



Genesis and Growth of Education in Tenkasi

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ABSTRACT

Tenkasi is situated within fifty four kilometers to the west of Tirunelveli on the Tirunelveli- Shengottai road in Tamil Nadu. and at the footsteps of Thirkoodamalai of the western Ghats near the courtallam waterfalls. Tirunelveli district, which is called 'Oxford of South India' has a rich tradition in education. In the year 1986, the Revenue District of Tirunelveli was bifurcated as Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi Districts and a new post of District Educational Officer at Tenkasi was created and the name of posts of the District Educational Officer. Education plays an important role in shaping and developing society, education makes the society more perfect. So this paper analyze the Genesis and Growth of Education in Tenkasi.

KEYWORDS

Tenkasi is situated within fifty four kilometers to the west of Tirunelveli on the Tirunelveli- Shengottai road in Tamil Nadu. south of Ambasamuthiram and north of Sankarankoil, and at the footsteps of Thirkoodamalai of the western Ghats near the courtallam waterfalls. Tenkasi town is a taluk head quarters of Tenkasi taluk in Tirunelveli district. It is on the northern bank of river sittal or Chitranadhi.

Tirunelveli district, which is called 'Oxford of South India' has a rich tradition in education. The district has a large number of educational institutions both in the government and the private sector. In the year 1986, the Revenue District of Tirunelveli was bifurcated as Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi Districts and a new post of District Educational Officer at Tenkasi was created and the name of posts of the District Educational Officer, Tirunelveli Central was changed as District Educational Officer, Tirunelveli and the District Educational Officer, Tirunelveli south was redesignated as District Educational Officer, Cheranmahadevi.

Education plays an important role in shaping and developing society, education makes the society more perfect. Gurukuls, patasalas and Ghatikas were the educational institutions which flourished in Tamil Nadu during the ancient period. The native system of Education was imparted through the mediums of vernacular languages. In the premodern period there existed indigenous school which impart education to young boys. These schools were mainly Veda Patasalas for Hindus and Mutts and Madarasas for the Muslim populace taught Arabic and Persian. In fact they also taught the religion in Tamil through Arabic scripts. They were located in every religious centre in this and supported by the parents of the pupils. Brahmins were chiefly charge of Veda patasalas and notn Brahmins for Thevara Patasalas while Muslims were in charge of Maktabs and Madarasas.

The Pandya kingdom of which Tenkasi region formed part figured very much as the home of poets and patrons of learning during the fifteenth century. An inscription in Tenkasi temple speaks of Tirunelveli perumal Kulasekera, (1551-1567) growing ceremony in the year 1551 A.D. He granted endowments of lands to the Tenkasi temple. He was also a poet himself he wrote verses on the Viswanatha the presiding deity of Tenkasi. He had a title Veeravenkatamalai to mark his petic talent. Athiveera Rama Pandya I (1564-1606 A.D) son and successor of Tirunelveli perumalkulasekera was a man of letters and encouraged the growth of literature. He was a great literature. He wrote many books and translated the Naidathem or Nalastory from Sanskrit to Tamil. Other books written by him are koormapuranam, kasikandam, Vayusankithai, Lingapuranam

etc. He was also well versed in Sanskrit. He also wrote for children teaching morals "Vetrivarkai" is a code of moral written by this king especially to be taught to children. A Tenkasi inscription mentions that varadungan (1588-1609 A.D) was crowned in the year A.D 1588. He was a co ruler of Adhivveera Rama I. He was also a poet. He wrote verses on Siva, the presiding deity of karivalamvanthanallur and the collection is known as pathitru pathu Anthathi, Kalithurai Anthathi and venba Anthathi. Like the modern universities there were salais in the Tenkasi region during the Pandya rule one of such salai situated in Tenkasi. They functioned as the present Administrative staff Training college. Strict discipline was observed in the salais. There were also vaishnava and Saiva Mutts to promote education such mutts were established in Courtallam and Tenkasi. There were libraries in the temples and mutts. These libraries were called saraswathi pandarams. One such Pandarams functioned in the Viswanathar temple where Vedas and puranas were taught.

From the high literary standard of the period as evidenced by the literary works handed down. It can safely be inferred that there were rich literary traditions in Tenkasi region while poets symbolized the flourishing state of Tamil literature, the temples in ancient times represented creativity, in the spheres of sculpture, painting, music, Dancing and Jewellery making were patronized under the auspices of the temples. Which were centers of religious and secular learning.

INDIGENOUS SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

In the pre modern period, there existed indigenous schools throughout this region which impart education to young boys. These schools were mainly vedepatasalas and the vedapatasalas for Hindus and Mahtabs and Madras for Muhammadans. They were located in every religious centre in this region and supported by parents of the pupils. Brahmins were chiefly in charge of Vedapatasalas and non Brahmins for Thevara patasalas while Muslims were in charge of maktabs and Maderasas.

The books in use were written in verse and they were transcribed as palm leaves. The schools for the young which usually taught the three 'R' (reading writing and arithmetics) were located in the precincts of temples and the choultries. The Muslim schools were usually attached to mosques. In the vedapatasalas, the subjects like Astronomy, Ethics and logic were taught apart from the vedas and the Thevarems. The instruction in vedapatasalas was in Sanskrit while in the vedapatasalas, it was in Tamil. The Muslim maktabs were engaged in primary education while the Madaras were devoted to higher education. While Koran reading writing and ordinary with

matric were taught in maktabas grammar higher arithmetic, geography etc were taught in Madarasas.

The indigenous school whether the Hindu or the Muslim type was a single teacher one. The difficulty of instruction in a growing school, was overcome by the system of pupil teachers (Sattampillais). This monitorial system of which much was made in England in the early part of the nineteenth century received its inspiration in all livelihood from the village schools of south India Dr. Andrew Bell whose name is associated with the monitorial system in England known as the Bell and Lancaster system was an army chaplain in India and from 1789 to 1796 held the position of super intendant of the male orphan Asulam in Madras. He was inspired by the system of pupil teachers prevalent in the Madras indigenous schools and later, he took it to England and reoriented it as monitorial system.

Of the galaxy of foreign catholic missionaries who dedicated their lives to education in this region. In 1663 Roman Catholic spread in Tenkasi Mr. Rayappan and Rev. Fr. D. Prulinga and BalDastha khosta were the first missionaries took part in this venture. In 1823 Roma Catholic church namely. St. Michel Athithuthar church was built and schools were started by them.

Among the protestant missionaries who came to this region from, England Rev. James Hough and Rev. C. E. Rhenius were the key figures Rev. James Hough from the dated of his arrival 1816 as a Missionary devoted his whole energy to educational work in this region. German Missionary Rev. Fr. Jaenicke (1792 -1800) belong to the S.P.C.K. T.D.T.A started schools in Tenkasi. In 1854 Department of Educational was organized. Provision was also made for a normal school a few provincial schools several taluk schools. In 1911 one Sanskrit school was started at Tenkasi by taluk Board. In 1956 Tenkasi came under the control of D.E.O Tirunelveli west. In 1986 Tenkasi became the one among the four educational divisions of Tirunelveli. The Tenkasi panchyat union has elementary schools at Kandaswamyapuram, keelapattoukurichi, Muthakikudiirrupu, Ayyapuram, Vadakarai Sundarapandipuram, Angayerayankulam, Kamakkerpillaivalasai, Tiruchittambalam Kasimajorpuram, Subramaniapuram, Annanagar, Alagappapuram, Vallam panpoli, T Meenakshipuram and Municipal Primary schools at Tenkasi. 9th ward Tenkasi, 13th ward Tenkasi and in Courtallam. The Municipality runs a Middle school in the 7th Ward in Tenkasi and the Panchyat union runs three at Melagaram, Varapudur. Ayyapuram, and karisal Kudiirrupu. In Tenkasi St. Michael Girls Higher Secondary school. A.V. Matriculation Higher Secondary School, M.K.V.K Matriculation Higher Secondary school one situated. Arulmigu senthil Andavar polytechnic was established in 1985. Government industrial Training institute. St. Mary's industrial training institute six libraries (1961) and Arabic College are situated in the Tenkasi.

In the civinity of Tenkasi parasakthi college for women Sri Ram Nallamani Yadava Arts and Science college, CBSC school, Pharmacy college, Nursing college, Teacher training and Education college, USP Groups polytechnic college, college of Education Metric Higher Secondary school, Daniel Rajammal Teacher Training Institution are situated.

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