CONCLUSION

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We have examined the development of education system in Kerala and the growth of political consciousness that was linked with the advancement of education.

Asan Pallikkoodams were the centres of traditional education in Kerala. These schools were the major source of imparting education to the people. The children were given basic education at home. Then they were taken to the Asan school for further studies. Only small elite groups were conspicuous beneficiaries from this system of education and the majority was still out of this circle. Many of these Asan schools were later converted into modern schools.

Apart from these schools, there were Missionary schools as well.

This new type of school system was a centre where 'modern' subjects like science, mathematics and history were taught. This education was obviously sufficient to create advocates, teachers and other professionals, though they were only a minority among the masses. At the same time the majority of the people were not part of this class. Those who reached England or cities like Madras for higher studies were the first to be attracted towards political activities. Their wide knowledge of the bitter struggle that had been going on in many parts of the world against the colonial exploitation attracted them towards the political movement.

These groups provided Malabar with leaders who pioneered the National Movement there. Among them included A.K.Pillai, K.Kelappan, K.P.Kesavamenon and Mohammed Abdurahiman. Only the persons
belonging to the emerging middle class became political activists in the early stage of the National Movement.

The colonial regime tried to control the educational institutions with a view that they should not produce any radical elements. They changed the structure of these institutions to suit their objective. The education system was supposed to be responsible for producing a colonial society in which the common people would have no say. In short, the consolidation of the colonial rule was the task assigned to the education system.

The colonial masters pretended to be progressive in their unequivocal stand against casteism. They strongly opposed the caste discrimination prevailing in the area through textbooks and other media, for they needed a homogeneous community for the smooth functioning of the colonial order.

The schools were strictly ruled by managers and bureaucrats who had brawny links with the colonial administration. They came to be the inevitable component of the system. The loyalty to the King was an important lesson that these schools imparted. The political activities were not at all tolerated. Those who had any distant link with politics were harassed and expelled from the schools. The students who had any connection with the political activists were sent out of the schools or punished accordingly. This attitude could also be visible in some of the leaders of the Indian National Congress. They could not tolerate the students participating in the political activities.

The report of the Director of Public Instruction, Madras has clearly stated thus:
"The conduct of every student outside the premises of the of the College or School to be noted. Conduct to be noted in the attendance register to forbid use of any book which is objectionable from an educational, moral, political or social point of view."\(^1\)

By the 1930s the colonial administration became adamant in its approach towards political activities in schools and colleges.

The Madras Education Rules says:

"No pupil convicted in a court of law for disloyal activities should be admitted into schools without the previous sanction of the of Government.............. the pupils should not be permitted to attend political meetings or to engage in any form of political agitation."\(^2\)

So it was almost impossible for a student to be politically cognizant in such a situation.

The general concept about the education system in those days was that it should impart only information. The system used its entire means to educate the pupils ignoring the aptitude of the children. The school became a centre where knowledge of the textbooks was imparted by force. All other activities were not at all part of the school life. The common people accepted this presupposition as well. This was the brilliant plan of the colonial administration to silence the radical sections of the society. They deliberately strived for the universal acceptance of their schemes. So education became separated from society and its experiences. Some teachers, who had the sparks of national feeling in them, might have inspired their students with the spirit of nationalism, but it happened mainly out of the academic ambience.

This was essentially because of the menace by the Government.

\(^1\) Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Madras, 1900,p.1
\(^2\) Madras Education Rules, 1930,p.99
The Madras Education Rules clarifies:

"No manger or staff or of the establishment are permitted to take part in political agitation directed against the authority of Government or to inculcate opinion tending to excite feelings of political disloyalty or disaffection."\(^3\)

Thus we can consider, without any ambiguity, the school being a conservative institution throughout the colonial period, not a liberating influence. Any progressive shift was deliberately bridled.

In this context it is apt to quote what Antonio Gramsci says:

"The traditional school was oligarchic because it was intended for the new generation of the ruling class, destined to rule in its turn; but it was not oligarchic in its mode of teaching. It is not the fact that the pupils learn how to rule there, nor the fact that it tends to produce gifted men, which gives a particular type of school its social character. This social character is determined by the fact that each social group has its own type of school, intended to perpetuate a specific traditional function, ruling or subordinate."\(^4\)

The majority of the people in Kerala were ordained to become subordinate.

The education system under the colonial regime was liberating only in the field of literacy, which on the other hand, indirectly prompted the growth of radical political influence later. Those who changed the society with their revolutionary ideals were not at all the Supporters of the colonial mode of education.

The spread of mass education in Kerala in the early decades of the 20\(^{th}\) century was a process in which Sreenarayana Guru, Ayyankali, Vaghbhatananda, the S.N.D.P etc. played a vital role. They were not at all inspired by the ideology of the modern colonial education, but by the social and political necessities of their respective social groups. They influenced

\(^3\) Ibid
the society in a big way providing greater opportunities for the people belonging to all sections of the society.

The literate class as a whole did not participate in the National Movement or any other political struggle. Many took up jobs in the Government departments and kept away from the main stream. This group had majority among the educated people and appeared to be the supporters of the colonial haven.

The literate class were able to attain language skills, dialogical methods etc. They could write poetry, conduct speeches and hold discourses, write articles on various subjects of their interest etc. It is true that there were literary clubs in some schools but their role in generating social or political consciousness also was very limited. These activities were taken place mostly outside the school environment and created an open space for discussions, which paved the way for founding organizations like the CSP, CPI etc. The school had no role in this process rather than providing the knowledge of letters.

In this context it is rather weak to argue that the education system unleashed the spirit of political consciousness. Hence it is sagacious to arrive at the conclusion that the process was done by those who had left the school after their studies. If the educated people only had participated in the political struggle, it would not have been a mass movement. They alone could not have shouldered the cumbersome task of leading the political movements. The uneducated masses too were an integral part of the social and political struggles. Many of them jubilantly jumped into the kiln of political struggle, for they had become political. The question of how they became politically conscious despite their educational backwardness is rather pertinent.
As there had been open spaces for getting information regarding the political and other issues, the illiterate masses were much attracted towards the movement. Public meetings, *Jathas*, public speeches, dramas, public reading of newspapers etc. were some of them. The common people accrued energy and confidence from these forces to face the new realities. Thus they became the vanguards of the National Movement, Peasant Struggles and the Working Class Movement.

The role of literacy and education ended with the creation of a public space for the members of the society to express their feelings, anxieties, ideas etc. freely. General politicization of the people of Malabar was done in this public space. If the public space had not arrived, no politicization would have occurred.