's Self-Respect Union. Their public-speaking was more than a forum for attacking the Brahmins; the leaders developed a distinctive skill in expressing the ideas of the movement, and the audience participated. Platform speech (meeTai peeccu) acquired the characteristics of dramatic art and became a form of transcendental expressiveness. Speeches combined both modern and ancient forms of Tamil speech, and were highly alliterative and rhythmic. These speeches attracted large audiences not only in the urban areas but also in the villages.
In their speeches, the leaders of the association stressed the values and morality of the ancient Tamils as mentioned in the ancient Tamil literature, and extolled these forms as essential for a satisfying life. The heroine in an ancient Tamil epic called *Silapatikaaram* was depicted as the ideal of womanhood; KaNNaki, the heroine, became the queen or goddess of chastity (*karppukkarasi* or *pattini teyvam*), and non-Brahmin women were compared with her. (Several statues of KaNNaki have been erected in Tamil Nadu in the recent past; when the DMK acquired political power, two statues—one for KaNNaki and another for Auvayaar, a philosopher-poetess—were placed in prominent places in Madras city.) The ideology of chastity, always possessed by the Tamil, became a sacred symbol. In their speeches the leaders recited couplets from *Tirukkural* (Tamil aphorisms on ethics and polity, believed to have been written by a Tamil saint called TiruvaLLuvar in the 1st century A.D.), which became a gospel of the Dravidian movement. In later years when the DMK formed the government in Tamil Nadu, printed couplets from *Tirukkural* replaced the pictures of gods and goddesses in most of the government-run buses and
offices. The statues of TiruvaLLuvar and many other ancient Tamil poet-philosophers were placed in prominent places.

The leaders were also very popular writers in Tamil. They wrote in "chaste" Tamil, avoiding the use of Sanskrit words. Thousands of books, booklets and journals were published, elaborating on the theme of the greatness of Tamil culture and Tamil language. The Tamil language was equated with the Tamil woman, and referred to as mother Tamil (Tamir Taay or Tamir Annay). Every Tamil was asked to protect his mother; the language took on a sacred quality, and an ideology of language came into being. Tamil culture and "Dravidian" culture became synonymous. As a result, the "primordial" ties with the other Dravidian groups such as the Malayalee, Telugu and Kannadiga found less emphasis, and the Tamil stood apart as the main, if not the sole, advocates of Dravidian culture and Dravidian nation-state.

During this period (the late 40's), when only the Tamil leaders were demanding the formation of a separate nation-state composed of the four Dravidian linguistic groups in southern India, and when the DMK had expressed
a coherent system of thought concerning the morality and polity of the Tamil, the Tamil village became actively involved in the Dravidian movement (see Chart A).

A medium of the Dravidian movement was the Tamil cinema. By the 40's, Tamil cinema had become the chief source of entertainment for the villager. Most of the leaders of the DMK were directly or indirectly involved in stage and cinema productions. Stage and cinema presentations depicted the Tamil woman as the embodiment of purity and chastity, and many cinema productions shown in the village dealt with the following themes: the cult of KaNNaki (queen or goddess of chastity), the glory of Tamil kings and queens, Tamil nationalism (the sanctity of the Tamil language), egalitarianism (eradication of jathi inequality) and opposition to Brahmanical priesthood and rituals. Abstract ideas related to virtue and the unity of mankind were also expounded. Slogans such as KaTamay-KaNNiam-KaTTupaaTu (Duty-Dignity-Discipline), Ontree Kulam Oree teivam (One Community, One God), Ellorum InnaTTu Mannarkal (All are Rulers of this country), and Yaatum Uuree Yaavarum KeeLiir (Let the world hear that I belong to every country) became popular in the Tamil village.
In the early 50's, when a Brahmin-headed government tried to institute the jathi vocational system (kula toril) in the schools, the Dravidian movement was at the forefront in opposing it, and many villagers actively expressed their opposition by supporting the movement. The Brahmin-headed ministry resigned and was replaced by a non-Brahmin-headed ministry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Urban Centers</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>South Indian Liberation Federation</td>
<td>Very rich and highly educated from non-Brahmin jathis</td>
<td>Rich and educated members of non-Brahmin jathis</td>
<td>Distinctive Dravidian race and culture; separate nation-state for Dravidians; economic, political and educational advancement of non-Brahmin jathis; dislodge Brahmin jathis from economic and political power</td>
<td>No active involvement but some members of each jathi are aware of the existence of the &quot;Dravidian&quot; activities in the city; dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups in sympathy with the movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Self-Respect Union</td>
<td>Periyar E.V. Ramasamy Naicker, the charismatic, iconoclastic leader campaigns against Brahmanical beliefs and rituals</td>
<td>Mostly semi-literate and poor youth from urban areas; secure training in public speaking; Reform-marriages occur</td>
<td>Egalitarianism; violently opposed to Brahmanical Hinduism; efforts at reordering the value-system; Rationalist beliefs</td>
<td>No active involvement but lower jathi groups evince interest; admiration for the leader's courage. Dominant non-Brahman jathi groups violently opposed to the movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase</td>
<td>The Dravidian Movement</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Urban Centers</td>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Village</td>
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<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>1944 Dravidian Association (combination of Justice Party and Self-Respect Union), or DK.</td>
<td>Periyar and his chief lieutenant, Aringar C.N. Annadurai, and several Tamil orators propagate Tamil Nationalism; and Tamil ancient literature</td>
<td>Semi-literate and poor youth, and school-going and educated youth in the urban setting establish forums</td>
<td>Egalitarianism; abolishing caste and Brahmanical Hinduism; formation of a separate nation-state for Dravidians; ancient Tamil texts presented as substitutes for Brahmanical scriptures</td>
<td>Many youth attracted to the ideology; journals and books of the movement are read by the youth and the poor; dominant jathi groups opposed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1949 Dravidian Advancement Association, or DMK</td>
<td>Aringar and several other Tamil orators expound the glory of Tamil-Dravidian cultures and provide a coherent system of ideas for altering belief &amp; behavioral structures</td>
<td>Youth organizations emerge; semi-literate and poor adults as well as youth; college students in the cities are actively involved; suppression by the government</td>
<td>Same as above, but Tamil values of chastity, womanhood and love for the language are emphasized; Tirukkural, the ancient Tamil book of aphorisms becomes the gospel</td>
<td>Efforts to organize village unit of the DMK undertaken by youths belonging to different jathis; dominant jathi groups opposed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART II: THE VILLAGE OF PULICAT

Chapter 1

History and Social Organization

The village of Pulicat (PaRaveerkaadu in Tamil, from the Dutch name Palleakatta or Paliakata), in the northeastern part of the Chingleput district of the state of Tamil Nadu in southern India, lies at $80^\circ 19'$ longitude and $13^\circ 25'$ latitude, and covers an area of 4.57 square miles. The village is composed of Pulicat proper and ten hamlets (sub-villages). The hamlets are inhabited mostly by Hindu and Christian fishermen, and Pulicat proper by various Hindu and Muslim jathi groups.

When Tamil kingdoms flourished in southern India from the third century B.C. to the third century A.D., Pulicat was called veerkaadu (root forest), and was the northern outpost of Tamil territory (Moses 1923: 75). With the decline of Tamil kingdoms in the third century A.D., a
major part of Tamil territory, including the northern region, came under Pallava kings of the north.

In the 9th century one of the Tamil kingdoms in the south expanded to include the northern territory. This northern territory, which corresponds roughly with today's Chingleput district, was called TonTaymaNTalam. The shores of TonTaymaNTalam were studded with ports containing Arab settlements, among which was Pulicat.

In the 14th century, Telugu and Tamil kingdoms in the south were invaded by Muslim princes and generals from the north, but for the next 200 years Telugu kings held hegemony over a large part of Tamil territory, including Pulicat. In the twilight of Telugu martial power, and when the Muslim kingdoms of the north were expanding, the trading companies of Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark, France and England sought to establish trading posts in a number of coastal villages.

When the Dutch arrived on the coast of Tamil territory in the early 17th century, they tried to eliminate the Arab traders, who functioned as middlemen in the trade between the peoples of the hinterland in southern India and the Straits Settlements, and the Portuguese. In 1609
they secured permission from a Telugu prince to build a trading post in Pulicat. They fortified the village against the local kings and the Portuguese, and within four years had monopolized trade in the east. Pulicat served as the seat of Dutch government in India. Under pressure from the Dutch, an English trading post established in Pulicat in 1619 was disbanded in 1622.

The frequent changes in the fortunes of Telugu, Tamil and Muslim kings, princes and generals apparently did not destroy trade or the handloom industry. The Dutch presence in Pulicat was beneficial to the weavers and the Hindu and Muslim trader. During their rule, the population of the village must have been over 10,000, and it is likely that over 1,000 handlooms operated in Pulicat alone. The sole occupation of several groups in Pulicat and in the hinterland of Tamil, Telugu and Kannada territories was the manufacture of cloth for export. Muslim and Hindu traders controlled internal commerce, and external sea trade was controlled by the Dutch.

Pulicat figured prominently in history because Telugu, Tamil and Muslim kings vied with one another for
the control of the port. Port revenue provided a major source of their income. Barbosa, travelling through Tamil territory in the early 16th century, described Pulicat as a "grand port which was frequented by an infinite number of Moorish vessels from all quarters (Moses 1923: 78)." Famine, resulting from the looting of Hindu and Muslim armies, wiped out a large number of people in port-villages. In the two port-villages of Pulicat and S. Thome, a port-village controlled by the Portuguese, an estimated 30,000 died of starvation in 1647 (Sewell 1932: 279).

In most multi-jathi villages in Tamil territory, inter-jathi disputes were settled by an uur pancaayat (village council) composed of representatives from the different jathis in the village, or by someone who was recognized by everyone in the village as the headman. Dutch sources of the 17th century indicate that Pulicat had no such village council or person. On one occasion, when a dispute arose between the jathis over a ceremonial aspect of burial, there was no mediating authority, and the conflict was settled by physical violence.
In the 1630's a chaplain stationed at Pulicat with the Dutch trading post wrote "that among Shudras there are many and diverse groups 'whereof each pretendeth to surpass the others; and therefore it doth oftimes hap that great strife ariseth in the land, insomuch as one caste or another, be it in marriage or in burial of the dead goeth beyond what is the custom' (quoted by Mandelbaum 1970: 217-218)." The same writer mentions a specific instance of inter-jathi dispute which occurred at Pulicat in 1640. A particular method of burial that was the privilege of one jathi was adopted by another jathi, and this gave rise to physical violence. Jathis were divided in their partisanship in the dispute, and this division was based on the left-hand and right-hand principle.

Pulicat was probably a well-known religious center. A few Brahmin religious practitioners lived in Pulicat. The chaplain at the Dutch trading post in Pulicat evinced interest in Brahmanical Hinduism, and studied under a Dutch-speaking Brahmin residing in Pulicat. This Brahmin also translated parts of Brahmanical Hindu scriptures into Dutch (quoted by Singer and Cohn 1968: 6).
Pulicat and its vicinity came under a Telugu king temporarily in 1626, and in 1644 a Muslim general from the north defeated the Dutch. But these incursions did not hamper the Dutch monopoly of trade, and Pulicat continued to exist as the principal trading post of the Dutch in southern India. The Dutch participated vigorously in many of the battles of Telugu princes and Muslim generals, supporting the side whose success would most benefit the Dutch presence in Pulicat. In 1689 the seat of Dutch government in India was moved to another port-village in southern India which the Dutch had captured from the Portuguese, thus reducing Pulicat to the rank of a principality. (See Burgess 1913: 67-114; Sewell 1932: 273-283; Krishnaswamy 1964: 322-360; and Sridharan 1965: 61-63.)

The Dutch rule in Pulicat lasted, with a few interruptions, for 214 years. In the 17th century, the area surrounding Pulicat was ruled by the Muslim king of Arcot, and this area was ceded to the English in 1760 as a jagir (estate) by the king. The English fought and defeated the Dutch in 1781, and again in 1785 and 1795. (On the main road in Pulicat there is a marker with the
inscription, "Site of the first Dutch Settlement in India, Fort called Geldria. The spot was finally captured by the English in 1795.") Dutch control of Pulicat lasted till 1825, when the village was annexed to Chingleput district, which had been given to the English by the king of Arcot in the 18th century.

With the departure of the Dutch in 1825, Pulicat changed from a center of trade and textile-production to a health resort. Retired British officials acquired land and mansions in the area, and Pulicat was probably a popular summer rendezvous. Casuarina (Casuarina muricata) was cultivated and sold as firewood, primarily by British settlers. The official concern of the British was to consolidate their interests in Madras town, which was 25 miles south of Pulicat; and when the thickly forested hills in southern India became accessible, even the little importance which Pulicat had as a health resort vanished. In 1895 the lighthouse at Pulicat was rebuilt, and its function was to warn ships away from the "dangerous shoals of Pulicat."

There were three religious traditions in Pulicat when the British possessed the village. Hindu temples
dedicated to the Brahmanic deities, to the Amman (mother goddess) and to the kula teyvan (deities who were also worshipped as family deities) were built in Pulicat before, during and after Dutch rule. The Amman was regarded as a manifestation of goddess Durga and was worshipped as the grama teyvatay (village goddess). Three Amman temples were built as a result of disputes between the left-hand and right-hand jathis.

Unlike the temples of the Brahmanic gods, Amman temples were open to members of every jathi, and the priest of the Amman temple was always a non-Brahmin. Particular Amman temples provided special prerogatives and privileges to "left-hand" or "right-hand" jathis. Every hamlet (sub-village) of Pulicat had its own Amman temple. Fishermen of most of the hamlets performed special annual rites for godlings called Kannii (sea virgins) and ANNanmaar (elder brothers). In the Amman temples blood sacrifices were performed to protect the village from cholera, smallpox and other epidemics that were believed to result from the anger of the Amman. Members of Brahmin jathis did not usually participate in these rites.
The practice of Islam in Pulicat probably dates back to the time of Arab settlements during the rule of Tamil and Telugu princes. After the fortification of Pulicat by the Dutch, mosques were built in Pulicat proper, and the mosques built earlier were used primarily by the Muslim boat-makers. Two large mosques named Periapallu (big mosque) and Chinnapallu (small mosque), and smaller places of worship and scripture-reading, were built. The Muslim traders, who claimed to be racially different from the other Muslims, were the religious practitioners. The other Muslims, who were divided into Rengan Party and Bebedel Party, built sacred halls known as ujiras for conducting special ceremonies and festivals associated with each group.

In contrast with the Hindus, who did not have a religious head, the Muslims recognized the authority of the kaazi (registrar). The office of kaazi was an hereditary post held by members of the trading community. The kaazi had the final word in all matters connected with crisis rites, divorce and property inheritance, and was often called upon to settle secular disputes among the Muslims. The traders' priestly and administrative
authority enabled them to dominate other Muslims despite their impoverished state in the 20th century.

Christianity in Pulicat has had a long tradition (the Roman Catholic church was probably built in the 16th century), but was confined to one hamlet of Pulicat. The people of this hamlet probably belonged to the PaTTanava Hindu jathi before their conversion to Roman Catholic faith. The Dutch had two churches, one outside and one inside the fort; a chaplain was stationed at Pulicat. It is unlikely that the Dutch had much contact with the native Christians. A Roman Catholic priest, an appointee of the Madras bishopric, conducted regular masses in the church located in the PaTTanava Christian hamlet.

The decline of Pulicat as a trading and textile center started even before the Dutch left Pulicat. In the 19th century the British-controlled port at Madras was expanding, and eastern trade was channelled mostly through this port. By the latter part of the 18th century the Dutch were no longer the major sea-power.

The fact that the Customs House at Pulicat was closed and Pulicat ceased to be a port of call in the 19th century did not by itself destroy the traders and
weavers of Pulicat, because the Muslim and Hindu traders of Pulicat had access to the port at Madras via a canal which the British had built in the early 19th century. What caused the decline was the British policy of systematic annihilation of the indigenous textile industry and trade. Whereas the Dutch had been satisfied to eliminate middle-men and amass the profits of trade for themselves, the British took over the entire trade operations and imported British goods, particularly cloth and yarn, for local consumption. Heavy taxation of indigenous goods, particularly cloth, and the banning of direct import and export by the natives, and the presence of tax-exempt British commodities in the market, eventually led to the destruction of the local economy.

A few Muslim and CeTTiar traders of Pulicat continued their profession, collaborating with English businessmen based in Madras. The main commodity of trade was the colored cotton cloth called lungi, which was in great demand in countries known today as Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. A few Muslim traders who had relatives living in those countries permanently or temporarily had trade connections there. The British tolerated native
trade in lungi because it brought them revenue. The cloth became so popular during Dutch rule of Pulicat that the Dutch trade-mark paliakat-lungi (cloth made in Pulicat) was used for all colored cotton cloth exported from Tamil territory. ("Pulicat lungi" is famous in southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia, even today.)

By the early 20th century all the Dutch mansions had decayed, and building contractors from Madras came to strip them of their wooden doors and windows. Some of these mansions were occupied by the Muslim traders of Pulicat, but others were owned and used by wealthy Englishmen, Hindus, and Muslims of Madras only as holiday homes. All the mansions were neglected. Even the homes of the Muslim traders of Pulicat whose ancestors had built them were not maintained. An anthropologist who studied the Muslim traders in 1923 wrote:

The houses built at a time when Pulicat was a flourishing emporium are very pretentious but unfortunately many of them are in ruin owing to the neglect to repair the blighting effects of biting winds loaded with salt spray. Many of the inhabitants are poor and eke out a precarious living selling stones, timber, pillars etc. from the ruins of the palatial residences built by their rich forbears. (Moses 1923: 82)
While this progressive extinction of a heritage of trade and affluence was taking place in one section of Pulicat, a similar process was occurring in another section. The Hindu traders, weavers, dairymen, oil-pressers, brick-makers, masons and smiths were migrating to other villages and towns, and their houses, often sold for the value of their stone and wood, were destroyed. The Muslim traders stayed in Pulicat and perished. The Hindu traders and artisans migrated and lost their wealth.

When the British acquired Pulicat, they introduced an official called the munisiff, who collected not only revenue, but information on births, deaths, and illegal activities in the village. Thus, for the first time, Pulicat was directly linked with a politico-legal authority which existed outside the village.

Under the British, villagers were allowed to participate in political activities that transcended the village. Natives were elected to quasi-autonomous units called District Boards which advised the revenue collector on matters related to education, public health and general development. Land owners in Pulicat had voting rights to elect members to the Board of Chingleput
district. Administration of Pulicat was entrusted to the
villagers, who elected the members of a town pancaayat;
however, the members of the town pancaayat were often
nominees of the jathis, and the chairman was either a
member of the economically powerful Beri CeTTiar jathi
group, or the Muslim Labbay (trader) jathi group. The
town pancaayat became defunct in 1938, as the income from
the taxes was insufficient to maintain the amenities
offered by the pancaayat.

During British rule, which lasted from 1825 to 1947,
the "right-hand" jathis in Pulicat were Mutialiar
(VeLLaLan), Kanakkar, VaNNaan, AmbaTTar, Balija NaiTu,
Labbay (Muslim), Bebedel Muslims, PaTTanava fishermen,
PaTTu and PaTma Saliar, ITayar, UTayaar and Parayan
(Harijan). The "left-hand" jathis were Beri CeTTiar,
KammaaLar, Vanniar, NaATTaar, KaikoLars, CempaTava
fishermen, Rengen Muslims and Christian PaTTanava. Three
jathis, the ToTTi (scavenger), the Panaccavan (the temple
assistant) and the PanTaaram (non-Brahmin priest) were not
included in either segment. Each division had its own
temples in Pulicat, and a few temples were built as a
result of disputes over custodianship. A few jathi groups
which had participated violently in the conflict between the two divisions migrated in the 20th century, after which disputes seldom occurred. The Hindu jathis no longer identified themselves with "left-hand" or "right-hand" segments. The non-Labbay Muslims continued to be divided into Rengen and Bebedel Parties, and violent disputes between them were common.

Many of the cyclic rites of the Hindus in Pulicat proper had ceased to have much significance. People showed little interest in the worship in the Brahmanical temples. The Beri Cettiar divisions (kiraamams) and the Mutaliars neglected the upkeep of the Brahmanical temples that were under their custody. Worship and ceremonies were almost exclusively confined to the Amman temples and to a newly constructed Muruga temple. The violent partisanship over special privileges associated with particular Amman temples had become extinct.

As fishing operations in Pulicat lake increased, Bebedel and Rengen Muslims, who had been household servants of Muslim traders (Labbay) when they were prosperous, became fish contractors. The increase in the fish trade led to rivalry between the fishermen of different hamlets,
and conflict between them was common. In one of the
conflicts, a few PaTTanava Hindus were murdered by
PaTTanava Christians. Eventually the fishing hamlets
agreed to use the fishing areas in Pulicat lake on
alternate days.

As fish contractors began to export fish and the
fishing enterprise expanded, groups previously engaged
in other occupations became indirectly or directly
involved with fishing. A number of Mutaliars, Vanniars,
ITayars, Bebedel Muslims, Rengen Muslims and NaiTus
opened coffee shops and cigarette shops to cater to the
fishermen. Two other economic enterprises were palm-leaf
basketry and weaving by handlooms. Almost every adult
female in the households of Muslim traders (Labbay) took
up basketry, which often enabled the traders to subsist.
KammaaLar (smiths), Kusavar (potters) and AmbaTTar (barbers)
continued their traditional occupations.

A large number of children from all the jathi groups
began attending schools run by Roman Catholic nuns and
the government. Before this, the children of the wealthy
jathi groups (the CeTTiars and Saliars in particular)
were taught by private tutors (vaattiar), a form of
education called tiNNai PaLLikuutam. Its main function was to teach boys to read and write Tamil, memorize Hindu puranas (mythologies) and compute simple arithmetic problems. Boys from the Labbay community went to Muslim religious schools where they learned the Koran and how to read and write Tamil in Arabic script.

In the schools run by the government and by Roman Catholic nuns, Tamil lyrics and poetry composed in ancient times were taught. Thus children belonging to the Hindu jathi groups, Christian jathi group, Bebedel Muslim community and Rengan Muslim community became aware of their ancient Tamil heritage.

In social status, the Beri CeTTiar and the Muslim traders who identified themselves as the Labbay ranked high, and Harijans were ranked at the bottom. (See Chart B.) The Villiar, although similar in food habits and rituals to the Harijan, were regarded as clean, and many served as household servants. All three Muslim groups had the same food habits, but only the Labbay were considered clean. After the migration of the Telugu-speaking CeTTiar and the impoverishment of the Labbay, the Beri CeTTiar ranked above every other group. However,
Mutaliars and Saliars did not acknowledge the high rank of the Beri CeTTiars. The ranks of jathi groups (in chart B) are only approximate, because different groups ranked themselves and others in different ways at different times.

**Chart B**

**Ranking of Jathi Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jathi Status</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beri CeTTiars</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labbay Muslim</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuliar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balija NaiTu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Harijan (Parayan)</td>
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By tracing the evolution of Muslim traders into a distinct jathi group in the Muslim community, it is possible to illustrate how a congruence was achieved between greater economic power and greater religious privileges. As the group's economic position improved, the group adopted the Brahmanical ideology.

Before the arrival of the Dutch, the Muslim traders were not differentiated from the Muslim boat-makers. Both classes claimed Arab ancestry. With the prosperity that accompanied the arrival of the Dutch, the traders shifted their settlement from the eastern and northern sections of Pulicat, where they lived with the boat-makers, to Pulicat proper, which was walled by the Dutch. The boat-makers continued to inter-marry with the local Hindu jathis. The traders put an end to inter-marriages and permitted their women to be taken as concubines by the Dutch. Over a period of 100 years or so, they became physically distinguishable from the boat-makers. The origin-myth which linked both the boat-makers and the traders to Arabia had become meaningless to the boat-makers because their physical traits were indistinguishable from those of the Hindu jathis. The boat-makers could
more meaningfully identify themselves with one of the two segments ("right-hand" and "left-hand" divisions) of the Hindu jathis. Those who identified themselves with the right-hand segment were known as Bebedel, and those who identified themselves with the left-hand segment were known as Rengen. Inter-marriages took place between Bebedel and Rengen segments, and their class positions were similar.

In contrast, the traders made use of the origin-myth to maintain the distinctiveness of their jathi identity. They "rediscovered" their identity and called themselves Labbay. The term Labbay, which literally means "Here I am," was generally used in Tamil Nadu to denote all Tamil-speaking Muslims who were converts to Islam, in contrast with Muslim groups such as Sayyids and Rowthers who spoke Urdu and were regarded as foreigners. The traders of Pulicat, however, interpreted the word to mean Arab ancestry. The traders who had once been undifferentiated from the boat-makers became a distinct group called Labbay.

The Labbay were the only Muslims who could read and write, and, as a result, religious authority came to be
vested in them. The Labbay were the peshimams (priests), kaazis (registrars) and mauluvis (commentators of the Koran). The term Labbay became synonymous to "priest," as every male Labbay, by virtue of his education, could perform priestly duties that required recitation of scriptures.

The Labbay came to acquire an identity comparable with that of the Brahmin jathi, and a status comparable with that of the Hindu traders. The Labbay prohibited inter-marriage between themselves and other Muslims, and maintained separate cemeteries. The Tamil spoken by the Labbay contained a few Arabic words from the Koran, just as the Brahmins used Sanskrit words in their spoken Tamil. The Labbay sent their children to learn and read Tamil in Arabic script, and to memorize the Koran, much as the Brahmin children attended Sanskrit academy.

The emergence and maintenance of Labbay distinctiveness and identity resulted from the Muslims' adaptation of the Brahmanical model of social organization. The Labbay were ranked high in social status because of their wealth. Their religious privileges validated the status vis-à-vis the Hindu jathi groups. Their poverty in the
20th century did not deprive them of high status, as they continued to officiate over religious ceremonies. Impoverished Brahmins retained high status for similar reasons.

The Beri Cettiyar monopolized sale of rice, grocery and textiles, and gave financial credit to the fishermen jathis (Pattanava Hindu, Karayaar, NaaTTaar, Pattanava Christian and Harijan). The Labbay and the weavers (particularly the Pattu and Patma Saliars) also borrowed from the Beri Cettiyar in time of need. Artisan jathis (Kammaalар or Black- and gold-smiths, and Kusavar or potters), AmbaTTaar (barber), PanTaaram (non-Brahmin priest), and Brahmin (temple priest and officiator over crisis rites) rendered services and received payment in cash. ITayars (herdsmen) sold milk; several members belonging to Balija NaiTus (a Telugu-speaking jathi), NaaTaar (a jathi whose traditional occupation was toddy-tapping), Vanniar and Mutaliar (cultivating jathis) and Bebedel and Rengan Muslims (who were mainly engaged in the fish trade) operated tea or cigarette shops, and some were professional tailors. Villiars (generally classified
as a tribe) engaged in fishing, but also served as household servants and laborers.

The financial credit provided by the Beri CeTTiar was pivotal to the functioning of the village social system. In the lean seasons of fishing, the fishing jathis borrowed money to ward off starvation. Other jathis also borrowed from the Beri CeTTiar. Thus the Beri CeTTiar were the patrons and all the other jathis were the clients in the credit structure which enabled the survival of all the jathis. The fishing jathis controlled the lake and sea, and were the source of wealth for the whole village, but were dependent on the creditors, the Beri CeTTiar.

Rengen and Bebedel Muslims were the only jathi groups who openly revolted against domination by the Beri CeTTiar. During the 20th century, a major turmoil occurred in Pulicat when the Rengen Muslims tried to prevent the Beri CeTTiars from polluting (hygienically, not ideologically) a temple tank that was used by the villagers for drawing good drinking water. The CeTTiars were physically abused on several occasions by the Bebedel and Rengen Muslims before an amicable settlement was reached.
In the 40's, intra-jathi occupational differentiation was pronounced among Beri Cettiers, Mutaliars, Vanniars, ITayars, the three Muslim groups, Baliya Naitus, Harijans and Villiers; that is, these jathis could not be identified with a particular occupation. Occupationally homogeneous groups were PattaTana Hindu, PattaTana Christians, NataTaars, Karayaar, Pantaaram, Kusavar, Kammaalgar, AmbaTTar and Saliar. Many youths among the occupationally differentiated jathis were literate, and they did not subordinate themselves to the elders. Among the homogeneous jathis, many of the Saliar were committed to communist ideology. The fishermen began to assert their rights in a number of social contexts although they were considered low in social status by the jathi groups in Pulicat proper. The emphasis of the TiraviTa Karagam (Dravidian Association) on egalitarianism found support in this kind of environment.
Chapter 2

The Dravidian Movement in Pulicat

An association called Netaji Potu-maKKaL Sangam (named in honour of a political martyr of India) was formed in Pulicat in the early 1950's. All of its members except the middle-aged president sympathized with the Dravidian movement. The president sympathized with the elders of Pulicat who opposed the Dravidian movement, and the association was disbanded in 1954 as a result of conflict between the president and the members. During the 1954 elections of the District Board (a regional advisory body) the president wanted the association to work for the Congress (all-India) political party which was supported by the elders of the village, and the youth members supported the DMK candidate. On October 29, 1954, thirteen males under the age of 35 founded an association called Ilayngar Murppokku KaRaqam (Youth Forward Association).

Youth Forward Association was a de facto unit of the DMK. A conflict between the elders and the youth
of Pulicat existed even before the formation of this association. The youth, most of whom had acquired education in secular schools and had visited Madras city frequently, felt oppressed by village authority. The ideology of the movement—Tamil nationalism, equality and a glorious Tamil culture—was seen by the young as a remedy for the poverty in the village. To the elders, the movement was an atheistic organization which sought to disrupt the tranquility of village life. The Congress government strove to suppress the movement, and the elders of the village were loyal to the government.

All the members of the Youth Forward Association declared themselves to be atheists or rationalists, and they usually met secretly. Membership was not limited to a particular jathi, but presented a cross-section of the community: one member was a Brahmin, two were Labbay Muslims, one was a Saliar, one a Mutaliar, three were Beri-CoTTiars, three were PaTTanava Hindus, and two were Harijans. The two Harijans (Untouchables) were relatively wealthy, and had served in Madras city as laborers. The two Labbay Muslims were peripheral in their jathi community. The two Beri CeTTiars were well-educated. Except
for these persons, support for the movement came mainly from the poor of every jathi.

From the beginning, the association had the full support of Rengen Party Muslims who had a long-standing quarrel with the economically powerful Beri CeTTiars. The Beri CeTTiars were in general violently opposed to the association, and many stopped their sons from attending school for fear that the boys would be contaminated by the ideology of the Dravidian movement. The PaTTanava Hindu fishermen gave support to the association after they were convinced of the merits of the ideology of the movement by a PaTTanava leader from Madras city who frequently visited Pulicat.

The main activity of Youth Forward Association was to train the youth in the art of public-speaking (Col Payircci and MeeTay Peeccu), a project similar to that of Periyar in his Self-Respect Union. A college student living in a neighboring village agreed to instruct the youth of Pulicat in public-speaking. (Thiru K. Vezhavendan, the student, eventually became the State Minister for Labour in the DMK government.) Through the association, the literature produced by the movement was made available to every youth in the village.
In 1959, conflict between the president and members of Youth Forward Association arose over the issue of political support for communist and DMK candidates. The president, a communist, left the association. In the same year the name of Youth Forward Association was changed to TiraviTa Munnetra KaRagam (Dravidian Advancement Association, or the DMK), and became a branch unit of the DMK of Tamil Nadu.

It was ten years before the Dravidian movement started functioning openly in Pulicat. From 1949 to 1959, the young people met in private and carried on the activities of the movement without mentioning it by name. Two of the prominent members, who were grade-school teachers by profession, operated under pseudonyms, fearing political repercussions from the government. (The teachers' conflict with the traditional authority in the village, and their attachment to the Tamil language, are important factors in the establishment of the Dravidian movement in the Tamil village.)
Structure and Function

In 1916, when the South Indian Liberation Federation was founded, the leaders and followers of the Dravidian movement were very wealthy and highly educated members of non-Brahmin jathis. The Dravidian movement served the implicit functions of enabling hostility to be channeled against the Brahmins, and political power to be acquired. In 1926, Periyar preached radical social reform, and Brahmin jathis were identified as outside Dravidian society. The misery of the poor was attributed to the existence of Brahmanical Hinduism. The movement provided the poor and the underprivileged as well as the student with a channel for expressing their frustrations, but the movement also revived ancient Tamil values and served the function of integrating and strengthening Tamil culture.

When the DMK was founded in 1949, a conflict already existed in the village between the elders, who represented traditional authority, and youths, who had become relatively independent through education and contact with urban areas. The movement provided a safety valve as well as facilitating greater participation in the political
arena. Language reform and revitalization of Tamil culture (tamiRin marumalarcci and tamiRar marumalarcci) were the explicitly stated goals of the movement. 

Political leadership:

In the 50's, efforts made by the government to democratize the traditional village council (pancaayat) resulted in the existence of two councils: the traditional council as well as an elected village council. The elected village council functioned as a developmental unit of the government, whereas the traditional village council continued to function as the institution of social control. In Pulicat proper there was no traditional village council, but all the hamlets of Pulicat had the council. In Pulicat, the kaazi (registrar) arbitrated in disputes among the Muslims, and the Beri CeTTiar and Vnniar elders served as arbiters (matiastam) in disputes among the Hindus.

When the DMK started functioning openly in Pulicat, its members were those who could never have become members or leaders either in the traditional or elected councils. (The Harijan members were exceptions.) Many of the members were identified as deviants by the elders. Two
had served jail sentences for offenses such as smuggling and bootlegging. Through their involvement with the movement they presented themselves as guardians of Tamil culture, which made them look respectable in the eyes of the villager. The Dravidian movement gave them an opportunity to establish contacts with men renowned for their oratorical and literary skills, through which they acquired prestige among the youth of the village. In the 60's, leadership and membership in the elected council gradually passed from the elders to the supporters of the movement.

In large part because of the involvement of the youth in political leadership, a reduction in social distance occurred between the elders and young, and between members of the various jathis. Terms of address and reference such as tooRa (comrade or friend) and tonTan (worker) became popular among the youth, although they continued the general practice of addressing the elders by their jathi names. In many instances, they used the term aNNa (elder brother) as a respectful term which expressed affection (anbu) rather than difference in social status.
Acts of transcendence:

In Pulicat, traditional acts of transcendence included trances, dances and games in the context of crisis and cyclical ceremonies. All these are present in modern times, although they are less important and less common today. Other acts of transcendence were story-telling (kata kalaTshebam), ribald songs sung to the accompaniment of a bow (villu-paaTTu), playing with sticks (kambu-aattam), drama (naaTakam), and the consuming of alcohol and psychedelic drugs.

Acts of transcendence outside the context of crisis and cyclical rites almost disappeared in the middle of the 20th century. Early in the 20th century, a theatrical group called Srimath Jaqa Janaanta NaaTaka Sabay existed in Pulicat for two years, run by a teacher (vaatiaar) employed by the elders of the village. The troupe enacted Brahmanical mythological stories. Later the elders occasionally invited drama groups from Madras city to perform mythological plays. In the 30's, the village secured the assistance of another teacher and a theatrical group was established, but the support for this came from the young and from a liquor-merchant rather
than from the elders. There was no theatrical group in the village in the 40's, and outside the context of crisis and cyclical rites, few dancers visited Pulicat.

By the late 40's, Tamil cinema became the most important form of transcendental entertainment for all the villagers. Although the cinema brought economic ideas of egalitarianism, political ideas of separate nationhood, religious ideas of eliminating Brahmanical Hinduism, and familial ideas of chastity, the stories were autistic dream fantasies. Unexpected windfalls and deification of the hero were common themes.

As indicated in Chapter 2 of Part I, the leaders of the Dravidian movement dominated the Tamil cinema industry from the late 40's. The villager, who went to see the same movie a dozen times or more, became familiar with dialogues written by the leaders of the movement. In 1957, 1962, 1966 and 1971 there were improvised movie theaters (often referred to as touring talkies) in Pulicat proper, and the villager also walked or cycled to neighboring villages and towns where a theater was operating.
In the 50's, the themes of the Tamil drama (naaTakam) were very different from those of the early 20th century or earlier. Brahmanical mythologies, which the village elders favored, had been replaced by social commentaries that often reflected the ideology of the Dravidian movement. In the 60's, members of the DMK unit in Pulicat strove to establish a theatrical group, but were stopped by the government. In 1964, a film comedienne staged a show in Pulicat for one day. A singer, who is also a prominent member of the DMK, visited Pulicat twice and gave story-recitals (kalaTshebam) of the achievements of the leaders of the Dravidian movement. Noted film stars associated with the movement visited Pulicat on a few occasions, particularly during election campaigns.

The rhythmic speeches of the leaders of the Dravidian movement brought an enthusiastic response from the audience, and constituted a form of transcendence. "Instant alliteration" (aTukkumoRi) was an essential feature of the speeches. The Tamil words used by the leaders were noted for their "purity." The leaders seldom used Tamil words which they thought to be contaminated by Sanskrit, and they avoided the use of colloquial
(koccav) words. Thus, pure (tuuya or cen) Tamil spoken in an alliterative and rhythmic form became known to the villager. (The illiterate youths of the village had the opportunity to learn to speak such Tamil.) In contrast with the colloquial Tamil spoken prior to 1950 by all the villagers, a substantial number of villagers in Pulicat began to speak formalized Tamil. (Many elders observed that young people and others who had come under the influence of the movement surpassed them in the gift of gab.)

**Sex and Mother-Son Relationship:**

In the late 40's and early 50's, the youth of Pulicat came into contact with a number of books and booklets written by the leaders of the Dravidian movement. All these stressed the greatness of Dravidian culture (as exemplified in ancient Tamil literature), and some described Brahmanical mythology in great detail in order to enlighten the Tamil about the sexual obscenity of Brahmanical Hinduism. Books such as Kamba-rasam, Teiva-liilaikaL and Aariya Maayay, which were written by the leader of the DMK, depicted Brahmanical mythology as pornography. It is quite likely that a few adolescents
were attracted to the movement by first reading these books.

The writers contrasted the pornographic description of Brahmanical mythology with the cultured life of the ancient Tamil as it was described in ancient Tamil literature. The movement emphasized the theme of chastity which existed in Tamil culture. The Tamil conceived their women to be chaste, and other women to be unchaste. The many men who had extra- and pre-marital affairs never accepted the idea that their wives, sisters and mothers might also have paramours. The men reassured themselves with Tamil proverbs such as "The husband is the god of his wife" (KaNavanee KaNkaNTa teyvam), and with beliefs in the divine purity of "our women." The fact of male infidelity did not interfere with the belief in female fidelity. The villager was aware that KaNNaki, the goddess of chastity, was married to Kovalan, who lost all his wealth on his mistress Maatavi. Most of the leaders of the movement were thought to have mistresses.

Men had close and extremely affectionate bonds with their mothers. In most instances, the family ties were maintained solely because of the bond between mother and
son. This close relationship between mother and son is not a function of the Dravidian movement, but a number of factors indicate that the Dravidian movement strengthened this bond. Titles of Tamil films illustrate the emphasis placed on mother. "Divine Mother (teyva taay), "Mother Precedes Wife" (Tayykkuppin taaram) and "Do Not Disobey Mother" (taay collay taTTaate) were some of the cinema bits in the village. Various Tamil proverbs glorifying the mother were usually present in the films.

Tamil language was equated with the mother, and when Hindi was made a compulsory language in Tamil Nadu by the federal government, several youths from Pulicat stated that they were willing to sacrifice their lives to save "mother Tamil" (tamiR taay or annay).

Identity:

Prior to the activities of the Dravidian movement, jathi and hamlet provided the villager with immediate, concrete references to identity. The movement established an identity which transcended the jathi and village. Language and race were once relevant symbols only when the villager visited different linguistic regions, but because of the movement they became symbols of
identification as important as jathi and hamlet. The expression, "Biologically a Dravidian, linguistically a Tamilian" (inattaal tiraviTap, mOriaal tamiRan) became popular.

Villagers commonly made a distinction between Brahmin jathi and Tamil jathi. The latter incorporated all the non-Brahmin jathis. This distinction was not made by all, and different people included or deleted some of the jathis from either of the divisions. Some included under Tamil jathi only the ranked non-Brahmin Hindu jathis, thereby excluding Harijans, Muslims, Christians and Brahmins, whereas others included every jathi, contrasting "Tamil jathi" with other linguistic groups.

Most villagers identified themselves as followers of particular political leaders and actors of the Tamil cinema. The actors, most of whom were leaders of the Dravidian movement, had become culture heroes of the villager. They were perceived, particularly by the youth, as the true defenders of the Tamil people and Tamil culture. One of the actors, M. G. Ramachandran (who is also a top leader of the DMK), was known to the villager by the several titles which indicated his status as
culture hero: "star of the people" (makkaL tilakam), "mighty philanthropist" (koTayvaLLal), "son of our house" (enga viiTTu piLLay), "golden heart" (tanga manasu) and "monarch of the art world" (kalayulaka meetay). He was also affectionately known as "elder brother" (aNNaN) and "teacher" (vaatiaar). M. G. Ramachandran developed the Tamil theme of "divine mother" in all his movies, and he named his residence "Mother's House (taay viiTu). The villager discussed these facts about Ramachandran with great pride.

Hundreds of village fan clubs have been established in honor of M. G. Ramachandran and other leaders of the movement. Clubs honoring leaders of other political parties are also found in the villages. In Pulicat, a club in honor of M. G. Ramachandran was founded in 1967. The president of the club was a member of the ITatayar jathi. The secretary was Kusavan by jathi, and the treasurer was a Bebedel Muslim. These three leaders belonged to jathis which were economically backward in Pulicat, as did the rest of the members of the club. None from the economically dominant Beri CeTTiar jathi joined the club. A club in honor of C. N. Annadurai,
the founder of the DMK, was established in 1966. The president was a Harijan, and almost all members were Harijans and members of other poor jathis. A club in honor of M. Karunanidhi, a top leader of the DMK, was organized in 1969 by PaTTanava Christians. A few PaTTanava Hindus and Harijan jathi members joined. In 1971, partly as a reaction against the activities of the other jathis in which they did not participate, and partly to give themselves a distinctive identity, young men of Beri CeTTiars jathi founded a club in honor of a cinema actor named Sivaji Ganesan. In his early career a supporter of the movement, Ganesan later identified himself with the Congress (all-India political party) with which most of the Beri CeTTiars also identified themselves.

The Dravidian movement was responsible for developing the villager's identification with leaders, particularly cinema actors, from outside the village. The clubs, whether they were units of the movement or of the Congress, provided opportunities for the youth to organize meetings, meet with Tamil leaders, and acquire a feeling of oneness with club members outside the village.
Common symbols of identity which appeared in the village were vests, towels, shirts, shawls and men's and women's garments imprinted with symbols of the Dravidian movement, or with pictures of the movement's leaders. Pictures of M. G. Ramachandran, M. Karunanidhi and C. N. Annadurai, and, less commonly, of other leaders of the movement and of leaders of other political parties, adorned the walls of many homes and coffee houses. These pictures, mostly oleograph paintings, often replaced the pictures of gods and goddesses that had usually hung on the walls of houses and coffee shops. The pictures were also printed on the covers of notebooks, wallets, waist belts, calendars, bags, and other similar objects.

In some instances, the symbols of the DMK replaced the traditional symbols used in decorative art forms: the DMK insignia of a rising sun was drawn on the koolam (a decoration made by women every morning in front of the household), on artifacts used in the karam (dancing with pots), and in body painting. Further, the DMK flag colors--black and red--were painted on the horns of cattle, house tops, hotel signboards, cycles, rickshaws, taxis and vans. In marriage announcements and other
greetings sent out to friends and others, the pictures of the leaders of the DMK and the insignia of the DMK were often included.
Chapter 3

The Economic System

A combination of tenure, credit and mortgage permeated every economic transaction in the village. Lease agreements and readily available credit kept the village economy viable. Persons selling fruit, vegetables, meat and fish, as well as breakfasts and lunches, and the widows and elderly women called angaTikaaricci who were permitted to sell food in the hamlets, were ancillary to the Beri CeTTiar creditors and fish contractors, upon whom the complex credit and mortgage structures depended. All wealth derived ultimately from the fishermen.

a. System of Lake Tenure: Intensive fishing was done in named zones and areas of Pulicat lake. Those engaged in lake fishing acquired rights of ownership over specific areas in the lake. These rights to specific areas alternated between individuals, and between groups. The rights could also be mortgaged.
Fish contractors paid sums ranging from $1,000 to $2,000 to secure exclusive rights to purchase the fish caught by all the fishermen in a hamlet. This money was called lease money (kuttakay paNam). The jathi council, which represented the hamlet, agreed that no one in the hamlet would sell fish on the open market. The lease money was considered a gift rather than a loan. The contractor usually paid less than the market price and thus was able to make a profit. Female contractors paid lease money to fishermen who caught crabs in the lake.

Occasionally, hamlets surrendered or mortgaged their rights to allotted areas in the lake in exchange for lease money. The contractors employed either the fishermen of the same hamlet or of other hamlets to fish in the allotted area. If the fishing enterprise proved successful, the contractor was obliged to share part of his profit with the fishermen who gave him the mortgage.

A hamlet might also decide to secure lease money without surrendering rights over fishing or selling. In this case, the lessee (the person who made the "gift" to the hamlet) was entitled to tax or impose levy on every fishing expedition undertaken in the hamlet. This
form of lease applied more often in the hamlets engaged in sea-fishing than in those engaged in lake-fishing.

Lake tenure was an essential part of the village economy. The money secured from the lessee was utilized to return the loans accrued by the hamlet at an earlier time. Any surplus was either spent on Amman temple ceremonies, or distributed equally among the male adults.

In the hamlet, every adult male was an economic unit (talaykaTTu, literally "head tie") required to share in the fortunes and misfortunes of the hamlet. Every male adult had a share (pangu) in the money received from a lessee or borrowed from a creditor, and he was obliged to honor the agreement with the lessee and the creditor. Only those who had a share acquired fishing rights in the lake.

Jathi groups who engaged in lake-fishing, such as PaTTanava Hindus, PaTTanava Christians, and Harijans, had an elaborate economic regulatory system called paaTu muray (area system). PaaTu muray determined the time, place and personnel of the fishing operations, and bestowed equal rights to every adult male (talaykaTTu). Persons within this system were share-holders in the
corporate enterprise by which fish were caught. *PaaTu muray* may also be seen as a limited concern or licensing authority that functioned as an economic leveler.

On attaining the age of 18, a boy became an economic unit (*talaykaTTu*). He was required to pay a nominal fee to the village council for such recognition. Until this time, he was not given a share, and he was not held responsible in any of the hamlet's credits and liabilities. In some hamlets, a distinction was made between those who had shares, and those with shares who also had areas in the lake registered in their name. In order to have a registered area, it was necessary to have a share, but this was not sufficient. In the hamlets where a distinction between share-holder (*pangukaaran*) and area-owner (*paaTu urimaykaaran*) was made, area-owners were recruited from among the share-holders when areas in the lake were being reallocated. Usually only married men and those who possessed fishing nets were allotted *paaTu* (a registered area), which encouraged share-holders either to get married or to buy nets. The eldest son inherited the *paaTu* of his father, and the other sons were required to file applications for
paaTu with the village council. The successful candidates were obliged to make nominal payments to the village council, and were then given the title paaTu urimaykaaran (owner of area rights). Owners of area rights who neglected to make use of their areas were removed from membership, and if they applied for admission again they had to pay a heavy fine to the village council.

Shrimp fishing was the most lucrative form of fishing in the lake. The lake was divided into a number of named zones, and each zone into a number of named areas. Each area was registered in the name of a person, but each person had to circulate, moving from one registered area to another according to a fixed schedule.

Fishing with drag nets (baaTi valay) required the labor of 50 to 60 persons. Usually most labor was recruited from among the share-holders of the same hamlet, but individuals from other villages were also employed. The owner of the net paid half of the wages in advance, and shared with the laborers 50% of the earnings above and beyond their wages. Only a certain number of nets could be used in the lake at a time; therefore, a net used on a particular day could be used
again only after all the other nets in the hamlet had been used in turn. Nets were put out in particular areas, where their owners had area rights.

The wealth of a fisherman was measured by the number of nets and boats he possessed. By loaning the nets and boats, he could secure one or more shares in the earnings. The number of shares given in return for the use of the nets varied, and the most profitable property was the drag net which provided the owner with 50% of the earnings.

In some hamlets, adult males (economic units or talaykaTTukaaran) were divided into groups called jamay or jamat. Each jamat had particular areas and days allotted to it. A jamat was usually composed of 15 to 26 persons, and had a leader. Earnings of the jamat were evenly distributed among members of the jamat, and if one of the members was sick and could not participate in the fishing operations, he was still entitled to a share.

Not only were different hamlets allotted areas, but hamlets exploiting the same zones in the lake shared the fishing rights among themselves on an equalitarian basis. Each hamlet was allotted specific days. Usually two
hamlets operated in a given zone, although they had
different areas, and the type of net that could be
used was also specified. The following tables illustrate
the circulation of individuals and hamlets in the lake.
Four hamlets labelled A, B, C and D, and three groups in
each hamlet numbered 1, 2 and 3, would circulate as in
Model I. If two hamlets agreed to exploit a zone on the
same day, the circulation would be as in Model II.

Model I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week I</td>
<td>A-1</td>
<td>B-1</td>
<td>C-1</td>
<td>D-1</td>
<td>A-2</td>
<td>B-2</td>
<td>C-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week II</td>
<td>D-2</td>
<td>A-3</td>
<td>B-3</td>
<td>C-3</td>
<td>D-3</td>
<td>A-1</td>
<td>B-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model II

Week I:
Zone I:
area (i)   A-1  A-2  A-3  C-1  C-2  C-3  B-1
area (ii)  B-1  B-2  B-3  D-1  D-2  D-3  A-1

Week II:
Zone I:
area (i)   B-2  B-3  D-1  D-2  D-3  A-1  A-2
area (ii)  A-2  A-3  C-1  C-2  C-3  B-1  B-2

Not all fishing in the lake came under the area
system. One section of the lake had no demarcated areas,
and was fished by area owners on days when they had no area allotment, and by the elderly who seldom utilized the areas. There was no registered area for angling, which was commonly done. Villiars and NaaTTaars who also fished in the lake along with the PaTTanava Hindus, PaTTanava Christians and Harijans had no elaborate area system.

Catching crabs was undertaken regularly by fishermen of three hamlets, and was very remunerative. The three hamlets took turns using the lake for this activity. The area in the lake where crabs were abundant was called nanTu paaTu (crab area), and Harijans had no rights in the area. Crab catching and fishing occurred simultaneously in the lake; men caught crabs when it was not their turn to fish.

b. System of Land Tenure: Casuarina and rice cultivation were sources of regular income for a few Beri CeTTiars, Labbays and fishermen (including Harijans). Cultivation was done through agreements between the owners of the land and the persons undertaking cultivation. The cultivator was called kuttakaykaaran (lessee); usually he employed Villiars and Harijans to work on a wage basis.
The lessee paid the owner of the land 50% of his earnings from the land. The procedure of sharing the proceeds equally was called varam. The lessee generally made advance payments that were considered loans, and the owner was required to pay interest on them. In some instances the interest on the loans far exceeded the amount the owner would get from his 50%, in which case the lessee usually continued to hold the land. Firewood contractors bought the casuarina trees when they were about five years old or more, felled them, and exported the timber to Madras city.

Casuarina was also cultivated on land that belonged to the hamlets and to the government. Lessees paid the money to the jathi councils or to the government office. Money paid to the councils was equally distributed among all the adult males in the hamlet, and on some occasions the entire sum was spent on Amman temple ceremonies.

Many Beri CeTTiars and a few persons from most of the other jathi groups owned rice fields in the neighboring villages. These absentee landlords leased the land to Harijans and Vanniars who cultivated the land either under the agreement called varam, or under an agreement
which required the lessee to provide the owner with a fixed amount of rice each harvest.

In contrast with the cultivation of casuarina, in which the lessee made advance payments or loans to the owner and thereby impoverished him, the owner of land used for cultivation of rice made loans available to the lessee and kept him in perpetual bondage. The owners of the sandy land where casuarina was cultivated were poor, and leased the land to others to secure loans. They were, in effect, mortgaging the land. In contrast, the owners of the rice lands were mostly wealthy Beri CeTTiars who paid clients low wages to cultivate the land.

c. Patronage System: Rice, grocery and cloth shop-keepers, most of whom were Beri CeTTiars, had regular customers (vaaTikaykaarar). As there was seasonal fluctuation in the earnings of the fishermen, weavers, and basket-makers, they and the other jathi groups which rendered services to them depended on loans to ward off starvation. The Beri CeTTiars offered credit. Almost everyone in Pulicat bought food and cloth on credit.

The individual shopkeepers kept the customer in perpetual debt, and thereby forced him to make all his
purchases in a particular store. If the customer shopped at other stores he would be required to pay his debt. The shopkeeper gave the customer a loan which was not meant to be returned as long as the patron-client relationship lasted. Regular customers were forced to buy commodities at high prices. Thus, if the customer decided to stop shopping at his regular shop (vaaTikay-kaTay) after a period of four or five months, the shopkeeper would not lose anything. Beri CeTTiars gave commodities at wholesale prices on credit to small shops run by non-Beri CeTTiars. It was not uncommon for loans as high as $300 to be underwritten after a patron-client relationship had lasted two or three years.

In certain instances, a shopkeeper would become the patron of a whole hamlet. If the headman and members of a jathi council approached a shopkeeper for a loan on behalf of the hamlet, the loan was given on the condition that everyone in that hamlet agree to buy commodities from his shop. The Beri CeTTiars were in competition with each other, but had an understanding about the prices of the commodities. Changes in patron-client relationship occurred only when misunderstandings arose over
non-economic factors, or when the customer did not honor his debts for a long time.

Most villagers bought cloth on credit during festive occasions. The usual understanding was that for every 60-cent purchase the customer would pay one dollar. Several government-licensed pawnbrokers—all Beri-CeTTiars except for one Marwari—transacted regular business with members of every jathi. Cooking utensils, jewels and houses were mortgaged at interest rates ranging from 10% to 50% per month. The interest rates stipulated by the government were seldom applied, but receipts usually indicated the government rates. Villagers who had a reputation for honesty could borrow, without mortgaging articles, at an interest rate of 100% per month.

The jathi group least involved in these transactions was the PaTTanava Christians. This group had relatively more wealth than all the other fishermen, and a few within the group gave credit to their jathi brethren. The Roman Catholic priest stationed in the hamlet exerted some control over the income and distribution of money in the hamlet, which facilitated the conservation of money. (The population of this hamlet grew from 36 in
1871 to over 700 in 1971, indicating the better position of this group.)

Economic Adaptations

The monopoly which the Beri CeTTiar had in giving credit and selling consumer articles was altered when credit was made available by fish contractors from Madras city and landlords from the neighboring villages. The government helped to establish cooperative societies for fishermen, weavers, palm-leaf basket makers and dairy men, and a government-run bank started functioning in the village. Loans for purchasing fishing nets, boats, handloom yarns and cattle became available through these agencies. Palm-leaf baskets were purchased regularly from the workers by the palm-leaf society. An exclusive dependency on credit provided by Beri CeTTiars was changed to preferences for certain kinds of economic relationships. Fishermen, including Harijans, invested in casuarina cultivation, and a few (particularly PaTTanava Christians) had income from this and other investments.

However, out of the 26 rice and grocery shops, 21 were owned by Beri CeTTiars; 5 were owned by Muslims
(Labbay, MutupeTay and Party groups). Five out of the 21 owned by Beri CeTtiars made a daily profit of over $5; ten made a profit of $3 each, and three shops made less than a dollar a day. Muslim shops made a profit of less than a dollar a day. Beri CeTtiars owned all three grinding mills, from which they received an average income of about $5 a day. Of the nine pawnbroker shops, each of which made an average profit of over $5 per day, eight were owned by Beri CeTtiars, and one was owned by a Marwaf. Brahmins, Vanniars, Mutaliars, Balija Naitus, iTayars, NaaTaars and Muslims owned cigarette and betel-nut shops, meat shops, vegetable and fruit shops, coffee shops and restaurants. The liquor shops ("kalakkal, or "French Polish") and the bakery were owned by NaaTaars.

Fishermen (PaTTanava, Harijan, NaATTar, Villiar, and Karayaar) were the main clients in the shops mentioned above. Only the weavers (predominantly PaTTu and PaTma Saliars) and the basket-makers (mainly Labbays) were not directly linked with the fishermen; but they were indirectly involved in the fishing operations, as the shopkeepers from whom they secured loans functioned in Pulicat only because of the fishermen. AmbaTTar (barber),
KammaLar (smith), and Kusavar (potter) catered to every jathi group. Brahmin purohitars (ritual specialists) catered to every jathi group except Villiars and Harijans.

The lake area system continued to function as an economic leveller by providing equal opportunities for all the fishermen. There were few differences in wealth within and between hamlets, but during the lean season in fishing a few persons in the hamlets had surplus money. Fishermen went to Beri CeTTiars as well as to other creditors for loans. Lake fishermen agreed among themselves not to use nylon fish nets, as they believed that owners of nylon fish nets would become rich at the expense of fishermen who did not possess such nets. This egalitarian principle was combined with a belief that nylon would destroy fish and empty the lake of fish.

(It is not unreasonable to speculate that had the fishermen started using nylon fish nets, a few would have accumulated enough wealth to become creditors of their jathi members, thereby replacing the Beri CeTTiars and others whose credit was vital for the survival of every jathi in Pulicat. The complex credit structure in
Pulicat would in that case have undergone a major modification.)

Certain alterations which occurred in the economic relationships between jathi groups can be attributed to the activities of the Dravidian movement in the village. Individual Beri CeTTiars who were regarded as deviants within their jathi community became more involved economically with the support of the movement. (The non-deviant Beri CeTTiars were violently opposed to the movement.) Those fishermen who actively engaged in the activities of the DMK ceased to have economic ties with the more Brahmanically oriented Beri CeTTiars. As the Beri CeTTiars seldom let their political and religious philosophies interfere with business, they did not sever any economic relationship with the supporters of the movement. Active supporters of the DMK among the Labbay community established a closer economic relationship with the fishermen, who for the most part supported the DMK, and through this relationship a few Labbays founded restaurant or fish-contract businesses. It is also possible that the Labbay became supporters of the DMK because they were dependent economically on the fishermen.
Chapter 4

The Political System

The principles governing public conduct were
a) subordination of self to village (*uurukku aTangi
naTappatu*), and b) trust in adjudication (*matiyastam*).
The villager subordinated himself to the adjudication
of pancaayat (village council), which meant that the
council represented the village and/or the jathi group.
The pancaayat was conceived by the villager to be the
village (*uur*) itself, and its adjudicatory function was
seen as the essence of corporate social life in the
village. The affairs within each hamlet, and relations-
ships between the hamlets, were governed by the pancaayat.

In Pulicat proper, rich Beri CeTTiars usually per-
formed the function of adjudication (*matiyastam*).
Elders of other jathi groups such as Vanniar, Mutaliar
and Saliar were also occasionally called upon to perform
this function. The *kaazi* (registrar of Muslims) generally
arbitrated over the disputes in the Muslim community.
However, Rengen and Bebedel Muslims had leaders of their
own who adjudicated over intra-and inter-community conflicts occurring when the two groups claimed privileges and prerogatives on ceremonial occasions.

The village as a whole (Pulicat proper and the hamlets) was a territorial and politico-legal unit of the State. The representative of the State in the village was the munisiff (village magistrate). The munisiff functioned as one of the chief adjudicators of Pulicat proper, and as the chief adjudicator over disputes that were not resolved by the pancaayats in the hamlets.

Thus, there were two kinds of authority in the village: the pancaayats, or councils, based on identification of groups with the tradition and custom of the village, and politico-legal control based on the coercive power of the State.

a. Pancaayat (adjudicating council):

There were two kinds of pancaayats. Hamlets with more than one jathi group had a pancaayat for each group (called jati pancaayat) as well as a hamlet pancaayat (known as uur pancaayat). The terms jati pancaayat and uur pancaayat were used interchangeably in hamlets in which only one jathi group existed.
The number of members in the pancaayats varied from hamlet to hamlet; the average number was six including the headmen. Jathi titles were used when referring to or addressing the headmen, but other members were often referred to as pancaayattaars or kaariastar. In a few hamlets, members performed specific duties, for example, as convenor of the council (tanTakaaran, or tanTagar) or temple trustee (tarmakarta, or tarmagar). Such offices were hereditary.

Harijans did not use jathi titles, but referred to their chief headman as peria kiramattaar and the assistant headman as chinna kiramattaar.

In one hamlet, in which three jathi groups lived, the uur pancaayat (village council) was composed of the headmen of the three jati pancaayats. Each headman held the position of leader (talayvar) in turn.

In one PaTTanava jathi hamlet, households were differentiated into seven "families" (kuTumbam). Each kuTumbam had a headman who was a member in the jati pancaayat. One of the seven families was identified as the "head family" (talay kuTumbam), whose headman was also the leader of the jathi group of the hamlet.
The main function of the pancaayat was adjudication (matiyastam). If someone deviated from tradition or custom, the pancaayat was convened, which meant that the entire village was assembled. At such assemblies, the headmen and other members of the pancaayat usually sat in an elevated position. Offenders who were not members of the pancaayat had to stand before the pancaayat; in a few hamlets, the offenders were required to prostrate themselves on the ground before the members of the pancaayat at the beginning of the hearing. A plaintiff (vaati) was given the chance to state his case first. The defendant (prati) was, on certain occasions, required to "swear by the village" (uur meela catiam).

The headman pronounced the verdict after consultations with members of the pancaayat, and after hearing the views of the people of the village. In some cases, the offender was required to acknowledge the authority of the pancaayat by placing a leaf or a stone before them; this act was known as maccolika, or "symbolic statement of agreement."

In one hamlet, maccolika was performed after the offender was judged guilty by the pancaayat. The common
practice was for the offender to make a pledge (cattia vaakku), and enter into an agreement (uTanpaTikkay) with the pancaayat never to deviate from the tradition and custom of the village.

The punishment for most offenses was payment of fines, which were either given to the aggrieved party or spent on the temple. Men were punished by having to circle the village with a broken pot containing cow dung and urine (maNkuuTa malar), and women had to collect village refuse. Such punishments were forms of censure, in contrast with the most serious sanctions (kaTTupaaTu) of ostracism and exile. The terms jati kaTTupaaTu or uur kaTTupaaTu indicated that an offender was living on conditional agreement with the village; if the conditions were not met, the offender was exiled from the village. Conditional stay entailed ostracism until the offender had met all the stipulations of the pancaayat judgment. A kinsman was usually required to provide "bail" (jaamiin). If the stipulations were not met within a stated period, the villagers were required not to speak to or aid the offender. Cooperation was necessary for the village to survive. If the offender did not honor the judgment of the pancaayat, he was forced to leave the village.
The panchayat, particularly the headman, was in charge of collecting and dispersing money in the village. The ritual function of the headman, and of the panchayat in general, varied from hamlet to hamlet. The headman and panchayat played a relatively minor role in the Christian hamlet, but in the Harijan hamlets they were consulted and honored in every crisis and cyclical rite; the headman officiated over the marriage negotiations and ceremonies, and received the bride on behalf of the village.

b. Politico-legal authority:

The munisiff (village magistrate), the karNām (village accountant) and the tālayarī (village watchmen) were paid by the State. They lived in the village, and their offices were hereditary.

The munisiff was empowered to conduct trials and jail miscreants, but was eventually supposed to hand such persons over to the police. In fact, only those cases which he or others in the village failed to resolve were reported to the police. Most of the inter-hamlet disputes were settled by the munisiff, who usually received gratuitous gifts for not reporting them to the police.
Police involvement in the village disputes was rare. If someone reported acts of violence to the police without consulting the pancaayat or the munisiff, he was censured by the pancaayat.

The main function of the munisiff was to record births and deaths, and to collect revenue. The karNam maintained the revenue records and exerted considerable power, as he wrote legal documents for the villagers.

**Political Adaptations**

A youth organization established in the early 50's enabled those who were dissatisfied with traditional authority to verbalize their discontent. The group was committed to the ideology of the Dravidian movement. Through the youth, every villager came to know of the goals of the movement, which were to create a separate nation-state for the Tamil. The villager was exposed to the political philosophy behind cultural nationalism. As part of the group's ideology, they sought to eliminate the Brahmanical model of relationships between the jathi groups. The villager's conception of his jathi as culturally (panpaaTu) and racially (inam) distinct was altered to some extent, and he began to equate culture
with language *(panbal tamiRan)*, and to identify his race as Dravidian *(inattaal tiraviTan)*.

The establishment in the 50's of a state-sponsored pancaayat (which could be distinguished as the "elected village council" in contrast with the *jati* or *uur* pancaayat) provided a forum for political criticism and discussion. The members of the youth group argued that Pulicat's lack of development was due to a "step-motherly" treatment by the state government, which was controlled by the Congress (all-India political party). The DMK leadership had accused the federal government of being "step-motherly" in its economic aid to Tamil Nadu; in the village, the state government (Congress) was held responsible for the lack of civic amenities. Traditional authority in the village was seen as being in collusion with the Congress party. Many villagers were willing to discard their traditional support of Congress.

A new pattern of relationship emerged between the different jathli groups in Pulicat and the hamlets. In the elected council, representatives from the hamlets comprised 60% of the membership, but could get none of their members accepted as president of the council.
A Beri CeTTiar, who was a supporter of the Congress, got "elected" for two terms with the support of the representatives from Pulicat proper. Selection of a president was a source of conflict between the jathi groups from the hamlets and the jathi groups from Pulicat proper, and the disputants went to the civil courts twice for adjudication. The jathi groups of Pulicat would not have a fisherman as the president, and the fishermen did not want to be subservient to the jathi groups in Pulicat.

In the third term of the council, about 75% of the members supported the Dravidian movement. Leadership by the Beri CeTTiars (the supporters of Congress) ceased, and other jathi groups of Pulicat began to play a major role in council leadership. A Vanniar was elected leader: his jathi membership made him acceptable to the representatives from Pulicat, and his active involvement in the movement made him acceptable to the representatives from the hamlets.

Economic conflicts between Pulicat and the hamlets led to a bifurcation of the elected council. The representatives from the hamlets were opposed to the council's decision to impose tax on fish caught in the lake. The
council president, although an active supporter of the movement, tried through government departments to annex a section of the lake as the property of the council. As a result the fishermen secured permission from the government to constitute an independent elected council comprising eight fishing hamlets, leaving the original council with only Pulicat proper and two hamlets. The village (revenue) unit remained as before, incorporating Pulicat proper and the ten hamlets.

Politicization of the youth and the poor started with Dravidianization, a revitalization process which altered the relationships within and between the jathi groups. The fishermen openly confronted the Beri CeTTiars and other jathi groups in Pulicat proper. Within the hamlets, the conflict between traditional leaders and others was institutionalized: traditional leaders abstained from active involvement in the "politics" of the elected council, and members of the elected council did not interfere in the authority of the traditional pancaayat which continued to function as the agency of social control. In two hamlets, however, the traditional pancaayat itself was "democratized"; the
youth began to stipulate conditions under which they would obey the pancaayat.

In Pulicat proper, Rengan and Bebedel Muslims became dominant not only in the council but in all the political activities of the village. With the exception of less than 5%, Muslims, including the Labbay, supported the DMK. A few Labbay youth established economic, political and social relationships with those fishermen who were active supporters of the DMK. Vanniar and Mutaliar jathi groups were also, for the most part, supporters of the DMK, and many members of these groups established close ties with the fishermen. The economically dominant jathi group, the Beri CeTTiuar, continued to support the Congress, but a few who were identified as non-conformists supported the DMK and had close ties with the fishermen.

Competition for political power without economic power or high jathi status was the main political adaptation. The communist party, which had a few adherents, particularly among the weavers, failed to mobilize any significant support in the village. But the youth and the poor who had become active supporters of the Dravidian movement could mobilize members from all the
jathi groups. The cultural nationalism of the movement could be understood by everyone, and the leaders as well as the followers were very articulate.

Traditional relationships and authority (as exemplified in the jati and uur pancaayats) co-existed with the newly established inter-jathi relationships and elected councils in the village. After an initial attempt to dominate the elected council, the traditional elders confined themselves mostly to their traditional functions in the village. The youth and others who had no hereditary authority involved themselves in political aspects which linked the village to the outside; the members and president of the elected council had links with political leaders of the region and the state. These non-traditional leaders could take pride in their achievements in the village, in securing government aid for constructing a reading room, schools, latrines, water tank and other amenities. In the general elections, these achievements rather than appeals to jathi loyalty were the main propaganda. The Congress (all-India party) depended on the traditional leaders for votes, and lost its traditional village support.
Chapter 5

The Religious System

Central to Hindu religious behavior in the village were the beliefs that a) supernatural beings participated in the activities of people, and b) supernatural beings could be manipulated. These beliefs formed the basis for conceptualizing the existence of several kinds of deities and spirits with benevolent and malevolent attributes, and for the practice of spirit mediation and exorcism. Spirit mediation and exorcism found less emphasis among the Christians and Muslims, but there was little difference between them and the Hindus in the beliefs concerning the existence and functioning of spirits. Many exorcists in the village were Labbay Muslims.

Apart from these beliefs, religious behavior was characterized by negative involvement, for example, ritual abstinence and tabus. The principle of negative involvement was an aspect of Brahmanical supernaturalism, as well as of Christianity and Islam. Among the Hindus
and Christians, abstinence and tabu were confined to the affluent, and among the Muslims, to the Labbay.

Just as there were two kinds of political control, one found in the coercive power of the State, and the other in the custom or tradition of the village, there were two forms of supernaturalism. One was based on the authority of Brahmanical, Koranic and Biblical myths, and the other was based on the authority of village myths. In most Hindu and Christian houses, an area was set aside for propitiation (naTu viiTu). Propitiation at this place linked the two forms of supernaturalism. Muslims did not have naTu viiTu, but their burial place served to link the two forms of supernaturalism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Religious Behavior</th>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Christians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative involvement</td>
<td>Abstinence; auspicious time; tabus &amp; propitiation</td>
<td>Auth. in Brahmanical myths</td>
<td>Auth. in Koranic myths</td>
<td>Auth. in Biblical myths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spirit participation</th>
<th>NaTu viiTu</th>
<th>naTu viiTu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possession, divination, exorcism &amp; propitiation</td>
<td>Authority in village myths</td>
<td>Authority in village myths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hindu, Christian and Muslim groups which demonstrated beliefs in negative involvement also tended to have greater political and economic power. Affluent members of each group tended to demonstrate these beliefs more than less affluent members.

Beliefs associated with the principle of negative involvement such as ritual abstinence, jathi commensality (panti poojanam) and observance of "auspicious time" (raaku kaalam), did not constitute a coherent system for the villager. That is, he did not believe in the active participation of the Brahmanical deities in the social life of the village, and he had little knowledge of Brahmanical cosmology. But just as the villager accepted the power of the State with little knowledge about the functioning of the State, he also accepted the presence of Brahmanical deities and the Brahmanical aspect of negative involvement. Most Christians and Muslims (with the exception of the Labbay group) also had little understanding of Christian or Muslim cosmology.

In contrast, the villager was fully acquainted with the origins and attributes of village deities called the Ammans (graama teevatay, or village mother-goddesses),
the jathi and family deities called *kula teyvam*, and the various demons and spirits, just as in the political system he understood the functioning of the pancaayats. The villager sought the aid of pancaayats to adjudicate over disputes, and the aid of deities and spirits to resolve problems thought to be caused by supernatural powers.

Rituals and festivals in the Christian hamlet were primarily for the Virgin Mary who was supposed to have come ashore at Pulicat about 300 years ago in the form of a log. A ritual in her honor was the greatest annual event in the hamlet. Propitiatory church services were held in the name of Jesus the Christ, and abstinence from meat on Fridays and fasting during Lent were considered necessary to secure the forgiveness of God. Muslims propitiated Allah five times every day and conducted special Annual festivals of fasting (Ramadan). They also prayed (*fateha*) to the dead to mediate in everyday affairs. The Bebedel and Rengen Muslims erected tombs for deceased saints, and the annual rites performed in their honor attracted the attention of these Muslims and of the village as a whole more than those performed in the mosques.
a. **Negative Involvement: Abstinence and Tabus:**

Brahmin jathi groups in the village adhered strictly to the rules of vegetarianism, auspicious time (*raaku kaalam*) and menstrual tabu. The Beri CetTtir followed the rules more scrupulously than other non-Brahmin jathi groups, but all non-Brahmin jathi groups indulged in the consumption of meat and fish—foods that were considered to be *kavacci* or polluting. The jathi groups who ranked second to the Beri CetTtir such a Mutalier, Saliar, Kanakkar, ITayar, Kammaalar and Balija NaiTu, paid greater attention to the rules than did the next-ranking jathi groups such as Vanniar, NaaTaar, Kusavar, AmbaTTar, Pandaaram, Itayar, NaaTTaar, PaTTaanaava and Karayaar. Villiar and Harijan jathi groups paid the least attention to the rules of ritual abstinence and tabus. *(See Chapter 1 for chart in which groups are ranked.)*

Ritual abstinence was called *oru poRutu* ("one time"), or *nonbu* (fasting). Certain days during the year were believed to be *oru poRutu*. Only a few of the *oru poRutu* days were common to all the jathi groups. On *oru poRutu* days, meat and fish (*kavacci porul*, or polluting food)
were avoided, and in the night a full dinner was not served. Beri CeTTiars generally abstained on special days called kiirtikay (when a star called kaartikay appeared), and amavaasay (new moon), and on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. A few Beri CeTTiars, and members of most of the jathi groups of second rank, observed kiirtikay and amavaasay but abstained on only two days of the week. The next-ranking jathi groups generally observed kiirtikay and amavaasay, and abstained on only one day of the week. Villiars and Harijans abstained on kiirtikay and amavaasay days. Other important oru poRutu days were Saturdays of the Tamil month PuraTaasi (September–October), and certain days in MargAli (December–January), which was the last month of the lunar year.

Special rituals related to death were performed on these regular oru poRutu days. The patri-collaterals (pangali) of dead persons observed certain days as oru poRutu days. Beri CeTTiars and second-ranking jathi groups gave greater importance to these rituals than did lower-ranking groups. Women observed oru poRutu days without fail, and most abstained during periods of menstruation, pregnancy or parturition.
Variation in the observance of abstinence and tabu occurred within as well as between jathi groups. Families with relatively large houses were able to perform the rituals more elaborately. Unless there were two rooms or an extra hut, a menstruating woman could not be separated, and unless the household unit was an extended or joint family, there would be no one to cook food if the woman was prohibited from entering the kitchen. Thus the poor of every jathi group paid less attention to these rules.

The presence and elaborateness of the section of the house called naTuviiTu indicated the importance attached to the abstinence and tabu. NaTuviiTu was known also as puuja aray ("propitiating room"). Brahmin jathi groups had the most elaborate naTuviiTu, followed by the Beri CeTTiar. The least elaborate naTuviiTu was found among fishermen in general, and particularly among Harijans and Villiar. Most of the members of these groups lived in small 6' x 8' huts, and if naTuviiTu existed at all, it was found in a corner of the room. Absence of naTuviiTu was common.
Brahmins kept ritual paraphrenalia in the naTu viiTu such as the pancapaatram (a vessel made of five metals, necessary for the performance of ancestor worship which was a central feature in a Brahmin household), and vessels containing sandal, red or white powder, water and spoon. Brahmins as well as others had pictures (oleograph paintings) or idols of deities, flowers, camphor and incense sticks. When a menstruating woman was in the house, or when other events considered to be polluting occurred, the pictures and idols were generally covered by a cloth stained with turmeric, which supposedly protected the deities from contamination. This practice was restricted to a few in every jathi group.

Every evening a lamp was lit in the naTu viiTu, which was waved in front of the deities to "invite and warm up" the deities; sometimes camphor was burned as well. This rite (tiipa-aaraatanay) was central to every propitiatory ceremony, and the fire was often waved in front of grinding stones and cooking utensils. The lamp was usually left burning the whole night to assure the continued presence of the family deity (kula teyvam).
On all ceremonial occasions, a special fire-waving rite was performed in the natu viiTu; usually all cooked food was symbolically offered to the deities by placing it in front (paTayppu) of the pictures or idols. The food, now god's food (prasaatam), was taken back and consumed by those present. The procedure of offering and consuming varied on different ceremonial occasions.

Propitiation in the natu viiTu constituted a bridge between beliefs in and practices of negative involvement, and beliefs in and practices of spirit mediation and spirit exorcism. Pictures and idols of Brahmanical deities and family deities (kula teyvam) were kept in the natu viiTu. Sometimes the family deity was a Brahmanical deity, but in other cases the family deity was either an Amman (mother goddess) or a spirit, in which case pictures were seldom included in the natu viiTu. In any case, propitiation of the family deity, which was the central aspect of worship in natu viiTu, included propitiation of Brahmanical deities. All purificatory rites involving the services of a Brahmin priest were performed in the natu viiTu. Thus, Brahmanical supernaturalism as well as spirit
participation and manipulation of spirits were manifested in the natu viitū. All the rites involving the invocation of the family deity began in the natu viitū, and possession by the family deity was a common feature in these rites.

b. Spirit Participation: Possession, Divination, Exorcism and Propitiation:

At certain times of the year, the idol of the Amman (mother goddess) was taken from the temple and carried around the village (uur valam). All other rites related to the Amman and the spirits were conducted either by non-Brahmin priests (pantāram) or by the devotees themselves. The non-Brahmin priests sustained themselves by performing these rites, by doing other jobs, or by utilizing the collections of the temple. Shamans (mediums) of the Ammans (mother goddesses) and spirits received no income for their religious services. There was no Tamil word for shaman: the villager referred to him as avarukku caami varum ("Deity comes to him"), or as avarukku muni irangum ("spirit will descend on him").

There were male and female shamans, and public and private shamans. On all ceremonial occasions, the Ammans
descended on the public shamans of Amman temples. The Ammans could also be invoked on other occasions. Public shamans were attached to specific Ammans. Pulicat proper had shamans from the Mutaliaar and Vanniar jathi groups, and each was attached to a particular Amman temple in the village. Shamans of the Amman temples in the hamlets were members of the jathi groups of the hamlets.

When a person showed signs that an Amman or a spirit was using him as a medium or vehicle, the community confirmed him as a shaman by either piercing his tongue (naakku alaku) or by pouring hot oil on his palm (puu alaku) in special initiation ceremonies. Shamans divined causes of sickness and other difficulties of persons or of the village, exorcised demons, and prescribed the ritual details related to the ceremonies involving the Ammans or spirits. When possessed, they had no identity distinctive from that of the deity or spirit, and their prescriptions were the prescriptions of the deity or spirit.

There were also private mediums or shamans of the family deity (kula teyvam). The family deity could be Ammans, godlings, spirits of dead magicians (muni) and
spirits of persons who met with untimely death. A member of the household usually functioned as the medium of the family deity. The deity could use several mediums, although it would possess only one at a time. When spirits of dead relatives were solicited to function as family deities or guardians of the household, special ceremonies were held with the aid of shamans to invoke the Ammans and other recognized spirits. If the solicited spirit consented to accept one of the living relatives as the medium, the medium swallowed burning camphor or poured hot oil on his palm. All familial ceremonies were conducted only with the permission of the family deity, as conveyed through the shaman.

Spirits of the muni class, Amman deities, and wandering spirits of those who committed suicide or had been murdered (peey) were reputed to have the power to possess and cause harm. On such occasions, the public or private shamans divined the identity of the possessor and the reason for the possession. Special propitiatory ceremonies, as prescribed by the shaman when in a state of possession, were held to propitiate the possessor. When these ceremonies proved ineffective, professional exorcists called mantraaarun were consulted.
The aetiology of particular Ammans and muni spirits was known to the villager. Cholera and smallpox epidemics were attributed to particular Ammans. When their identity was divined through the shaman, a temple was built as a propitiatory device. When a death was attributed to an Amman or a muni, a temple was built to appease the Amman, or special rituals were performed under the peepul, palm or margosa tree that was considered to be the abode of the muni. At times, a magician's aid was sought to control a muni, and iron-nailed wooden sandals were kept under the trees preventing the muni from alighting from the trees. On ritual occasions when the shaman became the medium of the muni, he wore the iron-nailed wooden sandals, and the muni moved about and was appeased through the shaman.

A number of diseases were attributed to possession. Amulets called billay were tied around the neck, waist or arm to ward off possession and attacks by the Ammans and spirits. In many Hindu, Christian and Muslim households, brass plates with Koranic inscriptions were hung on the wall or nailed on the doors to protect the homes from spirits. No one from within the village or the
hamlets was ever accused of sorcery; but villagers feared sorcery by outsiders. Blood sacrifices for certain spirits were occasionally done through the aid of a magician from outside the village, but supernatural assistance was secured mainly through known shamans of particular Ammans or spirits in the village.

Diseases believed to have been caused by the Ammans were seldom treated by medicine. Smallpox was known as ammay vilayatukiraL ("mother-goddess is playing"), or as ammay uuttirukkal ("mother-goddess has poured"). Margosa leaves, considered sacred in Amman worship, were placed on and around the sick person. Those attending the sick were required to take a ritual bath, wear clear costumes and abstain from sex. Mumps were called ammay kattirukkiraL ("mother-goddess has settled"), and a paste of margosa leaves was applied. No other treatment was given.

Religious Adaptations

The activities of the Dravidian movement altered the villager's relationship with Brahmanical supernatualism, but not with village supernaturalism. The
congruence between greater politico-economic power and Brahmanical supernaturalism became less noticeable than before.

The ideology of the movement repudiated Brahmanical rituals, and the leaders of the movement denounced Brahmanical myths. The movement encouraged rationalist thinking and discussions among the youth. Thus the movement was identified as an atheistic organization.

But the movement never openly repudiated the village myths and the principles of spirit participation and manipulation of spirits. Further, the movement never denounced the worship of Muruga and Amman, as both of these deities were regarded as primordial to the Tamil. Muruga and Amman worship differed from Brahmanical supernaturalism as the deities were conceived by the villager to be participants in the social life of the village. For example, the deities "possessed" the devotees.

When the supporters of the movement spoke against religious beliefs, they spoke against Brahmanical deities and against the principle of negative involvement which was central to Brahmanical supernaturalism. The only persons who were outraged by the denouncement of
Brahmanical supernaturalism were the economically powerful Beri CeTTiars, as they associated themselves with Brahmanical supernaturalism more closely than did the other jathi groups. To the poor jathi groups, the principle of negative involvement and Brahmanical myths were vague ideas which did not have direct implication in their lives. The jathi groups fought among each other over ceremonial privileges, very much as the Bebedel and Rengen Muslims asserted their rights on different ceremonial occasions. None of the groups except the Villiar Harijan accepted a status lower than another group on the basis of such privileges, but when the economic status went up there was a general acceptance of a group's higher status. The poor jathi groups were mostly concerned with the principles of spirit participation and spirit manipulation, and these principles were not denounced by the supporters of the movement.

Even the youth who were actively engaged in the activities of the movement did not doubt the validity of the principles of spirit participation and spirit manipulation. They did not discard the naTu viiTu worship, and did not revolt against the employment of
Brahmin priests during the purificatory ceremonies of the household. But they stopped performing propitiatory ceremonies in the temples of deities identified as Brahmanical by the movement.

The existence of naTu viiTu, which served as the link between Brahmanical and village supernaturalism, was justified by a few supporters of the movement as symbolizing the sanctity (aruL) of the household. Some explained that it was essential for the welfare of the women of the household, and a few others indicated that they did not want to displease their parents and relatives by throwing the idols and pictures of deities away. The need for a guardian of the house was mentioned by some.

Due to causes unrelated to the activities of the movement, the temples in Pulicat proper dedicated to the Brahmanical deities had ceased to have regular worship (see Chapter 1). There was no Brahmanical temple in the hamlets. The newly founded Muruga temple in Pulicat proper became popular among all the jathi groups, although the temple was maintained by the Beri CeTTiars. Although the temple employed the services of Brahmin priests, and many of the ceremonies and festivals were of Brahmanical
orientation, Muruga worship was conceived by the
villager to be similar to Amman worship.

All the non-Brahmin jathi groups performed Tamil
(traditional) cyclical ceremonies, but the cyclical
ceremonies that had been oriented solely to Brahmanical
supernaturalism were performed only by a few persons,
most of whom were from Beri CeTTiar and Saliar jathi
groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Festival</th>
<th>Participation of Jathi groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Pongal; harvest festival</td>
<td>All jathi groups participated. Bogi rite was performed by a few of every group. Only the Brahmins performed the rite of ATitya puuja (sun worship). Cow rite was done by all with cattle. Kaanum rite was performed more vigorously by fishermen, particularly by the Harijan who sang and danced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Brahanical</td>
<td>Sivaratri</td>
<td>A few of every group stayed awake, but Beri CeTTiars gave more importance to the festival.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Brahanical</td>
<td>Karaday Nonbu</td>
<td>No non-Brahmin jathi group performed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Festival</td>
<td>Participation of Jathi groups</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Brahmanical</td>
<td>Sri Rama Navami</td>
<td>No non-Brahmin jathi group performed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Brahmanical</td>
<td>TharpaNam</td>
<td>No non-Brahmin jathi group performed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Brahmanical</td>
<td>Avani AviTTam</td>
<td>No non-Brahmin jathi group performed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July &amp; August</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>KuuR Uutum ViRa</td>
<td>An Amman festival performed with great elaboration in Makkunta Amman temple on five Sundays. All the non-Brahmin jathi groups participated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Brahmanical</td>
<td>Krishna Jayanti</td>
<td>A few of every jathi group performed it. Hindu PaTTanava of one hamlet performed the ceremony elaborately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Tamil and Brahmanical</td>
<td>Agni Utsavam</td>
<td>An Amman festival; only in DraupaTi Amman temples of Pulicat proper. Brahmanical myth was combined as the Amman was identified as DraupaTi, heroine of Mahaabaarata. Fire-walking rite was the main feature. Jathi groups of Pulicat participated on a left-hand, right-hand basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Brahmanical</td>
<td>Vinayakar Caturti</td>
<td>A few Saliar performed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Festival</td>
<td>Participation of Jathi groups</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>September Brahmanical &amp; Tamil</td>
<td>Mahayala Amavassy</td>
<td>Ancestor worship. A few of every jathi group except Harijans and Villiars performed it. Beri Cettiars, Mutaliars, Saliars and Vanniars gave more importance to its performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September Brahmanical &amp; Tamil</td>
<td>Navaraatri</td>
<td>Nine days festival of dolls. A few Beri Cettiars women performed it at home. Ammans were decorated and special lullaby rites were conducted for nine nights. Each night's expenses were borne by the person who performed the upayam (special invocation). All jathi groups participated. On the 9th day a rite called aayuta puuja (weapon rite) was performed by most Beri Cettiars, Saliars and Kammaalars. A few fishermen also conducted it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September Brahmanical &amp; Tamil</td>
<td>Saraswati puuja</td>
<td>Nine-day learning festival. Most Beri Cettiars and a few Saliars performed it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Festival</td>
<td>Participation of Jathi groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>September &amp;</td>
<td>Brahmanical &amp; Tamil</td>
<td>PuraTasi sankkiRamay</td>
<td>Special bajana rites (singing religious hymns) were conducted on 5 Saturdays. Expenses were borne by a person or group performing upayam (special invocation).</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Brahmanical</td>
<td>VaikunT Eekaateesi</td>
<td>A few of all jathi groups stayed awake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Brahmanical</td>
<td>DiipaavaLi</td>
<td>All the jathi groups participated by tathing ritually and eating well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October &amp;</td>
<td>Tamil &amp; Brahmanical</td>
<td>Skandapur-aanam</td>
<td>Six-day festival of Muruga in the temple maintained by Beri CeTTIars. All the jathi groups participated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Brahmanical</td>
<td>Naaga Caturti</td>
<td>Snake worship. A few Beri CeTTIar, Mutaliar and Saliar women performed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Brahmanical &amp; Tamil</td>
<td>Kaartikay Tiipam</td>
<td>Muruga worship. A few of all jathi groups performed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December &amp;</td>
<td>Brahmanical &amp; Tamil</td>
<td>Maargali Bajanay</td>
<td>Special rites were performed in all the Amman temples. Single religious hymns were undertaken in the hamlets. In Pulicat proper, a few from every group performed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Very elaborate annual festivals took place in the hamlets in honor of the Ammans. No time was fixed for these festivals. When a hamlet could afford to spend about $1,000, the ceremony was performed, and it was not uncommon for a year or two to be skipped. Apart from the annual Amman festival, Hindu PaTTanava, NaatTaar and Karayaar fishermen conducted a special annual ceremony called kanni joTi (virgin pairs). Propitiatory offering of fire was an important rite in this ceremony. The fire was carried by a shaman and dumped into the sea. Idols of the virgins and their "brothers" (aNNanmaar) were kept on the seashore. Each hamlet had a specific place for keeping the idols, and new idols were added every year.

Village supernaturalism, which had its authority in village myths, had been validated rather than repudiated by the process of Dravidianization (revitalization of Tamil culture). Those villagers who contemplated religious beliefs became aware that the ancient Tamil worshipped heroes (similar to the worship of spirits), and that worship of Amman (mother-goddess) was an ancient practice among the Tamil. The deity Muruga was also conceived as a Tamil deity.
Divination and exorcism were considered essential for the good life of the village. Dravidianization did not alter these beliefs. Even though allopathic and native systems of medicines such as ayurvedic, sitta and unani were available to the villager, divination and exorcism were important techniques of curing ills. Snake and insect bites, fish stings, and a variety of other ills were cured by exorcists of Pulicat proper and of the hamlets. Very few took medical aid for smallpox and mumps, and the villager tried to avoid the vaccinator whenever possible. The supporters of the movement differed little from others in these beliefs and practices.

In Chapter 1, reference was made to the process of occupational ritualization which occurred in Tamil culture as a result of its coming into contact with Brahmanical supernaturalism. During the past twenty years, a progressive de-ritualization of occupations occurred in the village. Thus, fishing had become an occupation similar to weaving or basket-making. A few Vanniar and Mutaliar jathi groups took up employment as laborers in fishing operations of the PaTTanava fishermen.
The direct involvement of a number of jathi groups in fishing was not thought to have a polluting effect on them.

However, Harijan fishermen were considered unclean by the jathi groups in Pulicat proper, and by the fishermen belonging to other jathi groups. Although Harijans, Villiers, NaatTaars and PaTTanava engaged in the same occupation of fishing, and did not exhibit much difference in the observance of Brahmanical supernaturalism, only the Harijans were considered to be both ritually and hygienically unclean. Only those supporters of the movement (belonging to different jathi groups) who had ceased to give importance to abstinence and tabus had freer social intercourse with Harijans. Harijans had access to their homes.
Chapter 6

Status and Values

Economic and political power, and non-performance of vocations considered ritually polluting, generally symbolized that a jathi group had high status. However, congruence between economic and political power and ritual status was never absolute. The Beri CeTTiar had economic power and high ritual status, but had no direct political power in the village.

The economic and political status of the PaTTanava Hindu and Christian fishermen was slightly higher than that of Mutaliar, Vanniar, ITayar, Labbay, NaiTu, Saliar, Brahmin, Kanakkar, Kusavar, KammaaLar and PanTaaram, but these jathi groups had a higher social status than the PaTTanava Hindus and Christians because their traditional vocations were considered less polluting. A few Vanniar, Mutaliar and NaiTu were directly involved in fishing operations, but were not considered inferior to the fishermen because their
traditional vocations were considered pure. They continued to claim the status associated with pure vocations, even though they engaged in an impure vocation.

The political status of the Harijan was higher than that of many other jathi groups, but the Harijan had the lowest social status. In the performance of Brahmanical rituals, the Harijan differed little from the Villiar, but the Villiar had a higher ritual status and thus a higher social status than the Harijan.

The social status of Labbay Muslims and the Brahmins was similar to that of the economically dominant Beri CeTTiar, although their economic and political power was much lower than that of the Beri CeTTiar. The priestly privilege of the Labbay and Brahmins affected the status assigned them by other jathi groups. The economic status of the Rengan and Bebedel Muslims was low, but their political status was much higher than the Labbay and most other jathi groups; yet they held a social status much lower than the Labbay and most Hindu jathi groups.

The economic and political status of Hindu PaTTanava and Christian PaTTanava was similar, and both held the
same social status although their religious affiliation 
was different. Both jathi groups identified themselves 
by the same jathi group name and title.

Most jathi groups had special jathi group titles 
(paTTam) that indicated their own conception of their 
status. This status was seldom acknowledged by other 
jathi groups if the jathi group claiming the title did 
not possess economic power commensurate with the title.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jathi group name</th>
<th>Jathi group title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu PaTTanava fishermen</td>
<td>CeTTiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian PaTTanava fishermen</td>
<td>CeTTiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PaTTu and PaTma Saliar</td>
<td>CeTTiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karyaar fishermen</td>
<td>Mutaliar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITayar (herdsmen)</td>
<td>NaiTu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanniar (cultivators)</td>
<td>Naayakkar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These titles were used by the members of jathi 
groups to identify themselves. Members of jathi groups 
were referred to in private by jathi group name, but 
titles were used as terms of address, depending on the 
relative economic and political power of the jathi group, 
and particularly on the power of the persons involved 
in the interaction.
There were five jathi groups with the title "CeTTiar." Only the Beri CeTTiar had "CeTTiar as their jathi group name. Some jathi groups substituted jathi group names which they thought to be more prestigious: Kusavar (potter) identified themselves as "uTayar"; AmbaTTar (barber) identified themselves as "naavitar."

Two jathi groups identified themselves, and were identified by other jathi groups, by prestigious jathi group names: SempaTavar fishermen were known as NaaTTaar; smiths (such as Aasaari, Kollan and Taccan) were always referred to as KammaaLar.

The title "mutaliar" was used in a complex way. The Karayaar fishermen used the term as a title but were known primarily by their jathi group name "Karayaar."

Three other jathi groups used the title "mutaliar" as a jathi group name. Certain terms, affixed as adjectives, indicated a vocation or place of origin. The ancestors of one jathi group were temple prostitutes and dancers. They had the name NaTTuva (indicating the occupation of dancing) along with the name Mutaliar. Another jathi group was called Ponneri Mutaliar since the group had migrated from a place called Ponneri. A
third jathi group was known after the place name Karaykaadu.

Mutaliars, ITayars and Vanniars had a system of concubinage (kuuttiaar), in which mobility of persons from one jathi group to another occurred. Concubinage mobility was not restricted to these three jathi groups alone, but was generally restricted to the jathi groups which held comparable social statuses. Saliars and Balija NaiTuS were also involved to a limited extent. Children of concubinage alliances took the jathi group name and jathi group title of the parent whose jathi group name and jathi group title were considered superior. Thus when a Mutaliar was involved in an alliance, the child took the Mutaliar jathi group name and title; but if the alliance was between a Balija NaiTu and a Vanniar the child took the jathi group name Balija NaiTu. Beri CeTTiars did not permit their jathi group name to pass to the child of a concubinage alliance.

Disapproval of concubinage was expressed when the jathi groups of the couple severed ceremonial links with the couple, but no other sanctions were applied. The child's status was disputed only when a parent lived with
his or her jathi group and claimed the jathi group name and title of another jathi group.

Members of each jathi group perpetuated the belief that the moral standards and values of the jathi group were distinctive, and that these standards and values were special privileges that had to be validated on ceremonial occasions. The only jathi group that did not have such a specific attitude about its privileges was the Harijan. Only the Harijan had no overt claims to high status. Bebedel and Rengen Muslims, who acknowledged the ritual supremacy of the Labbay Muslims, believed in distinctive privileges and prerogatives. The crisis ceremonies of the Rengen and Bebedel Muslims resembled Hindu ceremonies more than Labbay ceremonies. Christian PaTTanava performed all the crisis ceremonies of the Hindus, but had the idol or picture of the Virgin Mary instead of the Hindu deities.

Separateness of jathi groups in matters of crisis ceremonies and commensality helped to sustain the belief in distinctive moral standards and values. All Hindu jathi groups except the Harijan, Villiar and Kammaal, employed the services of Brahmins in specific rites during
marriage and mortuary ceremonies, but every jathí group had a particular method of conducting the ceremonies. Commensality (panti poojnam) was usually restricted to those within the jathí group, but jathí groups such as Mutaliar, Balija NaiTu, ITayar, Kusavar, NaaTaar, AmbaTTar and Vanniar occasionally participated in commensality.

Perpetuation of such a distinctiveness was aided, in some instances, by the existence of a distinctive ethos that accompanied an occupation. Beri CeTTiar boys grew up to become money-lenders and traders, and thus were immune to the suffering of the poor; an ethic of investment and conservatism was seen in their attitudes toward sex, food, dress, talk, religion and politics. Saliar boys who were taught to become weavers exhibited a sense of humor; through their long hours of talk with their partners in weaving, a special idiom was developed and expressed in their use of puns, nicknames and discussion of sex. Sons of fishermen faced unpredictability early in life; fishing was a gamble, full of risk and uncertainty. The fishermen showed extreme forms of emotional behavior. When they were not drunk, which was
rare, cooperation among themselves and affection toward their wives and children were standard. They sang ribald songs (ambaa paaTTu) which they improvised, and which referred to the absurd. When they were drunk they became violent and dangerous even to their children and wives, and they frequently had sexual fantasies and delusions of grandeur. In the Harijan fishing hamlet, each person had a nickname, and a feeling of community spirit prevailed when the men were not drunk, but fist fights and sexual aggression occurred when they were drunk, which was almost every day. The Labbay Muslims, who had become impoverished due to the changes in the economy of Pulicat, dreamed about the past and future; most of them depended on the women of the household who made baskets for sale and bought food commodities. They exhibited a childish pride in their spirituality, and justified their laziness and inaction by praying in the mosques for long hours.

The artisan jathi groups such as Kusavar (potter), ambaTTar (barber) and Kammaalar (smith) came into frequent contact with all the jathi groups, and members of Mutaliar, Vanniar, NaaTaar, ITayar, Balija NaiTu, Rengan
and Bebedel jathi groups engaged in different occupations; thus there was great variation in their emotional attitudes.

Despite a jathi group's special idiom and ethos, the village as a whole had a common idiom and ethos. Of the 120 aphorisms or proverbs which I collected in the village, over 75% were known and often used by members of all the jathi groups. These aphorisms, common to all inhabitants of Tamil country, were moral statements and statements of affect, in which particular kinds of beliefs and behavior were stereotyped as either good or bad. The villager was fond of pronouncing these proverbs at appropriate moments of interaction. No one doubted the validity of the proverbs, but occasionally someone would dispute their relevance to a particular situation.

Sameness in the value orientation of the different jathi groups (excluding Labbay Muslims) was noticeable in their performance of and belief in certain ceremonies. (In the following paragraphs, a brief description of all the rites connected with a person's life history is given in order to illustrate the above statement.)
Ideally, a couple were supposed to have intercourse only when fully dressed, and to take a ritual bath the following morning and wash their clothes. The affluent performed a special ceremony for a pregnant woman, called *vaLaykaappu*, usually in the seventh month. On this occasion, the women wore several glass bangles "to amuse the fetus with the sound of jingling." A rite of waving a pot which contained a red-colored watery mixture of lime and turmeric (*aalam*) was performed, and the liquid was placed on the forehead of the pregnant woman by relatives and well-wishers. In the seventh month or the ninth month of pregnancy, a special ceremony called *ciimantam* was performed. The woman was seated on a dais in the central place of the house, and *aalam* was waved in front of her. On that day the woman was usually returned to her mother's house, where the child was to be delivered.

A mid-wife or an elderly relative attended the child-birth. For the first three days, the child was usually given only sugar water, but if the child was found very weak a lactating kinswoman or the mother suckled the child. The mother was given a concoction of various herbs
called *kaaya masaala* every day, and she was given a ritual bath on the fifth day. She consumed regular food from that day on, and was regularly given a mixture of asofoetida (*perunkaayam*) and palm candy (*panankarkankanTu*). For the first three months, she was permitted to have only the food that was considered "hot," and ideally she was required to abstain from sexual intercourse during this period.

A naming ceremony was performed in the first month, when the father lifted the child and uttered its name before handing it back to the mother. There was no restriction on the frequency of breast-feeding; the child was fed when it was restless. At the end of one year, the mother applied a paste of yellow gram, cayenne or morgosa leaves to her nipples, or tied the nipples with a string to discourage the child from breast-feeding. If there were no later child, weaning occurred at the age of two. Toilet training was done by coaxing and teasing. By the time a child was three, he was expected to be toilet trained.

Before the child reached the age of seven, an ear-piercing ceremony was conducted by all the non-Brahmin
jathi groups. Elaborate arrangements were made by the child's ammangan (maternal uncle). A seance with the family deity was usually held to secure the deity's approval. All the mother's consanguineal relatives (i.e., father's affinal relatives, or sampanti) were required to offer gifts (moy). Hair was shaved from the head by a special barber, and piercing was done by a ritual goldsmith. Brahmin priest was not required in this ceremony.

An elaborate female initiation ceremony was performed by all the non-Brahmin jathi groups. The girl was usually isolated for seven, nine or eleven days. The ammangan (mother's brother) bore all the expenses connected with the purificatory rites for her acceptance into the household. A seance with the family deity was held, and a special aalam rite for the girl was performed. Brahmin priest was not required in this ceremony. However, the services of a Brahmin priest were secured occasionally by every jathi group except KammaLar, Villiar and Harijan.

Brahmin jathi groups performed a male initiation rite called upanayanam, at which time a thread was worn
by the boy as a mark of his becoming a "twice-born" and was permitted to acquire secret formulae of the Brahmanical tradition.

Among non-Brahmins, preferential mates were cross-cousins, and the marriage was generally performed at the bridegroom's residence. Marriage was preceded by a ceremony called niccavaartam, at which time the terms of exchange of gifts for the bride and groom were decided. Three, five or seven days before the marriage ceremony, a long pole (pantal kaal) was planted, and special rites were performed. On the day preceding marriage, special rites called nalangu were performed which involved ritual bathing, particularly of the bridegroom. Ammaangan (maternal uncle) and attay (paternal aunt) had special privileges in this rite. Beri CeTTiar and Saliar grooms donned a thread as a mark of jathi privilege before the marriage rite. As the final rite of the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom tied a turmeric-stained string around the bride's neck. With the exception of KammaalLar, Villiar and Harijan, all jathi groups employed a Brahmin priest for the marriage ceremony.
Both burial and cremation occurred. Adults were usually cremated. Mortuary rites called punniattanam or kaariam were usually performed on the 1st, 7th, 11th and 16th day after death. A Brahmin priest was invited by all the jathi groups except Kammaalari, Villiar and Harijan to purify the house.

Christians differed from the non-Brahmin jathi groups only by employing the Christian priest to officiate over the ceremonies, and by having a naming ceremony in which a god-mother had special responsibility for the child. The dead were always buried.

Rengan and Bebedel Muslims had adapted most of the Hindu rites, but performed the Muslim ceremonies also, and employed the Labbay priests. The most characteristic adaptation of a Hindu rite by the Rengan and Bebedel Muslims was the performance of the female initiation rite, which the Labbay did not give much importance.

The Labbay Muslims gave great importance to reading scripture and to having special prayers. They also gave special significance to the process of eating together from a common pot (sahan). The Labbay placed great value on their women having black teeth, which they
acquired by rubbing on them a black powder called 
tasanaa. Marutani, a red substance taken from leaves, 
was applied to beautify the nails and palms, a practice 
performed by Hindus and Christians as well.

The Labbay had an elaborate naming ceremony. Soon 
after the child was washed, a priest or elder touched 
the ears and forehead of the child and recited scriptures 
before pronouncing the names of the saints selected by 
the family. The child's name of reference and address 
was, however, given on the seventh day. Ear-piercing 
ceremony was restricted to females. An elaborate initia-
tion rite called katanaa, or sunnattu (cutting) kalyanam 
(marriage) was performed for boys, during which the fore-
skin of the penis was removed. Marriage was a contract 
which the kaazi (Muslim registrar) confirmed, and divorce 
was permitted with the approval of the kaazi. A man was 
required to pay a dowry (mahar), and the marriage rite 
(nikka) was held in the bride's house. The father of the 
bride represented her in the marriage rite, and either 
the mother or the sister of the groom represented the 
bridegroom. Labbays buried their dead within the com-
pound surrounding the mosque. The dead of the Rengen and 
Bebedel Muslims were buried in a Muslim cemetery.
Status and Value Adaptations

Ability to participate in the state's political activities without having high economic or ritual status was made possible through the activities of the Dravidian movement. Before the Dravidian movement, those who engaged in the state's political activities were jathi groups which had greater political and economic power in the village. The activities of the Dravidian movement facilitated the emergence of politically articulate young men from jathi groups with low status. In turn, the young men acquired higher status. Ability to speak well, and contact with political leaders in the regional and state capitols, became important criteria for evaluation of status.

Rituals of the jathi groups had become less important as criteria for status evaluation. The Harijan fishermen strove to acquire western or modern symbols such as wrist watches and trousers, and did not try to secure the services of a Brahmin priest. The youth of the Harijan hamlet tried to reform the alcoholics of the hamlet, and in some instances functioned as the guardians of morality. The usual procedure was to write down the
names of those who indulged in pre- and extra-marital sexual acts on the walls of the village temple, and convene the pancaayat to punish the offenders.

Through the activities of the Dravidian movement in the village, access to literature published by the leaders of the movement, and the Tamil cinema, the villager became familiar with the ideals of the ancient Tamil. These ideals were not new to the villager, but many of them had been fused with Brahmanical beliefs and rituals. The movement belittled the Brahmanical beliefs and rituals, and emphasized the Tamil values. Thus, certain themes of the Tamil such as female chastity and the deification of heroes and mothers became separated from the Brahmanical forms, and were made more relevant to the villager.

Much of the literature of the movement contained proverbs and aphorisms which the villager had often used in his day-to-day social intercourse. The villager came to know through the movement that many of the aphorisms he used were in fact moral statements of ancient Tamil sages, particularly of TiruvaLLuvar, the author of Tirukkural. (See Chapters 1 and 2 of Part I, and Chapter 2 of Part II.)
The government's educational system was a main disseminator of Tamil values. In the grade schools, emphasis was placed on learning ancient Tamil poetry and aphorisms. Boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 12 became familiar with ethical principles expounded in ancient Tamil poetry such as aatticcuuTi, ulakaniiti and konray veentan. Thus, the writings and statements of the leaders of the movement did not convey anything new to the student, but the ideals became relevant to him.

The Tamil value-orientation of the female chastity-mother complex was reinforced. Non-Brahmin jathi groups (with the exception of Labbay Muslims) performed very elaborate female initiation rites. The services of a Brahmin priest were seldom secured for these rites. Great value was placed on female chastity by all the non-Brahmin jathi groups, and the mother was deified. As indicated in Chapter 5 of Part II, non-Brahmin jathi groups gave greater importance to the worship of Amman (mother-goddess) than the worship of Brahmanical deities.
PART III: DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 1

The Dravidian Movement in the Tamil Village

Early in the 20th century, in the first phase of the Dravidian movement, the leaders and followers of the movement were wealthy non-Brahmins who were opposed to the economic and political power of Brahmins. The ritual supremacy of Brahmins was repudiated, and the Sanskritric literary tradition of Brahmins was condemned. Wealthy non-Brahmins resented the Brahmins mainly because the former were afraid that Brahmins would compete for and acquire more economic and political power. Thus, wealthy non-Brahmin politicians supported the British against the Brahmins.

The second phase of the movement was heralded by Periyar's Self-Respect Union, which was a movement against Brahmanical Hinduism and the Brahmanical model of social relationships. He had the support of
college-educated non-Brahmins and other non-Brahmin scholars. The non-Brahmin faculty and students of Universities, where the Tamil literary tradition was revived, were able exponents of the ideology of the Dravidian movement. However, Periyar's followers were mostly members of the subordinate non-Brahmin jathi groups living in urban centers.

The movement was slow in taking root in the village, where the authority of the dominant jathi groups was undisputed, and subordinate jathi groups remained subservient. The dominant jathi groups found in the Brahmanical model an ideal system for retaining their authority and high social status, and they did not accept Periyar's repudiation of Brahmanical Hinduism. There was very little activity of the movement in the villages although many educated young members of the dominant jathi groups came under the influence of Periyar's "rationalist" philosophy and the art of public speaking (MeeTay peeccu).

Changes in the economic and educational systems following urbanization and industrialization resulted in a large number of young men from all the jathi groups
becoming relatively free from the traditional controls of the village. Further, the village was drawn closer to the market economy of the state, and many of the symbiotic ties between the different jathi groups were loosened. The traditional tutorial schools (TiNNay PaLLikkuuuTam) open only to the children of dominant jathi groups were replaced by government-aided grade schools, and education was open to most boys and girls. In some instances, the sons of dominant jathi groups went to urban centers for higher education, and discarded their traditional village vocations. Land tenancy acts passed by the government weakened the strangle-hold of the landlords, and the system of serfdom (paNNayaaL-paNNayaar) was altered. All these changes led to a lessening of effect between the jathi groups, and the various subordinate jathi groups became conscious of their rights. Thus in the 40's a large number of youths were receptive to the Dravidian movement. The movement was in its third phase at this time.

Pulicat village came under the influence of the movement during this third phase. Pulicat was a trading village with a sizeable Christian and Muslim population,
but was in general representative of other Tamil villages. In the 40's there were young men in every jathi group who were dissatisfied with the traditional authority. Several had acquired education in the grade schools in Pulicat, and some in the neighboring towns. A few had found jobs in the city. All of these young men were attracted to the ideology of the Dravidian movement. The dominant jathi group, the Beri CeTTiar, opposed the movement, although a few non-conformists from their community (who were educated or had worked in the towns) were leaders of the movement.

The fishermen, through their close links with the market economy, had become economically more powerful than they had been in the early part of the 20th century, but were still assigned a low social status by other jathi groups, especially by the Beri CeTTiar. A large number of fishermen became supporters of the Dravidian movement.

Rengan and Bebedel Muslims had a relatively high political status, but low social status. They resented the Labbay Muslim's ritual supremacy, and the fact that they had to bury their dead in a cemetery separate from
the Labbay. They declined to be subservient to the Beri CeTTiar, and were often physically aggressive toward them. Most of the earliest supporters of the movement were the Rengen and Bebedel Muslims.

Grade-school teachers played a significant role in establishing the Dravidian movement in the villages. A large percentage of these teachers were ardent supporters of the movement since the early phases of the movement. Most of the teachers were literate only in Tamil. They became teachers after only 9 or 11 years of schooling, generally in villages remote from theirs, and their status in the village was often low. Many were members of low-ranking jathi groups. Only a few had cordial relationships with the traditional elders of the village, and some lived in the village only because they could depend on the support of a village faction. Supervisory officials of the educational and other departments of the government usually treated them with disrespect and contempt. Thus, they perceived themselves as harassed on all sides: in the village, they were aliens of low status; they were not recognized as important officials by the government.
The only avenue for enhancing their status lay in identifying themselves with the Tamil literary tradition. The Dravidian movement, with its emphasis on Tamil learning and equality, undoubtedly had a great appeal to the grade-school teachers. Inside and outside the class rooms, they extolled the glorious past of the Tamil, elaborated on the high status of the Tamil poets of the ancient times, and idolized the leaders of the Dravidian movement. The teachers circulated among themselves and among the educated young men of the village the books and journals published by the leaders of the movement. They strove to make literacy in ancient Tamil literature a symbol of high status, and met with some success. When the Congress (all-India political party) was the ruling party in Tamil Nadu, the teachers secretly participated in the activities of the movement, often using pseudonyms and providing leadership (see Chapter 2 of Part II). After the DMK was voted to political power in Tamil Nadu, a few teachers were disillusioned at the slow pace of social reform, but the majority continued to support the movement.
The following statement, made by a politician, correctly assesses the grade-school teacher's role in establishing the Dravidian movement in the Tamil village.

I can say one thing here. It is that by spreading education we of the Congress Party unknowingly gave to the DMK 1,500,000 full-time paid workers in the form of elementary school teachers. They have all been DMK enthusiasts. How they were attracted to the DMK baffles me for as against 15 rupees a month plus absolute insecurity 20 years ago for an elementary school teacher, it is today more than 100 rupees a month with complete security of service. They have poisoned the minds of the people in favour of the DMK. (Cited by Ramanujam 1967: 16.)

In the 20 villages in the vicinity of Pulicat which I visited, I found that the conditions preceding the establishment of the movement were similar to those found in Pulicat. Students and those who had close contact with urban centers propagated the message of the Dravidian movement. A majority of grade-school teachers were actively involved although many shunned publicity; they were careful not to antagonize the dominant jathi groups opposed to the movement.

To the young men who were relatively free from the control of the traditional elders, and who were either affluent or had access to jobs outside the villages, the
movement provided a new identity, and an effective channel to express their hostility against the traditional elders. They found support among the poor, and thus were able to establish themselves as leaders of the village. They declared themselves to be atheists, and were critical of Brahmanical Hinduism. But their belief in Amman worship and in the sanctity of the propitiating room in the house (natu viitū) where familial rituals were conducted were not altered. Only a very small percentage of the founder-leaders of the movement in the villages had ceased to employ the services of the Brahmin priest. These had come into contact with the movement in its earlier phase when Periyar was the sole leader, when inter-jathi marriages and the performance of rituals without a Brahmin priest were emphasized.

In the fourth phase of the movement, the followers of the movement in the village were mostly of jathi groups which had openly disputed the status of the dominant jathi groups, and whose economic, political and ritual statuses were incongruent. The very poor in the villages were loyal to the dominant group. Whatever support they gave to the movement was covert.
In the fifth phase of the movement, support came from all the jathi groups. Factionalism within the jathi groups was usually the causal factor which led a section of the jathi group to support the movement. In many villages, the traditional leaders also began supporting the movement. The Dravidian Advancement Association, or the DMK, was identified primarily as a political party. The movement's ideology of anti-Brahmanism was kept alive mainly by the Dravidian Association (TiraviTaKaRagam).

The DMK identified itself as the poor man's party, but it attempted to secure the support of all the jathi groups in order to win the political elections, and thus ceased to make overt statements against Brahmanical Hinduism in the villages. Leaders of the DMK, however, emphasized their opposition to capitalism in all the public speeches. The DMK's main political platform was cultural nationalism: leaders and members emphasized the moral principles found in the ancient Tamil texts, quoted extensively from the ancient Tamil epics and from TirukkuRai (book of aphorisms written probably in the 1st century), and stressed rejuvenation of Tamil
language and culture (TamiRin marumalarcci and TamiRar vaaRvil marumalarcci).

Most villages, including Pulicat, came into direct contact only with the DMK. The Dravidian Association (TiraviTa KaRagam) continued to function as a very effective "wing" of the movement in the urban centers. Its followers were largely the semi-literate urban masses, but the core of the Association was composed of highly educated and wealthy men who identified themselves as "rationalists."

Not all villages came under the influence of the movement at the same time. The phases of the movement varied from village to village. In remote villages, the movement's message was received later than in the villages near urban centers. Thus in many villages the movement arrived only when it was in its fifth phase. However, the causal conditions that facilitated the establishment and the development of the movement were similar in all the villages.

In the three villages in Coimbatore district which I studied briefly, the movement began when it was in its fifth phase, in contrast with the villages in
Chingleput district, where the movement started in the fourth phase.

In one village, the dominant jathi group was KavunTar. Although a numerical minority, they owned most of the agricultural land where millets, cotton, rice, sugar-cane, vegetables, and other crops were cultivated. There were four other jathi groups in the village: Saatu Cettiar, whose main occupation was seasoning of tobacco; Boer and Kongu Cettiar, who performed odd jobs, and Cakkiliiar, who were serfs (panNavaal) of the KavunTar. Even though the Saatu Cettiar practiced Brahmanical customs and had a numerical majority in the village, they had lower social status than the KavunTar. The DMK was established in the village through the efforts of two KavunTars who were considered non-conformists by the villagers. But most of the supporters were from the Saatu Cettiar jathi group; the KavunTar were generally opposed to the movement. Cakkiliiar, Boer and Kongu Cettiar gave support secretly.

In the second village, the DMK was established by a college-educated son of the traditional leader of the dominant jathi group. The dominant group was called
Vokli-KavuTar. The other groups were Kurumba-KavuTar, Cakkiliar, Parayar and Valayar; support for the movement came from these four jathi groups. This village had a tribal population called IruLar which was dependent on the Vokli-KavuTar for loans, just as the fishermen depended on the Beri CeTTiar in Pulicat. The IruLar cultivated millets on the hills and collected mountain honey. They considered themselves ritually superior to all other jathi groups except the Vokli-KavuTar. The DMK was established among them by a person who was at odds with the traditional authority and the Congress government; once established, a majority of the IruLar supported the movement.

In the third village, the dominant jathi group, the Lingayat, were opposed to the movement. Their opposition to the movement had an external cause in that they favored the merger of the village with Mysore State, where the Lingayat constituted the majority. On the other hand, the Kurumba-KavuTar, who spoke the same language (Kannada) as the Lingayat but had a lower social status, supported the movement. The Muslims of the village also gave their support to the movement.
Much of what was said about the adaptations in the economic, political, religious and status relationships in Pulicat also applies to the twenty neighboring villages of Pulicat and the three villages in Coimbatore district. Jathi groups which had low economic and social status participated more in political activities. Young men and non-conformists who were deprived of political leadership in the traditional setting found in the movement a means to establish themselves as respectable guardians of Tamil language and culture. Food tabus and other Brahmanical ritual practices found less emphasis than before the establishment of the movement. The principal form of transcendental entertainment was the Tamil cinema. Younger persons spoke what is regarded as better Tamil, and were more familiar with ancient Tamil literature.

In other parts of Tamil territory, only two districts (Tirunelvelly and Kaniyakumari), differed markedly from the general pattern described for the emergence and development of the Dravidian movement in the village. These two districts had come under the influence of Christianity more than had the other
districts in the Tamil territory. The dominant jathi group in many villages in these districts were either Christian or Hindu NaaTaars who, although they had adopted the Dravidian ideology, identified themselves generally with the Congress (all-India party) because a jathi member of theirs was a top-ranking leader in the Congress. In recent times, the NaaTaars have been drawn into the movement mainly through the efforts of a NaaTaar leader who had originally headed an association called Naam TamiRar (We Tamils), which merged with the DMK during the 1967 general elections. KanniYakumari district had a unique history in that it was part of a princely state ruled by a Malayalam-speaking Naayar king until 1956, when it was annexed with the state of Tamil Nadu. The Tamil of KanniYakumari had little direct contact with the leaders of the Dravidian movement when the movement was in its earlier phases.

As indicated earlier, Tamil villages came under the influence of the Dravidian movement at different times and during different phases of the movement. However, the causal conditions which fostered the movement in the villages and, once the movement was established, the
progressive course or development of the movement in the villages were similar. The art of public-speaking (meeTay peecu) developed by the leaders of the Dravidian movement, and the Tamil cinema dominated by the leaders of the movement were two important factors which initially attracted the villager, particularly the young men, to the movement. The role of grade-school teachers and the literature published by the movement were two other factors which contributed to the growth of the movement. But, the conditions conducive to the acceptance of the Dravidian ideology existed before ideological acceptance. As subordinate jathi groups liberated themselves from the economic dependence on dominant jathi groups, they resented the hegemony of the dominant jathi groups. And, there were educated young men who were opposed to the traditional authority of elders. The movement was in its third phase when it began to gain support in the villages.

Periyar, the founder-leader of the Self-Respect Union and the Dravidian Association (TiraviTa KaRagam), was the undisputed charismatic leader of the movement during its second and third phases. The founding of the
DMK by Periyar's chief lieutenant, Aringar Annadurai, marked the fourth phase of the movement. The DMK underplayed its attack on Brahmins and associated itself mostly with the poor; it expressed hostility against northern Indians and the Hindi language similar to that of the Dravidian Association, and both associations promised formation of a separate nation-state for Dravidians. (Opposition to Hindi was channelled mainly by the DMK. In 1965, when Hindi was made the official language of India the Tamil reacted violently; a few young men lost their lives through immolating themselves and through police repression. People of most villages, particularly the young, participated in anti-Hindi demonstrations. The DMK became very popular among the Tamil, and many villagers conceived of the DMK as the "true defender of Tamil language and culture.")

Organizational units of the DMK were established in a number of villages. The Dravidian Association confined its activities largely to urban centers. Leadership of DMK units in villages were mostly in the hands of young men from the dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups, but support for the units came mainly from the subordinate
jathi groups. Elders of the village, particularly the elders of the dominant jathi groups, were opposed to the DMK.

In the fifth phase of the movement, the DMK became a powerful political party. In 1957, it polled 14.6% of the votes in the state general elections, and 27% in 1962 (Hardgrave, Jr. 1965). In 1967, the DMK polled 41.2% of the votes and became the ruling party in the state of Tamil Nadu (Spratt 1970: 49). In the 1971 elections it gained a larger percentage of votes. Many traditional leaders of the village began to support the movement in its fifth phase. This was partly a result of the villager's desire to be identified with the winning political party, and partly as a result of major changes in the relationships between dominant and subordinate jathi groups in the village.

The fifth phase may be characterized as the "organizational" phase of the movement. The DMK began to consolidate its village support by various adaptations which included less open expression of attacks on jathi hierarchy and eliciting the support of the rich and of the elders of dominant jathi groups who had generally been
opposed to the ideology of the Dravidian movement. The "rationalist" philosophy of the movement was seldom mentioned in the villages. In spite of these adaptations, mainly undertaken to strengthen the financial position of the party, DMK's support came largely from the subordinate jathi groups and especially from young men who gave voluntary services during all the elections.

Most of the supporters of the DMK had little contact with the Dravidian Association headed by Periyar. Only those who were totally committed to the ideology of the movement continued to participate in the activities of the Dravidian Association; they proclaimed themselves to be "rationalists," and in urban centers their activities included regular meetings which were called "rationalist forums" and breaking the idols of Brahmanical deities which occurred sporadically. To the villager the DMK alone symbolized the Dravidian movement, but for the urbanite the DMK and the Dravidian Association were two "wings" of the movement.

In the fifth phase, Aringar (the founder-leader of the DMK) eclipsed Periyar (the founder-leader of Self-Respect Union and the Dravidian Association) in
popularity among the villagers and among the educated young men. However, Periyar continued to be looked upon as the greatest Tamil prophet by most senior members of the movement. Aringar died in 1969, and the DMK's leadership passed on to Kalayngar Karunanidhi, a gifted power, writer and orator, and an able organizer. A man with no college education and a member of a jathi group considered ritually inferior, Kalayngar related himself totally with the poor villagers.

In recent times, honors were bestowed upon Aringar and Kalayngar by centers of academia in the United States. A few months before his death, Aringar served a term as a Chubb Fellow at Yale University; Kalayngar was presented the "Distinguished Service Citation" by the World Poetry Society of Urbana, Illinois, in 1970. These facts are often referred to with very great pride by the villager, and are included in Tamil ballads.
Chapter 2

Dravidianization: A Tamil Revitalization Movement

Wallace (1956: 265) defines a revitalization movement "... as a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture." The main feature of a revitalizing movement, according to him, is that it resolves an incongruence between the mazeway, or the mental image, and the "real" system, in order to reduce stress. Wallace (1966: 212-213) notes that: "Very commonly revitalization movements occur in societies, or groups within societies, which perceive themselves to be locked in a peculiar identity dilemma." He goes on to state that only a redefinition of the situation can resolve the identity dilemma: "This redefinition must include a new image of the group which is so satisfying, in a nativistic sense, that the group is confident of its ability to 'go it alone,' without identification or alliances. ..."
I have given the name Dravidianization to a specific process of change occurring in Tamil culture. Dravidianization is the process through which Tamil cultural forms are strengthened and Brahmanical forms discarded; this process resolves an incongruence between the "maze-way" and the "real" system of the Tamil, and provides the Tamil a distinctive "Dravidian" identity.

The term "Dravidianization" has been used in different ways in the past. Some have used it to mean the process through which the tribal populations in southern India discard their customs and adopt the customs of the Tamil, Malayalee, Kannadiga, or Telugu (Majumdar and Madan 1961: 256). Some have used the term to indicate the process through which Aryan cultural forms were modified by the ancient inhabitants (Dravidians) of India. A few scholars have referred to Dravidianization as a process of linguistic assimilation: in their view, Sanskrit was Dravidianized during the Vedic period (c. 1,000 B.C.). (See Emeneau 1971, for a discussion of linguistic assimilation.)

Since Dravidianization, as I have used the term, refers to revitalization of Tamil culture, the process may
be called "Tamilization." In the statement of the leaders themselves, the movement is often identified as rejuvenation of the Tamil language and Tamil culture (TamilRin marumalarcci and TamilRav vaaRvil marumalarcci). The movement is a conscious effort to revitalize Tamil culture: Brahmanical Hinduism and the Brahmanical model of social relationships are identified by the leaders as being responsible for the decay of Tamil culture, and the leaders strive to revive the religion and the model of social relationships illustrated in ancient Tamil texts.

However, because the leaders of the movement claim that the traditional Tamil values were in fact the traditional values of the Dravidian culture, and because they view Tamil culture as synonymous with Dravidian culture and qualify the identity of their organizations as "Dravidian," the term Dravidianization is more suitable than Tamilization to characterize the process of revitalization in Tamil culture.

When the movement emerged early in the 20th century, the leaders included speakers of all the Dravidian languages who strove to establish a Dravidian community or Dravidian nation-state incorporating speakers of all
the Dravidian languages in southern India (see Chapter 2 of Part I). Even today, the leaders of the movement proclaim that all southern Indians have a common Dravidian cultural and racial heritage, and hope to establish a confederation of the four southern states of India where Dravidian languages are spoken. Such statements, and the process of Dravidianization itself, are less noticeable among the people who speak Dravidian languages other than Tamil, such as Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. (The movement is popular among the Tamil living in other linguistic states of India and in other countries such as Ceylon and Malaysia.)

Stressful conditions prevailed in Tamil culture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Industrialization, urbanization, and Western education opened avenues of economic improvement for a large number of low-rankasting non-Brahmin jathi groups. Members of high-rankasting non-Brahmin jathi groups became very articulate in their demands for full representation in the professions and political institutions. Many ancient Tamil texts were published in this period. The existence of the texts discredited an earlier belief that the Tamil had no
separate or distinctive literary tradition from the Sanskritic literary tradition of the Brahmins. Participation of large numbers of Brahmins in the secular affairs of the society led to an incongruence between the "mazeway" and the "real" system of the Tamil. Although wealthy non-Brahmins held a high ritual status, this was below that of the Brahmins. As Brahmins began to leave their traditional occupations and establish themselves as leaders of industry, politics, western education, law and medicine, their high ritual status was combined with great economic and political power at the regional and national levels. Although Brahmins numerically constituted less than 3% of the population, the non-Brahmin elite in the urban centers had very little opportunity to advance their political interests as the Brahmins monopolized almost every important role of leadership. In most villages, however, the jathi groups which had the greatest economic and political power were non-Brahmin jathi groups. The conflicting situation was resolved by non-Brahmin leaders through repudiating the Brahmanical authority itself and establishing a distinctive "Dravidian" identity for the
Tamil, and excluding the Brahmins from "Dravidian" society. Devanandan (1959: 21) discusses this aspect of the Dravidian movement:

The Kazhagam [the Dravidian movement] repudiates Hinduism because it perpetuates Brahmin supremacy and imposes an alien Aryan culture and Sanskritic tradition on the Tamils. The Kazhagam wants all the Tamil religious classics to be reinstated as the primary source of scriptural authority; it urges that the entire fabric of contemporary society be completely changed so that social prestige, economic strength and political influence are taken away, if necessary by violent revolution, from Aryan Brahmins and given back to the Dravidian non-Brahmins.

Repudiation of Brahmanical beliefs by dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups and such a repudiation by subordinate non-Brahmin jathi groups differ in content although both the groups repudiate the same legitimizing ideology, i.e., the Brahmanical model which combines superior ritual status with great economic and political power. Members of dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups repudiated the ritual supremacy of Brahmins as a result of their conflict with Brahmins in the urban centers. The movement was established in the Tamil village principally because there existed a conflict between dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups and subordinate
non-Brahmin jathi groups; a number of subordinate non-Brahmin jathi groups had increased their economic power, but they did not have correspondingly high ritual or social statuses. The ritual supremacy of Brahmins, legitimized by the Brahmanical model, was repudiated by dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups in the urban centers; the principle of dominance, legitimized by the Brahmanical model, was repudiated by subordinate non-Brahmin jathi groups in the village.

When dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups repudiated the Brahmanical model they expected to occupy the ritual and social positions held by Brahmin jathi groups. Although the principle of egalitarianism was extolled and the principle of hierarchy condemned, the Dravidian movement during its early phases protected the vested interests of dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups only. Leaders of low-ranking non-Brahmin jathi groups were disenchanted with the leadership of the movement (Irschick 1969: 189-192), and the movement failed to secure the support of the poor, particularly the Untouchables. This initial non-Brahmin elitistic orientation of the Dravidian movement was altered by
Periyar when he became the leader of the movement.

Periyar had the support of the poor, but the movement under him also was essentially an urban phenomenon, largely concerned with propagating "rationalist" beliefs. Only when the DMK (Dravidian Advancement Association) began to carry the torch of the movement, participation of poor villagers increased. (See Chapter 2 of Part I and Chapter 2 of Part II.) Leaders of the DMK claimed that the movement incorporated a genuine communist philosophy (see Spratt 1970: 40-42; Harrison 1960: 182-185).

As the movement progressed to its fourth phase (the phase in which the DMK became popular in the village), elimination of northern Indian symbols acquired great significance for the Tamil. This was largely due to the fear that northern Indian businessmen controlled the economy of the state of Tamil Nadu and that teaching of a northern Indian language (Hindi) in the Tamil schools relegate the Tamil language to a secondary place. (Leaders of the DMK justifiably claim that it is their achievement which makes Tamil Nadu the only state in India where Hindi is not taught as a compulsory language in the schools.)
But, repudiation of Brahmanical authority continued to be the basis of the movement. In the urban centers, dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups repudiated the high ritual status of Brahmins; in the village, subordinate non-Brahmin jathi groups repudiated the Brahmanical model of dominance-subordination. There was no conflict between Brahmins and non-Brahmins in the village. In the urban centers, Brahmins posed an economic and political threat to the dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups; in their struggle with Brahmins, wealthy and educated members of dominant non-Brahmin jathi groups repudiated the ritual supremacy of Brahmins and established themselves as the guardians of Tamil culture. In the village, dominant jathi groups (which in some cases included Brahmins) blocked the economic, political and educational advancement of subordinate jathi groups. As the principle of dominance, legitimized by the Brahmanical model, prevented the political participation of even the subordinate jathi groups which had gained a measure of economic independence, these subordinate jathi groups supported the Dravidian movement which repudiated the Brahmanical model, and in that process many members of the subordinate
jathi groups established themselves as the guardians of Tamil culture. The "guardians" of Tamil culture, in both the urban and village centers, became the political leaders. In the urban centers, repudiation of the ritual supremacy of Brahmins resulted from a conflict between Brahmins and non-Brahmins; in the village, repudiation of the Brahmanical model resulted principally from a conflict between non-Brahmin dominant and subordinate jathi groups. But in both cases it was the Brahmanical authority which legitimized the order of dominance of jathi groups in which great economic and political power and superior ritual status were congruent, that was repudiated. In urban centers Brahmins held the dominant position, and wealthy non-Brahmins repudiated the ritual supremacy of Brahmins; in the village, the dominant position was held mostly by non-Brahmins who were ranked ritually high, and subordinate non-Brahmins repudiated the principle of dominance.

It was only through the repudiation of the Brahmanical model of social relationships that the various adaptations in economic, religious, political and status relationships were made by the non-Brahmin jathi groups
in general and by the subordinate non-Brahmin jathi
groups in the village, in particular. Such adaptations
have been delineated in this study as exempletive of the
process of Dravidianization.

Discussion

The term "caste" was first used by European traders
in the 16th century to characterize endogamous jathi
groups. In the 19th century, French scholars, and
British Census Commissioners stationed in India began
to use the term to explain the interconnections of jathi
groups; societies in India were viewed as constituting a
distinctive type of social system. The Brahmanical
scriptures (mostly recorded and translated by German and
British Sanskritists in the 19th century) contained a
theory of social organization. According to this theory,
there were four varnas (categories of quality or classes;
varna literally means "color") of which the upper three
were distinguished as "twice-born." Since the term
varna sankara (mixing of colors) was used in the
scriptures to explain the existence of hundreds of endoga-
mous groups, and since each varna was identified with a
particular color in the scriptures, scholars speculated on whether varna referred to racial categories. By the 20th century, the terms caste and varna were used interchangeably, and many persons (including physical anthropologists) sought to prove that the ancestors of the upper castes were Europeans. Since each varna was identified with specific occupations (varnashrama dharma), a common interpretation was that the varna theory of social organization illustrated the economic and social behavior of the various endogamous groups.

When the term varna was equated with caste, the term "sub-caste" referred to the endogamous groups which claimed a common varna, or caste status. In recent times, the varna concept found in the scriptures has been interpreted as a model of hierarchical reference. The hereditary occupational groups are characterized as jatis, and local units of jatis are characterized as jathi groups. The ideology of purity and pollution, as it refers to the relative state of purity or impurity of objects and persons, is seen as the criterion of commensality and ranking. See Barber (1968: 18-35); Berreman (1967a and 1967b); Dumont (1970: 21-32);

In the Tamil state system, as in other pre-industrial state systems (Gould 1971: 1-24), economic activities were classified as occupations, and named classes of people engaged in specific occupations (see Chapter 1 of Part I). As a result of the continued first-hand contact between Brahmins and the Tamil, the Brahmanical ideology of purity and pollution was adopted by the Tamil, and applied to occupations. Certain occupations were considered ritually defiling, and those engaged in such occupations were regarded as unclean. Thus, commensal relationships were confined to those who engaged in particular types of occupations, and the endogamous groups acquired distinctive identities and privileges which reflected their status in the society. Groups (with the exception of Brahmins) which engaged in the least polluting occupations were the most powerful economically and politically and had the highest
ritual and social statuses. Such status differential was reinforced by the performance of certain ceremonies and practices which only economically well-to-do groups could undertake. (See Chapter 5 of Part II.)

Gould (1971: 12) notes that the ethnographic distinctiveness of jati "...arose from the fact that Hinduism integrated the occupationalization of work and the stratification of occupations into a metaphysical model that made no hard and fast distinctions between economic and religious functions."

There was no indigenous "twice-born" jati in Tamil society. Brahmin migrants constituted the first varna, and all the Tamil belonged to the fourth varna. Untouchables were not referred to in the four-fold varna theory. But the occupational names of the endogamous groups were indicative of their relative position in the varna hierarchy since the attributes of defilement referred principally to occupations and only secondarily to persons who performed these occupations. Certain jathi group names were used as titles by several jathi groups, and the most popular title was that of the jathi group that was dominant in the village and region (see Chapter 6 of Part II).
The factors which sustained such an arrangement of endogamous groups were the economic interdependence and the consequent lack of economic or political competition among the groups. However, shifts in the economic power balance were common, and groups competed for specific jathi prerogatives and privileges (see Chapter 1 of Part II). Because dominant jathi groups had greater economic and political power than the other jathi groups, they were in a position to minimize competition by adjudicating over claims and counter-claims for privileges. Once a subordinate group became wealthy it migrated from the locality if its claims for greater ritual privileges were not acknowledged by the other jathi groups. When the groups put forward claims to move up in the hierarchy and when they changed the jathi names, these actions were "considered a return to a former status" (Pocock 1955: 71).

In this system of economic interdependence, often referred to as the jajmani system, certain persons rendered services to others. The latter were usually the landlords, and were known as jajmans (owners or patrons); those who rendered services to the jajmans
were known as kamins (clients or serfs) if their services included only the performance of manual jobs.

The jajmani system minimized social mobility by restricting the acquisition of wealth and land by low-ranking jathi groups. The system provided cheap labor by "limiting the mobility of lower castes" (Lewis and Barnouw 1967: 112-131). Beidelman (1959: 74) states that "While the jajmans tend to be ritually upper caste and the kamins a ritually lower caste, these roles are not based upon ritual rank. This may appear to be so at times since the power factor of land which determines jajman role is usually held by an upper caste."

The Tamil used the terms PaNNayaar and PaNNayal to refer to patron and serf respectively. It was not uncommon for a few members of the same jathi group to serve as clients of their more fortunate jathi-fellows who had the status of patrons. Even in such cases, the latter strove to prohibit the clients from acquiring
wealth. For example, among the NaaTaars of Tamil Nadu, who were ranked low ritually, a few owned large tracts of land and also "owned" the services of several of their same jathi group. The landlords identified themselves as NaaTaans in contrast with the clients who were identified as CaaNaans. The NaaTaans were retainers of the kings before the British, and were recognized as zamindars, or over-lords by the British (see Hardgrave, Jr. 1969).

Two Tamil villages studied by Gough (1960 and 1969) and Beteille (1966) indicate that economic interdependence in the village social systems has almost disappeared. The studies show that villagers are in frequent contact and have economic ties with people in nearby cities. Subordinate jathi groups have become traders, and with the accumulation of capital they have acquired land. Possession of land has led them to compete for higher social status alongside the Brahmin landowning jathi group, and those non-Brahmin jathi group members who have achieved economic independence refuse to subject themselves to their traditional Brahmin masters. Often through establishing alliances with jathi group members
living outside the village, non-Brahmin jathi groups have begun asserting political power. Beteille (1966: 144) observes:

There is a tendency for power blocs to develop within the structure of the village. Such blocs are usually based upon a plurality of factors. Caste and class play an important part in their composition. One of the basic features of politics in the village and in the region as a whole is the increasing importance of numerical preponderance, owing largely to the introduction of the adult franchise. A popular leader can today command considerable power even though his caste and class positions may be fairly low.

The twin processes of industrialization and urbanization have led to the migration of Brahmins to the cities, and in many cases their land is sold to non-Brahmins. The non-Brahmins decline to serve as clients, and often rent land for cultivation if they do not own land. With this strengthened economic status they compete for political power, which has resulted in the alteration of the traditional social relationships among the jathi groups in the village. Gough (1969: 51) notes:

It is clear that, in general, the social structure of the Tanjore village is changing from a relatively closed, stationary system, with a feudal economy and co-operation between ranked castes in ways ordained by religious law, to a relatively "open," changing system,
governed by secular law, with an expanding capitalist economy and competition between castes which is sometimes reinforced and sometimes obscured by the new struggle between economic classes.

Such changes began to appear in many villages in the 20th century. This thesis is concerned with whether or not the jathi groups which become wealthy as a result of such changes claim a higher ritual status through the performance of ceremonies considered superior in Brahmanical Hinduism, and whether or not they strive to secure a "twice-born" model of reference. Social mobility through emulation of Brahmanical customs has been conceptualized as "Sanskritization" (Srinivas 1952, 1957, 1962 and 1966).

Gough (1960: 58) points out that, in recent times, non-Brahmin jathi groups have challenged the principle of ritual ranking and that those who are most active in rejecting the "caste principles" had come under the influence of the Dravidian movement.

In Pulicat village and the three villages in Coimbatore district, and in the 20 villages in Chingleput district I visited briefly, there was no evidence of Sanskritization. In these villages, as Gough and
Betellic observed in the two villages in Tanjore district, economic interdependence of jathi groups was not very common; villagers had economic ties with people in the towns, and political factions were very prominent in every village. Indications are that low-ranking jathi groups and Untouchables had been able to gain education and get jobs, which enabled them to achieve social values on which a high premium was placed in the village but which had no reference to the Brahmanical model of ranking.

In earlier times, economic improvement of low-ranking jathi groups resulted in an incongruence between the mazeway of the group members and the "real" system since a high economic status was usually associated with high ritual status. Such an incongruence was resolved by the jathi group acquiring a new identity, which was often expressed as a rediscovery of the group's primordial identity, and this founding-myth legitimized the high ritual status of the group vis-à-vis other groups. Evidence of this form of social mobility in Tamil Nadu during the medieval age has gained scholarly attention (Stein 1968). Rudolph and Rudolph (1960 and 1967) and
Hardgrave, Jr. (1969) have discussed in detail two mobility organizations in Tamil society which were established in the late 19th century.

One of the jathi organizations demonstrates the change from an earlier application of the Brahmanical model (involving an attempt to claim higher ritual status) to repudiation of the model. Such a repudiation came about as the leaders of the organization adopted the ideology of the Dravidian movement.

In the 19th century, when the NaaTaars became economically powerful they first claimed high ritual status using the Brahmanical model, and strove to identify themselves as a group of Aryan origin (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967: 36-49; Hardgrave, Jr. 1969). When Caldwell, the linguist who was primarily responsible for the Tamil revivalism, published a book on NaaTaars in 1849 in which he characterized them as Dravidians, the NaaTaars were infuriated. They "disliked his ascribing a non-Aryan origin to their group" (Irschick 1969: 277). About "twenty years after the publication of the book agitation was started...and the book was withdrawn from circulation" (Irschick 1969: 278).
In the 20th century, NaaTaars came under the influence of the Dravidian movement and disavowed the group's earlier claims of Aryan origin. A number of resolutions were passed against the validation of Aryan identity. The group's leader claimed that the resolutions were necessary to show that the Aryans "had invented the caste system in order to prevent the Dravidians from overwhelming them" (Irschick 1969: 342).

Rudolph and Rudolph (1967: 97) note that NaaTaar jathi group organization had passed through "phases stressing Sanskritization and anti-Brahmanical de-Sanskritization." They point out that discarding Sanskritic customs was a common feature during a phase of many jathi organizations (135-137; passim). Such a generalization is misleading. Repudiation of the Brahmanical model cannot be equated with the discarding of Sanskritic customs by a successful jathi group once the group has had the opportunity to adopt Western or other urban-industrial values. Such groups never repudiated the Brahmanical model and never claimed a non-Aryan identity (as the NaaTaars did), but simply discarded those customs which were found to conflict with urban life.
Bharati (1971: 70) contends that modernization in India occurs through low-ranking jathi groups passing "through a phase of Sanskritization." He points out that there is a difference or an exception, however, in Tamil culture.

There is a recent exception to this general rule [modernization through Sanskritization], one resting on a kind of inverse Sanskritization. The Dravid Kazhagam and the Munnetra Kazhagam [the Dravidian movement] of Tamilnad reject any connection with the Sanskrit cultural base. Gods with Hindu names are not accepted and the images of such Sanskritic gods as Ganesha are carried in procession and incinerated. Sanskrit loanwords are rather laboriously replaced in ritual by Dravidian words and their compounds.

The change in the perception of jathi groups regarding their Aryan identity and in their claims for high status in the Brahmanical model of hierarchy is documented in the Report of the Backward Classes Commission (1971) of the government of Tamil Nadu. The members of the Commission report that Sanskritization has been reversed:

We would like also to bring to the attention of the Government that while a generation or two ago, every caste lower down in the social scale tried to emulate the Brahman and Kshatriya--a process known as Sanskritization--the present tendency, very evident in the
evidence tendered before us, is that more castes would like to be listed as Backward Classes, many Backward Classes would like to be included in the Schedule [i.e., similar to the status of Untouchables].

The term "Backward Classes" refers to those groups which have not acquired Western education. Several groups which rank high ritually and economically in the village are classified as Backward Classes, and several groups of low ritual and economic status in the village are classified as "Forward Classes" by the government. The educational criterion of ranking in government classifications does not apply in the ranking of groups in the villages. In the traditional setting of the village, education had reference to the status of Brahmins who were the literati (antaNar). In the village setting today, the Dravidian movement facilitates the adoption of education by non-Brahmin jathi groups as a reference to their status. The literati are the leaders of the Dravidian movement; young men in the villages emulate the style of Tamil speech and writing developed by these leaders.

A number of studies by political scientists, most notably the study by Rudolph and Rudolph (1967), indicate
that jathi groups have acquired new functions, reflecting the adaptive characteristic of the "caste system."

These studies, which are mainly social histories of particular jathi groups, show that jathi groups have undergone a transformation from localized, religious constellations to regional, political associations. The process through which such a transformation occurs is often characterized as " politicization" or "secularization" of jathi groups. Rudolph and Rudolph (1967: 19) discuss this aspect of "caste":

The leading and most pervasive natural association of the old regime, caste, has responded to changes in its political and economic environment by transforming itself from below and within. Hierarchy, privilege, and moral parochialism no longer exhaust its secular significance.

By examining two jathi groups in Tamil Nadu, the Rudolphs show that jathi group organizations mobilize the illiterate peasants for concerted social action, and that in this process the jathi groups have become "paracommunities" or "voluntary associations," departing from their traditional ascriptive and village locus. The authors contend that Marx was wrong in his assumption that peasants required an external factor to generate
change and progress, and hold that a dichotomy between tradition and modernity is fallacious since they do not exist independent of each other. Jathi group organizations, composed of peasants, incorporate both traditional and modern forms.

In our study (see Chapter 4 of Part II) it was shown that Dravidianization led to the politicization of subordinate jathi groups. The Dravidian movement fostered the emergence of political consciousness among subordinate jathi groups in the village. For the first time, subordinate jathi groups were able to compete for political power without economic power. In other words, subordinate jathi groups were politicized, i.e., they had become "rural proletarians" (Potter 1967), without becoming dominant jathi groups. In the traditional setting, only the jathi groups which had high economic and ritual statuses possessed political power. The Dravidian movement repudiated the principle of dominance, or the Brahmanical model of congruence between great economic and political power and superior ritual status, with the result that subordinate groups had become politically conscious without becoming economically or ritually dominant.
It is misleading to state that jathi group organizations had altered the traditional pattern and the Brahmanical model, and equally misleading to argue that jathi organizations had politicized jathi groups. Jathi group organizations did not repudiate the principle of dominance, but rather validated the principle. The political function of jathi groups is not new, as the Rudolphs claim. It was the political function of dominant jathi groups which enabled the groups to remain dominant. Dominant jathi groups had been conscious of their rights in the traditional setting. When subordinate jathi groups enhanced their economic status, political consciousness emerged along with it. Economic improvement preceded political power, and political power guaranteed a dominant or high social status vis-à-vis other jathi groups. This was no deviation from the traditional pattern; the existence of political consciousness reflected dominance and it found legitimacy in the Brahmanical model.

Until the Dravidian movement took root in the village, political leadership was in the hands of traditional leaders. The Congress (all-India political
party), which depended on the support of traditional elders in the village, won convincing victories in many political elections because of the existence of "vertical power relationships" in the village; the traditional elders who were at the top of vertical power structure secured votes from those at lower levels. Within a jathi group itself this power structure existed, and leadership in jathi organizations was with rich and educated elders of the jathi group. The young and the poor obeyed; the old and the rich commanded.

In contrast, the Dravidian movement provided a channel of political expression for those who were prohibited from such expression in the traditional village setting. The leaders of the movement repudiated the principle of dominance and established contacts with the young and the poor. (Leaders of the Congress party continued to manipulate the vertical power relationships, and the Congress lost in the elections.) Followers of the movement were members of subordinate jathi groups and poor or non-conformist members of dominant jathi groups. These men had no locus of political leadership in the traditional setting, and were hostile to the
traditional authority. Participation in the activities of the movement channelled their frustrations and gave them credibility as political leaders. They presented themselves as guardians of Tamil language and Tamil culture, and gave less importance to the principle of negative involvement of Brahmanical Hinduism (see Chapter 5 of Part II). When government-sponsored political councils were established in the village, leadership in these councils passed from the traditional leaders to the young men who were mostly followers of the Dravidian movement (see Chapter 4 of Part II).

After the repudiation of the Brahmanical model, jathi group organizations ceased to function as political, corporate power units. The youth and the poor of the corporate groups were mobilized politically by the Dravidian movement. The Rudolphs (1967: 37n) cite the statement of a politician which illustrates this fact: "Younger generations in the caste community led by younger men repudiated the directives of established leaders by voting DMK rather than Congress." Such a behavior was a departure from tradition and the Brahmanical model.
Hardgrave, Jr. (1965: 7) illustrates the Dravidian movement as an example of "traditionalizing" movements, and refers to the traditionalizing process, as it occurs in Tamil culture, as "Tamilization." Tamilization is "the means by which the forms and processes of modern government become culturally acceptable, psychologically satisfactory, and politically meaningful to the people."
The "primordial sentiment" of the Tamil jathi groups is "expanded and transformed" to include a "larger community" for the formulation of "particularistic political demands." Through this process, which Hardgrave, Jr. identifies as Tamilization, politics in Tamil Nadu have been Tamilized. Hardgrave, Jr. is very hopeful and optimistic about the future prospects of the Tamil: after an initial attempt at perpetuating cultural nationalism, traditionalizing movements become channels through which democratic institutions are established.

Tamil nationalism, in formulating a wider sense of personal identity, has drawn increasing numbers into the political culture. In accommodating primordial sentiment, the government has given the village rustic a stake in the system in terms which he understands. Rather than a threat to the unity of the Indian Union, self-consciously participant society—even when it operates in terms of
caste and linguistic identification--offers the possibility of a meaningful pluralism as a base for viable village democracy.
(Hardgrave, Jr. 1965: 80.)

Hardgrave, Jr. does not explicitly state what he means by Tamilization with respect to the total socio-cultural system of the Tamil. He apparently views jathi group organizations as traditionalizing movements as well. Both jathi group organizations and the Dravidian movement are vehicles of "political socialization," and the Dravidian movement is distinct only in its identification as "Dravidian" and its incorporation of all the non-Brahmin jathi groups. The Dravidian movement apparently expands and transforms the primordial identity, but so do the jathi group organizations. We are left with the impression that the Dravidian movement is similar to a jathi group organization, differing only in its having members from several jathi groups. We may also infer that the Dravidian movement is not a traditionalizing movement, but a traditional sectarian movement which will eventually become a jathi group. Historians have noted instances of religious sects which emerged in opposition to the "caste system" and eventually became jathi groups upholding the "caste system."
Hardgrave's misleading statements stem from the fact that he does not make a distinction between jathi group organizations, which do not repudiate the Brahmanical model or the principle of dominance, and the Dravidian movement, which repudiates such a model. Undoubtedly, there are aspects of traditionalization in Dravidianization: many forms of social relationships incorporated by the Dravidian movement are modern and secular; these modern and secular forms are legitimized by the belief that they too existed among the Tamil in the ancient times. And the Dravidian movement is a movement of non-Brahmin jathi groups, and thus has a jathi, or "communal" orientation. But this jathi orientation has a different basis from the jathi organizations; the movement identifies Brahmin jathi groups as outsiders of Dravidian society, and only non-Brahmin jathi groups are identified as members of Tamil culture and society. The movement is not a conscious effort to enhance the status of non-Brahmin jathi groups vis-à-vis Brahmin jathi groups. The existence of Brahmins as members of the Tamil society is denied, and the movement aims at Dravidianizing Tamil culture, i.e., reviving and
strengthening the themes of the ancient Tamil and discarding Brahmanical customs. In contrast, jathi organizations were channels through which low-ranking jathi groups enhanced their social status vis-à-vis other jathi groups once they increased their economic power.

The two most significant studies on the Dravidian movement are *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929* (Irschick, 1969) and *D.M.K. in Power* (Spratt, 1970). Irschick's study illustrates the early phase of the Dravidian movement, and Spratt's study documents the fifth phase of the movement. But both studies detail the antecedents of the Dravidian movement, the unique set of circumstances that existed in southern India during the early part of the 20th century, such as the publication of ancient Tamil texts, the writings of Caldwell, British disenchchantment with Brahmin politicians, and the greater representation of Brahmins in all the professions.

Spratt (1970: 10) points out that the Dravidian movement is an expression of conflict between Tamil and Sanskritic cultures:
Tamilnad has a cultural conflict of its own, which has no close parallel elsewhere in India. Disputes between those who prefer Sanskrit and those who favour Tamil texts for certain religious purposes go back for centuries. ... Until recent generations scholars in Sanskrit dominated [the] cultural life [of the Tamil], and they [the Sanskrit scholars] tended to claim that the culture and language of Tamilnad derived from their culture and language. ... 

Spratt notes that the publication of ancient Tamil literary works in the nineteenth century provided the Tamil with a "picture of an early and once widespread Dravidian civilization, separate and distinct from the Aryan and Sanskritic." Spratt believes that Hindu culture was in fact Dravidian culture, and that Aryan and Dravidian cultures "fused" completely before Brahmanical Hindu doctrines were propounded. Jainism (a religious movement of the 5th century which became the religion of the trading classes in northwestern India) represents "the 'Dravidian' tradition in the purest form." (See Spratt 1970: 10-13.)

Jainism was accepted as the ideal moral philosophy by the Tamil poets and saints who lived during the period from 3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D. The Tamil saint-poet TiruvaLLuvar whose aphorisms have
become the gospel (Spratt 1970: 37) of the Dravidian movement had definitely come under the influence of Jainism (Spratt 1970: 13).

The ancient Tamil conceived of supernatural power as a female principle; it is likely that they worshipped Amman (mother goddess), Siva (paramour of Amman) and Muruga (son of Amman and god of hills) as aspects of the same principle (see Chapter 1 of Part I). Sayvism, or worship of god Siva, had princely patronage from 3rd century A.D. onwards, and Tamil saints and poets elaborated a doctrine of Siva worship which was called Sayva Sittaanta ("Siva and true end"). Worship of god VishNu gained followers in Tamil society mainly through the efforts of a Brahmin saint, Ramanuja, who lived in the 11th century. But worship of Muruga and Amman was popular at all periods among the Tamil, and such a worship is most popular among the Tamil today, particularly among the villagers. It is a significant fact that no leader of the Dravidian movement has ridiculed the worship of Amman and Muruga, although many leaders claim to be atheists, or "rationalists." In contrast with the acceptance of these deities believed
to be the deities of the Tamil, idols and pictures of Brahmanical gods and goddesses are publicly desecrated. (See Chapter 1 of Part I and Chapter 5 of Part II.)

In the late 19th century, European and non-Brahmin scholars who did extensive research on the literature of the ancient Tamil came to the conclusion that Sayva Sittaanta was the religion of the Tamil before the Tamil adopted Brahmanical Hinduism. Sayva Sittaanta was referred to as the "Dravidian religion," and the leaders of the Dravidian movement in the 20th century sought to strengthen it (Irschick 1969: 292-295). Sayva Sittaanta never became popular among the villagers. Only the very literate were familiar with its doctrine, which differed from the Advayta school of Brahmanical Hinduism only in the interpretation of monistic and monotheistic worship. Worship of Amman and Muruga continued to be the distinctive feature of Tamil supernaturalism.

In recent times, after the DMK acquired political power, legislative acts have been enacted to substitute Tamil for Sanskrit invocations (arccanay) in Brahmanical temples, and to appoint non-Brahmins as priests in Brahmanical temples. Brahmins have challenged in the
court of law the governmental order to appoint non-Brahmins as priests in Brahmanical temples. Governmental regulation of Hindu temples is facilitated through the existence of a state executive department called Hindu Religious Endowment Board, which was first instituted by the British in the 19th century in order to stop the misuse of temple funds by hereditary temple trustees (Tarmakarttaa). See Derrett (1969: 311-336) and Mudaliar (1965) for a discussion on Hindu Religious Endowment Board.
Conclusion

This study examined in detail the process through which certain themes and values are strengthened and others discarded in the Tamil village. In Tamil culture, Brahmanical values are incongruent, and are repudiated as alien by the Dravidian movement. Secular and urban values are made acceptable to the villager by the movement, which legitimizes them as values existing among the Tamil before the adoption of Brahmanical values. This process of strengthening some values and eliminating others can be seen in the adaptations in economic, political, religious and status relationships (Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 of Part II). A new consciousness of identity has emerged in the village. It is not uncommon for a villager to identify himself as "biologically a Dravidian and linguistically a Tamil" (Chapter 2 of Part II). Ability to speak well in Tamil has become a status symbol, and skills such as platform-speaking and poetry-writing have become prestigious (Chapters 2 and 6 of Part II).
The ideology of the Dravidian movement, which repudiated the Brahmanical model, was felt threatening only by dominant jathi groups in the village. Only the dominant jathi groups fully associated with Brahmanical Hinduism, and the Brahmanical model of the social order validated their high status (Chapter 5 of Part II). Thus support for the movement came initially from subordinate jathi groups. Through the activities of the movement, young men and members of economically backward jathi groups who were traditionally prevented from participation in political activities became politically articulate. As a result, the order of dominance of jathi groups in which great economic and political power and superior ritual status were congruent was invalidated (Chapter 4 of Part II). As a low-ranking jathi group gained economic and political power, it did not adopt Sanskritic rituals; instead, jathi members strove to acquire education and western symbols of status (Chapter 6 of Part II).

Through the activities of the movement, various themes, ideals and other traits of Tamil culture were given special value. Among these is the ancient Tamil
theme of female chastity which was adapted in a number of different ways. KaNNaki, the heroine of an ancient Tamil epic, was identified as the queen and goddess of chastity, and the villager compared his wife, sisters and mother with her (Chapters 2 and 5 of Part II). A number of Tamil textbooks recently published deal with the life and achievements of chaste women (Chapter 1 of Part I). Worship of Amman (mother goddess) and performance of elaborate female initiation rites were conceived by the non-Brahmin jathi groups as essential (Chapters 5 and 6 of Part II). The Tamil language, which was equated with the mother (who was conceived to embody purity, virtue and chastity), became a sacred symbol. When Hindi language was made compulsory language in the schools in the 60's, several men immolated themselves to symbolize the importance of "mother Tamil" (Chapter 2 of Part I and Chapter 2 of Part II).

Tamil language underwent major reforms: words which were believed to be derivatives of Sanskrit were purged, and a distinctive style of writing and public-speaking was developed. The Tamil literary tradition of "academies" was revived in the late 19th century in urban
centers and in Universities; in the 20th century, village youths were trained in the art of public-speaking (MeeTay peecou) by the leaders of the movement (Chapter 2 of Part I and Chapter 2 of Part II). The villager referred to leaders of the movement by titles which indicated their skill as writers, poets or orators. The titles came to represent great prestige in the village, and many leaders of the movement acquired the status of "culture heroes" in the village (Chapter 2 of Part II). Village youths strove to emulate these culture heroes, and thus the Tamil literary tradition became a part of the village social life.

Public schools and Tamil cinema were two important channels by which the Dravidian movement propagated among the villagers the values considered to be original and unique to the Tamil (Chapter 2 of Part I; Chapter 2 of Part II; Chapter 1 of Part III). Most writers of Tamil textbooks, and a large percentage of cinema actors and script-writers, were committed to the ideology of the movement and a few of these men became "culture heroes" of the young men in the village (Chapter 2 of Part I; Chapter 2 of Part II; Chapter 1 of Part III).
Traditionally, stage and cinema actors and scriptwriters had been regarded as "street acrobats" (teru kuuttaTigal) of low social status, and the movement made these occupations into symbols of great prestige.

Young men in the village today know more of the traditional values of the Tamil than their parents had known in their youth, and they identify themselves as guardians of Tamil culture. In contrast, older people are conversant with myths and principles of Brahmanical Hinduism of which the young know very little. But the youths do not protest against securing the services of Brahmin priests, and they propitiate deities of both Tamil and Brahmin supernaturalism in the natu viituk (propitiating place in the house). Young men and women are generally literate, are more conscious than their elders of their Dravidian identity, and speak what is regarded as pure Tamil; male students emulate the style of Tamil speech and writing developed by the leaders of the Dravidian movement who are the Tamil literati. In contrast, the old are more conscious of their jathi identity, and are mostly illiterate. The young are more concerned with problems that transcend the village, and
the old are more concerned with the problems of social control in the village. The traditional village and jathi councils are controlled by the old, and the elected village councils are dominated by the young. In a number of villages, the father is a leader of the Congress (all-India political party) and the son a leader of the DMK (Dravidian Advancement Association).

Dumont (1970: 222-223) observes that his hopes of seeing the "disappearance of castes" were shattered in Tamil Nadu where he expected the Dravidian movement to have made progress in destroying "caste." Bharati (1971) contends that only a naive fool will claim that "caste" has been destroyed, but he points out that Tamil culture differs from the Sanskritized cultures in south Asia. Writing from a general theoretical perspective, Gould (1963: 436) notes that it is "very unlikely that so admirable an adaptive structure as caste is in any serious danger of ever disappearing completely."

Rudolph and Rudolph (1967) illustrate this aspect:

...the need for mediating collectives and adaptive structures based on birth and integrated by primary group sentiment and interest transcends the imperatives of modernity in politics and society not only in India but also
in advanced industrial nations. In so far as this is so, caste identities retain a future. (Italics mine.)

Gould and the Rudolphs are probably right in predicting that a kin-based social group will continue to exist as a mediating unit between the individual and society, but the term ethnic group explains such a mediating unit better than the term caste.

Much of the unique features that characterize a social group as "caste," and much of the unique features that characterize a system of social relationships as "caste system" have disappeared in Tamil culture. The system of economic interdependence in the village has been greatly altered; the system of ranking groups with reference to the Brahmanical model of hierarchy has almost disappeared; in some instances, education has become an important criterion of social status, replacing symbols of ritual purity; the principle of dominance which illustrates harmony, or congruence between economic and political power and ritual supremacy has disappeared, and as a result subordinate jathi groups with no economic power or high ritual status compete for political power; intra-jathi occupational differentiation is marked in every case.
Jathi groups, however, persist. Both old and young villagers still have beliefs concerning rules of purity and pollution, and commensal relationships between jathi groups seldom occur. These beliefs persist largely because of the existence of the following three factors: 1) the propitiating place (natu viiTu) in the house; 2) the traditional jathi pancaayat (council); and 3) the social category called the Harijan, or Untouchable.

A child is socialized into accepting certain things and actions as ritually impure or pure in the natu viiTu which links Tamil and Brahmanical supernaturalism; negative involvement, a central principle in Brahmanical supernaturalism, is fully manifested in natu viiTu. Most urban homes also have natu viiTu. A menstruating woman is prohibited from performing rites in natu viiTu, and in some cases the idols and pictures of gods and goddesses are covered by a yellow cloth when a woman in the family is menstruating. Regular purificatory ceremonies are conducted in natu viiTu. Thus, even the followers of the Dravidian movement who seldom visit Brahmanical temples find it difficult to discard notions of purity and pollution (see Chapter 5 of Part I).
Traditional jathi pancaayats (councils) are the institutions of social control in the village. The villager subordinates himself to the mediating authority of the pancaayat; jathi is his reference group and the pancaayat is a symbol of corporate life in the village. Eisenstadt (1954) notes that since a researcher's main aim is to explain how "orientations to reference groups" are adaptive, it is important to find out why such orientations are necessary in a particular social system; Eisenstadt points out that group orientation legitimizes authority. In the Tamil village, the traditional jathi council guarantees protection to the villager; his identification with his jathi group is a necessary factor for his survival. The government-sponsored elected council, introduced in the 50's, did not replace the traditional jathi councils but co-existed with the latter. Leadership of elected councils is largely with young men who have no traditional authority (see Chapter 4 of Part II). Had the traditional jathi councils been replaced by the elected councils (as it was expected by some political leaders), the villager's orientation would have changed.
The term Harijan (which literally means "people of god Vishnu") denotes a social category which incorporates a number of jathi groups considered to be ritually polluting. The term was bestowed on polluting jathi groups as a title by Mahatma Gandhi; he strove to make the Harijan category a model of reference that was prestigious. But this had a dire consequence: those jathi groups which had adapted the model committed themselves to a position from which there was no way to move out. In the Brahmanical model there was no reference to the great many jathi groups now classified as Harijan; the two opposing categories of purity and pollution were represented in social life by the Brahmin and the Shudra respectively, and the ritually defiling jathi groups were "exterior" communities. The Dravidian movement repudiated the Brahmanical model, and such a repudiation resulted in Brahmins losing their highest ritual position. Every non-Brahmin jathi group, which had no Harijan identity, conceived of itself as pure; the Harijan continued to be referred to as polluting. In Pulicat village, Karayaar, Viliar, Vanniar, PATTanava and Harijan jathi groups engaged in fishing, but only the
Harijan were considered polluting. Although there has been some "de-ritualization" of occupations, jathi groups are still identified by their traditional occupations. Although only a few members of the Harijan category might actually engage in ritually defiling occupations, every member of the category shares the pollution; there are scavengers and highly-placed government officials classified under the Harijan category which represents pollution, or impurity.

As long as the ideology of purity and pollution prevails the Harijan category will doubtless persist, and the ideology will persist as long as naTu viiTu exists.
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