CHAPTER IV

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Having addressed the intellectual and physical needs of the marginalised people in rural Tirunelveli, the women missionaries began to think of the overall development of the villages. Women's welfare is closely linked to their environment. So, the women missionaries of Tirunelveli organised welfare projects to help the poor. As a matter of fact, any lady missionary who was in charge of a particular place conducted development works in the surrounding villages.¹ In the beginning, the Christian community was predominantly rural in outlook. Hence it is but natural that rural reconstruction aimed at economic uplift became the motto of the women missionaries. The Tirunelveli Diocesan Council set up a Rural Reconstruction Committee in 1937. The committee had earlier been called Co-operative Work Standing Committee.²

Attempts had been made to raise the material standards of life by engaging the women in lace-making, sewing, embroidery, needle-work, dress-making, woollen caps and basket-making, grass and rope mats making, bee-keeping, gardening, lighting the streets and sweeping.³ The mission school staff members were in charge of the rural reconstruction centres. The schools conducted physical culture classes for the youth and acted as employment bureau. The products made in the schools were sold at the exhibition centres in various

¹. Interview with D. Thangaraj, Secretary, Bishop Stephen Neil Library, Palayamkottai, 2 November 2004.
places. Adequate training was given to the pupils in the cultivation of cereals, vegetables, cabbages and fruit trees. The women did farm work by turns. Relief work was undertaken during famines and epidemics. Teachers and pastors of the mission kept medicines with them for use for both Christian and non-Christian patients. Money was offered to the poor and clothes supplied. Villagers were rescued from the clutches of extortional money lenders by means of loans raised from the wealthiest members of the community to be repaid in instalments.4

The women missionaries gave importance to adult education and conducted training camps. Conferences, summer schools, refresher courses and retreats were conducted for the wives of the clergy, wives of the teachers and Bible-women or women evangelists in order to enrich their knowledge. Books and papers were supplied to the villagers in order to develop the reading habit among them.5 Such rural development schemes were designed to remove the root cause of injustice, poverty, exploitation and inequality in rural areas. Frequent famines in Tirunelveli and adjacent districts left a large number of orphans and widows in their wake. Several orphanages and widow homes were established by the women missionaries to give the young-widows and orphans shelter and support for a living.

The Diocese of Tirunelveli founded business institutions like the Printing press (1847), the Tirunelveli Diocesan Mutual Benefit Fund (1850), the Book

depot (1882), and the Diocesan Co-operative Stores (1942). The Secretary of the Rural Work Standing Committee of Tirunelveli administered the social works. The Rural Reconstruction Committee raised the economic level of the Christian community through cottage industries and co-operative organisations. In order to educate the women, lectures were arranged on literacy, hygiene, social work, mothers' union work, co-operative societies, improved methods of agriculture and cottage industries.

For rural reconstruction, the Tirunelveli Diocese organised rural congregations. Village surveys were conducted to get a clear picture of the villagers and their living conditions. On the basis of the surveys, the Rural Work Standing Committee drafted development schemes. The Rural Work Committee also published booklets on rural service, rural work, beekeeping and silk industry. The committee also published Dr. Appasamy's book, Rural Work in Tamil. The rural workers utilised such literature for improving their knowledge. The Churches set up shops and daily markets in the mission districts. Income from these sources helped the circles to continue with the rural uplift work. Along with these, the Mothers' Union too rendered yeomen service for the rural reconstruction to benefit the women in Tirunelveli.

10. Ibid., 28 February 1947, p.4.
Mothers’ Union

Mothers’ Union worked for the welfare of the women. It was called by different names in different places like Ladies’ Association and Women’s Mission Association. The main aim of the Mothers’ Union was to build good Christian homes by rendering social and evangelistic service. Systematic rural reconstruction was done through night schools for adults, social work in slums and hospitals. To give opportunities for self-employment, the Mothers’ Union conducted sewing classes to make clothes and altar linen and training sessions in handicrafts, weaving, gardening, cooking, child care, sanitation and decoration. It gave training to the women evangelists or Bible women and organised summer schools and taught home economics, first aid, use of medicinal plants etc. The Union also gave industrial training to the poor, the orphans and the destitute women to earn their livelihood. Mothers’ Union meetings were conducted by the wives of the priests, the Bible women and the wives of the other mission agents. According to the Tirunelveli Diocesan Council Report of November 1948, there were 432 Mothers’ Union branches in Tirunelveli with 10,150 members.

Mothers’ Union in Tirunelveli had its origin in a village called Kadatchapuram. It was started in 1847 by Muthammal, wife of Rev. John Devasahayam. The Union started a nursery school and a night school and gave

15. Report of Mrs. Rachel Devadasan, Secretary, Mothers’ Union, Tirunelveli Diocese, Palayamkottai, 18 September 1949.
adult education to the elders. Perinpam, a member of the Kadatchapuram Mothers' Union started a night school at Kadatchapuram for the women who worked in the paddy fields. As many women had to spend the whole day boiling palmyra juice to make jaggery, nursery schools were started for their children. It was also responsible for the emergence of branches of Mothers' Union in C.M.S. and S.P.G. fields all over the world. ¹⁶

Mary Sumner established the international Mothers' Union in 1876 in England. Women Missionaries like Mrs. Williams (1905-1914), Miss. Anna Rix (1909-1919), Dulcy Brooks (1919-1921), Mrs. Tubbs (1923-1928), N.H. Herring (1921-1929), Mrs. Sophie Tailor (1929-1945), Grace New Western (1929-1935), Miss. Smith (1935-1945) and Mrs. Rachel Devadason (1947-1960) worked in collaboration with the international Women's Union in the Tirunelveli district. Mrs. Rachel Devadas was the first Tamil lady to become the General Secretary of Tirunelveli Mothers' Union. ¹⁷

The South India Mothers' Union Council was convened once in three years. A conference of Mothers' Union workers of South India and Ceylon was held in Madras in September, 1929. The aim of the council was to find out means and methods for the Mothers' Union's progress, to affiliate the Mothers' Union of Tirunelveli to that of the United Kingdom and to have mutual understanding in the methods of work, common literature, books and publications. Miss. Western

¹⁶ Interview with Vasanthi Alex, Secretary, Women's Fellowship, Tirunelveli Diocese, 8 May 2005.

was the President and Miss. Grace New was the Secretary of the Mothers' Union. Delegates from the six dioceses, - Madras, Dornakal, Nasik, Tirunelveli, Travancore and Calcutta - participated in the South India Mothers’ Union conference. Mrs. Waller presided over the Mothers’ Union conference in 1932. Mothers’ Union by-laws were framed at the conference of the Presidents of Mothers’ Union at Courtallam in 1935. It was resolved that the aims and objectives of the union should be propagated in the villages through printed notices and handbills. On the question of divorce, it was resolved that the bad effects of separation and the sanctity of marriage should be taught to the people.\(^{18}\)

Miss. Western, the sister of Bishop Frederick Western and the President of the Mothers' Union of Megnanapuram was deputed to attend the World Conference of Mothers’ Union in London held in July, 1930. She presented a linen chalice veil made at Megnanapuram embroidery school as a token of affection and gratitude from the Mothers’ Union in Tirunelveli Diocese to the Mothers’ Union, England.\(^{19}\) The Mothers’ Union Festival was celebrated on 6 April 1948 all over the world. From 3 February to 5 February 1948, a Mothers’ Union conference was held at Courtallam. It was resolved there to start Women’s Fellowship in which all women, married and unmarried could be accommodated. The teachers and the students of the schools and colleges were encouraged to become members of the Women’s Fellowship. Within the Fellowship, there was to be a society for married women, called Mothers' Union of the Church of South

\(^{19}\) Report of Tinnevelly Diocesan Council, 1930, pp. 15-16.
India. Sr. Carol Graham\textsuperscript{20} founded the Church of South India Women’s Fellowship on 27 September 1948 and became its first General Secretary.\textsuperscript{21}

In 1929, there were 165 branches of Mothers’ Union in the Tirunelveli Diocese and 310 branches with a total of 7,500 members in 1947. The members of the Mothers’ Union elected Secretary and conducted the meetings. Annual subscriptions were collected from the members. The members were trained to participate in baby welfare work, visit the sick and to teach in Sunday schools.\textsuperscript{22}

In Mothers’ Union centres, summer schools were organised. Conferences and retreats were arranged every year for sharing of ideas and experiences with a view to keeping the leaders well informed. The Mothers’ Union had links with England, Ireland and Australia. It is estimated that in 1932 there were six lakh members in the International Mothers’ Union. E.B. Morris was the link Secretary of the Tirunelveli Diocese. Twenty-five Mothers’ Union branches in England had links with the Mothers’ Union of the Tirunelveli Diocese. They sent specimens of Mothers’ Union literature to Tirunelveli Diocese free of cost for evangelistic work.\textsuperscript{23}

Miss. Ling, the woman missionary at Ootacamund reported that the Mothers’ Union of Tirunelveli had the children of Todas educated in the Tirunelveli Diocesan schools.\textsuperscript{24} Miss. E. Elwin, Miss. C.J. Elwin and Bible women of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Sr. Carol Graham came to India as a missionary of U.S.P.G. England in 1927 and worked twenty three years in the villages of Telugu area. As a member of the Union Negotiation Committee of the Church of South India, her contribution to C.S.I. was praise worthy.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Report of Tinnevelly Diocesan Council, 1929, p. 15.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 1952-1953, p. 29.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 1930, pp. 16-18.
\end{itemize}
Sachiapuram near Tirunelveli, helped the Toda women to sell their needle work in the Tirunelveli region. In 1934, Adi Dravida branches of Mothers' Union in the diocese were formed. In the Christianagaram Church district, a Mothers' Guild was organized. Harvest festivals were quite common in Tirunelveli and they were celebrated by the Christians also. During harvest festivals, the people of a mission district assembled at the head station. To attract the people, bajanai meetings and magic lantern exhibitions were held.

**Important Women Personalities**

The C.M.S. and S.P.G. women missionaries jointly worked for rural reconstruction. Miss Branche Turner and Miss. Clara Turner were two important women evangelists of Tirunelveli who were fully involved in this work. Mrs. Harriet Strachan was the president of the Diocesan Branch of the Girls' Friendly Society and also of the Women's Missionary Association. She helped the poor and the sick. Miss. White was in charge of the women's work in Tuticorin. She carried on her work among the Hindu women in Tuticorin and in the nearby villages. She was assisted by five Bible women. They visited the Municipal hospital in Tuticorin and in the neighbouring villages. Miss. White visited Nagalapuram and north Tirunelveli once in a week.

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25. Ibid., 1948-1949, p.43.
26. Ibid., 1934, pp. 41-45.
29. Quarterly Report of S.P.G., January 1899, p. 120.
31. Ibid., 1913, p.83.
The Mothers’ Union in England adopted Miss. Anna Rix as their special representative and deputed her to do work in Tirunelveli. Miss. Anna Rix, Miss. Groves and Mrs. Ketty Mathuram were put in charge of women’s work in Nazareth. Annals’ Association for young women was founded by Miss. Rix in 1908 at Nazareth. Miss. Herring and Miss. Evans rendered valuable service among the women of the diocese, especially at Sawyerpuram. Grace New, a woman missionary at Megnanapuram became the first General Secretary of Mothers’ Union in Megnanapuram in 1929 and served up to 1934. She established health care centres in the villages, neighbouring Megnanapuram.

With the consent of the Secretary, the leaders of the Mothers’ Union branches placed First Aid Boxes in their branches. Mrs. Mercy Paliah, Mrs. Navamani Durairaj, Mrs. Ranjitham Anbudian and Mrs. Daniel Thomas, Mrs. John Jacob and Mrs. James Thomas were the women missionaries who were actively involved in the social service sponsored by Tirunelveli diocese. To create awareness among the Christian people about the ideal Christian home, a Christian Home Exhibition was organised by Miss. Elijah and Mrs. Gnanamuthu at Nazareth.

A refresher course on ‘The Christian Teacher in Free India’ for both men and women teachers of the Diocesan Secondary Schools was held in Nazareth.

32. Ibid., 1909, p. 131.
33. Ibid., 1910, pp. 120-121.
34. Ibid., 1925, p. 140.
35. Interview with Jessy Anandh, President of District Women’s Fellowship, Palayamkottai, 17 June 2006.
from 19 September to 24 September 1949. Lectures on the principles of religious education, food, recreation, hygiene, welfare of children and sex education were delivered. To meet the intellectual, physical and spiritual needs of the youth of the Diocese from twelve to thirty years of age and to co-ordinate all its organisations, a separate committee was constituted in 1948. Special consideration was given to the illiterate and underprivileged youth of the rural areas. In 1950, there were forty-eight Young Men's Associations and twenty-one Girls' Guilds with 1500 members. Mrs. Rev. A Frederick Samuel was the Secretary of the Diocesan Girls' Guild.

Vidivelli Ashram

With the donations from Europeans, the Vidivelli Ashram was founded by Miss. Maud Muriel Frost and Miss. Joy Solomon, Professors of Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai in 1932 at Sayamalai. It was a devotional and training centre. The ashram established day and night schools and arranged house visit programmes. Miss. Frost and Joy Solomon started a Nursery School in the ashram for the children and supplied free mid day meals. They visited the neighbouring villages and taught the importance of cleanliness to the villagers. They bathed the dirty village children and combed their hair. Night schools, one for the Harijan girls and another for caste girls were started in their quarters.

Reading, writing, arithmetic and sewing were taught to the girls in the night schools. Miss. Frost collected old clothes from her friends and stitched petticoats, jackets, bags, comb cases and handkerchiefs out of them and cut the cast away bits into small pieces and stuffed them into cases for pillows. She took part in household work such as peeling potatoes, cutting limes and making snacks, cleaning the store room and putting the articles in tins for marketing. On all Sunday afternoons, she took Bible classes for teachers. Joy Solomon arranged for the Vacation Bible School (V.B.S.) teachers and Tirunelveli Children's Mission workers to work for ten days in Sayamalai.

In 1933 Miss. Frost built a small dispensary at Sayamalai. Dr. Leela Thambidurai and her sister, Sylvia worked in this dispensary. Dr. Leela gathered the women and older girls once a week and gave them talks on health and home science. Both Miss. Frost and Miss. Joy Solomon possessed knowledge about medicine and first aid. Miss. Frost gave first aid for scorpion sting and poisonous bite. She offered treatment for fever, cold, sore eyes, discharging ears and itch. Complicated cases were sent to Neyyoor hospital in Kanyakumari District for better treatment. As an efficient doctor and surgeon, Miss. Frost managed the dispensary. Medical inspection was conducted once a week for the children of Sayamalai. She taught about the evils of superstitious beliefs, ignorance, folly, despair and fear among the villagers. She left India in 1960.

41. Interview with Mrs. Kumutha Jones, relative of Miss. Joy Solomon, Joy Cottage, Palayamkottai, 1 August 2002.
After that, the Vidivelli Ashram looked after by the Tirunelveli Diocese Women's Fellowship.  

**Adult Literacy**

Adult education centres were established in the rural areas by the women missionaries. It was an important factor in the educational and cultural development of Tirunelveli District. Also, every adult had to be familiarised with the social ailments and economic inequalities so as to make them seek solutions to the problems. The awareness education created in them an urge for rational thinking. Miss. Grovers, Miss. Bennett, Miss. Lindsay, Miss Herring, Miss Rix, Miss Smith, Mrs. Western, Mrs. Maurice, Mrs. Gnanasihamani, Mrs. Gnanammal and Mrs. Albert, popular members of the Mothers' Union, promoted the adult literacy programmes by conducting night schools and summer schools in Tirunelveli District.

In 1947, the Rural Work Standing Committee of the Tirunelveli Diocese collected statistics on adult illiterates. On the basis of the reports, plans were drafted and more night schools were opened in the rural areas. In order to spread the adult literacy campaign, the Rural Work Committee utilised the services of the students of the diocesan institutions. The Rural Work Standing Committee conducted special training courses for the rural workers and teachers.

45. Minutes of Rural Work Standing Committee, 28 February 1947, p.3.
46. Ibid., 11 March 1949, p.2
every year. It conducted training programmes in order to train the rural workers to teach the adult illiterates. Further, it organised conferences to highlight the importance of adult literacy.

On 21 September 1947, an Adult Literacy Conference was held at Courtallam. A Citizenship Conference was organised at Palayamkottai in 1949. The conference set forth the idea that the matter of education for citizenship was one of the duties of the rural workers. Moreover, suggestions to improve the work of the rural workers were published in the Diocesan magazine, Narpothagam. Short-term training courses were imparted to the students of the training schools of the Diocese.

Night Schools

Night schools and adult schools were established for the eradication of illiteracy and ignorance among the adult women. As per the Tirunelveli District report of 1939, only 3% women were literates in a village of the Tirunelveli district. With the help of the Mothers' Union Committee, Bible women and Church workers' wives conducted night schools for girls. The women worked individually and in groups in the night schools. The night schools voluntarily taught the illiterate girls. The girls who were not able to attend regular schools in the day time attended

47. Ibid., 11 March 1949, p.4.
48. Ibid., 12 October 1950, p.3.
49. Ibid., 16 September 1947, p.4.
50. Ibid., 11 March 1949, p.5.
51. Ibid., 20 February 1949, p.2.
53. Ibid., 1939, p. 29.
the night schools and were taught to read, write and do arithmetic. It helped the women to become literates.\textsuperscript{54}

The night schools functioned from 9 to 10 P.M.\textsuperscript{55} Slates and books were supplied to the adult students. Regular tests were conducted and prizes were awarded to the best students.\textsuperscript{56} In the initial stages, the village girls hesitated to attend the night schools. Therefore, the teachers had to introduce folk arts like \textit{kummi} and \textit{kolatam} in order to attract them to the schools.\textsuperscript{57} According to the Tirunelveli Diocesan Council Report of 1930, three hundred and fifty adult women from twenty five villages in Tirunelveli learnt to read and write.\textsuperscript{58}

The night schools were financially supported by the Mothers' Union Work Fund. Rural workers were empowered to collect donations for the night schools.\textsuperscript{59} The expenditure of the night schools was met by the Sunday and weekly collections from the Churches of the diocese.\textsuperscript{60} During the Presidentship of Miss. Smith (1935-1945), twenty-four night schools functioned all over the Tirunelveli diocese. Night schools were opened at Draviapuram in Nazareth, Evanspuram in Idaiyangudi, Sawyerpuram Shoe makers colony, Koilpatty shoe makers colony, Mallakulam in Alwarneri, Nambitope in Dohnavur and Muthurayapuram in

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 1935, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 1943, p.23.
\textsuperscript{56} Minutes of Women's Work Standing Committee, 7 March 1950, p.3.
\textsuperscript{57} Report of Tinnevelly Diocesan Council, 20 February 1951, p.3.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 1930, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 1947-1948, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{60} Minutes of Rural Work Standing Committee, 10 March 1950, p.3.
Perpilankulam. In Dohnavur, an evangelist was employed to work among Adi Dravidas. The secretaries of the Mothers' Union and the Rural Work Committee paid frequent visit to the night schools and submitted their reports to the committee. The secretary of the Mothers' Union, Mrs. Rachel Devadason, was appointed as the convener to look after the night schools of the Diocese of Tirunelveli in 1947.

**Summer Schools**

The Tirunelveli Diocesan educational institutions and Mothers' Union jointly conducted summer schools for rural women and teachers every year. In summer schools, general knowledge, spoken English, handicrafts, gardening and moral lessons were taught to the women. Lectures on literacy, health, sanitation, hygiene, social work, scouting, Mothers' Union Work and co-operative societies were organised. Summer camps were conducted to provide opportunity for exposition of their hidden talents. They were also given vocational guidance and a sense of social awareness. This course is still continued as it is most useful for rural development.

In 1935, all the teachers of the Circle and the clergy went on an excursion tour to Travancore and attended the Elementary Educational Conference held at Nagercoil. At Marthandam, they visited the rural demonstration and honey processing centre. Acting on the advice of Marthandam honey processing centre,  

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62. Minutes of Rural Work Standing Committee, 10 March 1950, p. 3.  
a bee keeping unit was set up in the Christianagaram school garden. The first conference for the leaders of summer schools was held at Nallur in 1939. The aims and policies of Summer Schools were discussed. In that conference, a questionnaire was circulated to the pastors, prior to the conference to give suggestions. In 1943 Miss Herring, the diocesan secretary of the Mothers' Union conducted a special meeting for women at Mukuperi, near Nazareth. Dr. Grace Vedabothagam of Nazareth gave highly informative lectures on hygiene. Miss Joy Solomon and Mrs. Taylor organised a summer school at Megnanapuram for thirty women village teachers in order to train them to conduct meetings for mothers and young girls in their respective villages. Miss. Bennett and Miss. Grover conducted special meetings for women at Vengulam and Veerambal in September 1946.

Miss. Groves, Miss. Evans and Mrs. Hollis conducted special classes for the wives of the students of the Theological College at Thirumariyur once in a week. Mrs. Randle conducted a sewing class for them. Dr. Grace Vedabodakam delivered lectures on first aid, maternity and child welfare. Weekly demonstrations and practical training were given in the wards of St. Luke's Hospital. A sub-warden and three students of the Theological College were deputed to undergo training in Rural Reconstruction Work at Martandam in South

65. Ibid., 1935, pp. 54-55.
67. Ibid., 1943, p. 19.
69. Ibid., 1929, p. 13.
70. Ibid., 1947-1948, p. 46.
Travancore in 1934.\textsuperscript{71} According to the Tirunelveli Diocesan Council Report, 1939, twenty-eight summer schools were held and 1150 women from eighty villages attended them.

**Village Service Leagues**

The Village Service Leagues were formed in Training Schools, Middle Schools, High Schools and the College in order to create a spirit of service and sacrifice in the minds of the pupils and make them do constructive work during the holidays. At the instruction of the Diocesan Rural Work Standing Committee, the Training Institutions motivated their students to teach the illiterate adults in the villages during their holidays.\textsuperscript{72} Blue Birds and King's Messengers Leagues were formed in the schools. Members of Kings' Messengers offered monetary help to the needy and conducted Sunday school for the sweepers. In the colleges, Gleaner's Union and Children's Scripture Union were organised. Miss Dora David organised Girls Guilds in the Sarah Tucker College.

Gleaner's Union was formed in the Sarah Tucker College in July, 1886 by Miss. Askwith. In 1905 Miss Doxey was selected as the President of the Gleaners' Union. Once in a month, the union held a missionary meeting. Books in English on mission work in different countries were circulated. Matters relating to specialised areas of their work and service were discussed. Further, the missionaries shared among themselves their experiences in the foreign countries where they worked. In this context, Mrs. Kember spoke of her experiences in

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 1934, pp. 41-42.
\textsuperscript{72} Minutes of Rural Work Standing Committee, 11 March 1949, p.1.
China, Mrs. Carr spoke on Persia, and Miss Ling explained her work among Muhammedans and among the Todas of Ooty. The abstract of their deliberations was prepared and circulated among the members.\(^{73}\)

The Sarah Tucker College Y.W.C.A.\(^{74}\) was started by Miss. Naish in 1899. The members visited the villages once in a week and engaged in social work. During their visits, they taught needle work to the village women and also taught the illiterate. The village children were taught games and religious songs. In March, 1902, Lady Carbery, the President of the Y.W.C.A. of England visited the college.\(^{75}\)

Old students of Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai undertook the social reconstruction of the villages in Tirunelveli. They enlisted themselves in the Christian social organizations, the Mothers' Union and Young Women's Christian Association and worked for the social uplift of the downtrodden and socially neglected sections of society. These educated women taught the illiterate women about the voting system. Previously the illiterate women, out of ignorance, fear and suspicion, would neither enroll their names nor choose a candidate to vote for.\(^{76}\) The old students taught the boarding school girls hand-work in palmyra
leaves, gardening and cooking. They also had many of their illiterate neighbours enrolled in the school.\textsuperscript{77} The boarding school girls taught them reading, writing and arithmetic and different crafts during the holidays.\textsuperscript{78}

\textbf{Industrial Institutions}

Industrial institutions were introduced in the female boarding schools and orphanages. Recurrence of famines and repeated outbreak of plagues in different centres of Tirunelveli District compelled the women missionaries to start industrial schools for the poor to earn their livelihood. Women missionaries and missionary wives headed the lace and embroidery industries. These ventures were highly successful in all the mission centres as they required very few raw materials and were low cost. Most of the missionaries' wives spent a great deal of their time in teaching the females needle work, lace-making and crochet work. Soon, the poor girls in the missions stations began to enjoy a state of independence and comfort. Their uplift became a means of rooting up caste.\textsuperscript{79} The women missionaries were happy that their projects had succeeded and convinced that the industrial education was a means to liberate women from the economic and social bondages.\textsuperscript{80} The pupils were trained for the various Government Technical Examinations upto the intermediate level. Those who passed the examinations were appointed not only in government departments

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 1916-1918, pp. 13-15. \\
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 1919-1920, p.5. \\
\textsuperscript{80} Church Missionary Record, 1841, p. 37.
but also elsewhere in India and abroad. The women missionaries themselves employed the intelligent among the trained students in the industries. The lace schools gave employment to women and girls.

**Idaiyangudi Lace industry**

Mrs. Eliza Caldwell introduced lace-industry at Idaiyangudi in 1851 with sixty girls. They were taught lace-making, Indian embroidery and needle work. Crocheting and tatting were used mostly for lace making. One attractive feature of the lace industry was that the hand-made articles were available cheap. It gave employment to several hundreds of poor girls in Tirunelveli district. Many of the girls and women learned to make lace on the English pattern. The articles were sold at a profit for the benefit of the missions. Clothing such as sweaters, dressers, jackets and socks were made by knitting. Embroidery, like painting, depends for much of its beauty or colour. In order that the finished embroidery pieces were neat and tidy, it was taught on linen and cambric clothes. Lace industry in the mission centres was mainly intended for orphans and poor girls.

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82. Lace Industry was first introduced in Travancore by Eliza’s mother, Mrs. Martha Mault in 1823. Her daughter, Eliza Coldwell introduced lace school in Idaiyangudi and her granddaughter, Mrs. Isabella Wyatt started a lace making industry in Tiruchirappalli. The lace industry produced lace and embroidery items with the help of the designers. Two distinct types of hand-made laces were bobbin lace or pillow lace and needle-point lace. Bobbin lace was woven with bobbins on a pillow or cushion over stiff parchment with small holes in it to make the pattern. The needle-point lace was worked with a needle over a linen or thin parchment surface. (Crowell, *Collier’s Encyclopedia*, Vol.12, London, 1958, p. 70.)
83. Idaiyangudi is a Christian village about three miles south of Thisayanvilai. Idaiyangudi means, 'the village of the shepherd'. It was one of the driest parts of South Tirunelveli. There were thirty-nine village congregations in the district.
84. Madras Diocesan Record, January 1893, p. 9.
The money that each girl earned by making embroidery and lace work was set apart for her marriage.87

The lace school in Kudamkulam was started in 1894 to provide employment for the grown up girls who were passed through the Boarding School. Mrs. Arputham Daniel, a student of Mrs. Caldwell was in charge of the lace school at Kudamkulam.88 It was a great boon to the people of Radhapuram taluq. The lace industry at Idaiyangudi and its branch at Kudamkulam gave employment to 270 poor widows and girls. It brought substantial income to the mission also. Mrs. Caldwell encouraged the employees to bring more women in their villages to work in the industry.89 The profit thus acquired from the lace industry was utilised for construction of buildings for the girls' boarding schools, orphanages and for the welfare of women.90 Some of the trained students came out of the girls' boarding schools found employment in the lace and embroidery schools in other districts.91

The women missionaries, assisted by the matrons, periodically inspected the work in the industries. Mrs. Eliza Caldwell taught the women to make lace with locally made bobbin sticks on pillows stuffed with paddy straw and arranged for the sale of the yard lace. She employed eighty women. This work enabled them to earn a fixed income to support their families. She taught sewing, spinning,

89. Ibid., 1913, p. 198.
knitting, embroidery and crochet work to the boarders. The profit was used for providing cloth to the poor children. She also organised sewing classes for the older women. The finished products were sold to the Europeans who lived in different parts of India, but most of them were exported and sold in the cities of England, London and Glasgow, Australia, Africa, Sweden and Norway. The wives of military and civil officials in India were interested in this project and they promoted the sale of the lace and needle work of these girls. The elder girls were allowed to leave the school in March and they helped the families by making lace and stitching clothes. The Mothers' Union tried to get the village girls and women to join the lace school as day scholars. Lace workers established the Widows' Fund to help the poor widows to meet sundry expenses.

The missionaries regulated the working hours in the institution. The development of the industry required the division of workers into groups as good workers and weak workers. The good workers received regular work throughout the year and the weak ones were given work once in a week or once in two weeks. The permanent workers had to work for five to six hours a day. The temporary workers were employed once in a week. One significant feature of the lace industry was that the workers were allowed to carry the materials to their homes to continue their work. The wages of the workers were fixed according to the varieties and sizes of lace they produced. During Christmas

times, gifts in the form of rice and cloth were offered to the workers. The profit earned from the lace and embroidery industry was utilised for starting schools for girls and for the appointment of Bible women to work among the non-Christians and the Christian congregations.

The Government of Madras encouraged the lace and embroidery industry by conducting exhibitions. Further, the government purchased the finished products and exported them to London. A large quantity of lace was sent to Dublin Art Exhibition at the time of the Durbar in 1902. Due to its fine quality, there was great demand for the articles in the foreign countries. Locally, the exhibits were awarded two gold medals and one silver medal and a certificate of merit. The lace school won medals at several exhibitions, held in London, Paris and Manchester. In November, 1912, they were awarded a Bronze Medal for lace at the Dasara Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition in Mysore and a Gold Medal at the Madras Industrial Exhibition in December, 1913.

In course of time, the lace industry which was established in Idaiyangudi by Mrs. Eliza Caldwell began to spread throughout the Tirunelveli district. The lace schools were very effective means of gathering the women together under the protection of the missionary ladies. Wages provided by the industries helped the poor classes to overcome their financial difficulties. Lace making industry

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95. Interview with Chellamal Sundersingh, old student of Lace School, Idaiyangudi, 6 June 2000.
96. Interview with Rev. M.G. Manickam, Council Chairman, Holy Trinity Church, Idaiyangudi, 1 March 2006.
introduced on a small scale in the schools further helped to meet the expenses connected with the upkeep of the girls and other mission institutions in the district.\textsuperscript{100} It was a source of education to women who could not attend the regular school in their childhood. Women who worked in the industry, after gaining training in primary education, turned into Zenana teachers and Bible women themselves.\textsuperscript{101} It provided succour to Christian widows who depended upon it wholly to support themselves and their families. The lace school became an asylum for orphans and destitute girls.\textsuperscript{102}

The industry also created health awareness and habits of cleanliness among the depressed classes. The workers were trained to keep their lace clean and to make it attractive. This training in neatness had its effect upon their personal life. Their access to the missionary bungalows too had a great effect on their personal cleanliness. Twice in a week, the I and II class students came to the bungalows of the missionaries for sewing and fancy work.\textsuperscript{103} Such visits helped the children to get away from the baleful influences they were exposed to in their villages and trained them in good habits. To get rid of the chewing habit of women of the villages, the teachers made them sign an undertaking to keep away from this filthy and unhealthy practice.\textsuperscript{104}

The industry inculcated in them a sense of responsibility and the spirit of

\begin{enumerate}
\item[Footnotes]
\item\textsuperscript{100} 'Madras Jubilee Retrospects', \textit{The Mission Field}, 1 September 1887, p.259.
\item\textsuperscript{101} 'Inspectors visit to Idaiyangudi', \textit{The Gospel Missionary}, 1 November 1872, p.163.
\item\textsuperscript{102} Annual Report of S.P.G., 1853, p.1xviii.
\item\textsuperscript{103} Report of L.M.S., 1905, p. 132.
\item\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 1885, p. 89.
\end{enumerate}
self-support. The industrial institution turned villages into centres of a new culture.\textsuperscript{105} The missionaries found that the housewives looked clean and neatly dressed. It kept them industrious. They had no time for idle gossiping. The lace workers contributed money from their earnings to buy clothes for the poor and destitute women in the district. On Christmas day of every year, the clothes were distributed to the workers. Further, the industries offered financial and materials assistance to the poor during famines.\textsuperscript{106} However the missionaries, in the beginning of the 20th century faced difficulties in running the industries.

On 31 March 1930, the lace industries at Idayankudi and Kudamkulam were closed down. It was mainly due to the non-availability of raw materials, fall in prices, change of fashions and styles, impact of the great depression of 1928-1929, the World Wars and the change in the tariff policy of countries. There was a general downturn in the fatness of small scale industries all over the world. The imposition of a 33.3\% duty on lace in England was a great blow to the lace industries. The growth of big industries in the local areas brought a keen competition. The import of cheap materials from the European countries worsened the situation further.

Along with these factors, the difficulties in finding a steady market, cut in the salaries of army officials and of professional men too adversely affected the market for lace and embroidery. Similarly, political unrest in India forced many English women to leave India. The decrease in the number of European residents

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 1907, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{106} Tinnevelly: Idaiyangudi and Radhapuram', \textit{The Mission Field}, 1 August 1872, p.239.
in India caused a decline in the sales of the lace and embroidery articles.\textsuperscript{107} The decline was further accelerated by the increase in import duties on cotton thread and cotton materials. Increased import duties heightened the cost of production but any increase in the price of the finished products was impossible which indirectly affected the sale of the lace.\textsuperscript{108} Hand made laces were replaced by machine made laces of cotton, silk, wool, rayon, acetate, nylon, metallic thread or combinations of these materials.\textsuperscript{109}

\textbf{Enterprises of Idaiyangudi Ladies}

An Association of Women was formed by Mrs. Eliza Caldwell at Idaiyangudi, a Christian village about three miles south of Tisayanvilai in 1879 for women who were brought up in the boarding school, Idaiyangudi to help the ignorant women in the neighbourhood. They also raised funds to support the missions in the district by cultivating castor oil plants and making jackets. Isabella, the daughter of Mrs. Eliza Caldwell wrote that these women taught spinning to the rural womenfolk.\textsuperscript{110} A branch depot of the All India Spinners' Association was established in Thisayanvilai, near Idaiyangudi by the Association of Women, Idaiyangudi. The branch depot of A.I.S.A. paid the villagers one rupee per head for a whole week's labour. It was estimated that about 1300 spinners lived within the radius of ten miles of Idaiyangudi. The educated ladies helped the rural

\begin{itemize}
  \item[108.] Report of Tinnevelly Diocesan Council, 1929, p. 15.
  \item[110.] ‘A Native Boarding School in Tinnevelly’, \textit{The Grain of Mustard Seed}, 1 July 1882, pp.104-105.
\end{itemize}
womenfolk to become members of A.I.S.A. in order to earn an income by spinning through A.I.S.A. The women could meet the manager of the office of the depot on any day in the week to give the yarn and receive payment for the same. They had never had any income worth the name till now and were immensely delighted to receive the money.

The Association of Women maintained a subscription list in Idaiyangudi. With the subscription money, they bought sixteen charkas and other equipment and started a khadder spinning school on 23 February 1937 in the mission building at Idaiyangudi which had formerly been used as the lace school. Six Christian women attended the school and earned on an average 2½ annas each per week. The yarn produced by the girls was of good quality. Soon its reputation rose. The Honorary Lady Secretary of Association of Women who was in charge of the Spinning School urged the Chairman of the Editorial Board to establish similar cottage industries, especially spinning, in the neighbouring villages. It led to the economic emancipation of women in the rural areas. The Association of women also helped the women of Idaiyangudi to get income by spinning fish net through agents.

Megnanapuram Embroidery and Basket Industry

The women missionaries helped the girls to learn embroidery and basket making at Megnanapuram. They also helped the girls of the boarding school at Megnanapuram to earn money by rearing fowls, selling the eggs and by cultivating

112. Interview with Dhanaraj Isreal, Retired Head Post Master, Idaiyangudi, 5 June 2007.
castor plants. Mrs. Mary Thomas established an embroidery and basket industry at Megnanapuram in 1842. The villagers produced articles of daily use by using different varieties of grass, cane and bamboo. After her death, Miss. Francis Elizabeth Thomas became the manager of this industry and was assisted by Miss. Gertrude Pakentam Walsh. Two teachers were appointed on the salary of rupees thirty per year to train thirty-five students. For many destitute women, work in this industry opened up ways to support themselves. The finished products were sold in the markets of Kodaikanal and England due to the efforts of Miss. Royds, S.P.G. missionary. Free meal was given daily to the poor girl students. With the growth of domestic industries, the numbers of working women also increased. By making shirts, collars, trim frocks, jackets and fancy works, the girls earned money. They became more independent and self-reliant.

Following the success of the industries, the missionaries organised basket making societies at Evanspuram, Oremankulam in the Idayangudi Circle. The basket making society at Evanspuram was a multi purpose society for food, clothing, house building and basket making. Village industries, Beekeepers' Societies, Sheep Rearing Societies, Poultry Societies, Handloom Societies, Produce and Sale Industries were established at Puliankudi, Christianagaram, Suvishesapuram, Keelakarai, Anandapuram, Madathan, Adaikalapuram and

114. Interview with Miss Chellammal James, Personal assistant to Miss. Walsh, S.P.G. Missionary, Megnanapuram, 23 June 2000.
115. Church Missionary Record, 1874, p. 39.
Valasai Ramnad. The Diocese received Rs.3000/- grant from the Central Social Welfare Board to open a Child and Women Welfare Centre in Tirunelveli. Poultry projects were opened on small scale at Nagalapuram, Puthiamputhur, Nambitope of the Dohnavur Circle, Mavidu Pannai in Trichendur and Sahayapuram of Perpilankulam.

Art Industrial School, Nazareth

Women missionaries, Miss. Anna Rix, Miss. Eminaboy and Mrs. Randle broke new ground in the empowerment of the girls in and around Nazareth by setting up an art industrial school. They taught lace work, needle work and fancy work. The girls were taught to make different types of designs on dresses, cassocks and surplices. The Art Industrial School was the first of its kind in Southern India. Orphanages for boys and girls had been established by Arthur Canon Margoschis during the famine in 1877. They became the nucleus for the Art Industrial School at Nazareth. The aim was to provide free vocational training to the inmates of the orphanage at Nazareth. The students of the Industrial School received instruction in reading, writing and Arithmetic. The orphans and the destitutes had a home and education. Their general living conditions had begun to improve through training and learning.

In the beginning, carpentary, tailoring, weaving and lace-making were taught. There were twenty-eight girls in the lace department and they made pillow...
cases. Twenty women were engaged in embroidery work. Miss. T. Eminaboy, a qualified mistress in tailoring, trained the students to make shirts, trousers, coats, jackets, cassocks and surplices. Clothes of new pattern were stiched by them. There was a good demand for the readymade articles. Clothes of "mission patterns" were used both by the Europeans and the natives. Miss. Anna Rix took charge of the lace-department in 1909 and taught needlework to the girls. In 1947, the total strength of the Art Industrial School was 128.

Mrs. Randle, wife of Rev. A.P. Randle, Superintendent of the Art Industrial School, Nazareth was in charge of the girls' section. The girls were given training in tailoring, spinning, weaving, embroidery, dress making, drawing, type-writing and lamp wick making. Special instruction was given in Mohammedan embroidery. Mrs. Randle was also the manager of Boys' High School, Nazareth. Since the pupils came from different parts of India, instruction was given in English and all the students learnt type-writing. Daily, the students were given training in drawing for one hour. In the morning, the pupils were given vocational training for four and a half hours from 7.30 to 12 noon. In the afternoon they attended the English conversation class. In 1886, they had daily cookery classes for the girls. The clothes of the children of the orphanages and Boarding Schools were made by the weavers; the surplices and cassocks of the Church choir by the tailors;

chairs, tables, cots, desks, benches, almyrahs, baby wheels and gymnastic apparatus by the carpenters.

The Christian children of the institution were supported by the S.P.G., S.P.C.K. and individual benefactors in England. The management made efforts to have government scholarships sanctioned for the Hindu children. At the exhibition of needlework held in Madras by the National Indian Association in 1886, prizes and certificates were awarded to the Art Industrial School for white lace and a collection of native garments. A few specimens were sent to the Calcutta exhibition centre. The Government of Madras purchased a sizable quantity of lace and exhibited the same in the Indian and Colonial exhibition in London. In the industrial exhibition at Palayamkottai in 1907, the Art Industrial School was awarded the Silver Medal and a Merit Certificate in the fancy weaving competition. The model of a German castle made of blackwood, cabinet boxes and other articles of furnitures made in the school were awarded the Silver Medal in the Industrial Exhibition at Palayamkottai. To encourage the industry, the Churches and schools in the Tirunelveli diocese purchased furniture from the school. The students also specialised in making educational toys.

Excellent brass locks and steel pruning knives were manufactured. A bronze medal and a merit certificate were awarded to the school in the

127. Ibid., 1907, pp. 209-211.
Ettaiyapuram exhibition for the excellent carpets manufactured by it. The school took part in the annual exhibition of the Industrial Missionary Association at Kodaikanal. Pieces of furniture manufactured in the school were exported to Ceylon, Rangoon, South Africa and England. Students trained at the industrial departments were employed in factories, industrial schools and government offices. Two other self-employment projects, manufacture of palm leaf products and the production of palmyrah fibre for girls were started with the help of Khadi and Village Industries Board of Madras and Christian Association for Social Action (C.A.S.A.). Hundred and twenty-five girls benefitted from this useful training. The products they made were in great demand in the foreign countries.¹³⁰

Cottage Industries

The self employment schemes and programmes started by women missionaries solved the problem of unemployment in the villages slowly, steadily and quite unobtrusively way. The women missionaries introduced economic uplift schemes to improve the condition of the rural womenfolk in Tirunelveli district. The training received inculcated in them motivation, awareness, stimulation, encouragement, guidance and support to start and develop self employment schemes such as poultry-keeping, bee-keeping, mat weaving, vegetable cultivation and herbal gardens. The major occupation and means of sustenance of the womenfolk in Tirunelveli district was jaggery making¹³¹.

Jaggery is a kind of black sugar, made from the juice of the palmyra tree, which was boiled and thickened into round cakes. Jaggery making was a laborious task and the women spent the whole day in it. The continuous work made them look unkempt and dirty. They had no time for things like hygiene, cleanliness, rest, relaxation or recreation. This made them more and more disinterested in life and they were constrained to look upon their life more as a bane than as a boon. Therefore, the woman missionary, Mrs. Eliza Caldwell, organised these women and taught them the need for cleanliness, better hygiene and decency in life and directed them towards more refined and dignified jobs.\(^\text{132}\)

Besides, the women missionaries taught the young village girls and women the art of making palmyrah leaf articles through demonstration classes. Formerly, the villagers used the palmyrah leaf as fire wood but the women missionaries taught them to utilise the palmyrah leaves for making attractive articles such as handbags, baskets and mats. Mrs. Morley, the wife of Bishop Morley patronised the industrial schools and visited these schools very often.\(^\text{133}\)

The Rural Work Standing Committee of Tirunelveli Diocese administered the cottage industries and supervised their development works. It employed rural workers in villages. Cottage industries like palmyrah leaf work, palmyrah fibre work, leather industry, co-operative farming, silk worm rearing, bee-keeping, matchbox-making, mat making, extraction of ground nut oil, soap making, poultry

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keeping, supply of milk, weaving, ink and paper making were started. Poultry keeping was referred to as the poor man's industry. The villagers were taught about better breeds of poultry to get more profit and yield. The ultimate aim of the industry was to eradicate mal-nutrition and poverty from among the rural people. In order to rouse the interest of the people, an Industrial, Educational and Agricultural Exhibition was organised in connection with the Tirunelveli Diocesan Jubilee Celebrations in 1946. For one week, ink, leather goods, rubber products, textiles, glass works, various plants, seeds and manure were exhibited. The exhibition brought a net income of rupees 1700/- to the diocese.134 The rural workers helped the tappers to establish societies for the Christians who were the predominant section of the society.135

**Relief Measures**

The Tirunelveli Diocese had about 3290 acres of land in Tirunelveli district. Tirunelveli district is generally a dry region. But the women missionaries, Mrs. Mary Thomas, Mrs. Eliza Caldwell, Mrs. Harriett Strachan, Miss. Amy Carmichael and the wives of the pastors converted their missions dry lands into fertile lands by digging wells. Good quality seeds and seedlings of all kinds of vegetables, flowers, fruits and coconut trees were supplied to the village women and Guides in the schools free of cost. Manure and pesticides were supplied through volunteers for the development of this project. Further, they engaged in the housing of the poor natives and the beautifying of the surroundings.136 As a part of

135. Ibid., 1948-1949, p.44.
awareness education, they conducted seminars and public meetings to propagate the ideas of preservation of nature. Drinking water facilities were made available in the remote village areas through the efforts of women missionaries.

Missionaries helped the villagers to propagate and promote home gardens in the villages. The rural water-supply scheme was intended to provide drinking water. Wells were dug during the time of drought. New wells and bore wells were dug with government subsidy and Circle Funds. From 1946 to 1948, four hundred wells were dug in the rural areas of Tirunelveli. Besides digging wells, they also cleaned and chlorinated, deepened and repaired the existing ones. Barren lands were brought under cultivation.\(^\text{137}\) For the benefit of the poor thirsty people, \textit{tanneer pandals} (water sheds) were opened in different parts of Tirunelveli.\(^\text{138}\)

The diocese met the expenditure incurred for the rural relief works. The rural workers helped in planting trees in the mission lands and compounds of the diocesan institutions. They supplied good varieties of plants and seeds to the agriculturists. With the co-operation of the native Christians, the missionaries were able to turn the infertile lands into fertile lands.\(^\text{139}\) The women missionaries themselves maintained gardens and cultivated sugarcane. Mrs. Caldwell encouraged the women of Idaiyangudi to plant new trees and plants. These trees not only gave shelter and shade but also generated fresh air to breathe. Also

\(^{139}\) Grey-Edwards, A.H., \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 59-60.
rice, sugarcane and plantain products were grown in abundance. Mrs. Harriet Nicholson Strachan, wife of Rev. Dr. Strachan offered financial grant for planting trees in barren lands. She distributed plum buddings to people in different parts of Tirunelveli during Christmas season.

During the year 1867-1868, there was a big famine in Tirunelveli district which caused deaths in large numbers. Children were orphaned. To give asylum to the orphans, the women missionaries founded orphanages in Tirunelveli district. The clergymen and their wives were in charge of the orphanages. The inmates were provided food, clothes and taught different crafts. Mrs. Harriet Strachan went to the famine refugee camps in Nazareth and took charge of the orphan girls. She consoled the famine affected people and the sick. Poverty stricken children were identified and cared for most lovingly by her. She collected funds for the orphanages from abroad. Owing to her influence, a famine orphanage was opened in Sullivan’s Garden in Madras. The Rural Work Committee was kept in touch with famine relief measures. A committee was appointed with the Archdeacon as the convener and the rural worker as the secretary to arrange for famine relief works. The Church World Service of U.S.A. supplied wheat, rice, multi-purpose food and vitamin tablets and milk powder during the famine and they were distributed in the famine stricken areas.  

141. Mrs. Harriet Strachan, wife of the Bishop of Rangoon arrived India in 1861 and worked upto 1882 in the S.P.G. Mission Field of the Madras Presidency. She always stood for the cause of the native women and poor children of the Tirunelveli district.  
143. Madras Diocesan Record, 1898-1899, p.152.  
144. Ibid., 1898-1899, p. 152.  
146. Ibid., 1952-1953, pp. 33-34.
To meet the shortage of rice, the missionaries patronised and propagated the scientific method of cultivation. The Japanese method of paddy cultivation on cemented floor seemed to be more useful. This new system of cultivation was introduced inside the Monicka's school compound at Nagalapuram and two crops were harvested successfully. At Nazareth, it was introduced in Art Industrial School, Margoschis High School, Dr.Vedabodagam’s lands and Rev.Gnaniah’s compound. Further, the missionaries offered loans to the poor agriculturists for the purchase of pumpsets, seeds, manure and bulls for cultivation. An economic survey Commission appointed by the National Christian Council visited the diocese in February, 1945. It suggested the opening of a model farm for the diocese and the starting of various cottage industries. With a grant of £200/- from the S.P.G., a Rural Worker was appointed for the diocese who prepared plans for the improvement of mission lands in different places.

**Children's Mission**

Women missionaries Miss. Grace New, Miss Stern, Mrs. Hodge Walker, Miss. Chamen and Mrs. Annett worked for the development of the children's mission in Tirunelveli. Children’s Mission or Baliar Sangam was established in the Usborne School, Palayamkottai by Rev. Scott Price on 20 June 1891. It was formed as a separate unit in the Diocese to work among the school going

147. Ibid., 1956-1957, pp.35-36.
148. Ibid., 1955-1956, p.34.
149. Ibid., 1955-56, p.56.
150. Ibid., 1945, pp. 13-35.
children. A branch of the Children’s Mission was started at Idaiyengudi in 1920.\textsuperscript{151} The Children’s Work Standing Committee governed the various activities of the Children’s Mission. The Children’s Mission visited the Christian villages in the district once a year. For the benefit of the members and to create the habit of devotional readings of the Bible, the Children’s Mission in 1849 issued a monthly journal called the \textit{Children’s Friend} in English and \textit{Baliar Nesan} in Tamil.\textsuperscript{152} An annual subscription of $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas was collected from the subscribers of the Tirunelveli diocese. From readers outside the diocese, they collected four annas.\textsuperscript{153} \textit{Baliar Nesan} became a popular leaflet even abroad. Large number of copies were sent to Ceylon, Malasia and Gulf countries. In 1947, about 10,000 copies of \textit{Baliar Nesan} were circulated.\textsuperscript{154}

The women missionaries visited the villages and taught the children as well as the parents by lectures and magic lantern performances. The annual children’s festival was celebrated in July every year. The diocese conducted a competitive examination in scripture. The children appeared for the Annual Scripture Union Competition Examination held in the first week of November every year. Prizes and certificates were issued to the best students in the scripture examination.\textsuperscript{155} The Tirunelveli Diocesan Children’s Mission published Scripture Union Cards, Almanacs and \textit{Baliar Nesan} which had a wide range of circulation.

\textsuperscript{151} Proceedings of the C.M.S. for Africa and the East, 1920-1921, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{152} Annual Report of the Tirunelveli C.M.S. District Church Council, 1911.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 1951-1952, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 1947-1948, p. 12.
among people. The revised edition of the Hymn Book and children's songs with additional short prayers were published.  

Mrs. Hodge Walker and Mrs. Grace New Western organised Sunday schools and worked for the development of the Children's Mission. To enhance the Biblical knowledge of kids, they adopted various methods. Good Shepherd Camp, Children's Festival, puppet show, scripture puzzles were some of them. International Bible reading cards were used for training the children in the habit of daily Bible reading. They emphasised the fact that the character of the children could be moulded by narrating moral stories. Therefore women were trained in the art of telling stories to the children.  

In September 1933, Mrs. Annett, a woman missionary gave Bible instruction to sixty five teachers, both men and women from all over the diocese in the Bishop Sargent School, Palayamkottai. Miss. Chamen, Special Worker of the Children's Mission arranged special camps for children. Spiritual and moral instructions were given in the camps.

**Literary Works**

The Tirunelveli Protestant Missionaries' contribution is immensely rich and diverse in the literary field also. Their literary works were a means to enhance their educational, social and evangelistic service. Tracts, books of various kinds and magazines were published for the women of India. The women missionaries

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156. Ibid., 1930, p. 16.
wrote interesting stories, parables containing Biblical teachings, moral stories and songs. Transcription and proof correction were executed by them. The women missionaries had distinguished themselves by writing and publishing books, pamphlets and articles for the benefit of the women. They were assisted by the school teachers of the diocese. The Tirunelveli Tract Society published 70,000 Tamil tracts for the benefit of the people in 1882.

The Evangelistic Work Committee made necessary corrections in the manuscripts of the tracts. The Literature Work Standing Committee of the diocese undertook the publication. The tracts and booklets were printed at the Tirunelveli Diocesan Press and kept for sale in the Diocesan Book Depot. The tracts running to twenty to thirty pages were mainly in the vernacular languages. The mission workers distributed the tracts and hand bills to the Christians and non-Christians. The printed tracts were distributed to the non-Christians in their houses, the streets, the choultries and the mandapams.

Mrs. Rhenius, Mrs. Eliza Caldwell, Mrs. Sargant and Mrs. Thomas took immense interest in the literary works. The writings of women missionaries in

162. In 1837, Tinnevelly-German Evangelical Mission Religious Tract Society was founded at Palayamkottai. In 1847, the C.M.S. installed a printing-machine at Palayamkottai itself. In 1914, it became the Palayamkottai press. The Tirunelveli Diocesan press was opened on 3rd September, 1943 by Bishop Stephen Neill. The Diocesan press printed religious books and pamphlets for Gospel work and school books for the educational institutions.
163. The Diocesan Book Depot was established in 1882. In the early days, it served as a distributing centre for religious books and handbills. Then it started selling educational and literary books and stationary goods.
journals and periodicals in the S.P.G. and C.M.S. missions magazines, The Church Missionary Intelligencer, Gleaner, The Harvest Field, The Mission Field, Madras Diocesan Magazine and Tirunelveli Diocese magazines, Narpothagam and Baliar Nesan, created an intellectual ferment among the people. They wrote and spoke about social evils like child marriage, caste system, slavery and devadasi system.

In the religious tracts, the women missionaries emphasised the need for female education and the uplift of widows. The tract, 'The Mirror of Custom' by Mrs. Pettitt explained the customs and conventions of the age. Mrs. A. Dibb published a tract, Old Path, which emphasised the evils of caste system.

Rev. and Mrs. Rhenius translated the Bible and History and Geography books into Tamil. They wrote or compiled many school textbooks on Geography, Astronomy, French Grammar and Evidences of Christianity. They also revised a translation of Mrs. Scherwood’s Indian Pilgrim in 1822. They composed a Tamil Grammar in English in 1836. Further, they published pamphlets in Tamil. Mrs. Schaffter helped her husband, Rev. P. Schaffter to publish a book, 'Geography and History of Palestine' in 1849. Rev. and Mrs. Sargent wrote Ancient History in 1850. Rev. & Mrs. Eliza Caldwell published a pamphlet, Reserve which had a good impact on the higher classes. Tracts explaining the importance of female education was published by Mrs. Caldwell. Mrs. Caldwell helped Rev. Caldwell in the revision of the Tamil Bible, the prayer book and the hymn-book.

165. Madras Diocesan Record, 1904-1905, April, p. 92.
fluent in the various dialects of the Tamil language and was very helpful to Caldwell in his work and research. She helped Rev. Caldwell to publish 'Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages'. A grant of £150 was given to Mrs. Caldwell from the Royal Bounty Fund, England in recognition of Bishop and Mrs. Caldwell's eminent services to the people of India.\footnote{168}{Wyatt, J.L., \textit{Reminiscences of Bishop Caldwell}, Madras, 1894, pp. 138-148.} Rev. & Mrs. Schmid compiled \textit{A History of the World} with particular reference to the Biblical traditions and a compendium of general history.\footnote{169}{Church Missionary Record, February 1843, Vol. X, pp. 20-21}

In February 1849, the C.M.S. missionaries published \textit{Narpothagam}, a bilingual, English and Tamil magazine in order to establish contact with both Christians and non-Christians. Edward Newman was the first editor of \textit{Narpothagam}. Women missionaries Miss Grace New, Mrs. Annett, Miss. Stern and Miss. Chamen contributed articles to this magazine. Articles on education, church and the world were published. Every month, 2000 copies were printed and distributed at the price of one anna per copy. The payments from the subscribers amounted to rupees 320/- a year.\footnote{170}{David Packiamuthu, 'The Grand Old Narpothagam', \textit{150 Anniversary Magazine of Narpothagam, 1849-1999}, Palayamkottai, 1999, p. E-2.} The S.P.G. missionaries published a magazine, \textit{Siluvaikodi} in August 1882. It consisted of articles on the history of missionaries, scripture, poems and science. The women missionaries and the wives of the missionaries wrote articles in this magazine.\footnote{171}{Christy Mercy, M., \textit{Missionary Canon Margoschis} (T), Nazareth, 2003, p.39.}

In 1947, the Literature Work Committee printed 10,000 copies of the four hand bills, prepared by Miss. Grover, Miss. Frost, Mr. G.P. Williams and...
Rev. M. Duraisami. In 1952, seven manuscripts of tracts in Tamil - Unmai Nanban, Kinartil Kanda pokkisham, Raththa Semippu, Maranathukku Pin, Thai Ullam, Mana Samadanam, Suyatheenam were published by the Literature Work Committee. The manuscripts were collected from Miss. Joy Solomon, Miss. Frost, Mr. S. Duraisami, Mr. Paul Chellappa, Rev. H. Arulanandam and the Rev. I.J. Iyadurai. Miss. Frost prepared the diocesan scripture syllabus for secondary schools. The Literature Work Committee published a Teachers' Guide for moral instruction classes for non-Christians. Tracts from the Christian Literature Society, Madras and the Dohnavur Fellowship were also made available in the diocesan depot for evangelisation. Religious tracts and portions of scripture were printed and distributed.

To foster awareness about privilages and duties, the Mothers' Union supplied leaflets and magazines for members. In 1929, a monthly magazine, Mather Mahizhchi was published by the Mothers' Union. The magazine carried articles on spiritual thoughts and suggestions for social and evangelistic work among women. The work of editing the magazine was undertaken by the wives of the staff and students of Theological College, Tirumariyur. Mothers' Union published a book of prayers for mothers and a book of Bible stories, bearing on

172. Minutes of Literature Work Standing Committee, 27 February 1947, p. 3.
175. Ibid., 11 March 1950, p. 2.
177. Report of Miss. Rix, Secretary, Mothers' Union, Nazareth, 1912.
family life specially for the use of illiterates. An article on methods of Bible study and a list of available books were given in the Mothers' Union magazine. The Mothers' Union magazine was circulated in the dioceses of Madras, Travancore, Ceylon and Rangoon. The library which was started for the Mothers' Union at Palayamkottai in 1922 had a rare collection of the copies of the minutes, pamphlets, books and biographies of important women missionaries of the branches of the Mothers' Union. Miss. Western, the sister of Bishop Frederick Western was appointed as the Joint Depot Literature Secretary. A circulating library was started in 1933.

Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur, C.E.Z.M.S. Missionary wrote thirty-two books. These books were primarily personal or biographical, telling the story of the rescued children. Lotus Buds, Windows, Though the Mountains Shake, Gold by Moonlight, ‘Things as they Are’ are some of her works. Her writings narrate the story of her rescue of the girl children who were offered to temple gods. She wrote a biography, Walker of Tinnevelly. For children, story books were printed. For the welfare of the blind, the deaf and dumb, Miss. Askwith and Miss. Swainson prepared scripture books. Miss. Askwith also prepared Braille codes in the Tamil and Malayalam languages for the blind students in 1912. The

179. Ibid., 1934, p.42.
181. Interview with Vasanthi, daughter of Rachel Devadason, the former Mothers' Union Secretary, Tirunelveli, (1946-1960), 10 May 2006.
184. Ibid., 1934, pp. 40-41.
school books in both languages were embossed at the National Institution for the Blind, London. Miss. G. Blenkarn of England, a blind teacher of Schools for the Blind, Palayamkottai spent much of her time in writing Tamil books on general subjects, History, Geography, prayer and hymn in Braille for the use of the students of the Schools for the Blind, Palayamkottai. Miss. G. Blenkarn was assisted by Miss. Fry, a teacher of the Schools for the Blind, Palayamkottai. Provision of books at cheap price and keeping a steady supply of them helped preserve literacy and emphasise the value of literature.