

A SPOT LIGHT ON EDUCATION – KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

In the early ages the premises of temples became centers of only to high caste Hindus to get educated. Women and low caste were deprived of the right of education. The Muslims also have their education but Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic medium dominated the education scenario. However the arrived of the Christian missionaries and western education replaced the traditional educational institutions. In the 19th century the Christian missionary extended education to women also. The missionaries schools brought in a new era of thinking mainly abolishing of the social evils. The British efforts in education brought the low caste like Nadar, Ezhavas, Pulayas and Parayas to get the benefits of free education and modern education. Job oriented training programmes initiated by the British in spinning, knitting, sewing, laze making etc. Really benefited the young women of Kanyakumari district. In certain areas missionaries gave women industrial training and there by freedom from suppression and oppression. The new education policy further boosted the educational opportunities to one and all.

INTRODUCTION

Kanyakumari District ranks first in the State of Tamilnadu in Literacy. India 1991 reveal the literacy rate in the District was 91.75% in 2011. The earlier efforts of the Christian missionaries since 1806, the introduction of compulsory education in 1930 in municipalities and selected villages, and the extension of the same to the entire Travancore-Cochin state in 1946-47, have greatly helped the process. Agastheeswaram block has the highest literacy rate 92.01% followed by Thakalay 90.91% and Rajakamangalam 90.61%. The Literacy rate male and female in 93.65% and 89.99% respectively. The teacher-disciple tradition of education was prevalent in Kanyakumari District right from the Sangam period when literary activity in the District was thriving. In this tradition the student became almost a member of the teacher's family and it became a life long relationship. But education got a set back with the in poet of the caste system.

Kanyakumari District came under the control of the Pandya Kings who were great patrons of letters. The educational system slowly evolved into the PIAL schools or Pallis with a teacher having a number of students of students often in the veranda or thinnal of the house.

The arrival of the Christian Missionaries in the 18 and early 19 centuries and the beginning of British rule in India, brought changes in the educational system. Westerners introduced the Western type of education in these schools.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education, comprises the first eight years of schooling which lays foundation for the personality, attitudes, self confidence, habits, learning skills and communication capacity of students. When compulsory education was introduced in Kanyakumari District, children between the age group of 5 to 10 were covered under the scheme. When the District was merged with Tamilnadu in 1975, there were 212* primary schools, Between the period 1966 and 1976, there was a phenomenal. It rose from 211 in 1966-67 to 304 in 1976-77. Population of District in 1991 was 16 lakhs. By the year 2013 – 14 the number of primary school was 568.

Enrolment:

The enrolment at the primary schools in 1956-57 was a phenomenal growth in number of schools. It rose from 211 in 1966-67 to 304 in 1976-77. Since then, only a marginal growth could be seen up to students enrolled in primary schools. Over a period of forty years, student enrollment increased by three times. The gross Enrolment Rate in primary Education is nearby 100% in 2013 – 14.

Student-teacher ratio is a function of two variables, namely, the teacher strength and the student enrollment. Over a period of forty years 1957 – 1997 the teacher strength and the student increased by two times and the student enrolment by three times. The government has fixed the student – teacher ratio as 40, but in 2013 in it has come down to 26.

It has been generally inferred from analysis that in Kanyakumari District, the drop out rate at primary level as well at upper primary level are much less compared to the figures at the national level. One possible reason may be that whenever dropout cases were reported, teacher and management showed special interest and followed-up those cases with zeal and had brought them back to the school. The drop – out rate at the primary level was minimal – just 0.44% the completion rate is 98.04% during the same year.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

When the District was merged with Tamilnadu in 1956, there were 106 middle schools. In the process of development, primary schools were up-graded as middle schools and middle schools as high schools. The number of middle schools consistently increased over the years and touched 163 in 1990-91. By 2013 – 14 the number decreased 149.

Enrolment:

Total number of students enrolled in the middle schools during the year 1956-57 was 43,431. There has been a gradual and smooth rise in the student enrolment. Between the period 1956-57 and 1993-94, the middle schools enrolment almost doubled and touched 84,266. In 2013 – 14 it was 99,37. The drop out rate was just 0.95% and the completion rate 97.13%. The transition from primary school and upper primary school in 2013 – 14 was 100%. The student teacher ratio in the middle school was 39 in 1993-94.

HIGH SCHOOLS and HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A result of the reorganization of secondary education in the year 1966-67, secondary schools have been renamed as “High Schools”. The secondary education was made free with effect from 1964; In the academic year 1978-79, a change was made in the schooling system under which ten years of secondary school course and two years higher secondary was introduced (10+2+3). The dropout rate in gust 0.08%

Number of Schools

With the introduction of (10+2+3) system in 1977-78, the eleventh standard got separated from the existing high schools and merged with the new type of schools called Higher Secondary Schools. Some of the high schools were upgraded as higher secondary schools.

While the new system created 47 fresh higher secondary schools in Kanyakumari District, the number of high schools in the same period reduced to 89. Only some high schools had come forward to upgrade themselves into higher secondary schools. Within a short period they realized the importance of the new system and converted the high schools into higher secondary schools. There has been stagnation in the growth of the number of higher secondary schools.

Except for very few government schools in the urban areas, all other government schools have only Tamil medium from sixth standard onwards upto plus two. Government sanctions teachers to schools at the rate of one teacher for every 40 students enrolled.

Due to severe competition for joining professional courses, there is a mania of sending school-going children for private coaching at tuition centers or to tuition teachers. Children concentrate only on examinations-centered curriculum learning without giving due importance to co-curricular, extra-curricular or other activities.

COLLEGIATE EDUCATION

Formation of the Scott Christian as a second grade college in the year 1893 and affiliation it to the University of Madras marked the beginning of collegiate education in Kanyakumari District.

Till the end of Eighties, only three colleges were offering research degree leading to the award of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil). Doctoral opportunities were added later in the nineties Though the District is small, it has 24 Arts and Science colleges, 27 Polytechnic colleges and 76 other Institutions.

The New Education Policy of 1986 stressed the need for higher education and research to be carried out in the colleges.

The subjects offered under Arts group in different colleges are Tamil, English, Economics, History and Sociology. Similarly, subjects offered under the science group are Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology and Computer Science. Realizing the need of the hour in these days, some of the colleges have developed infrastructure necessary for research. There colleges offer course in research, leading, leading to the award of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)

God infrastructure, efficient management and administration, adequate resources, dedicated faculty members and hard working students are the basic requirements of a sound educational institution. In reality, colleges do not have adequate infrastructure while they are established.

Of the fifteen colleges that have been established before 1989, three had been offering postgraduate courses in arts even before 1979. One more college joined in offering postgraduate courses in arts from 1982-83. More colleges started offering post graduate courses in science and three are offering post graduate courses in Commerce.

The overall average enrolment at the under graduate level for the groups arts, science and commerce are 253, 314 and 161 respectively. Also, the overall average enrolment at the post graduate level for arts, science and commerce are respectively 47, 53, and 70. Hence the average enrolment of an institution is 892.

Holy Cross College and Scott Christian College have been assessed by the national Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and have been offered three and four star status accordingly. Their rating is valid for a period of 5 years.

Under the new policy of liberalization and free enterprise, self-financing institutions and courses are being encouraged and patronized by the government. With the motive of profiteering, some of the private parties and agencies have come forward to start self-financing institutions and earn good fortune by way of capitation fee. Also many of These institutions turn out mediocre students.

Further, the infrastructure facilities available in these institutions are inadequate and the quality of education imparted by them is also comparatively poor. The teachers in these institutions are poorly paid and improving trend in these institutions because of diverse pressures for quality and excellence.

Since the family income of seventy Perce of the agriculturists in the District is very merge, even if their children scored good marks and find a place in good professional intuitions outside the District, the parents have to pay for their hostel and travel expenses. As the District is in the southern most tip of he Indian Peninsula, students have to be displaced and move long distances to get a professional diploma. Therefore, such students are denied professional education for the simple reason that there is no professional institution in wasted due to the absence of proper professional courses and institutions in the District.

Large number of graduates and post graduates who come out of Arts and Science colleges in this District are searching for suitable jobs in the employment market. These job seekers, on seeing the demand for computer personnel, knock at the door of the computer centers to get computer knowledge. Hence, there has been a phenomenal growth in the number of private computer centers both in the urban as well as in the rural areas which design different modules catering to the need of different segments of the society depending upon the age group, level of computer knowledge, time schedule, cost structure, etc.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

The system of distance education was first set up in 1962 at Delhi University for under graduate courses. With the development of an Open University and Distance Education Institute, the number of distance learners has also increased over the years.

Again, another section constitutes the degree holders. They need to improve upon their qualification through distance education to face competition in the real world situation.

Thus there is a heavy demand for distance education in Kanyakumari District. Among all the universities that promote distance education, only Annamalai University and Madurai Kamaraj University and now the Manonmaniam Sundarnar University have penetrated into this District on a large scale.

Languages and Arts subjects were first offered to the students through distance education. But in due course, science subject and even technical subjects are offered. As there is good number of students enrolled in Annamalai University and Madurai Kamaraj University, M.S. University and Indra Gandhi National open University, they have set up study centers in Nagercoil, which is the headquarters of the District.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public libraries play an important role in providing an opportunity for ordinary people to gain knowledge. Usually people in their spare time utilize the public library for reading newspapers or magazines of their choice. However, there are widespread allegations that the reading habit among the people, especially among the students, has gone down alarmingly. The advent of television viewing may be a possible logical reasoning. However, this is an area for further survey and research.

In Kanyakumari District there is a government District library situated at Nagercoil. Under its control there are 8 branch libraries, 18 rural libraries and 10 part-time libraries functioning all over the District.

CONCLUSIONS:

As most of the educational institutions in the college level are in the private sector, education is costly on the self-financing basis. Students who complete the degree in arts and science become professors, teachers, lawyers, politicians, philosophers, academician etc. The district is privileged to get the services from both government and private colleges. Together they have improved human resources in the district to great extent. Since women when after studies. Most of them got employed in one way or other and this has resulted in enhancing their status, economic position, and marriage age. Higher education has brought about the great change in the social, religion, economic and political arenas of the district. In spite of all this education agencies, both government and private should ensure the quality education.

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