

SRI MULAM TIRUNAL AND PROGRESS OF EDUCATION IN THIRUVATTAR – KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Thiruvattar was important place during Travancore rule and many side developments took place in that period now it is situated in Kanyakumari District. The study has been conducted in Thiruvattar to find out the first school introduced in Thiruvattar and its developments. The education system followed in Thiruvattar from the period of Sri Mulam Tirunal and later changes were finding out on the basis of relevant source materials from Trivandrum Archives. Comparing the Travancore rulers, Sri Mulam Tirunal placed first position in the development of education in Thiruvattar. He ruled from 1885 to 1924 and educational institutions were started in Thiruvattar at first. The schools were introduced for boys and girls separately. In the beginning English School was started in Thiruvattar and then Vernacular School was started. These schools were very famous during the period of Sri Mulam Tirunal.

Key words

Sri Mulam Tirunal , Travancore, Thiruvattar, Board of Education, Vernacular Education, English School, Primary School, Middle School.

The enlightened sovereigns of Travancore fostered radical changes in the spheres of education. The encouragement given to western education target the people critical and creative thought of the West based on reason and judgment. Similarly, Travancore is well-known for its traditional systems of medicine and treatment and with the spread of western medical education it popularized modern medicine and treatment. As a result, Travancore witnessed progress in all walks of life. The government of Travancore bestowed much importance on the administration and management of educational institutions.

The formation of a Separate Inspectorate in 1867 gave new impetus to vernacular education. Schemes were made to establish a Central Vernacular School at Trivandrum and a school in each taluk of the state. A Director of Vernacular Education and two Inspectors were appointed to look after its administration¹. The government extended the vernacular education to commensurate with the growing needs of the state. In addition to the Taluk Schools, Grant-in-aid Elementary Schools were started in each village in 1871. The instructions in these schools were similar to that of the taluk schools. The government appointed Deputy Inspectors to supervise the working of these schools².

Purpose of Study

- To analysis the importance of introducing schools in villages, implementation of Western Education and Vernacular Education in Thiruvattar.
- Educational progress in Thiruvattar during the period of Sri Mulam Tirunal
- To find out the year of establishment of schools in Thiruvattar during the period of Sri Mulam Tirunal.

Thiruvattar the historical important place situated in Kanyakumari District. In this village high class people were educated and Gurukula system was followed in olden days. So high class people can highly educate. The schools were started for all people during the period of Sri Mulam Tirunal (1885-1924). A school was introduced in Thiruvattar during the period of 1893-1894. The English School was working in the name of English District School in the year 1893-1894³. The classes were based on class-I, class-II, Form-I, Form-II, Form-III, Form-IV, and Form-V. 'Form' denotes classes above 5th standard, ie, 1st form is equal to 6th standard. The regular attendance was taken which was under the control of the government. For the improvement of the school, a new building was constructed at Thiruvattar opposite to the Court building. In 1894, a Grant-in-Aid Code was introduced to regularize the working of these schools⁴. In 1897, it was known as English Middle School. The code prescribed the basic qualifications to the teachers, utilizing the grants. Soon, the private agencies started more schools in the state. As a result of the development of vernacular education, the government took keen interest in improving its standard. Therefore, attempts were made to improve the condition of government school buildings in the state⁵. In 1896, a Board of Education was constituted with five government's nominated members⁶.

It suggested schemes for the future development of education in the district. The members of the board were expected to reside within the prescribed area as in the modern days. Besides, that Vernacular Middle school was also functioning in the year 1897-1898, the school was meant for girl children only. Regular attendance was taken and often inspections were conducted for the improvement of the schools⁷. Malayalam was the first language in this school. The girls' school functioned near Ammaveedu⁸. Based on Board of Education's suggestion, in 1901, the schools in the State were classified into Primary, Middle and High Schools and introduced a revised curriculum in all the schools⁹. In the primary schools, vernacular language was introduced as the medium of instruction, while English was taught as the second language commencing with class III. They taught reading, writing, elementary arithmetic, history and geography upto class IV. In the girls' schools, special attention was given imparting singing, needlework and domestic economy¹⁰.

The Vernacular Middle Schools had classes upto VII standard and Vernacular High Schools upto classes IX. In the Primary Schools, vernacular was the medium of instruction in the Middle and English was taught as the second language in the High Schools. The English Middle schools had classes upto III form (8th standard) whereas, English High Schools had the forms IV-VI. English was the medium of instruction in these schools while vernacular was taught as the second language¹¹. The classification separated the vernacular primary schools from English Schools¹².

Boys and girls schools were inspected on July 2, 1910 the conditions of the schools were mentioned in the report. At that time, the girls school was named as Higher Base Elementary School for Girls and the Boys School was known as Higher Base Elementary School for Boys. There was no teacher for Class VI in Girls' School. In the boys school, six of the classes were held in main building opposite the Sub-Magistrates Cutchery (court). The state had only limited number of schools for certain communities like the Nadars, Parayas and Fishermen. Even though, the low caste people given chance to acquire education, special attention was given to high class people in Thiruvattar. The classes were held in a small building (near the temple) only for the high caste Hindus¹³. High caste people got many privileges in education and separate were allotted for them.

From this study, we know that the first English School functioned in Thiruvattar in the year 1893-1894 and Vernacular School during 1897- 1898. In an old building English School was functioned from 1893 to 1897 but, new building was constructed I 1897 during the period of Sri Mulam Tirunal. Thus, the schools were firstly introduced in Thiruvattar during the time of Sri Mulam Tirunal but social inequality prevailed among low and high caste people. So , in schools separate buildings were allotted for high caste people. Later, this School was called Upper Primary School (UPS) Thiruvattar. This School property consists of 2.17 acres of land. Still today this building is existing but Vernacular School was demolished because of introduction of new schools in later days. Thus schools were firstly introduced in Thiruvattar during the time of Sri Mulam Tirunal but social inequality was prevailed among high and low caste people in schools, separate buildings were allotted for high caste people.

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4. Report on Travancore Administration, 1896-1897, Trivandrum, p.10.
5. File No.120, Political Department, Trivandrum, April 7,1903.
6. Administration Report of the Madras Presidency, 1902-1903, Trivandrum,p.6.
7. Report on Travancore Administration (1897-1898), Trivandrum, 1899,p.57.
8. Personal Interview with Thomson , Kesavapuram, March 7, 2017.

Ammaveedu was the residence of the consorts of the Travancore kings. Ammaveedus at Arumanai, Vadasery and Thiruvattar were most important.

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