



Development of Education in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar Regions of Kerala State, India

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to analyze development of education in the three princely states of Kerala state, Travancore, Cochin and Malabar region. Kerala's achievements in the field of education - near total literacy, free and universal primary education, low dropout rate at the school level, easy access to educational institutions, gender equality in access etc. - are well known. The evolution of education in general, and higher education in particular was greatly due to the influence of western education introduced by the missionaries and the progressive rulers of the native states – Travancore and Cochin.

KEYWORDS: Education, Kerala, Travancore, Cochin, Malabar

Introduction

Kerala is located on the Southern part of India. Modern Kerala came into existence on 1st November 1956, by amalgamating the states of Travancore-Cochin and Malabar on the basis of the State Re-organization Act. The achievement of Kerala in the field of education, health, habitat, land reforms etc, generally constitutes what is widely known as 'Kerala Model of Development'. Among a number of achievements the most spectacular is educational development viz., cent percent literacy and greater access to formal education for all. It places the state at a unique position in the educational map of India (Figure 1). Before the reorganization of Indian States in 1956, the present geographical area which forms the Kerala state was divided into three political units such as Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. Out of these three units, Travancore and Cochin in the south were princely states and the Malabar District and Kasargod taluk were part of the erstwhile Madras state. These units had their own educational institutions and methods.

Educational Development of Kerala

Kerala historians have pointed out that the peculiarity of the State is to be explained on the basis of its early exposure to different foreign cultures from very early days – the Arab culture, the European culture and the culture of other countries which came to trade with Kerala right from the BC's. Again, the State came under the influence of different religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam, in addition to the teachings of different sects within Hinduism. All these influences, far from disuniting the people, created a climate of tolerance for different cultures and ideologies. Education in ancient and medieval India was based on the doctrine of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam. While including secular subjects, it was strongly religious in its orientation (John Sesrochers : 1987). Learning in ancient Kerala was also not intended for its own sake, but for the sake of religion. The Portuguese and the Dutch made some contribution to the cause of education and learning in Kerala.

Figure 1
Trends in Literacy-Kerala and India



Source: **Census of India**, Various Years

Education in Travancore

Almost all changes in the field of education in Travancore were initiated by the rulers and Christian missionaries. The beginning of modern education in Travancore is traced to the issue of Royal Rescript by Rani Gouri Parvathy Bhai of Travancore in 1817. The Queen's proclamation of 1817 is rightly considered by all educational historians as the 'Magna Carta of Education' in Travancore. The beginning of western type of education was laid in Travancore by the British during the second decade of the 19th century. London Missionary Society (LMS) was the first protestant missionary movement to begin religious and educational work in Travancore (V. Nagam Aiyah: 1940). The originator of an English school in Travancore was Rev. William Tobias Ringletaub, a native of Prussia. The lower caste people who suffered a lot in the midst of caste domination were soon brought under the firm grip of the LMS missionaries. Like LMS missionaries, the Church Mission Society (CMS) also made yeomen service to the cause of education. They founded the first institution for higher learning at Kottayam, C.M.S. College, Kottayam.

Table 1
Number of Schools under Christian Management in 1908

Denomination/Diocese	No. of Schools
Protestant	
LMS	393
Salvation Army	74
CMS	296
Church of England	16
Total	779
Latin Catholics	
Archdiocese of Verapoly	130
Diocese of Quilon	147
Diocese of Cochin	92
Total	369
St. Thomas Christians	
Vicariate Apostolic of Cnanganacherry	424
Vicariate Apostolic of Ernakulam	178
Vicariate Apostolic of Trichur	186
Total	788
Non Catholic Syrians	
Mar Thomites	97
Syrian Archdiocese of Malankara (Jacobite)	175
Grand Total	2208

Source: **Travancore Administration Report**, Relevant Years.

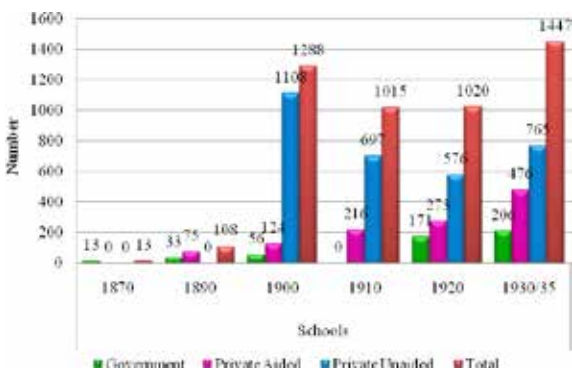
In 1834 first English medium school was opened at Trivandrum. In the initial days it was a free institution but later compulsory levying fees introduced. When the fees system was introduced, the restriction on admission was withdrawn. The English education in Travancore got a flare when Maharaja of Travancore issued in 1844 the following proclamation: "for service in public offices, preference will be given to those educated in English school." The grant in aid scheme envisaged in the woods despatch of 1854 also left its deep mark on the progress of education in Travancore. The second half of 19th century laid strong foundation of rapid and massive educational development in the Tra-

vancore state. The most important among them was the educational policy followed by the Travancore Government under one of its ablest Diwan- T.Rama Rao. The main achievement was the creation of the Vernacular Education Department. The next milestone was the year 1871 when it was decided that every 'pookuthy' or 'village' should have its own school. In 1879 grant in aid rules were made applicable to all private schools, provided they were imparting vernacular education up to a certain standard. In 1904 Travancore government took up the responsibility of imparting free primary education to all children in the state and fees were abolished in all schools and salary grants were made to private schools kept for backward classes. An education code was introduced in 1909-10 effecting comprehensive reforms in the classification, management, accommodation and equipment of schools. Restrictions in lower castes in government schools were removed in 1911-1912. In 1917 rural schools were also started for the benefit of the pupils who were unable to going for education due to poverty or other cause. In view of the people's demand and the collegiate level institutions in the state, on 1st November 1937, the University of Travancore was established and incorporated under the Travancore University Act 1937-38. With the opening of the Travancore University the growth of higher education was accelerated in the state.

Education in Cochin

As was done in Travancore, in Cochin also missionary efforts at starting English Education began during the second decade of the nineteenth century. The first attempt to introduce the study of the English language was made by a CMS missionary Rev. J Dawson, who opened an English school at Mattancheri in 1818, in aid of which he received a grant from the Government. The school did not take in root and it had to be closed down within three years. The educational history of Cochin was, till late in the 1880's one of opening more and more English schools and raising some of the existing ones to the level of colleges. Sealy was appointed the first Director of Public Instructions in Cochin (K.V.Epen :1986). The first set of rules for grant in aid to private schools was framed in 1889, subsequent to which a large number of private aided schools sprang up. The education of the common man received attention of the Cochin Government only as late as 1890. The active efforts of the state as well as of private agencies helped the spread of western education in Cochin. The closing decades of the 19th century laid strong foundation for the development of a wide based educational structure during the subsequent decades. During the first decade of itself many measures were taken to improve the educational standards of the states. The important measure taken up was the framing of an educational code by the government in 1911 (C.M Ramachandran:1987). Consequent on the grant in aid given by the government a large number of schools sprang up under private management. The rules for giving aid were revised in 1921 which encouraged the private agencies to open school.

Figure 2
Growth in Number of Schools in Cochin



Source: **Cochin Administrative Report**, Relevant years.

In 1947 Cochin had three government colleges and two private colleges. The state of Cochin was integrated with the state Travancore and a new state of Travancore Cochin was formed on 1st July, 1949. This merger of the two princely state paved way for the formation of democratic government in the state. Till 1949 the colleges of Cochin were affiliated to the Madras University but with the formation of new state the colleges came under the control of government. However the

private colleges continued their affiliation under the Madras University. When the state of Kerala was formed in 1956, these colleges were brought under the department of collegiate education, with their affiliation to the newly formed Kerala University (C.M Ramachandran: 1987).

Education in Malabar

Malabar became part of the British administration at the end of the 18th century. But the western educational activities started their only very late. The indigenous system continued to exist among the different castes of Hindus, Muslims and Christians. The growth of western education was slower in Malabar than in the other two regions (A.R.Kamat:1989). Besides, even the development of education which began after 1835 was strictly based on the infiltration which gave more emphasis to higher levels of school education and collegiate education than primary education. The credit for having laid the foundations of western education in Malabar area goes to the 'Basal German Evangelical Mission'. Basel Mission in Malabar, founded by Herman Gundert, actively engaged in educational activities in the middle of the 19th century (E. T. Mathew :1991). Among the colleges started in this region, the earliest ones were Zamorin's Guruvayurappan College (Calicut), Victoria College (Palakkad) and Brennen College (Thalassery).

In Malabar, the government's attention to the cause of promotion of Malayalam education began only in 1921. This period had coincided with the *Moplah rebellion* and with the period of transfer of partial control of central education department to Indians under the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1919. In Malabar, serious attention was given to the development of primary education supported by grants from the Madras government. The educational disparities that existed between Malabar and the other two regions of Kerala have narrowed down quite rapidly during the past quarter of a century as a result of the deliberate policy of special educational encouragement given to the former region.

Table 2
Distribution of Educational Institutions in Erstwhile British Malabar (1950/51)

Category	Provincial Government	Boards and Municipalities	Private unaided	Private Aided	Total
Government Colleges	3	-	3	-	6
Government Secondary Schools	9	36	77	-	122
Government Elementary Schools	75	954	2681	-	3577
Government Training Schools	10	-	11	-	21
Special Schools	63	288	806	22	1179
Total Government Schools	160	1278	3578	22	5038
Grand Total	160	1278	3578	22	5038

Source: **Report on Public Instruction**, Madras Presidency, 1950/51.

When India became independent in 1947, Malabar continued to be a district of Madras state. The colleges in Malabar were affiliated to the Madras University. It was added to Travancore-Cochin, as a result of the formation of the linguistic state if India, to form part of the united Kerala state (C.M Ramachandran:1987). However with the enactment of the Kerala University Act in 1957, all colleges in Kerala were brought under the control of the only University in the state then. Thus the Kerala University Act of 1957 transformed the character of the erstwhile Travancore University very creditably.

Map 1
Map of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar



Conclusion

Kerala has to its credit long and rich traditions of education, language and literature. Compared to the other states in India, Kerala has a relatively prominent position in the areas of literacy and education. Even during the pre-British period educational facilities had been quite widespread in almost every region. Therefore this unique position which Kerala has attained in the educational map of India is not the result of any sudden spurt of activity in the field of education in recent times, but the climax and culmination of the enlightened policies followed by its rulers from the very early days and the intellectual pursuits of the people spread over several centuries.

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