CHAPTER II

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From the primary level of education to the higher level it was but a logical step forward. The women missionaries, having done their best to bring basic education to the poor and the needy, felt that their mission would be incomplete if they did not establish high schools in the rural as well as urban areas of the Tirunelveli district. They selected Nazareth, a place with a large Christian population, to start a high school for the girls. The missionaries did not stop with this. The students who passed out of the high schools, had to seek admission in the colleges in far off places particularly in Tiruchirappalli and Madras. But the poor parents had no means to meet the educational expenses of their children. Hence, most of the successful high school students did not aspire to pursue higher studies. Moved by the plight of the poor girls, the women missionaries came forward to set up a college. Thus the long cherished dreams of the poor and needy of Tirunelveli were realised when a women’s college came into existence at Palayamkottai. This is an important milestone in the field of female education in Tirunelveli.

St. John’s Girls High School, Nazareth

St. John’s Girls’ School was the first Girls High School in South India. This girls’ school was destined to become the first school for Indian girls to be recognized as a high school by the Madras Department of Public Instruction. It was started by Rev. James Hough in 1820 with twenty girls. Mrs. Michael from
Tanjore was appointed as a teacher in Nazareth school. She taught needlework to the students.¹ But it was closed down in 1826 due to financial constraints.² In 1843, Anne Cammerer started St. John’s Girls Primary School in Nazareth. She was the wife of Rev. A.F. Cammerer, who was the pastor of Nazareth from 1838 to 1858. The missionaries met with much opposition from the natives of Nazareth.³ In order to collect students for the new school, Anne Cammerer went from house to house, spoke kindly to the parents, offered gifts to them and stressed the need for female education. Consequently, parents agreed to send their children to the school. Thus the nucleus of the St. John's Girls School was formed in 1843. Mrs. Anne Cammerer served as the first Principal.⁴ She constructed a boarding school in 1848 to accommodate forty-one girls. Similar schools were founded at Mukuperi and Alwarthirunagari, near Nazareth in 1848. She passed away on 15 September, 1849 at the early age of twenty-eight.⁵

In 1860, Mrs. Sarah Scarbarough, sister of Rev. Brotherton, took charge of St. John’s Girls Primary School, Nazareth. During her time, the school was upgraded into a Middle School. Mrs. Sarah Scarbarough jointly managed both the boys and the girls schools of Nazareth.⁶ After the death of Rev. Brotherton, the school was brought under the control of Anne Brotherton. Due to her efforts, the school got Government grants-in-aid in 1869. After the death of Anne

3. A tablet in the St. John's Church, Nazareth.
6. Annual Report of S.P.G., 1867, p. 120.
Brotherton in 1869, the school came under the control Mrs. Harriet Strachan from 1870-1876, the wife of Dr. Harriet Nicholson Strachan. She also took charge of the Girl's Boarding School in 1869.7 Canon Margoschis8 was appointed the superintendent of the school in 1876. He stressed the need for good education for women and started a kindergarten school. The Nazareth Co-operative Bank Committee presented a sea-saw for the kindergarten.9

The school attained the status of a High School in 1886. However, the school became a full-fledged High School only in 1888. The first set of women students to pass the Matriculation Examination in the Madras Presidency was from this school. Miss Getsia Ammal, a former student of this school was the first Tamil girl to graduate from the Tirunelveli Missions. She was awarded the Grigg Gold Medal for English.10 Miss Groves was the principal of both St. John's High School and the Training School in 1916. During Miss. Grover's furlough, Miss Herring took charge of the school.11 Miss. Neadham, Miss Davidson, Mrs. Harries, Miss. Macdonald, Miss. Green, Miss. Marks, Miss. L.M. Evans and

7. Madras Diocesan Committee Report, 1869, p.16.
8. Arthur Margoschis arrived in India in 1875 and came to Nazareth in 1876 and he laboured for 31 years. He is called, 'Father of Nazareth'. He established an Orphanage and Industrial School for the orphan children of great famine in 1877. The Nazareth Native Christian Provident Fund was inaugurated in honour of the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria. He raised a sum of Rs.20,000 for a new building for St. Johns' High School and Training School for Girls at Nazareth. As an appreciation of the splendid Philanthropic and educational work done by Mr. Margoschis, the Government of India presented him with the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal in 1901. He wrote articles on Indian subjects in the journal, Madras Mail. His last article was the review of the Sister Nivedita's book, Indian Fairy Stories. (In Memorium of Arthur Margoschis, 1852-1908', The Madras and Tinnevelly Diocesan Magazine, Vol. III, June, 1908.)
10. Madras Diocesan Record, 1903, p. 49
Miss. E.M. Swingler served as teachers in this school. Girls students from St. Mary's School, Sawyerpuram, Girls Schools at Idaiyangudi and Pannavilai studied here.\textsuperscript{12}

In 1908, there were eighty girl students in the High School, 153 in the Model School and nineteen in the Normal School of Tirunelveli Diocese. Of these, seventy six were boarders. The high standard of the school drew appreciation from the Director of Public Instruction, Madras.\textsuperscript{13} Miss Rix took charge of the management of the Girls' Boarding School in 1910.\textsuperscript{14} The Director of Public Instruction sanctioned grants liberally for the construction of buildings, for the purchase of books, furniture and appliances. Meanwhile due to paucity of funds and lack of teachers, the branch schools at Malavai Maravari and Manalkundu, west of Nazareth, were closed.\textsuperscript{15}

The foundation-stone for the new buildings of the St. John's High School for Girls was laid in November, 1908 by the Governor, Sir Arthur Lawley.\textsuperscript{16} The students presented him a fancy table-cloth with his name and the name of the school inscribed on it along with a set of fancy palmyra-leaf boxes.\textsuperscript{17} The new school building was a two-storied structure, containing two halls, Cammerer Hall and the Margoschis Hall, and twelve spacious rooms. Rooms were named after benefactors of the school, such as the Montgomery Room, the Alien Room and

\textsuperscript{12} Report of Tinnevelly Diocesan Council, 1929, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{13} Annual Report of S.P.G., 1911, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{15} Madras Diocesan Record, 1896, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{16} Annual Report of S.P.G., 1908, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 1910, pp. 216-217.
the Brittain Room. On the ground floor, there were six classrooms and a hall which were occupied by the Training and Model Schools.

Under the management of the missionaries, Mr. Weston and Rev. Canon Margoschis, two halls and twelve spacious rooms were constructed. A building was erected for the Kindergarten on the piece of ground in front of the St. John's Training School. The building was declared open by Miss Western on 13 November, 1933 and was dedicated by the Bishop. This school helped to reduce the student strength in the Model School. A new building, Arokya Salai was constructed for the sick girls. The probationer's class was formed in 1938 as a part of the Training School during the Principalship of Miss Evans. In 1939, it was transferred to the High school as Form III extension. Students were trained in the home craft and gardening. Their cooking and music were very much appreciated by the public. Mrs. Grace Vedabodakam conducted medical inspection for the students of St. John’s Girls’ School.

In order to train the students in social work, the missionaries started a society called Students' Sargam in 1924 in the school. It was formed for the purpose of games and social service. The students were prepared for service

20. Ibid., 1910, p. 218.
22. Ibid., 1939, p. 17.
and were encouraged to inculcate good manners through the Guide Company, King's Messengers and Blue Bird Flock. Under the leadership of Miss. Davidson, King's Messengers conducted Sunday School for the sweepers and for Hindu girls in the nearby village. Further they conducted a dress-making class for poor girls.

The women missionaries fostered a sense of responsibility through the house system and various leaders. The houses were the units for matches in the various games and for the assignment of boarding duties. The women missionaries also encouraged the girls to score good marks in lessons and for general neatness and order. The Girl Guide Movement was started by Miss. Davidson. Guides from this school attended the training camp held in January, 1933 in the Deaf and Dumb School at Palayamkottai. Thirty students appeared for the Secondary School Leaving Certificate. There were 280 students in the High School out of which, 200 were boarders. Guides and Blue Birds participated the various district rallies arranged in Palayamkottai. The leaders of the Guides attended a camp at Kulasegarapatnam in Tiruchendur and a rally at Palayamkottai in 1946. The Guide leaders from Madras visited the school frequently. Interesting lectures were given by eminent people like, Rev. Paranjothy, the State Food Controller and Mr. John Samuel on matters connected with Rural

27. Ibid., 1906, p. 102.
28. Ibid., 1931, p. 155.
30. Ibid., 1939, p. 17.
work. Teachers and girls attended the Y.W.C.A. camps in September every year at Papanasam and Rachniapuram.

The school children participated in the celebrations connected with the Independence Day in August, 1947 and the inauguration of the Church of South India in September, 1947. Teachers were given orientation to teach the new subjects. Efficient teaching staff members from other schools conducted the orientation. Students attended the adult education course held in Nazareth. One of the staff members attended the citizenship course, another the home science course and a third the craft course. All students got admission either in Colleges or Training Schools. In October 1949 the Fifth Form girls made practical demonstrations of the topics they studied in Social Studies. Much interest was shown by the teachers and girls in sewing curtains. Educational competitions were organised in making varied collections of flowers, insects, feathers and stamps. In 1949 a Science Club was formed. It established a link with similar school clubs in America. Due to the introduction of 10 + 2 + 3 pattern of education by the Government of Tamilnadu in 1978, the school was upgraded into a Higher Secondary School.

Sarah Tucker High School, Palayamkottai.

The Sarah Tucker High School has done yeomen service to the cause of

32. Ibid., 1929, pp. 23-24.
34. Ibid., 1947-1948, pp. 32-33.
36. Ibid., 1977-1978, p. V.
women's education in the southern part of Tamilnadu. The Sarah Tucker High
School for women owes its existence to Miss. Sarah Tucker of England and her
friends who raised money for the founding of a small school for training teachers
with a Model School in 1858. The school was upgraded into a High School in
1890 with five girl students. The number of students increased to thirty-four in
1897. The school had IV, V, VI and VII Forms. The curriculum of the school was
framed exclusively for the Matriculation Examinations of the University of Madras.
In the beginning, the management found it difficult to get a sufficient number of
girl students due to opposition from the public. However constant efforts of the
women missionaries, bore fruit in the end and parents sent their girls to the
school.\textsuperscript{37}

Most of the students hailed from poverty-stricken families. The children
were boarded and clothed. The school supplied them with petticoats and jackets
which they wore during class hours only. Children were given slates, pencils,
books and received four annas a month as pocket-money. They were given
regular presents of plantain fruits, sweetmeats, dolls and clothes so that they
would attend classes regularly. When they returned home for vacations, they
were provided with sustenance allowances. During holidays, the boarders taught
their illiterate neighbours to read, write and also arithmetic and engaged in
dressmaking and embroidery. They entertained the children of their village with
stories. The orphan boarders remained at school during the vacation.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{37} Report of Mrs. Jessie Jeyakumar, the Headmistress of Sarah Tucker Higher
In 1890, Miss Askwith became the manager of Sarah Tucker Institution. The school had five eminent European women missionaries, Miss R. Edith Howard, Miss M.M. Frost, Miss Lindsey, Miss Labroy and Miss Pawson. Miss Cowell taught English and Physiology to the students. Miss. Anne Lindsey taught English and Scriptures in the Sarah Tucker High School. She was the correspondent of the school from 1936 to 1939. Miss. Light Arumainayagam, a teacher of this school later became the Vice Principal of Sarah Tucker College. Miss Anbu Mani, 'the Nightingale of Sarah Tucker High School', inculcated in the children an aptitude for drawing and trained them in singing. Miss. Thanemmal Shanmugam, one of the staff members of the school, obtained the government diploma in physical training. She introduced new ideas in drill and games.

Lessons were taught by the masters and ladies, both in the vernacular and English. In addition to academic studies, the pupils were trained in sewing, house keeping, Bible, music, English folk dances and cooking. Much emphasis was given to cultivating good behaviour, manners, discipline, handwriting, cleanliness and punctuality. The women missionaries cared for the personality development of the pupils too. The students who emerged out of this institution proved to be worthy citizens beneficial not only to their native land but also places abroad. In 1934 a staff club was formed. Associations like Rangers, Bluebirds, Guides and Scouts were formed with the assistance of the teachers

40. Interview with Lilian Egbert, an alumni of S.T.C. and the Principal of Devnar School for the Blind, Hyderabad, 2 December 2006.
who had been trained as guides. The students exhibited their talents in cultural programmes. Miss. Carr, the Inspectress of Girls' Schools inspected the Sarah Tucker High School in February, 1898 and was very much impressed with its progress.

Miss. Naish started a library in the Sarah Tucker High School and served as the Librarian. The library had more than nine hundred books in English and Tamil. It helped the students to get more knowledge. The library also had magazines and illustrated papers on Natural History and Travels, stories to illustrate the manners and customs of different nations and the religious and political crises in the history of the world. Sarah Tucker High School was upgraded in to a Higher Secondary School in 1978.

Elliot Tuxford Girls High School, Megnanapuram

Mrs. Mary Thomas started a Boarding School at Megnanapuram in 1841 with four pupils. She was the wife of Rev. John Thomas, a C.M.S. missionary at Megnanapuram. The educational department of the three united districts of Megnanapuram, Satthankulam and Asirvadhapuram was under her charge. She managed the school for thirty years with great success. Two hundred and forty six pupils successfully completed their studies under her able guidance.

42. Ibid., 1949-1950, p. 15.
44. Annual Report of the Sarah Tucker Institution, Palayamkottai, 1900, pp. 4-5.
45. The Village Neduvilai was named as Megnanapuram by Rev. Rhenius in 1830.
school imparted education to the poor girls of Megnanapuram and its neighbourhood. The school children did not attend school regularly due to their family circumstances. During the palmyra season, the children had to work along with their parents to eke out a living. However, since free education, food and clothing were available easily, they were also keen to attend classes in spite of such hardships.\textsuperscript{48} The children were given plantains, jaggery and parched corn regularly. Those who came from distant places were given curry and rice. In the evening, they amused themselves with games. The school offered financial assistance to the widowed mothers of girl students.\textsuperscript{49}

Rev. Tucker laid the foundation for the new building of the school on 20 June, 1844. It was called Mary Elliot Tuxford School\textsuperscript{50} in memory of Mary, the wife of Rev. E.B. Elliott, formerly Vicar of Tuxford.\textsuperscript{51} The school had to its credit European teachers, Miss. Sophia Hobbs, Miss Darling, Miss. E.C. Vines and Miss. Frances Thomas.\textsuperscript{52} Subjects like Tamil, Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography and History were taught besides music, needle work, embroidery, tatting, cotton spinning, cooking and gardening.\textsuperscript{53} The students of this school had the advantage of having their character moulded.\textsuperscript{54} Since the school was situated in the midst of paddy fields, when epidemics like cholera broke out, the students voluntarily nursed the sick people in the surrounding areas.

\textsuperscript{49} Church Missionary Record, September, 1860, p. 290.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 1844, p. 262.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 1862, p. 273.
\textsuperscript{52} Annual Report of S.P.G., 1898, p. 286.
\textsuperscript{53} Church Missionary Record, September, 1862, p. 273.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 1852, p. 163.
The school was financially supported by the friends of England. They contributed £3 per annum for each pupil. The principal supporters of the school were Mrs. Dr. Wilson and Miss Wilson of England. Due to the increase in the prices of food and clothing, there was financial constraint.\(^{55}\) When Mrs. Mary Thomas went to England in 1860, she appealed to the friends in England for further financial assistance. In response, the Ladies Association supplied clothes and stitched garments like jackets and petticoats for girls and trousers for boys. The school sold the surplus clothes to the wives of mission agents and the former boarding school girls.\(^{56}\) The average number of girls for years up to 1864 was eighty. A few students had undergone the course of study at the Teachers’ Training Institution, Palayamkottai and the Sarah Tucker College for the Madras Matriculation Examination. Meritorious students were given training in teaching practice to appear for the government examination in 1865. The girls who got trained thus could find educated young men as life partners. It was like a dream come true for the missionaries. For young men engaged in the mission as teachers could not have found suitable brides otherwise.\(^{57}\)

After the death of Mrs. Thomas in 1870, her eldest daughter, Mrs. Mary Jane Dibb and her younger daughter Miss. Frances Elizabeth Thomas took charge of the administration of the school.\(^{58}\) When Miss. Frances Elizabeth Thomas went to England, Mrs. Edith Doughlas, wife of Rev. E.A. Douglas took over the

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56. Report of Mrs. Isabella Wyatt and Miss. Louisa Caldwell, Boarding School, Idaiyangudi, 1 October 1869.
57. Report of Church Missionary Society, September, 1858, p. 278.
Elliot Tuxford School temporarily and was assisted by Miss. E.C. Vines. For forty-seven years, Miss. Frances Elizabeth Thomas laboured hard not only for the welfare of the school but also for the general welfare of the women of Mengnanapuram. The number of pupils increased to 169 in 1910. Three Toda girls from Nilgiris were educated in the Megnanapuram girls school.

Margery Harietta Royds became the Principal of the school in 1924 and worked till 1946. The school had two sections, Middle School and a Higher Elementary School. She taught the elementary school children with visual aids and practical devices. In addition to the regular studies, the girls of Form V learned embroidery. In the embroidery section, new designs were introduced. Her weekly Scripture classes with the teachers and Sunday lessons with the elder children had a great impact on the students. The school became a High School with the opening of VI Form in 1944. Permanent government recognition was obtained in 1945.

Social service was organised by the teachers in the nearby slum areas. Children from the slum areas were encouraged to attend the elementary school.

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60. A tablet in the St. Paul's Church, Megnanapuram.
62. Margery Harietta Royds of England came to India in 1912 under the Church Missionary Society. She had taken Froebel training in England. She served for few years in the Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai. Within a short period, she had fully mastered the Tamil language. Miss Royds worked for the development of the Elliot Tuxford School.
Teachers were also engaged in regular Night classes for the illiterates in the school premises. The associations of Guides, Rangers and Bulbuls functioned effectively under the able leadership of Miss. G. Pakenhan Walsh. The Literary and Debating Society met regularly and entertained the whole school with commendable performances.

Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai.

For a long time, there was no higher educational centre in Tirunelveli to impart education to the girl students. So, the missionaries, with renewed dedication came forward to establish a college exclusively for women. The Sarah Tucker College is one of the most important institutions in the Madras Presidency and was the first college for women in the State. It was established in 1896 and was affiliated to the University of Madras. To begin with, there was the First degree of Arts course (F.A.) with four students from Palayamkottai in February, 1896. Miss Askwith was first Principal. As there was no first grade college in the Madras Presidency, the Director of Public Instruction asked Miss. Askwith in 1898 to raise the college to first grade. Askwith informed the C.M.S. Missionary Conference in Tirunelveli and asked for financial help from England. The matter raised by her was referred to the Parent Committee in London. It postponed the

67. Ibid., 1947-1948, p. 34.
70. Letter of the Director of Public Instruction, Madras to the Principal, S.T.C., Palayamkottai, No.32226, 21 March 1898.
matter for few years due to financial crisis. Later, the college was upgraded into a First Grade College in 1939. In 1948, the college was shifted from Palayamkottai to its present spacious campus in Perumalpuram, near Palayamkottai.

The college prepared the students for the examination of F.A., a stage midway between the Matriculation and the B.A. examinations. The subjects taught in the F.A. classes were English, Tamil, Ancient History, Modern History, Physiology and Logic. In the beginning, the intermediate course was offered in Humanities. In 1917, two hundred and fifty girl students got their bachelor degree and nine obtained master's degree. Indeed, it was a great achievement against all odds because female literacy was considered a source of moral danger. In 1927, affiliation was secured for Natural Science, Mathematics and Geography. In 1939, the management obtained affiliation for Physics and Chemistry. After passing the F.A. examination, the students had to go to Madras or Tiruchirappalli to join the degree courses. Hence in 1941, degree courses in B.A. Part III Group 1-b Mathematics, B.A. part III Group V Tamil and Early South Indian History and Economics were introduced.

Lecturing method of teaching was followed. In the case of science subjects, practical training was given in the laboratories. Most of the teachers were from the western countries. When the strength of the college increased,

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71. Minutes of the Tinnevelly C.M.S. Missionary Conference, 2 April 1898.
73. Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society, 1905, p. 27.
the need arose for more teachers. Therefore in course of time Indians were 
employed. In 1897, there were five lady teachers namely, Askwith, Swainson, 
Walford, E.C. Cowell and Kenrick. In 1908, Miss Joy Solomon joined the college 
as a Mathematics Lecturer and Miss. Maduram as History lecturer. Miss. Howard 
taught the students music, song and drawing. D. Duncan, the Director of Public 
Instruction reported in February, 1898, that the staff members of the college 
were good and that the results of the F.A. were excellent. Girls, irrespective of 
caste and creed, joined the college. A good dispensary and a room for the sick 
were attached to the college.

The annual expense of the college amounting to Rs.24,000 was met by 
government grants, voluntary subscriptions and donations. When Miss 
Catherine Tucker, sister of Miss Sarah Tucker died in 1896, she left a sum of 
250 pounds for the college. The college celebrated the Silver Jubilee of Miss 
Askwith as a missionary in India in November, 1906. In recognition of her services 
to the cause of women's education and the care for the blind in particular, the 
government awarded her the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal in 1907. The college 
maintained over the years an unbroken record of academic excellence.

74. Report of the Principal, S.T.C., Palayamkottai, 26 April 1994; George Muller, D.S., 
'S.T.C. - A Centenary Scroll', Centenary Souvenir of S.T.C., 1895-1995, 
76. Report of the Inspectess of Girl's Schools Southern Circle, Tirunelveli, No.1154, 
18 February 1898.
78. Ibid., 1897, p. 9.
79. Ibid., 1907, p. 7.
Miss G.M. Walford became the Principal in 1908. On 21 November 1910, she organised the Sarah Tucker Old Girls Association (STOGA). The first secretary of the association was Miss. Joy Solomon. The Old Girls' Association involved in the social work. It adopted the villages, Tuckerammalpuram and Rettiapettai, near Palayamkottai and worked for the welfare of the women in these villages. Former students of Sarah Tucker College who spread all over India and abroad and occupying very high positions in several walks of life were requested to become members of the STOGA. Miss. Annathai Koilpillai, an alumnus was the first Tirunelveli woman to become a Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery (L.M.S.) degree. She was in charge of the C.E.Z.M.S. hospital, Bangalore. In 1908, the college had four hundred students of whom thirty were trained teachers. In 1910, Askwith Memorial Hostel was opened in commemoration of her leadership and dedicated service in the Sarah Tucker Higher Secondary School, Palayamkottai.

Miss. E.M. Chambers became the Principal of Sarah Tucker College in 1931 and served upto 1936. Though she was physically handicapped, she never bothered about her physical weakness and taught the students sitting in a wheel chair. Under her guidance, the Blue Birds, Rangers and Guides were organised properly. They worked for badges in cookery, astronomy, child nursing and first

81. Letter of A. Acheson Williams, the Bishop of Tinnevelly and Madura to the clergy and other Mission workers, November 1907.
aid. Guide camps were organised and the Rangers corresponded with Guides in England. The Girls' Guide was started during the Principalship of Miss. Howard in 1924. During the tenure of Miss. N.M. Hewitt (1936-1945) as Principal, the Howard Memorial Building was constructed. Miss Simon of the Red Cross Society and Mrs. Thurman of the Negro Delegation from America visited the college in 1935.

Mrs. Thangam Devadason was the first Indian Principal. She was appointed as lecturer in 1948. She had served the Sarah Tucker college for 38 years as a lecturer. As the Principal, she served for only one year. In 1948, the college moved to the present campus situated in forty acres of land in Perumalpuram, two furlongs south of the Palayamkottai Railway Station. Miss. Joyce Peel from England was appointed lecturer in History in 1948. Mrs. L.R. Joseph was appointed Principal of the college in 1949. The Natural Science Block was built at a cost of Rs. 36,000 during the Principalship of Miss. Dora David. It was opened by Miss Helen Sexton of the United States Information Service in 1952.

Miss. Walford established a well equipped library in the college. The library at the Sarah Tucker institution was well utilized by the students. Several

85. The guide movement was founded by Lieutenant General, Sir Robert Baden-Powell and his sister, Agnes in 1910 at Geneva. Its slogan was 'Be-prepared'.
88. Ibid., 1952-1953, p. 10.
donors from India and abroad sent books, magazines and illustrated papers. They sent monthly magazines like ‘Illustrated London News’, ‘the Graphic’, ‘The Sunday at Home and ‘The Girls’ Own Paper’. Missionary magazines such as ‘East and west’, ‘The International Review’, ‘China’s Millions,’ ‘The Kings’ Messenger’, ‘Gleaners’ and ‘Round World’ were also sent by them.\(^\text{89}\)

The students who studied in this college brought laurels to this institution in the field of education, sports and other extra curricular activities. Extra-curricular activities like sports and debating societies received great attention from the women missionaries. The students actively took part in inter-institutional competitions. They participated in the national tournaments and made their mark in Games and Athletics also. Planning Forum and Quiz Club were organised regularly. They provided opportunities for the students to acquire leadership qualities and develop self expression on vital issues.\(^\text{90}\)

**Impact of Female Education**

The women missionaries have made a distinct contribution to the cultural, moral, intellectual and spiritual welfare of the girls of Tirunelveli. They not only imparted a sound education, but also opened their minds to the opportunities of service and inspired them to render social service to the people. The introduction of the residential system in schools and colleges, helped in the moral, intellectual and spiritual growth of the students. The poor illiterate women could acquire


\(^{90}\) Interview with Mrs. S. Prema Nair, former Librarian, Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai, 2 April 2000.
knowledge of English through the women missionaries. It helped them to get employment both in the private and public sectors. All these factors gave them the means to redeem themselves from poverty, ignorance and superstitions.\textsuperscript{91} It was not just reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and grammar\textsuperscript{92} and needle work, that gave them empowerment, they had began to be trained in other skills too.\textsuperscript{93} Debating societies were organised in the schools. Subjects like, higher education versus elementary education for women were discussed.\textsuperscript{94}

Education and employment became tools for the economic progress of various Christian communities in the district. Children who received general and spiritual education from the Christian institutions found employment. Even married women became the trained agents of the S.P.G. and C.M.S.\textsuperscript{95} The educational institutions, managed by women missionaries were well disciplined. In the initial stages, orthodox Hindu families hesitated to send their female children to the mission schools but later, when they realised the importance of education they sent their children to the schools and colleges.\textsuperscript{96} A number of students took keen interest in the cause of education and served as teachers, Headmistress, Principals and Professors of government and aided colleges.

The educational institutions founded by missionaries helped their students to rise to prominent position in the society as doctors, engineers and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{91} Church Missionary Record, June 1856, p. 133.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 1862, pp. 272-273.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Quarterly Report of S.P.G., June 1895, p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 1931, p. 155.
\item \textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 1871, p. 287.
\item \textsuperscript{96} Annual Report of S.P.G., 1874, p. 36.
\end{itemize}
scientists. The spread of education and the opening of salaried posts had a
direct economic impact on the womenfolk. Savings from salaries and professional
incomes had become the capital needed for the starting of trade and industries.
The educated Christians freed themselves from the economic restraint of the
Hindu joint family system and enjoyed the new freedom of enterprise.97

The girls who were educated in the mission schools were employed in
different capacities and they helped the women missionaries in all their
endeavours. The educational institutions created a sense of social service in
the minds of the students. The women missionaries also imparted moral and
social value of education to the students. They even conducted surveys and
engaged in social work in the slums and organised work-camps. The women
missionaries utilised their institutions for creating an awareness of the rights for
achieving social justice in their students. Many teachers involved themselves in
public life and actively supported social welfare programmes. They encouraged
the students to save more and to help the poor people.

Christian colleges and schools were noted for discipline which students
also inherited. The educational institutions fostered the mental, physical and
spiritual attitudes of the students.98 The women missionaries removed the blind
beliefs and prejudices from among their parents.99 Consequently, the women of
the villages began to send their little children to receive education. By the efforts

99. Frederick V. Moore, Christians in India, Delhi, 1964, p. 39.
of the women missionaries, the system of caste found no room in schools, institutions and churches. The missionaries encouraged the children of various castes in their schools to mingle with one another so that they could ignore caste distinctions.

Christian schools helped the outcastes to improve their position in the society. The Brahmin children of the mission schools attended the services in the church and sat with the Christian children of low caste. Thus the women missionaries overcome caste distinction in the school and showed the way for the other missions. Missionary institutions were indirectly responsible for elevating the status of the outcaste and lower castes. Missionary education helped to break down the traditional caste basis of occupation and made it possible for an individual to reach upward status and gain occupational mobility. In a reference to the village schools of Tirunelveli, the Director of Public Instruction for the Madras Presidency reported that, "This is the most successful effort for the improvement of indigenous education which has yet been made in India."