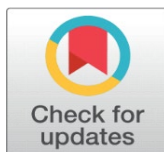


SOCIAL REASSURANCE WOMENS PROGRAMMES OF DMK GOVERNMENT (1989-1991)

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DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i5.2024.5214](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i5.2024.5214)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

Since the very evolution of the concept of welfare state, the very idea has been adopted in most of the democratic countries across the world. Due to which the very scope of social welfare services has expanded and become much broader. In case of Tamilnadu when the D.M.K. Party established its own Government, it was capable of realizing its prime objectives of social equality and to establish an egalitarian society. Towards realizing this ambitious target, however it has confronted several short comings and constrains to bring about the desirable changes in the living condition of the poor, downtrodden and womens of Tamilnadu. Since the DMK party from its inception, have drawn mostly, its support from the different category of backward communities womens which includes scheduled castes and scheduled tribeswomens mostly in the rural pockets it was so much concerned about their welfare, progress and development. It is needless to say that the DMK Government has accorded top priority for those the downtrodden and poverty ridden masses in the slums across the state of Tamilnadu.

Keywords: DMK government, Socio Economic Development Programe

1. INTRODUCTION

Universally it is accepted, that in a democratic Government, that the state is very much responsible to ensure the well-being of all the weaker sections of the community. In consonance with this universally accepted concept, all the weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in Indian society have their interests guaranteed under the Indian Constitution. Hence certain articles were enshrined in the Constitution itself which ensures that specific welfare measures are taken especially for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes across India. For instance, Articles like 244, 341 and 342 has granted the authority to the President of India to ensure the betterment of certain specific category of communities, or ethnic groups.* Hence in order to facilitate the advancement and betterment of these downtrodden communities, in 1954 a Backward Class Commission (under Article 340) was appointed.

2. SOCIAL LEGISLATIVE MEASURES 1989-1991

It is desirable here to have a discussion on the various social legislative measures initiated by the Tamil Nadu Government between the years 1989 and 1991. To keep the pledges made by the DMK party in its election manifesto,

this has been done. For instance, the party has stated that it will carry out the Mandal Commission's suggestion to safeguard the welfare of all of Tamilnadu's oppressed, depressed, and underprivileged sections, in addition to the denotified communities. In addition to that, the Election Manifesto also outlined several measures to safeguard the interest of the women folk through several schemes like the marriage assistance, maternity benefit scheme, widow remarriage and such assistance daughters of poor widows. This apart, the manifesto also declared that necessary financial assistance would be extended for heart and kidney operations. Further it has announced the establishment of Mahalir Mandrams, Service homes and hostels for working women besides free distribution of sewing machines, and Women's Development Corporation exclusively for women. Moreover, it has also announced separate guidance bureaux for women, destitute cottages and Orphanages for orphan children etc., Also the Manifesto monthly stipend of Rs.50 per month for widows. Despite all such pro poverty ridden programmes, the DMK Government under Karunanithi was removed from power on January 1991. Despite his short tenure of two years in the office as Chief Minister (1989-1991), he was able to implement several women's welfare programmes which have been declared in the DMK Party Election Manifesto.

3. FREE EDUCATION UP TO GRADUATE LEVEL

The DMK Government has announced free undergraduate education for certain academic programmes like B.A., B.Sc., and B.Com. This privilege was granted for all the depressed class students of Tamilnadu, subject to certain restrictions like annual income and no graduate in the family.

Also the students residing in the hostels were given free bus passes for their commutation from the hostels to their place of study. Besides for those higher secondary school students from these depressed classes, the monthly stipend was increased to 115 rupees. The stipend was also increased to Rs. 280 for boys and Rs.190 for girls who pursue their professional courses.

4. PROPERTY RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

The Tamilnadu Self-Respect Movement, which fought for equal rights in family properties and equal employment opportunities for women as men, outlined the procedures that needed to be followed in order to maintain women's status in the state.

In keeping with this spirit and to protect the interests of women, the D.M.K. government announced in the Tamilnadu Legislative Assembly in 1989 that necessary amendments to the already existing Hindu Succession Act of 1956 would be made soon. Hence, the necessary amendment was made in this Act on May 6, 1989. This historic legislation made it possible for all Hindu women in Tamil Nadu to have a fair share of their family properties. And the new government amendment has ensured that female children have the same property rights as male children.

5. GRANTS IN ASSISTANCE FOR MARRIAGE:

During the Tamilnadu Assembly proceedings On May 2, 1989, Chief Minister Karunanidhi, has announced three major schemes of financial and such other assistance to help the poor women across Tamilnadu. Those schemes were named after three grate women leaders in order to honour their selfless services to the women folk of Tamilnadu. Through these schemes marriages assistance for poor ladies awaiting in marriage, relief measures for expectant mothers, free education for girls from downtrodden families upto their graduations was implemented.

Table

Year	Scheme	Amount (per head)	Beneficiary	Over all amount (Spend)
02-May-1989	Muvalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar memoriyal Marriage Assistance Scheme	5000	26,547	13 Crores
06-Mar-1989	Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy	200	3,71,805	7.44 Crores
1989	Dr. Dharmabab Widow Remarriage Scheme	5000	312	16 Lakhs
29-Sep-1989	Anjugam Ammaiyar		Till 1991	

	Inter caste Marriage Assistance Scheme	1000	686	40 Lakhs
1990-1991	Daughters of the Poor Widow	2000	1,551	21 Lakhs

6. WOMEN'S FREE EDUCATION SCHEME

Yet another scheme of free education exclusively for poor women was launched in the name of EVR Nagammaiyar Memoria Women's Free Education Scheme I. This humanitarian scheme benefited around 5,444 during the period 1989. A new project was launched in the year 1989-1990, under the caption 'Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project', keeping in mind the most backward district of Dharmapuri. Due to the positive results of this programme, it was further extended to other districts like Salem and South Arcot.

This specific project paved the way for economic upliftment of nearly forty thousand women over the period of time, for which purpose around 46 crores of rupees was earmarked in the budget allocation. It must be pointed out here that for this scheme only those women from rural areas under the below the poverty line families were identified, and necessary assistance were extended. This assistance was extended to them for pursuing diverse vocations, including agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, animal husbandry, to set up small cottage industries etc., to identify the beneficiaries of this scheme, the service of a private organization known as MYRADA was utilized, and those elected for this programme were given training by this organization.

This apart, women of tribal descent who had completed the fifth grade were also eligible for assistance. From January 1, 1989, to January 11, 1991, 34,595 women received 17,30 crores of rupees as financial assistance under this scheme.

7. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

The Tamilnadu Government has implemented certain schemes under the banner 'Mahalir Thittam'. To make it more effective and efficient, the implementation of this programme was entrusted with the Tamilnadu Corporation for Women's Development. Modestly launched in Dharmapuri in 1989, this scheme initially received financial support from certain International Funding Agencies.

It may be pointed out here that, this is a sort of Self-Help Group Movement, began in a minuscule way in 1989, has grown beyond proportion, in stature and strength, to the point where it has spread its tentacles over all the disadvantaged and devalued segments of Tamil society. Some of its objectives were : social empowerment of women, creating a sense of oneness, aiming to fulfill the requirements of the Panchayats in villages, undertaking decision-making responsibilities in the family and society, and to raise women's awareness of government schemes and welfare measures for the economic development of women.

Aside from this, fostering a sense of saving, working to improve the family's economic situation, and making effective use of government loan aid are essential. Also, women are encouraged to develop different skills, such as reading, writing, and leadership qualities. During the period of 1991 an honorarium is also paid to the Mahalir Thittams convention. During this fiscal year of 1990-1991, for this programme fund allocation of around fifty two lakhs have been earmarked to cover the costs associated with maintaining Mahalir Mandrams across the state.

8. SERVICE HOMES FOR WOMEN

Exclusive Service Homes are an essential requirement to protect the most disadvantaged women folk of this society. Despite innumerable laws enacted to safe guard them, still those categories of deprived sections of the society like the widows, uneducated and abandoned women are at the mercy of the public and the Government to take care of them. Hence in order to fulfill their expectations and to provide them a safe shelter, Service Homes meant for them were established by the Government of Tamilnadu. To begin with such centers were established at five different places.

Young women were admitted in them where in they were provided with necessary education to complete either 8th or 10th or the higher secondary school examinations. Depending on the interest of such inmates of the service homes, they have been given training in vocational trades like : tailoring, typing, and housekeeping. Those residents are provided with a monthly stipend of Rs.120 besides free clothing text books and note books. Upon successful completion of the Secondary Education programme, they were given the Secondary Grade Teachers Training in the institute at Pallavaram. After they successfully completed their teacher training programme, they are directly nominated as teachers without

going through the employment exchange process. As per Government statistics of October 1991, around 1100 women were benefited from this programme.

9. HOSTELS FOR WORKING WOMEN (1990)

The necessity of creating working women's hostel gained currency when a large number of women undertook various kinds of jobs and employment especially in the urban centers. Since they have been in search of a safe place for their stay, working women hostels were established, which provided them their basic requirements. Around 1991, Government of Tamilnadu opened up such working women's hostels at several urban centers like Chennai, Cuddalore, Trichy, Putukottai, Madurai, Hosur, and Tuticorin. The construction of working women hostels were undertaken by private non-profit organizations, for whom the Government has provided them 15% of the construction cost. Initially, during the year 1991, around 355 working women were accommodated in these hostels.

10. GUIDANCE BUREAUX FOR WOMEN

In order to ensure self - employment opportunities for the most disadvantaged sections of the women society like the widows, deserted wives and women in poverty, to undertake petty trades, bank loans were arranged through nationalized banks of India. The most eligible beneficiaries were identified for whom with a subsidy of Rs.600, bank loans were arranged, through the guidance bureaux for women. Also this Bureau provides them necessary guidance regarding their continuing education, and the education of their children, besides free legal aid, and such other retirement benefits.

11. TAMIL NADU WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The D.M.K. Government keeping in mind the development of women across Tamilnadu has gone to the extent of establishing an exclusive women development corporation. The Chief Minister stated that Tamilnadu is the forerunner to establish an exclusive corporation meant for the development of women, especially to promote the employment generating activities. This women's development corporation devised a massive socioeconomic development programme, at a cost of forty six crores of rupees with is expected to benefit around 45,000 women in Tamilnadu. As a part of this massive programme, more than 30 lakhs of women were provided employment opportunities, both part time and full time by the Khadi and Village Industries Board. These apart, around two hundred women were given financial assistance to purchase auto-rickshaws. Apart from the already existing six industrial training institutes, six more such units were ordered. As per the details available, around 20,000 women were employed to prepare school uniforms and around 38 lakhs of rupees was provided towards meeting the expenses.

12. SELF - EMPLOYMENT SCHEME FOR WOMEN

During the years 1990-1991, one more self-employment scheme for women was implemented for which an amount of Rs.2.25 lakhs was set aside to provide them monetary assistance, stipend, etc., Around thirty women who sought self-employment were given auto-rickshaws which they can use to generate income to maintain their families. For this purpose the Government has given them fifteen percent of margin money and the remaining 85 percent was funded by Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation (TIIC). In order to facilitate to them the vehicles provided to them they have been granted necessary permits and licenses were issued operate them.

13. CONCLUSION

Throughout dmk and kalaingar political career, he has championed the causes of the oppressed, depressed classes, deprived communities, and all those living below the poverty line. dmk primary goal was always to uplift all of these segments of Tamil society. All efforts were pitched towards the depressed classes and communities across Tamilnadu. Kalaingar humanitarian efforts and legislations towards the oppressed, the most disadvantaged communities, and the most vulnerable sections of society are not only commendable and incomparable. His visionary social development programmes and the missions of his accomplishments are unparalleled not only in Tamilnadu's history, but in the history of the entire Indian subcontinent. Most of his charitable and benevolent programmes, which have primarily benefited the poor, have set a precedent not only in Tamil Nadu politics but also across the political spectrum of India.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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