CHAPTER I

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The Christian missionaries were pioneers in the field of education in Tamil Nadu. They imparted religious and secular instructions to the people. The first ever efforts at educating the girls came from Protestant women missionaries and not from the English East India Company. They provided education regardless of caste, religion and sex. In 1881, there were 540 schools for girls in South India. Christian missions, like S.P.G., C.M.S. and C.E.Z.M.S. played the biggest role in the extension of female education. The schools which the women missionaries started though small and inefficient to begin with, were destined to develop into renowned institutions later on. The subjects taught to girls were reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, hygiene, domestic economy, drawing, needle-work and lace-making. The unstinted efforts of the lady missionaries to remove illiteracy from among the rural women by opening Zenana centres yielded substantial results. With the establishment of Zenana schools in rural areas, superstitious beliefs of the womenfolk began to vanish and women of the villages came to occupy their due place in society. The rate of literacy increased consequently.

In 1830, Alexander Duff, a Scottish Missionary stressed the importance of and need for English education and thereafter English language became popular. The five Girls' Schools started by the L.M.S. in South Travancore in

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1821 were the first schools for native girls in India. Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control of the English East India Company formulated new educational policies in 1854. Wood’s Despatch wanted to utilise the services of the Christian missionaries and private agencies to spread western education in India by granting it aid under the grant-in-aid system. It stressed the need for the establishment of schools at the elementary, middle and higher levels, colleges and Universities in the Presidential towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. It brought education under government control and started a grant-in-aid system for private schools. Recognized schools were inspected by the government and recommended for grants-in-aid. It was a turning point in the Indian educational system. When this system was inaugurated in 1865, Christian schools were eligible to receive government grants for teachers’ salaries on the basis of their qualifications.

The women missionaries made notable contribution in the field of education from 1800-1947. The Tirunelveli Diocese managed two first grade colleges, one for men, St. John’s College and the other for women, Sarah Tucker College; fifteen High Schools for boys and girls, five Middle Schools, 700 Elementary Schools, one Industrial School and two special schools, one for the blind and the other for the deaf and dumb. Of them, ten were mixed schools. In some cases, the existing boys’ schools were amalgamated with the girls’ schools.

as at Idaiyangudi and Nallur or by the admission of boys in the girls' schools and vice versa due to financial crisis.  

Female Education

There were nearly 153 million women in India in 1917. Among them 1,600,000 were literates. They could read and write simply in their own language. The percentage of school-going girls was less than six. There was one school for girls for thirty-three towns and villages in India in 1917. A number of socio-economic factors were responsible for the negligence of education in general. Between the ages of five and sixteen, most girls were illiterate and did not attend school, because of the ignorance and negligence of their parents. Many of the parents did not know the value of education as for them life was a struggle for survival. Marriage customs of the Hindus and Muslims also put serious obstacles in the progress of female education. Social practices such as purdah, child marriage and the rigid seclusion of women from society were some other inhibiting factors. Superstitious beliefs were rampant.

Poor parents sent their girls for tending cattle, weeding, picking or spinning cotton to augment the family income. Further, the climate of the southern

7. Report of Mrs. Scorborough, Christianagaram District, 1 October 1869, p. 17. (Hereafter any entry in the thesis referring district other than Tirunelveli District is to indicate ecclesiastical geographical boundaries and unit.)
8. Purdah - a system of screening Muslim or Hindu women from strangers by means of veil or curtain.
region with its black cotton soil was not conducive to the health of the children. All these contributed to the lack of awareness about education. Boarding schools had not yet been started.\textsuperscript{10} Educating a girl of the lower caste was considered a breach of culture and tradition by the upper caste. Education was their monopoly. Further, they employed the lower caste people for menial and manual work in their houses and did not want to lose them.

Education of non-Christian women was largely confined to the primary level. Also, girls schools were chiefly found in towns.\textsuperscript{11} Female literacy was regarded as a source of moral danger since only dancing girls could normally read and write.\textsuperscript{12} Hence, the strongest opposition for female education came from the ignorant old women. They could not just understand the advantages of female education due to their superstitious beliefs and prejudices. Parents of girls felt that their education would deprive them of the extra hands needed during the sowing, transplanting seedlings, removing weed and harvest times. Also, even the village girls considered the field work to be more important than education. Further girls were engaged in household chores.\textsuperscript{13} The missionaries in the course of their preachings in the villages and social service, saw the plight of the young girls. Moved by the pity, the women missionaries established a series of educational institutions in Tirunelveli district which had an everlasting impact among the people.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} Quarterly Report of S.P.G., April 1909 pp. 85-89.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Margaret Pope, Women’s Education in India, \textit{The East and the West: A Quarterly Review for the study of the Missions}, Westminster, 1917, Vol.XV, pp.183-186.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Altekar, A.S., \textit{Position of Women in Hindu Civilization}, New Delhi, 1856, p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Annual Report of S.P.G., 1915, p.46.
\end{itemize}
Basic Educational Institutions

The educational institutions were of three grades viz. the Primary Schools (Lower Elementary and Higher Elementary), Secondary Schools and Colleges. Primary Schools aimed at the teaching of reading, writing and elementary knowledge. Secondary Schools were classified into English, Anglo-vernacular and vernacular schools. English was the medium of instruction in Anglo-vernacular schools. The VI Form was the final class in the secondary education stage. It was followed by two year intermediate courses and degree courses in the colleges. In addition to these, there were various institutions of a special character, such as medical schools, colleges and normal schools for the training of teachers.\textsuperscript{14}

In response to the crying need for elementary education, the S.P.G. and C.M.S. started a series of schools in Tirunelveli and neighbouring mission districts. Until 1920, elementary education was in the hands of Christian missionaries. By the Elementary Education Act of 1920, the Government of Madras set up an Education Council for each district. It consisted of persons, nominated by the government and elected by the local bodies. All matters concerning elementary education were carried out only in consultation with the District Education Council.

The District Education Council was replaced by Taluk Advisory Councils in 1939. But they were also abolished in 1941 and their powers were transferred.

to the Department of Education under the District Educational Officers. In 1961, a new post, ‘the Inspectress of Girls Schools’ was created at Tirunelveli. After independence, the curriculum for primary education was modified into a vocation oriented one. The schools that adopted the system of education were called Junior Basic Schools (I to V classes) and Senior Basic Schools (VI - VIII classes). Spinning, weaving, agriculture, gardening and crafts were included in the syllabus for the basic schools. However at present, there are different categories of schools like the Primary, Middle, High and Higher Secondary Schools and Teacher Training Institutes in the district.\textsuperscript{15}

There were different types of Educational Institutions in the Tirunelveli Diocese, Preparandi Institution, Vernacular Training Institution, Native English School, Boys and Girls’ Boarding Schools. The Preparandi Institutions were established in 1851. They were designed chiefly for spiritual agents and the course of instruction was mainly theological. The missionary who was in charge of the institution, trained youngmen as Christian teachers. Vernacular Training Institution was established in 1856 with a view to equipping men for the office of schoolmasters. This training system was introduced throughout the Tirunelveli District. Model school and practising school were attached to this establishment. The higher department was called the normal school.

Native English Schools were established in 1844 for the purpose of giving education to the higher caste Hindus. Boys and Girls’ Boarding Schools were established in 1850.\textsuperscript{15}

attached to every Missionary Station throughout the district. The children in every village could attend Vernacular Day School.\textsuperscript{16} Besides the large number of village schools under the direct management of the district Church Council, there were institutions under the direct supervision of European missionaries. They were variously grouped under the heads of colleges and high schools, training and theological institutions and boarding schools.\textsuperscript{17}

Primary schools for girls were chiefly day schools and were under mission control. Attendance was irregular and more than half of the girls did not study beyond the second standard as their illiterate parents wanted them to lend a hand in the agricultural work. Secondary schools for girls were also day-schools. They were often formed by just adding one or two classes to a primary school. The intelligent girls from the primary schools in the surrounding districts were sent to the high school for higher studies. The aim of the secondary school was largely to train well educated teachers for their primary schools. In Anglo-vernacular schools, English was the medium of instruction. High schools prepared girls for admission to the medical schools or teachers training courses. The Mission High Schools for girls had large boarding establishments. In connection with the education of non-Christians, there were purdah schools, which provided education both in vernacular and English.\textsuperscript{18} While educating the


\textsuperscript{17} Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society, 1905, p.27.

girl children, the women missionaries felt the need to compensate their parents for the loss of income when their children did not work.\textsuperscript{19}

**Female Education in Tirunelveli.**

Women missionaries were the pioneers in the sphere of women's education in Tirunelveli. After the Charter Act of 1813, young missionaries brought their wives to Tirunelveli who opened small schools for girls in their residences. Before their arrival, it had been thought that education was absolutely unnecessary for women.\textsuperscript{20} The women missionaries were the first to break the shackles in which the women were bound and set them free to learn things and enrich themselves. The C.M.S. and S.P.G. missions took special care for the education of girls and opened day schools, boarding schools, Sunday schools, orphanages and industrial schools. They founded elementary schools in rural areas and established high schools and Colleges in select places.\textsuperscript{21}

The mission schools admitted orphan children in their boarding schools at times of famine. Boarding schools and orphanages were mainly intended to render support to young converts and children of poor parents. The women missionaries themselves worked as part-time and full time teachers in schools. However, they were not specifically trained as teachers. But to teach the local languages, they employed non-Christian Indians. The lady missionaries always

\textsuperscript{21} Tucker, A.L.O.E., 'The Mother in Israel', *Gleaner*, April 1897, p. 54.
showed a tenderly maternal affection to their students and never made use of wholesome severities.\textsuperscript{22} The ultimate aim of education imparted to women by the Churches and missions was not to produce scholars but to enable the women to fulfil their role in a changing society.\textsuperscript{23} 

The first church and the first school in Tirunelveli were established in 1778 by Clarinda, a Maratha Brahmin widow, baptized by Rev. Schwartz.\textsuperscript{24} The missionaries of the S.P.C.K. and later the C.M.S. and the S.P.G. founded a network of schools throughout the Tirunelveli district in the early nineteenth century. In 1996, the Tirunelveli Diocese had 485 Elementary Schools and 148 Middle Schools. These schools were under the management of the Tirunelveli Diocesan Trust Association. It was the biggest educational agency in the State of Tamil Nadu. Elementary schools were the foundations over which high schools and colleges were built. The education also consisted of technical training and manual labour, including industrial and agricultural education.\textsuperscript{25} Introduction of female education in Tirunelveli brought about a sea change in the life style of the women. The number of girls schools increased rapidly after 1858. The best students from the residential schools were provided with a special vocational training in farming or industry. From the residential schools, women teachers and hospital nurses were recruited.\textsuperscript{26}

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\item \textsuperscript{22} Caldwell, R., \textit{Records of Early History of the Tinnevelly Mission}, Madras, 1881, p.345.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Madhaviah, A., \textit{Clarinda (T)}, Tirunelveli, 1992, p.211.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Annual Report of S.P.G., 1939, p. 25.
\end{itemize}
Mary Sargent Girls' School, Palayamkottai.

Mrs. Anne Rhenius, wife of Rev. Rhenius\(^{27}\) started a Girls School in March 1823 at Palayamkottai.\(^{28}\) A boarding room was built in 1831 to accommodate the girls.\(^{29}\) In 1831, there were thirty-six pupils in this Boarding School. The school was originally known as Rhenius Amma School. It was at a time when women were denied schooling and were confined to their houses. The schools charged no fees and the girls were encouraged to come to school with gifts of pots and clothing. The girls were instructed in reading and writing, spinning, knitting and sewing.\(^{30}\) The students were taught to keep their homes clean, to discern what is good and bad, to visit the sick to comfort them and to pray for them. Very often Mrs. Rhenius delighted them with gifts. During the outbreaks of cholera in Tirunelveli region, the students visited the villages and distributed medicines and consoled them.\(^{31}\) The widow of late Mr. Schnarre, a missionary at Tranquebar was appointed as the head of the Boarding School in Tirunelveli.\(^{32}\) The Girls Boarding School was financially assisted by friends in England.\(^{33}\)

\(^{27}\) The C.M.S. started their work in Tirunelveli in 1820 with its representative, Rev. Charles Theophilus Ewald Rhenius of Germany. He was the Father of the C.M.S. Tinnevelly Mission. He was born on 5th November, 1790 at Gaudens in West Prussia. He studied theology in Berlin from 1810 to 1812. He left England for India in 1814. He went to Tranquebar to study Tamil language and soon became proficient in Tamil. He married Anne Van Someron in 1816. Within five years, he opened, 107 Primary Schools in Tinnevelly district. (Walker, The Tinnevelly Mission - C.M.S., *The Harvest Field*, October 1892, p. 123.)

\(^{28}\) Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society, 1823, pp.24-27.


\(^{31}\) Ibid., 1841, p.116.

\(^{32}\) Church Missionary Record, 1824, pp.24-27.

\(^{33}\) Tinnevelly Schools', *The Grain of Mustard Seed*, 1891, p.63.
Mrs. Rhenius was assisted by Mr. Gnanapragasam, the first convert to Christianity from Hinduism in Palayamkottai. Mrs. Schaffter taught sewing and English. Mrs. Lousia Pettit took charge of the school in 1835. She was succeeded by a number of devoted missionaries like Mrs. Newman, Mrs. Mary Anne Clark and Elizabeth Graver, Mrs. Mary Sargent, Mrs. Mary Kember and Mrs. Ardill. Elizabeth Graver, wife of Bishop Sargent looked after the Girls Boarding School and Children's School from 1842 to 1853. After Mrs. Elizabeth Graver, Mrs. Mary Sargent managed the school for twenty-eight years and endeavoured to promote female education. Mrs. Mary Sargent induced the village women to send their children to school by offering jaggery, peanuts and fruits. She re-opened Girls Boarding School at Suvisehapuram. It had been started by Catherine Muller in 1837 but was closed due to financial crisis. Every Wednesday morning, Mrs. Mary Sargent addressed forty poor widows and emphasised the need for cleanliness and counselled them in their domestic affairs. She gave them enough rice to cook meal for the day. Every year, she gave each widow a set of new clothes.

The instruction in the Girls Boarding School was in the vernacular. The students were taught History, Geography, Tamil, Grammar and Arithmetic. They learned to write both on paper as well as on palm-leaves. Along with these studies, they were taught the domestic duties of a Hindu house wife, pounding out rice,

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35. Church Missionary Record, 1884, pp. 143-144.
36. Ibid., 1856, p.302.
cooking, spinning cotton, needlework and crochet. There were two school masters, one for Tamil and one for English and two female teachers. They collected one rupee per month towards the cost of clothing and books. Poor and orphan girls of the Boarding School were admitted into the industrial school.

Mrs. Mary Sargent was followed by Mrs. Mary Kember and Mrs. Ardill. Mrs. Kember was in charge of the administration of Boarding School in 1865. The strength of the students increased to one hundred. The students were taught various kinds of needle works. With the available facilities, the inmates of the Boarding School managed to work for the development of the institution. The students were given training in cooking methods. On simple mats, they slept in the school-rooms. In the initial stages, girl students from Ceylon, Mauritius,Nilgiris and Madras were admitted. But later this system was stopped.

Mrs. Ardill was in charge of the school from 1910 to 1952. She was assisted by her husband, Rev. R.F. Ardill and her daughters, Miss. B.E. Ardill and Mrs. K. Warren. There was a spectacular progress in both studies and discipline. A new kindergarten class was opened in 1932 with the permission of the Government of Madras. Little children from four years of age were admitted to I and II Standards. Successful students were sent to the various neighbouring High Schools for higher education and a select group of students received Elementary Training. To improve the health of the students, milk powder and

37. Ibid., 1858, p.278.
39. Ibid., 1897, p. 281.
40. Madras Diocesan Record, 1893, p.102.
grain were added to their food.⁴² The school gave special attention to service and religious instructions.⁴³ The growth of the institution was mainly due to the efficient administration and tireless work of Mrs. Ardill, who took charge of the school in 1910. The school was upgraded as High School in 1963. Subsequently, it became a Higher Secondary School in 1978 and later the Girls' Boarding School. Now it is known as Mary Sargent Higher Secondary School.

**Girls' Boarding School, Idayangudi**

Mrs. Eliza Caldwell⁴⁴ founded a Girls Boarding School at Idayengudi, near Tisayanvilai in 1844.⁴⁵ In the initial period, there were only eight girls on the roll. As years rolled by, its strength rose to more than one hundred. Boarding schools were also started at Christianagaram, Nagalapuram, Puthiamputhur, Koodenkulam and Kuttam by Miss. Eliza Caldwell. She paid periodical visits to these schools to provide the necessary guidance and support. The Idayangudi Boarding School was also instrumental in starting similar schools at Nazareth and Mudalur under Mrs. Cammerar and Mrs. Heyrne respectively.⁴⁶ Mrs. Caldwell used education as a tool to change the attitude of girls about themselves. Her principal object was to train the girls to become good housewives.⁴⁷

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42. Ibid., 1933, p.40.
44. Mrs. Eliza Caldwell was the daughter of Rev. Charles Mault and Mrs. Martha Mault, L.M.S. Missionaries at Nagercoil. Eliza was born at Nagercoil on 13 August 1822. Mrs. Mault established the first Girls Boarding School at Nagercoil in 1819. She also published a Tamil tract of twelve pages on the advantages of female education in 1831. Eliza was married to Robert Caldwell on 20 March 1844. She died in 1899. (Madras Diocesan Record, 1898-1899, p.106).
46. 'Female Education in India', *The Mission Field*, 1 April 1859, pp.73-75.
The annual reports of the S.P.C.K. and S.P.G. throw light on the growth of the school. The students were taught Tamil, Grammar, Geography, English, Arithmetic, History, needle works and hygiene. Poor children were given free education and supplied free food and cloth. Eliza Caldwell was a pioneer in giving free mid day meals to hundred and seventy-one students. A nominal amount of money was collected as fees in order to make the parents aware of the expenditure incurred on education.\textsuperscript{48} Lady Napier, wife of the then Madras Governor, on her visit to Idayengudi in 1868, donated money required for planting a thousand palmyrah trees which could serve as a source of permanent income for the Boarding School in the future.\textsuperscript{49} To get permanent income for the school, Mrs. Eliza Caldwell purchased agricultural lands with a gift of £100 (Rs.1060/-) obtained from Rev. Fenton of England and named the land as ‘Fenton Estate’. She also constructed a Fenton Tank at Kudemkulam.\textsuperscript{50} Mrs. Caldwell was assisted by Miss. Eleanor, a native of Idaiyangudi. She was appointed as teacher and matron of the Boarding School in 1844. Later, she was appointed as the Headmistress of the school. She was the first Indian Headmistress of the school.

The boarding school children paid rupees ten to the District Sabai as an annual offering, from their earnings from rearing fowls and keeping small gardens.\textsuperscript{51} The expenditure of the school was met partly by the Madras Diocesan Committee and partly by the subscriptions collected from the rich people.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{49} Report of Isabella and Louisa Caldwell, Girls' Boarding School, Idaiyangudi, 1868.
\textsuperscript{50} Report of Caldwell, S.P.G. Missionary, Idaiyangudi, 31 October 1868.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 1895, p. 70.
epidemics, the missionaries and teachers jointly helped the affected people. At times of caste disputes, the educated women in these schools assisted their husbands in restoring peace. Having attained perfect mastery over Tamil and colloquial Tamil, Mrs. Eliza Caldwell could easily be approached by any student or teacher or servant for consultations on important occasions and issues. It is surprising to note that Bishop Caldwell, the great Tamil scholar was tutored by his wife in the early years. Every year, the girls were well prepared for Teachers' Third Grade examination. The girls after passing the V standard, either had to go home to help their parents in household work or to join the mission industrial school.

Caldwell's daughters, Isabella and Louisa too got involved in the education of girls. They wrote impressive and moving letters to their friends in England and raised sufficient funds to support the poor girls in the boarding school. They even managed the girls' boarding school in the absence of their mother. In 1869, the strength of the boarding school was 167. With the limited resources, they opened a new Anglo-vernacular school in 1869 at Oramanhulam. The S.P.C.K. offered scholarships to the poor girls. With the contributions of the S.P.C.K., the school built rest rooms for the boarders. The Ladies Association of England supplied clothes and toys for the school. The surplus articles and clothes,

unsuitable for school children, such as children's frocks and christening robes were sold among the wives of the mission agents and former boarding school girls. With the help of her daughters, Mrs. Caldwell developed the school and brought it up to a very high standard. Following in the footsteps of her mother, Mrs. Isabella Wyatt in 1880 set up the first Girls' Boarding School at Puthur in Tiruchirappalli and a training institution for teachers.  

The girls' school was recognised as first grade elementary with seven standards and aided by the government. The school had forty one boarders and seventy eight day scholars. The total strength of the staff members in 1916 was seven. In 1934, Idaiyangudi Girls School had 195 girl students, of which thirty three were boarders. The school became a full-fledged High School in 1944 with the opening of the VI Form. 

On the model of the Girl's Boarding School, Idaiyangudi, Mrs. Eliza Caldwell started a Girls' School at Kulaseharapatinam near Tiruchendur in the Christianagaram mission district for high caste Hindu girls. Eliza Caldwell solved the financial problems of Pudukottai school, near Tuticorin which was started by Rev. Sharrock in 1883. Sixty girls in and around Pudukottai were admitted in the school which was a great boon to the poor. 

60. Madras Diocesan Record, 1892, pp. 15-17.
63. Ibid., 1944, p.23.
generously donated money to the Boys’ Boarding School at Ramnad. She offered financial support to a Marava boy and a Marava girl from Radhapuram mission district.\(^{66}\) The S.P.G. Boys’ and Girls’ Boarding Schools at Kudankulam and Radhapuram were opened in 1888 by Rev. S.S. Daniel, under the patronage of Mrs. Caldwell, Mrs. Agnes Clarke and Mrs. Isabella Wyatt.\(^{67}\) These schools were managed mostly on subscriptions from the friends of Mrs. Caldwell of England.\(^{68}\)

**Victoria Girls’ School, Tuticorin**

In 1883 Victoria Girls’ School was started by Mrs. Eliza Caldwell in Tuticorin\(^{69}\) for high caste Hindu girls. There were twenty three girls in the Day School at Tuticorin Melur and twenty seven at Tuticorin Keelur with qualified female teachers. Out of the forty-seven students, twenty five were married. In 1884, another school was started at Vaddakkur in Tuticorin. These three schools of the women missionaries obtained government recognition in 1885. Bishop Caldwell of Tirunelveli and Mrs. Caldwell wanted to develop the Melur school into a High School. The Melur Girls School was up-graded into a Middle School in 1887 and was subsequently made a Boarding School.\(^{70}\) The school was named after Queen Victoria on the occasion of her golden jubilee celebration in 1887.\(^{71}\)

In 1893, the school was upgraded into a High School.

67. Ibid., 1889, p. 40.
68. Ibid., 1886, p. 17.
69. Tuticorin was the chief sea-port in Tirunelveli. It was the principal emporium of trade. The terminus of the railway connected Tirunelveli with the rest of India and the centre of communication between India and Ceylon. Tuticorin was under the possession of the Portuguese from 1532 to 1658. Then it was passed on to the Dutch and finally ceded to English in 1825. (Annual Report of S.P.G., 1882, p. 16).
71. Madras Diocesan Record, 1904-1905 p. 94.
In 1904 the total strength of the Victoria school was six hundred. The Victoria Girls' School and the Melur Lower Secondary School were managed by Miss Boyton and Miss White. In July 1906 lace making was introduced in these schools. In 1910, the Victoria school became a Higher Elementary School and Miss Burton took charge as Headmistress of the Victoria Girls' School, Tuticorin. The school was reconstituted as a Higher Elementary School in 1910. Miss Thomson was appointed as Principal, after the resignation of Miss Burton. There were hundred students in the school, of which twenty five were boarders. In 1911, the management appointed ten qualified Indian teachers.

Mrs. Foster was the manager of the Victoria Girls' School till 1924. Upto 1927, the school was managed by the S.P.G. missionaries. But from 1927 onwards it came under the direct management of the Tuticorin Circle Committee and the Circle Chairman became its manager. Miss Viana Philip was the first Indian Headmistress of the school in 1932 and worked upto 1952. When the golden jubilee of the school was celebrated in 1937, there were 350 pupils with eleven women teachers. About sixty three pupils resided in the boarding. Mrs. Lucy Western, wife of Bishop F.J. Western gave training to the girls in the art of cooking.

73. Ibid., 1908, p. 129.
74. Ibid., 1910, p. 121.
75. Ibid., 1911, p. 118.
76. Pascoe, C.F., Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., 1701-1900, Westminster, 1901, p.553d.
In order to equip the students with knowledge of current affairs, various programmes were arranged. The representatives of the American Films Education Department of U.S.A. visited the school in 1952 and documentary films on health, sports and games were screened. In addition to the regular subjects, Hindi was taught to the students. In 1952, the total strength of the school was 2346. In 1952, the Victoria Girls School was upgraded into a Middle School. It became a High School in 1953. In 1955, IV Form was started. In 1978, the Victoria Girls School was upgraded into a Higher Secondary School.

St. Mary's Middle School for Girls, Sawyerpuram

The women missionaries Miss. Evans, Mrs. Ardill and Miss. Ardill were responsible for the development of St. Mary’s Middle School for Girls at Sawyerpuram. Sawyerpuram village is about twelve miles south of Tuticorin. In 1883 the S.P.G. missionaries started a Girls’ Boarding School in Sawyerpuram and in 1898, it was raised to a Lower Secondary School. Rev. Arthur Joseph Godden upgraded it into a Middle School in 1905 and became its manager. It was named as St. Mary’s Girls Middle School. Mr. C.S. Joseph was its first Headmaster and he had a team of six teachers. Miss. Evans was incharge of the school as supervising Headmistress from 1921 to 1926. In the initial stage, the classes were held in thatched rooms with mud flooring. The main building was

81. Madras Diocesan Record, 1901-1904, p 83.
built in 1931 and the school attained the status of a High School in 1945. The first batch of girls appeared for S.S.L.C. examination in 1948. It was upgraded as a Higher Secondary School in 1978 by the efforts of the woman missionary Mrs. C. George.83

The villagers voluntarily sent their children to the school. The total strength of the students was one hundred in 1924. There was scarcity of trained women secondary grade teachers. Of the five assistants, only one was trained. To make up for the lack of trained graduates in Science and Mathematics, untrained men were employed. The school gave importance to religious and moral instructions.84 Miss. Ardill taught English, music, and scripture. Music classes were held regularly for all the students. Miss. Ardill had a great passion for cleanliness and the students were taught about the importance of cleanliness. Physical training received good attention. The pupils took part in interclass and interschool sports competitions. An earnest effort was made for the students to follow the principle, "Learn by doing." The practical work undertaken by the students in nature study and gardening, geography and history was commendable.85

The school gave instruction in home craft, knitting, crochet and darning. Great importance was given to cultivate good manners and cultural excellence. The Girls’ Literary Society had its meeting on every alternate Saturdays. Every student had to contribute an event to the general programme-a recitation, a song, a

85. Ibid., 1934, p. 36.
a story or a dramatisation. They read essays and conducted debates on various subjects in vernacular. The teachers attended the meetings and presided over them by turns. The School Teachers' Association met every fourth Saturday of the month and discussed various problems faced by them in their work for the month. 86 Miss Evans and the students in the hostel went to the nearby slum areas to carry out social and gospel work. Mrs. Anne Pandian was the head of the institution in 1934 and during her period, a hostel for girls and a Science Block were built. 87

St. Mary's Girls' School was upgraded into a High School in 1948 with twenty four pupils. Girls from even the most backward villages like Mudithananthal and Manahaneer Kayal studied in this school. 88 St. Mary's Girls' School drew the attention of the students of east Tirunelveli, Sawyerpuram, Pudukottai, Pannavilai and Tuticorin. 89 The Tirunelveli Diocese granted Rs.2,000/- every year for the maintenance of the school. 90 The Government of Madras issued permanent recognition to the school on 28 January 1953. 91

Sarah Tucker Branch and Zenana Schools

The women missionaries established Branch and Zenana Schools for the welfare of the high caste Hindus and Muslim girls. These schools were

86. Ibid., 1935, pp.36-37.
90. Ibid., 1950-1951, p. 12.
91. Ibid., 1952-1953, p. 23.
intended to be an auxiliary to the Zenana work among women. Before the establishment of the British rule, only a microscopic minority of girls received education. The Hindu codes disallowed the education for women as it was regarded ‘unbecoming the modesty of sex and fit only for public dancers’. In 1870, there were no caste Hindu girls studying in any of the mission schools. In order to meet the basic necessity of the caste Hindus, the first school was opened in Tirunelveli in 1871. Seven years later, Usborne Memorial School at Palayamkottai was established. Rev. and Mrs. Lash set up a network of Sarah Tucker Branch Schools all over the Tirunelveli district. Mission boarding schools helped the girls to get higher education. Most important among them were the Nallur school with thirty five boarders, Surandai school with fifty seven boarders and Suviseshapuram school with six boarders. In the year 1881, there were fifty-five Branch Schools with 1,764 pupils in the Tirunelveli district. All the schools were managed by the Rev. and Mrs. Harcourt. These schools promoted education among caste Hindu girls.

The girls who learned and lived in this institution took up new responsibilities as teachers or nurses in hospitals or were employed in other walks of life. Most of the Sarah Tucker Institution Branch Schools were situated in villages of the Tirunelveli district with outposts at Eral, Subramaniapuram and Vanaramutty. A small hostel was established for the resident teachers at

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94. Church Missionary Record, 1871-1872, p. 287.
Sindupundurai School and Kallidaikurichi School was remodelled to accommodate more pupils. The non-Christian girls did not stay in schools after twelve years of age on account of traditional customs and early marriages. It is to be noted that among the Hindu children in the Branch Schools, there were many child wives. The high caste girls studied Tamil, English, Hebrew, Latin, Geography, History, arithmetic, rhetoric and needle work. Study of Hebrew was later discontinued due to the lack of teachers and study materials. The women missionaries made the necessary arrangements for the elder girls in the Branch Schools to attend the training classes in the Sarah Tucker Training School and to become qualified teachers in the future.

Necessity of Branch Schools

Various factors necessitated the establishment of Sarah Tucker Branch and Boarding Schools in Tirunelveli. The Training Institute offered employment opportunities to the trained teachers. The common people of the villages had a strong belief that a woman could never be a teacher. It was a tradition that high caste girls would not be sent to distant places for study. Understanding the nature of handicap for the upper caste girls, the women missionaries established schools in the areas where they live in large numbers. Hundreds of students joined the Christian institutions. Some of the boy students openly said that their sisters

100. Church Missionary Record, 1884, pp. 147-148.
at home would like to receive education. But the practical difficulty was that the girls were prohibited from receiving any instruction from male teachers. Hence the missionry societies of Tirunelveli appealed to the foreign missionaries to send more women missionaries to India to educate the girls. Consequently, several women missionaries volunteered for service in India. The women missionaries managed the Branch Schools with the generous contributions received from the friends of England and India and the government grants.

The first Sarah Tucker Branch School was opened at Adaikalapuram, near Palayamkottai on 1 April 1870. Followed by this, a few schools were established in the strategic centres of the district. Rev. Lash opened a Branch School at Tirunelveli in 1871. Usborne Memorial School, one of the largest Branch Schools was built in 1878 in Palayamkottai with the grant received from Miss. Harriet Usborne and A.M. Usborne from London. They were munificent benefactors to the cause of female education in Tirunelveli district. The foundation stone of the Usborne school was laid on 2 March 1878 by the Collector Mr. R.K. Puckle. Another Branch School was started with a gift of ten thousand pounds from Miss. Harriet Usborne. Miss. A.M. Usborne financially supported the Sarah Tucker institution and made a gift of £6000.

Most of the Sarah Tucker Branch Schools were established with the

102. Letter of Rev. John Tucker, the Superintendent of the Church Missionary Society’s Missions in Madras to the Secretary of Female Education Society, 1836.
103. Church Missionary Record, October 1881, p. 277.
money contributed by the foreign women missionaries. In the schools, Bishop Sargent delivered interesting lectures on African researches and Bishop Caldwell on a historical sketch of Tirunelveli.\textsuperscript{106} The Usborne Memorial School which was located in the Brahmin dominated area, enrolled 100 girls in 1878.\textsuperscript{107} The Christian girls trained in the Sarah Tucker Institution were employed in the Branch Schools.\textsuperscript{108} The Government of Madras donated 10,070 square feet of land to the Usborne Memorial School for playground and garden. The total number of pupils in the rolls in 1934 was 2457 girls and 141 boys.\textsuperscript{109}

There were fifty nine Branch Schools in 1881 with 1810 pupils. The women missionaries admitted the low caste girls in their institutions. They were allowed to mingle with high caste girls. Mr. and Mrs. Lash were successful in bringing girls from among the high-caste Hindus and the low caste girls into these schools. The women missionaries established separate schools for Brahmins and Sudras at Kallidaikurichy. At the Brahmin School, the mistress was assisted by a Brahmin woman. In both the schools, the girls were taught fairly.\textsuperscript{110} The Sudra School obtained government grant of eighty two rupees while the Brahimn School obtained only rupees ten from the government. A new school was established in a Nadar village at Tiruttam.\textsuperscript{111} The women missionaries started Victoria Girls

\textsuperscript{106} Church Missionary Record, October 1881, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{107} Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society, 1878, p.117.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 1905, p. 27
\textsuperscript{109} Report of Tinnevelly Diocesan Council, 1934, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{110} Church Missionary Record, March 1881, pp. 67-68.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, 1881, pp. 270-273.
School at Kalakkad in 1903 for the Brahmin children. The S.P.C.K. society sanctioned scholarships to the elder girls of Nallur and Suviesachapuram.\textsuperscript{112}

The boarding schools provided education mainly for the depressed class children. In the boarding schools, poor outcasts and destitute children were housed, clothed, fed, instructed and trained. Most of the missionaries' wives spent a great part of their time in teaching the girls needlework, lace making, and crochet work. While they remained in the boarding schools, their customs and superstitious beliefs changed to a great extent.\textsuperscript{113} The students of the boarding schools at Nallur, Surandai and Pannavilai gave a nominal fee to the management and gave half-price for their books. Nallur had an excellent boarding school with thirty one girls. It saw all round development under the care of Mr. and Mrs. John Samuel who were in charge of the school for six years. They taught hand work, needle work, drawing and physical exercises.\textsuperscript{114} Adi Dravida girls were admitted in the Sachiapuram Girls Boarding School. There were eighty boarders and seventeen day scholars.\textsuperscript{115} Six of the oldest girls in Sachiapuram boarding school and six from the Pannaivilai boarding school were sent to the Sarah Tucker Institution, Palayamkottai. Since they were too old to remain there without a resident European lady escort.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{112} Annual Report of the Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai, 1901, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{115} Report of Tinnevelly Diocesan Council, 1930, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{116} Church Missionary Record, October 1881, p. 277.
Sachiapuram Girls Boarding School imparted education to the girls of the backward areas of Tirunelveli. There were 120 girls in the school, of which 117 were boarders. Manual work was a prominent feature of the Branch schools' curriculum and the girls took an active part in the cultivation of the school lands and the repairing of buildings. In the twelve acres of land, the students cultivated cotton, ground-nuts and vegetables. They were also taught sewing and binding. They bound their own note-books and stitched their own clothes. A pre-vocational subject, basketry was taught in the Ambasamudram School. Spinning using thaklie was introduced in the C.M.S. MC Whirter School. These three schools were considered as model schools of the district.

The Branch schools of the Tirunelveli diocese were under the control of a lady missionary Miss. Askwith. Most of the schools were in the villages and spread all over the district and some of them were in in-accessible localities. In Palayamkottai alone, there were five branch schools such as the Montgomery School, the Usborne Memorial School, the Market School, the Fort School and Adaikalapuram School. Miss. Bourne of the Indian Female Instruction Society rendered valuable assistance for the progress of the schools. In 1896, Miss. Walford took charge of the Branch and Zenana Schools. Miss. Naish who took charge of the management of Branch Schools in 1911 built a small school to help

117. Report of Tinnevelly Diocesan Council, 1945, p. 44.
118. Ibid., 1929, p. 29.
121. Letter of Acheson Williams, Bishop of Tinnevelly and Madura to the clergy and other Mission workers, 1 May 1911.
the outcaste children of the canal area, near the Sarah Tucker High School. It was given the name 'Naishammal School'. Thaklie was introduced in the Sarah Tucker Branch Schools as a craft subject.\(^{122}\)

The Block Development Department of Madras supplied furniture, charts and teaching aids to the branch schools. Milk powder and cheese were provided by the National Christian Council Welfare Relief Committee to the branch schools.\(^{123}\) Many women teachers were employed in the Sarah Tucker Branch Schools in Tirunelveli and Palayamkottai. This paved the way for the betterment of the social status of women in Tirunelveli district. The branch schools remained for very long under the control of the Sarah Tucker Institution at Palayamkottai until the schools were merged with the Pastorates in 1975. At present, these schools are under the direct management of T.D.T.A. of the diocese.\(^{124}\)

Training Institutions

Teachers' Training Schools were formerly known as 'Seminaries'. Normal classes were attached to a few boarding schools. During the early days of the missionary service in education, no trained teachers were available and hence the women missionaries gave training to the native women and appointed them as teachers.\(^{125}\) In 1878, the training institutions were classified into two categories, Elementary Lower Grade and Elementary Higher Grade. Those who

\(^{123}\) Ibid., 1955-1956, p. 22.
passed VIII standard, got admission in Elementary Higher Grade. The students who passed V standard were admitted in the Elementary Lower Grade. The period of training was one year. Secondary Grade training was started in 1904. Students who passed X standard got admission in the Secondary Grade course. In 1910, the Elementary Lower Grade was abolished. In 1932, a two year teacher training course was introduced.\textsuperscript{128}

The teacher trainees received systematic instruction from the art of teaching. "Criticism Lessons", a form of exercise was introduced in the curriculum to stimulate the teachers. The training institutions supplied teachers to the various missions and government institutions in different parts of India. If a trained mistress had obtained a government certificate, she got rupee one per month as fixed pay and two annas\textsuperscript{127} per head on the average daily attendance.\textsuperscript{128}

Rhenius established a seminary at Palayamkottai for women in 1823 with twenty-three girls. In 1823, Mrs. Rhenius took charge Principal of the seminary for women. The students learnt languages, theology, history and ciphering specimens of writing on ola and needle-work and were trained for three months to serve as teachers.\textsuperscript{129} The inmates of the women's seminary attended the practising school in the forenoon and the Girls' Boarding School in the afternoon in the mission compound. Mrs. Rhenius gave moral instructions

\textsuperscript{126} Narpothagam, May 1934, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{127} According to the coinage then, 16 annas equal to one rupee.
\textsuperscript{128} Annual Report of S.P.G., 1874, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{129} Letter from Rev. Rhenius to the Madras Corresponding Committee, September 1823; Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society, 1826-1827, p. 136.
also for moulding their character. The students had their teaching practice in the central school at Murugankurichi, near Palayamkottai.\textsuperscript{130}

With a view to popularising female education, Miss. C.C. Giberne and Miss Sophia Hobbs, the C.M.S. Missionaries, opened the Female Normal School for women teachers at Katachapuram, near Mudalur in 1843.\textsuperscript{131} Miss. C.C. Giberne, a teacher in Tirunelveli Female Normal School, employed trained elderly women and widows as school teachers.\textsuperscript{132} Meanwhile in 1845, Miss. Sophia Hobbs was transferred to Mengnanapuram to assist Mary Thomas in the Boarding School. As she married Rev. James Spratt, the C.M.S. Missionary of Mengnanapuram in 1845, her sister, Mary Jane Hobbs was put in charge of Female Normal School, Katachapuram till 1856. Unfortunately, the training school at Katachapuram was closed in 1856 for lack of staff members. Hence the girls of this school were given training in the Palayamkottai Boys' Training Institution. Twelve girls students were admitted in 1855 and in the subsequent year, seventeen were admitted. This could be only an ad hoc arrangement and Rev. Sargent of Holy Trinity Church, Palayamkottai stressed the need for starting a training school exclusively for women.\textsuperscript{133} Hence in 1856 the seminary for women was separated from the Boys' Training School. Thus was sown the seed for what was to become the Sarah Tucker Training School in the later times.

\textsuperscript{132} Church Missionary Record, 1844, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{133} Minutes of Madras Corresponding Committee, 11 December 1855.
Sarah Tucker Female Training Institution

Sarah Tucker Female Training Institution was established at Palayamkottai in 1858 by Mrs. Mary Jane Dibb, in memory of Sarah Tucker\textsuperscript{134} for training native Christian young women. It was founded with the object of equipping the native women to become teachers in mission schools.\textsuperscript{135} After the death of Miss Sarah Tucker in 1857, her friends, Maria, Sovia and Sovana raised funds for the institution. They themselves donated 268 sovereigns of gold and 17 Shillings British gold coins to Rev. John Tucker of Palayamkottai. With this amount Rev. Sargent purchased a small plot at Palayamkottai from a Parsee merchant, Limjeebhoy Dossabhoy and established the Sarah Tucker educational institution.\textsuperscript{136} The Sarah Tucker institution started a school for training teachers. Attached to this, a model school was also started. Soon the S.T.I. began to flourish with various branches such as Boarding Schools, Branch Schools, Sarah Tucker College, Hospital and the Blind School and Deaf and Dumb School.\textsuperscript{137} Notable women missionaries like Mrs. Mary Jane Dibb, Miss. Meredith, Miss. Mary Richards, Mrs. Lash, Miss. Askwith, Swainson and Miss. Walford served in this institution.

\textsuperscript{134} Miss Sarah Tucker, sister of Rev. John Tucker, the C.M.S. Secretary at Madras collected money to start the Sarah Tucker Training Institution. She was deeply interested in missions and wrote some useful books about them. She was the author of several delightful missionary books, ‘South Indian Sketches’ ‘Abeokuta’, and ‘the Rainbow in the North’. Though she never came to India due to her physical disabilities, she had an ardent desire to enlighten and educate the women who were neglected by society. In response to the moving letters written by her brother, describing the pitiable conditions of the Indian women, she contacted her friends and collected twenty-four sovereigns from them. (Report of the Sarah Tucker Institution, October 1881).

\textsuperscript{135} Church Missionary Record, 1874, p. 98.

\textsuperscript{136} Church Missionary Record, 1858, p.260.

\textsuperscript{137} Annual Report of the Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai, 1900, p. 7.
In 1858, the C.M.S. missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Mary Jane Dibb took charge of the administration of Sarah Tucker institution. To assist them, Miss. Meredith from England was appointed. Geography of India, History, Arithmetic, Scripture, English Grammar and Life Skills were taught. Mr. Schaffter of Suvinessapuram sent six talented girls from his boarding school to Sarah Tucker Institution for studies. These girls studied here six months and afterwards returned to their parent schools. The teachers from nearby schools taught geography and drawing twice in a week. Mrs. A.H. Lash was in charge of this institution from 1866 to 1880. In 1890, the entire management of the Sarah Tucker Institutions passed on to the missionaries of C.E.Z.M.S., Miss. Askwith, Miss. Swainson and Miss. Walford.

The students of the Sarah Tucker Training School had their teaching practice in the Model School at Palayamkottai. They taught with the help of illustrations, flowers, nuts or models from the museum, paper coins, dolls and vessels. The training students were sent to the neighbouring villages to teach the illiterates during the holidays. The girls of this institution learned in hygiene, Indian History and Physical Geography. Miss. La Broomy, one of the teachers of the school taught them basket-making, mat-weaving and other craft with local

139. Church Missionary Record, July 1862, p. 215.
140. Ibid., September 1864, p. 266.
142. Madras Diocesan Record, 1893, pp. 103-104.
144. Church Missionary Record, March 1881, pp. 63 - 66.
materials and dyes. Twice in a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, the students had ‘Criticism Lessons’. Miss. Carr, the Inspectress of Girls’ Schools visited the institution frequently and was impressed with the teaching ability of the students. The trained students found employment as teachers in Sarah Tucker Branch Schools, Primary Schools of the Tirunelveli diocese and in the mission schools of Madurai, Tanjore, Madras, Ceylon and Mauritius.

In 1878, the training section started functioning with Elementary Higher and Lower grade classes in the Sarah Tucker Training institution. The minimum qualification for admission to the Elementary Higher Grade was a pass in Form III and to the Elementary Lower Grade, a pass in Form IV. The duration of the training course was one year in 1904, but in 1932, the duration of the training course was enhanced to two years. However there was very poor response for admission in the Secondary Grade section. Only one student studied in the section in 1904. Such poor admission rates forced the management to abolish the Elementary Lower Grade section in 1910. A separate governing board for the school was constituted on 3 September 1947 and the correspodent of the school was made an ex-officio member of the governing board. The school became a Basic Training School in 1958. A new syllabus was introduced with spinning, weaving, drawing and painting as major crafts. The school offered

146. Ibid., 1897, p. 4.
150. Minutes of Executive Standing Committee, 18 September 1947, pp. 9-10.
re-orientation to all teachers who were not trained in basic education. Diploma in Education course was introduced in the school in 1975.\textsuperscript{151}

**St. John's Teacher Training Institute, Nazareth**

Miss. Groves, Miss. Evans, Miss. Swingler and Miss. Harris, the eminent women missionaries were responsible for the establishment of St. John's Teacher Training Institute in 1877 at Nazareth. Young women were trained to be eligible to teach in middle and elementary schools. The training school functioned as a lower grade training school from 1877 to 1900. In 1885, the school was recognized by the Government of Madras as a Normal Training Institution. English, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, history, geography, general knowledge, grammar, map-drawing, drawing, needle-work and gymnastic exercises were taught. The training school was upgraded into higher grade training school in 1900 and continued to function till 1955.\textsuperscript{152}

The training school included both elementary higher and lower elementary grade students. The school grew under the able leadership of several dedicated Principals and Correspondents. In 1909, Miss. Groves managed St. John's High School for girls and the training school.\textsuperscript{153} Under her guidance, the school gained 100% success in the Training School Leaving Certificate (T.S.L.C.) in 1929 and four of the girls obtained the top four places in the Madras Presidency. In 1929,

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{151} Interview with Mrs. Mercy Rajan, the Correspondent, Sarah Tucker Training Institution, Palayamkottai, 12 February 2008.
\item\textsuperscript{152} Letter from Rev. Arthur Margoschis, Nazareth Mission District to M.D.C., 30 June 1886.
\item\textsuperscript{153} Report of C.W. Weston, Manager, St. John's Girls' High School, 12 July 1909.
\end{itemize}
Miss. Groves was transferred to Trichirappalli and was succeeded by Miss. L.M. Evans\textsuperscript{154} who served in the institution upto 1946. The performance of the students in sports was commendable. Miss. Groves encouraged the students to involve in extra curricular activities. The students wore uniform, a dark green saree and white jacket when they participated in games. Another feature in the training school was the Ranger Cadet Company which was inaugurated in August, 1934. It was to train the Rangers to help the Bluebird Flocks after they completed their training course.\textsuperscript{155}

In 1946, the staff and students of St. John’s Training Institute, Nazareth conducted a two-day exhibition on teaching aids and apparatus made from unused materials. It was a stimulating session with a new methodological approach. Students and teachers all over Tirunelveli district benefited much from this exhibition.\textsuperscript{156} Three staff members of the training school were attended the summer school at Erode to get training in the project method. Interesting projects were studied in all the classes. Students and staff members were sent to Mangalagiri and Marthandam for four months to learn about rural reconstruction work.\textsuperscript{157} The school was financially supported by the Circles of Nazareth, Pudukottai Suvisheshapuram and Idaiyangudi. The students taught the illiterate village girls through the Nazareth Girls’ Club.\textsuperscript{158} In 1948, the training school won a prize sponsored by the Rural Work Standing Committee for teaching illiterate

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 1939, pp. 16-17.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 1934, pp. 22-23.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 1946-1947, pp. 17-18.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 1947-1948, p.30.
adults during their holidays.\textsuperscript{159} The Education Standing Committee conducted a refresher course for teachers at Nazareth in 1949.\textsuperscript{160}

Every year ten to twenty elementary teachers were sent to the mission schools of the district, mostly in rural and backward areas. Students were given practice in micro and macro teaching and sent to various schools in and around Nazareth for observation and teaching practice.\textsuperscript{161} Those who successfully completed their studies found employment in various schools of the Madras Presidency and also in other countries like Natal, Burma, Sumatra and Ceylon.\textsuperscript{162} They contributed to the social and economic emancipation and uplift of women.

\textbf{Ooliyasthanam Teacher Training Institute, Palayapettai}

Miss D.M. La Broony, a C.M.S. missionary was the founder of Ooliyasthanam Teacher Training Institute, Palayapettai, near Tirunelveli town. It was established in 1934 in a rural atmosphere to provide training to girl students from rural areas. It was hoped that the students would go back to their villages to serve in the village schools and to serve the community. Miss. La Broony took charge of the school as Principal in 1934 and continued to serve upto 1958. In 1934, Sarah Tucker Girls Training School, Palayamkottai was bifurcated and the Elementary Higher Grade section and the Model School section were shifted to Palayapettai.\textsuperscript{163} The Elementary Higher Grade was converted into a Junior Basic

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 1948-1949, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{160} Minutes of Education Standing Committee, 8 March 1949, p.11.
\textsuperscript{161} Annual Report of St. John's Teacher Training Institute, Nazareth, 18 December 2003.
\textsuperscript{162} Annual Report of S.P.G., 1904, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{163} Christudas, D.A., \textit{Tirunelveli Thirusabai Varalaru (T)}, Tirunelveli, 1974, p. 11.
Training School in 1934. A new syllabus was introduced with spinning and weaving. In 1964, the Junior Basic Training School was converted into a Senior Basic Training School. Since 1972, the school has been called, The Ooliyasthanam Teacher Training Institute.\(^{164}\)

The students were trained to operate and maintain educational technology equipment and to use modern communication equipment. They were also given training in the art of doll making, tailoring, preparation of juices, phenol and ink. The student-teachers organised cultural programmes commemorating national and international days. The school started a feeder school at Patcheri to the south-west of the Ooliyasthanam school compound.\(^{165}\) In 1945, Mrs. Thangam Devadason was the Correspondent and Mrs. Chandra Balasingh was the Headmistress of the school.\(^{166}\) There were 119 students in the Ooliyasthanam Teachers Training Institute in 1947. For teaching practice, the students were sent to the Sarah Tucker Branch Schools at Mathakoil and Puttharitithi.\(^{167}\) The training students staged a health play with songs to a large crowd of women at Puthupettai.\(^{168}\) Till 1947, there was no separate governing board for the Ooliyasthanam institute. The sub-committee of the Executive Standing Committee constituted a separate governing board for Ooliyasthanam Training School on 3 September 1947.\(^{169}\) In 1948, a constitution for the school

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167. Ibid., 1945, p. 18.
was drafted. It was accepted by the Tirunelveli Diocesan Executive Standing Committee on 12 October, 1948.¹⁷⁰

Under the stewardship of women missionaries, basic education reached the villagers irrespective of their caste and creed. Young girls who trained in the institutions under the able guidance of the women missionaries of the C.S.I. diocese met with great success. Their success percolated down into their oppressed society. Most of the qualified trained women became teachers and they involved themselves not only in teaching but also in the social transformation of the society.

¹⁷⁰. Ibid., 12 October 1948, p.1.