

Chapter - IV

THE WORK OF PIONEER MISSIONARIES

The Early Missionaries brought revolutionary changes in the life of the people of Travancore. These changes were reflected in their socio, economic and political life. The European missionaries who introduced protestant Christianity in Travancore, felt astonishment and sadness by seeing the evil customs in the society. They felt that superstition was the main reason for all the evils. So they wanted to open the eyes of people by giving education to them. Therefore the downtrodden society could move from the darkest superstitious and slavery world to the bright confident free world. Col.Munro and Brazer were the important English representatives who helped the missionaries to lay the foundation for a missionary station¹. Mecauly was another English representative who was very helpful to Rev.Ringeltaube in his missionary endeavours². Munro was also an English representative who took more interest in helping missionary societies and preserving the wellbeings of missionaries. So he was referred to as the father of Christian mission³.

¹ Dr.Sobhanan B., (Ed.) *A History of the Christian Missions in South India*, Trivandrum, 1996, Issiah Azariah, "*The Protestant Missions*", p.129.

² Azariah S.A., *Ringeltaube*, Nagercoil. 1939, p.50.

³ Agur C.M., *Church History of Travancore*, Madras, 1903, p.561.

4.1 Establishment of Schools:

Ringeltaube, the first Protestant Missionary to start evangelic work in Travancore, found that the Nadars and other low castes suffered from lack of social identity. He felt that the prime need was to create a sense of awakening among them. For that he chose to spread the western education as an effective instrument. Hence, he started a school at Mylaudy in 1806. It was followed by his successors who operated all over South Travancore under the control of the L. M. S. He devoted his whole energy to evangelistic work and wherever he went, he carried with him the mission of English Education. He was incessantly preaching and teaching and he established six schools for poor children, Christian as well as non-Christians⁴. Ringeltaube's effort in the spread of English education helped the people to learn English and changed the personality of the rustic people.

Ringeltaube patiently worked amidst obstacles and the number of students gradually increased. He wrote thus "our Schools come on tolerably well at Eathamozhy, Puthalam, Athicadu and Thamaraikulam. Some children have learnt to read. Among the children that attend are some heathen and three Mohammedans. The number of children attending school is sixty⁵". To train the youths and to promote the religion, Ringeltaube proposed the following plan to the society - a seminary of twelve youths to

⁴ Horne Sylvester, C., *The story of the London Missionary Society*, London, 1904, P.97.

⁵ Ringeltaube, letter to Director Board of Missionaries, London, 1809.

be established and maintained. The annual expense of a boy would be 18 star pagodas per annum, total of 216 pagodas the sum equal to those employed as itinerants and every one so employed would receive two star pagodas per month⁶. He made arrangements for the proper training of men who would be able to undertake the work of the mission and also to establish seven village schools for imparting useful knowledge as well as Christian instruction.⁷

During 1812, his work went on steadily and grew rapidly. In addition to serving the scattered churches, Ringeltaube began vigorously the work of education. By 1812, he had six native school masters and also a number of youths under training including two Anglo Indians, wealthy and influential. Rev. Ringeltaube made Vedamonickam catechist and made him a paid agent of the mission. His work steadily increased and many people were converted in the villages of the Agasteeswaram Taluk especially at Thamaraiikulam, Athicadu, Pichaikudiyiruppu (Jamestown), Puthalam, Kovilvillai and Eathamozhi. At the end of 1809 there was only one church; but in the beginning of 1810 Rev. Ringeltaube obtained permission to build churches in all the other places. The efforts of Rev. Ringeltaube bore greater fruits than he expected. In 1812 nearly 300 people were baptized.⁸

⁶ Starpagoda was a British coin in circulation. One Pagoda=3 Fanam; a star pagoda = 3 ½ Fanams.

⁷ Hacker. H., *op.cit.*

⁸ Rev. John A. Jacob, *History of South Travancore London Mission Society*, p. 30.

Rev. Ringletaube's work was appreciated by all sections of people and it may be noted here, that even the brother of Dewan Ummini Thampi became a convert to Christianity with the name of Samuel Thampi. Though he was deprived of his property by his orthodox Hindu relatives he remained faithful to the religion.⁹

In the year 1813 the most important event took place in the history of the Protestant Mission in Travancore. With the object of improving the mission, Vedamonickam convinced Rev. Ringletaube the need for raising a fund for the permanent upkeep of the missionary enterprise. He reminded Ringletaube of the gift of the paddy fields, which the ruler of Tanjore gave to the Protestant Mission in Tanjore and suggested that a similar gift might be obtained from the benevolent Rani of Travancore through the assistance of Col. Munro, the Resident.

Ringletabe and Vedamonickam first fixed their target upon the three fields of Sauleikulam, Vayillakulam and Putherikulam. These fields had an estimated produce of 1464 Kottas of paddy per annum in two crops. Deducting all the expenses - money for the cultivation, tax etc., the fields were capable of yielding an income of 156 star pagodas per annum. So it was represented to H.H. the Rani, that as the Raja of Tanjore had conferred upon the mission in Tanjore extensive paddy fields tax free status, she too might be pleased to grant these fields tax free status. The Rani reckoning the

⁹ Augur C.M., *op.cit.*, p.580.

social work of Ringletaube, gave him the option even in the selection of the fields. The Government fields at Thamarikulam and Vayillakulam, which were nearly 61 acres in extent were selected. The ayacut tax of 500 kottas of paddy was reduced to 247 kottas of paddy and 257 fanams. Vedamonickam and Rev. Ringletaube found, that unless this tax was reduced further, the grant would not be of much benefit to the mission. So they again appealed to the Rani requesting her to reduce the tax to 100 kottas of paddy. To this the Rani gave her consent.¹⁰ Thus the gift became a source of good income to the mission.

Rev. Ringletaube persuaded Col. Munro to appoint a Protestant judge in the south to protect the interest of the Christians and to regain the social identity like the high castes. Due to his ill health Rev. Ringletaube was obliged to leave Travancore. Before that Mr. Everette was appointed judge¹¹. Rev. Ringletaube the first Protestant Missionary in Travancore was respected most. Some of them accompanied him in his preaching tours while others were sent into the villages among the scattered Christians to teach them catechism.¹¹ The boys in his schools were sent into the villages to propagate the Gospel.¹²

Ringeltaube in a letter to Col. Munro in 1813 described the six schools he ran for the laity as follows. "The Instruction that is given consists

¹⁰ Augur C.M., *op.cit.*, p. 604.

¹¹ Hacker, H.A., *Hundred Years in Travancore*, London 1908, P. 69.

¹² *Ibid.*

of lessons in reading, writing, and arithmetic. To the Christian, the catechism and reading in school the new testament and other religious books, for school masters I choose much out of the congregation that can read and pray fluently which is an incitement to others"¹³.

The gift of paddy field at Thamaraiikulam and Vailakulam produced grains worth 300 star pagodas per annum for support of the poor and education of the Christians in South Travancore.¹⁴ Due to hard labour in South Travancore, Ringletaube's health declined. He did not know that the directors of the London Missionary Society had appointed Charles Mead his successor in anticipation of his departure.¹⁵ Bishop Caldwell in the History of the Tranquebar Mission states that Ringeltaube was killed on a journey into central Africa before 1920¹⁶.

¹³ Augur C.M., *op.cit.*, pp 173-179.

¹⁴ Naik, J.P. and syed Nurulla, *A students History of Education in India, 1800-1973*, Delhi, 1974, P. 116.

¹⁵ John A. Jacob, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

¹⁶ Bishop Caldwell writes, "It is reported that in his endeavor to penetrate into the interior of the Malayam peninsula he was murdered by the natives, and that his resolution to abandon his labours in India originated in the impression produced in his mind by a letter received from the Dutch Minister, Mr. Bornas with whom he had been acquainted at college, describing a religious movement which he had commenced among the native of Malacaus". It is not improbable that the following hypothesis may be true - The natural in reference from his letters is that he was seriously ill from liver disease and was doubtful whether he would Olive long. In tropical countries disease of this kind rapidly turns its course. We may therefore suppose that Ringeltaube died of this disease between Malacca and Batavia and was buried in the sea. His personal belongings would be as to afford little or no clue to his identification. Possibly the only source of him would be the entry in a ship's log and died as a passenger

The missionary work he started at South Travancore flourished and was blessed for greater success. He paved the way for the other Christians what should they do to propagate Christianity¹⁷. The zealous and ardent founder of the mission left the shores of Travancore on the evening of Monday the 5th February 1815, but strangely once more to return and suddenly disappear again.¹⁸

4.2 Rev. Mead

Rev.Charles Mead reached South Travancore in 1818. He was born on 1st October, 1792 at Briston, a small village in England. He was an Anglican by birth¹⁹. After the death of his parents he was brought up under the sole guidance and management of his uncle Rev.John Hunt of the Church of England. John Hunt was one of the Directors of London Missionary Society. He served as presbyter in the church of England. His family was very much involved in the missionary work and social work. His aunt was a highly religious lady. She impressed into his mind a desire for missionary work²⁰. She said that it was a work of God. Rev.Mead was selected along with three other men for missionary work.

¹⁷ John A.Jacob, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

¹⁸ Silvester Horne, C., *The Story of the London Missionary Society*, 1998, p. 97.

¹⁹ Samuel Zecharia, *The London Missionary Society in South Travancore 1805-1855* (Tamil), Nagercoil, 1877, p.36.

²⁰ Agur, C.M., *Church History of Travancore*, New Delhi, 1903, p.648.

Rev.Mead got most of his education from London till he joined the missionary work. He was admitted in the Grammar School in London²¹. He spent all his early days studying in this institution. He was trained in handicraft industry including wood work, typing, printing, composing, paper making, weaving, sewing and forge work. In his early days he had an intention of joining the army to do service for the nation. But gradually he changed his mind and wanted to do social service and liberate the slave friends. He also believed that he would be more useful in religious and social field than military. Of course his idea was fulfilled. Mead was sent to a seminary for Theological study under Rev.Dr.David Bogue, a noted theologian of that time²². He was one of the chief exponents of the organization of the LMS. Since Rev.Mead was under the guidance of Dr.Bogue, he inculcated in him a zeal for missionary work²³.

When he was very young he often went with his many friends for bathing in a stream at Greateuse. Once he was playing with his friends in a stream of water current which took him away from his friends²⁴. They noticed the friend who was in a danger. So they cried to get the help of neighbours. The neighbours heard the sound of the boys and saw Mead was

²¹ Pastorate Centenary Souvenir, District Church, Neyyoor, 1996, p.44.

²² Richard Lovett. *The History of London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, London, 1899, p.74.

²³ Samuel Zachariah, *op.cit.*, p.36.

²⁴ G.Christudhas,G., *Paathachuvadugal* (Tamil), Palayamkottai, 2005, p.61.

in peril²⁵. With the help of the people, he was saved. This incident created a feeling in his mind that God saved him from the forthcoming danger. Thus he began to work for the glory of God. Then he was trained under the able leadership of Rev.Dr.David Bogue. After this theological education, Mead accepted the invitation of London Missionary Society. Rev.Mead was one of the four young men admitted by L.M.S. in 1814²⁶. He was ordained along with his friend Mr.John Tayler on Wednesday on the 6th March 1816²⁷.

When it was a time that no communication and no voyage was expected by people he decided to go to India to do religious service. But he wanted to get married before reaching India, so that she would help him in religious work. But no one was willing to give either their daughters or their sisters to Rev.Mead. Because they thought that Rev.Mead would not return to England. So it was his only alternative to marry his aunt's daughter Mrs.Ann Hunt, daughter of Rev.John Hunt²⁸.

Rev.Kohlhoff Iyer of Tranqubar requested the L.M.S. to send a missionary to South Travancore in the absence of Ringeltaube. So they sent Rev.Charles Mead to occupy the position of a missionary in the place of Rev.Ringeltaube²⁹. London Missionary Society was prepared to send

²⁵ Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.649.

²⁶ Pastorate Century Souvenir District Church Neyyoor, 1966, p.44.

²⁷ Samuel Zachariah, *op.cit.*, p.36.

²⁸ Rev.John Hunt was one of the Directors of the London Missionary Society Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.650.

²⁹ Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, Madras, 1991, p.266.

Rev.Charles Mead who himself was ready to go to India. He with his wife Anne started their voyage from harbour Deal on 20th April 1816 in the ship named 'Earl of Moria'³⁰. Rev.Mead started with many other missionaries in the same ship. Rev.Knill was one of the close friends of Rev.Mead, who came with him. His journey to India was not as pleasant as he had expected.

After a long journey for four months and eight days the ship landed at Madras on 28th August 1816³¹. His safe arrival at Madras was hailed by the many Christian friends Mrs. and Mr.Loveless received Rev.Mead and his family at Madras. Mr.Loveless at Madras seemed to have been very anxious about the arrival of missionaries from the London Missionary Society for Travancore³².

Rev.Mead was delayed at Madras because Mrs.Mead was suffering from respiratory problem. So she was forced to stay at Madras for few months. They lived at Vepary in Madras for one year. Mrs.Mead delivered their first child on 2nd February 1817³³.

Rev.Mead did not like to waste his time. Hence, he was preparing for his missionary work. He was engaged in studying Tamil language³⁴. The man who first taught Tamil to Rev.Mead at Madras was a respectable native

³⁰ Samuel Zachariah, *op.cit.*, p.37.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.266.

³² Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.69.

³³ Paul Dhas, D., Charles Mead Oru Varalattu Parvai (Tamil), Souvenir, Thanks Giving festival, Kanyakumari Diocese, Nagercoil, 1991, p.32.

³⁴ Samuel Zachariah, *op.cit.*, p.39.

Christian who was working in a college. Some other missionaries also came there to study Tamil. Rev.Mead visited many churches, schools and some other places in Madras with his friend Knill and Loveless³⁵.

When Rev.Mead was detained at Madras he gave early intimation of his arrival to Col.Munro³⁶ and consulted him on various subjects relating to the mission affairs and the country and solicited his kind help³⁷. Col.Munro issued intimation to the government officers to prepare the small mission house at Mylaudy³⁸ in consultation with Rev.Vedamanikam and suggested some alterations. By the letter of Col.Munro, Mr.John Everest went to Mylaudy and renovated the above bungalow for Rev.Mead to live in³⁹.

Rev.Charles Mead decided to travel to Travancore by sea with his little son and his wife. Mrs.Mead was attacked with some sickness connected with liver. On September 9, 1817. Rev.Mead and Mrs.Mead with their tender baby embarked on board to Travancore⁴⁰. Mrs.Mead was still ailing from the sickness.

³⁵ Samuel Zachariah, *op.cit.*, p.39.

³⁶ Col.Munro was the Resident Cum Dewan of erstwhile Travancore.

³⁷ Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.673.

³⁸ Mylaudy is an important missionary place. It is 10 kms South east Nagercoil Kanniyakumari route. Rev.Mead constructed a church in Mylaudy which is familiar for his missionary work.

³⁹ Hector, S.S., *op.cit.*, p.17.

⁴⁰ John A.Jacob, *A History of London Missionary Society in South Travancore* (1806-1956), Trivandrum, 1990, p.58.

During their travel Mrs.Mead's weakness and pain on the left side of her chest increased. That time Major Makiners and Dr.Henderson came to see them. With their advice they made an examination and found out that an abscess was forming on her liver. On the 7th October an opening was made and the wound was dressed⁴¹. The wound became considerably enlarged and inflammation was advancing inside. He was very much worried because his wife was unable to speak.

Mrs.Mead died on 26th October 1817. This was a great blow to Rev.Mead. The sad news was first received by the Directors of England and Malaka. The Directors informed the sad news to their highly respected Director Rev.Hunt. Mrs.Mead's death was a great loss to London Missionary Society⁴².

Rev.Mead could not delay at Penong. His duties demanded that he should immediately proceed to Travancore. But his health condition made some diversion in his programme. Thus atlast with his child John Hunt, who was now the only solace and delight particularly in his time of affliction⁴³, he landed at Colachel in South Travancore on December 1817. He was welcomed by Rev.Vedamonikam of Mylaudy and others. Rev.Mead was quite happy to see them. The extreme pleasure of the meeting made a lasting impression on his mind. On reaching Mylaudy he found that though the

⁴¹ Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.663.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.663.

mission had been left vacant for about two years Rev.Vedamonikam, the native priest incharge, had carried on the work with diligence and success⁴⁴. Rev. Mead lived in the cottage bungalow of Rev.Ringletaube for a short period. He lost no time in reporting his arrival to the British Resident Col.Munro and shortly afterwards went personally to pay his respect to him. Col.Munro was a great promoter of mission in Travancore. He had great esteem and sympathy for Rev.Mead. Rev.Vadamonikkam handed over the ministry to Rev.Charles Mead⁴⁵. In the beginning of 1818 Rev.Mead took charge of his mission work in South Travancore⁴⁶. He took up the work left by Ringletaube.

On 13th January 1819 Rev.Mead married Miss.Johanna. Their union lasted for about thirty years and were days of great happiness. She was greatly interested in the Travancore mission. She had the honour of laboring with Rev.Mead as the "First Missionary Lady in South Travancore"⁴⁷.

Rev.Mead did marvellous works in South Travancore in general and Kalkulam taluk in particular. He was appointed the superintendent of education. He introduced several educational reforms. He frequently toured the state and visited most of the schools. Under his direction, several vernacular schools were merged with the English schools. He started many

⁴⁴ John A.Jacob, *op.cit.*, p.58.

⁴⁵ Maharasan Vedamanikam Memorial Pillar, Mylaudy, 1995.

⁴⁶ Bakthi Malar (Dina Malar) Tirunelveli, 11, April, 2004.

⁴⁷ Silvester Horne, *op. cit.*, 1998, p.110.

churches and he participated in liberation movements of the state⁴⁸. In 1853 he left Neyyoor mission in Kalkulam taluk and retired from the mission. He died in his 82nd age on 19th January 1873.

After taking charge the first thing, which engaged the attention of Rev.Mead, was the building up of a central paddy godown or granary at Mylaudy, where he could gather and store the produce from the mission fields. He also proposed to build a room on the top of it for use either as the residence of the missionary or as a vestry or as a school room. For this purpose he obtained a licence from the Sirkar for cutting down about 100 palmyrah trees. The Government also permitted him to use the granite stones of the ruined fort at Punnarkulam and to cut down the margosa trees that stood thereabout for the same building.⁴⁹

Even from very ancient days, Mylaudi had been a very good market place. Poor people irrespective of caste and creed from various villagers flocked to this granary for purchasing paddy. Poor people had the facility to buy paddy even for 1 chuckram (n.p. 3) a facility unknown anywhere else. So the poor among the high castes as well as the low castes were very thankful to the missionary. The poor widows of the place were given the job of pounding paddy for the supply of rice to the Nagercoil boarding school.⁵⁰ It was a rule that the superintendents of the granary were to be chosen from

⁴⁸ John A.Jacob, *op.cit.*, p.103.

⁴⁹ Augur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p. 676.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Vedamonickam's family. All these good intentions were now entirely forgotten by the people, who were in charge of these endowments.

Rev. Mead also succeeded in procuring from the Travancore Government a licence to land in the Travancore ports, free of import duty, all articles intended for charitable use, brought from England and other places. He also succeeded in obtaining from the Sirkar the ancient historical church and other buildings at Fort Udayagiri for the use of the medical missions in the country. He then proposed to remove the mission headquarters from Mylaudy to Nagercoil. Munro promised to give the traveller's bungalow for the purpose. Subsequently Mead purchased eight adjoining pieces of land to put up buildings for orphanages, boarding school, church, printing office and other necessary establishments. The above lands were mostly devaswom lands with an annual tax of 30 fanams, which was used to meet the lighting charge of the temple at Nagercoil. On a representation made to the government for reduction of tax, as the land was to be used only for charitable purpose, the tax was reduced to a nominal sum of 2 fanams and the remission of the 28 fanams was assigned to be used for the lighting charges of the Nagercoil Church⁵¹.

Rev. Mead allotted the land to Christian settlers for putting up houses. The nucleus of the Christian Village of Nagercoil was thus formed. The first catechist for Nagercoil was Arulnandam, husband of Arulayi sister of the

⁵¹ Rev. Samuel Mateer, *op. cit.*, p.267.

Christian poet Vedanayagam Sastri of Tanjore. He lived in a house nearby, what is called today Mead's street. The younger brother of Vedanayagam Sastri was one of the early teachers in the seminary and his house was next to that of his sister. Near this another house was put up for one Vedanayagam Pillai another catechist, who was converted from the Kurup family of Payenkuzhi (Perinbapuram) near Eraniel of the Kalkulam Taluk.

The Rani appointed Rev.Mead a judge of the Nagercoil District Court⁵², as she deemed it fit to appoint a missionary to this office for the proper administration of justice to the socially backward classes. The appointment of a missionary as a judge of the state was a very novel experiment of the Government. Such an appointment was perhaps the solitary instance in the whole history of either British India or the native states. This measure aroused criticism from many quarters. Even the London Mission Society felt, that such an union of offices was somewhat incongruous. No doubt, the two offices are incompatible, but nobody can say, that this was the demand of the circumstances that existed at that time. Backward communities formed the bulk of the population in South Travancore. They were suffering severe oppression at the hands of caste-Hindus. It was then that the Protestant missionaries were carrying on their work of social welfare of the converts, who mainly belonged to the low castes. Hence the idea prevailed that simple justice for simple and poor

⁵² Velu Pillai, T.K., *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.772.

people cannot be better administered than by a Christian missionary. It was one of the reasons, which induced Col.Munro to recommend the appointment of Rev.Mead as a civil judge in Travancore.

On the appointment of Rev.Mead as judge Munro himself said "The inhabitants have a saying among them, that even the chair of a gentleman placed in one of the courts would be useful and the presence of a gentleman of the missionaries would communicate a purity, energy and efficiency to the proceedings of the court. This measure would be most acceptable to the people; they see the courts, an institution established for the express purpose of guarding their rights and so a plan obviously calculated to improve the efficiency of the court would be received with gratitude. The scrupulous integrity and conscientious justice of the Christian judge would exalt the reverence of the people for the British character and would be contributed to found its influence on a still more durable basis of the people's interests and affections⁵³."

The appointment of Rev.Mead as a judge can be cited as an example of the great tolerant spirit of the native Government. Munro was in fact very desirous, that the courts of law instituted in this country immediately should prove a success and a blessing to the people. It was the desire of the Rani to emancipate the oppressed section of society in Travancore and make all her subjects happy as quickly as possible. These were the immediate causes

⁵³ Augu, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.680.

which favoured the appointment of a Christian missionary as judge. Rev.Mead managed his office so cleverly that when a dispute arose between the English East India Company and the Dutch regarding the Dutch factories at Cape Comorin, he was sent as the British agent to settle the dispute and he settled it very successfully⁵⁴. The appointments of Rev.Mead of the L.M.S. and Rev.Norton of the C.M.S. as civil judges of Nagercoil and Alleppey respectively lasted only for one year, because the committees of the Societies in London forbade any such assumption of civil duties⁵⁵.

H.H. the Raja of Cochin donated Rs.5,000/- for the benefit of the Protestant mission in Travancore⁵⁶. Mead utilized the money in purchasing about 41 kottas of paddy fields at Vattankullam at Vellamadam for the mission and the balance was utilized for building a church at Nagercoil. About this time certain other grants were also made by the Rani of Travancore. As the produce from the field was insufficient for feeding the poor and for other charitable work, the heavy taxes were reduced. After consulting Col.Munro she issued a royal grant. She met Rev.Mead in June 1818 making over to him for the mission the anubogham of 99 Kotas and fixed the mitchavaram (the balance) as the Government dues at a nominal rate of 1 kotta payable in two half yearly installments. This timely secured concession proved to be of immense help to the mission.

⁵⁴ Augu, C.M., *op.cit.*, p. 691.

⁵⁵ Mackenzie, *Christianity in Travancore*, Trivandrum, 1905, p.104.

⁵⁶ Cheriyan, P., *The Malabar Syrians and the C.M.S.*, p.90.

In 1818 Mead entertained the noble idea of building a gigantic church at Nagercoil, capable of holding about 3,000 people. Many Hindu Princes cheerfully contributed towards the building of the Church. H.H. the Raja of Tanjore contributed Rs.500/- and H.H. the Rani of Travancore gifted the land and the necessary stones and timber free of cost. The Raja of Cochin made a donation of Rs.1000/- The foundation stone was laid on New Year's day 1819 by Rev.Knill who had reached Travancore in September 1818. During the construction, the difficulty of transporting stones and timber from the nearby hill areas was keenly felt. Munro got the sanction from the Rani for employing the Sirkar and temple elephants for the purpose.

In April 1819 another royal grant was made whereby the mission got about 34 kottas of paddy fields in the Agasteeswaram Taluk. A nominal tax of one kotta of paddy per annum was fixed⁵⁷.

Mead's educational schemes accelerated the educational policy of Munro. A seminary or boarding school for boys was opened at Nagercoil. Mead used the income from the paddy fields which were granted by H.H. the Rani to the mission in the time of Rev.Ringletaube for the support of the Nagercoil Seminary. Though feeding the poor was the original object of the gift, Mrs.Mead assisted by Mrs.Mault wife of another missionary, rendered valuable service in organizing the first girls boarding school where

⁵⁷ Augur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.604.

embroidery and pillow-lace making were introduced. This industry has grown to a large proportion and continues to flourish even to this day.

The missionaries were not only concerned with the religious and spiritual life of the people but they extended their activities for their social uplift. Many social legislative enactments passed by the Ranis through the instrumentality of Col. Munro originated with the missionaries. The proclamations abolishing the poll-tax and exempting the Christians from Sunday Oozhium Service were passed as a result of the initiative taken by Rev.Ringletaube. The Seminaries at Kottayam and Nagercoil produced many eminent people. No wonder they were fully encouraged by the Ranis and Munro, in their fight against spiritual and social backwardness, illiteracy and disease.

4.3 Maults

Rev.Mead was left alone to continue the work that was left by Ringeltaube. He had no assistant too. His health was declining. He applied to the Directors of the London Missionary Society to help him serve better the existing Christians and convert more people to the fold. The directors of the London Missionary Society too understood that Rev.Mead was losing his health and he needed a relief. Hence, the board decided to appoint

Rev.Charles Mault and Rev.John Smith to Travancore⁵⁸. In 1819, the London Missionary Society sent Mr. and Mrs.Mault to Nagercoil⁵⁹.

Charles Mault was born on 11th May 1791, at Salop in England. He was a student at Gasport England. He was ordained on 28th October, 1818 as a pastor⁶⁰, by Rev.T.Morells Meeting House, St.Neots. Rev.Morells declared the confession of faith and Rev.Dr.Waugh offered the ordination prayer. Rev.George Border in his ordination address said "Do the work of an Evangelist". As Mault was destined to go to Travancore, the offer from the board of directors came and he accepted the offer and started his missionary journey. Mault left England ten months earlier than Mr.Smith. He along with his wife started the journey from Liverpool on Wednesday 18th Nov. 1818 in a vessel called the "West Moreland". He travelled with Rev.John Campbell and John Philip who were sent on deputation to South Africa. Mr. and Mrs.Mault landed at Mumbai at the end of the July 1819. He applied for the passport from the Resident of Mumbai and obtained the same without much difficulty. From there Mr. and Mrs. Mault proceeded to the London Missionary Society's Mission field. ie., South Travancore to assist

⁵⁸ Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.727.

⁵⁹ Rev.Samuel Zachariah, *The London Missionary Society in South Travancore*, 1805-1855, p.75.

⁶⁰ 150th Annual Souvenir, C.S.I.Home Church, Nagercoil, 1819 – 1969, p.70.

Rev.Mead in all his endeavors of the missionary⁶¹. He worked with Rev. Mead and other missionaries in harmony for about thirty years⁶².

In 1821, the South Travancore mission was divided into Tamil and Malayalam Missions. Rev.Smith was posted to Quilon in charge of Malayalam Mission. Rev.Mead and Rev.Mault managed the more extensive and important Tamil Mission. The Tamil Mission was divided into Eastern and Western divisions. Rev.Mault and Mrs.Mault were in charge of Nagercoil Division and Rev.Mead and Mrs.Mead were in charge of the Neyyoor Mission in 1828⁶³. The congregations east of Nagercoil including those of Mylaudy, Thamaraiikulam, Mukilankudiyiruppu, Agasteeswaram, Papanaben Mission Field, Puthalam, Kottar, Parakai, Pitcheykudiyiruppu (Jamestown) and Vadakankulam and the Evangelistic work of Cape Comorin were under the supervision of Rev.Mault⁶⁴. Rev.Mault wrote a biographical sketch of Moses called "Anbunilamai", in memory of Moses, the assistant of Rev.Mault.

A new version of the Tamil Bible was prepared by Mrs.Rhenius who had settled at Palayamkottai about this time. Rev.Mault assisted him in the work of revision and copies of the Holy Scriptures were printed. Rev.Mault became much interested in the Bible revision work. He devoted two hours

⁶¹ Hacker, I.H., *op.cit.*, p.85.

⁶² 150th Annual Souvenir, C.S.I. Home Church, Nagercoil, 1819 – 1969, p.74.

⁶³ Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.727.

⁶⁴ Nagamaiah, V., *op.cit.*

daily to a careful examination of the New Tamil Version of the Scriptures. The Religious Tract Society was formed on October 1822 by the Travancore and Tirunelveli Missionaries. Rev.Mault was one of the chief agents who organized this useful institution. The Nagercoil Tract Society issued tracts and books under the table management of Rev.Mault

Mrs.Mead and Mault

Mrs.Mault, along with Mrs.Mead rendered meritorious service to the cause of women's education in South Travancore⁶⁵. In Travancore as elsewhere in India, the birth of a female child was looked down upon⁶⁶. Even the women of the higher caste lived in seclusion though they were expected to dress nicely according to their caste rules⁶⁷. In the case of low castes the birth of a female child was usually welcomed because as the child grew it would earn for the family and at the time of marriage the parents would be given bride's price⁶⁸. Generally, women were considered to be the object for the enjoyment of men⁶⁹. Before the arrival of Christian Missionaries educational institutions were practically non existent in rural areas⁷⁰. Absence of educational

⁶⁵ Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.755.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.773.

⁶⁷ Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle Dec, 1820, p.531.

⁶⁸ Francis Day, *The Land of Permals*, Madras, 1863, p.40.

⁶⁹ Prenath, V.M., *Keralitela Adimaikal*, Trichur, 1966, pp.93-96.

⁷⁰ Samuel Mateer, *The Gospel in South India*, London (n.d) p.188.

institutions in the near vicinity of remote villages made it impossible for the villagers to send their wards to schools⁷¹. Their parents were unwilling to send them to school as they feared that female education would endanger their culture and civilization⁷². Hence, the lady missionaries of the London Missionary Society⁷³ came forward to uplift by encouraging women's education⁷⁴. Mrs.Mault made special efforts to bring poor girls to school. She patiently collected the slaves and orphans for attending the school⁷⁵.

A few girls picked up by her were provided with boarding and clothing⁷⁶. It is learnt from the letters of Mrs.Mault that the blind belief and prejudices of the parents made them withdraw the girls whom Mrs.Mault had enrolled in her school with great difficulty⁷⁷. However, the Girls School opened by her, continued to function with the children in the school at Nagercoil, of whom thirty depended entirely upon the boarding home for everything⁷⁸. For meeting the expenses Mrs.Mault received funds from her friends in England

⁷¹ Annual Report of the L.M.S. London, 1822, p.836.

⁷² Hacker, I.H., *op.cit.*, p.26.

⁷³ Naik, J.P., and Syed Murallah, *op.cit.*, pp.15-16.

⁷⁴ Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.760.

⁷⁵ Letter of Mrs.Mault to foreign secretary, Nagercoil, 2nd June, 1830 and December, 1830, p.64.

⁷⁶ Annual Report of the Directors, 1842, p.64.

⁷⁷ Letter of Mrs.Mault, Nagercoil, dated 6th October, 1820, and December, 1820, p.53.

⁷⁸ Annual Report of the Director, 1842, p.60.

towards the maintenance of the school⁷⁹. She had received support from the Maharani (Parvathi Bhai) and the British Resident⁸⁰.

In the girls school, Mrs.Mault taught the children cleanliness and sanitation along with Christian religion. Besides these, she taught them to read and write and trained them in spinning, knitting and sewing, so that they could earn money. In 1842 there were eighteen village day schools managed by a single teacher. Each congregation supported one teacher⁸¹. There were in all 3000 natives attending the schools of whom majority were slaves⁸². Although cholera prevailed in the country in 1849 the attendance in school was very regular⁸³.

Mrs.Mault was assisted by Missionary Ladies like, the daughter, Mrs.Sarral White House, Mrs.Dennis, Mrs.Abbs, Mrs.Jones and Mrs.Lee. These ladies worked as teachers in Mrs.Mault's School. In her village day schools native female teachers who possessed good manners and devotion to God were allowed to teach⁸⁴. As the Missionaries faced with the problem of paucity of funds, they preferred

⁷⁹ Letter of Mrs.Mault addressed to a friend, St.Neots Huntingdonshire, 1831, p.32.

⁸⁰ Letter of Mrs.Mault dated 6th June 1831, Nagercoil and Sreedaramenon A.Social and Cultural History of Kerala, New Delhi, 1979, pp.329-331.

⁸¹ Annual Report of the Forty Eight General meeting of the L.M.S., London 1942, p.65.

⁸² Letter of Mrs.Mault addressed to a friend, St.Neots Huntingdonshire, EMMC. Vol.IX (New Series), January 1831.

⁸³ Annual Report of the Directors to the Forty Fifth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1849, p.85.

⁸⁴ Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle Vol.VIII, 1840, p.512.

to utilize the service of those women who were prepared to render voluntary service⁸⁵. The salary of a teacher was one fanam per month. They were also paid one and a half fanams to bring a slave girl or buy them to the school⁸⁶.

Mrs.Mault and her friends taught the children scripture, geography, grammar, arithmetic and writing in Tamil⁸⁷. She opened separate schools for girls and boys at the home station. Books on morals and scriptures were taught⁸⁸. Thus the school at Nagercoil and other village schools imparted useful instruction to the girls. Mrs.Mault trained the girls of the boarding School at Nagercoil in such a manner that they left the school more refined in their appearance and character⁸⁹. At the beginning, the natives opposed women's education. Hence, Mrs.Mault and Mr.Mault diverted their attention much towards the slaves⁹⁰.

In 1845 the jubilee of the London Missionary Society was celebrated at Nagercoil, and a significant event in that Jubilee celebration was the establishment of Native Society to work among the

⁸⁵ Report of the T.D.C. for 1893, Report of the Nagercoil Mission District, p.286.

⁸⁶ Fanam – was a coin in circulation in Travancore, Four Copper Chuckrams constitute of a fanam and seven fanams a rupee. And Nagamiah, V., op.cit., Vol.II, p.56.

⁸⁷ Annual Report of the L.M.S., London, 14th May 1857, p.181.

⁸⁸ Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle, 1841, p.128.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, October, 1838.

⁹⁰ Annual Report of the Directors of the L.M.S. London, 1847, p.86.

slave population in Travancore. It is about this time that the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society at work in Travancore took up the question of the liberation of the slaves in Travancore. The Lady missionaries, were responsible for bringing to light the existence of slavery in Travancore and laid the foundation for their freedom by introducing self earning schemes⁹¹.

In course of time, the situation changed. The Christian parents also came forward to send their children to the School⁹². During the time of Mrs.Mault, Missionaries like Tyreman, Daniel and Bennet visited the School in 1827. On seeing the progress of the girls, they praised the hard work of Mrs.Mead and Mault. Because of the constant work of Mrs.Mead and Mrs.Mault and her co-workers did, there was considerable improvement in the appearance and character of the school children. Rama Varma Kulasekhara Perumal, the Maharaja of Travancore visited her school in 1834 and expressed his appreciation of the work done by her⁹³.

⁹¹ Francis Day, *op.cit.*, p.42.

⁹² Annual Report of the Directors L.M.S., London, 1832, p.70.

⁹³ Rev.Samuel Zachariah, *The L.M.S. in South Travancore* Part I, 1805-1855, Nagercoil, 1897, p.118.

In an attempt to raise the economic status of the women, Mrs.Mault started the Lace Industry in 1820⁹⁴. The Nagercoil Lace Industry is the oldest of the Mission Industries in this part of South India. Its origin goes back to 1820 when Mrs.Mault, started teaching her own hobby of lace making, on the verandah of her bungalow, to a few poor Christian converts⁹⁵. She taught them crochet and embroidery work and in 1821 introduced the pillow lace. This new industry of lace making was gradually enlarged when great facilities for disposing of the lace were secured. In course of time this industry became a source of support to the institution. The South Travancore mission lace is widely known in India and abroad, and has won prizes in Madras, London, Paris, Chicago and other famous exhibitions. Materials such as patterns, thread pins were obtained from Wellingborough in Northamptonshire. These were supplied to the workers and they received payment for their work. In the girls school under the care of Mrs.Mault twelve girls learnt to make lace, some of which were exceedingly well done⁹⁶.

Mrs.Mault used these girls to teach young girls in homesteads. She visited them among whom some were slaves or indentures, and

⁹⁴ Gladstone, *protestant Missions and People Movements in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1984, p.34.

⁹⁵ 150th Annual Souvenir, Home Church, Nagercoil, 1819-1969, p.117.

⁹⁶ Nagercoil Home Church, C.S.I. Bulletin, March, 1968, p.10.

sold the lace they made to her friends, so that they could be redeemed to freedom. The price of a slave was Rs.7 ½. Seven or eight girls were brought into a boarding home, where lace – making was taught in addition to general sewing, and also to the wives of teachers and catechists⁹⁷. In all these works Rev.Mault stood very strongly behind her. After a long period of 40 years of fruitful, service, Mrs. and Mrs.Mault retired in 1857 and went home. Their retirement was very much felt by the people. However, Mrs.Dennison continued the administration of the school⁹⁸.

After doing meritorious service to the people of South Travancore from 1819-1855, Rev.Mault left for his native place, Coventry in Britain, He died at the age of 68. So the Coventry people, relatives and well wishers wanted to establish a Native Missionary Society in the name of Rev.Mault in India, especially at Nagercoil. Consequently, the Mault Missionary Society was established in 1872.

The early missionaries such as Rev. Ringletabue, Rev. Mead and Mrs. Mead, Rev. Mault and Mrs. Mault, laid a strong foundation to create a sense of social awakening in the minds of the depressed classes. Upon this foundation, the fight for social identity was slowly built under the leadership of pioneer missionaries. The missionaries who came after the them too worked hard to create social awakening.

⁹⁷ 150th Annual Souvenirs, Home Church, Nagercoil, 1819-1969, p.118.

⁹⁸ Hacker, I.H., *op.cit.*, p.84.

They educated the people to fight for the social identity of those who suffered from want of it. The bifurcation of the mission field into Nagercoil and Neyyoor was the work of Rev.Mead. The creation of Neyyoor, the starting of Medical Mission at Neyyoor, opening of new schools and work among the down trodden were the commendable work of Rev.Mead, the pioneer Missionary. He was instrumental in starting the first upper cloth revolt in 1822. When they worked like this, the women missionaries who came after them worked hard among the women of Travancore.