CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR WOMEN IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

The earliest efforts to introduce any form of education beyond the indigenous Hindu and Muslim educational institutions had emanated from the missionaries in India. In Madras Presidency the education of women was first taken up by the missionaries, who were the pioneers of women’s education in Tirunelveli district.¹ In their educational endeavors they were far ahead than the government and they were entangled educational and proselytizing activities together in this district. The missionaries adopted the following methods like acquisition of vernaculars; opening of schools; medical assistance, condemnation of evils; efficient organization; personal commitment, courage and suffering² to make their efforts successful to educate women. This chapter examines the nature of work done by the missionaries and Government towards the Primary Education for Women in Tirunelveli District from 1800 to 1947.

CONTRIBUTION OF MISSIONARIES

The Portuguese missionaries who came to India were quite successful in their educational activities and regarded them as the originators³ of modern system of education in India. The Roman Catholic missionaries influence among the Paravas in Tirunelveli coastal area at the beginning of the 16th century resulted in the growth of literacy in the district. In 1542, St. Francis Xavier visited many villages, and left a copy of the Bible for the people. The Catholic Mission established a college for imparting training to Jesuit Fathers and Brothers at Thoothukkudi in 17th

³ Pillai, Jaya Kothai, India Education: Historical Foundations, (Madras, 1972), p. 69.
Century paved the way for the educational development in the region. Of the galaxy of Catholic missionaries, Father Beschi, a Tamil scholar’s name stand for ever who taught the people of Tirunelveli district in Tamil and English.

The Danish missionaries, who were the successors of the Portuguese missionaries started schools in Tirunelveli were considered as the Torchbearers’ of modern education by introducing clear-cut system of education which were different from those that existed in our country. The mission schools were famous for teaching grammar, history, geography, and religious instruction in Vernacular as well as in English. It also introduced printed text books; regular school-hours; holiday on Sundays; and started schools for girls.

Since the East India Company became the ruling power, the Indian officers urged the Court of Directors to take responsibilities to educate the people of India. So, the Christian Missionaries started to educate the Indians in stead of East India Company. But, the East Indian Company had a fear about the religious policy of Christian Missionaries and the inhabitants. Lord Minto, the then Governor-General of India, ordered that the Missionaries to follow ‘religious neutrality policy’ of the company. The Missionaries started agitating the ‘anti-missionary policy’ of the company till they received help from the British Parliament in 1813. The missionaries urged the Company to take up the responsibility of educating Indians, and for this purpose substantial investments should be made. This proposal was accepted by Lord Minto who made arrangements for aid to the extent of ten thousand pounds (the equivalent of one lakh rupees) per year for education. However, till 1833, the Company remained quite indifferent towards education. The Christian missionaries who came to India during the East India Company’s reign

---

4 Caldwell, R., Political and General History the District of Tirunelveli, p.235.
7 Ingham, Kenneth, op. cit., p. 2.
8 Indra Sharma, op. cit., p. 25; Brockway, Nora, A Larger way for women, p.38.
began to propagate education in their own way. Tirunelveli district became one of the busy trading centers of the East India Company by land and sea, by the beginning of the 19th Century which allow the missionaries to establish schools for the children of Company servants. In these schools knowledge of the Bible was imparted along with other subjects through the medium of the regional languages.

Converted Christian’s houses were set on fire at night. Their properties were damaged. They were forced to drag the Hindu temple cart. In order to save the victims, Samuel Sawyer, an Anglo-Indian, purchased that village. He saved the Christian who were persecuted in 1814. Hence that place was named after him i.e. Sawyerpuram. In 1816 Bishop Middleton, visited Tirunelveli district and found out that there was one Christian school in Clarinda’s Church with 41 children. It is very clear that in the midst of persecution, parents were willing to send their children to Christian schools.

Till 1817, the internal conditions of the Tirunelveli district stood as an obstruction in the progress of women’s education due to terrible draught and epidemic fever. This period was considered as the “dark period”, in the history of Tirunelveli. The persecuted Christian converts and the affected persons appealed through Rev. Kohloff, the Missionary of Society for Propagation of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) to the East India Company. The East India Company passed a resolution on 16.07.1805 stating that the Christians also had the same rights as

---

enjoyed by the Hindus and the Collector of Tirunelveli had the right to take action against the offenders.

In November 1816, James Hough was appointed by the Company as the first Government Chaplain who belonged to Church Mission Society (mentioned as C.M.S.) at Palamcottah. He established a English school and a Tamil medium school for the children of public servants and native officers of the English battalion in January 1817 at Palamcottah, and another school at Tirunelveli with 34 students from all caste in June 1818. These schools collected fee for instruction, where they taught reading, writing, arithmetic and the elements of English grammar. In order to improve the educational standard Rev. James Hough regularly inspected these schools, and applied to the Governor for a grant of 25 Pagodas a month for the support of these two schools. His request was forwarded by the Collector and Judge of Tirunelveli to the College Board, then by the College Board to the Governor. But the Governor in his reply to the Collector stated that the main reason to refuse to sanction the aid was that these schools were of a private nature. He was of the opinion that the mission schools meant for conversions to Christianity, and no way these schools work for the promotion of the public interest. Subsequently, these two schools established by Rev. James Hough imparted education to the natives without the government’s pecuniary aid. The

---

18 Letter from Hill D., Secretary to Government Ft. St. George to the Board of Superintendence for the College of Ft. St. George, 7 February, 1820, TDR. Vol. 3576, p.44, TNA.
19 Public Consultation dated 7th February 1820, M.R.O. Vol. 474, p.547
20 Letter from H.Morstock, the Secretary of the College Board of Ft. St. George dated 8 June, 1820, to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Public Consultations dated 23 June 1820, Disposal No, 3, M.R.O. Vol. 477AB, pp. 2360-2362.
22 Despatch from England to the Governor- General – in Council, PC. M.R.O. Vol. 45 A, 11 February, 1825, p.129,TNA; *Guide to the Records Tirunelveli District*, p.82, TNA.
students of these schools have secured employment after receiving education.\textsuperscript{23} [see Appendix –I] The Madras Corresponding Committee (M.C.C.) of the Church Mission Society (C.M.S.) permitted to open schools throughout the district and had sent copies of Testaments, Prayer Books and monthly grant of Rs. 40 for the payment of school masters to support Rev. James Hough. He carefully selected teachers and placed them in S.P.C.K. schools at Nazareth, Mudalur,\textsuperscript{24} Taruvai, and Kulasekarapattam. All C.M.S. schools were subsequently handed over cheerfully to the S.P.C.K.\textsuperscript{25}

In the meantime, Mr. Mount Stuart Elphinston was appointed as Governor of Bombay Presidency in 1819, who suggested promoting Native Education through vernacular languages. The Elphinston Minute of 1819 was deadly opposed by a member and his Council and Board of Directors who believed in Downward Filtration Theory. Whereas in Tirunelveli District, Elphinston’s point of view was already accepted and implemented effectively by educating women of the lower strata of the society, and later to the higher caste by Christian Missionaries.

**INCENTIVES TO GIRLS IN MISSION SCHOOLS**

Right from the beginning, the per-capita expenditure of girl students was considerably higher than that of boys. Gifts of small amounts of money, bangles, cloths or eatables were given as incentives to girls in mission schools from as early as the 1840s, and each school followed its own procedures in offering a variety of gifts to attract a regular attendance of girls. For instance, the Arcot Mission School, Madras provided its girls with books or slates, mats, blankets, and three sets of clothing.\textsuperscript{26} In some schools gifts were given to the girls who were on the school rolls and also to ex-students; At the time of their marriage, girls were given an

\textsuperscript{23} Letter from D. Hill, Secretary to Government Ft. St. George to the Board of Superintendence for the college of Ft. St. George, 7 February, 1820, TDR, Vol.3576, pp.52-53, TNA.
\textsuperscript{24} Portrait of a Diocese Tirunelveli, C.S.I., (Palamcottah, 1992), p.6.
\textsuperscript{25} Appasamy, Paul, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.
\textsuperscript{26} Brokeway Nora, *A Largerway for Women*, p.103.
allowance (to assist the parental dowry payment) ranging from Rs. 10 to Rs. 45, or useful articles worth such amount\textsuperscript{27} such a system of incentives for girls’ education in mission schools was appreciated by the government during the 1870s and 1880s.\textsuperscript{28} Significantly, some of these practices were included by the government in its grant-in-aid scheme.\textsuperscript{29} The government valued the distribution of Prizes to girls to attract many families to the idea of educating girls. It is noteworthy to mention here the same system like the one that was practiced during the British Rule has been followed in Tamil Nadu, India. The present Tamil Nadu Government has enhanced Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiar Marriage Assistant Scheme, to encourage the girls to complete 8th Standard, 10th Standard, +2, and Degree. Those who study technical courses are also eligible to receive Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 50,000 with four gram gold based on their qualification.

Missionaries provide the following concession to encourage girl student in Tirunelveli district as follows: Girls were exempted from payment of fees with free boarding and lodging.\textsuperscript{30} A dowry of Rs.45 was given to each girl who got married after III Form or 8th Standard. They were also given utensils worth for Rs. 45 such as One brass sembu Rs. 4.00, A flat bottomed plates Rs. 3.00, Two couches Rs. 10.00, Two set cloths Rs. 8.00, One round rimmed tumbler Rs.1.80, One brass lamp Rs. 3.00, Two brass hardwood chair Rs. 3.80, Two chairs Rs. 6.00, and Cash Rs. 5.40. In addition, a Bible and two hymn books were presented.\textsuperscript{31} In order to receive the gifts, the parents demanded for Girls Boarding schools,\textsuperscript{32} as the natives realized that these schools could afford safety and seclusion from age old tradition.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., pp.52-23.
\textsuperscript{28} Madras Education Commission 1882, para 38; Government of India 1883, para.544.
\textsuperscript{29} Madras Education Commission, 1884, para. 136.
\textsuperscript{30} Siqueira, op.cit., p. 33.
\textsuperscript{31} Brockway, Nora, A larger way for Women, p. 53.
free from social bondage, and eliminates the difficulties of girls to attend a school irrespective of distance. The missionaries’ intention was to provide suitable wives for pastors, teachers and boarding school boys.  

HISTORIC INCIDENT TO OPEN GIRL’S SCHOOL IN TIRUNELVELI

One boy from Palamcottah School had shown his anxiety to impart education to his sister and asked one spelling book for his sister to teach at home. This incident was instrumental by establishing the first Girl’s School with 20 girls at Nazareth by Rev. James Hough, in 1820. This school becomes the First High School for Indian girls to be recognized by the Madras Department of Public Instruction. They were the first batch to appear for the Government Matriculation Examination in for the whole of Madras Presidency. Later, two seminaries were willing to educate their girl children to fulfil the desire of the parents. This led to the establishment of school for girls in Tirunelveli district. When the missionaries started the school the Hindu students were not object to attend the Christian prayer at school. The missionaries faced difficulties due to the prevalence of caste feeling among the people, and the lack of Christian teachers. This was one of the reasons for low attendance in the Mission school. The strength of a class was more than 40 and the teacher was paid one and a half pagodas as salary and one pagoda for less than 40 students. During the time of Inspection the school masters would bring strange pupils to the school in order to show the attendance full. Malpractices of the master’s attitude led to the withdrawal of many students from schools. However, these problems were solved by appointing school inspectors. The Inspectors made personal visit and to check the daily attendance of students. In 1821, Rhenius and

33 Ibid.
34 Appasamy, Paul., op.cit., p. 36
36 Ibid.
Schemid were started schools for the native girls in Kayatar, Pannikulam, Vadakkankulam, Keelapattam, Seval, Kokirakulam, Kansapuram and Murappanad.\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{THE FIRST GIRL’S BOARDING SCHOOL}

The third decade of the nineteenth century was a turning point in the history of women’s education by establishing the \textit{First Girls’s Boarding School} at Palamcottah in the Madras Presidency, with 36 resident students and with classes up to Standard V\textsuperscript{39} by Rhenius in 1823. This school came to be called “\textit{Pengal Viduthi Palli}” (Girls’ Boarding School) or \textit{Melapallikhoodam} (school residing at western side of Tambaraparni River) or \textit{Rhenius Amma School}.\textsuperscript{40} Rhenius Amma (mother) was assisted by a native widow and Gnanapragasam, who was the first convert in the Tirunelveli district.\textsuperscript{41} But Rhenius Amma taught ‘\textit{female work}’\textsuperscript{42} i.e. needle work, domestic economy, hygiene and sanitation, cooking, lace-making, knitting and embroidery after school hours. One of the prominent missionaries, who succeeded by Rhenius Amma was Mary Sargent, who worked for the improvement of this school. Thus, the school was renamed after her as “\textit{Mary Sargent School for Girls}”.\textsuperscript{43} The school provides free education, meals, clothing and gifts on the occasion of Christmas to boarders. The poor parents found that it was a good opportunity to impart education to their daughters with free of cost. According to the Munro’s report, the native Christians of Tirunelveli were generally poorer on the whole than the Christians of any other part of the country,\textsuperscript{44} it is clear that, and the poor parents were unable to save money for their daughter’s marriage too. To meet

\begin{footnotes}
\item[38] Appasamy Paul, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 34-35, 37
\item[39] Muller et al., \textit{Bicentenary of the Tirunelveli Church}, p. 9.
\item[40] \textit{Hand Book and Diary, Mary Sargent Hr. Secondary School for Girls}’ (Palamcottah, 1991-92), p. 2.
\item[41] Muller et al., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 9.
\item[42] Appasamy Paul, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 36-37.
\item[43] \textit{Hand Book and Diary, Mary Sargent Higher Secondary School for Girl’s}, p. 2.
\end{footnotes}
their educational and marriage expenditure, the girls were sent to school. In 1826, four day schools for girls were opened in various parts of Palamcottah and 14 schools by C.M.S. in 1827. The schools headed by schoolmasters were called as **Schoolmasters' School** and the schools headed by catechists were called as **Catechists' Schools.** Thus, Rhenius established about 400 schools in different villages. In June 1828, there were 30 such schools established in various places. In 1833, Rhenius established three girls' schools, one was in the mission compound; one in Tirunelveli for Christian girls, and another Tamil school was in Rajapalayam. Same curriculum was followed in all schools.

Economic reasons and low enrollment of girls drove the missionaries to enroll a few number of girls in the boys village schools.\(^{45}\) This was one of the reasons for the establishment of **co-educational schools.** There was no objection arose from the natives, since the villagers bounded by the same law and there was no occupational distinction based on gender. It is easy for the parents to observe children’s behaviour, lack of transport facilities, frequent local festivals, marriage seasons, acquire daughters help at the time of harvesting, girl children were expected to prepare meals for younger, and elders at home. Parents would prefer village co-educational school located within the vicinity to save money, time, and labour rather than far away girl’s school.

**FIRST CO-EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION**

The First Co-Educational Boarding Middle School was established by Rev. John Thomas at Meignanapuram, in 1830.\(^{46}\) The boy’s school was separated and named after Amburose High School, whereas the Girls’ Boarding school was built out of the donation received from the village of Tuxford in England. Rev.Elliot was a rector, who encouraged the Tuxford church people to contribute liberally

---


much for the construction of this school, on 20th June, 1844. So, this school was named as *Tuxford Elliot High School*, and it was engraved on the school wall as “1844, the Elliot Tuxford School for Native Female Children.” The above mentioned stone table stated the efforts made by the missionaries for the erection of a single school for women’s education.47 This girl’s school had the unique privilege of having electricity as early as 1930.48 This school imparts not only education, but also offered books, notebooks, writing material, clothing, boarding and lodging free of cost. The girls stayed within the campus that were free from the society, exempted from moral degradations, and reduced their parents’ burden studied up to Third Form49 [Standard VIII]. Due to the effort of the then Bishop of Tirunelveli, Stephen Neil, and this school was upgraded as High School in 1945.50 There were 796 girls studied in the school which included 181 boarders. In1845, the C.M.S. missionaries opened rural model Boy’ Boarding Schools at Pannivalai, Megnanapuram, Satankulam, Nullur, Suvishapuram, Surandai, Dohnavur, and Palamcottah,51 later converted as co-educational institutions. Tirunelveli district by then was divided into three divisions to improve the quality of education and introduced regular half yearly examination in 1849,52 which was in practice till now. Mr. V. Amirthalingam sponsored Rs.10,000/- (in memory of his mother benefited by Tuxford Elliot Girl’s School) to Tamil Nadu Government according to G.O.No. 1035 Education and Science dated 26.10.1994,53 and G.O. Ms. No. 1075 dated 08.11.1994 (endowment Rs. 10,000/- for Amburose Higher Secondary School) for those who secured the rank at the school level in X and XII Standard Public Examination from these Schools.

47 Krishnasamy Ayyar and Souther, *op.cit.*, p.230; Muller et.al., *Bicentenary of Tirunelveli Church*, p.4
48 *St. Paul’s Church Sesquicentenary Souvenir*
SELF SUPPORTING SCHEME

During the third decade of the nineteenth century, the number of C.M. S. schools rose from 12 to 62 with 53 girls on roll in 1829-30. Rev. C.E. Rhenius, Mr. and Mrs. Schmid organized the Dharma Sangam or Philanthropic Society on 2 June, 1930 to promote self supporting scheme among the natives. Dharma sangam donated Rs.60/- to build schools for native children in 1930. The women have enthusiastically given “pidiarisi”, a handful of rice set aside from the daily meal to establish schools.

The people of Tirunelveli district were affected by a terrible draught, a dreadful famine and Cholera in 1832-33. The C.M.S. sent relief fund of Rs. 320, the Bombay Missionaries Rs. 1,700, and the Tirunelveli mission Rs. 208 to meet the needs of the peoples of all castes. Every week the mission supplied rice to 200 people who attended catechism worth of Rs.137. The missionaries extend their sympathetic attitude to admitting orphan children in Boarding schools at the time of famine, whereas, the people’s intension had to receiving rice. Those who were incapable to feed their wards, sent them to Boarding Schools and not brought back even during the summer vacation. In the same year Rev. John Devasahayam was the First Indian ordained Minister appointed in Tirunelveli by the Church of England, which motivate the natives to admit their wards in the Boarding school.

In 1833 the East India Company permitted missionaries from all countries to spread education in India. Till 1833, the missionaries mainly concentrated on establishing elementary schools, teaching through vernacular languages. After 1833, they firmly believed that English education was inevitable and at aimed to convert the upper class of Hindu society. A remarkable change had taken place

55 Report of Indian Education Commission, 1884, Ac No. 128638, TNA, p.156
56 Appasamy, op. cit., pp.39 & 54.
57 Brockway Nora, op. cit., p. 53.
immediately in Tirunelveli district by opening new stations and schools in Pudugudy, Pukuneri, Kadachapuram, Mundadaippu, and Satankulam. Accordingly new school masters and inspectors were appointed. In 1834 Rev. Scheffter and his wife took charge of Santankulam Station, where his wife established efficient girls’ school.\textsuperscript{58} Rev. Blackman and his wife worked hard first in the schools of Palamcottah and Preparandi institution, and then they were made in charge of Satankulam, where the parents sent their daughters to school regularly.

The main objective of Lord Macaulay in his famous Minute of 1835 was to push back indigenous education and give importance to English education, which could also affect women’s education. The reason behind this was fear of learning English. According to Harcourt the missionaries tactfully handled the situation by preparing little girls for extra two years to complete the first standard and two years for the fourth standard. Rev. William Miller has recommended leniency to girls who studied in primary village schools to learn “the three R’s” i.e. reading, writing, and arithmetic in schools.\textsuperscript{59}

Unfortunately the great schism of 1835 took place between Rev. Rhenius and Archdeacon Robinson regarding objection to caste distinctions admission and appointment in the schools.\textsuperscript{60} Consequently, he was replaced by Rev. John Tucker, the Secretary of Madras Correspondence Committee, in May, 1835. But Rhenius returned to Tirunelveli on 22 October, 1835. The rivalry between the two missions\textsuperscript{61} i.e. \textit{Melpakkathar} (the C.M.S. missionaries who resided on the western side of Tambraparni river), and \textit{Keelpakkathar} (the C.M.S. missionaries who resided in the eastern side or Tambraparni river) led to the establishment of new schools and employment of large number of Shanaar (at present Nadar) teachers. In 1835, the

\textsuperscript{58} Appasamy, Paul, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{59} Report on Indian Education Commission, 3 February, 1882, p. 11, 151.
\textsuperscript{60} Ingham, Kenneth, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 25. Pate, H.R., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 95; Appasamy Paul, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 51-64.
\textsuperscript{61} Appasamy, Paul, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 58-64.
C.M.S. has maintained 317 elementary vernacular schools with 7,802 pupils.\(^{62}\) They opened new schools at Palamcottah and Srivilliputur. In 1829 the number of students in 76 schools established by Melpakkathar was 2,583. Out of it, 114 were girls.\(^{63}\) However, within six years, the number of girl students doubled. From the above stated reports, the researcher can conclude that the rival feeling stimulated the missionaries to admit more and more children in their own schools to outdo each other.

The year 1835 was a turning point in the history of the S.P.G. mission in Tirunelveli. Rev. Rosen (1829 &1835) and Hubbar (1836- 1837), Irion Commerer from 1838 to 1858 and Hayne from 1839 to 1885 were worked at Palamcottah, Nazareth and Mudalur. Rev. Muller and his wife started one Girl’s Boarding School at Suviseshapuram with 15 Boarders\(^ {64}\) on October 1838. There were 29 S.P.G. schools with the strength of 825. Out of it, 118 were girls. Irion Commerer\(^ {65}\) and Anne Commerer restarted the first girl’s school as co-education school at Nazareth in 1839. But the girls’ school was separated in 1849. The increasing number of schools and students during World War II proved that the natives realized the necessity of education. In 1838, \textit{the Jesuits re-entered Tirunelveli} and established headquarter at Palamcottah.\(^ {66}\)

For the first time the Government made a direct effort to educate Hindu girls in Madras in 1841, but they failed.\(^ {67}\) Whereas in Tirunelveli district, such difficulties were overcome by introducing \textit{Station Missionary System} with 12 sub-districts headed by one catechist, whose duty was to send monthly report on school to the headquarter at Palamcottah, which helped them to take remedial measures in


\(^{63}\) Appasamy, Paul, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 67.

\(^{64}\) Syed Nurullah and Naik, J.P., \textit{A Students History of Education in India}, pp. 40,72-73.

\(^{65}\) Pate, H.R., \textit{Tirunelveli District Gazetteer}, p. 96.

\(^{66}\) Krishnasamy and Souther, (eds.) \textit{Madras District Gazetteers : Tirunelveli}, p. 230; Muller et al., \textit{Bicentenary of the Tirunelveli Church}, pp. 4 & 77.

Mission schools. For instance, on 2nd June, 1834, Rhenius established a Widow’s Fund Society for the catechists and schoolmasters' widows on the basis of the head catechist’s report. Within one year, 158 rupees was in the account of Widows’ Fund. He instructed all mission districts to establish a Poor Fund, and from that amount was spent for the poor, the sick, and the widows. The collections had raised cash and kind like rice, cotton, and jaggery. C.C.Giberne, S.Hobbs, Hawkins, Newman and M.T. Hobbs did commendable work from 1844 to 1853 among the women. Mrs. Mary Sargent conducted separate classes for mothers, poor women, widows and wives of the theological students. The far sighted efforts of Mrs. Sargent was to empower women to become self reliant in terms of women’s education.68

During 1840’s ‘Slave System’ widely prevalent in Tirunelveli district. For the first time the government took measures to abolish the System of Slavery,69 and proclaimed that the slaves and the converted Christians had the same rights and privileges like others in the society. It ensures that the slaves were free from lifelong slavery and reforms had to be introduced to improve their status. For instance, the Missionaries of Dhonaur purchased girl children who were sold out by their parents sold as temple dancers and admitting orphan girls in Dhonaur asylum. According to Edwin Joel, the native of Dhonaur, many girls were sold by their parents as temple dancers and temple dancers were rehabilitated by the Missionaries and were admitted at Dhonaur Asylum.

The Government had introduced fee system to limit the application for grants-in-aid to schools. The girls’ were exempted to pay fee and receive stipends, those who were in girls’ schools, and the senior department of the Normal School.70

---

69 Appasamy, op. cit., p. 85.
For encouraging female education Rev. Pope stated that he can allow a boy without fee and books in boy’s schools, but where there were girls in a family, should send them to school otherwise not to admit a boy in his school. In Tamil School, all students in all classes had paid 4 annas [1 anna is 6 paise] per month, strength also increased, few girls also admitted in primary boy’s schools in North Tirunelveli. Hence, fee system no way affect the strength of the schools.

Mrs.Kearns, Missionary, Church of England Zenana Mission Society,(C.E.Z.M.S.) North Tirunelveli was of the view regarding the question number 3 about the participation of natives to promote education by the Indian Education Commission. Since the higher caste people were the owners of the schools, they never admitted the low caste people in their schools. Hence, the low caste people were highly motivated to join the mission schools to have an enhanced socio and economic status. For instance the native gentleman Sulochana Mudaliar of Tirunelveli applied to the Government to permit him to establish schools and requested for one Englishman as the master for his school with a salary of Rs.100 per mensem paid by him. There was no reference to girl children in this institution.

The University Board intimated to Rev. Edward Sargent, to open the mission school for government inspection to get grant-in-aid on 12 January, 1853. On January, 1853, Sargent expressed his anxiety of government inspector’s visit counter signed by Bird, the then Collector of Tirunelveli, to the University Board. But the Government appointed Richard, a Government Inspector of schools, to carryout the work of the mission schools only in 1855.

---

71 Selections from the Records of Public Instruction 1856-59, pp.75-77.
73 Ibid.
RICHARD’S REPORT ON GIRLS’ BOARDING SCHOOL

Richards was most impressed by the Girls’ Boarding School in Tirunelveli. He was happy on seeing the girl’s physical and moral growth and noticed that their standards ‘are higher than in any other part of India’ and recommended to Government not only to sanction grants-in-aid trust but also handover the entire educational activities of this district to the C.M.S. mission of Tirunelveli district. As a result of Richard’s Report, the government sanctioned grants-in-aid to teachers who were holding Training Certificates. A grant of Rs. 2 per month was paid to each teacher who passed the Inspector’s Examinations and obtained the Training Certificate. In 1858, for the first time 58 C.M.S. School Masters were benefited from this grant.

In 1851 there were 217 Girls’ Day Schools and 39 Girls’ Boarding Schools in Madras Presidency under the control of Protestant mission. Out of 7,878 educated girls in Madras Presidency, 3,275 girls i.e. about 50 per cent of girls from Tirunelveli district, which was a remarkable development in the history of women’s education.

In 1852, the S.P.G. of C.M.S. missions supported nearly 186 schools. Most of these schools were in the District of Tirunelveli, Madurai, Thiruchirapalli and Tanjore. 3,835 boys and 1,349 girls received education from S.P.G. schools in 1852. The S.P.G. mission spent Rs.49,000 in 1852 and Rs. 30,000 in 1853 towards running schools. In 1853, there were 870 schools in Tirunelveli district. Among them 229 were mission schools and 641 were native schools. Till 1853 the

---

74 Report by School Inspector, Mr. Richards on village schools, 21, April, 1856. p.207.
75 Papers Relating to the State of Education in the Provinces subject to the Government of Madras: Letter from the Collector of Tirunelveli to the Secretary to the Madras University Board, (Vepery, 1854), p. 313.
76 Appasamy, op. cit., p. 125.
77 Gazetteer of South India, p. 442-43
education of girls were under the care of individuals and missionary societies. But none of the general dispatches relating to education i.e. letters, orders, Collector’s Reports, missionaries and officials educational correspondence, Letters from College Board of Madras Presidency, Papers relating to educational matters submitted to or received from the Court of Directors. Thus, missionary education significantly improved the women’s position in Tirunelveli District of Madras Presidency.

Besides the Protestant Missions, the Roman Catholic Missions were also active in the field of education in Tirunelveli District. Mother Maria Louise Demeester, founder of Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICM) has started her service at Mulagumoodu on 7th November 1887. In those days boys were admitted in all school than girls, so the ICM sisters started a girl’s school at Palamcottah. On 15th June 1921, four sisters headed by mother M. Gudule as Superior arrived at Palamcottah to establish the Ignatius Convent with three pupils on the roll. In 1923, this school was granted recognition by the Education Department as a Secondary School with permission to open Form II and III. Forms IV, V and VI were opened and permanent recognition was granted on condition that all male teachers should be replaced by women teachers. It was then when Mother M. Thomas took charge as the first Headmistress of the pre-independent days. In 1942, they started the kindergarten class which laid the foundation for the Loyola Primary School in 1949. Permission was granted by the Government to start one English Medium section in the High School classes and the teaching of home science in Form IV and V. Mother M. Thomas was succeeded by Mother M. Ermelinda, then by Mother M. Valerea, who started evening classes for working girls and women which paved the way for Adult education on the Ignatius campus. The ICM sisters helped to raise the status of women by imparting education till date.

---

82 *St. Ignatius Convent School Diary, 2011-12.*
In 1906, Father S.J. Mage was appointed as the first parish priest to Sriviliputhur in North Tirunelveli. In 1911 he called for the ICM sisters from Mulahumoodu to serve for the development of women in this area. Father Mage started about 22 schools on surrounding villages. In 1938, Father Joly took charge as parish priest and sold the Church land of Koonamkulam to ICM sisters for Rs. 5000/- in order that the sisters might establish a school for the development of the girl-children.

The below Table No. 1 collected and preserved in the Diocese of Palamyamkottai in 2010-11 is the source available to know the contribution of Roman Catholic missionaries in Present Tirunelveli district. The below table No. 1 help us to understand the Primary and Middle schools started by the Catholic Missionaries in Tirunelveli from 1917 to 1947. There were 53 Primary and 5 Middle schools started by Roman Catholic missionaries prior to Independence. All schools were promoting education till date. There is no record to show that the primary schools were co-educational institution or not. At present these schools are run as co-educational institutions in rural areas. There is no information about the number of boys and girls studied in these institutions during the first half of the 20th Century. From the above information the researcher found that the World’s Great Depression of 1929 also affected the establishment of schools in this district. From 1926 to 1935, only 5 schools were started. After the outbreak of World War II, more than 30 schools were started by Roman Catholic Missionaries in this district. From 1944 to 1946 no school was started by the Roman Catholic missionaries. After World War II, the Roman Catholic Missionaries again started schools and imparted education to women.
## TABLE NO. 1

**ROMAN CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONS IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT**

1917-1947

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Name of the Roman Catholic Institutions and Place</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>St. Antony’s Primary School, Pettai</td>
<td>1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Nanjankulam</td>
<td>1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Primary School, Kalugumalai</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>R.C. Soosai Primary School, Kayathar</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Avudayanoor</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Pottalputhur</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Veikalipatty, Mettur</td>
<td>1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, K.Kailasapuram,Gangaikondan</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Panaiyur,Karivalamvandanallur</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>R.C. Pry. School,Pandarakulam, Theertharappapuram</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Vasudevanallur</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>St. Antony’s Primary School, Palamcottah</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School,Kalyanipuram, Karuthapillaiyur</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Rangasamuthiram</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Akilandapuram, Kadambur</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Kottakulam, Tenkasi</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Kuthukkalvalasai, Elathoor</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Panchandiyur, Pavoorchatram</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Kadayam</td>
<td>1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Veerakeralamputhur</td>
<td>1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Melakkalangal, Uthumalai</td>
<td>1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Vadiyr, V.K. Puthur</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Primary School, Thonugal, K. Alangulam</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Nakkalamuthanpatty, Sippipurai</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Tharmatboorani,Naduvakkurichy</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Thirumalapuram, Sendamaram</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Velayuthapuram, Goodaloor</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Chockampatty</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Sankarankudiyiruppu</td>
<td>1939 Cont..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>School Name</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Keelapavoor</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Nellaiappapuram, Poolangulam</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Mukkadal</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, V.M. Arockianathapuram</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Keelanatham -Therkkoor</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Abishekapatty</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Gangaikondan</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Singamparai, Mukkadal</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Ramasamiapuram</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Vellagoundanpatty, Aiyapuram</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Alagunatchiarpuram,</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, MelalIlanthakulam,Thevarkulam</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Kattalongulam, Vanaramutti</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Kallathikinaru, Parivallikottai</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, T.N. Puthukudy, Puliangudy</td>
<td>1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Devipattinam</td>
<td>1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Naranapuram</td>
<td>1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Sevalkulam, Kuruvikulam</td>
<td>1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Nettur, Alankulam</td>
<td>1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Meenthulli, Sankarankoil</td>
<td>1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Tenkasi</td>
<td>1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Therkku Theerthampatty</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Seethaikurichy, Manoor</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>R.C. Primary School, Kandamangalam, Pulcikulam</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>R.C. Middle School, Panneerkulam, Kayathar</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>St. Peter’s Middle School, Sendamaram</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>St. Xaveers MiddleSchool, Vadakku - Vandanam</td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>R.C. Middle School,Duraichamypuram, Sivagiri</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>R.C. Middle School, Sankarankoil</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GOVERNMENT EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND ITS IMPACT

It is a matter of interest to look back upon a few historical landmarks of modern education in the Madras Presidency and its impact on Tirunelveli district.

The earliest measure of the Madras Government was that of the Minutes of Thomas Munro issued by the Department of Public Instruction on 25th June 1822. He wanted to know the real position of indigenous education and bring it to the immediate attention of the Court of Directors, by submitting the reports of the Collectors of all district. The lists submitted by them exhibited an aggregate of 12,498 schools with 184,110 males and 4,540 females respectively.

In 1822, Sir Thomas Munro’s enquiry on the educational system revealed that the few indigenous schools existed in all the district. In 1823, the Committee of Public Instruction was set up with an aim for the general improvement of native education in Madras Presidency which was amalgamated with the College Board in 1826 which had an aim of preparing candidates for the Civil Service and Public Offices. In accordance with the new scheme, a Collectorate school and two Tahsildary schools were opened in Tirunelveli District. The Masters of the Collectorate Schools were to receive a salary of Rs. 15 per mensem and those of Tahsildarree Schools Rs. 9 per mensem with liberty to add to their income by the fees of the Scholars throughout the State. In Tirunelveli district these schools soon turned out to be a total failures since the teachers were not fulfilled the required qualification and were said to be inferior.

After receiving Collectors’ Educational Reports, Munro, applied to the Court of Directors in London for a grant of Rs. 48,000 for the Madras Presidency alone. His proposals of expenditure [see appendix iv] were approved in general by

83 Letter from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Ft. St. George, PC Vol. 651, 24 May 1836, pp.2073-76, TNA.
85 Brockway, Nora. A Larger Way for Women, pp. 64 -65.
the Directors in London in 1829, i.e. the year after his death. Munro’s Scheme of spreading mass education through the indigenous institutions lost its value, and it also denied the grants.\textsuperscript{86} In spite of this, the native masters in Tirunelveli run their own schools. The statistics of the institutions submitted by the Collectors and the Board in 1822 [Appendix –III] stated that in 1826, there were 607 schools to a population of 17,956 in Tirunelveli District. There was thus roughly one school for every 30 of the population in Tirunelveli district.\textsuperscript{87} A very few girls were taught in the Hindu and Muslim schools,\textsuperscript{88} who numbered about 117\textsuperscript{89} in Tirunelveli District.

From the below table No. 2, it is clear that the Hindus were highly educated than the Muslims. As compared with the total number of population, only 2 Muslim female students were educated due to the practice of Purdah, as against 115 Hindu girls.

### TABLE NO. 2 HINDU AND MUSLIM STUDENTS IN -1822.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of schools in 1822</th>
<th>No. of students in Hindu Schools</th>
<th>No.of students in Muslim Schools</th>
<th>Total No. of scholars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tirunelveli district</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>8,462</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The male members of the families felt that educating women would affect the character of the Hindus.\textsuperscript{90} So, the caste women were prohibited to study, because, the family members of high castes considered that education was needed

\textsuperscript{86} Sathianathan, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 427.
\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Lt. from Ft. St. George to the Governor-General in Council, 10 March, 1826}, BOR. Vol. 314, TNA.
\textsuperscript{88} Public dancers generally named as ‘Devadasis’ or Impure Caste or Prostitutes.
\textsuperscript{89} Collectors Report to the BOR, 29 October, 1822; BOR Vol. 928, p.9936, TNA; John Sullivan, President of Native Education Committee Report to the Ft. St. George, 2 December, 1822, BOR. Vol. 932, p.10, 939, TNA; Letter from Ft. St. George to the BOR President, 13 January, 1823, BOR. Vol. 926, p.984, TNA; Letter from Ft. St. George to the Court of Directors, 13 February, 1823, BOR. Vol. 942, p.2, 402, TNA.
only by the dancers, not by the housewives. Another reason for the low state of education was that the low teacher’s salary i.e. Rs. 9 to Rs. 15 per month, which cause for less professional interest. In order to meet their economic needs, they conducted private tuitions, which was called ‘additional schools’. The Parliamentary Papers of 1832, high lighted the expenditure of 1813- to 1833 for native education in India. [see Appendix –v]. Even though the Madras Presidency had received very low amount than Bombay and Bengal Presidencies, the educational standard in Madras Presidency was far ahead than other Presidencies.

The next important educational measure adopted by the East India Company was the renewal of the Company’s Charter in 1833, which allowed the European countries to send missionaries to India. It was considered as the first declaration of the Company Government in the sphere of education in India and allotted Rs. 10,00,000 for native education, but rarely sanctioned grants - in – aid to mission schools. This led to a controversy over the allocation between Classicists or Orientalists and Anglicists or Occidentalists. On June 10, 1834, Lord Macaulay was appointed as President of Committee on Public Instruction and asked to interpret the educational provisions of the Charter Act of 1833. He had sent his famous Minute on education to Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General of India and a resolution was passed on 7th March 1835, by Governor –General’s Council. The Minute insisted that the Downward Filtration Theory had to be followed to promote European literature and science among the natives of India and it also suggested that the funds were allotted for the same. Downward Filtration means the knowledge would filter-down from the upper classes to the masses. 

91 Arbuthnot, *Munro’s Selection from His Minutes*, Section II, (Madras, 1886), p. 577.
96 Nurullah and Naik, *History of Education in India*, p. 179.
also of the view that the Lordship-in- council should not abolish any native college or school and all existing professors and students at all institutions under the superintendence of the committee shall continued to receive their stipends but hereafter government should not sanction any new stipend to the students of oriental learning. However, this was the first genuine educational policy adopted by the contemporary government which removed the element of doubt in the new educational policy and helped the government to overcome its uncertainty and also established 20 Tahsildari schools in Madras Presidency.

**TABLE NO. 3**

**MONTHLY EXPENDITURE OF NATIVE EDUCATION BY EAST INDIA COMPANY ON 12TH DECEMBER 1839**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUB-TREASURER OF THE PRESIDENCY</th>
<th>AMOUNT In Rs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESIDENT AT TANJORE: Allowance to the Provincial School at Tanjore,</td>
<td>350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumbakonam and Rammad, Half-yearly Rs. 2,000 or per month.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTOR OF TIRUNELVELI: Allowance to the school master at Palamcottah per month</td>
<td>35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total monthly expenditure on Native Education by Company</td>
<td>773.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above table No. 3 shows clearly that Tirunelveli district received very low amount i.e. 1/10 of the expenditure allotted as compared with Tanjore from the Company. In 1839 the allowances for country school at Palamcottah were discontinued. The introduction of English education proved a serious obstacle in the education of girls till 1868. But, in Tirunelveli district, “*The Downward*
"Filtration Theory" in no way affected the educational activities of women, because English education was already in existence among the lower strata of the women to higher strata. It is not the aim of the Downward Filtration Theory to impart education on the basis of socio-economic status of the people.

For the first-time the Government with the help of the Scottish Church Missionaries (S.C.M.) made a direct effort at educating Hindu girls of Madras in 1841, but they failed due to rigid caste system. The statement of Mr. Fowler to the Education Commission Chairman Mr. Ranganada Mudaliyar in Question No. 4, was an evident to prove that many Brahmin girls, were admitted in Christian schools of Tirunelveli district because the Brahman parents did not object to send their daughters to Christian schools, though they followed rigid caste system.

Charles Wood, the President of Board of Control, dispatched his educational declaration on 19th July, 1854. It is referred to as Wood’s Despatch or the Magna Carta of Indian education by Rev. Willion Meston. It contained so many recommendations. Accordingly the Department of Public Instruction was formed in 1854 headed by a Director of Public Instruction. It also recommended that Universities should be set up headed by Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors, a system of grant – in – aid should be adopted; special institutions for training teachers should be set up; and importance should be given to the education of women, which was perceived by Lord Dalhousie, the Governor – General of India.

Since the emergence of Educational department competition arose between the mission schools and departmental schools, which cause for the closure of indigenous schools. The newly created departments of education paid special attention to open girls’ schools and appointed women inspectresses. It introduced English as the medium of instruction in the higher classes, and the vernacular languages as the medium of instruction in the lower classes. The character of the instruction given at girl’s school was similar to that given at boys’ schools but the standards were in some respects lower than that of boys’ schools and special subjects like household accounts, domestic economy and needle work were introduced. The proportion of girls to boys under instruction in all India was 1: 9.25. The proportion of girls to boys studied in school was being the highest in Madras, and lowest in the United Provinces. Wood’s was of the opinion on women’s education that education of women had made satisfactory progress though schools were under the control of missionary or private management, and recognized aided schools were inspected by the government. But the government allowed teaching the Bible after school hours. Some mission schools replaced the traditional school books by the Bible. Ramasamy Pillay, an agent who represented on behalf of some Hindus at Tirunelveli submitted a petition to the Court of Directors on 7th October, 1846 that many of the Hindus of Tirunelveli were discontent to send their children to read the Bible, which was against Hindu law and considered it as sin. This objection rose against the use of the Bible as a school book. The Hindus made a complaint against E.B.Thomas, the Collector of Tirunelveli, of supporting the

105 Wood’s Educational Despatch, 19 July, 1854, No. 49, paras, 3-5, 18, 74, 93 & 94., TNA.
109 Letter from Clarke R.G, Secretary to the Council of Education to I.F. Thomas, Chief Secretary to Government, PC Vol. 814, 17 August 1847, TNA.
missionaries and converts, not others. They realized their mistake later and demanded the government to appoint Tweeddale as the Governor of Madras and E.B.Thomas as the Collector of Tirunelveli respectively.\textsuperscript{110} Since the people of Tirunelveli paying tax to the government, they demanded the government to establish and maintain English Medium and Vernacular schools and not compelled the natives to learn the Bible as school book in Tirunelveli district.\textsuperscript{111} Their demands were fulfilled after the Wood’s Despatch. The below table No.4 help us to understand the development of women’s education from 1820 to 1857 without the support of the government. The desire of the Despatch was to evolve a policy of grant-in-aid which would enable the government completely to withdraw from the field of education. Rev. J.L.Wyatt, of Sarah Tucker College, was of the opinion that the grant allotted for primary education was not enough for Tirunelveli, as it was a well instructed area, so the Government had to increase the grant to educate the rural population. Up to 1884 Christian missions were the only private agency in the field of education and the government did not have the courage to entrust the work of education to others.\textsuperscript{112} The events of 1857, the Queen’s Proclamation of 1858, Stanley’s Despatch of 1859 have all strained the relations between the Government and the Missionaries to a considerable extent. The spark of independence was slowly glowing and the revolution for the country’s independence took place and it put an end, for ever, to the administration of the Company. By 1858 India was passed into the hands of the British crown and also put an end to the monopoly of missionaries over education.

\textsuperscript{110} Charmier’s Minute on the letter from the Council of Education, PC. Vol. 815, 7 September 1847, TNA.
\textsuperscript{111} Letter from R.G. Blocrke, Secretary to the Council of Education to I.f. Thomas, Chief Secretary to Government PC. Vol. 814, 10 August, 1847, pp. 3599-600, TNA.; Charmier’s, Minute on the Letter from the Council of Education PC. Vol. 815, 7 September, 1847, TNA.
\textsuperscript{112} Nurullah and Naik, History of Education in India, pp. 212-13.
### TABLE NO.4
WOMEN’S EDUCATION IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT
FROM 1800 TO 1857

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>No. of SchoolInspectors</th>
<th>No. of Schoolmasters</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>No. of Female student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>In 2 girls school</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2,882</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>5,324</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>5,534</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>6,245</td>
<td>1,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>6,560</td>
<td>3,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>20,301</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.A. Not Available


In 1857, Ragland, the Church Missionary Intelligencer started his work at Agraharam and Sivakasi as the service centre in the North Tirunelveli. In 1856, for the first time, A.V. School at Srivilliputtur and several other Christian schools were opened in North Tirunelveli.\(^{113}\) which was still growing strong. It is clear that till 1857, the Protestant Missionaries worked only in the Southern Tirunelveli. Unlike

Southern Tirunelveli, the Norther Tirunelveli pupils were not shown interest in education. All through the day, they engaged in field work, and collecting firewood and rearing cattles. So the teachers waited for them to return home and brought them to school. However, the higher community people initially not only opposed but also persecuted the missionaries. Rev. Meadows started Night Schools, and encourage everyone to join this schools without any disparities and announced one set of dress as gift for those who could read within a short duration of study. Strength in schools, girls at schools is only 10% to 20% of the total strength of the schools in North Tirunelveli. Girls at schools in South Tirunelveli is far ahead than North Tirunelveli. The following table No.5 (Fig.1 bar diagram) helps us to understand the development of education in North Tirunelveli by the effort of Anglican Church Mission.

**TABLE NO. 5**

**STUDENTS STRENGTH IN NORTH TIRUNELVELI SCHOOL 1857 -1874**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>Boys in Schools</th>
<th>Girls in Schools</th>
<th>Total strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.12.1857</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.12.1858</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.12.1857</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.12.1857</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.06.1861</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.12.1862</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.06.1863</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.09.1874</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>939</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BAR DIAGRAM  FIG– 1

STUDENTS STRENGTH IN NORTH TIRUNELVELI SCHOOL 1857 -1874

Due to the sudden outbreak of national uprising in 1857, the Government withdrawn its support from assisting the mission schools and a siege was laid to the missionary’s house at Tirunelveli which led to establishment of a Hindu Anglo-Vernacular rival schools in Tirunelveli. This institution was later supported by Madurai Ponnammal, Mangaikarasi Amal, Kanniammal and Pichaiammal and Mrs p. Diraviyam Pillai. Many pupils were withdrawn from the Christian schools in Tirunelveli district by that time. In order to attract children to mission schools milk powder was imported from England. The S.P.G. granted the sum of Rs. 10,000/- annually for establishing rival Anglo - Vernacular Schools in Alwar-Tirunelveli, Kulasegarapatnam, Radhapuram, Tentripati, Nagalapuram, Taruvey, and Arumugamangalam. Officers of Educational department appreciated Tirunelveli District as it was one among the three literate districts of Madras Presidency in 1857. As per the Indian Education commission Report of 1881, there was no government girls’ school in Tirunelveli district till 1885. Thus, the Missionaries monopolized women’s educational institutions.

STANLEY’S DESPATCH OF 1859

The Stanley Despatch of 1859 was an important landmark in the history of the development of education in Madras Presidency. In 1859, Lord Stanley, Secretary of State had sent a Despatch on education to the Government of India. The objectives of the Despatch of 1859 were to review the educational policies of India. The following recommendations were made by the Despatch of 1859. a) Education Department had been created, b) inspecting staffs had been organized, c) universities had been incorporated, d) many affiliated Colleges had been opened, e) Secondary

---

Schools under Government management had been well attended, and f) the number of those under private management had been increased. Since the native community had failed to co-operate with the government in promoting Vernacular Elementary Education, the Secretary of State suggested that Vernacular education should be provided by the direct instrumentality of government by means of Compulsory Rate, but the Madras Government was not in favour of a Compulsory rate.

Result Grants System was first introduced by Mr. Kearn in North Tirunelveli district. The result grant system was better than the salary grant system on the part of students, which helped the pupil to acquire better standard to fit for examination. This system was widely accepted by the natives, and 500 schools applied for the same. All village schools with hereditary masters were waiting for the grant like that of the schools and school masters. Since the Government rules were very strict to get the grand – in – aid, the missionaries find it difficult to prepare the girls for Government examinations due to irregular attendance. So, they were working with the Hindu women and familiarizing the concept of female education by introducing simple way of imparting education by reading and writing, then by introducing grammar, poetry and geography. They established Boarding schools to avoid irregular attendance. However, the tests were so severe for village girls, it was impossible for the girls to copeup many subjects. Hence, the mission schools omitted fraction, history, hygiene, and grammar from primary girls’ schools’ Curriculum from 1st to 4th standards.

Rev. Harcourt, the Principal of Sarah Tucker Institutions and Mrs. Kearn, the missionary and manager of Schools in Noth Tirunelveli were suggested the government to release grant for Girl’s schools as follows: a servant to bring 10 girls to schools for Re. 1, for school rent Rs. 3 in towns and Rs. 2 in villages per

118 Despatch of 1859, para 17.
month, Sewing stuffs, and scissors. The pupils were expected to fulfil the basic norms to receive the financial assistance and enhanced the standard of schools as follows: Reading-Vowels and consonants combined Re. 1; Writing-Vowels and consonants combined Re.1; Arithmetic – Notation and numeration to three figures Re.1; Rough hemming Re.1. Further, they expected the Government to give scholarships to school master during training period.

Introduction of fee system has increased the benefit of teachers as well as pupils, but at the same time it led to the closure of some schools. However in no way it affected the girl’s schools as they exempted to pay fee. Co-education or mixed schools were prevailed in the primary school levels. Mrs. Kearns expected that the Government should take steps to enable the girls to remain at school for longer period as follow: For the First 2 girls of a school on the result system of the III Standard examination – 8 annas per month. Re.1 per month was given as scholarship for a girl who was admitted first in a school under the result system of the IV Standard examination. Rs. 5 given as bonus to a girl who passed the Special Upper Primary Examination. The government disburses financial assistance to Widows of caste – women, age relaxation; allowed them to come with their children to appear for the examination and helped them to get efficient intelligent teachers for girls’ schools.

Mrs. Kearns and Harcourt maintained administrative quality by properly maintaining of attendance registers, which should be countersigned by the village official once a month. Local Fund Inspector should visit each school at least once in every two months and those who taught above the III Standard in result grant schools should hold certificates and to meet the ever increasing expenses by imposing or increasing the taxation or to decrease the grants for boy’s primary schools to meet out the unpredictable expenses for women’s education every year.
The anxiety of the natives to get quality education with the help of missionaries by using their text books, and sending their daughters to mission schools, allow the missionaries to become the managers of their schools. Absolutely there was no difference of opinion on academic excellence under the guidance of Christian missionaries. Due to the rigidity of caste system in this district there were Brahmin girls in schools.

**THE MADRAS ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1920**

The Madras Elementary Education Act of 1920 introduced many policies regarding the development of Elementary Education in Madras Presidency. The Municipalities also took several steps to introduce certain schemes in this regard. District Educational Councils were created in Madras. The principal functions are: extension of elementary education with the co-operation of all agencies, opening of additional schools, expansion of existing schools; regulate the recognition of all elementary schools and to assess and disburse all grants-in-aid from provincial funds to private elementary schools.

A large numbers of elementary schools opened under Village Panchayats were subsidized by Government directly. All primary schools were inspected by the officers of the Educational Department. The practical instruction included in the optional additional subjects provides in case of girls, for lessons in health and household management. There was a recommendation that the curricula for girls’ schools must suitable for girls and to the local conditions and people.

In May 1923, the Government of Madras convened a Conference to discuss the expansion and improvement of primary education. The more important recommendations of this Conference were as follows: Each village with a

---

120 Report of Public Instruction 1920-21, para. 82, p.47.
population of 500 inhabitants or more shall be provided with a school. Indigenous schools should be developed and made eligible for aid. The new aided schools to be started. Local bodies shall take steps to start school of their own where an aided school was not possible. To encourage teachers and provide job security and financial benefit, Provident Fund Scheme\textsuperscript{122} was introduced in all recognized elementary schools for all certificated teachers, pundits, instructors, clerks and librarians whose pay is not less than Rs. 20 per mensem in 1923 in Madras Presidency.

The Director of Public Instruction reported in 1925-1926 that the majority of girls’ schools were staffed either by untrained women or by the old men. So they insisted that the girls’ schools were staffed by women and inspected by women which had considerable effect on the popularity and progress of women’s education. For instance, all male teachers were replaced by women teachers as per the instruction given by the government in St. Ignitius convent at Palamcottah. Unfortunately the increase in the number of women inspectors had not kept pace with the large increase in the number of girls’ schools.\textsuperscript{123} In 1926-27 the total women’s Inspectresses and Deputy Inspectresses, numbered 101, as against 84 in 1921-22. However, inadequacy of the women Inspecting staff caused slow growth of women’s education in 1927-28.

\textbf{Dalton Plan} had experimented in Kindergarten and Montessori work in 1927-28.\textsuperscript{124} For instance, the Palayamcottah Municipal Council maintained a Nursery school for children between the ages 3 and 5. The nursery school was probably the \textit{first of its kinds in Tirunelveli district} and became popular. Out of the total income of Rs. 90,000, the municipal council spent Rs.10,500/- for elementary education since it maintained 10 Elementary schools and 5 Adult

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Report of Public Instruction 1927-28}, para 97.
Education Schools. Since Tirunelveli district was a ceded district, Richard, the School Inspector on Elementary Education reported that the Ceded Districts were fairly equipped well than other districts and run schools on its own buildings and a few were in rented building. Some school teachers served as school masters as well as branch postmasters. The teachers also should maintained Service registers and certified copies and the inventories of valuable stock Register.

The Tuticorin Municipality was among the first 29 Municipalities constituted in Madras Presidency in 1866 under the Town Improvements Act X of 1865. Tuticorin was an important sea-port town and known as “the southern key to India”. According to the first census taken in 1871 the population was 10,565. When the town was constituted into a Municipality there were only a few pyal schools conducted by private teachers. Apart from the pyal schools, few schools were established and under the control of Christian Missions. There was not a single Municipal School then. Within a few years of its establishment, the Municipal Commission (as the “Council” was then called) took a mild interest in education. From 1872-73 onwards, there was improvement in the field of education by the introduction of annual grants known as “Salary Grants” and “Result Grants” to private schools. 18 schools, which was the highest number of aided schools, received the “Result grants” from the Municipality in 1892-1893. From 1906-07, the system was changed into “Teaching grants” under the new educational code.

From the year 1892-93 the Municipal Council took a more active interest in the advancement of elementary education; and it took over the management of the Muhammadan School and maintained it at the cost of the Municipality. In August 1893 it opened a “Panchama” School for the education of the Adi-Dravida children.

due to the prevalence of rigid caste system. It is noteworthy that these first active efforts of the Municipality were in the direction of the education of the minority and backward communities. In 1910 the First Municipal Girls’ School was opened in Melur. In 1914, the “Panchama School” was converted into a free school for all communities including the Adi-dravidas, who were entitled for admission in all public schools. In 1919-20 one Municipal school for girls and the other for boys were opened in Shanmugapuram. Later on another Muhammadan Boys’ school, a school for Muhamadan Girls and a school for girls in Draviapuram were opened by the Municipality. The Municipality maintains two Muhammadan Boys’ Schools, one Muhammadan Girls’ School, four for boys of all communities and three schools for girls of all communities. All these were Elementary Schools; (one the Shanmugapuram Girls’ School) teaching up to Standard VIII. Only three of these Municipal Schools were housed in buildings owned by the Municipality and the others were in rented buildings.

The total number of children of school age attending all Elementary Schools in the town was 8,167 (4,907 boys and 3,260 girls) in 1938-39. A comparative analysis of the position on 31.03.1927 and 31.03.1939 indicated that the educational activities of the Municipality had doubled within 12 years. In 1927, there were 8 Municipal schools with 35 teaching staff and the average strength of 1086. In 1939, there were 10 Municipal Day Schools with 68 teaching staff, and the strength of children increased to 1,925.

A scheme of Adult Education was inaugurated in January 1939 to educate the illiterate adults at two different parts of the town for men. Since then two more centres have been opened of which one was for Adult Women. The Municipality met the cost of running all these centres. The proposal of the Council to open three more centres had been sanctioned by the Director of Public Instruction. To improve the attendance of adults at the centres, money prizes for the best
attendance and free cinema tickets sponsored by local cinema proprietors for good attendance was provided by the Committee. The teaching method of Mr. S.G. Daniel and his books were sold in all the centres. It takes normally about 6 to 9 months to teach the 3 R’s i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic to an adult illiterate at present. The Adult Education Committee had issued certificates of literacy to men and women who joined the centres as illiterates.

There were 23 Municipal Elementary Schools for Boys and girls besides 9 aided Elementary schools for girls in Tirunelveli Municipality. Of the 23 municipal schools 2 were specially intended for Muslim girls, 3 for girls and 3 for scheduled class pupils. There was one Higher Elementary School for girls in Block II with six standards. There were 9 Elementary Schools with standards V of which 2 for girls (one for Muslim girls and the other for all castes). Besides these, there were five feeder schools with third standards and five schools with fourth standards. It was clear that the schools were established based on rigid caste system in this district.

Since 1923 Compulsory elementary education had been introduced only for boys in Tirunelveli Municipality. There were 8 schools housed in Municipal buildings and the rest of the schools were in rented buildings. The Council realized the need for its own buildings for schools. In addition to the secular instruction given in the Municipal Schools, steps had been taken to introduce spinning, Weaving and other prevocational subjects in the Municipal Higher Elementary School, Perumalkoil ward on 26.6.1936. Pupils were trained to weave towels and sold in public auction and the proceeds were being remitted to the Municipal treasury. The following table No. 5 help us to understand the number of teachers employed in Tirunelveli Municipality schools.
NUMBER OF TEACHERS EMPLOYED IN TIRUNELVELI MUNICIPALITY

Source: Compiled from Ponnaiah. J. S., *Research studies by Christian Colleges undertaken under the Auspices of the Central Board of Christian Higher Education in India: The Christian community of Madura, Ramnad and Tinnevell,*
TABLE NO.6
NUMBER OF TEACHERS EMPLOYED IN TIRUNELVELI MUNICIPALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>TOTAL NO. OF TEACHERS</th>
<th>NO. OF MALE TEACHERS</th>
<th>NO. OF MISSTRESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary grade</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher grade</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower grade</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from Ponnaiah, J. S., Research studies by Christian Colleges undertaken under the Auspices of the Central Board of Christian Higher Education in India: The Christian community of Madura, Ramnad and Tirunelveli.

The above table No. 6 (bar diagram fig.2) clearly shows that the number of untrained teachers who worked in Elementary Schools. In order to staff these schools with qualified teachers, elementary schools were converted into Basic Training Schools. The Basic Training School, teachers were paid stipends of Rs. 18 per month in addition to their pay as school teachers. Candidates were selected for undergoing the Khadi Pranesika course at Government cost at Tiruppur for eleven months.

When the Congress Ministries were to continue in office, they were bound to give effect to the **Wardha Scheme**. The objective of this scheme of Mahatma Gandhi was “free universal education in the whole country in about 20 to 25 years’ time”. The learning of a craft was only a part of the whole of the “activity curriculum” so that whatever the childrens learning became assimilated into his growing activity”. For instance, in Tirunelveli Municipality, Twenty Charkas were purchased for two Municipal girls’ schools Viz. Municipal girls’ school,
Rajagopalaperumal ward and Municipal Higher elementary girls’ school, Perumalkoil ward where they taught yarn spun.

As per the G.O. Ms. No. 2419, dated 18th December 1928, the Government appointed a Committee to investigate the question of physical education for girls in elementary and secondary schools in the Madras Presidency to stimulate public interest in the organizations for developing games and sports. The Hindu, dated March 17th 1938 rightly pointed out that the Zakir Hussain Committee recommended to include physical education syllabus as an integral part of school education.

‘Parents’ Associations’ were started in each school and monthly meetings were held to secure better attendance. The teachers before the school commences its sessions go round the locality and brought the children to school. The Teachers were also asked to submit three months defaulters list to the Attendance Committee. The attendance committee was constituted as per Government norms. This committee met four times in a year to give warning and imposed fine on parents who willfully detain their wards. The Senior Deputy Inspector of schools, Tirunelveli Range was ex-officio President while the Educational Supervisor of the Municipal schools was the ex-officio Secretary. The Head-teachers of the elementary schools for boys in the Municipality were its members. Besides these there were five non-official members of whom two were ladies.\textsuperscript{127} The Municipal Council has taken census to get accurate number of school age children by the teachers every year. The Council introduced compulsory scheme in order to educate girl children and it also funded money for their educational expenses and give funds for their educational expenses.

\textsuperscript{127} Guide Book of the Tirunelveli District 1940, pp.74-77.
Bar Diagram (fig -3)

SCHOOL STRENGTH IN PRIMARY GIRLS SCHOOL IN

TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT (1820-1947)
The Missionaries of Tirunelveli introduced many innovative ever green policies like gift to girls, fee exemption, different curriculum for girls, separate institutions, mid a meal scheme, free uniform and books, uniform system of education, educational scholarships, marriage assistance aid schemes, introduction of Parent Teachers Association, Attendance Committee, Result Grant System, appointment of women staff and inspectresses, Adult Education Scheme. The above methods were valuable to formulate new educational policies and new scheme to promote Women’s Education in the past, present and future. Many of the Missionaries Schemes were revived and modified according to the need of the society at present.