CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of British rule in India marked the beginning of a new era in the history of political, economic, social and educational systems. Of all these, the educational system opened new vistas by creating a new set of opportunities in the society. As a result a new class of intelligentsia trained in modern Western Sciences and Cultures emerged in the Indian Society. This intelligentsia became the pioneers of all progressive democratic movements. Of all the activities carried out by this group, emancipation of Women is more significant. On one hand, the British liberal views, Christian missionary activities and the attitudes of the bureaucrats helped in judging the position of women in relation to the European standards and values that led to the condemnation of the customs and conventions of traditional Indian society relating to women such as child marriage, sati, dowry, illiteracy and widowhood. Due to their effort, sati, female infanticide and slavery were abolished. In addition to this, several other reforms were also introduced in relation to Government business and public works. Sunday has been made a day of rest, and the converts have been protected, by a special enactment enforced in Tirunelveli District by the Government of Madras and East India Company on 16.07.1805.¹ This enactment legalized as a result of the enquiry report submitted by Mr. Lushington, the then Collector of Tirunelveli district. It also paved the way for Grant-in-Aid system (regular annual grant to schools by the Government) and the Missionary schools were no longer excluded from the benefit of Government grants.² On the other hand, westernization created an awareness regarding the subordinate position of women and the need for rationalizing and eliminating the

traditional customs and conventions which were creeping into the society. The Britishers, Christian missionaries as well as the Western educated Indians felt that “educating women” is the only means through which the emancipation of Indian women can be achieved. Thus the importance of educating women was first published in Bengal by the Atmiya Sabha, founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1815. This led to the starting of a First Formal Female School at Nazareth by Rev. James Hough, the C. M. S. Missionary, in Tirunelveli District\(^3\) of Madras Presidency and in South India in 1820.

**HISTORY OF TIRUNELVELI**

Tirunelveli is properly named as “Tirunelveli” purporting to mean the land surrounded by beautiful paddy fields.\(^4\) The Tirunelveli Sthalapurana prescribes a tradition for the origin of the Tirunelveli.\(^5\) One Vedasarma, a staunch devotee of Lord Siva collected paddy by way of begging and carried on his ablutions in Tambraparni. One day he prayed to the Lord for rain. His prayer was answered and the Lord showered rain immediately. Vedasarma witnessed a wonderous miracle that, the area spreading the paddy was under the sunlight. Since that day, the town was called Tirunelveli (Thiru + Nel+ Velli) which means “Sacred hedged paddy’. Other names of Tirunelveli are *Venuvanam, Thirumoorthipuram, Ibapuri, Tharanisaram* and *Sakalasithi\(^6\) Nellai, Nellaiyampathy or Nellaiyambalam.*\(^7\)

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PHYSICAL FEATURES AND BOUNDARIES

Tirunelveli district (Map No. 2) occupies the extreme Southern and Eastern part of the Indian Peninsula. It lies between $8\frac{1}{2}$ and $9\frac{1}{2}$ North Latitude (122 miles) and between $77\frac{1}{2}$ and $78\frac{1}{2}$ East Longitude (74 miles). Tirunelveli district is a large plain which covers 5,381 square miles.

The boundaries of Tirunelveli extended from North by Ramnad district; South and East by Gulf of Mannar; West by Western Ghats and Travancore territory, which include the cities of Srivilliputur, Virudhunagar, Sattur and Sivakasi (till the formation of separation of Ramnad district from Tirunelveli district in 1910). The Western Ghats lies between Travancore and Tirunelveli.

POPULATION AND OCCUPATION

According to the census of 1921, (see Map Nos. 3, 4, & 5) the whole population of the district was 19,073,114. As per the census of 1931 the total population of this district was 20,462,004. The number of female was 10,585,920, whereas the number of male was 9,876,124. Since this study focused on women’s education of Tirunelveli district, it is essential to refer about its population ratio on the basis of sex. It is clear that the females’ number exceed the number of males in these areas. It must be one of the reasons for the establishment of formal schools for women by the Christian missionaries.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the masses. The district contains two types of soils i.e. red sandy soil in the southern part and the black cotton soil in the northern part. People are dependent for their livelihood on the cultivation of palmyra palm, gathering and processing of its products, which form one of the most

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important economic activities in the district. The Tirunveli cotton, the “Tinnies” valued second or sometimes highest of the Indian cotton in Liverpool market exported through Tuticorin, which is known as the Principal Emporium of South India. However, Agriculturists were suffering enormously by the fall in the prices of agricultural products, the highest mean temperate, and one of the lowest average amount of rainfall area in the Madras Presidency. But Tirunveli gets the benefit of the two monsoons, which cause flood in the Tambraparni and do considerable damage. The Missionaries relieved the natives by rendering support at the time of natural calamities, establishing schools, asylums and supporting them economically.

During pre –British period the Nayak Rajahs had levied one-sixth of the gross produce as Land Revenue. Assessments were lighter with those of Mussalmans. The Hindu Government was subverted by the Mussalmans between 1736 and 1739. From 1739 to 1801, when the East India Company finally assumed control over the Tirunelveli, successions of managers were deputed to administer the Revenue of Tirunelveli. The first collector of Tirunelveli under East India Company, Mr. Lushington termed Tirunelveli as the fairest province of the Carnatic in1799. He commenced operations of measurements of all lands both wet and dry. The Southern Taluks of Tirunelveli are the wet Taluks whereas the Northern Taluks are the dry Taluks. Three years Village lease system, and Decennial lease system [1800 to 1822], the Olungu system [1822 to 1859], the Mothafysal system [1859-1867] were adopted to collect revenue in the wet villages. In 1802,
Mr. Lushington fixed the rates on the dry *punja* land on an average collection of former years. For some years the assessment underwent alteration, reduction and enhancement. In 1808, they were permanently reduced to rates which varied according to the soil from Rs. 2-5-0 to 10 annas per acre and they remained the same with a few unimportant alterations till 1865. After 1865, the Government had decided to resettle the land revenue on the *ryotwari* principle. By the *ryotwari* system *patta* holders directly paid the revenue to Government. There was a complete resurvey of the fields by adopting the triangulation and offset system of survey before the second re-settlement in 1908 and 1909.\(^{21}\) A noteworthy feature of this re-settlement was that the existence of the double *patta* system for land and palmyrah trees to different individuals in the same plot of land was done away with by arranging an informal negotiation and settlement between the land and tree pattadars concerned. At the time of the settlement of 1877, palmyrahs were classified under four categories as *Paruvam* [for a season], *Kattu Kai* [fruit of palm tree] and *Olaivettu* [cutting palm leaves]. During the Resettlement of 1912, there were only two classifications of palmyrahs viz. rough and smooth. The permanent tree assessment was merged with land revenue. In certain villages of the district, there is a peculiar class of lands known as *Company Pannai Swami Bhogam lands*.\(^ {22}\) They are popularly known in Tamil as ‘*Kumbini Pannai Nilam*’ e.g. Home Farm Lands of the Panchalankurichi (land of bravery) Poligar (petty chieftains ruled in Southern district of Tamil Nadu) later seized by the East India Company. Subsequently they were made over to the respective cultivators who were, in addition to the land revenue, to pay one anna and four and a half pies swami bhogam on an acre subject also to cesses. By *Zamindary* or Permanently Settled Estates,

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\(^{21}\) Great trigonometrical stations are those that were erected by the Survey of India. These are covered by masonry work.

\(^{22}\) Government were the pattadars of the lands, which were seized by the East India Company from the Poligars in Tirunelveli district. These lands still exist in the taluk of Koilpatti and Srivaikuntam taluk. This special assessment is directly brought to village account No. 7 and then to village account No. 9.
large tracts of lands are entrusted to Zamindars who were made directly responsible for fixed permanent revenue to Government known as Paishkish. It is noteworthy that the Zamindars were supporting the Christian missionaries to establish schools and donated for the growth of Schools in this district. It is necessary to know about the acquisition of Tirunelveli District by East India Company, since the research is carried out on Women’s Education under East India Company and Crown rule of the above said district.

ACQUISITION OF TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

In ancient period Tirunelveli district had no separate existence, but formed merely the southern portion of the Pandya country and continued to be so under the rule of the Cholas, the early Muslims and the Nayaks as well as the Pandyas themselves. There are literary references which stated that when the Pandya country came under the Imperial Cholas, the country was subdivided into Valanadus and the areas now came to be known as Tirunelveli district.

Taking advantage of the civil war in the Pandya Kingdom, Malik Kafur invaded and established the Mohammedan rule in Madurai, for nearly half a century it fell to the onslaught of the local powers led by Kumara Kampana, a Vijayanagar ruler. Thus, from the period of the Second Pandya empire to the Vijayanagar regime,(13th and 14th Century) there were frequent changes that took place in the administrative divisions and the governing system.

Tirunelveli fell into the hands of the Nayaks of Madurai in 1559 A.D. When the Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Subadar of Deccan expelled the Marathas from Southern India, Tirunelveli passed under the nominal rule of the Nawab of Arcot in

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1736 A.D. When the country passed from the Madurai Nayaks to the Nawabs of Arcot in 1736, the Palayams continued and the area collectively came to be known as Tirunelveli Province. Tirunelveli became independent of Madura in 1744 A.D. However, actual authority lay in the hands of a number of independent chiefs of the district called Poligars who were originally feudal barons appointed by the Nayak deputies who had after the fall of the dynasty assumed wider powers. The poligars were revolted against the paramount power. On account of the disorder in the country, the British first interfered at the request of the Nawab in 1755 A.D. The western poligars were joined under the leadership of Puli Thevar, the first poligar who fought against the British from 1751 A.D. to 1765 A.D. However, the British expedition under Major Harren and Mahfuzukhan in 1757 brought some sort of order in Tirunelveli and the country was rented to the latter. The inability of Mahfuzukhan to control the poligars induced the Madras Government to send troops commanded by the British officers where the country was administered on behalf of the Nawab by the native officials. As this system of divided responsibility created administrative problems in 1781 the Nawab assigned the revenue duties to the East India Company Civil Officers known as the superintendents of Assigned Revenue. George Proctor, the first Receiver of the Assigned Revenue was appointed in Tirunelveli province in 1781. He was succeeded by Irwin in 1783 A.D. During this system of administering the country; the Poligars started revolting against the British administration, which was considered as the First Poligar War. It was followed by, the Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga royal families. The First Tamil Royal Woman

27 Palaiyakkarar, Poligar, Palegaadu, Polygar, Palegar, or Polegar was the feudal title for a class of territorial administrative and military governors appointed by the Nayaka rulers of South India (notably Vijayanagar Empire, Madurai Nayakas and Kakatiya dynasty) during 16th – 18th centuries.
Velunachiaar, who fought against the British and retained her throne after eight years and ruled Sivaganga Samasthanam [Kingdom] for one and a half decade. This war must be the first victorious war against the British in India.

However, the East India Company Government at Madras took over the general administration of the country by unilateral proclamation, ‘Assumption of Management of the Nawab’s Country’ on 7th August 1790. On 23rd July 1790 A.D., even before the date of the proclamation, Benjamin Torin, who had acquaintance with the district as the Pay Master General of Palamcottah, was appointed as the Collector of Tirunelveli and the dependent Palayakars. By the Treaty of 1792 A.D., between the Nawab of Arcot and the British, the Collector was redesignated as the ‘Collector of the Zamindar and Poligar Pesheush or Paishkish’ in the Tirunelveli, Madurai, Trichinapoly, Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga districts. Ramanathapuram served as the headquarters of the Collector. Benjamin Torin was succeeded by Landon as the Collector and on his death in 1794 A.D., George Powney became the Collector. At the close of the 1797 A.D., Jackson was appointed as Collector of Tirunelveli, when the poligars headed by Kattabomman Nayak with the support of Maruthu Brothers again gave trouble by revolting in the Ramanathapuram territory of Tirunelveli. A British force was sent to Tirunelveli under Major Bannerman and the Last Poligar War followed.31 Two years later, the poligar war broke out again.32 Subsequently, Jackson was succeeded by Lushington in 1799 A.D.

On 31st July 1801 A.D., Mr. Lushington became the first Collector of Tirunelveli in the midst of the most stubborn resistance of poligars. The Panchalamkurichi fort was destroyed. The ring leaders of the rebellion were hanged. Bearing of arms by general public was prohibited. During Lushington’s period the final war against the poligars came to an end. Hence, the Nawab of Arcot ceded the

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entire Carnatic to the East India Company by a Treaty signed on 31st July 1801. On the same day, an order was issued by Mr. Lushington when Tirunelveli came absolutely into the hands of the British East India Company. Mr. Lushington moved his headquarters from Ramanathapuram to Tirunelveli. A week later he reported to Madras that the province of Tirunelveli had been brought under the Company’s authority. By 1801 A.D., the land south of Madurai formed Tirunelveli district of the Madras Presidency. The cultivators of Tirunelveli demanded East India Company to establish school as they paid cess to the government.

Rhenius, the C.M.S. Missionary sent a report on indigenous education in Tirunelveli district to the Board of Revenue in 1814. The report gives a clear cut picture of the curriculum and the books used in the indigenous schools. Reading, writing, and arithmetic was taught in the indigenous schools. They were also to decipher upcountry letters which played a significant role in the village transactions. They were used religious books like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Panchatantra. The manuscript books were used in the indigenous schools i.e. Harikannakkoo (a book on alphabets), Aveiyar’s Avaimoli or Autitsoodi (Aveiyar’s sentences), and Aveiyar’s Kondeiveiden (a book name like the God Siva) and Mookoorei. All the books written by Aveiyar contained partly moral, partly religious preachings. Needi Venba, a poetry book on moral and ethical behaviour, Kannakoo or Kuzhipperukkum, a book on arithmetic and its various branches, a number of story books praising the Hindu Gods, and also used Teevagaram and Neegandoo, two

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33 Padmanabha Ayyar, V., op. cit., p.37.
34 Rhenius was born in 1790 in the fortress Graudens in Prussia. Berlin C.M.S. sent him to Madras in 1814, where he worked till 1820 and started mission work in Tirunelveli on 7 July, 1820. See Appasamy Paul, op. cit., pp.28-29.
35 Rhenius’s School Report from Tirunelveli to the Board of Directors, 3 November, 1829, TDR, Vol. 4367, TNA.
36 All story books are in verse i.e. Pilleyar Sindoo (Praisings of Pilleyar), Anandamalai, Ambigamalai, Pottiyeimalai, Abiramiyandadi (Praisings of Murugan), Kooravanchi, (Praisings of Courtallam Swami Kuravanchi). Rhenius’s School Report from Tirunelveli to the Board of Directors, 3 November, 1829, TDR. Vol. 4367, TNA.
dictionaries containing synonymous terms in Tamil were taught. It was difficult to understand by the teachers and the students. The teachers used to bring the students to Schools on their door step daily.\textsuperscript{37}

The extract of Indian Education Commission by Rev. Vincent W. Harcourt\textsuperscript{38} help us to understand the curriculum followed in the indigenous schools and the mode of payment to the master in Tirunelveli district. The books taught in unaided indigenous schools in Tirunelveli district are as follows: \textit{kuzhipperukkum} (multiplication table and fraction), \textit{Ulaganeethi} (moral duties) in poetry \textit{Kathirkammaalai} (Praise of a god Kathirkaamaan) were taught in First standard; \textit{Puththippadalam}; \textit{Chinthamani} (A treatise against immorality), and \textit{Dhivakaram} (A catalogue of names of gods and goddesses) in the second Standard; and \textit{Anupothi Alankaram} (A description of holy shrines); \textit{Kuravanchi} (Description of Courtallum and history of Valliummei & Subbramanian); and \textit{Pillai Tamil} (A treatise on Subbramanian Meenachi or some other god) in the third Standard.

Rhenius and Harcourt’s reports clearly stated that there was no uniform curriculum and books followed in indigenous schools in Tirunelveli District.

The teacher had received from each pupil as payment, a spoonful of oil on Saturday and 4 or 6 Chillies on Friday; betal nut on Pradhosum; two pice [paise] or half measure of paddy on the previous day to half holiday; a pair of cloths and from 1 Rupee to 7 Rupees as payment to the master at the time of admission. About Rs.20 or 30 was raised from the parents and relatives of the pupils on Saraswathi Pooja which falls in the month of Purattasi [September]; On Pillaiar Chathurthi, 4 pice, [paise] or 1 anna which falls in the month of Aavani [August]. The teachers


\textsuperscript{38} Vincent W. Harcourt was working as in charge and Principal of Sarah Tucker Female Normal Institution and Five Girls’ Boarding Schools, and about 55 & 60 branch girls’ schools for more than 20 years. \textit{Madras Education Commission 1884}, Evidence taken before the Madras Provincial Committee 1884, (Madras, 1884) A.C.No.128638, TNA., pp.153-54.
bought plantains with the money and offered them to Pillaiar (God), gave a part to the pupils and took the rest by themselves.39

Women’s education was not entirely neglected at that time. Some form of elementary education was imparted to girls in the boy’s schools following the same curriculum.40 Tamil inscriptions at Tanjore temple dated 1004 A.D. stated that there were four hundred Tali-Cheri-Pendugal or “women of the temple.”41 Dharampal’s in his book titled “The Beautiful Tree: Indigenous Indian Education in the Eighteenth Century” was of the view that only educated women belonged to Thykula or temple dancers in Tirunelveli district.42 Social disapproval to women’s learning was widespread during the 19th century. The fear that educated girls would become widows at a young age was also widely prevalent. A Tamil Proverb “Choose a prostitute for a wife, but not one who can write”43 clearly pointed out that how traditionally women’s education was scorned in those days. Girls rarely stepped out of the inner quarters of the traditional home, while outsiders who proposed to educate them within their own home were also not encouraged to visit them.44 When girls were not allowed to enter schools that naturally remained an exclusive domain of boys till the end of 18th century. The “Zenana” system45 introduced women teachers who could visit girls at their own homes and teach. The Education Commission stated that the Zenana System was a failure in Madras Presidency but was successful in Tirunelveli district. For instance, Amy Carmichael followed the Zenana system to collect destitute women to her asylum at Dhonaur.

41 Santhosh Kumar Das, op. cit., p.259.
45 Zenana system of education was meant for the upper caste women and Muslim girls who due to social customs could not receive formal schooling.
When the missionaries teaching the lower intellect of women, the public commended as follow: ‘You Might Be Teaching The Cows Next’. However attempts made by the missionaries to educate women were remarkable despite the pessimism among the native society.

In fact, the only major expectation from educated girls was of their efficiency in performing domestic roles. Girls therefore stopped schooling at puberty or marriage, which ever was earlier; and the average length of time for a girl at school was just about two -and -a -half years. The girls entered secondary schools mainly with the hope of getting better grooms in marriage. The above statement was evident from the lives of Mrs. Soranathai, wife of Retired Indian Postal Superintendent Mr. Selvaraj of Kulavanikarpuram and Mrs. Saroja, wife of Mr. J. Chelladurai Pandian, Retired Deputy Collector of Tuticorin. Though both were completed III Form i.e. present 8th Standard, they could not pursue further due to taboo in the society for women. Thus education, regardless of its levels, carried no purpose for girls other than marriage.

In the Madras Presidency the school was usually held in the Varandah like projection in front of the houses or the Thinnai Palli or temple at any time and this school is called as Pyal School. For instance, Rev. Paramanandam studied in pyal school at Sankaranainarkoil temple premises, on his return from school he taught the same lessons to his mother and earn ½ anna per day. Mostly the unemployed men who were able to read and write started setting up Pyal schools. The unique feature of these pyal schools was introduced as the monitorial system in England by

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48 For a description of indigenous education system see *The Education Commission, Evidence taken before the Madras Provincial Committee 1882, Madras, 1884*, pp.65-66.

49 Letter from the Collector of Coimbatore to Ft. St. George, 30 September, 1825, BOR., Vol.310, TNA; Letter from Ft. St. George to the Governor-General in Council, 10 March, 1826, BOR, Vol. 314, pp.850-52, TNA; Rev. Rhenius’s School Report from Tirunelvelli to the Board of Directors, 3 November , 1829, TDR.Vol.4367,TNA.
Andrew Bell, the Chaplain of Madras. Miss. K.N. Brockway, the then Principal, St. Christopher’s Training College, in her article titled ‘The Child Then And Now’ described about the village pyal schools in South India. These schools were opened to all except the untouchable castes and girls. So it seems that the female population was kept away from these schools. According to the First Educational Census of 1822 only 117 girls were educated. But this position changed after the opening of schools for girls by the Missionaries and made the orthodox section to realise the importance of women’s education.

**DEFINITION OF WOMEN’S EDUCATION**

Women’s Education is termed as “Providing for all facilities and opportunities for the learning of females on par with those available for the education of males”. Those Women belong to poverty line were not contribute directly to the economic development of the country. Therefore, the missionaries believed in the concept that if they educate a woman, they educate a family and society that would contribute directly to the economic development. Hence, they decided to educate the poor and middle class women by following anti – Downward Filtration Theory and succeed in their attempt in this regard. [Downward Filtration Theory in education was introduced by East India Company. It meant that coming down of knowledge from the higher class people to the lower classes].

**IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN’S EDUCATION**

The progress of any nation interlinked with women’s education which plays an important role in the society. Without providing proper educational opportunities for all women in our country who constitute roughly about 50 per cent of the

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population, it is futile to think of achieving universal literacy. Many of the social reformers like Swami Vivekananda, Subramanian Bharathiar, Mahatma Gandhi, Annie Beasant and Sarojini Naidu emphasized the need for women’s education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

- to analyze the salient features of the women’s education in Tirunelveli district;
- to highlight the work of indigenous societies, missionaries on the one hand and the East India Company and Crown on the other hand towards the education of women in Tirunelveli district;
- to trace the origin and growth of women’s education in Tirunelveli district during 1800 to 1947 which covers more than one and a half century, that would help the research scholars to undertake further research in this field.
- to explain the historic development of primary education, higher education, industrial education and special education for women in Tirunelveli district; and
- to understand the history of formal female educational institutions, and its development during the 19th and the first half of the 20th century.

HYPOTHESES

This research titled “Women’s Education in Tirunelveli District from 1800 to 1947” traces the history of Tirunelveli District, development of Primary Education for Women, genesis of Higher Education for Women, development of Industrial Education for Women, origin and development of Special Education.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE


Missionaries to impart Christian education to South Indian girls; Kenneth Ingham’s, *Reformers in India 1793-1833: An Account of the work of Christian Missionaries on Behalf of Social Reform* (Cambridge, 1956) brings out the Societal changes that were taking place after the arrival of Christian Missionaries in India. Rev. M. Rajasekaran’s, (ed.) *Life History of Rev. Rhenius*, (1814-1838) (Palayamkottai, 2010) traces the impact of castes’, and also throw lights on the Himalayan task of establishment of more than 300 educational institutions by Rev. Rhenius within 18 years with the support of local public in Tirunelveli district.

*An Autobiography of Rev. Paramanandam,* gives a clear picture about the types of indigenous educational institutions, and nature of women’s education in Sankaranynarkoil Taluk of Tirunelveli district. The works of Edward Jonnathan.D’s, *Miss.Anne Jane Askwith and the school for the Blind*, Palamkottai (1888-1919), (Tirunelveli-7); Pascoo,C.E.’s., *Two Hundred Years of S.P.G.* (1701-1900), (Westminster,1901); Stephen Neil’s, *Bhakti- Hindu and Christian*, (Madras, 1974). *The Story of the Christian Church in India and Pakistan*, (I.S.P.C.K., 1972), and Weston, Bishop’s, *The Early History of the Tinnevelli Mission* have dealt the efforts of Missionaries to promote women’s education in Tirunelvelly district; Sita Anantha Raman’s work on *Getting Girls to School- Social Reform in the Tamil District, 1870-1930* analyzed the social reforms, and also examine the educational process that transformed the colonial era, triggered by the Western presence. This paved the way for the involvement of people from Tirunelveli district active participants in the beginning. *The Guide Book of the Tirunelveli District – the thirty-first Provincial educational Conference, 1940*, Ambasamudram, clearly states the growth of education with datas, educational institutions for boys and girls; David & Sarojini Packiamuthu (eds.), *A New Society* (Tamil), (Tirunelveli-2) mentions the Social, Cultural, Economic, Religious and Educational condition with special reference to individual personalities, which helps us to understand the position of the
converts in Tirunelveli districts from 16th century to till date; Jacob.R.S.’s *Oorum Perum [Tamil] Part II & III* (Palayamcottai,2004 & 2007) high lights historical importance of the villages, the socio-economic, religious, and educational conditions of the people during the 19th and 20th centuries in Tirunelveli District.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

During the ancient period, men and women received the same type of education and enjoyed the same status. The curriculum was religious in nature and they learnt together in the same place. In the medieval period, the practice of child marriage and purdah system resulted in the decline of women’s education. After the advent of the British in India, women’s education was promoted by the Christian Missionaries and by the British government. There were various studies which throw light on the development of English education and the policies followed by the British towards this cause. The provision of English education represents the most sustained and far-reaching attempts of a society to create consciousness among certain sections of that society like backward castes and women. So, educational system plays a greater importance in any society. To understand the regional variations in the growth of education, the regional and district level research on history of education is necessary to know the complete history of education in India. Therefore the researcher has analyzed that the history of women’s education in India in the nineteenth and twentieth century’s.

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This study aims to analyze the history of Women’s education in India, particularly in Tirunelveli District of Madras Presidency, from the colonial period to the Independence. The turning point of this period was that the first formal female school which was started by Christian Missionaries in 1820, is still in existence to carry out its mission, whereas, in Ramnad a few schools started earlier than this period were closed within two or three years due to poor response from the public. Hence, Tirunelveli District is rightly been called as a pioneer district for promoting female education in Madras Presidency. So, this study would help us to understand the history of Women’s Education in Tirunelveli District from 1800 to 1947 and also throw light on the origin and growth of Women’s Education in Madras Presidency. The year 1800 signifies the end of poligar administration and 1947 becomes a landmark of the end of crown rule and the beginning of free India.

The researcher therefore has analyzed that the history of women’s education in India is intricately woven into the wider fabric of social and religious transformation that took place in the nineteenth and twentieth century’s. This study, which analyses the genesis, growth and development of women’s education in Tirunelveli district between 1800 to 1947, has four main thrusts. In the first place, this study uses primary and secondary sources from various documents to reconstruct the Development of Primary Education for Girls in the Tirunelveli District. In the second place, it analyses the Genesis of Higher Education for Women in Tirunelveli District. In the third place, it throws light on the Development of Industrial Education for Women in Tirunelveli District. Finally, it emphasis the Origin and Development of Special Education for Women in Tirunelveli District.
SOURCES

This study is based on the archival materials such as the Proceedings of Board of Revenue, Public Consultations, Tirunelveli District Records, Selections from the Educational Records, Reports of the Indian Education Commission, Annual Reports on the Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency, District Gazetteers and Manuals, Educational Reports of Missionaries in India, the Report of the Primary Education Committee (1929-30), the Sargeant Committee Report (1944), and the Hansa Mehta Report on the Post-war Educational Reconstruction with special reference to women’s education (1945), Quinquennial Reports on Education. The secondary sources include books, articles, journals and newspapers. Personal interviews with the members of the Diocese of Palayamcottai, Diocese of Tirunelveli, Stephen Neil Research Centre, Thembavani Thottam Roman Catholic Centre, St. Xavier College, St. John’s College, and Tirunelveli Social Service Centre, Palamcottah, interviews with the people at Melapalayam, Kollimalai, Sankaranainarkoil, Thoothukudi, Vadomalapuram, Moovirndazhi, Achampatti, Devarkulam, Palayapettai, Sivalaperi have been carried out to obtain first hand information and data relating to the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in the presentation of this study is historical, analytical and exploratory. The researcher visited the institutions in person to collect first hand information. Attempts were made to interview the past and present faculty members, educated people in villages and questionnaires were distributed to find the system of education, curriculum, the historic reason for the genesis of Female School, Teacher Training Institutions, Female High Schools, First Women’s College, Vocational Training Centers, and the First Special School in Tirunelveli District of Madras Presidency.
LIMITATIONS

- The period of study is limited from 1800 to 1947.
- Origin, growth and development of women’s education only in Tirunelveli District.
- The primary education, higher education, industrial education and special education for women in this district alone have been dealt in this study.
- This research does not analyze the entire educational policies of Madras Presidency and India.
- This research does not analyze the entire educational development of Madras Presidency and India. However, this research is necessary to understand to know about the past and lead for educational policy makers to adopt the policies with modification according to the requirement of the present and future.

CHAPTERIZATION

The study is divided into six chapters including introduction and conclusion. The Introductory chapter deals with an overview of the study, an introduction of the History of Tirunelveli District and traces the history of Women’s Education in the Pre-British period in the Tirunelveli District, definition of women’s education, importance of women’s education, objectives of the study, hypotheses, review of literature of contextual relevance, scope of the study, sources, research methodology adopted for the study, limitations of the study and chapterization.

The Second chapter Development of Primary Education for Women in Tirunelveli District throws light on the steps taken up by the Roman Catholic Missionaries, Protestant missionaries, and indigenous people for the development of
Primary education. This study reveals that primary education was well developed than any other district and any other parts of India.

The Third chapter *Genesis of Higher Education for Women in Tirunelveli District* reveals that the development of higher education and the efforts taken by the people of this district to preserve the pioneer institution of Tirunelveli District and in South India from 1820 to 1947 was remarkable.

The Fourth chapter *Development of Industrial Education for Women in Tirunelveli District* explains the necessity to start industrial schools and its impact on the status of women in Tirunelveli District. The research found that the establishment of industrial schools, variety of industrial work open to women, and earn for their livelihood, enhance their socio-economic status.

The Fifth chapter *Origin and Development of Special Education for Women in Tirunelveli District* deals with the need for the development of special school for the differently able in Tirunelveli District. The education for disabled was neglected area till the last decade of 19th century. As a result of the western impact, municipalities and Christian Missionaries made an endeavour to establish separate educational institutions for disabled.

The Concluding chapter summarizes the whole study and suggests measures for future development of Women’s Education in Tirunelveli District.