

# A NEW NOTE ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN IN TAMIL NADU SINCE INDEPENDENCE

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## Abstract

The position of women was restricted in the Tamil society due to the traditional blended customs. They were not allowed to come out and development occurred on education polices framed by different Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu. Women slowly and concentrated and involved themselves in the field of education. The Government of Tamil Nadu since independence provided several opportunities for the women and gradually they enter into the education. The recommendations made by different committee gave an opportunity for them Study in various colleges since independence is tremendous advancement of women education and showed the increasing entry of the people into the portals of the educational institutions. Indeed the number of students, increased during the given period of the study. It was due to the sanctioned more money for their scholarships, hostels, etc., which helped the increasing entry of the students into in the women educational institutions of Tamil Nadu. This paper throws light on education development of women in Tamil Nadu since independence.

**Key Words:** mid-day meals scheme, academic programmes and interdisciplinary-associations

The growth of education gave new impetus to develop the female education in Tamil Nadu. Their valuable efforts gave women to enter into the educational field. Women's positions were restricted in the society due to the traditional blended customs. They were not allowed to come outside the home. Severe restrictions were imposed upon them. They were unable to express their views to their neighbours in the family. They were unable to know the happening outside their home. Entering into the field of education was restricted.

They had to depend upon their family members. The facts of figures expressed by their family members were believed by the women. Male members were given due respect as in the home. So they were unable to know the condition which is existing in the present scenario. Women were treated as labourers in houses. This paper also discussed the growth

of elementary education, higher education, technical education and the educational activities of the Missionaries in Tamil Nadu.

The educational services carried out by the missionaries during the 18<sup>th</sup> century continued during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Missionary societies and charity schools were established in several places of India. The Christian Missionaries established schools with the vowed purpose of converting Hindu and Muslims to Christianity. The Charter of 1813 directed the company to maintain schools for education wherever necessary. The company encouraged the establishment of schools at the principal town within its territories and gave them liberal grants in aid. Then the St. Mary's charity school was established in Madras. The company encouraged the establishment of schools at the principal town within its territories and gave them liberal grants in aid.

After Independence growth rate of Education was increased. Governments gave importance for Science and Technology. Due importance was given for Newspaper, Television and Radio. So the Mass Media provided plenty of information to women at national and regional level. The importance of media provided an opportunity for the women to know about existing scenario. The importance for media brought many positive thoughts to improve themselves.

Tamil poems predicted by different Tamil poets like Avvaiyar, Bharathiyar and Bharathidasan stimulated women to concentrate on education. In Tamil Nadu gradual development occurred due to the new education polices framed by different Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu. Women slowly and steadily concentrated in the field of education. From 1947 onwards Chief Ministers took efforts for the growth of education. They showed keen interest for the growth of down trodden. Thanthoori Pragasam, O.P. Ramasamy, P.S. Kumara Samy Raja, Rajagopalachari, Kamarajar, Bhaktavatsalam, C.N. Annathurai, M. Karunanithi and M.G. Ramachandran rendered their full support for the development of women in Tamil Nadu.

The Government formulated many programmes on women education based on the recommendations of various Committees. Education thus started to become a common affair. This trend developed in the general education had its impact on Arts and Science studies. So women got an opportunity to gradually enter into Arts and Science studies. A National Committee on women's education was formed to study the condition of women's education. Srinivasan, the Chairman of Project Implementing Committee, started that 80% of girls enrolled in municipal and non-municipal areas were benefitted by mid-day meals scheme. Permission was granted to teach through English medium in standard VI in secondary schools.

The Government of Tamil Nadu from 1948 provided opportunities for the women to gradually enter into the field of education. The recommendations made by different committee gave an opportunity for the women to gradually enter into the field of education. So the women who belong to lower section gradually entered to study various courses in various colleges. To implement the recommendations made by various Committees women colleges were started From 1948. It provided an opportunity for women to enter in women colleges. Women colleges were increased day by day.

### **Stella Maris College, Chennai**

The Stella Maris College is a Catholic institution of higher education for women. It was established under the direction of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. The College was begun in a small one-store building on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1947. The College was also one of the few chosen to start the pilot project of the National Service Scheme in 1968. There was a shift in the admission policy with a thrust towards social justice from 1978. The college became autonomous in 1987. With the introduction of the credit based system since 1997-'98 the college is offering many new academic programmes and encouraging interdisciplinary-associations<sup>1</sup>.

### **Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore**

Rev.Fr. Joseph Louis Ravel founded the Nirmala College for Women in Coimbatore on 1st July,1948 as the first college for women in the city. This College is managed by the Franciscan Sisters of the Presentation of Mary with the primary objective of providing University education for Catholics and others<sup>2</sup>.

### **Lady Doak College, Madurai**

Dr. Kartie Wilcox was a great teacher and a dedicated missionary who realized her vision of empowering women students through higher education. Thus Lady Doak College was established on 4th July, 1924 for women in Madurai. She went to the USA to raise funds for the College. She served in India for 43 years and was devoted to the cause of women's education in Madurai. Being the founder of educational institution for women, she fulfilled the long felt desire of women's higher education. It manifests a rich tradition of quality and value education and aims to bring about a healthy transformation of women with a well-balanced moral and social outlook<sup>3</sup>.

### **St. Mary's College, Tuticorin**

Rt. Rev. Tiburtius Roche, the then Bishop of Tuticorin and Rev. Fr. N.G Susainather founded the St. Mary's College at Tuticorin in 1948. It was one of the Catholic institutions of higher education for women, and became first Grade College in 1951. The College functions under the management of the Sisters of the Mother of Sorrows, Servants of Mary. As a Christian minority institution, the St. Mary's College is meant primarily for the higher education of Catholic girls and especially for girls from the coastal villages, those who are economically and socially disadvantaged. Besides Scholastic excellence, the college aims at a holistic development of the students. The College has grown into a full grown institution as an egalitarian society through liberalized education<sup>4</sup>.

### **Fatima College, Madurai**

The Fatima College was founded by the tireless efforts of the Missionary Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyons and the zeal and heroic sacrifice of Rev. Sr. Rose Benedict of St. Joseph's Society of Madurai. As an affiliated College of Madurai Kamarajar University, it was started in 1953 at the Joseph's School Campus, Madurai, as a Second grade College with sixty three students. The college was upgraded and became a Post-graduate college in 1964 and was conferred Autonomous Status in 1990.

### **Auxillium College, Katpadi, Vellore**

Rev. Mother Cesira Gallina, an enthusiastic Italian missionary founded the Auxilium College on 1st July, 1954. She arrived in India with the noble mission of imparting education to young and poor women for their empowerment and growth. She started the college with sixty-seven students and twelve staff members. The Auxilium College focused not only on the objective of imparting higher education to a great level, but also tries to make the students socially responsible.

### **Stella Matutina College of Education, Chennai**

The Stella Matutina College of Education was established in July 1961 as a minority Teacher Training College. It is a Catholic College under the management of the Franciscan Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. The Stella Matutina College of Education was granted UGC recognition in June 1972. It is affiliated to the University of Madras. The main aim of this Teacher Training College is to promote excellence in the sphere of teacher education by giving students a thorough foundation in both the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching<sup>5</sup>.

### **Jayaraj Annapackiam College for Women, Theni**

Jayaraj Annapackiam College for women, a synonym for sterling service in the higher education of women. It was established on 5th July, 1971 and became a family name in the whole of Periyakulam Educational District. This is managed by the Sisters of St. Anne of Thiruchirapalli to impart higher education to the women of this rural area. This is the only Government aided women's college and the only autonomous college in Theni District<sup>6</sup>.

### **Meenakshi Sundaram- Kalaimagal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode**

Meenakshi Sundaram was the best example as a fighter for the cause of womens education in Erode. He was the guide, philosopher and a symbol of hope. He had set his heart on girl's emancipation and took the career of unselfish and dedicated service. He also wanted women to be courageous, intelligent and simple. He provided all facilities in the field of education in Erode district. His services and the financial help extended to him by various members for opening an educational institution (Kalaimagal Kalvi Nilayam) for girls stand as a lasting monument in Erode. His encouragement for girl's education made every woman to be free, dignified and strong<sup>7</sup>.

### **Sri.V.L. Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai**

Two lawyers created history by donating their entire earnings for public cause and good of the community, and more specifically the education of women and girls. Sir P.S. Sivaswami Ayyar, and V.L. Ethiraj donated his entire savings to the cause of women's education. Even though Ethiraj first thought of donating the money for starting a hospital, he later decided to start a women's college. Ethiraj was strongly convinced that there was a real need for a private institution to provide higher studies for women. The Ethiraj College for Women was started on July 2, 1948 out of the founder's generous contribution and his deep interest in women's education. Some of his close friends advised that no girl should suffer for lack of money to pursue their college studies and providing funds for such students was the finest manifestation of his social awareness and gesture of nobility<sup>8</sup>.

### **Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed- SIET Women's College, Chennai**

The Muslim Educational Association of South India failed miserably to show interest in the promotion of women's education. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed was keenly interested in the starting of the women's college. After establishing a Trust Basheer Ahmed Sayeed set out for collection of funds in India and abroad with the help of his family members and friends. Though he held office as a Judge of the Madras High Court in 1949, he travelled to the countries of South East Asia, East Africa and Middle East for this purpose, and returned with huge funds. Finally he established a women's college on January 22, 1955. It was raised to the status of a first grade college in the year 1958. He liberally donated money to the Madras University for the study of Islamic studies.

### **Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women, Coimbatore**

Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women was established by the great patriot and educationist T.S. Avinashilingam under the auspices of the Avinashilingam Education Trust in 1957 with forty five students. It is the largest institution of its kind in Tamil Nadu for imparting Home Science Education at all levels. It was one of the eight colleges to which autonomy was conferred by the University of Madras in June 1978 and the first of the women's colleges to get this distinction. The Government of India declared Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women and Sri Avinashilingam Teacher's College for Women as a Deemed University under Section 3 of the UGC Act in June 1988. Her main motive in life was to improve the status of women and other weaker sections. Chellammal placed all her wealth and properties at the disposal of the Pachaiyappa's Trust to be utilized for the cause of education and religion<sup>9</sup>.

### **E.M. Gopalakrishna Kone Yadava Women's College, Madurai**

E.M. Gopalakrishna Kone Yadava Women's College, Madurai was founded in 1974 by the late E.M.G. Soundara Rajan. Being inspired by the philanthropic ideals of E.M. Gopalakrishna Kone he provided education for the economically and socially backward women. He uplifted them to a state of dignity through economic prosperity and social recognition. The college was started only with University courses at E.M.G. Kalyana Mandabam in Tallakulam, Madurai in 1974<sup>10</sup>.

### **K.R Sundararajan-Meenakshi College for Women, Chennai**

Meenakshi College for Women is an institution that works towards ideal goal of continuous improvement in the discovery and sharing of knowledge-a goal envisioned by the founder, Prof. K. R. Sundararajan and carried forward by the founder Principal, Dr. K.S. Lakshmi. It was founded on 4th July, 1975. The college is committed to provide young women with quality higher education in the course of which they take in the basic virtues of Faith, Fidelity and Fortitude<sup>11</sup>.

### **A.D. Jeyaveera Pandian-ADM College for Women, Nagapattinam**

A.D.Jeyaveera Pandian was a great philanthropist and he valued education as the only means of instilling self-confidence in women. The college, exclusively for women, was founded in 1975 by 'Vidhya Seva Ratna' A. D. Jeyaveera Pandian, A. D. Jawaharlal Pandian, 'Kalvi Vendhar' Thiru. A. D. Jeyem Pandian (President) and Dr. A.D. Jegadheeshwar (Secretary), in the name of their parents A. Duraisamy Nadar and Maragathavalli Ammal, who planned the future of a hundred generations of women folk in and around Nagapattinam.

### **Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science for Women, Coimbatore**

S.N.Rangasamy Sons Charitable Trust, a synonym for service, was founded in 1970 by the four sons of S.N. Rangasamy Naidu, a great philanthropist and a man of vision. He was an ardent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Educating a woman leads to enlightenment of a family and with this aim, the Trust started Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science for Women in the year 1991 to equipwomen with knowledge and courage to face the challenging and competitive world. The college has been functioning in Coimbatore.

### **Holy Cross College, Nagercoil**

Holy Cross College, the first women's college in Kanniyakumari District was established by the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod in 1965 in response to the invitation of the then Bishop Agniswamy, Bishop of Kottar with the main purpose of providing university education in a Christian atmosphere to the deserving women students irrespective of caste and creed, with the watchword "Excellence" which is an expression of the Divine. Rev. Mother Yvonne Lavorel, the then Superior General and Rev. Mother Marie Cecil Vionnet, the then Provincial of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, Province of Tiruchirappalli started this institution. This prestigious Institution, meant for the development of downtrodden women of Kanyakumari district has a long lasting tradition since the regime of Maharani of Travancore, Rani Gowri Parvathi Bai in the early 18th century.

### **Women's Christian College, Nagercoil**

On 13th June, 1973, Women's Christian College was started in this campus by the Kanyakumari Diocese of the Church of South India. Dr. Joy Gnanadhasan, wife of Moderator I.R.H. Gnanadhasan, was the founder Principal. This lush green campus which carries the sacred memories of the missionary work is situated in the centre of the town. It was from this campus that the early Christian missionaries spread enlightenment to the areas around.

### **Sree Devi Kumari Women's College, Kuzhithurai**

The college is located in peaceful and beautiful environment at Kuzhithurai, 32 km. from Nagercoil, the District Headquarters and 35 km. from Trivanduram, the Capital of Kerala State. It was affiliated to the Madras University at its inception, and afterward affiliated to the Madurai Kamaraj University and now it is affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli. Its vision is to provide quality education to the maximum number of women folks, to equip the teachers and students to become intellectually competent, and to help the student be self-reliant.

The concluding part state that the various educational measures, implemented by the Government, to promote all types of the women education since the independent of Tamil Nadu. Education is rightly regarded, as the very basis of civilized life of the people of Tamil Nadu. In other words, to mention, the education is universally regarded, as an instrument of improvement, in the status of the people.

The development of women education, polygamy and polyandry were gradually discontinued. Evil Practices such as the Devadasi system, prevention of widow re-marriage and other irrational practices began to lose acceptance. A tendency towards family planning slowly gained favour among the educated. Besides it also influenced the customs and manners of the people of Tamil Nadu, the age old beliefs, customs, omens, superstitions and

the practice of killing animals, to appease gods, had slowly died out. Another noticeable change was the upliftment of the Harijans, who had been slowly absorbed into the mainstream of Hindu society. Education had been a great catalyst, in bringing about socio-economic changes, among the Harijans and backward classes, by making them fit to take up service, in any Government or private sector organization. From 1947 there was a tremendous advancement of education in Tamil Nadu, which showed the increasing entry of the people into the portals of the educational institutions.

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