



EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN TUMKUR DISTRICT, KARNATAKA.

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Abstract

Indian culture has a rich heritage. It is special because, it upholds humanity. Our heritage not only stood on its own ideology, but also has inculcated the religious, philosophical, ethical ideas and spiritual vision of the world. It has embraced all that the world has produced. Our country is known for unity in diversity. Our country breaths along with Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsis, and Christians. In all these Christianity is the one of the important religions.

Christi had fascinated millions of Indians. I think Christian religion appeared India in 52 A.D. Saint Thome had come to India in that year and died in 72 A.D. During the modern period. During his stay for about 20 years in India he preached Christianity and established Churches at Malabar and other places. So it may said that he was pioneer of Christianity of India.*1

Christianity started spreading its limbs with the arrival of Portuguese and in 1510, they occupied Goa and made it their capital in the name of 'Rome of Orient.'*2 at the beginning Britishers did not encourage the conversion at the behest of their trade. But the English Missionaries did not step down. They established an institution to spread the Christianity.

Christian Missionary entered Karnataka probably in 6th century A.D. It is evident that there was chancellor in Kalyanpur near Udipi.*2 The Portuguese established their missionaries in Mangalore, Kundapur and Honnavar during the reign of Vijayanagar emperors. The records say that the chennamma of Keladi granted a piece of land to build a Church at a Mangalore.*3 The Bassel Mission started their campaign from Mangalore I 1834. Then they extended their work to Darwar, Hubli, Gadag and other places of Karnataka. The London Missionaries established their church 1810 at Bellary and the Wesleyan Mission established church at Bangalore I 1820. They worked in several places in Karnataka and established the Churches in many places and sowed the Christianity in an alien land.*4

Tumkur District was also influenced by the Christian Mission. The Missionary activities started in the district in 1735 by Father Mucchi. It is said that the Catholic Church was built at Sira taluk of Tumkur District in 1770.*5 After that, the Wesleyan Mission of Protestant became active since 1837. in the District. This institution made gubbi as its centre and became active since 1837.*6

In 1854 the Christian Missionaries continued their activities in Tumkur and began to serve the poor and down trodden people. They were not only engaged in spreading Christianity, but also engaged in promoting education, press, public life and function of the government.*7 Another important thing to be noted is the role

of the Christian missionaries is educating women and they did valuable work in the field of adult education and carried on novel experiments in rural education in their schools. They taught English grammar, English literature, science and history.

The Christian missionaries have served the people in the different places of Mysore province including Tumkur District. The Christian Missionaries that belongs to the Wesleyan mission engaged themselves actively. They contributed a lot in the field of education, medicine, literature and society. They used education as a powerful weapon to eradicate the social evils.

Many Christian missionaries who came to Mysore had good education. They propagated education and chiefly concentrated on the downtrodden people and women. But it was not that easy in Indian context. Still they learned regional languages and prepared necessary text books. Another biggest problem that Christian Missionaries had to face was that their purpose and their deeds were viewed with an yellow eye by the natives. Parents were scared to send their children to school run by Christian missionaries.*8 But the Christian missionaries did not lose confidence and continued to work. The following is brief analysis of how the Christian missionaries promoted education in Tumkur district.

In 1848 Chikka Daniel with the help of Mathew Male and John Jakins missionaries opened the school at Singonahally near Gubbi of Tumkur District. At the same year the Christian Mission founded a school in Tumkur city. There were 34 students in that school. When English school started in 1854, 211 children sought admission. Many schools were opened in and around Gubbi.

By 1906, 11 schools were for boys and 3 schools were for girls offered education, 4 schools for boys one night school and two schools for girls were opened in Gubbi. Medium of instruction was in both languages those are Kannada and English. For the first time in 1865 Rev. Henry J. Syce opened a boarding school for orphan girls. It was in CSI vocational compound. Here children were provided with boarding, lodging and education. The Government was giving Rs.30/- as an aid in 1870. But all the expenses were met by Christian missionaries.*9 In 1856 Mrs. Mali started a school for girls and boarding school for boys*10.

After that many schools were opened in and around Gubbi, the Missionaries intended to educate everybody, for that they started schools like,

1. Vernacular boys school
2. Girls schools
3. Sunday schools
4. Girls day schools
5. Vernacular Girls schools
6. Industrial schools

The schools were functioned very well in Kadaba and Kallur of Tumkur district and education made the people wise. In Kunigal and surrounding villages of Tumkur district, the schools for boys offered education through regional languages. Due to some reasons Bidanagere School was shifted to the famous pilgrim center of Yedyur and there were thirty students. Captain and his wife Mrs. Mierse donated generously for the school. Nadumavinapura school was exemplary one. Then the District collector P.N.Krishnamurthy applauded the service of the Christian Missionaries.*11

Girls Schools: Christian missionaries gave importance to women education. Mrs. Parsons worked hard for the cause of women education. The education was given both to the village schools and town schools and the teachers were appointed to teach Kannada. Girls school at Gubbi was doing well, but unfortunately when they reached

the proper age they were forced to marry. Even the talented girls dropped out of schools, because of their marriages. Yet they continued to give swing training in vocational school and many girls were benefited by it. In Kunigal also girls had an opportunity to learn stitching clothes. Mrs. Everett Wreen, Mrs. Barnaty, Mrs. Abbot and Bristol association, Wesley Lancaster and Gloucester and many others helped these schools.*12 In this way girls schools at Gubbi and Kunigal were doing well. Many girls were benefited by the vocational schools.

Vernacular Boys Schools:

In Fort schools 115 students were studying, all of them had 75% attendance. In town school, there were 113 students and they had 86% attendance. By this time government increased its financial aid. Therefore both schools were run elegantly. The vernacular schools were started in the villages of kyathasandra, Gulur, Beldara. When villagers demanded for another school in Belgumba and a school was opened in Belagumba. It is a village on the way to Devarayanadurga. At Devarayapattana a school was opened. Similarly Gubbi, Kalluru, Hebburu, Bidanagere schools were laboring hard for the growth of education in Tumkur District and other places of Tumkur district.*13 The villagers took interest and the missionaries started the schools and Beladara primary school was run with the help of mission house. In the year 1887 regional schools were so crowded that difficult to control.

Schools for Downtrodden Children:

The Christian teachers were appointed at the schools of untouchables. Classes were conducted every evening. Kernel W Robert encouraged them by giving Rs.60.*14 The Missionaries sincere concerned for the downtrodden children. Therefore, they started the schools for the outcastes. For the left hand outcaste, a night school was opened. The teachers training school was opened at Badachowdanhalli, in Madugiri Taluk of Tumkur district and was the best of its kind.*15 The new forts school building was inaugurated by the maharaja of Mysore in 1900. The number of students rose to 40. During that year the strength in Gubbi schools rose from 131 to 170. The number of students were increased in the night schools also.*16 Following the suggestion of Inspector general of education, English and Kannada schools became composite. Christian teachers try to improve the standard of teaching methodology.*17

Girls Day schools:

A committee was formed for the empowerment of women education. Mrs. Parson was the president of the committee. Girls Day Schools ran successfully under her guidance. It led to the progress of women. The District Collector P.N. Krishnamurthy presided over the annual function of the schools. The District chairman Kurnel and Mrs. Rotton were also present. P.N. Krishnamurthy spoke effectively about the importance of the women education. This speech was published in an English Harvest Field. Christian missionaries were encouraged by Krishnamurthy's speech.

Girls schools were in Kyathasandra, Gulur, Beladhara, Sira, Gubbi and other places in Tumkur District. In Sira, classes were conducted in rented room. The schools of Gubbi and Kunigal were well organized. Even in Kadaba where Brahmin in majority a school was opened. Mrs. Wisemen and her friends in Bangalore were interested in this area.

A new school was opened in Tiptur. There were sixty five girls in that school. Merchants, especially Komatigas and Lingayaths showed considerable interest in the progress of the school.*18 During 1887 academic year, girls strength decreased from 141 to 110, due to opening of a Brahmin school in the same year. Still women

education continued vigorously. Shepherd Bedford, Heroget, Stephenson, Peareson and others encouraged the schools by giving money, toys, sports materials etc. Mr. Varadarajan Iyer, then Munsif of Tumkur gave prize money of Rs.10/- for mathematics best distinction, best writing and good handwriting. With such encouragement the girls schools at kyathasandra, Guluru, Bellavi, Sira, Gubbi, Tumkur and other places some how managed to run the schools.¹⁹

Investigating officer of education has stated in his report the girls were progressing behind one expectation. The teachers have been successful by imbibing wisdom and intellect in girls. There were 523 girls in these schools and 400 of them were studying in two schools situated in the Tumkur town. Three girls who had passed LSE are appointed as teachers in the same schools.

One of the girls of Fort school who got married five years ago, came back to the school as a widow. She was getting scholarship every month. The girls of upper cast were over enthusiastic in coming to school.*20 In the year 1910 two widows, one from Jain and one from Lingayath community were appointed as teachers. In an orthodox society they were not allowed lead an independent life. The Christian missionaries help them to live on their own by providing them jobs. They tried to persuade the parents of a widow and appeal to them to postpone the head shaving ceremony and also appeal to send her to school. But her parents were not prepared to go against the custom of their caste. The Christian missionaries worked hard in this regard.*21

According to Mrs. Pajet report girls schools were appreciated by the inspection official for their commendable job. The Christian missionaries admitted a Brahmin widow to the Fort school in January 1913. She had four children and her village was 30 miles away from Tumkur. She came to Tumkur with an assumption that mission school helps to the widows to lead an honorable life. Her expectation was fulfilled. Rev. Sawday who was well known for his social service, started girls schools in Madhugiri taluk of Tumkur district and appointed head master. The service of Sawday is note worthy in the field of education.*22

By opening schools for girls, the Christian missionaries provided an opportunity for women to lead an independent life and worked hard to bring them to schools. The women had to live under immense pressure. They were subjected to rigid norms and taboos. That's why the Christian missionaries gave at most importance for women education. They worked day and night to improve the condition of the women. With the help of education they tried to enlighten women folk. Anyhow where talking about women education was forbidden, the Christian missionaries did a commendable job.

Industrial Schools:

The workshops and technological schools were started for the welfare of the orphans. Rev. Sawday started an industrial school in order to provide industrial training in the orphans in Tumkur. The purpose behind starting these schools was to train the orphans in different handicrafts and thereby improve their standers of living and make them good citizens with an ability to live an independent life. A committee was appointed to supervise the industrial schools. The committee also had a man skilled in western technology. The school was functioning under guidance of the management. Actually the school progressed with the influence of the staff who had technically skill and tendency towards socialism. It was in 1904, many buildings had been built by the missionaries and they improved the technology in the field of carpentry and other crafts. Carpenter, poultry and rope winding were taught in the industrial schools and agricultural activities were also in progress. Women learnt tailoring.*23 The Christian missionaries worked hard to train the farmers to become self confidence.

In this way the Christian missionaries worked to improve the conditions of people educationally, economically & medically and the major impacts of education were as follows:

Impact of education:

- a. Spread of secular education through Anglo-vernacular schools
- b. Created scope for the self-employment
- c. Eradication of social evils like Devdasi, sati system and etc.,
- d. Encouraged girl's education
- e. Emancipation of women through educational awareness
- f. Improved the conditions of people through educational opportunities
- g. Led to the improvement in literacy rate
- h. Overall modernization of the society

In addition to their missionaries work, the missionaries built several educational institutions for the people of Tumkur district. Because of the effort of the missionaries work in Karnataka, especially in Tumkur area, the Christians are still commanding their contribution in the field of education. This is the fruit of educational works of missionaries in Tumkur district.

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