CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

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METHODOLOGY

Methodology of research is the science of proper modes and orders of procedure. There are three generally accepted methods of educational research. They are the historical method, the survey method, and the experimental method. Since this study attempts to explore the history of the education of women in Kerala, the historical method will be the most suitable one for this study.

3.1 Historical Method

In the words of Allan Nevins (1938, pp.22-23) history may be defined as "an integrated narrative or description of past events or facts, written in a spirit of critical inquiry, for the whole truth". History differs in method from the natural sciences. Instead of the direct observations used in science the historian usually must depend on the observations of others. Therefore, the historical method involves "a procedure supplementary to observation, a process by which the historian seeks to test the truthfulness of the reports of observations made by others" (Good: 1959, p.117). According to Sukhia et al., (1974, p.192), "Historical approach to the study of any subject denotes an effort to recount some
aspect of past life". So historical method is an attempt to narrate an accurate account of some aspect of life and its scientific analysis and presentation. The process involves investigating, recording, analyzing and interpreting the events of the past for the purpose of discovering generalizations that are helpful in understanding the past, understanding the present, and to a limited extent, in anticipating the future" (Best: 1977, p.15). Historical research is "the application of the scientific method of inquiry to historical problems" (Sindhu: 1985, p.94).

3.2 Steps in Historical Research

Historical method being a scientific one, a historical researcher has to pass through stages similar to those of an experimental research worker, such as stating and delimiting the problem, and selecting the sources.

There are three major steps in historical research. They are:

a. Collection of data through primary and secondary sources.

b. Criticism of the data, including the internal and external examination.

c. Presentation of facts in a readable form involving problems of organisation, composition, exposition and interpretation.
The pre-requisite of research is the collection of adequate, accurate, and reliable facts about the problem under investigation. The success of research depends on the validity of the information that is collected. Therefore the selection of suitable instruments for collecting relevant data is important.

3.2.1 Collection of Data

Historical sources usually fall into two categories, namely, primary and secondary.

**Primary Sources:** "Primary sources are the original documents or remains, the first witness to a fact.... It is the only solid basis of historical work ...." (Good & Scates: 1954, p.184). They may be of two kinds. (a) Consciously transmitted information in the form of oral or written testimony or records kept and written by actual participants or witnesses of an event. Constitutions, charters, court-decisions, official minutes or records, autobiographies, letters, diaries, genealogies, deeds, wills, permits, licences, declarations, proclamations and reports come under this category. (b) Unconscious testimony in the form of remains or relics, e.g., human remains (fossils, tools, weapons, household articles and clothes) and language, literature, arts, and institutions of various types (Sukhia et al.: 1974, p.194).

Primary sources are extensively used in this study. Primary sources used in this study are letters, minutes, reports, published and unpublished documents, periodicals, newspapers and books.
Letters: A large number of letters sent by the missionaries in Kerala to the mission authorities in England are preserved in the archives of the Council for World Mission in the School of Oriental and African Studies of the London University and in the Church Missionary Society Archives in London. The archives of the United Theological College in Bangalore also have many letters sent from Europe to the missionaries in Kerala. These letters, though very often express the subjective feelings of the missionaries, form part of the authentic records of the social and educational history of Kerala. Though all the missionaries did not write descriptive letters, many of them like Charles Mead, Mrs. Mead, John Cox, James Duthie, Samuel Mateer, Hacker, Thompson and Sinclair wrote long and detailed letters. Many of such letters form part of the sources for this study.

Minutes: A large number of minutes of committee meetings are used in this study. Important among them are the following:

Minutes of the Travancore District Committee (TDC). The Travancore District Committee is a body of LMS missionaries. Another is the Minutes of the Meeting of the Eastern Committee. In these minutes there are pieces of information regarding the establishment and management of schools. These are either in manuscript or in printed form.

Minutes of the Conferences of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) is another one. These minutes are also in manuscript or in printed form. These minutes also include
representations to the government and similar documents. These documents were found to be extremely valuable to trace the history of women's education in Kerala.

**Reports:** There are large collections of reports sent from the mission stations to the headquarters. They are preserved in the Archives of the School of Oriental and African Studies and the Archives of the Church Missionary Society in London. The Reports of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society are preserved in Basel (Switzerland) and in the University Library at Hamburg (Germany). These sources are used extensively in this study. They give detailed descriptions of the history of women's education in the Malabar area. The manuscript reports are marked 'MS' to distinguish them.

**Government Documents:** Another kind of primary source used in this study is the Government documents. Most of the educational activities of the local governments are mentioned in the Travancore Administration Reports. Back volumes of these reports are preserved in the British Museum Library in London. Cochin Administrative Reports are kept in the India Office Library and Records in London. These sources are used in this study. Madras Political Proceedings, available in the same library also gives elaborate accounts of many educational and social reforms in Madras Presidency and Kerala.

A good number of documents related to the Travancore Government known as the Travancore Government English Records
are preserved in the Government Secretariat, Trivandrum. 
Back volumes of Travancore Gazette available in the Public Library, Trivandrum were also found helpful for this study.
Periodicals: Of the periodicals, the most important are the Church Missionary Intelligencer of the C.M.S. and the Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle of the L.M.S. These are available in the University Library at Hamburg and in the Archives of the United Theological College, Bangalore. The Harvest Field, another magazine, is preserved in the British Museum Library in London. Keralopakari a Malayalam periodical preserved in the Mission Archives in Basel also gives valuable information about the educational activities of the missionaries in Kerala. The investigator visited the libraries in London, West Germany, Switzerland, Kerala, and Bangalore and collected the data for the study.

Neetus: 'Neetus' were the royal proclamations issued by Kings of Travancore and Cochin. Neetus and the writings of early missionaries and foreign travellers supply valuable information about the socio-religious and educational conditions of the 18th century Kerala.

Interview: "The interview is, in a sense, an oral questionnaire. Instead of writing the response, the subject or the interviewee gives the needed information verbally in a face-to-face relationship" (Best: 1977, p.182). The interview is relatively
a more flexible tool than any other written enquiry form and permits explanation, adjustment and variation according to the situation.

With a skilful interviewer, the interview is often superior to other data gathering devices. One reason for this is that people are very often more willing to talk than to write especially on intimate confidential topics. The purpose and meaning of questions can be explained to get valid responses. It is also possible to check the truthfulness of the responses.

Hence in the present study interviews were conducted with headmasters, managers and some old students of some of the missionary schools to collect more information regarding the education of girls. The persons interviewed included T.Y. Harris, Retired Dist.ect Educational Officer, Nanthencode, Trivandrum, Yacob, Mission Compound, Mylaudi, P. Joseph, Old Student, Scott Christian College, Nagercoil, and Richard Joyson, Manager, P.K.S. High School, Kanjiramkulam.

Secondary Sources

It is not always possible to obtain primary evidence, and therefore at times the historian has to rely on secondary sources. "The sources of information transmitted by one who was neither a participant in, nor an eye witness to the original event are called secondary sources" (Sukhia et al.:1974, p.195). Secondary sources include such materials as history,
encyclopaedias and books (Good; 1959, p.184). In this study also secondary sources have been used to supplement the primary sources. Therefore a number of books have been consulted.

3.2.2 Criticism of Data

A historical research worker has to depend on the conscious and unconscious testimony of others for the study. One cannot say how much valid, reliable or significant the collected data is unless a careful analysis is made. The process of appraisal which is used to derive usable and trustworthy data, is known as historical criticism. It involves the dual process of external and internal criticism.

External Criticism

It is aimed at establishing the authenticity or genuineness of the data lest the researcher may waste his labour on forged or counterfeit documents. "External criticism is concerned with genuineness of the document itself, whether it really is what it purports or seems to be and whether it reads true to the original" (Good and Scates; 1954, p.188). To establish the genuineness of the age or authorship of documents, one may have to use many an intricate test of signature, handwriting, script, type, spelling, language, usage and documentation. It may involve chemical and physical tests of the material data of ink, paint, paper, metal and cloth.
In other words, the validity of the sources used must be established before their content is evaluated and used for research purposes.

**Internal Criticism**

"Internal criticism deals with the meaning and trustworthiness of statements that remain within the document ...." (Good and Scates: 1954, p.188). "It weighs the testimony of the document in relation to the truth" (Mouly: 1964, p.212). It is aimed at evaluating the accuracy of the documents. The errors, omissions and additions in documents in copying, printing and translation can be detected by internal criticism. It is also an important factor in determining the validity of the data. The Research worker must make use of both internal and external criticism for assessing the validity and reliability of the data.

In this particular study the data collected through primary and secondary sources were subjected to internal and external criticism. In the missionary reports and their publications, and in some of the government reports, the investigator sometimes noted a sort of rhetoric which overestimated their works and the results of their works. In order to overcome such shortcomings and to make the study more objective the investigator referred to other contemporary sources. Thus sufficient care has been taken to make the study objective and impartial.
The investigator also personally visited the places where the work had begun and also the institutions originally started.

3.2.3 Presentation of Facts in a Readable Form Involving Problems of Organisation, Composition, Exposition and Interpretation

There was a time when historical writings were done chronologically. However, according to present understanding, the historical material may be organized according to the theme or topic. It is known as topical, thematic or functional arrangement. But the method suited for this study is found to be a combination of both chronological and thematic arrangements. Therefore attempt has been made to arrange the materials chronologically. But in a few places chronology was discarded for the sake of clarity and coherence.

According to Good and Scates (1954, p.242), "Historical composition is a synthetic and constructive process that involves the mechanical problem of documentation, the logical problem of selection and arrangement of topics and sub-topics and the philosophical problem of interpretation". The problem of documentation in writing the report of a historical research is in no way different from the problem of documentation in reporting any other research study. Therefore in giving references, the procedure adopted in other research studies was followed in this study also.