Chapter – II

HISTORY OF THE MISSION

De La Salle’s fortified conviction in the will of God propelled him to start the institute at France in the year 1679. Like Saint Joan, another famous Martyr in France, De La Salle was deeply moved by the voices within. His struggle, sacrifice, purity of thought has not merely converted him into a missionary yet he has yielded rich dividends. This is witnessed in blossoming of schools in Spain, Italy, Canada, USA, England, and host of South Asian countries. Thus with the turn of the century the history of the Institute has broadened enormously to embrace the entire world¹.

An arresting factor in France is a major expansion of the brothers’ services. By 1760 there were 6270 brothers in nearly 700 communities. They had schools all over and the strength of the pupils reached 2,71,780. Of course conditions during the first decade of second Empire of Rome were very favourable, to the progress of education and also to the multiplication of Catholic schools. The Brothers were equipped to take charge of numerous state primary schools. In the coastal towns, they ran schools for boys who had intentions to became sailors. In Marseilles, special classes were conducted for the customs officials. In Paris they were in charge of reformatories. In other famous towns, they had Institutions for deaf, mutes. In focus there were primary schools special class for apprentices, classes for soldiers, courses for higher studies and a training college for teachers. There also flourished boarding schools in Paris and Yons².

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¹ De Flores Stefano: La “Nuova” Spiritualita, LP, Rome, 1850, p.275.
One factor is very striking about the schools run by the brothers. Where the English public schools resorted to flogging the culprits, as form of punishments, the French schools proved to be disciplined with time devoted to constant supervision of the students. As a major venture the brothers opened free schools in Turkey and Egypt. To meet the incessant request for more personnel to staff rapidly expanding establishments, they founded communities in the Paris far-east regions. Thus they turned out to be pioneers who with their courage laid the foundations of the enterprises in the mission. Of course there was a demand for English speaking brothers and this provided the much sought after opportunities towards establishing houses in London\(^3\). In September 1861, the superior convened a chapter and brother Facile was chosen as the representative. Being well acquainted with the problems faced in United States and Canada, he handed the issues with prudence and determination. What is more, he was the only superior general who could speak English. As a competent and able administrator, he was prepared to accept what was good in the country to turn it to advantage. He publicly voiced his admiration for the work of the brothers. In June 1865 a law was introduced, to implement in practice, the education, provided by the brothers. He acknowledged in his death to the valuable service of De La Salle. France acknowledged its indebtedness to De La Salle by erecting a public monument to him. A general subscription was organised and contribution came from all over the world. In November 1873, the Sacred congregation of rights was presided over by the Pope. In this meeting he was declared, the servant of God and Miracle maker. Thus his beautification was around the corner\(^4\).

During the French revolution, also known as a rein of terror, there existed religious persecution. This resulted in the brothers scattering to various parts of France to escape, the effects of anti-religious laws. Experienced

\(^3\) Duroselle Jean Baptiste, Les Debuts Du Catholicisme Social En France 1822-1870, LP, Paris, 1875, p.75.
brothers flooded to Belgium, Luxemburg and Italy for safety. In Ferrara, the French brothers introduced language courses, to tide over the difficulties in mastering the Italian language. Pope Pius VI was impressed by the good work done by brothers in the establishments in Rome. What is more the brothers received encouragement to the utmost point of appreciation from the Pope. The stationing of French soldiers in Italy warranted a sense of responsibility from the brothers. During winter months, they organised evening classes for soldiers, whose families had settled in Rome. The soldiers desired a French education for their sons. Encouraged, the brothers opened classes in an ancient monastery in August 1850⁵.

Italian boys were then admitted and in 1858 the school was composed of 173 pupils. The Italian brothers competed their work. Schools were opened in near by places. Initially, there existed differences of opinion between the brothers of the two nations. But later on the differences were cemented⁶.

At the general chapter of 1858, both communities got equal representation. The north of Italy was separated politically from the rest of the country. Naturally the brothers were involved in the total disruption of events. Here there was no division of the provinces into water right compartments. The brothers renewed the efforts to teach at Turin and the result was establishing a novitiate which turned out to be an autonomous province of the Institute⁷. Thus in their provincial quarters they were in charge of charity schools like Santa Pelagia Regia Opera, Mendicita Istruta. Since Turin was exceptionally well provided with facilities the brothers who had been laboring hard were supported by the 3 saints of the town: Canon Joseph cottolengo, Don Joseph Cafasso, and Don Bosco. They grouped together vagabond youths and apprentices and groomed them spiritually. Thus the brothers worked in Turin

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⁶ Ibid., p.203.
and this was only a part of a vast charitable enterprise that was being perused in the rapidly expanding city. The brothers continued running schools in smaller towns like Pinerolo, Biella, Susa, Nice and Genoa\footnote{Agathon, op.cit., p.113.}.

With their roots sufficiently established in Italy, the brothers moved over to Canada towards continuing their missions.

The opening of the school in Notre Dame Paris, in Montreal in 1837 filled the brothers with zest to persue the efforts towards opening of a new school in the ruled note was an event of importance of educational history of the town. The schools were known as St. Lawrence’s and St. Patrick’s\footnote{Dictionnaire de Trevoux. Florentin Delauline, Paris, 1721, p.53.}.

By 1850, the brothers in Canada established in 3 large centres. With 27 brothers in Saint Lawrence’s and St. Patrick’s, the bi-lingual character of the population was reflected in these schools. Cape diamond for instance was entirely English speaking while St. Roche was predominated by the French\footnote{Furetirere, Antoine. Dictionnaire Universel, Seconde Edition, La Haye: Arnoud et Reinier Leers, France, 1701, p.88.}.

The first important development took place in May 1851, when the brothers penetrated into upper Canada by opening schools in Toronto. The brothers opened a class in Richmond Street with the pupils strength being 2000\footnote{The Ancien Reigme: French Society, 1600-1750. Translated by Steve Cox. Harper and Row, New York, 1974, p.33.}.

Within a couple of years the brothers started schools in William and Balthurst streets. The brothers numbered over 100. Hence it became possible for them to make further foundations. One was at Saint Marie de Beauce in 1855. The other was St. Joseph’s Montreal 1858 a commercial academy for English speaking pupils in Quebec in 1862\footnote{Rooks (Tr.) Louis XIV and Twenty Million Frenchmen. LP, France, 1970, p.14.}. The civil war which was raging
fiercely on the other side of the Canadian border was drawing to a close and United States was next singled out by the brothers for their next venture. It was in the chapel Mont that the feast of the blessed De La Salle was celebrated for the first time. Its true that some important boarding schools ceased functioning but the early foundations remained untouched and in fact prospered. The 20 years 1880-1900, 21 community schools were established of which 13 remain extant. The most notable was Mont Saint Louis in the heart of Montreal built on a magnificent scale. It accommodated seven hundred students boarders and day boys who would be taught science on a commercial course on a trilingual basis. It achieved outstanding success and the year 1894 was singled out by the Governor General to visit Canada\textsuperscript{13}.

After the ceasing of the war in America, the brothers in 1850 established three important centres at Baltimore, New York and St. Louis. Working conditions proved difficult; immigrants amounting to 8,00,000 arrived from Ireland and Germany. Opportunities proved handy for missionaries and religious teachers were in great demand. The brothers took charge of St. Francis Xaviers and Cathedral schools. They also took over the running of St. Vincent and St. Patricks. The brothers launched further schools. Within a short period of 1850-54 they gained a foot hold in 8 towns: Troy, Cumberland, Washington D.C., Detroit, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Utica and Bay St. Louis. In most of the localities they took over parochial schools or orphanages already established\textsuperscript{14}.

This rapid expansion was possible because the whole of North America formed a single administrative unit. Some of the schools taken over in such quick succession proved short assignments. It is important to mention that one establishment in Troy continues to function to this day\textsuperscript{15}.

\textsuperscript{13} Goubert, op. cit., p.35.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p.29.
The brothers next shifted to New Orleans. At New York, they assumed charge of St. Mary’s Schools. At the end of the first year, the strength of the people rose to 375 numbers\textsuperscript{16}.

The emergence of colleges is a major achievement by the brothers and is today considered singularly important. Bro. Patrick Beg became the Director of the establishment and with the procurement of the charter, the academy was incorporated as Christian brothers college. The first catalogue announced that the aim of the college was to offer the highest grade of education attained in the best American Universities and colleges. The authorities promised to give prominence to mathematics and natural sciences and also included courses in class VI. This same year 1863 saw the emergence of La Salle college at Philadelphia. In 1858 the academy in New Orleans was granted a charter and incorporated as St.Mary’s College. Other colleges worth listing at this juncture are Rockhill at Ellicott city which was later called Rockhill college. Thus within 20 years, the brothers established five colleges at Baltimore. They were firmly established in higher education, in view empowered to grant degrees. They professionally groomed the students by broadening their intellectual horizons, through increased culture, refinement of moral mind and taste. Besides the colleges the brothers focused on primary education too. They established them in New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis and New Orleans. In 1861, they opened St. Vincent’s academy on Nepolean avenue and in 1858 they took over the running of as orphanage later called the Lasalle institute. They also opened free schools at St. Agustin, Cinnatii and Yonkers\textsuperscript{17}.

The four years that followed exposed the brothers to the horrors of civil war in America. The brothers were compelled to leave their schools as they were destroyed. At St. Louis, the colleges were used for prisoners of wars. The

\textsuperscript{17} Mandrou, Robert. La France au XVIIe Siecles, LP, Paris, 1967, p.205.
capture of New Orleans forced the brothers to get enrolled in Military Service but this was quashed after an appeal. After a lapse of few months, the brothers took charge of another institute in Chicago and were lucky to have it in their controlled for twenty years. The brothers also opened schools in the South. They took over running of St.Mary’s college which was already established. In June 1865 a farm comprising of 114 acres was purchased and St.Joseph’s building was erected into which moved in the brothers with 400 boys. Since the boys of the Protectory had little aptitude for academic studies, they were taught trades like tailoring, shoe making and printing. Thus vocational courses made the boys efficient in manufacturing, umbrellas, gloves, stocking and cane chairs. Gradually, the numbers of these boys rose to thousand and the institution became widely known all over the world and demand of its products was evident in public functions\(^{18}\). In 1864, the brothers in United States were grouped under separate districts. The brothers’ efficiency in United States was proved with their power stretching to towns, situated on the Canadian border. Two brothers came into the lime light. One was Brother Ambros and another was Brother Patrick. Both contributed their services to Manhattan College. However the war broke down the ties between the brothers in the North and South America. In South a separate district was found with New Orleans as a centre of activity. What is more the district had its own novitiate. In 1868, another district was found in California. The brothers journeyed by boat to reach San Francisco. St.Michaels schools was opened in 1869. Now the time had dawned for the brothers to move over to England to establish themselves at Liverpool\(^{19}\).

In England, the educational sphere had come under the scanner of the Educational Act of 1870 which set up state maintained schools along with church schools. As for the For Catholics they were treading on dangerous


grounds. While the Public schools were maintained by public funds, they were run by voluntary subscriptions. This lead to low salaries for teachers with 7800 students in grave danger of losing their jobs in schools. The launching of a ‘crisis fund’ brought in 390,000 pounds and created 71,518 new schools. They got strengthened by the demand for more Catholic teachers\textsuperscript{20}.

The Brothers responded to the critical situation by taking charge of six Primary Schools in Liverpool. To name a few schools of reputation, they were Dr.Goss Memorial School in 1877 M.F. Carmel School, St. Nicholas, St. John and St. Vincent. They also introduced the teacher pupil certificate. The schools with favourable reports were granted recognition for selecting students under the apprenticeship scheme. The pupil teachers spent five and half hours a day learning under the supervision of a qualified teacher after class hours and were given a stipend of 10 £ to 20 £ in annual increments. The teachers likewise received a government stipend\textsuperscript{21}.

Thus for the Brothers, pupil teachers centre proved to be in line with the Founders De La Salle’s ideals. Gradually, the students showed signs of improvement. Inspite of students hailing from ordinary homes with them doing odd jobs to supplement their parents’ home, the results obtained were good. In ethics as a subject the results proved even better. Reports for 1883 proved three of the schools were top on the list\textsuperscript{22}.

England hence turned out to be a happy hunting ground for the Brothers to promulgate to the general public their educational excellence and also prove the quality of their schools. They were asked to provide their exhibits in the International Health Exhibition\textsuperscript{23}. Under the general title ‘Health Exhibitions’

\textsuperscript{21} Rouphel, Gaston. La Ville Et La Campagne Au XVIIe Siecle. Armand Colin, Paris, 1955, p.188.
\textsuperscript{23} Broutin, Paul, La Reforme Pastorale En France au XVIIe Siecle, Desclee, Tournai, 1956, p.73.
included everything related to the well being of public schools and they were accorded top priority. Exhibits of models of buildings, up to date fittings, educational appliances of every kind were on display revealing the mental and physical development of every kind. Products poured in from all the countries where the brothers had schools. Exercise books from primary schools, models from technical and commercial, agricultural schools, statues, painting from art schools made the exhibition a memorable event. The effect was tremendous and six months exhibitions lasted. The brothers received complements from magazines such as The Times, the Athenaeum and in Dubline Review. In conjunction with the exhibition and educational conference was arranged, where brothers participated enthusiastically. The exhibition had its positive merits. It inspired the contenders by giving awards, gold and silver medals and certificates of specialisation. During the next three months, the Christian brothers were interviewed by the press and public, greater probably than in recent times being extended to any other Catholic Institution\textsuperscript{24}.

But this triumph proved short lived. The brothers had to withdraw from all schools in Liverpool. The reason being strained relationships with the governing bodies. The ecclesiastical authorities, proved themselves difficult, towards the brothers. Thus Liverpool proved disappointing from the point of view of vocation. Manchester and Ireland promised brighter prospects and the brothers decided to hand in their notice. Brothers employed in Liverpool were directly in need of funds for Lasalle foundation in Ireland\textsuperscript{25}.

A major question was whether the brothers should co-operate with the national system act, coming under the Irish education act. This was because many religious bodies felt a huge prize had to be paid for the advantages to be gained from it. Hence Edmund Ignatius Rice, and his Irish Christian brothers decided not to identify themselves with the system and continued their mission


\textsuperscript{25} Goubert, Pierre, \textit{op.cit.}, p.66.
independently. This sparked off the decision, to establish a training college, but a foothold was necessary and this came in the form of the brothers taking over the running of St.Stephen School, Waterford. The problem was solved by the establishment of St.Joseph’s academy. This was taken over by Bro. Potamian, a brilliant and successful teacher for thirteen years held in high esteem in academic circles. Under his direction a site, comprising of 18 acres was purchased and an imposing edifice was constructed to accommodate 200 resident students. But all of a sudden in June 1895, 40,000 was offered and the college to came to end after seven years existence in the middle of 19th century26.

In fact there were no schools in Singapore or Hongkong before the arrival of the British. But their presence in these far Eastern regions, spurred people to get educated. So it was left to the Bishops, the Priests and Brothers to establish schools in these regions. At this time the brothers were asked to lay a foundation at Agra in 1843 and another at Pondicherry in 1844. Both at Singapore and Penag run by Region brothers. The accommodation was provisional and unsatisfactory. For a brief period they taught at St. Xaviers27.

**Brother’s first Presence in Asia:**

No Brothers had gone to the mission fields of India or Asia before the middle of the 19th century. The Superior of the Brothers had received; request for a foundation in Agra as early as 1843, and another for the establishment of community in Pondicherry in 184428. But nothing had resulted from these contacts. Then persistent requests had come from Malacca, where Bishop Boucho, Vicar, Apostolic of Malaya and Fr. Beurel, Singapore, were both determined to handover their schools to the disciples of the Venerable De La Salle. A Correspondence began between Fr. Beure and the Superior, in 1845,

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26 W.J. Batters, *op.cit.*, p.130.
like wise without result. But the Queen of France decided to enlist her support, and finally decided to go to Europe himself of a personal interview with Brother Philip. He arrived at Le Havre on March 14th 1851\(^{29}\) and his subsequent efforts were so far successful that, or December 6th, Brothers set sail from Antwerp in La Fulie for the Far East, in company with five nuns and two young missionary Priests. Voyage took three months, but eventually the group reached Singapore on March 29th, except for one nun who had died on the way\(^{30}\).

The Brothers were housed in Fr. Brurel’s presbytery, the community consisting of three French Brothers: Venere, Lothaire and Switcher and Two Irish Brothers, Gregory and Hierom, with Liefroy, a French man of forty – two former Visitor of Savory as their head. But now other English Speaking Brothers had joined the original group: English – Speaking Brothers from America: Brs. Joshua, Albion Peter, and Autstin, and already there were plans for extending the scope of the Brother’s work in India\(^{31}\).

**Mangalore : 1859 – 1868**

The Superior General had received urgent requests from Bishop Michael Anthony, Vicar Apostolic of Mangalore, Backed by the approval of The Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda and Papal Nuncio in France, for Brothers to open an establishment in Mangalore. At the Beginning of 1859, therefore, Four Brothers: John Nepomucene, Aephaire, Pastoris and Berchamans, were sent on this mission\(^{32}\). In view of the eagerness with which the Bishop had looked forward to their coming, they were much surprised at the scant consideration which they received form Fr. Andrew, the Vicar Genera, who took charge of

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them, and made makeshift arrangement for their suitable residence there. The Bishop however, promised to provide an area without delay, establishment for the local inhabitants objected to the site chosen, saying that the building would obstruct the view of the façade of the cathedral, and when the matter was referred to the Regime, the Superior agreed to drop the project. Meanwhile, however, the Brother did not remain inactive. They established a novitiate for native postulants in the bishop’s house, with brother pastoris, who had been novice master for 11 years in Montreal, in charge.

The closing of the Mangalore house two years later was mainly due to difficulties between the Bishop and Br. Pastries over money matters. In April 1868 the Bishop of Colombo was asking for Brothers to establish schools in Mangalore.

**Calcutta 1859**

The same year as the Brothers were thus establishing themselves in the southeast at Mangalore, Brother Venere, acting as the auxiliary Brother Liefroy, went to Calcutta to investigate the possibility of taking over an orphanage and school founded by Arch Bishop Kerron, and conducted by two Irish religious, Brothers Francis and Alphonsus, who desired to join the Institute of De La Salle. As a result, Brother Venere assumed charge of the orphanage and the school the following year, and obtained from the Superior in Paris eight French brothers. The prospects in Calcutta appeared promising. The buildings were well adapted for their purpose; the property extensive and agreeable. Soon there were nineteen brothers there teaching 130 orphans and 270 pupils in the day school (Three Brother Othmarian, Victor and Leo) responded the invitation from Bishop Bigndet of Burma. Meanwhile, things were going badly in Calcutta. The fair hopes which had been placed in this foundations were not

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fulfilled. The Community was broken up and the work abandoned. The fact that the community consisted of two distinct sections French and Irish, different background and habits had been the source of difficulty. But the main responsibility for this disappointing setback must be borne by Brother Venere. He was to continue for many years after this in the mission field of the Far East and render valuable service, but at this period he was not at his best. As the head of the community he was weak, either the result that regular observance suffered and dissensions broke out.

Agra : 1861

Another group from Calcutta went to Agra, where the Capuchin Fathers, in charge of the mission had long been desirous of having Brothers. The foundation offered considerable possibility for expansion, and hence Brother Venere went to France in search of more personnel. He returned with seven French Brothers, arriving at Agra on March 21\textsuperscript{ST} 1861. Some of these Brothers he left with the community already established there, and taught at St. Peter’s boarding school and St. Paul’s orphanage. With the others he went on to Burma to reinforce the communities there. Just as in the north of India Agra was an offshoot of Calcutta.

When Br. Gregory, Director of Singapore, who had been appointed visitor after the departure of Br. Liefroy (he died at Alexandria in June 1869) for India, came to Agra, where difficulties had arisen. The trouble was due partly to attitude of one of the Capuchin’s Father Louis, who was dissuading postulants from entering the brother’s community. When Br. Gregory arrived, with Brothers Modesto and a postulant, however, he was immediately struck with cholera and died. This tragedy and the difficulties which the Brothers had experienced in the preceding months, led the superior general to decide on the withdrawal of the community from Agra. Brothers were placed at the disposal of other missions.

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\footnote{Rigult, Georges, Les Temps De La “Secularisation”, 1904-1914, LP, Rome, p.88.}
\footnote{Rigult, Georges., \textit{op.cit.}, p.33.}
\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p.73.}
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of Brother Pastoris, the new visitor, and he sent six of them to the Malabar Coast, and the remaining two: Brothers Symphorian and Peter, to Singapore. Thus ended abruptly, after one year and a half, the work of the Brothers in Agra which had seemed to offer such great hope for the future\textsuperscript{39}.

**Telicherry: 1862 – 1869**

Thus, in the South, Tellicherry was an offshoot of Mangalore. A month after the Brothers had started work in Agra, Brother Pastoris, with three companions, established this second community on the Malabar Coast. He brought with him his group of novice from Mangalore, among whom, were some promising youths, notably Brothers Timothy of Mary and Anthony of Padua\textsuperscript{40}.

Brother Timothy, a native of Calcutta, twenty-five years of age, and had been teaching in Mangalore when the Brothers opened their community there. He was son of a doctor who traced his ancestry back to the converts of St. Thomas the Apostle. Brother Timothy himself was very gifted, and after his novitiate he taught with considerable success in Telicherry community even before he was professed. It was his example that led Brother Antony to enter the novitiate. He was not endowed with the same abilities as Brother Timothy, but he was to have a long and useful career in the communities in India\textsuperscript{41}.

**Karaikal: 1862-1866**

Meanwhile Brother Venere, with the power of Visitor, was busy making more foundations. In 1862 he made two. At the request of the Bishop of Pondicherry, an intimate friend of Bishop Bigandet, of Rangoon, he established a community in Karaikal, on the change would improve their health, and accompanied them to Karaikal. There they took charge of a small college.

\textsuperscript{39} Rigult Georges, Varela, L. Biblia of Spiritualidad en san Juan B.de La Salle. Tejares, LP, Salamanca: SPX, 1966, p.36.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p.175.
already established, and Brother Berchmans came to assist them. Later other brothers arrived from France to complete the community\textsuperscript{42}.

Brother Venere was now relieved of his functions as Visitor, for Br. Liefroy came to India, fixing his residence at Mangalore with Brothers John Neopomucene. Aephaire, Louis and Pastoris, after having returned with his novices from Tellicherry. The school now had some 100 pupils and it seemed as if there would be great development in the Brother’s work in Mangalore and along the whole of Malabar Coast. This was undoubtedly what the Bishop hoped for. In a letter to Superior, dated November 21\textsuperscript{st} 1862, he expressed himself thus request letter from Bishop for establishing another two communities with English speaking brothers\textsuperscript{43}.

It is now four years since he sent Brothers of their Institute to take over two schools in his mission, at Mangalore and Tellicherry, for which he thank than he was however, for these Brothers, which was to establish Brothers of their order in chief centers of mission. The Brothers already have done all they could to carry out his wishes, but they find it impossible to do so, not knowing English or Irish and having Brother among them. For this reason he repeat the request and the wish that he has so frequently expressed either to him or to the Brothers, to have at least two or three English or Irish Brothers to take over a section at Mangalore and an establishment at Calicut\textsuperscript{44}.

He has also another establishment to open at Cannanore, which is very pressing, and where he thought they would find Europeans among the sons of Irish soldiers who would place no obstacle to their vocation. But without at least one English or Irish Brother for each establishment, he could not open them\textsuperscript{45}.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p.79.
\textsuperscript{44} Cyrus, The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, LP, New York, 1976, p.88.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.89.
In Karaikal the accommodation had never been satisfactory. The Parish priest could give the Brothers only the ground floor of his presbytery, and when the Brothers requested the Bishop of Pondicherry to remedy the situation, he was unable to promise any improvement in the immediate future. Hence there arose discontent among the brothers, until finally it was decided to disperse the community. Brs. Leo and hidulphe went to Mangalore; the others placed themselves at the disposal Brother Pastorates\textsuperscript{46}.

**Calicut : 1863- 1869**

The Brothers did their best to meet the wishes of Bishop. At the beginning of 1863 Brother Liefroy founded a community at Calicut. He went there himself, with Brothers Berchmans and Aloysius, he died at the age of 54 – Colombo and took over a school which a priest had been conducting up till then\textsuperscript{47}.

Br. Hermenigilde arrived from Paris as the new Visitor. His primary mission was to make thorough investigation of the situation in the Far East, and particularly in India. When he arrived in Calicut in mid-June 1869, he found only two Brothers Francis Assisi, the director, and Br. Roch. Their school, called St.Nichola’s contained 135 pupils, of whom pagans and eight protestants. There were three classes, one of which was taught by a layman. The brothers were being paid 90 rupees a month by the mission, for all three teachers, but nothing was allocated for repairs to the house or the class expenses. The community residence was much below standard, hence Brother Hermenigilde insisted on the provision withdrawn the following December 1869\textsuperscript{48}.

\textsuperscript{46} Cyrus, The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, LP, New York, 1976, p.256.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p.306.
**Mahe : 1868 – 1870**

The following June he (Br. Loie Froy) went to Mahe with a view to opening to school there also.

In Mahe, Br. Hermengilde again found only two brothers: Valens and Engine Octavian with a small school of 58 pupils. Once more he reported unfavorably to the Superior, advising the withdrawal of the community. This was done in November 1870\(^49\).

**Cannanore : 1863**

Another foundation was made at Cannanore. Brothers Octatavian Chrodegran and Odobertus going there towards the end of July. Bringing the number of communities on the Malabar Coast up to four\(^50\).

There remained only Cannonare. Owing to unsatisfactory conditions and to difficulties between the Brothers and Fathers of the mission, the community had already been withdrawn once while Br. Pastries was visitor. The Brothers had returned in May 1864 however, with increased personnel. They had received a visit in November 1866 form Lord Napier, Governor of Madras, who expressed himself as very satisfied with the pupils, and promised to give some assistance in providing a new building\(^51\). In 1868 a new school and community residence were in fact built providing ample and comfortable conditions. Hence, when Br. Hermengilde arrived July the next year, he found things very much better than in other localities. There were four Brothers, assisted by two lay teachers, and a school of 164 pupils. Cannanore therefore continued. Furthermore, a community was re-established in Bassein, in Burma, after a temporary lapse, and this offset, to some extent, the closing of the

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\(^50\) Gerbod, Paul, Europa Cultural of Religiosa, LP, Rome, 1982, p.78.

houses in India. Meanwhile, the last two communities in India, Calicut and Cannanore had been suppressed in 1884. Thus, of all the eight founded between 1859 and 1863 not one now remained. Br. Imier, the future Superior General, who visited the communities in the Far East as Visitor General in 1906, wrote in his Report to Brother Gabriel Mary. It is much to be regretted that the establishment in India should have been closed, particularly those in Calcutta, Agra and Mangalore, which are important catholic centres.

He placed fortified conviction in the will of God the Institute at France in the year. Like Saint Joan Anther famous Martyr in France, De La Salle was deeply moved by the voice within. His struggle, sacrifice and piety has not converted him into a missionary. But has yielded rich dividends. This is witnessed in blossoming of schools in Spain, Italy, Canada, USA, England, and host of South Asian countries. Thus with the turn of the century the history of the Institute has broadened enormously to embrace the entire world.

An arresting factor in France is the Major expansion of the brothers services. By 1860 there were 6270 Brothers in nearly four Communicates, they had school all over and the strength of the people reached 271,780. Of course condition during the first decade of sacred Empire of Rome was very favourable, to the progress of education and also to them multiplication of catholic schools. The Brothers were equipped to take charge of numerous state primary schools. In the coastal towns, they ran schools for boys who had intentions to become sailors. In Marseilles, special classes were conducted for the customs officials. In Paris they were incharge of reformations. In other famous towns they had institution for deaf–mutes.

In Roucen there were primary schools special classes for apprentices, classes for soundless, courses for higher studies and a training college for

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53 Broutin, Paul. op.cit., p.33.
54 Ibid., p.72.
teachers. There existed also flourishing in boarding schools in Paris and Lyons.

One factor is very striking. Where the English public schools resorted to flogging the culprits, as form of punishments, the French schools proved to be disciplined with the time devoted to constant supervision of the students. As a major venture, the brothers agreed to meet the incessant request for more. Personnel to staff rapidly expanded establishments, they founded communities is the Far East region. Thus they turned out to be pioneers who with their courage laid the foundations of the enterprises in the mission. Of course there was a demand for English speaking Brothers. This provided the much sought opportunities towards establishing houses in London. In September 1861 the Superior convened a chapter acquainted was chosen as the representative. Being well acquainted with the problems faced in United States and Canada, hard to read handled the issues with prudence and determination. What is more he was the only Superior General who could speak English. Napoleon III Minister was competent and able administrator, he was prepared to accept what was good in the country to turn it to advantage, He publically raised his admiration for the work of the Brothers. In June 1865 a law was introduced, to implement in practice the education, provided by the Brothers.

The Brothers had their houses widely scattered at eight stations in India between 1859 (Mangalore) and 1884 (Cannanore). These were systematically closed and the brothers withdrawn to the houses in the Far East. Now after a lapse of nearly 100 years the brothers began their second attempt to establish themselves in India. They took over in August 1961 an orphanage. It had been newly opened in a Maduari Archdiocesan property situated eight miles south of Madurai city, by the Nagamalai range of hills in Tamil Nadu South India.

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56 *Doctrina pontificia*, Documentos Politics, LP, Madrid. 1958, p.22.
Boy’s Town

Till 1964 the boys Town has been managed by a community of Missionary Brothers, who lived in a small white house at the eastern end of an undeveloped property of 120 acres belonging to the Archdiocese. Sixteen boys from destitute homes were accommodated in a large mud house. The chapel was a tin-roofed cottage. There was a large poultry, a few cows and sheep and work had started on the first vineyards and rice fields. The boys attended Loyola Technical School, Madurai or the local village schools. The new cottages were begun – now called the reception and visitors cottages\(^5^9\).

In 1965 a large grant of two-hundred thousand Death Matrimony obtained from Misereor made possible the erection of the Boys’ Town complex of buildings and workshops. Once the new Boys Town was completed the number of inmates suddenly increased from the usual sixty to close upon two hundred. Up-to date machinery gifted by Misereor was installed in the new metal and wood work shop and raw material was bought and adequate workmen and staff were employed. This sudden growth of Boys Town brought about a complexity of troubles and financial the workshops for gainful production. Expertise was needed. So volunteers were employed from abroad and contracts were sought and fulfilled. Side by side with cultural development. For all these much money was required and the boys Town administrator who took charge of the Boys town sank into debts to the tune of rupees fifteen hundred thousand. Thanks to the good offices and magnanimity of the our major superiors in Rome, the debts were cleared by 1974\(^6^0\).

This made things worse. The Boy’s Town administrator offered his service to the Archbishops of Madurai to get funds from Europe, to acquire a site and build and administer a University College about 10 miles away from

\(^{5^9}\) Doctrina Pontificia, Documents Sociales, *op.cit*, p.89.

Boys’ Town. This was a hasty step and personnel and funds from the College were not available and all the financial commitments had not been sufficiently foreseen and no agreement with the Archbishop had been made in writing regarding the limit of the obligations and the financial responsibility for the College. However, a grant of Rs. 14,28,000 was obtained by the Boys Town Trustee from P.W.G. Germany. The buildings were put up from the Archbishop’s funds. The buildings were put up for Rs. 21,71,146 and furniture and equipment were supplied to the value of Rs. 2,22,249. The college was run three years with one Brother in charge and affiliated to the Madurai University. By 1972 the assets of the College stood at Rs.30,00,000 and the debts to the banks and the other Bishops of Tamilnadu came to Rs. 14,00,000. Then quarrels arose over the repayment of loans. The Trustee left India and the Institute. On 12.12.72 the administration of the college was handed over to the Archbishop who gave it to the Jesuits. The Keelapatti property which was developed by Boys Town for the College wept with it to settle some debts the Boys Town owed the College.

This seemed once more re-enacting of the same on a different stage. The former tragic drama of the Indian Pioneer Brothers of a century ago whose conduct was censured by Brother Gabriel in 1906, when he wrote:

“Paucity of personnel, lack of training both religious and pedagogic and lack of ability, prudence and ever Commonsense which gave rise to scandals, quarrels with missionary priests; dissertations, upheavals”

During the ten years between 1962 and 1972 there were defections among those who were at the helm of affairs in the Indian Region. The strained feelings between the Archbishop and the brothers were smoothened and in due

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61 Doctrina Pontificia, op.cit., p.88.
62 Ibid., p.93.
63 Roman Archives, MS Colombo, 26th October 1906.
course cordial relations were, once more, established and cemented by the formation of a Board of Trustees for Boys Town in which the archbishop is the Chairman and the Procurator General, a Member of the Trust. The promotion of good feelings between the Brothers and the clergy is one of the successes of the Indian Brothers of Region 64.

A Juniorate built in the Boys Town premises in 1972 with aid from the superiors in Rome proved to be in a sense a white elephant as high schools were not found within easy reach of the place for the junior novices to attend classes. The building is now used as a central house for the Brothers, scholars and the postulants who study in various colleges in TamilNadu 65. Among other developments accomplished since 1965 are the digging of the half–a–dozen wells at strategic points in the property for the irrigation of the fields. A pig farm was constructed with the help of Osfam and contracts had been arranged to supply work producers to Spensers and company, Madras, This project too needed expertise for sausage and bacon production and the scientific feeding of the pigs became a problem as pig – feed became expensive and the price of production was costly. Further when droughts occurred in Tamilnadu, the supply of electricity was cut and refrigeration failed. It was only in the dear school of experience these lessons were being learnt. The workshops too were affected by want of electricity. Water and current became important determining factors. The viability of the Boys Town’s production schemes, the self – sufficiency that was being aimed at, all the time was inclusive. But the dozen acres of rice yielded have helped to feed the boys 66.

In 1973, the carpentry and metal workshops were de-centralized for the department of accounts and management. Each production department had to dove tails its receipts and expenses for its self sufficiency and provide some

65 Ibid., p.73.
income to the central pool for the Boys Town. Under this scheme, the production is maintained at a particular financial level according to the capital that is available. Large contracts cannot be undertaken as large capital is not available. Consequently the income is low, once the work have been met. Most of the Boys were too small for rural help in production. They were a happy lot of boarders who failed to understand the situation\textsuperscript{67}.

Between 1971 and 1974 a great deal of land development was done. Practically all cultivable land was brought under cultivation. Orchards were planted Grass fields wee sown. Paddy fields were extended and dry corps. were put on land that formerly was condemned. But much of this agriculture depended on the monsoon. During this period the Batalagundu – from Arul Anandar College had been finalized. These came under the same single administration. Seven acres of the land Batalagund which is a hamlet thirty miles North West of Madurai had been gifted to the Boy’s Town for a model farm, It had the premises of a Benedictine Ashram\textsuperscript{68}.

A large dairy farm was opened in 1974 in Boys Town with the financial aid of the Dutch Government. It turned out to be a cattle breeding centre of the area. This venture, again needs experts. One Brother qualified himself in Spain for this purpose. The milk has to be sent to down daily and compete with other vendors for sale purposes. Once again in this dry region lush grass proved to be a problem\textsuperscript{69}.

The administration of Boys’ Town was in the hands of Missionary Brothers up to 1974. Later on it has been handed over the Indian Brothers. The foreign volunteers have been replaced by Indian staff. The Indian Brothers are making a restudy of the problems management and development. The rate of

\textsuperscript{68} The Journeys of Brother Barthelemy, Roman Archives, 1975, p.10.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., p.15.
production has slowed down and unfortunately 1974 has been the worse year for lack of rains. Under the Indian Management which is the characterized by caution, there is the weaning away from support, from foreign aid which had been the main stay of the works of Boys Town for weal or woe, in previous years\textsuperscript{70}.

The Board of Trustees of Boys Town meets once a year to inspect the progress and the accounts which have been duly audited quarterly by charted accountants. A small group forming a board of management is present to advise the management committee in the day – to day administration of Boys Town. The trustee who is also now the brother Director of Boys Town could avail himself of the consultative services of local business managers and Skip to have his doubts and difficulties solved\textsuperscript{71}.

No further grandiose projects have been undertaken But it now remains to watch and maintain efficiency as far as possible in the departments and areas of production already in operation\textsuperscript{72}.

**Community Living:**

No special experiments in community living had been tried out in the region. Liturgical life has been adapted to the India culture to the extent the hierarchy permitted. Bible services have been conducted in Tamil and according to the Indian culture as promoted in Bangalore where some of young Brothers have attended course. The community dialogue has been at times helpful and constructive and at times disruptive much depending on the groups of personalities that compose the small communities of the Region. The Boys Town administration has had regular staff meetings to discuss problems and

\textsuperscript{70} Annual Report of Boys Town, 1975, Madurai, p.3.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p.4.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., p.6.
lines of action to be taken in emergencies. The boys have had a measure of self-government and the cottages help to promote a homely atmosphere\textsuperscript{73}.

**Boys Town Apostolate:**

The Boys town Apostolate which is different from the school Apostolate is spiritually consoling and rewarding while confronting the fourth world of the poor among a recognized third world in India. Care and attention and apostolic zeal have been duly expended and much time consuming labor and attention have been devoted to the apostolate. A dozen conservations to Christianity have been noted and Boys have been helped even upto the point of their marriages performed in the chapel. Fortunately the Chaplain has been stable through the decade of years and is non interfering in the affairs of Boys’ Town. Some attempt was made to extend the Boys Town apostolate beyond the premises of Boys Town through extensions programmes among the villages by way of low cost housing, rehabilitation, medical care, family care, feeding possible. The Archdiocese desires greater involvement outside Boys’ Town be undertaken\textsuperscript{74}.

**Problems and Solutions:**

The Boys town faces two problems the shortage of working capital for large earning capacity. The average earning is Rs.5000 a month whereas the expenditure comes to Rs.7000 a month. This expenditure excludes rice and other products from fields and farm and donors occasionally. Buying raw-material on credit diminishes the profits. Merchants are slow in payments for work done\textsuperscript{75}.

The second problem is that of religious personnel suitably qualified for the various departments. Secular staff is costly on salaried.

\textsuperscript{73} Brothers of the Christian School, LP, Rome, p.9.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p.10.
\textsuperscript{75} De La Sale and the Civil Authorities, LP, Rome, p.22.
Sheep-rearing gives less problems than pig-rearing as food and grazing are easier with the mountain slopes. There is a ready local market for mutton.

The education of the boys of Boys Town has to be up-dated for gainful employment through various trades taught to them. The teaching of machinery gives jobs to a few in big forms only.

A brother is needed to act as a liaison officer and social worker between boys town as supplies and the merchants and patrons who have to be constantly contacted for agreements and arrangements for the produce of the workshops and the farms. The market has to be watched all the time.

Some boys should be sponsored by benefactors. The Boys Town has to work on a scheme for this purpose.

The following table shows the strength of Statistics in Boys Town, Nagamalai Madurai76.

Statistics:

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Catholics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
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<td>1966</td>
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<td>1972</td>
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<td>1973</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76 Statistical Report, Boys Town, Madurai, p.33.
St. Josehp’s Boys’ Village Genguvarpettai:

In 1968 this farm of 7 acres was handed over to the De La Salle Brothers by the Sarvodya Ashram organization of Dom Bede Griffiths on condition that we run it as a home for boys and a model farm for the surrounding villages to imitate.\(^{77}\)

Over the years up to the present, the farm was extended to 25 acres. All this land belongs entirety to the De La Salle Brothers.

Previous to 1971 most of the work was attended to by Brother Thomas Hammerton who lived here in very rough conditions with a small group of boys. From 1971 onwards its care came under the administration of Boys town and it is from this date that the final development and expansion work began.

In May 1974 Brother James moved to the Village on a permanent basis and the first group of junior boys arrived – 25 number. Over the next twelve months the numbers increased to 35 juniors and 10 seniors. The latter are also called working boys because they earn a wage for their farm work. These numbers will probably remain the way for some time to come.\(^{78}\)

Over the past four years all the land has been reclaimed and put under cultivation using a variety of novel methods and using many new seeds and saplings.

Two cottage for the boys have been built, also a chapel, a new kitchen, three houses for the staff and visitors, a poultry farm, a dairy a hostel for the senior boys and workers house. Wells have all been repeatedly deepened and a

\(^{77}\) Annual Reports of the St. Joseph’s Boys Village, Genguvarpatti, p.25.

\(^{78}\) Ibid., p.43.
new method of irrigation used. Once the crops and orchards established are fully productive Boys’ Village will become self sufficient\textsuperscript{79}.

There was also introduced the open community. This means, that in addition to the Brothers the other people living here are considered as part of a wider community and they are allowed to share in the way of life. There is very little distinction between any of the people living here\textsuperscript{80}.

The Spiritual exercises, although in some ways depended on each of the Brothers individually, also comprise a sharing. Thus each evening there is a brief shared mediation. Residents are quite open with one another and express our feelings and opinions without fear. They also try to live the simplest kind of life with no concessions ever made to the Western way of living.

The apostolate extended far beyond the project itself. Each day we tend the sick and poor of the villages around us free of charge. We also feed many poor who approach the authorities each day and they are welcomed. We also maintain a Christ house is maintained for the very poor travelers along the road outside the gate. We have adopted a village of 30 families. For these we have dug a well, planted 64 trees and are now due to start building houses thanks to the generosity of the Swiss Brothers.

\textbf{Charles Estate:}

In January 1975 and estate has been bought to raise finance for the support of the young Brothers in training. It is now in the process of being developed the process of developing it and a great deal of work has been done already\textsuperscript{81}.

\textsuperscript{79} Brother Gabriel Drolin, the “Admirable Soldier” LP, Rome, p.26.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Ibid.}, p.43.
\textsuperscript{81} Mynms in Lasallian School, Rome Archives, Rome, p.15.
De La Salle House, Thoothukudi:

The Brother’s Community was officially started in Thoothukudi on 1st of June 1964 Bro. Lawrence Robless was the first Director of the community were Brothers Cassian and Yesudasas

Bro. Lawrence, with the help of his friends in Malaysia, improved the living quarters of the Brothers. He collected a large number of books for the community library.

In 1967 Bro. Thomas Xavier, a son of the soil succeeded Rev. Bro. Lawrence as the Director of the Brother’s community and the newly reorganized Juniorate. Bro. William Abel was appointed Sub – Director of the newly formed community. The brothers quarters upstairs in the Mission House had become over crowded a place meant for two priests had become the residence of three Brothers and thirty boys. Amenities of life were lacking and yet the Brothers had to rough out with these inconveniences and now and more convenient quarters have been found for them elsewhere.

Bro. William became the Director of the Community and the Juniorate in 1968. The Brothers shifted their living quarters 1969 from Mission House to Rattakalakam (which was a weaving centre 25 years ago) The living conditions were not only unhygienic but also primitive and not conducive to relaxation or even the minimum of comfort. In true La Sallian style the Brothers took up the challenge and with grim determination faced the problems one by one.

In 1973 Bro. Emiliano succeeded Bro. William as Director of the community and the Juniorate. He appealed to the Superiors to get help for the Brother’s quarters. Bro. James the then acting Regional Chairman wrote to the

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83 Ibid., p.121.
Propaganda Fide for help are they donated Rs. 39,000 for the Brother’s Quarters Bro. Emiliano went to Spain for higher studies.

Bro. Arulsamy was appointed Director of the Community and the Juniorate in 1974. With help from Bro. Superior General the Brother Visitor of Belgium and Bro. James Brothers were able to modify Rattakalam into somewhat comfortable living quarters for the Brothers and the Juniors.\textsuperscript{84}

**P.M. Ornellas High School:**

P.M. Stands for Portuguese Mission which indicates that the school was started long ago by the Portuguese Missionaries, who came here during the time of St. Francis Xavier. For a long time it was only a primary school attached to the Parish of the Lady of Snows, located near the sea in Thoothukudi.\textsuperscript{85}

In 1964 it was upgraded into a High School when the De La Salle Brothers were asked to take charge of it. Rev. Brothers Lawrence Robless, Cassian and Yesudasan were the pioneers, whose life all pioneers had to overcome numerous difficulties. But with perfect trust in Providence they did succeed. The strength at that time was only 180 pupils. The class rooms were dark, ill ventilated. The pupils were mostly children of the poor fishermen. Great effort, sacrifice and courage were needed to cope with their low standard and background to bring them up. The pioneer Brothers especially Bro. Yesudassan worked hard to raise the standard of education and the general tone of the school.\textsuperscript{86}

Seeing the dire necessity of the bigger and more modern school, the Brothers decided to build a good school. The Bishop of Thoothukudi generously offered the Brothers two acres of land to build a school. One

\textsuperscript{84} Chelini, \textit{op. cit.}, p.205.
\textsuperscript{85} Bannon, Edwin. \textit{op. cit.}, p.88.
\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Ibid.}, p.73.
generous benefactor, Chevalier Machado put up six class rooms at the cost of Rs. 70,000 with all the initial expense, levelling and clearing the place\textsuperscript{87}.

Bro. Yesudasan was the first headmaster of the school. Although he was the only teaching Brother in the school, he worked very hard to raise the standard of the school in all respects. In 1969 the school obtained the State championship in the Tamilnadu State in football tournament. In 1969 Bro. Yesudasan was transferred to Madurai and Mr. Bruno, one of the senior teachers became the headmaster of the school, for one year. In 1970 Mr. Esrone was appointed headmaster of the school\textsuperscript{88}.

In 1971 Bro. William became the Correspondent of the school and from then on the Brothers took complete charge of the school.

The German agency, Misserror agreed to put a new Science Block together with the administrative section\textsuperscript{89}. Of course Misserror wanted the brother to put in their share: about Rs. 75,000 one fourth of the cost of the building. They were able to get donations from local donors for about Rs. 25,000 only Bro. William begged from Brothers and other agencies abroad and completed the construction of the new block.

In 1973 Bro. Arulsamy succeeded Bro. William as the correspondent of the school and he was the only Brother teaching in the school for two years. The progress of the school has been slow due to the very poor standard of the pupils. In 1975 Bro. Jesudasan joined the staff in our school and hoped to raise the standard and the general tone of the school\textsuperscript{90}. Bro. Vincent Joseph and other Superiors go the credit of hoisting the Lasallian flag in this Xaverian strip of the South Indian Coromandel Coast\textsuperscript{91}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Duroselle Jean Baptiste; \textit{op.cit.}, p.203.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p.88.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p.121.
\item Parias, L.H., \textit{op.cit.}, p.33.
\item South Indian Coromandel Coast Report, Rome Archives, Rome, p.33.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The following table is showing the Staff and Students strength of Lasalle School, Thoothukudi during the year 1964-1975.

### Table 2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Brothers in De La Salle House</th>
<th>Brothers teaching in the school</th>
<th>Lay Catholic teachers</th>
<th>Non Catholic teachers</th>
<th>Catholic pupils</th>
<th>Non Catholic pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>245</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>350</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>1969</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>65</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>350</td>
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<td>1971</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>1972</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>330</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>320</td>
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<td>1974</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1964 the staff and students strength was 10 and 245 respectively. Strength of staff and students were raised gradually. In 1975 the strength was 21 teachers and 455 students.

### The House Formation

#### The Novitiate

The House of Formation made a new beginning in India in 1964. In the house of formation the Novitiate and Juniorate were started in Mangalagiri and Thoothukudi respectively. The Novitiate takes in the novices from Sri Lanka and India.\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Gallego, Saturnino Sembraron con amor, LP, Rome 1978, p.123.
The Novitiate and Observation on Recruiting:

The first house of the novitiate was an old leather tanning factory belonging to an old boy, Mr. J.B.M. Roche who gifted it to the Brothers in 1964 together with an old chapel built in 1908. He also gifted about 3 acres of land. In 1968 a new two-floor block arose on the novitiate property, thanks to financial assistance from Bro. Pablo Manuel, the Vicar General who laid the foundation stone. Bro. Austin Dee has been the Novice Master since the inception and Bro. Xavier had helped him as Sub – Director almost upto his death in 1974.

Recruiting in India has not been easy, nor or very rewarding up till now. The De La Salle Brothers were naturally unknown to the youth of this country. Their efforts were to get aspirants for the novitiate. Brothers Xavier and Hilary were mainly responsible for the first group of our postulants. Their recruiting had to be rather quickly done. Then the better candidates were naturally selected by other recruiters earliest in the filed, and so this perhaps accounts for only one of these four postulants being a brother. It was then decided that a juniorate has been functioning and nearly all the Tamil brothers we have today have passed that way. The percentage of perseverance of these Juniors has been very slow indeed. This can probably be put down to the hasty intake, in the desire to build up numbers, failing thereby to test the candidates for a sincere vocation. Then there was a certain amount of insincerity on the part of the parents so many of then claimed their children back when they reached senior classes in school. There was not enough proof then to arouse admiration for the Brothers’ life and work, for there was only a poorly staffed school catering for the more backward children of the area at least socially if not intellectually. On the other hand there was only Boys town to point to and that was just growing.

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into some form of a shape. They had not much to show even by way of Brothers at that time\textsuperscript{94}.

This concentration of the juniorate for our recruiting accounts for the total absence of novices form 1965 to 1969. This was perhaps one of our big mistakes, for it has left us with so few brothers after these ten years and more of novitiate. The following are the statistics for the novitate from 1964 – 1975. During this period there have been then groups of novices here; only in 1971 was there a gap with no novitiate going on\textsuperscript{95}.

The following table is showing the strength of the Novs in India of Ceylon.

Table 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ceylon Novs</th>
<th>Indian Novs</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Made vows</th>
<th>No. with us 30-10-75</th>
<th>India</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1974</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
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\textsuperscript{95} The Statistics for the Novitate Records, Roman Archives, Rome, p.45.
Percentage of perseverance of those

Who made the vows Ceylon ... 44/48 = 73.3 percent
India ... 8/15   = 61.5 percent
For all .... 41/58 = 70.6 percent

There is no doubt the odds have been against us as far as recruiting is concerned over the past years. No one can say that effort has not been made, or full time. Recruiter had been appointed. Bro Emiliano went about his work most conscientiously. If he did not have much to show for its trouble, there may be many other causes for it. One thing is however, certain and that is that our very existence in India depends on the success of the recruiting during the next few years. The pleasant recruiter, Bro. Joseph is young and inexperienced, and needs every help and encouragement. More brothers should involve themselves in recruiting when opportunity offers. They should work in conjunction with the brother Recruiter, but many often be working on their own and in their own area. There is a great scope for the Brothers in India where so much liberty still prevails.96

Observations:

The juniorate and the scholasticate have both suffered because of unsuitable location and lack of trained staff. We have done our best to remedy the former but with no great success, while the latter can only be remedied when trained men become available here on the spots, for very few outside personnel have been able to come to our help. Every opportunity has been given to our young Brothers to qualify themselves. An academic degree (B.A. or B.Sc.) and a professional qualification) are required for registration as an approved teacher in a government aided High school. That they are obliged to be away in the various colleges or long periods without contact with their community is a great pity but is almost inevitable when one considers the almost impossibility of finding colleges in one locality that would often all the subjects required by the Brothers.97

96 Gerbod, Paul, op.cit., p.89.
Where we have failed most noticeably perhaps is in providing a suitable
teological and ascetical formation in the Scholasticate year that would
compare with their academic studies. It is in this field that the dispersal of the
Brothers for long periods has been more prejudicial. Ways and means should
be sought to remedy this. Will our joining with another congregation of
Brothers in India solve this problem?\textsuperscript{98}

Our position with regard to personnel has been made more critical by
the defections of men in key posts or who were specially trained for posts here.
It has not been possible to replace them. And so the onus of responsibility is
falling on too few, and in many cases, still inexperienced men. The results are
tensions of various kinds. Such being the case, further enlargement of projects
with the necessary demand for personnel is not in the interests of the Region as
a whole, at this juncture.

Financially we shall need the assistance of the Institute for some years to
come. If it most of our Brothers are to be assigned to Boys Town or similar
projects, we don’t see how we can make the Region financially viable. Unless
these Institutions are in a position to pay the Brothers salary, and come to the
assistance of the Houses of Formation, the retired Brothers, Regional expenses
etc. functioning will prove impossible made from what we see, the Boys Town
can only just make ends meet. This should clear in any report to the Major
Superiors and the General Council\textsuperscript{99}.

\textbf{The Juniorate:}

In 1964, thanks to the pioneer work of Bro. Cassian and other Brothers
who recruited the Indian boys to the Juniorate. There were six Junior novices at
Thoothukudi and Bro. Lawrence became the first Director of the Juniorate\textsuperscript{100}.

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., p.73.
\textsuperscript{100} Marx. El 18 Brumario de Luis Bonaparte, LP, Ariel, 1983, p.63.
Since the Brothers were not well known in India the vocations to the congregation were not bright. Inspite of that in 1967 there were thirty juniors under Bro. Xavier, In 1969 Bro. William became the Director of the Junior novices and he was able to send 4 Junior novices to the Novitiate\(^\text{101}\).

In 1970 Brothers thought that Thoothukudi was not so good a place for the Juniorate and so they shifted the Juniorate to Madurai. They built a fine Juniorate in Boy’s Town but the juniors stayed there only for three years as schooling was difficult.

In 1973 the Juniorate was shifted back to Thoothukudi and Bro. Emiliano became the Director of a well – organized Juniorate. Since Bro. Emiliano had to go for higher studies Bro. Arulsamy became the Director of the Juniorate At present there are three junior novices in Thoothukudi and nine juniors in Boys Town\(^\text{102}\).

For the past 11 years 103 juniors have come to the Juniorate. Out of these juniors there are at present six Brother, two novices and twelve juniors. It shows that either the selection were not as well looked after as they should have been. The method of recruitment and training should be improved. With God’s help the Brothers hope to increase local recruits in India in the near future\(^\text{103}\).

It will be fitting to conclude that the establishment of the Institute by De La Salle is a major milestone in the history of France. The achievements proved to be an inspirational force to break down geographical borders to leave its impact throughout the world.

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\(^{101}\) Nere, J. Historia contemporanea. Labor, Barcelona, 1986, p.77.

\(^{102}\) Ortega, Y. Gasset, Jose. En torno 9 Galileo, LP, Madrid, 1979, p.29.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., p.58.