



# International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: [www.ijrpr.com](http://www.ijrpr.com) ISSN 2582-7421

## Educational Service of Christian Missionaries in Tiruvannamalai District

*Manoj Kumar A*

Periyar University

### INTRODUCTION

During the second part of the nineteenth century, the District of Tiruvannamalai was the focus of active and intense missionary work aimed at spreading the gospel. The recipients of the gospel message needed to be at least somewhat educated in order to comprehend and disseminate the message if the missionaries' goal of selling their commodities was to be truly accomplished. There weren't many and the quality of schools was low during the nineteenth century. The national educational system was oriental, and the teaching approach was mechanical and unscientific. The impoverished's access to education was limited by their poverty. After the Charles Wood was dispatched, the PCR high school was established at Chittoor in 1856. Anglo-vernacular schools began to be established in Chetpet, Aarani, Arcot, and other towns in the next year.

### ELEMENTARY EDUCATION - GENERAL

At first, the American Arcot Mission only allowed new converts' children to attend primary school. The vernacular was used as the instruction language. They operate separate schools for males and girls as much as possible. Wherever that was not feasible, coeducational schools are operated.<sup>1</sup> In 1853 C.E, five elementary schools were started at Sarron (Tiruvannamalai), Keekalur, Mekkalur (Keelpennathur), Siloam (Tirukkoilur) and Vanthavasi. From a humble beginning the pupil strength and the number of elementary schools began to grow.<sup>2</sup>

The circle system proved to be an effective means of managing schools. Four circles were formed out of the local elementary schools and congregations. Under Eastern Vettavalam, the schools in Tiruvannamalai and Chetpet stations were run. In 1925, the schools were moved to the Board of Administration, and three India supervisors were hired to ensure the smooth operation of the school. Through the supervisors, the mission provided teaching aids and charts to the local schools. For a month in 1922 C.E.<sup>3</sup> the local instructors received specialized instruction. Prior to India's independence, in 1946 C.E., the district was home to 131 elementary schools and four upper elementary schools. The Danish Mission, Jesuit Dioceses, American Arcot Mission, and sister Congregation were in charge of these schools.

In 1912, the Australian Presbyterian Mission began focusing on the well-being of schools and students who were entrusted to the church's care. The deployment of female missionaries and the departure of Rev. C.E. Turnbull, a male missionary with ordination, and his spouse in 1913<sup>4</sup> to oversee the church and school operations exemplified the distinctive nature of the A.P. Mission. In order to manage the schools in and around Tiruvannamalai<sup>5</sup>, the first four women missionaries—Miss Mary Mclean, Miss Margaret McNeill, Miss Daisy Symonds, Miss Holt, and the ordained presbyter Rev. C.E. Thurbull and his wife—formed a strong team.

### BOARDING SCHOOLS IN TIRUVANNAMALAI

The idea was to elevate the social standing and financial independence of downtrodden rural communities, especially those who had become Christians. To that aim, a church was planted and a gospel was preached in North Arcot District. In order to achieve this goal, the missions established boarding

<sup>1</sup> 50 years Jubilee Commemoration of A.A.M. P. 150.

<sup>2</sup> The Rules of the Arcot Mission (Madras, 1853), pp.4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Immanuel David, Reformed church in America Missionaries in South India, 1839-1938, an analytical study, (Bangalore, 1980), p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> Minute of the CSM Book from 1879 to 1893, 24 October, 1881, p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Church of Scotland Madras Mission for the year 1935-36 (Madras, 1937), p.60.

schools and hostels connected to town schools. Village children were sent to the boarding schools, while the hostels received the necessary boarding and housing facilities<sup>6</sup>. Free clothing, books, pencils, notebooks, and lighting supplies were also given to them.

The mission of the boarding schools and hostels was to uphold Christian principles of behavior, character, and life by methodical instruction and strict rules. The boarding schools and hostels also provided housing for the teacher's children. Day scholars were initially not accepted into the residential schools, but with time, they were allowed.

The American Arcot Mission (AAM) was the first to start a Boys Boarding school called the 'prepared class' at Vellore in 1854.<sup>7</sup> After couple of years, it was called the 'Arcot seminary' which aimed to train boys to be mission school teachers, catechists and native pastors.<sup>8</sup> The second boarding school was started at Aarani in 1856.<sup>9</sup> The AAM started the first girl's boarding school at Chittoor in 1860,<sup>10</sup> with seventeen girls to be trained as teachers and able wives of the native catechists.<sup>11</sup>

Besides Girl's elementary boarding school were taught needle work with General domestic economy and cleanlines.<sup>12</sup> Apart from systematic education the girls were taught knitting, sewing, embroidery, weaving, gardening, cooking, family health education and child care, so that when they return home, they would meaningfully take their place in the rural community in responsible citizen and mothers.<sup>13</sup> It was later divided into a lower secondary girl boarding school and primary school in 1895. The primary section was shifted to Ranipet to become the Primary Girls Boarding school. It was upgrade into a Higher Elementary Boarding school. In 1926 it was named as "VITVA Ratna Villa" meaning "Home for the Jewel of learning". Today it is reputed as V.R.V Girls Higher secondary school Ranipet.

When they live boarding home after their school education,<sup>14</sup> the homeless girls were used as teachers and village bible women. Some of them were married to the village teachers and catechists to take care of the women's work.<sup>15</sup>

At the Boarding School both basic education and vocational training were imparted to the boys. The educational department was so much impressed by the training given in the school that it sent teachers from the town school to observe the education and training given in the boarding school.<sup>16</sup>

The MELIM started the first boarding school for the both boys and girls at Vaniyambadi in 1902.<sup>17</sup> After three years it was shifted in to Krishnagiri. The second boarding school was started at Ambur in 1917.<sup>18</sup> It was exclusively for boys. The present native leaders of Ambur Lutheran church were all products of these boarding schools.<sup>19</sup>

The CSM started separate boarding homes for boys and girls in 1929 for the students coming from the villages. Poor day scholars were given midday meals in the two homes.<sup>20</sup> A high sense of dignity of labour was instilled in the minds of the boys by making them work on the fields, grow their own food and weave their own cloth and mats.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Educational Pastoral plan, 30<sup>th</sup> September to 5<sup>th</sup> October 1989, Don Bosco Orphanage, Gandhinagar, Vellore, P.1.

<sup>7</sup> Don Bosco to his Benefactors, (Vellore, 1955) P.1.

<sup>8</sup> Annual Report of Don Bosco High School, Vellore, 1969-70 P.1.

<sup>9</sup> Annual Report of Don Bosco High School, Vellore, for the years, 1971-72, P.1; 1947-75, PP.1-2. And 1976-77.P.1.

<sup>10</sup> Proceedings of the Education No.3444, 28, October, 1978.

<sup>11</sup> St. Mary's Convent, Vellore, Origin and Development 1928-91, Chronicle, Vol.II, P.16.

<sup>12</sup> The Catholic Directory of India, Diocese of Vellore 1990. (New Delhi, 1990), P.898.

<sup>13</sup> Compiled Statistics from Various School Records.

<sup>14</sup> Statistic of APM Educational Work at Sholinghur for the year 1944.

<sup>15</sup> Centenary Jubilee Souvenir of Goodlet Higher Secondary School, Sholinghur 1985.

<sup>16</sup> History and Aim of the Mary Immaculate Girls Higher Secondary School, Tirupathur, Chronicle, P.1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Catholic Directory of India, op.cit., P.898.

<sup>19</sup> Minutes of the APM Council Meeting on 17 February 1944, Sholinghur, P.142.

<sup>20</sup> Centenary Jubilee Souvenir of Goodlet Higher Sec. School, Sholinghur, 1958.

<sup>21</sup> Miss.A. Hope Goldie's (Secretary of Treasurer of APM) Letter to Area Officer, 26 September, 1946, Madras.

The DMS also started boarding schools for boys and girls. A permanent school for boys was started at Tiruvannamalai in 1900.<sup>22</sup> Until independence it was maintained purely by the church. After India's Independence, the boarding home received assistance from the Government also.<sup>23</sup> Most of the lay and clerical leaders of the church are the products of the boarding home.<sup>24</sup>

---

## ORPHANAGES

From the start, the Roman Catholic Mission viewed the boarding houses as orphanages, dedicated to providing aid to impoverished orphans and the needy of both sexes, in line with St. Don Bosco's mission and vision for the uplift of the defenseless. Every educational facility, including vocational training centers, inevitably has an orphanage on site. In the district of North Arcot, where 2101 persons attend academic and vocational courses, the Roman Catholic Church currently operates ten orphanages for boys with 1724 boarders, ten orphanages for girls with 1947 boarders, and ten orphanages for both sexes.

The Catholic Church's Brothers and Sisters, who are in charge of the orphanages, reside on campus and give the students extremely structured instruction to help them reach academic and professional success. Additionally, the kids in the orphanages receive training in developing a feeling of labor's dignity. Another significant aspect of these institutions is leadership training.

---

## TECHNICAL EDUCATION

### 1) Teacher Training Schools

The indigenous people were eager to work with the distinct mission that was in charge of establishing the church in the area. The indigenous needed to receive an education in order to study the Bible and preach the gospel. With time, the demand for high-quality education that followed the government's syllabus and was taught methodically emerged. As a result, the various churches realized that they needed to establish and operate Teacher Training Schools in accordance with government regulations.

The A.A.M took the lead and started a Teacher Training School for boys at Chittoor in 1883,<sup>25</sup> and one for girls at Vellore in 1891.<sup>26</sup> The former was shifted to Ranipet in 1886 and discontinued because of the existence of a Government Teacher Training School for men.<sup>27</sup> The latter was shifted from Vellore to Chittoor in 1895. Beattie Memorial Teacher Training Schools for women named after its first manager, Mrs. Beattie.<sup>28</sup>

In 1955 when the government of India reorganised the states of linguistic basic the school was shifted to Ranipet since the medium of instruction was Tamil and the government of Andhra Pradesh was not in favour of providing teaching grant for teachers. The school today offers two years secondary grade teachers training course according to the government syllabus. Fifty girls are admitted every year.<sup>29</sup>

The Union Mission, consisting of AAM, CSM and united Free Church of Scotland Mission, started the second teacher's training school for men at Arakonam in 1903. It was shifted to Ranipet after a couple of years, and then to Vellore in 1916.<sup>30</sup> Two more Missions namely the APM and the London Mission joined the board of management of the school in 1913.<sup>31</sup> In recognition of its services the Government granted autonomy to the institution to frame its own syllabus. In 1924 the management bought 30 acres of land with four wells for Rs.12, 000 at virundhampet two miles north of Vellore. A grant of Rs.40, 643 was received from the government.

The new school campus at Virudhampet was opened by the then Chief Minister Dr. Subbarayan in 1927.<sup>32</sup> It has to frame the syllabus for all the Teacher Training Institute based on the model of the Union Mission Training school. It was only in the year 1933 the government withdrew the autonomy granted

---

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Mullers, A brief history of ten years Missionary labour in India. (London, 1863), P. 119.

<sup>23</sup> First Annual Report of A.A.M. 1854, P.4.

<sup>24</sup> Ninth Annual Report of A.A.M. 1862.P.37.

<sup>25</sup> Rev. J.W. Scudder, Historical Sketch of the Arcot Mission, of the Reformed Church in America, (Madras: 1879), P.23.

<sup>26</sup> 75 years Jubilee Souvenir of A.A.M. P.155.

<sup>27</sup> 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Report of the A.A.M. 1894, P.50.

<sup>28</sup> Charlotte C.Wyckoff, op,cit., P.134.

<sup>29</sup> Lutheran Witness (CM), Vol. XLIX, No. 6, March 1930.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Sathiasatchi (CM), Vol.I, No.3., 1921, P.10.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Mr.G.C.Balasundaram, Retired teacher, Vellore, 12 March, 1995.

to the school as a uniform policy.<sup>33</sup> Admission is given for 35 students every year belonging to five supporting churching and to other non- Christian communities.

The IELC started the third teacher training school at Ambur 1926. In the thirties a few girls<sup>34</sup> also admitted. It is called the Concordia teachers training school. Today it is exclusively for men. 40 candidates are admitted every year.<sup>35</sup> St. Joseph's Teachers Training schools meant for boys was started in 1988 at Sasaigiri- Athipet. The Arcot Lutheran church also started a Teacher Training Institute for girls at Tiruvannamali in 1983. Its life was short and it was discontinued in 1992 as it could not fulfil the requirements stipulated by the state government.<sup>36</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church also started its own Teacher Training Institutes concentrates more on training women rather than men. Three training schools started in 1950 at Tirupattur and the Little Flower Teachers training school, started in 1986 at Ranipet. ALC Teacher Training Institution at Tiruvannamalai, St. Mary's TTC at Anmarudi, St. Antony's Teacher Training Institute at Pavithiram, and Sacred Heart Teacher Training College at Vanthavasi. During the year 1989-90 in all the four Teachers Training Schools the total number of students are 290 are girls.<sup>37</sup>

## 2) Don Bosco Agro Tech, Polur

The house was founded by Fr. Francis School, the Dutch missionary in the 1970s when he was the parish priest of Polur. To serve the much neglected predominantly agriculture dependent area through agro-based technical training, he bought the present lands of the Agro Tech. The original aim of the house was to impart professional training to boys who after completing schooling, had no other possibilities for higher education.<sup>38</sup>

Don Bosco Agro Tech was started in the year 1987 at Polur, Thiruvannamalai District. Its main goal is to provide technical education to poor, school dropout youth of economically weaker section of the society with Fr. K. V. Sebastian as the first Rector with Br. George & Fr. A. J. Joseph helping him. Carpentry and cabinet making with Electrician course was inducted as a trade in 1989 with eventual state government recognition.<sup>39</sup> An upgrade to NCVT recognition took place in 1992 for the Electrician's trade. Over these years, the institute continues to run with the help of Mr. Boels, the brother of Fr. School.<sup>40</sup>

---

## SPECIAL SCHOOLS

### 1. Services offered at Rangammal Memorial Hr Sec School for the Hearing Impaired

Deafness is a common problem in Indian villages: Sylvia was asked help by the Government. In 1966 she responded by building a boarding school of age group 4 to 16 where 200 profoundly deaf children are fed, clothed and educated to a high standard, entirely free of charge. Exam results are excellent and the school is top of the district league tables.<sup>41</sup> An increasing number of children are now going on to university and are graduating with distinction. Class sizes have to be limited 8 children per teacher. There are 24 classrooms and 35 teachers.<sup>42</sup> All of the children are given hearing aids and some classrooms have audio systems.

The children produce excellent written and artistic work. Sporting skills are strong, especially in cricket and dance. Despite their disabilities, the children are often described by visitors as the happiest children in the world. A dairy farm is attached to the school, providing good quality milk to all the projects. Two early intervention classes help very young children who attend each day with their mothers.<sup>43</sup>

A full-fledged Audiography Center, Ear mould making lab, Auditorium, Free Medical services to students, Art & Craft Classes, Tailoring Classes, Hostels, A well-furnished Computer lab, Library, Audiogram with Sound Proof Room, Providing Appropriate Hearing Aids, Good environment.<sup>44</sup> Although the hearing loss is labeled as 'profound', it may well vary from person to person in its effect. Some children may show poor academic progress and be labeled 'lazy' or 'inattentive' – although they may have average or above average intelligence of the students. This often leads to poor self-concept

<sup>33</sup> Report of the Madras Mission of the Church of Scotland for the year 1929, P.55.

<sup>34</sup> Report of the Madras Mission of the Church of Scotland for the year 1933, PP.48-51.

<sup>35</sup> Rev.C.E.Turnbull's (Secretary) Letter to the D.P.L., Madras, 15 June, 1931.

<sup>36</sup> Annual Report of the A.P.M. for the year 1949.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Thiru. Wales Asirvatham, Correspondent. Saron Boarding School, Tiruvannamalai, on 18.03.95.

<sup>38</sup> Povl Wandall, op.cit., p.155.

<sup>39</sup>The Catholic Directory of India, Diocese of Vellore, 1990, P.900. 50 years Jubilee Commemoration, op.cit., 143.

<sup>40</sup> Mrs. W.I. Chamberlain, Fifty years in Foreign Fields, (1875-1925), op.cit., P.54.

<sup>41</sup> 50 years of Jubilee Commemoration. Op.cit., P.143..

<sup>42</sup> Mrs. W.I. Chamberlain, op.cit., P.85.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Miss. Dora Boomstraw, op.cit.,

<sup>44</sup> Annual Report of the A.A.M. for the year 1913, P.24.

and the child, may lack self-confidence and be labeled deaf and 'dumb' (with all its connotations), even by those in authority.<sup>45</sup> Hence to reduce the impact of hearing impairment, early diagnosis and appropriate intervention is essential (see 'Early Intervention') Once the degree of hearing loss is established, if cochlear implant is not possible or suitable for the child, a purpose designed and appropriate hearing aid must be fitted and reviewed regularly. The majority of children studying at RMSD come from poor socio-economic backgrounds (see 'Pupil Profile') and the condition has not been recognized and managed in infancy.<sup>46</sup>

Auditory training and speech therapy is started in addition to the academic syllabus which the children are taught. Language and communication skills are developed along with English language.

---

## FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE SCHOOL OF NURSING

A unit of Rangammal Memorial Rehabilitation Society Florence Nightingale School of Nursing is a unit of Rangammal Memorial Rehabilitation Society. The society was formed in 1991. The founder of the Society is Madam S.M. Wright who was also the Managing Director of the Hospital and the School of Nursing. She started the village project with a Van and four boxes, often working under the Tamarind trees of nearby villages around Tiruvannamalai.<sup>47</sup> It was not common for 400 patients to attend in a day. Through her vision and great hard work three big institutions have been established in this backward and socially deprived area. Four hundred staffs were working in the organization and approximately seventy thousand patients are treated every year as both inpatients and outpatients. In addition, handicapped people are helped in our Schools and Community Programmers.<sup>48</sup>

---

## CONCLUSION

Beginning in August 1947, the missionaries' work was subject to a number of restrictions and regulations under the new administration. Educational establishments were expected to adhere to the government's curriculum and syllabus. Thus, MELIM granted autonomy to its organizations and churches with Indian leadership. With the missionaries' slow withdrawal, there was a corresponding decline in foreign financial support. Thus, the grant-in-aid that the church had given up in 1924 was taken up and used to fund the schools starting in 1958<sup>49</sup>. In 1966, a new educational committee was established by the Ambur District Synod, which was founded in 1949, to take over the responsibilities of the elementary schools.

In 1948, there were 72 teachers and 4105 students enrolled in 15 middle and elementary schools<sup>50</sup>, all of which were attended by girls in 1989–1990. When Danish Christian missionaries came to Tiruvannamalai in the 18th century, they were moved by the people's circumstances and felt compelled to create a year-round school. Rev. Jenson established this elementary school in 1898 with the goal of serving the local community. On the other hand, the Danish Mission Society promised to teach the offspring of the recent converts. With 15 pupils enrolled, the first elementary school was established in 1898 on Asaliyman Koil Street<sup>51</sup> in Tiruvannamalai. This school also afforded the opportunity to educate the offspring of the outcasts living in and around Tiruvannamalai<sup>52</sup>.

### Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors stated that they have no potential conflicts of interest related to this article's research, authorship, or publication.

### Funding Acknowledgement

The authors received no financial support for this article's research, authorship or publication.

### Author Contributions

The initial draft was written by the corresponding author, Manoj Kumar. A., and the co-author, C Jeyaveeradevan, provided comments on the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final version.

### Acknowledgement

I extend gratitude to the co-authors for their valuable comments and feedback

---

<sup>45</sup> Annual Report of the A.A.M. for the year 1913, P.43.

<sup>46</sup> 75 years Jubilee celebration of A.A.M. PP.170-173.

<sup>47</sup> 78<sup>th</sup> A.R. of A.A.M. 1931, p.51.

<sup>48</sup> C.H. Swavelym,(Ed.), *The Lutheran Enterprise in India*”, op.cit., P.198.

<sup>49</sup>Flora A.Timms, *Mary Mc Lean First Missionary of the Women's Missionary Association*, (Sydney, 1943) p. 25.

<sup>50</sup> Statistics of A.P.M. Sholingur field, 1923.

<sup>51</sup> Daisy Symond, Op.cit., pp. 41-42.

<sup>52</sup> A.P.M. Statistics for Schools, Sholinghur for the year 1947.

---

**Bibliography:**

---

THIRUNAVUKKARASU, S. MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES TO ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN NORTH ARCOT DISTRICT--A HISTORICAL STUDY

Burkhart, G. L. (2019). Schooling, identity, and belonging in a Tamil Lutheran congregation. *The Impact of Education in South Asia: Perspectives from Sri Lanka to Nepal*, 161-187.

Burkhart, G. (2019). Danish Women Missionaries: Personal Accounts of Work with South Indian Women. In *Women's Work For Women* (pp. 59-85). Routledge.

Stephen, S. J. (2008). *Caste, Catholic Christianity, and the Language of Conversion: Social Change and Cultural Translation in Tamil Country, 1519-1774*. Gyan Publishing House.

Kumar, R., & Armstrong, S. A Bio-Chronology. In *Bama* (pp. 283-288). Routledge India.

Goel, S. R. (1994). Catholic Ashrams. *Sanyasins or Swindlers. Voice of India, New Delhi, India*. URL: <http://voiceofdharma.org/books/ca>.

Champakalakshmi, R. (1986, January). PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: URBANISATION IN SOUTH INDIA: THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY AND POLITY. In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (Vol. 47, pp. 45-107). Indian History Congress.

Pandya, S. (2016). Seva in Mata Amritanandamayi Mission: Social Service as a Public Face of Faith. *Implicit Religion*, 19(3).

Francis, W. (1989). *Gazetteer of South India*. Mittal Publications.