



BENEFACTION OF MISSIONARIES TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN TRICHINOPOLY DISTRICT – A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Trichinopoly was a place of considerable importance and antiquity namely Uraiyur, Srirangam and Jambukeshwaram. The antiquity of Trichinopoly and its having been emporium of international trade and commerce. The earnest efforts for the spread of Higher education in Trichinopoly district were made by Christian Missionaries during the first half of the 19th century. Particularly the SPG College was established in 1873, this was the first college to be established in Trichinopoly district by Rev. Frederick Schwartz⁷. Then, the St. Joseph's College was established in 1844 by Fr. Audibert, Society of Jesus at Nagapattinam, after that the college was shifted to Trichinopoly by 1883. Another one remarkable work of the Missionaries were the Holy Cross college at Trichinopoly. This was established in 1923 by St. Mary's Tope, for the benefit of them young girls of Trichinopoly district. Holy Cross College was the only women's college in Trichinopoly district. The nineteenth century occupies a very important place in the history of India, for it was during this period that a new India was emerging under the rejuvenating influence of the West. Everything began to undergo a change for the better. There was an awakening in the field of education, and in socio religious life of the country particularly in Trichinopoly district.

KEYWORDS: *Trichnopoly , Nawab of Carnatic , gigantic pyramids.*

INTRODUCTION

Trichinopoly was a place of considerable importance and antiquity namely Uraiyur, Srirangam and Jambukeshwaram. The antiquity of Trichinopoly and its having been emporium of international trade and commerce. It contained between twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants, several handsome mosques, palace and a garden of Mohammed Ali, Nawab of Carnatic. A stupendous granite rock which rises within the fortress to the height of 450 ft. commands an exotic view of the surrounding country; in which the island of Srirangam, encircled and fertilised by the divesting branches of the Cauvery river and the conspicuousness from its gigantic pyramids and the vast pagodas, forms a magnificent object. It was during the Nayakas rule that, Trichinopoly gained the capital status. At first Trichinopoly was under the control of king of Tanjore, Viswanatha Nayaka of Madura who captured Trichinopoly in 1559. Then Choka Nayaka transferred the capital from Madura to Trichinopoly¹. Zulifikar Khan, the deputy of Aurangazeb visited in 1693 and since then the rulers of Trichinopoly had been feudatories of the Mughal Emperor. The death of the king of Trichinopoly in 1736 was followed by disputes between the queen and a prince of royal blood which produced confusion in the government sufficient to give the Nawab of Arcot hopes of subjecting the kingdom to his authority. Among the European nations who had come for trade and commerce, French were the first to dream of over lordship in South India; so the English had to fight against them and also against the Mysore rulers. These struggles compelled the early missionaries (Danish Lutherans) confine only to Tranquebar and they were not allowed to enter the neighbouring



kingdom of Trichinopoly. This type of position allied before the advent of Europeans².

Before the nineteenth century Indian culture and social organisations were at their lowest ebb. When the British came to this country, they found themselves in an educational vacuum. Learning and enlightenment were more or less non-existent; and the native of the country steeped into a deplorable state of ignorance, conservatism superstitious beliefs. The East India Company was primarily a commercial concern and was unwilling to accept a direct responsibility for the education of the Indians for a long time. Even the outmoded traditional learning was the monopoly of a few privileged communities. The missionary clause inserted in the Charter of 1679 directed the Company to take a chaplain in very ship and maintain schools in all the garrisons and factories, mainly for the company servants.

When the Company became a territorial power in 1765, it established two institutions in higher learning – the Calcutta Madresha, (1782) and the Benares Sanskrit College (1791)³. They encouraged the oriental learning in Sanskrit Arabic but did not like to undertake the financial liability of running educational institution for the children of the Indian people, for it was bound to reduce their dividends. Under such circumstances, it was the missionaries who lifted up the torch of mass education and became pioneers of the modern education in India.

The freedom given by the Charter of 1813 was promptly taken advantage of by the missionaries. The Company also recognised the utility of the educational work on the missionaries. The nineteenth century occupies a very important place in the history of India, for it was during this period that a new India was emerging under the rejuvenating influence of the West⁴. Everything began to undergo a change for the better. There was an awakening in the field of education, and in socio religious life of the country. The drawn of era was marked by new thoughts, new institutions and new visions.

In the field of modern higher education in India the Christian missionaries were pioneers in many respects. They were to a large extent, instrumental in creating an educational ladder of the western type. Higher education of western model developed in India gradually and it became increasingly popular chiefly due to the medium of instruction, viz. English. The man who was commonly credited with the introduction of western education in English was *Thomas Bahinton Macaulay*. He came to India as a member of the Governor-General's Council in December 1834 and his primary task was to compose the *Indian Penal Code*⁵. He was also appointed as the President of the General Council of Public Instruction in 1834 and in that capacity he played a very important role which had great impact on the entire system of education.

The growth of missionary enterprise in the period between 1833 and 1853 was facilitated by cordial relationship that existed between the Company and missionaries. This period was one of the greatest reforms and liberal thinking in the social life of England and as a result, many of the Company's officials who came to India at this time were also inspired by missionary zeal. Between 1835 and 1853 the Government and private educators had thrice made educational experiments, but met with no success. Therefore in 1853 the Charter of the East India Company was to be renewed and the need for defining the educational policy had become necessary. As a result, the Education Despatch of 1854 was (Wood's Despatch) issued by the President of the Parliamentary Committee, Sir Charles Wood, and later Lord Halifax⁶.

It provided for the system of grants-in-aid. Taking advantage of the Government's decision to pay substantial grants to any one preparing to establish schools and to teach secular subjects with reasonable efficiency, the missionaries decided to found still more and colleges in Tamilnadu.

MISSIONARIES WORK IN TRICHINOPOLY

As early as in 1756, two of the missionaries, tracked many places in the district, founded schools in Srirangam and Trichinopoly. The famous Missionary Rector Schwartz who belonged to this mission came to Trichinopoly in 1761 where he was welcomed by the English garrison. He stayed at the town raised subscriptions, obtained donations from the Nawab of Arcot the then nominal ruler of the country and founded a school and a church therein 1772. In 1854, the Society for the Propagation of Gospel (SPG) in foreign parts, supported not less than 186 schools, the majority of which were in the district of Trichinopoly and composite districts of Madura, Tanjore and Tinnelveli. The Missionaries took keen interest in education at the time when the government did very little to shoulder the responsibility in this regard. The earnest efforts for the spread of Higher education in Trichinopoly district were made by Christian Missionaries during the first half of the 19th century. Particularly the SPG College was established in 1873, this was the first college to be established in Trichinopoly district by Rev.

Frederick Schwartz⁷. Then, the St. Joseph's College was established in 1844 by Fr. Audibert, Society of Jesus at Nagapattinam, after that the college was shifted to Trichinopoly by 1883. Another one remarkable work of the Missionaries were the Holy Cross college at Trichinopoly. This was established in 1923 by St. Mary's Tope, for the benefit of them young girls of Trichinopoly district. Holy Cross College was the only women's college in Trichinopoly district.

SOCIETY OF JESUS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION

The holy founder of the Society of Jesus, St. Ignatius Loyola wanted his sons to be "all things to all men". It is not surprising therefore that Jesuits are a bewilderingly diverse fraternity. They are seismologists, swamis, architects, parish priests and social workers, astronomers, revolutionaries, economists as well as missionaries, teachers and professors. The Jesuit colleges thought their educational system inculcate in the mind of the students the spirit of service and develop in youth social consciousness and social philosophy. They enable the students to fit into the modern developing, India with its special culture and other needs. They help to build up enlightened social attitudes in the field of education through missionaries in various parts in Tamilnadu particularly in Trichinopoly District. As a result St. Joseph College in Trichinopoly was established by the Jusuits.

St. Joseph College

In the field of education, St. Joseph College has an important role in imparting higher education in this region. It was established in 1844 by the Fathers of Society of Jesus at Nagapattinam. The college at Nagapattinam from the first a double establishment, one for the European and Eurasian Catholics of the Coromandel Coast.

St. Joseph's College is situated in the north-west corner of the fort near Main guard Gate and was the largest collegiate institution in the Presidency outside Madras. It has grown out of the school opened at Nagapatnam by Rev. Audibert S.J, in September, 1844. It was originally intended to be constructed at Trichinopoly which was the head quarters of the newly revived Jesuit Society. Unfortunately and epidemic then broke out and the death of the Superior General from an epidemic then residing at Trichinopoly raised a suspicion that the town was unhealthy. The new building was therefore converted into a mission house which now forms a part of the residence of the Bishop of Trichinopoly and another site was looked for. It so happened that at this time a number of old employees of the East India Company residing in many of the stations along the East Coast made an appeal to the Fathers to provide a place of education for their sons. Hence the Superior decided to start a college at Nagapattinam.

Transfer from Nagapattinam to Trichinopoly

The foundation of European College at Puducherry and the consequent fall in the number of European boys in the Nagapattinam College led to the abolition of the European section in 1858. Soon Nagapattinam became an inconvenient place for the college. The Strength of the institution did not increase. Indeed the numbers of the institution did not increase. Nagapattinam was at the extreme end of the Thanjavur district which made it troublesome and expensive for the pupils from other districts to attend the college there. Trichinopoly had by this time become an important railway junction. This had become a central place connecting railway lines as well as the head quarters of the Mission. The expense of the transfer was very heavy but it was fortunately largely met by a gift of two lakhs of rupees from a charitable French gentlemen. The college was shifted to Trichinopoly by 1884 and had been affiliated with University of Madras since 1866⁸.

The boarding house and the college department were established by Fr. R. Rector Faseuille S.J. near Main Guard Gate. Hostels had always formed an important adjoin to College life. In 1903 the old educational policy and methods were giving way to new courses and systems by Fr. Bess. Fr. Sewell's connection with the syndicate led to some changes in the management.

It has developed into a first grade college imparting instruction in four languages (Tamil, Malayalam, Sanskrit and Latin) and four science and Arts divisions. By 1911, the college was offering Intermediate, B.A. degree and Honours courses in the subjects like Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, History and Economics. St. Joseph's was the only Mofussil College which started honours courses then. With the opening of the honours courses, the well equipped laboratories, the well-stocked libraries and the availability of eminent professors, the number of

students enrolled went up by leaps and bounds. The 400 students of 1910 soon increased to 500, then to 800 and then to 1000 and more. By 1957, there were 1800 students within the campus.

The college is equipped with full-infrastructural facilities such as buildings, hostels, library, book-banks and laboratories. Four units of N.S.S. and three units of N.C.C. are functioning in the college. Each unit of N.S.S consists of 100 volunteers and N.C.C. 50 corps⁹.

The institution has completed 75 years of its educational service by 1994. Many educationists were associated with the growth of the college as a reputed institution and among them Prof.V. Sarnathan, who served as the Principal of the college, for more than 25 years deserves special mention.

SPG and their Contribution

The story of the society for the promotion of Christian knowledge (S.P.C.K.) and later its sister organisation, the society for the Propagation of Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G.) begins with the appointment of Bishop Henry Compton to the see of London in 1675. The year 1698, the oldest English missionary society, the society for Promoting Christian knowledge (S.P.C.K.) was formed by Dr. Thomas Bray. He was born at Martson, Shropshire in 1656, and educated at Oswestry Grammar School at Hart Hall (Hartford College) Oxford, after that the missionary take over by C.F. Schwartz, born in Brandenburg in Prussia. Schwartz had the plan start Provincial schools in Trichinopoly¹⁰. He established first school (St. John vestry school) in Trichinopoly in the year of 1783, after that, this was converted first grade college. The college name is SPG College.

SPG College (or) Bishop Heber College

SPG College was established in 1873, this was the first college to be established in Trichinopoly and the district. The wish of Rev. Frederick Schwartz came true by the year 1873, when the school was converted into a secondary grade college. After that the native of the district could obtain a liberal education. The FA class has 30 students and a Line of 12 English Principals piloted the college for the next six decades locating it on the academic map of Tamil Nadu, In particular three was Principals Margoschis, Creighton and Pearce who lovingly nurtured the institution in the nascent years.

Principal Williams (1886-88), Dodson (1888-96), Smith (1896-1901), Malim (1901-04) rendered their yeomen service to the college. The college was 31 years old when Principal Walsh began to shape the New Hostel with 75 inmates. In 1906 was the year of the Arbuthnot Bank crashed and the college was in the dire straits. However, the SPG pulled the college out of the financial hole. Principal Sharrock nursed the institution for the next three years.

Then stepped in Principal Gardiner who masterfully guided the college for 18 long years. By 1919 there were 637 students – 449 Brahmins, 86 non-brahmins, 86 Christians and 16 Muslims. The Golden Jubilee Function of the college witnessed the rechristening of the college as Bishop Heber College in 1926¹¹. The then Governor of the Madras Presidency Lord Goshen presided over the celebrations some valuable courses started. Honours courses in Mathematics and History had already been started in 1925. By the year 1928 when Principal James was in charge retrenchment began, the Lindsay Commission on Christian Higher Education recommended for the merger of the Bishop Heber College with the Madras Christian College. But the college owing to certain administrative reasons made its eclipse from the district for three decades since 1933 to 1966. And during the time it was merged with the Madras Christian College (MCC) Thambaram.

Sisters of Seven Dolors and the Contribution

The congregation of the Sisters of Cross founded in 1838 owes its origin to a humble young lady from Savoy France, Claudine Echednier by name. She was helped and supported in the is work by fatler mermier, the founder of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Saks, Born on the 29th May 1801 at Feternces a rural Parish at Savoy, in a family richer in Faith than in possession, Caludine evinced from her young age most astonishing thirst for knowledge and a great spiritual sensibility, Grippled by a deep personal love for Jesus Christ crucified, she responded to God's call after hard life in the world, to fulfil her desire to belong entirely God in the service of the neighbour.

The Sisters of the Cross were asked by the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sabs to help them in Mission of India in 1886, the first departure took place. Six Sisters of the Cross were the pioneers of this great Missionary

adventure. Sisters Vernoica Pollian Superior the Community, Sisters Marie Laravoire, Philomene Cadout, Jenne Lachenal, Clementne Galliard, Sazanne Coissard. They established many schools and colleges in India particularly in Trichinopoly¹². The notable one college is Holy Cross College in Trichinopoly.

Holy Cross College

Holy Cross College for Women is the oldest in Trichinopoly and has magnificent History. It was started for the benefit of them young girls of Trichinopoly as early as 1923 when higher education for women was considered almost a transgression against the age old respected customs and Indian Ideas. The College rose to its present position as a First Grade College from humble beginnings. Started as a Primary School in 1901 in St. Mary's Tope, Trichinopoly, it became a Lower Secondary School in 1902. After a short while the School was shifted to main bazaar Road and raised to a High School in 1905¹³. In the years that followed, there was a growing public demand for a College for Women in Trichinopoly. There was no such institution in this part of the Presidency, South of Madras city. In response to that demand it rose to the status of a Second Grade College and was affiliated to the University of Madras in 1923. The College was elevated to the full status of a First Grade College in 1933.

One of the earliest colleges in Tamil Nadu started exclusively for girls, this college was started with 4 girls on its roll which rose to nine 1925, thirty one in 1930 and 148 in 1940. In 1923 when the college was started the intermediate course was introduced in the Department of Economics and it has established B.A Economics with specialization in Rural Management Course. The Department of English was established in 1923 to teach English to the students of Intermediate Classes. In the stream of Science the subjects such as Mathematics (1933-34), Chemistry (1935), and Biology (1935) were introduced. The College also ran course for Religious and Moral Education and a separate department for it was created in the year 1923.

The Institution received help from St. Joseph's College in the close Proximity of which, it is situated and it owes its growth and welfare partly to the above Institution. Every effort is directed to the formation of character, the instilling of good manners, in fine to the intellectual, moral and spiritual culture of the young girls entrusted to the care of the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

Autonomy was made use of, to restructure courses in Economics, Physics, History, English Literature and Commerce with an accent on Vocationalisation. The Vocationalised undergraduate courses have a built-in component of on-the-job training, paving the way for institutional linkages with Business Establishments, Industries, Governmental and NGO Organizations. The Courses on Rural Management and Rehabilitation Science are unique and they led to the development of manpower to meet the needs of the Nation and to develop the marginalized.

The College which started with five students and five staff members has grown from strength to strength with 4208 Students, 249 Teaching and 115 Non-teaching staff. Academic excellence, value based education, highly motivated teaching and supportive staff, well planned, socially oriented, extensive our each programmes and outstanding performance in sports, games and fine arts are unique features of Holy Cross College. The College in all its glory now owes a lot to the Sisters of the Cross and the devoted Principals it had during this period of 87 years. Rev. Mother Sophie Descombes (1923-1949) was the first Principal and Founders' of Holy Cross College¹⁴. The steady progress of the Institution was due in great measure to the pioneering Spirit of Mother Sophie who labored for the great cause of education. In 1945, Mother Sophie was awarded the Kaise-I-Hind Medal for her work as an educationist.

"The aim of the College has been to inculcate in the minds of the students the value of life dedicated to God and the glory of motherhood, the sense of discipline and duty, for spiritual and moral development and for the social uplift of Women. Over 80% of its students are drawn from among the low income groups. This is social and educational up life indeed!"

The College also ran Hostels to cater the needs of the women students. Different blocks of Hostels were inaugurated in 1923, the blocks such as Catholic Block, Little Flower Block, Maria Villa Block, Holy Family Block, St. Joseph's Block and Shanthy Illam are note worthy. These hostels helped the students to further their studies and to cultivate the habit of hard and consistent work¹⁵.

CONCLUSION

The selfless and courageous service of the Missionaries of the Society in the field of education cannot be narrowed down to the point that it was only to teach the Indians the Christian doctrine. It was more than that, they risked their lives by rendering their service to a closed, caste ridden and deeply superstitious society. It was out of real concern for the liberation and development of the people who had been socially, educationally and economically oppressed for ages. The Missionaries established colleges for the children of all communities even amidst vociferous opposition by the natives. By the educational service they not only dispelled darkness in which the masses were immersed, but also insured opportunities of employment, both for Christians and Non-Christians.

The Christian Colleges have been pioneers in Indian Higher Education for the past one hundred fifty years, even critics of Christianity acknowledge the countries indebtedness to the Christian Colleges, particularly in the past when the show obviously played a role for out of proportion to the number of Christians in the overall population. The First School, First College, and the First Training College for Women were all established under the auspices of the Christian Missionaries in Trichinopoly district. The nineteenth century occupies a very important place in the history of India, for it was during this period that a new India was emerging under the rejuvenating influence of the West. Everything began to undergo a change for the better. There was an awakening in the field of education, and in socio religious life of the country particularly in Trichinopoly district.

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