



History of Initial Education to Higher Education in Kerala: Few Glimpses

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Abstract

Education gives a person an insight into all affairs; it removes darkness & shatters illusion. A person without education is really blind. The future of humanity depends very much on the cultural, scientific, and technological developments which evolve from the centres of educational institutions. The mission of an educational institution hence, is to be a pioneer in the creation of an era so as to preserve the God showered nobility of human existence, recognizing its moral and spiritual dimensions. This truth has to be all the more insisted upon as every centre of excellence in education should contribute to the future development of society through the training of qualified individuals and promotion of scientific research for welfare of mankind and preserving human values and upholding human dignity. This paper focuses on the historical aspects of education which was given from initial stage to higher stage in kerala. Interest in writing this paper was just due to the fact that kerala has stood up in the ladder of attaining 100% literacy among the states in India. Paper is based on secondary data and documentary proofs available and mentioned in the reference section.

Introduction:

As per thinkers of ancient India, Education is the third eye of a person. It gives him insight in to all affairs, it removes darkness & shatters illusion. A person without education is really blind. The future of humanity depends very much on the cultural, scientific, and technological developments which evolve from the centres of educational institutions. The mission of an educational institution hence, is to be a pioneer in the creation of an era so as to preserve the God showered nobility of human existence, recognizing its moral and spiritual dimensions. This truth has to be all the more insisted upon as every centre of excellence in education should contribute

to the future development of society through the training of qualified individuals and promotion of scientific research for welfare of mankind and preserving human values and upholding human dignity. Education is not merely the acquisition of textual knowledge, but a continuous ongoing process towards the attainment of an integral personality and culture. Education that does not aim at inculcating such human values and enhancing humane qualities is of no worth. In the context of globalization, an education with a wider global perspective is the need of the hour. The vision of an institution of learning must be to produce intellectually trained, morally upright, socially committed, and spiritually inspired individuals who can face any modern challenge, but with a humane face.

History of Education in Kerala:

As we see towards the rest of the country or world, the earliest known places of learning in Kerala were abundant with a religious culture. The seats of education and knowledge of those times were 'Kudippallikkoodams' (elementary schools), Kalarys (physical and military training schools), and Paadassalas (Vedic schools). Kudippallikkoodams were of Buddhist origin, Kalarys carried on a Dravidian tradition and Paadassalas were Brahmanical.

Higher education was imparted in separate institutions called 'Saalais' in south Kerala, and 'Subh Matts' or Temple Universities in central and northern Kerala. These structures of tertiary learning came in to existence in the 9th century A.D. under the patronage of the crown. They were residential educational organisations in the form of Gurukulas. Education was imparted only to Namboodiri youths in these institutions. 'Subh Matts' conducted examinations and awarded degrees. Candidates were required to submit thesis or present themselves before scholars and prove their proficiency in learning. Seminars were held regularly in temple premises and scholars from various places gathered and exhibited their learned aspects in debates and were granted formal recognition or other honours and titles. Eminent scholars were awarded the degree of 'Bhattathiri'. These centres of higher learning resembled the famous universities in North India like 'Nalanda', and 'Takshasila', in many aspects. Protestant missionaries from Europe who settled in various parts of Travancore and Cochin in the early 19th century laid the foundation for modern higher education in Kerala.

Further Focus on the Importance of English language

The governments in these two states were run by the British residents who encouraged missionary works and thus gave impetus for the growth of education of English language at all levels. The English language was accepted as Lingua Franca. The missionaries opened English medium schools in Nagercoil (now in Tamil Nadu), Quilon, Alleppey, and Kottayam in the state of Travancore and in Ernakulam and Trichur in the state of Cochin. These English schools were approved by the University of Madras in due course and allowed them to present candidates for matriculation. Later, the institutions were developed into colleges affiliated to the princely University of Madras. In 1818, Rev. Mead founded the Nagercoil Seminary which was the first institution in Travancore to start regular English education.

This institution grew into a first grade college, later. In 1816, the Syrian Catholics established a college at Kottayam. In 1834, H.H. Swathi Thirunal, the then Maharaja of Travancore took the initiative to start an English school at Trivandrum, which was later raised to a college, the Maharaja's college, affiliated to the University of Madras. This period witnessed a few efforts made by the government to promote vernacular education. A few vernacular schools were started with the objective of creating a cadre of clerks and accountants for service in the various government departments of these states. There were developments in the state of Malabar also. As in the cases of Travancore and Cochin, the English schools started in Malabar also were grown up to colleges. The government started a high school – Brennen High School – at Tellicherry in 1862, and the school was graduated to the famous Brennen College by 1890. The Government Victoria School was started in Palakkad in 1816, and the school developed into the Government Victoria College by 1838. H.H. Sir, P.K. Manavikrama Maharaja Bahadur, Zamorin of Calicut also started a school in 1877. This was converted into the Zamorin's College by 1888.

Growth of Higher Education

The first university in the princely state of Travancore was the University of Travancore which was established under an Act promulgated by H.H. the Maharaja of Travancore, Sir Bala Rama Varma, in 1937. Three committees had been set up earlier, in 1919, 1923, and 1932 to look into the feasibility of establishing a university in the State. The Maharaja was the first Chancellor and Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Dewan of Travancore, the vice-chancellor. Ten colleges which were formerly affiliated to the University of Madras transferred their affiliation to the University of

Travancore. In the year 1939, the government entrusted the control of all the government colleges thitherto managed by the Director of Public Instruction, as an additional responsibility, to the University of Travancore. In 1949, after the merger of the princely states of Cochin and Travancore, the colleges in Cochin which were affiliated to the University of Madras also came under the University of Travancore. Post Independence Period At the dawn of freedom, Kerala state was still unborn. The region was constituted of three separate entities, namely, the two princely states of Travancore and Cochin, and British Malabar, a remote district of former Madras Province. Naturally there were three separate systems of education. Travancore was, by far, more advanced in modern education. It had a university of its own, the Travancore university, established in 1937, the 16th university in India.

Few well established arts and science colleges both under the govt. ownership and private managements, over and above the well established professional colleges at Thiruvananthapuram in medicine, Engineering, law and education were there maintained by the state. In school education also Travancore had progressed very much, with a large number of reputed government english high schools besides a large number of private schools maintained by Christian missionaries. 'Cochin State' was well ahead in literacy and school education, but it did not have any professional college before Independence. 'Malabar' was far behind in both school and college education. There were two government colleges at Palakkad and Thalasserry and two intermediate colleges at Kozhikkode under private management. The colleges both in Cochin and Malabar were affiliated to the University of Madras. After freedom different social groups to set up schools and colleges to promote modern education were inspired for this task. The Christian community had already established a large number of schools and colleges, particularly in Travancore and Cochin. On the eve of freedom the Nair Service Society (NSS) set up colleges at Changasnasserry, Pandalom, and Thiruvnanthapuram. The Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDPYogam) set up their first college in 1948 at Kollam. The Muslims also set up their first college in 1948 at Faroke near Kozhikkode. By the year 1950, the number of colleges in Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar rose to 54, registering rapid growth. Kerala state was formed in 1956 (as a result of the re-organisation of states on the basis of language), uniting Travancore-Cochin with Malabar. The first election after the foundation of Kerala state installed a communist government under the leadership of EMS Namboothirippad. Mr. Joseph Mundasserry

was the minister for education. His first effort was the unification of higher education in the state.

The Kerala University Act 1957 replaced the Travancore University Act 1937. Colleges in the whole of Kerala came under its jurisdiction. The distinguished economist and former Finance Minister Dr. John Mathai became the Vice Chancellor of the university. The Kerala Education Act 1958 and the Kerala Education Rules 1959 were the brilliant pieces of legislation in the state. The fifties were notable for the development in professional education. The second medical college in the state was set up at Kozhikkode 100 in 1956. The REC, Kozhikkode, in the public sector and the TKM engineering college, Kollam, in the private sector were set up after 1956. TKM engineering college, Kollam, was the first private venture in professional education in the State. In 1964 the state was facing a dilemma whether the 11th 12th year classes should be in school or college. That was the year when the new scheme of ten year SSLC reached its final year replacing the old eleven year english school in Travancore. After a momentous debate in the senate of the University of Kerala it was decided to introduce the two-year pre-university course, as part of college education, preparatory to the three year degree course. The three plus decades of existence of pre-degree as an integral part of college has given rise to intractable problems for the process of transfer the plus-two to schools. During the sixties, 79 new colleges were started, the largest number in any decade. During the fifties only 39 colleges were started; seventies 23 and eighties 54. The record of the sixties is not yet broken, even though in 1994, at one stroke, 72 colleges were sanctioned, including 27 B Ed colleges and a few self-financing colleges for the first time. With the expansion of number of colleges, the need for more universities was widely recognized. The Kothari Commission Report (1964-66) recognized as legitimate Kerala's demand for a second university. CH Mohammad Koya, who was minister for education, appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Samuel Mathai to examine the question of establishing more universities in Kerala. The committee recommended the immediate establishment of Calicut University and subsequently the Cochin University, on a different model. 101 The 'University of Calicut' was established in 1968 in a 600 acre campus at Thenjippalam. The university made notable achievements in academic fields such as syllabus reforms and examination reforms and started new departments like drama, management, and life-science. The 'Cochin University of Science and Technology' also came in to being with a new

orientation as a federal university. It was set up in 1971 with head quarters at Cochin. Several new departments like marine engineering, industrial fisheries and ship technology were established. An expert committee recommended that the institution should be developed as a full scale science and technology university. The university Act was suitably amended. It is now well known as an advanced institution in science and technology and has embarked up on new areas of research in collaboration with foreign universities.

In the year 1971 another remarkable university, namely the 'Kerala Agricultural University' at Thrissur. Already there was a well developed agricultural college at Thiruvananthapuram and a veterinary college at Thrissur. These formed the nucleus of the university together with agricultural research stations in different parts of the state, with liberal support from the state government and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the agricultural university made rapid progress and is known as one of the best in India. It has made remarkable contribution in hybrid seed development in paddy, coconut, and banana, to give a few examples. While new universities were being established, trouble was brewing in affiliated colleges. Students were agitating for uniform fees; teachers were demanding payment of salary directly by the government; and managements 102 were insisting on grants to cover full deficit and absolute right to select teachers. An agreement was reached between the government and the management. Salaries were to be paid by the government; fees were to be deposited to the treasury; and the staff to be selected by a committee in which management retained the decisive voice. It is called as Direct Payment Agreement and its provisions have become part of the statutes of universities. It also provided for quotas for admission of students: 20 % for the management; 20 % for SC/ST; 20 % or 10 % for the community of the college; 40 % or 50 % on merit. The 'Mahatma Gandhi University' was established in 1983. Apart from routine courses, the university embarked on a number of vocational and semi professional courses such as Para medical courses, bio-technology, nursing and so on. In the nineties, two more universities were started – the 'Sree Sankara Sanskrit University at Kalady, and the 'Kannur university' with headquarters at Kannur. A very important recent development is the establishment of the 'Indian Institute of Management' in a forty acre campus at Kozhikkode. This is the first All India Institute in Kerala. Similarly, the recognition of the Sri Chithira Medical Centre as a deemed university is a great achievement.

Conclusion: In this way we can say that kerala made an evidentiary progress at all levels of education.

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