CHAPTER - III

ADVENT OF WESTERN EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON TAMIL SOCIETY

Education on the eve of British Arrival :

After the fall of Vijayanagar (1565), until the British conquest of South India there were no changes in the educational system. Due to prolonged wars the patronage for education by the Nayaks and the Nawabs of South India was not encouraging. In the middle of the eighteenth century there were very few schools for public instruction. As in the past Sanskrit education was available for the Brahmin pupils in the Gurukulas, which had deteriorated in Standard. The debased system of education in the 18th century is described by Schwartz thus: "under a frame of Government so wretched, the education of the young is miserably neglected. Few children learn to read and write and cast accounts and they are exclusively boys. Indigenou education was private or public, elementary or higher administered at home to boys and exceedingly rarely to girls, or administered to boys alone in schools, which


inspite of serious defects were maintained and managed by the people themselves. "The Chettis and the Kanakkars knew accounts and look-keeping but had no access to vedic learning or its ancillary disciplines".  

After the establishment of the Madras Presidency, the British could not pay attention to educational reforms until 1922, as the government was engaged in "a series of experiments in Judicial and more particularly in land revenue administration". Tamil Nadu had been impoverished due to low prices and high taxes. The middle and lower classes of people were unable to defray the expenses incidental upon the education of their children. Where grants of land had been made for the support of indigenous schools by ancient Hindu and Muslim rulers, the Schools had fallen into disuse and in some places had entirely disappeared. In some parts of the country, education was confined to some Brahmins and the Muslims taught their children in their own houses with the aid of teachers. Education was entirely unknown to the peasants in rural

areas\textsuperscript{7}. The Collector of Bellary, Campbell who submitted a report on Education to Governor Munro in 1822 states that the teachers were generally inefficient and that "Every school boy can repeat verbatim a vast number of verses the meaning of which he knows no more than the parrot that has been taught to utter certain words\textsuperscript{8}.

The elementary education in the indigenous schools was far from satisfactory. In the 'piar' or elementary school the first thing the pupil learnt was the alphabet. He was taught to write on the sand; he was made to read light literature, Ramayana, Mahabaratha and Panchatantra. He was taught to read letters, Write legal documents, deeds, etc., which helped him in the village transactions. In the Brahmin 'tols' or colleges were taught law, logic, astronomy and the Vedas and the students emerging from them formed the class of literary men\textsuperscript{9}.

In the pre-British school system in Tamil Nadu, the pupils did not stay long to learn, as they were withdrawn from schools by their parents to be trained in the

\begin{itemize}
\item[] \textsuperscript{7} Campbell's Report, Para 22; Board's consultations No.46, dated 21st February 1825.
\item[] \textsuperscript{8} Baliga. B.S. (ED)., \textit{Op.cit.}, P.62.
\item[] \textsuperscript{9} Campbell's Report in Board's Consultations Nos.32-33, dated 25th August 1823, Page 1169 Sqq. of Board's Consultations val.958.
\end{itemize}
traditional profession of the community to which the parents belonged. But in the 'tols' or colleges were found scholars more advanced in years. The students in the 'tols' were taught various subjects. Coming under higher education. "In the sanskrit 'tols', education was entirely gratuitous, the teacher invariably received nothing but the satisfaction of having imparted, what he considered, the sacred lore to a few devotees" 11.

Pre-British Tamil society, which had been existing for centuries, was not without scientific culture. It lived by agriculture and handicrafts; as such possessed such sciences as astronomy, agronomy, mathematics and mechanics. It possessed the science of medicine also. "But as the society stood at a low level of economic development, the amount of scientific knowledge it had attained and accumulated was small" 12.

Tamil society was caste-stratified as in other parts of India. In the caste scheme which assigned specific social functions to each class, it was the Brahmin caste which had

the exclusive right to preach religious doctrines, to officiate as priests, and to function as teachers\textsuperscript{13}. Hence, they alone had the privilege to study all higher religious and secular knowledge. Other castes were debarred by religious edicts from all higher studies. The Brahmin learnt through Sanskrit, the sacred language in which all religious and higher secular knowledge was expressed, while the common man in villages and towns learnt the three R's in vernacular\textsuperscript{14}. Education made the individual to accept and conform to the hierarchical structure of society and made him subordinate to it.

**Introduction of Western System of Education:**

Sir Thomas Munro, who assumed charge as the Governor of Madras in 1820, directed the collector of the districts to submit reports as to the condition of Education in their respective districts, with the object of bringing education reforms. Before Munro's attempts to bring in the new educational system,\textsuperscript{15} Bengal had taken the lead. It was found that in various parts of India the Hindus and Muslims had their own educational institutions which were linked with

\textsuperscript{13} G.O.No.217, Education dated 16th April 1883.

\textsuperscript{14} Selections from the Records of the Madras Government, No.II Papers relating to Public Instruction by Arbuthnot, Pages 127-130.

\textsuperscript{15} Munro's Minute, dated 25th June 1822.
religion. The Pandits taught the Sanskrit in patasalas and taught the Muslims in the Mosques. In order to assist European judges in the administration of Hindu and Mohamedan laws a Madrassah or Muslim college at calcutta, and a Sanskrit institution at Banaras were started.\textsuperscript{16}

The history of the development of English education in India falls into four distinct periods:

1. From 1772 to 1818, the period of beginnings;
2. From 1818 to 1854, the period of foundation and decision of great importance;
3. From 1854 to 1901, the period of rapid expansion; and
4. From 1901 to the present day, the period of examination and modification.

When the question of the renewal of the charter of the East India Company came before the House of Commons in 1792 - 93, Wilber Force, a Member of the House of Commons, brought before the House a resolution to take such steps which would lead to the advancement of the people of India through useful knowledge.\textsuperscript{17} But the resolution was opposed

\textsuperscript{16} Munoro's Minute, dated 25th June 1822, Para 1.
\textsuperscript{17} Boards Consultation Nos.5-6, dated 8th July 1822.
on the ground that it would be madness to give the Hindus any kind of learning other than what they possessed\(^\text{18}\). If the colonial rulers had maintained this stand during their rule, Indians would have remained philosophic and contented with their social and religious ideals. But things happened otherwise. The awakening of the Hindus to nationalism and agitation against foreign rule went ahead, as a result of new ideas imbibed from western education.

A few years later Charles Grant, one of the Directors of the company, submitted a memorandum to the British government to introduce English education in India. We may quote his words in this respect; "It would be extremely easy for government to establish, at moderate expense, in various parts of the provinces, places of gratuitous instruction in reading and writing English; multitudes, especially of the young, would flock to them and the essay books used in teaching might at the same time convey obvious truths on different subjects. The Hindus would, in time, become teachers of English themselves; and the employment of our language in public business, for which every political reason remains in full force, would, in course of another

\(^{18}\) Board's Consultation, Vol.1011, No.46, dated 21st February 1825.
generation, make it very general throughout the country. There is nothing wanting to the success of this plan, but the hearty patronage of government\textsuperscript{19}. In the Charter Act of 1813 provision was made for "the revival and improvement of literature and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India\textsuperscript{20}.

Through the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy the Hindu college was founded in 1817 where Hindus received education in European languages and sciences, and the Bishop of Calcutta opened an institute to train young Christians as preachers and impart knowledge of English to Hindus and Muslims. Meanwhile in Madras Presidency, steps were taken for the introduction of English education without interfering with the indigenous system of learning. Collectorate school at district headquarters and Tahsildari school at taluk headquarters were started throughout the Madras Presidency\textsuperscript{21}. "In every collectorate there were to be two collectorate schools, one for the Hindus and the other

\textsuperscript{19} Revenue consultation, Vol.310, No.1, dated 30th September 1825, Para 4-5 of Board's Report.

\textsuperscript{20} Board's consultations, Vol.1666, No.21-22, dated 5th August 1839.

\textsuperscript{21} Revenue Consultations, Vol.314, No.s1-5, dated, 10th May 1826.
for the Muslims, under one or more teachers trained in various subjects. At Tahsildari, there was to be a school under a competent school-master. English was taught in the collectorate schools, while in Tahsildari schools the entire teaching was conducted either in Tamil, Telugu or Kannada respectively in the linguistic regions of the Madras Presidency.

While introducing European knowledge the country Directors had clearly announced that they did not wish to discourage higher studies in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic literature; and they believed that a knowledge of English alone would enable Indians to acquire higher education and that they wished it to be taught along with the Indian language, and that vernacular should be the medium of instruction in the elementary classes.

There were two schools of thought among the English educationists in regard to the type of education to be imparted to the Indians. The first school headed by Lord Macaulay was for education through English medium and introduction of western culture and literature. Macaulay was for "the substitution of western culture for the Indian" and


23. Despatches on Education (From the Directors of East India Company), 1854-1868.
create a class of Indians who would be "Indian in blood and
colour but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in
intellect." The second school, known as the Orientalists,
while agreeing to the education of the Indians in western
science and knowledge, advocated the encouragement of
Sanskrit and Arabic literature. Mount-stuart Elphinstone
held the view that English education would make the Indian
people gladly accept the British rule. According to
Elphinstone, education in English was a political necessity.
There was a total separation between the British rulers and
the Indian people, and the only means of ensuring cordial
relation between them was relations education.

It was the intention of the colonial government not to
interfere with the existing indigenous schools in the
provinces. Sir Thomas Munro, the Governor of Madras, had
made it clear that it was not his intention "to recommend
any interference whatever in the native schools." Everything of this kind ought to be carefully avoided and
the people should be left to manage their schools in their
own way.

24. Barns, Margarite., India To-day and Tomorrow, (New
Delhi, 1937), P.176.
25. Letters from the Board of Public Instruction, dated 6th
December 1834, Page.5.
26. Ibid.,
27. Munro's Minute, dated 25th June 1822, Para.1.
Elphinstone's "minute on Education" of December 1839 clearly defined the steps to be taken by the three presidencies regarding education. First he accepted Governor-General William Bentinck's proposition that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and that all funds appropriated would be best employed on English education alone. Secondly Elphinstone was in favour of the "filtration theory of education". According to this theory, "the best results could be obtained by educating the higher classes in the first instance, and leaving it to them, to create a desire for education in the masses".

The British Government announced in 1844 that in every case of public appointment, preference would be given to those educated in western science and who were familiar with the English language. In regard to this policy, Governor-General Lord Auckland said: "I would make it my principal aim to communicate through the means of English language a complete education in European literature, philosophy and science to the greatest number of students who may be ready to accept it".

Through the efforts of Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Madras, the Madras Presidency High school was established in 1840\textsuperscript{30}. The university Board constituted in May 1840 had drafted the fundamental rules to regulate the working of the High school. Admission was open to all castes and groups taking care to avoid whatever may tend to violate or offended the religious feelings of any class. However, things went otherwise. Social distinctions came to dictate the character of this institution. The school fees were fixed at the high rate of four Rupees in order to eliminate a large influx of pupils from the inferior class, who might deter the more respectable families from sending their children to this school. Further, "students from the 'polluting caste' were denied admission by the University Board which appeared over-zealous in respecting the susceptibilities of the high caste Hindus"\textsuperscript{31}. In 1851 the first batch of Harijan students entered the Madras Presidency High School, upon which there was a loud protest resulting in the exodus of some high caste students and the resignation of Hindu members of the University Board. \textsuperscript{32} However, the University Board stood firm and declared that social distinctions would not be recognised in the institution.

\textsuperscript{30} Minutes of Elphinstone, 12th December 1839.


\textsuperscript{32} Education Commission Report, 1884, Madras, Para.18.
Between 1854 to 1901 there has been a rapid progress of Education in Tamil Nadu\textsuperscript{33}. The filtration theory formerly adopted had benefited the high class students only, while the rest belonging to lower classes were denied proper education. In 1854, Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control in London, directed the East India Company to form a proper system of education extending from primary school to University education. Wood's despatches to Government of India are familiarly known as 'Woods Despatches' and are considered as the Magna Carta of Indian Education\textsuperscript{34}. The scheme enunciated by Wood envisaged support to the traditional schools, replacement of the theory of filtration by the theory of mass education, periodical inspection of schools and neutrality in matters of religion.

Education was organised with the triple objects of (1) spreading western education, (2) securing trained candidates for public administration, and (3) obedience to the British Government by Indian subjects\textsuperscript{35}. It was decided that the medium of instruction at the collegiate stage should be English, secondary education should be imparted both through

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} Despath from England, dated 7th April 1859, Para.51.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Collection of Despatches on Education, 1854-1868, Despatch, dated 19th July 1854, Para.7.Page2.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Syed Nurullah and J.P.Nyak., \textit{History of Education In India}, (Delhi, 1943), P.179.
\end{itemize}
English and modern Indian languages. Wood's despatch of 1854 laid the foundation of the structure of the modern educational system in India. The growth of education gathered momentum after 1854\textsuperscript{36}. The indigenous school system rapidly declined by the end of the 19th century. An act of the Legislative council provided for the creation of Universities at Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. The Madras University and the Department of public Instruction came into existence in 1859\textsuperscript{37}. Universities Act was passed in 1904 giving autonomy to the universities for the spread of college education\textsuperscript{38}.

The Madras Government passed a number of Acts to encourage elementary education and provide grants for their aid. Act VI of 1863 sanctioned the maintenance of school partly by grant-in-aid and partly by voluntary cess\textsuperscript{39}. Act III of 1871 declared that municipal funds could be utilised

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\item \textsuperscript{37} Bimanbehari Majumdar., \textit{Indian Political Associations and Reform of Legislature 1818-1917}, (Calcutta, 1965), P.16.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Report on Public Instruction, 1904-1905, P.35.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Collection of Despatches on Education, 1854-1868, Para 17, P.1.
\end{itemize}
for Education. Act V of 1878 (the Madras Municipalities Act) made provisions for the education of the poor. Act VIII of 1920 transferred much of the powers of the Director of Public Instruction, in respect of elementary education, to the District Educational councils. About the same time the District Municipalities Act and the Local Boards Act were revised and elementary education was completely removed from the preview of the District Boards and Municipalities.

There was a steady expansion of education in Tamil Nadu between 1921-1937. \textsuperscript{40} Under Diarchy, the educational Department came under the control of the Indian Ministers in 1921. In the Madras Presidency, steps were taken to implement programmes of educational expansion. \textsuperscript{41} "The tremendous social and political awakening among the people during the period" was also responsible for the rapid spread of education among the masses. \textsuperscript{42} Under the government of India, the spread of education was rapid.

\textsuperscript{40} File of Papers relating to the Acts III and IV of 1871.
\textsuperscript{41} Education Commission Report, 1884, Madras, P.27.
\textsuperscript{42} File of papers relating to Act VIII of 1920.
India Act, 1935, University education was placed under the control of Provincial Governments. Later, Sir John Sergeant, the Educational Advisor to the Government of India brought educational reforms requiring compulsory education for boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 14. High schools were to be maintained out of public funds as far as possible. Intermediate course was to be included in the high school course, and the college teaching was to last for three years.

Education through Missionaries:

Wilberforce, a member of the House of Commons, had submitted a resolution for sending schoolmasters and missionaries to India to educate the Indians. The Christian missionaries who came to India did yeoman service for the cause of education. While spreading modern education, they were mainly inspired by a proselytizing spirit to spread Christianity among the Indian people. However, it must be acknowledged that they were among the pioneers of modern education in India. Eager to reach the common people, they


46. Mahajan.V.D., Modern Indian History (1707 to Present day), (New Delhi, 1986), P.508.
imparted education in Tamil and provided free boarding. "Their usual curriculum for the schools included reading, writing, arithmetic and Bible lessons. At the college level they offered advanced courses in literature, science history and other subjects."^48.

The Christian missionaries took leading part in instructing students as early as 1715. They adopted some of the methods of teaching prevalent in the indigenous schools in Madras^49. In 1717 the Society for Promoting Christian knowledge opened two charity schools in Madras to help the poor students. With the indefatigable efforts of Reverend Schwartz, the mission started English Schools at Tanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga. The Jesuit Fathers made Tiruchirapalli the centre of their educational activities. The American Jaffna Mission established schools at Madurai, Dindigul and Ramanathapuram by 1834. "The missionaries realised that the spread of English language would help the spread of Christianity in the Country"^50.

47. University of Madras., op.cit., PP.65 -68.
The London missionary society established a number of schools at Madras, Kumbakonam, Chittor (now in Andhra Pradesh), Salem, and Coimbatore. In 1835, the church missionary society set up several schools in the Tinnavelly district. The Madras Christian school started in 1837 was converted into a college four years later. In 1854 there were about 30,000 boys being educated in Missionary Schools.

During the latter part of the 19th century Christian missionaries were leading in their endeavors to educate the Tamilians. The fear that the missionaries would convert the students to Christianity was dominant among the Hindu parents. But this fear was allayed by the assurance of the British government that the religious sentiments of the people would be safeguarded. The London mission took keen interest in the education of the Koravas, many of whom were converted to the Christian faith.

52. The missionary Herald 1837, P.104
53. Court of Directors, Educational Despatch to the Governor General in Council, 19 July 1854.
The missionary schools and colleges spread all over South India are standing witness for the work done by various Christian Missions in regard to the cause of education.

**Muslim Education:**

Education of the Muslims may be traced to the several dynasties of Sultans who had established their capital at Delhi. Persian became the administrative language. Amir Khusru has stated that "the Persian speech (Guftar) is uniform in Hindustan from the banks of the river Sind to the shores of the sea"\(^55\). Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388) established colleges which were attached to mosques, where muslims could learn and pray. Institutions for muslim learning were established at Delhi, Jullundur, Firuzabad and other places. Delhi had developed into an intellectual competitor of Bukhara, the famous University - City of Central Asia\(^56\).

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In Mughul India there was nothing like the modern system of education maintained by government, but primary and secondary education of some sort existed. Every mosque had a maktab attached to it, where boys and girls received education. Mughul rulers who reigned between 1526 and 1707 were generally patrons of learning and they established muslim schools in several parts of the country. Persian was very much encouraged.

In the 18th century Muslim education in South India was not better than that of the Hindus. Education among the Muslim was intended only for the upper classes and did not offer any instruction to the Muslim masses. Generally, Persian was the medium of instruction in Muslim schools. The first attempt to educate the Muslims to qualify them to work as assistants to European Judges was made by Warren Hastings. He established the Calcutta Madarassah to qualify the sons of Mohammedan gentlemen for responsible and lucrative offices in the state. The subjects taught were

57. Munities of consultation, dated 18th May 1836 Para.21.
58. Ibid.,
theology, logic, rhetoric, grammar, law, natural philosophy, astronomy, geometry and arithmetic\textsuperscript{59}.

Among the Muslims, higher education was not a monopoly of any section, due to the democratic character of Islam. Any Muslim could study at the Madarassah. "While the Hindu schools were designed for one favoured class of the community, Muslim schools were open without let to all who confessed that there was but one god and Mahammad was the Prophet"\textsuperscript{60}.

In the 18th century when the Carnatic wars were raging, Muslim population was concentrated in Arcot and Madurai areas. The Nawabs of Arcot had encouraged Islamic education. The British scheme of English education was not warmly received both in South India and the North. When the British Government on 7th March 1835 announced, approving Lord Macaulay's scheme, to promote "European literature and science amongst the natives of India and that all funds

\textsuperscript{59.} Letters from the Board of Instruction, dated 6th December 1843., p.7.

\textsuperscript{60.} O'Malley,(ED)., Modern India and the west, (London, 1941), P.138.
appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education", the Muslims of Calcutta, including Maulvis, submitted a petition objecting to this educational scheme. The reason for this objection was their apprehension that it was the object of the government to convert the people to Christianity and that by encouraging English exclusively, Muslim and Hindu Systems of education would be neglected. In order to remove the misgivings of the Muslims, Lord William Bentink declared a policy of strict neutrality. He forbade interference with the religious beliefs of the students in all schools and colleges and the mingling, direct or indirect, teaching of Christianity with the system of instruction"61.

Education of Muslim boys and girls did not lag behind. By the end of the 19th century there were several Urdu schools for the teaching of boys and girls. In Tamil Nadu there were separate schools for Muslim girls. The government issued orders for the religious instruction of Mahammadan girls within the school hours in the schools chiefly intended for the education of Muslim boys62.

62. G.O.No.1727, Madras, dated 22nd September 1933.
With the growth of education, Muslims aspired for higher posts in administration and proper representation in the legislature. By the beginning of the 20th century Hindus and Muslims were drawn as under, and the British banned Communal feelings among the two classes of Society. After the disintegration of the Mughul Empire, the Muslims had gradually sunk to a position of political obscurity and poverty, while the Hindus were better in professional, administrative and economic life. In Madras, several Muslim associations sprang up. In 1884 the association called Anjuman-i-Islamiah had started schools to educate Muslim youths. In course of time, the educated Muslims "alarmed at the growing Hindu influence in the administration, had no wish to see the highest organs of executive and legislative power in the country transferred" to the Hindus. In 1906 was formed the Muslim League. Education awakened the Muslims to claim political rights and the Muslim League became a powerful party. After 1933, the Muslim League consolidated itself under M.A. Jinnah. The Muslim League which had all along co-operated with the Congress, fell out and demanded a

separate state for the Muslims. At the Madras conference of the League in 1941, Jinnah spoke in clear terms: "we do not want, under any circumstances, a constitution of an all India character with one government at the centre. We are determined to establish the status of an independent nation and on independent state in this sub-continent."

Thus the political and national awakening resulting from Modern education inspired the Hindu and Muslim communities to think in terms of their own and the separatist tendency of the league resulted in the creation of Pakistan.

Education of women:

In Ancient India women had high place in society and were learned. Education of girls was not neglected. "The Rigveda mentions the names of learned women like Lopamudra, Sikata, Nivavasi, Vishwavara, Ghosha, and Apala, who attained the rank of Rishis and composed hymns."66 In the Epic period, the position of women had deteriorated. "With

66. Luniya, op.cit., P.86.
the passage of time, education and rights of women were curtailed"\textsuperscript{67}. Hiuen Tsang, who visited India (c. 630 AD), mentions that female education was restricted to higher classes.

In the Medieval times and later till the advent of the British, village boys and girls were taught in indigenous schools; there were no public schools. As there was the custom of child-marriage and girls had to do domestic work, they were withdrawn from school at an early age and were denied proper education. They "remained outside the reach of all education" and remained illiterate\textsuperscript{68}.

During the early part of the 19th century female education had made some progress. But parents withdrew their daughters from schools to get them married. In 1850 Carpenter, a reformer, at a meeting with the local leaders and the Director of Public Instruction, urged that it was absolutely necessary to start a normal school for girls at Madras to prevent high caste girls leaving school without

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., PP. 110 - 111.

\textsuperscript{68} Status of women in India; Educational Department ICSSR (New Delhi, 1975), P. 93.
completing their education. Due to her efforts a Normal school for girls was started in 1869 with admission restricted to girls of the higher castes and classes.

The Hunter commision appointed in 1882 recommnded that female education should be considered as the reponsibility of the Government and should receive immediate attention. The Madras Government also implemented the recommend­ations. In the same year Brander, the inspectress of girl's schools, submitting her report in respect of edcuation for girls, proposed grant-in-aid scheme for girl's schools, and employment of teachers to teach girls at home. In 1890 Duncan, the Director of Public Instruction, Madras proposed to government that mixed schools (co-education institutions) would remove the social prejudice against female education. In these schools, the inspectresses of schools supervised the education of girls.

To encourage education among women, Christian missionaries and private institutions introduced zenana education, a scheme which provided for the teaching of girls and ladies at their homes. This scheme was intended to help purdha ladies, elderly and married women to learn at home. By the end of the 19th century, the Madras government had accepted the policy of advancing female education and encouraged private bodies and Christian missionaries to establish girls schools and women's colleges in the Presidency.\(^73\)

During the first two decades of the 20th Century female education spread rapidly. In 1904, the British government established model primary schools for girls at important centres and increased the number of training schools for women.\(^74\) Practical education for women was stressed, so that they could find useful employment. The revised grant-in-aid code of 1905-06 placed both girls and boys on the same footing for aid. Secondary education was

\(^{73}\) Sathianadhan.S., *op.cit.*, P.225

\(^{74}\) G.O.No.215 - 216, Education, Madras, dated April 6, 1904.
encouraged for girls by giving liberal grants to schools and scholarships for the girls. In the All India Women's Conference on education held in Madras in 1928, Lady Irwin, while appreciating the progress made in respect of female education, mentioned also the reasons for the lag of women's education. She pointed out that there were enormous obstacles in the way of female education in the country such as poverty, ignorance, apathy, hostile public opinion, social customs and even politics.

In 1930's the advantages of women's education in the rapidly changing society was realised and the social taboo against women's education disappeared. University and technical education provided opportunities for women to become teachers, and elevators. Mahatma Gandhi's satyagraha and political agitation movements gave impetus to educated women to take part in the freedom movement. During the Quit India movement (1942), women also came out to protest against British Imperialism. Students of the Queen Mary's

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college observed hartal and led processions shouting 'Quit India' slogans all along the way until they were dispersed by police. The Second World War (1939 - 45) gave an opportunity for educated women to serve the country in many capacities and with India's freedom, the outlook completely changed regarding the position of women in society. Educated women were able to find employment in offices and factories; they began to serve the country as doctors, Engineers, Scientists, lawyers and teachers. In the political field their contribution is remarkable. Many are able to serve as ministers and legislators in the states and at the centre.

During the British rule in Tamil Nadu, equal right of women to education and culture was recognised universally. Education has now spread among women rapidly. Female education has gone through all stages - total apathy, ridicule, criticism and acceptance. "It may now be safely stated that anywhere in India, the need for the education of girls as much as of boys is recognised as a cardinal need for national progress."

Impact of Education on Tamil Society:

Western education awakened the political and social conscience in the Tamil people. Hitherto subjected to age old customs and social prejudices, they saw things in their real perspective. The caste system, disparity among the social classes, the double standard of law imposed by the Dharmasastras were examined from the scientific angle and educated men revolted against them. Political thought imbibed from the works of the western political philosophers influenced the educated class to seek freedom from the hegemony of the British rulers.

Education had opened the eyes of the Tamilians to the several disparities in social life and the "divide and rule" policies of the British government. Brahmins being favoured for civil appointments, the non-Brahmins of Tamil Nadu revolted against the government policy and the non-Brahmin movement became a strong force which the British had to face till they laid down their authority in India. The Justice party contained very powerful educated men like Ramaswamy Mudaliar, E.V.Ramaswamy Naiker and others, while the Dravida Kazagham dominated the political scene during the latter part of the British rule in Tamil Nadu.
Educated people stood up against the injustice to the women folk, the untouchables and other social evils to eradicate which social reformers like Annie Besant, Veeresalingam Pantalu, Chentsal Rao and others, devoted their lives and induced the Government to take steps to legislate against those evils.

Education changed the outlook of society. The spirit of Nationalism roused the Tamilians against the atrocities of the British rule. The Tamilians as a whole stood to support the National movement and and the formation of the Congress ministry in Madras under C. Rajagopalachari. Political consciousness induced the people to organise themselves to secure demands like administrative reforms, Indianisation of administrative services, representative institutions, franchise, elected legislature, civil liberties and self-government. But for Western education, Indians perhaps, would have been groping in the dark caverns of their society under the grip of traditional uneven laws which made distinction between the higher and lower classes. The outcome of western education was the spread of democratic ideals among the people.

Chapter Third deals with the advent of western education and its impact on the Tamil society. When the
Madras Presidency was established education was carried on in the traditional system. Elementary education in the indigenous schools were far from satisfactory. Higher education was forbidden to lower classes. The Brahmins learnt through Sanskrit.

Hindus and Muslims had their own educational institutions. Early in the 19th century, Charles Grant, one of the directors of the East India company, submitted a memorandum to the British Government to introduce English education in India. In the Madras Presidency steps were taken for the introduction of English education without interfering with the indigenous system of learning. The British administrators considered that English education in India was a political necessity. The policy of Elphinstone known as the 'filtration theory' benefited the higher classes only, for according to this scheme the higher classes in society were given preference for education. [Wood's educational scheme encouraged traditional schools and mass education (1854). It was the educational policy of the British rulers to spread western Education in India,] and secure educated candidates for public administration. There was a steady expansion of education in Tamil Nadu. By the
Government of India Act 1935 University education was placed under the control of the provincial governments.

Missionaries have contributed much to spread education in Tamil Nadu by establishing schools and colleges. Education among the Muslims gained impetus by the encouragement given by the government. Girl's education had fallen behind since they were withdrawn from schools by parents to get them married at an early age. In 1882, the Hunter commission recommended to the government that female education should be encouraged and considered it as the responsibility of the government to spread education among women. By the beginning of the 20th century female education had spread rapidly.

Due to the efforts of the Christian missionaries and the efforts of learned men like macaulay, Hunter, Wood and others English education spread all over the country.

Western education brought new ideas and awakened the people to social and political realities. The spirit of Nationalism grew and there were constant agitations for reforms in administration, civil liberties, elected legislature and for self-government.