

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The discovery of a direct sea route to the East by Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese, ushered in a new era in the history of commerce and navigation of the East. This facilitated the Europeans to come to India in pursuit of trade and commerce which resulted ultimately in the colonisation of the sub-continent. Different nations, *viz.*, Portugal, Holland, England, Denmark and France competed with one another for colonial supremacy in the Peninsular India. Accordingly, the British, the Dutch and the French formed companies with the support and supervision of the respective countries to trade with India. Ultimately, in the mad race for colonisation, the English defeated the French. The British ruled over vast territories of the sub-continent upto 1947 while the French ruled over a small portion of India, mostly in the Southern part, making Pondicherry as their head quarters till they departed in 1954. Both the English and the French followed the policy of exploitation towards the colonised which is the hallmark of colonialism though the intensity of the degree of exploitation varied to some extent.

Colonialism as a policy was the byproduct of industrialisation in Europe especially in England which drove the English and other Europeans to go to far off countries in search of raw materials and markets for their industries at home. They ultimately succeeded in the conquest of those countries. India became a prey to European colonialism because of her inherent or traditional backwardness. Colonialism is also interpreted as an effort at modernisation which failed

because of the weight of the past and traditional backwardness, though undoubtedly, India did undergo a fundamental transformation during the colonial period.

Bipan Chandra in his book *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India* views that the initial conditions from which started the development process after political freedom were not those of its pre-colonial past; they were in fact, the creation of the colonial period. There is no doubt that the colonial interests, policies, the state and the institutions, culture and society, ideas and ideologies, and personalities are to be seen as functioning within the parameters of the colonial structure. Colonialism affected Indian society to such a great extent that it gave rise to an independent capitalist class which grew steadily not allying with British capital, but at the same time playing a very vital role in the nationalist movement against the *Rāj* and in the post-1947 social development of India in general.

British India was economically, culturally, socially and politically backward. The same social, political and economic process that produced industrial development maintained economic under-development and social and cultural backwardness in India, her colony. But at the same time, India on the eve of independence was described as a classical colony, the most developed of the colonial countries.

The colonial structure encompassed the internal structure of Indian society. Colonialism though not the only obstacle to development, provided the chief contradiction of the history of the last two centuries. Colonial modernisation involved not only the Indian economy, but also the patterns of social, political,

administrative and cultural life. Colonial Indian government was not willing to take positive steps to aid the process of internal capitalist development. The government's imposition of free trade upon India, its failure to give tariff protection to Indian industries and to aid and encourage them through direct state support in the form of state subsidies, purchase of stores and its negative policy towards irrigation contributed much to the impoverishment of the country.

British exploitation of India had taken place in three successive stages:

The first, mercantilist phase from 1757 up to 1813, which was marked by direct plunder and the East India Company's monopoly trade purchasing often Indian finished goods arbitrarily fixed at low prices through the investment of surplus revenues for export to England and other European countries. The Industrial Revolution in England changed the whole pattern of trade and the years from 1813 to 1858 saw the classic age of free traders, industrial capitalistic exploitation converting India rapidly into a market for Manchester textiles and a source for raw materials, uprooting her traditional handicrafts. From the latter half of the nineteenth century onwards, economic-imperialism began to entrench itself in India through some export of capital and a mass chain of British controlled banks, export-import firms and managing agency houses. From the 1870s onwards, the problem of drain of wealth by the British occurred in the colonial economy.

British rule shattered the economic and political basis of the old society. It dissolved the old pre-capitalist mode of production but a new capitalist system did not follow; instead a new colonial mode of production came into being. A new agrarian structure was evolved to suit to the needs of colonialism which

was not new but semi-feudal ;with a new internal class structure which had come into existence in the Indian social structure.

The above facts show clearly the colonial exploitation by Europeans of the subjugated in terms of economy in the back ground of the Industrial Revolution in the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe. It is to be noted that the colonial policy of the Europeans towards India was guided by instructions from the Home Govt. from time to time. Each policy implemented in the colony was the reflection of the policy at the metropolis. There was no definite or consistent idea or policy towards India since it was determined by the Home governments in the Metropolises.

But it is to be noted that the European administration in India had not completely destroyed the traditional systems in any way. On the other hand, they had introduced their own systems without affecting the old systems very much.

In the field of education, traditional system had continued. Even though the Europeans had come here as tradesmen, the prevailing conditions had tempted them to interfere in the political affairs resulting in the conquest and consolidation of the sub-continent. Alongside trade, conversion to christianity had also progressed. Education was the means to conversion. This they did out of necessity for teaching the gospels of Christ. At the same time, they wanted to conquer the souls to take them into their confidence.

It is also important to note that during the colonial period, steps were taken by the Europeans to bring out significant measures in the educational sphere. During the British period, English education was introduced which

opened to the Indians the doors to western liberalism though their aim was to produce a set of people 'brown in colour, but European in taste'. Under the British, efforts were taken to establish educational institutions both at the lower and higher levels with systematic curricula financed by different agencies with periodic inspections. Commissions were also instituted to study the effectiveness of their suggestions and recommendations to suit the requirements of the natives.

With regard to the French, the administration had introduced an education system in the French Indian settlements which prevailed in Metropolitan France and which was much enlightened when compared to that of the British. The ideas of equality, liberty and fraternity, the noble contributions of the French revolution transplanted to French India too. Several such benevolent measures were introduced in Pondicherry, incorporating French republican ideas. Though colonial policy continued in the French settlements, the sweeping changes brought about in the backdrop of the political turmoils in France resulting in the granting of many liberal concessions which in a way affected the educational field in the Metropolis reached far off Pondicherry too, though a little late!

In this background, an attempt is made to study the educational system in French Pondicherry. The fact that the French School education system which was in operation for more than a century in the five colonial settlements of France in India was ignored by Indian academicians and educational planners, as pointed out by K.J.S. Chathrath in the introduction to his book *Vers la Lumière: A Study of French School System*, 1998, spells out clearly that the subject chosen for this thesis has not hitherto received any attention by the

Indian Scholars. This lacuna in the vast realm of studies covering all other aspects of India's experiment with education through the centuries is sought to be filled through this doctoral thesis on "Education in French Pondicherry" since the arrival of the French in Pondicherry in 1674 until their departure in 1954.

In this context, the system of education in British India upto 1947 serves as introduction to the study of education in French India during their sway here.

1. Objectives of the present study.

One of the objectives of this study is to highlight the basic differences in the system that was introduced by the French in Pondicherry with the system that prevailed in British India.

This study mainly examines the following aspects:

1. The changing contours of education in French India between 1674-1954 under four distinct phases.
2. The role of missionaries in promoting education in French India upto 1815.
3. The increasing involvement of the state in the affairs of education after 1815.
4. The system of educational administration.
 - a. The training of teachers.
 - b. The mode of conducting examinations.
 - c. The system of inspections.
5. The importance given to local languages.
6. The award of scholarships.
7. The encouragement given to girls' education.
8. The importance of free education.
9. The importance of secular education.

- 10.The importance of compulsory education.
- 11.The importance of pre-primary education.
- 12.The importance given to secondary education.
- 13.The importance given to higher secondary education.
- 14.The role of private institutions in promoting education.

All these aspects of education have been dealt with wherever relevant in order to highlight the significant features of the system introduced by the French in Pondicherry.

2. Scope of the study.

In the ancient past, India was a Hindu country and the cradle of Hindu civilisation. During her medieval period, India came under the sway of Muslim dynasties, culture and religion. With the discovery of the direct sea route to India by Vasco da Gama in 1498, European colonisation started in India. The Western powers did not have a precise notion of India's tradition, culture and civilisation and they were convinced of the superiority of their own systems of education in the early years of their presence in India. Hence over a period of time, the British and to some extent the French, evolved a system of education that was to serve their own imperial objectives and also the needs of their Indian subjects.

In view of the vastness of the subject, even though confined to Pondicherry, this study therefore focuses attention on Primary and Secondary education, referring to higher education too. As this is basically a historical study, a macro level approach is adopted without penetrating much into such micro level aspects such as syllabus, curriculum, school inspections, examinations, teacher training, etc, except to the extent that is essential to establish the findings of this

thesis. There are however subtle differences in the perceptions, policies, objectives, programmes and schemes formulated and implemented in respect of education by the British in India and the French in Pondicherry. To what extent these perceptions, policies, objectives, programmes and schemes introduced and implemented in India and Pondicherry respectively by England and France were influenced by historical developments during the following five significant phases in France and French Pondicherry form the crux of this study with the focus on education in French Pondicherry.

This study is made under the following five divisions:

1. Before 1674, i.e., before the arrival of the French in Pondicherry.
2. From 1674-1815 i.e., from their arrival up to the final restoration of Pondicherry to France.
3. From 1815-1870 i.e., from the Restoration up to the III Republic.
4. From 1870-1914 i.e., from the III Republic up to the beginning of World War I.
5. From 1914-1954 i.e., from World War I up to Defacto departure of the French from Pondicherry).

3. Sources for the study.

With regard to the sources for the study, they are classified into three categories viz., Primary, Secondary and Tertiary in both French and English languages.

Archives Administratives des Établissements Français dans l'Inde (1823-1827), *Bulletin des Actes Administratifs des Établissements Français dans l'Inde, Pondichéry* (1827-1872), *Bulletin Officiel des Établissements Français* (1873-1909), *Journal Officiel des Établissements Français dans l'Inde*,

Pondichéry (1910-1954), *Revue Historique de l'état Français*, Volume VIII, *Revue Historique de l'État, Pondichéry*, Volume IX, 1955 and *Revue Historique de Pondichéry*, Volume X onwards are the important primary French sources used for this study. Besides various *ordonnances, décrets and arrêtés* issued by the French Government in Metropolitan France from time to time and extended in the erstwhile colony by the French Government in Pondicherry also formed the main source for study. The primary English sources include the Imperial Gazetteer of India, Gazetteer of Union Territory of Pondicherry published by the Government of Pondicherry and the Encyclopaedia Britannica. These sources are available in the State Archives, Pondicherry, National Archives of India, Record Centre, South Zone, Tamil Nadu Archives, Madras and the Rare Books Section of the Romain Rolland Library, Pondicherry. Historical sources which provide information about the system of education which prevailed in India and France upto the end of the seventeenth century are consulted to give an historical survey of education in these countries before examining the system that was introduced in Pondicherry. Sources relating to the educational activities of the missionaries in French India and British India upto the end of the eighteenth century are consulted. Similar Historical sources providing information on the system of education which prevailed in France are examined. Besides, contemporary literature relating to the education in French India are also looked into.

4. Method of investigation.

The methodology employed in this study is basically historical, tracing the growth of education in four clearly definable periods. The historical analysis of the documentary evidence is followed in the study since this thesis is

essentially an historical survey of the evolution of the systems of education that prevailed in British and French India in the background of the political, social, economical and cultural developments. To have a more deeper perception of the subject of study, interviews with elder citizens who had undergone education under the French system prior to 1954 were also held. Their views and opinions are examined and incorporated wherever necessary. Thus a combination of analytical, historical and sociological methods are used for this study.

5. Frame work of the study

The present study is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter I introduces to the reader the conceptual frame of this study in the back ground of the colonial policy of the Europeans in general in the sub-continent, putting forward the problem to be analysed in the succeeding chapters. Mention is also made about the objects, scope and the method , nature and sources for this study.

Chapter II deals with education in British India upto 1947 as an introduction to the study of Education in French India during their sway here. In this context, the pattern of education in the country before the arrival of the British, viz., the *Vedic* system in the ancient period and the *madrasahs* of the Muslims during the medieval period are explained. The transition from the traditional to the British system of education is studied under two heads, viz., education under the Company's rule and education under the Crown. As for education under the Company's rule, the British policy in the early period, the efforts of the Christian missionaries for the development of education, the steps taken by the Indians for the introduction of English education, the policies of different Governor Generals towards educational improvements and the institutions they had es-

established here are analysed. The famous Minutes of Lord Macaulay which could be reckoned as the corner stone of English education is also dealt with. The recommendations of different educational commissions that visited British India from time to time which reflected the policies of the Home Government in Great Britain are covered while dealing with the education under the Crown. The agencies, beneficiaries, content, the medium of education under Company and also Crown are dealt with here. The British system of education in the background of the Nationalist Movement in India is also discussed with special reference to the National Education policy put forward by the Indian National Congress. The most significant developments in the fields of the Primary Education, Secondary Education, Higher Education, viz., College and University Education, Professional and Technical Education are explained here. The salient features of Mahatma Gandhi's concept of Basic Education are also stated briefly.

Chapter III gives an historical account of the developments in the realm of education in France from the beginning of the Christian era and the Carolingian Educational system that prevailed there from the eighth century to the sixteenth century A.D. During this time, Universities were established in France, the most important being the University of Sorbonne. The influence of the Muslim civilization on the west that paved the way for the spread of secular and humanistic ideas in Europe which in turn shaped the course of education in France is also touched upon. During the Renaissance, new ideas in education came to be introduced in France. The courtly education in France due to the rise of Nation States, the role of different religious orders and congregations, especially in the promotion of girls's education and the different theories and practices on educa-

tion as propounded by Erasmus, Rebalais, Montaigne, Calvin, Rousseau, Condorcet and others are also analysed here. Napoleon's National System of Education leaving Primary school education in the hands of the Church and Secondary and Higher education like *lycées* with the government is also traced out. The effects of the restoration of monarchy on education after the down fall of Napoleon and the developments related to the process of education during the Third Republic in France are referred to here. Secularization and Laicisation of education and the revival of Rousseau's ideas on education at the beginning of the 20th Century are explained. The educational goals of France in the 20th Century up to the Second World War and the merger of Pondicherry in 1954 are also examined.

Chapter IV discusses the feeble attempts made by the French especially by the Missionaries for the promotion of education in India since their arrival in 1674 upto 1815, i.e., the final restoration of the French possessions in Pondicherry to France. Though the French came here as traders in 1674, they could firmly establish their political authority only after 1815. In the early years, education did not form part of the concern of the French rulers. They had established educational institutions first for the children of the Europeans and then for the natives through their missionaries. It is further shown that the early missionary efforts in the field of education were essentially part of the mission for conversions. Moreover, French efforts during this period were more intended to serve the European community. In course of time, there evolved an educational system in the colony, which was not very different from France in its essential features unlike in British India. To give a historical background to the starting of the educational system in the colony, the social milieu of Pondicherry on the

arrival of the French is given, viz., the status of Pondicherry before the arrival of the French, the evolution of French polity, the ebbs and tides of the French political sway, urbanisation of Pondicherry and the population during this time. Louis XIV of France by his *Lettres Patentes* (license) authorised the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) to carry on missionary activities in India. A Royal Ordinance was issued in 1747 to provide instruction to the slaves. The activities of the missionaries and the different religious congregations, viz., the Jesuits, *Prêtres des Mission Étrangères* (priests of the Foreign Missions), Paris, *Société des Missions Étrangères* in charge of the Carnatic, *Pères du Saint Esprit* (Priests of the Holy Spirit) and the Ursulines who worked for the promotion of education in the colony by establishing educational institutions, Seminaries for the training of priests and convents for nuns are highlighted in detail. The growth of literacy in Pondicherry by the efforts of influential citizens in the colony by learning French language for knowledge sake and for power and influence is also explained here. Though schools were established by the French in Pondicherry, the traditional system of *thinnai-p-pilligal* of the native Hindus was still very prevalent as a means to provide education to the local population.

Chapter V attempts to study the growth of education in Pondicherry from 1815 to 1870, i.e., between the final restoration of the monarchy and the Third Republic in France in the backdrop of the impact of the French Revolution of 1789 against Royalty. The popular cry for a National system of education during the revolution synchronising with Napoleon's National System of Education is highlighted. After Napoleon's downfall and the restoration of monarchy in France, French Indian territories were restored to the French. Comte Dupuis, the first Governor of Pondicherry after its final restoration to France who took

keen interest in the promotion of education in the colony requested the missionaries to start educational institutions at Primary and Secondary levels and it is examined here. The educational activities of congregations such as those of *St Louis de Gonzague*, *St Joseph de Cluny*, *Prêtres des Missions Étrangères de Paris*, *Congregation de l'Immaculée Marie*, *St Joseph de Nevers*, *St Joseph de Lyon* are dealt with here. Details of private initiative in the educational field are explained along with scholarships, free schools for low castes, schools for upper classes and schools for *creoles*, the efforts that went into improving the quality of teaching, teacher training, steps taken for the promotion of vernacular languages, examination system, efforts of philanthropists for starting of new schools and professional education are enumerated chronologically. The role of printing press in the growth of literacy and education in Pondicherry through the efforts of missionaries and locals, starting of printing presses, journals in French as well as local languages and the composition of dictionaries by the Foreign missionaries are noteworthy factors in the field of education. There was steady growth in education during this period through the efforts of missionaries, private agencies and the administration.

Chapter VI deals with education in Pondicherry during 1871 to 1914, i.e., between the proclamation of the Third Republic and the First World War in Europe. The developments during this period saw the introduction of Secular and Universal Primary Education in France in 1880 under the leadership of Jules Ferry, the moderate republican minister for Public Instruction and its extension to French India. The report of Mr Gramboulan, *l'inspecteur d'academie* in 1879 who was sent on a mission to India by the *Ministre de la marine et des colonies* to study Primary Education and the report of Mr Perdijon appointed

as Inspector for Primary Schools in 1884 giving valuable insight on the state of affairs of education in Pondicherry are the special features in the educational field during this period. The starting of *Alliance Française* in Pondicherry for the promotion of French language and culture is also explained. Many of the *décrets and arrêtés* passed during this time show the number of schools started during this time. The policy of education, curriculum, the system of public instruction, the question of grants-in-aid, schools for low class people like *adidravidas*, ecclesiastical education, process of laicisation of schools, improvement in secondary education, the system of *baccalauréat*, the system of awarding certificates to the students and the introduction of *pensionnat* (boarding schools) for students are touched upon. The question of *renonçants* which was the hottest topic for discussion of the day is also alluded to here.

Chapter VII deals with the progress of education in Pondicherry between 1914 and 1954, i.e., period from the First World War and the final departure of the French from their Indian settlements. After the Second World War, as part of the nationalist movements all over the subjugated colonies for freedom and Independence, French Indian subjects also clamoured for the same. As a result, the French decided to hand over their enclaves in India which was marked by the Treaty of Cession between India and France in 1954. Primary education, secondary education, *baccalauréat*, technical education, direction and administration, inspection of schools, *conseil colonial de l'instruction publique*, training of teachers, scholarships, grant-in-aid, teaching of English, teaching of indigenous languages, pay scale of teachers, fixing up of staff salary, fixing up of school vacations, recruitment of teachers and stipends to students are discussed in detail here. Different *décrites and arrêtés* during this period give a clear

picture of the developments in education in various fields.

An attempt is made in the concluding chapter to bring out the salient features of the educational system that prevailed in Pondicherry over a period of 280 years of French rule. The activities connected with the promotion of education under the auspices of the Christian religious institutions both in British India and French India upto the end of the Eighteenth century and afterwards are studied. The differences in the policies and programmes followed by the British Indian Government in various fields of education along with the role of private sector and government sector in promoting education in their region are brought out with available data. The system of education in Pondicherry that forms the crux of this thesis is analysed and explored from various angles and conclusions are arrived at. The periodisation of the theme chosen for this thesis is justified here. Peace and prosperity are the pre-requisites of any progress in any field even for the growth and development of education in a country. During the first period, there was no peace either in political or in social field, though there was prosperity. So the French could not evolve any definite system of education in Pondicherry. After 1815, when Pondicherry was restored to the French administration, there was peace and hence, development in educational field. Education now became the total monopoly of the missionaries. Though Monarchy gained control, Republican ideas slowly started influencing education during this time. By 1871, Republican ideas held complete sway over education. As a result, secularisation and laicisation gained momentum. After 1914, it was a turbulent period politically and economically and there was no peace in France. Hence there was a tendency for them to go back to the past. Now, Rousseau's informal education gained importance in France. These sig-

nificant changes had reflection in Pondicherry with all sweeping changes. The developments which had taken place in the following areas like general education, viz., Primary, Secondary and *Baccalauréat*, Professional and Technical education, Direction and Administration including inspection in improving the efficacy of education, the role of teacher training in improving education, the growth of girls' education in the light of the activities of the congregations of the nuns, encouragement of vernacular languages, promotion of English education in the colony, the process of democratisation of education, secularisation, the special features of laicisation, the role of private initiative for the promotion of education and the role of the press that reflected people's conscience through education are discussed here. It is further shown that in most of the spheres of education, the system in vogue in Pondicherry till about the middle of the twentieth century met the requirements of the local population consistent with the availability of resources. Finally, the significance of articles 21 to 25 in the Treaty of Cession signed between India and France which provide scope for continuation of French education in Pondicherry is also referred to. A chart describing the stages of Pre- Primary, Elementary, Secondary and Higher Secondary education in British India and in French India is also provided in this thesis.