Chapter IV

Historical Background of Tirunelveli Diocese,
CHAPTER IV
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TIRUNELVELI DIOCESE

4.1 Introduction

Tirunelveli Diocese comprises the geographical districts of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi in the south east of Tamil Nadu. These districts were exposed to Christianity when European companies came to trade with India. Vasco-de Gama reached Calicut in 1498. Before long, the Portuguese were well-entrenched in Goa and Cochin, but they had no such great desire to preach the Gospel to the Indians.¹

4.2 The Roman Catholic Mission

In October 1542 Francis Xavier, one of the outstanding missionaries of Pope landed at Manappad and decided to make his way to Thoothukudi on foot.² St. Francis Xavier did the most effective work among the fisher folk from October 1542 to November 1544.³ From 1600 onwards, the Madura Mission of the Jesuits established many Churches in Tirunelveli District. The Tirunelveli region became the earliest mission territory of the Catholic Mission.⁴

Seventeenth Century

In 1600 Christianity began to spread from the coastal areas to the interior areas of Tirunelveli.⁵ From 1621, the Catholic population went up rapidly in the interior parts of Tirunelveli. Most of the Churches had no regular pastoral supervision. It directly affected the growth of Catholic Mission in Tirunelveli region.⁶

4.3 The Dutch Mission

The British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company were formed in 1600 and 1602 respectively. The Dutch was the first to bring Protestant Mission to Tirunelveli.

² Joseph Thekkedath, History of Christianity in India, Volume II, Church History Association of India, Bangalore, 1988, Chapter 9, p. 155.
³ Ibid. Chapter 9, p. 155.
In 1658 the Dutch captured Thoothukudi from the Portuguese. They built an extremely plain but massive Church in Thoothukudi in 1750. This is the oldest Protestant Christian Church in Tirunelveli. The Dutch contribution to Tirunelveli Church is negligible.

4.4 The Danish Mission

In 1621 the Danes came to India and acquired a tiny trade settlement at Tarangampadi from the Raja of Thanjavur. In 1705, King Fredrick IV instituted the Danish Royal Mission. In July, 1706 Bertholomew Ziegenbalg and Hentry Pluteschau were the first Protestant missionaries who came to India from Germany through the Danish Mission. They set up a school at Tarangampadi to learn Tamil and sat on the ground with students and translated the New Testament.

4.5 SPCK Mission (1770-1820)

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge shortly called SPCK offered necessary financial reinforcements to the missionary efforts. The timely assistance enabled a number of German Missionaries to come to India and the greatest among them was Christian Friedrick Schwartz, one of the early illustrious missionaries to who join the Tarangampadi Mission. The history of Protestant missionaries' effort in Tirunelveli was during the era of the Poligar wars. Schwartz served the Tarangambadi Mission from 1750 until his death in 1798 without returning to Europe.

4.6 Eighteenth Century

In 1770, Trichy had a sizeable Christian Congregation. Business persons coming to Trichy sometimes changed their faith and returned home as Christians. The first Ramnad convert is one such example. “It was through such migration of individuals that our church in Tirunelveli had its beginning”. On 10th August 1770, baptism of Lakshmanan, a 20-year old youth from Tirunelveli was baptised as Gnanapragasam. The first notice of Tirunelveli occurs in the Journals of Schwartz for the year 1771, as ‘At Palayamkottai, a fort and one of the chief...”

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7 D.S. George Muller, op. cit., p.235.
8 James Baughan, The Trident, the Crescent and the Cross, 1876, p.281.
10 H.R. Pate, Tirunelveli District Gazetteer 1916 Documentation Service Series - 1, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli 1993, p. 93.
12 D.S. George Muller, op. cit., p.6.
towns of Tirunelveli, about 200 miles from Trichy, there resided a Christian of Tirunelveli Congregation and his name was Savarimuthu".  

In February, 1778 Schwartz visited Palayamkottai for the first time and baptised Kohila with the converted name Clorinda, on 03 March, 1778 at Palayamkottai. The baptism of Clorinda was considered a milestone in the annals of the CSI Tirunelveli Diocese. Tirunelveli Church also calls Clorinda as the mother of the congregation of Tirunelveli.

Clorinda preached the Gospel with redoubled zeal and her house became the meeting place for many women. The Rev. Schwartz and his assistant the Rev. Pohle visited Palayamkottai in June, 1779 and was much impressed by the leadership of Clorinda to the Christian Community. The Rev. Pohle baptised Clorinda’s servant as John on June, 29, 1779 and on June 30, 1779, he performed his marriage with the 18-year old Mariyammal, Clorinda’s foster daughter. With these baptisms and marriages the Church in Tirunelveli started well. Thus the Church in Palayamkottai took an organised shape in 1779 as the starting point of the history of Tirunelveli Church. The year 1780 was the year of the Origin of Tirunelveli Congregation in the Protestant Diocese. Bishop Caldwell writes that he discovered 40 names representing as many as 13 castes - that of Clorinda heading the list in 1780.

The little building of the first English Church was erected between 1780 and 1785 in Palayamkottai. In 1784 Clorinda had built a prayer house in Tirunelveli. Clorinda took much effort for the growth of the infant church. She distributed Bible extracts and Christian literatures which she had collected from Tanjore for propagating Christianity. In January,

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19 R. Caldwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-12.
20 *Extract from the Gazetteer of Tirunelveli District*, Tirunelveli, 1960, p. 481.
1785, Schwartz sent Sathianathan to Tirunelveli who returned with a glowing report about the infant church. He conveyed Clorinda's invitation to Schwartz to consecrate her Church.\textsuperscript{23}

In August 1785, Schwartz undertook another journey to Tirunelveli and stayed in Palayamkottai for three weeks, preaching the Gospel twice and even thrice a day. Clorinda built a Church in 1785 and Schwartz dedicated the Church built by Clorinda at Palayamkottai in 1785. He took two young men with him to Thanjavur of whom one was 17-year old and a hopeful son of the poet Devesahayam who was to blossom later into the renowned Tamil poet and lyricist Vedanayaka Sastriyar.\textsuperscript{24} Schwartz had for a long time approved the policy of buying land and making Christian settlements. In a letter to S.P.C.K. of January, 1786, he had said that he had the idea for fifteen or more years. Several of such settlements were formed in Tirunelveli between 1799 and 1805.\textsuperscript{25} Schwartz left the Congregation in the hands of Sathianathan, who was later ordained. Thanks to the sustained labours of Sathianathan and his zealous assistant like Clorinda, the Tirunelveli Church had 400 members on its roll.\textsuperscript{26} Between 1785 and 1816, the Indian Clergy assisted Missionaries and Catechists to visit Tirunelveli District and founded Churches and Schools.\textsuperscript{27} J.D. Jaenike was the first Tranquebar Missionary from Thanjavur who stayed in Palayamkottai from 1791 to 1880. He made use of every opportunity to meet people and tell them about Christ.\textsuperscript{28} Dr. J.P. Rottler came to Tirunelveli from Tanjore in October 1795. Following the steps of Schwartz, Joenick devoted himself to the great work of preaching the Gospel. In those days this was the widely-used technique to convert the people to Christianity.\textsuperscript{29}

David Sundaranandam of Vijayaramapuram, who became a Christian at Thanjavur returned to his village and lost no time in telling his people about Jesus Christ. Owing to his efforts, 20 persons (mostly David's relatives) were baptised in Shunmugapuram - the nucleus

\textsuperscript{24} V. Henry Packinathan, \textit{op. cit.}, 1980, p. XX1.
\textsuperscript{25} F.J. Western, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 93-94.
\textsuperscript{26} D. G. George Muller, \textit{Portrait of A Diocese}, Church of South India, 1992, p.6.
\textsuperscript{27} H. Sharp, \textit{Selections from Educational Records (1781-1839)}, The National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1920, p. 194.
\textsuperscript{28} D.S. George Muller, \textit{op. cit.}, p.6.
\textsuperscript{29} V. Henry Packianathan, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. IX-XII.
of the present Kadachapuram. In October, 1797, another 20 persons were baptised at Vijayaramapuram. The new converts were tormented by the non-Christians and they migrated in a body to a place few miles away from these villages. David bought a land in August, 1799 in the name of Rev. Jaenicke. He built a prayer house and dug a well. Being the first purely Christian settlement in Tirunelveli, it was named as Mudalur (the first village).

4.7 Nineteenth Century

In February 1800, Gericke who undertook a eleven-day tour to Tirunelveli to assist Sathianathan, paid a visit to Panjalamkurichi - the last Poligar strong-hold which was taken by the British on 24th May 1801. Owing to the spread of the last Poligar rebellion, he was stranded there. During the year 1801 Tirunelveli Church suffered a lot. The Church was badly shaken but not uprooted. Between May 1801 and October 1802 as many as 5457 persons were baptised. The Nawab Government had come to an end and the entire Tirunelveli district had been ceded to the British in 1801. As the converted Christians refused to pay taxes to the Hindu temples, the Hindus threatened the converted Christians. The converts appealed to the missionaries for protection.

Rev. Kohlhoff, who succeeded Schwartz in 1798, visited Tirunelveli in 1803, only once in the course of his life. The Rev. Kohlhoff purchased a land in the west of Chanbathu village (now it is called Nazareth) for Rs. 28/- in 1803 for a Christian settlement with an aim to protect the converted Christians from the hardship of their fellowmen. At that time there were more than 6000 Christians in Tirunelveli. He met the Collector and the Assistant Collector, who assured full protection to the Christians. The distressing news reached the S.P.C.K. London, and they took steps for the protection of Christians from Hindus and Mohammadans. No ordained minister was available to take Sathiananthan’s place on his retirement. In 1806, Kohlhoff quickly sent Ringaltaube of the London Missionary Society to Palayamkottai. The S.P.C.K. objected to the arrangements made by Kohlhoff and instructed its Missionaries not to have any

32 K. Samuel Jebakumar, op. cit., p.45.
33 Caldwell, op. cit., p.5.
34 F.J. Western, op. cit., p. 94.
35 Caldwell, op. cit., p.25.
37 H.R. Pate Tirunelveli District Gazetter, M.S. University, Tirunelveli, 1916, p. 194.
dealings with the London Missionary Society Missionary and so he faded out of the scene in 1808. Ringeltaube took fresh fields and pastures new in South Travancore, where his labours for the next eight years seemed to have been more rewarding. Rev. James Hough, the first Chaplain in the cantonment of the East India Company, took earnest efforts for the Missionary work. He learnt Tamil and toured the district extensively. In villages, he could see the fire of faith still faintly sparking in the hearts of the poor, illiterate and marginalised people. He revived and reorganised the church within the four years he stayed there. The second founder of the church in Tirunelveli, Rev. James Hough was instrumental in inviting the Church Missionary Society to Tirunelveli. Owing to epidemic fever accompanied by a severe famine in 1812-1813, the Tirunelveli Christian Community stood quite helpless. These things made people feel that they were being punished by their former deities. The visit of Bishop Middleton brightened the dark period of the Tirunelveli Christians.

At first Hough began securing the aids from CMS for the schools he had set up in Palayamkottai and Tirunelveli. He purchased ideal sites with much foresight and put in his own fund and whatever he could raise through subscription from the local British residents and from the Collector, John Cotton. More schools were soon opened in Tachanallur, Melapalayam and Thoothukudi. He started the first Seminary in Tirunelveli in 1818 for Christian boys who could be trained to become Catechists and Teachers later.

Hough visited various Christian centres in Tirunelveli on 10th September, 1818 and submitted a masterly report of Tirunelveli Church, its strength and weaknesses in September, 1819. Hough transferred the seven schools he had started in CMS account to the S.P.C.K. account and started two more schools for girls at Nazareth and Mudulur. Hough received assistance from S.P.C.K. Mission at right time and paved the way for the entry of CMS into Tirunelveli. In order to honour him the Tirunelveli Church named a village after him as Houghyarpuram. Hough had served in several capacities as a military Chaplain, builder of many Institutions and founder of Seminaries. He cared for quality and not for quantity of

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38 D.S. George Muller, *op. cit.*, p.17.
40 V. Henry Packinathan, *op. cit.*, p. XVII.
converts. He entreated the CMS earnestly to send missionaries and left Palayamkottai only after Rhenius arrived. Later in England Hough wrote in the exhaustive volumes 'A History of Christianity in India'. Both the missionaries of the CMS and the S.P.G established Churches and Schools in the district following the policy that every village in Tirunelveli should have a church and every church, a school.  

4.8 CMS in Tirunelveli (1820 -1896)

Rhenius arrived at Palayamkottai on 17th July 1820. To quote Paul Appasamy, “During the whole of the decade and the major portion of the next, the history of the Mission is practically the history of Rhenius himself and his multifarious activities”. Again, Caldwell noted in his lectures on Tirunelveli Mission, in 1857 in London: “Rhenius was one of the ablest, most zealous of missionaries that India had ever seen. “The Tirunelveli Mission is in a great measure indebted to him for the progressive element apparent in its history”. In 1824, Rhenius purchased a piece of land from his friend and philanthropist Vengu Mudaliar. He built a Church which is the basis for the present Holy Trinity Cathedral, an imposing landmark in the whole district. Hough had handed over eleven schools and three churches in and around Palayamkottai. Berhard Schmid was in charge of these schools. Rhenius dedicated all his energy to congregational work.

As a result of his endeavour, small congregations were formed in Sattankulam (1823), Neduvilai/Meignanapuram (1825), Idayankulam (1827), Asirvathapuram (1828), Nallur (1832) and Surandai (1833). As there was a threat of persecuting the Christians, Rhenius colonised in 1827, the Christians of Puliyoorkurichi in a village and named it Dohnavur in 1827. In 1836, he built a Church in Tirunelveli Town. Rhenius introduced the ‘Tract Fund’. It was called Pidi Arisi Kanikkai (the offering of the handful of rice). Christian women took and saved a

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47 CSI Tirunelveli Diocesan Website, WWW/csitrirunelveli.org. p.2.
48 Henry Packianathan, op. cit., p. XXII.
49 CSI Tirunelveli Diocesan Website op. cit., p.2.
handful of rice everyday from the rice taken for cooking the daily meal in a box of local church. The Sexton will collect it every week-end.\textsuperscript{50}

Rhenius followed the custom of summoning the Catechists once a month to equip them to do the gospel and school work. He encouraged the local people to support their own churches by initiating the ‘Native Philanthropic Society’. He also started “Poor Fund” in 1832 to feed the poor people. On 9th July, 1834, he formed the Tirunelveli Catechists’ and Teacher-Widows’ Fund to help the poor and needy widows. In 1835, he established the CMS Gospel Mission to enhance evangelistic work in new areas. Thus, the old congregation was taught to support other new churches.\textsuperscript{51}

Rhenius founded several useful societies among the people, particularly the Dharma Sangam, or native philanthropic society, for the purchase of land and houses as a refuge for converts who were persecuted. Several Christian villages sprang up under the auspices of this organisation, such as Kadachapuram (Grace village), Swuriseshapuram (Gospel village) and Nallur(Good Town). He did excellent translational and literary work.\textsuperscript{52}

In 1836, the SPG was able to send an English missionary Rev. C. Hubbard to district of Tirunelveli, together with two Germans in English orders.\textsuperscript{53} Rhenius, the most notable missionary that the district has known, preached and commended audience of Christians and non-Christians alike. Rhenius set up as many as 371 congregations in Tirunelveli all within fifteen years by his earnest and systematic work. He died on 15th July 1838.\textsuperscript{54}

Rev. George Pettitt, who succeeded Rhenius, is best remembered as the builder of the majestic steeple of the Holy Trinity Church in 1845. Besides, he built Churches at Alwarthirunagari, Dohnavur and Pannavilai between 1846 to 1849. The Rev. John Thomas came to Meignanapuram, Nalumavadi and Vellalanvilai as a missionary in 1837. As a result

\textsuperscript{50} Jason. S. Dharmaraj, former Bishop in Tirunelveli, German Contribution to Tirunelveli Church, A paper presented in the Bishop Stephen Neill Ecumenical Study and Research Centre, Palayamkottai, 1996, p.3.

\textsuperscript{51} Bicentenary of Tirunelveli Church (1780-1780), Commemoration Souvenir, Palayamkottai, 1980, pp A 26-A 27.


\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 319.

\textsuperscript{54} Tirunelveli Diocesan Website op. cit., p.2.
of the devoted service of Ragland, Satchiapuram near Sivakasi came into being. Thus the CMS managed to propagate Christianity all over Tirunelveli District.55

The Rev. J.T. Trecker, CMS missionary who worked in Tirunelveli for 20 years, baptized 3000 converts and built sixty simple churches. Rev. Scott Price instituted Children’s Mission in 1892. CMS founded the Printing Press in 1847 and CMS Book Depot in 1882. Palayamkottai was a CMS head-quarters in 1892 and it was the highest for CMS Centres in the World because thirty five Missionaries were stationed in Palayamkottai. The CMS rendered a yeomen service to the poor and downtrodden and served as an educational agency; in particular CMS had made a great impact on the community.56

4.9 SPG in Tirunelveli (1829-1896)

In 1837, the SPG appointed the Rev. Charles Hubbard as the first SPG missionary in Tirunelveli. He was transferred to Madurai in 1838. The Rev. A.F.Caemmerar succeeded him in May 1938. In 1841, Rev. R. Caldwell, one of the greatest Indian missionaries, came to Tirunelveli. The work of Caldwell has the greatest impact of missions in South India on the education and consequent socio-economic and political mobilisation of communities who previously had lower socio-economic status.57 He was appointed as the Special Supervisor of the SPG in Tirunelveli and Ramnad. He loved Tamil and devoted much time to literary work. The people in Nagalapuram area irrespective of their caste and religion loved the great missionary, a Tamil Scholar and a warm human being.58

Rev. Christian Samuel ministered at Mudalur from 1839. Meanwhile, the second Bishop of the Diocese of Madras, the Rt. Rev. G.J.T. Spencer visited Tirunelveli in January, 1841. In that year, the congregation of Tirunelveli had about 30,000 members. Dr. G.U. Pope came in 1842 and established the Sawyerpuram Seminary in 1844. It is significant that Dr. Pope’s seminary blossomed into a college.59 The important figure in the Missionary movement in north Tirunelveli during 1846-1858 was Rev. Thomas Gajetan Ragland from CMS. His areas of

55 V. Henry Packianathan op. cit., pp XXVII-XXXV.
59 CSI Tirunelveli Diocesan Website op. cit., p.4.
activities were in Viruthunagar and Sivakasi. In 1859, the Rev. Thomas Brotherton started the mission work at Nazareth. In 1870, the Rev. Dr. Strachan succeeded him. He was the founder of SPG Medical Mission in Tirunelveli. In 1870 he opened the first dispensary in Nazareth. Through this hospital the patients from places forty to fifty miles away were benefitted. From 1876 to 1908 the Rev. Arthur Margoschis worked at Nazareth. The SPG had churches at the villages of Pillayanmani, Agapaikulam, Oyyaongudi, Mudalur, Nazareth, Pudukottai, Puthiamputtur, Nagalapuram and Idaiyangudi. In 1879, the CMS had about 34,484 Christians in 875 villages and the SPG had about 24,719 Christians in 631 villages. The Rt. Rev. Sargent administered all the CMS Churches till 1889 and the Rt. Rev. Caldwell administered all the SPG Churches till 1891. In 1851, there were 34,928 Christians in Tirunelveli (The CMS Mission 24,613 and the SPG Mission 10,315). The Rev. Walker introduced the Harvest Festival in 1891. The first Harvest Festival was held in 1891 at Sachiapuram. In 1880 CMS and SPG joined hands in celebrating the first Harvest Festival in Tirunelveli.

The Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel selected Tirunelveli District for their important mission and field and turned out to be one of the most fertile areas for conversion of Shanars. The Tirunelveli Shanars belonged to one of the lowest strata of the caste hierarchy in South India. The growth of Christianity among the Tirunelveli Shanars was most rapid and extensive. Christianity had spread among other lower castes and few higher castes in Tirunelveli District. The Shanars were the largest and the most important sections of the Protestant Church in Tirunelveli District. One of the important SPG

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64 D.S. George Muller, Portrait of a Diocese, op.cit., p.8.
67 The Church Missionary Intelligence, Bishop of Calcutta on the Tirunelveli Missions, Vol. 1 (new series) 1865, p. 133.
Mission Stations in Tirunelveli District was Nazareth. It was the Chief Shanar Christian Centre in the region.  

4.10 CEMS in Tirunelveli (1874)

In many parts of India, particularly in Tirunelveli, the Women’s work in connection with CMS Mission was almost entirely in the hands of Church of England Zenana Missionary Society (CEZMS). In 1895 a women Missionary Amy Carmichael came to Tirunelveli and stayed until her death in January 1951. The Bishop Gell decided to select one member each from the CMS and the SPG Missions. He had selected Edward Sargent from CMS Churches and Robert Caldwell from SPG Churches. They functioned as Assistant Bishops to Bishop Gell. Bishop Sargent administered all the CMS Churches till 1891. In October 1896, the Bishop of Madras separated Tirunelveli from the Diocese of Madras and named it as the “Diocese of Tirunelveli”.

4.11 Formation of the Tirunelveli Diocese

Until 1896 Tirunelveli mission was a part under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Madras. The then Bishop of Madras Diocese, Frederick Gell felt the need for a separate Bishopric for Tirunelveli. The SPG, in particular, urged the creation of a separate Diocese and allotted a sum of R. $5000 as endowment. It took five years to mobilise the endowment.

4.12 Period of Progress and Union

On 28th October 1896, Samuel Morley was ordained in Madras as Bishop in Tirunelveli and Madurai. A Bishopstowe was built for him to reside and to house his office. A lovely chapel was also added. When Morley became the Bishop of Tirunelveli there were four Church Councils under the Central Church Council and the Bishop was its head. In 1898, there were 60,000 Christians in the Diocese of Tirunelveli and Madurai.

The Bishopric of Tirunelveli constituted the “Tirunelveli Diocesan Trust Association (TDTA) in April 1918 and the CMS and S.P.G missionaries were amalgamated. Their properties came under the management of the Diocesan Councils, the North, South and Mid

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The SPG and CMS Missions themselves merged their fields into a single Diocese in 1924. The total number of Christians in Tamil Nadu in 1941 was 13,08,000.

Twentieth Century

The Tirunelveli Bishopric convened the first session of the Diocesan Council on 11th October, 1917. The Diocesan Executive Committee was held at Nazareth on 7th April, 1918. In accordance with the decision of the Diocesan Council, the new Diocesan Council and the new Diocesan Constitution came into effect from 1st November, 1924. The Rt. Rev. Waller was transferred as Bishop of Madras Diocese in 1922. The Rev. Henry Tubbs succeeded him.

The Rt. Rev. Tubbs was consecrated Bishop of Tirunelveli Diocese on 25th 1923. This was the first Bishop Consecration Ceremony held in Tirunelveli.

CSI Diocese in Modern days or at present

A historic session of the Diocesan Council was held on 11th March, 1924 to formally usher in the birth of the Diocese of Tirunelveli. Both the CMS and SPG had sent their blessings to the formation of the new Diocese. A Central Diocesan Office was established in 1925 for the administration of three Church Councils (North, Central and South).

The Diocesan Council approved the Diocesan Synod on 14th March 1928. The Church of England had given official permission to the formation and establishment of the Tirunelveli Diocese.

There were many independent churches in South India which wanted to form an interdenominational union after 1941 under one fold as 'The Church of South India (CSI). The inauguration of the Church of South India on 27th September 1947 was hailed by the churches all over the world as the most significant event of church union movement.

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75 D.S. George Muller, *op.cit.*, p.7.
79 V. Henry Packianathan, *op.cit.*, p.35.
80 CSI Tirunelveli Diocesan Website, p. 5 to 6.
82 Cyril Bruce Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, Madras, 1992, p. 239.
Madura and Ramnad which were once part of the CSI Tirunelveli Diocese formed a separate Diocese in 1947. The Diocese of Madura - Ramnad which started its functioning from 1st April 1949. During 1947-48, the CSI Tirunelveli Diocese had 106 Clergy men, 1569 villages, thirteen Bible women and 5324 baptised persons. After the retirement of Bishop Selwyn Bishop Jebbaraj was consecrated in 1953. After the retirement of Bishop Jebbaraj, Rev. Garrett was consecrated as Bishop in 1971. On the resignation of Bishop Garrett, Rev. Daniel Abraham was consecrated in 1975. On the retirement of Bishop Daniel Abraham, Rev. Jason S. Dharmaraj was consecrated in 1984. After the retirement of Rev. Jason S. Dharmaraj, Rev. Jeyapaul David was consecrated in 1995. Bishop Jeyapaul David is the twelfth in the line of Bishops and the fourth Indian Bishop of the Tirunelveli Diocese. During 1997-98 the Diocese had 143 Clergymen, 1142 villages, 16 Bible women and 6660 baptised persons. The CSI is an organic union and it is the first of its kind. The CSI consists of Anglican, British Methodist, American Reformed (Presbyterian), British and American Congregational and Basel (Lutheran/Reformed) traditions. The formation of the CSI is indeed in the History of Christianity in India a landmark. The Church of North India (C.N.I.) came into existence on November 29, 1970.

4.13 The Administrative Structure

The early missionaries carefully made many attempts for the smooth administration of the Diocese. The Diocese of Tirunelveli is the first Diocese in India where Indians were free to express and administer the church themselves. In 1947, the Diocese came under the control of the newly formed Church of South India (CSI). The Tirunelveli Diocese is a registered body with a Trust called “The Tirunelveli Diocesan Trust Association” (TDTA). The Diocese is under the control of the Church of South India (CSI). The Synod of the CSI is the supreme governing and legislative body of the Church of South India.

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84 Minutes of the Executive Standing Committee, 57th Meeting, 30th March, 1949.
86 D.S. George Muller, op. cit., pp.91-93.
89 The Indian Church Directory, 1937-38, p. 209.
4.14 Organisational and Administrative Structure

The congregation members elect the Pastoral Committee members and Church Council members and they will elect the Church Council members. They will elect the Diocesan Council Members. The Diocesan Council Members will elect the Executive Committee Office-Bearers and the Bishop. It is shown in Chart 4.1. The Diocesan Council is the important decision-making body of the CSI Tirunelveli Diocese. Fig. 4.2 shows both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the organisational structure of the CSI Tirunelveli Diocese. It shows the level of management and the various bodies of the Diocese in the descending order. The Diocese has a planned organisational structure.

4.14.1 Top level Administration

The Bishop, Office bearers, Executive Committee and the members of the Diocesan Council are the top level administrators of the CSI Tirunelveli Diocese. They administer the Diocese with the help of various Sub Committees. The functions of various Committees are discussed separately.

4.14.2 Middle level Administration

The CSI Tirunelveli Diocesan Church Council is one of the middle level administrative set-up. The middle level administration is run with the help of Pastoral and Evangelistic Sub-Committees, Finance and Property Sub-Committee and the Elementary Education Sub-Committee.

4.14.3 Lower Level Administration

The Pastorate Committee of the CSI Tirunelveli Diocese is at the lower level of administration. The Pastorate is under the control of the Pastorate Chairman. The Pastorate Committee also has Pastoral and Evangelistic Work Sub-Committee, Finance and Property Sub Committee and Elementary Education Sub-Committee. The Pastorate Secretary and the Pastorate Treasurer will help the Pastorate Chairman to do Prayer and Worship, Evangelism and Outreach Programmes, conduct of Youth Meetings, Women Fellowship, Men Fellowship, Sunday Schools for Children, Ministry and Revival Meetings and Training and Counselling.

4.15 Total Quality Management and the CSI Tirunelveli Diocese

There are many techniques in management that can be carefully used to improve the Diocesan and Church Administration. It must be realised that every Diocese be treated as a distinct unit for development and proposals must be presented from the Pastorate Committee and the Church Councils and this should be crystalised in Diocesan Councils, which should then give a clear mandate to the Diocesan Executive for implementing them.91

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Chart 4.1
CSI Tirunelveli Diocesan Organisational Structure
The chart shows the organizational structure of the CSI Diocese in descending order.
Chart 4.2

Organizational Structure of the Diocese

LEVELES

VARIOUS BODIES

TOP LEVEL
MANAGEMENT

BISHOP

Office Bearers

Executive Committee

Diocesan Council

MIDDLE LEVEL
MANAGEMENT

Church Council

LOWER LEVEL
MANAGEMENT

Pastorate

Congregation members, Diocesan Workers, Church Workers, Pastorate Workers
The main objective of the Total Quality Management (TQM) is to improve and bring about quality improvement in totality in all areas. According to TQM, quality can come only through changes. Churches in U.S.A., Europe and Japan applied TQM for the improvement and Special Service Organisations.

The CSI Tirunelveli Diocese is following the steps of TQM. The first step of TQM is that the members must be motivated towards achieving total quality. The CSI Tirunelveli Diocese encouraged all the members to speak freely in their respective committees. The second step of TQM is to do SWOT analysis of the organisation. The CSI Tirunelveli Diocese is following the SWOT analysis. The Diocese is analysing the strength and weaknesses of the Diocese, opportunities of the people and the threats of the rival groups. The CSI Tirunelveli Diocese is having mission statement and vision statement. There is an atmosphere for open decision-making.

During the year 1958-59, for the sake of administrative convenience, the whole Diocese was divided into 3 Councils, 39 Circles and 114 Pastorates. The respective Councils and Committees directed the work. At the Diocesan level, the Executive Committee and the Standing Committee guide and control the activities of the Church and Institutions. During the year 1958-59, the Diocese had five hospitals, 20 High Schools, three Middle Schools and 533 Elementary Schools. The total number of students in the Diocesan institutions was 89,167 with 3532 teachers.

The Diocesan Council met on 15th and 16th January 1973 and devoted most of its time to consider restructuring its administrative pattern, making each Pastorate an administrative unit. Every congregation has a local Church Fund sufficient to maintain its church and make necessary developments. It is to be hoped that making the Pastorate an administrative unit will be a spur to local leadership and even increase the people’s contribution to the Church. For administrative convenience, the whole CSI Tirunelveli Diocese is divided into eight Church Councils during the year 1981-82 and there were 119 Pastorates, 1138 Congregations with 118 Clergymen.

Before the formation of the CSI in 1947, the Diocese followed the Constitution of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. After the formation of the Tirunelveli Diocese, it began to follow strictly the Constitution of the CSI in electing its own Bishop. According to the new

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92 Ibid., p. 3.
95 Ibid., Report for the year 1981-82, p. 1
system, the Synod of the CSI appointed a Selection Board. The Diocesan Council selects the panel of candidates and the Synod Selection Board has the power to select the Bishop.96

4.16 The Duties and Powers of the Bishop

The Bishop, in addition to his episcopal duties, had other duties also. He addresses Conferences and Conventions, Retreats and Fellowship Meetings and preaches at harvest festivals. He presides over the Tribunals of Disputes and Factions.97 The Bishop is the Chairman of the Governing Board of Diocesan Councils, Committees and all the Diocesan Colleges. The Bishop sends letters to each Congregation and it will be read in the Sunday Service. The Bishop also contacts the people through the official magazine of the Diocesan ‘Narpothagam’.

4.17 Diocesan Administrative Structure

The Administrative structure of the Diocese is explained below:

4.17.1 The Pastorate Committees and Powers and Functions

The Pastorate Committee shall consider all matters connected with the welfare of the Congregations the Pastorate schools and the Pastorate funds and shall encourage efforts to deepen spiritual life of the Christians.98

The Pastorate Committee consists of the Pastorate Chairman, the Pastorate Secretary, the Pastorate Treasurer and elected members of the Pastorates. The Pastorate Treasurer submits the quarterly financial statements to the Chairman of the Circle Committee.99

4.17.2 The Circle Committees

A group of Pastorates form a Circle. Each Circle has a Circle Committee. A senior clergyman is in charge of the Circle. All the clergymen working in the circle, one retired clergyman who is elected by the Pastorate Committee, Church workers, laymen representatives of the Pastorate Committee and two members nominated by the Bishop are the members of the Circle Committee.100

4.17.3 Church Councils

The Church Council consists of the Chairman of the Church Council, all the Circle Chairmen, all Treasurers including lay treasurers, Congregation Representatives from each Pastorate and the Principals of all the Diocesan Colleges. There were nearly 1000 Congregations in the TDTA in 1947. These congregations were divided into 130 Pastorates.

96 Ibid., Report for the year, 1945-46, pp. 11-12.
98 Diocese of Tirunelveli Constitution, 1994, p.16.
99 Ibid., pp. 9-11.
100 Ibid., p. 19.
Again the 130 Pastorates were divided into four Circles. Each Circle is managed and administered by democratically elected bodies. There are eight Church Councils.

4.17.4 Diocesan Council

There is a Diocesan Council for the whole of the Diocese called “The Tirunelveli Diocesan Council”. The Diocesan Council consists of the Bishop, all Bishop licensed Clergymen, Congregations’ Representatives, Pastoral Workers’ Representatives, Diocesan Workers’ Representatives and the Bishop-nominated fifteen Clergymen and 15 Laymen. The Diocesan Council shall advise the Bishop and the Synod on all matters and may approach the Bishop or the Synod by way of petitions on any matter with which the Bishop or the Synod, as the case may be, is competent enough to deal with. The Diocesan Council shall elect as its representatives for each ordinary session of the Synod six Clergymen and eight Laymen.

4.17.5 Diocesan Courts

The Diocesan Council shall constitute Diocesan Courts for the discipline of the laity and the Clergy, and the rules and regulations for the establishment of such courts and the procedure therein shall be in accordance with the rules and regulations and procedure of the Constitution of the Church of South India.

4.17.6 Executive Committee of the Diocesan Council

The Office-Bearers of the Diocesan Council shall always be the office-bearers of the Diocesan Executive Committee. The Diocesan Bishop, in consultation with the office-bearers, arrange the Executive Meetings at any time or in any place in the Diocese. A meeting shall, in any case be arranged during the month of March in each year. The Bishop may convene special meetings, or on the requisition of ten Executive Committee Members the Bishop convenes the meetings.

The Executive Committee members should not exceed 50 members. It consists of the Bishop, the Office Bearers of the Diocesan Council, Chairman of the Diocesan Council, Clergymen, Church Workers’ Representatives, Laymen, the Principals of the Diocesan Colleges, the Representative of the Correspondents of High Schools and Special Schools, Congregations’ Representatives, the Representatives of SPG and CMS and Bishop’s Nominee.

4.17.7 Office Bearers

The office-bearers consist of the Bishop, Vice-Chairman, Lay Secretary and Clerical Secretary. They will meet at any time or place and take decisions.

101 Ibid., p. 37.
102 Ibid., p.43.
103 Ibid., p.52.
4.17.8 Tirunelveli Diocesan Trust Association (TDTA)

All the immovable properties belonging to the Diocesan Council or to any Institution, Committee or Council have been registered in the name of the Tirunelveli Diocesan Trust Association. The Diocesan Office is maintaining the Property Register in the Diocesan Office. The Executive Committee of the Diocese has to sanction mortgage or let on long lease of the Diocesan properties.\(^{104}\)

The Diocese deposits all the funds and securities with the TDTA General Church Fund Account. The Executive Committee of the Diocesan Council manages the funds. The Diocesan Executive Committee gives directions to the Diocesan Treasurer to administer the Diocesan Central Funds.\(^{105}\) A professional auditor examines the accounts of the Diocese. The reports of every audit will be placed before the Diocesan Executive Committee and its Finance Sub-Committee at their next meeting. A full audited statement of receipts and expenditure is published every year.\(^{106}\) All the funds for the endowment of pastorates and institutions, scholarship and the like, of which the interest only is to be spent, and the amount is deposited with the Tirunelveli Diocesan Trust Association.\(^{107}\)

4.18 CSI Tirunelveli Diocesan Return of Congregation

In the Tirunelveli Diocese the number of clergymen is low. Due to increase in the number of congregations, the Diocese began to appoint Honorary Clergymen, Retired Clergy (light work) to do the church connected activities. Each Pastorate has to take up the responsibility of more than two congregations. So the Diocese appoints catechists, Diocesan Bible Women and Independent Evangelists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Clergymen</th>
<th>Honorary Clergy</th>
<th>Deacons</th>
<th>Retired Clergy</th>
<th>Bible Women</th>
<th>Villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1173</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{104}\) Ibid., Diocesan Constitution, 1994, Chapter VIII, p.76.

\(^{105}\) Minutes of the Finance Sub Committee, 184th Meeting, 21st March, 1977, p.12.

\(^{106}\) Diocese of Tirunelveli Constituion, 1994, Chapter VII, p.72.

\(^{107}\) Ibid., p.73.
4.19 Important Religious Missions

4.19.1 Children’s Mission

The Tirunelveli CMS ‘Paliar Bakthi Viruthi Sangam’ was started in 1891. The Tirunelveli Paliar Mission was started in 1898. The Children’s Mission arrange camps for boys and girls every year. Spiritual and moral instructions are given in the annual camps. The full-time missionaries visit almost all parishes in the Diocese, screening audio visual aids and conducting children’s camps and rallies. A full-time pastor is in charge of the Children’s Mission. In 1891 Rev. Scott Prince founded the Tirunelveli Diocesan Children Mission (TDCM) has made great strides during 1985-98. This department conducts Sunday school Teachers’ Training Camps at the Council levels. In 1991, a Special Offset Press was set up for TDCM in Bishop Stowe compound to print the guide books and monthly children’s magazine “Paliar Nesan” (Friend of Children) both in Tamil and English.

4.19.2 Youth Mission

The Diocese is conducting annual camps and retreats to the youth to enrich their spiritual knowledge. In 1948 Bishop G.T. Selwyn started Youth Mission to impart Bible knowledge and christian culture to the youths. The Youth Mission aims at training the youth in prayer, Bible reading, Gaspel works, Music and Social Service. The Youth Department publishes Illaignar Nanban, the daily devotional book which is distributed throughout the Diocese. In 1998, the Youth Mission celebrated its Golden Jubilee. A lady worker has been newly appointed to do evangelistic work among the young girls. A number of girls’ groups were started in villages. The youth magazine “Illaignar Nanban’ is published as a monthly magazine from the year 1977. Diocesan Youth Workers and Youth Secretaries have been doing sincere and dedicated work among the youth throughout the Diocese.

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112 Ibid., Report for the year 1975-76, p.iv.
4.19.3 Mothers' Union (Women Fellowship)

The Mothers’ Union was started in Tirunelveli Diocese in 1848 to do religious and medical work. In September 1961, the Mothers’ Union became the Women’s Fellowship. A quarterly magazine is printed for the use of the Women Fellowship Members. The Women’s Fellowship is running Sewing Schools, the Nursery Schools, Night Schools, Vacation and Bible Schools. It is also instrumental in baptizing a number of souls every year. During the year 1997-98 it had 650 unions, 17 creches night schools and 17 sewing schools. 115

4.19.4 Men’s Fellowship

The Men’s Fellowship is functioning in the Diocese from 1980 onwards with the motto “Prayer, Fellowship and Social Service”. In 1997 it had 140 branches all over the Diocese and clergy work as Directors and ten co-ordinators help them to do gospel and social work in each Pastorate. 116

4.20 Department of Mission and Evangelism

The Rev. Ragland started Tirunelveli Diocesan Evangelistic Mission and in 1854, The Department of Mission and Evangelism celebrated its festival at the Council level and helped the poor in the festival. During the year 1997-98, this Department celebrated its twelfth Diocesan Festival. One hundred and twenty two poor and marginalised people got aid out of the funds generated through the festivals. The members of the Diocese had camped at nine Pastorates and did Gospel work at 274 villages. Fifty one persons have been baptised through this ministry. 117

4.20.1 City Mission

The City Mission was started in 1990 at Palayamkottai and Thoothukudi. The City Mission covers the Industrial Mission, Counselling visit to the hospitals and jails, Industrial Workers’ Family retreat, Workers get-together and Officers’ Christian-Association. For social involvement, Christian Library for industrial society, Healing Ministry and Student Ministry were formed. The major emphasis of the City Mission is Jail Ministry. 118 The Special feature of City Mission is also to take care of the prisoners’ families and the affected. It would promote the prisoners’ families. 119

116 Ibid., p.3.
119 Department of Mission and Evangelism, Pamphlet by the Director DME, 1990, p.5.
4.20.2 Evangelistic Band

The Diocese started evangelistic work all over the Diocese through the Evangelistic Band. In the beginning, the Band members conducted Open Air Bible preaching in the evening or night and they had personal approach in the morning from 8 a.m. The Band changed the time in 1949. The Band trained the volunteers in doing the follow-up work with the help of the Clergymen.

There were voluntary evangelistic bands in the Tirunelveli Diocese. They met the needs of the local congregations. Independent Voluntary Evangelists' Association was formed in 1978 with the aim of bringing the independent evangelists together and training them to do the Gospel work. During the year 1977-78, there were ninetyone adult baptisms through the Evangelistic Band. During the year 1978-79, the Diocesan Evangelistic Band visited 183 villages.

4.20.3 Group Evangelism

The Diocese brought all the paid evangelistic workers under its direct control and the circles were divided into advanced circles and backward circles. These groups of Evangelism gave systematic and thorough evangelisation in the the Diocesan area.

4.20.4 Personal Evangelism

The early missionaries introduced Personal Evangelism in the Tirunelveli Diocese. These evangelists carry the Gospel message to every home or to every person. The Diocese Evangelistic Band gives more importance to Personal Evangelism in the Diocesan area. The Diocese carries on personal evangelism through letter correspondence also.

4.20.5 Mass Movement

The Diocese had Mass Movement Committee and it supervised the Gospel work. The Mass Movement Committee gave priority in the matter of grants for churches with new converts.

4.21 Radio Evangelism

Radio Evangelism is being done in co-operation with Vishwavani. The services of one Pastor have been lent to Vishwavani to extend the Ministry to all parts of the Diocese. The CSI

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120 Ibid., Report for the year 1955-56, p. 28.
123 Ibid., Report for the year, 1932-33, p. 40.
124 Ibid., Report for the year, 1944-45, p. 35.
Tirunelveli Diocese is successfully continuing its Radio Evangelism and Cassette Ministry in co-operation with the Transworld Radio, New Delhi.126

4.22 Mission to Seamen

The Diocese appointed a full-time Pastor for this ministry. He is stationed at Thoothukudi. He meets the seamen and renders spiritual and social help. During the year 1993-94, the Diocese received a fund of Rs. 67 lakhs from abroad to construct a parsonage and an administrative block for this project.127 The Mission to seamen took shape in a small way in 1990. Rev. Jeyakumar underwent training at the centre in Colombo and he was incharge of it upto 1995. “The Mission to Seamen” of Church of England is supporting this noble cause through the Synod of Church of South India.

4.23 Evangelistic Work in other places

The Diocese is doing evangelistic work in other places like Pilgrim Centres, Prisons and among non-Christians. The Diocese did evangelistic work in the Pilgrim Centres from 1929 with much care. A group of church workers preached the Gospel and distributed the handbills.128 In the beginning, the Diocese did Gospel work among the Hindu people. From 1963 onwards, the Diocese did Gospel work among the Muslims.129 The Diocese also did Gospel work to the prisoners in the Central Jail, Palayamkottai. Apart from this, the Diocese is doing evangelistic work in educational institutions. The Diocese is conducting clergy wives’ retreat every year.

4.24 Indian Missionary Society

The Diocese had a sense of obligation to the Missionary Work among the unevangelised parts of India. The Indian Missionary Society was started in 1903. Thomas Gadjetan Ragland was the source of inspiration for the Missionary zeal. V.S. Azariah took the final step towards the formation the Indian Missionary Society.130 The IMS had its own emblem in 1947, the emblem denotes the aims, achievements and vision of the society.131 The IMS is doing wonderful jobs like preaching the Gospel, building of churches, opening of hostels, providing

129 Minutes of the Evangelistic Work Standing Committee, 97th meeting, 7th October, 1964, p.3.
education and health and starting Rehabilitation Centres with the help of Indian Men, Money and Management.

4.25 Business Institutions of the Diocese

The CSI Tirunelveli Diocese, apart from doing evangelistic work, is also managing some institutions like Diocesan Book Depot, Diocesan Press, Diocesan Cooperative Store and the Diocesan Mutual Insurance Company Limited.

4.25.1 The Diocesan Book Depot

In 1840, Rev. Pettit started Tirunelveli Book Society to print school books and distribute them to the CMS Schools. The Diocesan Executive Committee finalised the name as ‘Diocesan Book Depot’ and a separate constitution was formed. The Diocesan Depot is now the stockist of not only religious books but also the dealers of the Bible.

4.25.2 Diocesan Co-operative Store

In 1942, Bishop Stephen Neil opened a Diocesan Co-operative Store at Palayamkottai. This Co-operative Store was started with a view to supply food grains, groceries, hand-loom and mill cloth to the Diocesan Institutions. The Diocese is managing six ration shops efficiently. The Diocesan Co-operative Store, with the support of its shareholders, is coming up. The Co-operative Store reserved considerable amount to common fund. Some poor students were benefitted through the profits of the Co-operative Store.

4.25.3 The Diocesan Press

The old CMS Press established in 1847 was sold in 1914 and it became the Palayamkottai Printing Press in 1942. The press is doing printing work of the various Churches, Diocesan Institutions and the individuals. There is a separate manager for the Diocesan Press. He supervises the printing press. The Diocesan Press is also contributing money to the Diocesan Central Fund.

4.25.4 The Tirunelveli Diocesan Mutual Insurance Company Ltd.

The Diocesan Finance Sub-Committee suggested to the Executive Committee to start an Insurance Company in 1945. The Diocesan Executive Committee merged the already

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existing widow's fund with the Tirunelveli Diocesan Mutual Benefit Fund. In 1950, the Diocese registered the Mutual Benefit Insurance into Mutual Insurance Company Limited under the Indian Companies Act of 1913 and the Insurance Act of 1938. In 1956, the Diocese gave up this, due to the scheme of nationalisation of all insurance companies.

4.26 Other Departments

Apart from these, the Diocese has a Centre called Human Resources Development Centre.

4.26.1 Human Resources Development Centre

The Human Resources Centre was started in June 1991 with the view of preparing the students to face various competitive examinations of the Central and State Governments. A part-time co-ordinator is in charge of the programme.

4.26.2 Social Welfare Department

The Tirunelveli Church, dating back to 1780, has always concentrated on the socio-economic conditions of the people. The early Missionaries organised famine relief and road forming in the villages. The Social and Economic Concern Committee of the Diocese initiated the formation of Social Welfare Department in the Diocesan to meet the urgent needs of the people. The Social Welfare Department of the Tirunelveli Diocese is able to channelise assistance that is available both in the form of cash and kind to help the individual farmers in deepening wells or sinking of new wells. The Social Welfare Department is rendering help through CASA, World Vision of India, AFPRO (Delhi) E2E (Germany) HEKS (Switzerland) and Helpage India. This department is helping not only poor christians but also poor non-Christians.

4.27 Diocesan Festivals

The important Diocesan Festival is Mambazha Sangam and Centenary Celebration.

4.27.1 Mambazha Sangam

Rev. Edward Sargent introduced the Summer Festival for all christians mainly in villages with the sole aim of avoiding attending other Hindu functions. He converted Widows' Fund

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135 Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee, 84th meeting, 19th September, 1946, pp. 5-6.
136 Ibid., 95th meeting, 20th October 1949, p. 1.
introduced by Rhenius and he converted the anniversary day of the Widows’ Fund as ‘Mango Society Festival’ or Mambazha Sanga Vizha. It has been celebrated at the Centenary Hall, Palayamkottai since 1901. The offeratory received on that day was allotted for Diocesan Reserve Fund. These cultural festivals united the people from remote villages and castes and paved a way for sharing love.  

4.27.2 Centenary Celebration

In 1980, the Diocese celebrated the Bicentenary Year with the slogan of “Grow and Increase”. The Diocese raised a sum of Rs. 7.5 lakhs in 1980 for building new Churches in North Tirunelveli area and creating Endowment Fund for social work. On 10th July, 1980, the Diocese published a book on the history of Tirunelveli to commemorate the Bicentenary of the Diocese.

4.28 Publications - Narpothagam

In October 1822, Rhenius had founded the Tract Society both in Palayamkottai and Nagercoil. The tracts were taken to far off places and were circulated among women. Women were also brought in for the Tract Fund what is known as ‘the offering of the handful of rice’ (Pidi Arisi Kanikkai). Women took a handful of rice daily from the rice taken for cooking the daily meal and saved them in a basket supplied by the local church. The saved rice is given as an offering. The work of Rhenius bore fruits. From the beginning of the year 1849, new CMS Missionaries published the magazine called ‘Narpothagam’. The articles that have adorned the Narpothagam (Friendly Instructor) speak for themselves. The anecdotes and its spiritual messages are the hall marks of its success. Paliyar Nesan and Illaignar Nanban are the other publications of the Diocese.

4.29 SYNOD

The Synod is the Supreme governing and legislative body of the Church of South India and acts as the final authority in all matters pertaining to the Church. The Officers of the Synod shall be a Moderator, a Deputy Moderator, a General Secretary and a Treasurer. The Moderator and the Deputy Moderator are being elected from among the Diocesan Bishops of the Church.


The Synod has the final authority in all questions of the interpretation of the Constitution and other matters of the Church of South India. The organisational structure of the CSI Synod is shown in chart 4.3.

The Executive Committee of the Synod consists of the officers of the Synod, all the Diocesan Bishops and one Presbyter and one layman elected from among the representatives of each Diocese. In addition, the Moderator appoints not more than one presbyter and two lay persons to the Executive Committee.145

The Court of the Synod sits to hear on appeals from the Court of a Diocesan Council, which consists of the Moderator as President and two Bishops, two Presbyters and two laymen selected by the Moderator.146 The Church of South India was inaugurated on 27th of September, 1947 at St. George’s Cathedral Madras, with fourteen Dioceses. In 1997, the CSI Synod consisted of twentyone Dioceses.147

| Table 4.2 |
| Statistics of CSI Synod in 1997 |
|-----------------|---------|
| Total Population | 2.8 million |
| Number of Dioceses | 21 |
| Congregations | 10,114 |
| Pastors | 2,244 |
| Lay workers | 2,103 |
| Schools | 1,930 |
| Colleges | 38 |
| Vocational Polytechnics | 51 |
| Hospitals and Clinics | 104 |
| Hostels for poor children | 512 |

Source: South India Churchman, September, 1997, p. 4.

Chart 4.3 Organisational Structure of the CSI Synod

145 Ibid., p. 66
146 Ibid., Chap. XI, p.76.
147 P. Surya Prakash, Church of South India Marches Ahead. The South India Churchman, September, 1997, p.3.
Fig. 4.3. shows the organisational structure of the CSI Synod in the descending order. Table 4.3 shows the total number of CSI Diocese and their dates of formation.

The table 4.4 shows the eight Councils of the CSI Tirunelveli Diocese and of Pastortes in each Council. The CSI Tirunelveli Diocese has crossed many hurdles and obstacles. It has successfully lived upto the expectations of the congregation. As a religious body it is democratic in character and follows the norms of democracy in all the meetings and proceedings. It follows in letter and spirit the Constitution of the Tirunelvlei Diocese.
MAP - 1

CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

DIOCESAN BOUNDARIES

Tinnevely Diocese
MAP - 2
TINNEVELLY DIOCESE
### Table 4.3
The Diocese of the Church of South India with the dates of their formation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name of the Diocese</th>
<th>Dates of Formation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Coimbatore Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dornakal Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>East Kerala Diocese</td>
<td>3rd April 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Jaffna Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Kanyakumari Diocese</td>
<td>1st June 1959 (Bifurcated from South Travancore Diocese)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Karimnagar Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Karnataka Central Diocese</td>
<td>1st May 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Karnataka Northern Diocese</td>
<td>1st May 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Karnataka Southern Diocese</td>
<td>1st May 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Madhya Kerala Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Madras Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Madurai-Ramnad Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Medak Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Nandyal Diocese</td>
<td>Joined CSI in 6th July 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Royalseema Diocese</td>
<td>16th July 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>South Kerala Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Tiruchirappalli-Tanjore Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Tirunelveli Diocese</td>
<td>27th September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Vellore Diocese</td>
<td>26th January 1976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Constitution of the Church of South India, CLS, Madras, 1993, pp.111-112
Chart 4.4 Formation of CSI Tirunelveli Diocese

Source: Cecil John, Towards an Indian Chruch, The Growth of Church in India, London, SPCK, 1947
### Table 4.4

List of Church Councils and Number of Patorates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kovilpatti</td>
<td>Tuticorin</td>
<td>Palayamkottai</td>
<td>Nazareth</td>
<td>Meignanaparam</td>
<td>Dharmanagaram</td>
<td>Dohnavur</td>
<td>Tenkasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pandavaramangalam</td>
<td>Tuticorin Rural</td>
<td>Military line</td>
<td>Nazareth Rural</td>
<td>M. Santhaparam</td>
<td>Idaiyangudi</td>
<td>Chinnamaltpuram</td>
<td>Sathaparam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Melaseithalai</td>
<td>Shunmugapuram</td>
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<td>Udayarkulam</td>
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