

Research Paper

EMERGENCE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES IN POST –COLONIAL TAMIL NADU

R.MUNIAPPAN M.A., M.Phil.,

Ph.D. Research Scholar in History
Bharathiar University, Coimbatore
New No.35, North Road, West CIT Nagar
Chennai-600 035 Tamil Nadu

ABSTRACT

Education is the remedy for all the social ills in the Emerging Modern Society. Thanks to the spread of western liberal thoughts, philosophical ideas, writings of the scholarly Christian Missionaries and the generosity shown by the liberal and egalitarian British Administrators, there began a period of transition in the knowledge sector. After the establishment of British Power in Tamil Nadu, importance was given to the western model of education. The need of educating Indians was highly felt by the Colonial British Authority. There was a gradual development in the portal of education. Education Sector got impetus through the emergence of higher education institutions.

The British needed educated and qualified people to serve them in administration.¹ The growth of higher education institutions in Tamil Nadu began from the middle of Nineteenth Century. The earliest British administrator who felt the need of the higher education institutions in the country was Sir Thomas Munro. He had an intimate knowledge of the people of South India and their intellectual equipment. This farsighted and liberal minded Sir Thomas Munro had insisted the necessity of higher education and also portrayed the subsequent benefits. He emphasized that by all means higher education was to be made available at least to the more affluent sections of the Indians. The Court of Directors appreciated his stand and warmly endorsed his suggestions.²

Higher Education in the Beginning

The public of Madras made a petition with more than 70,000 signatures under the leadership of George Norton to the then Governor Elphinstone in November 1839 with an appeal to open a College at Madras. In response, a Central Collegiate Institution was established in 1840, which later developed into the Presidency College.³ It was the first higher educational institution in South India. In the passage of time, colleges maintained by the Government in different parts of the Presidency as well as those owned and managed by private bodies also came in to existence. By 1871, there were four Government colleges besides the Presidency College, and the number of non-government colleges was seven in Madras Presidency.⁴ Among the Non-Government Colleges, the Free Church Mission Central Institution developed into a first grade college. It became the Madras Christian College. Two more colleges, one each at Madras and Masulipatnam were run by Church Missionary Society. The Gospel Society established colleges at Thanjavur, the St. Joseph College at Nagapatnam and another college at Coimbatore.⁵

The number of colleges in the Madras Presidency increased to 24 by 1881. By 1904 the number of higher education institutions increased to 62 due to the increasing

demand for higher education. The growing enthusiasm among the students also led to the opening of new colleges by the British administration. The total number of colleges in the Madras Presidency rose to 100 by 1927. It included the Professional and Oriental colleges also.⁶ After independence, there was enormous demand for higher education. Therefore the Congress Government in the state adopted a policy of establishing one college in each district. The new policy also aimed at producing more number of graduates with the opening new colleges. These new graduates were to take up many administrative posts in the post-independence period. The Madras Presidency was reorganized in 1953. On the eve of reorganization of the state, the number of colleges both government and aided were 82 excluding Professional and Oriental colleges. In 1954 the number of colleges in the Madras State reduced to 53 due to reorganization. The number of colleges in the Madras State increased to 105 by 1967 with the opening of more Arts and Science Colleges.⁷ Though the Madras State's education policy emphasized on primary education, due importance was also given for the promotion of higher education by establishing new institutions and developing the existing ones.

During the Dravidian Rule

DMK came to power in 1967. To accommodate enthusiastic learners in the college, the Government had opened seven Government colleges in 1967, and to meet further rush for collegiate education, Government started four new colleges in 1968. Six private aided colleges were also started. With this the number of colleges in Tamil Nadu increased to 126 (Government 33 and Aided 93 colleges) by 1968. The evening courses were first started in colleges in Tamil Nadu in 1965-1966. There were eleven colleges offering evening courses in Tamil Nadu, out of which eight colleges were conducting PUC and degree classes and the remaining three colleges offered PUC alone. During 1968-1969 B.A. Economics course in the Evening College was started at Raja Serofoji Government College, Thanjavur. Three

Teacher Training colleges were opened in 1968-1969, under the private management and thus the total number of training colleges had increased to 23 (Government, 7 and Private, 16).⁸ Further, to meet the growing demand, the government started six new colleges in 1969-1970, of which four were for men and two for women. The government granted aid to seven colleges started by private management in 1969-1970. With this, total number of colleges in the state has increased to 141 (Government, 39 and aided, 102) In 1969-1970. The total number of colleges offering evening classes were increased to 12 (6 government colleges and 6 aided colleges) in 1969-1970.⁹

To meet the mounting demand, the Government of Tamil Nadu had decided to start few more new Government colleges and also encourage the private agencies to start colleges on aided basis. Accordingly the Government had started three more colleges for men and four for women and granted aid to sixteen private colleges started in 1970-1971.¹⁰ Thus the total number of Arts Colleges increased to 161 in 1970-1971. Degree courses were opened in three government colleges which were so far functioned as PUC colleges. Additional Degree courses were started in five Government colleges. PUC and Degree courses were started in a few evening colleges. Thus the total number of evening colleges rose to 22 in March 1971, out of which nine colleges offered PUC and thirteen colleges, Degree courses. The total number of Teacher Training Colleges in the state continued to be 23 (Government 7 and aided 16).¹¹ These regular and evening colleges helped to meet the growing demand for higher education, and enabled many middle class and lower middle class students to acquire graduation. Many employed persons enriched themselves as graduates and later as post-graduates because of these evening colleges.

Further, there was fascination for college's education among the students and employed people. So the government opened the avenue to higher education by starting new Arts colleges every year on the basis of the demand from 1971-1972 onwards. This led to an increase in the Government and Aided colleges, numbering 51 and 138 respectively and thus tallied to 189 Arts Colleges by 1974-1975. Considering the local needs of the pupils of the area, evening colleges were started. During 1972- 1973 nine Government and Aided Colleges started evening degree courses. Master of Education, a part-time evening course, was started at the Teachers College, Saidapet, Madras and Government Training College, Komarapalayam in 1974-1975. Thus the total number of colleges offering evening courses increased to thirty-one by 1974-75 including Teacher Training Colleges.¹² Four private aided colleges were opened in 1975-1976 to meet the enormous demand for collegiate education. Government converted the oriental college at Rameswaram as Rameswaram Devasthanam Arts and Science College in 1975-76 on the request of Devasthanam. Thus the total number of private aided colleges rose to 143 by 1977-1978 and the number of Government Arts Colleges continued to be the same. The number of Government and Private aided colleges and Teacher Training Colleges totaled 7 (men-5, women-2) and 16 (men-8, women-8) respectively in 1977-1978. The number of oriental colleges and physical education colleges were 16 and 2 respectively in 1977-1978. There were two Rural Education Colleges and two Social Education Colleges in Tamil Nadu in 1977-1978. There were also one music college under Government and one private aided Ayurvedic College in 1977-1978.

Due to the lack of interest of the students to study in

evening college, the student strength in evening colleges drastically fell

at Government Arts Colleges at Villupuram, Chingleput, Namakkal and also In the Presidency College, Madras. So the Government decided to close evening classes in the above colleges in 1976-1977, and thus the number of Government and private aided colleges evening classes was reduced to 9 and 16 respectively in 1977-1978.¹³ The government noted the lack of interest among students in studying in evening colleges. Hence it immediately stopped the evening classes in a few colleges and thus utilized the revenue for opening new colleges in the needy places. The drastic fall in the admission in evening colleges was also due to opening of correspondence courses in universities.

In order to meet the needs of music learners of southern districts of Tamil Nadu, the Government opened a Music College at Madurai during 1978-1979. Thus the number of Music Colleges in Tamil Nadu increased to two.¹⁴ There were two Government Arts Colleges for men in Salem. In order to meet the needs of the local people, the Government converted Government Arts Colleges for men at Salem into Government Arts College for women in 1979-1980.¹⁵ The Government gave permission for starting one aided Arts College namely St.Jude's College, Thoothoor, Kanniyakumari district, during 1980-1981. Thus the number of Government Arts Colleges in Tamil Nadu continued to be 51 (men-37 and women 14) in 1980-1981. The total number of aided colleges increased to 144 colleges in 1980-1981. Remaining other higher education institutions continued to function government colleges, offering evening classes were increased to 11 and private aided colleges offering evening courses were 18 in 1980-81.¹⁶ Thus the government of Tamil Nadu continued to extend patronage to the higher education by opening a few colleges in spite of financial burden in implementation of UGC scale of pay to the teaching staff. It also concentrated on qualitative development.

Vertical Expansion

From 1981 onwards the approach of the Government of higher education was vertical expansion. By this, Government began to introduce new P.G. courses and new job oriented courses in the existing colleges. It is due to the inability of management to continue to maintain the RDM College, Sivagangai, in 1981-1982, government took it. So it was taken over by under its control and thus the number of Government colleges increased to 52 and that of aided colleges reduced to 143. In 1981-1982 the Government gave permission to three more colleges to start evening classes. This was due to the heavy rush for a few courses in the day college. There students' interests were protected without any financial commitment to the Government. Hence the total number of colleges offering evening classes increased to 21.¹⁷ For administrative reason, Annamalai University closed U.G. Degree courses in 1982-1983. The Government of Tamil Nadu had come to the rescue of pupils of this area and started new Government Arts College near Chidambaram during 1982-1983. The Government also gave permission in 1982-1983 for starting a new professional college namely Sri Sarada College of Physical Education for women at Salem. Thus the total number of Government colleges in Tamil Nadu increased to 53 (39 men, 14 women). The number of physical education colleges increased to four (men-3, women-1). There were 11 Government Colleges and 26 private aided colleges offering evening classes in 1982-1983.¹⁸ During this period, the Government approach towards the higher educational

institutions was to protect them from its financial constraints and help the pupils in pursuing their higher studies. Aided colleges took the responsibility and started new courses in the existing infrastructure as evening colleges. Thus the number of evening colleges increased.

Private Colleges

The new economic order of globalisation, the trend of making higher education individual concern instead of Government responsibility in national and international level and the poor economic condition and backwardness of Tamil Nadu forced the Government of Tamil Nadu to encourage the private entrepreneur, who came forward to start colleges. Accordingly the Government gave recognition to six unaided private Arts and Science Colleges in 1984-1985 on the condition that these colleges should surrender 50 per cent of the seats to Government pool. These seats would be filled up on the basis of merit. The normal fees should be fixed by the Government. These led to the increase in the number of Arts and Science Colleges to 193 (Government – 53, Aided – 134, Unaided Private colleges - 6) by 1984-1985. There were two Institutions for social work and one institution for Rural Higher Education under the jurisdiction of this department in 1984-1985.¹⁹

Evening Courses

Additional degree courses in four Government colleges were started in 1984-1985. Further, B.Com. degree courses in five Government Colleges and B.A courses in one Government College were opened as evening course without any financial commitment to government. As the demand for higher education increased among the employed, the government started Evening courses in a few Government and aided Colleges as self-finance courses. Thus the number of Government and Aided Colleges offering evening courses increased to 13 and 30 respectively in early 1983-1984.²⁰ The financial crunch of the Government forced the government to approve two more unaided Arts and Science Colleges in 1985-1986 and it led to the increase of Arts and Science Colleges to 104 (Government - 53 Aided -143, Unaided-8). Earlier, Alagappa College was taken over by the Government to elevate it as Alagappa University and thus the aided colleges decreased to 142. On the requisition of people, this aided college continued as Alagappa Government College (Govt-54, Aided-142, Unaided-8). Other institutions under its control continued to function undisturbed. To cope with the rush for admission in colleges, six more degree courses and 2 P.G. courses in Government colleges and 30 degree courses and 31 P.G. courses in Aided Colleges were started as self-supportive courses during 1985 -1986.²¹ To meet the further demand, the government encouraged and approved two unaided private colleges in 1986-1987 and to meet the further requirement, the Government had started five new courses at the undergraduate level and two P.G.courses as self-finance courses in Government colleges. It also sanctioned 28 undergraduate and 29 new post-graduate courses under self-supportive mode in private aided colleges in 1986-1987. The total number of Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu increased to 206 (Government - 54, Aided 142, and Private Unaided Colleges -10).²² The other institutions and evening colleges under the control of the collegiate education remained undisturbed in 1986-1987.²³ This expansion of higher education institutions gave an opportunity to all sections of people to pursue higher studies.

Rural Colleges

The policy of British India in the beginning of 20th century was to provide education to Indians and make them supportive, loyal administrators and appreciator of British administration. After independence, the Congress Government in Madras Presidency mainly interested in the development of secondary education, streamlining the higher education institutions and qualitative improvement in higher education. For qualitative improvement, the Government initiated examination reforms, infrastructure development and framing of new syllabus and curriculum suitable to post-independence condition. From the Dravidian rule of 1967 onwards the 'new government took interest in establishing Arts and Science Colleges in large numbers. The Government had to bear in mind the difficulties of students to stay and study in city colleges. It began establishing colleges in suburbs of district headquarters and taluk headquarters. The number of Arts and Science colleges increased from 109 in 1967-1968 to 206 in 1986-1987. This phenomenal increase of Arts and Science Colleges was due to introduction of free education up to P.U.C. level, extension of Tamil medium to Degree courses in Arts and Science subjects, incentives and stipends to Tamil medium students in colleges, and scholarships to Backward Class and Scheduled Caste students. From 1980 onwards the new trend of establishing self -finance courses in the existing Aided colleges was started. It led to the establishment of self-finance colleges in 1986-1987. Among the 97 colleges started during 1967 to 1987, 35 colleges were exclusively meant for women. Thus proportionate representation was given to women even in starting new colleges.

End Notes

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