

**HISTORY OF PROTESTANT SCHOOLS IN
MADRAS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
– A STUDY**

SYNOPSIS

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DECEMBER 2006

Nature and Scope of the Study

The significance of the Protestant schools in India

Among the many things which Christian missionaries brought to India, education and the printing press are widely regarded to be the most significant for the country. The very first Protestant missionaries, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Pluetschau, started a school within a year of their arrival in India, as soon as they had learnt enough of the local language. Since this beginning, missions and schools remained closely tied throughout the following two centuries.

Protestant schools are widely known to have led the way in many social changes. They were the first to educate people of all classes, the first to formally educate women, and the first to introduce western and English education in India. Many schools were meant for the poor and traditionally illiterate, who constituted a large portion of the church as well as the general population of Madras. Education for girls and women started in the eighteenth century itself and Protestant missionaries in the face of considerable odds ran the first schools for 'high' caste girls. Protestant schools were among the earliest to introduce yearly academic sessions and examinations. From the 1830s onwards, they began to show more interest in providing modern western education.

But an evaluation of the role of Protestant schools needs to place it within the other factors which influenced education in India as well. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the government's provision for education is described by the historian R.C. Majumdar: 'The general policy of the East India Company was to encourage traditional learning in India by giving pecuniary aid, and not to interfere with education or to suggest alternative methods for fear that this might contravene the policy of religious neutrality.'¹ This kind of financial and other support for private enterprise was occasional. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, thus, there was little competition for the missionaries in the educational field. Their work was also at this stage more moulded to Indian conditions and traditions. It was much later, in the 1830s and

¹ R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), *History and Culture of the Indian People: British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Vol. X, Part 2, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1965, p. 43.

1840s, that the government began to set up its own educational institutions.

Later in the nineteenth century, four important sections of people influenced education – the Company Directors, the Utilitarians, the Christian missionaries and influential Hindus. The interaction of the four, with none dominating, led to a unique culture of education which benefited the whole society. As a result, in Madras there was more private than government enterprise in education, with more pupils in Christian missionary and other private schools than in government schools.²

It was the missionary rather than the European government which took the lead in offering education according to the latest European philosophy. Before the official resolutions of 1835 were issued by Governor-General William Bentinck in Calcutta, for using government funds to support English education, there were in Madras already missionaries providing an English education to Indians.³ R.C. Majumdar writes about the first people to introduce western education: ‘For a long time it has generally been held by the historians that it was Macaulay’s minute which proved decisive in the introduction of English as the medium of instruction. But the ground had already been prepared long before Macaulay arrived in India. The historical process of the entire movement had been in operation for a long time and nothing caused or moved this process more than the Evangelical and Utilitarian ideas.’⁴

Within the government, there was opposition to Christian influence, and financial support in the early East India Company period went only to traditional Indian schools. During the time of Governor Tweeddale, between 1841 and 1848, the proposal to introduce the Bible in government schools could not bear fruit because of the opposition of the Court of Directors and the general public.⁵

But the government and the missionary in other ways also worked together. The formation of the University of Madras in 1857 facilitated the setting up of missionary colleges affiliated to it. The first college to be so affiliated was the Central Institution of the Free Church of Scotland Mission. The Institution later became the Madras Christian College. It was partly missionary influence which led to the setting up of the Hunter Commission in 1882, and three missionaries including William Miller were among its

² Hugald Grafe, *History of Christianity in India – Tamil Nadu in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, Vol. IV, Part 2, Church History Association of India, Bangalore, 1990, p. 193.

³ Hugald Grafe, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

⁴ R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁵ Hugald Grafe, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

smembers. They pressed for greater government support for elementary education rather than higher education, though not for the setting up of more government schools.⁶

At other times, the missionaries and wider Indian society worked together to press the government for common ends. This happened, for example, when both missionaries and the Madras Native Association pressed for greater government support for education and especially primary education when the Hunter Commission was set up. Both Christians and Hindus again protested a proposal for the establishment of government model schools in every district in 1912, feeling that private initiative in this area with the support of grants-in-aid from the government would be a more efficient way to spread education, and that proposal was not implemented.⁷

The competition between the missionaries and the Hindu society also resulted in the expansion of education. The Pachaiyappa Preparatory School was started in opposition to Anderson's institution and influenced the policies of the latter in Madras, and a similar rivalry existed between Cruickshank's Anglo-Vernacular School and the Hindu College in Palayamkottai-Thirunelveli. The latter rivalry was a factor in the setting up of St. John's College of the Church Missionary Society in that place in 1880.⁸ The whole society benefited.

Hindu revival towards the end of the century was partly a reaction to Christian instruction provided in mission schools. Religious instruction was always controversial, but when practiced with the intention of 'leavening' as advocated by Miller, it probably led to greater understanding between communities.

Missionaries led the way in other things as well. They were the first in the Tamil country to admit Dalits into schools or have separate schools for them. Though the early mission schools tended to have students of only single or compatible castes, and were in this way conservative, in the nineteenth century missionaries began to actively oppose caste and disallow caste segregation in their schools. C.T.E. Rhenius, a missionary of the Church Missionary Society, was among the first to do this. Haubroe, who followed Rhenius, reorganized the mission school so that the lower caste boys sat in the same

⁶ Ibid., p. 198.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p. 195.

classroom with the upper caste boys.⁹ John Anderson of the Church of Scotland Mission also, in 1838, refused to turn away a Dalit student. This policy led to much friction and bitterness spilling over from the school into the church, with a large number of Indians, Christian as well as non-Christian, choosing to leave the church and the school for one more tolerant of Indian feelings. These men, however, stood firm, and, as Braidwood notes in his biography of Anderson and Johnston, though the same fight was fought much later in the government schools, this came to be soon established as a principle in Protestant schools. The Government, in fact, announced concessions in this matter only in 1893, in response to demands in 1891 and 1892.¹⁰

The Protestant missions were also the first to provide formal education to girls. This started in the eighteenth century itself. In the early days, people from the 'lower' classes sent their daughters to school more easily than their social superiors. The girls who did come were normally withdrawn after the age of ten for the sake of marriage. Anderson's school for girls, set up in 1841, seems to have been the first to educate upper caste girls. The school had great difficulty keeping its students, having to offer inducements of money and food, which seems to indicate that only the poorer caste girls came to schools.¹¹ The number of schools for girls, especially primary schools, increased throughout the century, and as early as 1848, as reported by Mrs. Porter, the students of the London Missionary Society Female School were already finding their wings, 'It is a cause of great joy to us to think of the interesting and important positions in which kind and gracious Providence has placed many of our dear children.' A change of attitude was apparent by 1850, when Mrs. Porter reported, 'We have had more numerous applications for admissions from Hindu and Christian parents than ever before. The greater number of these we have been reluctantly compelled to refuse.'¹² Protestant schools produced especially many women teachers. In 1871, 16 girls of the Free Church of Scotland

⁹ M.E. Gibbs, *The Anglican Church in India 1600-1970*, ISPCK, New Delhi, 1972, p. 87; J.R. Rhenius, *Memoir of the Rev. C.T.E. Rhenius*, James Nisbet, London, 1841, pp. 35, 36 & 167 and S. Manickam, *Studies in Missionary History*, Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1988, p. 88.

¹⁰ John Braidwood, *True Yoke Fellows in the Mission Field – the Life and Labours of the Rev. John Anderson and the Rev. Robert Johnston*, James Nisbet, London, 1862, pp. 63 & 64 and M.A. Sherring, *History of Protestant Mission in India*, Trubner and Co., London, 1875, p. 426.

¹¹ M.A. Sherring, *History of Protestant Mission in India*, Trubner & Co., London, 1875, p. 432.

¹² K.N. Brockway and Marjorie Sykes, *Unfinished Pilgrimage – the story of some South Indian schools*, Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1973, p. 18.

schools passed the government examination for female teachers' certificates.¹³

Protestant educationists tried also to make the government responsible for general education, campaigning actively for financial support. Traditionally, schools had been supported by village and community resources rather than the government.

Protestant schools were among the earliest to introduce yearly academic sessions and examinations. From the 1830s onwards, missions began to show more interest in providing modern western education. Their syllabi would typically include arithmetic, grammar, Indian and English history, geography, the sciences and the languages (usually English and the vernaculars).¹⁴ Anderson's more ambitious syllabus for his institution included 'the elements of astronomy and practical economy; logic, moral philosophy and natural theology.'¹⁵ All schools taught the doctrine of Christianity also.

At the basis of all this educational activity was the belief that every person is valuable to God and should be at least able to read so that he can read the Bible to decide his response to God and that his freedom in this matter should be respected. This idea provided an important philosophic basis for the national movement. It was supported by Utilitarians like Macaulay, who hoped, 'that, being instructed in the European language, [Indians] may in the future demand European institutions.'¹⁶

In fact, one argument of Britons like Warren Hastings who were against missionary activities was that it would weaken the British Raj. After the shake-up of 1857, while some blamed aggressive mission work for the uprising, the missions felt that educational work must be extended to prevent such things recurring in the future. The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) after the revolt set apart a sum of £10,000 for the setting up of schools, teacher-training institutes, and the distribution of books in India.¹⁷

In Madras Presidency, missionary operations were much greater compared to the rest of India. S. Sathianadhan, a professor at the Presidency College in Madras in the nineteenth century, in his book *A History of Education in the Madras Presidency*, reports

¹³ K.N. Brockway, 'Mrs. William Porter of Porter's School, Madras', in Bentinck Star, V, Bentinck Higher Secondary School, Madras, 1969, p. 11; S. Sathianadhan, *History of Education in the Madras Presidency*, Srinivasu and Co., Madras, 1894, p. 224 and M.A. Sherring, op. cit., p. 434.

¹⁴ K.N. Brockway and Marjorie Sykes, op. cit., p. 19; J. Asirvatham, 'Past History of Christ Church High School', in Christ Church Post-Centenary Golden Jubilee Souvenir, Christ Church Anglo-Indian Higher Secondary School, Madras, 1993, p. 24 and J.R. Rhenius, op. cit., p. 109.

¹⁵ John Braidwood, op. cit., p. 61.

¹⁶ R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), op. cit., p. 37.

¹⁷ Victor Koilpillai, *The SPCK in India 1710-1985*, ISPCK, Delhi, 1985, pp. 30-2.

that there were 1185 mission schools with 38,005 students, in the Madras presidency in 1852, compared to 472 schools, with 26719 students, in the other Presidencies. But this did not lead to great numbers of conversions. While the missionaries had come primarily to convert, it was against their philosophy to use force in this matter. The average percentage of non-Christians in Protestant colleges was 80% in 1888, and non-Christians also served in Protestant schools and colleges as teachers and other staff.¹⁸

The schools were part of an all-India and even a worldwide movement. Christian missions working in the countryside had a lot of boarding schools. Ringeltaube, the LMS missionary who worked in Myladi in southern Tamil Nadu, started churches as well as schools. When James Lynch and his band of Methodist missionaries landed in Galle in Sri Lanka, it was suggested that they become school teachers. They could thus support themselves till they received money from England.¹⁹

In an interesting article in *The Hindu*, Vimala Ramachandran discusses the factors which attract children and their parents to school. Among them the important ones are a welcoming school, a school where children actually learn and which is within reachable distance, dedicated teachers, adults, especially the father, in the family who value education and are concerned about the welfare of the child and adults who share the housework and are successful role models. As far as girls are concerned, being a girl, particularly the eldest, or having a family member with a disability, burden of housework or outside work, early marriage, a distant school and safety concerns are considerations which keep girls out of schools. The children usually want to attend schools. But she says that having a dedicated teacher is 'the single most important factor in a child wanting to study.'²⁰ The missionaries were dedicated teachers, and this may be an explanation for their success.

The significance of the nineteenth century

The period marks for Madras the beginning of British control and the end of the political turmoil of the preceding century. Throughout the eighteenth century and at the time of the early missionaries, particularly Fabricius, Madras passed from the English

¹⁸ S. Sathianadhan, *History of Education in the Madras Presidency*, Srinivasu and Co., Madras, 1894, pp. 68-70 and Hugal Grafé, op. cit., p. 196.

¹⁹ M.E. Gibbs, op. cit., pp. 97 & 137 and Beth Walpole, *Venture of Faith*, Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1993, pp. 58 & 91.

²⁰ Vimala Ramachandran, 'Snakes and Ladders', in *The Sunday Magazine*, *The Hindu*, August 10, 2003.

to French and to English again, then again to French and back into English hands. The congregation of the SPCK thus twice fled from Madras to Pulicat. There was also trouble from the Mysore rulers, Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. As late as 1791 the Vepery mission was attacked by Tipu Sultan.²¹ The 19th century, by contrast, was a century of comparative political peace in Madras, and the missions flourished.

About 1800 in Tamil Nadu, one common rule was established after a long time. Tipu Sultan was defeated at Srirangapatnam in 1799 and the Kingdom of Thanjavur was brought under effective control the same year. After the Carnatic was also brought under the English fold and the second Poligar war fought in 1801, the English gained control over almost the whole of the southern India. Almost the whole of Tamil Nadu, except a few princely territories and European settlements, were under the English East India Company's control.²² Education began to spread faster as congregations and schools did not have to be uprooted with every upheaval, as happened particularly during the time of Fabricius.

Secondly, the second half of the eighteenth century was also marked by relative stagnation in the churches and missions, as new missionaries seemed unwilling to come or without the ability of the old ones. After the deaths of Schwartz and Gericke, the period of the great pioneering missionaries from Germany ended. At Halle, pietism had declined under the influence of Voltaire, and missions had less people interested in them.²³ By contrast, in the final years of the 18th and early years of the 19th century there was again a revival in England, with many mission societies being formed and many men of ability coming to India as missionaries.²⁴ In 1795, William Carey founded his enterprise at Serampur, near Kolkata, in Bengal. For missions the nineteenth century thus was a period of new vigour, and it has been called 'the greatest missionary century.'²⁵

Most of the mission organizations which were active in education in Madras were founded or came to the city in the first or second decade of the century. The London Missionary Society was founded in 1795 and sent its first missionary to India in 1804. The Church Missionary Society was formed in 1799 and sent its first missionaries in

²¹ Beth Walpole, *op. cit.*, pp. 37 & 38.

²² Hugald Grafe, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

²³ M.E. Gibbs, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

²⁴ Beth Walpole, *op.cit.*, p. 52.

²⁵ H.W. Raw, 'The greatest missionary century', in *The Harvest Field*, Fourth series, Vol. X, 1899, Wesleyan Mission Press, Mysore, 1899, p. 245.

1814. The Baptist Missionary Society was founded in 1792. The Wesleyan Missionary Society was founded in 1813 and sent its first men to India in 1818. The American Madura Mission and the Basel Evangelical Mission sent their people in 1834. Later came the Baptist Telugu Mission, the Free Church of Scotland Mission, the Leipzig and American Evangelical Lutheran Missions, the Arcot Mission of the Reformed Church in America, and the Canadian Baptist Mission.²⁶

In 1813, the bishopric of Calcutta was founded and in 1815 its first bishop, Bishop Middleton, arrived. His diocese included Australasia, the whole of India and Ceylon. During the bishopric of Daniel Corrie (appointed in 1833), Madras Presidency, Ceylon, New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land (now called Tasmania) and their dependencies were severed from the diocese of Calcutta. The new diocese of Madras with St. George's as its cathedral included the Presidency of Madras and Ceylon. So Daniel Corrie in 1835 became the first Anglican bishop at Madras. The rapid setting up of new bishoprics was a sign of the Christian population and mission work expanding and communication becoming faster. In 1879 a new diocese of Travancore and Cochin was carved out of the old Madras diocese, and in 1897 the diocese of Thirunelveli. Towards the end of the episcopate of Bishop Frederick Gell (1861-1899), the diocese of Madras became the biggest outside England in terms of number of clergy and congregations. The first Indian bishop of the Anglican Church, Samuel Azariah, was consecrated just twelve years after the end of the selected period in 1912.²⁷ The missions thus came to maturity in the nineteenth century, about one century after they had come to Madras.

Where government policy was concerned, there was a significant change early in the century in 1813 when Section XLIII of the East India Act required the Governor-General in Council to set apart annually a sum of rupees one lakh at least 'for the Revival and Improvement of the Literature and the Encouragement of the learned Natives of India, and for the Introduction and Promotion of Knowledge of the Sciences among the Inhabitants of the British Territories in India.'²⁸ India was also finally made open to missionaries from all countries. This was a contributing cause to the sudden increase in mission work in India.

²⁶ W. Francis et al., *Gazetteer of South India*, Vol. 1, issued 1901-1906, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1988 (reprint), p. 34.

²⁷ M.E. Gibbs, op. cit., pp. 59, 247 & 341.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 50.

In other ways as well, the nineteenth century marked a break from the past. As transport became easier, the world was becoming smaller. In the ‘old times’, says Baierlein in 1875, a journey from Madras to Tranquebar (or Tharangambadi) lasted at least 9 days by bullock cart. ‘Now’, in 1875, by the same means of transport, with roads improved and bridges built, the journey took seven days. It is also possible to use the railroad ‘by wide detours’, since there is no railways at Tranquebar. By this means, Madras can be reached in two days – ‘so altered are the times!’²⁹

It was a period of rising all-India consciousness, facilitated by the learning of English which could be used as a lingua franca. The Rev. Lal Behari De of the Calcutta Institution of the Church of Scotland Mission communicated with Ethirajooloo of the same mission’s center in Madras. News could thus travel fast, and on a lesser scale Anderson’s school became well-known outside Madras also. When he went to start a school in Kanchipuram, he found ‘the people have heard of the Pariah struggle...and maintain that I have come to convert them.’ In spite of such fears, Anderson found seven students willing to study under him. There was a growing all-India consciousness, where issues concerning education influenced areas far apart. Anderson mentions that people had heard of the events of Bombay, ‘Dr. Wilson’s struggle in Bombay has set the natives all on the watch, and has made them exceedingly jealous.’³⁰

In other ways as well, Madras was influenced by what happened in the rest of India. The grammar school set up by Bishop Corrie in Madras in 1836 was modeled on the school of Bishop John Matthias Turner in Calcutta. Bishop Turner had reorganized a school founded in 1823 by better off Anglo-Indians for the education of their sons. He upgraded it to a high school, made it financially secure, set a new syllabus and as far as possible supervised it himself.³¹ Anderson too modeled his school on Duff’s Institution at Calcutta.

In fact, this period saw an increasing consciousness, especially in the cities, about the value of education, and especially western English education. The mission schools were thus fulfilling a demand. A report of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel says that ‘the establishment of schools is considered by Hindus as among the chief and best of charitable works. They ascribe it to the most

²⁹ E.R. Baierlein, *The Land of the Tamilians and its Missions*, AES, New Delhi, 1995 (reprint), p. 149.

³⁰ John Braidwood, *op. cit.*, pp. 98, 123 & 292.

³¹ M.E. Gibbs, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 & 137.

benevolent motives, and attribute to it a degree of merit which must ensure to the founders an ample return of happiness in another state of existence. Thus favourably disposed, they are not hasty to object either to the course of instruction pursued, or to such rules as the discipline of the school may require. The good that may be done by a sound and judicious system of instruction, is thus only liable to be thwarted by occasional, though very rare insinuations of native bigotry, or by the more frequent ascription to Hindus, by some of our own community, of suspicions and jealousies which experience has abundantly shown to have been grossly exaggerated.³² The first schools opened, in the early eighteenth century, had to struggle against indifference to education. By the beginning of the next century, however, at least in the urban areas, there was recognition of the value of education as a door to careers in the government and to interact with the ruling race, and the schools set up by Christian missionaries survived and even prospered in spite of unpopular religious instruction and policies of placing all castes together. In 1910, J.A. Sharrock noted that the desire for education had reached even the villages: whenever a village came over en masse to Christianity, the first request was invariably to send them a teacher and to start a school.³³

Again, the beginning of the nineteenth century is commonly taken to mark the point when ‘great currents of new life, thought, and aspiration’³⁴ began to sweep over India, which would eventually lead to political unity and independence. Madras was a center of modern education. In the 1891 census the Madras Presidency had higher literacy figures than the other presidencies. Within Madras presidency, Madras had the highest percentage of educated people.³⁵ So Madras was a full participant in the social ferment of the country.

Protestant Christian education in the nineteenth century

There were Protestant clergy in Madras from 1640, when the English acquired the settlement which later became Fort St. George. But most of these early English clergymen in Madras concentrated their attention on their European flock, and do not

³² Report of the SPG for the year 1829 (pertaining to South India), printed for the society by CJG and F. Rivington, London, 1830, p. 166.

³³ J.A. Sharrock, *South Indian Missions: containing glimpses into the lives and customs of the Tamil people*, SPCK, Westminster, 1910, p. 221.

³⁴ K.N. Brockway and Marjorie Sykes, op. cit., p. v.

³⁵ Census of India 1891, Vol. XIII, Madras, Government Press, 1892, pp. 178 & 179.

seem to have had much interest in education. The coming of Rev. William Stevenson and the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries at Tranquebar marked a turning point. Stevenson, along with Rev. Gruendler of the Danish mission at Tranquebar, set up two schools in Madras – one for the ‘Portuguese’, or the Eurasians, in the White Town, and another for the ‘Malabars’, or the Tamils, in Black Town.³⁶ There was no public awareness of the value of education at this time, and the schools went through periods of closure because of lack of students. But they survived, and St. Paul’s at Vepey and St. George’s at Kilpauk trace their history back to these small beginnings.

One important feature of early Protestant missionary work in India was the spiritual root of the movement: the tendency for a school to be associated with every church, and for the missionary to start a school almost as soon as he had arrived and had acquired sufficient command over the local language. The arrival of a missionary was sometimes followed by the establishment of a school before the church. The school served both as an agency to educate Christians to help them read the Bible and develop their spiritual lives, and as a point of contact with non-Christians to give them the gospel. In this sense, education was almost a religious enterprise, especially basic education for the masses, which would enable each person to read the Bible and decide for himself his response to its claims.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century in Madras there was a slow but very steady increase in the demand for western education. A number of mission agencies started work in Madras, with educational work being second only to evangelistic work in priority in many. The number of schools mushroomed, and rarely did any school, particularly a mission school in the urban areas, suffer for want of students.

The different missions had common goals, but differing emphases. The Church of Scotland Mission, for example, focused mainly on work among the wealthier and more educated sections of society. In contrast, the London Missionary Society worked among the depressed classes. The evangelical commitment of the mission decided their educational commitments. If they worked among a poor and rural population, their schools, which would usually serve them alone, focused on basic education which would enable them to read the Bible. This was true of the RCA mission in Arcot, for example.

³⁶ S. Sathianadhan, *op. cit.*, p. cxiii and H. Grafe, ‘Benjamin Schultze and the beginnings of the first Indian Protestant church in Madras’, in *Indian Church History Review*, vol. III, no. 1, June 1969, Church History Association of India, Bangalore, p. 36.

Many missionaries, like those of the RCA, where education was severely subordinated to evangelism in the beginning, consciously tried to avoid anglicizing their Indian believers. Their schools offered mainly instruction in the vernacular.³⁷

Soon however, the missions recognized the value of knowledge and education for their own sake, and as instruments of social and individual transformation. Even Anderson, who was firmly evangelical, mentions this, 'Everything must give way before a desire to do them good, whether in making a road or in establishing a school...'³⁸

From the nineteenth century onwards, 'educational' missionaries, whose primary duty was to manage and teach in the schools of the mission, were seen. Rhenius and Anderson are examples of such missionaries who were sent with the specific purpose of promoting education. Anderson opened schools in towns neighbouring Madras as well, such as Kanchipuram.³⁹

Among the Christian schools, it was those which offered good education, regardless of their degree of evangelical zeal, which were most successful, like Anderson's institution. Like consumers of the educational goods on offer, students would take what they want and need and reject the rest. From the beginning good secular instruction was one of the selling points of Protestant education. The missionaries did hope for conversions as Rice, one of the Church of Scotland missionaries, said at a meeting in 1883: the object of mission education was not 'merely secular education', 'but to make known the truths of our religion'.⁴⁰ But it is not true to say that all the schools run by Christian missions through their history were solely instruments of conversion. They certainly started with that in mind, among other things, but they failed in this but still continued their educational work.

William Miller in a much-quoted phrase described the function of Christian educational institutions in India as one of 'leavening of the great society',⁴¹ as opposed to conversion. As a small amount of leaven or yeast can work through a large amount of dough, even a little bit of Christian education, Miller hoped, would influence the entire society for good. While some fellow missionary-educators may have disagreed,

³⁷ Emmanuel David, *Reformed Church in America Missionaries in South India 1839-1938 – An Analytical Study*, Phoenix, Bangalore, 1986, p. 141.

³⁸ John Braidwood, op. cit., pp. 63, 98 & 99.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 97.

⁴⁰ Church of Scotland Archival Material, op. cit., p. 46.

⁴¹ William Miller, 'The place of higher education as an instrument of Christian Effort,' in Report of the Centenary Conference on Protestant Missions of the World, James Nisbet, London, 1889, p. 235.

it would not be incorrect to say that Protestant educational institutions in general, and their schools in particular, have done just that. Miller consciously eschewed the policy of using schools as forums to evangelize. For lack of success in conversions and the shortage of funds, some missions, like the Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission, the Reformed Church of America Mission, and the American Madura Mission, for a short while, decided to restrict their educational activities to the education of Christian children in their native tongues. But after the Despatch of 1854 and the institution of the grant-in-aid system, many of them returned to general education, recognizing that this was one of the few ways of getting to touch the upper classes of Indian society and adopting the goal of 'leavening' rather than 'converting'.⁴² While schools did not become effective missionary instruments as hoped, the standard of secular instruction, being good, soon enabled many schools to become financially independent, so they were not a drain on mission funds.

There had always been debate about the proper place of education within the mission's vision of evangelization, and the debate became sharper towards the end of the century. Because there were so few conversions in schools (Baierlein in 1975 noted that even after 160 years of evangelization the town of Tranquebar remained mainly heathen⁴³) and funds were strained, some missions argued that general education should be left to the government, which came to increasingly in this century take responsibility for education. Missions actively participated in efforts to make the government responsible for general education.

The early missionary teachers always learnt the local language and then taught using it as a medium. Most Protestant schools in this period, according to the need of the situation, used the local language to impart primary education.⁴⁴ Vernacular schools with a good standard of education in English were the pattern. The Scottish missionaries in Madras, who chose to use English as the medium of instruction and targeted the most educated and the highest castes, were an exception.

The Institution of the Church of Scotland Mission was the first to offer a liberal English education according to the latest trends of the day. The success of this institution

⁴² Hugald Grafe, *History of Christianity in India – Tamil Nadu in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, op. cit., p. 195.

⁴³ E.R. Baierlein, op. cit., p. 147.

⁴⁴ Hugald Grafe, *History of Christianity in India – Tamil Nadu in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, op. cit., p. 47.

spurred on others to enter the same field. ‘Other missionary bodies seem preparing to enter the field, as rivals with us [the Church of Scotland Mission] in the same great work, and upon the very same plan. These are no mean testimonials in favour of our scheme...’⁴⁵ This shows that there was a great need and desire for English education among the people of the city. The value of an English education was realized earlier in the cities than the towns, and there seems to have been a fair degree of knowledge of English and its value among Indians at this stage, which made an English-medium school possible.

It is also to be noted that English was not really replacing the vernacular in higher learning or in government business. It was replacing more Sanskrit and Arabic. The vernacular continued to be the medium of elementary education. Even the Orientalists had never thought of making the vernacular the medium of instruction in higher education. This was in fact not possible because at that time the vernaculars were not developed enough to be used in higher education.

Many missionaries from the earliest days consciously tried to adapt their message to Indian culture and rejected the idea that adoption of Christianity meant adoption of English, European, or western culture. This was part of the reason most teaching was done in the vernacular. The schools for girls especially tried not to anglicize but rather uplift women and build awareness.

Protestant and mission schools succeeded because in many ways they responded to conditions in Indian society and adapted themselves to it. As already mentioned, there was a growing demand for western education in Madras as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century. The early missionary educationists ran their schools in the fashion of Indian tradition – classes were held in verandas, under trees, and in houses. There were no regular age limits or age divisions, periods or fixed syllabi. Classes were held generally from the mornings to the afternoons.

In other ways, however, on entering the school, the pupil entered a new world quiet distinct from his home. The home was traditional and more controlling. The school was freer and more open to new ideas, but there was still a kind of discipline. The Protestant schools were part of the dynamics between old and new social forces which created modern India.

⁴⁵ John Braidwood, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

The bigger institutions inevitably tend to become prominent in any account. But in fact, the greatest amount of work and the greatest amount of social transformation was effected by large numbers of small schools. The development of the schools and their services in imparting knowledge irrespective of caste, religion, or gender, are a fascinating study.

Sources and Methodology

There are many primary and secondary sources, and a number of these have also appeared on some related topics.

Many missionaries kept careful records, either as diaries or in the reports they sent to their missions at home. Many of these have survived and are available here, and provide first-hand glimpses into their work. *The Memoir of C.T.E. Rhenius*, an educational missionary, was published by his son posthumously in 1841, and borrows heavily from the diary kept by the missionary. Rhenius was one of the first missionaries of the Church Missionary Society in Madras, and his diary describes his setting up of schools and the beginnings of the Indian desire for western education. John Braidwood, another teacher-missionary who worked in the Church of Scotland Mission School which became the present Madras Christian College, published an account of the experiences of his immediate colleagues and himself in *True Yoke Fellows in the Mission Field – the Life and Labours of the Rev. John Anderson and the Rev. Robert Johnston* in 1862. This again describes the challenges faced by these pioneering missionaries, especially as they engaged with the elite of Indian society in Madras and tried to educate girls. Beth Walpole has compiled the archival materials pertaining to the work of the Church of Scotland Mission in Madras, Arkonam, Vellore, Secunderabad, and Sholingur. This record is again a source of much information about the mission and its schools in Madras. Major De Havilland, who helped to build the present St. Andrew's Kirk in Vepery in Madras, wrote *An Account of St. Andrew's Church, Egmore, Madras*, in 1821. He writes about the early school connected with this church - the school of the Church of Scotland Mission in Madras.

Some reports of missionary societies has been printed, like the report for 1829 of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which has been published along with a sermon preached before the society: ‘Rt. Rev. Robert, Bishop of Bristol, A sermon preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts at their anniversary meeting held on February 19, 1830, together with the report of the society for the year 1829 (pertaining to South India)’. This report concerns specifically the mission’s work in southern India, and mention is made of schools in Madras, and much importance is given to this work. J.A. Sharrock, who was superintending missionary and sometime Principal of the SPG College in Thiruchirapalli wrote *South Indian Missions: containing glimpses into the lives and customs of the Tamil people* in 1910. Sharrock describes the people and their attitudes to schools and education, and especially education for girls. Similar to this is the book written by the German missionary E.R. Baierlein, *The Land of the Tamilians and its missions*, which has been translated into English by J.D.B. Gribble and published in 1875.

The *Gazetteer of South India* issued in 1901-1906 describes the educational situation in the southern part of India, and especially Madras, during the turn of the century. Frank Penny’s *The Church in Madras – being the history of the Ecclesiastical and Missionary Action of the East India Company*, published in 1904, deals with the schools and churches of the East India Company in the city of Madras alone. It is a good source of information about the Company’s contribution but it does not deal so well with the much greater contribution of the missions. M.A. Sherring’s *History of Protestant Mission in India*, published in 1874, has a section on the work of missions in the Madras Presidency which is relevant to this study. Similarly, S. Sathianadhan’s *History of Education in the Madras Presidency* is useful to this study when he describes the work of the various missions. Henry Davidson Love’s *Vestiges of Old Madras* describes some of the earliest schools connected with St. Mary’s Church in Fort St. George in detail.

Besides these books, there are journals surviving from the nineteenth century which offer a glimpse of the era. Typically, they deal with a large variety of topics, but they show the concerns of the people of that time better. For example, many pages of *The Harvest Field*, a monthly journal devoted to mission work in India, are devoted to issues which agitated the missions of that day: religious education, the political awakening of the Indians and the attitude towards this the missions should adopt, the need for balance

between the evangelical and educational work of the missions, and connected with this the necessity or lack of it for educational work. The *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, another mission periodical, deals with the concerns of the mid-nineteenth century mission work all over the world. It has interesting articles about the situation in India, and about how mission educational work can prevent the recurrence of events like the 1857 Revolt.

The reports of missionary conferences, like the Centenary Conference on Protestant Missions of the World held in London in June 1888, also have a number of pages devoted to India. The report contains a paper by the William Miller, the Principal of the Madras Christian College, on 'The place of higher education as an instrument of Christian Effort', in which he elaborates his educational philosophy.

Besides all the above sources, a number of books have also appeared on the topic. Hugald Grafe's volume on the history of Christians in Tamil Nadu in *The History of Christians in India* series (Vol. IV, Part 2) is a good introduction to the general history of Christians in this state in the nineteenth century. Beth Walpole, in *Venture of Faith*, goes to the roots of the earliest missions to this part of the country as she describes the foundation of the Church of South India. S. Manickam in *Studies in Missionary History* and C.B. Firth in *An Introduction to Indian Church History* are wider in geographical scope, but offer a good overview of the subject.

Besides these, many authoritative books on general Indian history also touch upon the history of Christians in India, and because their perspective includes the whole country, their treatment of this subject is often illuminating. R.C. Majumdar, in the *History and Culture of the Indian People* series published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, evaluates the contribution of Christian mission effort compared to government efforts to promote English education in India. Romila Thapar's volume on ancient India in the *History of India* published by Penguin touches upon the legends of St. Thomas coming to southern India and being martyred here, and the beginnings of the Christian community in India. Other books which offer an interesting perspective on the topic of Christian history in India are Antony Copley's *Religions in Conflict – Ideology, Culture Contact, and Conversion in Late-Colonial India* and Susan Bayly's *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings – Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society 1700-1900*. H.M. Bergunder's *Missionsberichte aus Indien im 18. Jahrhundert* about missions in India contains an interesting discussion on the legacy of Halle pietism in India.

There are books also concerned with specific missions, like M.E. Gibbs' on the Anglican Church, *The Anglican Church in India 1600-1970*, which covers the earliest Protestant chaplains in the East India Company and the earliest missionaries as well. Victor Koilpillai has written about the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, *The SPCK in India 1710-1985*, and, because the SPCK supported the work of the earliest German missionaries in Tharangambadi (or Tranquebar), his book also deals with the earliest missionaries in India. Emmanuel David has written on the work of the American Reformed Church in southern India, *Reformed Church in America Missionaries in South India 1839-1938 – An Analytical Study*. This mission did important work in the smaller cities and villages in Tamil Nadu, and a reading shows the different challenges of this work compared to work in urban Madras. C.H. Swavelly's *The Lutheran Enterprise in India*, an edited book, contains several interesting articles on the earliest Dutch-Halle mission at Tranquebar and its successor the Leipzig Mission. K.N. Brockway, who was once Headmistress of the Bentinck School, has researched and written much about the school, first known as the London Mission Female School, in the nineteenth century. This includes *A Tribute to Mrs. W.H. Drew* about the founder of the school, and several articles published in the school's magazine 'Bentinck Star'. She along with Marjorie Sykes wrote *Unfinished Pilgrimage – the Story of Some South Indian Schools* about Bentinck School and the teacher's training school connected with it. This book also shows how some missionaries approached the national movement in India, and particularly their appreciation of Gandhi's philosophy. Carol Graham's *Between Two Worlds* is also similarly set in a later period, as is J.R. MacPhail's *Reflections from a Christian College*. These books show the change in mission philosophy, particularly its educational philosophy, from its early evangelical roots. MacPhail taught in the Madras Christian College in the period soon after independence.

There are journals like the Indian Christian History Review which have published articles by scholars about the early schools and churches in Madras city. Duncan Forrester has written about Christian attitudes to caste in the nineteenth century, and Hugal Grafe has written about Benjamin Schultze and his church and school in Madras. The church of Benjamin Schultze was the first Indian Protestant church in English territory.

The report of the All-India Conference on Religious Education of the National Christian Council, held in Bombay in 1928 shows the changed climate of missionary opinion with regard to the topic of religious education in mission schools.

Besides all these, handbooks, souvenirs, and magazines of particular institutions are also a rich source of information. Often, these contain a history of the school or the institution. Sometimes, the history is well-researched and detailed, as in the case of the Bentinck School, published in its 'Bentinck Star' magazine in the 1960s. The Northwick School for girls in Royapuram has saved old school magazines from the 1920s and 1930s, and these are fascinating. They show how the schoolgirls of this Church of Scotland Mission institution were encouraged to view the national movement, and their freedom to express their thoughts in this school forum. The souvenirs issued by the Madras Diocese in its centenary year in 1935, and by the Leipzig Mission in its 150th year are also good sources of information. At the very least, such publications, in most cases available only with the institution itself, show the name of the founder and approximately when the institution was founded.

Government records such as the census reports do not deal directly with the subject of this study. However, they throw light on some important issues indirectly involved, such as the statistics on education or literacy of various sections of the population, financial support from the government, and occasional legislation concerning teachers' qualifications, available facilities, and the curriculum in aided institutes.

A lot of research has been done in the field of the Christian history in Tamil Nadu, and Christian educational institutions and missions have been researched as well. The research and the theses so far on this topic, however, have tended to concentrate on the work of a single mission, or the history of a particular institution, and their work in some specific field such as education, medicine, or social work, or general Christian work, Protestant or Roman Catholic, in a large area. Not much was done to analyze a particular aspect of the work of many Christian missions in a comparatively small area, as the present study does.

The present work, being a first-time study, is a descriptive and analytical study of the schools run by Protestants in the city of Madras in the nineteenth century in the field of general education.

Chapterization

This thesis is divided into six chapters. They are (1) **Introduction**, (2) **The Historical Roots of the Mission Schools**, (3) **The Various Missions and Their Schools**, (4) **Management of the Schools**, (5) **Social Transformation**, and finally, (6) **Conclusion**.

The first chapter, that is, this chapter, deals with the significance of missionary effort in education in Madras city and in India in general. It shows how the missionary effort was unique and discusses some essential features of mission education. The nineteenth century provides a natural time frame to analyze certain trends like education, and reasons for this are discussed. The sources of information for this study, the methodology, and the chapterization are also analyzed in this chapter.

The second chapter, **The Historical Roots of the Mission Schools**, deals with the roots of the mission education movement of the nineteenth century in Madras. The beginnings of Christianity in India, the Reformation and the Protestant Movement in Europe, the great voyages of discovery in the middle ages are all dealt with. All of these are tied, in one way or another, to the missions in nineteenth century Madras and their zeal to start schools and educate. Pietism provided the philosophical foundation of the early missions, and the educational concerns of Pietism continued to be a strong feature of Protestant missions long after Pietism itself was eclipsed by rationalism and secularism in its birthplace. Christian missions came to Madras from their small beginning in Tranquebar. The church was connected to the school from the very beginning of Protestant missions. The mission schools in eighteenth century Madras, though disrupted by political wars, small in size and number, and much like traditional Indian schools in every way except for the religion they professed, contained the seeds of the Renaissance-like movement which swept nineteenth-century India.

The third chapter, **The Various Missions and Their Schools**, describes the schools in Madras city in the nineteenth century. The schools are classified according to the mission they belonged to for the sake of easy description. The schools belonging to the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge and its sister mission the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel are described first. These missions had their 'stations'

in Madras in the eighteenth century itself. Then are described the schools of the Church Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Mission, and the Church of Scotland Missions, all of which came to the city in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Other schools run by Protestant Christians but not belonging to any specific mission are also described, especially schools for Eurasian children. The schools for girls are described in a separate section in this chapter, as the education of girls deserves to stand alone as a topic. The challenges faced by the girls' schools of the various missions are similar and the issues concerned with this are also clearer this way.

The fourth chapter, **Management of the Schools**, describes the Protestant schools and how they functioned. Most Protestant schools were run by missions, and one of their aims was to present the gospel and enable all people to read the Bible. But from the earliest days one of the chief attractions of the mission school for the people of the city was the good standard of secular instruction they offered. This chapter discusses the financial aspect of the schools as well, as most schools were run with some financial strain, and there were continual debates within most missions as to the appropriate amount of money and energy to be spent on education. But even with such constraints, the shortage of trained teachers, and the ambivalent attitude of the population towards religious instruction, the schools were a qualified success. There were schools for all sections of society, and the need for institutions of higher instruction was felt as Indians took more and more to education. Towards the end of the century, there were greater numbers of Indian teachers and Indians were beginning to take up leadership positions within schools.

The fifth chapter, **Social Transformation**, deals with the impact of the Protestant schools on wider society and the social changes they led to. It presents statistics to analyze the growth of education in the nineteenth century. It also discusses the situation after 1900 and the impact of Protestant schools on the freedom movement. Though the number of Christians never increased as the missionaries had hoped, the schools wielded an influence disproportionate to their size. In general, Protestant schools admitted people of all castes, though individual schools differed in their policies in this regard. In some missions, especially in the first half of the century, the job of 'breaking' caste was seriously taken up, and various castes forced to mix in the school and church. Though opinion turned against such severity later, the measures achieved integration within the

walls of the school, though not outside to the same extent. In educating girls and women also, the Protestant schools were treading on largely new ground. Their commitment to this cause helped many girls, especially of the 'respectable' classes which were closed till much later to female education, to learn how to read and write. In introducing western and English education, fixed syllabi, examinations, and campaigning for government responsibility in education, the Protestant schools led the way.

The sixth and last chapter, **Conclusion**, sums up the findings of the study. The educational philosophy of the missions underwent change as the situations changed, and there was greater stress on rooting Indian education to Indian circumstances. There was also greater acceptance of religious diversity and the need for dialogue and understanding.