

## Chapter – VI

### EDUCATIONAL ENDEAVOURS OF LADY MISSIONARIES AT NEYYOOR AND PARASALA DIVISIONS

The educational work for social awakening was not confined to Nagercoil division alone. The missionaries understood that villages, within the jurisdiction of Neyyoor and Parassala divisions, were very backward. Their social status too was far below the dignity of a normal human being. The coarse and cruel nature of slavery was very much seen in the Kalkulam and Vilavancode taluks under above two divisions. Hence, the Lady missionaries and their husbands strongly decided to fight for the eradication of slavery, social degradation and to get the oppressed social identity. They thought that social awakening should be brought through educating the people first and then fight for the social identity. They began to create schools first to enlighten the oppressed. They selected Neyyoor and then Parasala as their stations.

#### **6.1 Mrs.Mead and others**

The development of female education in Neyyoor was achieved by Mrs. Johanna Celestina Horst Mead<sup>1</sup>, Mrs. Jessie Fergusson Thomson,

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<sup>1</sup> "In January 1819 Rev. Mead married Johanna Celestina Horst, daughter of Rev.Christopher Henry Horst of Tanjore. Their union lasted for Thirty years. She had the

Mrs. Ann Martha Baylis Thomson, Mrs. Elizabeth Hacker, Mrs. Winnifred Hacker, Miss. Bertha A. Blanchard and K.J. Mecalroy.

In 1827 Mrs. Mead shifted to Neyyoor from Nagercoil. She drew inspiration from her husband who founded an industrial school at Nagercoil in 1820<sup>2</sup>. She started a boarding school for girls at Neyyoor in 1828<sup>3</sup>. Students in the Girls Boarding were boarded and clothed at the expense of the Mission. Hence the school attracted many children<sup>4</sup>. In the management of the school Mrs. Mead was assisted by Mrs. Abbs who established schools at Parasala in later years<sup>5</sup>. Under Mrs. Mead the girls of the Boarding school improved much in their appearance and character. In this school the girls were given an elementary education in Scripture, Geography, Grammar, Arithmetic and writing in Tamil.<sup>6</sup>

Mrs. Mead gave great importance to the establishment of village schools for girls<sup>7</sup>. The girls who were educated in the mission schools

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honour of laboring with Rev. Mead as the First Missionary Lady in South Travancore". James Sibree, D.D., *op.cit.*, and Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Silvester Horne, C., *The Story of the London Missionary Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Edition, London, 1904, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p. 767.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. Samuel Zachariah, *The London Missionary society in South Travancore*, Vol. I, Nagercoil, 1897, p. 174.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. John Abbs, *Twenty years of Missionary Experience in Travancore*, London, 1870, pp. 348.

<sup>6</sup> Jacob, J.A., *History of the London Missionary society*, L.M.S., press, Nagercoil, 1956, p.102.

<sup>7</sup> Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle, October 1838, p. 513.

occupied high positions in the society<sup>8</sup>. Also they were given plots of land to settle in Neyyoor<sup>9</sup>, Mrs. Mead established as many schools as possible.

But she died at Neyyoor on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1848 at the age of 45<sup>10</sup>. After the death of Mrs. Mead in 1848 the school at Neyyoor could not function properly upto 1852<sup>11</sup>.

With the arrival of Rev. and Mrs. Baylis in 1<sup>st</sup> July 1854, the school at Neyyoor was revived once again<sup>12</sup>. She rendered valuable service to the mission for 12 years. She worked hard for the upliftment of the downtrodden children. They were taught the Bible, History, Geography, Grammar and Arithmetic in Tamil. Apart from this, she taught them embroidery, spinning, pounding paddy and cooking. So that in future these children would become self supported. The children imbibed from the Christian influence of the Boarding school and they were noted for cleanliness and punctuality<sup>13</sup>.

After the death of Mrs. Baylis on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1864, Mrs. Low assumed charge in 1864. When she left on furlough in 1870. When she could not return to India due to ill health, Mrs. Annie Cox Baylis, second

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<sup>8</sup> Evangelic Magazine and Missionary Chronicle, Oct. 1838, p.513.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Daniel Das, N., *Missionary society*, L.M.S., press, Nagercoil, 1956, p. 102.

<sup>10</sup> Home church centenary Souvenir, Neyyoor, 1866-1966, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> Kingsely, L., "*L.M.S., High School for Girls*", *Triple Jubilee Sourvenir*, Neyyoor, 1828 – 1978, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Home church, centenary Souvenir*, Neyyoor, 1866-1966, p. 49.

<sup>13</sup> Kingsley, L., *L.M.S., High School for Girls, Triple Jubilee sourvenir*, Neyyoor, 1828-1978, p. 4.

wife of Rev. F. Baylis, took charge in 1865. She took the lead in the development of women's education upto 1870. After the death of Rev. Baylis on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1877, Mrs. Balyis stayed as a widow at Neyyoor<sup>14</sup>. Then Jessie Liddell the first wife of Dr. Thomson took charge in 1872 till her death in 1876<sup>15</sup>.

### 6.1.2 Mrs. Jessie Thomson

Mrs. Jessie Thomson arrived at Nagercoil on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1872<sup>16</sup>. She devoted much attention to girls' education. From 1872 to 1876 she took much pains to establish caste girls schools in and around Neyyoor<sup>17</sup>. Also she visited and arranged to teach the confined women in their house at Thalakulam and Eraniel<sup>18</sup>. With the help of the Medical Mission, Mrs. Thomson established a school for girls at Eraniel near Neyyoor in 1872<sup>19</sup>. But she faced great difficulty in getting girls for the school. However, Dr. Thomson who was working at Neyyoor Medical Mission, successfully treated some patients in Eraniel and it gave their parents confidence to send their daughters to school. Mrs. Thomson started this school with four

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<sup>14</sup> Report of the T.D.C., for 1878, Report of the Neyyoor Mission District, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Home Church Centenary souvenir*, Neyyoor, 1866-1966, p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> Home Board File Diocesan office, Nagercoil.

<sup>17</sup> Hacker, I.H., *Hundred years in Travancore*, p. 88.

<sup>18</sup> Annual Report of the Eighteenth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1874, p. 39.

<sup>19</sup> Hacker, I.H., *Hundred Years in Travancore*, p.88.

women teachers and forty girls in 1873<sup>20</sup>. The second school was started at Thiruvithancode with two female teachers and thirty four girls in 1874<sup>21</sup>. The third school was also started with two women teachers and forty nine girls, in 1875, at Thuckalay<sup>22</sup>. Through her efforts, schools were established for high caste girls at different places.

Since the children of the schools were given free medical treatment when they fell ill, high caste Hindu parents sent their children to the school without any hesitation<sup>23</sup>. While the educational work was in progress Mrs. Jessie Thomson passed away on June 12, 1876<sup>24</sup>. But the educational activities that she left were continued by Mrs. Baylis Thomson. After two years Dr. Thomson married Mrs. Baylis (Ann Martha) on 26th September 1878<sup>25</sup>.

### 6.1.3 The Medical Mission

Travancore was famous for herbal medicines. Untill the arrival of European missionaries there was no possibility for English medicine. The people were suffering from contagious disease due to lack of proper medical care. The native people were relying upon the native physicians called the

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<sup>20</sup> Hacker, I.H., *Hundred years in Travancore*, p.88.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1980, Report of the Neyyoor Medical Mission Schools, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Home Church Centenary souvenir*, Neyyoor, 1866-1966, p. 52.

Vaithyans. In some cases they sought the assistance of devil dancers and a group of sorcerers called the Manthravadhis to get cured of any dreadful diseases. The vaithyans were well versed in herbal medical treatment for the sick<sup>26</sup>.

In the early part of Mead's labour, he saw the pitiable conditions of the people with diseases. Most of the people were poor. So they were not able to get the proper Indian medicine. Hence, Rev.Mead thought that there must be a hospital to treat them and bring them back to normal life. He planned to start medical hospital at Udayagiri fort close to Padmanabapuram. The reason for selecting Udayagiri was that Neyyoor was not thickly populated area. It was a jungle area infested with dreadful insects and reptiles<sup>27</sup>. Further there was the misunderstanding with the Catholics with regard to fort. Hence, he was forced to shift the station from Udayagiri to Neyyoor<sup>28</sup>. Rev.Mead decided to start a hospital at Neyyoor. That idea was materialized in 1838. The L.M.S. sent Dr.Ramsay to South Travancore, Rev.Mead started the hospital in a thatched shed where the patients were accommodated<sup>29</sup>. Within three months more than 1500 patients got treatment in this hospital<sup>30</sup>. Thus, the medical work that was established by Rev.Mead and Dr.Ramsay, Neyyoor is till now a leading centre for medical

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<sup>26</sup> Report of London Missionary Society, London, 1870, p.10.

<sup>27</sup> Report of London Missionary Society, London, 1872, p.184.

<sup>28</sup> Martin Daniel Dhas, N., *op.cit.*, p.15.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel Zachariah, *op.cit.*, p.180.

<sup>30</sup> John A., Jacob, *op.cit.*, p.60.

care in Kanyakumari District. Once it was an important charitable institution in Travancore. Neyyoor Medical Mission was considered as Asia's First Medical Mission.

#### **6.1.4 Mrs. Baylis Thompson**

Mrs. Baylis Thompson was appointed to Neyyoor by a Board's resolution on November 26, 1877<sup>31</sup>. She married Dr. Thompson and worked for the mission for 40 years<sup>32</sup>. She played a notable role in the educational development, Zenana work and in the medical mission. In December 1880, the fourth school was established by Mrs. Baylis Thompson at Thalakulam with two female teachers and 27 children<sup>33</sup>.

On 4<sup>th</sup> November 1881 a fifth school was established in Neyyoor among the Sudras. It was also started with two teachers and 26 Children<sup>34</sup>. In the same place a little school room was built with the support of N. Nanoo Pillai, who was a thick friend of Dr. Thomson. He met all the expenses of the building<sup>35</sup>. At the end of 1881 the five schools had 158 girls and 43 boys. In 1882, the number of children increased to 246<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> John A., Jacob, *op.cit.*, p.60.

<sup>32</sup> Hacker, I.H., *Hundred years in Travancore*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>33</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1890.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Report of the Travancore District Council for 1890, p.1 (Here in after abbreviated as T.D.C).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

Mrs. Baylis Thompson conducted examination for the pupils at Earniel, Travancore, Thuckalay, Thalakulam and Neyyoor<sup>37</sup>. The result showed that the children took much interest in their studies. Seeing the progress and improvement of the girls, people from other backward villages around Neyyoor sent petitions to the lady missionary requesting her to start schools in their villages<sup>38</sup>. Respecting their requests she opened a school at Parasala in 1884, for the Pariahs<sup>39</sup>. She established the school with the help of the secretary of the Ladies Working Party in Finchley<sup>40</sup>. After getting the whole amount from Finchley the school was named "Finchley School"<sup>41</sup>. Thus Mrs. Thomson worked hard for the downtrodden people. The Ladies Working Party supported the school continuously for about 12 years.<sup>42</sup>

This was the sixth school of Mrs. Baylis Thompson. Dr. Thompson visited this school on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1884 and conducted a Lyric meeting in the school room<sup>43</sup>. In the following year, he passed away.<sup>44</sup> After Dr. Thompson's death on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1884, Mrs. Baylis Thomson managed the schools of the Medical Mission with the help of Mrs. Roby Fletcher of

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<sup>37</sup> Report of the Medical Mission Schools, Neyyoor, pp. 2-4.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Report of the T.D.C., 1891, pp.2-4.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Home church Centenary Souvenir, Neyyoor, 1866-1966, p. 53.

England<sup>45</sup>. In 1889, she opened the seventh school in a shed, a mile away from the village named Tharavilai<sup>46</sup>. It was started with two female teachers and forty-one students<sup>47</sup>. In 1890, the eighth school was opened in the village called Peringodu with 29 children and one teacher<sup>48</sup>. The number of children at the end of 1890 for the eight schools were 221 girls and 121 boys, the average attendance being 228<sup>49</sup>. On 24<sup>th</sup> December the children of all the schools were assembled in the verandah of the missionary's bungalow at Neyyoor, and Christmas was celebrated. Mrs. Baylis Thompson gave presentation like toys, dolls, frocks, jackets, rice and clothes to the poor<sup>50</sup>. Thus, Mrs. Baylis Thompson worked hard for the uplift of women at Neyyoor for a period of 46 years.<sup>51</sup>

In February 1886 Dr. and Mrs. Annie Fry arrived at Neyyoor. Mrs. Annie Fry shared the burden of the Medical mission schools along with Mrs. Baylis Thompson.<sup>52</sup> She undertook supervision of these schools for 4

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<sup>45</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1890, Report of the Medical Mission Schools, Neyyoor Mission District, p.9.

<sup>46</sup> Report of the Medical Mission, Neyyoor Mission District, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1892, Report of the Medical Mission schools, statistics, Neyyoor Mission District. p.1.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.8.

<sup>51</sup> Home Church centenary Souvenir, Neyyoor, 1866-1966, p. 52.

<sup>52</sup> Hector, S.S., *Church History*, part - I (1806 - 1907), p. 89.

years from 1886 to 1890<sup>53</sup>. These schools of the medical mission were supported by the medical mission, His Highness the Maharaja's Government, and a grant from the parent society. Further, the missionaries collected fee from the students.<sup>54</sup> In 1894 they appointed only trained teachers to teach the students<sup>55</sup> so that they could claim salary for the teachers from the government as per the orders of 1895.<sup>56</sup> Mrs. Thomson retired from her active service in 1909 after working hard for the development of female education at Neyyoor.<sup>57</sup>

#### **6.1.5 Mrs. Winnifred Hacker**

After the death of F. Baylis on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1877, Rev. Mrs. Elizabeth Hacker took charge of the women's work at 1878. She carried out extension work in the Boarding school and passed away in 1885.<sup>58</sup>

After the death of Elizabeth Hacker, Winnifred, the second wife of Hacker took charge of women's work in Neyyoor, while Mrs. Thomson worked among the non-Christians. Winnifred developed the embroidery

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<sup>53</sup> Mrs. Annie C. Fry, Report of the Medical Mission schools, Report of the T.D.C. for 1890, Neyyoor Mission District, pp. 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1891, Report of the Neyyoor Mission District, p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> "In 1894 the Government introduced a new grant-in-aid system in Travancore". Minutes of special meeting of the T.D.C. at Neyyoor, July 25 & 26, 1894, pp. 1-2.

<sup>56</sup> Yesudas, R.N., *A History of women's Education in Kerala*, p. 29.

<sup>57</sup> Home Church centenary souvenir, Neyyoor, 1866-1966, p. 53.

<sup>58</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1878, Report of the Neyyoor Mission District, pp. 3-4.

industry. With the profits of the industry she supported the Girls Boarding school at Neyyoor.<sup>59</sup>

In 1890 Mrs. Hacker reported that during the past ten years a hundred girls passed out of the school and all of them occupied good positions in the congregations.<sup>60</sup> In 1899 a severe drought and famine followed by infectious diseases affected the area and the girls of the Boarding school were also affected by the epidemic. Hence, a sick room for the girls was the urgent need in the premises of the school. The sick room was named after Clapham<sup>61</sup> for she helped to build a sick room. Mrs. Hacker employed her own students as teachers under her supervision.<sup>62</sup> She was very unhappy about the poor strength of the school. However, the number of girls began to increase owing to her hard work. Besides supervising the Boarding school, Mrs. Hacker taught the children school lessons, embroidery, sewing and singing. As a result there was a marked improvement in the number of girls. Mrs. Hacker retired from her service in 1920 and she died on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1954 at Kodaikanal.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Rev. Hacker married winnited Downing Baylis (daughter of F. Baylis at Buckingham) on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1887.

<sup>60</sup> Hacker, I.H., *Hundred years in Travancore*, pp. 90-91.

Report of the T.D.C for 1890, Report of the Neyyoor Mission District, south Travancore, p. 15.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, Report of the Neyyoor Medical schools, pp. 5-6.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 1897, Report of the Neyyoor Mission District, p.15-16.

<sup>63</sup> *Home church centenary souvenir*, Neyyoor, 1866-1966, p. 51.

### 6.1.6 Miss. Bertha A. Blanchard

Miss Bertha A. Blanchard took charge of the Girls Middle school, Boarding Home and women's work in 1911. First she enlarged the dormitory of the Boarding Home. Miss G.E. Pugh helped Miss Blanchard in all her work.<sup>64</sup> In 1914, the Boarding school became a Higher Grade Elementary school with classes one to seven with a strength of 227.<sup>65</sup>

In 1920 a school at Ootukuly was opened. By 1936 the strength of the school at Ootukuly had considerably increased.<sup>66</sup> This gave rise to the need for additional class rooms. As adequate accommodation was necessary for obtaining government recognition Blanchard took great pains to put up additional sheds<sup>67</sup>. In 1922 at the request of the people in and around Neyyoor, Miss Blanchard started a kindergarten class.<sup>68</sup> In the following year, she started a second division of that class, with 25boys. Also in 1922 she introduced the system of collecting 4 annas from the girls in the fifth, sixth and seventh classes. In the following year she raised the fees from four annas to six annas every month.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Annual Report of the one Hundred and seventeenth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1912, p. 168-169.

<sup>65</sup> Report of the one Hundred and Nineteenth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1914, p. 176.

<sup>66</sup> L.M.S., Ten years of church and missions in Travancore, 1921-1930, p. 64-65.

<sup>67</sup> Yesudas, R.N., *A History of women's Education in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1975, p. 29.

<sup>68</sup> Travancore Mission council select Minutes, 1922-1926, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Miss Blanchard, B.A., *Vernacular Middle school for Girls, Neyyoor, L.M.S., Ten years of church and Mission in Travancore*, 1921-1930, p. 51-52.

Miss Blanchard followed cottage system in the Boarding school at Neyyoor<sup>70</sup>. She built a sick room and a bath room for the Boarding Home.<sup>71</sup> She donated Rs. 300/- towards a scholarship fund with the money collected from the local people. She collected an endowment of Rs. 1000/- in 1936 and that came to be called 'Blanchard Memorial Fund'<sup>72</sup>. Miss Blanchard added 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> classes and thus developed the school into a high school.<sup>73</sup> She extended the classrooms. Under her the number of children increased from 450 to 575. The strength of the teachers increased from 18 to 22.<sup>74</sup> It was so unfortunate that Miss Blanchard could not continue her services to the school because of the problems of her family at home and she handed over charge to Mrs. Grace Samuel who became the first native headmistress of the High school in 1939.<sup>75</sup>

Miss Blanchard developed the middle school for boys also. She purchased a site for erecting a new building for the school<sup>76</sup>. After the completion of this building, the school was named as the Hacker Memorial school in honour of the late Rev. I.H. Hacker who was closely associated

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<sup>70</sup> Travancore Mission Council Minutes, February 1935, p. 35.

<sup>71</sup> L.M.S., Ten years of Church and Mission in Travancore, 1931-1940, p. 74.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Kingsley, L., *L.M.S. High School for Girls, Neyyoor, Triple Jubilee Souvenir*, 1828-1978, p.5.

<sup>76</sup> L.M.S., Ten years of Church and Mission in Travancore, 1931-1940, p. 74.

with the Neyyoor Mission for more than forty years.<sup>77</sup> After Miss Blanchard's retirement Miss McIlroy took charge of the female educational activities in 1937 in Neyyoor.<sup>78</sup> From 1937 Miss McIlroy undertook the management of the school orphanage and the embroidery industry.<sup>79</sup> In 1950, the school developed into a government recognized English High school. She was the last lady Missionary to be in charge of these institutions. She retired from her service in 1976. She died on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1988 and was buried at Neyyoor<sup>80</sup>. The missionaries now chose Marthandam area which was the most backward area in Travancore.

## **6.2 Marthandam**

### **6.2.1 Mrs. and Mrs. James Emlyn**

Rev. James Emlyn, a missionary of the London Missionary society was appointed to the Parasala Mission in 1869, after the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Newport.<sup>81</sup> Mrs. Emlyn supervised the Boarding school and education of women and girls.<sup>82</sup> After their return, Mrs. Emlyn took much pains to establish a girl school at Marthandam. Unfortunately she died in 1880. However before her death Emlyn opened three schools in thatched buildings

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<sup>77</sup> Ten years of Church Mission in Travancore, p.74.

<sup>78</sup> Kinsley, L., *L.M.S., High school for Girls, Triple Jubilee souvenir*, 1828-1978, p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> Travancore Mission Council Minutes of August 1942, pp. 20-21.

<sup>80</sup> Jasper, A.S., Miss. K.J. McIlroy, Desopakari, August 1988, part – 55, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> Annual Report of the L.M.S., London, 1869, p. 75.

<sup>82</sup> Martin Daniel Dhas, N., *op.cit.*, pp. 26-27.

of which two schools were meant for boys, one of them being a middle school in which English, Malayalam and Tamil were taught.<sup>83</sup> The third one was an elementary school in which all the three languages were taught. After the death of Mrs. James Emlyn, Rev. James Emlyn shouldered the responsibility of developing these schools for the next ten years and retired from the service of the L.M.S. in 1892.<sup>84</sup>

### 6.2.2 Mrs. Joshua Knowles

In 1892 the girls' school at Marthandam had 264 pupils on the rolls. More than half of them were Hindus. In 1892 Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Knowles (1892-1900) took over the management of the schools started by Rev. James Emlyn.<sup>85</sup>

In 1895, in accordance with the requirements of the government, efforts were made to get suitably qualified teachers<sup>86</sup>. In 1899 five girls were sent for the Madras Lower Secondary Examination. All the five girls came out with flying colours.<sup>87</sup> Because of the constant work of Mrs. Knowles the percentage of passes in the school was the highest in the state.<sup>88</sup> In 1896,

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<sup>83</sup> Martin Daniel Dhas, N., *op.cit.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>85</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1893, Report of the parasala mission District, South Travancore, p. 7.

<sup>86</sup> Yesudas, R.N., *A History of women's Education in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1975.

<sup>87</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1900, Report of the parasala Mission District, pp. 30-33.

<sup>88</sup> Mrs. Joshua, K., *The History of our school Martandam, L.M.S. Girls Higher secondary School centenary Souvenir*, 1882-1982, p.5f.

Mrs. Knowles converted the school into an English school.<sup>89</sup> She increased the number of staff and encouraged the students by giving them scholarship.<sup>90</sup> The best students were supported by the Mission.<sup>91</sup>

### **6.2.3 Mrs. A.T. Foster**

After the retirement of Mr. and Mrs. Knowles in 1899, Mrs. A.T. Foster continued the work at Martandam.<sup>92</sup> Mrs. Foster added two rooms to the existing building. In every school the Bible was made a compulsory subject<sup>93</sup>.

### **6.2.4 Mrs. Hacker**

In 1905 Rev. I.H. Hacker was appointed a full time supervisor of the schools.<sup>94</sup> Hence Mr. and Mrs. Winnifred Hacker worked hard for the promotion of primary education.<sup>95</sup> In the Girls primary school Mrs. Saral

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<sup>89</sup> Evangelical Magazine and Missionary chronicle, May 1897, p. 106.

<sup>90</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1900, Report of the Parasala Mission District, pp. 8-10.

<sup>91</sup> Annual Report of the one Hundred and Third Report of the L.M.S., London, 1898, p. 136.

and

Report of the T.D.C. for 1900, Report of the Parasala Mission District, p. 29.

<sup>92</sup> Report of T.D.C. for 1907, Report of the Parasala Mission District, pp. 5-6.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Annual Report of the one Hundred and Twelfth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1907, p. 128.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, Thirteenth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1908, p. 105.

Sebaganam was appointed as a teacher.<sup>96</sup> Mrs. Winnifred Hacker started an Embroidary Industry and encouraged the school children to learn needle work<sup>97</sup>. She also taught them English in the Boarding Home. As a result four girls of the school were awarded medals on the occasion of the coronation of George V.<sup>98</sup> Devavaram a qualified headmaster of the school employed his own students as teachers.<sup>99</sup> In 1919, the local Boys Middle School was handed over to the government.<sup>100</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Winnifred Hacker retired from their active service in 1919.<sup>101</sup>

### 6.2.5 Mrs. Bessie Sinclair

After Mrs. Hacker, the work of promoting female education at Martandam was taken up by Mrs. Bessie Sinclair<sup>102</sup>. One of the earliest

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, Nineteenth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1914, p. 175.

<sup>97</sup> Annual Report of the one Hundred and Fifteenth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1910, p. 98.

<sup>98</sup> Mrs. Joshua, K., *The History of our school – Martandam, L.M.S. Girls Higher Secondary school, Centenary Souvenir, 1882-1982*, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Annual Report of the one Hundred and Twenty – Fifth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1920, p. 33.

<sup>102</sup> Bessie Graham Smith married Robert Sinclair on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1910 at the Home church, Nagercoil. In 1910 this missionary couple took charge of the Nagercoil. Mission District They stayed with Mrs. cave Mrs. Sinclair participated in the street meeting and preached the love of God. She met the women, on the previous day and invited them to the street meetings at Nagercoil. On the retirement of Hacker and Winnifred Hacker in 1919 Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair took charge of the Neyyoor District in 1920 Sinclair made Marthandam his lead quarters.

achievements of Mrs. Sinclair was the construction of a building in 1921, for the Girls school which was dedicated on 5.6.1922 by I.H. Hacker.<sup>103</sup> On that occasion Hodgson, the Director of public Instruction offered felicitations.<sup>104</sup> Assisted by Miss. G.M. Harris, Mrs. Sinclair and A.T. Foster, Rev. Sinclair drew up a plan for a Boarding Home.<sup>105</sup> At the end of 1923 the work on the Boarding Home was completed at a cost of Rs. 11,500/-<sup>106</sup> Towards this good cause a gift of Rs. 260/- was received from the L.M.S. In 1922 there were 72 children in the Boarding Home and the school had a strength of 321 children.<sup>107</sup> Among the boarders twenty girls were freely admitted and the rest paid only Rs. 315/- as against the actual expenses of Rs. 2770/-<sup>108</sup>.

Mrs. Bessie Sinclair supervised the women's education and the teaching of lace making. In 1924 a new scheme to help the poor day – scholars was inaugurated.<sup>109</sup> The poor pupils were provided with noon canjee free of

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<sup>103</sup> Minutes of the Travancore Mission Council, February 1922. p. 47 (L.M.S., 84, U.T.C.A.)

<sup>104</sup> Mrs. Joshua, K., *The History of our school – Martandam L.M.S. Girls Higher secondary school*, 1882-1892, pp. 1ff.

<sup>105</sup> The Boarding Home is now used as the chemistry laboratory and department of Nesamoni Memorial Christian College, Martandam. Minutes of the Travancore District conference, 1921, p.287. (L.M.S., 83, U.T.C.A)

<sup>106</sup> "The Influence of the Institution is one of the healthiest in the District and the contact that it establishes with the girls constitutes one of the most satisfactory aspects of our work". Sinclair, R., "Girls Boarding Home" – Martandam, L.M.S., *Ten Years of Church and Mission in Travancore*, 1921-1930, p.57.

<sup>107</sup> L.M.S., Report of the Industrial work, Industries and properties under the supervision of the Mission council, 1922, p. 31, U.T.C.A.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 1923, p. 40 -43.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 1924, p. 30. and

cost.<sup>110</sup> This scheme paved the way for considerable increase in the strength of the school.<sup>111</sup> The year 1928 was an important year in the history of Martandam Boarding Home. In an attempt to help the home missionary society<sup>112</sup> the boarders were taught poultry farming and gardening<sup>113</sup>. Out of the income earned by the boarders, a new bell for one of the churches was purchased and donated by the H.M.S.<sup>114</sup>

In 1928 cholera broke out in South Travancore and it affected the villages with all its severity<sup>115</sup>. Though the government took steps to help the afflicted it could not do much in the remote villages. But Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair visited those villages where help did not reach. They reached the villages by walking two to three miles along with Dr. Somervell and

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Annual Report of the one Hundred and Thirty one Report of the L.M.S., London, 1926, pp. 53-54

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 1924, p. 34.

<sup>112</sup> The Home Missionary society was founded by Travancore Church Council in 1895 with the object of spreading the Gospel in areas not reached by the Mission so far. It was managed by native funds under native direction. (Hacker, I.H., Hundred years in Travancore, pp. 60-62).

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 1928, p. 26.

<sup>114</sup> L.M.S., Report of the Industrial work and properties under the supervision of the mission council, 1928, p. 27.

<sup>115</sup> Russel Raj, N., Sinclair, R., *The Builder of the Martandam Church – Desopakari*, 125<sup>th</sup> Malar, pp. 47-48.

distributed medicine to the sick and if necessary, shifted the patients to the hospital at Neyyoor.<sup>116</sup>

In 1929 there were 293 mission schools in the southern districts of the Mission viz. Nagercoil, Parasala and Neyyoor. But the trained teachers in the schools constituted only 22% of the total number of teachers as against the 100% in schools of the Madras Presidency.<sup>117</sup> Hence Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair appealed to the council to start a Training school at Martandam.<sup>118</sup> The mission council conceded the request and authorized Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair to go ahead with the project. Accordingly they applied to the Director of Public Instruction for permission. The Director appreciated and approved the proposal for starting a Tamil Training school.<sup>119</sup> In may 1932 the Tamil Higher Secondary Training school was started with 24 students.<sup>120</sup> This training school was accommodated in the Girls Middle school Building which had been built at a cost of Rs. 12,000/-<sup>121</sup>. By 1936 the strength in the

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<sup>116</sup> Minutes of Travancore Mission Council, August, 1929 pp. 49-50, (L.M.S., 85, U.T.C.A.)

<sup>117</sup> Annual Report of the one Hundred and Thirty Fifth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1930, p. 70. (U.T.C.A.)

<sup>118</sup> Minutes of Travancore Mission council February, 1932, p. 12.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb, 1932, p.12.

<sup>120</sup> L.M.S. Report of the Industrial work and properties under the supervision of the Mission council., 1932, p. 227.

<sup>121</sup> Minutes of Travancore council, February 1936, p. 127.

Training school had increased to 35.<sup>122</sup> The students took active part in evangelical work, itinerary and the activities of the H.M.S.<sup>123</sup>

In the girls' school Mrs. Bessie Sinclair trained the children in knitting, stitching, embroidery and lace making. This enabled the girls to earn their bread in the future.<sup>124</sup> As knowledge of Malayalam language was necessary for securing a job in the government, Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair obtained permission from the Mission Council to start Malayalam Medium sections in the school at Martandam.<sup>125</sup>

Under the guidance and directions of Mrs. Sinclair an Old Students Association was formed.<sup>126</sup> The object of the Association was to help the former students both professionally and spiritually and to maintain closer contact with them<sup>127</sup>. They built a new church with the income earned by the lace industry<sup>128</sup>. Due to ill health Mrs. Bessie Sinclair went on furlough in 1937.<sup>129</sup> But she could not return due to the second World War. Sinclair passed away on 13.12.1977 in England.

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<sup>122</sup> Minutes of Travancore council, February 1936, p. 127.

<sup>123</sup> L.M.S. Report of the Industrial work and properties under the supervision of the Mission council, 1936, p. 25.

<sup>124</sup> Mrs. Joshua, K., *op.cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>125</sup> Annual Report of the L.M.S. 1930, p. 18.

<sup>126</sup> L.M.S. Report of the Industrial work 1936 (L.M.S. press, Nagercoil, 1937) p. 13.

<sup>127</sup> L.M.S. Report of the Industrial work and properties under the supervision of the Mission council, 1936, (L.M.S., 87, U.T.C.A), p. 127.

<sup>128</sup> Sinclair R., *Girls Boarding Home – 'Martandam, L.M.S., Ten years of Church and Mission in Travancore, 1921-1930*, p. 57.

<sup>129</sup> Minutes of Travancore Mission Council, August 1937, pp. 6-8.

## 6.2.6 Mrs. Vera Kilham Trowell

After the retirement of Robert Sinclair in 1939,<sup>130</sup> G.D. Trowell and Mrs. Vera Kilham Trowell assumed charge of the Martandam mission in 1941.<sup>131</sup> Under Mrs. Vera Trowell the vernacular Middle school was introduced, which required a graduate to be the headmistress. Mrs. Joshua was the first Indian lady to be appointed as headmistress.<sup>132</sup> In 1949 the girl's school was upgraded into a High School.<sup>133</sup> In 1952 Mr. and Mrs. Trowell were transferred to Trivandrum Then D. Fletcher, a native of Martandam took over the management of the mission schools at Martandam<sup>134</sup>. The educational endeavours of the missionaries at Marthandam mission area which was the most backward area, created social awakening among the men and women alike.

## 6.3 Parasala Mission

### 6.3.1 Mrs. Abbs

Parasala was the western division of Neyyoor Mission District.<sup>135</sup> Staying at Neyyoor Abbs started their work at Parasala in 1845.<sup>136</sup> On seeing the pathetic condition of the slaves and poor children at Parasala, Mrs. Abbs

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<sup>130</sup> Mrs. Joshua, K., *op.cit.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>131</sup> Travancore Mission council Minutes, February 1943

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, February 1943, pp. 9 11.

<sup>133</sup> Mrs. Joshua, K., *op.cit.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>135</sup> Annual Report of the L.M.S., London, 1843, p. 80.

<sup>136</sup> Abbs, J., *Twenty years Experience in Travancore*, p. 34.

started a school at Parasala with twelve boarders.<sup>137</sup> In the following year the number increased to forty. Twenty five of them were from the neighboring villages like Palkulam, Palugal, Kodangari, Kunnathoor, Manivilai, Mulanguli, Chengavilai and Mullanganvilai.<sup>138</sup> Mrs. Abbs taught them scriptures and Arithmetic Mrs. Abbs worked hard and taught the alphabet to the girls<sup>139</sup>. It also brought a change in their social outlook.

### 6.3.2 Mrs. Newport

After the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Abbs in 1859 Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Mateers were in charge of the work at Parasala.<sup>140</sup> In 1860 Mr. and Mrs. Newport moved to Parasala.<sup>141</sup> Mrs. Newport secured funds from India and abroad for promoting education of women.<sup>142</sup> In course of time, her friends in England stopped their support.<sup>143</sup> Therefore, Mrs. Newport introduced the system of collecting 10 fanams from each boarder.<sup>144</sup> Mrs. Newport enlarged the first two class rooms in the head station, which were

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<sup>137</sup> Annual Report of the Fifty – Second Report of the L.M.S., London, 1846, p. 90. and Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p. 768.

<sup>138</sup> Annual Report of the Directors to the Fifty-Fourth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1848, p. 56.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> History of the London Mission Church – Parasala, Abbs Memorial Church, Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, 1893-1968, p. 4.

<sup>141</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1860, Report of the Nagercoil Mission District, pp. 2-5.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>143</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1868, Report of the Nagercoil Mission District, p. 24.

<sup>144</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1870, Report of the Nagercoil Mission District, pp. 17.

established by Mrs. Abbs.<sup>145</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Newport left for England in 1869.<sup>146</sup>

### **6.3.3 Mrs. James Emlyn**

On the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Newport in 1869, women's education at Parasala came to be supervised and developed by Mr. and Mrs. James Emlyn. Mrs. James Emlyn took great pains to collect the girls from in and around Parasala. She enlarged the class rooms by putting up three sheds.<sup>147</sup> She worked as a teacher and taught English to the children. While the work was in progress she died in 1880 at Trivandrum. Her death was a great loss to the women of Parasala. However, Mr. James Emlyn continued to serve at Parasala till 1892.

### **6.3.4 Mrs. Gertrude Foster**

Mr. and Mrs. Knowles retired in 1899 and the Parasala Mission was placed under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Gertrude Foster.<sup>148</sup> At this time the government extended grant - in - aid to the schools and so the missionaries were relieved of the terrible order that they were undergoing every day in

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<sup>145</sup> Annual Report of the Travancore Mission of the L.M.S., London, 1866, p. 166.

<sup>146</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1870, Report of the Nagercoil Mission District, pp. 18-19.

<sup>147</sup> "History of the London Mission Church, Parasala", Abbs Memorial Church, Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, 1893-1968, p. 6.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

order to meet the expenses.<sup>149</sup> Mrs. Foster changed the curriculum of the school to cope with the change in the rules and regulations of the government.<sup>150</sup> As the government stressed the appointment of trained teachers in the schools, she appointed trained teachers in the village schools.<sup>151</sup> She gave much attention to the development of girls' village schools<sup>152</sup> at Krishnucovil, Martandam, Kulithurai, Kanjirapuram, Irenepuram, Arumanai and Parassala.<sup>153</sup> In order to instill confidence in the minds of the untrained teachers she continued to pay their salaries, though the government did not support such teachers.<sup>154</sup> Also Mrs. Foster took much efforts to put additional teachers in the village schools at Palugal, Irumbil, Chengavilai, Kotteikkal, Chemmangalai, Mulanguli, Irenepuram, Palkulam, Pallikal, Kunnathoor, Kirathoor, Vilathivilai, Killiyoor, Kodangarai, Vengadambu, Manivilai, Eimpuliconam, Mullanginavilai and Arasakulam.<sup>155</sup> She enlarged many of the above said schools. The income derived from the lace Industry was utilized for providing the necessary

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<sup>149</sup> Minutes of special Meeting of the T.D.C. for 1894, at Neyyoor, July 25 & 26, pp. 1-2.

<sup>150</sup> Yesudas, R.N., *A History of women's Education in Kerala*, p. 29.

<sup>151</sup> Report of the T.D.C. for 1894, Report of the Nagercoil Mission District, p. 20.

<sup>152</sup> Foster, A.T., Women's work, Report of the Parasala Mission District, Annual Report of the L.M.S., South Travancore, 1911, pp. 8-10.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Annual Report of the One Hundred and Fourteenth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1909, p. 126.

<sup>155</sup> Foster, A.T., women's work, Report of the L.M.S. Annual Report of the Parasala Mission District, South Travancore, (L.M.S. press, Nagercoil, 1912) 1911, pp. 10-13.

furniture to these schools.<sup>156</sup> The local churches met half of the expenses incurred in the extension work.<sup>157</sup> The government also provided Rs. 1000/- for making furniture.<sup>158</sup> A.T. Foster and Mrs. Gertrude Foster retired from their active service in 1933 after a period of nearly 35 years of memorable service in the Parasala Mission District.<sup>159</sup>

### 6.3.5 Miss D. Hayes

After the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Foster, Miss D. Hayes took charge of Parasala district in 1934.<sup>160</sup> As the Mission council felt that more attention should be given to the work among the women and girls in the villages of the Parasala District, Miss Hayes concentrated her attention on the development of the schools, while Miss Evans took care of the lace Industry. In order to open two divisions in the school at Parasala, Miss. Hayers built 2 rooms at a cost of Rs. 200/-<sup>161</sup>. Another notable event during her time was that she added two more buildings for the girls school at Parasala at a cost of Rs. 1700/-<sup>162</sup>. Also she extended two more rooms in the

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<sup>156</sup> Annual Report of the Parasala Mission District, 1911, pp. 10-13.

<sup>157</sup> Annual Report of the One Hundred and Sixteenth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1911, p. 113-114.

<sup>158</sup> Annual Report of the One Hundred and Seventeenth Report of the L.M.S., London, 1912, pp. 172-174.

<sup>159</sup> Travancore Mission Council Minutes, July 1933, p.6.

<sup>160</sup> Travancore Mission Council Minutes, August, 1934, p. 22.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, August 1937, p. 29.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, August 1939, p. 21.

existing buildings in the girls school.<sup>163</sup> D. Hayes went on furlough in May 1939. But she could not return to India due to the Second World War. After her departure in 1939, Mrs. Lefever took charge of the Parasala Mission.<sup>164</sup>

### **6.3.6 Mrs. Lefever**

After the departure of Miss Dories Hayes in 1939, Mrs. Lefever took charge of the Parasala Mission. During her time the Tamil Middle School building for girls was completed and opened in September 1939.<sup>165</sup> She encouraged the school children to learn the scriptures in the Sunday schools. She conducted Sunday school rally for all the school children and the best students were given prizes.<sup>166</sup>

The enthusiasm displayed by the missionary ladies in the development of female education is really praiseworthy. Their efforts yielded high dividends. Many schools were established at the head stations. Their great efforts yielded high dividends. But steps were taken to establish and develop schools in villages. As a result women all over Travancore became aware of the benefits of education and grew more and more eager to send their girls to the schools of the mission.

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<sup>163</sup> Industries Committee, Grant for New Building for Parasala Girls School, Travancore Mission Council Minutes of August 1939, p. 27.

<sup>164</sup> Travancore Mission Council Minutes, Parasala, August 1939, p. 28.

<sup>165</sup> Parasala Tamil Middle school for Girls, Travancore Mission council Minutes, February 1940, pp. 16-17.

<sup>166</sup> Abbs Memorial Church, Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, Parasala, 1893-1968, pp.7-8.

The Lady Missionaries, through the instrument of education, changed the outlook of the uncultured, slavish, and tradition - bound people who were overwhelmed by superstition, and customs, conventions and practices.

Even the women from the remote villages could taste education, and could understand that their masters were the main stumbling block for their social identity. While they were deeply contemplating upon this, the Christian Missionaries came with a powerful instrument called social awakening through education. This made the people prepare for the oncoming fight.