



THE BEGINNING AND BLOSSOMING OF ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT :

The burning urge in the mind of Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar made him see that it was the right time to develop the high school, into a Secondary Grade College. He wrote to the Registrar of the University of Madras on 16th October 1919, and sought affiliation of the Ramaswamy Chettiar Town School, as a Secondary Grade College under section XXI of the Indian University Act (Act VIII of 1904). After writing this letter, the first Founder started in right earnest to search for and select right men for the right jobs. In 1927, the Chief Minister, Dr. P. Subbarayan appointed a new committee to decide the feasibility of establishing a Tamil University. The sub-committee issued and collected a questionnaire from leading educationalists and educational institutions in order to elicit opinion regarding the proposed establishment of a Tamil University. The committee received 130 responses to the questionnaires of which 2/3 of the replies favoured the establishment of a Tamil University. Based on this opinion sample, the sub committee recommended to the government the starting of a Tamil University. More or less at the same time, the Chief Minister, Dr.P. Subbarayan, who presided over the annual celebration of Sri Meenakshi College, Chidambaram, said "when the time comes for the founding of a Tamil University, Sir Annamalai Chettiar will, I hope, develop not only an examining University but a real residential University. I hope that the Sri Meenakshi College will develop not only as a College but also into Sri Meenakshi University at Chidambaram". After discussion of the legislative council Annamalai University bill was passed.

KEYWORDS : Nascent Beginning Establish Meenashi College Blossoming Annamalai University.

INTRODUCTION:

The British impact on the Indian society created a new kind of aristocracy all over the centres of governance in India. But the Indian mind, though in outlook and behaviour, adopted English customs, manners, etiquette etc., inwardly it remained always Indian. But the agony to rebuild and rejuvenate the past glory, ethos of India, to the tune of changing (modern) times was ever present in that section of the new aristocracy. One such personality who had such vigour, urge and inner mind, moulded by the revival of the Dravidian heritage and Tamil learning and traditional lore of South India especially of Tamil music was Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar. Education is a tool for modernization and every enlightened English educated Indian youth with reform zeal, showed interest in his own way for modernization. The philanthropic bent of mind and traditional quality of

Dharma associated with the clan, family and individual that was ever present in India was with the first Founder of the University; he wished to provide, help, assistance and encouragement for the development of education.



Seedling

In 1910, Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar went to England at the age of thirty-one to witness the Coronation

of King George V.¹ During this trip, which was rather brief, he had time to visit the world renowned Universities like Cambridge University and Oxford University. His tour to European Countries enlarged his vision on scientific lines. Education through travel is true education. The traditional system of education in India, especially the Gurukula system, on account of many factors, has deteriorated to a great extent. The syllabus, knowledge imparted, schooling condition and residential condition, had begun to face more and more short-comings. Very few Gurukulas imparted knowledge at higher levels. When the revival of more and more Sangam classical literature and other Tamil works was in progress,² imparting and patronizing knowledge of Tamil and Tamil works at higher level became the need of the hour. Having realized this, the first Founder of the University, had a great urge to involve himself in action. His imagination and forethought helped him to design a workable plan, that is, to establish a University in his motherland, like the ones in England. In England, he meticulously collected information, materials and other details to start an educational institution. He tabulated and planned the infrastructure needed for the realization of such an institution. In 1915, Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar's family, particularly his elder brother Dewan Bahadur Ramaswamy Chettiar started a High School in Chidambaram.³

Lord Pentland and Kanadukathan

Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar as the Chairman of the Karaikudi Municipality developed the Municipality on modern lines.⁴ With a civic sense, he gave importance to health and hygiene. He also thought of starting a Hospital for the poor and the sick. In 1916, he invited His Excellency, Lord Pentland⁵, the then Governor of Madras Presidency to Kanadukathan, to open a hospital in the name of Lady Pentland. He endowed this hospital with free medicine for all the patients. Thus he provided an avenue for medical aid and assistance to this region. The stay of Lord Pentland in the house of the Founder gave him a golden chance to realize his vision with regard to education endeavour. Lord Pentland who was connected with Scottish education very much agreed with him to the pressing need for a good College and University in this region for the moral and material development of the people.

Madurai Episode

In the second decade of the twentieth century, Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar moved closer to the management of Madurai College at Madurai. Since it was nearer to Kanadukathan, he purchased fifty one acres of land for that College.⁶ He had an intention to take over the Madurai College, but the negotiation for the take over was very slow, and not to his taste. He gave up his plan finally to bring the Madura College administration under his control in 1918⁷. He shifted his interest to establish such an institution in Chidambaram. His magnanimity which is par excellence made him donate the fifty one acres to the Madura College for its growth and progress⁸. The reasons for shifting his plan of action from Madurai to Chidambaram are many. It can be ascribed to the following.

1. The city of Madras had become a centre of activity in education, trade and commerce and politics. The sea – borne trade from the harbour of Madras saw more and more ships sailing to Burma and far off lands. Madras had become a centre of cultural hub. The term Madras; now denoted a southerner in north India. People speaking Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Bengali, Sourashtra, Marwari etc. lived in the city. The majority of the population spoke Tamil, their mother tongue.
2. His family's association with the holy town of Chidambaram also may have prompted him to select Chidambaram. He became a member of the Madras Legislative Council in 1916. The council was functioning in Madras the capital of Madras presidency. Chidambaram lies in between his native place Kanadukathan and Chennai on the main railway line whereas Madurai is located further south.
3. In politics also, after the emergence of an association at the fag end of the nineteenth century, the real political background for freedom struggle in a passive manner started with the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Later political activity picked up during the Swadeshi movement.

At this hour the politics of Madras Presidency was taking a new shape. Dr. Annie Besant started the Home Rule Movement. As a natural corollary, the Non-Brahmins of the Madras Presidency on 20th November 1916, issued the Non- Brahmin Manifesto and later formed the Justice Party. The Justice Party opposed the home rule league vehemently and requested the government not to give Home Rule in order to avoid the domination of the

minority who were ever doing well in their educational advancement. It clearly indicated that the advancement of Non- Brahmin classes is possible only by educational advancement.

Nascent Beginning

Traditionally and in religious terms, Chidambaram is a holy town. In Tamil, when we say “koil”, it denotes two places only-one is Lord Nataraja temple at Chidambaram and the other, Lord Ranganatha temple at Srirangam. Chidambaram was also an ancient seat of learning for a long time. The dance of Siva is the main attraction for devotees. The great kings of the past and the people from all walks of life patronized the temple. From the Middle Ages, mutts came to be located in Chidambaram. They not only rendered temple services, but were utilized as rest houses for the pilgrims. Moreover, they imparted religious education especially the Saivitelore. Devara Patasalas also functioned under them. In the twentieth century fifty-nine⁹ mutts were functioning in Chidambaram. Nattukkottai Nagarathars were basically saivites. They adored and worshipped Lord Siva. They had their own choultry and mutt in Chidambaram. Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar’s father was greatly attached to this temple. He renovated Lord Nataraja temple in 1891.¹⁰ His elder brother Dewan Bahadur Ramaswamy Chettiar took permanent residence in Chidambaram. He contested the Municipal election and became Chairman of the Chidambaram Municipality in 1908, and remained in office till 1916¹¹. The High school started by him came under the administration of Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar in 1918, after his demise. Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar showed great interest in the progress of the high school. He increased the endowment to the school from Rs. 35,000 to 50,000.¹² In 1880’s there were two Colleges in South Arcot District.¹³ But by 1902 even these two Colleges came to be closed.¹⁴ At that time only places like Madras, Kumbakonam and Tirunelveli were imparting modern western education.

Birth of Sri Meenakshi College

The burning urge in the mind of Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar made him see that it was the right time to develop the high school, into a Secondary Grade College.¹⁵ He wrote to the Registrar of the University of Madras on 16th October 1919, and sought affiliation of the Ramaswamy Chettiar Town School, as a Secondary Grade College under section XXI of the Indian University Act (Act VIII of 1904).¹⁶ After writing this letter, the first Founder started in right earnest to search for and select right men for the right jobs.

In response to his letter, the University of Madras sent a committee of two members to Chidambaram. The members were Mr.K. Ramunni Menon, Registrar of the University of Madras and Professor J.G. Tait, Professor of English, Presidency College.¹⁷ They gave a favourable report and recommended for permission to start the College. The Director of Public Instruction Mr. G.R. Grieve made a note to the government that the College had been started and endowed entirely by Rao Bahadur Annamalai Chettiar and that the endowment amounted to Rs. 3,50,000 and under these circumstances the request may be granted.¹⁸ He further wrote that it can be included in the Government Scheme of Zamindar managed institutions.

Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar started the Secondary Grade College on 24th June 1920¹⁹ and named it Sri Meenakshi College.²⁰ He named the College after his beloved mother Meenakshi Achi. In the beginning, it was located in the high school building temporarily in Chidambaram.²¹ Then it was the Seventh First Grade College in the Presidency. At first in Group III, History and Logic were taught for the intermediate course. Only humanities was offered. He provided houses for the staff of the College. Again another committee consisting of Mr.M.A.Candeth and Professor E.S.Runganathan came to report on the proposed affiliation to the Sri Meenakshi College in IV Group (or) the B.A., course. The committee recommended the affiliation, which was accordingly effected.²²

Growth of Sri Meenakshi College

Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar selected the best staff for the College. He wished to bring the cream of intellectuals of the day to his institution. Professor K.A. Nilakanta Sastri was appointed the first Principal of the College.²³ V.G. Ramakrishna Aiyar was appointed to teach Economics and History, Mr.A.Aravamuda Aiyangar and Mr.P.A. Subramania Aiyar were appointed to teach English and Mr.Sankaranarayana Aiyar was appointed to

handle Logic. He exhibited his love for books, by taking charge of the library, which had 2000 volumes at the time of its inception.²⁴ Later, one Mr. V. Venugopal Chetti donated more than one thousand books to the College.²⁵ Some of them were rare editions. The selection of books was done by Professor K.A.Nilakanta Sastri and K. Swaminathan.

G.VKrishnaswami Aiyangar was appointed as Professor of Mathematics. He was a sociable man. He was also in-charge of receiving important visitors to the University. He received them at the railway station and arranged for their comfortable stay in the guest house. One Mr.L.K. Govindarajulu was in-charge of Physical Education. "He was an easy man to get on with, ever smiling and ready to help on the side of academic life."²⁶ There was increased interest in games and the lovely play grounds and attractive pavilion helped to organize tournaments from time to time in the campus. As for cultural activity in the College, Professor Myleru of the Department of English and Sambanda Mudaliar of the Department of Tamil organized dramas the former the English dramas and the latter Tamil dramas.²⁷ This created a pleasant atmosphere in the campus.

In the first year, the College had 58 students,²⁸ in the second year it increased to 75,²⁹ and in the third year it was 197.³⁰ In 1928, the student strength was 426.³¹ In the beginning, the College had three Departments i.e., English language and literature, History and Economics. In 1922, the B.A. classes were inaugurated by Mr. C.R. Reddi³² (later Sir Ramalinga Reddi, Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University). Mathematics was started in 1923 and Philosophy course in 1924.

College Buildings and Construction

Being a man of tradition and modernity, Dr.Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar selected the land for the Sri Meenakshi College on the eastern side of Chidambaram railway station known as Tiruvetikulam now known as Annamalainagar. He chose an auspicious day for the foundation laying ceremony. The hour of Jupiter in favourable position was chosen for the foundation rituals. Brahmins chanted Vedic hymns. The holy water from the lily pond of Lord Nataraja's shrine was brought and sprinkled profusely all over the place. All the dignitaries of the Chidambaram Municipality and cream of Chidambaram town were present on the occasion. When the bells of Tiruvetikulam temple rang for the morning prayers, it became an auspicious omen for laying the foundation of the building. One Doraisami Aiyar of Sengudy, worked as a supervisor for the building construction.³³ One Mr. Thandavam Chettiar took charge of the supervision of the construction work.³⁴ The earlier mentioned gentleman was in the spot from dawn to dusk. Another person who joined later and supervised the construction work was Sundaram Aiyar of Thiruvanaikavu. Apart from them, the Founder himself used to come down two or three times a month to watch the progress and he encouraged the workers and gave his suggestions. At times, Sundaram Aiyar argued with the Founder about the construction work. Finally, he used to accept his suggestion as right and used to feel sorry for the argument he made.

When Mr.Littlehailes, the Director of Public Instruction, came to inaugurate the college buildings the first Founder told him pointing to Sundaram Aiyar that the buildings were the work of Sundaram Aiyar. The Founder said "His work is worth his weight in gold". At an unexpected moment the Founder gave a handsome gift to Sundaram Aiyar and Aiyar was astonished on account of the size of the gift.

Thus the very first building in the campus called the Oriental Block or Meenakshi building came into being. It was 360 feet long and 60 feet broad with lecture halls on the ground and upper floors.³⁵ It housed the Sanskrit and Tamil Departments. On the top of the building, in a panel, was set an image of the Goddess Meenakshi, the patron deity of Madurai the old time Pandyan Capital. It is a graciously-moulded figure about which a German Professor on a visit remarked that it reminded him of the virgin and child which adorns the University of Bonn.

After the construction of the building, Sri Meenakshi College was shifted from the town to the new building in 1922.³⁶ For the shifting also, an auspicious day was selected and the shifting took place in the forenoon of 4th June 1922. Mr. Littlehailes opened the door with a silver key and declared the College open.³⁷ Mr. Littlehailes also said that the college had good infrastructure. The Founder gave presents to all. Though the building had lecture halls etc. "The office functioned in a shed of thatch in which was left a grove of Illuppai trees. There were seven of them standing in circle, and a wag referred to them as the seven Graces and the name stuck. They afforded shelter from the sun and the rain but when the wind blew, and clouds of dust swirled over head,

the office had to beat a hasty retreat to the College verandahs. Even more urgent was the need of hostels. Students were swarming from as far south of Pudukkottai and Tiruchirappalli and from Cuddalore in the north. They were housed and fed in shacks. Known as the Kora Raman huts, after a Korava named Raman who was there by right of trespass! the huts were there only for the time being till pukka buildings could be put up".³⁸

Hostels

Later, the Founder realized the need for hostels. He immediately summoned the architect and commanded Sundaram Aiyar to carry out the construction work. To relieve the congestion he wished and proposed to construct two hostels. The hostels became ready for occupation in June 1923.³⁹ Much care was also shown about the food in the hostels. Food bill always remained at a moderate level. Even as late as 1942 the charges remained steady. In 1926 when Mr. H. S.L. Palak a Barrister from London, came to open the Science Block⁴⁰ he wondered how the food bill was only six rupees. One Ananta Vaidyanathan became busy in equipping the laboratory. He did this job carefully and meticulously.

The B.A. Honours course was introduced in 1925.⁴¹ The Science Departments and Laboratory were opened in 1926 by the Governor, His Excellency Mr. Viscount Goshan, Chancellor of the University of Madras.⁴² In 1927, Dr.Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar founded Sri Meenakshi Tamil College⁴³ and Sanskrit College.⁴⁴ Thiru U.V. Swaminatha Aiyar⁴⁵ was appointed as Principal of Sri Meenakshi Tamil College,⁴⁶ Thiru Dhandapani Dikshitar⁴⁷ was appointed as Principal of Sri Meenakshi Sanskrit College.⁴⁸ Soon he also established an Oriental Training College and a College of Music in 1929 in Chidambaram.⁴⁹ It was the first Music College in the Madras Presidency. As such, through the efforts of the first Founder of the University, from 1920 to 1929, as many as five Colleges were founded in Chidambaram to impart knowledge in various branches especially for the propagation of Tamil language and literature. They were:

1. Sri Meenakshi Secondary Grade College, 1920⁵⁰
2. Sri Meenakshi Tamil College,1927
3. Sri Meenakshi Sanskrit College,1927
4. Sri Meenakshi Oriental Training College, 1927
5. Annamalai Music College 1929

Thus from 1920 to 1929, the growth of Sri Meenakshi College was strong and steady. Students came from distant areas like Cochin, Nellore etc. Thanks to the vision and philanthropy of the Founder. The students enjoyed the residential facilities, good food etc. They were also attracted by the eminent Professors. The teachers at Sri Meenakshi Colleges were

Professor K.A. Nilakanta Sastri ⁵¹	Principal of the College and Head of the Department of History.
Professor K.Swaminathan	Department of English
P.A. Subramania Aiyar	Department of English
A. Aravamuda Aiyangar	Department of English
C.R. Myleru	Department of English
V.G. Ramakrishna Aiyar	Department of Economics
G.V. Krishnaswami Aiyar	Department of Mathematics
V.Venugopal Chetti	Physics and Chemistry

	Anatavaidyanathan	Physics and Chemistry
0.	U.V. Swaminatha Aiyar	Principal of the Sri Meenakshi Tamil College
1.	Dandapani Swami Dikshitar	Principal of the Sri Meenakshi Sanskrit College

The College taught the following subjects

1. English, 2. History and Logic, 3. Economics, 4. Mathematics (1923), 5. Philosophy (1924), 6. Physics, 7. Chemistry, 8. Tamil (1927), 9. Sanskrit (1927), and 10. Music(1929).

The Founder invited greatmen of the time to guide the growth of the institution. Sir M. Visweswaraiya visited the college and advised as to the lines on which the Science Department should be run. When they proposed to start an Honours course in Science subjects, qualified teachers were appointed and one of them was training for two years and he came back and joined the Department in 1928. Thus, they expected recognition and approval from the University of Madras to start the Honours course in Science. All this clearly shows how the public and leaders of the society began to have increasing trust and confidence in Dr.Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar, which paved the way for the transformation of the College into a University.

Madras Presidency: Education and Politics in 1920s

The Justice party came to power in December 1920.⁵² At that time, the Madras Presidency had 22 districts. On the basis of languages spoken, the Presidency could be divided as 9 Telugu speaking districts and 11 Tamil speaking districts and one each for Malayalam and Kanada.⁵³ The Presidency covered 250, 000 sq miles and had a population of 60 million. It was a coastal Presidency and had 1,700 miles of coast line. The only University in the Presidency was the University of Madras. It came into existence in 1857.

For nearly half a century there was a demand for the creation of a new University in the Presidency. Only at the turn of the twentieth century i.e., in the year 1900, the Tamils made a demand to include Tamil language in the curriculum of the University of Madras. In those times, only Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit found a place in the curriculum. The Indian University Act of 1904,⁵⁴ gave powers to the Senate of the University to introduce new regulations in courses of study. The vernacular language was a compulsory subject only at the matriculation level, F.A. (First Examination in Arts) and B.A., degree classes.⁵⁵ However, Tamil was not a separate group and could be offered along with Sanskrit because Tamil was then ranked not as a classical language but as a vernacular.⁵⁶ Then a debate also went on to classify Tamil as classical language.

In 1916, when B.A, degree was offered in language group in the Presidency College,⁵⁷ Madras, they taught languages like Sanskrit, Urdu, Persian and Arabic and no Dravidian languages found a place. In the same year, Mysore University was established in the state of Mysore. The vernacular Kanada became a compulsory subject in the Mysore University curriculum. This proved as a turning point for the elite Tamils to make their demand with greater force and vigour for the introduction of Tamil as a separate group in the University curriculum.

When the Justice Ministry passed the Madras University Act of 1923,⁵⁸ it changed the composition of the functioning bodies of the University. When the demand to include vernacular language was increasing, in 1927-28 it was introduced as a compulsory second language in the B.A. course. To pass the Oriental title examinations, a candidate had to choose either Sanskrit or Arabic alone or any two languages in group I, namely Tamil, Telugu, Kanada, Malayalam and Sanskrit and that too only when he passed the English paper in Matriculation examination, he was permitted to sit for the Oriental tittle examination. The University offered B.O.L. only in 1935.⁵⁹ In this situation, the various Colleges, and Tamil associations, Non-Brahmin conferences, Madurai Tamil Sangam, Thiruvalluvar Tamil Sangam, Salem and leading intellectuals at different times and at different levels presented memoranda to make the vernacular language a compulsory subject and a separate group.

Thus more or less from 1910 onwards, there were two demands mainly proposed by the educated and conscious Tamils of the Madras Presidency. The first demand was for the introduction of Tamil language and

literature as a subject in the University curriculum and to declare Tamil as a classical language. The next demand from them was for the establishment of a Tamil University.

Demand for more Universities

In 1915, before the establishment of Mysore University, a reader of Madras Mail wrote a letter to the editor of the paper. In it, he pointed out the needs of a population of 60 million scattered over an area of 2,50,000 sq. miles and speaking not less than four different languages.⁶⁰ He also suggested the formation of four more Universities for the four major Dravidian languages in respect of their linguistic regions. He considered Madras as the potential seat of a Tamil University.⁶¹

In 1918, Osmania University was established in Hyderabad,⁶² a princely state. The establishment of two new Universities in states adjacent to Madras Presidency added weight and thrust to the demand to start new Universities in the Madras Presidency. Professor P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar, Principal of the A.V.N College, Vizagapatnam expressed the need to start more Universities in the Madras Presidency.⁶³

Demand for Tamil University

In 1920, in the Provincial educational conference held at Salem, a demand was made to establish Tamil University and Andhra University.⁶⁴ When the Ministry of Rajah of Panagal passed the Hindu Religious Endowment Act, the Tirupati temple came under Government control.⁶⁵ At the celebration of the 61st birth day of Rajah of Panagal at Tirupati, he himself suggested the starting of a University by using the surplus revenue of the Tirupati temple, on the lines of the Banaras Hindu University and naming it as the Sri Venkateswara University.⁶⁶ The Hindu wrote an editorial on this subject and made a plea for the Tamil University. The paper also observed that the authorities of Dharmapuram, Tiruppanandal, and similar mutts might be encouraged to start a similar University to promote Dravidian culture.⁶⁷

In 1924, when Mr. R. Littlehailes, the then Director of Public Instruction, presided over the fourth college Day function of Sri Meenakshi College at Chidambaram, he rightly observed that the College along with the Sanskrit College and the Oriental Training College bid fair to constitute a teaching and residential University.⁶⁸ At this time, the people of Kumbakonam demanded the location of a new University at Kumbakonam.⁶⁹ In Tiruchirappalli, the District Board passed a resolution to found a University in Tiruchirappalli. The Tiruchirappalli branch of South India Liberal Federation⁷⁰ (Justice Party) also passed a resolution on starting a new University.

One T.V. Seshagiri Iyer moved a resolution in the Senate meeting of the Madras University in 1925 on establishing at least one University in the Tamil districts, and the resolution recommended to the government to take steps immediately.⁷¹ T.N. Sivagnanam Pillai of the second Justice Ministry spoke at the Tamil University Conference held at Tiruchirappalli about the need for starting a Tamil University in Madras.⁷²

In 1925, the Justice Ministry passed the Bill for establishing the Andhra University. The Bill set out as its aim the rapid development of the study of the Telugu Language and Literature. On 26th April 1926, the Andhra University was started at Bezwada, with jurisdiction over all the Telugu districts.⁷³ In 1926, there were attempts by the Senate of the Madras University to appoint a committee to consider the steps to be taken to form a Tamil University. But the attempts ended in failure since there was a confusion over the names proposed to form the committee. Later, the government formed 35 member committee to examine the demand for a separate University for Tamil districts⁷⁴

Meanwhile the Justice party faced defeat in the elections held in November, 1926. An Independent Ministry was formed with Dr.P.Subbarayan as the Chief Minister. He failed to show any enthusiasm towards the establishment of a Tamil University in the beginning.⁷⁵ When His Excellency Lord Goschen inaugurated the Senate of the Andhra University on 30th August 1926,⁷⁶ he pointed out that, the Andhra University Act was passed not purely for educational demand but for the Andhra movement.⁷⁷ In this respect, the demand for a Tamil University as an aspiration of Tamils or Dravidian nationalism which was growing among Tamils(Non-Brahmins) had to be fulfilled.⁷⁸

In 1927, the Chief Minister, Dr. P. Subbarayan appointed a new committee to decide the feasibility of establishing a Tamil University.⁷⁹ The sub-committee issued and collected a questionnaire from leading

educationalists and educational institutions in order to elicit opinion regarding the proposed establishment of a Tamil University. The committee received 130 responses to the questionnaires of which 2/3 of the replies favoured the establishment of a Tamil University. Based on this opinion sample, the sub committee recommended to the government the starting of a Tamil University.⁸⁰ More or less at the same time, the Chief Minister, Dr.P. Subbarayan, who presided over the annual celebration of Sri Meenakshi College, Chidambaram, said “when the time comes for the founding of a Tamil University, Sir Annamalai Chettiar will, I hope, develop not only an examining University but a real residential University. I hope that the Sri Meenakshi College will develop not only as a College but also into Sri Meenakshi University at Chidambaram”.⁸¹

In the third annual conference of the Teachers’ Guild held at Thirunelveli in February 1927, the request was again sent to the Government in the form of a resolution to establish a Tamil University.⁸² The same request was again made to the Presidency Government in the Thanjavur Non-Brahmin conference held at Mayuram in May 1927⁸³ and in the first provincial Non Brahmin youth congress held in Madras on October 1927.⁸⁴ In March 1928, the Tamil University Committee made recommendation unanimously to start a new University for the Tamil districts.⁸⁵ It recommended a federal affiliation type of University with six principal centres at Madras, Thirunelveli, Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore, Kumbakonam and Chidambaram.⁸⁶

Success of Private Enterprise

At this juncture Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar, Founder of the Sri Meenakshi College at Chidambaram⁸⁷ came forward to donate Rupees twenty lakhs along with three Colleges and buildings located in Chidambaram to establish a Unitary and Residential University at Chidambaram.⁸⁸ When he approached the government with the above proposal, another Chettiar, hailing from Madurai, came forward to donate Rupees thirty five lakhs for the establishment of a University at Madurai.⁸⁹ Finally, the government favoured and accepted the proposal of Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar and took steps to pass an Act to establish a University at Chidambaram. The government also came forward and proposed to start a new University.⁹⁰ Subject to the vote of the Legislative Council, the government proposed to make (1) an Endowment of Rs. 20 lakhs toward the establishment of the proposed University and (2) a non-recurring grant of Rs. 7½ lakhs for buildings and equipment and a recurring grant of Rs.1½ lakhs per annum.⁹¹

The Legislative Process

Public opinion was building up slowly with a demand for establishing a Tamil University in Tamil speaking districts of the Madras Presidency. The legislative power, given by the Montague Chelmsford reform Act of 1919, gave Diarchy to the provinces and the creation of a legislature enabled enacting of laws. The earlier attempt to start a Tamil University through legislative process failed mainly due to financial constraints. The willing co-operation and financial support of Dr.Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar made the legislators support his claim through official channels. The willingness of the Hon’ble Minister of Education made the acting Secretary to the Government of Madras (Law and Education Department) to write a letter about the bill to the Secretary to the Government of India (Legislative Department) on 23rd August 1928.⁹² All these papers loaded with Government Proceedings no. 1817 dated 1st September 1928 were made available to the official concerned.⁹³ On 28th August 1928, the bill on the creation of Annamalai University was published in the Government Gazette of the Madras Presidency.⁹⁴ The bill was then introduced in the Madras Legislative Council on 8th September 1928.⁹⁵ The legislature referred the bill to a select committee consisting of 26 members.⁹⁶ The members of the committee formed out of the Legislative Council were:1. The hon’ble Dr.P. Subbrayan, 2. Mr.W.E. Smith, 3. Diwan Bahadur K. Ramunni Menon, 4. Mr. S.Satyamurti, 5. Mr. P.C. Venkatapathi Raju, 6. T.C. Srinivasa Ayyangar, 7. Rao Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu, 8. Diwan Bahadur A.M.M. Murugappa Chettiar, 9.Mr.P.T. Rajan, 10.T.M. Narayananswami Pillai, 11. Mr. Arpudaswami Udayar, 12. Mahomud Schamnad Sahib, 13. W.O. Wright, 14. Raobahadur C.V. Anantakrishna Ayyar, 15. Mr.Basheer Ahmed Sayeed Sahib, 16. V.I. Muniswami Pillai, 17. Diwan Bahadur K.Kumaraswami Reddiar, 18. Rao Bahadur K. Sitarama Reddiar 19. Mr.C.V. Venkataramana Ayyangar, 20. W.P.A. Soundarapandia Nadar, 21. Mr. S.N. Dorai Raja, 22. A.V. Bhanoji Rao, 23. Swami A.S.

Sahajananda, 24. Mr. R.Srinivasa Ayyangar, 25. Mr.Muhammad Meera Ravuttar, 26. Mr.A.B. Shetty and 27. Diwan Bahadur R.N. Arogyaswami Mudaliyar.⁹⁷

The committee was asked to report to the Council within a month. The committee went into action and made a visit to Chidambaram to study the ground realities. Later, it submitted its report to the Council. On the basis of the report, on 11th October 1928, the Prime Minister Dr.P.Subbarayan presented a report of the select committee on Annamalai University Bill in the Madras Legislative Council. While doing so he said, "I am sure the Hon. Members will realize that this is the biggest benefaction that has been offered to the cause of education in this province, and I do hope that this is only a beginning for such benefactions. It really shows the way to men who are happily circumstanced in this world and will be a guide to them to show that the amassing of wealth is not the end in life but a greater purpose is achieved if that wealth could be utilized for the advantage of our fellow human beings, and in this respect I am sure the Hon'ble. Members will render their grateful thanks to Sir Annamalai for his munificence"⁹⁸.

The Hon'ble member Mr.S. Muthiah Mudaliyar seconded it. By this proposal the legislative debate on the bill commenced in the legislature. The motion was put to and vote carried. The Hon'ble President of the House then proposed the bill Clause by Clause. The legislature discussed the bill Clause by Clause for two days i.e., on 11th and 12th October 1928.⁹⁹ There was no lack of points of order. The council was only ten years old and the members were quick to raise a point of order if there was one or a suspicion of one.¹⁰⁰ On 11th October from 11.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. it discussed upto clause no.4 of the bill and passed it. From 2.30 p.m. to 4.45 p.m. on the same day, from clause no.5 to 16 was discussed and later passed and carried. On 12th October 1929, from 12.30 pm to 12.55 p.m. from clause no. 17 to 42 and after lunch break the legislators assembled and discussed the remaining Clauses of the bill from 3.00 p.m. to 4.00 a.m. and finally the entire bill was put to vote and passed unanimously into law. When the bill was passed, it received loud cheers and clapping of hands in the legislature.

During the discussion, certain Clauses were debated and amendments were passed. Some of the amendments were accepted and some were rejected. A table showing the Proposer and Seconded Clause by Clause and amendments suggested and the results of voting were tabulated from the legislature records and enclosed in table No.2 in table I a.show the table

No. 2 .table I. a Showing the details about the mover and seconded of the bill in the an amendments and results clause wise

S.No.	Class no of the bill	Name of the mover	Name of the second	Amendment by	Result	No of the legislative debates	Voting
1.	Clause 1	Hon'ble Dr.P.Subbarayan	Hon'ble Muthiah Mudaliyar		The motion was put and carried.	2	
2.	Clause 2	Dr.P.Subbarayan	S.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Satyamurthi	The clause as amended was put passed and added to the bill	9	
3.	Clause 3 Clause 4	C.V. Venkataramana Ayyangar	J.A. Saldanha	Amendment was lost	Put, passed and added to the bill Passed and added to the bill	21	No 83 N10 N54 Yes 29

4.	Clause 5	K.K. Koti Reddi	S.Satyamurti	K. Koti Reddi Mr. Aruppuswamy Udayar the provide be omitted	The amendment carried passed and added to the bill	15	T.66 Yes 47 No 29
5.	Clause 6	Basheer Ahmad Sayeed	P. Bhaktavatsulu Nayudu	With the previous senction of the Governor General in council omitted	Amendment was put and lost passed and added to the bill	6	
6.	Clause 7	Dr.P. Subbarayan	S.Satyamurti		The clause as amended was put passed and added to the bill	2	
7.	Clause 8 Clause 9 Clause 10	Dr.P. Subbarayan	Mr.S.Muthiah Mudaliar		The motion was carried As amended was put passed and added to the bill Were consecutively put passed and added to the bill	4	T 70 Y 67 N 3
8.	Clause 11	Mr. Satyamurthi	C.V. Venkataraman Ayyanagr	S.Satyamurthi	Passed and added to the bill	4	
9.	Clause 12	Dr.P. Subbarayan	S.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr. Subbarayan	The amendment was, by leave of house with drawn	3	
10.	Clause 13	Dr.P. Subbarayan	S.Muthiah Mudaliyar		As amended was put passed and added to the bill		
11.	Clause 14	Dr.P. Subbarayan	S.Muthiah Mudaliar		The amendment was put and carried.		
12.	Clause 15 Clause 16	Sriman Biswanath das Hasasoya	Mr. Basheer Ahmad ayeed	Dr.P. Subbarayan	The amend was lost		
13.	Clause 17 Clause 18	Dr.P.Subbarayan	S.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Consideration of the Annamalai University bill	2	

14.	Clause 19 Clause 20	J.A. Saldanha	C.V. Venkataraman Ayyangar	J.A. Saldanha	The Amendment was put and carried passed and added to the bill	4	
15.	Clause 21 Clause 22	Dr.P.Subbarayan	S.Muthiah Mudaliyar		Amendment was put and carried	2	
16.	Clause 23 Clause 24	Dr.P.Subbarayan	S.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Passed and added to the bill put and carried added to the bill Passed and added to the bill	2	
17.	Clause 25	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr.P.Subbarayan	26,27,28 were then successively put passed and added to the bill		
18.	Clause 29	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr.P.Subbarayan	29, and 30 passed and added to the bill		
19.	Clause 31	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr.P.Subbarayan	The amendment was put and carried		
20.	Clause 32	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Venkataramana Ayyangar	As amended was then put, passed and added to the bill		
21.	Clause 33 Clause 34	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar		The amendment was by leave of the house with drawn		
22.	Clause 35	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr.P.Subbarayan	The amendment was carried		
23.	Clause 36 Clause 37	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr.P.Subbarayan	The amendment was carried 37. Passed and added to the bill	4	

24.	Clause 38	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Put and carried 39 and 40 were successively put, passed and added to the bill	2	
25.	Clause 41	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr.P.Subbarayan	This was carried 42 passed and added to the bill	2	
26.	Clause 43	Dr.P.Subbarayan	The Hon Diwan bahadur		44 the amendment was put and carried	3	
27.	Clause 45	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar	Dr.P.Subbarayan	46 passed and added to the bill		
28.	Clause 7	Dr.P.Subbarayan	Mr.Muthiah Mudaliyar		The hours and carried unanimonoly and the bill was passed into lay		

No 2 table I b show stable the a list of the Hon'ble members who participated in the debate.

NO.2 TABLE I. (b)

List Showing the Hon'ble Members who had participated in the Debate.

S.No.	Name of the legislator	Debate clause
1.	The Hon'ble Sir Norman Majoribanks	16
2.	The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Sir Muhammad Usman Sahib Bahadur	
3.	The Hon'ble T.E. Moir	3(3), 5(2), 47
4.	The Hon'ble Diwan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nayar	
5.	The Hon'ble S. Muthiah Mudaliyar	41,43
6.	The Hon'ble Dr.P. Subburayan	1, 2(2), 3, 5, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16(8), 17, 21, 23, 25, 29, 31(2) 33, 35, 36, 38, 41, 45(2), 47(2)
7.	Rao Bahadur C.V. Ananta krishna Ayyar	1, 2(2), 3, 5(2) 6 7 8(3) 11(5), 13, 14, 16(13) 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 29, 31, 32, 33(2), 35, 36, 38, 41(2), 43(2), 45(2), 47(4)
8.	Mr.C.B. Cotterell	
9.	Mr. H.A. Watson	
10.	Mr. C.A. Souter	
11.	Mr. S.H. Slater	
12.	Mr. A.MC.G.C. Tampoe	
13.	Mr. C.W.E. Cotton	
14.	Mr.V.C.H. John	

15.	Mr. W.A. Manikkavelu Nayakar	
16.	Mr. A.B. Shetty	
17.	Mr.J. Bheemayya	
18.	Mr. R. Foulkes	
19.	Mr.P.J. Gnanavaram Pillai	
20.	Mahmud Scham Nad Sahib Bahadur	
21.	Mr. Muppil Nayar of Kavalappara	
22.	Subadar major S.A. Nanjappah –Bahadur	
23.	Mr. A..L.Ar. Narayanan Chettiar	
24.	Mr.T.M. Narayanaswami Pillai	
25.	Mr.K. Krishnan	
26.	Mr. Daniel Thomas	5, 16
27.	Syed Ibrahim Sahib Bahadur	
28.	The Zamindar of Singam Patti	32, 33
29.	Diwan Bahadur K.Ramunni Mennon.	
30.	Mr. W.E. Smith	5(2)
31.	Mr. S. Arpudaswami Udayar	
32.	Mr. K.Ramachandra Padayachi	
33.	Khan Bahadur P.Khalifullah – Sahib Bahadur	
34.	Mr. G.R. Premayya	
35.	Mr. J.A. Saldanha	3(3), 5(11) 15, 16(2), 19
36.	Mr. Abdul Hamid Khan	16
37.	Dr.B.S. Mallayya	16(2)
38.	Mr.K. Uppibsaahi	
39.	Mr. Basheer Ahmad Sayeed Sahib	3, 5, 15, 16(8)
40.	Sriman Biswanath Das Mahasayo	2(2), 3, 6, 15
41.	Mr.A. Kaleswara Rao	3, 15, 16(2)
42.	Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar	16
43.	Diwan Bahadur R.N. Arogyaswamy Mudaliyar	3
44.	The Zamindar of Gollapalli	16
45.	Mr. Chavidi K. Subrahmanya Pillai	11
46.	Mr. Khadir Mohideen Sahib	
47.	Mr. N. Sivaraj	16(2)
48.	Mr. M. Gangadhara Siva	
49.	Mr. V.I. Muniswami Pillai	3, 16, 47
50.	Mr. S. Subrahmaniya Moopnar	
51.	Mr. S. Venkiah	
52.	Rao Sahib R. Srinivasan	47
53.	Mr. V.Ramjee Rao	
54.	Mr. S. Satyamurti	3, 5(2), 6, 7, 8, 11(4), 16(3), 31(2), 32, 35, 36, 47
55.	Mr.P.C. Venkatapati Raju	3, 16
56.	Mr.G. Harisar Vottama Rao	2(2), 5(2), 16(3), 19, 33, 43(2), 47
57.	Mr.C.N. Muthuranga Mudaliyar	
58.	Mr. K.V.R. Swami	3, 16(3)

59.	Mr. Muhammad Meera Ravuttar	3
60.	Mr. D. Narayana Raju	
61.	Mr.L.K. Tulasiram	3
62.	Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar	16(3), 47
63.	Mr.Ramanath Goenka	3,16
64.	Mr. R.Nagan Gowda	3
65.	Mr. T.C. Srinivasa Ayyangar	2
66.	Mr. K.R. Venkatarama Ayyar	16
67.	Mr. K.P. Raman Menon	
68.	Mr. C.Gopala Menon	3,16
69.	Rao Bahadur C.S. Ratnasabapathi Mudaliyar	
70.	Diwan bahadur S. Kumara Swami Reddiyar	11
71.	Rao Bahadur K. Sitarama Reddi	
72.	Rao Bahadur B.Muniswami Nayudu	16(3)
73.	Diwan Bahadur A.M.M. Murugappa Chettiar	5
74.	Mr. Abdulwahab Sahib	
75.	Mr.J. Kuppuswami	
76.	Mr. W.P.A. Sundara Pandiya Nadar	
77.	Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti	
78.	Mr.C.V. Venkata Ramana Ayyangar	2, 3(2), 8, 11, 16(2), 19, 31, 33, 36
79.	Mr.C.S. Govindaraja Mudaliyar	
80.	Mr. K.R. karant	5
81.	Mr. C.Obi Reddi	
82.	Mr. A.Parasurama Rao	
83.	Mr.C.Ramasomayajulu	5
84.	Mr. S.N. Dorai Raja	3
85.	Mr.P. Bhaktavatasalu Nayudu	6
86.	Mr. K.Koti Reddi	5, 16
87.	Mr. C.Marudavanam Pillai	
88.	Mr.K.V.Krishnaswami Nayakar	
89.	Mr.C.Venkatarangam Nayudu	
90.	Mr. Sivasubramanya Ayyar	
91.	The Rajah of Panagal	47
92.	Mr. T.K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliyar	
93.	Zamindar of Mirzapuram	
94.	Kumara Rajah of Venkatagiri	
95.	W.O. Right	3
96.	P. Anjaneyalu	3(2)
97.	Syed Tajuddin Sahib	5,6
98.	Abdul Ahamed Khene	16(2)

When the Madras Legislative Council debated the Annamalai University Bill, 98 legislators were present at the time of the discussion. Their names are given below. The Clause of the Bill on which they spoke is indicated in Arabic numeral in the suffix to their names and the number of times they spoke on that particular clause is given in brackets. For example, S. Arpudawami Udayar Cl. 5(2). During the debate, Mr. Satyamurti who did his best to get the bill passed countered the suggestion of a legislator to start courses in Commerce. He observed that “the

University should concentrate on English, Tamil and Sanskrit and that Commerce, as a subject of University Education, could come later."¹⁰¹ Mr.Gopal Menon and Mr.W.O. Wright supported the introduction of Industry and Commerce. It is to be noted here that Mr.Satyamurti always pleaded in the Senate of the Annamalai University for the introduction of a course in commerce. The Hon'ble Legislator S. Arpudaswami Udayar made a minute of dissent as a member of the select committee, on 5th October 1928. He observed that "there was therefore very great need that every thing should be avoided which may impart to the new University a sectarian or monopolistic character. Both in the composition of its covering bodies and its aims should be the promotion of liberal culture". Further he observed "with regard to the institution formed half a century ago, we find such tests working prejudicially and recently the trustees of the college had to seek a High Court decision on the question whether or not an Adi-Dravida is a Hindu and consequently entitled to join Pachiyappa's college. But in a University to be newly started under modern, liberal conditions, the encouragement of benefaction founded on religious tests is an anomaly and an anachronism. Still more objectionable is the proviso which follows section 5 provided that nothing in this section shall be deemed to prevent religious instruction being given in the manner prescribed by the statutes to those not unwilling to receive it. What is to be the nature and character of this religious instruction? Is it to consist of lectures based on the different religious systems prevailing in the Tamil districts delivered by Professors competent to expound the same and certified to that effect by the heads of the different religious bodies? Is it to form a part of the regular course of the University or to be provided for in the halls or places of religious worship attached to the different hostels or lodgings maintained or recognized by the University? In the Universities of Europe religious teaching is left to private bodies out of class hours. An undenominational University does not undertake to teach religion. I do not see why the new University which is undenominational in character should officially undertake the religious teaching of students of different religious denominations".¹⁰²

All this dissent note and the note by Hon'ble Mahmud Schamnad were concerned with Clause 5 of the Bill, wherein the proposer K. Koti Reddi said: "There is no objection since the words mentioned were already in the Madras University Act". Finally the amendment was carried. Mahmud Schamnad made a note to Clause 16 and suggested that it was necessary that a premier institution of Muhammadan Educational Association of Southern India should have an ex-officio member in class I in the Senate. The amendment was not carried. Actually the Bill had given a representation to that body in the Senate in the class II category. The subsequent history and growth of Annamalai University proved that the apprehension of S.Arpuadaswami Udayar was baseless and false since from the very inception of Sri Meenakshi College the Founder was very particular, in promoting academic liberty and liberal culture. The same spirit of the first Founder continued as years rolled on. T.E. Moir, Finance Member, conveyed "his deep appreciation of the generosity of the Founder"¹⁰³ Rajah of Panagal (former Chief Minister) said, "Magnificence of the quantity as well as the quality of Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar's gift is certainly unsurpassed in India."¹⁰⁴

Thus the Legislative process started on 8th September 1928 at 12.00 noon and came to an end on 12th October 1928 at 4.00 p.m. In all, the legislature took 7 hours to pass the bill after a careful debate. The personalities in the legislature were not ordinary. They were persons honoured by the British Government. A study on them shows that there were 4 Diwan Bahadurs, 2 Khan Bahadurs, 4 Rao Bahadurs, 3 Bahadurs, 1 Rao Sahib, 3 Zamindars and 2 Rajas, apart from the dominant officials. The brains which worked for the bill took note of posterity and service that has to be rendered through this institution created by the Bill. For example, Hon'ble Member Mr.J.A.Saldanha stated "I have not yet lost hope of this University being converted into a Scientific and Industrial University". His hope came true when one observes the growth of the University. Thus the debate shed light on the future of the University and the legislators had utmost confidence in Dr.Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar as the right man for the right job. Finally the Bill was sent for the assent of the Governor of the Madras Presidency and the Governor gave his assent on 3rd November 1928 to the Bill No. 9 of 1928 passed by the Madras Legislative Council and the same was forwarded to the Governor General of India for his assent. He gave his assent to the bill on 11th December 1928, and this was published in the Fort St, George Gazette of the 1st January 1929 as Madras Act No.1of 1929. Thus the Act came into force as the 'Annamalai University Act' 1st January 1929.¹⁰⁵ List the chronological events leading to the passing of Annamalai University Act.

CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS LEADING TO THE PASSING OF ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY ACT

Date	Events
31 March, 1928	: The Tamil University committee submitted its report to the Madras Presidency Government almost at the same time Sri S.R.M.A. Annamalai Chettiar , founder of Sri Meenakshi College at Chidambaram offered an endowment of Rs.20 lakhs “ in furtherance of the scheme of a unitary residential University at Chidambaaram” in addition to the three colleges which he had already founded and all the buildings which had grown up at Chidambaram.
22 August, 1928	: The Draft Bill was signed by Dr.P.Subbarayan the premier of the Madras Presidency Government.
23 August, 1928	: Acting Secretary to the Government of madras, Mr. G.S.Bozman forwarded the draft bill to the Secretary to the Government of India Legislative department.
25 August, 1928	: Bill no.9.of 1928, drafted bill was printed and published in Government of Fort St. George, Law (Legislative) department.
28 August, 1928	: Draft Bill No.9 of 1928 was published in the fort St. George Gazette.
1 September, 1928	: Draft Bill no.9 of 1928 was lodged in Government Order No. 1917 Law Education dated 1-9-1928.
8 September, 1928	: The Draft Bill no.9 Annamalai University Bill was introduced in the Madras Legislative Council. After the introduction a select Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Diwan Bahadur Kumara Sami Reddiyar with twenty six members to study and report about the bill to the Council with in a month.
11 October, 1927 11.30 a.m.	: The Draft Bill no. 9 Annamalai University Bill was introduced, with the report of the select Committee in the Madras Legislative Council by Dr.P.Subbarayan.
11.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.	: The Debate on the Bill clause by clause from clause numbers 1 to 4 was discussed debated and passed by the Council.
2.30to 4.45 p.m	: Debate on the Bill clause by clause from clause numbers 5 to 6 was disused, debated and passed by the Council.
12 October, 1928 12.30 to 12.55 p.m.	: Debate on the Bill clause by clause from clause numbers 17 to 42 was Disused, debated and passed by the Council.
3.00 to 4.00 p.m	: Debate on the Bill continued and clause numbers from 43 to 47 was debated, disused, and passed.
4.00 p.m	: The entire Bill was put to vote and the was carried unanimously and the Bill was passed in to Law by the Madras legislative Council. The Legislature witnessed the announcement of the passing of the Bill in to Law with loud cheering and clapping of hands.
3 November 1928	: The Bill received the assent of the Governor of the Madras Presidency His Excellency the Right Hon’ble Viscount Goschen of Howkhurst, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., C.B.E. He duly forwarded the same to the Governor General of India.
11 December, 1928	: His Excellency Lord Irwin, Governor General of India gave his assent to the Bill and thus it became, ‘Annamalai University Act’ .

1 January, 1929 : Madras Act no: 1 of 1929 'Annamalai University Act' was published in the Fort. St. George Gazette, Madras.

Subsequently, the Act was amended keeping in view to the changing situation. In 1937¹⁰⁶ it was amended after the adoption of Indian laws, and later in 1940, 1943,¹⁰⁷ and still later in 1982,¹⁰⁸ and 1989 by the legislature of Tamil Nadu so as to attend to the needs of higher education. However the main provision of the act remains the same and was passed in the legislature in 1928.

In the preamble to the Bill, it was pointed out that the study of Tamil, Sanskrit and Indian History and other subjects particularly connected with India would be given special importance in the University. The territorial jurisdiction was limited to a ten mile radius from the Convocation hall of the University. In appreciation of the large endowment made by Dr.Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar, the University was named in his honour as Annamalai University.

The financial system to run the University was also planned. The funds for the University were classified as 1. General fund 2. Permanent endowment fund and 3. Contribution of Central and Local Governments or any local or other public body might make. The annual contribution of the Local Government was brought in the general fund account. The University started functioning from the academic year 1929-30 in the already existing, fully organized, institution which enabled the new University to make quick progress in higher education.

Thus the dream and vision of Dr.Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar came true in his life time to earn glory for mankind. It took more or less twenty years (1910-1929) for the success of this private enterprise, to establish a University. It was supported by the public opinion, policy of government, the party politics, intellectuals all who supported the formation of the University. They all unanimously agreed and supported Dr.Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar to establish a University in his name.

REACTION OF THE PRESS

Generally, the press of the presidency supported the creation of the University and passing of the Bill. However, the leading newspaper "The Hindu" expressed reservations, on the realization of the objectives of the Bill. In her editorial the paper observed thus; "the further of the University will developed upon its becoming a progressive body on the creation of an atmosphere congenial to the growth of culture and research. Much could depend upon those who are called upon to undertake the great responsibility of standing University on its career".¹⁰⁹

As the Bill, was supported by all, there was apprehension in certain quarters, especially due to the Founder's association with the Justice party. Hence, "The Hindu" struck a note of caution about the academic appointments and admissions favouring Non-Brahmins and that subjects other than Tamil would not receive due recognition'. The Founder was not a partisan; he was a man of equanimity and sagacity. He recommended the name of Rt.Hon'ble V.S Srinivasa Sastri to the post of the Vice Chancellor. Sastri was a man of great talents, a member of the Servants of the India Society, a moderate constitutionalist in the Congress. His knowledge of English is world renowned. V.S. Sastri also accepted the high office of the newly founded University in January 1929, and left the office in April 1929,¹¹⁰ in order to accept another high office, with the support of the Founder. And later he became Vice Chancellor in 1935. (See the list of Vice – Chancellors, list No.3) In spite of such teething problems, with his sagacity the Founder tackled the appointments. He elected only meritorious, candidates for all posts. Sir E.S. Runganathan was invited and recommended by the Founder to the post of Vice Chancellor. Thus, technically, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri was the first Vice Chancellor of the University and Sir E.S. Runganathan was the second Vice Chancellor from May 1929.¹¹¹

The Senate, the Academic Council and the Syndicate of the University began to function from 6th December 1929¹¹². The Senate was formally inaugurated on March 2, 1930 by His Excellency Sir Frederic Stanley, Governor of Madras Presidency. The Chancellor in his inaugural address praised Annamalai Chettiar's contribution to education.

During the address the Chancellor said, "This University is of a type well known in the United Kingdom but unknown in this presidency which grew from old monastic systems in which were centred the learning and culture of the middle ages. In the Colleges in England, particularly reverence is paid to the Founder and I often wonder whether those Founders who lived so many centuries ago had any thought in their minds that their names would be revered and adored by the youth of untold future generations. Annamalai University, gentlemen, should be no place of mere learning but should be a place where the youth of the country can receive an education which will fit them for the callings in life which they are destined to adopt, and will educate them in those broad interests of mankind to which we sometimes apply the term culture or civilization. It is a necessary adjunct of such a University that there should be proper facilities for the physical exercise of its under graduates and I am glad to say that aim has not been forgotten".¹¹³ He felt that it was his privilege to inaugurate the Senate of the University and inaugurated the same.

This Senate was constituted and laid down by the Act. It represented "All the Talents" and the "cream of the intellectual life of Madras" It had seventy elected members and thirteen nominated members. The shining stars of the Senate were: 1. Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar, Advocate General, 2. Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, member of the Viceroy's Council 3. Dr.A Lakshmana Swami Mudaliar, Vice Chancellor of the University of Madras 4. Mr. Smalles, Educationalist and Principal of the Findlay College at Mannargudi, 5. Mr. Erlam Smith, educational expert and 6. Mr. Papworth educational expert. The life members of the Senate were yet to come, at that time the first life member was Kasivasi Arulnandi Tambiran. The members of the Senate showed real interest and took part in the discussion on the University's problems.

They all agreed and supported Dr.Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar in establishing a University in his name to earn name and fame for the higher education. The first Founder himself had pointed out the reasons for the existence of the University in the inauguration ceremony of the Senate, the Syndicate and the Academic Council. He said, "the University owes its existence to two factors, which I shall, with your leave, detail here today. First and foremost is the hearty and enthusiastic response that the Government of Madras has been given to the endeavour of private philanthropy and secondly, the desire of the eighteen million Tamils in this Presidency and abroad also, to nurture a centre of learning, to give to the world the value of Tamil language, literature and culture". The University became a beacon light for knowledge and technology. Thus, the Sri Meenakshi College blossomed into Annamalai University in 1929.¹¹⁴

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