CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Introduction

This research study is an earnest attempt to compare the service and working conditions of teachers in South Kerala. Conducive service and working conditions are imperative for motivating, activating and extracting the best output from teachers. The role of teachers is most significant for moulding the students and directing them in the most desirable way. A uniform service and working condition is inevitable irrespective of the nature of management for preserving the morale and status of teachers intact. However, at present uniform service and working conditions do not exist in the state. This anomaly has prompted the researcher to undertake the research study. This study places greater focus on formal school education including teachers and the structure of the institutions that impart it without ignoring its merits and inadequacies. It also attempts to throw light on the duties and responsibilities of the various agencies involved so as to derive the best out of it in consonance with the goals and objectives conceived by the pioneers and architects of education in our nation. However, this study is limited to southern Kerala which comprises regions of the erstwhile kingdom of Travancore. It was formerly a Hindu feudal kingdom (1729-1858) and later on became an Indian princely State (1858-1947) with its capital at Padmanabhapuram or Trivandrum ruled by the Travancore royal Family. Travancore (Venad) was located on the Malabar Coast, South India and encompassed the present day southern districts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. (Aiyar, Progressive Travancore, 1923, pp. 94-97)

To place this study in a historical perspective a quick glance back at the educational scene in ancient Kerala is indispensable.
The unique position that Kerala has attained in the educational map of India is not the result of a sudden spurt of activity in the field of education in the recent times, but the culmination of the enlightened policies of its rulers from early days and the intellectual pursuits of the people spread over several centuries (Menon, 1978). The ancient Tamil Sangam literature testifies to the high level of literacy that flourished in Kerala, which was accessible to all, irrespective of sectarian or gender considerations. For instance, the communities like the Kuravas, the Parayas and the Vetas, reckoned as inferior in social scale in the later ages, were held in high esteem by the kings and the nobles. During this period Matilakam near the ancient Muziris was one of the prominent centres of educational excellence.

The caste system – Chaturvarnya - which came along with Aryanisation did considerable harm to the ideal of universal education which prevailed during the early Sangam age. The age of the Kulasekharas in South Kerala (800 -1100) saw a revival of learning with Salais or vedic colleges getting established around all the major temples. From the 9th century to the arrival of the British, education was a privilege of the high caste in the society. Local dynasties which assumed power on the decline of Kulasekhara empire like the rulers of Venad and the principalities of Thekkumkur, Vadakkumkur, Chempakasseri and Kolathiri did their patronising best in keeping the lamp of learning shining bright down the centuries. In North Kerala, the period also saw the emergence of Mutts (madoms) on the lines of Salais. But the promotion of learning among the common people did not receive enough attention during this period. The high caste teachers and students in the Mutts or Salais alone had social respect and decent economic gains accruing from the royal munificence.
However, the Asaan Pallikoodams in South Kerala and Ezhuthupallys in the North Kerala (that existed alongside the Mutts and Salais) that provided basic education to the common people continued to have their humble existence. Such village schools received a shot in the arm thanks to the interest taken by Thunchat Ezhuthachan in the 17th century who made no secret of his displeasure at the privileged treatment given to the Brahmins and to Sanskrit education. The asaan /ezhuthachan (village teacher) received social respect and modest economic gains for the first time and the impetus so received made popular education attractive and accessible to one and all.

The contribution of the Portuguese and the Dutch in comparison to the British was rather marginal, notwithstanding the much acclaimed prototype printing press established by the Portuguese. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) and London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries who landed in Travancore in 1816 at the instance of the British resident of Travancore Col. Monroe played a significant role in the progress of education in Kerala by compiling dictionaries and grammar books besides establishing schools and colleges.

The pioneering impact of Protestant missionaries Ringle Taube and Dr Mead of LMS on formal education prompted Rani Gauri Parvathy Bai to promulgate the Rescript of 1817 under which “the state should defray the whole cost of education of its people, in order that there might be no backwardness in the spread of enlightenment among them.” (Pillai, 1940, p. 700)
According to V. Nagam Aiya (1989, p.443) “education in the modern sense of the term in Travancore may be said to date from the year 1834 AD” when the first English School was established. But it was in 1867 that the government initiated steps to put vernacular schools on a sound basis. The dual control of the English and Vernacular schools was done away with in 1894. Prior to this, two systems of grant in aid, one for vernacular schools and another for English schools were in place. But the rules regulating the grants were rather haphazard. The new Grant in Aid Code of Malayalam Era (M.E.) 1070, dealing with rules for classification of schools, fixing standards of instruction, qualification of teachers in aided schools etc. in addition to award of grants for running the schools was published in 1894 (Aiya, 1989, p. 491).

Ever since 1817, the government have played a decisive role in the laying down of rules, regulation of functions, provision of finance and management of schools. However, the present phenomenon of private unaided schools constitutes a significant exception to this historical trend.

In this context it should be remembered that the famous Education bill of 1957 framed at the instance of Kerala’s first Minister of Education, Joseph Mundassery, legalised the role of private school management. Consequently three categories of educational institutions came into being - Government schools, Aided schools where government pay the salary of the staff members of the private schools and Unaided schools where management of the school has to meet the salary requirements of the teachers though the school is recognised. A healthy competition among these three categories proved to be a better market oriented solution to many issues faced in the education sector such as infrastructure facilities, quality
of educational and enrolment rate of the children. Teaching became the most sought after profession in Kerala while the Education sector evolved into a major service sector activity.

The widespread educational development was facilitated by easy access to Lower Primary (LP), Upper Primary (UP) and High School (HS) education in Kerala. For instance, among the rural population 94.39 per cent is served by primary schools within a distance of 1 kilometre, 96.2 per cent with an upper primary school within three kilometres and 97.82 per cent with a secondary school within a radius between six and eight kilometres. Economic Review of 2004 says that there are 12,322 schools in Kerala for 48.94 lakhs enrolled students. Among them, the private sector manages 63.5 per cent schools with 67 per cent students and 66.6 per cent teachers in the Kerala schools scenario.

Since the Travancore government took upon itself in 1904 the vital responsibility to offer free primary education (Aiy, 1989, p. 443) literacy in Kerala has recorded phenomenal growth. The literacy rate of Kerala that was 47.18% in 1951 almost doubled to 90.92% as per the 2001 census while the national average remained 65.38%. Further, the regional and gender disparity in Kerala was significantly low. Prevalence of schools in every nook and corner of the state accounted for it, schools under private management stealing a march over the government counterparts in this exercise. The number of schools in the private sector offered stiff competition by raising the bar of teaching standards. The state has a history of over two hundred years of private ‘edupreneurs’. (educational entrepreneur)
As of the year 2008-09 (Selected Educational Statistics 2008-09, 2010) Kerala has 1,74,978 teachers, 54,300 in government, 1,06,143 in aided schools and 14,535 in unaided schools offering SSLC syllabus. As against 999 government high schools there are 1429 government aided high schools and 375 unaided high schools following state syllabus. Of higher secondary schools, 735 are directly run by the government while 529 are aided and 439 private unaided schools. Government vocational higher secondary schools number 261 while private aided Vocational higher secondary schools number 128. Of the 1720 uneconomic government schools (High school, Upper Primary and Lower Primary government schools together) in south Kerala, Trivandrum has 145, Kollam 133, Pathanamthitta 178, Alapuzha 172, Kottayam 205 and Idukki 85.

In 2008-09 there were 587 Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) schools in Kerala (Trivandrum 51 + Pathanamthitta 26 + Kottayam 48) which had 3,81,852 students on their roles and employed 16,002 teachers whereas the 100 ICSE Schools in Kerala (Trivandrum and Pathanamthitta claimed 13 each and Kottayam 8) had 66,188 students and employed 2,122 teachers. (Selected Educational Statistics 2008-09, 2010)

Among other factors, working and service conditions significantly influence teacher effectiveness. Effective education leads to effective society. The most important agent in educational process that leads to reconstruction of society is the teacher. The students, parents and society feel the pulse of education through the teacher. However, “private unaided schools remain largely beyond the domain of government control and regulation. Nevertheless, certain regulatory measures were in fact introduced by the government by adding a new Chapter XIV (AA) to the Kerala
Education Rules relating to the conditions of service of teaching and non-teaching staff of the recognised unaided schools. This was made as per the Gazette notification dated 30/03/1990. Surprisingly, the state government itself which enacted this rule stayed the implementation of the rules soon after its introduction.” (Baby & Pillai, 2008, p. 8)

The Secondary Education Commission 1952-53 (Mudaliar Commission) advocated that teachers should be given better conditions of service such as attractive pay, pension and provident fund. The Indian Education Commission 1964-66 (Kothari Commission) laid special emphasis on the improvement of teachers’ economic, social and professional status and the National Policy on Education 1986 stated that the status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society (Shukla, 1988).

Chronic unemployment (Sunny, 2000) of a large segment of the active labour force has been the most serious socio-economic problem in Kerala for the past several years. In this background it must be admitted that though the private unaided educational sector has been a significant service provider in the state, all is not well with the condition of its employees as in government sector.

The main argument in this thesis is that the government and the community should endeavour to create conditions that are conducive to motivate the creativity and professionalism of all educators working in government, aided or private schools.
1.2. Need and Significance of the Study

The achievements of Kerala in social development (http://www.education.kerala.gov.in/) and the consequent rise in the quality of life have helped the state record a human development index comparable to that of the developed countries of the World. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen (Sen, 1999) has attributed Kerala’s achievements largely to the higher priority given to education for a long time compared to the other Indian states. This is because Kerala society has given so much importance to education all along and made endeavours to improve the quality of education to an enviable level.

The role of teachers in improving the standard of education in this highly literate state has been uniformly acknowledged. Yet the wide disparity between the service and working conditions of government and private unaided school teachers remain alarming. As such the main thrust of this study is to highlight the fact that the job security and social standing born out of the decent salary and perks assured to the government school teachers were way beyond the reach of private unaided school teachers. The major grievance of the private school teachers, therefore, is that there is wide disparity in their salary and perks as against that of their government school counterparts, making them feel less secure and self assured. This is a serious problem which the government of the state should address promptly, lest it should affect the morale of the private school teachers whose contribution to the realm of school education is no less vital.

The statistics given below is meant to render clarity to the arguments projected. Between the years 2002-03 to 2005-06, against 386 new unaided
schools only 6 new government schools and 8 new aided schools were started. (Kerala, 2006). While in the academic year 2003-04 there were only 8187 teachers in unaided schools of Kerala out of a total of 1,73,807 teachers (in government, aided and private unaided schools together) in the academic year 2005-06 the number of teachers in private unaided schools soared to 31,398 (Politics of education, 2005).

In this context, the present study which compares the Service and Working Conditions of teachers in Government and Private Unaided Schools of South Kerala assumes great relevance and significance. It is hoped that the outcome of the research will provide valid insights to the policy framers and to the echelons of private management institutions on the hardships and frustration of the teachers in unaided private management schools. It might also inspire them to introspect as to whether the prevailing academic milieu is conducive for the teachers to work to their full potential.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

A Comparative Study of the Service and Working Conditions of teachers in Government and Private Unaided Schools in South Kerala

1.4 Research Question

What are the possible similarities and dissimilarities between the Service and Working Conditions of teachers in Government and Private Unaided Schools in South Kerala and how do these impact the educational outcome?
1.5. Hypotheses

Hypothesis : 1 - There will not be significant difference between private school teachers and government school teachers on the variable working conditions despite the structure of school ownership.

Hypothesis : 2 - There will be no significant difference between private school teachers and government school teachers on the variable service conditions despite the structure of school ownership.

1.6. Objectives

1. To analyse the evolution of service conditions of teachers in private unaided schools with that of government schools.

2. To compare the service conditions of teachers in private unaided schools with that of government schools.

3. To compare the working conditions of teachers in private unaided schools with that of government schools.

4. To study the self perception of teachers in the private unaided schools and government schools.

5. To find out the impact of competition between private and government schools on the students.
1.7. Operational definition of key terms

It is done so that measurement of variables and objectives becomes easier and gains in clarity.

1. Working Condition: is the real physical environment in which the teacher is working that influences the teaching learning process. This includes the physical infrastructure like - type of roof for classrooms, playgrounds, compound wall, drinking water, writing board, table and chair for teacher, fan and light in classroom, adequate number of benches for students, adequate number of staff rooms, adequate number and condition of teachers’ toilets, adequate number and condition of students’ toilet, students’ possession of bag, books, and pens, number of computers, number of libraries, presence of librarian and the approximate area of school campus.

2. Service conditions: include the non-physical factors involved in the school environment that influence the teaching learning process. This comprises experience of teachers, nature of appointment, selection for appointment, donation to school, qualification of teachers, manner of promotion, teaching hours in a day, teaching hours in a week, number of days’ leave in a week, number of days’ leave in a month, number of days’ leave for summer vacation, monthly salary, summer vacation salary, casual leave in a year, half pay leave, employees pay (in private unaided educational sector) commensurate to their qualification, annual increment, provident fund, employee state insurance, maternity leave, maternity leave salary, presence of unions and associations in schools, role of unions in increasing efficiency and securing rights, legal remedy for teachers,
loopholes in the legal framework and the awareness of the rules to protect the teachers.

3. **Private unaided schools** – basically include the CBSE schools in Kerala as they form the maximum number in the unaided sector in the state.

1.8. **Methodology in Brief**

The study uses a mix of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques depending on the situation to derive maximum data for the ‘comparison of working and service conditions of teachers’ in South Kerala.

The study made use of the primary data, secondary data and used tools such as questionnaires and interviews for data collection.

1.9. **Limitations of the Study**

1. The study is confined only to South Kerala. Among unaided schools only CBSE schools were selected.

2. Since participants’ responses are reflections of their personal experiences this may lead to subjective prejudices.

3. Due to time constraint and lack of comprehensive database, the researcher has not been able to fully locate and contact all the teachers and managers of the private unaided schools.

Due to the very nature of qualitative research, the data obtained in the second phase of the study may be vulnerable to different interpretations by different readers. As the study on the service and working conditions of the private unaided schools and government schools in the entire state of
Kerala is too vast, the framework of study is limited to schools in the six south Kerala districts namely Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alapuzha, Pathanamthitta, Kottayam and Idukki. The Right to Education Act (RTE) has not been dealt with in detail as it deals mainly with the rights of students and fixing the glitches of education that has hindered universalisation of education in India. Moreover, the RTE which has yet to be implemented in its true spirit is undergoing constant changes.

1.10. Organization of the study

The study is divided into six chapters.

The first chapter deals with the introduction, nature and scope of the study.

The second chapter deals with literature review on the area of investigation.

The third chapter deals with theoretical overview pertaining to the area of investigation.

The fourth chapter deals with the description of methodology, sample selected, tools and techniques.

The fifth chapter presents a detailed analysis followed by discussion of results and the tenability of the hypotheses.

The sixth chapter summarises the study in retrospect by presenting the findings, recommendations and suggestions for future research and conclusion.

This is followed by Bibliography and Appendices.