CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

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This investigation is aimed at finding out the significant educational developments with reference to social (including geographic, religious and linguistic), economic and political conditions that prevailed in the erstwhile princely State of Travancore from 1817 to 1947. Historical method was found suitable here for the collection, interpretation and analysis of the data.

3.1 Historical Method

Historical method is a technique developed to present past events in their correct perspective. Historical method was used here to recount certain aspects of educational developments in the erstwhile Travancore State with the help of authentic evidences. Historical research is digging into the past in order to re-enact the past in its entirety, to reconstruct the past events as fully as they must have happened, to explain the meaning and significance of those events, to correct the wrong notions so long prevalent, if any, and to elaborate, analyse, synthesise and philosophise the ideas in the light of the knowledge we possess. This method is mainly used in this study to have a correct perspective of the past, and try to understand the present in the light of the past educational events and developments. Historical analysis may be directed towards an individual, an idea, a movement or an institution.

In the present study a coherent picture of the educational history of this remote princely State was attempted taking into consideration the many fold causal factors.

Historical research is quite different from other forms of research such as survey and experimental studies. But a historical researcher too has to pass through similar stages such as selecting, stating and delimiting the problem. The rationale behind the selection of the research problem and limitations of the study

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were presented in Chapter I. According to Borg, historical research is the systematic, and objective location, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions concerning past-events\(^1\).

The three major steps characteristic of the historical type of research are:

1. Collection of data through primary and secondary sources.
2. External and internal criticisms of the data collected.
3. Presentation of facts in a reasonable form involving problems of organisation, exposition and interpretation.

In this study, all these steps are strictly and diligently followed to make the study objective and precise.

### 3.2 Collection of Data

Historical studies in education are based on two types of data—Primary and Secondary. The investigator's first step in evaluating the adequacy of her source materials is to distinguish between evidence from primary sources and evidence from secondary sources.

#### 3.2.1 Primary Sources

The primary sources, the only solid basis of historical research, are the original documents or remains and the first witness to a fact\(^2\).

Primary sources are data provided by actual witnesses to the incident in question. They include consciously transmitted information such as written documents and inscriptions, oral traditions and artistic production, unconscious testimony including relics monuments, etc.

Documents are the records written and kept by actual participants in, or witnesses of an event. Documents include a wide range of witnesses of an event. Documents include a wide range of written and printed materials recorded for the purpose of transmitting information\(^3\). Documents classified as primary sources are

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constitutions, charters, laws, court decisions, official minutes or records, autobiographies, letters, diaries, genealogies, contracts, deeds, wills, permits, licenses, affidavits, dispositions, declarations, proclamations, rescripts, certificates, lists, hand bills, bills, receipts, newspapers and magazines, accounts, advertisements, maps, diagrams, books, pamphlets, catalogues, films, pictures, paintings, inscriptions, transcriptions and research reports.

The chief documents used in present study are the neetu or rescripts issued by the rulers of Travancore. Over two hundred neetu having educational, cultural and social significance were consulted in original, of which about forty were selected for intense study and analysis. These include several neetu issued by Rāṇi Gowri Pārvati Bāi in 992 and 993 M.E (AD 1817 and 1818 respectively) on vernacular education, English education the famous neetu declaring education as a State responsibility. Several other neetus issued by her illustrious successors like Swāthi Thirunāl, Ayilyam Thirunāl, Uthram Thirunāl and Śrī Moolam Thirunāl were consulted. These Royal rescripts throw light on diverse aspects of education such as opening of schools, granting lands and other facilities, appointment of teachers, salary paid for the teachers, conduct of educational inspections and such other related measures.

Other than the Royal rescripts, primary sources such as Administration Reports of the Education Department, Travancore, Report of the Travancore University Committee (1923-24), Report of Travancore Education Reforms Committee (1932), Annual Reports of the University of Travancore and other Government publications were profusely utilised for the study. Letters written by missionaries, Regents and Royal Personages were also studied to the extent that they throw valuable insight into the problem. Some of the laws passed in the Śree Moolam Popular Assembly, such as the one introducing compulsory primary education in Travancore, were also taken into account. A detailed description about each and every document is not attempted here as they are presented in the body of the report and also in the appendix.

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1 See Appendix No. 1-41.
3.2.2 Secondary Sources

For a good research work it is necessary for the researcher to search her data from as many primary sources as she can. But in the absence of Primary sources, she has to depend on Secondary sources. Secondary sources may be very useful in providing information about Primary sources. To quote Moully 'the Secondary Sources are useful, but should not be taken as final'. Secondary sources are those in which the person describing the event was not present but has obtained his description from some one else who may or may not have directly observed the event. Most history text books, encyclopaedias and other books on education used in the study are examples of secondary sources.

The important Secondary sources used in the present study include Travancore State Manuals by Velu Pillai and Nagam Aiya, History of Travancore by Shungoony Menon, K.M. Panikkar, Padmanabha Menon, Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, Padmanabha Iyer and Sreedhara Menon, Kerala District Gazetteers, Journals, Pamphlets, Souvenirs, Calendars, earlier research studies in Kerala History and history of education, and other publications. In fact, many of the Secondary Sources indicated above were consulted first in order to obtain scholarship in the field, to get an orientation into the problems and approaches and also to get an idea of the main primary sources. The investigator also became aware of the gaps in existing knowledge on the factual side as well as in aspects of educational interpretation, through a careful study of secondary sources.

3.3 Historical Criticism

The evaluation of historical sources is usually referred to as historical criticism. The investigator while in the process of gathering research data, concurrently resorted to an evaluation of the data. In as much as the pertinent documents provided the sole source of information for the study, the evaluation of

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these documents was of critical importance in helping the researcher to place each bit of information in its proper perspective and draw sound conclusions from the total picture obtained. In the present study all the sources, both primary and secondary, have been examined very carefully subjecting them to historical criticism. There are two types of historical criticisms-external and internal.

3.3.1 **External criticism**

External criticism establishes the authenticity or genuineness of data\(^1\). As Good and Scates have pointed out, "external criticism is concerned with the genuineness of the document itself, whether it really is what it purports or seems to be and whether it reads true to the original"\(^2\). External criticism is therefore aimed primarily at the document itself, rather than the statements contained in the document. "A careful study of a document can give us a great many clues concerning its authenticity\(^3\). The problem of establishing the age or authorship of documents may require intricate tests of signature, handwriting, spellings, language usage, documentation, knowledge available at the time, and consistency with what is known\(^4\). External criticism or critical scholarship would enable a researcher to solve the problem of authenticity. This job of criticism would be over if the author, place and time of the document are established\(^5\).

As the period covered in this study (A.D.1817-1947) is relatively recent, some of the major difficulties which historians of the ancient and medieval period face regarding the genuineness of the documents did not arise here. Fortunately almost all documents collected from innumerable archival repositories of Kerala did possess a precise indication of the name of author, place and date. Besides, the Travancore Government had, throughout the period under study maintained a systematic scheme of maintaining documents. This does not mean that materials pertaining the manifold aspects of Kerala history and education are

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\(^1\) John, W. Best. *op. cit.*, p.350

\(^2\) Carter, V. Good and Douglas, E. Scates. *op. cit.*, p.188.


subjected to historical criticism either by government or private agencies. Many of
the documents examined by the investigator have already been subjected to external
criticism, wherever necessary, by archaeologists, specialists in charge of archives and
document centres, and researchers in Malayalam literature, History and Kerala
studies. Hence the problem of subjecting every piece of material for external
criticism did not arise here. However, while the old and vernacular materials in the
archives were themselves studied, those principles of criticism were also kept in mind.

3.3.2 Internal criticism

Internal criticism is aimed at evaluating the accuracy or worth of the
documents collected. Good and Scates have clearly brought out the distinction
between external and internal criticisms. "Internal criticism deals with the meaning
and trustworthiness of statements that remain within the document after any spurious
or interpolated matter has been removed from the text. In other words, external
criticism deals with data relating to form and appearance rather than meaning of
contents, whereas internal criticism weighs the testimony of the document in relation
to the truth."1

Borg insists that the task of evaluating the accuracy and worth of the
data contained in the document must be undertaken after the authenticity of a
document has been established. According to him internal criticism involves
evaluating the writer, his biases, and his possible motives for distortion.2 Several
principles of internal criticism have been laid out by the experiments of the historical
method such as differentiating between the literary meaning and real meaning of the
statements, judging the competency of the author, determining the truthfulness,
honesty and bias of the author.3 The emphasis now shifts from the documents as such
to the statements within the document. Positive internal criticism seeks to discover
the literary meaning and the real meaning of the text. In negative internal criticism

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"every possible reason is sought for disbelieving the statements made, questioning critically the good faith and accuracy of the author."

Thomas Woody listed several basic principles of internal criticism.

1. Do not read into earlier documents the conceptions of later times.
2. Do not judge an author ignored of certain events, necessarily because he fails to mention them, or that they did not occur for the same reason.
3. Underestimating a source is no less an error than overestimating it in the same degree, and there is no more virtue in placing an event too late than in dating it too early by the same number of years or centuries.
4. A single true source may establish the existence of an idea. But other direct, competent, independent witnesses are required to prove the reality of events or objective facts.
5. Incidental errors prove the dependence of sources on each other or a common source.
6. If witnesses contradict each other on certain point, one or the other may be true, but both may be in error.
7. Direct, competent, independent witnesses who report the same central fact and also many peripheral matters in a casual way may be accepted for the points of their agreement.
8. Efficient testimonies, oral or written must be confirmed with unofficial testimony whenever possible for neither one nor the other is alone sufficient.
9. A document may provide competent and dependable evidence on certain points, yet carry no weight in respect to other it mentions.

Many of the principles stated above apply as much to the educational history of Kerala as to fundamental historical research from which context most of the principles seem to have derived. But the history of education particularly pertaining to a princely State in India during the British Period calls for certain special evaluative criteria. Apart from the genuineness of the document and its worth in terms of general social significance, certain special questions arise. What are the factors

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}, p. 198.\)
visible and invisible behind a decree or its operation? Were the sovereigns compelled by any extraneous forces to move according to the times? Whether the British Residents in Travancore had a significant role in these developments?

It would be quite obvious that one individual working over a limited period of time would not be able to answer these and similar questions fully and exhaustively. However, an honest attempt was made in the study to subject every bit of information to a thorough appraisal to make the study as objective as possible. In order to find out the validity of the documents, the investigator has compared, contrasted and supplemented many of the documents with the originals. Where primary sources failed to fill up the gaps, secondary works of well known authors have sufficiently been referred to.

In the present study the investigator has used internal criticism to evaluate the accuracies or worth of the documents collected. It was found out that, all the documents used in the study, reveal a true picture of the problem under investigation. Through positive internal criticism the investigator has revealed the literal and real meaning of the text which were used in the study. Negative internal criticism helped to seek every possible reason for disbelieving the statements made.

3.4 Historical Report Writing

Historical composition is a synthetic and constructive process that involves the mechanical problem of documentation, the logical problem of selection and arrangement of topic and sub-topic and philosophical problem of interpretation. It involves the same steps in giving complete footnotes and bibliographical references as in any other scientific investigation.

3.4.1 Selection and organisation

A good writer of educational history, must know the historical value and significant of each topic. She must have a historical perspective and this must guide her for the purpose of narrating and selecting the relevant materials and meaningful data.

The relative importance of events and topics has to be carefully calculated and kept in mind while selecting the data. Good history of education observes the conditions of good story telling, shows purpose and meaning and provides background for better understanding of current problems.

3.4.2 Interpretation and synthesis

Interpretation of the data must be made from the standpoint of whatever hypothesis or theory the data will most adequately support. Isolated facts have no meaning and a mere listing of historical occurrences is not research. The most recent and popular theory is one which is a combination of men and events. A vigorous interpretation of data requires the investigator to have a background of archaeology, geography, literature, art etc. "It is necessary that the data considered in relation to another, synthesized into generalization or conclusion which place their overall significance in focus."

3.5 Style of Writing

Simplicity, dignity, power, lucidity, and objectivity are the qualities that are often found desirable for a good historical writing. The historian may sometimes indulge in a little colour, to make the dry facts of history more interesting. In short, the style of historical composition must be dignified and objective, free from faults and frills, but not dull or uninteresting.

In the present study all the procedures such as giving complete footnotes, detailed bibliographical reference etc. are strictly followed in writing the report of the historical research. Only the relevant materials and meaningful data are selected. Every effort is made by the investigator to attain the qualities, condensation precision and concentration for the historical narrative. The qualities like simplicity, dignity objectivity etc are kept in mind while writing the report.

1 Ibid. pp 40-47
2 George. J. Moul. op. cit. p. 205.