

CHAPTER II

The Nadars – A Portrayal

Among the multifarious communities of the peninsular India, in Tamil country i-e., in the erstwhile Madras Presidency, the **Nadar** community, which was generally known as **shanar** community, was one among the suppressed and oppressed communities in the 19th century. But by virtue of their own personal traits and calibre they withstood social and economic challenges and gradually attained status on par with the other affluent communities in the 20th century.¹ The **Nadars** were treated as **shanars** who were the great toddy-driving caste of the southern districts of the Tamil country and they were usually placed at a level a little above the **Pallas** and **Parayans**.² During the last decade of the 19th century there were 1,03,561 **Shanar** individuals. It is worth to note that they were hardworking, industrious people and pauperism was almost unknown to them. Many were farmers and many of them were engaged in trade and there was even one **shanar** Zamindar. The spread of Christianity amongst them improved their material status. The Hindu **shanars** were generally saivites, but in reality their religion was demonolatry and the cult of devils was particularly vigorous among them.³

During the last quarter of the 19th century, the Tinnevely region was the most concentrated area of the **Nadar** community.⁴

Tenkarai	Taluk	- 40.75%
Nanguneri	„	- 32.40%

¹ Robert L.Hardgrave, **The Nadars of Tamilnad**, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2006, Preface XVIII.

² **Census of India, 1891, Vol.XIII**, Madars, 1892, p.297.

³ **Idem.**

⁴ J.A. Stuart, **Manual of the Tinnevely District**, Madras, 1879. p.164.

Ambasamudram	„	- 15%
Tenkasi	Taluk	- 20.00%
Tinnevelly	„	- 8.50%
Ottapidaram	„	- 12.00%
Sankaranaynar Kovil	„	- 7.50%
Srivilliputtur	„	- 8.75%
Sattur	„	- 14.00%

It is also worth to note that they started their movement above establishing themselves in the 19th century itself⁵. The Kshatriya Christians who were 5,100 in number were the **shanars**.⁶ They called themselves **Nadans** (a name signifying the land or the soil), the shanar land owners who claim right of superiority over most of the villages kept themselves separate from the other **shanars**, who were toddy-tapers. Anyhow, they, as a caste, were most turbulent, oppressive and proud like the warriors.⁷ They went even to the extent of submitting petitions to the Prime Minister of England

W.E. Gladstone and the Home Secretary of India through G. Gnanamuthu Nadar dated 13th June 1883 and 25th July 1883 respectively.⁸ Such demands were further sent to the Governor

⁵ Sathia varthamani, 15, August, 1883.

⁶ Madras Church Record, September, 1874, Madras, p.288.

⁷ Report of Rev. Caldwell to the Government of Madras, dated 30, June, 1845, p.6.

⁸ Y. Gnanamuthu Nadar, **Shanars are Kshatriyas**, V.N. Jubilee Press, Madras, 1889, pp.135

of Madras and Superintendent of Madras Museum dated 18, August 1883, and 25th June 1883 respectively⁹. Such facts stand to prove that the **Nadars** were so keen and particular on maintaining their position as Kshatriyas because they were warriors.

In this regard, it is worth to note that the ancestors of **Nadars** were occupying a high position during the Chola and Pandya periods in the name called **Nadalwars**. As they were the heads of the administrative units called **Nadu** they were titled as **Nadalvars**.¹⁰ There are ample references to attest to this fact.

The Karur Pasupateeswara temple inscription reveals that the **Jeyamuri Nadalvan** led an army to Srilanka during 1053 A.D..¹¹ Vedaranyam was guarded by **Edirily Ganga Nadalvan**.¹² The Tiruttondeesurar temple inscription of Acharappakkam mentions that **Sandamangala Nadalvan**, the grand son of **Irungolappadi Nadalvan** offered a bronze lamp to that temple.¹³ One **Akkur Nadalvan** was ordered to rebuild the dilapidated Chembanpalliyar temple at Cembanar Koil during the rule of Kulottunga III.¹⁴ In 1073 A.D. **Adayur Nadalvan** donated cows for burning a perpetual lamp at the Virattanamudayar temple at Adayur.¹⁵ The terms **Karikalachola Adayur Nadalvan**,¹⁶ **Uthama Chola Magadai Nadalvan**¹⁷

136.

⁹ **Ibid.**, pp.136-137.

¹⁰ M. Gandhi Dasan, "Nadalvarkal", **Mahajanam**, 27, December, 1984, pp.21-27.

¹¹ South Indian Inscription Vol. IV No.21.

¹² **Ibid**, No.544.

¹³ **A.R.E.** 359/1902.

¹⁴ **Ibid.**, No.170/1925.

¹⁵ **S.I.I.** Vol. VIII, No.84.

¹⁶ **A.R.E.** No.114/1900.

¹⁷ **S.I.I.** Vo. VIII No.863.

Amunurkandan Nadalvan,¹⁸ Uttama Kalayur Nadalvan,¹⁹ Virupparaya Nadalvan²⁰ will testify to the above facts. While the above were few **Nadalvars** of the Chola period, there were **Nadalvars** in the Pandya country too. They were also responsible for the maintenance of an administrative unit called **Nadu**.²¹

During the 14th year of Maravarman Sundara Pandya's regime in 1230 A.D, one **Kandiyur Nadalvan** had donated land at Sathaneri for having sung a Tamil poem.²² **Rajagambira Anjukottai Nadalvan** was the head of the **Elagapadai** of Thiruvudagam.²³

Kalavali Nadalvan, in 1202 A.D., during the reign of Jatavarman Kulasekara made arrangements for the survey of land at Vembattur region and to fix up the land revenue for that period.²⁴ The Perayur Naganatha swamy temple contains two inscriptions referring to **Raja Raja Nadalvan, Uthama Chola Nadalvan, Kottaiyar Nadalvan** belonging to the 22nd regnal year of Maravaman Kulasekara i-e. 1289-90 A.D.²⁵ Another inscription available at the Siva temple of Poovalaikkudi village of Tirumeyyam Taluk dated 1532-33 A.D mentions about **Pillaimalai Nadalvan**.²⁶ The names **Vadvala Tirukkai Nadalvar, Augutta Nadalvar, Pungunra Nadalvar, Kandiyur Nadalvan, Gangaiyaru Nadalvan, Dhaludur Nadalvan, Alattur Nadalvan, Vinaganga Nadalvan, Galavandaya Nadalvar, Pandimandala Nadalvar,**

¹⁸ A.R.E. No. 388/1909

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 173/1894.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 230/1920.

²¹ M. Ilancheliyan **Pandya Kula Nadarkal**, Cheliyan Pattippagam, Virudhunagar, 1999 p.113.

²² *Ibid.*, p.116.

²³ S.I.I. Vo. III, P.212

²⁴ A.R.E 667/1916.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 165/1907.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 151/1907.

Anjukottai Nadalvar, are the names of 11 **Nadalvars** mentioned as people who involved in the fratricidal warfare between Kulasekara Pandya and Vikarama Pandya in 1171 A.D.²⁷ Such facts stand to prove that the **Nadalvars** were the ancestors of the **Nadars**. Due to the termination of the Chola and Pandya powers, the **Nadalvars** adopted to toddy tapping, an independent occupation for earning their livelihood. Their social status was also a degraded one.

In the 19th century, they are portrayed as a polluted caste and they had no rights to approach a man of a high caste.²⁸ Their position was just above the **Vannan** and **Ambattan** i.e. washerman and barber communities respectively. But they were not untouchables. Anyhow, they were marked as the right hand castes on par with the **Vellalar**, **Vannars** and **Ambattans** due to the privileges which they obtained from their Goddess Kali. There are myths which stand to prove that they were **Kali putras**.²⁹ They were worshippers of Mariamman, the inflictor of small pox and Maha Kali, the cholera goddess.³⁰

The **Nadars**, who had their own individual qualities, were also known as **Nadars**. The Muthukrishnapuram (**Kuthiraimoli Theri**)

inscription dated 1639 A.D. refers to **Aditha Nadan**, **Govinda Panikka Nadan**, **Veerappa Nadan**, **Thithiyappa Nadan**, **Ayyakketti Nadan**, **Thikkellam Katti Nadan**, **Ninaithathu**

²⁷ Ramalinga Gurukkal and V.A. Kumarayya Nadar, **Nadar Mannarum Nayakka Mannarum**, Sachidanandam Press, Virudhunagar, 1937, p.41.

²⁸ Samuel Mateer, **The land of Charity, An account of Travancore and its Devil worship**, Dodd and Meed, New York, 1870, p.32.

²⁹ K.S. Singh (Ed), **People of India, Tamilnadu**, Vol. XL. Part II, Anthropological Survey of India, Madras, 1997, p.1052.

³⁰ R. Caldwell, **The Tinnevely Shanars: A Sketch**, Madras, 1849, p.25.

Muditta Nadan, Avathaikkuthevi Nadan as Nattatti Nadars.³¹ The following list also will mention the availability of **Nadan** in the 17th 18th centuries.³²

Source	Date	Name of the Nadar
Thiruchendur stone inscription	1584 A.D.	SivanthiAditha Nadan and Kumarasamy Nadan.
Achchampadu (Ramnad Dist) Inscription	1646 A.D.	Kuttam Chandradichcha Nadars. Kommadikkottai Thiruppappu Nadan, Pudukkaipparru Amudhakutti AdhichchaNadan, MadhavanKurichchi TirukkaiVeladhichca Nadan,Periyakandan Vadalivira Marthanda

³¹ A.R.E. 306/1963-64.

³² Nio. P. Singaravel, **Nadarkulam**, Pandayon Pattippagam, Madurai, 2008, pp.39-42.

Nadan.

Vikramasigapuram inscription	1662 A.D.	Sevvanthi Nadan.
Kulasekara pattinam inscription	1752	Chandra Marthanda PanikkaNadan, KumaraviraMarthanda Nadan.
Sivakasi copper plate of Thiruvadudurai Adeenam	1769	Ariya puthira Nadan, Thambi Nadan, Siva muruga Nadan.
Tirumurugan Poondi copper plate	1770	Cheinna Tambi Nadan, Chokkalinga Nadan.
Alangulam copperplate	1774 and 12 other	Dalavoy Nadan Nadans.

From the above facts, it is revealed that the **Nadars** hailed from the group of people called **Nadalvan**. Then after the 17th century, they were known as **Nadan**. Simultaneously in the 18th and 19th centuries they were having their name **shanar** due to their weak social status

which they obtained due to their toddy tapping profession. There are ample references to the fact that they were people of the same community and this could be attested by the following epithets.

“Nadan – A polite epithet in the south applied to the Shanars”.³³

Nadan is the title of **Shanars** and it was a corruption of **Shanrar**.³⁴ The **Tamil Lexicon** published in 1829 too attests to the same fact. **Abindana Chintamani** too points out that the term **Nadan** was title borne by **Shanars**. The same reference about **Shanar** is told as the corruptive form **Sanrar**.³⁵ **“Nadan is the ruler of Nadu”.**³⁶ It is also mentioned that the term **“Nadan means an owner of land or a land lord and was given to lords of the soil only”.**³⁷ They were all **Sandrar** or men of wise calibre. The **Shanars** were called by that name. The Tiruppullani inscription of Kumara Kampana dated 2, October 1374 contains the terms **sandrar ullitta satiku vari**³⁸ and it reveals the existence of a set of people called **sandrar**. In 1683 itself, John de Britto had referred to **Shanars**.³⁹ Muthukkutty Swamigal in his work called **Arulnul** had called the **shanars** as **Deiva Sanrorkal or Desam Venra Sanrorkal**.⁴⁰ Thus the status of shanar was a fluctuating one.

³³ J.P. Rottler (Ed) **Tamil English Dictionary**, 1834.

³⁴ U.V. Swaminatha Iyer (Ed) **Tamil Lexicon** Vol. II, 1842, p.25.

³⁵ **Tamil Etymological lexicon**, Madurai Tamil Sangam, Madurai 1912.

³⁶ **Census of India**, 1891, Madras Report, Vol.XII. Madras, 1892, p.297.

³⁷ **Indian Church Quarterly Review** Vol VI, 1897, p.54.

³⁸ **S.I.I.** Vol. VIII, No.400.

³⁹ H.R. Pate, **Madras District Gazetteer**, Tinnevely, Vol. I, Madras, 1917, p.297.

⁴⁰ **Arul Nul**, p.19.

The **Shanars** were thickly populated in the Tinnevely region. Hence they alone enjoyed the right of climbing the palmyra trees for extracting toddy. Among the **Shanars**, there were **Nalla Shanar** and **Kalla Shanar**. Even among the Shanars there were merchants and they enjoyed the privilege of using a palanquin. In the Tinnevely region, Adichcha Nadan, Vaikuntha Nadan, Kuttathu Nadan etc. were enjoying such rights.⁴¹ Though the **Shanars** were **Nadars**, having a lot of difficulties, they strove hard for maintaining their own individual practices such as using palanquin, wearing chapels etc.,⁴² Anyhow the term **Sanrar** or **Shanar** are derived from the root word **Sal** which means prestigious.⁴³ The prestigious **Shanars** met with a lot of distresses. There were many anti **shanar** riots and cases.⁴⁴ The following list will attest to the fact that the said community met with hardships due to such riots. Even before the sack of Sivakasi which took place in 1899, preliminary atrocities were committed to the Nadars in the surrounding areas.⁴⁵

Date	Shanars Villages attacked
3 rd May 1899	- Pattakulam
6 th May 1899	- Puduppatty

⁴¹ S. Soundira Pandian (Ed). **Idangai Valangaiyar Varalaru**, Govt. Oriental Manuscript library, Madras, 1995, p.82.

⁴² G.O. M.S. 2017-18 (Judicial) dated 12, December 1899.

⁴³ V. Nagam Aiya, **The Travancore State Manual** Vol.II, p.392.

⁴⁴ G.O. No.1471. Confidential No 154 dated 9, October 1900.

⁴⁵ M.S. Shanmugha Nadar, (Ed), **The Sack of Sivakasi and other atrocities in Tinnevely District**, Addison and co, Madras, 1889, p.1-3.

31 st May 1899	- Sukkiravarpatty, Iyyampatty
1 st June 1899	- Kunnur
2 nd June 1899	- Sankaralingapuram, Karisalkulam and Kattamar patty.

The **Nadars** had intimated the fact to the Governor in council on 26, May 1899, to the District Magistrate, Tinnevely on 5th June, 1899 and to the I.G. of police, Madras on 19, June 1899 by Telegrams.⁴⁶ But these delayed actions no way helped the **Nadars**. In addition to the above referred atrocities, they had to face many difficulties with regard to religion.

The Auppukkotai Riot case of 1860-61, Tiruchendur Temple entry case of 1872, The Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple Entry case of 1874,⁴⁷ Tiruthangal Temple Entry Case of 1876, Sivanananjapuram case of 1885, Kalugumalai case of 1895, Kamudi case of 1898,⁴⁸ Sivakasi riot of 1899⁴⁹ are the activities which bear ample testimony to the legal difficulties caused to Nadar by other communities.⁵⁰ But for these legal battles, the Government would not have adopted the term **Nadar** in place of **shanar** in all official documents.⁵¹

⁴⁶ **Ibid.**, pp 4-7. (Copies Telegrams are Printed)

⁴⁷ Calendar case No.799 of 1874 at the II Class Magistrate of Madurai.

⁴⁸ Official Suit No.33 of 1898 on the file of the Court, Madurai East, pp.125-128.

⁴⁹ G.O. No.20-17-18. (Judicial) Madras, December 1899.

⁵⁰ The letter from the Secretary, Nadar Mahajana Sangam No.138. dated 16, March 1921.

⁵¹ G.O. Ms. No.785 (Law General Dept) Madras, dated 7, July, 1921.

While such things were common and the **Nadars** faced them by legal proceedings in 1921, the Nadar population of the Madras Presidency was 6,55,252.⁵² This was a continuation of the **Nadars**, who occupied a noticeable position in various Tamil Districts, during 1911 as per the census of that year as mentioned below.

Name of the District	% of the Nadar Population
Madras	- 1.80%
Chingleput	- 1.64%
North Arcot	- 0.74%
Salem	- 2.36%
Coimbatore	- 3.28%
South Arcot	- 0.57%
Trichirappalli	- 0.62%
Madurai	- 2.22%
Ramnad	- 6.53%
Tinnevely	- 13.59%
Pudukkottai	- 0.63%

⁵² Census of India, 1921, Vol.XXV, Travancore, Part II, Trivandrum, 1922, pp.45-47.

Such facts indicate that the **Nadar** population in Tamilnadu was occupying a sizable position as a unit of social action.⁵³ But Robert Caldwell treated the **Nadars** as the highest division of the lowest class or the lowest of the Middle class.⁵⁴ In the 19th century, the **Nadars** were forbidden from approaching a man of higher caste and faced several difficulties caused by Maravars.⁵⁵

The dawn of 20th century met with a turning point in the history of the **Nadars**. The earlier suppressions and the temple entry movement, as noted below, stressed them to meet any kind of challenge posed to them. The **Nadars** raised their voice of protest against their prevention from entering the temples.⁵⁶

Year	place	Name of the Temple
1872	Kumarakoil	Murugan temple
1874	Madurai	Meenakshi Amman temple
1878	Tiruttangal	Siva temple
1885	Kollappatty	Amman temple
1890	Tiruchuli	Siva temple
1895	Kalugumalai	Amman temple

⁵³ M.N. Srinivas, **Castes in Modern India and other Essays**, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1962, p.41.

⁵⁴ Robert Caldwell, **op.cit.**, pp.4.5.

⁵⁵ Mateers, Samuel, **op.cit.**, p.32.

⁵⁶ A. Kesavamurthi, **Nadar Marumalarchi**, Pavai publications, Karur, 1998, pp.71-78.

1895	Sivakasi	Viswanatha Swamy temple
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1898	Kamudhi	Siva temple
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All these things, subsequently introduced a united integration among the **Nadars** in the 20th century. When their economic status was in the ascendancy the **Nadars** devoted themselves in their upliftment by involving in public welfare activities. They realised that things could be achieved in their favour only by constant efforts under multidimensional propositions. Instead of fighting with the fellow community members, the **Nadars** as a positive approach, concentrated on integrated, co-ordinated and co-operative approaches. They started their own temples, educational institutions, **pettais**, **uravinmuraish**, **mahamai**, **nandavanam** etc.⁵⁷ All such things enabled them to maintain their own individuality. With specific rules and regulations, the **Nadars** created **uravinmurai**, (a community organization which made every Nadar as kith and kin) in all the Nadar belt areas. They guided the **Nadars** to step forward in a progressive and developing way. The **Mahamai** (an amount set apart from the income of every **Nadar** individual to be utilized for the common welfare) assisted their economic stability. On 26, November 1891, the **Nadars** opened the first Hindu Primary School as a fee free school. In the 19th century itself, the following schools were constructed by the **Nadars** at different places to widen the horizon of knowledge and wisdom.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ **Ibid.**, p.90.

⁵⁸ **Ibid.**, p.91.

Year	Place	Name of the School
1885	Virudhunagar	Kshatriya Vidhyasala
1889	Kamudhi	Kamudhi Vidhyasala
1895	Aruppukkottai	Kshatriya High School

In 1895 itself, at Madurai, the **Nadars** in order to bring the **Nadars** under one organisation established the **Kshatriya Nadar Sangam**. But it did not function successfully. On 6, February 1910 at Porayar, Rao Bahadur T. Ratnasamy Nadar rejuvenated and revitalized the earlier society and it blossomed as **Nadar Mahajana Sangam**.⁵⁹ At this juncture, it will be apt and appropriate to have a portrayal of the **Nadars** before plunging into an analysis of the **Nadar Mahajana Sangam**, which is a coordinating agency of all the **Nadar Uravinmuraish** of Tamilnadu. To protect the **Nadars** by themselves and to promote their life, they had the **Uravinmurai**. This assisted them to lead a life of co-operation among **Nadars** with all promptness and security.⁶⁰

The **Dakshinamara** and **Uttaramara Nadar** merchants created **pettais** for their comfortable stay at times of their business tours in a safe and protected way. This enabled them to establish their resting places at important trade centres. The Sivakasi and Virudhunagar **Nadars** had their own centres at various places from Chennai to Tinnevely. They

⁵⁹ **Ibid.**, p.92.

⁶⁰ P. Rajadurai, **Uravinmurai**, Ilamaram Pattippagam, Virudhunagar, 1983, pp.93-95.

are known as **Mahamaitalangal**.⁶¹ The **Nadars** of Sathangudi, Thirumangalam, Sivakasi, Virudhupatti, Aruppukkottai, Palayampatti were called **Arur Nadars**. They were the heads of various other **Uravinmurais** located in the nearby areas.⁶² They were so particular in maintaining their own social status. By bringing out their own traits and qualities to the Superintendent of the Census Operation, they demanded him to describe them as Dravida Xatras, or Sandra race.⁶³

Further when the Govt. collected taxes, in the name called Nudi police taxes, for the security of the **Nadars** from the attacks by other communities it was opposed by the **Nadars**.⁶⁴ They even went to the extent of opposing V.G. Sinivasa Igengar, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai and T. Subramanya Mudaliar, who addressed Ramanathapuram District conference held at Sattur on 24th and 25 May 1920 and stressed that **Nadars** the low class people should not enter into the Hindu temples. They expressed their opposition through journals and newspapers.⁶⁵

At the same time, they did not want to oppose the rulers and wanted to be in their good books. They expressed it by various ways and means. To condole the death of Emperor Edward VII of England, the **Nadars** in their second conference held at the Victoria Public Hall at

⁶¹ S.A. Ramachandra Dogo, **Nadar Uravinmurai Sangangalin Pirappu Valarppu**, Nellai Nadar Mahamai Paripalana Sangam, 1973, No.page

⁶² Palayampatti Nadargal Uravinmurai – **Arulmigu Muttalamman Temple Ashta Bhandana Maha Kumbabhisheka Malar**, Palayampatty, 1979, p.182.

⁶³ Nahobi P.V. Pandian, **A Memorial From Nahobi P.V. Pandian on behalf of the Nadar Community to J.C. Molony, Suptd. Census Operation Madars, 1911**. Southern Star Press, Tichinopoly, Dec.1910, p.3-24.

⁶⁴ **Nadar Kula Mittiran**, June 1921, (A monthly Journal published by the Nadar Kalvi Sanga Sabha, Aruppukkottai)

⁶⁵ **Kshatriya Mithran**, June, 1920.

Chennai on 26, 27, 28 December 1910, sent a condolence message to the Viceroy on 29, December 1910 through Telegram.⁶⁶ In the same way, they expressed their happiness by sending a telegram of congratulation during the coronation ceremony of George V as the Emperor. This was mainly due to their attachment towards the British rule as expressed by Sivanthi Aditha Nadar. It could be attested even by the fact that they extended a warm welcome for assumption of charge by Lord Hardinge as the Viceroy of India.⁶⁷ In spite of the detrimental activities of the alien government towards **Nadars**, they were always honest and devoted to the rulers.⁶⁸ They did not show any antagonistic feelings against the foreign rulers.

The **Nadars** at the initial years of the commencement of the 20th century were keen on adopting the following things mainly for the upliftment of the community.⁶⁹

1. The **Nadars** should always be patriotic.
2. They must sufficiently have well read scholars to express and to ventilate their grievances to the Government.
3. The community should obtain equal opportunities in the local Government institutions.
4. The poverty stricken and uneducated **Nadars** should be made to gain the community feeling and by that they must be encouraged to achieve progress and social upliftment.

⁶⁶ **Report of the Nadar Mahajana Sangam**, December 1910, Chennai, 1911, p.36.

⁶⁷ **Ibid.**, p.39.

⁶⁸ **Madras Times**, 28, November 1900

⁶⁹ **Kshatriya Mithiran**, April, 1920, pp.234-236.

5. The **Nadars** must always be philanthropic.
6. They should have noble qualities such as unity, love for others, helping tendency, patience and tolerance.
7. It was stressed that the **Nadar Mahajana Sangam** should never be a mere debating organization. It should show evincing interest in putting all the resolutions passed in its conferences into realities.
8. The **Nadars** must know the activities of the Legislative Councils, Governor and Viceroy and by that they can achieve a lot for their development.

The **Nadars**, due to their self analysis, endeavoured to achieve progress by shattering all the obstacles which they faced socially, politically and economically. They unhesitatingly considered the Newspaper as a source to fight out the anomalies and atrocities which they faced during the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries. They keenly observed that a news paper will guide the community and a country to move towards dynamism.⁷⁰ In this context, they even requested the members of the **Nadar** community to patronise **Nadar Kula Mittiran** by contributing the payment of subscription regularly and it was described as part of their duty.⁷¹

The **Nadars** were quite happy in making the community people to know the involvement of the **Nadars** in politics through elections to various local bodies as given below.

Name of the place	Name of the	Post to which
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⁷⁰ **Kshatriya Mittran**, September 1919, p.5.

⁷¹ **Ibid**, December 1919, p.109.

	individual	elected
I a) Vellore	K. Murugesu Nadar	Municipal Councillor
b) Virudhupatty	V. Vanniya Nadar M.S.P. Senthikkumara Nadar and others	Municipal Councillors
c) Marthandanpatty	M.V. Marichamy Nadar	Tinnevely District Board Member. ⁷²
II a) Tirumangalam	K. Valasubramaniya Nadar	Usilampatty Taluk Board Member.
b) Sivakasi	M.C.A Chidambara Nadar	SivaKasi Taluk Board Vice - President.
III a) Pattiviranpatty	W.P.A. Soundara Pandia Nadar	Madras Legislative Council

⁷² Nadar Kula Mittiran, September 1920, p.34.

Member.⁷³

b) Mayavaram

N. David Nadar

Mayavaram
Municipal
Chairman.

IV a) Pattiviranpatty

Periyathambi Nadar

Madurai

District Board

Member.

b) Tuticorin

AR. A.S. Kandasamy

Municipal

Nadar

Councillor,
Tuticorin.⁷⁴

V a) Virudhupatty

M.S.P. Senthilkumar

Municipal

Nadar

Chairman
Virudupatty

b) Aruppukkottai

A. Ilayaperumal

Ramanathapuram

District Board

Member.⁷⁵

VI a) Kumbakonam

A.V.M. Karuppana-
Samy Nadar

Kumbakonam
Municipal

⁷³ **Ibid.**, January 1921, p.10.

⁷⁴ **Ibid.**, March 1921, p.7.

⁷⁵ **Ibid.**, June 1921, p.332.

Councillor.⁷⁶

VII a) Palakkad	K.K. Ponnappa Nadar	Palakkad Municipal Councillor.
b) Tirumangalam	Balasubramania Nadar	Madurai District Board Member
c) Koilpatty	Devasagaya Nadar	Koilpatty Taluk Board Member ⁷⁷

As the **Nadars** were keen on uplifting and maintaining their social status, they concentrated in politics. For achieving a place in politics, they were community oriented and were so particular in encouraging the **Nadars** to show attachment towards their own community. Such facts expose that the **Nadars** before the establishment of the **Sangam** and even at the initial period after the commencement of the **Sangam** were interested in maintaining their social status through proper activities. They even treated the Madras Legislative Council as a means to express their grievances. As such the **Sangam** and its authorities of administration

⁷⁶ **Ibid.**, July 1921 p.392.

⁷⁷ **Ibid** August 1921, p.430.

encouraged its members to support the **Nadar** contestants irrespective of their political parties.⁷⁸

Through **Nadar Kula Mittiran**, they conducted the election propaganda to elect M.C. Chidambara Nadar to the Madras Legislative Assembly.⁷⁹

The **Nadars** were interested in giving free education to the students of all communities and they even demanded the well to do **Nadars** of Sivakasi to make arrangements so that the poor students of Sivakasi are offered free education. They even cited that the Kshatriya Vidhyasala of Virudhunagar is granting free education to all and the Kahatriya school of Aruppukkottai is also giving free education to Nadars.⁸⁰ As the **Nadars** were giving importance to knowledge and wisdom they made such constant appeals to the members of the community to assist in promotion of education.

The **Nadars**, although well aware of the legal proceedings, were equally conscious about the waste of time and expenditure in gaining real justice through Law Courts. So they were interested in having their own **Panchayat** system for settling their issues in a compromising way. Though the **Mahajana Sangam** established a sub committee to solve their problems at Virudhunagar, the general opinion was in favour of **Panchayat**, which had no courts or lawyers. They even approved and acknowledged the Arbitration courts suggested by

⁷⁸ **Ibid.**, September 1920, pp.25-27.

⁷⁹ **Ibid.**, November 1920, p.88.

⁸⁰ **Ibid.**, October 1920, p.71.

Mahatma Gandhi in settling the issues.⁸¹ So the **Nadars** decided to establish **Panchayats** in their concentrated areas and they in turn exposed their knowledge of law.

The **Nadars** during the twenties of the 20th century were against the policy of isolation in a caste ridden society. By comparing the fate of the economic blockade or the Continental System adopted by Napoleon Bonaparte in Europe, the **Nadars** depicted the results of the policy of isolation adopted by the high caste people of Tinnevely towards the **Kshatriya Nadars**. They realised that the activities of the **Nadars** themselves widened the scope of the high caste people in isolating them. Without estimating the varied progresses and developments in the name of culture and civilization, the **Nadars** adhered to abnormal and unwanted forms of worship, adopted non-vegetarianism and undertook superstitions and conservatism. Further, they followed the rituals without understanding the realities. So the **Nadar** elites suggested to their community members to isolate the high caste people and to enhance their own social status by adopting cultured practices in their daily walk of life.⁸²

The **Nadars** of that period were also aware of the fact that neither the **Nadar Mahajana Sangam** conferences, nor the public meetings or the **Nadars**, news papers such as **Nadar Kulamittiran, Kshatriya Kula Mittiran, Pandiyakula Deepam** could succeed in their attempts, unless they convinced the **Nadars** to be conscious of their social conditions at all times. They

⁸¹ **Ibid.**, April 1921, p.265.

⁸² **Ibid.**, May 1921, pp.291-301.

were instructed to avoid visiting temples which have Brahmin priests and they were asked to stand on their own legs by construction of temples of education.⁸³

The **Nadars** had their own community priest. Deiva Roya Swamigal was the priest of the Malaya Pillai Nadar of Thirumangalam around 17th century. Subsequently Chokkalinga Gurukkal, Ramalinga Gurukkal, Nataraja Swamy Gurukkal, Vinayaka Gurukkal were all the **Nadar** priests.⁸⁴ In order to promote general knowledge of the **Nadars**, the **Nadars** of Virudhunagar, established the “Rao Bahadur T. Rathinasamy Nadar Memorial Library in the south eastern corner of the **teppakulam** of Virudhunagar on 18th January 1918. Further from 1907 onwards the Sachidanandam press started functioning from Virudhunagar. All these works of wisdom were the activities executed by Ramalinga Iyer alias Ramalinga Gurukkal.⁸⁵

The **Nadars** themselves wrote many Tamil works such as **Subramanya Swamy Asiriya Padigam**, **Tudikkai Vinayagamalai**, **Mariamman Padigam**, **Madurai Meenakshi Amman Kappal Sindhu**, **Modi Vithai**, **Tiruttalattu**, **Tiru- Kalyana Valthu**, **London Mudisuttu Kummi**, **Delhi Durbar Kummi**, **Victoria Maharani Ammanai** etc. Among the above the works mentioned the last four are known for their historical value. **Thirukkalyana valthu** traces the virtues of the **Nadars** and the **Victroia Maharani Ammanai** written in 1901 refers to the

⁸³ **Ibid.**, June 1921, pp.329-332.

⁸⁴ V.A. Kumarayya Gurukkal, **Deivaroya Desiga Swamigal Adheena Parambarai**, Sachidanandam Press, Virudhunagar, 1926, p.19.

⁸⁵ **Ibid.**, p.58.

genealogy of the Hanovarians of England and the life history of Queen Victoria from 1819 to 1900 A.D.⁸⁶

During the first and second quarter of the 20th century, the **Nadars** were attracted by the Justice Party rule and the activities and principles of E.V. Ramasamy.⁸⁷ The **Nadar**, who lost their privileges and identities due to the Nayak rule in Tamilnadu, were prevented from fetching water from common well, visiting temples, climbing palmyra tree etc. They were even restricted to have a barber. To relieve themselves from such distresses, the **Nadars** had their own **pettais**, temples, schools, **mahamai** etc. The **Pakkupettai**, (arecanut **pettai**) is available at Uraiyur in Trichy even to-day. They started their own schools. The **mahamai** system adopted by the **Nadars** is a unique feature available only within this community. In 1939, C. Rajagopalachari introduced Sales Tax in the Madras Presidency, due to the inspiration of the **mahamai** system of the Nadars.⁸⁸ It is worth to note here that of the **kaval** duties were removed from maravars and were transferred to the Christian **Shanars**. Such disturbances continued till the independence of India in 1947.⁸⁹

While such things reveal the growth and development of the **Nadars**, Gandhiji on 4th October 1927, at a meeting at Rajapalayam, hailed the **Nadars** and their contribution to business and education. Though they offer free education to all the students irrespective of caste, colour and creed, their history reveals that they had no right to enter the temple. Even in

⁸⁶ **Ibid.**, p.56.

⁸⁷ S. Sounthira Pandian, **Social History**, Kasi Nilayam, Inamputtur, 1981, p.7.

⁸⁸ **Ibid.**, pp.9-10.

⁸⁹ T.K. Venkatasubramanian "History of Tinnevely from 1600-1900". An approved but unpublished Ph.D. Thesis of the University of Madras, 1977.

1921 at Kailasapuram, Gandhiji stated that the **Nadars** had no equality in entering the temples.

If such equality is not granted to the **Nadars** India will not achieve freedom even for 100 years.⁹⁰

Such facts testify to the qualities of **Nadars**.

For utilisation of **mahamai** fund of the **Nadars** for the upliftment of the **Nadar** concentrated areas a post named **Nattanmai** was created for taking decisions about the society. The **Nadars** were all industrious and laziness was not available in their dictionary.⁹¹ The strenuous efforts of the **Nadars** in their business in all ways and means encouraged them to take active part in their community promotion. Due to the income, which they obtained through business, and **mahamai** they were able to spend for the welfare of their community. Such a progress was met by the **Nadars** by investing their income in constructing educational institutions and religious centres such as temples.⁹² The efforts undertaken by the **Nadars** are narrated in the various works brought out by eminent personalities. The following list will attest to it.⁹³

Author	Name of the work	Year of publication
H. Martin Winfred	Sanror Marabu	1871
S. Winfred	Sanror Marabukkattalai	1874
„	Dravida Kshatriyas	1880

⁹⁰ Neo. P. Singaravel, **op.cit.**, p.91.

⁹¹ Somalay, **Vadamanilangalil Tamilargal**, Tanjore Tamil University, Tanjore, 2002, pp.39-41.

⁹² Neo. P. Singaravel, **op.cit.**, p.92.

⁹³ **Ibid.**, pp. 98-99.

Samuel Sargunar	Bishop Caldwell and Tinnevelly Shanars	1883
Ponnusamy Nadar	Pandiyakula Vilakkam	1883
K. Shanmugha Gramaniyar	Sanrorahiya Chandra Surya vamse Parambarai	1889
Y. Gnanamuthu Nadar	Shanar Kshatriyas	1889
Manicka Kaviroyar	Sivakasi Prabandam	1901
J. Cornelius Nadar	Amarar Puranam	1901
P.V. Pandian	A Short account of the cantras of Tamil Xatras	1901
K. Kannayira Nadar	Tamil Kshatriya Kula Vilakka Vina-Vidai	1902
T.T. Thomas Nadar	Shanrar Ethnography	1910
T. Vijaya Doraisamy Gramani	Ariya Kshatriya Kula Vilakkam	1910
„ „	Kshatriyan	1910
„ „	Sanrorkasu	1910
„ „	Ela Arasan Charitram	1910
P.V. pandian	Sanror Sangam	1910

B.J.M. Kulasekara	Nadar Kula Varalaru	1914
Raj		
N. Vadivel Nadar	Sanror Puranam	1914
T. Vijaya Dorasiamy	Namadhu Kula Tolil Yadu	1922
Gnamani		
„ „	Kshatriyar	1923
China Lakshmana	Shanar Kshatriyas	1924
Raja		
„ „	Namadu Kula Tolil	1926
„ „	Nadar Ennum Sol Araichi	1927
S.A. Virasamy	Nadar Kula Thilaga Narramil	1927

In addition to the above, P. Rajadurai's **Uravinmurai**, **Suyamariyathai Iyakkamum**, **Nadargal Pangalippum**, S. Mahalingam's **Nadarkalin Thorramum Valarchiyum**, M. Immanuel's **Nadar Through the ages** etc, are few other works written in the post independent period. Such works expose the mobility and sentiment of the **Nadars** in maintaining their identities.

Vijaya Vikatan was the first journal published by the **Nadars**. In addition to the above, **Dakshina Deepam**, **Pandiyakula Deepam**, **Dravida Abhimani**, **Sachidanandam**, **Nadar Nanban**, **Nadar Kula Mittiran**, **Kshatriya Mittiran**, **Mahajanam**, **Sanror Malar**, **Nadar Kula**

Deepam, Gramani Kulam, Nadar Kulam, Uravinmurai Murasu, Eluchchi Murasu, India

Nadar Murasu, Kumari Murasu etc, are some of the weeklies and monthlies which speak for the **Nadar** community. After independence, the following works emerged⁹⁴

Author	Name of the Journal
Sadhanantham	Mahilchi
V.V. Ramasamy	Tamil Thenral
Nachiyappa Nadar	Unmai Vilakkam
Muruga Dhanuskodi	Navasakthi
A.V. A. Asaithambi	Thani Arasu
K.R.M. Dharmar Nadar	Udhaya Suriyan
Ponnaimuthu Nadar	Valikatti
K. Ganapathy Nadar	Kandupidi
Chelliah Nadar	Cinema Kathir
Sevuka Perumal Nadar	Medhavi
K.T. Kosal Ram	Pudumai, Dina Seithi

⁹⁴ **Ibid.**, 100.

M.P. Sivagnana Gramani

**Tamil Murasu, Sengkol,
Tamilan Kural**

P. Ramasamy

Nathigam

S.G. Vinayagamurthi Nadar

Udhaya Murasu

Marshal Nesamani

Thingal

S.P. Adhithan and Sivanthi Adhithan

**DinaThanthi, Malai Malar,
Rani, Gokulam
Kathir etc**

B.S. Maniyam

Dinachudar

S. Krishnasamy Nadar

Poonga, Kalai Ponni

Mariappan

Makkal Seithi

K.P. Kandasamy

Dinakaran

Shanmugha Sundaram

Makkal Kural, Daily Mirror

H. Vasantha Kumar

Inraya Indian

K.A.S. Manimaran

**Dina Bhumi, Adhirstam,
Jothida Boomi, Madurai
Times.**

M. Bernardsha

Adhavan

Raja Sorna Sekar

Vara murasu

P. Durai Raj

News

S. Ashok Ravi

Tamilan Madal

A.C. Kamaraj

Thennavar Osai

Eluthu Vendan

Ten Kural, Ten Kumari

K.J. Robert

Nadar Christian

The above list is an illustrative one to exhibit the talents of the **Nadars** and their fascination in promoting knowledge and wisdom. They even point out that they excel others in various fields.

The analysis of the contribution of the **Nadars** to the modern politics also will highlight their virtues and superior nature. The caste affinity, consciousness of upliftment and objective of solidarity compelled the **Nadars** to play their role in politics. Though it accelerates internal dissensions and differentiations, politics was treated as an individual pursuit and no **Nadar** politician endeavoured to impose his political view points over the other members of the community. The political involvement was also a fragmentary one. It was not until the mid 1930's that political consciousness and activism began to take shape among the **Nadar** community.⁹⁵ In Ramnad District of Tamilnadu, the **Nadars** were politically united but they had factions and caste was set against caste i-e; the **Nadars** against Maravars. For their own safety

⁹⁵ Robert. L. Hard grave, **op.cit.**, p.207.

and survival, the **Nadars** adopted a unilateral political policy. The hostility shown by the **Maravars** against **Nadars** stressed the **Uravinmurai's** to tighten the control of **Nadars** in political activities. The **Nadars** were prevented from contesting against another **Nadar** even in the **Panchayat** elections.⁹⁶

After 1952, the position met with drastic changes due to political rivalries. The **Nadars**, with the support of the Harijans opposed the Maravars.⁹⁷ Even K.T.K. Thangamani, a **Nadar** member of the Communist Party had to face a tough time with his own **Nadars** at Mudukulathur.⁹⁸ In the big cities, such as Madras and Madurai, the caste domination was interrupted by occupations. The **Nadars**, though were the leading members of the mercantile community, adopted their own political view points, to preserve their own economic property. The political culture of the **Nadar** community is heterogeneous. As the **Nadars** were dominant castes of the regions, the role of the **Uravinmurai** and **Nadar Mahajana Sangam** play their own role in the politics of the community. But in this context the **Nadars** did not deviate from the special characteristic qualities of other communities. The **Nadars** lent their supports to the Congress, Justice Party, D.M.K. and other political parties according to their own whims and fancies.

There were many causes for their own political involvement. By supporting the alien mighty British yoke, as seen earlier, the **Nadars** attained progress and development in trade,

⁹⁶ **Ibid.**, p.223.

⁹⁷ **Mahajanam**, 31 October 1957.

⁹⁸ **The Hindu**, 6 October 1957.

education, economic pursuits, social status etc.⁹⁹ They never antagonised the government for any reason. The **Nadar Mahajana Sangam** was the guiding star of their political activities. From January 1922 to 1937, W.P.A. Soundarapandian was a **Nadar** member of the Madras Legislative Council. At that time, the **Nadars** as well as other community members gained a lot.¹⁰⁰ While the Justice Party was in power, the **Nadars** of Sivakasi and Virudhunagar acted independently without any co-ordination. In 1937, when K. Kamaraj and V.V. Ramasamy, contested the election due to community affinity, V.V. Ramasamy withdrew his candidature and Kamaraj was elected unopposed.¹⁰¹ At this juncture, it is worth to note that Kamaraj was defeated in his own **Nadar** concentrated Virudhunagar constituency in the 1967 election by a non Nadar candidate. This will explain the real position of the **Nadars** in politics.

The **Nadars** were mainly interested in maintaining their economic affluence. To achieve that in 1921 itself, the **Nadar Bank** was started. It is carrying out its duties promptly even though there were problems in the administration.¹⁰²

Thus the **Nadars** who were known as **Nadalvan, Nadan, Shanars** etc. were capable of adopting themselves to the various situations. They have their own qualities of perseverance and tolerance. They are particular in maintaining their own individuality. They devoted much attention to promote themselves by education, hard work and industrious nature. They are known for their unity and solidarity. In general, the **Nadars** were beyond comparison with other

⁹⁹ A. Kesavamurthi, *op.cit.*, p.93.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.94.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.97.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.99.

communities due to their own personal identities. Above all, it is an appreciable act to note that almost all the **Nadars** attach veneration for the activities of the **Nadar Mahajana Sangam** and the respective **Uravinmurai** to which they are members.