

A Study on the Impact of Periyar Ideology in DMK Stalin Government in Tamilnadu

R. Darshini¹ and Dr. S. Muruganandhan²

B.A.L.L.B¹

Assistant Professor²

Saveetha School of Law, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Science (SIMATS), Chennai
hram50212@gmail.com and muruganandhans.ssl@saveetha.com

Abstract: Periyar saw Hinduism as a fundamental degradation of the non-Brahmin community in general, the Dalits in particular. The sample size of the study is 250 and an empirical study was conducted with a convenient sampling method. This research aims to study the roots and the ideologies that Periyar gave to this society to remove the social disparities and bring equality among the people all over. Be it civilization development, inventions, discoveries, social transformations, cultural revolutions, protections, wars, peace-exchanges, technological innovations, agricultural developments, space, pharmaceuticals etcetera, the hidden humans behind the developments are always to be remembered and socialized to the upcoming budding generations. Periyar was a firebrand champion of human dignity. He was a relentless fighter for what he professed. Throughout his life he spread the messages of rationalism, atheism, abolition of casteism, gender justice and self respect for the so-called Surdas and fought for these causes, with the people and among the people. He never wavered from his chosen path and remained active till his end. The statistical tool used is graphical representation. The final outcome of the research is that however what can be called an irony of history or the poverty of Indian intellectual life is that Periyar is largely an unknown figure today. Periyar has donated a lot to the society, among which the thought of his eradicating caste and treating all people equally majorly added in uplifting the society and broadening the minds of the people.

Keywords: Intellectual, atheist, civilisation, degradation, Dalits, revolution

I. INTRODUCTION

Periyar E V Ramasamy, a man of an ideology who made a remarkable impact on the socio-cultural reforms which led to the social reformation in India specially in South India. A man with different ideologies, social reformer who died so many years ago but still he is remembered for his astonishing work for mankind. The caste system which was the main threat to humanity, Periyar was the man who worked to bring the people who are still below poverty line because of their caste system and they are untouchable in the society. He was the main propounder of the self-respect movement. The plenty of advantages and opportunities given to the upper class people were unchallenged and unquestioned in those days. The privileges and advantages which were used in the name of caste by the Brahmins was questioned by Periyar and led the way to the new reforms and challenges, which spread like wildfire all around the country. Periyar questioned and opposed the priorities and freedom which was given by Vedas to the upper class people and even had the existence of god. Periyar has taken an extremist position on so many issues concerning the downtrodden population of the society.

Besides being a well-known wealthy businessman in Erode Mr. E.V.R. entered into public life by rendering social services selflessly. Once the dreadful contagious disease plague attacked Erode. Hundreds of people died and thousands fled to save their lives. But this noble man did not desert his native town like other rich merchants. He himself carried the dead bodies on his back to the cremation ground while even the close kith and kin did not touch the expired persons for last rites due to the fear of the contagion of the plague disease. He became the Chairman of Erode Municipality. Despite his intense hatred towards the Hindu religion and its caste-system - particularly the cruel



‘Untouchability’ exerted by the Brahmins to suppress the Dravidian race - the executive efficiency and the unshakable honesty of E.V.R. fetched the awards of many posts in various public institutions. Periyar was made Honorary Magistrate by the British Government.

Many essential welfare schemes were implemented effectively by him. Particularly the drinking water scheme was skilfully executed. The policy of Prohibition of Liquors was first conceived only at the house of Periyar. When Gandhi came to Erode stayed at his residence, his wife Nagammal and his sister Kannammal explained unbearable agony of the wives tortured by their drunkard husbands and strongly stressed to draw a policy on prohibition of liquors. Periyar appreciated the measures of the Justice Party Government for implementing the policy of Reservation in education and employment through Government Order.

So that ‘Satyagraha’ - agitation was started by local Congress party people. E.V.R. was not only a man of simple words but an actioner who indulged in a lot of protests and picketing for the sake of people. For the benefit of the human community, he chopped down 100's of coconut trees in order to show himself as a true model for others. The prohibition which he initiated through this kind of act has opened his eyes around his village and served as a pioneering act. Ideas and Actions: Revolutionaries born on occasions and also in situations. When analysing Periyar 's characteristics trait his seemed to be a situational one. The Kasi incident was a one by which he got a turbulent mind change and also propelled him to think deeply towards the social setup in the atmosphere. The Indian national movement produced more revolutionaries. Revolutionaries born on occasions and also in situations. When analysing Periyar's characteristics, his trait seemed to be a situational one. The Kasi incident was a one by which he got a turbulent mind change and also propelled him to think deeply towards the social set-up in the atmosphere. The Indian national movement produced more revolutionaries. The French revolution also had the same impact. Self-respect ideology of E.V.R is one among his ideologies which played a greater role in Tamilnadu. Realising the subjugation attitude of Brahmanism, E.V.R started to propagate the self-respect ideal which spreaded out all among the peoples of Tamilnadu. As per the self-respect ideology, marriages were conducted and even now without enchanting mantras by Brahmins.

Objectives

- To interpret the ideologies of Periyar in the current society
- To define the impact of the caste system prevailed in the previous times
- To analyze the life and struggles of Periyar
- To assess the steps taken by Periyar to eradicate caste system in the society

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Kannan 2017, pp. 241–42). That the icon of Periyar would provoke Hindu upper-caste sentiments has been considered an unwritten truth over the decades.

Periyar (1879–1973) is seen by his supporters in South India as a rationalist, the key figure of the Dravidian Self-Respect Movement, an anti-caste campaigner, a champion of the social and political rights of the lower castes, a proto-feminist, and a fighter for greater autonomy for Tamil Nadu.

(Guérin 2010, p. 60), Periyar had a cautious approach to the state, and did not give a call for its immediate abolition. While his utopia of the future was a stateless society, he did fight for greater rights for the Dalits and lower castes, especially with regards to proportionate representation, within the existing state.

(Aloysius 2016). One might perhaps find here similarities to the strategies of state socialism than anarchism. However, there is much in the essence of Periyar's political thought to suggest a greater affinity with anarchist thinking, especially with respect to religion and social power. In essence, Periyar's works reveal his greater interest in the ‘unmasking of power’ than replacing it with anything akin to a Soviet style dictatorship of the proletariat.

(Newman 2007, p. 27). Bakunin further believed that the state and religion were bonded in a (un)holy marriage that prevented emancipation of the poor and the working classes, keeping them in a state of subservience. Periyar, while not



explicitly anti-statist like Bakunin, nevertheless saw the Indian state as a hurdle for the emancipation of the Dalits and the other lower castes.

(Ramasamy 2011b, p. 149). But, as Manoharan argues elsewhere, he does this without supporting an alternate nationalism or nation-state formation, with his argument as regards state power being that the Indian nation-state privileged Brahmins and condemned the Tamil people to being in the state of Shudrahood¹ and untouchability.

(Ramasami 2009, p. 11), but it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore Periyar's gender politics in detail. Periyar's criticism of the Hindu religion, Brahmin supremacy and the Indian state was fundamentally a criticism of social power. In this, he has much in common with Bakunin and this comparison is worth pursuing, aiming to provide a coherent account of Periyar's approach to religion.

(Kaali 2018, p. 45). Critical debates on the Hindu religion, whether it was to be reformed or done away with altogether, took place in the last decades of the 19th century, spilling over to the 20th century. Further, Dalit-subaltern intellectuals rediscovered the Buddha's teachings for "the greater purpose of expressing the modern value-form of egalitarian fraternity, solidarity and identity of the larger and inclusive society".

(Shulman 2016, pp. 307–8). Social critics of this period "identified the creatures called rakshasas in Ramkatha² with indigenous inhabitants of the South whom they classify as 'Dravidians' and glorified Ravana.

(Richman 2008, p. 14). The influential neo-Saivite thinker Maraimalai Adigal criticised the Kamba Ramayana for "distorting reality and fooling the masses into believing in fabulous and fantastic tales"

(Chidambaranar 2016, p. 92)Chidambaranar speculates that two local personalities might have influenced Periyar's approach to religion and politics. One was Maruthaiya Pillai, a Tamil scholar, a strong opponent of caste, rituals and religion, who also belonged to Periyar's hometown Erode and was known as a blunt and bold intellectual.

(Venkatachalapathy 2017, pp. 102–33).Periyar set out on a tour of Western countries in December 1931. He travelled to England, France, Germany, Greece, USSR, Spain, and also Egypt and Turkey. He interacted with socialist groups in Berlin and Madrid. His longest stay in the West was in Russia, where he was greatly impressed by the socialist project.

(Venkatachalapathy 2018, p. 9) On his return, Periyar published translated works advocating atheism and socialism like The Communist Manifesto, Bhagat Singh's Why I am an Atheist, Bertrand Russell's Why I am not a Christian, Lenin's works on religion, Robert Ingersoll's essays and so on.

(Manoharan 2019, pp. 14–15)His Soviet trip cemented his commitment to atheism. While he enthusiastically supported socialism, he was averse to the Indian Communist parties for being dominated by Brahmin leadership which would, he thought, not destroy but perpetuate hierarchy.

(Ramasamy 2006b, p. 95)More than two decades later, he would write in Viduthalai, another party paper, on 3 December 1957 that the assumption that Hinduism is their religion and that India is their state led to the downfall of the Tamils as a nation. In 1969, he described his mission as the following "I am a reformer of the human society. I do not care about country, god, religion, language, or the state. I am only concerned about the welfare and growth of the human society".

(Chomsky 2014, p. 6)The question of conquest or destruction of state power is what Bakunin regarded as the primary issue dividing himself from Marx", further adding that Bakunin anticipated the oppressive bureaucracy of such a state.

(Pandian 2007, pp. 196–205).Periyar also believed that an elite 'class' in India stood in the way of the law of equality. This elite class, the Brahmins, used the Hindu religion to ensure their superiority in society and the state was an instrument to cement this.

(Ramasamy 2012, p. 7)He believed that science and rationality would displace god and that the West (he was referring to the USSR) was setting an example of such a society. Along with god, states, wars, money, slavery, and oppression of women would also end and there would be a universal community where the oppression of any would provoke the indignation of all. **(Ramasamy 2013, p. 265)** He saw the campaign for rationalism as vital to challenge the Hindu religionists and empower the lower castes. In his words, "What I am doing is not political work—but a work for rationalism! Rationalism must spread among the people. Rationalism must be taught to those people who have been brutally oppressed and they must be humanised"



(Ramasamy 1992, p. 97) Periyar was critical of both the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins who upheld the Hindu religion. He argued that the imitation of Brahmin practices “has resulted in our degrading and enslaving womankind and making women walking corpses”, calling for an end of such tradition.

(Richman 1995, p. 633) Periyar vocally challenged the projection of Ramraj as an ideal state. To Periyar, Ramraj was symbolic of the supremacy of Brahminism against the interests of the lower castes, of North Indian-Aryans over the South Indian-Dravidians, of patriarchy over women’s liberation, of hierarchy over equality. Paula Richman argues that to Periyar “Ramraj was a pernicious brahminic fiction designed to keep nonbrahmins from challenging the status quo”

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A proper study through empirical research has been followed here and a total of 200 samples has been collected for this study. All of these samples have been collected through a convenient sampling method. The sample has been collected from people in and around Tamilnadu that is from the convenient sample units of the researcher. The independent variables used here are gender , age , educational qualifications, occupation, living. The dependant variables are the best movement done by Periyar, do you agree that the ideologies of Periyar should be accepted by all the people in the society for better development, etc.

Hypothesis

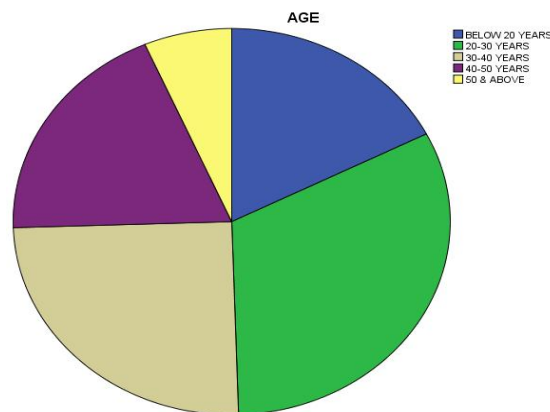
This research study is assigned to assess the impacts of Periyar ideology in the current society

HO : There is no significant difference regarding the impact of Periyar ideology in current society.

Ha : There is a significant difference regarding the impact of Periyar ideology in current society.

IV. ANALYSIS

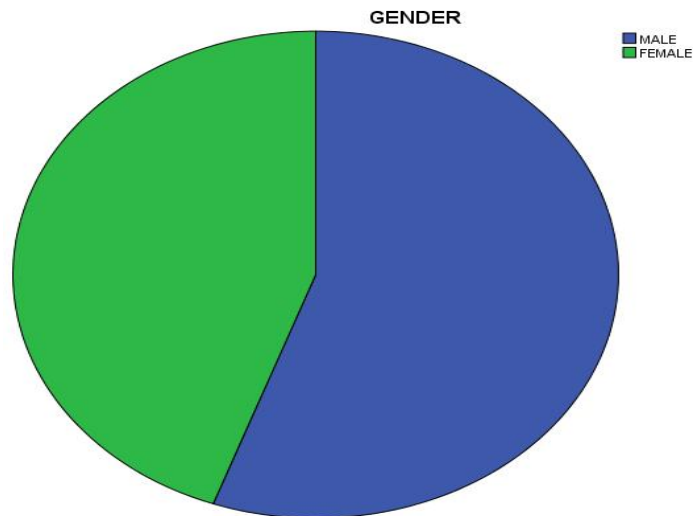
Figure 1 :



LEGEND : This figure 1 represents the frequency of age of the respondents.

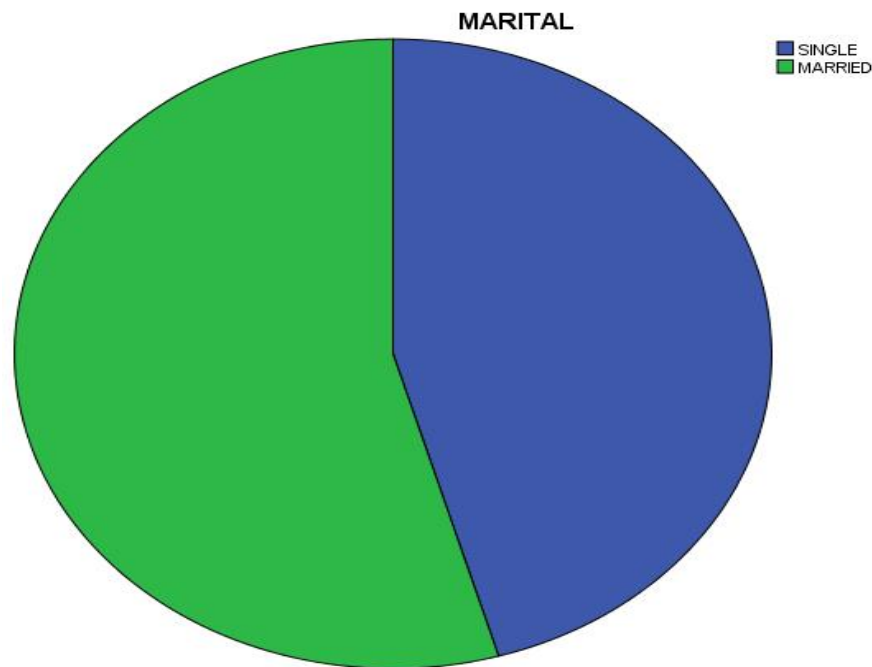


Figure 2 :



LEGEND : This figure 2 represents the frequency of gender of the respondents.

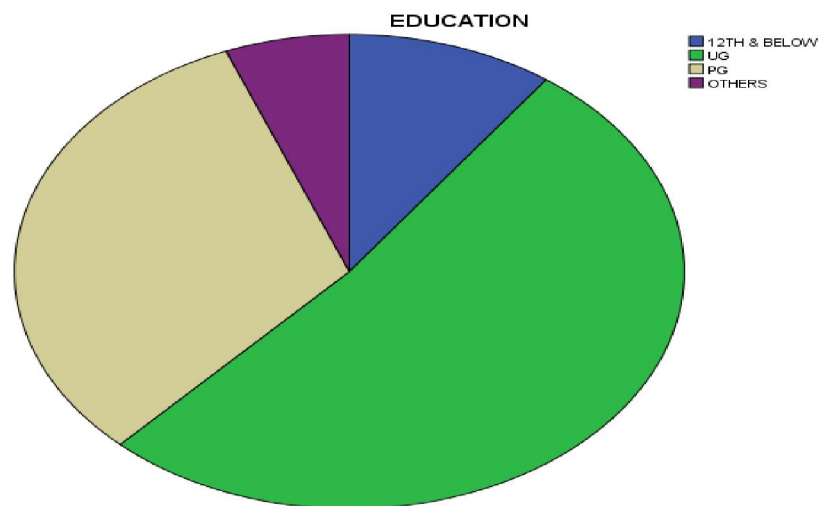
Figure 3 :



LEGEND : This figure 3 represents the frequency of marital status of the respondents.

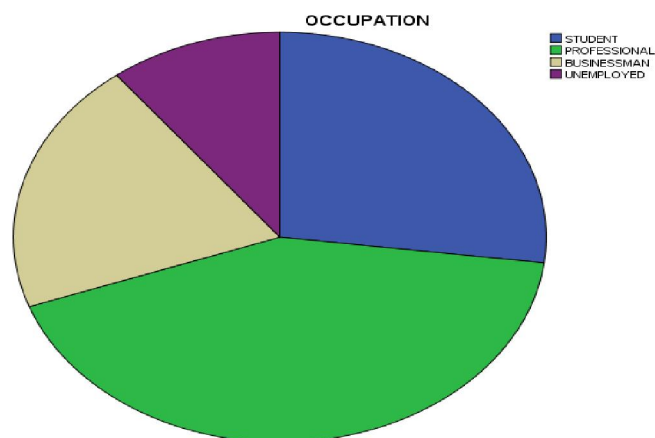


Figure 4 :



LEGEND : This figure 4 represents the frequency of educational qualifications of the respondents.

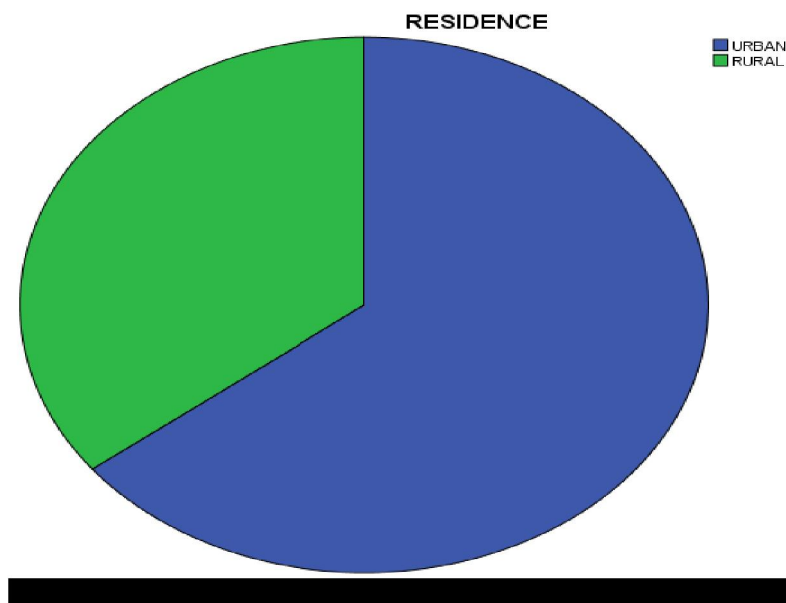
Figure 5 :



LEGEND : This figure 5 represents the frequency of occupation of the respondents.

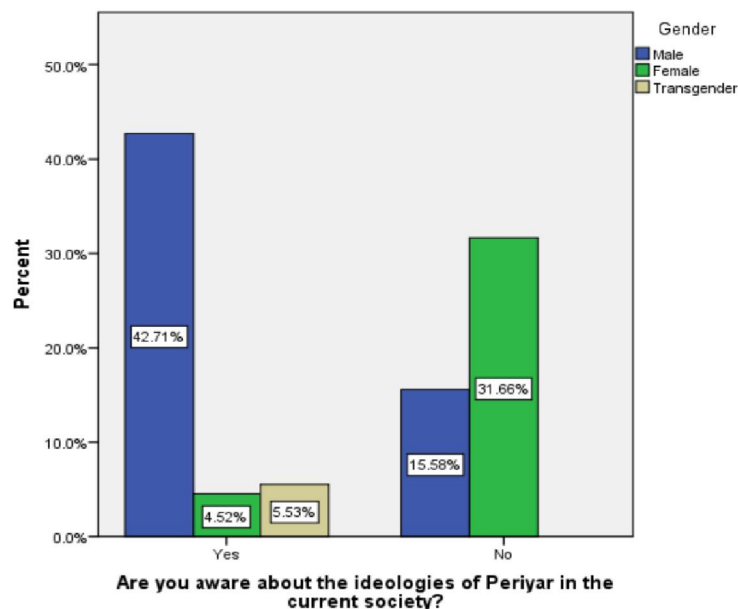


Figure 6:



LEGEND : This figure 6 represents the frequency of residence of the respondents.

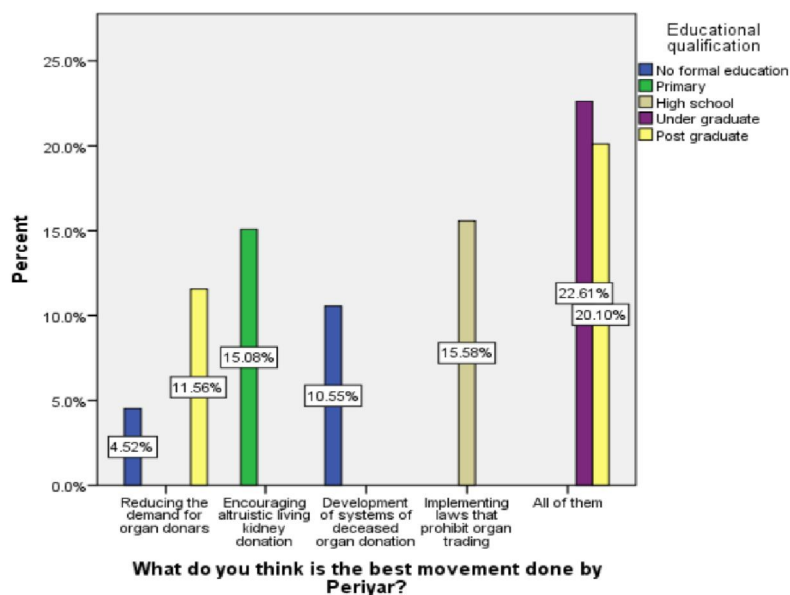
Figure 7:



LEGEND: The graph depicts whether the people are aware about the ideologies of Periyar in the current society.

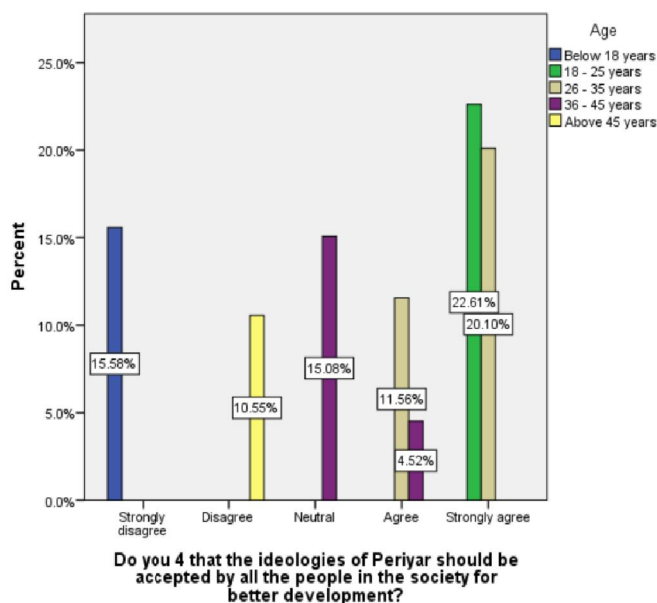


Figure 8:



LEGEND: The graph depicts what was the best movement that was done by Periyar.

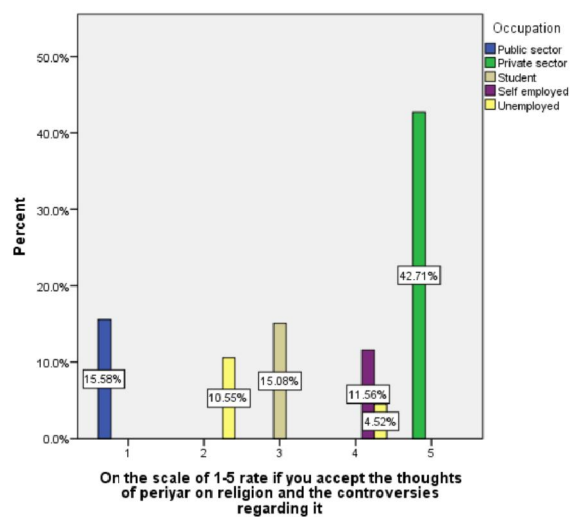
Figure 9:



LEGEND: The graph shows whether people know that the ideologies of Periyar should be accepted by all the people in the society for better development.

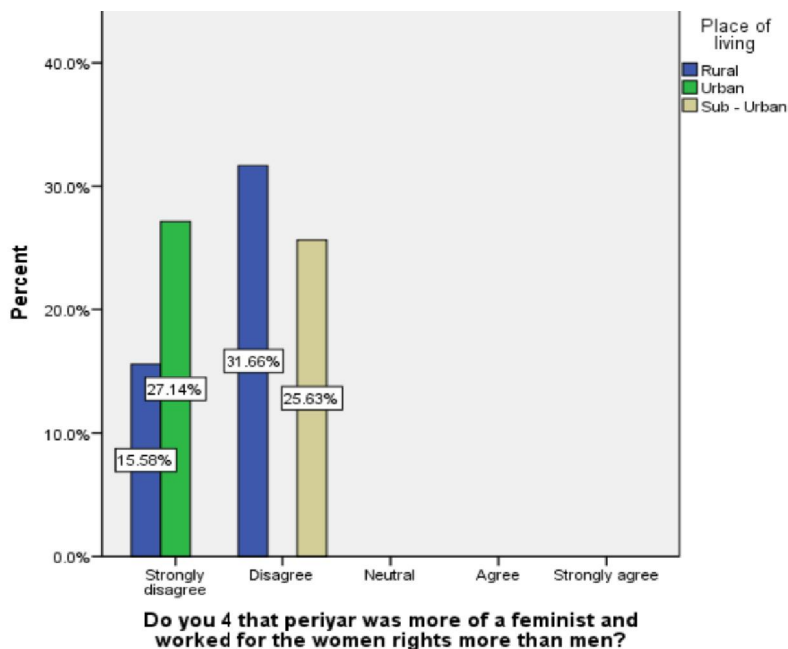


Figure 10:



LEGEND: The graph shows the scaling from 1 to 5 whether people accept the thoughts of Periyar on religion and the controversy regarding it.

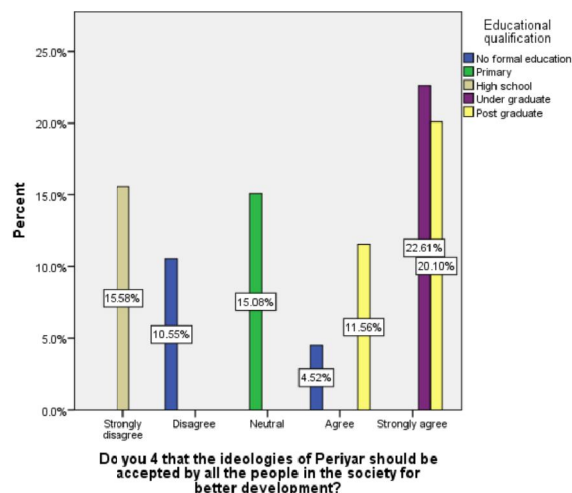
Figure 11:



LEGEND: The figure shows whether people know that Periyar was more of a feminist and worked for women rights more than men.

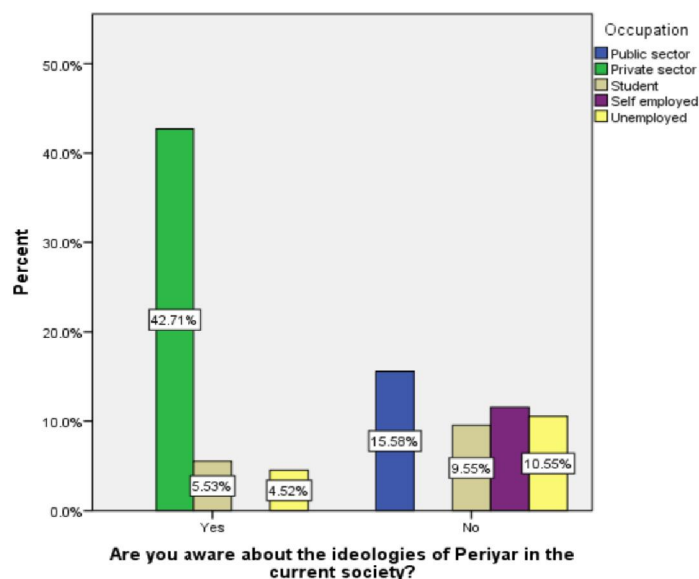


Figure 12:



LEGEND: The graph depicts that whether people know that ideologies of Periyar should be accepted by all the people in the society for better development.

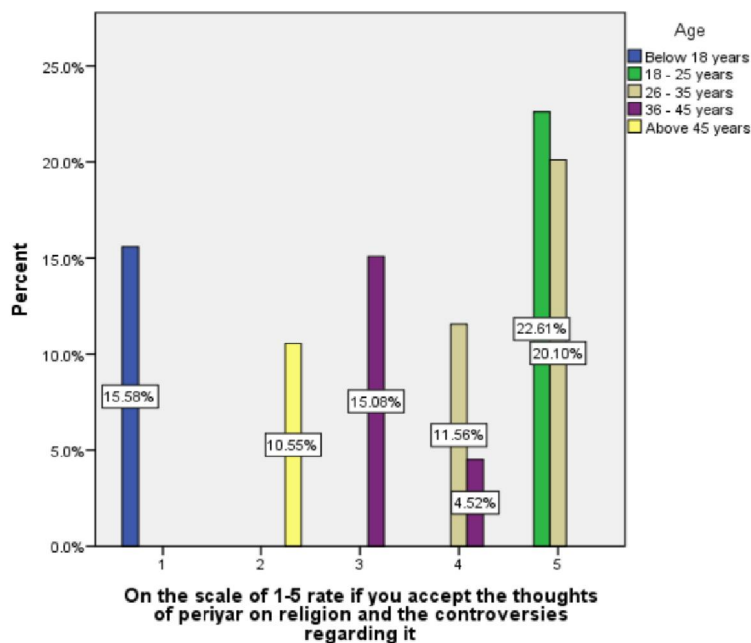
Figure 13:



LEGEND: The graph represents whether people are aware about the ideologies of Periyar in the current society.



Figure 14:



LEGEND: The graph shows the rating from 1 to 5 if people accept the thoughts of Periyar on religion and the controversies regarding it.

Table 1:

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	618.060 ^a	20	.000
Likelihood Ratio	457.525	20	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.366	1	.037
N of Valid Cases	199		

a. 18 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.16.

LEGEND: The above table is a chisquare test conducted between an independent and dependent variable.



TABLE 2:

Correlations

			Place of living	What do you think is the best movement done by Periyar?
Spearman's rho	Place of living	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.236**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	199	199
	What do you think is the best movement done by Periyar?	Correlation Coefficient	-.236**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	199	199

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

LEGEND: The above table is a correlation analysis done between an independent and dependent variable.

V. RESULT

In **figure 1** it represents the frequency of the age of the respondents with majority of people belonging to the age of 20 to 30 years in **figure 2** it represents the gender of the respondents with majority as male as the respondents in **figure 3** it represents the frequency of the marital status of the respondents with majority of the people being married in **figure 4** it represents the frequency of educational qualifications of the respondent with majority of the people pursuing UG in **figure 5** it represents frequency of the occupation of the respondents with majority of the people doing professional job in **figure 6** it represents the frequency of residence of the respondents with majority of the people belonging to urban areas in **figure 7** it depicts whether the people or aware about the ideologies of Periyar in the current society and majority of the male with 42.71 % agreed that they were aware about the ideology of Periyar in **figure 8** the graph shows what was the best moment that was done done by Periyar in this the undergraduate people with the majority of 22.61% has said that they know all the best moment that was done by Periyar in **figure 9** it shows whether the people know that the ideologies of Periyar should be accepted by all the people in the society for better development in this the people of age group 18 to 25 strongly agree the statement in **figure 10** it was a rating question if people accept the thoughts of Periyar on religion and the controversies regarding it in this majority of the private sector people with 42.71% has agreed and said that the thoughts of people upon religion are controversial in **figure 11** it shows that do you know Periyar was more of a feminist and work for women more than men in this people strongly agree with the percentage of 27.14% that yes Periyar worked more for the women's rights in **figure 12** it says that do you know the ideologies of Periyar should be accepted by all the people in the society for better development people strongly agree the statement with 22.61% that it should be accepted by the people in **figure 13** it states that are you aware about the ideologies of Periyar in the current society with majority of private sector people with 42.771% says that yes the ideologies of Periyar are known to them in **figure 14** it says that the rating from 1 to 5 scaling whether you accept the thoughts of Periyar or religion and controversies regarding it so people of the age 18 to 25 years have said that they accept the thoughts of Periyar on religion **table 1** depicts the Chi Square test done between age and the controversies of Periyar on religion and **table 2** depicts the correlation test done between an independent variable gender and dependent variable Are people aware about the ideologies of Periyar in the current society.

VI. DISCUSSION

In figure 7 the graph shows whether the people are aware about the ideologies of Periyar and it was a good notable point that people are still aware about the ideologies of Periyar in the current society and still implementing it. In figure



8 was asked about the best moment done by Periyar and few of the moments are principles of nationalism, self-respect women rights, eradication of caste, and all of them and people have said that all of the implementation is have been great and been useful for the society in figure 9 it was asked that do you know that the ideologies of Periyar should be accepted by the people for better development and for a good cause people have agreed that it should be implemented for a better developed country and people to be more civilised in Graph 10 it was asked of a rating from 1 to 5 whether they accept the thoughts of Periyar on religion and controversies regarding it despite many controversies being a rise there are still good things which Periyar tried to abolish about the religion and caste system and I think which the people should surely implement in the daily lives in figure 11 it says that if people knows that Periyar was more than a mere feminist and worked for women rights and people agree that yes Periyar has a done a lot of struggle for the women rights and the woman empowerment than the men, in figure 12 it was asked that do you know that the ideologies of Periyar should be accepted by people in the society and people have agreed and said that yes the ideologies of Periyar will bring a lot of changes in the society. Figure 13 it was asked whether the people or aware about the ideologies of Periyar and majority of the people has said that yes they are aware and it is a good point that still in the modern society the people are aware about the thoughts and the views of Periyar and it is a good point, in figure 14 it was a rating question from 1 to 5 other people except the thoughts of Periyar on religion and the controversies regarding it despite bringing a lot of controversial point on the religion but people still agree that thought and accept the views given by Periyar on religion and the next test was done as a Chi Square test in which it it depicted the independent and dependent variable and the next was a correlation test which was done between a dependent and independent variable.

Limitation

There are certain limitations that were faced by the researcher during the study liking sampling error where it failed to reflect the appropriate population due to the limited ability to gain access. There might be some errors due to lack of previous research studies on the same topic. Research was limited only around Tamilnadu by online mode. There are limitations to conducting a thorough analysis of the result because of the lack of time in conducting the research.

Suggestion

Since the ideologies of have been known by a lot of people there is still a very few implementation of his ideologies all over, despite working a lot on the eradication of caste system people still practise the tradition of caste and there are still many controversies regarding it, the educated people should come forward and take further more steps in respect to the thoughts and ideologies which was given by Periyar and bring a change in the society for a better developed country.

VII. CONCLUSION

Periyar E V Ramaswamy openly condemned the part of puranas, myths and blind beliefs in the society and the people who followed it. Periyar wanted to inculcate a practical oriented thinking in the minds of the people, who are following unscientific procedures and customs. He openly opposed Brahmins and their spiritual practices while performing pooja and functions. Periyar addressed many gathering and visited every corner of Tamil Nadu and different parts of India to insist a person to think and to have innovative ideas which helps the society and the people. According to Periyar the society which gives equal rights to women will definitely develop and prosper. The inspired lectures of Periyar encouraged many people all around the country to have self respect and to lead a better life and to see a better world for our young generation. Periyar opined that women all along the nations of the world were oppressed and exfoliated for fulfilling the desires of men. The patriarchal society has to be demolished; women must come away from confined duties viz., home making, cooking, child rearing duties. Periyar advocated women to indulge in public services like Plato and Aristotle's advocacy.

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