CHAPTER IV

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION

The traditional Gurukula System of education existed in Tamil Nadu in general and Tirunelveli in particular till the arrival of the British. The privileged high caste pupil were benefited by this system. These religious oriented schools taught vedas, puranas, epics, dharma sastras, grammar, astrology, medicine and astronomy to the students. The unprivileged majority people in the society were neglected by this system. But the rapid social and political changes, economic developments and the growth in population made this system out-dated and insufficient. Knowing the limitation of the Gurukula System, the British introduced a new system of education, which made radical social changes and economic development with the introduction of the British system.
of education the outdated traditional Gurukula System began to diminish\textsuperscript{1}.

The Christian missionaries came to India in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century and contributed much for the growth of education. Prominent among them were the Jesuit missionaries. In 1567 Fr.Henry started a school at Punnakayal in Tirunelveli District. They also started a printing press at Punnakayal in 1577 with a view to print religious books and pamphlets.

Another Christian missionary who contributed to Tamil Language was Caldwell who came to Triuneveli in the first half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} Century. He did research on the character and glories of Dravidian Languages and wrote the Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages. Based on the Comparative Grammar of Caldwell, the Universities in Tamil Nadu conducted research on this topic. He was closely associated with Tirunelveli and wrote the history of Tirunelveli.

\textsuperscript{1} K.Rajayyan, 'History of Tamil Nadu', Madurai, 1982 P.260.
The Christian missionaries rendered marvelous service for the eradication of illiteracy generally in Tamil Nadu, particularly in Tirunelveli District. They encouraged the growth of education by constructing schools and colleges both in urban and rural areas. The Christian missionaries started St. John's college and St. Xavier's college at Palayamkottai.

The services rendered by the Christian Missionaries for development of education in Tirunelveli District have been emulated by the present Non-Governmental Organisations. The Tirunelveli social service society which was established in 1972 works for the social advancement of the society. To enhance the employability of the disadvantaged children from rural areas the Tirunelveli Social Service Society offers vocational and technical skills through its educational Institutions. Separate Institutes have been founded in Kuruvikulam, Kayathar and Palayamkottai to impart technical
knowledge so that the students who come out of the portals of these institutions are employed without any delay\textsuperscript{2}.

Another Non-Governmental Organisation, the SCAD founded in 1985 firmly believes that all the children have a right to quality education and it has worked hard to make it possible by improving the village schools by providing support teachers, teaching and learning materials. In the year 2007-2008, 324 supporting teachers were working for the rural schools supported by SCAD (Social Change and Development) Non-Governmental Organisation\textsuperscript{3}. Hundred and Seventy Four schools were provided with play materials, sanitation facilities, water facilities through Rainwater Harvesting Tanks. Besides this the SCAD runs special schools for saltpan children, gypsy children and children with learning difficulty. On the whole 22,752 students have been benefited through the policies adopted by the SCAD\textsuperscript{4}.

\textsuperscript{2} Tirunelveli Social Service Society, 'Handout', Palayamkottai 2012, P.4.
\textsuperscript{3} SCAD Handout, Tiruneveli, 2011; P.4.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid, P.5.
Puratchi Trust, yet another Non-Governmental organization has also taken steps for the growth of education in Tirunelveli District. The missionaries who founded schools and colleges in Tirunelveli District were very particular that the children should be educated. But they did not give priority to employment oriented studies. At present unemployment has become the biggest problem in the modern society especially for the rural youth. Even industrialized Nations cannot ensure a job for everyone. Hence the Puratchi Non-Governmental Organisation has started various skill developments training programmes for the youths in the Tirunelveli District.

Purachi Trust has begun its first activities to minimize school drop out of children in the Tirunelveli District\(^5\). The Trust has highlighted the position of children in bonded labour to the District administration and school education Department in Tirunelveli.

The Trust has organized awareness programmes to stress upon the importance of child education\(^6\) through street plays.

Arumbugal Trust, another Non-Governmental Organisation does involve itself in the progress of education in Tirunelveli District. Ministry of Environment, Government of India and the Arumbugal Trust sponsored the programme under National Environmental awareness campaign on the topic, 'Bio Diversity Conservation'. This programme was implemented by the Arumbugal Non-Governmental Organisation in collaboration with the Paramakalyani Arts and Science College, at Alwarkurichi in Tiruneveli District\(^8\), as the college is located adjacent to Western Ghats.

Arumbugal Trust took the initiative of sensitizing the NSS and NCC students of the Paramakalyani College on Bio diversity conservation. The Arumbugal Non-Government organisation involves children in 'herbal conservation'. Students are taught how

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\(^6\) Puratchi Trust Annual Report, op.cit, P.8.
\(^7\) Arumbugal Trust, Buletin 2011, Tirunelveli, P.9.
\(^8\) Ibid, P.10.
to maintain and take care of the Medicinal herbs. Such practice in
due course develop the development of indigenous medicines.

Ministry of Rural Development has envisioned the scheme
SGSY (Swaroja Jayanthi Gram Swarozgen Yojana). It has
structured provision for creating special projects for skill
development to enable the youth to get employment. In Tirunelveli
District Arumbugal Trust has taken remarkable steps to fight
against poverty and employment in rural areas. The candidates who
are trained by the Arumbugal Non-Governmental Organisation are
provided with certificates which have a strong brand value in the
market spall and will be a life long asset\(^9\). A strong placement
network for them has been created to place the students at suitable
jobs\(^10\). From November 2010 to March 2011 training based on
employment orientation was given by the Arumbugal Non-
Governmental Organisation to 67 students. Of them 50% are
placed in different sectors and placements are going on. Through
the process of employment oriented education offered by the

\(^10\) Ibid, P.10.
Arumbugal Non Government Organisation many students have become the bread winners of their families\textsuperscript{11}.

Just like the efforts taken by the Non-Governmental Organisations, 'The Tamil Nadu Corporation for Tamil Nadu' has also taken steps to educate the orphan and destituted children and paved the way for the growth of education in Tiruneveli District\textsuperscript{12}. To reduce unemployment problem, youth skill training was introduced in Tirunelveli District from the year 2007 and 1912 student have been imparted youth skill trainings under various grades through reputed institutions and job placements were also ensured to them\textsuperscript{13}.

In addition to the Government steps for the progress of education in Tirunelveli District another prominent Non-Governmental organization, known as Vidyarambam Trust has also come forward for the development of education in Tirunelveli District. Students of the rural areas face plenty of difficulties in

\textsuperscript{11} Arumbugal Trust Bulletin, op.cit, P.11
\textsuperscript{12} Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of women, op.cit, P.5.
\textsuperscript{13} Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development women, op.cit, P.5.
learning the English language, largely because of lack of access to English language and lack of access to good English teaching and sparse exposure to spoken English. A special curriculum has been developed to teach languages, arithmetic, environmental sciences, life skills, yoga, basics of computers, art and culture and indoor and outdoor games. Activity based learning methodology has been followed to teach the children.

Seeing the benefits the Vidyarambam Learning centres impart on the students' education there was a huge demand from the teachers of local schools to teach the children English as a separate course and hence this new initiative in teaching was started\textsuperscript{14}. Keeping in mind the skill level of the rural students, a curriculum was designed to them to study basic English grammar easily. Trained volunteers are permitted in Government schools in Tirunelveli to teach English to the rural students. The volunteers are conducting 3 hour weekly classes over a period of 3 months. AT the end of the course most of the students studying in 6\textsuperscript{th}, 7\textsuperscript{th}

\textsuperscript{14} Vidyarambam Trust, op.cit, P.13.
and 8th standards are able to read, write and speak in English. The infrastructures that were laid by the Christian missionaries in imparting English education to the rural people are being continued by Vidyarambam Non-Governmental Organisation.

The "know-it-Basic literary Programme" developed in Tamil Nadu15 is being adopted by Vidyarambam. The programme is being taken for the first time to the computer learners in the rural communities to widen their electronic skill level in Tirunelveli District by the Vidyarambam Trust.

To develop the practice of reading, a children's Library is set up in every chosen village with about 300 books in Tamil and English16, helping children to develop reading habit with a competitive spirit. Still the quality of education has not improved in the last 5 years eventhough the Government allots a lot of funds17. More than 50% of the children are incapable of meeting the required reading levels and Tamil Nadu is below in national

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15 Vidyarambam Trust, op.cit, P.14.
16 Vidyarambam Trust, op.cit, P.14.
17 Ibid, P.15.
average reading level. The quality of education is suffering due to high pupil teacher ratio in Government schools. Many of the under achievers drop out of school and become unskilled labourers either as a child in the society or can become an anti-social element. The under achieved children are neglected in schools, given up by parents and end up with a bleak future. The children who fall behind in Primary school never get back the opportunity to catch up in life\textsuperscript{18}.

The Vidyarambam Trust has provided supplemental enjoyable quality education to 6,00,000 rural primary school children over a period of nine years using a cost effective and scalable model that can address the needs of more underachieving children in the future\textsuperscript{19}. The Trust has 3 toy vans operating for Government primary schools in Tirunelveli District. Each van carries 250 educational toys, curriculum based quizzes, games, worksheets and memory power packed toys.

\textsuperscript{18} Vidyarambam, op.cit, P.21.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid – P.22.
Volunteers are trained to guide the children in handling the toys. The volunteers travel in a van and visit two primary schools a day. They stay in each school for 3 hours during the school hours and educate the children. These educational toys create enormous curiosity among the school teachers also to learn new teaching methodologies. Each toy van reaches around 20,000 children every year\textsuperscript{20}.

The SCAD Non-Governmental Organisation not only developed the remote villages in Tirunelveli area but it has also extended its services in another block of the Tirunelveli District, Cheranmahadevi. In Cheranmahadevi, the SCAD selected five remote villages. In these villages children are given basic education\textsuperscript{21}. Drop out children are given education. In the villages in Cheranmahadevi evening classes are arranged and drop out children are made to study. In 1987 this scheme of teaching the drop children was extended by the SCAD organization to thirty six

\textsuperscript{20} Vidyarambam Trust Publicaiton 2011 Tirunelveli P.7.
\textsuperscript{21} SCAD-Silver Jubilee Souvenir Tirunelveli, 1985-2010, P.9.
villages\textsuperscript{22}. The SCAD started 34 supplementary schools to accommodate the drop out children. After the completion of primary education these children and enrolled again and allowed to continue their school education.

After the successful completion of primary and secondary education, the SCAD Organization has decided to move forward to set up community colleges\textsuperscript{23}, industrial Training Institutes, new professional colleges and Technical Institutions so as to provide rural students access to quality education, thereby being a source to create responsible literates for the development of their families, communities and the Nation. SCAD has been concentrating on educational sustainability as it firmly considers that education is the foundation for every human's growth and development\textsuperscript{24}. SCAD Organization found huge number of children who had completed secondary education yet have not been able to continue their higher education due to poverty and less in income.

\textsuperscript{22} SCAD-Silver Jubilee Souvenir Tirunelveli, 1985-2010, P.10.
\textsuperscript{23} SCAD, Silver Jubilee Souvenir, op.cit, P.12.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, P.13
Moreover, still for the basic skill training students have to go to the nearby towns, which is not affordable to these students of low income families. SCAD was convinced that non-affordability and non-accessibility to these students are the two major blockades that close the opportunities for poor students from villages to walk into higher education courses. So SCAD started various formal and non-formal vocational and technical education centres. These centres provide basic skill training like carpentry, fitting, plumbing, welding, handicrafts, basic electrical training and motor mechanic trainings.

Higher education centres are also established by SCAD to provide more skilled technical education for rural youths who are traditionally and culturally bonded with in the village boundaries. Trades like Computer Science, Nursing, Electronics, Information Technology, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Printing Technology have been provided to these students who

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25 SCAD SILVER JUBILEE Souvenir op.cit, P.23.
come from rural areas\textsuperscript{27}. At present 9,000 students are studying in these institutions. Every year 3,000 youth get trained and employed in various sectors and their economic conditions have been highly increased\textsuperscript{28}.

The families of the poor students crossed over their previous status of living below poverty line to normal life due to the provision of quality technical education within their vicinity. The possibility of finding employment with the technical knowledge and certificate empowers them to become potential employees in the towns and cities.

In order to improve the living conditions of the Gypsy children, the SCAD organization has started a non formal education centre in the Gypsy community centre area, Pettai. In 1992 SCAD started a formal school for Gypsy Community in Palayamkottai. Nearly 200 students are studying in formal educational

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\textsuperscript{27} SCAD, Silver Jubilee Souvenir, op.cit, P.24  \\
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, P.24.  
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Institutions. Most of them have competed primary education and a few of them go for secondary schools.

SCAD Non-Governmental Organisation hopes that through attending the schools, the children of the Gypsy community will learn more mainstream patterns of behavior that will mean that they can integrate with other communities in the future.

In the development of educational pursuits to the poor children another Non-Governmental Organisation, 'The Peace Trust' has also played a major role. The Peace Trust began to concentrate its attention on the destitute children in the poverty stricken area, 'Naraikinaru' in Tirunveli District. The village Naraikinaru had a glorious past. Missionaries from England, deeply moved by the backwardness of this poverty stricken village, established a Church Missionary School at Naraikinaru in 1895. The school was developed by the missionary, Gauder. He served in this school till 1951. In 1952 another missionary Miss Watson took charge of this

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29 SCAD Souvenir, op.cit, P.24
30 Ibid, P.25
31 Peace Trust, Handout, 2012, Tirunelveli
school. They served in this school till 1955. In 1955 another missionary Mr. Brown administered this school. These missionaries took much interest in the progress of the school\textsuperscript{32}.

Brown left India in 1956. The administration of the Naraikinaru school was since then taken over by the local people. In 1957 one Dharmakkan, a former lecturer and activist in Hindu college, Tirunelveli took over the administration of this school with the assistance of 'Peace Trust' Non-Governmental Organisation\textsuperscript{33}. He served and improved the school till 1977. In 1978 Daniel Jesudhason and Mrs. Arputham Daniel took over the administration of the school. At present Mrs. Beula Angeline wife of Dr. R. Anburajan, the managing trustee of the Peace Trust organization is the headmistress of this school\textsuperscript{34}. The school at present has 350 students. Even amidst dire circumstances, in the orphanage and at school there is a band of the most dedicated team

\textsuperscript{32} Peace Trust, Handout, 2012, Tirunelveli, P.30
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, P.31
\textsuperscript{34} Peace trust, Handout, op.cit, P.29.
of wardens, teachers and other staff who are working very
diligently towards fulfilling the vision of the missionaries.\footnote{35
Peace trust, Handout, op.cit, P.29.}

This school believes that a child is a positive asset and a
valuable national source who ought to be moulded, nurtured and
developed with tenderness and care. Most of the children are from
remote villages.

Education of the children is the foundation for the overall
development of any nation. However education is not accessible to
all. The poor economic background of the family is the major
cause for the destitute children. The Tirunelveli Social Service
Society, another Non-Government Organisaiton in Tirunelveli has
contributed a lot to liberate the downtrodden destitute children. The
Tiruneveli Social Service Society has brought in an important
project. The main component of the project is to run the Non-
Formal education centres\footnote{36 ‘Tiruneveli Social Service Society’, handout Tirunelveli, P.15.}. It included supplementary education,
extracurricular activities and life coping skills. The teachers served
as the Front Line Workers in identification, making referral services and maintaining them into formal or non-formal education centres.

**Balwadi Schools**

Tiruneveli Social Service Society at present runs 17 Balwadis with 544 children. Balwadies have been started in remote villages where the Government does not have Anganwadis. Special trainings are offered to Balwadi teachers. The students are provided with medical examination also. The Balwadi teachers are sensitizing the rural mass on the importance of education through cultural programmes. At the end of every year evaluation programmes are arranged so as to assess the performance of the teachers and students. Thus the Tirunelveli Social Service Society gives importance for the progress of education in Tirunelveli District.

Refresher courses always help teachers to update their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Moreover, the latest techniques in

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38 Tiruneveli Social Service Society, Hand out op.cit, P.14.
teaching and methods of facilitating learning are imparted to the teachers. These trainings enable the teachers to understand the problems of children, the root cause of these problems, outcome of the problems the possible strategies to address the causes and protect the children against all forms of violence, insecurity and stress\textsuperscript{39}.

The Tirunelveli Social Service Society encourages the staff and leaders to create an education fund to help the children hailing from very poor families. It is remarkable to note that the Tirunelveli Social Service Society has mobilized a total amount of Rupees 362836 upto March 2010\textsuperscript{40}. A set of bylaws have been formulated with the participation of the members and beneficiaries of the programme for the efficient management of the Fund.

**Formal Education**

The Tirunelveli Social Service Society has begun a Technical Training Centre at Kayatar in 1988. This Technical Training

\textsuperscript{39} Tirunelveli Social Service Society, Hand out op.cit, P.15.
\textsuperscript{40} Tirunelveli Social Service Society, op.cit,P.18.
Centre was known as Vinnarasi Technical Training Centre. It was mainly created for the purpose of providing vocational training.\(^{41}\) Likewise, the Valanaar Academy of vocational training centre was established on 3\(^{rd}\) July 1996 at Kuruvikulam near Tirunelveli to reduce the child labour problem prevailing in that area. Valanaar Industrial Technical Institute has been one among the reputed technical training Institutes recognized and approved by the Government of Tamil Nadu for conducting short term certificate courses in selected Trades.\(^{42}\) The certificate is issued by the Government to the students who complete the course successfully. The scope for potential employment is wider to those who obtain the certificate.\(^{43}\)

The Palayamkottai Community College was another milestone in the progress of education in Tirunelveli District. This Community College was started by the Tirunelveli Social Service Society in 1998 at V.M. Chatram in Palayamkottai. This college is

\(^{41}\) Tirunelveli Social Service Society, op.cit, P.19.  
\(^{42}\) The Tirunelveli Social Service Society, op.cit, P.22.  
\(^{43}\) Ibid, P.23.
affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University. The main thrust is to empower the poor downtrodden, underprivileged and marginalized sections of the society through skill development leading to gainful employment.

**Francis Xavier College of Engineering**

The Francis Xavier Engineering College, a constituent institution of St. Xavier’s Educational Trust is located in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu four kilometres from the city Railway Junction, 38 kilometres from the nearest airport at Vagaikulam and 3 km from the Bus station.

The Francis Xavier Engineering College popularly known as FX Engineering College was established in 2000\(^4\) with the vision to empower budding engineers in technical and entrepreneurial training and to contribute to the socio-economic development of the nation. The college is located at the heart of the city of Tirunelveli, which heralded worldwide as the Oxford of South India\(^5\) and is

\(^4\) SCAD Society, Hand out, op.cit, P.21  
\(^5\) Ibid, P.23
well connected with road, rail and air. The college provides opportunities where students' talents can thrive and it systematically transforms a graduate to a ready professional. This institution is open to the exchange of ideas, where discovery creativity, and personal and professional development can flourish\textsuperscript{46}.

**Polytechnic College**

Polytechnic College was established in 1997 by SCAD Non-Governmental Organisation. The College functions in Cheranmahadevi. Located on the Kalakkad – Tirunelveli main road this Polytechnic College, with in a short span of fifteen years has developed into the highest standards of professional behavior and personal integrity\textsuperscript{47}. Hundreds of students who are placed in the top level of prominent companies in India bear testimony to this amazing growth and achievement.

\textsuperscript{46} SCAD, Handout op.cit, P.22.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, P.23.
Fx Polytechnic College

Francis Xavier (FX) Polytechnic was established in 2006 by St.Xavier's Educational Trust, a registered society under the leadership of S.Cletus Babu the Chairman of the SCAD group of Institutions, with the prime motive of bringing quality technical education within the reach of students in the rural districts of Southern Tamil Nadu\(^{48}\). FX Polytechnic College aims at imparting professional technical education with an emphasis on analytical and reasonable abilities as well as practical skills. The number of students who have been placed in leading companies bear testimony to this amazing growth and achievement. This FX Polytechnic College located at a village, Tharuvai, in Thirunelveli serves the needs of the poor destitute of Thirunelveli and Thoothukudi Districts.\(^{49}\)

\(^{48}\) SCAD, Handout, op.cit, P.24.
\(^{49}\) Ibid, P.25.
B.Ed Educational College

A Bachelor of Education College was started and owned by the "Department of Social Change and Development" of SCAD Trust, a Non-Governmental Organisation at Cheranmahadevi in Tirunelveli District. It is a co-educational residential self financial Institution. It is recognized by National Council for Teachers Education in Bangalore. It is affiliated to Tamil Nadu Teachers' Education University, Chennai. The college offers one year B.Ed Degree course with an intake of 100 students.

The college was structured in 2006. The college has a healthy campus environment, modern amenities, latest infrastructures and well equipped with sufficient library facilities and well qualified faculty in order to provide better teacher education course.

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50 SCAD Hand out, op.cit, P.25.
51 ibid, P.26.
SCAD ITI at Cheranmahadevi

An Industrial Training Institute was started by Dr. Cletus Babu, the founder of the SCAD group of Institutions. Being a dedicated educationalist he started this technical Institute in Cheranmahadevi, a village near Tirunelveli at the foothills of the Golundu Maha Mountain. The poor destitutes in and around the Cheranmahadevi village are highly benefited through this institution. Those who have completed the course in this institution are highly placed in industrial centres. This Institution in this area is a credit to Cheranmahadevi Village.52

SCAD ITI at Vagaikulam

Vagaikulam is a village in Thoothukudi where SCAD Non-Government Organisation has also started an Industrial Training Institute. Poor children are highly benefited by this Institute. Latest infrastructures, modern amenities, healthy campus

52 SCAD Handout, op.cit, P.29.
environement and well qualified faculties are provided to impart better technical education to the rural mass.

Likewise St. Xavier Matric School in Tirunelveli\textsuperscript{53}. Good Shepherd Model School and SCAD Engineering College at Cheranmahadevi\textsuperscript{54} have been functioning for the progress of the poor children. Non-Governmental Organisations have been performing wonderful services for the benefit of the poor people since the middle ages Christian Missionaries did great service during the early years of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century in establishing schools and colleges. St Xavier's Higher Secondary School, St.Xaviers College and St Johns College have been the results of the Christian Missionaries.

At present the Non-Governmental Organisations have been much interested in the formation of model schools in remote villages and established many Industrial Training Institutes in Tirunelveli, Cheranmahadevi and Vagaikulam. Likewise

\textsuperscript{53} SCAD Handout op.cit, P.30.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, P.31.
Engineering Colleges and Bachelor of Education college have been founded for the enhancement of the life of the poverty stricken multitudes in Tirunelveli. But for the Non-Governmental Organisations in Tiruneveli, educational progress at an amazing level at present could never be achieved. Today Palayamkottai is generally considered as the 'Oxford of South India. This is due to the progress of education in Palayamkottai. This progress of education in Thirunelveli District is due to Non-Governmental Organisations.