CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF SALVATION ARMY IN TIRUNELVELI AND KANYAKUMARI DISTRICTS

The Salvation Army made social development among the people of southern Tamil Nadu in the beginning of the Army's work. Its slogan was ‘soap Soup, and Salvation’. On Christmas week in the year 1887, one day the founder of the Salvation Army returned home after his long ministry. It was mid night. He called his son Baramwell and secretary George Scott Railton and told them to do some thing for the poor people who were sleeping under the London bridge, without any shelter. Immediately Bram and Railton hired an unused warehouse in the white chapel road and brought all the men and women to the warehouse.

The next morning Bram and Railton went to door to door to collect food for the poor people. In January 1888, first food depot was opened. This was the beginning of Army's social work and also Army took initiative interest to fight against social evils. During 1890 in England, prostitution was allowed from the age of 12 onwards. But the Salvation Army opposed that idea and got more than 3 lakhs signatures and brought it to the parliament house. So the Government passed a bill against child hood prostitution and raised the age to 16. This was a great reform in England. Then in India, the Salvation Army did many kinds of reformation in the social life of the people.
As we said earlier in the pages, the Army brought reformation to the dressing. After the Army's arrival only the low caste people were allowed to wear proper dress.

The Army introduced Tailoring and Needle Work to the women. Many people still yearn their livelihood by this kind of trainings. By starting Vocational Training Centers for the physically handicapped, the Army brought new hope in the life of the handicapped. In 1968 a Vocational Training Center at Aramboly was started especially for the ex. leprosy patients. Now for the last 35 years it is serving the community with heart to God and hands to man.

Army is feeding the poor in many centers. Whenever there is natural calamity, the army is extending its helping hand to the community. There is no caste or creed or color for the social service of the Salvation Army. The Army is providing milchy goats for the poor to improve their financial status. Now the Army is giving scholarship for nursing students to encourage many people to have medical studies.

**Motherless Babies’ Home and Day Care Centre**

In June 29, 1980 Colonel N.J. Samuel, the then Territorial Commander of South Eastern Territory laid the foundation for Motherless Babies’ Home at Palayamkottai. This building was erected with gifts from United States of America Central Territory and was dedicated by Commissioner Ernest, E. Yehed, international secretary for South Asian Zone on Wednesday 13 October

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1 Inscription on the Front Wall of the Home.
For the last 28 years the home is housing many orphans and semi orphans. The first Superintendent of this home Major Chellathai was working for ten years and she got the retirement from here. When she was working at the early time, the home had only three children. Then Captain Kannimarial worked for two years.

The next Superintendent Captain Chellam worked for six years. Then Captain Swarnabai who came here did her service for about four years. Previous Superintendent Captain Asirbai did her service for one year. And now Major Lyssamal is in-charge of this Charity home in addition to the babies’ home, Day Care Centre accommodating five children. Mrs. Santhi and Miss. Sathiya are looking after the children in the Day Care Centre.

A new Working Women Hostel which was started on 18th June 2002 and was donated by United States of America Western Territory and dedicated by Dr. Colonel P. Yogannam. At the time it consisted of four ladies. It was run only for six months. But now the hostel was not here.

The Army is running Child Development Centres throughout Tamil Nadu. In these centres 100% poor children are gathered and given tuition in their studies at every evening. They are provided with refreshment. Special care is taken to uplift the poor and needy children without any discrimination.

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2 The warcry (Tamil) Tirunelveli, June, 1986, p.3.
Tailoring Institute, Moolakaraipatti

In the year 1992 February 11th, the then Territorial Commander, Col. Girubadhas opened this Institute. Now in this Institute ten students are studying and 2 teaching staffs are working.

The Salvation Army encouraged students to learn the art of weaving. Hand needle work was turned to women and they earned their livelihoods through their needle work.

Medical Service

The Catherine Booth Hospital of Nagercoil had nine Branch hospitals in the early part of 20th Century. In 1922 during the time of Colonel Ghanadhas as the Territorial Commander and Lt. Colonel P. Selvaraj Administrator started a branch hospital at Vallioor.

Radhapuram was an area of darkness in spirit and physique. There was no proper education even to the high caste people. No medical facilities were available in that area and also the land was dry. In this situation the Salvation Army branch hospital brought life and light to these People.

For the people of Rathapuram area, the Salvation Army hospital became the temple and Dr. Gnaniah, their deity. So the low caste people as well as the high caste people had a high standard of medical help from the Salvation Army Hospital. If needed the patients were referred to the Catherine Booth Hospital,

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3 The War Cry (Tamil) April, 1992, p.9.
Putheri and a special care was given to the poor patients. Even though Dr. Gnaniah passed away still the Rathapuram people are remembering by affectionately calling him uncle Gnaniah. This kind of medical work uplifted the lower class people in Southern Tirunelveli District. Even now the Salvation Army is having one High School, one Middle School and eight Primary School in Rathapuram and Valliyoor areas.

**Tucker Girls’ Hostel, Nagercoil**

In the year 1980 the then Territorial Commander Colonel N.J. Samuel opened this Hostel. This Hostel provides boarding and lodging specialities and good education to poor and needy girls. Last 24th years this hostel serves this area people. Now 88 girls are staying in this hostel.

**Child Development Ministry**

The Army is running Child Development Centres throughout Tamil Nadu with the support of the cross unit of Chennai. In these centres 100% poor children are gathered and given tuition in their studies at every evening. They are provided with refreshment. Special care is taken to uplift the poor and needy children without any discrimination.

**CDC, Kadaigrammam**

Col. M. Abraham, the then Territorial Commander opened on 27-06-1997. At the starting time 62 children were admitted in this centre. Now 192 children are in this centre. 10 staff are working in this centre. One officer is in
charge of this centre. In the year of 2001 October 23rd, the then P.W.D. Minister of Tamil Nadu Mr. N. Thalavaisundaram visited this institute and donated 30,000 Rupees valuable Benches and Tables. Minister "congratulated the Salvation Army's works and ministry"

R.D.V.T.C

The premises of the once branch hospital of Catherine Booth Hospital known as Kothanallur Hospital were used by the public for social evils. After the hospital was closed down in 1972, Commissioner Suganantham along with Commissioner David Turman, the then International Secretary for South Asia planned to make use of the buildings for the public.

Mr. Sundar Egbert, Captain James Hood, Major Selvaraj, Major Jeyaprakash and the then Thuckalay Divisional Commander were made as committee for the centre. It was decided to start a Vocational Training Centre for the Rural Development. Capt. V.Azarah, the then corps officer of Chemparuthivilai corps motivated Commissioner Sughanantham to start this institute.

On 1st August 1986 this centre was launched by Commissioner Suganantham and Commissioner Durman. Typewriting, tailoring, and banana fiber basket making were introduced. With in these years many hundreds of young women were benefited through this institute.
VTC for Physically Handicapped Women, Nagercoil

In the year 1970 this center was opened. This institution was first put in the hands of Brigadier Sarah an Indian Salvation Army Officer, and followed by Major G. Inbam, another Indian Salvation Army Officer. She took charge of this institution on 1-8-1981.

As she has much experience in this field, she understood the problems and needs of the handicapped persons and did the needful. The institute grew under some unselfish leaders. This institute served the handihapped women. Now 33 women are staying in this institute. 5 Army Officers are serving in the institute. 10 staffs are working there.

Tailoring Institute, Vadasery

Colonel Mathangi Abraham, the then Territorial Commander opened this Institute on 6-11-1998. Now this Institute is running in a good condition. 10 students are having their training in this Institute.

Tailoring Institute, Kulasekharam

In 1990 March 5 the then Territorial Commander Colonel Garibdhas opened this Institute. Now 15 students are studying in this Institute. One Teacher Mrs. Vasantha Gnanadhas of Chemparuthivilai is presently working as instructor.

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Tailoring Institute, Moolaikaraipattti

In the year 1992 February 11th the then Territorial Commander Col. Garibdhas opened this Institute. Now in this institute 10 students are studying and 2 teaching staffs are working.

Tailoring Institute - Thiruchendur

When Major Yesudian peter took charge as District Officer at Tuticorin he took initiative interest to reestablish a tailoring institute. He gathered the seated Tailoring machines and repaid them. Then on 19th September 2002, it was opened at Thiruchendur Corps. A six month course had been started. More than twenty girls had completed their course and received certificate. Now the third session is in progress. Capt. Seenivasan is looking after the institute along with the corps.

Computer Centre - Chemparuthivilai

During 4th July 2001 a Computer Centre was inaugurated by Colonel P. Yohannan, the then Territorial Commander, Major. Y. Peter the then Superintendent of the Rural Development and Vocational Training Centre took initiative interest to start the centre with the kind help of Rev. Dr. Appaji and the Salvationists in Kuwait. The major was able to purchase a brand new Computer and a printer.

Mr. Victor Mony of Arasankuzhi supported this project and the major very much. Then the major approached Dr. Lawrence and got an old Computer as donation from him. Then with the support of Major N.Y. Lawrence, Major Peter collected 12,000 rupees as donation from various people and purchased the third computer for the institute. It is proved to say that the centre produced “100% pass in the year 2003 and one student got distinction in state level. Mr. I Christopher, the Computer faculty was much appreciated by all.

**Computer Center, Nagercoil**

In 1997 April 18th, the then Territorial Commander Col. M. Abraham opened this centre. Last 7 years this centre served this area poor and needy people. Now 30 students are studying, this year. 2 teachers are working in this centre.

**Services**

The Salvation Army is doing social services to the people in various forms. The Catherine Booth Hospital is bringing light about the HIV/AIDS and warns the public. It also serves the community by providing counselling, food and shelter, follow up treatments are given by Catherine Booth Hospital.
The condition of the Dalits in Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari Districts in the 20th Century.

While calling the people Dalits we specially focus on the community which is called Parayas at Tirunelveli District and Sambavar in Kanyakumari District. This community is one of the members of scheduled castes.

By nature these people were agriculture cooli workers. They worked in farms and they were treated as slaves. They had no liberty. They could choose anything for them. But they should do and even live according to the wishes of their high caste masters. As these people didn't have education, they never raised their voices against their masters.

They simply obeyed them. So the masters also treated them badly. These Dalit people should not wear proper dresses. Their sufferings and humiliations under the hands of their task masters knew no bounds.

Even the ladies were not exempted from inhuman treatment. We cite say one incident. A pregnant lady of the Sambavar caste in Talakudi village was yoked with a buffalo in the paddy field and her own husband was compelled to treat her like an oxen. This was compelled by the high caste master'. This incident is one of the thousands.

The barbarian act of the high caste people was supported by the then Government. Another incident can be cited here. Sambavar community as well as the other scheduled caste people were not allowed to wear upper garments. Only the married women could put her saree over her body.
Before marriage the upper body should not be covered by any cloth. For this reason Swami Vaikundar along with his followers made agitations against the then Travancore district. It went on for a long time. But the Government didn't respond. During 1890's when the other Christians also joined with Vaikundar and the Salvation Army to fight for these rights. The govt. declared that every women can wear upper garments. 'HISTORY OF TRAVANCORE' says that the low caste people should not take even the dead body along the public roads.

In Tirunelveli district a village called Sanganankulam where there is an unwritten law by the high caste people that the low caste women should be given first to the high caste master soon after she attains puberty. Only after that she could be married to another low caste man. This situation prevailed for a long time in that village.

After 1974 the low caste people wakened from the hibernation and realized how they were ill-treated by the high caste people. 75% illiterate village people moved from Sanganankulam and spread all over Tirunelveli and Tuticorin district. This was the condition of the people.

Eventhough there was a Catholic Church in the area for more than 1000 years, the London Mission Society for 100 years and Lutherans for more than 500 years. No one came forward to embrace the Dalit people. Every one concentrated on the community with which they served. The Parayas were

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7 Personal Interview with Major. Y. Peter, Tuticorin 26.10.2010.
8 Personal Interview with Mrs. Rajaselvam, Tuticorin, 27.10.2010.
neglected and forsaken in all aspects. In this situation the Salvation Army entered into Tamil Nadu with its forefold Ministry.

The Salvation Army reached the people with the love of Christ and helped them to know themselves and educated to realise that their masters treated them worse than a dog during the past days.

The primary education by the Salvation Army opened the eyes of the people and they looked very widely and realised themselves their mistakes. So they joined the Salvation Army and accepted Christ. By these the Dalit people also got respect among the community. Let us see how the Salvation Army originated and helped these people to get respect among the other people.

**What is the Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army is an integral part of the Christian Church although distinctive in Government and practice. The doctrine of the Army follows the main stream of Christian belief and faith. Its articles of faith emphasises God's saving purpose. Its objects are the advancement of the Christian religion of education, the relief of poverty and other charitable objects beneficial to the community of mankind.⁹

The movement was founded in London in the year 1865, July 2, by William and Catherine Booth. It has spread to many parts of the world.

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Religious Freedom

Until the last decade of 19th century the low caste people specially the Parayas were not allowed to enter into the Hindu temples for worship. As per the Hindu mythology these people were considered as panchamas, which means they are lesser than the sutras. The mythology says that the people from from the head of Brmma are called Brahmins, which means people of wisdom. The people born from the shoulder of Bramma are called as Shathrias means people with might warriors. The third community, which is born from the Belly of Bramma, is called as Vaisiors which means people of trade. The fourth community is considered as sutras, which means lower caste for serving the other three high castes. The last community that is considered as panchamas have the origin under the foot of Bramma. So these people are not considered as men or women.

So the Parayas were treated as slaves worse than dogs.¹⁰ There are so many incidents. We can refer but due to page limit I am bringing a few to the light. Karkadu is a village nearby Suchindram in Kanyakumari District. During the time of Travancore kings this village was considered as mother village¹¹ Suchindram is a famous Hindu village where there is a famous Hindu Temple for Lord Vishnu. Whenever there is a festival in the temple the streets of Suchindram will be prohibited for the Paraya community people to enter there. Even for a daily work they should go through the back doors only. If ever any paraya community people or other low caste people entered into the street they will be

punished or some times they will be executed. The streets will be closed by long wooden bars to tell the people that it was their holidays. So the Karkadu people cannot use even the public road to reach the national highways.

At Thalakudi one Mr. Manickampillai\textsuperscript{12} who was a Christian convert working among the Paryas was bound with stone pillar and was beaten by the Hindu Vellalas for entering into the streets of Hindu people. He entered into the street to buy some plantains. The lad was of the Vellala caste, members of which are allowed in any Brahmin village except on the occasion of a wedding when the Brahmins were eating. But having in the Army worked among Parays, this was quite enough for the lad was seized and carried off to the police station.

After some trouble he was released on bail for the sum of rupees 500/- Appeal was made to the Diwan of Travancore and to the British resident, but while the case was being considered by these authorities the lad was dragged upto the court not less than 16 times. For this case he was put into custody 2 times. At last he was imprisoned 20 days.

Several South Indian papers spoke out strongly about the affairs and pointed out its injustice. In those days Manickam received very harsh treatment from the jail authorities. During this time the Suchindram Hindu people burnt down the Karkadu Salvation Army Church.

\textsuperscript{12} Frederic Tucker, \textit{Muktifauj} London, 1924, P.110.
The Salvation Army brought this brutal\(^{13}\) act of this people and informed to the Governor of Madras, Lord Wenluck. He replied that instructions had been given to the British residency to enquire the case and he had given orders that in future all such cases should be dealt with by the District First Class Magistrate. So the Travancore government joined with the British government and made a law to prohibit the torture among the Parayas. The law gave security to the Salvation Army churches. Thus the government allowed the Parayas to have their own churches and worship the Lord without fear. This brought the religious freedom to the low caste people. Now there are many many big churches throughout Tamil Nadu. Ratnapuram is a village still standing as a permanent witness for the work of the missionary William Stevens.

In 1892 the present village people lived in a raised land which was called tidal. When the residents accepted Christ through the Salvation Army, the high caste people compelled them to be Hindus and asked them to work on Sundays also. When the new Christians refused to do so, the high caste people put fire to the whole village and threatened them with weapons and asked them to vacate the place immediately.

The poor people were not able to leave that place and at the same time their new faith didn't allow them to worship the idols again. So the high caste people put a case against these people. In the meantime the villagers reconstructed their huts this kindled the anger of the high caste people.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., P.111.
To revenge the people the high caste people put fire to the Paraya village for the second time. Now the judgment also came which is not in favours of Parayas. So the poor people became helpless. Immediately they approached the Salvation Army leader Brig. Yesuretnam. So Yesuretnam purchased a land worth of 50/-rupees at the time and gave it free to the people. With the help of the then forest Conservator, the village people took the needed woods from the forest and erected their new houses in the new village and the village people unanimously called it as Retnapuram meaning the village of Yesuretnam.14

In 1920 the Vellala people of Kadukkarai compelled the young Salvationists to pay tax to their Hindu temples as they were celebrating their 12-year festival. But the new Christians refused. The thousands strong Hindus attacked the less than 100 people and threatened to fire the village. But with the strength of the Lord the people fought against the Hindus. So there was bloodshed and fear among the people. Court case was made and the judgment came in favours of the Christian Parayas stating that they have freedom to have their own Church and the Hindus cannot compel them to pay tax for their Hindu temple.

Because of this the surrounding low caste people also got freedom in following their faith. The Salvation Army took a great effort to bring freedom to the Dalit people even before the freedom of the nation. So the Parayas, Nadars and other low caste people got freedom in their religious faith in the early part of 20th century.

The Salvation Army brought the light of freedom in spirit and body to the downtrodden people by the love of Christ, the Redeemer.

**Education to the Dalits**

In those days education was a day dream to the Sambavar Community people. They were not allowed to go to school. They were compelled by the high caste masters to do their own work designated for their community. In the Hinduism Dalits were the respect in the community. They are supposed to be cooli workers in the forms and fields. But when the Army came to work among the people, there was no education. The people were without knowledge. They could raise questions why and what with their masters.

The Government also refused to educate the Dalits. Only high caste people were admitted in schools. So through the government also education is a dream to the Dalits. So the Army wanted to educate the people.

*In the year 1893 when Adjutant and Ghana Desigar (former teacher before becoming Salvation Army officer) started teaching to the Dalit students in Attakulam there was the seed of Education faid into the ground. On knowing the wonderful thought of Ghnanatheiskar, William Stevens commanded every officer to start teaching. So village schools for the Parayas were started.*

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Until 1957 the Army had 120 primary schools in Kanyakumari districts. Because of the Government policy the Army surrendered all the primary schools to government.

When the Dalits began to learn some of them became highly educated. They got separate school uniforms etc. the Army's effort in educating the people successfully flourished. The education cleared out the slavery spirit of the Dalits. They also got the vision to get more respect in the community.

Nowadays we can see many doctors, lecturers and I.A.S, I.P.S officers from this community. In Tininelveli district also primary education to the Dalits were given by the Salvation Army only. Through education only the Army changed the double cup system from the hotels and tea stalls. The Salvation Army educated them how to wear proper dress. During 1972 also the village people do not know how to wear proper dress. The Army educated the people to love and respect. Without the Salvation Army, the Dalits may be illiterates.

**Cottage Industries Studies**

The Salvation Army found it best to concentrate their attention mainly upon viewing silk, needle work and mat making and each of these branches had been developed with a thoroughness and attention to detailed that live litrie to be desired.

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17 Ibid.,
India possess 11 million handloom weavers in the year 1920's. The weavers were once the most prosperous community in India. Now reduced to poverty and destitution to throw away their wonderful technical skill seemed a poor policy.

After a careful examination of existing conditions the Salvation Army decided to try to improve their handlooms and rapid machines as well as the quality of cloth they could produce. Staff Captain premdoss (Maxwell) was appointed to live among the weavers. A new and fast loom was invented. This machine produced four or five times the quantity of cloths woven on old handlooms.

The market for raw silk was extensive including Switzerland, America and England. Once the American President appreciated the silk production. The silk made by the Salvation Army attracted even the king and queen of England.

The Army’s chief work has been to train others. The Salvation Army gave one year training course for the learners. The Salvation Army encouraged students to learn the art of weaving. In the year 1920's the Salvation Army trained 280 Indians as weavers. Hand Needle works was turned to women and they earned their livelihoods through their needle work.

The Army had developed lace drawn-thread and needle work. The Army had organized this industry for the benefit of the village women and Industrial

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School students in Nagercoil a separate training center was started to teach this art of needle work. Till date the Army is having that industry in Vetturimidam.

**Industrial Training**

In the era 1960 there were so many leprosy patients in and around Kanyakumari district. Though most of the patients were cured by the Government’s effort, nobody was willing to give jobs to the ex-leprosy patients.

On realizing these poor condition, the Salvation Army started a Vocational Training Center for the ex-leprosy patients at Aralvaimoly. The cured ex-leprosy patients were taught to make mats and boots. Then the Army took more interest upon the patients and gave them mechanical training. That industry is marching towards its 35th year. Because of this education many ex-leprosy patients are surviving. By this kind of education the standard of the Dalits were raised. Socially and economically they flourished with school education and industrial training. The Salvation Army raised the standard of the Dalits.

**Medical work and the Dalits**

The enthusiasm and the gladness of the Salvationists Christianity was contagious and inspiring and their complete dedication to their tasks of Mercy was Rt.honourable Sr. Johnsmith.

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19 Silver Jubilee Souvenir of V.T.C. Aramboly.
As we said earlier, the untouchability among caste sum proves hard in the medical field also. The Dalits were not admitted even in the Government hospitals. As the doctors were of high caste community they never touched the Dalit, men or women and did any medical help. If sickness came, either the Dalits should suffer or the sickness itself go by God’s grace. The condition of the Dalits were bad and if they are sick their condition will march towards worse. During the end of 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century medical help to Dalits was in dream.

Even the village midwifes refused to attend the birth of baby for a dalit woman. So many women died because of non-medical support. As the government of those days followed the Hindu methods of caste sum, they considered the Dalits as outcastes. As the Brahmins advised the king, kings also refused to accept the Dalits as respected citizens of their rule. In Kanyakumari district in those days the people used raw tobaccos and because of that most of them had cancer in their cheeks. Problems in tooth and problems by mosquitoes caused many sickness to the people. As there was no sanitation in the villages of Dalits easily many diseases spread among them.

In this condition the Salvation Army brought a ray of lightning in the medical field. Harry Andrews, the medical missionary started the medical work in Nagercoil during 1893 while he was working as an assistant to William Stevens.
This Harry Andrews was an orphan, handed over to Bramwell Booth in 1873 by the mother as a child who was in dying condition. Harry was adopted by Emmabooth, sister of Bramwell Booth.

In 1890 Harry became a Salvation Army officer. He came to Bombay and stayed there. Bramwell Booth sent him the gift of some dental instruments. It helped Harry on a course of practical helpfulness to the needy. In Bombay dirty, poverty and pain were all around him. At least he could try to relieve the pain. In 1893 Harry was sent to the southern tip of India to assist William Stevens in supervising the newly started village schools. The visit to the village schools gave him opportunity to mingle among the poor Dalits. Being a man who knows about dental sickness, willingly offered his service and cured the people. His fame began to spread among the villages. So many sick people visited Harry Andrews in his residence at Nagercoil where the 'CBH' is presently situated. Mrs. Stevens becoming aware of the young man’s practical sympathy and his keen interest to relieve suffering of observed 20 “the boy wants to heal bodies and I am going to make it easier for him, he shall have that little bathroom at the end of the Veranda for a dispensary”. (the bathroom door is today preserved in the structure of the Catherine Booth Hospital, Nagercoil telling a link with the humble beginnings in Southern India of Salvationists medical service.)

The amateur dispensary in the bath room was set up in 1893 and patients walked many miles to seek help at the hands of the young man with eyes to see and a heart to care deeply for their needs. It was a severe outbreak of cholera in

Kanyakumari district that first constituted Harry’s call to an even wider field of medical work. Gathering a few simple remedy’s he went from village ministering the sick and the dieing. His ceaseless effort saved many hundreds of life. News reached to London and the London head quarters offered him a \(^{21}\)dresser course in London Hospital. In 1896 Harry returned to Nagercoil to erect ‘Catherine Booth’ dispensary. Three years passed Dr. Persi Turner came to Nagercoil as a qualified Doctor. From 1901 the dispensary became Hospital. Many more Dalits were cured by Harry and Dr. Turner. Dr. Turner was an eye specialist. The coming of Dr. Turner opened many eyes to see the world. Many Dalits who were suffering of sight problem were cured by Dr. Turner.

The birth of the medical hospital for the poor and destitute opened a new era among the Dalits. Now they too are proudly saying that they have their own doctor and hospital.

**Medical Studies**

While Dr. Turner was in-charge of the Catherine Booth Hospital, during 1901 to 1920 he had the plan to educate the Indians specially the Dalits in medical field. On seeing the situation in India, the casteism and untouchability, Turner felt that education in medicine to the Dalits was a must. So he planned sought advises from the Salvation Army and the king of Travancore. On knowing the enthusiastic spirit of Dr. Turner, the then Travancore Govt. came forward to sponsor his medical education. So the Govt. accepted Catherine Booth

\(^{21}\)Ibid.,
Hospital as one of the medical schools of Travancore. From 1914 a four year medical course was started and few people were trained.

In the end of 1818 they were awarded 'LMSMG' Degree and considered as Doctors. After that it is sad to know that medical school was not continued. Because of the transfer of Dr. Persi Turner.

The first school of medicine trained many people. Among those trained under Turner, three of the Salvation Army officers recognized as registered medical practitioners in Kerala. Brigadier T.C. Chacko Senior Major Gnaniah and Senior major, J. Manuel rendered valuable service over many years among the Dalits.

Realizing the vast need of medical service to the thousands and thousands of Dalits in Travancore and British Tamil Nadu, Turner opened Branch Hospitals for CBH in Ratnapuram. A senior Major Gnaniah was appointed as doctor. Rathapuram was an area of darkness in spirit and physique. There was no proper education even to the high caste people. No medical facilities were available in that area and also the land was dry. In this situation the Salvation Army Branch Hospital brought life and light to these people. There was no more death in childbirth and due to other sickness.

For the people of Rathapuram area the Salvation Army Hospital became the temple and Dr. Gnaniah their deity. So the Dalits as well as the high caste people had a high standard of medical help from the Salvation Army Hospital. If

needed, the patients were referred to the mother Hospital and a special care was given to the poor patients. In Rathpuram the Dalits felt proud of Dr.Gnaniah as he was of the same community. What a wonder even the high caste women were coming to Dr. Gnaniah for their treatments.

Eventhough Dr. Gnaniah passed away still the Rathapuram people are remembering him by affectionately calling him uncle Gnaniah. This kind of medical work uplifted the Dalits in southern Tirunelveli District. Along with this medical work gave formal education to the Dalits. Even now the Salvation Army is having one High School, one Middle School and eight Primary Schools in Rathapuram and Vallioor areas. The Salvation Army not only uplifted the Dalits it also supported the high caste needy people.

Sankaneri was a village comprising of many caste people. There was a rich Vellala called Subramaniam.

He Opposed the Salvation Army and its work purposey. Once he fought with the Dalits and tortured them mercilessly. On knowing this, the Divisional Commander of Vallioor Colonel P.Nallathambi went to Sankaneri to compromise with the rich men but the rough rich men assaulted Nallathambi. So his turben fell down filed Nallathambi challenged the rich man and filed suit against him.

23 Personal Interview with Mr. Vethanayagam, Radhapuram, 28.12.2002.
The case prolonged for many years that the rich man sold his property and became pauper. The case was also lost by him. On knowing his poverty, the future leader of the Salvation Army appointed the grandson of the once rich man as a teacher in the Salvation Army school. The Junior Subramaniam is retiring this year from a school in Vallioor Division.

After Turner the famous doctor\textsuperscript{25}, William Alexander Noble, a Scott by birth, citizen of America came to Nagercoil to succeed as the Chief Medical Officer of CBH.

For more than forty years he served the community and extended the facility of CBH. William was constantly beside with the request urging the extension of medical services and dispensaries in areas were there where in no facilities at all. Where the need was great, he would leave one nurse, if possible, two or a compoudner to provide a good measure of first aid to the village people. He was in full compassion for the poor and needy specially the Dalits. During 1940 cholera epidemetic broke out in the northern party of Thovala Taluk. Dr. Noble and his staff visited village to village and served the people.

For one month they used the Salvation Army Hall at \textsuperscript{26}Ratnapuram as their temporary dispensary. During 1938 William Noble started the School of Nursing at Catherine Booth Hospital to educate the men and women of Indian Dalits in the medical field.

\textsuperscript{26} Major. Y. Peter, \textit{Op.cit.}, P. 40.
That school is still operating and it had produced many hundreds of Nurses. Many of the products of the CBH School of Nursing are serving in many parts of the world, specially in the Arabian countries. Dr. William Noble had a good friendship with the Travancore king’s family. So the royal family supported him much by building many wards in the CBH. In 1958 Dec.1 Mathavanthambi Women and Children's Ward was opened by the support of the Travancore Royal family.

**Dalit Doctors**

Though the School of Medicine was not continued by the Salvation Army, it had produced some good doctors from the Dalit community. 27 Doctor Sara Daniel was one among the many Dalit doctors produced by the Salvation Army. Sara. Daniel was a daughter of an officer of the Salvation Army. Her parents being a Divisional Commanders, Sara had the opportunity to see the activities of Dr. Noble. On seeing the great demand for medical people for the Dalits Sara dedicated herself to be an officer and a doctor in the Salvation Army. She became an officer from Trivandrum in 1927. She was selected for medical training under the renowned Dr. Idascudder at the Christian Medical College Vellore.

In 1937 she became a doctor with special quality for women and child patients. This dedicated woman had found a field in which she was to serve with compassion and efficiency for more than a generation. Nurses training also

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formed as important part of her responsibility. She served thirty years in the Cathrine Booth Hospital for women and children. Major Peter the Present district officer of the Salvation Army, Tuticorin District remembers highly about the service of Sara Daniel and calling her as his guardian angel.

While he was eight days old the famous Dr. Noble told his mother that this boy will die within eight hours. While the mother was weeping, the child specialist came as a guardian angel and argued with Dr. Noble to give treatment to the boy. By the continued pleading of Dr. Sara Daniel, Dr. Noble accepted and cured the boy. Passing 45 years he is still remembering the mercy of Dr. Sara Daniel.

Dr. K.C. Joseph

Another young Indian Dalit selected for medical training by the Salvation Army was Captain K.C. Joseph. He had his medical studies at the Miraj-Mission Medical School. He became an officer in the Salvation Army in 1930 from Naranganam Thiravallar. First he was appointed at CBH, Nagercoil and served in succeeding years at its branch Hospitals at Kangazha, Chemponvillai, Rathapuram and Aralvaimozhi. This doctor K.C. Joseph also a Dalit of Kerala rose to the level of Lieu.Colonel of the Salvation Army and a recognized leprologist and a member of the International Leprosy Association.

This is another evidence for the Salvation Army uplifting the Dalits through formal as well as medical education.

Dalit Nurses

In the year 1938, May 24, the Salvation Army Catherine Booth hospital had its first batch of nurses being trained in its own premises. Dr. William Alexander Noble, the Chief Medical Officer with a help of the British as well as Travancore governments got the permission of starting a School of Nursing. For the last 64 years the School of Nursing had produced so many excellent nurses. Men and women we can see some of the special nurses trained by CBH.

Sughanantham

A young man from Kadetty near Suchindram entered into the 1st batch of the Salvation Army Nurses Training at CBH. As a wonderful student and a sincere nurse, he rose to the rank of Commissioner in the Salvation Army.

This gentleman became Nursing Superintendent and a senior lecturer in the School of Nursing and honoured by the Indian Medical Council as one of the best nurses. Sughanantham also was a member of Sambavar community (Dalit).

Grace Sughanantham

A daughter of an officer Major Philip, Grace became a Salvation Army officer and entered into the School of Nursing and became a nurse. After marriage with Sughanantham, she served as theatre sister assisting the famous

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Dr. Noble in the operation theatre. She too is a member of Dalit community. She was awarded order of the founder from the Salvation Army International Head Quarters - the highest award of the Army during Sep. 1988.

**Mrs. Rani**

A daughter of Mr. Poomaniraj of Talakudi from a well reputed family she too became a nurse. Being trained at the CBH, she had her full service in the reputed hospital because of her nursing studies. Her children also entered into the medical field because of that she became a rich landlady. She is also a Dalit Christian.

**Sister Anbai**

A daughter of the Salvation Army officer became a nurse and in later days, she served as Nursing Superintendent at CBH.

**Mr. A. Yesuraj**

A son of a Salvationists of Chakkapatthu was trained as a male nurse in the CBH and presently serving in the USA. He is supporting the Salvation Army by giving lakhs of rupees as self denial to the Salvation Army. He too is a Dalit Salvationist.
Mr. I. Arthor

A son of a Salvation Army officer of Arrsankuzhi served as a nurse in CBH and in abroad still remembers the help of the Army for his studies. He is still supporting the Army and always thankful to the Army. He too is a Dalit Salvationists.

Mr. Samuel

As a son of an officer of Vijayanarayanam Samuel became a nurse through the Salvation Army hospital in Dhariwal (Punjab). As the Salvation Army helped him to undergo his training he became rich and supported poor parents and his brothers and sisters. Mr. Samuel is well-known as a rich person in Vallioor. He says all his wealth came by Salvation Army.