CHAPTER III

EARLY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

Christianity was not a new religion to Travancore at the turn of the nineteenth century. In India, Travancore has the unique privilege of having a Christian community from a very early date, the community of St. Thomas, otherwise called Syrian Christians. The Catholic Church was firmly established in Travancore in the sixteenth century, and their Missionaries from time to time converted large numbers of the faith, sometimes transgressing the boundaries of caste. When rare cases of conversion from privileged classes were reported, the government employed means to check the work of proselytism among Hindu subject. Those who were converted from the privileged classes were treated very badly. Neelam Pillai an officer of a noble family was shot at Aruvamozhi, because he refused to renounce the Christian religion. The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed the Nadar mass-movements toward Christianity and the second half that of the depressed classes, mainly Parayas and Pulayas. When the Nadars saw the new Christians gaining powerful friends, they also offered themselves for Christian baptism. They found that the missionaries and their agents were sincere friends, ardent religious instructors, helpers in times of in religious quarrels.

3.1. Early Christian Conversion

The history of Christianity in India from the early times has not been recorded up to the arrival of Vasco da Gama at Calicut in 1498 followed by the Portuguese rule in Goa and some surrounding areas. However, it is certain that there were small settlements of Christians in Malabar before the arrival of the Portuguese. When and how they came is shrouded in obscurity and authorities differ in tracing their origin.

1 Baylees, The South Travancore Mission, Madras, 1858, p.6.
2 Mackenze, History of Christianity in Travancore, Delhi, 1901, p.52.
There are two views among historians concerning the origin of Christianity in India. One group traces it back to St. Thomas, the apostle or even to two apostles, St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew. The other ascribes it to the enterprise of Merchants and Missionaries of the East Syrian or Persian Church who came to India in trading vessels. According to the former tradition, St. Thomas came by sea and first landed at Cranganore about 52 A.D.; he converted high caste Hindu families in Cranganore, Palayur, Quilon and some other places. Then he crossed over to China and preached the Gospel over there and returned to India again and organized the Christians of Malabar.

B.R. Ambedkar describes that the first Missionary to India who came and sowed the seed of Christianity of which there is no record. It is believed that Christianity in India is of apostolic origin and it is suggested that the apostle Thomas is the founder of it. The apostolic origin of Christianity is only a legend not withstanding the existence of what is called St. Thomas mount near Madras which is said to be the burial place of the apostle. There is no credible evidence to show that the Gospel was even preached in India during the first century. The recorded history of Christianity in India began with the arrival of Portuguese. Vasco da Gama, was the first Portuguese explorer and navigator who landed near Calicut in 1498 A.D and got a friendly reception from Zamorin the local ruler of Malabar. In 1500 A.D. came Alvares Cabral, who on his return to Portugal took the Indian Christians to the prominent notice of his king and people. The king took deep interest in spreading the Christian faith. He made abundant provision for proselytism by dispatching eight

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Franciscan friars, eight chaplains and a Chaplain Major along with the fleet under Cabral’s command. Friar Miguel Vaz who was taken by Vasco da Gama on his former visit and who was converted in Portugal, also returned to Malabar with Cabral. The Portuguese did not wait to begin their proselytizing activities in Malabar\textsuperscript{8}. The Missionaries who came with Cabral and Vasco da Gama proceeded from Cochin Southwards along the coast. Converting many among the poor class and pursuing their activities in the interior with some success. They proceeded as far as Cape Comorin and beyond the limits of Travancore to the coast.

Alfonso de Albuquerque landed in India in 1503 A.D. and laid the foundation of political influence in Cochin by helping the Raja against the Zamorin of Calicut, building a fort which soon became a religious centre. A Church was built there and dedicated to St: Bartholomew and the members of the various religious orders settled down there in large numbers. When he reached Quilon, he found 25000 Christians there. Deeply interested in their welfare, he secured for them the confirmation of their ancient privileges from the king of Quilon\textsuperscript{9}. The Portuguese king Manual I and his successor, Joao (1521-1557 A.D) deemed it their duty together with colonial conquest and exploitation to plant Romish type Christianity in the newly discovered regions of the East and the West. The first forty years of the Portuguese Catholic Mission were, however, poor. There was no noteworthy event or success, except the baptism of a Raja of Tagore on the Malabar coast\textsuperscript{10}.

3.1.1. St. Xavier’s Mission in Travancore

Francis Xavier came to Travancore in November 1545 A.D. He went to Trivandrum by land and had audience with the Maharaja, who received him with horror, treated him with kindness and gave him permission to preach the Gospel in his kingdom and to baptize those of his subjects who would desire to become Christians.


\textsuperscript{9} Hunt, \textit{The Anglican Church in Travancore and Cochin 1816-1916}, Kottayam, 1920, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{10} Julius Richter, \textit{History of Missions in India}, London, 1908, p. 41.
After his visit to the Maharaja, St. Francis Xavier began at once his apostolic work\textsuperscript{11}. He concentrated his activity in South Travancore, where the people spoke Tamil, a language which at that time he knew perfectly well. He limited his Missionary work to the sea coast between Cape Comorin and Quilon, realizing that only through education the people could be converted\textsuperscript{12}.

He established elementary schools wherever he landed. He did not wait for the erection of costly chapels. Whenever he made converts, he erected first a cross and then a booth of branches and palm leaves which were in time replaced by a church built of stone and cement. He founded many congregations and built a number of churches. Before the end of 1545 A.D., he founded forty five churches in Travancore. Kottar was his principal residence. It was during his stay at Kottar that, he helped Unni Travancore Varma, the king of Venad in warding off the invasion of the Vadagars. Vadagars, meaning the Northerners, were the names given by the Southern people to the army of Vijayanagar. This historic incident brought St. Xavier and the Venad king closer, as a result of which he was permitted to carry on his Missionary work without hindrance together with the assignment of land to build a Church\textsuperscript{13}.

On his earlier visits to Parava villages on the West Coast, Xavier had been repeatedly requested by the Mukkuva (fisher) people of Manakudy near the Cape to baptize them and their kin in the coastal villages of Travancore. After obtaining personal assurance from Dyarts de Gama, the Captain of Quilon that he would use all necessary means to prevent these people from relapsing into Hinduism, Xavier set about baptizing them in November 1545 starting from Poovar. It was the first mass conversion undertaken by Xavier in person and he was overjoyed at walking southward from village to village and pouring the sacramental water over 10000

\textsuperscript{11} Venancius, \textit{Thiruthalam Kottar} (Tamil), Banagalore, 1988, p. 1.


\textsuperscript{13} C.P. Antony, \textit{The History of Latin Catholics in Travancore}, Ernakulam, 1992, p. 43.
Mukkuvas\textsuperscript{14}. Economically impoverished and politically oppressed by the officials, these people had found formerly solace in the worship of Bhadrakali to whom they dedicated small huts as temples containing her idol and portraits of the sacred cobra. Some of them probably a large number of people at Thenkagapattam had become Muslims before Xavier came to the scene\textsuperscript{15}.

He devoted himself to the conversion of the coastal inhabitants. For three years, he engaged himself in practising and baptizing. He founded chapels and opened schools for the new converts. When he found that the priests and the Christians were increasing in number, he directed his workers to organizational work. In the places where he evangelized, he provided residential priests. The Paravas were proud enough to call themselves, “The children of St. Francis Xavier”. In fact, St. Xavier is rightly considered as the Apostle of India. Whenever he passed through, he sought to reform the life of the Christians and to gain more people to the Christian fold\textsuperscript{16}.

3.1.2. Devasahayam Pillai- First Christian Martyr in South Travancore

Among those who sacrificed their lives for the sake of their faith, the most prominent is Devasahayam Pillai. His original name was Neelakandan Pillai, born in 1712 to a noble family of the ruling Nair community at Nattalam near Marthandam in Kanyakumari. He received education in philosophy, history and languages. Early in his life, he was a devout Hindu, worshipping the deity Badrakali, but turned a skeptic when misfortunes overtook his family one after another. In this situation, he came under the influence of De Lannoy, a Dutch general who served as Commander in Chief of the Travancore forces\textsuperscript{17}. At his suggestion, Neelakandan Pillai met Father John Baptist Boutttari, priest at Vadakankulam and listened to his discourses. Thereupon he disclosed. “I have come to receive the sacraments not by force, but by

\textsuperscript{15} Directory of the Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, 1982, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
my own force, will and desire. I shall even give up my life to maintain the truth which
I received the light and of which I am convinced”. Accordingly, he received more of
instructions and was baptized with the name Devasahayam, meaning god’s help18.

He won over some of his companies for his new religion and attacked the
kings ministers as Brahmins and often discussed with them showing them clear that
their religion was nothing else fiction quite repugnant to reason19. This zeal stirred up
against him the hatred of Brahmins. One of them, a close associate of the king, tried
even artifice and violence to compel Devasahayam Pillai to give up the Christian
faith. But perceiving that he was only wasting his time,20 he gave Devasahayam Pillai
to understand that he intended doing everything in his power either to make him
abandon the faith or to make him pay with his head. To such threats he said, “tell me
either that you will cut off my head or that I shall gird my lions with your thread”.
This wounded the sentiments of the Brahmin who determined to see the death of
Devasahayam Pillai21.

After a few days, some Brahmins went to the Maharaja with their heads veiled
and told Maharaja that in the kingdom no one could disobey his commands nor insult
their gods. But one Neelakandan, an officer of His highness government, had
embraced the Christian religion and was insulting their gods, Brahmins and his royal
throne itself. He publically announced that he would take their sacred threads and use
them as his waist tread, that all Christian would join together and destroy the Sri
Padmanabhaswamy temple, dethrone the Maharaja and banish him from the kingdom.
They again said, “if your highness do not take immediate action against this fellow,
we shall be forced to close down all the temple and leave this country. Neelakandan
and his Christians will put an end to our Vedas and Puranas, convert the Sri

19 A. Mingana, The Early Spread of Christianity in India, Manchester, 1926, p. 16.
21 P. Dehmen, Devasahayam Pillai’s Conversion and Martyrdom, Trivandrum, 1980, p. 3.
Padmanabhaswamy temple into a church and spread their new religion throughout the country.”

In the name of Sri Padmanabha, they affirmed that what they had said was true. The Maharaja who had great respect and veneration for Brahmins pondered over the complaints and commanded that Devasahayam Pillai be produced before him. Thereupon Devasahayam Pillai sent a messenger to Captain De Lannoy who was living at Udayagiri. De Lannoy at once went to Padmanabhapuram and asked the soldiers to take Devasahayam Pillai to Fr. Barreires, who was residing near Padmanabhapuram. Fr. Barreires heard Devasahayam Pillai’s confession, administered the sacrament and counselled his hardships.

The soldiers removed the uniform and emblems of his high office and took Devasahayam to the palace. On the way, relatives, friends and fellow officers implored him to give up the Christian religion. Their entreaties did not move him. To them, Devasahayam Pillai replied, “If I have to lay down my life for the true faith, I can receive eternal honour and glory from the king of heaven.” The officers who heard this, reported to the Maharaja that however they tried to advise Davasahayam Pillai, he would not listen and that like a mad man he was abusing them. To deepen the hatred already formed, the minister Ramayyan Dalava told the Raja about the obstinancy and fiery zeal of Devasahayam for his new religion.

Greatly enraged, the Raja commanded that Devasahayam should be fettered and sent to the prison. It was done so. Not satisfied with this, the Raja again ordered the next morning that Erikala Malai, a garland of the shrub calatropis gigantea with which condemned murderers were generally decked as they were led to the gallows, must be put around his neck and that he should be taken to remote jungle and be beheaded there. The order was cancelled, but a new variety of punishments and

24 V. Lawrence, *op. cit*, p. 85.
prolonged tortures calculated to cause a lingering death were devised and suggested. Devasahayam bore all the persecutions\textsuperscript{26}.

The Raja’s men mounted him on a buffalo and led him from village to village beat him with banyan canes, whipped, stuffed chilli powder into his mouth, nostrils and eyes, made him stand in the burning sun and when he was panting for water they made him drink the dirty water in which coconut skins were soaked. When the news reached the palace that Davasahayam Pillai patiently endured all persecutions and preferred to suffer death rather than renounce his faith royal command was issued to take him to Kattadimalai and there to be shot down\textsuperscript{27}. Eight days before this, Davasahayam called his wife and exhorted her to abide steadfastly in the faith for which he was going to suffer martyrdom. Unable to utter a word, sighed and sobbed and she wept in great anguish\textsuperscript{28}. Devasahayam lingered in prison for about eighteen months. During this time, his relatives and friends persuaded him to abandon his new faith but amidst all these persecutions, he stood firm and undaunted. When Devasahayam Pillai was in prison, De Lannoy used to send him messengers secretly to enquire about him. The Raja’s servants knowing about this reported it to him. The Raja was very much upset by this news and sent a trenchant note to De Lannoy asking him to confine his attention to matters of state and the army and not to meddle with other affairs. There upon, he ordered that Devasahayam be executed at Kulamakad, 35 miles away from Trivandrum along the south main road. So that all the Christians in the state be given a warning\textsuperscript{29}.

According to the Maharaja’s order, the executioner and his men entered the prison, removed the fetters from his feet, tied his hands behind his body and brought him outside the prison. A garland made of calatropis gigantean was put round his

\textsuperscript{26} J.R. Narchison, \textit{Called to Serve, A Profile of the Diocese of Kottar}, Nagercoil, 1985, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{27} Arattukulam, \textit{op. cit}, p. 154.
\textsuperscript{28} C.M. Agur, \textit{Church History of Travancore}, Madras, 1904, p. 187.
\textsuperscript{29} Paul Thenayan, \textit{The Missionary Consciousness of St. Thomas Christians, Cochin}, 1982, p.117.
neck. Amidst the raucous shouts and insults of the populace, he was taken along the streets on his way to Kulamakad. On seeing him, some people shouted in merriment and laughed at him in derision. Others seeing his pitiable state had compassion on him and wept. Devasahayam Pillai walked on without showing the least signs of fatigue. On the way, the soldiers struck him, molested him in many ways and took him to the place of execution\(^\text{30}\). When he was about to be beheaded, a messenger from the Maharaja came running and informed the soldiers of the royal command that Devasahayam Pillai be not executed for the time being but that he be kept in prison. So the soldiers took him back to prison\(^\text{31}\).

Through all these sufferings, Devasahayam Pillai never murmured any complaint but suffered everything in silent misery. After some days, he was incarcerated at Thiruvithamcodu. Christians and Hindus from various places visited him and listened to the discourses. The devices of the authorities to make him renounce his faith being of no avail, they grew more spiteful and revengeful. On many occasions, the Brahmins tried to make him smear his forehead with ashes\(^\text{32}\). They tried to induce him to recite the mantrams of the Hindu religion. Devasahayam Pillai refused to comply with their demands and stood steadfast in his conviction.

A few days passed by as Pillai's physical tortures were made more severe, his conviction in religion increased. People began to wonder at this. When they saw that the chilli powder, instead of aggravating the condition of the wounds, cured them, they considered it a miracle. Finally they decided to entrust him to the executioner. After scourging him in public, they made arrangements to send him on buffalo back to Peruvilai, the place chosen for execution\(^\text{33}\). His body was bleeding having been beaten up with thorny cane sticks. They applied chilli paste on his wounds, took to a  

forest in Puliyoorkurichi and in the midday seated him on a rock. He felt extremely thirsty and asked for water. They gave him dirty water in a broken earthen pot, with gratitude to quench his thirst he asked for more, but it was refused. Devasahayam Pillai knelt down on the rock and prayed. The executioners took Devasahayam Pillai through Brahmapuram, Mankara and Appattuvila and Peruvila, where he was tied to a neem tree near a stable. Here without proper food and drink, he spent seven more months exposed to the sun and rain. Seeing that through the prayers of Devasahayam Pillai many people recovered from their ailment, the executioner requested Devasahayam Pillai pray for him to have a son. Accordingly, prayer was rendered and it was reported that his wife conceived. From that day onwards the executioner had great regard for the Martyr.

One night, as Pillai was sleeping, he had a vision of the Infant Jesus with the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. Suddenly he woke up and sent a word to the parish priest of Vadakankulam about this vision. The priest wrote to him that the Vadakamkulam church was dedicated to the Holy Family for which he was undergoing the tribulations. Hearing of this news, the Hindus of the neighbouring places began to flock in large numbers to have a darshan of this saintly person. The Brahmins, seeing that the tortures to which they subjected Devasahayam Pillai and the persecution of the Christians did not produce the anticipated results, approached the Maharaja and told him that Devasahayam Pillai was converting many Hindus to Christianity. He was still insulting Brahmins and their gods. The Maharaja who was very much devoted to Brahmins determined to do away with him and asked the Brahmins to take him to another place and put him to death. A sanyasin who was residing at the palace, hearing this news advised the Maharaja that an innocent man

must not be put to death because he had embraced Christianity. For the time being the Maharaja accepted this advice\textsuperscript{36}.

For three long years, Pillai bore these hardships and sufferings. Yet, he did not show any signs of weakness either in body or in mind. Without proper food, drink or ablutions, he had undergone continued hardships. Yet his countenance was serene and radiant. His speech was fluent and eloquent and his faith was steady with unwavering. He spent many days in that executioner’s stable at Peruvilai. There he enjoyed some sort of liberty, being famous all over the place for his miracles and wise counsels\textsuperscript{37}. They reported the matter to the Maharaja who ordered that Devasahayam Pillai be taken to Aruvamozhi handcuffed and fettered, where he be starved and kept in prison. He being guarded by soldiers day and night that no one be allowed to go near him. The old guards were changed and a new squad of soldiers sent. They took him to Aruvamozhi fifty miles from Trivandrum and tied him to a Portia tree with iron chains. He was not able to sit or lie down. There was no protection against nature. He was not given anything to eat or drink\textsuperscript{38}.

Aruvamozhi was a customs clearing centre between Travancore and the Tamil districts. It was a market place frequented by thousands and a resting place for travellers going and coming from Vadakandulam, Tinnevelly, Tuticorin, Manapad and surrounding places\textsuperscript{39}. Large number of people disregarding the instructions of the soldiers went near Devasahayam Pillai and conversed with him. As he endured the most heinous forms of tortures with calm resignation, the people looked upon him as a martyr. Crowds of people approached him with great veneration and respect. By his prayers, he performed miracles, the sick regained health, the irresolute of minds became steady. In course of time the soldiers guarding him became more sympathetic.

\textsuperscript{36} Catholic Directory of Travancore 1986, Ernakulam, 1986, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{37} D. Ferrori, Jesuits in Malabar, vol. II, Bangalore, 1939, pp. 544-556.
\textsuperscript{39} C.M. Agur, op. cit., pp. 283-84.
and ceased obstructing the people from seeing him. The Brahmins again approached the royal presence and spoke to the Maharaja, Neelakandan was exercising some magic influence on the people, everyone who listened to him, act according to his words. He was uttering imprecations against them and the royal family. He was muttering some prayers and the sick were healed. Large numbers of Hindus were becoming Christians and were ridiculing them. They had imprisoned him. They had insulted him by taking him around all the country side on a buffalo. They had beaten him with cane and applied chilli powder on his wounds, eyes, mouth and nostrils. They had kept him under the hot sun. They had starved him. After bearing all these, he was still strong. He must be in possession of some magic powers. Their highness twice sentenced him to death, but he escaped from punishment on both occasions. If he be not immediately put to death his religion will spread throughout this country and the power and prestige of Brahmins and of their religion would come to nought.

The Maharaja thereupon ordered, “Let Devasahayam Pillai be taken to Kattadimalai, a hill about six furlongs from the place where he was kept tied to the tree and be shot dead”. The palace priests were delighted and they went back to Aruvamozhi for preparations for Devasahayam Pillai’s execution. At the time Devasahayam Pillai’s wife was going about from place to place in search of him. Hearing that he had been taken to Aruvamozhi, she went there. She fell down at his feet, weeping. He lifted her up, wiped her tears and consoled her. “Bear these sorrows with fortitude and one day you will enjoy eternal bliss in heaven. However long may we live in this world, one day we shall die. Suffering in the royal highway to salvation. Do not remain in Travancore after my death. Some of our relations and

40 Mingana, The Early Spread of Christianity in India, Manchester, 1926, p.86.
41 M. Mariya Ligoris, Vadavayin Varalaru. Vadavaimatha Thevalayam (Tamil souvenir), Nagercoil, 1972, p. 16.
43 Dahmen, op. cit., p. 18.
friends may harass you, so go to Vadakankulam and spend the rest of your life there. Do not fear, the merciful God will help you. One day we shall meet in heaven\textsuperscript{44}.

The Brahmin officer had already dispatched some soldiers to Kattadimalai with the needed instructions. As the saintly martyr came out of his prison, the soldiers hit him. Because his hands and feet were bound, he could walk only slowly. As he could not walk quickly with fetters and meacles, the soldiers passed a stick across them and carried him to Kattadimalai, the place of execution\textsuperscript{45}. On the arrival of the appointed spot, the victim stood up and addressed them with their permission. He knelt down and prayed. After the prayer was over, the soldiers made him to stand on a high rock of Kattadimalai and from the foot of the hill they fired at him three shots. He fell down crying “Jesus save me”. Seeing that he still had life, the soldiers loaded two rifles and again fired at him aiming at his chest. Devasahayam Pillai received five wounds and became a martyr\textsuperscript{46}.

\textbf{3.1.3. Protestant Christianity in Travancore}

The Southern part of India, from Palayamkottai and Manappaar down to Cape Comorin, had been formerly visited by native catechists and priests from Tranquebar, the home of Protestant Mission in India. The first European Missionary who visited these areas was a Danish by name Schwarts who had settled down in Tanjore, and who was ably assisted by a native priest named Satyanadhan\textsuperscript{47}. The native priests and catechists had often written to Tranquebar describing the increasing readiness with which the Gospel was received and the great effects which might be expected if a Missionary would go there and settle for a time amongst the country people. Gericke, the successor of Schwartz, however, at an old age devoted his life to preaching the Gospel to the poor and backward people in the Southern most part of India.

\textsuperscript{45} C.P. Antony, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{46} L.W. Brown, \textit{The Indian Christians of St. Thomas}, Cambridge, 1956, p.112.
The history of Protestant Missionary efforts in Thirunelvli goes back to the era of the poligar wars. In 1778, the Danish Missionary Schwartz visited Palayamkottai and baptized a Hindu woman who did meritorious services for the advancement of Christianity. He mentioned the existence of a few Christians in Thirunelvli. In 1790, he ordained Satyanadhan, one of his catechists, and put him in charge of the Thirunelvli Mission. He observed something peculiar in the inhabitants of Thirunelvli which encouraged him to cherish hopes of their conversion.

Very soon a strong movement started among the Nadars of the south, especially in Thirunelvli. The first Protestant convert from this class was a man by name David of Kalankudiyruppu. He propagated Christianity among his community with renewed zeal and enthusiasm and several thousands were converted to Christianity. Since 1791, German Missionaries of the Society for promoting Christian knowledge had been in charge of the district; The two great German Missionaries, Jaenicke from 1792 till his death in 1800, and Gericke from 1800-1804. Before 1800, Mudalur had become the first Christian settlement in Thirunelvli. Between 1800 and 1803, there was a rush into the fold of Christianity. The magnetic Christian waves sent out from Thirunelvli and the influence the Christian Nadars gained there, reached and influenced the south Travancore people who were looking for an opportunity to embrace the new faith.

The introduction of Protestant Christianity in Travancore had some interesting peculiarities, when compared with that of the Syrian and Roman Catholic faiths. The most important aspect is that Protestantism was first zealously propagated in Travancore by a native by name Maharasan of Mylady, who belonged to a privileged caste. This great enquirer of truth, who was a worshipper of Elankamanyan first,

came to know about the great temple at Cidambaram where, he believed, he could
attain Sayujya, which according to the Saivas, is the fourth or the highest degree of
bliss-union with God. At about 1799, he visited the Cidambaram temple in Tanjore,
where lived his cousin and brother-in-law, who were Christians\textsuperscript{52}.

Maharasan came to Tanjore, the Tanjore Mission was under the control of a
Danish Missionary by name Rev. Fr. John Caspar Kohlhoff. Accompanied by his
relatives, Maharasan came to the Tanjore church. He was struck by the personality
and Christian speech of the Missionary Rev. Kohlhoff and after studying Christian
principles, he became a Christian. Rev. Kohlhoff baptized him and changed his name
into Vedamanikkam, ‘the Gem of the Bible’. While at Tanjore, he decided to visit the
Tranquebar Mission. The Christian Missionaries in Tranquebar headed by Dr. John
were very much interested in the new convert\textsuperscript{53}. After residing at both these places for
about six months, he desired to return to his native place, Mylady. But the
Missionaries had their misgivings and fears. They feared that Maharasan would be
exposed to a great danger and persecution. They advised him to live in Tanjore; but
he refused. He requested them to send one of their native teachers to help him in
preaching the gospel to his countrymen. The request was not granted because of the
fears about Travancore. The people in these parts were afraid, they replied, “of the
very name of your country: Malayalam is believed by them to be full of demons and
heathenism of every form. Under such circumstances it is impossible for you or for us
to expect our people to be willing to go so far away from their houses, and beyond the
Ghauts; it is our firm hope that Tranvancore will yet be brought under the
Government of the East India company, when the Gospel will have free access to that
distant land. Wait therefore and be with us. Be not hasty\textsuperscript{54}”. Vedamanikkam
continuously insisted on his going home, and was reluctantly allowed by Rev.
Kohlhoff. From the very next day after his return home, he began to preach the

\textsuperscript{52} The Indian Evangelical Review, Vol. XXV, Trivandrum, p.439.
\textsuperscript{53} J.N. Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, New York, 1906, p.63.
\textsuperscript{54} R.N. Yesudhasan, The People’s Revolt, Trivandrum, 1973, p.52.
Gospel of Christ. He became the first native preacher of Protestant Christianity in Travancore.

The teachings of Vedamanikkam gained ground, persecution began and strong attempts were made to arrest its progress. He was expelled from his community. The opposition was so strong that he seriously thought of leaving his native place with his family to Tanjore, as he was once advised by Rev. Kohlhoff to do so. By this time, membership of the Protestant Christian Community had increased to about 150 in number. In February 1805, he committed the little group of Christians at Mylady to the care of Gnanamutthu, the head man of the family, and set out for Tanjore with the idea of obtaining the help of a catechist and to advocate their interference for the amelioration of the sufferings of the poor Christians.

Rev. Kohlhoff advised Vedamanikkam to proceed to Tranquebar and meet Mr. Ringeltaube, a Missionary of the London Missionary Society, who had just arrived in India with the motive of propagating Christianity. He told Vedamanikkam that Ringeltaube was studying Tamil in Tranquebar and requested him to invite him to labour in Travancore, a country which was neglected by all previous Missionaries. Vedamanikkam met Ringeltaube at Tranquebar and told him that in South Travancore there was a wide field for his labours. Ringeltaube promised to labour in Travancore after acquiring some knowledge of the Tamil language. Believing the words of Ringeltaube, Vedamanikkam returned home happily with a catechist by name Yesudiyan to preach in Mylady.

57 Letter from Kohlhoff to SPCK dated 8 March 1805.
The mass conversions that took place among the Nadars of Thirunelvli had its immediate effects, and the members of the community in Travancore followed the policy of their brothers. The Hindus took it as a great revolt against their established customs and practices. They persecuted the converts in various ways. Rev. Kohlhoff gave the following information about the Christians of Travancore and the sufferings of the converts connected with the Thirunelvli Mission. "Some inhabitants in the country of the Raja of Travancore, on becoming acquainted with the truths of Christianity in a visit which they paid to one Tranquebar for many years requested me to send a catechist to instruct them and their relations, and I have had the pleasure to learn from the country priest that their request had been complied instructed them to the doctrines of Christianity, which they heard and learned with gladness, but that in consequence of a disturbance which had taken place in that country, the catechist was obliged to retire and that those good people solicitous for the safety of the Catechist had sent some of their number to bring authors of the disturbances have been subdued and peace and tranquility resorted to the country, the catechist will be able to pay those people another visit."  

Besides the request of Vedamanikkam, several factors influenced Ringeltaube to labour in Travancore. Some influential government servants, having heard of the miserable state of affairs in Travancore and of the sufferings of the low class people, thought that they would somehow ameliorate their conditions by sending out Missionaries, who should labour both for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the country. Mr. Grantian, a gentleman, who lived in Manappar at this time, wrote a letter to a Missionary friend of his at Tranquebar dated 8 June 1805, which was communicated to him. He concluded his letter with the following appeal: “I doubt not that these facts have been reported to the Rev. Mr. Kohlhoff by the country priest 

60 Ringeltaube’s Journal, Palayamkotta, 12 September 1806, pp.81-82.
61 Ringeltaube’s Journal, Tranquebar, 4 October, 1805, p.66.
63 W.J. Richard, Twenty Years CMS in Travancore and Cochin, Kottayam, 1879, p.84.
and if I mention them to you, it is with a view to show in what a forlorn state the poor Christians here about are and how desirable a thing it would be if Rev. Ringeltaube were to come hither as soon as possible. The tranquility would be restored and future molestations prevented. I request you to communicate this letter to him with my compliments. This letter left a deep impression on his mind, especially when he received a full account of the plight of the Christians. Ringeltaube writes: “they were frequently driven from their homes, put in the stocks, and exposed for a fortnight together to the heat of the raging sun; and the chilling dew of night, all because there is no European Missionary to bring their complaints to the ear of the government, who, I am happy to add, have never been deficient in their duty of procuring redress, where the Christians have had to complain of real injuries.” He felt a deep desire to rush for the assistance of the poor people groaning under the yoke of casteism and domination of the privileged classes.

As a prelude to his works in south Travancore, he assumed charge of the society for promoting Christian knowledge in Thirunelvli. While working in Thirunelvli his attention was directed to the Nadas of South Travancore. He believed that he could convert thousands of people to Christianity from this oppressed class. He was quite aware of the great risk involved in his Mission to Travancore. He wrote to a friend of his before his arrival in Travancore: “I am going to Travancore which is full of devils. I do not know what will befall me there. Perhaps I may be killed there for preaching the Gospel.”

On the 25 of April 1806, Ringeltaube entered Travancore through Aralvaimozhi Pass, his companions trembling at every step as they entered the land, for they were now on the ground altogether in the power of the Brahmins, the sworn enemies of the Christians. A little occurrence soon convinced them that they were not

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in British territory. Ringeltaube lay down to rest in an inn meant for Brahmins only, when the magistrate immediately sent word to him to leave the place as his presence would invoke the wrath of their god\textsuperscript{67}.

He reluctantly obeyed and proceeded towards a nearby village, Mylady, from where two men visited Tranquebar to request him to labour in Travancore, representing that 200 Hindus were desirous of embracing the Christian religion. He stayed two days with them in their houses. They begged for a native teacher and told him that they could not build a church as all the country had been given by the Raja of Travancore to the Brahmins. He spent there his first Sunday very uncomfortably in an Indian hut, in the midst of a noisy gaping crowd, which filled his house\textsuperscript{68}. His disappointment contributed to his unpleasant feelings, for although he had expected hundreds, eager to listen to the Gospel, he had difficulty in persuading a few families to attend for an hour. On Monday, he committed his infant flock to the charge of a catechist of the neighbouring congregation, who arrived to speak with him. The catechist was to come once a week to look after the Christians. Reingltaube sent him to the local magistrate with a request not to persecute the Christians at Mylady and the official gave him a very favourable answer\textsuperscript{69}.

The people of South Travancore belonging to unprivileged classes were looking for a leader to represent their grievances to the government. When Ringeltasbe came to work among them, they found in him their leader. The yoke of servitude had been put on them by the privileged classes and they believed that they could break the yoke by embracing Christianity. When they came to know about the amelioration of the sufferings of the their brothers and sisters in Tinnevelly through the labours of the Missionaries, their desire to join the Christian fold increased to

\textsuperscript{67} Susan Billington Hooper, \textit{In the Shadow of the Mahatma – Bishop V.S. Azariah and the Travels of Christianity in British India}, New York, 2000, p.83.


persecute the Christians of Mylady, the people thought of escaping from social degradation and oppression by accepting the religion of the Missionary, who was powerful in their eyes\textsuperscript{70}.

From Mylady, Ringeltaube started his journey to Cochin on 8 May 1806 to meet Col. Macaulay, on whose invitation he came to work in Travancore. Macaulay requested Ringeltaube to remain in Cochin and start a Mission there. But Ringeltaube requested permission to erect a Protestant church at Mylady.

3.1.3.1. Vellu Thampi's Opposition to Christianity

Ringeltaube set out for Cochin to meet Col Maccaulay for getting his help to obtain sanction from the Raja to erect a Church at Mylady\textsuperscript{71}. Maccaulay received him with open arms and promised to exert his influence to get sanction from the Raja for building a Protestant Church at Mylady\textsuperscript{72}. He also expressed his willingness to bear the cost of the Church proposed to be built. On his return journey, he met the Dewan, Velu Thampi at Quilon and solicited government sanction for the project. But the Dewan told him frankly that it could not be sanctioned as it militated against established customs. Ringeltaube did not lose hope because he was confident of the resident's influence at the court of the Raja\textsuperscript{73}.

Caste Hindu's opposition to the erection of a Church at Mylady was so great that even Maccaulay's intercession proved of no avail. Dr. Claudius Buchanan was deputed by the government of India to visit the ancient Syrian Churches of Travancore and report on their condition, their tenets and faith and recommend measures for their improvement. He had also to report upon the general state of

\textsuperscript{70} John Abbes, \textit{Twenty Two Years Missionary Experiences in Travancore}, London, 1870, p.197.
\textsuperscript{71} Ringeltaube’s Journal, Palayamkottai, 19 June 1806, p.7.
\textsuperscript{72} Letter from Dr. Claudius Buchanan to the King of Travancore, Trivandrum, No. 29, Dated 17 October 1806, pp. 70-71.
\textsuperscript{73} C.M. Agur, \textit{Church History of Travancore}, Madras, 1904, p. 502.
Christianity in this coast and thus came into contact with the Protestant Christians of Mylady\textsuperscript{74}. They requested him to obtain the long awaited consent of the Raja to build a Church\textsuperscript{75}. Buchanan requested the Raja to grant them permission and allot the ground to erect the same. The request was not granted. Ringeltaube, finding his efforts proved futile, finally left Travancore for Palayamkotta to visit the Churches there and to propagate the Gospel\textsuperscript{76}.

Col. Maccaulay felt that he was insulted by the Dewan and the Raja by withholding permission for the erection of the proposed Church at Mylady. Moreover, the Dewan also had become callously indifferent to the instructions given by the resident after the conclusion of the treaty of 1805. This to the Resident presented a very dismal prospect and the end of everything that he wanted to achieve through the Dewan. The Resident Col. Maccaulay wrote to the Travancore government against the Dewan that, a Dewan of this country who should fancy himself managing a separate interest seems from that instant to have placed himself in a state hostility to both parties, to the Raja and to the British government\textsuperscript{77}.

To Vellu Tampi, the Christians were an anathema because their issue had brought upon him the displeasure of the Resident. The hapless and bankrupt condition to which Mattu Tarakan was reduced served as a standing witness to Tampi’s retributive measures. Tarakan complained of the matter to Macaulay and made him believe that the insults showered on him were due to his being a Christian. Macaulay, the ardent supporter of Christians, decided to prevent the injustice. In the exchanges that were made between the Resident and the Dewan, the latter made it clear that the

\textsuperscript{74} Letter from Dr. Claudius Buchanan to the King of Travancore, No.29, Trivandrum, dated 27 October 1806, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76} E. Godfery Philips, \textit{The Ancient Church and Modern India}, London, 1920, p.23.

\textsuperscript{77} Hentry Rice, \textit{Native Life in South India}, London, 1895, p.57.
former had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of the state. The Resident thereupon decided to crush the Dewan\textsuperscript{78}.

Ringeltaube came back to Mylady on 30 February 1807 and baptized forty persons. He made the converts promise that they would perform the traditional government services and obey the king and the magistrates as before. Ringeltaube asked Vedamanikam to build a small prayer home or chapel near his house till the sanction for the permanent church was given. Vedamanikam, raising funds from the new converts, constructed a small chapel there to conduct the Holy Communion\textsuperscript{79}.

In August 1807, Ringeltaube severed his connection with the society for promoting Christian knowledge and settled in Travancore with a view to devoting his sole attention to the expansion of the Mission at Mylady. Though he put up his residence temporarily at Udayagiri, he moved to Mylady when a permanent Church was built there. Ringeltaube continued to work in the southern division of Travancore, paying occasional visits to Palayamkotta and other places in the Tinnevelly area till his final departure from India in 1816\textsuperscript{80}.

3.1.3.2. Vellu Thambi’s Rebellion of 1809

The subsidy to the British government had been raised to eight lakhs of rupees by the treaty of 1805 and it was a strain on the resources of the state. When the subsidy fell due, Col. Maccaulay ordered its immediate payment after obtaining the sanction of the governor in council\textsuperscript{81}. It was of no avail. Thus the nonpayment of the subsidy formed a convenient pretext for the Resident to wreak his vengeance on the intractable Dewan. To prevent the further spread of Christianity and to subvert the


\textsuperscript{79} James Hough, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 281.

\textsuperscript{80} Ringeltaube’s Journal, \textit{op. cit}, p. 166.

\textsuperscript{81} Letter from G. Buchanan Chief Secretary to Government to Col. Maccaulay, Madras, 25 February 1807.
British authority, Velu Tampi in his turn decided to murder the Resident whom he hated like a scourge. This resulted in the Travancore rebellion of 1809. Velu Tampi had addressed secret letters to the kings and chieftains of the neighbouring kingdoms to stir up a general commotion in the land in the name of religion. A letter of him addressed to the Zamorine of Calicut in January 1809 smacked of his fear about the extension of Christian faith in Travancore. He apprehended that the Hindus and Mussalmans would be compelled to acknowledge and observe the faith of Christians and to pay them allegiance. This letter was handed over to the collector of Malabar by the Zamorin minister and passed it on to the governor of Madras.\(^2\)

Velu Tampi nevertheless managed to excite some ferment among the people by appealing to their sense of patriotism, liberty, religion, and loyalty to the throne. A proclamation issued by him on 16 January 1809 showed his intense hatred towards the Christians. He issued order, “The English will get unprivileged caste people to inflict heavy punishments for slight faults put up crosses and Christian flags in pagodas, compel intermarriages with Brahmin women with out reference to caste or creed and practice all the unjust and unlawful things that characterise Kaliyuga”. When the situation became tense the Dewan perpetrated a series of atrocities on the Christians. On C.M. Agur’s estimate, nine priests and upwards of 3000 Christians were maimed, tortured, butchered and thrown into the backwaters. The poor Christians of Mylady in the south were unhurt as they had fled to the mountains to hide themselves. The rebellion was however crushed and the British became paramount in Travancore. Internal peace was established. This very much aided the rapid progress of Christianity.\(^4\)


\(^3\) Shangoony Menon, *History of Travancore*, Delhi, 1878, pp. 312-314.

3.2. Contributions of Christian Missionaries

The Christian Missionaries had to be involved in the life of the society in various ways and their involvement created much disruption in the society, but a large number of suppressed people found a possibility to break the chains which had bound them for centuries. The work of the Missionaries-religion, educational and social however was one of the factors which created a new awareness among the people to struggle for their betterment. There struggle created tensions within the society because the depressed sections began to question many of the established customs. These were the beginnings of changes in society.

3.2.1. The Educational Activities of the Christian Missionaries

To the Missionaries of the LMS goes the credit of having taken the first tangible step toward the introduction and diffusion of English education in Travancore. The Catholic Missionaries, who were the first among the Christian Missionaries who came to the land, were in the beginning indifferent to the educational needs of the people. But the Protestant Missionaries, who started their work in Travancore in the beginning of the nineteenth century, took a very keen interest in the introduction and spread of English education. The ancient method of instruction was displaced by the English method of instruction introduced by the Missionaries. The ancient educational institutions of Travancore were mainly of three kinds, viz., the ezhattupallies or pial schools, kalaries or military schools, and the vedic or sanskrit schools.

William Tobais Ringeltaube, the first Protestant Missionary in Travancore, was responsible for the introduction of English education in Travancore. All his early catechists, who were employed to preach the gospel, were also masters. He was

86 Nagam Aiya, op. cit., pp. 445-446.
interested in establishing a seminary to train youths to preach the Gospel and act as teachers. He believed that this measure, if usefully employed, would help to establish Christianity in Travancore almost independently, and make it flourish even in the absence of European Missionaries. To train youths and promote the religion, Ringeltaube proposed the following plan to the Society.  

From 1806 to 1816 Ringeltaube devoted his whole energy to evangelistic work, and wherever he went, he carried with him Mission of English education. With his limited funds, he succeeded in establishing six schools in Travancore for the education of Christians and Non–Christians. Instruction was given in three Rupees.  

Ringeltaube wanted to establish a network of schools in Travancore and for that he expected all help from the Resident, Col. Munro, who evinced great interest in his plans. Col. Munro was responsible for the establishment of government vernacular schools in central and North Travancore. A college for the Syrians was started at Kottayam through his patronage, and he made liberal grants for its growth. He desired to open more schools to impart education to the children of poor families. But the financial problems prevented him from taking steps in that direction. With in a brief period of his Missionary endeavour, Ringeltaube laid the foundations of English education in Travancore.  

The most important name connected with the educational work in Travancore is that of Charles Mead. He was a very enthusiastic worker who threw himself heart and soul into the cause of education till his death in 1873. He believed that the hope of the Mission was in the rising generation, whose prejudices had not hardened in to
habits. To him, the only weapon available to mould the young men was the right type of education to tailor self-respecting and adventurous individuals\textsuperscript{92}.

The Missionaries were fully convinced of the deplorable state of education in Travancore. Only very few were taught even the rudiments of knowledge. The remedy the Missionaries proposed for such a deep rooted Mylady was the establishment of good schools in all the principal towns and villages of Travancore. They found that people in general, though ignorant, were very attentive and teachable, a few were intelligent and inquisitive. To attain their objective, schools were established in most of the places where congregations were formed\textsuperscript{93}.

Although there was opposition to education at first, gradually it vanished and a large number of students flocked in to the institutions. But lack of funds often stifled their efforts to open more schools to meet the demands of the people\textsuperscript{94}. The scheme of education imparted from the Missionary schools was of an elementary standard. The medium of instruction was in the vernacular. Apart from reading, writing, simple arithmetic, Tamil grammar, geography, history and English, scripture lessons with special reference to duty toward and one another were given\textsuperscript{95}.

A few of the orthodox Non-Christians were reluctant to send their children to the Missionary schools where Christian and backward class students studied. With a view to educating the students belonging to such families, a school room was built in the Bazaar of Nagercoil, and named it the Bazaar school. It was a very successful experiment. The school was well-attended and the students were from Hindu and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{92} Letter from Ringeltaube to Col. Monro, Ouilon, 30 March 1813, pp. 1876-1877.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Letter from Ringeltaube to William Robinson, Mailadi, 4 January 1813, p. 114.
\item \textsuperscript{95} Ibid
\end{itemize}
Muhammadan families. Those who were willing to attend the catechism and scripture lessons, besides the usual lessons were instructed accordingly.\footnote{James Hough, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 283.}

The Missionaries were very much interested in educating the Parayas, the Kuravas etc. These poor people were taught in the same schools where the caste Hindu students attended, and they evinced a great desire to learn. But the hostile attitude of their masters was a very serious obstacle to their regular attendance\footnote{Ullor. S. Parameswara Iyer, \textit{Colonel Munro}, Trivandrum, 1931, p. 41.}. In 1861, a charity school for the Pulayas was started to extend the blessings of education to the people belonging to that community in and around Trivandrum. Several students who studied in the school later filled useful positions in the Mission, in coffee estates or in domestic service. Separate schools were started to provide education for destitute children. Lack of funds, however, prevented the progress of the orphan schools. To educate the adults, who worked in the day time to support their families, evening schools were opened which in a large measure catered to the needs of the poor\footnote{John, \textit{Christian Heritage in Travancore}, Kochi, 1981, p. 18.}. Over and above all this, Anglo - Vernacular schools were started to train the bright boys, who had passed through the vernacular schools. They were given a working knowledge of English. Those who were successfully completed their studies in the Anglo-Vernacular schools were appointed as preachers and teachers after further training in the Nagercoil Seminary\footnote{Letter from Ringeltaube to Colonel Munro, Quilon, 30 March 1831, pp. 176-77.}.

\textbf{3.2.1.1. Educational Mission}

Christian Missionaries were the pioneers of English education in Travancore and schools were an integral part of their work. Ringeltaube, the first Protestant Missionary in Travancore, had school attached to all his congregations\footnote{Letter from Ringeltaube, Madras, 4 January 1813.}. In 1815,
there were 188 boys studying in his schools which all had Indian school masters\textsuperscript{101}. Thomas Norton, the first CMS Missionary, started a school in 1817 with 44 pupils. In 1819, he opened another school in the 'Great Bazaar'\textsuperscript{102}. In 1819, when the LMS had 10 congregations in Travancore, they had 12 schools and a plan for extending the number of school to thirty\textsuperscript{103}.

In the plan of Col. Munro, who had invited the CMS to Travancore, much importance was given to the educational work, for he believed that to the advancement of Protestant Christianity and stability to the British political power in India\textsuperscript{104}. In 1827, there were 7 schools and nearly 100 pupils\textsuperscript{105}. In the LMS area in 1830 there were 97 schools with 3100 pupils\textsuperscript{106}.

The Protestant Missionaries in Travancore continued the educational work with great zeal and enthusiasm. They successfully carried this work until the government gradually acknowledged its responsibility and directly controlled it\textsuperscript{107}. However, the transition was a painful experience for the Missionaries because they found many restrictions were imposed on this area of their work by the government\textsuperscript{108}.

In schools opened by the government, the Bible also was taught\textsuperscript{109}, which meant that lesson on Christianity also formed part of the syllabus. Schools were a definite means of Christian instruction until this was altered in British India in 1858.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{101} Statistics for the year 1815 given in C.M. Agur, \textit{Church History of Travancore}, Madras, 1903, p. 622.
  \item \textsuperscript{102} Annual Report of the LMS, Trivandrum, 1842, p. 64.
  \item \textsuperscript{103} M.A. Sheering, \textit{A History of Protestant Missions in India}, London, 1884, p. 302.
  \item \textsuperscript{104} Proceedings of the CMS 1816-17, p. 485.
  \item \textsuperscript{105} Sreedhara Menon, \textit{Social and Cultural History of Travancore}, Trivandrum, 1979, p. 207.
  \item \textsuperscript{106} Cheriyan, \textit{A History of Christianity in Travancore}, Kottayam, 1973, p.140.
  \item \textsuperscript{107} LMS Report, Trivandrum, 1835, p. 66.
  \item \textsuperscript{108} Ibid, p. 69.
  \item \textsuperscript{109} James Hough, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 117.
\end{itemize}
and in Travancore in 1894. Afterwards also for many more years, the Missionaries had the freedom to give lessons on Christianity ‘without compulsion’ in the Mission schools. In Travancore, in 1864 the government introduced a new grant in aid system. By the system, the government had the right of choosing text books which resulted in the exclusion of the Bible in grant in aid schools110.

The educational endeavors of the Missionaries exploded the myth that only the privileged Castes were destined to learn. It also laid strong foundations for the ‘cultural renaissance’ which had been taking place in the society111. The Mission schools provided in many places the depressed classes of people with the opportunity to educate their children and the Missionaries made special efforts to bring them to the schools. ‘The commercial value’ which the English education secured, helped to popularize it among all sections of people112. Those who had secured an English education could get better employment in the local government (if they belonged to the privileged castes) or in the British India or elsewhere113.

The Mission schools brought the children of different castes together for the first time114. When the government entered the field of education by opening schools in 1834 and Mission was limited to the children of privileged castes only and this pattern continued till the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Until the government opened its school to the unprivileged castes, Mission schools were the only institution

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110 Exclusion of the Bible from the Educational Systems of Government in India, the Perpetuation of the Neutral Policy. March 1861, p. 65.
112 LMS Report, 1824.
114 LMS Report, 1824.
for the unprivileged caste children to learn, though in fact in many places separate schools were opened for them\textsuperscript{115}.

3.2.1.2. Central School at Nagercoil

The most important achievement of Charles Mead in the field of education was the establishment of the Seminary or Central School at Nagercoil in 1818. It was the first institution to give regular English education in Travancore. The main object of the seminary was the communication of religious and useful knowledge. A subsidiary object was to teach the language and literature of the people\textsuperscript{116}. The languages taught were English, Malayalam, Tamil and Sanskrit. Instruction was in English except in theological and other informative lessons, which were taught in Tamil and Malayalam languages. Early teachers for the Seminary were brought from Tranquebar and Tanjore and gradually natives were trained up. The students who successfully completed their studies in the Seminary were appointed as school masters and local teachers. The Nagarcoil Seminary became the most important educational institution of the LMS in South India\textsuperscript{117}.

In the beginning, the education department of the Mission suffered much from lack of good teachers. To equip them with intellectual acumen and teaching technique, special classes were held in the Nagercoil Seminary. The Missionaries also gave training to the students belonging to the privileged classes in order to make them school teachers among their own people. When there was pressure from the people to open schools for all castes, the government in 1865 proposed to establish separate Anglo-Vernacular schools for the children of the Shannars and of such castes who do not mix freely with the Sudras\textsuperscript{118}. To the Missionaries, this was a destructive policy. They vigorously opposed the establishment of separate schools for unprivileged

\textsuperscript{117} Cheriyyan, \textit{A History of Christianity in Travancore}, Kottayam, 1973, p. 76.
\textsuperscript{118} R.N. Yesudasan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 130.
classes and requested the government to open cosmopolitan institutions. The benefits of the educational institutions to the Travancore Government Marked Baylis, “should be shared by youths of all classes of His Highness subjects without reference to creed, or caste and would assert that any system of education practically short of such principle, is defective. This proposal of the Missionaries did not receive sufficient and immediate attention from the government”\textsuperscript{119}.

The financial crises faced by the LMS in 1866 had its worst effects in the educational sphere. This depression prompted the Missionaries to suspend many schools. When the financial position became stringent, the Missionaries requested the Government of Travancore for a grant-in-aid to enable the Mission to push more vigorously the work of primary education. Accordingly, in 1875, the Travancore Government provided a sum of Rs.15,000 to be given as grants-in-aid to schools not under direct government supervision\textsuperscript{120}. The grants were intended to aid elementary education in the vernacular schools. All needy institutions received some assistance from the government. The aid primarily proved a great blessing to the Missionary educational institutions in particular\textsuperscript{121}.

The year 1894 was a turning point in the history of education in Travancore. The government accepted the responsibility for giving education to all classes of people in the state. A new grant-in-aid code was introduced in 1894 to change the educational pattern of the state and the whole educational system was brought under one authority. This measure of the government severely affected the educational work of the LMS Missionaries in Travancore. The government gained the right to interfere in the working of the schools by the introduction of the new code. The Missionaries found in the code the violation of their right to maintain schools and educate the

\textsuperscript{119} LMS Report, 1863, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{120} TDC Report, 1865, pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{121} Souvenir, Published for The Fifth Platinum Jubilee of Scott Christian College, Nagercoil, 1967, pp.1-4.
people. The Missionaries wrote to the Travancore Government; "We are quite willing to help in teaching the people of the country, and will gladly accept any grants you may give us, provided you will not interfere with our liberty to govern our schools as we wish and teach what books we please. We will satisfy as to the thoroughness of the secular instruction we impart, and you can test it by your own officers."

The government laid the following conditions in the new code, which the Missionaries were unwilling to accept. They were:

1. That the text books employed were those which might for the time being, be prescribed by Government.

2. That any change in the staff would be notified to and have the approval of, the inspecting officer.

That it shall not be required as a condition of any pupil being admitted into, or allowed to continue as a pupil in any aided school that he shall engage, or abstain from engaging, in any religious exercise or worship; or attend, or refrain from attending, any particular place or places of religious worship; or profess, or refrain from professing, belief in any particular religion or religious creed. Nor shall the manager or headmaster of any aided school insist upon the attendance at school of any pupil, whose parent or guardian may wish him to absent himself on account of any particular religious observance peculiar to the religious body or sect to which his parent or guardian may belong. The difficulty was overcome gradually. The Mission decided to entrust the management of the schools in the hands of the local people—the Missionaries serving as mere helpers. Educational councils consisting of the best men from the churches were formed in every district of the Mission for the better

122 LMS Report, 1894, p. 474.
123 Ibid.
management of the education work. The Missionary of the district became a member
of the council and the treasurer of the funds\textsuperscript{124}.

This council looked after the appointment and transfer of teachers and all matters
connected with education. A General Educational Council, whose duties were mostly
of an advisory nature, was also established by the TDC. The pastorates assumed the
responsibility of financing their own schools. Several of the large congregations
which were not formed into pastorates, but which maintained their own evangelist or
catechist, also undertook to pay their own school masters\textsuperscript{125}. In 1904 the government
of Travancore went a step further and declared that the Government was fully alive to
their responsibility in the matter of primary education. Their aim would be to see no
child in the state between the ages of five and ten, whatever his caste and station in
life was allowed to grow up without the benefits of education. As a first step toward
the realization of this ideal, the government resolved to bear the entire cost of the
primary education of privileged classes\textsuperscript{126}. It was also decided to bear the entire cost
of the schools for the poor and educationally unprivileged classes. The order
regarding free education to the unprivileged classes of Travancore elicited wide
spread approval all over India\textsuperscript{127}.

The credit for the establishment of a sound system of education in Travancore
goes to the Missionaries of the LMS. They were the pioneers of English education
and the education of the poor. When they began their labours in Travancore, the
government was least interested in educating the ignorant masses. When the
government found that the Missionary activities in the educational field were winning
laurels, they were inspired to enter the academic arena. Consequently they gradually
evolved a new educational policy with a view to uniting the whole educational system

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Cover File No. 153, Letter from F. Baylis to T. Madava Rao, 26 September 1985.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the TDC 1889-1897, P. 280.
\item \textsuperscript{127} LMS Report, 1898, p. 137.
\end{footnotes}
of the state\textsuperscript{128}. The Missionary educational institution was also brought under the control of the government. Thus the Missionary educational institutions lost their separate identity. The result was that Travancore became the most literate state in India by the end of the nineteenth century.

\textbf{3.2.2. Education of Women in Travancore in the Eighteenth Century}

The education of the people of Travancore in general as well as of women in particular was not a process of development at the dawn of the nineteenth century. The social status of women had deteriorated considerably. The society had a general prejudice against female education. The prohibition against women learning to read was probable due to various causes\textsuperscript{129}. It was believed that education was considered rather profane and immoral by aristocratic ladies. There was a general belief that a girl taught to read and write would become a widow. A feeling was alleged to exist among the majority of Hindu families, principally cherished by the women and not discouraged by men that a girl taught to write and read would soon after marriage become a widow, an event which was regarded as nearly the worst misfortune that could befall the sex. Over and above all, there was a very strong social prejudice against the education of women among all sections of male population. As a result, the ‘upanayana’ ceremony came to be prescribed for boys only and, ultimately, the right to education was denied to women. This was probably the greatest obstacle to the education of women. This prejudice was strongly rooted in the socio-economic and religious conditions of the country. Among the Muslims, the evils of purdah and segregation were the chief obstacles to progress\textsuperscript{130}. The Christians and Muslims shared all the prejudices of the Hindus against the instruction of girls. According to Mateer, “The denial of education to females springs to a great extent from the fear

\begin{footnotes}
\item 128 Report on the Administration of Travancore for the Year 1080 M.E. (1904), pp. 59-69.
\item 130 A. Menon Sreedhara, \textit{A Survey of Travancore History}, Kottayam, 1967, p.235.
\end{footnotes}
that they would misuse such advantages and become unfit for obedience and humble labour”.

But there was a small section of women who had received education, were the devadasis, the daughters of Nair Tarawads and the Syrian girls. In south India, till about the eighteenth century, nobody other than devadasis dared to study letters or get training in music and dancing. Dubois observed: “courtesans, whose business in life was to dance in the temples and at public ceremonies, and prostitutes and the only women who were allowed to learn to read, sing, or dance. It was thought to be disgrace to a respectable woman to learn to read, and even if she had learnt she would be ashamed to own it.” In medieval Travancore a large proportion of the employment in temples was reserved for Devadasis. The devadasis enjoyed a high social status; they were allowed to take seats even in the company of royal women.

The next group of girls who received education were the female children in Nair and Syrian families. In these cases, girls were admitted along with boys to the indigenous institution called ezhuthupallies. Logan pointed out that the indigenous schools were freely attended by girls. The aim of girls’ education in these institutions was to give training in elementary moral instruction and some basic lessons in music. These girls began with the learning of alphabet and went on to the learning of simple slokas, and simple arithmetic and reading and writing. According to Panikkar, the curriculum consisted of moral lessons, some particular songs intended for girls and the poetry of Ezhuthachan. Music was also a common accomplishment.

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131 Larance, op. cit., p.79.
The period of learning was from five to seven years of age and some girls of this age group attended schools. The girls after the ‘tali’ tying ceremony did not attend schools. (This ceremony took place between 3 and 10 years of girls). Formal higher education was denied to them.\(^\text{136}\)

The main defect of this indigenous system of elementary schools was the exclusion of girls except some Nair and Syrian children. Another defect was that the children of both the sexes of the unprivileged castes, who formed the vast majority of population, were denied admission in these schools. The curriculum on the whole was inadequate and gave no knowledge about the world and nature and had no relation to the needs and interests of the pupils.\(^\text{137}\)

Since most of the occupations were hereditary, vocational education in the modern sense was not needed. The training required in the household arts would have been provided by the elders in the home. The occupations engaged by people during the Sangam age, were given up after Sanskritization and for a long period in the history women were confined to their homes.\(^\text{138}\) In consequence, the learning attained by a small number of girls was confined to the mastery of the alphabet and as they had no access to higher education or to social and religious avenues of education they could be presumed to have lapsed into illiteracy very soon.\(^\text{139}\)

Therefore, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, there existed a kind of village education, which was exclusively meant for privileged caste boys and a very small section of the middle class girls including devadasis. So it may be concluded that except an extremely small number of women who had received some rudimentary education either at home or in schools, general or special, almost the whole of the female population of the country was deprived of formal education.

\(^{136}\) Bede artifits, *Christ in India*, New York, 1996, p.27.


\(^{138}\) Ninan Koshy, *Caste in the Travancore Churches*, Bangalore, 1968, p.79.

was against this background that the Missionaries launched a new venture of providing education irrespective of caste or sex\textsuperscript{140}.

3.2.2.1. Johanna Mead—the Pioneer Missionary of Girls’ Education in Travancore

Johanna Mead (Mrs. Mead) is the pioneer Missionary in the field of women’s education in Travancore. Her full name was Johanna Celestina Horst. She was the third daughter of C.H. Horst, a Missionary in Tanjore. Johanna was the first lady Missionary in South Travancore. She was the wife of Charles Mead, the second Missionary. Charles Mead reached South Travancore in 1817. He spent the major part of his life working in south Travancore. By his energy, enthusiasm, and imagination, he was able to reshape the entire educational system of this state\textsuperscript{141}. Soon after the arrival of Charles Mead, the headquarters of the Mission was moved from Mylady to Nagercoil. In October 1819, Mead opened a seminary at Nagercoil. At the same time, Johanna Mead began her work for women by starting a school for girls in Nagercoil. This is the first girl’s school in Travancore\textsuperscript{142}. It was in 1819 that Johanna Mead established this school. This was the beginning of the earliest systematic attempt in the field of female education in Travancore. It marked a new era in the history of South Travancore by opening the portals of education to the so far neglected women of this region.

Johanna Mead started a boarding school at Nagercoil along with the girl’s school, which was the first of its kind in Travancore. In the beginning, the Missionaries found it very difficult to find girls joining in these institutions. All the girls who joined the school were accommodated in the boarding home and were provided with free food and clothing\textsuperscript{143}. The work which was initiated by Johanna

\textsuperscript{140} Hentry White House, \textit{Indian Problems in Religion, Education, Politics}, London, 1924, p.43.
\textsuperscript{141} J. George Mouly, \textit{The Science of Educational Research}, New Delhi, 1964, p.64.
\textsuperscript{142} James Peggs, \textit{India’s Cry to British Humanity}, London, 1982, p.18.
Mead became a movement as Martha Mault joined in the task. Martha was the wife of Charles Mault who arrived in Nagercoil in 1819.

Martha Mault and Johanna Mead wanted to improve the status of women by imparting education to them. These Missionaries thought that the subject of female education was of great importance to the future of India. But in the beginning, parents were quite unwilling to send their girls to school\(^\text{144}\). It was contrary to the custom and they could hardly be convinced of the necessity of breaking that evil custom. It is said that so great was the prejudice of the parents that girls who were collected one week, were withdrawn the next week. In the early years all the girls admitted were children of Christian parents, the children of the Mission agents who were dependent lady Missionaries. But some of them also ran away to their homes, partly encouraged by their parents. Among the first batch of pupils, about one third of the girls were slaves. There was no strict age limit to admit a child in any of the classes\(^\text{145}\).

### 3.2.2.2. Aims of Girl’s Education

The Missionaries had definite aims in starting girls’ schools. When the Christian Missionaries began their work in India, they realized that ‘no stable and certainly no Christian community could be built up under conditions where women were incompetent to teach the young\(^\text{146}\). The main aim in starting these schools in Travancore was to bring girls more completely under Christian influence in the hope that, if thus educated ‘they could become converts and be fitted for the work of extending knowledge of truth among their countrymen.’

The Missionaries also found that education was one of the means to raise women folk from their low status in the society. So throughout their tenure, the board of Directors of the LMS as well as the Missionaries regarded female education very

\(^{144}\) Annual Minutes of TDC 1984, p.18.

\(^{145}\) Ibid., p.19.

important. Therefore, when Johanna Mead started the first girls’ school, her primary object was ‘to impart a plain education, united with religious instruction’. So the aims of girls’ education of the Missionaries can be summarized as humanitarian and religious concerns\(^\text{147}\).

### 3.2.2.3. Expansion of Girls’ Education in South Travancore

The remarkable growth of congregations during the early part of the nineteenth century caused the spread of girls’ education in different parts of South Travancore. Wherever the Missionaries started churches, schools were opened and in many places educational facilities were extended to girls also\(^\text{148}\).

The first boys’ school in Travancore was opened in 1809 at Mylady. In 1819, the first Girls’ school was opened at Nagercoil\(^\text{149}\). During that year when the congregation was increased to 10, the schools were increased to 12. In these schools the Missionaries admitted both boys and girls, but the number of girl's who attended these schools was very small. In October 1820, Martha Mault remarked the number was small at present and has to struggle with great opposition, as the dreadful custom prevailed all over India to teach female nothing\(^\text{150}\).

The Missionaries worked very hard to overcome the opposition against female education. Several experiments were conducted to attract girls to schools. In order to change public opinion in favour of female education, they published several articles. In 1831, they published a pamphlet in Tamil, entitled ‘On the Advantages of female Education’. This pamphlet exhorted the people to send their girls to school\(^\text{151}\).

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148 Letter from Mrs. Mault to Foreign Secretary of British India, 2 June 1830.
149 Ibid.
150 Letter from Knill to Burder, 2 March 1819.
151 Letter from Mrs. Mault to John Smith, 6 October, 1820.
3.2.2.4. Boarding Schools for Girls'

In 1820, the lady Missionaries opened a boarding school for girls as an experiment, amidst great opposition from the Savarnas. About the necessity of the boarding schools, one of the Missionaries observed that the Mission Boarding School was evidently a necessity in the present stage of Christian life in India, in order that children of Christian people may be for a time so separated from the associations and influences of the life around them”. Another aim was that if the children were boarded and clothed they could retain them and avoid drop outs to some extent152.

The establishment of separate schools for girls was another important experiment in this field. This was a blessing to the slave girls'. The Missionaries desired to give the slave girls' self-help and education. The measures taken by the Missionaries helped the slave girls to secure freedom from their masters. However, the privileged classes became jealous of the benefits the slaves enjoyed in the field of education and so they began to oppose the activities of the Missionaries153.

Another experiment of the Missionaries to popularize girls’ education was to conduct schools outside the Mission compound. In 1822 they established a school outside the Mission compound by name Bazaar school154.

To attract more Non-Christian girls, lady teachers were appointed in the schools. These experiments proved successful and gradually a large number of girls sought admission to these schools155.

152 Ibid.
154 Letter from R.W. Thomon to W.D. Osborne, 8 June 1900.
3.2.2.5. Extension of Missionary Work

The Mission was established in Nagercoil, the Missionaries extended their work to the other important centres in South Travancore. They opened Mission centers in Trivandrum (1821), Quilon (1821), Parassala (1838), Vakkom (1895), and Attingal (1900). In 1827 the Nagercoil Mission was divided into the western and eastern Missions. The eastern division of Nagercoil was under the supervision of Mault and the western division of Neyyoor was under the supervision of Mead\textsuperscript{156}.

The Mission at Nagercoil was expanded to Thalakulam, Muhilangudy, Agasteeswaram, Puttalam, Kottar, Parakai, Puthugramam, Koilvilai, Atticadu, Piceykudiyiruppu, and Vadakankulam. In all these places they started schools for boys and girls. Thus in 1821, there were 15 schools in Nagercoil alone. But there was not much increase in the total number of girls being sent to schools. Even in 1827 the number of girls under instruction was only 14\textsuperscript{157}.

The Mission at Neyyoor was expanded to many places under Charles Mead and William Miller after 1828. They established churches in Kotanavilai, Devikodu, Patnam, Matikodu, Peyankuly, Etavilai, Eraniel, Eathamoly, Ananthanadan Kudiyiruppu, Tittuvilai, and Kalliankadu. The Missionaries started mixed schools, girls’ schools and boarding schools in most of these places\textsuperscript{158}.

3.2.2.6. Trivandrum Mission

Trivandrum was another centre of the Missionaries. In 1821, the Missionaries started a school in Trivandrum. The location of this school was supposed to be at Valiyathurai. They opened schools in Kanyakumari, Neyattinkarai, Karaiyakulam and

\textsuperscript{156} LMS Report 1821, p.62.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
Kuzhithurai were some of the stations of the LMS Missionaries in Trivandrum. The Missionaries remarked: “an English Girls’ school is much required here, many Brahmins and others of caste being desirous of learning English”.

The first Missionary to Quilon was John Smith. He started his work there by opening schools. Churches were established only much later. For the educational enterprises, he got the support of the British Resident. Important stations in Quilon were Quilon Mission compound, Bazaar, Kykullam, Mulangadavattu, Cadavur, Moonakil, Killialloor, Paroor and Thattamely.

By 1825, almost in every Mission centre a few girls were given instruction. According to the statistic in 1825, the number of students attending different schools except the Trivandrum centre was 1422, of which 42 were girls. The available statistics showed that in the year 1830, there were 97 schools and 3100 students attending the classes all over the centres. New congregations and schools were formed in several villages such as Mandiacaud, Kottanavilai, Palliady, Killayur, Amsi, Mthicode, Vadakankara, Ethavilai, etc. seven more girls' schools were opened in 1837.

3.2.2.7. Progress of Girls Education: 1838-1893

After 1838 the number of schools and scholars were increased in the two districts of Nagercoil and Neyyoor. New churches and schools were established in Achankulam, Malayanvilai, Santhaidy, Kundal, Ottialvilai, Kannangulam, Anchugramam, Alagappuram, Pichaikudiyiruppu, Kanagappapuram, Koodangulam,

161 LMS Report, 1825, p.104.
162 Ibid., p.109.
Pannai, Vadakankulam, Yacobpuram, Avarakulam, Panakudi, Radhapuram and Aramboly. The Boarding schools in Nagercoil and Neyyoor progressed well and in these schools, day scholars were admitted along with boarders. The first girl’s Boarding school was then known as Carlton School and during that period this was a kind of training school which provided female teachers.\footnote{164 S. James Dennis, \textit{Depressed Classes the An Enquiry into their Condition and Suggestions for their Uplift}, Madras, 1912, p.45.}

A new feral of progress of schools and scholars from furlough with 5 more Missionaries and their wives to reinforce the work in Travancore. John Cox, Pattison, Abbs, James Russel, and Ramsay were the new Missionaries. They and their wives laboured much for the spread of girls’ education in this state\footnote{165 R.N. Yesudhasan, \textit{British Policy in Travancore 1805 – 1859}, Trivandrum, 1977, p.37.}. 

John Cox was appointed in Trivandrum centre in 1838. In the same year, the LMS got a campus in the ‘haunted hill’ at Kannanmoola. Mrs. Cox established a boarding school with 5 girls. This was the first girls school of the LMS Missionaries in Trivandrum. By 1840, the number of students in South Travancore attending schools increased to 7540 of whom 1000 were girls. In 1842, there were 14 schools for boys and 3 for girls. Mixed schools and girls' schools were opened in Nellikkakuzhi, Karichel, Kattuvila and Parreneyum. Within a few years, the number of schools and scholars were increased and in 1852, there were 22 village schools of which 14 were boys and 8 were girls.\footnote{166 Samuel Mateer, \textit{The Land of Charity}, London, 1871, p.18.}

A girls’ boarding school was started by Mrs. Russel in the head station. Santhapuram and Jamestown were the two other centres for girls’ education. In 1857, in the two districts of Nagercoil and Neyyoor, the total number of scholars increased...
to 7540 of which 998 were girls. Within two years the total number of girls increased to 1468\(^{167}\).

As a result of the encouragement given by Charles Mead 'the Ladies Society for the Promotion of Female Education in the East' started a school in the Trivandrum city in 1858, for girls. This school was chiefly intended for Christians. The school was under the charge of Mrs. D. Veigas and supervised by Charles Mead, who was then the first superintendent of the Government District Schools. This school was upgraded in 1888, and in 1897 it was raised to a Second Grade College for women\(^{168}\).

In 1884, Samuel Matter opened a girls' school at Karamana. In 1885, another school was opened in the Mission compound at Trivandrum. Thus this period witnessed the rapid growth of girls' education in the Trivandrum district\(^{169}\).

### 3.2.2.8. Parassala Mission

After opening a new station at Parassala in 1838, John Abbs and his wife worked hard to establish churches and schools. Ashton and his wife helped Abbs for some time in supervising the village schools. According to the statistics of 1845, there were 55 stations, 41 village schools and 1183 scholars. According to the available statistics of Parassala, in 1867, 611 men and 158 women were able to read. The number of schools increased to 74 with 3267 scholars and 97 teachers in 1890\(^{170}\).

In Quilon, Pattison joined with Thompson in 1838 and he supervised the schools and boarding schools there. These girls’ schools continued to function well. Evening schools were established in the villages in 1848. According to the statistics given in the Report of the South India Missionary conference held at Ootacamund

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167 C.B. Firth, *An Introduction to India Church History*, Madras 1961, p.34.
168 Letter from John Cox to Tideman and Freeman, 3 September, 1845.
169 LMS Report, 1945, p.46.
from April 19- May 5, 1858, there were some village schools in Quilon with 160 boys and 26 girls\textsuperscript{171}.

The period from 1859 to 1866 was one of marvelous increase in the church membership all over South Travancore. The troubles over the ‘upper cloth movement' helped the progress of the Mission. The years from 1861 to 1866 were years of ‘mass movement’ to Christianity in South Travancore. In 1861-1862 some four thousand Nadars were added to the churches in Neyyoor and Parassala districts alone\textsuperscript{172}. In 1862, many Parayas and Pulayas of Neyyoor and Parassala also joined Christianity. This resulted in the need for more educational institutions. More districts and stations were opened. James Town, Tittuvilai, and Santhapuram were some of the new districts. The statistics of 1865 showed that there were 47 schools for girls which included 6 boarding schools all over South Travancore. Thus, rapid progress was seen everywhere in the education of girls. In 1870, the Christian adherents numbered 30969 and in 161 schools, there were 5000 scholars\textsuperscript{173}.

Meanwhile, the Travancore Government opened some schools in Travancore with the co-operation of the LMS Missionaries. But the unprivileged classes were not permitted to attend the government schools and mix with the privileged classes till the last decade of the nineteenth century\textsuperscript{174}. When there was a pressure from the people to open schools for all castes, in 1865 the government proposed to establish separate schools for the children of the Shannars and of such castes as they did not mix freely with the Sudras. To the Missionaries, this was a policy detrimental to their efforts. They opposed this government policy and requested the government to open

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{171} LMS Report, 1845, p.46.
\textsuperscript{172} Joseph Kingsmill, British Rule and British Christianity in India, London, 1859, p.12.
\textsuperscript{174} Letter from John Lowe to T. Madhava Rao, 22 September, 1865.
\end{footnotesize}
cosmopolitan institutions. But this proposal of the Missionaries did not receive sufficient and immediate attention from the government\textsuperscript{175}.

The financial crisis faced by the LMS in 1866 had its worst effects in the educational sphere. Even then the Missionaries gave priority to education. When the financial position became stringent, the Missionaries requested the government for a grant-in-aid to schools which were not under direct governmental supervision. This grant was intended to aid elementary education in the vernacular schools. This help was a blessing to the educational institutions of the LMS Missionaries\textsuperscript{176}.

The period after 1880 was a time of consolidation and progress of education in South Travancore. More Missionary personnel reached South Travancore around 1880. The leading Missionaries during this period were Duthie and Allan in Nagercoil. Hacker in Neyyoor, James Emlyn, Knowles and Foster in Parassala, and Mateer in Trivandrum. One feature of the activities in the following years was that the Board of Directors and the District Committee gave more importance to girls’ education\textsuperscript{177}.

Duthie and his wife, who worked in Nagercoil, were two important educationists in South Travancore. They began their work in 1856 and worked hard for the progress of women’s education. In 1879 some new schools were opened at Nagercoil centre\textsuperscript{178}. According to the annual report of the LMS for the year 1891 five girls schools were opened for the education of 293 girls. The caste girls school at Vadassery and the caste Girls school at Krishnancoil were two of them\textsuperscript{179}.

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{176} Indian Evangelical Review, 1874, p.376.
\textsuperscript{177} Minutes of the Meeting of the Eastern Committee, 1905.
\textsuperscript{178} TDC Annual Report, 1891, p.133.
\textsuperscript{179} LMS Report, 1891, p.133.
Another important development in Nagercoil was the bifurcation of the Christian Girls School. This school had been divided into two sections. Of these two sections, one was an English girls school. The Missionaries believed that “it will prove a great advantage to those whose circumstances permit them to remain at school until their seventeenth and eighteenth years”. During these years, there were six girls schools under the care of Mrs. Duthie alone\textsuperscript{180}.

Five more Missionaries were sent as a result of the LMS forward movement of 1892. These Missionaries – Wills, Gillies, Dennison, Miss Kate Derry and Miss Macdonnell- worked in different parts of south Travancore.

In many places in Neyyoor, vernacular schools were started. The LMS report for the year 1892 revealed that in Neyyoor alone there were 74 vernacular schools with a total attendance of 3161 students. More than half of them were Non-Christians. In 1902, there were two Anglo-Vernacular schools in Neyyoor- one for boys and another for girls\textsuperscript{181}.

The Missionaries felt that they had done very little to the development of female education in Quilon\textsuperscript{182}. The Board thought Quilon had to be strengthened by a resident Missionary and asked Knowles to move to Quilon. After that a girls' boarding school was started in the early 1890’s with ten scholars. Thus the number of schools and scholars in Quilon increased steadily\textsuperscript{183}.

Female education at Parassala progressed under the supervision of Mrs. Knowles who arrived at Parassala with her husband in 1880. Thus new girls schools were opened in Amaravilai, Kaliakavilai and Marthandam\textsuperscript{184}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[180] LMS Report, 1892, p.144.
\item[181] C.F. Pascoe, \textit{Two Hundred Years of the SPG 1701-1900}, London, 1901, p.194.
\item[182] Letter from D.O. White House to J. Knowes, 21 December, 1883, p.12.
\item[183] LMS Report, 1893, pp.129-130.
\item[184] LMS Report, 1896, p.112.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
3.2.2.9. Development of Women’s Education after 1894

The year 1894 was a turning point in the history of education in Travancore. In 1894, a new grant-in-aid code was introduced by the government to change the educational pattern of the state and the whole educational system was brought under one authority. The regulations of the new code prevented the Missionaries from using Christian textbooks, and making their schools a medium for evangelical work. The code also disqualified a good number of teachers and insisted upon better school buildings, more school furniture, and a higher average attendance. The teachers were required to pass government examination to qualify themselves as teachers. Grants were refused to those schools which had not satisfied the provisions of the code.

This order of the government regarding free education to the unprivileged classes impressed the Missionaries. When the government actively entered the field of education, the aim of the Missionaries to educate girls and the downtrodden was achieved, and they desired to withdraw their active efforts from the field. They believed: “The introduction of the Travancore Government of the New Educational Code marks a new stage in the development of education in this country.” Therefore the Missionaries resolved: "we cannot therefore be the sole managers, superintendents and responsible individuals to the government for the upkeep and maintenance of each and all the schools in our districts, because government is working upon one principle and we on another, and the result is and will be much friction about details with minor government officials, besides a loss of time which might be spent with more profit in other directions.” This led the Missionaries to concentrate their attention on the spread of Christian religion adopting other means.

185 TDC Minutes, 1889-1897, p.280.
186 Travancore Administration Report, 1897, pp. 10-12.
But at the same time they continued to involve in the educational activities of South Travancore

3.2.3. Progress of Education after 1900

After 1900, the number of schools in Trivandrum increased. New schools including girls’ schools were started in many places. At the beginning of the twentieth century, girls’ education in Quilon also progressed much. After the starting of the Medical Mission in Quilon, the Missionaries were able to open 3 more schools there. In 1902, the total number of schools there was 37, of which 11 were night schools. In these schools, there were 1403 scholars of which 1073 were boys and 330 girls. In 1902 in Neyyoor there were two Anglo - Vernacular schools, one for boys and another for girls. Parassala was a vast area of work for the Missionaries. A lady Missionary was appointed to develop the educational work among girls. New schools were started in Amaravilai and Venganoor also.

The number of schools and scholars in Nagercoil also increased. In the Duthie Vernacular School at Nagercoil, the number of pupils increased and in 1918 there were 500 girls, mostly children of Christians. Miss. Harris, the educational Missionary in Nagercoil stated that in this school, there were twenty privileged caste girls. This proved that caste prejudice was being overcome gradually. This was an important development in the history of women’s education in Travancore.

One of the special features of the 1930s was the progress of the vernacular middle schools for boys and girls. During the time of Sinclair (1921-1930), a LMS Missionary, the number of Day Schools in Neyyoor increased from 57 to 71. Another

188 LMS Minute Book, 1897 – 1909, p.280.
189 LMS Report, 1902, p.205.
190 LMS Report, 1902, p.199.
191 Letter from R.W. Thompson to H.T. Wills 16 April 1908.
192 Minutes of the Meeting of the Eastern Committee, 1918, p.212.
significant feature of the activities of the LMS Missionaries in the twentieth century was that the Board and the Travancore District Committee gave more importance to women’s work and spent more money for that. In the appointment of teachers for girls’ schools, the Missionaries showed particular interest to select qualified teachers. In 1933, it was found that the girls’ boarding schools were managed mainly by trained teachers. Another notable activity was the starting of hostels for girls. For example, Mrs. Allan worked hard to provide a new Hostel for the Christian girls’ school by patient and judicious saving of funds gained by the Lace industry in Nagercoil. In Trivandrum, the Missionaries started a girls’ hostel for the benefit of girls. This hostel was in a flourishing condition during the year 1917.

Another change observed in the later period was that a boy or girl who passed the seventh class, expected a job as a result of the progress of education. Sinclair observed: “The benefit of this is everywhere apparent, but we have come to a point where the limitations of that work are equally apparent. Practically every boy and girl as well as their parents expected that on passing the seventh class, teacher’s work would be provided and this restricted outlook spelled disappointment to scores of boys and girls. As a remedy for unemployment, Sinclair tried to introduce rural training among boys and girls. He opinioned that to encourage rural training for girls, a lady should be appointed in Marthandam where there is land and scope for rural training.

The Missionaries tried to maintain the existing schools including girls’ schools. For a long time, most of the schools in the villages had only one or two classes. The Travancore Government set up an Education Reforms Committee, known as ‘Statham Committee’ in 1932 and its report was submitted in 1933. This

193 Minutes of the Meeting of the Eastern Committee, 1935.
194 Letter from R.W. Thompson to A Parker, 18 October, 1901.
committee proposed that grand-in-aid would be given by the government only to complete primary schools consisting of five classes, which were centrally situated. As a result of it many schools were abolished by the LMS. An education board was set up by the Missionaries in 1934. It accepted the policy of the government but created centrally situated complete primary schools with five classes and also chose some centers to open middle schools where English would be taught for three years out of the eight years duration. Boys and girls who passed from the complete primary school would join the middle school classes. In some places middle school was attached to the primary school, so that boys and girls who spent 8 years in the primary and middle school could spend 3 more years in the high school and complete secondary school leaving certificate course. Thus there were 10 middle schools in the southern district and 5 in the central district. This system of primary, middle and Secondary school education has helped the growth of girls’ education considerably.

Due to the new situations, many schools were abolished again and some of them were surrendered to the government. As a result of this, the numbers of schools were reduced considerably and in 1934, there were 236 schools under LMS. In these schools, there were 907 teachers of whom 211 were lady teachers. In 1945, the Travancore Government decided to recast primary education throughout the state and bring it more fully within its own authority. At that time, there were 3160 aided private schools and 883 government schools, and of the private schools 89 percent were under Christian management. An Education Reorganization Committee was set up by the government. This Committee proposed for a uniform system of free and compulsory education for all children between the age of five and nine, and recommended the continuance of private schools within the system on a grant-in-aid basis. During the years 1946-1948, many LMS primary schools were handed over to Travancore government. All the primary schools in Thovala, Agasteeswaram,
Nagercoil Municipality, and Trivandrum town were surrendered on lease for 12 years\textsuperscript{200}.

Again the Executive Committee of the Travancore Church Council resolved to “hand over to the Government as many as possible of the schools, under the same conditions as in the case of the schools already given”. In 1946, 45 schools were surrendered. According to TDC report of the Board for the year 1947-1948, the total number of scholars in the remaining schools of the LMS were 36,305, of whom 15,629 were girls and 20,676 boys\textsuperscript{201}.

The process of transferring the Primary schools to Government which began in 1946, continued up to 1948. In these three years, LMS Missionaries handed over or closed 158 schools and leased 120 buildings to the Government\textsuperscript{202}.

### 3.2.4. Indigenous Schools

Inspired by the Missionaries, certain local people also engaged in educational activities in South Travancore. Some of them clubbed their educational activities with evangelization. For example, Sathyanesan started his first school in January 1906 at Kanjiramkulam\textsuperscript{203}. This school was a mixed Malayalam School. Afterwards, he established an English School and a Training School there. In these schools, girls were admitted along with boys. Another example is the school started at Trivandrum by Mathew. He was the proprietor of the T.M.E. school, and Anglo-Vernacular School. The main object of this school was to propagate the Bible truths and the Christian hymns in the hearts of the pupils. This school also contributed to the development of women’s education in Travancore. Missionaries thus encouraged

\textsuperscript{200} Primary Education Act of Travancore Government 1121 M.E.
\textsuperscript{201} TDC Report, 1946, p.29.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{203} Letter from G.E. Philips to R. Sinclair, 1 October, 1936.
people to establish schools and this helped the rapid spread of women’s education in South Travancore.\textsuperscript{204}

\textbf{3.2.5. Work among the Unprivileged Sections of the Society}

From the very beginning itself, the Missionaries paid particular attention to the educational work among the lower sections of the society. They understood the social disabilities and oppression to which the Paraya, the Pulaya and other unprivileged castes of Travancore were subjected. They could not, however, lose sight of the fact that the disabilities and injustice complained of were due to the action of social and religious influences which had been in operation for many generations and therefore, they were not easily removed by legislation. They also found education would be an effective means for their upliftment. The Missionaries showed particular interest in the development of female education among all these castes. The girls’ schools of the Missionaries provided facilities for the education of the converts from such castes.\textsuperscript{205}

\textbf{3.2.6. Curriculum}

Missionaries considered all the aspects of the child’s school life-class-work, play, special projects and group life-as parts of the curriculum.

In schools, Missionaries considered religious instruction as an unavoidable part of the educational system.\textsuperscript{206} “The Bible is taught and actually studied by all the scholars, whether Christians, Muhammedans, or Hindus”. In His Highness’ free school also the Bible was regularly read and explained. About her school, Mrs. Mault pointed out: “no books are allowed in the school such as are not strictly moral. The first effort is to direct memory to Watt’s small catechism, and other compendiums of Christian religion, and they are led on to the Gospels and Epistles”.\textsuperscript{207} So that many of

\textsuperscript{204} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{205} LMS Annual Report, 1863, p.34.
\textsuperscript{206} LMS Report, 1864, p.103.
\textsuperscript{207} Letter from Mrs. Mault to Foreign Secretary dated 13 December, 1830.
the girls, when they left the school, had committed to memory important portions of the New Testament. After the girls had studied and committed to memory certain portions of the scriptures, then only they were initiated into other industries such as knitting, spinning, needle work etc\textsuperscript{208}.

Reading, writing and arithmetic were taught in these schools. Writing on the palmyra leaf, the simpler rules of arithmetic and geography formed part of their studies. In the higher classes, girls had a few lessons in English. Mrs. Abbs, one of the Missionary ladies, went so far as to maintain a Greek class for girls in her school for sometime. Besides this, a fair knowledge of history, geography and elements of natural philosophy were imparted in the vernacular. In the seminary, the standard of education was high and the subjects taught included astronomy, physical science, logic, theology, Hebrew and Greek\textsuperscript{209}.

Many of the books were received as gifts from Tranquebar. The Board of Directors in London also helped them by supplying books. In one of the letters, the Board informed Charles Mead that a supply of English books was forwarded for the use of the stations generally. The Missionaries also translated and printed some books needed for the schools. Many educational equipments such as maps, globes, mathematical instruments etc., were received as gifts from abroad\textsuperscript{210}.

The teachers and the Missionaries mainly employed the ‘telling method’. But at times, this gave place to the discussion method. The Missionaries divided the children into several classes. The classes were graded according to the mental ability of the children and the syllabus was formed according to the gradation of each class\textsuperscript{211}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{208} LMS Report, 1862, p.152.
\item \textsuperscript{209} Minutes of the Meeting of the Eastern Committee, 1938, p.38.
\item \textsuperscript{210} Letter from Foreign Secretary to Charles Mead, dated 22 August, 1834.
\item \textsuperscript{211} TDC Report from White House, 1854, p.43.
\end{itemize}
Instruction was given through the mediums of both the vernacular and English. According to a decision taken in 1863, the importance of the vernacular had been accepted by them. In most girls’ schools, the Missionaries used the vernacular as the medium of instruction. About her school, Mrs. Whitehouse states: “all the lessons are in vernacular Tamil, for we have not seen the advantage of teaching English in our schools, for generally our school girls have no time and few inducements to continue the study after they leave school, and they do not remain long enough to acquire such knowledge of it”\(^{212}\). Mrs. Whitehouse pointed out that their great object was to promote mental development and true education, and so they preferred the best Tamil books. The Missionaries gave particular attention to the moral and spiritual training of the pupils. Perfect discipline was maintained in these schools\(^ {213}\).

The curriculum of the educational system of the Missionaries was changed now and then. But the pattern was more or less the same as shown above. Before changing the curriculum, the Board studied the opinion of the Missionaries. For this they sent questionnaires to every Missionary. On one occasion they enquired: “How far is the present curriculum adapted to promote (a) the development of the Indian people as citizens (b) the present contribution of the young to the religion of the church.” Here one thing is clear. The Missionaries wanted to train girls and boys according to the needs of the nation with the objectives of the LMS\(^ {214}\).

The grant-in-aid code was introduced in 1894 to change the educational pattern of the state, the whole educational system was brought under the authority of the Government of Travancore. According to the new code, curriculum was changed. The textbooks employed were those which might, for the time being are prescribed by the government\(^ {215}\).

\(^{212}\) LMS Report, 1863, p.38.
\(^{213}\) TDC Report from White House, 1854, p.43.
\(^{214}\) LMS Minute Book 1897 – 1909, p.280.
\(^{215}\) Ibid.
3.2.6.1. Teachers

Teachers in South Travancore have a long history. They were known as Catechists, School Masters or School mistresses and teachers in different times. Ringeltaube, the first Protestant Missionary in Travancore, called his assistants Catechist. Mead, the second Missionary, made a change in the designation and called them ‘Readers’. Then they were known as school masters or school mistresses and Teachers\textsuperscript{216}.

Owing to lack of good teachers, the first teacher for the seminary had to be brought from Tranquebar and Tanjore. Gradually teachers were taken from the local people. Seminary provided teachers from the local people. Seminary provided teachers for many decades from its inception. According to the 49 Report of the LMS, in 1843, the seminary had 13 pupils. Two students were appointed as school Masters in course of the year\textsuperscript{217}.

Missionaries were more particular that teachers should possess decided and consistent piety. In the selection of teachers, the directors requested the committee to pay utmost possible attention to their religious and moral fitness along with other qualifications. Missionaries wanted that teachers should possess higher qualifications as well\textsuperscript{218}.

The Missionaries expected more from the teachers to fulfil their aims. When a teacher was appointed, the Missionary expected the teacher to be a good person and he should improve himself, his family and the people around him. Mead wrote about the teacher of the school at Amandivilly thus: “The teacher is dividend and spares no pains to improve himself as well as his family and the people around him”\textsuperscript{219}.

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{217} Letter from Director to Edmond Crisp, dated 19 December, 1834.
\textsuperscript{218} TDC Report from Charles Mead, 1846.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid.
3.2.6.2. Appointment of Women as Teachers

The Missionaries of the LMS were the first to appoint women teachers in schools. Even at an early date, school mistresses were employed, besides school masters. This was a novel sight to the people. The first woman teacher of the LMS in South Travancore was Johanna Mead220.

The Missionaries appointed women as teachers wherever they could to attract girls to schools. They commented, “A promising commencement has been made and there is every prospect of increasing success”. This was indeed a promising development in the field of women’s education221.

In 1830, some local women teachers superintended the schools. There was a girls’ school, formerly under the care of Thompson, one of the Missionaries, which was then superintended by the wife of one of the readers. She seemed to be competent to direct the education of the scholars. In 1834, there were some female native teachers in Nagercoil. In 1842, there were 18 village day schools under Martha Mault. In many schools, local female teachers were employed222.

In 1848, in Neyyoor, out of 42 school teachers, 22 were women. According to the statistics of 1857, there were 127 workers under Parassala district. Out of them, 22 were women teachers. Some of them were excellent teachers, competent superintendants, and able administrators223. About the teachers, annual report of 1848 remarked, “As they were found most suitable and efficient every possible endeavor is made to add to their number224”. But the report continues: “This part of the plan is

220 TDC Annual Report from Nagercoil, 1836, p.73.
221 Ibid.
222 LMS Report, 1842, p.64.
224 TDC Report from Neyyoor Mission, 1848, p.79.
comparatively new and from the prevailing prejudices of the people, its introduction and exhibition had been found extremely difficult\textsuperscript{225}.

3.2.6.3. Qualification of Early Lady Teachers

Missionaries were the first women teachers. All the Missionaries had passed some examinations in languages before they engaged in their activities. Johanna Mead, the pioneer lady teacher possessed a good knowledge in Tamil. Later, those who passed the highest classes in the boarding schools for girls were appointed as lady teachers. In Neyyoor, there was a Carlton School for girls which was a normal school. According to the Written Report of 1848, 32 young women, formerly taught in the Carlton school, were appointed as teachers\textsuperscript{226}.

3.2.6.4. Training for Teachers

The Missionaries knew that the quality of education was depended up on the quality of teachers. So the Board of Directors and Missionaries were anxious to get qualified youths as teachers. Therefore the Missionaries adopted some measures to improve the quality of teachers. Some able Missionaries tried to assemble some qualified youths together and to give them training\textsuperscript{227}. Thompson, one of the early Missionaries, was very anxious to improve the quality of teachers. According to the LMS report for the year 1828, “a class of Tamil Youth ranging from 15 to 18 years of age, are also undergoing a course of training and instruction, with a view to their laboring as native teachers”. Lewis, another Missionary, organized a class for giving training for 12 young men. These young teachers made creditable progress. Whitehouse, another Missionary in Nagercoil, collected the most intelligent of the school masters and gave them training once a week\textsuperscript{228}.

\textsuperscript{225} LMS Report, 1842, p.64.
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{227} TDC Minutes, 1833, p.56.
\textsuperscript{228} Report from Lewis in the Nagercoil Mission, 1828, p.184.
Several vacation classes were conducted for teachers in the Mission schools. In the harvest season, children were not able to attend schools. During this time, some kind of training was given to the method of teaching. To equip the teachers with intellectual acumen and teaching technique, special classes were held in Nagercoil seminary very often\textsuperscript{229}.

The new education code of 1894 had caused very serious inconvenience to the Missionaries, because the government had suddenly insisted that all teachers in state-aided schools should be qualified by passing an examination. Realizing the importance of giving training for the teachers, the Board of Directors directed the Christian vernacular education Society to train teachers for Mission schools. So the Mission established a few training schools in different parts of South Travancore. The establishment of the training schools was a milestone in the development of women’s education. Several girls were trained as teachers. Many girls passed the primary training class and engaged as teachers in different parts of the districts\textsuperscript{230}.

The London Missionary Society provided salary to the teachers. In the beginning the salary of a teacher was determined by the number of pupils he collected. Around 1892, the salaries of teachers varied from Rs.5 to Rs.15 per month. At first the Missionaries appointed married women as school teachers. For example, Mary Ciaton was a married school mistress who was working in Nellikakuzhi during the year 1845\textsuperscript{231}. But after a century, this was changed. Parker, one LMS Missionary expressed the view of the Mission thus: “we do not employ married women in schools now. Because of the inconvenience of the confinement leaves and the various leaves on account of family illness.” but at the same time some steps were taken in favour of married teachers and maternity grants\textsuperscript{232}.

\textsuperscript{229} LMS Report, 1865, p.35.
\textsuperscript{230} LMS Report, 1896, p.105.
\textsuperscript{231} Letter from John Cox to Tidman and Freeman dated 3 September, 1845.
\textsuperscript{232} Letter from Parker to Phillips dated 2 September, 1933.
During the first quarter of the twentieth century LMS Missionaries introduced some programmes and projects for the benefit of the teachers. They decided to give pension to the teachers and as a first step, they resolved to invest 500 to the pension fund. During this period of the endeavor of the LMS Missionaries, teachers were considered as the better educated persons in the society. Society considered them as their better guides also. They had a higher place in the minds of the people.

3.2.6.5. Higher Education

The Travancore District committee of South Travancore desired to establish a Christian college at Nagercoil for the higher education of the Christian youths. The sole purpose of a Christian college was to bring the youths under religious influence. The directors of the LMS also agreed to this proposal.

The directors felt that if the Christian college had to be a really useful agency to the Mission “it should be under the direct care of an educational Missionary appointed for the purpose”. So a college was established at Nagercoil and it was named Scott Christian College. In the Scott Christian College, classes commenced in 1893 with 9 students. Though girls were not admitted in the beginning, it was a blessing to them later. In 1939 there were 200 students in this college of whom 20 were women.

3.2.6.6. Demand for Facilities for Girls’ Education

The close of the nineteenth century witnessed rapid progress in girls’ education all over South Travancore. People demanded higher education facilities for their daughters. The Board of Directors was impressed by the rapid development of education and of the demand for higher education for women in all parts of India.

233 Minutes of the Meeting of the Eastern Committee, 1924, p.152.
235 Letter from R.W. Thompson to W.D. Osborne, dated 8 June, 1900.
Eventhough the London Missionary Society faced financial crisis, it sought various ways of meeting this demand\(^{236}\). Particular consideration was given to the admission of women in all the Christian colleges for men. But the people were not satisfied with this alone. They demanded separate colleges for women. But owing to the financial difficulties, they could not start a college for women. Most of the Missionary societies who were working in India consulted together to start Union Christian Colleges. The Board of Directors also was in favour of this\(^{237}\). They supported the plan for a Joint committee to raise funds from British educationalists for meeting the needs of the colleges in India. As a result, several Union Christian Colleges were opened in Asia. The Women’s Christian College of Madras is the best evidence for the Missionaries’ efforts in this direction. Many women from Travancore, Cochin and Malabar received higher education from there. Miss Devasahayam was one of the first students of the Women’s Christian College\(^{238}\).

The year 1918 marked the establishment of another training centre for women—the Missionary Medical College for women, Vellore, under Ida Scudder of the American Arcot Mission. This quickly became a union institution receiving the co-operation of a large number of British and American Societies and grant-in-aid from the Madras Government. LMS was a financial partner in this college also. Later men were admitted along with women students. These colleges were a great blessing to the women of Travancore and it enhanced the status of women in the society\(^{239}\).

In south India, another outstanding piece of co-operation in women’s training was started at St. Christopher’s Training College, Madras, in 1923, to which students from all LMS areas in the South, including Travancore, were sent\(^{240}\).

\(^{237}\) Ibid.
\(^{238}\) Minutes of the Meeting of the Eastern Committee, 1929, p.18.
\(^{239}\) Ibid.
\(^{240}\) LMS Report, 1929, p.318.
Statistics reveal that in those days only a few women studied in colleges as compared with men. Of these, a large number took history as their optional subjects, due to the non-availability of seats in the science subjects.  

### 3.2.7. Opposition of the Privileged Castes to the Protestant Missionaries

It was obvious that the Missionaries were creating a situation where there was an opportunity for the unprivileged sections of the people to fight for their emancipation. This naturally aroused the indignation of the privileged castes against the Missionaries. Many masters of slaves foresaw the reaction of the slaves if they came into direct contact with the Missionaries. One of the masters evaded the proposal of giving Christian instructions to his slaves by saying that “they loved the worship of devils and would regard him as an enemy, if he permitted any one to touch them another way (Christianity).”

The growing hatred of the privileged Castes towards the Missionaries exploded in 1853. A group of Missionaries with their families were returning from one of the Mission stations. At a place called ‘Suchindrum’ a procession of Brahmins was coming in the opposite direction to the Missionaries. The Brahmins wanted the Missionaries and their palankeens “to descend a step back in to the bed of the river.” As one of the Missionaries said that there was enough room on the road for both the palankeens and the procession to go through, they let the palankens go through on the edge of the bank. One Missionary, Lewis, whose palamken came some distance behind, through “Got out of the palankeen and placed it on the farthest edge of the

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245 Ebenezer Lewis Joined the LMS Mission in 1846. He Worked Effectively at Santhapuram Center. LMS Report, 1846, p.87.
246 Ibid.
road to allow the procession to pass on” was pushed down to the bed of the river where he was pelted with dust and sand road material by the mob, especially Brahmin youths\textsuperscript{247}.

On receiving a complaint from the Missionaries, the Resident left the matter for an enquiry by the Travancore government. An enquiry was made and its report was submitted as far as possible in favour of the Brahmins\textsuperscript{248}. But this incident was an outward sign of the increasing hatred of the privileged Castes towards the activities of the Missionaries. The Missionaries also spared no words in expressing their anger against the privileged castes. They lamented His Highness the Maharajah surrounding by Brahmins, with a Brahmin for his cook and a Brahmin for his Dewan and at their Mercy sight for a better state of things but sighs in Vain\textsuperscript{249}.

The enmity of the privileged castes towards the Protestant Missionaries, owing to their attempts of removing some of the social disabilities of the unprivileged castes, made the Brahmins demonstrate their bitterness on a Missionary in a violent form in 1868, which had far reaching consequences in the social history of Travancore\textsuperscript{250}.

3.2.8. Vocational Education

Some Missionaries thought that imparting of education in general with vocational education would improve the condition of the people. Therefore the Missionaries imparted vocational education along with general education. Martha Mault and Johanna Mead combined classroom teaching and vocational training together\textsuperscript{251}. Girls were taught reading and writing in the morning and spinning cotton,
knitting, sewing and embroidery in the afternoon. Martha Mault, the pioneer in this particular form of education, reported, the primary object of the school was to give a plain instruction united with moral education and given training in some industries also.\textsuperscript{252}

The deputation sent by the LMS Missionaries in Travancore, reported: “The girls schools under the care of Mrs. Mault are in an excellent state. Twelve of these girls learned to make lace. Some of which were exceedingly well done. The children in these schools and that called the seminary both on the premises are entirely supported, clothed, fed and educated from the proceeds of the land given for the purpose and the sale of the lace made by the girls.” The lace industry helped the slave girls to get freedom. In the early days about one third of the girls in the schools were slaves. The children of slaves were always the property of masters. The Missionaries passed a resolution that each girl by her own industry should purchase her freedom before she left the school. This helped the slave girls to get freedom except in one case. Martha Muault had described the history of that girl. “A girl in the school became big enough to work in her master’s field, he therefore came to claim her. I asked him if it would not be well for her to learn to read and whether he should not allow her to do so. He replied, it may be well for you to instruct her, as you will get a place in heaven there by, but it is enough for me if my bullocks and slaves do the work required in the field”.\textsuperscript{253}

The lace industry provided employment to many and prevented them from going back to their traditional professions. It gave the girls a new outlook on life because this made them self supporting. As the girls left the school and got married they continued their work in their homes.\textsuperscript{254} At times of scarcity, when crops had failed this cottage industry had been a great boon to them. Lace industry played a very

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[252] Ibid.
\item[254] R.N. Yesudhasan, \textit{op. cit.}, p.137.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
important role in the social and economic life of the people. This industry was also an instrument to enhance the status of women because it provided a means of livelihood to many women in South Travancore\textsuperscript{255}.

By the end of the very decade of the introduction of the lace industry, it became famous in India and abroad. The South Travancore lace had won many prizes in exhibitions including those held at Madras. During and after the World War I, there was a very great demand for lace in Europe, as France and Belgium practically ceased to export lace. This strengthened the lace industry once again. The next generations of Missionary, ladies furthered the work of this growing industry. Among them Mrs. Abbs, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Thompson deserve special mention. All these factors encouraged the Missionaries to start this kind of educational institutions in many other centres\textsuperscript{256}.

3.2.9. Medical Mission

Medical Mission work in south Travancore was also a part of the LMS Missionary work. LMS started the medical work as a separate department of the Mission only later. The London Mission started medical Mission work at Neyyor in South Travancore with the arrival of Dr. Archibal Ramsay, a medical Missionary\textsuperscript{257}. He established a small hospital but a large number of people crowded there for treatment. It was the most important and the most successful one\textsuperscript{258}. It played a key role in the diffusion of the gospel. When Ramsay left the Mission field but with the arrival of Mr. C. C. Leitch in 1853 revived it. Both privileged and unprivileged class patients were benefited by the work of C. C. Leitch\textsuperscript{259}.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{255}I.H. Hacker, \textit{op. cit.}, p.90.
\bibitem{256}Letter from G.E. Phillips to H.C. Lefever, dated 7 August, 1938.
\bibitem{257}C.B. Firth, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 89.
\bibitem{258}Sobhanan, \textit{The History of the Christian Missions in the South India}, Trivandrum,1996, p. 112.
\bibitem{259}LMS. Report, 1854, p. 89.
\end{thebibliography}
At first feared that the privileged class would be deferred from attending by the fear of contacting pollution or from risk like the religious service in which all patients are required to attend\textsuperscript{260}. These fears happily proved unfounded for not only did the daily attendance occasionally exceed 100 and rarely fall below so. But Brahmins, Sudras and Muhammadans were frequently to be found sitting close by the poorest and most degraded of the population\textsuperscript{261}. Considering the importance of the medical work, another Missionary Frederick Baylis was appointed in 1853 to cooperate with Leitch. The policies of the government also made the Mission work easier\textsuperscript{262}.

In 1861, another devoted Missionary John Lower took charge of the dispensary. In October 1864 the dispensary became the South Travancore Mission hospital\textsuperscript{263}. So in 1864, it started a medical class for a batch of intelligent men, well educated in English from the different districts of the Mission. The training was a period of three and a half years. The best of the trained were sent to the branch hospital started at Santnapuram, Agasteeswaram, Attoor, and Karakonam. These medical assistants were known as dressers\textsuperscript{264}. On the success of the Medical Mission work, Mr. Lows reported that it was very gratifying to observe that a much large number of high caste patients came to the hospital. Among the patients assembled in the waiting room, many belonged to the unprivileged castes, number of Brahmins and Sudras both men and women sitting side by side with Shannars and untouchable peoples\textsuperscript{265}.

During the past years indeed the privileged caste people and unprivileged caste people lived together in the same room in the hospital for nearly two months. A

\textsuperscript{260} LMS. Report, 1854, p. 90.  
\textsuperscript{261} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{262} Samuel Matter, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 420.  
\textsuperscript{263} LMS Report Medical Mission 1866, p. 90.  
\textsuperscript{264} David Arnold, \textit{Touching the Body}: perspectives on the Indian Plague, Delhi, 1987, p. 75.  
\textsuperscript{265} Ganesh, \textit{Keralathiley Innalakal}, (Malayalam) Trivandrum, 1990, p. 245.
young Brahmin and his mother, a Sudhra, his wife and brother, a Shannar boy and his mother besides patients of other castes who were admitted for shorter periods. It also gave a rude shock to the privileged caste prejudice in the minds of the caste Hindus. A large impression about the service mindedness of the Missionaries which in turn helped the cause of Christianity. Connected with the Medical Mission was the leper asylum which began operating in 1888 under the leadership of Dr. Sargood Fry a medical Missionary at Neyyoor.

Outstanding among the physicians who served on the Medical Mission was the world famous Dr. Howard Somervell. Dr Somervell travelled through South India and was impressed by the tremendous need for medical services in that area. He gave up his highly successful London practice and joined the Mission hospital at Neyyoor. He arrived in 1932 and put Neyyoor in the map of the world. The Medical Mission work spread throughout the South Travancore with many dispensaries and hospitals. A hospital was opened in Kalayapuram in the North.

The healing of the London Missionary Society in South Travancore was a Mission of love to the poor, ignorant, illiterate suffering of the mass in the country. In the beginning of the Trivandrum Mission in 1860, the Darbar Dr. Warring joined with the Missionary in helping the poor during the time of famine. As in the matter of Education so in the dispensation of Medical aid the London Mission Society had very early taken the lead. The results of the Medical Mission were far reaching as it gradually became the link between the Non - Christian and the Travancore Mission.

266 LMS Report Medical Mission 1866, p. 90.
268 Cover file No. 999, Annual Contribution to the Neyyoor Hospital, p. 12.
269 Sobhanan, *op. cit.*, p.122.
3.2.9.1. Dr. Ramsay

The Pioneer of the medical Mission was Dr. Ramsay. The London Missionary Society was able to get a surgeon in Dr. Archibald Ramsay who was willing to come and work in Travancore\textsuperscript{273}. Dr. Ramsay reached Neyyoor on 6 April 1838 with his wife and step daughter Miss. Paul. He was the second medical Missionary sent forth by the LMS and the first to come over to Travancore. Apart from military doctor, Dr. Ramsay was the pioneer of western medicine in Travancore. By commencing his work in the same month of his arrival at Neyyoor, he established the South Travancore Medical Mission. There was no suitable building for carrying on this humanitarian work\textsuperscript{274}. Mead put up temporary thatched sheds and helped the patients to come and stay. From then onwards, there was a steady flow of patients who were able to get regular treatment. At morning and evening times, Mr. Ashton and catechist Thoma read out scripture lessons to the patients and exhorted them to believe on the Great Physician Jesus and prayed with them\textsuperscript{275}.

In addition to this, the doctor selected some of the seminary students and with them formed a separate medical class and began to teach them lessons concerning the medical science\textsuperscript{276}. From these humble beginnings, the medical work of the LMS in Travancore grew to such extent that at one time it became the biggest medical Mission in the world. It was running more than twenty branches, staffed and supervised from the Central Hospital at Neyyoor. Originally Rev. Mead did not intend to establish the Medical Mission at Neyyoor on a permanent basis. Neyyoor was neither a thickly populated area in those days, nor was it a centre of Non-Christians among whom the Medical Mission was expected to bring better results. Therefore, Rev. Mead selected Fort Udayagiri close to Padmanapapuram as the centre for the

\textsuperscript{273} I.H. Hacker, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 76.
\textsuperscript{274} James Hough, \textit{op. cit.}, vol. III, p.156.
\textsuperscript{275} LMS Report, Medical Mission, 1839, p.40.
Medical Mission. Padmanaphapuram, a Hindu stronghold in South Travancore, was an ideal place as it was surrounded by thickly populated villages with people belonging to various castes and creeds. Accordingly, Rev. Mead tried to get the officers building used by General De Lannoy, the former Commander-in-Chief of the Travancore native forces\textsuperscript{277}.

It was indeed a great and happy period for the Medical Mission when the Missionaries and the doctor stayed together in Neyyoor carrying on the divine work. But soon a change in the charge of the Missionaries was effected in the year 1839, which resulted in the removal of the Medical Mission from Neyyoor. Rev. Charles Miller was transferred to Nagercoil and along with him went also the seminary which was in his charge\textsuperscript{278}. Since Dr. Ramsay was conducting a medical class in the seminary, he too went to Nagercoil. Therefore, the Medical Mission was also transferred to Nagercoil. Ramsay’s work at Nagercoil was closely associated with the Rev. Charles Mault. The latter often introduced patients to the new doctor in his station. The veranda of the doctor’s house at Nagercoil became an asylum in which patients were always accommodated. The people who observed Dr. Ramsay’s work in the Medical Mission saw that some novel things were going on and brought to him people suffering from various diseases. For the sake of the people who wanted to stay there and continue their treatment, Ramsay soon set up small thatched huts with the help of Rev. Mualt\textsuperscript{279}.

But the huts proved inadequate to accommodate all the patients who wanted to stay there. Therefore to erect a better hospital, he made an appeal for funds which was liberally responded by both Europeans and natives in Travancore. He began the building with the money thus collected on a site where the present Women’s Christian College is situated. The building was planned by Col. Horsley and the basement was

\textsuperscript{277} Samuel Zechariah, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{279} Medical Mission Report, 1839, p. 14.
soon completed. Unfortunately, at this stage, there arose a difference of opinion between Dr. Ramsay and the other Missionaries. Therefore, he left the Mission in 1840 and entered government service at Trivandrum. Later, the building he began to construct for the hospital was completed and used for the seminary by Rev. J.O. Whitehouse\textsuperscript{280}.

In Travancore, Dr. Ramsay found people very willing to accept his treatment, as is seen from the fact that during his first three months, he had treated as many as 1500 cases. He wrote: "People of every caste, even the Brahmins, flock to me for advice. I have free access to all and have great reason to believe that good will be done." His name became well known not only throughout Travancore, but also in the neighbouring provinces. He was invited to Palayamkottai when the CMS Missionaries working there. Rev. Rhenius fell ill. Despite Dr. Ramsay’s best efforts Rhenius succumbed to his illness in June 1838\textsuperscript{281}.

3.2.9.2. Dr. S.H. Pugh

Dr. Pugh assumed charge of the Medical Mission. The entire staff were those trained within the Mission and therefore they were hopeless, underpaid, though they were better known and reliable. The Medical Evangelists without whose service the Medical Mission would not have widened its scope were paid Rs.12 or 14 per month. Dr. Puch having come to know of their poor standard of living on account of their meagre salaries, raised it upto five or six times\textsuperscript{282}. Similarly, he revised the salary of all the members of the Medical Mission and their standard of living became better than it was before. When the salaries and the standard of living of the servants became better, the type of person who came for training as a nurse or a compounder also became far superior to those came before. Nursing profession which was once considered to be a shameful job in India and was now gradually getting to be

\textsuperscript{280} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{281} LMS Report, 1840, p. 65.
honoured and trusted\textsuperscript{283}. The increasing expenditure of the Medical Mission necessitated charging patients for operations and consultations, a principle introduced by Dr. Pugh. Later Dr. T.H. Somervell justified Dr. Pugh’s action as follows: "Much as we should like to treat all our patients free of charge, we could only do so if we gave them thoroughly inferior treatment and bad inadequate nursing. To keep up our standard which is the highest we can give with the skill and funds at our disposal. We have to charge for it and we consider it is no charity to give free treatment to those who can well afford to pay. Especially if by so doing, we would of necessity deprive the poor of any attention at all"\textsuperscript{284}.

The mode of treatment and the introduction of modern techniques into it, raised the standard of medical attention in Neyyoor higher than it was anywhere else in Travancore. Therefore, the number of people who came to Neyyoor increased. Dr. Pugh continued the medical class begun by Dr. Davidson and the services of the students were usefully employed when the existing staff of the Medical Mission was found inadequate to cope with increasing necessities. The standard of surgical work performed in Neyyoor Hospital during Dr. Pugh’s time was continually keeping abreast of the time\textsuperscript{285}. In certain fields, Neyyoor had actually set the pace of the whole of India and been ahead of all other hospital in the country. Dr. Pugh was the first surgeon in India to realize that dyspepsia that was so common in South India and Ceylon was due to duodenal ulcer. This disease in a village community cannot be satisfactorily treated except by surgical operation. Dr. Pugh was the first surgeon in India to operate for it.

Opportunities of the medical Mission for service multiplied at an alarming rate inspite of the fees charged for operations and consultations. As stated above, the

\textsuperscript{283} C.M. Agur, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 874.

\textsuperscript{284} Poonam Bala, \textit{Imperialism and Medicine in Bengal: A Socio-Historical Perspective}, Delhi, 1991, p. 183.

\textsuperscript{285} N. Martin Daniel Dhas, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 59.
major portion of Dr. Pugh’s service in Neyyoor was single handed. Therefore, the patients for operations had to wait many weeks, in great pain for their turn to come\textsuperscript{286}. This lack of European doctor was painfully expressed in one of his annual reports, "we have known years when three European doctors have staffed our medical work and been fully employed. But during the past year Dr. Pugh has had to meet single handed the work which three doctors would have found heavy. We are further unfortunate in being without a European nurse. Being understaffed for the past six years it has not been possible to carry on a medical class to train new workers and we are now feeling keenly the lack of Medical Evangelists. Three branch hospitals have had to be closed and the work in one or two others has been inefficient as we have no men to replace the present workers\textsuperscript{287}. Dr Pugh made arrangements to get his men trained in the American Presbyterian Mission Medical School at Miraj in Bombay. The entire cost of education of those candidates was met by the Medical Mission. The minimum cost for each student for the four years, including their one year probation at Neyyoor was Rs.1800. An expense which could have been properly equipped to train its own students. With the arrival of the newly trained doctors from Miraj the outlook of the existing Medical Evangelists become widened through their contact with the well trained new comers\textsuperscript{288}.

The Missions work on the woman’s side was greatly affected with the retirement of Miss Schaffter in 1922. Miss Schaffter had been steering the nursing department from 1916 in an efficient manner. But with her resignation, the Medical Mission went without a European nurse and the absence of a lady superintendent lowered the standard of nursing and gave additional work to Dr. Pugh. In spite of the fact that Miss Ferguson, a European nurse who was making a tour in India volunteered to serve the Hospital for a period of two years. Without a permanent nursing superintendent, there was no chance to train any fresh candidates as nurse and

\begin{footnotesize}
286 Ibid., p.60.
288 Ibid., p. 11.
\end{footnotesize}
the result was a shortage in the nursing department. But this state of affairs in the nursing department came to be remedied in 1923 when Miss E.A. Hacker, after completing her training as a nurse in Guy’s hospital, London, joined the Medical Mission. The benefits of her work from 1923 to 1927 became well appreciated by the Mission. She was an exceedingly capable nurse. She spoke Tamil like a Tamilian, being born and brought up in Neyyoor itself when her father Rev. I. H. Hacker, was Missionary there. She began to give training to freshman and woman in nursing. The efficiency of the men and women whom Miss Hacker trained was highly spoken of by doctors. From now onwards the Medical Mission never suffered for lack of nurses.

The already famous South Travancore Medical Mission was to enter into an era of marvellous changes with the arrival of Dr. T.H. Somervell of Mount Everest fame. Dr. Somervell first visited the Neyyoor Hospital in September 1922 when Dr. Pugh was at the helm of affairs. Dr. Somervell stayed with Dr. Pugh for a fortnight and the two doctors together were able to perform a number of surgical operation. Being impressed by the great need, he saw at Neyyoor, Dr. Somervell decided to come to Neyyoor as a medical Missionary. Dr. Somervell himself wrote of it as follows: In fact, “it was due to a ten days sojourn at Neyyoor in 1922, that I had decided to spend the best part of my life at that very place, where the need seemed to be great, and the supply seemed hopelessly inadequate.”

Dr. Somervell joined the staff of the Medical Mission in 1923. At the very outset, what he noticed in the Neyyoor Hospital was the inadequacy of doctors in relation to the number of patients there and also the inadequacy of the accommodation for the patients already existing. While, his arrival solved the first problem, it only intensified the second. For a while, Dr. Pugh who was working full time was able to fill the hospital of eighty beds and to keep them full now two famous doctors working full time simply dealt with twice that number. This brought in the need for doubling

289 Report of the Medical Mission for the Year 1924.
290 I. H. Hacker, op. cit, p. 112.
the patient’s accommodation. The Hospital capacity at this time began to look so wonderfully inadequate that not only all the beds were full but even an extra patient was put under each bed, besides a few between the beds. The verandas were also filled with patients. This made the two doctors think seriously on the question of finding additional accommodation[^291].

Apart from the overall inadequacy of accommodation, there was also a bad arrangement in the Neyyoor Hospital by which the women’s ward became situated on the road side in the front portion of the hospital in a public place[^292]. This arrangement was not suitable to the Indian custom of segregating women. Because of this arrangement many of the privileged class women patients would not willingly come to the Neyyoor Hospital. For years Dr. Pugh was brooding over this problem and he rightly thought of building a separate ward for women.

It was at this juncture that Dr. Somervell brought with him an X-ray apparatus. The need for installing this apparatus together with the necessity for increasing accommodation brought the issue of a separate ward for the women to the forefront. So shortly after the arrival of Dr. Somervell in 1923, the work for additional accommodation was started in right earnest. In the new construction, the X-ray room and a large medical ward were on the ground floor. The former opening out wards into the men’s compound, the later into the women’s[^293]. Above these were two wards, one for midwifery and the other for surgery. To the south west were to be three wards with six or eight beds, two for septic cases and one to function as an isolation ward. Mrs. Parker gave ten thousand rupees towards the cost of these buildings from her embroidery industry at Trivandrum. Later two rows of kitchens and a maternity room were added to this fifty bed women’s ward. The total cost of the building came about rupees twenty thousand and it was Mrs. Parker who opened the new women’s

[^293]: Ibid., p. 3.
ward in 1924. From now onwards, Neyyoor Hospital began to attract almost every class of women including Mohammedans. The visiting hours was fixed from twelve to two, during which time alone men were allowed to visit their sick ones. After the opening of this new women’s ward, former women’s ward was used as men’s abdominal ward and some 300 or 400 gastric cases every year were treated in it.294

These new accommodation facilities and the introduction of modern techniques like X-ray apparatus etc. attracted a large number of people from all over Travancore and even from the neighbouring provinces.295 In spite of the continuation in multiplication of government hospitals throughout Travancore in those days, the South Travancore Medical Mission dealt with 134,000 new cases in the year 1926 alone – a record number in the history of the Medical Mission. This was also as far as we could ascertain a number larger than that which had been dealt with in any other Medical Mission in the world. The annual report of the Medical Mission for the year 1926 says, “considering the continued multiplication of government hospitals in Travancore, the fact that our patients are more numerous than ever in one which speaks well for the efficiency of the Mission and the confidence it inspires in the country”.296

Neyyoor Hospital is the largest hospital in Travancore. Its equipment is thoroughly up to date in consequence we often have cases sent to us which the government hospitals have been unable to treat, but which find Neyyoor ready and able to give them all the benefit of modern surgery, aided in its diagnosis by X-rays and in its practical side by diathermy. During 1926, the major operations done at Neyyoor have totally 1032 a greater number than ever before.297

295 Ibid.
296 Ibid., p. 16.
297 Ibid.
Neyyoor Hospital under Dr. Pugh had attained in the whole front of Christian Missions would appear from the following lines taken from the one hundred and thirty first report of the London Missionary Society in the year 1926: "The growth of the Medical Mission during all these years became manifest not only in the Central Hospital at Neyyoor but also in its various branches. Marthandam Hospital for example, one of the largest of the branches opened four new private wards in 1922. The cost of their erection was entirely defrayed by Mrs. Sinclair from the Marthandam embroidery industry owned by the LMS in South Travancore. The branch hospital at Kulasekaram was running successfully and had dealt with 7000 patients during the year 1926 alone. The Tittivillai branch which had been closed for some time was also ready for reopening in 1926." 298.

During this period, though Dr. Somervell was in Neyyoor from 1926 onwards, it seemed that he was not able to focus his whole attention towards the Medical Mission, as he had decided to be a Medical Missionary at Neyyoor. However, he returned to Neyyoor in August and worked in double harness. In 1925, he went back to England where he did the best thing. All the recorded growth and advance of the Medical Mission in these days therefore were to be attributed mainly to the efficiency and painstaking work of Dr. Pugh. A Medical Mission report says, “Dr. Pugh who did more than any single individual to increase the efficiency of our Medical Mission. He developed the surgical side of the Neyyoor Hospital enormously” 299.

3.2.9.3. Dr. T.S. Somervell

Theodore Howard Somervell was destined to steer the course of the South Travancore Medical Mission. He was born in Kendal, in the United Kingdom in 1880. He was qualified as a doctor in the University College Hospital, London. Dr. Somervell’s choice of Travancore as the field of his medical work was inspired by

298 Ibid., p. 17.
DR. Pugh’s services there. He visited Neyyoor and found that “the healthy man whom I had met in 1922 was pale and thin and obviously working himself to death. He had to look after Neyyoor Hospital which then had nearly a hundred beds, as well as fourteen branch hospitals and two leper homes. In addition, he had twenty Indian doctors and many other Indian hospital servants and nurses under his charge. He did almost all the operative work having developed this side of the Hospital’s activities in a most remarkable manner”³⁰⁰.

Indeed it was a boon to Travancore that the great surgeon came to serve the Medical Mission joining it in 1923. From 1923 until his official retirement in 1945 his brilliant gift as a surgeon and his life of intense Christian devotion were placed at the service of the Medical Mission. Everything he did was characterized by remarkable brilliance and outstanding success. His years of service in the Mission in combination with Dr. Pugh gave him an opportunity to understand the people, their custom and their sufferings. Dr. Somervell’s previous experience in Neyyoor Hospital was as a junior doctor, but now he had to head the Medical Mission³⁰¹. Yet, with high hopes and much enthusiasm Dr. Somervell took up the work of the Medical Mission straight away. In the hospital work, he was not left alone for much longer. For the same year itself, Dr. Dudly Marks was sent by the Board at home. Dr. Mark was an able surgeon extremely capable to deal with Indian patients. His efficiency can be gauged from one simple incident. In June 1927, four out of the five Mission students who returned from the Miraj Medical School failed in their final examination. Dr. Marks gave them only six months tuition not averaging more than one hour every day, one of them passed. Dr. Marks had great desire to stay in Travancore as one of the permanent members of the Medical Mission³⁰².

³⁰⁰ Report of G.E. Phillip to Secretariat of India, September 1933, p. 25.
³⁰¹ T. Somervell, op. cit., p. 18.
In 1927, Dr. Somervell was relieved from the additional burden of office work with the arrival of Mr. Harlow as a business manager of the Medical Mission. Formerly he had been working in the LMS Hospital in Hong Kong in the same capacity and therefore without much difficulty, he was able to run the business management of the Medical Mission. While shouldering the entire business responsibilities, Mr. Harlow took upon himself the responsibility of improving the financial situation of the Medical Mission also\textsuperscript{303}.

The entire lot of drugs needed for the Medical Mission in those days was brought from the agents and not directly from the manufacturers. The agents charged high prices for them. Obviously, it was avoidable waste of money. But now under Mr. Harlow, Neyyoor Hospital itself began to manufacture drugs, medicines, tablets, tooth-pastes etc. These things thus manufactured were found sufficient for all the hospitals under the South Travancore Medical Mission. The other hospitals in Travancore also began to send their orders to Neyyoor asking for these things. The manufacture of drugs and allied things in Neyyoor brought about a turning point in the financial condition of the Medical Mission and putting it on a firm foundation for the future. In addition to these works, Mr. Harlow took on his shoulders the responsibility of the X-ray department also for some time, for which he had special training at home. He worked at Neyyoor until 1947 and in that year he was transferred to Kundara along with the medical stores where he worked till 1953\textsuperscript{304}.

During those days, there existed a custom in Neyyoor Hospital of taking the European patients into the bungalows of the doctors for treatment for want of convenience suitable to them in the general wards of the hospital. Dr. James Davidson’s desire to build a separate nursing home for Europeans did not come into practice due to lack of money. But the task was undertaken by Dr. Somervell. In

\textsuperscript{303} David Arnold, \textit{Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth Century in India}, California, 1993, p. 66.

\textsuperscript{304} Medical Mission Report, 1928, p. 34.
1927, he constructed a nursing home for Europeans at Neyyoor entirely at their own expense and to be financed solely by them\textsuperscript{305}. Miss Lawrence from London Hospital was arranged to be in charge of it. Her salary was paid by Messrs Harrisons and Crosfield Ltd and Messrs Malayalam Plantations Ltd. From 1928 onwards, the European nursing home began to function. This brought a great relief to the doctor’s work as it did away with the former practice of taking European patients into their bungalows. Also its establishment became a profitable one to the Medical Mission. All the fees from the European patients went towards the Medical Mission, except for the first year or so when the fees obtained had to be used for the equipment of the nursing home. Moreover, Miss Lawrence, apart from her work in the nursing home found a good deal of time for work in the main hospital\textsuperscript{306}.

After the retirement of Dr. Marks, the Medical Mission joined to receive Dr. Ian Orr who came with his wife. The ill wind that blew them away from China became a favourable breeze for Travancore. Mrs. Orr was glad to enter into the house at Neyyoor where she was born when her father Dr. Bentall lived while working at Neyyoor. Dr. Orr was a first class surgeon and since Dr. Somervell was also a surgeon, Neyyoor continued to be famous for surgery. The surgical cases of the branch hospitals were directed to the Central Hospital\textsuperscript{307}. They dealt with only medical cases as there were little facilities for operations in them. Being a doctor with an enquiring type of brain, Dr. Orr was keen in research. While at Neyyoor, he did two extremely thorough and useful pieces of research. He investigated the problem of cancer of the mouth in Travancore. He discovered it to be due to the tobacco which chewed with the betalnut, certain kinds of tobacco being much more apt to produce cancer than other varieties. Then he proceeded to investigate the problem of duodenal ulcer in conjunction with Dr. Somervell and they came to the conclusion that vitamin

\textsuperscript{305} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{306} Ibid., p. 35.
deficiency was the most essential factor in its production in Travancore. Dr. Orr also perfected the transplantation of the uterus by operation \(^{308}\).

During the month of October and November 1928, South Travancore witnessed a cholera spreading over with all its severity. The countryside around Neyyoor for many miles was ravaged by it where many families were altogether wiped out within a few days. Though the Travancore government became aware of it and took steps to help the people, they did not reach much interior from the roadside \(^{309}\). Dr. Somervell in the report for the year, "spent many days in relieving the distress in the villages off the roadside. One of our Missionaries, with one of our Indian assistants and two orderlies together with a supply of drugs and all the apparatus necessary for intravenous infusion went about every day going and inquiring of houses along the roads as to where the new cases had started. Often we had to walk two or three miles to the stricken villages and on the most days we did about fifteen to twenty miles on foot". In this way the medical party of the Mission visited over a thousand cases personally and over a thousand more had medicines sent to them or left with them. Most of these poor people would have died but for the relief offered by the Medical Mission. For this service, the government honoured Dr. Somervell by conferring medals \(^{310}\).

One of the most important achievements in the Neyyoor hospital during the time of Dr. Somervell was the introduction of radium treatment for cancer in the year 1930. In that year, he had a grant to a man working abroad to England during which time Dr. Orr managed the Medical Mission single handed. During the furlough Dr. Somervell collected some money, largely as a result of his broadcasting, account of his work in Travancore \(^{311}\). The introduction of radium in a hospital like Neyyoor

\(^{309}\) Ibid.
\(^{311}\) Medical Mission Report, 1930, p. 27.
where cancer of the mouth was frequently seen brought immense benefits to hundred and thousands of sufferers. By the end of the year 1930, two special wards were built in the Neyyoor hospitals for the radium treatment. These were the first radium wards to have been erected in the whole of India. The wards were opened by Col. Pritchard, the newly arrived British Resident to Travancore. The tremendous enthusiasm with which the cancer wards were received by the thousands of cancer patients all over India has been explained by Dr. Somervell. The opening of our radium wards has developed our facilities for relieving cases of cancer and nearly five hundred operations have been performed for cancer in 1931, many of these being the insertion of radium. Such is the appalling frequency of cancer, especially of the mouth, in this country that it is strikingly evident that our present supply of radium. Through it to treat some two hundred cases every year is hopelessly insufficient\textsuperscript{312}.

Dr. Miss Joan Thompson, the first European lady doctor of the Medical Mission came in 1936. Next year Dr. James Romans Davidson whose father Dr. James Davidson had also worked at Neyyoor between 1905 and 1913. With their arrival things got clarity. Women and children were allotted to Miss Thompson and the medical cases went to Dr. Davidson, as well as the skin diseases. In addition to surgery, Dr. Somervell continued to listen ears and eyes. This division of work ceased the burden of the doctors and greatly improved the efficiency of their work\textsuperscript{313}.

Rapid growth followed this specialization of work. There had been an increase in the number of patients dealt with, especially among the medical and maternity cases. Mr. Harlow improved the drug department and more than doubled its work by increasing the manufacture and accommodation facilities and by developing the distribution system. The laboratory work progressed and at several branches pathologists were appointed. The leper home was no longer an asylum but a place

\textsuperscript{312} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{313} Medical Mission Report, 1931, p. 24.
where patients could receive treatment which resulted in a number of cases being discharged as cured each year.

In 1938 the South Travancore Medical Mission completed its one hundred years of service, the London Missionary Society in Travancore celebrated the occasion in a fitting manner\(^\text{314}\). On the last day of the celebrations, a thanks giving meeting attended by thousands of people was held at Neyyoor. Mr. K.K. Kuruvila from North Travancore and Dr. Webb from Dhonavur gave addresses. Earlier it had been decided to collect a centenary fund that could be used for the extension of the Medical Mission, while a portion of it was used to improve the branches\(^\text{315}\). In many cases the amount was used to construct new buildings. The major share went to the Neyyoor hospital. A shortwave therapy and ultra-violet light therapy have been added to the method of treatment in the electrical department and a cutting diatherm to the surgical equipment. The front block of the Neyyoor hospital was remodeled to its present form so as to have more space for patients and better facilities for nursing them. A new maternity block and an out-patient ward were also added. In response to the increasing demand for private wards, the old row of wards for private patients was partly replaced by more up to date buildings. One such building was built and presented to the hospital by Mr. Ramanathan Chettiar of Kottaiyur\(^\text{316}\).

### 3.2.9.4. Work among Leprosy Patients

Well qualified, committed Medical Missionaries followed one after another, each making their special contribution to the healing ministry of the Church in South Travancore. Another landmark in this liberation process was the opening of a separate home for leprosy patients on 8 September 1888 at Allancode, couple of kilometers to the north of Neyyoor\(^\text{317}\). Leprosy was considered a dreadful disease for which it was

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\(^{315}\) Ibid., p. 3.


\(^{317}\) Joy Gnanadasan, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
believed there was no cure. The dread of infection and the stigma attached to the
disease made those who were affected by it objects of horror. Those found suffering
from leprosy were thrown out of their homes and chased out of the towns and village.
Most of them had no choice except to beg. Even this was not easy they were literally
driven out of the streets by the frightened people. Moved by the appeal of such
helpless beggars, Dr. Fry launched out this Mission of mercy and courage providing
accommodation for ten to twelve sufferers. In this he was helped by the Mission to
lepers. Soon this Home became an asylum for men and women suffering from
leprosy.  

The first block of buildings which could accommodate 20 patients was opened
on 12 August 1892 when there were 22 patients. Then Mrs. Charles Pease, a
benevolent friend of lepers from England had given the entire sum necessary to
complete the whole scheme of buildings contemplated, which included separate
rooms for 40 in-patients, chapel, houses for attendants, dispensary, mortuary and a
well. She made herself responsible for the whole work among lepers and their
children carried S.T. Medical Mission at Neyyoor. The Dewan of the state, Shankara
Soobayar who was invited to open the new building, paid high tribute to the
Missionaries for the work they were doing for the benefit of the poor and oppressed,
remarked that he considered the present work among the lepers as crowning all their
work in the past which deserved unmeasured praise. “True Charity” he said; could not
have had a worthier object than an organized system of relief to the poor outcaste
lepers.

A home for the healthy children of leprosy parents had been started in March
1891. The need for such segregation was brought home to the Missionaries in a very
painful manner by the child of the cook in the leprosy home, was allowed to play with

318 Ibid.
the patients inspite of warnings of contracting the disease. In this home, the healthy children of leprosy parents grew up free from contagion along with other orphan children. Further, on 1 January 1901 a separate home was opened by Dr. Fells in Neyyoor for the women patients. This again was the gift of Mrs. Charles Pease. Greater love than this no one had shown to these miserable beings\textsuperscript{321}.

The number of patients increased and the accommodation was found inadequate. It was decided to shift the home from Allancode to a spacious site in the village of Udayarvilai on the Monday Market-Colachel Highway about 6 kilometers to the South of Neyyoor close to West Neyyoor where the privileged class Nairs lived. There was opposition from the public. But in 1933, a doctor’s house and four wards were opened by the Dewan Austin in the midst of demonstrations and stone throwing. From the Neyyoor home were shifted to the new home which was most appropriately named the Charles Pease Memorial Leprosy Home. Mrs. Charles Pease who had been supporting the whole work among lepers at Neyyoor and had provided the money for this new home\textsuperscript{322}.

\textbf{3.2.9.5. Great Contribution of Medical Mission.}

1. The quality of the work done in the Medical Mission became excellent in a manner that had not existed before. This was due mainly to the introduction of modern techniques, arrival of specialists and the availability of a European lady doctor to work on the women’s side. Therefore, there was a steady increase in the annual number of patients rushing to the Mission hospital. Under Dr. Somervell the 1926 figure rose to 150000 in 1927 and it still continued to rise exceeding 160000 in 1930 and 216000 in 1940. The total number of people who went through the Mission hospitals during the year 1945 was more than 250000. It was Dr. Somervell’s great desire that every branch hospital should have a qualified doctor, at least two or three nurses, a

\textsuperscript{321} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{322} Ibid., p. 5.
room for labour cases or minor operations, a full-time dispenser and at least thirty beds\textsuperscript{323}.

2. Dr. Somervell who brought the idea that Indians should be gradually put in responsible positions of the Medical Mission. In the future, they themselves could manage Mission’s affairs. Dr. Somervell had been often stressing the idea. They were looking forward to a time when the Indian staff would shoulder the full responsibilities of the work in the whole Medical Mission. It was already being done at Kundara and the other branches to a large extent.

3. Every step was taken as far as possible to meet the cost of the Medical Mission with the local resources, chiefly from fees, income from interest on vested funds, local donations etc. For example, the total expenditure was Rs.268493 for the year 1942-1943. The LMS grant was only 1024. Thus the Medical Mission was gradually passing through a period of self sufficiency\textsuperscript{324}.

4. The relation between the church and the Medical Mission became closer and closer. Dr. Somervell and his colleagues never hesitated to go to the relief of the people in the remote villages whenever a call for it came from the Mission. To mention only one of such instances, the people of the Central Districts of the LMS in Travancore fell an easy prey to malaria in 1939. The disease became so wide spread and so severe in its ravage that people were killed off by hundreds. Rev. J.E. Kesari, the Central district Chairman then wrote about the Medical Mission’s relief on the occasion as follows: “We appealed next to the Neyyoor Hospital. One village Poovathur where the disease was particularly bad was selected. Dr and Mrs. Davidson arrived with the necessary drugs and an assistant and treated all the afflicted ones in the school and the congregation. Dr. & Mrs. Somervell with friends from Neyyoor also arrived with clothes, rice, and materials for treatment. This prompt and very

\textsuperscript{323} Travancore Mission Council Minutes, November 1940 and February 1941, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{324} Travancore Mission Council Minutes of August 1941, p. 34.
kind response from Neyyoor was of immense value. The epidemic was definitely checked in Poovathur”\textsuperscript{325}.

After a long and lustrous service in the Medical Mission this great Missionary doctor officially retired from it in 1945. Then the Travancore Mission Council of the LMS passed the following resolution to honour him. “In bidding farewell to Dr. Somervell, the council recalls with gratitude and sincere appreciation for his long, brilliant and selfless labours as medical Missionary of the LMS in South Travancore. His eminence as a surgeon and his self-sacrificing life have made it possible for thousands of people to get relief from suffering and cure from disease as well as a glimpse of the true Christian way of life”\textsuperscript{326}.

3.2.10. Social Involvement of the Missionaries

The LMS Missionaries from the very beginning of their work and the CMS Missionaries after the Synod of Mavelikkara came into direct contact with the lower sections of the society. The unprivileged classes who had been subjected to various traditional social laws which imposed many restrictions looked to the Missionaries for their material and spiritual advantages\textsuperscript{327}. C.M. Agur writes “The first spectacle that would often strike Ringeltaube on his return to his house from visits was the numerous long cadjan petitions (written in Palmyra leaves)” the people used to hang on the low roof of the veranda of his small Bungalow\textsuperscript{328}.

John Cox, who fought for the rights of the people during 1850’s wrote: “No sooner does any European gentlemen who is thought to have even a remote connection with the government approach Travancore, then he is over whelmed with petitions, to prove which, if an opportunity were obtained the deliverance from the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[325] Ibid.
\item[326] Ibid., p. 36.
\item[327] J.W. Gladstone, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 73.
\item[328] Cyril Bruce Firth, \textit{Indian Church History}, Serampore, 1960, p. 71.
\end{footnotes}
present misery would be so great, that the petitioners would consider themselves to be introduced into a higher state of existence“

People appealed to the Missionaries for various benefits and favors from the government, when on their part the Missionaries found that the grievances of the people were genuine they did indeed exert their influence to get such benefits on relief. When for example the Mylady Christians convinced Ringeltaube of the oppressive nature of some of the taxes such as the poll tax, Ringeltaube approached the Resident with the needs of his people on the instruction of the Resident the tax was abolished in 1815.

In 1815, during the time of Col. Munro, through his influence some exemptions were made for Christians from ‘Ooilum’ services on Sundays and such services connected with temples. This and similar enactments failed to bring about the desired results and ‘Oolium’ continued unchanged but at least when the Christians demanded their right of not doing ‘Oolium’ on Sundays and for temples, they had the full support of the Missionaries. The Missionaries also protested against the exploitation of their people by government officials, who took away from them such item as fowls at an unfairly cheap price, and prohibited the use of the milk of cows for the lower caste people etc.

During the nineteenth century, the status of the women was very low in Travancore. The Missionary did yeomen service in the field of women education.

Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Mault, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Thomson, Mrs. Norton, Mrs. Balley and

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331 Proclamation of the Travancore Government, dated, 1 Karthika 1815.
332 Sobhanan, *op. cit.*, P. 128.
333 C.M. Agur, *op. cit.*, P.695.
Mrs. Baker are honored names associated with these pioneering education enterprises among the women of Travancore. The introduction and popularization of the best, an English education conscientious the mind of both men and woman against evils of the society.\textsuperscript{336}

English education was one of the dynamic factors which instilled the suppressed section of the society with a strong desire of emancipation. The Shannar and other Christian converts advanced in worldly circumstances. It was most natural that they should not so familiar as before to endure the injustice and oppression to which they had been exposed from the privileged caste. But this was intolerable for the privileged caste.

3.2.11. Social Inequalities

Unprivileged people suffered much from the oppression of the government and caste Hindus. The privileged caste people considered these people not human but animals. On the eve of the English arrival, Travancore presented the picture of a Tenedal or pollute with its characteristic weakness\textsuperscript{337}. These were social inequalities and disparities among the various classes.

3.2.11.1. Child Marriage

It was one of the social evils which enslaved woman kind in South Travancore. The girls among Nairs and Nambudiris were given in marriage before the age of puberty. Girls were married off when seven or even five years old, whilst boy went till they were sixteen, twenty or eleven older\textsuperscript{338}. Once a girl had passed the marriageable age it was very difficult for her to find a husband; moreover if she died, he can marry again a little child of five or six years old. The husband generally died


\textsuperscript{337} T.P. Sankaran Kutty Nair, \textit{A Tragic Decade in Travancore History}, Trivandrum, 1977, p. 69.

\textsuperscript{338} V.M. Premnath, \textit{Keraledhile Adimakal} (Malayalam), Trissur, 1966, p. 81.
long before his wife and often even she had attained the age which would allow him to exercise his right as a husband. So the poor girl became a widow, she may not marry again. The Brahmins also practised child marriage and the re-marriage of widows was strictly prohibited till the end of the nineteenth century.

Ezhava girls were all married in infancy as a mere forms of custom, at various age from one to nine. If not so married, the neighbours reproached the parents for their neglect and excluded them from social privileges. The person who married a girl in infancy did not afterwards live with her. This was a wicked social custom because the child was not at all conscious of the real meaning and obligation of the relatives although her girlish fancies had been continually directed to it.

3.2.11.2. Child Widow

As one of the Missionaries has put it, in the age of comparative childhood, she is united in marriage without any knowledge of or having even seen her husband when they meet together for the first time they are bound together for life. Thousands who are thus married in a stage of childhood loose their husband without having even lived with them and are doomed to a life of widowhood for the law forbids them to remarry. Parents in some cases marry fifty or sixty daughters to one Brahmin that family may be raised to honour by a marriage relation to their man (These females with husband). The Missionary has again articulated the conditions of the child wife thus. She never sits to eat with her husband but prepares his food, wait upon him and part takers of what he leaves. If a friend of the either sex calls upon her

340 Ibid., P.51.
husband she retires. She is veiled; she desires no knowledge for the other sex, except from the stories to which she may listen from the mouth of a religious mendicant.\textsuperscript{343}

3.2.11.3. Prohibition of Widow Remarriage

The life of widow was very miserable. A widow had to be mourning till her death. There were several signs of mourning. One was that she was expected to have her hand shorn once in a month, she was not allowed to chew betal, she must wear coloured cloth no longer\textsuperscript{344}. Only pure white once. Furthermore, she was forbidden to take part in any amusement or attending family festivals such as marriage feasts etc. The very sight of widow was believed to bring ill-luck. She was prohibited from wearing jewels, beautiful clothes and eating tasty food. According to the prevalent belief, the widow shall never exceed one meal a day nor sleep on the bed, if she does so her husband falls from swarga\textsuperscript{345}.

3.2.11.4. Devadasi System

Another social evil which prevented in the society of Travancore was the devadasi system. The dedication of unmarried girls to deities for service in temple was Tamilian custom and was prevalent in all the temples in Tamil districts. By the influence of the Tamilians, it found its way into some temples in South Travancore\textsuperscript{346}. The Devadasis of South Travancore adopted in to their fold, girls of the Tamil Padam or Padamangalam section of the Nairs. Those attached to the Padmanabha Swami temple at Trivandrum were drawn from the Padamangalam caste of the Sudras and this section also supplied temple servants in the Agastheswaram taluks. By the time of

\textsuperscript{344} Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, \textit{Chila Keral Chatithra Prashnangal} (Malayalam), Kottayam, 1963, p.48.
\textsuperscript{345} K. Sarathamoni, \textit{Emergence of a Slave Caste Pulaya of Travancore}, Delhi, 1980, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{346} L.A. Krishna Iyer, \textit{Travancore and Her People}, Palgat, 1961, p. 46.
Raja Raja, the great, the system had become rooted in Tamil Nadu\textsuperscript{347}. The frequent contact with Cholas and Pandyas at Suchindram, the institution might have been imported from those region. Raja Raja Chola stabilized the order on a permanent basis at Tanjavur. He also introduced the system at Suchindram. The Malayali Brahmins entered the area of Suchindram and eventually dominated Santi Tantram and management of the temple they would have imported some devadasis of the Nair group\textsuperscript{348}.

The office of Devadasi became hereditary by the thirteenth century. A certain child and her forthcoming generations were regarded belonging to the God. Sometimes children were dedicated to the temples because of the vow\textsuperscript{349}. Sometimes, a child was given in order to escape from some entanglement. For instance, if the father was ill the mother vowed that if he recovered she would give one of her children to God. Sometimes a poor widow or a deserted wife was faced by the impossibility of marrying of her child suitable; she married her child to the God. After the fourteenth century, Devadasi system degenerated to its worst. This was a system which degraded the status of women in the society\textsuperscript{350}.

3.2.11.5. Slavery

In India, the origin of slavery is closely associated with the inception of the caste system which in turn was based on our hierarchical social order. The term Jati (caste) and Varna (colour) were used as synonyms. The whole structure was given a religious background and holy garb. In Travancore, there were several slave classes like the Pulayas, Parayas, Vettuvans etc,\textsuperscript{351} but the first constituted the bulk of the total slave population. Besides heredity, there were certain other sources and factors

\textsuperscript{348} Godfrey Philip, \textit{The Untouchables}, London, 1936, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{350} D.J. Melchizedek, \textit{The High Caste Indians and Christianity}, Madras, 1909, p. 59.
of political and social nature which contributed to the pool of slavery. For instance, wars and conquests between petty chiefs and princes were always followed by the capture of vanquished who were turned into slaves. During famines, parents used to sell their children into slavery\textsuperscript{352}. Women of privileged castes, in case of association with men of unprivileged caste were invariably degraded to slavery and barred from their parental community. There was a custom that when a farmer or landlord wanted a few Pulaya to work in the fields, he obtained their services on payment of fifteen to twenty rupees to their master\textsuperscript{353}. The demand for slaves was always followed by fresh means of acquiring them. In the Coromandel, during the period of famine and scarcity, the parents used to sell their children at cheap rates. Thus slaves were denied even the remote comforts of human life. They were systematically tortured both physically and mentally\textsuperscript{354}.

The slaves were cruelly treated by their masters who enjoyed the right to sell, chain and kill the slaves.\textsuperscript{355} They were given only a small quantity of grain for their subsistence. In sickness and old age, they were not protected by their masters. They were also grievously neglected in regard to food and clothing. Those who escaped were chased and brought back and severe punishments were meted on them. There was a heartless traffic of slaves carried on in different parts of the state - Kottayam, Changanaserry, Kayamkulam, Eraniel etc. In this cruel trade, the husband and the wife, the parent and the child were rudely separated and sold in different directions. Education was also denied to the slaves\textsuperscript{356}.

\textsuperscript{352} P.O. Philip, \textit{The Depressed Classes and Christianity}, Madras, 1925, p. 86.  
\textsuperscript{354} D.A. Mcgavran, \textit{India’s Oppressed Classes and Religion}, Jabalpore, 1939, p. 62.  
\textsuperscript{355} Michael. J. Mahar, \textit{The Untouchables in Contemporary India}, Arisona, 1972, p. 118.  
\textsuperscript{356} James. S. Dennis, \textit{Depressed Classes: An Enquiry into their Condition and Suggestions for their Uplift}, Madras, 1912, p. 70.
3.2.11.6. Viruthi

Those who held temple or government lands called Viruthikars. Viruthikars were bound to supply things free of cost in addition to the Oozhiyam service\(^\text{357}\). Palmyra tree leaves used as writing materials and coconut tree leaves used as the main food of elephants were supplied regularly by the Viruthikars. During festivals, the royal families, officers and jemnies should be gifted with hens, eggs, vegetables, fruits, oil and firewood should be supplied to the Ootupuras, free feeding centres for Brahmins by the Viruthikars. In all these, many a time the Viruthikars had to transport the things as head load to Trivandrum or Quilon where they lived\(^\text{358}\).

3.2.11.7. Human Sacrifices

People of Travancore used to give human sacrifice to female demon called Kali, person for which female had been used. One of the Machanzic manuscripts says that an annual human sacrifice of peculiar atrocity was accustomed to be offered. A young woman pregnant with her first child was selected and brought in front of the shrine. She was then beheaded with one blow of a sword the head rolled up in front of the image on which the blood of the victim was sprinkled\(^\text{359}\).

3.2.11.8. Marumakkathayam

Marumakkathayam or matrilineal system was followed by a number of communities in Travancore. The most important pattern to be noted in the community of the Nairs was the system of inheritance\(^\text{360}\). According to this system, sisters children were the inheritors. The Nair women were permitted to have marital relationship with any Nambuthiri or Nair. Those Nambuthiri or Nairs were not bound

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\(^{358}\) M.N. Sreenivas, *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*, Bombay, 1962, p.83.

\(^{359}\) Personal Interview with Surendran, the President of Pulaya Mahananasabha, Aged 53, Residing at Trivandrum, dated 12 January 2011.

to care for the children born in such relationship. Polyandry prevailed among them. As Robin Jeffry observed, “no Nair knew his or her father, the mother alone was known”. Properties were jointly used and it was managed by the eldest male member of the family on behalf of the female members\textsuperscript{361}. So the female members of a family lived under one roof with authority, safety, security and right. The Vellalas of Nanjinad were also called the Nanjinad Nair. They also accepted the Marumakathayam Law of inheritance and identified themselves with the Nairs\textsuperscript{362}.

There was no proper marriage system among the Nairs. Following a formal function, the women could accept as reject any number of persons. The eldest brother of the Nambuthiri shall have only a relation with three or four women. The marriage customs that the traditions followed by the Nairs, Brahmins and the forest dwellers of Africa had almost the same sort of a ‘club marriage’. It should be accepted with amazement, the custom among the Nair women that after the first night the person involved used to keep an amount of money under the pillow of the wife before leaving\textsuperscript{363}.

3.2.11.9. Smartha Vicharam

An evil custom which existed in Travancore which endangered even the privileged Castes and reduced them to slavery was Smartha\textsuperscript{364}. When a Brahmin woman was suspected by her relatives or by her Brahmin neighbours of illegal connection with men, the suspected woman had to face a severe process of trial before her excommunication from her caste and it was known as smartha. If the woman was found guilty, she was segregated and removed to a particular house which was built

\textsuperscript{361} Robert Jeffery, \textit{Decline of Nayar Dominance}, Delhi, 1976, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{364} K.V. Krishna Iyer, \textit{The Travancore Tribes and Caste}, vol. II, Trivandrum, 1941, p. 119.
for this purpose. After a severe process, she would be excommunicated and driven from her family.\(^{365}\)

The women were degraded to slavery and deprived from their parental community in other ways also. For example, a unprivileged caste woman allowed any improper intimacy with a Brahmin was sold to the Moplans (Mahommeden).\(^{366}\) A Nambudiri who was condemned to commit fornication with a ‘Taiti,’ a unprivileged caste woman would be deprived of his eyes and the girl and her relations would either be put to death or sold as slaves to a Muslim who sent them beyond the sea. At the same time, a Nambudiri did not lose caste on account of fornication with a Sudra woman. Thus women were subjected to slavery and extreme discrimination.\(^{367}\)

3.2.11.10. Untouchability

Untouchability was exercised in three levels. First, unprivileged people should not be looked at as unseeable, second they should not be approached (unapproachable) and third they should not be touched (untouchable). It is a practice that kept a section of the society physically away from the main stream in all social transactions except in using their labour for production.\(^{368}\) In fact, there were at least four kinds of disabilities and restrictions relating to the caste system in Travancore as follows. The first restriction was Tindal or caste pollution where Dalits were not permitted to use public roads, market places and courts among the various castes and there was no intermarriage or even inter-dining between them. The caste system operated itself in such an irrational and oppressive manner that Swami Vivekananda who visited the state in 1892 called ‘Travancore a veritable lunatic asylum of India’ or mad house of India.\(^{369}\) Second restrictions included the breast cloth restriction and

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366 Mahadev Desai, The Epic of Travancore, Delhi, 1940, p. 316.
368 Samuel Mateer, op. cit., p. 299.
forbidance to wear ornaments no more valuable than brass or beads. Third one is to forced labour or Oozhiyam mainly for repairing roads and public building and for acquiring provisions during festivals and for touring officials.\textsuperscript{370}

Fourth case was absolute slavery based on bonded slavery system. The slaves in Travancore had undergone all sorts of cruelties such as they had been used mercilessly to plough fields attached to animals and boxes tied to the legs of the slaves, denied to use thatched houses, slave fights like cock fights etc. The slavery was so legalized in the state that there were registered companies to supply slaves as a cheap labour force.\textsuperscript{371}

3.2.11.11. Pulapedi and Manner Pedi

Though the Nair women enjoyed considerable social influence, they also suffered from certain disabilities. If they were convicted of caste offences of a serious nature, they were put out of caste and condemned to be slaves. They were free to establish relations with the Nambudiris but not with their caste interiors.\textsuperscript{372} The claims of the unprivileged castes over them added to their grouse. During certain month of the year the unprivileged caste people like the Pulayas, Parayas and the Mannars enjoyed the right to seize the Nambudiri and the Nair females. This period was known as ‘Pulapedi Kalam’. During the months of Kumbham and Minam (February and March), if an unprivileged caste man touched a privileged caste woman during this period, she was to publicize and leave her house. She often used to hide herself in the house of some unprivileged caste people. So that her relations might not kill her as a remedy for what had happened or sell her to some strangers as they were accustomed to do. Actual contact was not necessary, it was enough if the lady was hit

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\textsuperscript{372} Sarathamoni, \textit{Emergence of a Slave Caste Pulayas of Travancore}, Delhi, 1980, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{373} Duarte Barbosa, \textit{A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar}, London, 1812, p. 143.
by a stone or stick or the person had seen her from the top of a tree\textsuperscript{374}. These unprivileged people during certain months of the year try as hard as and secretly by night to do harm. So they went by night to the houses of the Nairs to touch women, even though no one saw it and though there should be no witnesses, she, the Nair woman herself published it immediately, crying out and left her lineage\textsuperscript{375}.

3.2.12. Missionaries Attempt to Abolish Social Inequalities

The Missionaries of the LMS were looked upon by the Travancore government as a set of people trying to subvert the existing social fabric of the state. They alleged that the Missionaries were encouraging the unprivileged classes to defy the caste Hindus and that their intention apparently was to introduce English customs and usages in Travancore. Prominent Hindus believed that the Missionaries were using the name and power of the British to convert the people and were claiming perfect toleration and liberty for their converts, without taking into consideration the time, the country, the nature of the government and their own position in a foreign land\textsuperscript{376}.

The Travancore government claimed that in spite of the opposition of Hindus, it afforded toleration and protection to the Christian Missions and that the work of the Missionaries progressed rapidly. But without considering this fact, the Missionaries charged the government of cruel and unfair machinations against them\textsuperscript{377}. The government also held that the aim of the Missionaries was to increase in every possible way their own prestige of the Christian Church by winning the largest

\textsuperscript{375} R. N. Yesudasan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{376} Shangoony Menon, \textit{History of Travancore}, Delhi, 1878, pp. 505-506.
possible number of converts without any real regard for actual conversion\textsuperscript{378}. The Raja feared the caste Hindus and therefore did not act against their sentiments. His main concern was the welfare and satisfaction of the caste Hindus with whom he was associated. Therefore, the government was to follow a neutral policy as long as the Missionaries avoided injuring the interests of the caste Hindus. The Hindus thought that the Christian Missionaries were aiming at the destruction of Hinduism by attacking their age old customs and institutions. They accused the government of pro-Christian leanings\textsuperscript{379}.

The Hindu inhabitants of Travancore in general seriously entertained the impression that the Sircar was too much influenced by leaning to Missionary views and that while the state religion was Hinduism, the state was identifying itself with efforts directed against that religion\textsuperscript{380}.

The Missionaries accused the government of following barbarous customs, usages and institutions. They alleged that the government was practising intolerance under a profession of toleration. The unprivileged classes of people suffered injustice at the hands of the government and the caste Hindus. The Missionaries declared that the state was priest-ridden and by no means of the model which it had long been represented to be. The officials were prejudiced against the weaker sections and perpetrated injustice in the name of administration of justice.

Frederick Baylis writes: “I have never yet known of any complaint brought by one of the unprivileged classes against one of the privileged caste in Travancore receiving any proper attention in the police. All the officials are banded together against the unfortunate applicant for justice". All kinds of intimidations and oppressions are resorted to, until he is wearied out finding that he only get further

\textsuperscript{378} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{379} Cover file No.2115. Letter from T. Madhava Rao to General Cullen dated 17 May 1859, pp.93-94.
trouble for all his efforts to get his complaint redressed. This and the existence of caste system proved severe hindrances to the work of the Missionaries. Their efforts to break the barriers of caste, the fountain of all social evils were not viewed by the government in a favourable light\textsuperscript{381}.

The root cause of opposition against the Missionary activities in Travancore was the caste system. The Missionaries regarded this hydra-headed monster as their greatest enemy\textsuperscript{382}. The supporters of the caste fully reciprocated this sentiment and regarded the Missionaries as the greatest foes of that institution. The supporters of caste system consisted of two groups. One group consisted of people who clinged to the caste system because they conscientiously believed that caste was the bed-rock of Hinduism and that any attempt to tamper with it was an attack on their religion. The other group consisted of people who though not morally inconvenienced by any religious scruples, hugged caste system because it ministered to their selfishness, greed and lust for power over the person and property of large numbers of their fellowmen\textsuperscript{383}. It was firmly believed that everyone must die for the caste or religion in which one was born and that it was foolish for any man even to dream that he could improve his social or spiritual position by changing his faith. They held that it was wrong on the part of any man to try to convert to his own faith the adherents of any other faith\textsuperscript{384}.

The privileged classes were anxious that those belonging to unprivileged classes should permanently remain as their hereditary servants whose services they should be able to command on their own terms. They also wanted that the social barriers that existed between them and the unprivileged classes should be left untampered. The caste Hindus thought that the converts to Christianity would rebel against the trammels imposed upon them by ancient caste usage and assert their rights

\textsuperscript{381} Memorial of the Missionaries of the LMS Vol. III, dated 18 July 1859, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{382} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{383} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{384} Ibid., p. 132.
as free human beings with the spread of education. Such a change was not welcome to
the caste Hindus. So they did their best to thwart the Missionary and his agents in
their attempt to educate and draw toward the Christian fold those miserable
creatures.385

The Christian converts were exempted from paying unjust taxes like the poll-
tax and rendering Oouzhiyam, which attracted many to the fold of Christianity. The
Rani saw the Christians violating the age old customs and traditions of the land and
evading the Oozhiyam services required of them386. She therefore directed her
officials to make the Christians obey the laws of the land and perform the required
Oozhiyam except on Sundays and other festival days387. In the same year, Christians
were persecuted for not paying the arrears of their toddy rent and for the wearing of
upper-clothes by their women388. In 1839, the Rani issued a proclamation imposing
many restrictions on the freedom of work and movement of the Missionaries and
Christians389. In a memorandum submitted to the Travancore government,
Rev. Hawksworth, a Missionary of the Church Missionary Society in Travancore,
observed, the injunction that converts should not infringe the ancient usage cannot but
mean that they should not on the ground of their conversion act towards the privileged
caste Hindus in a different manner from what they were accustomed to do before their
conversion. If unprivileged caste converts depart in any respect from the above rule or
regulation as in the instances under reference. They necessarily infringe the custom
and usage of the country and offend the feelings of the Hindus390.

385 Ibid.
386 Neetu, vol. XV, No. 29, Proclamation Exempting Christians from Oozhiyam on Sundays,
4 Kanni 997 M.E. (1822).
387 Ibid.
389 Ibid.
390 Cover file No. 215, Christian Converts- their Treatment in Travancore.
The prohibition relating to the erection of places of worship gave the Missionaries much trouble. Under the new regulation, if a European acquired land without the sanction of the resident and the government, it was an infraction of the regulations and established usages of the country. So the Missionaries wanted perfect liberty to erect places of worship for the Christians. But the Travancore government held that the proclamation was intended to prevent collision and instruction by any one class of religionists against others. It meant for the protection of all other sects and of the government interests as well as of the Christians. The proclamation was an indirect incentive to those who wanted to persecute the Christians and prevent the spread of Christianity.

The relations worsened in the period of Krishna Rao, who was appointed Dewan in December 1846. He exerted a malignant influence on the administration and was considered by Raja Swathi Thirunal as a scourge of the country. The Missionaries felt that Krishna Rao was indifferent to the question of redressing the grievances brought to his notice by them and was trying to prevent the spread of Christianity in Travancore. In February 1851, he issued an edict depriving Protestant Christian converts of the privileges enjoyed by them. The edict prohibited the converts of the backward classes from using those roads which the privileged caste used. The converts were required to make use of the road and ways assigned for the people of unprivileged castes. This resulted in bitter persecution and indignity at the hands of those in authority, who had eagerly availed themselves of the Dewan’s edict to harass and oppress converts to the Christian faith.

In February 1854, Ebenezer Lewis and Mault, two Missionaries of the LMS were assaulted at Suchindram by the Brahmins when they forced their way through a religious procession. But the case was only mildly investigated and the guilty parties

393 Cover file No. 215, Christian Converts- their Treatment in Travancore, pp. 3-4.
394 Ibid.
were never traced. In the same year, there was violent persecution of Christians and it spread to all parts of South Travancore. The Missionaries came forward to assist the Christians. They raised their voice against the injustice shown by the local authorities and sought the help of the Resident. John Cox, Missionary of the Trivandrum Mission district took the initiative in bringing to the notice of the Resident several cases of persecution. When he failed to get protection for Christians from any quarter in Travancore, John Cox sent a petition to the Madras government complaining of specific acts of oppression and violence committed by the authorities in Travancore. He also forwarded several petitions from the Christian converts complaining of similar acts against them\textsuperscript{395}.

In July 1855, the Missionaries presented a joint petition to the government of Madras detailing the facts of oppression and cruelty to Christians which highlighted the deplorably bad political atmosphere of Travancore. They complained that corruption, oppression and extortion were openly practised by the government that no redress was obtained by the Christians and others and that the most serious cases were treated by the Resident as unimportant. The police was shown as a ruthless instrument of iniquity and oppression. People were seized and imprisoned for indefinite periods without investigation. The most barbarous treatment in prison prevailed, torture was practised and robbery was rampant. The high officers were of questionable character. Criminals and inefficient men were appointed to high offices. The court was also corrupt. A system of forced labour for government supplies existed which opened the door of oppression wider still. The innumerable evils that arose from the pepper, salt and cardamom monopoly strangulated national development. All the evils were fully exposed in the petition. The Missionaries concluded the petition by requesting the appointment of a commission of well qualified Europeans with full powers first to secure the records in the courts and then to enquire into the whole affairs of the government\textsuperscript{396}.

\textsuperscript{395} C.M. Agur, \textit{op. cit,} pp. 837-838.
\textsuperscript{396} Petition of the LMS Missionaries in Travancore, Nagercoil, dated 26 July 1855, pp.83-84.
The petitions sent by the Missionaries to the governor at Madras were forwarded to the Resident General Cullen, with instruction to institute immediate enquiries and report upon the allegations contained in them. John Cox tried his best to prove the charges brought forward against the Travancore government. The Resident, on the other hand, tried to defend the government by bringing forward the underlying causes for the strained feelings between the government and the Missionaries\textsuperscript{397}.

In his reply to the Madras government, the Resident denied the charge of the existence of persecution of Christian converts on religious or other grounds. He asserted that the requisition of the subordinate district servants for Oozhiyam duties from these unprivileged castes and the not unfrequent resistance of the converts whenever they had the opportunity, had no doubt led to frequent quarrels and discrimination. But seeing that the charges alleged were of a very grave nature and that they were corroborated in some measure by the constant petitions received from the people of Travancore, the Madras government felt that investigation of some sort was imperative\textsuperscript{398}.

The Madras government urged the government of India to appoint a Commission to inquire into the affairs of Travancore to conduct a minute and searching scrutiny into the entire system of the administration in all its branches, the present and the past proceedings of the Dewan and the resident, as requested by the Missionaries. But the government of India was not to appoint a commission to investigate the condition of Travancore and there the matter rested\textsuperscript{399}. Moreover Dewan Krishna Rao, the subject of the major complaints died in 1858, thereby making the proposed investigation unnecessary\textsuperscript{400}.

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397 Letter from the Resident to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated 8 May 1855.
398 Letter from Governor in Council to the Court of Directors, dated 24 December 1855.
399 Ibid.
400 Letter from Simson, Under Secretary to the Government of India to the Chief Secretary to the Government, dated 9 March 1859, pp. 36-37.
In spite of all these efforts of the Missionaries to put a stop to the persecution of Christians, the Travancore authorities totally ignored them. The officers were left free to do what they pleased to the unprivileged castes\textsuperscript{401}. The Missionaries found it difficult to get justice for the Christians. When such was the strained relations between the Missionaries and the government, the ‘upper-cloth movement’ broke out for the third time in 1858\textsuperscript{402}. The Missionaries feared that the caste Hindus were trying to drive them out of this land\textsuperscript{403}. This again prompted them to request the British government to interfere in the affairs of Travancore. In a memorial to Sir C.E. Trevelyan, the governor of Madras dated 18 July 1859; the Missionaries of the LMS leveled a series of charges against the Travancore government. The Missionaries led to obtain special permission to reside in a local state. They were treated as local men and had to obey the laws and customs of the state\textsuperscript{404}. To them these rules were highly anomalous and objectionable, so they requested the governor-in-council to direct the Travancore government to exempt them from liability to the native laws and to place them in all respect both as to privileges and liabilities under the British resident for the time being. Authorities as the British government may deem proper to appoint as British subjects in Turkey, China and other Eastern countries have been placed under the jurisdiction of consuls or other officers appointed by the British government. They believed that only the British government could effect the improvements so much needed in Travancore. To remove the evils that existed contrary to the upright administration of justice and to the happiness of the people. The Missionaries demanded the direct interference of the British government in the affairs of Travancore as per the treaty of 1805. The removal of

\textsuperscript{401} Cover file No. 2115. Petition if Visvasam Vedanayakam, Catechist to the Resident dated 19 February 1858, pp. 81-82.
\textsuperscript{402} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{403} Letter from F. Baylis, dated June 1860.
\textsuperscript{404} Letter from J.S Fraser, Trivandrum, dated 13 July 1860, pp. 136-37.
General Cullen, the Resident and appointment of Malby as his successor set the matter right for the time being.\textsuperscript{405}

The agitation of the Missionaries ultimately resulted in a change of policy on the part of the government of Travancore. The officials changed their attitude toward the Christians and the Missionaries. The new G.O. introduced by the Travancore government observes, persecution by the heathen was not so much as it had been except perhaps in the case of Pulayas and Parayas, who being slaves were often dealt harshly with by their masters on account of their religion. Christians were allowed to enjoy their religion in outward peace. The last few years seemed to have done a great deal for Christians in Travancore. But the interregnum of peace and quiet did not last long.\textsuperscript{406}

The assault on Rev. William Lee, a Missionary of the LMS in Travancore on 19 August 1868 at Panjalipuram, made the Missionaries launch another fight for the removal of the disabilities.\textsuperscript{407} The Missionaries thought that their right to use roads and streets was wantonly violated by the local people and hence represented the matter before the government of Travancore. But it did not produce the desired effect.\textsuperscript{408} The punishment given to the offenders by the Travancore government was in the eyes of the Missionaries insufficient for the end of justice.\textsuperscript{409} So the whole question was laid by them before the governor of Madras. The Madras government after reviewing the whole case drew the attention of the Raja to the principle laid down that the public streets of all towns were the property not of any particular caste but of the whole community and that every man be his caste or religion what it may has a right to the full use of them provided that he did not obstruct or molest others in

\textsuperscript{405} Memorial of the Missionaries of the LMS in Travancore, dated 18 July 1860, p. 127.
\textsuperscript{406} LMS Report, 1865, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{407} Letter from Chief Secretary to Government, Trivandrum, dated 22 December 1868, pp. 433-434.
\textsuperscript{408} Letter from T. Madava Rao to the Resident, Trivandrum, dated 24 December 1868, p. 441.
\textsuperscript{409} Ibid.
the use of them. The Resident of Travancore was advised by the Madras government to strongly urge upon His Highness the adoption for the future of this principle as that which was alone worthy of an enlightened government\textsuperscript{410}.

As a first step the Madras government instructed the resident to furnish information regarding the disabilities to which the unprivileged castes in Travancore were subjected. Accordingly, the resident required the Dewan to furnish full and specific information as to whether the unprivileged castes in Travancore were still subject to any and what substantial disabilities and oppressions\textsuperscript{411}. In his reply the Dewan gave a list of the disabilities. They were the following:

- They were not permitted to use roads open to the public of privileged castes.
- They were not permitted to enter and approach within certain distance of many courts and public offices.
- They were excluded from government schools.
- They were excluded from the public service\textsuperscript{412}.

Nevertheless, he noted that all other major disabilities that proved a hardship to the unprivileged classes were removed by notifications or had ceased to operate as a result of neglect\textsuperscript{413}.

The Madras government was for the immediate removal of all impediments facing the unprivileged classes including pollution or ‘Theendal\textsuperscript{414}, the root cause of all the disabilities. With respect to the prohibition on the use of public roads they insisted that the Travancore government should take due cognizance of what

\textsuperscript{410} Order by R.S. Ellis, Chief Secretary to Government, dated 11 September 1869, p. 454.
\textsuperscript{411} Letter from G.A. Ballard to the Acting Chief Secretary to Madras Government, Cochin, dated 9 March 1870, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{412} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{413} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{414} Ibid., pp. 2-3.
prevailed in the territories under the direct authority of the British in India. The Madras government also requested the Travancore government to remove all impediments to the free access by the classes to the Court of Justice and to the public offices of the state. As a positive step toward the removal of pollution, they opinioned that public servants in their public capacity must lay aside all consideration of ‘Theendal’ or pollution by approach and contact of unprivileged castes and be required to permit approach of all classes without distinction for the due performance of business during prescribed business hours or when the exigency of the public service demands it.

The Travancore government fully appreciated the views of the Madras government and notified its determination to introduce or advance right principles of public policy steadily yet discreetly. Accordingly, in April 1870 roads, markets and courts were opened to all classes of people in Travancore irrespective of caste and creed. The Madras government while approving the gesture reminded them that a beginning only has been made and much still remains. The Travancore government did not follow up the action and consequently the reform did not bring much relief. It remained very much on paper. Very often government officials who frowned at these reforms obstructed the unprivileged castes at every step and thus defeated the very purpose of the reform. Continued entreaty by the Missionaries compelled the hands of the Travancore government to issue a general circular to direct all concerned that the courts and cutcherries of the state and all public roads and market places were open alike to all classes of His Highness subjects without distinction of creed or castes and that no man shall be allowed to hinder another from the free use of them on any ground what so ever. Such hindrance being an unjustifiable interference with the

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415 Order, dated 23 April 1870, p. 8.
416 Ibid.
417 Letter from Acting Resident in Travancore and Cochin to the Chief Secretary to Government Trivandrum, dated 20 April 1870, pp. 44-46.
liberty of the subject and calculated to defeat the impartial administration of justice\textsuperscript{418}. The public officer who may be found to deny free access to himself on business to any section of the population and who may not personally receive or hear petitions from any person or conduct investigations into cases in the presence and within the hearing of the parties concerned on the ground that such person were of unprivileged caste was warned with having to bear the severest displeasure of government\textsuperscript{419}.

Even after the circular of 21 July 1884 disabilities in the use of public roads by unprivileged castes continued Nadars, Parayas, Christians, Europeans etc, were prohibited from using public roads at times when religious processions were taken out\textsuperscript{420}. The Christians wanted the privilege of total freedom from the stigma of caste and complete abolition of all religious prejudices which were so strong in Travancore. Several petitions were addressed by the Christians of Travancore to the Madras government on this matter. However, they were of the view that the Travancore government had gone to its almost extent in this direction\textsuperscript{421}.

3.2.12.1. Non Admission of Christian Children in Schools

The children belonging to the unprivileged classes were not admitted to government schools. The Missionaries stood for the education of all classes of people in the state, irrespective of caste and creed. The representations of the Missionaries to effect the same made the Travancore government open their eyes toward the education of unprivileged classes and proposed separate schools for them\textsuperscript{422}. But the Missionaries opposed the measures on the ground that schools which did not allow the unprivileged classes to mix freely with the privileged classes would prove a

\textsuperscript{418} Circular of V. Ramiengar, Dewan of Travancore Trivandrum, dated 21 July 1884, pp. 45-46.
\textsuperscript{419} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{420} Cover file No. 1622. The Petition of P.C. Joseph and Other Christian of South Travancore to T. Rama Rao dated 7 March 1892, p.120.
\textsuperscript{421} Cover file No. 3679. G.O. No. 925, Government of Madras dated 8 December 1897, p.219.
\textsuperscript{422} Cover file No. 135. Letter to the Superintendent of District Schools dated 11 September 1895, p.220.
failure\textsuperscript{423}. They requested the Raja to cause all schools supported at the public expense to be opened to all cleanly, decently dressed and well behaved children\textsuperscript{424}.

The government ostensibly favoured the views of the Missionaries. But the distinctions of caste and the strong feelings generated by this in Travancore presented a grave difficulty. The caste Hindu student was forbidden by his religion from associating with the outcaste students. The government feared that the grant of permission to all castes to attend the schools would prompt the caste Hindu students to desert them. So in this matter, the Resident was soft pedaling in order to achieve the aim without creating discontent\textsuperscript{425}. Provision was made for the education of the children of the unprivileged classes by the government in the grant-in-aid code of 1894. The desire of the government to extend educational facilities to them took practical shape in the code. For the first time funds were provided for grants being made to schools for unprivileged classes\textsuperscript{426}.

Another long standing grievance that attracted earnest attention was the question of the right of inheritance denied to converts. A convert to Christianity lost all rights to his share of the property of the family to which he was entitled before his conversion\textsuperscript{427}. The government enjoyed the right to assume such property as may have been left by a deceased person being a Hindu by religion and leaving no heirs but such as had become converts to a different religion. The children of the Christian converts were separated from their parents by their maternal uncles to whom they belonged as per the customs of Travancore to prevent their conversion to Christianity. These formed obstacles to the conversion of rich Hindus. To the Missionaries, this was revolting to the claims of justice by which none should be deprived of property.

\textsuperscript{423} Letter from John Lowe to T. Madhava Rao dated Neyyoor, Dated 22 September 1865, p.178.
\textsuperscript{424} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{425} Travancore Gazette, Educational Department No. 29 vol. VIII, dated 16 August 1904, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{426} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{427} Memorial of the South Indian Missionary Conference to H.E. the Viceroy, Madras, dated 22 May 1904, p.65.
consort and children merely on account of a change in religious conception. This would apply equally to the Hindu who became a Muhammadan or a Brahma Samajist or an Arya Samajist or a Theosophist or any other faith.\textsuperscript{428}

3.2.12.2. Struggle against Civil Disabilities

The Missionaries of the LMS applied themselves earnestly to the struggle for correcting these civil disabilities. The immediate provocation was the unjust proceedings on a case filed in the Padmanabhapuram civil court. The complaint in the case was a Christian convert claiming the property of his deceased Hindu brother.\textsuperscript{429} The court declared that in conformity with the Dharmaśastram and the usage of the country, he would not be entitled to the property and that it would be forfeited to the government.\textsuperscript{430}

The vociferous prayers of the Missionaries to the Madras government and the government of India resulted in the passing of an act on 11 April 1850, known as caste Disabilities Removal Act, which declared that change of religion would not deprive a man of his right to property.\textsuperscript{431} It was enacted in all the dominions under the direct control of the British in India. But Travancore, a princely state, was opposed to the act and therefore reluctant to take steps to implement the same. On 29 June 1869, the government issued a proclamation relinquishing all its rights to the property of a Hindu, who became a convert to Christianity or any other religion and died leaving no heirs.\textsuperscript{432}

The reluctance of the Travancore government to enact the Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1850 in full in its dominion made the Missionaries impatient. The courts were bound to follow the Hindu law and they were guided by existing customs


\textsuperscript{429} The Christian who filed the Case was Ramachandran, a Convert from the Nadar Caste.

\textsuperscript{430} C.M. Agur, \textit{op.cit}, p. 894.

\textsuperscript{431} G.O.No.599, 600, Government of Madras, Political Department, dated 9 October 1901.

\textsuperscript{432} Proclamation of the Maharaja of Travancore, dated 17 Mithunam 1044.
and the converts lost on account of their conversion to Christianity all rights to the property of their family. So in 1889, the Missionaries of the LMS in Travancore submitted a petition to the Raja to secure equal and impartial justice to the people of Travancore\textsuperscript{433}.

They requested the Raja to remove this existing anomaly by enacting the Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1850 in Travancore. The directors of the LMS in London were also earnest about the removal of the civil disabilities of the Christians in Travancore\textsuperscript{434}. They requested the Secretary of State for India to use his good offices with the Maharaja and government of Travancore to secure the removal of all civil disabilities which now rest upon Christians in consequence of the profession of Christianity\textsuperscript{435}. The Mission conference of the Church Missionary Society also sent a memorandum in August 1895 to the Governor of Madras on the subject of the disabilities of Christian converts in Travancore and the TDC of the LMS unanimously supported it\textsuperscript{436}.

In May 1900, the South Indian Missionary Conference consisting of the Protestant Missionaries of all denominations in South India took up the matter and expressed their anxiety over the injustice done to converts to Christianity in the native states of Travancore, Cochin and Mysore. In depriving them of civil rights, solely on the ground of their change in religious convictions, they expressed deep regret at the backsliding of the government of India\textsuperscript{437}.

The attitude of the authorities in London also became lukewarm in respect of pursuing the measure, mostly due to the anxiety shared by the Madras government along with the government of Travancore and Cochin that such a reform would

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\item \textsuperscript{433} Petition of the Missionaries of the LMS in Travancore to the Maharaja of Travancore, dated 11 September 1897, p.325.
\item \textsuperscript{434} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{435} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{436} Letter from Rev. J. Duthie to the Governor of Madras, Nagercoil, dated 27 August 1895.
\item \textsuperscript{437} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
gravely affect the social set up of the state. After an elaborate examination of the whole question in all its ramifications, they also concluded that it did not appear to be consonant with justice or good policy to impose such measures by the authority of the British government upon the two states and accepted the decision of the government of India. Thus ended the struggle of the Missionaries for securing the right of Christian converts to inherit the property of their family\textsuperscript{438}.

The zealous Missionaries of the LMS, fighting for the removal of disabilities awakened the poor and downtrodden people to a sense of self - respect and better living. Their strenuous efforts negatived or rather neutralized the ill-effects of caste rules and customary observances. The conception of social freedom, justice and equality for unprivileged classes was an original idea conceived and carried out by the Missionaries with commendable zeal in the midst of opposition. They put their shoulders to the yoke for the uplift of depraved humanity. The Brahmins and other caste Hindus could not claim this credit. It is a strange paradox that foreigners turned out to be the redeemers of a divided, disintegrating nation. Such an event will surely be remembered as a mile stone in the chequered history of this land.

3.2.13. Attempts of the Missionaries to Achieve the Abolition of Slavery

Slavery as explained earlier was a part of the socio-religious structure in Travancore. Both landlords and the government owned slaves\textsuperscript{439}. Their condition was deplorable because they had no access to education and because, being treated as pollutants, they were prohibited from using the public roads. In fact, they were treated even worse than animals\textsuperscript{440}. Very often they were so cruelly tortured that they were disabled for months. But the court of justice was closed against them, because as slaves and untouchables, they had no access to the courts of justice\textsuperscript{441}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item[438] G.O.No.526, Government of Madras, Political Department, dated 13 June 1902, p.76.
  \item[439] Samuel Mateer, \textit{op. cit.}, p.293.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Any attempt to run away was usually met with a horrible death. Once, a slave belonging to a Syrian Christian family, ran away from his master. While he was a fugitive, he came in contact with some Christians and he became a Christian. He made up his mind to go back to his master and to be a good slave. On his return, he was so severely punished by his master that he died on the third day. In some places, slaves were put to death for any attempt to escape from the master. Though the slaves groaned under the yoke of bondage, emancipation was not possible at that time without the assistance of an external force, because of their peculiar circumstances. In Travancore, the work of the Protestant Missionaries and the response of the British administration were the external force which led to the emancipation of the slaves.

In fact, from the commencement of their work, the LMS Missionaries had been trying various methods to emancipate the slaves. The Missionary ladies were able to bring a few slave girls into their boarding schools where they were taught the making of lace, along with reading and writing. The girls were paid for their work and the Missionaries helped them to save that money. From such savings, the Missionaries tried to buy their freedom. However, this method had many weaknesses. First, the Missionaries were able to bring only a very limited number of children to their boarding homes. Secondly, these girls could count as free only inside the ‘Mission compounds’. Thirdly, when the children were grown up, many of them were re-claimed back from the Missionaries. Boarding home by their slave-master, intending to put them to work in the fields and refusing to accept money to redeem them. Their attitude was, as one of the slave-master put it, “it is enough for me if my bullocks and slaves do the work required in the field.”

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445 Ibid.
Slavery is the most unmitigated form united with caste restrictions to form an effective barricade against the Missionaries of the LMS when they started their activities in Travancore. A major portion of the population, mainly those castes below the Nadars and Ezhavas, such as the Pulayas, the Parayas, the Kuravas, the Vedar etc, were generally classed as slaves. The lowest among the slaves were the Pulayas, who formed the bulk of the total slave population\textsuperscript{448}. They were born slaves. Every Zamindar prince or Nair possessed a certain number of them just as they owned cows or buffaloes. Canter Visscher says that their masters have power to put them to death, without being called to account or if they please to sell them, though this is not often done without some good reason\textsuperscript{449}. The slaves in general were an object of unfortunate race, who by cruel laws and tyrannical customs were reduced to a wretched state. A very considerable number of the slaves belonged to the government. They were partly employed on government land and partly rented out of the ryots\textsuperscript{450}. The murder of a slave was sacredly considered a crime. Several thousands of slaves were sold annually like cattle and sent out of the country. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the slaves were in a forlorn condition and were regarded rather as beasts than human being\textsuperscript{451}.

Some times slaves came from the privileged castes also. Imposing slavery was one form of punishment. The Raja enjoyed the right to sell into slavery persons of various castes who had committed any crime which made them liable to lose their social status. Those of the privileged classes who were convicted of caste offences of a serious nature were ostracized and condemned as slaves. A Brahmin woman found guilty of adultery became the slave of the Raja. A Brahmin convicted of theft had also

\textsuperscript{447} LMS Report, Trivandrum, 1831, p.31.  
\textsuperscript{448} Samuel Mateer, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 291-293.  
\textsuperscript{449} Jacob Canter Visscher, \textit{Letters from Malabar}, Madurai, 1862, pp. 70-71.  
\textsuperscript{450} Francis Buchannan, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 370-371.  
to go into bondage. Slave in considerable number were recruited in the pulappedi season\textsuperscript{452}.

The arrival of the Missionary ladies, Mrs. Mead and Mrs. Mault in Travancore was a turning point in the social history of Travancore. They concentrated their attention on the slave classes and work among them progressed rapidly. Several slave girls were admitted into their boarding school at Nagercoil, started in 1820. Their idea was to secure freedom for the slave scholars while they were in school by paying their cost and freeing them from bondage\textsuperscript{453}. However, some masters refused to accept the money and let their slaves free. Mrs. Mault gives a touching incident of a girl, who was educated in the boarding school and whose freedom she failed to secure. She says, a girl in the school had become big enough to work in her master’s field. He therefore came to make his claim to her. I asked him if it would not be well for her to learn to read and whether he should not allow her to do so. He replied, it may be well for you to instruct her, as you will get a better place in heaven, thereby, but it is enough for me if my bullocks and slaves do the work required in the fields\textsuperscript{454}.

Another instance of a poor slave girl would make the position clearer. A girl of about eleven years was found near the premises of Mrs. Mault in a state of exhaustion due to hunger. She told the Missionary that she was a slave and owing to her master’s heartless flogging she had run away. She was given asylum by Mrs. Mault. After ten days, a morose looking man appeared and demanded his slave girl. Every possible effort was made to induce him to show clemency of offering to accept the cost of her freedom. But this was in vain. In Mrs. Mault’s words, he was unmoved his iron heart had no relenting. I want not your money, but my slave, said he as he walked away with her\textsuperscript{455}. When the girl was seen following her master to his house, the school girls


\textsuperscript{453} Letter from Mrs. Mault to the Foreign Secretary dated Nagercoil 2 June 1830, EMMC, Vol. VIII, pp. 540-41.

\textsuperscript{454} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{455} Ibid.
rushed out and with tears in their eyes entreated him to release her but he was
unmoved. This incident left a deep mark on the Missionaries who spared no occasion
to work for their manumission. As a first step in this direction, they decided to build
up a strong public opinion to attract the attention of the authorities. They wrote series
of articles describing the plight of the slaves\textsuperscript{456}.

Rev. Cox had narrated another incident which shattered his mind. He says,
"when I was preaching at Matilda Chapel, a few unprivileged caste slaves came near
and stood to listen. After service, I went out to them. I could only induce one to come
near me and the others ran away to some distance, through fear. I talked to the former
and told him that he was my brother and I his, invited him to come to the Chapel. I
felt shame rising within me at the existence of such a state of things as required me to
tell my fellow man that he was not unfit to come near me. This is one of the evils of
caste, the fatal instrument of which Satan has so long employed to enslave and
destroy the souls of millions in this part of the earth"\textsuperscript{457}.

The Missionaries advocated the cause of the slaves and called the attention of
all free men to this peril. They roused the conscience of every free man by arguing
that the slave was entitled to the sympathy and aid of every free man, whether they
considered the horrible effects of slavery on its victims or on their oppressors or the
obstacles. It opposed to the progress of civilization and religion in the world. They
had the most powerful motives presented to they for promoting in every legitimate
way its immediate and entire abolition. Mrs. Mault was deeply interested in the
abolition of slavery in Travancore. The Missionaries of the Church Missionary
Society also co-operated with the Missionaries of the LMS in exposing the evils of
slavery\textsuperscript{458}.

\textsuperscript{456} LMS Report, 1842, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{457} Samuel Mateer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 304.
\textsuperscript{458} Ibid.
Another Missionary thought that by spreading of education, slavery could be weakened. So he offered the school master an additional pay of one ‘panam’ for every slave girl they brought into the Christian schools for education, with in a year more than one thousand slave children were collected and brought into Christian education. However, all these attempts turned out not to be very successful\textsuperscript{459}.

No one can calculate how many of the sons of bondage were prematurely removed from this world in childhood and youth, for want of sufficient nourishment and clothing\textsuperscript{460}. Those who reached maturity were doomed to work like beasts of burden, to line in wretched hovels; ate the most offensive animals and reptiles, and to be treated as outcastes by their fellow creatures\textsuperscript{461}.

In the correspondence of the Missionaries, this also appeared very often.\textsuperscript{462} One of the civil officials of the English East India Company, T.H. Baber enquired about the extent and condition of slavery in Travancore and Cochin and brought it to the notice of the British administration\textsuperscript{463}.

The act passed by the government of India in 1843, declared that no public officer should enforce decree or demand of rent or revenue by the sale of slaves. Slaves could acquire and possess property and were not to be dispossessed of such on the plea that they were slaves. That act considered penal offences to a free man should be applicable in the case of slaves also. Abolishing slavery in British India was an inducement to the Missionaries to push ahead with their offensive against the evil in Travancore\textsuperscript{464}.

\textsuperscript{459} C.M. Agur, \textit{op. cit.}, p.892.
\textsuperscript{460} Joy Gnanadasan, \textit{op. cit.}, p.88.
\textsuperscript{461} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{462} Letter from J. Abbs to A. Tidman and J.J. Freeman, date Neyyoor, 23 March 1841, p.180.
\textsuperscript{463} R. N. Yesudasan, \textit{op. cit.}, p.154.
\textsuperscript{464} Cover file No. 286. Letter from General Cullen to the Dewan of Travancore, Cochin, dated 12 March 1849.
Though the LMS and CMS had differences of opinion on many issues, they joined together in their fight against slavery. On 19 March 1847, a joint memorandum was submitted by the Missionaries of the LMS and CMS to the Maharaja of Travancore, Utram Tirunal Maratanda Varma requesting him to make a Proclamation abolishing slavery, similar to that of the enactment of 1843 in the territories of the English East India Company\(^{465}\).

The memorandum created a storm of protest in the Travancore court. The landlords argued that any measure which had been proposed by the Missionaries would bring down the agriculture of the state. To the memorandum, the Dewan replied, emancipation His Highness considers too important a question to be entered upon at present\(^{466}\).

The chief ameliorative measures proposed were:

1. No traffic in slaves should be permitted.

2. Slavery should be made penal as in British India.

3. Slaves should be permitted to own property like other classes of people.

4. Hereditary slavery should be done away with.\(^{467}\)

The Missionaries presented another memorial in 1848, for which they received a reply from the Resident on behalf of the Maharaja that he was decidedly averse to the entire abrogation of the existing laws on that subject\(^{468}\).

\(^{465}\) The Petition of the British Missionaries in Travancore to the Raja of Travancore, dated 19 March 1847, p.466.

\(^{466}\) Shanguny Menon, *History of Travancore*, Delhi, 1878, p. 366.

\(^{467}\) Letter from Dewan of Travancore to the Resident, dated 01 June 1847, p.370.

\(^{468}\) Cover file No.286, Petition of the Christian Missionaries to the Raja of Travancore 19 March 1847.
As a first step toward abolition of slavery, the Missionaries requested the Raja to effect the emancipation of government slaves. They reminded the Raja that such an act of mercy would make his name precious in Travancore for generations to come as the reliever of the oppressed\textsuperscript{469}. The Raja fully appreciated the feelings of the Missionaries in regard to the emancipation of slaves. V. Venkita Rao, the Dewan of Travancore on behalf of the Raja wrote to the Resident on 1 June 1848 on the question of slavery. He wrote the amelioration of the condition of the unfortunate classes of the population was a subject which would not fail to engage his highness future consideration\textsuperscript{470}. But the representation they made did not produce the desired effect on the government.

In 1849, the Resident proposed to the Dewan in a long memorandum, a few ameliorative measures to be brought into effect by royal proclamation\textsuperscript{471}. On seeing the summary of the memorandum of the Resident in this diary submitted to the Madras Government\textsuperscript{472}, the Governor wrote immediately approving of the proposals of the Resident and expressing his desire for an early implementation of these measures\textsuperscript{473}. The Resident General Cullen, took a very keen interest in the abolition of slavery. In a letter to the Dewan dated 12 March 1849, he had drawn the attention of the Travancore government to the act passed by the government of India in 1843. He urged the Dewan to improve the condition of slaves as far as it could be done without affecting the interests of their owners. He recommended measures to phase out the

\textsuperscript{469} Cover file. 286. Petition of the Christian Missionaries to the Raja of Travancore dated 19 March 1847.
\textsuperscript{470} Letter from V. Venkita Rao to General Cullen, Trivandrum, dated 1 June 1847.
\textsuperscript{471} Memorandum from the Resident to the Dewan of Travancore, Dated 12 March 1849.
\textsuperscript{472} Letter from Resident to the Dewan of Travancore, dated 02 August 1853.
\textsuperscript{473} Cover file No. 286, T. Pycroft to the Secretary to the Government of India, 09 March 1855, p.255.
abolition of slavery and as a first step suggested the manumission of all government slaves. He proposed:

- Government should publicly disconnect itself with the perpetuation of slavery.
- Government should take measures for the future emancipation of slaves by declaring that all children born of government slaves should be free, while the government should receive no slaves on their own account they should exact a like stipulation as to the emancipation of all children of slaves whom the government might restore to claimants as distant heirs along with their escheated estates.
- More stringent regulations should be established with regard to the treatment of slaves, they should be given food, clothing and better treatment on a tolerably good scale.

Although the Raja was in favour of it, he found great difficulty in convincing the various landlords and landed proprietors of its reasonableness. On the contrary, the latter contended that the abolition of slavery would lead to the ruin of agriculture. Therefore, the Raja kept the matter in abeyance. The continued delay in effecting the reform made the resident impatient. He sent strongly worded letters to the Government of Travancore for the immediate introduction of the reform.

Meanwhile, the British administration had become impatient with the delay of the proclamation. In 1850, the Court of directors also issued a dispatch expressing their desire for the abolition of slavery. There was, however, no reply but a long

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475 Letter from T. Pycrott, Chief Secretary to Government to the Secretary Government of India, dated 9 March 1855.
476 Letter from the Dewan of Travancore, dated 02 August 1853, 20 September 1853, p.2943.
silence from the Travancore government. The Resident, therefore, wrote a number of letters to the Dewan, some even in a threatening tone\textsuperscript{477}.

The indecisive stance of the Raja was a matter of great anxiety to the Madras government for they wanted to see the immediate abolition of slavery in Travancore. M.C. Montgomery, the chief secretary to the Madras Government, expressed the anxiety of the Governor and the Court of Directors for not implementing the reform even after a delay of six years. He wrote to the resident, “I am further desired to convey you for communication to the Dewan, the opinion of this government that the Raja’s answer on the subject should not after six years delay be longer deferred, considering that the measure has already received the approval of the government and of the honorable the court of directors”\textsuperscript{478}. Indefinite procrastination of the reform tended to dishearten the Missionaries also.

Charles Mead writes: We are sorry that nothing has been done to ameliorate the condition of the slaves of the soil in Travancore. Thousands of the people are prevented by their cruel owners from attending Christian instruction. Amongst our fisher-people there are numerous slaves, who could be easily redeemed, if benevolent persons would contribute a little of their property for the purpose. We have redeemed several families of fishers and others, by private means but a special fund is required for this object. The slaves who work in the paddy field must be liberated by the influence of the government for in many instances the state is the slave proprietor\textsuperscript{479}.

The Travancore Government finally agreed to make the proclamation proposed in 1850. But the discussion between the Dewan and the Resident on some of the clauses in the Draft Proclamation prepared by Travancore caused further delay. In

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{477} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{478} Letter from M. C. Montgomery to the Resident General Cullen dated 14 September 1853.
\item \textsuperscript{479} LMS Report, 1853, p. 72.
\end{itemize}
spite of the objections raised by the Resident to certain classes the Travancore government wanted to stick on to the proclamation prepared by themselves\textsuperscript{480}.

In October 1853, therefore, in the absence of the Resident from the capital, the Maharaja signed this document and on the Resident’s return the Dewan requested him as the Maharaja had at last signed, not to raise any objections. The Madras Government also agreed to it “for the time being”\textsuperscript{481}.

According to this proclamation, children of the Sircar slaves born after fifteenth September 1853 were declared free. But slavery was not abolished. The proclamation also emphasized the perpetuation of caste rules and it did not guarantee equality of the emancipated slaves before the law. Cochin, however, made the enactment as proposed by the Resident\textsuperscript{482}.

Even after the proclamation of 1853, slave trade continued. So the resident was directed by the Madras Government to confer personally with the Raja and ascertain from him. Whether there was on his part any valid objection to the manumission of all the government slaves in his territory both old and young\textsuperscript{483}.

The Madras government was unhappy about the proclamation made by Travancore. A few slave deals after the proclamation also provoked the British administration. Therefore, in March 1854, the Resident was instructed that, it must be pointed out to the Raja that the present measure of emancipation\textsuperscript{484}. Affecting only the children is after all very insignificant and ascertain whether there is upon his highness

\textsuperscript{480} Letter from the Resident to the Dewan of Travancore dated 14 October 1853, p.75.
\textsuperscript{481} Letter from the Dewan to the Resident, dated 25 October 1853, p.200.
\textsuperscript{482} Samuel Mateer, \textit{op. cit.}, p.203.
\textsuperscript{483} Letter from Resident to the Dewan of Travancore dated 29 October 1853, p.205.
\textsuperscript{484} Cover File No. 286, the Resident to the Dewan of Travancore on 12 September 1853.
part any valid objection to the immediate manumission of the whole, both old and young, of the small body of Sirkar slaves\textsuperscript{485}.

Though the Travancare government wanted to escape from any fresh enactment on slavery, at the imperative demand of the British authorities, the government of both Travancore and Cochin finally made proclamations similar to that of the proclamation made in British India.

The involvement of the Missionaries in this and similar activities made the lower rank of the people looked upon them as their protectors while the privileged Castes began to establish customs and traditions of society. The Missionaries also accepted this role as protectors for the unprivileged Castes and criticized the Brahmins and the Nairs openly\textsuperscript{486}.

As a result, the Travancore government consented to the manumission of all the government slaves from the first day of the year 1030 M.E. (1855)\textsuperscript{487}. Then the Madras government suggested to the governments of Travancore and Cochin to declare free the children of the slaves of private proprietors and of all slaves. But the government of Travancore was against the immediate emancipation of the children of private slaves. They feared that the measure would cause economic malignancy as well as great anxiety and alarm among private proprietors regarding the motives of the government. However, they offered to place their slave proprietors exactly on the same footing as those on the company’s dominion by the introduction of the act passed in 1843 in their territories. The Madras government approved of this proposition and directed the immediate issue of necessary proclamations to that effect. Accordingly, a proclamation was issued by the Raja of Travancore on 24 June, 1855 to better the condition of the slaves and concede to them, “advantages which are enjoyed by the same class of subjects in the extensive territories of the honourable

\textsuperscript{486} Memorial of the Missionaries of the LMS, dated 18 July 1859.
\textsuperscript{487} Ibid.
East India Company”. It was a revolutionary social reform which challenged the conventions and practices of centuries\textsuperscript{488}.

The emancipation conferred on the slaves had several blessings. They got the right to acquire property. Several good houses were built by them. Applications were received from them for waste lands and the government responded to their requests. Many of them were appointed in the government departments and coffee estates. Despite such spectacular improvements, several inequalities remained. The slave castes experienced difficulty in getting access to the public courts and offices. They were obstructed in the use of public highways and markets. The government was desirous of removing all the social disabilities of the slave classes. So the Dewan Ramiengar, through a circular issued on 21 July 1884 declared that the courts, offices, public highways and market places were for the use of all classes of people without distinction of caste or creed. The government also extended the benefits of education to these unprivileged and downtrodden people. Special grants were given for the schools of the unprivileged classes on the basis of the grant-in-aid code. In 1904, the government decided to bear the entire cost of the schools of the poor and educationally unprivileged classes\textsuperscript{489}.

The efforts of the Missionaries and the measures adopted by the Travancore government resulted in the disappearance of slavery. The slave classes gradually advanced up the ladder of culture. Caste Hindus noticed the changes in the lives of their erstwhile slaves and wondered at their progress.\textsuperscript{490}.

\textsuperscript{488} M.K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials*, Madras, 1982, p.120.
\textsuperscript{490} Memorial of the Missionaries of the LMS, dated 18 July 1859.
3.2.14. The Protestant Missionaries against the Travancore Government

After 1850, as the Christian ‘mass movements’ began to spread to various parts of Travancore, the social demands and claims of the new privileged caste Hindus looked upon the new converts also increased. This made the privileged caste Hindus looked upon the new converts with hostility and the Missionaries with aversion. After 1850, the Missionaries represented the cause of the unprivileged caste to the government more frequently than before. Very often the complaints of the Missionaries did not receive the attention they expected. At the same time, there was obvious mal-administration and Anti-Missionary feeling in the Travancore Government. This made the Missionaries turn against the Travancore government and many of its higher officials.

In 1855, a joint petition of the LMS Missionaries in Travancore alleged that convicted criminals were appointed to very responsible offices and “the police are a tremendous engine of iniquity and oppression”. They complained that justice was not administered in the department of justice and that there was bribery and gross injustice. Partly because of this, they implied, justice was not obtained by their converts.

The Missionaries made serious efforts to convince the British administration that the Travancore government was full of injustice and corruption. They described many injustices and corruption. They described many instances to prove their

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491 ‘Mass Movement’ The word Mass Movement Means Group Conversion. After 1850, More Number of People Embraced Christianity. No where in India, have the People Turned to Christian Massed.

492 James Hough, op. cit., p. 287.


allegation. In 1854, John Cox wrote, every man with English blood in his veins, among the people of Travancore, became their involuntary champion, and did his utmost to obtain redress for their intolerable wrongs.

The Missionaries complained not merely about social or related issues. In their criticism they went beyond the limits of their work as Missionaries. They lamented the fall in the revenue of the state and trade. The situation of Travancore in their view was as which under good management, was capable of becoming a fine country, yielding prosperity to the inhabitants, and a good revenue to its rulers, and which under former administrations had been far more prosperous than at present, was now bordering on utter disorganization and vain, and in this state of things the sufferers were great mass of the people. For them, the only and final solution to save Travancore was its annexation to British India. “Till the English takes it into their hands”, wrote Frederick Baylis, the whole system of government would be “rotten and corrupt”. The Missionaries also pleaded for the appointment of a commission of “well qualified” Europeans to inquire into the whole affairs of the Travancore government.

495 LMS Missionaries Memorandum to the Governor of Madras, Dated 26 July 1855, P.18.
496 I.H. Hacker, op. cit., p.129.
497 LMS Missionaries Memorandum to the Governor of Madras, Dated 26 July 1855, P.19.
498 Ibid., p.20.
499 This idea was the first Proposed by Charles Mead in 1842 when he found that Justice was non done to Christians (Mead, Report for the year 1841 Dated January 1842).  
500 Delton, Missions in India, London, 1854, p.137.
The Missionaries sent six complaints to the British administration between 1853 and 1856. All the complaints were directed to the Resident for enquiry, and the enquiries were made by people against whom the complaints were directed\textsuperscript{501}.

Among the complaints of individual Missionaries which attracted much attention from the British administration was that of John Cox. He sent a petition on February 12, 1855 charging the Travancore government with specific acts of oppression and violence committed by the district authorities and others still higher\textsuperscript{502}. The Resident defended the position of the Travancore government and criticized John Cox vehemently. He wrote to the Madras Government that Mr. Cox, in violation of the Rani’s proclamation and the printed instructions to the London Missionary society, systematically interfered in the secular concerns of his converts. This was productive of the greatest inconvenience by weakening the just influence of the local police\textsuperscript{503}.

So the Madras Government asked for an explanation from John Cox. As a reply, Cox made a long and detailed account of his complaints on December 26, 1855\textsuperscript{504}. Inspite of the attempts of the Resident and the Travancore Government, the Missionaries were able to convince the Madras Government that things were not in order in Travancore. Lord Harris, Governor of Madras after studying the petition, considered that the case as stated by Mr. Cox was very strong but any action on it was postponed\textsuperscript{505}.

\textsuperscript{501} Memorandum on Petitions Presented to Government from Travancore and Correspondence with them dated 14 March 1859, p.292.


\textsuperscript{503} C.B. Firth, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{504} J.N. Farquhar, \textit{Modern Religious Movement in India, New York, 1924, p. 148}.

The Missionaries criticized, the Travancore Government showered criticism upon the Missionaries, especially the LMS Missionaries for helping the people to break the traditions and customs\(^{506}\). Shangunny Menon, one of the top executives from the Earliest Times’ tended to justify the violence of the privileged Castes against the Christian converts. His statement echo the jealousy, frustration and fury of a representative of the dominant caste at the social improvement of their to justify the violence of the Nairs against the Nadars on the ground that customs and traditions were broken by the latter\(^{507}\).

Another effective means for the fight of the Missionaries against the Travancore Government was to publish articles and letters about the administration of Travancore in newspapers from Madras. ‘The Athenacum’ published a series of articles under the pseudonym, ‘Not the last\(^{508}\)’ which portrayed the Dewan in the most derogatory manner and the Resident was not spared either. The Raja became extremely anxious about the reputation of Travancore and the reaction of the Madras Government\(^{509}\).

Repeated complaints of the Missionaries and the newspaper reports added to the financial depression in Travancore moved the Madras Government to consider the suggestion of appointing an enquiry commission. Appointment of such a commission could have led to the annexation of Travancore to British India\(^{510}\).

The Madras Government referred the matter to the Government of India. The Governor General, Lord Dalhausie was of opinion that was no ground for a “direct

\(^{508}\) Robin Jeffery, *The Decline of Nair Dominace*, Delhi, 1976, P. 120.
interference with the internal management of the Travancore state. But he ordered “suitable advice and warning” to be given. As a result, the Raja of Travancore received a warning from the Governor on 21 April 1856.

In his reply to the Governor of Madras, the Raja stated that there were just grounds for complaint, and that he had already taken steps to better the situation. With regard to the new social problems resulting from the conversions to Christianity from the unprivileged castes, he wrote, "the increase in their numbers, and their dispersion all over the country had led to disputes which had tended in some degree to impair the control exercised by him Government over its Hindu subjects."

On seeing these papers, the court of Directors in their dispatch dated April 30, 1856 directed that a commission should be appointed to investigate the affairs in Travancore. On 15 August, 1856 the Madras Government made its proposals regarding the commission and set it to the Government of India for suggestions and approval. These papers were not sent back to Madras immediately.

Meanwhile, war broke out in North India against the British and in Travancore, the Dewan, against whom many of the complaints were directed, passed away. The Madras Government entertained much hope in the new Dewan, V.P. Madhava Rao; Travancore was saved from an enquiry commission or from annexation to British India.

511 Amy Wilson Carmichael, Things as They are Missionary Work in Southern India, London, 1904, p. 49.
512 Samuel Mateer, op. cit., p. 142.
514 N. Koshy, op. cit., p.18.
The involvement of the Missionaries in the social life of the people in Travancore took the form of helping the people who were victims of oppression by participating in the struggles for their emancipation from the traditional bondage\textsuperscript{516}. As Cox pointed out, “the interference on my part would amount to no more than giving advice, and would not be so decided an act of interference as writing on their behalf to these sufferers, on many occasion the Missionaries followed the cases of their converts. Usually they involved themselves only when the people themselves were looking forward to emancipation”. Thus the Missionaries championed the cause of the oppressed in Travancore and John Cox deserves the honor of being the foremost fighter for the emancipation of the people\textsuperscript{517}.

\textsuperscript{516} Corinne. G. Dempsey, Travancore \textit{Christian Sainthood}, Delhi, 2001, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{517} Samuel Zechariah., \textit{op. cit.}, 1897, p. 123.