CHAPTER-I

EARLY EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teaching, the mother of all professions, is the oldest and most indispensable one in the world. In India, the profession has undergone immeasurable changes since its inception. The ideal teacher is expected not only to impart information and skills but also to lead and guide his students to "supreme knowledge". Hence the qualities laid down for teachers in India are high. The professional education of teachers in India has not been static, but an evolutionary process starting with Gurukula System to the Modern System.

This Chapter attempts to provide a bird's eye view of the gradual growth of education in different phases in Tamil Nadu. The system of teacher-student oriented education, being practised in Tamil Nadu, is of different kinds, namely, the Gurukula System in the ancient times, the Monitorial System in the Medieval period and the Modern System at present.

Monitorial System

Tamil Nadu has had an ancient and effective Gurukula System of Education. It led to the origin of Monitorial System. "This system was in the nature of an informal approach to the problem of making available and adequate supply of
teachers for the indigenous educational institutions. It was based on the principle of 'mutual instruction', and it was worked out in practice by splitting up a school or a class into a number of homogeneous groups and by placing each group under the charge of a promising and superior pupil called the ‘Monitor’. The duties of the Monitor were fairly comprehensive, for he was not only expected to look after the routine organisational and disciplinary matters but also to impart individual as well as collective instruction to the pupils in his group and to keep the teacher informed of their day-to-day work and progress in studies. Through such a system of mutual instruction, Monitors naturally gained, in due course of time, some proficiency in teaching and class-control which enabled them to teach in independent institutions of their own, if, after completing their education, they chose teaching as the profession of their life".¹

**Beginning of the Modern System**

The Gurukula System was very well understood and appreciated by the officials of the East India Company. The Gurukula System led to the Bell and Lancaster System.² Dr. Andrew Bell, the First Superintendent of the Madras

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¹ Diksit, S.S., *Teacher Education in Modern Democracies*, Delhi, 1969, p.65.
² Lancaster System: Dr. Andrew Bell was the founder of the 'Madras' or 'Monitorial System' or 'Lancaster System'. As Mr. Bell was riding past a pial school one morning, he found sharp boys teaching backward ones; the whole school was active although there was only one teacher. He employed this system among boys in the Orphan Asylum in Madras. (Thomas, P.I., ‘History of Education in Madras’, *The Madras Tercentenary Commemoration*, Madras, 1939, p.237)
Military Asylum, made use of this method, as early as 1789. The same system was successfully adopted in England with a view to spreading elementary education at a lower cost. This system had been called by different names - Madras Lancastrian, Pestalozzian, Glasgow, Monitorial and Pupil-Teacher System.

**Contribution of the Missionaries**

The introduction of modern education awakened the people from ignorance, superstitious beliefs and several social evils. The credit goes to the Christian Missionaries who were the pioneers of western education in South India. The Portuguese came to India not only for trade but also to spread Christianity among the people.³ They started schools in Goa and Calicut with the primary intention of educating their new converts. These schools taught reading, writing in Portuguese as well as in the regional language, besides the principles of Catholic Religion.⁴

The honour of being the First Protestant Missionaries to work in the territories of the East India Company goes to the Danish Mission or Tranquebar Mission. After the Danish, other Christian Missionaries came to India and established many schools and colleges all over India, especially more in Tamil

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³ Rai, B.C., *op.cit*, p.120.
Nadu. Missionaries from Roman Catholic Mission, London Mission, American Arcot Mission, Scottish Mission, Wesleyan Mission, etc., were noted for their contribution to education.

Missionary work was extremely widespread mostly in the Madras Presidency because Missionaries came to South early and started their work on education partly because the extreme plight of the Depressed Classes in the South provided them a more fitting ground for conversion.

**Roman Catholic Mission**

Just hundred years before the arrival of other Missionaries, the Roman Catholic Fathers contributed to education of Indian girls and boys while the Roman Catholic Nuns performed a notable work as teachers of Indian girls. In South India, they started their pioneering work in improving Girls’ Education. St. Francis Xavier's High School in Palayamkottai became the Practising School for St. Xavier Training College which was opened in 1950 by the Society of Jesus, which was a part of the Roman Catholic Mission.\(^6\)

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\(^6\) G.O.No. 716, Education Department, 21 May 1923.
Tranquebar Mission

Missionary Education in South India was initiated at first in Tranquebar by two young pioneering Danish Missionaries, Bartholomeaus Ziegenbalg and Henry Plustschau. They established an institution in 1716 for the training of teachers to be employed in the Charity Schools. These schools were opened for the children who became Christians. The Mission also started Separate Schools for Children of Muslim Community. The Missionaries indirectly brought about good results for the natives. They sought the help of native teachers to teach in the schools founded by them, in which they also taught under their able guidance. The native teachers learnt systematic methods of teaching and western methods of education were slowly imbibed.

Inspired by the Danish Missionaries, John Sullivan, the Resident at Tanjore, suggested a plan for the establishment of English Schools meant for the upper Caste Children, in 1786. John Sullivan took up this task in order to break down the religious prejudice which existed against the Missionaries. As a result, three English Schools were set up in Tanjore, Ramand and Sivagangai.

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American Mission

As far as the Foreign Missionaries were concerned, the American Board of Commissioners was the first American Missionary Society to work in India for the development of education, more particularly Women Education.

Women Education in Nellore began quietly, with a school opened by Mrs. Day in her Bungalow Veranda in 1841. From that small beginning had grown up into a big chain of institutions viz., a Training School for Women, a Model School, and a High School for Girls and a Bible Training School in different parts of the Madras Presidency. \(^{10}\) A Training School for Women was started in 1842, in the Madurai District for the general and special education of women. A Grant of Rs.12,000 was given towards the building for the American Mission Training School for Women in Madura by the Government of Madras Presidency\(^ {11}\) under the provision of the Charter Act of 1813.

Scottish Mission

Rev. John Anderson arrived in Madras in 1837. He was the first Scottish Presbyterian Missionary. The Church of Scotland Mission had, under its management, five Higher-Grade Elementary Schools for Girls in the City of

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\(^{10}\) Oliver E. Jones and M. Seshayya, *A.B.M. Telugu School, 1841-1941*, Madras, 1941, p.15.

\(^{11}\) G.O. No. 685, Education Department, 25 November 1901.
Madras at George Town, Triplicane, Tana Street and Sundaram Pillai Street, both at Purasawalkam and Vepery, with a staff of sixty trained teachers and 1500 pupils. To encourage trained teachers, the Management initiated a Provident Fund for the benefit of these teachers in 1914.¹²

**London Mission**

In 1804, the London Mission opened schools in South India. In due course, it maintained 317 Elementary (vernacular) Schools, enrolling 7,802 pupils of whom 5,116 were Christians and 2686 were Hindus. This Mission had a training institution at Palayamkottai.¹³ Later this training institution was named St. Ignatius College of Education.

**Women Mission**

During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, Female Education was opposed by the Indian Society. The natives, conditioned by the religious superstition, did not allow their girl children to go to school. By this time, Women Missionaries came to India as Educationists. They took up the cause of removing illiteracy of women, in which they were successful in course of time.

¹² G.O.No. 315, Education Department, 28 February 1923.

Government Female Normal School (later known as the Presidency Training School) was established by the Women Mission in 1870.

In 1881 Mr and Mrs Wyatt opened the First Post Graduate Training School for Women Teachers at Trichinopoly. There were seventeen training schools for women, with 342 pupils in the Madras Presidency. Among them, St. John's Female Training Institution, Nazareth and Sarah Tucker Institution, Madras, occupied a prominent position.\textsuperscript{14} Although the Women Mission did nothing for the Secondary Teacher Education, its work was recognized in the field of Teacher Education.

**English Mission**

Besides the efforts of Missionaries in the field of Teacher Training, the East India Company also gradually felt the need for doing something in this direction. In 1793, the first Normal School, a school specially meant for Teacher-Students, was set up at Serampore (Bengal) as a collaborative effort between the Danish and English Missionaries.

Special mention should be made about the Calcutta Central School for Girls which was organised by the Calcutta Ladies Society for training Female Teachers. Sir Thomas Munro, the Governor of the Madras Presidency, (in his minute of May 10, 1826), firmly expressed his belief that no educational progress could be made

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p.24.
in the Province without "a body of better instructed teachers". He, therefore, advocated the establishment of a Central School for the Education of Teachers.\footnote{Diksit, S.S., \textit{op.cit.}, p.66.} Soon Government Institutions for Teaching Teachers were established in the three Presidencies and Madras had the distinction of having opened the First Normal School under the Government Management and financed by the Government. This institution later developed into the present Presidency College.

In 1847, the Bombay Presidency had its first Normal School in the Eliphinstone Institution. Further, a Normal School was opened by Alexander Duff for the first time at Calcutta in 1849.

\textbf{Vernacular Education}

The Vernacular Education in the Madras Presidency was of special significance for various reasons. An educational institution was primarily a centre of character building, man making, assimilation of ideas and values and promoting English Language.

Realising the imperfect state of education, Thomas Munro wanted to introduce a better system of education for the intellectual development of the country. He ordered that reading and writing should be instructed in Vernacular
Languages in the Elementary Schools and Sanskrit, Theology, Logic and Astronomy should be taught in the colleges.

The growth of education in India in general and in Tamil Nadu in particular, underwent various changes under different periods. The need for a changed outlook in the educational system arose mainly out of socio-political necessities. It should be mentioned that the Indigenous Educational System did not enrich all sections of the society because it was monopolized by conservative elements of the Hindu Society. Thus for a very long period, the vast majority of the population did not benefit from education. The English East India Company's Administration was responsible for a paradigm shift and they sowed the seeds of Mass Education.16 The sport in the missionary educational enterprises and social activities during the Nineteenth Century had significant impact upon the people as well as the administration. As a consequence, a New Era was ushered in the life of the people. The Charter Act of 1813, Macaulay's Minutes (1835), Wood's Dispatch (1854) and Hunter Commission (1882) worked as Major Instruments for the Spread of Education in India.17

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Christian Missionaries, guided by humanitarian and religious motive, devised a liberal system of education for all the inhabitants, irrespective of caste or religion.\(^\text{18}\)

The Danish Mission appeared to be the First Protestant Group which started its activities at Tranquebar from 9\(^\text{th}\) July 1706.\(^\text{19}\) Its Missionaries were the Pioneers in Printing Books at Tranquebar on the South East Coast.\(^\text{20}\) The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, opened Charity Schools through the Agency of Danish Missions at Tranquebar in 1711. Ziegenbalg, the First Danish Missionary and his colleagues took the initiative to educate the people and did useful work such as establishment of a Printing Press in Tamil and opening of a Teacher Training School.\(^\text{21}\) In 1715, St. Mary's Charity School was started in Madras for thirty protestant children and in 1717, he started another Anglo-Vernacular School at Cuddalore for Indian Christians.

Those were probably the first schools in which the Company took some interest.\(^\text{22}\) This was the beginning of the great system of Anglo-Vernacular Education for the children of its employees and Christians under the patronage of

the English East India Company and the Missionaries in the Presidency. In 1717, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge opened two Charity Schools in Madras for the children of the Portuguese and the Tamils. Grunder, another Danish Missionary, also started a Portuguese School and a Vernacular School in Madras in the same year.

Since 1801, the English East India Company concentrated more on its political consolidation rather than on reaching the immediate needs of the people. However, realizing administrative obligations, it initiated reform measures too. The Company started taking interest in the Spread of Education from 1813 onwards. The Charter Act of 1813 marked a turning point and the East India Company came forward to accept the responsibility of educating the Indians by releasing a Grant of Rupees One Lakh for educational activities. This eliminated the hostile attitude of the Company towards Missionaries, which paved the way for a large number of Missionaries to land in India and establish schools in the territories of the Company. Secondly, the incorporation of an educational clause in the Act of 1813 the legislative recognition of the educational needs and the need

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for a share in revenues of India towards the above purpose. The amount thus collected, came to be utilized for revival and improvement of literature and promotion of the knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British Territories.

Thomas Munro became the Governor of Madras in 1820. At the time of his arrival, the Madras School Book Society did some pioneering work. It published the approved books at cheap rates both in English and Vernacular Languages which tended to open the minds and improve the character of the natives. As soon as he assumed power, he ordered an Educational Survey of the Province to assess the literacy of local people.

On 2nd July 1822, the Government directed the Board of Revenue to ascertain the number of schools and the state of education among the natives in the Province. From the Collectors' Reports, it was known that there was one school for every 1000 people. It was estimated that out of 12.5 million population of the

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26 Ibid.
27 Naik, J.P. and Syed Nurullah, Educational Planning in India, Bombay, 1965, p. 60.
28 Asylum Press Almanac and the Directory for South India for the year, 1858, Madras, 1858, p. 468.
Province, only 1,88,000 or one in sixty seven received education. The Survey further explained that illiteracy rate of males was greater than the females.\(^{30}\)

The Survey enlightened Munro about the poor condition of education in the Province, absence of encouragement from the Government and the poverty of the people. At once he took sincere efforts to educate the masses by improving the Indigenous Schools. He found that the standard of education was in a primitive stage. In a letter on 10\(^{th}\) March 1826, Munro expressed his desire for the establishment of a school in Madras to give training to the masters.\(^{31}\) In 1826, he prepared a Scheme called Munro's Minutes.

In an attempt to train teachers, Munro proposed the establishment of two Collectorate Schools, one for the Hindus and the other for Muhammedans. He also suggested that each Collectorate should consist of fifteen Tahsildary Schools. In every Tahsildary, candidates for the teaching posts in Tahsildary Schools were to be nominated by the respectable men of the locality, a provision which was specially designed to create local interest in education. The study of english was confined only to the Collectorate School, and that too was of an elementary nature.\(^{32}\) Other subjects were taught in Vernacular medium. In the Tahsildary

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Schools, entire teaching was conducted in the Language of the District. The subjects taught in these schools were as those taught in the Indigenous Schools. The Scheme aimed at the establishment of a few well-managed, efficient schools, so that these were held out as Models for the numerous schools which were in an unsatisfactory condition.

A Committee of Public Instruction was set up to carry out Munro's Scheme. It was decided to establish a school in Madras for the Training of Masters and within two years, about seventy schools were established in the Tahsils. The expansion of education for the masses gained momentum under this Scheme. Unfortunately, it received a setback due to the interference of the Directors of the Company. They sent instructions to the Government of Madras to concentrate on the Spread of English Education rather than Mass Education. By this instruction, the Court of Directors felt that the Munro's Plan neglected Higher Education of the Upper Classes.

Besides these factors, there was also the demand for English Education from the upper classes of the Province in order to gain positions in Government Service. In 1836, the Court of Directors advocated the Downward Filtration Theory at the

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cost of Mass Education. According to this Theory, the upper class, possessing leisure and natural influence over their country men, could learn Higher Standards of English Education and elevate them morally and intellectually to a higher status. By raising the standard of instruction among these classes, they expected a much greater and more beneficial change in the ideas and feelings of the community. The Promoters of this Theory thought that dissemination of western culture and knowledge could take place among the masses. But this type of change did not take place and hence it did not yield the desired results. These attempts of the Company, however, did not alter the School System of Munro.

Though no new Tahsildary and Collectorate Schools were opened in the Province under the changed circumstances, the Missionaries extended their activities with great vigour and strength. The American Jaffna Mission established the American Madura Mission in 1834 and opened schools at Madurai, Dindigul and Ramanathapuram. In course of time, these institutions developed into Centres of Higher Learning. The Court of Directors rightly observed that, “we can only remark with satisfaction that the educational efforts of Christian Missionaries have

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36 G.O. No. 76, Revenue Department, 16 January 1860, p.2.
37 Ibid., p.3.
been more successful among the Tamil population than any other part of India”. Even the Government was reluctant to start educational institutions of its own in view of the fervent educational activities of the Missionaries who had established good schools in various parts of Tamil Nadu.

The Missionaries were ready to admit pupils without payment of fees while the Government realized that they could not run such schools without incurring heavy financial burden. Further, the Mission Schools were run with a view to propagating their faith, making Bible Teaching Compulsory in these schools. Thus it must be admitted that they introduced a New System of Education by setting up schools, which were far different from those of the existing system.

After Munro, the people of Tamil Nadu witnessed only successive Governors without any constructive plans for the Expansion of School Education. The Official Records of the Madras Government between 1839 and 1853 mostly consisted of Minutes of successive Governors outlining the Policies which were never fully adopted. In view of the frequent changes of the Educational Policy, the measures of the Madras Government did not yield fruitful results.

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Until 1852, the Government made no serious attempt to establish any institution under its immediate control. The *Spectator*, (weekly), Madras, published an article which deplored the lack of activity on the part of the Government in the Madras Province and urged them to take steps to provide necessary facilities for the Spread of Education.  

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