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EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN INDIA:
UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN KERALA

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UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN KERALA

Chapter 1

Introduction

One of the major social achievements that Kerala can take pride in is the near-universal literacy of its people. According to the 1981 Census, the literates in Kerala formed nearly 70 per cent of the population. Since children below the age of eight, who would account for not less than 17 to 18 per cent of the population, would remain illiterate even in a situation in which there exists ready availability of ubiquitous primary schooling facilities, the state may be taken to have almost reached the stage of universal literacy. The percentage of literacy for men is as high as 74 and that for women 64. These rates are much higher than the corresponding all-India rates and are the highest among the different states in the country. This spectacular achievement is doubtless the result of the success of the state's primary education system, which has grown from strength to strength over the last hundred years or more. The history of its evolution and the factors underlying its success should be of interest to educationists and educational planners throughout the country particularly because the efforts made in most parts of the country during the last several decades to expand primary education with a view to achieving universal literacy have remained unsuccessful.

I acknowledge with thanks the help received from Shri Joseph Thomas for collection of data from the old records Cellar of the Secretariat, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum.

Before we take up the discussion of the processes and factors of growth of the primary education system in Kerala, it may be worthwhile to preface it with a few facts about the geographical and historical characteristics of the region. This state, which was known from very ancient times as the Malabar coast, came under a single administrative authority only in 1956 consequent on the formation of linguistic states in India. It had remained as three separate administrative units, the princely States of Travancore and Cochin and the Malabar district of the Madras presidency, for about a century and a half after the establishment of the overlordship of the region by the British in 1793. The states of Travancore and Cochin themselves came into existence only during the second half of the eighteenth century. Prior to that period the region of Kerala had been under the control of a large number of petty chieftains and princes. It was the conquest of the neighbouring principalities by the ruler of Venad in the southern tip of the Malabar coast that led to the formation of Travancore; the domain of Cochin was confined to a small area squeezed in between those of Travancore and of the Zamorin of Calicut. The efforts made by the Zamorin of Calicut to become the king of the entire Malabar coast did not succeed. Malabar came under the rule of the Sultans of Mysore during 1766-1792 and afterwards under direct British rule. The States of Travancore and Cochin were integrated into a single state in 1949, soon after the attainment of Independence of India. Later in 1956, consequent on the formation of linguistic states in the country, Malabar which had remained part of the Madras state was added on to, and a few taluks at the southern extreme taken

way from, Travancore-Cochin to form the present state of Kerala.

Geographically speaking, Kerala forms one of the very small states of India. It lies at the southern end of the Indian sub-continent between 8°18 and 12°47' north latitude and 74°82' and 77°24' east longitude flanked by the Arabian sea on the west and the Indian ocean on the south. The Western Ghats form its eastern boundary and in the north lie the western districts of Karnataka. The state forms a narrow strip of land with an area of nearly 37 thousand square kilometers and has a long sea coast of about 580 kilometres. The population in Kerala in 1981 stood at 25.4 million.

The insulation from the rest of the world by the lofty Western Ghats on the east and the Arabian sea on the west had been factors which contributed to the development of a people, a language, and a culture unique in several respects. Its insulated existence was however never complete and used to be disturbed by foreigners who came by the sea for trade in agricultural products and forests produce. The trade contacts of the Malabar coast with foreign countries began as early as at least the seventh century B.C. Streams of population from the northern parts of the country also flowed into Kerala since very early times. The Malabar coast has not experienced in its long history, any major wars with outsiders, a fact which accounts for the uninterrupted and peaceful progress that it enjoyed till very late when the western powers — the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English in quick succession — began their squabbles in India for monopoly positions in trade and territorial control.

Early Educational Development in Kerala

Kerala has long and rich traditions of education, language and literature. Even during the pre-British period, which ended in Kerala in 1793, educational facilities had been quite widespread in every region of the area. However such facilities were not equally accessible to all the different socio-economic strata. In fact the distribution of educational opportunities was in those days determined by the pattern of distribution of ownership and control of land, the basic means of production.

The higher castes of Hinduism, such as the Brahmins and the Nairs, were the owners of land. They leased out their lands to tenants who belonged to the communities of Nairs, Ezhavas, Muslims and Syrian Christians. The tenants cultivated their leased-in lands with the manual labour of the agrestic slaves who came mostly from the castes of Pulaya, Paraya, and Kurava. The higher castes among the Hindus looked down upon trade and commerce as occupations of an inferior social status. The only employment that they took pride in was government service in which they were willing to take up even very inferior positions without any qualms. Commerce and trade were therefore mainly in the hands of Christians, Muslims, and to a limited extent the Ezhavas, a numerically strong sub-caste of Hinduism in Kerala.

We find that the educational opportunities were a mirror reflection of the economic power wielded by the different sections. The higher castes of Hinduism, such as the Brahmins and the Nairs, had



well-developed institutional arrangements of their own for educating their children, particularly their sons and nephews. In theory, education was the monopoly of the Brahmins,^{1/} in practice, it was, however, within the reach of almost all the socially privileged sections of the population.^{2/} Nevertheless, vast sections of the society belonging to the 'depressed classes' of the Hindu society, did not enjoy, in general, any facilities for education and remained steeped in illiteracy. There existed clear difference between the types and content of education that the Brahmins and the higher castes received and that received by the lower, intermediate castes of Hinduism. While the former received higher education in subjects such as philosophy, religion, logic, mathematics, medicine, architecture and medicine, all in the medium of the Sanskrit language, those lower down in the social hierarchy, but not of course at its lowest stratum, learned the arts of reading, writing and arithmetic and the rudiments of agricultural and meteorological sciences in the medium of their mother tongue. The latter type of education was intended to enable these communities in the pursuit of their traditional occupations, the cultivation of land. Non-Hindu communities also had their church-schools or Madrasas. The education received by the agrestic slave castes consisted little else than their folk lores

1/ William S. Logan, Malabar (reprinted by the Superintendent, Government Press, Madras, 1934), p. 109.

2/ V. Nagan Aiyah, Travancore State Manual, vol. II (Superintendent, Government press, Trivandrum, 1906), p. 445.

and skills handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth.

With the assumption of power by the British, the age-old social equilibrium began to get disturbed. The disturbance was the highest and their impact on society the most far-reaching in Travancore and, to a lesser extent, in Cochin, the two princely states. Malabar which came directly under British rule was the least affected in so far as social and economic improvements are concerned. In Malabar, the British kept untouched the feudal landlordism which then prevailed and enlisted the support of the land-owning classes in their attempts to extort from the cultivators high rates of rent with a view to enhancing the governmental revenue. The history of the Malabar region during the nineteenth century was one of growing social and communal unrest, immiserisation of the tenants and agricultural labourers, and increasing animosity between the Muslim population and the British. Little progress therefore did take place in the field of education in that area except for the introduction of a few English Secondary Schools and colleges, in conformity with the policy followed in the rest of India in pursuance of the lines suggested by the Minutes of Macaulay. However, primary education institutions also grew up in limited numbers mostly due to private agencies and catered to the needs of the relatively well-do-do.

Unlike in Malabar, the policy that the British followed in Travancore and Cochin was more positive. Even before the British came, significant changes had taken place in land ownership patterns in these two regions. In Travancore, the lands that had belonged to chieftains and

lords had been taken over to government by the end of the first half of the eighteenth century by King Marthandavarma. In Cochin, during the 1760's Saktan Tampuran, the then ruler, took away to government a sizeable proportion of lands owned by private chieftains. This change of title of ownership from private individuals to the government had not however significantly altered the feudal land relations, the only result being that the government itself became the biggest feudal lord. The extent of the lands under government ownership was further extended in Travancore to nearly 75 per cent of the total cultivated area by the acquisition by the government of extensive areas of temple lands during the second decade of the nineteenth century. It was this near - monopoly of land by the government that led in a matter of a few decades to the decline in the land revenues of the government and subsequently during the 1860's to the restoration of cultivated lands to the tenants themselves by the conferment on them of ownership rights. However even before the creation of a numerous class of peasant proprietors, a series of social reform measures was introduced in Travancore under the aegis of the early British Residents. Among such reforms, promotion of education was one of the most significant. Social reforms introduced in Cochin were also in general on the lines of those introduced in Travancore. Our discussion of the evolution of the education system is therefore confined mainly to Travancore.

The beginnings of the Western type of education were laid in Travancore by the British during the second decade of the nineteenth

century when Protestant Missionaries were invited from England to come to the State and start a process of establishing English Schools with a view to converting people to Christianity. This step was taken as part of the attempt of the British to create ultimately an India in the British image. The British decided to concentrate their initial efforts in Travancore.^{3/} The Missionaries received from the government large amounts of money, vast tracts of land, buildings and building materials for construction of churches and educational institutions.^{4/} They opened a few English schools in different parts of the State. Their educational activities were mainly concentrated among the depressed communities and they were successful in converting a large number of persons belonging to such communities within a very short span of time.^{5/}

^{3/} According to Resident Munro "in establishing a body of native subjects connected with the mass of the people by a community of language, occupation, and pursuits, and united to the British government by the stronger ties of religion and mutual safety, ample means would be acquired of procuring information of the proceedings of the people and of all machinations against the British power. In the course of time, still greater advantages would arise: the support of a respectable body of Christian subjects would contribute to strengthen the British power in those junctures of commotion and difficulty which must be expected to occur in a country like India that has been in a state of revolution for ages. The introduction of Christianity in some of the provinces may be attended with delays; but in Travancore and Cochin there is already a numerous body of Christian inhabitants who, with moderate assistance and encouragement from British government, will firmly attach themselves to the interests and may prove of material service in supporting its power". Col. Munro in address to the Government of Fort St. George See: C.M. Augur, Church History of India, S.P.S. Press, Vepery, Madras, 1903, p.82.

^{4/} Ibid., pp.1-85; T.K.Velu Pillai, Travancore State Manual (Supt., Government Press, Trivandrum, 1940), vol.I, p.728; vol.II, p.538.

^{5/} Rev. Mead, the Pioneer among the Missionaries brought down by Col. Munro to Travancore for educational-cum-proselytisation activities remarked in 1821, barely after four years of work that 'upward of 5000 (persons) have renounced heathenism', C.M. Augur, op.cit., p.761.



The Missionaries also were the pioneers in women's education in the State. For about fifty years from 1817, English education in the State remained virtually in the hands of the Missionaries. However the encouragement that the Missionaries received from the government began to dwindle from the early 1830's when British Residents became progressively less zealous of promoting conversions to Christianity.^{6/} The contribution that the Missionaries made to the cause of education in the State was however significant, not purely in terms of the numbers that they turned out, but in terms of the awareness that their efforts instilled in the minds of the 'depressed classes' about their social rights and in the minds of the higher ups in society about the dangers to their social power inherent in giving a free hand to the Missionaries in the field of education. The Missionary activities further paved the way to the enactment of a few legislations abolishing vexatious impositions on the lower castes of the Hindu society such as poll tax and compulsory work without wages. The most significant piece of legislation was the abolition of slavery passed in the year 1855. It has been claimed that about 136,000 agrestic slaves were liberated in Travancore.^{7/} The direct efforts of the government, during the first half of the nineteenth century at promoting English education, were confined to the establishment of the Rajah's free school and three other English schools at the district level.

^{6/} For instance, General Oullen who was the Resident in Travancore for about a quarter of a century since the early 1830's was 'a purely worldly statesman, much opposed to Missionary effort', ibid., pp:47-48.

^{7/} Ibid., p.74.

Malayalam (which is the regional language) education also began to receive the attention of the government from the early decades of the nineteenth century. The rescript of the princess of Travancore issued in 1817 has become justly famous, even though it was issued under the advice of the Resident Colonel Munro. In that rescript the princess had stated that "there should be no backwardness in the spread of enlightenment in Travancore, that by diffusion of education the people would become better subjects and public servants and that the reputation of the state might be advanced thereby". For the attainment of such a lofty objective, she also accepted the principle that the state should defray the entire cost of education of its people. However, it should be noted that the responsibility of the state to impart education to its subjects had been recognised even earlier. For instance, Velu Thampy, the Dewan of Travancore during 1804-1808 had initiated an attempt to set up Malayalam schools in each village. However, Vela Thampy was murdered before he could implement his plans. The efforts initiated by the ruler of Travancore after the famous rescript were limited in scope and extent. The instructions issued by the princess were to open five schools in Travancore with two teachers in each school in areas in which local efforts were not forthcoming to provide educational facilities. This early attempt did not produce any direct tangible results in the field of education particularly since the schools established by the government were not in any way superior to the indigenous schools already in existence, in terms of subjects of study, methods of teaching, or qualifications of teachers. Thus during the first half of the nineteenth century, the responsibility of

imparting education lay primarily in the hands of the traditional indigenous institutions and the Missionaries. The Missionaries devoted particular attention to spread English education eventhough they did not ignore in their schools teaching of Malayalam and even Sanskrit. Since the main purpose of Missionary activities was proselytisation, their educational efforts did not in general attract great numbers from the well-to-do and higher-caste sections of the Hindu population. There were, however, a few from among these groups who attended Missionary schools, particularly since 1834, when governments all over India including the government of Travancore began to give preference to persons educated in English for appointment in government services. The governments' direct efforts at promoting education were limited to the establishment of a few English schools in district headquarters. On the whole, the expansion of institutionalised education, both English and Malayalam, was limited in scope and extent during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The second half of the nineteenth century lay strong foundations of rapid and massive educational development in the Travancore state. The educational policy of the state was based on two major planks: one the promotion of Malayalam education, and two encouragement of private educational efforts, both English and Malayalam education, through a liberal scheme of grant-in-aid. It will be interesting to examine the major factors underlying the formulation of this new educational policy as well as the reasons for the ready response that it evoked among the various sections of the people. Among the factors underlying the new educational policy the following seem to be the more important.

The closing years of the 1850's witnessed in Travancore a break from the earlier decades in matters of administration and internal social reforms. It was in 1859 that the British government decided to step the policy of ubiquitous interference by its Residents and confer on the King and his Dewan direct responsibility and powers in ~~all~~ such matters. This decision was the culmination of a variety of developments that took place within Travancore, in India as a whole and in England. The developments that took place in Travancore were not only political, but social and economic as well. The internal factors included abolition of slavery, removal of some of the restrictions in the use of public roads and on work by members of the 'suppressed' communities, abolition of government monopolies in trade and of restrictions on the movement of goods from place to place, distribution of land to the landless, conferment of ownership rights on tenants on government lands and security of tenancy on tenants of private lands, reclamation of Kaval (backwaters) lands for cultivation, commercialisation of agriculture, growth of industries, development of transportation, communication and public health facilities and, as already indicated, improvements in the quality of administration.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, depressed communities, particularly the agrestic slave communities, had remained out-castes in society, deprived of all the rights of citizenry such as rights to own land or buildings or ornaments made of precious metals, enter places of worship, use public roads, enrol in educational institutions, seek employment opportunities, speak correct and sophisticated language, go near persons belonging to higher castes of society,

or even to cremate the dead. Besides, there also existed numerous vexatious imposts on them. The educational attempts made by the English Missionaries attracted persons belonging to such communities mainly because of the social emancipation that it guaranteed to them, since those who were enrolled were taken readily into the fold of christianity. Once a person belonging to a depressed community converted to christianity, he was able to shed a large part of the disabilities he had to suffer from the caste stigma. Moreover, the Missionaries backed by the British power waged struggles against the orthodox Hindu society and the government which stood for the upkeep of its vested interests in society. The Missionaries succeeded in removing a few of the obnoxious taxes and laws of obligatory services imposed on the backward communities, awaken the social consciousness of those sections of such communities which received some education in Missionary schools and organise and lead agitations of backward communities for social reforms. For instance, the Missionaries led an agitation of the Nadars (a backward community) of South Travancore (now in the Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu) during the later years of the 1850's for the removal of the restrictions on the wearing of "upper cloth" by women belonging to the backward communities. The agitations were so strong that the Travancore government was not able to suppress it by force, particularly because of the backing that the Missionaries had from the British authorities; the demand of the agitators could not be conceded because of the possible repercussions that it would generate from the influential sections of the Hindu society which were not prepared to deviate the least from what they believed the time-honoured traditions of Hindu society. The government felt that social reforms are inevitable, but also that in order to

introduce them with sanction of the powerful segments of society, ideas of modernity had to be promulgated in them. Spread of modern education was the only method by which such a change of the public attitude could be brought about. For the spread of education on a massive scale and within the shortest time possible, vernacular education was considered the most suited.

The Missionary activities had an indirect effect also on the governments' decision-making on educational policy. As we noted earlier, the educational attempts of the Missionaries had, at least in the earlier stages, the grand design of converting the entire population of the kingdoms of Travancore and Cochin into Christianity. The British government soon lost its interest in conversion and the Missionaries received scant support in their educational activities from the British Residents since the 1830's. In fact, later during the 1850's the British government in India found that supporting Missionary activities might even cost them their empire. Nevertheless, the seeds of suspicion that missionary efforts at conversion sown in the minds of the kings and the high caste Hindus in Travancore had all along been gradually growing. They feared that destruction of the Hindu society was imminent and with that the destruction of the social, cultural, moral and spiritual values of the society too. The rulers of Travancore did not have the power to raise a countervailing force to the educational-cum-religious activities of the Missionaries so long as the administration of the government was de facto under the complete control of the British Residents. When in 1859, the Travancore king was given complete powers of administration, that opportunity was used by the king to start a large number of

educational institutions both departmental and private with a view to countering the growing influence of Missionaries in the field of education and to attract a large section of the population, which had kept away from missionary educational institutions, into schools.

The introduction of facilities for education would not have attracted large numbers as it did, had it not been for the ability to attend schools, and the desire for education, created among large sections of the population as a consequence of significant economic changes. The most important among them were the institutional changes during the mid-1860's that led to the emergence of a large body of peasant proprietors and tenants with permanent tenancy rights on the lands they cultivated. Changes in cropping patterns, diversification of agriculture, extension of cultivation, increase in trade in agricultural products, growth of employment, release of agrestic slaves from their traditional masters and creation of a body of casual agricultural labour followed. British planters began to invest large amounts in tea plantations in the 1860's on government forests leased out to them on nominal rent. Coastal firms which financed the working capital requirements of planters and engaged themselves in the export of plantation products and the products of the coconut palm such as copra and coir (for which there grew an enormous demand in Europe following the opening of Suez Canal, introduction of steam ships and the income revolution in England during the Victorian period) began to establish their factories and offices all along the Malabar coast. The rise in the price of coir and coir products and copra increased incomes of large sections of the population (particularly Ezhavas) who had

traditionally depended on the coconut palm for their livelihood. The incomes of the trading communities also increased among whom the Syrian Christians were the most significant. The land legislation of the 1860's conferred on them titles to land and they began a process of commercialised agriculture. The 1860's also witnessed the beginning of industrialisation in Travancore, particularly industries based on agro-processing.

Such significant institutional and economic changes received support and encouragement from the administrative policies of the government which began to open up the country to commerce and trade by developing road and water transport, removing restrictions on the movement of goods and abolishing state monopolies on trade.

The preceding brief discussion shows that there were factors working both on the demand and the supply sides, favourable to the development of education. A further factor was the decision taken by the government during the early 1860's to recruit to public service only persons with specific educational qualifications. For several jobs in government, certificates in Malayalam education were made the minimum qualification. The expansion of the governmental apparatus and the prescription of educational qualifications for entry into government services were strong incentives to the population to take to education with enthusiasm.

The efforts of the government of Travancore were specially focussed during the 1860's on the development of Malayalam education for which it had done next to nothing till then. The success of such efforts largely depended on the existence already in every village of schools



of the indigenous type. The introduction of a grant-in-aid scheme on a limited scale in 1868-69 and its liberalisation in 1873-74 served as a strong stimulus for conversion of a large proportion of such schools into aided schools. The figures furnished in Table 1.1 show the rapid growth of schools and enrolment in vernacular education in the Travancore state in the years following the introduction of this policy.

The government of Travancore extended grants-in-aid to English schools in 1887-89 with a view to encouraging the opening of more schools by the private sector. Further, in 1894-95, funds were provided for the first time in the State for grants to be made to schools for backward classes. It was the policy of the government to open schools for

Table 1.1

Growth of Vernacular (Malayalam) Education in Travancore 1873 to 1894

Year.	Number of Vernacular (Malayalam) Schools		Number of Students enrolled
	Government Schools	Aided Private Schools	
1873-74	177	20	9,637
1882-83	223	44	35,588 (in 1881)
1894	255	1,388	57,314 (in 1893)

Source: T.K.Velu Pillai, Travancore State Manual, Vol. III, (Superintendent, Government Press, Trivandrum 1940), p.695.

backward class students who were not admitted in other regular departmental schools. Taking advantage of the liberal grants-in-aid scheme, the Missionaries also opened numerous schools for the backward communities. It is seen that by the end of the nineteenth century there existed

nearly 43,580 pupils belonging to such communities in vernacular (Malayalam) schools.

Girls' education was relatively a neglected area in the State till the mid-1860's. The early efforts solely consisted of the establishment of a few boarding schools by the Missionaries during the period 1819 to 1822, in which training was imparted in knitting, spinning, needle work, etc. In quantitative terms, the achievements made by the Missionary schools in the area of women's education were negligible. But the impact of their efforts on the attitude of the society towards women's education was important and far-reaching. The first decided effort of the government to encourage women's education was taken in 1865-66 when the government took over the management of the Contonment school for Girls in Trivandrum started by the Zenana mission. Women's education registered rapid progress from the mid-1860's with the result that by the turn of the century, the literacy rate among females in the Travancore State had become the highest in India, namely 31 per thousand.

In spite of the opening of large number of departmental schools and the liberal grants-in-aid given to private schools, a large number of indigenous schools which did not conform to the government's stipulation about courses of study, qualification of teachers and conditions about school buildings and premises and did not receive any financial aid from government, continued to exist. In 1894-95, the government decided to bring in, as far as possible, all existing indigenous schools within the government's educational system by giving them grants-in-aid and subjecting them to departmental inspection.

In 1883-84, Malayalam schools were classified into lower Malayalam schools with two classes, middle Malayalam schools with four classes and Malayalam high school with six classes. Subsequently, in 1894-95 a reclassification of Malayalam schools was made with primary having 2 classes, middle with 4 classes and high with 7 classes. In 1901-02, the system of English primary schools was abolished and Malayalam primary schools were reorganised as lower grade primary schools with classes I to IV, and higher grade primary schools with classes I to VII. Thus from 1901-02 Malayalam primary schools became the basis of the educational structure, which was followed by two types of higher school education - the first, the Malayalam middle and high school and the second the English middle and high school. Already in 1891-92, fees had been abolished in the lowest classes of Malayalam schools, and those in the next higher classes were considerably reduced. This step was taken with the specific purpose of helping the poor sections of the population to attain education.

It is nevertheless true that the distribution of educational opportunities among the different sections of society was none too equitable. In spite of the efforts made by the government to encourage the education of backward classes, their progress remained insignificant throughout the nineteenth century. Departmental (or government) schools were inaccessible to them. Even in the special schools opened for them largely by private effort and aided by government, attendance of the erstwhile agrarian slave communities was negligible largely due to the widespread indigence among them. For instance, Nagam Aiyah pointed out that according to the 1891 Census, the percentage of literates to total population was but nominal among the depressed castes, see Table 1.2.



Table 1.2

Educational Status of Population in Travancore belonging
to different communities and religions, 1891

<u>Community/Religion</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
<u>I. Hindus</u>		
<u>(a) Forward Communities</u>		
<u>Brahmin</u>	51.7	7.2
<u>Nairs</u>	37.5	6.9
<u>(b) Backward Communities</u>		
<u>Ezhava</u>	12.1	0.1
<u>Channar</u>	5.1	0.4
<u>(c) Depressed Communities</u> (Agricultural slave Communities)		
<u>Kurava</u>	0.0	0.0
<u>Parava</u>	2.9	0.3
<u>Pulaya</u>	0.4	0.0
<u>II. Christians</u>	21.3	3.3
<u>III. Muslims</u>	11.4	1.7

Source: V. Nagan Aiyah, Report on the Census of Travancore, Vol. I, Report 1891, (Addison and Co., Madras, 1894, pp. 467-509)

The Table shows that the educational distance among communities was very wide and that their relative position reflected their social and economic status. It is also seen that women's education lagged far behind



men's education and that even among the most privileged communities, the level of female literacy was extremely low. Thus we may conclude that despite the sustained efforts of the government to promote primary education which began in the 1860's, significant results were yet to come even by the closing years of the nineteenth century. Partly the poor finances of the government was also to blame. When the government was able in later years to devote an increasing proportion of its expenditure to education, and when more favourable conditions were created for enrolment of children of the poorer sections, conditions began to improve rapidly. Therefore, the figures shown in the Table should not be taken to reflect faithfully the wide spread enthusiasm for educational progress that was seething in the mass mind of Travancore. It took a few more decades to manifest itself clear in more tangible terms.

Educational development in Cochin: The pattern and pace of educational development in Cochin (till 1900) was almost on the same lines as in Travancore since the very beginning of the modern period of its history which began in the 1790's. In 1818, at the instance of Colonel Munro the Resident of both Travancore and Cochin, the Government of Cochin established 33 Malayalam schools, one in each village, with a view to training young men for recruitment into state service in the ministerial cadre. These single teacher schools did not attract pupils since there already existed numerous schools conducted on traditional lines and since the new schools were in no respect an improvement upon the older ones. All those 33 schools were therefore abolished in 1832. Three years later, a fresh attempt was made to start six vernacular schools, but they too had the fate of the earlier ones and for the same reasons. But they

were not formally abolished till 1835.

As was done in Travancore, in Cochin also Missionary efforts at starting English education began during the second decade of the nineteenth century. Rev. J. Dawson opened the first English school near Ernakulam in 1818 with the aid of a grant received from the government. However it had to be closed down due to want of popular support within three years of its starting. The second attempt was made in 1835 with a view to teaching the Jews — teaching of English, Hebrew and Malayalam. This second attempt was successful and the school which came to be later known as the Hebrew school survived into the twentieth century. Two English schools were opened in 1837 and 1845 for teaching the princes and the children of the aristocracy. One of these schools developed in 1875 into the Maharajah's college. The years since 1875 saw the establishment of district schools and taluk schools which in course of time grew into high schools. The first set of rules for grants-in-aid to private schools was framed in 1889, subsequent to which a large number of private aided schools sprang up.

The education of the common man received the attention of the Cochin government only as late as 1890 when it opened Malayalam schools in all villages and brought into the aided category a large number of indigenous schools. Primary education had developed at least among the higher castes of Hinduism and the Christians in Cochin even before the entry of the government into the scene and the introduction of the grant-in-aid scheme. The levels of literacy attained in Cochin at the dawn of the present century were a even a step ahead of those in Travancore.

With the growth of government schools and aided schools, the indigenous schools in Cochin began to die out. The educational development in Cochin may be attributed to the existence of a large class of peasant proprietors, growth of Cochin as an important overseas trading centre and the rise of a trading community from among the Ezhavas and the Syrian Christians. The closing decades of the nineteenth century laid strong foundations for the development of a wide-based educational structure during the subsequent decades.

Educational progress in Malabar: Malabar had, in common with Travancore and Cochin, (till 1900) strong traditions of education. The indigenous system continued to exist among the different higher castes of Hinduism, the Christians and the Muslims. However, since the Christians were a minority and the missionary activities were quite limited - confined mostly to the activities of the Basel Mission - the growth of the Western system of education was much more tardy in Malabar than in the other two regions. Besides, even the development of English education which began after 1835, was strictly based on the 'infiltration theory' which gave more emphasis to higher levels of school education and collegiate education than primary education.

Primary education received scant attention by the Government till about 1920 and even in 1931, the literacy levels among Muslims and Cherumans - (a depressed community of former agrestic slaves corresponding to the Pulayas of Travancore) were 0.55 per cent and 0.01 per cent respectively. It may be remembered that these two communities together came to more than 37 per cent of the population in that year. The

relative educational backwardness of Malabar was due to a variety of factors such as the mutual animosity of the British and the Muslims, the contempt on the part of the High Caste Hindus like the Nambudiris for a very long time towards the English language which they considered a Mleccha language, the reluctance on the part of Muslims to attend schools opened for the Hindus, the existence of a tyrannous system of landownership and tenancy system under which the tenants were being progressively impoverished during the entire nineteenth century, the tardy growth of the economic sectors in the economy and the British policy of indifference towards the development of primary education.

Chapter 2Progress of Primary Education during the first
half of the Twentieth Century

Before we take up the discussion of the progress of primary education in Travancore during the first half of the twentieth century, a word about the condition of the society that existed towards the end of the nineteenth century and the changes that were brought about in its texture during the period under review will be in order.

As already pointed out, the social, economic and institutional changes that were introduced in Travancore since the 1860's were so powerful, as to unleash forces of destabilisation of the traditional and hierarchical structure of its society. The monopoly position of the government and the landlords on land ownership gave way to a much more decentralised and widespread peasant proprietorship. The traditional landed classes such as the Namboodiris and the Nairs progressively lost their positions of power and privileges also in government service due to the policy of importing Tamil Brahmins from outside the state for appointment in state service followed by the Rao Dewans of Travancore. The growth and diversification of agriculture and the development of trade led to the emergence of commercial classes of cultivators and merchants from the Christian community and the Ezhavas. Their clamour for more and more positions of power in government service followed. Those who got educated in the higher institutions of learning imbibed the spirit of democracy and equal citizenship rights. Social reform movements were started by the enlightened

sections of the backward communities. The privileged sections (such as the Nairs) which found the ground under their feet rapidly giving way also began efforts to consolidate their positions and introduce reforms in their communities to suit the needs of the changing times. The government itself had to yield to popular pressure and institute legislative bodies consisting of people's representatives. In sum, the late nineteenth century in Travancore may be rightly called a period of renaissance.

One of the most powerful agencies of social reforms was the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sangham (SNDP) started in 1903 under the inspiring leadership of the sage Sri Narayana. The movement was directed primarily at the removal of superstitions, irrational traditions and the caste and communal stratification of the society. The realisation of these objectives lay, in the view of the Sangham, on the educational development and industrialisation among the backward and the depressed classes. The Nair Service Society (NSS) established in 1914 was aimed at the consolidation of the positions of power and influence of the Nair community, traditionally considered a martial caste which had enjoyed monopoly rights to government service and ownership of land, which was tending to decline in power due to changes in the institutional and political set up and the dominance over it of the outdated customs and practices of inheritance. Movements for social reforms emerged among the depressed classes themselves. The Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sabha formed in 1907 under the leadership of the Pulaya leader, Ayyankali, was the most important among them. The movement was successful in awakening the minds

of the depressed classes to their social and economic deprivation and in inviting the attention of the government to the need for restoring to them their due position in society. The proceedings of the state's Legislative Assembly during the first two decades of the present century are replete with the demands for social reforms and the establishment of equal rights for all the different social groups, raised eloquently and forcefully by the people's representatives, particularly of the backward communities. The barriers to entry into educational institutions fell one by one in quick succession. The depressed and the backward classes received increasing encouragement for education; special measures came into force for promoting girls' education, not only at the primary but at the secondary and higher levels too. The tempo of the social reforms measures rose to a crescendo with the important legislations made during the mid-1920's abolishing matrilineal system of property rights among important communities such as the Nairs, the Vellalās and the Ezhavas. Perhaps, the crowning successes of the agitations were the passing of the Janni-rudiyān bill in 1933 (which released a large number of cultivators from the status of perpetual tenants under private landlords) and the promulgation of the Temple Entry Proclamation in 1937 (which threw open all the Hindu temples in the state for entry to all the Hindu communities irrespective of caste distinctions).

The spread of education among the masses and the social awakening that followed it, also led to rapid growth of cultural activities such as the production and publication, on an increasing scale, of books, journals and news papers, and establishment of libraries and reading rooms in most part of the state. Journalism had its beginnings in Travancore in 1881.

Associations emerged for the promotion of the regional language and literature. The number of literacy works in diverse forms began to increase from year to year from the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the major refrain in most of them being social reform and emancipation of the downtrodden masses.

With the spread of mass education, political awareness of the populace increased. It began to manifest itself from 1891 onwards, first in the form of mass memorials submitted to government by educated persons praying for increasing opportunities to them in social, political and economic activities. The Malayali Memorial of 1891 and the Ezhava memorial of 1895 marked the early beginnings of political activities in Travancore which laid the basis for agitations for political freedom and responsible government, waged during the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century.

We shall now turn to the progress made in primary education in the state during the first half of the present century. An epoch making reform introduced in primary education in the state at the very dawn of the century was the abolition of all English schools at the lower primary stage and making Malayalam the medium of instruction at that stage. Separate Malayalam and English Medium Schools existed only at the middle and high school stages. The common primary school with classes I to IV in which Malayalam was the medium of instruction served as the foundation of the entire educational structure from 1902 onwards. It was noted earlier that the determined efforts of the government for promotion of Malayalam education began in the 1860's and that the

government pursued a two-pronged policy of opening more departmental schools and encouraging the growth of private schools. The educational efforts of the government were however limited by the availability of resources. The decision to encourage private agencies was itself the result of the resource constraint. However, the response of the private agencies was so spontaneous and rapid that the state experienced a high growth rate of the number of schools and pupils; for instance, in a period of twelve years from 1871, the number of private aided schools increased from 437 to 1375 and their strength from 21,574 pupils to 57,314 pupils. Such enormous growth necessitated the introduction of a code of Educational Rules in 1894, which laid down, among others, the conditions for the payment of grants-in-aid to private schools. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the efforts of the government and the aided private agencies together to promote primary education remained much lower than those of indigenous, unaided private agencies as late as 1903-04. In that year, out of the 149.9 thousand pupils enrolled in the 3433 primary schools of Travancore, 83.2 thousand (or 55.5 per cent) were enrolled in the 2211 (64.4 per cent) schools run by private unaided managements. This fact unmistakably shows the significance of the spontaneous efforts by the indigenous sector and the massive demand for education in the state. The government was not initiating the process of educational expansion, but only trying to cope up with the rising tide of educational demand. In this endeavour it did succeed decisively, but only by the end of the first decade of the present century.

Owing to the special care taken by the government to develop women's

education, total enrolment of girls in schools increased in a period of ten years from 1894-95 by 60 per cent as against an increase of 50 per cent in enrolment of boys and girls taken together. Yet, the enrolment of girls formed only about 23 per cent of the total in 1903-04. Among the backward communities, Ezhavas alone were rising rapidly in their educational status; they registered an increase of 115 per cent in enrolment during the same period (from 10.8 thousand in 1894-95 to 23.5 thousand in 1903-04). Owing to the increase in the number of government schools and private schools receiving grants-in-aid, the expenditure on education of the Travancore government increased as a per cent of total government expenditure from about 3 in 1894-95 to nearly 6 in 1903-04.

Attention of the government to the educational upliftment of the depressed communities was turned in some significant measure only since 1894-95. All the schools, both governmental and private, had been in principle, accessible to all the communities from 1874-75. However, the depressed communities had in effect been denied access to educational facilities in all governmental and most private schools, and religious scruples had prevented large numbers among them from joining Missionary schools. In the grant-in-aid code of 1894-95, funds were provided for the first time for grants to school for backward classes, including special grants. Further, the government itself came forward to open schools intended exclusively for backward communities. The native Christian Missionaries attracted by the liberal grants-in-aid opened large number of such special schools. The encouragement given by the government was extended further in 1896-97 when it instituted 185 scholarships for pupils from

such communities to appear for the Vernacular Elementary Schools Examination, a pass of which entitled them to become teachers and earn grants from government. Such pupils were given exemption from payment of examination fees also. These steps were taken to meet the paucity of teachers in schools for backward communities since the forward communities were reluctant to take up the assignment. The concern for the educational upliftment of backward communities which began thus in right earnest from the closing decade of the nineteenth century grew in strength in the following decades and still continues to be one of the major distinguishing features of Kerala's educational policy.

Within a decade after the introduction of special schools for teaching of students belonging to the backward communities, the number of such schools increased to 480 and the enrolment in them to 43,580 pupils (including those enrolled in schools open to all communities).

The preoccupation of the government with the educational upliftment of the backward communities was only a part of its concern for the general educational progress of the society as a whole. With a view to the attainment of this objective the government declared in 1904 that free primary education of all the communities in the state would be the direct responsibility of the government and that the government would bear the entire costs. However, owing to the paucity of resources, the government had to limit the implementation of this policy at the initial stage to the case of the backward communities of the state. The scope of its application was progressively enlarged. Thus in 1906-07, the government declared that in regard to the schools in which the majority of pupils came from

certain specified backward communities, the entire cost of primary education would be borne by the state and that in places in which no non-governmental agency existed for educating pupils of such communities, the government would open schools for the purpose. Finally education in the lower primary stage (classes I to IV) was made completely free in departmental schools for all communities from 1908 onwards.

As we had noted earlier, the pressure for educational rights was the most intense from the socially and economically advancing community of Ezhavas. Ezhavas had, through the agency of private educational institutions, acquired not only elementary education, but education at the collegiate level too for a few among its new generation as early as the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The Ezhava Memorial submitted to government in 1895 under the leadership Dr. Palpu praying for their legitimate share in government appointments and educational opportunities had about 13000 signatories. However, times were not ripe enough for the then government of Travancore, controlled by the Brahmin Dewans and their henchmen who were jealous of guarding their caste privileges, to concede their request. The reply given to them regarding their demands was most humiliating to the petitioners, which ran thus:

"Their social position is such that they can hardly be eligible for public offices, were a certain amount of respect is expected to be commanded in a state where Hindus are more conservative and superstitious than their brethren in Malabar." ^{8/}

^{8/} Endorsement by the government on the Malayali Memorial, No. 1899 M. 884 dated 21.4.1891 of the government Secretariat, Travancore State, Trivandrum, quoted in T.K. Raveendran, Asam and Social Revolution in Kerala, Kerala Historical Society, Trivandrum, P.5.



The Ezhavas continued to fight for their rights through the press, the platform and the floor of the Legislature. The Sircar schools were thrown open to Ezhavas and other backward communities from 1906-07 and this step further stimulated the enrolment of their pupils. However, in 1910, the complaint made by the representative of the Ezhavas in the state Legislature has been reported thus:

"That the Ezhavas should be denied the privileges which were granted to classes so far below from the social scale, i.e. Christian converts from lower castes, appeared to be anything but just. Hence the member requested that the Ezhava girls should at least be admitted into those schools to which christian girls had access at present"

In response to such pressures, the government yielded and in 1911-12, the restriction on the admission of pupils on the basis of caste was removed in all departmental schools. Even the children of Fulayas, both boys and girls, which was one of the most 'polluting castes', were granted entry from that year onwards into government schools. Thus by the end of the first decade of the present century, all legal barriers to entry of children to schools on the basis of considerations of caste and religion as well as sex were finally removed. Yet, it took several years more for such discriminations for admissions to educational institutions in Travancore to disappear. Till the final achievement of this objective, the government resorted to a variety of policies such as the establishment of more and more social schools for the different castes and communities, opening of rural schools to attract children to education from remote and backward areas, night schools for adult education, and girls

9/ Kunju Panicker in 1910, Travancore Legislative Assembly Proceedings, 6th Session dated 6.1.1910, Ibid., p.39.

schools; the granting of fee concessions and scholarship to children belonging to backward and depressed communities including Muslims and to girls; relaxation of rules of eligibility for appointment as teachers in special schools, night schools and rural schools; the introduction of mid day meal programmes, and the supply of clothes and books to needy children. We shall discuss a few of such policies in some detail presently in order to bring out the dynamic nature of the efforts at educational development followed in this region. Before we do that, let us take a brief review of the relative role that the government, the private institutional agencies and the indigeneous and traditional educational sector played during the formative years of modern educational development in this state.

We noted in an earlier context that when the government began during the 1860's to encourage education particularly education in the local languages, none already existed in the state private, indigeneous malayalam schools in every village. These schools had been functioning without any financial support from the government, but purely with people's voluntary contributions. The state policy of liberal grants-in-aid gave birth to a large number of private schools of the modern type since the 1860's and the government itself had been opening more and more departmental schools. However, so long as the government did not put serious restrictions on the functioning of the indigeneous schools, their numbers had also been increasing steadily. Even after nearly four decades of efforts of educational development by the government the total number of children enrolled in the departmental and aided schools remained smaller than those enrolled in the indigeneous unaided schools. The

dominant role of the unaided institutions began to decline only after 1909-10 when the government passed a comprehensive Education Code which laid down strict conditions about the classification, management, accommodation and equipment of schools and prescribed qualification of teachers and the conditions to be observed in the practice of the profession, namely school term, fees, text books, school records and returns to be submitted periodically to educational officers. After 1909-10, the private unaided institutions began to fall as is evident from the Table 2.1.

In the Malayalam schools, the relative position of the different agencies during the period 1910 to 1920 is shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.

Enrolment in Educational Institutions in Travancore by Management, 1910-11 to 1919-20

(Selected years)

Year	Enrolment (in thousand)			Total	Private unaided (unrecognised)	Total
	Government	Private Aided	Private unaided recognised			
1910-11	79.8	56.5	26.6	162.9	51.9	214.8
1911-12	106.5	59.9	2.7	179.1	50.9	230.0
1912-13	132.0	65.5	6.8	204.3	54.5	258.8
1914-15	175.5	76.8	3.2	265.4	41.8	307.2
1916-17	216.0	119.3	2.9	358.2	55.0	413.2
1919-20	206.1	153.2	1.2	376.5	30.3	406.8

Source: Statistics of Travancore, 1920, Part I, Superintendent, Sircar press, Tritandrum, 1921, p.163.

Table 2.2

Enrolment at the Lower Primary stage in Malayalam Schools
by Management, 1910-1920 (Selected years)

(in thousand)

Year	Departmental			Aided			Unaided (recognised)			Total		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1910-11	35.2	7.0	42.2	47.9	3.5	51.4	13.2	3.2	16.4	96.3	13.7	110.0
1915-16	92.4	19.2	111.6	77.4	6.5	83.9	17.8	1.6	19.4	187.6	27.3	214.9
1919-20	90.0	17.7	107.7	119.8	9.1	128.9	6.2	0.3	6.5	216.0	27.1	243.1

Source: Statistics of Travancore, 1921, pp.163 and 165.

Within a period of ten years of the passing of the Education Code, the proportion of enrolment in unaided Malayalam lower primary schools declined from 15 per cent to less than 3 per cent. This decline has been, of course, more than compensated by the increase in the private aided schools and their enrolment. For instance, in 1910-11, the year immediately following the passing of the Education Code, their percentage share in enrolment was nearly 47; it rose to 53 in 1919-20. The decline in the relative share of government was the result of withdrawal of government schools from areas in which private schools were operating, with a view to avoiding overlapping and unhealthy competition.

Following the relaxation in 1911-12 of restrictions on the entry of pupils belonging to backward and depressed communities, their number, in total enrolment began to increase at rates higher than during the

earlier periods. The following Table shows the rates of literacy among the major caste groups in Travancore in 1911 and 1921.

Table 2.3

Percentage of Literates to Total population in Travancore
1911 and 1921

Caste	1911			1921		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<u>Forward community</u>						
<u>Nairs</u>	46.7	9.7	28.3	61.2	32.4	43.1
<u>Backward community</u>						
<u>Ezhevas</u>	21.2	1.9	11.5	36.4	9.5	22.8
<u>Depressed communities</u>						
<u>Kuravas</u>	1.4	0.2	0.8	3.5	1.0	2.3
<u>Pulayas</u>	1.8	0.1	0.9	4.0	1.4	2.7
<u>Paravas</u>	2.0	0.3	1.5	10.9	5.5	8.3

Source: Census of Travancore, 1921, p.88

The Table shows that eventhough the literacy rates of backward and depressed communities increased rapidly, the increase among the upper castes, say Nairs, was still higher. These figures suggest that the removal of restrictions on entry to schools by itself was not able to attract significantly large enough flows of children of school-going age belonging to the depressed communities to educational institutions. This was natural since the depressed communities still continued to be, in general, landless agricultural labourers, ill-paid, ill-fed and ignorant of the



potential of education for their social and economic upliftment, trampled down upon by a society which kept them untouchable, polluted outcastes. The exhortations made by leaders of depressed communities had, it would therefore seem, only very limited impact till at least the end of the second decade of the present century. Besides, there are reasons to believe that the relaxation of the restrictions did not in fact give freedom for entry into schools to these communities. For instance, the SNDP complained in 1917 in a petition submitted to the Maharaja: "Even now we have no admission to schools, particularly girls' schools".^{10/} Yet, it is interesting to note that in the Administrative Report of the state for the year 1917-18, the claim was made that "cent per cent literacy was attained among Ezhava and Pulaya communities in most taluks of the state".

In consequence, the period following witnessed more intensified efforts from the backward and depressed communities to translate into actual practice the rights legally granted to them in matters of education and employment. However, their efforts had still only limited success due to the inability of government to open schools in adequate number and the indifference on the part of the private agencies to open Malayalam schools. The administration Report of the Education Department of Travancore noted this fact in the following words:

Further, in the matter of vernacular education, "the inducement of private agencies to open and maintain schools has not been as great as in the case of English education, because primary education within the state

^{10/} P.K.K. Menon, The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala, vol. II (1855-1933), (S.G. Press, Trivandrum, 1972), p.465.

has been free in the sense that no fees whatever are levied in the first four classes in departmental schools and most private institutions have in consequence been unwilling to avail themselves of the option given to them to charge fees in classes II, III and IV: Further, the fees levied in vernacular schools has been very low.^{11/}

However, statistics show that the increase in enrolment was higher in private schools than in departmental schools.

During the period from 1919-20 to 1929-30, enrolment of children in all educational institutions increased from 406.8 thousand to 568.7 thousand as is shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4.

Enrolment in all Educational Institutions in Travancore, 1919-20
and 1929-30

Type of management	(In thousand)	
	1919-20	1929-30
Departmental	206.1	258.4
Private Aided	153.2	281.7
Private unaided	47.5	28.6
Total	406.8	568.7

Source: Administrative Reports of Travancore, 1919-20 and 1929-30.

Corresponding to the increase in total enrolment in all educational

11/ Administration Report of the Education Department of Travancore, 1929-30.

institutions taken together, the enrolment in Malayalam education also registered a significant increase, see Table 2.5.

Table 2.5

Enrolment in Vernacular (Malayalam) Schools in Travancore,
1919-20 and 1932-33

(in thousand)

Type of Management	1919-20	1932-33
Departmental	107.7	276.5
Aided	128.9	351.1
Unaided	6.5	negligible
Total	243.1	627.7

* Source: Administration Report of Travancore 1933-34.

By the beginning of the 1930's, unaided schools had virtually disappeared, having performed their historical duty, by either the closing down of schools or merger into the aided category.

In a previous section, we have noticed that owing to the opposition of forward caste communities to send their children to schools attended by children belonging to the untouchable castes and the hesitation on the part of the latter to attend schools in which higher caste children were enrolled due to fear of harassment and downright physical assaults, the government had been following a policy of opening special schools for the backward communities since 1894-95 when it decided to bring all pupils of the

school-going age to schools run directly by the government or those run by private managements with the governmental aid. Schools were opened also exclusively for girls to surmount the reservation on the part of parents to send their daughters to mixed schools. However, the government had in mind right from the beginning of such a policy that it was at best a temporary measure to be put an end to when the times became ripe and the society became agreeable to have common schools for all communities and both the sexes. The system of special schools continued till the year 1928-29, when the government made bold to declare that all special schools should be converted to general schools and that from that year onwards admission should not be denied in departmental and private schools to any student on the basis of caste, community or creed. If any private school was found to deny admission on such grounds, the government warned, the grant-in-aid to that institution would be withdrawn. The magnitude of governmental efforts to encourage the education of backward and depressed community students through the opening of special schools becomes evident when we note that there existed as many as 228 such institutions in the State in 1921, of which 23 were departmental schools.^{12/} A community-wise distribution of the departmental and the private schools is given below:

12/ File No. R. Dis. 940 of 1922 of the Government Secretariat.
Government of Travancore.

Table 2.6

Community-wise distribution of Schools for Educationally
Backward and Depressed Communities, 1921

	<u>Departmental</u>	<u>Private</u>
<u>Malayala Brahmins</u>	2	
<u>Muslim</u>	10	5
Rural Schools (for all communities residing in remote rural areas)	7	-
Night schools for Adults	1	-
<u>Pulayas</u>	2	131
<u>Parayas</u>	1	47
<u>Ezhavas</u>	-	6
<u>Mukkuvas</u> (Fisherfolk)	-	7
<u>Paravas</u> (")	-	2
<u>Vedas</u> (Hill tribe)	-	1
<u>Kuravas</u>	-	6
Total	23	205

Even in 1921 the government had begun efforts to convert special schools into ordinary schools and retain special schools only in places in which ordinary schools which admitted pupils from depressed classes did not exist. But the educational authorities advanced several reasons against such conversion such as the following:

- (i) "the managers and teachers who now take a personal interest in bringing children of depressed classes to school would lose interest", and
- (ii) "there is still great hesitation or reluctance on the part of the parents to send their children to them (public schools) so that if the special schools were converted into ordinary ones, a heavy fall in the number of such children attending school would follow".

The government relented to some extent to the above arguments but passed an order saying that ".....there is no need for the maintenance of all these special schools at the present time and that most of them have outlived their usefulness".^{13/}

The government also gave the management of special schools option to convert them into schools teaching children part of the time and educating the adults during nights.^{14/} Night schools continued to exist even after 1928 and they received government grants. It is seen that in 1933, 19 night schools thus received grants from government.^{15/} The government resolved in 1947 to start departmental schools, as a part of the scheme for universalising literacy, particularly among the adult population of the muslims who remained educationally backward.^{16/} These steps indicate the solicitude of the government not only for promoting literacy among the new generations, but also among the adults belonging to the educationally backward communities.

The enthusiasm for educational expansion among the people of Travancore becomes evident from the fact that a scheme of providing mid-day meals was introduced by the local people in various districts

13/ File No.H.Dis.443 of 1923 of the Government Secretariat, Government of Travancore.

14/ File No.R.Dis.357/33 of the Government Secretariat, Government of Travancore.

15/ File No.D.Dis.268/47/Edn. of the Government Secretariat, Government of Travancore.

16/ File No.329/1921 of the Government Secretariat Letter from the Director of Public Instruction to the Government.



completely on a voluntary basis, to needy children in primary classes, as early as 1920.^{17/} At that period the attitude of the government towards the introduction of such a scheme at Government expense was quite tepid. The Director of Public Instruction reported to the Secretariat in 1920 that "the principle that it is parent's first duty to feed his children has been accepted by government as the policy to adopt in this matter."^{18/} However, the government was actually aware of the fact that many school children went without food at noon, partly due to poverty and partly due to the reservations on the part of high caste pupils to take food in places outside their homes, particularly in the presence of persons belonging to other 'inferior' castes and communities.^{19/} The Dewan therefore suggested with a view to helping the high caste students, the construction of separate tiffin rooms to enable children to keep and to eat their tiffin free from 'pollution' by the other castes. Mid-day meals programme run on public donations was continued for several years in schools in different parts of the state on an experimental basis.^{20/} Introduction of a more widespread system of mid-day meals had to wait till the 1940's.

17/ Ibid.

18/ File No. 329 of 1921 of the Government Secretariat, Government of Travancore. Dewan's Inspection Notes dated 3.8.1920.

19/ File No. D. Dis. /303/1935 dated 10.8.1935 of the Government Secretariat, Government of Travancore.

20/ Order R. Dis. No. 26 of 1923 dated 9.12.1923 of the Government of Travancore.

With the growth of education and the developments taking place in the rest of the sectors of the economy such as public health and medical care, the government began to pay increasing attention not only to quantitative expansion of schools, but also to matters such as medical inspection of school children, improvement in the condition of school buildings, provision of latrines and urinals in schools, provision of play-grounds, etc. In respect of medical inspection of school children the attention of government was drawn in 1923. In that year, instructions were issued by the government to conduct periodical inspection of schools by qualified medical officers from the academic year 1923-24. But to begin with, the scheme was confined to children studying in recognised English schools, both departmental and private.^{21/} The extension of the scheme to all schools both English and Malayalam was recommended by the Education Reforms Committee in 1933. The Committee also pointed that it would be unsound to introduce medical inspection at any stage unless suitable arrangements could also be made for remedial treatment. The suggestions of the Committee were accepted in principle by the government. However owing to financial stringency the scheme was first introduced in a few schools on an experimental measure and a budget provision was made in 1935-36 for this purpose. We cannot say that the scheme has been implemented effectively in this state at any time since the passing of such order; however, the fact that the importance of this measure was fully realised by the educational authorities and some efforts were in fact begun as early as the 1930's shows the progressive outlook of the state policies in the field of education to suit the needs of the times and in

^{21/} Order R.Dis.No.26 of 1923 of the Government of Travancore.

keeping with the developments taking place elsewhere in the more advanced countries.

Introduction of Hindi in English schools from Form V (roughly comparable to the 9th standard under the present system) as early as 1937, the introduction of teaching of Arabic for the benefit of Muslims pupils in 1920, the beginning made in the teaching of hygiene as a compulsory subject in Malayalam schools and starting Manual training in Classes I to IV from 1922 also indicate the solicitude on the part of the government to develop the State's educational system to inculcate a feeling of oneness among the pupils with their counterparts in the rest of India, ensure the growth of a generation with health and healthy habits, serve the social and religious interests of particular communities and make the persons coming out of the educational system productive members of the society.

We know that the minimum age of admission of children to the first year of the school has now been fixed at 5+ or 6+ in most of the states. But, it seems that maximum age is not so prescribed in most cases. The result has been that children belonging to several age groups happen to attend the same class. The age-heterogeneity of students is further increased owing to the ubiquitous practice of grade repetition. The problem of age of entry to schools had received the attention of the educational authorities in Travancore at least by 1931 when the Director of Public Instruction reported to the government that he was refusing admission to applicants, particularly in high school classes, who were no more boys or girls, but grown up men and women. He refused admission

to persons above the age of 15 to the preparatory class in English Schools. Thus began in the 1920's itself attempt to bring down the disparities in the age groups of children attending the same class.

We have indicated in an earlier section that one of the objections that non-Christian communities had against sending their children to schools under Christian management had been their fear of persuasion made by management through subtle methods to conversion to Christianity. The fear must have been in the majority of cases unfounded, but nevertheless it lingered in their minds till very recent years. Even major struggles used to be waged between managements and pupils as well as between managements and government on the question of propriety of religious instructions in educational institutions intended for children belonging to all communities. We find that the issue was coming up again and again in the early decades of this century. For instance, in 1924 the parents and guardians of the Hindu and the Muslim students of the various English educational institutions in and around Trivandrum submitted a memorandum to the Dewan against compulsory teaching of Christian scriptures in schools and colleges under Christian management. The government did not take the memorandum seriously and merely observed that no punitive action could be taken against the managements concerned since they were only recognised, but not aid-receiving institutions. Complaints were raised time and again till the government finally issued in 1935 instructions to the effect that "no pupil shall be compelled to attend religious instructions in a faith which is not his own".^{22/} Such

22/ File No. 1798 of 1924. Government Secretariat, Government of Travancore.



complaints indicate the growing awareness on the part of the students and their parents of their rights, social and religious, and their increasing defiance of practices that they found incongruous with their status in society. By hindsight we know that they were forebodings of more serious troubles to come on this question at later dates.

Let us now revert to our main tract. We have seen that the early decades witnessed genuine concern on the part of the government for educational expansion, particularly expansion of primary education, on the one hand, and rising demand for educational opportunities on the part of the people. The government did not have the financial resources to build educational institutions and appoint teachers in adequate numbers. The private managements were interested more in the opening of English Schools (in which they could levy fees and the fees levied were at higher rates than those levied in Malayalam schools) and opening middle and high schools (since in primary schools they were not permitted to levy fees in ^{II} class I and II and were permitted to levy fees only at nominal rates in classes III and IV). The result has been an excess demand for places in primary schools. In such a context the government had to think in terms of introducing the shift system in primary schools even in 1921.^{23/} The shift was introduced as a tentative measure in all departmental Malayalam schools at a time additional teachers were found required if the shift were not introduced due to increase in enrolment.^{24/} After

^{23/} Travancore Government Secretariat File No. 1798 of 1921 of the Department of Education.

^{24/} File R. Dis. No. 619 of 1922 of the Travancore Government Secretariat. Order dated 27.6.1924.

experimenting it for four years, the system was put an end to from 1928-29. The shift was reintroduced both in departmental and private primary schools again in 1947.^{25/} The burgeoning demand for admission at all levels of the educational system has in recent years compelled the Kerala Government to introduce the shift system at the school and the college level. A large number of pre-degree and degree colleges have at present the shift system.

A land mark in the evolution of the education system in Travancore was the report of the Education Reforms Committee (Statham Committee) of 1933 to which we have made reference earlier. The Committee looked into the different stages of education and examined the problems in each stage in great detail. In their report,^{26/} special attention was given to questions of promoting primary education, education of the depressed classes, efficiency of the education system and the relative role of private and departmental management of schools.

About the percentage of enrolment in primary schools to population in the school-going age of 5-10 years, the Committee pointed out (in Chapter III on Mass education) that contrary to impression commonly held even in departmental circles (as reflected in the Education Department) that it had reached 80 per cent, the actual enrolment would be

^{25/} File D.Dis. No.460/47/Edn. of the Travancore Government Secretariat, Note Submitted to the Resident on 24.2.47; and order No.D.Dis. 2197/47/Edn. dated 31.8.1947.

^{26/} Report of the Education Reforms Committee, 1933. (Government Press, Trivandrum, 1934.)

about only 43 per cent since the children enrolled in lower primary classes included those above and below the appropriate age groups:

The Report pointed out that the overall quantitative expansion of Malayalam primary schools during the period since the passing of the Education Code in 1909-10 had been quite impressive; the number of schools had more than doubled, enrolment almost quadrupled and government expenditure on Malayalam education also quadrupled. However, there were serious causes for concern about the efficiency of the system. For instance, the Committee pointed out, the proportion of children enrolled in Class IV to those enrolled in Class I which had worked out to 30 per cent in 1912-13 had during a period of two decades improved only 40 per cent in 1931-32. The proportion that reached Class V, the first year of middle school education to those enrolled in Class I remained at 18 per cent during the entire period. Thus, wastage due to drop out, was prohibitively high and the absolute numbers dropping out had been rising quite rapidly with the increase in schools and enrolment.

In order to take a more reliable view of the drop out rates the Committee made an attempt to compare the percentage of enrolment in higher classes in subsequent years to enrolment in Class I during a given year. This was done for two periods 1912-13 to 1916-17 and 1927-28 to 1931-32. The results were found depressing since, on the basis of this method of calculation, the drop out rates were found to have increased, as may be seen from the Table given below:

Table 2.7

Drop out Rates 1912-13 to 1916-17 and 1927-28 to 1931-32, Travancore

Base (Enrolment in Class I during the years 1912- 13)	Percentage of enrolment		Base (Enrolment in Class I during the year 1927-28)	Percentage of enrol- ment	
	in Class IV during the year 1915-16	in Class V during the year 1916-17		in Class IV during 1930-31	in Class V during 1931-32
100	53	28	100	39	21

(Source: Report of the Education Reforms Committee, op.cit.)

The deterioration in the retention rates in the primary schools had adverse effects on the growth rate of literacy, the bulk of the expenditure on education at this stage going to waste. The Committee therefore undertook to examine the relative performance of the departmental schools and the private schools in respect of drop out rates and the following Table reproduces their results:

Table 2.8

Annual Enrolment in Classes I and IV in Departmental
and Private Schools, Trivandrum 1922-23 to
1931-32

Year	Department Schools		% of enrolment in Class IV to enrol- ment in Class I	Private Schools (Aided)		% of enrolment in Class IV to that in Class I
	Enrolment in Class I Nos. thousand	Enrolment in Class IV Nos. thousand		Enrolment in Class I Nos. thousand	Enrolment in Class IV Nos. thousand	
1922-23	52.9	33.9	64.9	80.7	15.4	19.1
1923-24	55.5	37.1	66.8	86.5	17.2	19.9
1924-25	54.6	38.9	71.2	87.3	18.7	21.4
1925-26	52.4	39.8	76.0	89.1	20.4	22.9
1926-27	52.8	36.6	73.1	92.5	21.1	22.8
1927-28	57.7	40.4	70.0	97.0	23.5	24.2
1928-29	61.0	42.1	70.2	100.6	25.0	25.0
1929-30	64.3	43.6	67.6	102.2	27.6	27.0
1930-31	59.7	43.3	72.5	102.6	29.9	29.1
1931-32	63.6	45.2	71.0	109.5	32.1	29.3

(Source: Report of the Education Reforms Committee, op.cit.)

The figures show that the proportion of children enrolled in Class IV to those enrolled in Class I had remained much higher in departmental schools than in private schools even though in the private schools themselves the proportion had been steadily increasing. For the state as a whole, the percentage of pupils in Class IV to the enrolment in Class I worked out ^{to} 36.9 in 1922-23 and 44.7 in 1931-32. While it was true that the proportion was lower in private schools and their efficiency was also lower, the entire difference between the

proportions was not due to efficiency difference alone. There existed a large number of schools under private management which had either only Class I or Classes I and II. The proportion of such schools was much lower among departmental schools with the result that the students passing from the highest class in private schools (namely Class I or II) who wanted to pursue education had to seek admission in departmental schools. Since the capacity of intake in departmental schools was itself not adequate and such schools did not exist in places accessible to the pupils in all the areas of the state, there was large drop out of students after completion of studies in the first one or two classes. In fact the total enrolment in Classes I to V was distributed quite unevenly among the classes due to this higher order of drop out as is shown in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9

Percentage Distribution of Total Enrolment in Classes I to V
by individual classes: Travancore 1931-32

Total	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
100	32.7	25.3	21.1	14.6	6.1

(Source: Report of the Education Reforms Committee, op.cit)

The problem of incomplete schools had even earlier come to the notice of the government.^{27/} The following statement comparing the number of departmental and private schools teaching upto the several stages is also significant.

27/ Travancore Government Secretariat File D.Dis. No.1324/45.

Table 2.10Distribution of Primary Schools according to the
highest Class, 1920-21

No. of schools in which the highest Class is		Departmental	Private
Class	I	5	259
	II	37	618
	III	136	434
	IV	595	373

(Source: Report of the Education Reforms Committee, op.cit)

The scourge of incomplete schools continued to debilitate the educational system for several years after this observation was made. The Education Reforms Committee noted, there existed in 1931-32 as many as 1680 incomplete lower primary schools out of a total of 3072, the private sector accounting for most of them; see Table 2.11.

Table 2.11Incomplete Lower Primary Schools, 1931-32

Management	Number of Incomplete Schools			Total
	with one class	with two classes	with three classes	
Departmental	3	9	62	74
Private	265	687	654	1606
Total	268	696	716	1680

(Source: Report of the Education Reforms Committee, op.cit)

On a comparison of the figures for the year 1920-21 with those for 1931-32 furnished in the preceding Table, we find that while the number of incomplete schools in the public sector declined rapidly, those under private management went up. The majority of incomplete schools under private management were those managed by private individuals; not corporate managements.

The Committee's observation was that the condition of primary school buildings was deplorable: "The average primary school building in the state is extremely unsatisfactory from the point of hygiene, light, air and flooring.....with a few exceptions, it can be said that the primary school buildings present a shabbiness and want of attractiveness which must have a depressing effect on the education imparted within them".

We have noted already that efforts to promote literacy among the most backward sections of the population (depressed castes and tribes) had begun right from the beginning of the period of mass education in the state and that both government and the private managements had shown keen interest in this matter. In fact, high rates of growth were recorded in the enrolment of such communities in the primary schools. However if we go by the numbers actually completing four years of schooling we find that their educational progress achieved till the beginning of the 1930's was but nominal. The Educational Reforms Committee furnished the following figures to prove this point.

Table 2.12Number of Depressed Class Pupils Reaching in Class IV
of Vernacular Schools each year, 1922-23 to 1931-32

1922-23	917
1923-24	973
1924-25	967
1925-26	1125
1926-27	1204
1927-28	1293
1928-29	1298
1929-30	1425
1930-31	1597
1931-32	1638

(Source: Report of the Education Reforms Committee, op-cit)

The bulk of the enrolment of pupils from such communities was in Classes I and II, the two together accounting for as high a percentage as 71 of the total enrolment in Classes I to V. Besides, the fact also remained that four-fifths of their enrolment was in private aided and unaided schools. This fact points to the dominance of higher caste pupils in departmental schools. The legal rights granted to the depressed classes for admission to government schools had not, till the beginning of the 1930's enabled them to seek that right effectively. Whether the reasons behind the inability lay in their fear of polluting the higher caste pupils, or the denial of entry to them by school authorities in spite of government's instructions or their own economic deprivation to pursue schooling, cannot be ascertained for want of reliable information. However,

it would seem from the evidence of the educational progress that was being made by other backward communities like the Ezhavas whose economic positions were stronger, that the greatest handicap to the depressed classes lay in their economic backwardness. They did not have till that time any substantial source of income other than the customary wages paid to them as agricultural labour.

Before we proceed further with our narrative, we may have to make a passing reference to the question of departmental Va. private in the management of schools. The question was examined by the Educational Reforms Committee in some detail. On the basis of the evidence of the better efficiency of departmental schools one would have expected them to pass a judgement in favour of abolition of the private management system, particularly since the private sector was running their schools largely with the grants-in-aid from the government. Their verdict was on the other hand, that "whatever may be the present defects of the aided agency, it has, in the past, made a most useful and distinctive contribution to the growth of education in the Travancore State" and that "a policy of abandoning the aided agency, if applied to Travancore, would be extremely unfortunate". Not that they did not also realise "that many of the aided agencies in the State represent sectarian interests, and that grave objection must be taken if it can be proved that any sectarian school is fomenting communal differences". However, they thought that the spirit, of unity, of comradeship, of civic consciousness and of joint citizenship can be fostered in the existing schools without the introduction of such a drastic measure as the abolition of all the "so-called sectarian

managements". A very specious argument indeed, particularly since the Committee knew that many of the managements held religious instruction to be essential "in the interest of character training and morality". Then followed another argument, the by-now familiar and hackneyed one, that they represent organised or personal enthusiasm which unfortunately tends to be absent from the more formal and impersonal machinery of the departmental agency. Surprising that the Committee could pass this verdict in such facile fashion when they had convincing evidence before them of the deplorable level of efficiency of the privately managed schools. The Committee then advised the government that since Travancore government was spending nearly 24 per cent of its revenue on education, a proportion much higher than in the most progressive provinces of British India, it should not continue to increase its total expenditure in the same proportion as in the past and that it should gradually divest itself of the management of a considerable number of departmental institutions and transfer the management of large numbers of departmental schools to local bodies as was the practice in provinces under direct British rule. The recommendations made by the Committee actually meant the loss of a great opportunity for government to control the educational system; subsequently, whenever the government tried to apply controls on the waywardness of private managements, it had to face insurmountable resistance. The educational system that prevails today is one in which private management owns and runs educational institutions, appoint teachers and the staff, admit students and expand the scale of their operations, with the government footing their entire bills. The private vested interests are getting stronger day by day and the state of affairs has reached a point of no return.

The stricture passed by the Educational Reforms Committee on the existence of incomplete schools had an immediate effect on governmental policy. The government initiated a programme in 1935 of withdrawing recognition for incomplete primary schools, first of the one-class schools, then of ^{the} two-class schools and lastly of the three-classes schools. However, the efforts do not seem have to be completely successful. The distribution of primary schools by the highest class in them in 1947-48 was as shown below:

No. of schools with Class I only	- 23
" " Class I and II	- 164
" " Class I, II and III	- 134
" " Class I, II, III and IV	- 438
" " Class I, II, III, IV and V	- 2531
Total	<u>3290</u>

As a result of this programme and the one of preventing the mushrooming of schools for particular 'denominations' of communities and abolition of ever-lapping schools, the total number of primary schools fell from 3253 in 1931 to 2902 in 1941. The education department in Travancore claimed in 1945 that "taking the state as a whole the average area served by each primary school was 5.3 square miles in 1911, 2.2 in 1921, 2.3 in 1931 and 2.6 in 1941. The average number of persons served by each school was 2393 in 1911, 1159 in 1921, 1967 in 1931 and 2092 in 1941. The higher rates both in point of area as well as the average number of persons served by schools (in 1941) when compared to those of 1931 are due to the fact that owing to increased facilities for transport, each school, by providing

additional accommodation, could cater to a large number of pupils".^{28/}
 The governmental policies are reported to have also reduced the rates of drop out and grade repetition. For every 100 pupils in Class I in 1928 only 39 had reached class IV in 1931, the rate increased to 57 for those who enrolled in Class I in 1932-33 and reached class IV in 1935-36; it was further raised to 60 and 64.5 for the cohorts who reached class IV in 1941 and 1945 respectively.^{29/}

Reform measures introduced after the Committee Report of 1933 included also the opening of more training schools for teachers. Within a period of 15 years from 1931, we find that the proportion of untrained teachers came down significantly. In 1931, 60 per cent of the teachers were untrained; but in 1945, only about 35 per cent of the teachers were untrained in private schools, and the proportion of untrained teachers in government schools was nominal.

The improvement of the efficiency of the primary school was reflected in the literacy rates. It is seen that literacy rate in 1941 among males of 6 years and above increased to 67.9 per cent, the corresponding rate among females being 42.1 per cent. These figures have however to be taken only as indicative since the 1941 Census figures are not considered to be as reliable as those of other Census figures.

In our discussion so far, we did not touch upon a very miserable human problem that existed in the privately managed schools, namely the salaries of teachers and the security of their employment. Teachers in private schools did not have any scales of pay fixed for them by the Education Code or the Grant-in-Aid Rules. They were appointed by the

^{28/} Ibid.

^{29/} Report of the Travancore Education Reorganisation Committee, (Superintendent, Government Presses, Trivandrum, 1946).

management, paid salaries according to the pleasure of the management and retained them in service only so long as the management wanted them to be in service. The Education Department had since the beginning of the present century fixed from time to time the minimum qualifications for appointment of teachers at the various stages of the education system. It had also laid down rules regarding the training qualifications required by them. The recommendations made by the Education Reforms Committee and the increasing organisational strength of private school teachers enabled them for the first time in their history in Travancore to pass a series of resolutions in 1934 at the First Conference of the Travancore Private School Teachers. The following were among the important resolutions passed:

- (a) Government should insist that no teacher, once permanently employed in a private school, should be relieved without the prior sanction of the Director of Public Instruction;
- (b) Government should make the leave provisions in the Travancore Service Regulations applicable to private school teachers;
- (c) The private school teachers should be given the salary scales existing in government schools; and
- (d) the Government should pay the primary school teachers their whole salary by way of grant-in-aid since no fees were levied in primary schools.

The government was not willing to interfere with the powers of the management to dispense with the service of teachers. The Managers retained the power to dismiss a teacher on a month's notice or a month's salary. The teachers had of course the right to go in appeal to the Education Department against the unjust decision of managements. The

government agreed to look into the question of minimum salaries, but were unprepared to introduce equal rates for government and private school teachers.

The Teachers' Association continued to represent to the government on the question of security of tenure and equality of pay and got their demand sanctioned one by one, from 1946 onwards, when the Travancore Government introduced a scheme of complete taking over of primary education into government hands.

The move towards nationalisation of primary education was a sequel to the recommendation of the Education Reorganisation Committee (Papworth Committee) appointed by the Government of Travancore which submitted its report in 1945.^{30/} Some of the highlights of the Report are worth special notice. The Committee noted with some sense of satisfaction of the increasing enrolment ratio of children in primary schools. According to the 1941 Census, the total number of children enrolled in Classes I to IV worked out to about 63 per cent of the children in the age group 5-9. The proportion of pupils enrolled in class I reaching class IV had reached 64.6 per cent by 1943-44. It is worth remembering that the corresponding percentage in 1931-32 was only 40 per cent. The Committee's most significant recommendation was the introduction of compulsory, universal primary education for five years (class I to V). With regard to the pay of teachers of primary schools, the Committee recommended that the government should pay to the management of primary schools as grant an amount equal to 75 per cent of the teachers' salaries. According to the Committee, one of the fundamental problems relating to primary education in the

^{30/} Government of Travancore, Report of the Travancore Education Reorganisation Committee, 1945 (Government Press, Trivandrum, 1946).

State was the one connected with the status and remuneration of teachers, without an improvement of which no progress was possible in the field. The service conditions and salary scales of private primary school teachers were brought on a par with those of the departmental school teachers in 1948.^{31/}

On the basis of the recommendations of the Committee, the Travancore Legislature resolved that the government should make themselves responsible for primary education throughout the state and should, for this purpose, take up the control and management of primary schools. Accordingly, the government passed an order in 1945.^{32/}

The major recommendation of the Educational Reorganisation Committee may be summarised into the following:

At the primary stage

- (a) introduction of a course of primary education of 5 year's duration, say classes I to V.
- (b) abolition of all uneconomic and incomplete schools,
- (c) closure of all overlapping schools,
- (d) introduction of a proper mid-day meal programmes to all needy children,
- (e) minimisation of wastage (drop out) and stagnation (grade repetition),
- (f) introduction of pre-university schools,
- (g) provision of facilities for health care of children and teaching the principles of hygiene,
- (h) appointment of a larger proportion of women teachers particularly at the primary stage,

^{31/} Order F.Dis.No.359/48/Edn. dated 8.3.1948 of the Travancore Government.

^{32/} Order F.Dis.No.1324/45/Edn. dated 12.9.1945 of the Travancore Government.

- (i) fixation of equal pay for private and government school teachers.

At the middle school stage

- j) abolition the system of two types of middle school - Malayalam and English - and to have only one type in which the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue.

At the high school stage

- (k) abolition of the system of two types of high school - Malayalam and English - and to have Malayalam as the medium in all high schools, and introduction of two categories of high schools, academic and technical.

The Committee also made the following observation:

"Government have come to the conclusion that the responsibility of, imparting primary education throughout the State devolves upon, and has to be shouldered by, them and they have accordingly decided to assume the control and management of primary education with the definite objective of making such education both free and compulsory within as short a period as practicable; and they have instructed the Director of Public Instruction to formulate detailed proposals on the basis of a ten-year programme for implementing this decision." The Government had clarified to the private managements that it was not the intention of the government to ask them to surrender their buildings and premises to government; that the government would not take steps to close down private primary schools provided they followed the general standards and the general curriculum formulated by the government, and that it would be willing to acquire the buildings and premises of private schools only if their

management voluntarily handed them over to it. However, the government would exercise their sources, if need arose, of utilising the premises vested in the existing managements. The government also made it clear that no grants would be given to institutions specifically meant for imparting religious instructions.

Within the course of a single year, 368 private primary schools were taken over by the government. The declaration of the government and the taking over of private schools to government that followed, led some of the corporate managements, particularly those under the Catholic church, to take a united stand against the governments' programmes and created a situation in which further taking over was rendered difficult. The governments' initial reaction was however to suspend all grants to private primary schools run by Catholic Christian managements. But soon it relented and in 1947, disbursed the grants withheld on condition that recognition and aid would be continued for their schools only if they are run as denominational schools in which admission is limited to the children of the concerned community alone. However the government declared that no new primary schools started by the Catholic management or any other private management would be eligible for financial aid. These bold postures of the government did not serve to arrest the growth of private primary schools in later years. In fact today, the number of private schools far exceed those directly under government. In 1981-82, as against 2660 primary schools owned by the government (with a total enrolment of 11.1 lakhs), there existed 4151 primary schools under private management (with a total enrolment of 14.8 lakhs).



The other reforms introduced in the education system following the recommendations of the Educational Reorganisation Committee were (1) the raising of the number of classes at the primary stage from 4 to 5 (2) the abolition of the system of two types of schools - Malayalam and English - at the middle and high school stages and instituting a single unified system, and (3) the introduction of compulsory primary education in five taluks. The attempts made by the government to bring under governments' direct control the entire primary education to the rest of the taluks in the State were thwarted by the political developments that followed, the declaration of Independence (1947), the subsequent custer of the Dewan of Travancore (1948), and integration of the States of Travancore and Cochin into a single state (1949).

The rates of growth of literacy for the different communities in Travancore during the period 1901 to 1941 were quite impressive even though the better-off retained their leading positions. In fact the levels of literacy among most depressed communities remained extremely low till 1931, and it was during the decade 1931-1941 that they gained some significant gains. Such a steep rise was presumably the result of a variety of factors such as the removal of all restrictions to admission of pupils in government and aided schools on the basis of caste or religion and the liberal policy followed in the 1930's for assigning uncultivated lands to depressed communities (in plots of not more than three acres per family) at concessional rates.^{33/} In 1935-36, there were

^{33/} R.Ramanatha Iyer, Progress of Travancore, (Anantha Rama Varma Press, Trivandrum, 1923).

2667 pupils in English schools (middle and high taken together) and 8 pupils

in colleges, belonging to the depressed communities, including hill tribes. The Temple Entry Proclamation of 1937, which was the final death blow to the scourge of untouchability in Travancore, gave a further fillip to their educational and economic aspirations. In the year 1935-36, a beginning was made in the practice of giving lumpsum grants to pupils of such communities with a grant of Rs.0.50 per pupil in classes III and IV of all recognised Malayalam schools. However, it may be noted that the upward trend in enrolment was arrested during the closing years of the 1930's and the early years of the 1940's due to the wide economic depression in the former period and the conditions of poverty and misery caused by the inflationary conditions during the 2nd World War. It was only after 1943-44 that the upward trend in enrolment was regained after which the state continued to have high rates of growth. Table 2.13 shows the growth in absolute numbers of enrolment in educational institutions in Travancore during the period 1935-36 to 1947-48.

Table 2.13

Number of pupils belonging to a few communities in Educational Institutions in Travancore: 1935-36 to 1947-48
(selected years)

<u>Community</u>	<u>1935-36</u> (thousands)	<u>1936-39</u> (thousands)	<u>1943-44</u> (thousands)	<u>1947-48</u> (thousands)	<u>Increase</u> 1935-36 to 1947- 48 (per cent)
<u>Hindu Forward Community</u>					
<u>Nair</u>	144.5	157.8	172.5	238.8	65.3
<u>Hindu Backward Community</u>					
<u>Ezhava</u>	113.6	129.7	133.6	202.1	77.9
<u>Hindu Depressed Community</u>					
<u>Pulaya</u>	15.1	19.2	15.9	29.4	94.7
<u>Christian</u>					
<u>Syrian</u>	71.8	87.6	101.3	131.1	82.6
<u>Catholic (Backward community)</u>	44.8	46.3	44.4	70.6	57.6
<u>Muslim (Backward community)</u>	31.6	31.6	34.4	56.0	79.1

Source: Administration Reports of the Department of Education, Travancore State for the respective years.

In spite of the varying rates of growth registered, the relative proportions of enrolment of the different communities remained almost stable, see Table 2.14.

Table 2.14

Percentage Distribution of Enrolment among some Communities, Travancore:
1935-36 to 1947-48 (Selected years)

<u>Community</u>	<u>1935-36</u>	<u>1938-39</u>	<u>1943-44</u>	<u>1947-48</u>
<u>Hindu: Forward Community</u>				
<u>Nair</u>	20.7	20.6	21.0	20.5
<u>Hindu: Backward Community</u>				
<u>Ezhava</u>	16.3	16.9	16.3	17.4
<u>Hindu: Depressed Community</u>				
<u>Pulaya</u>	2.2	2.5	1.9	2.5
<u>Christian: Forward</u>				
<u>Sect</u>	10.3	11.4	12.3	11.3
<u>Christian: Backward</u>				
<u>Latin Catholic</u>	6.4	6.0	5.4	6.1
<u>Muslim (Backward Community)</u>	4.5	4.1	5.2	4.9
<u>Others</u>	39.6	38.5	38.9	37.3
<u>Total</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

(Calculated from figures supplied in the Administration Reports of Travancore, Department of Education).

A major achievement of educational growth in Travancore was the increase in enrolment of girls. The steady increase in the percentage of girls to total enrolment in the two types of school - Malayalam and English -

achieved during the period 1938-39 to 1947-48 is shown in Table 2.15.

In fact, in 1947-48, the percentage of girls to total enrolment in class I was as high as 47.8, but the percentage declined to 46.6 in Class II, 45.2 in class III and 41.1 in class I. In subsequent decades, the rates of drop out ^{34/} from the different stages of the

Table 2.15

Percentage of girls Enrolled to Total Enrolment in Schools.

Travancore 1938-39 to 1947-48

	Percentage in English High and middle schools	Percentage in Malayalam and Tamil schools
1938-39	31.0	42.0
1939-40	32.0	43.0
1940-41	32.4	43.4
1941-42	33.1	43.5
1942-43	33.7	43.9
1943-44	33.5	44.0
1944-45	32.9	44.2
1945-46	32.7	44.4
1946-47	35.7	44.9
1947-48	34.1	45.6

Source: Administration Report, Education Department, Travancore, 1947-48.

educational system among the girls have considerably come down and today

^{34/} The rates of stagnation were also unconsciously high during the mid-1940's. The following observation is revealing: "We have found large numbers of cases in Travancore in which pupils have stagnated for periods varying from 2 and 6 years in one class and other cases in which pupils have taken between 7 and 8 years to read in two classes", Education Reorganisation Committee, op.cit., p.15.

there exists virtually little difference in the rates as between the two sexes at any stage in the education system in Kerala, as we shall see presently.

Growth of Education in Cochin (1900-1947)

The growth of education in Cochin during the first half of the twentieth century was quite rapid at all the stages. As was the case in Travancore, Cochin also introduced a series of reform measures in its educational system. During the first decade itself, the following measures were taken:

- (a) Primary education was to be imparted exclusively in Malayalam, except in a few Anglo-Malayalam schools;
- (b) primary education in Malayalam schools to be free, from (1908)
- (c) revision of curricula for all stages of the school system;
- (d) encouragement of technical education and adult education;
- (e) liberal grants-in-aid to private schools in lieu of teachers' salaries and for expenditure on land, buildings, furniture and equipment;
- (f) improvement of the pay of teachers;
- (g) reorganisation and strengthening of teachers' training programmes including training women for appointment as teachers;
- (h) introduction of a scheme of scholarship to poor and meritorious pupils; and
- (i) the introduction of an Education Code.

In spite of such comprehensive reforms, the literacy rates among the depressed communities continued to remain low as may be seen from the rates of literacy among some of the major communities in Cochin for the different census years from 1911 onwards.^{35/}

Table 2.16

Literacy Rates among Selected Communities, Cochin
1911 to 1941

	1911			1921			1941		
	Male	Fe- male	Total	Male	Fe- male	Total	Male	Fe- male	Total
<u>Hindu, Backward</u>									
<u>Ezhava</u>	15.4	1.2	8.2	18.6	3.3	10.6	50.4	20.5	34.7
<u>Hindu, Forward</u>									
<u>Nair</u>	41.3	13.7	27.1	42.9	20.0	31.0	75.7	52.9	63.2
<u>Hindu, Depressed</u>									
<u>Pulaya</u>	0.9	-	0.5	1.6	0.3	0.9	16.0	3.9	9.8
<u>Muslim (Rawther)</u>									
	14.0	0.4	7.3	22.7	1.2	12.9			
<u>Christian</u>	31.2	11.1	21.2	35.1	17.2	26.2	68.0	51.7	59.3

The attempts made by the Government of Cochin for the development of education received generous support from the local population. However, such support came more for the expansion of secondary education than for

^{35/} Census of Cochin, 1911, 1921 and 1941.

primary education. Even for the upgradation of departmental schools, the additional accommodation was provided in nearly every case, by local people. It was observed by the educational authorities in 1917-18 that in many areas in which there did not exist primary schools, local assistance was not forthcoming due to poverty of the people. In such areas, the government itself had to bear the entire expenses; owing however to the constraint of finances, the government continued to persuade private enterprise to take up this responsibility in as many places as possible.

In order to attract backward community students and girls to middle and high school education, liberal schemes of fee concessions were in vogue in Cochin from 1914 onwards. Special schools were also opened for backward community students, special scholarship were offered to them and free meals, clothes, books and stationery were offered.^{36/} In 1922-23, an official announcement was made to the effect that the Pulaya pupils and pupils of several Hill tribes would be exempt from payment of fees in all schools both departmental and aided.^{37/} The figures of enrolment show however that the efforts at the development of education of the depressed classes did not catch up rapidly till the end of British period in India. The reasons for their apathy to education should be traced to the prevailing system of untouchability, the lack of occupational choice, and their continued existence under miserable conditions as

^{36/} Cochin Administration Report, 1093 (1917-18)

^{37/} Cochin Administration Report, 1095 (1919-20)

landless agricultural labour. Faced with such 'apathy', the government even thought that "where persuasion fails compulsion may have to be resorted to ultimately".^{38/}

At the same time as the government was thinking of steps to be taken for developing education among the working classes, the government was also worried about the adverse effects of spreading purely literary education among them since they found that 'children contract an aversion to their hereditary occupations which they come to look upon as infra dig The economic conditions of our villages have thus been disturbed to a woeful degree, and with the extension of mass education, things may go from bad to worse....." These observations did not fortunately discourage the efforts of the government to spread mass education. Instead they proposed to introduce subjects such as agriculture in rural schools which would give teaching in them a dignity to vocation.^{39/} The real achievements made in this direction of vocationalisation do not however seem to have been significant; nevertheless, we notice from the opening of numerous industrial schools in Cochin the significance that the State attached to the development of vocationally equipped educated manpower for the economic growth of a region. In fact, even Travancore did not seem to have assigned as much importance to this line of education as Cochin did during the period.

^{38/} Cochin Administration Report, 1098 (1922-23).

^{39/} Ibid.



Growth of Education in Malabar (1900-1947)

In Malabar, the governments' attention to the promotion of Malayalam education began only after 1921, as a consequence of the blood-bath that the Moplah Rebellion of the year led to. The period also coincided with the period of transfer partially of the control of the Central Education Department to the Indians under the provision of the Government of India Act of 1919. Primary education began to receive greater attention than earlier. In Malabar, serious efforts ensured for the development of elementary education supported by grants from the Madras government. District boards and taluk boards were formed and primary schools were started in most villages and towns of the district. However, it should be noted that a majority among them were moplah (Muslim) schools, which were begun in private houses (mostly on the upper floor of buildings) rented out from the owners. The owners gave the accommodation more by attraction of the rent offered than by the desire to promote elementary education. A large proportion of such schools existed as single teacher schools or incomplete schools. Despite serious obstacles, the Boards of Education under the self-less local leadership saw to it that elementary education did make significant progress during the ensuing decades eventhough the level of literacy that Malabar reached by the time of the formation of the state of Kerala was much lower than that existed in Travancore and Cochin. Muslims and the depressed communities did not take to education easily owing to serious economic and social hindrances. The major beneficiaries came from the occupancy tenant sections, the merchants, the government

servants and the landlords. These sections who were the better off sections of society managed to pursue higher studies as well and get into positions of power and prestige and continued to command economic social and political privileges that remained beyond the reach of the tenants-at-will, and the agricultural labourers who were illiterate, and poor. The educational disparities that existed between Malabar and the other two regions of Kerala have narrowed down quite rapidly during the past quarter of a century as a result of the deliberate policy of special educational encouragement given to the former region. We shall look into the growth of the education system during the post-independence period in the next chapter.

Before concluding this section, we may notice also a major development that took place at the higher levels of education, namely the establishment of a separate university for Travancore in 1937. Even though there was keen competition among the different major communities in Kerala for starting new colleges, the emergence of colleges had to wait till after 1947, due to several vicissitudes of the period such as the Great Depression, the Second World War and the political uncertainties that prevailed till 1949. However, even as early as 1937-38 there were nearly 2700 students enrolled in the different colleges, excluding law college, in Travancore and the enrolment came mostly from the relatively more advanced communities, see Table 2.17.

Table 2.17

Distribution of Students in Colleges by Community.
Travancore 1937-38

Community/ Type of college	Government					Pri- vate college	Total	Percentage share of each community
	Science College	Arts Coll- ege	Women's college	Train- ing coll- ege	San- skrit coll- ege			
<u>Malayalam</u>								
<u>Brahmin</u>	7	8	-	-	3	15	33	1.2
<u>Tamil</u>								
<u>Brahmin</u>	196	49	15	10	14	15	299	11.1
<u>Chayyas</u>	51	45	23	9	19	54	201	7.4
<u>Nair</u>	242	121	62	43	29	261	758	28.0
<u>Christian</u>	213	86	141	56	5	816	1317	48.7
<u>Muslim</u>	26	28	3	2	-	36	95	3.5

Source: Administration Report of Travancore, Department of Education,
1937-38.

Chapter 3Educational Expansion in Kerala Since Independence

The two princely states of Travancore and Cochin were intergrated into a single state of Travancore Cochin with effect from July 1956⁴. This state became the present state of Kerala in November 1956 consequent on the reorganisation of states on linguistic basis by adding the Malabar districts of the Madras state to it and transferring four taluka at the southern end. The educational growth in Kerala during the post-independence period is quite impressive not only in terms of the growth of institutions, teachers, enrolment and expenditure but also in terms of the development and diversification of the higher stages of the education system. It has been a period in which the differences in pay scale and other service conditions of teachers at all levels as between the government and private managements were removed, the disparities among the different regions in educational development narrowed down, the higher stages of education grew more rapidly than the lower stages, the private managements became more powerful in the affairs of education more than ever before and came to enjoy benefits without responsibility and the extent of corruption (in the form of "donations" for appointment of teachers and admission of pupils) assumed alarming proportions. The efforts made during the past in Travancore and Cochin to make the regional language the medium of instruction at all the three levels of schooling, and to unify the system of education by rigorous enforcement of rules regarding curriculum and syllabus and conditions for recognition of schools are being thwarted by the growth at an ever increasing rate

of English-medium (recognised and unrecognised) schools, at the pre-primary, primary, middle and high school stages and the government's approval (tacit or explicit) of such development of 'elitist' schools. The opening of new schools at the primary stage continues in spite of the virtual stagnation of the total number of children enrolled afresh annually in the first year of primary school during the past ten years. Teachers are appointed by managements, thrown out when enrolment is found inadequate and "protected" by the government by retaining them in the respective management schools or absorbing them in the government schools in which they remain in most cases as supernumeraries. An auxiliary system of education has grown up which imparts tuition and coaching for examination at all levels of the education system which is being avidly depended upon by the richer sections of society to equip their wards for entry into the highly demanded courses of education at the higher levels such as Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture and Veterinary science. The intense competition has even led to some influential parents to resort to malpractices such as tampering with mark lists and manufacturing mark lists and university certificates. Education in the regular institutions has become nominal, particularly due to recurrent agitations by students and teachers on real and apparent grounds. A gigantic "parallel College" system has emerged which coaches students for the different university examinations particularly since a system of appearance by private candidates in such examinations was allowed at this stage from the early 1970's. Every year, particularly in recent years, has witnessed unwholesome competition by private managements for obtaining more colleges and schools, and the government is being

pressurised for granting educational institutions to different communities on the basis of their relative share in population. The educational system has become unwieldy and lacking in a sense of direction and purpose which had been the qualities found earlier during the pre-independence period, the government shelling out the entire cost of education both in the governmental and private sector. In fact nearly 45 per cent of the entire revenue expenditure of the state is accounted for by education. In the following sections we may take a birds eye view of the growth of the education system in the state during the post-independence period with particular reference to the stage of primary education.

Before taking up the discussion of the patterns and processes of educational growth we shall first present the changes that have come about in the structure of the school education system since 1950-51; see Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Rates of increase of the number of Institutions, Teachers and Enrolment at the Lower Primary, Middle and Secondary stages of School Education in Kerala, 1950-51 to 1979-80

Stage	Rate of Increase in		
	No. of Institutions (Per cent)	No. of teachers (Per cent)	No. of pupils (Per cent)
Lower Primary	4.5	78.2	85.4
Upper Primary	115.4	260.4	297.8
Secondary	233.3	268.2	283.9

Source: (1) Statistics for Planning, 1972, 1977 and 1980
 (2) Economic Review, 1982, State Planning Board, Govt of Kerala)

In school education the higher rates of increase have been registered by the middle and secondary stages than the primary stage, in terms of the number of institutions, teachers and pupils.

The increase in educational expenditure has been the highest of all, during the period from 1961-62 to 1982-83; it rose by 1244 per cent. When we look at the increase in the facilities for higher education including professional education, we find that it has even far outstripped the increase registered at any stage in school education. We shall not go into details, but merely mention that the enrolment of the collegiate level increased during the period 1957-58 to 1981-82 by 782 per cent; the number of colleges increased from 47 (20 government and 27 private) in 1956-57 to 208 (55 government and 153 private) in 1982-83 and the enrolment from 28.8 thousand to 282.9 thousand. The details of enrolment in Arts and Science colleges by stages and management during 1982-83 are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Enrolment by stages in Arts and Science Colleges,
Kerala, 1982-83

Stage	Sector	Male	Female	Total
<u>Predegree</u>	Government	15154	11444	26598
	Private	69877	69937	139814
	Total	85031	81381	166412
<u>Degree</u>	Government	8709	6155	14864
	Private	38826	41619	79645
	Total	45735	47774	94509
Post Graduate	Government	863	1127	1990
	Private	2593	2135	4728
	Total	3456	3262	6718
Grand Total		135222	132417	287639

Source: Record

Reverting to the primary stage of education, we find that within a period of four years from the introduction of the scheme of compulsory primary education in Travancore in 1946, about 1000 private schools were surrendered to Government.^{40/} The surrendered schools were considered government schools and the teachers in such schools were extended the same service conditions, scales of pay and other benefits of the teachers of government schools. After the formation of the Travancore-Cochin state, the policy of surrender was continued but compulsory primary education was not extended to new areas. In 1955, compulsory education existed in 11 taluks in the Travancore region; the act was in force in Cochin also. The difficulty in extending the scheme to the entire state was a practical one, of providing books and stationery and noon-meal to all necessitous children.

In 1951-52, consistent with the policy prescribed for implementation elsewhere in the state, the principle of basic education was accepted and a programme was prepared for conversion of the then existing classes of primary schools into basic education classes.^{41/} A Basic Training School was also started in the year 1954-55. The basic education system continued to expand over the years and middle schools and high schools were also progressively brought under the scheme. However, the functioning of the system was found to be ineffective and the experiments at diversification, vocationalisation, introduction of work experience programmes and the appointment of craft teachers, tried from time to time, had to be

40/ Govt. Letter No. D. Dis. 1200/49/Edn. dated 18.6.1949 regarding Status of Teachers in surrendered schools.

41/ Administration Report of the Education Department, Travancore-Cochin, 1951-52, p.5.

terminated by 1967-68. The failure of the basic education scheme in Kerala, as elsewhere in India, is a testimony to the half-hearted attempts at the implementation of half-baked ideas in the field of educational innovation.

One of the significant developments that took place in the field of secondary school education in the state during the early 1950's was the introduction of the Private Secondary School (P.S.S.) scheme. The scheme aimed primarily at improving the service conditions of teachers employed in schools under private management. The scheme was first introduced in the state from September 1950. This scheme was not welcomed by all the managements of schools because they found serious objection to some of the provisions in it, particularly those relating to the rights of the managements to appoint teachers. The scheme had to be therefore revised and the revised scheme came into effect from December 1951. The main features of the scheme were the following:

- (1) the managements should remit 90% of the fee collected into public accounts opened in the treasury;
- (2) the contingent and other expenses of the private schools would be met by the management from the remaining 20% of the fee collection; and
- (3) a contribution of 4.7 pies per rupee (that is, 9 old pies per rupee) should be paid each by the teacher, management and the government towards provident fund of the teacher.

It was provided in the original scheme that a general list of qualified hands for the appointment in private secondary schools should be prepared by the Director of Public Instruction and the Public Service Commission from which managers were to select candidates for appointment as and when

vacancies arose. As some of the managements did not agree to this provision it was amended in the revised scheme and the managements were given their own choice in the matter of selection of duly qualified teachers for their schools. Eventhough most managers were reluctant to join the Scheme, they had to yield before the organised agitations of teachers and the pressure from the government. In the course of the next couple of years, almost the entire private secondary schools came under the Private Secondary Schools Scheme.

We had noticed earlier that the with the introduction of the Compulsory Education Scheme in Travancore in 1946, the dual system of education at the middle school and secondary school stages, namely that of Malayalam schools and English schools - was discontinued. The English middle schools had levied fees at much higher rates (that is, at Rs.3/- per month per pupil in Forms I to III and at Rs.2/25 in the preparatory class) than in the Malayalam middle schools (that is, at Rs.0/50 per month per pupil). With the abolition of the dual system, the preparatory class went out of existence, and primary education was extended to five years. After the 5 years, the course of study in the Middle School was for three years (forms I to III) and that in the High School for another three years (forms IV to VI). Fees were levied in all the middle and high school classes at the rates which prevailed in the English schools prior to the introduction of the new scheme. The Travancore-Cochin government abolished fees in form I and II in 1954-55 and form III in 1955-56, thus rendering both primary and middle school education free. The abolition of fees in the high school classes started in 1960-61 when fees

were abolished in form IV (by then designated standard VIII).^{42/} With the abolition of tuition fees in standards IX and X in 1969-70, the entire school education in Kerala, upto the end of the secondary stage, was made totally free.

A landmark in the development of the educational system has been the introduction of the Kerala Education Rules which was introduced in the State Assembly in 1959, after obtaining the assent of the President of India. Simultaneously with the Education Act the then Ministry of Government (the first Communist Ministry headed by Sri.E.M.S.Namboodiripad) also introduced a comprehensive act on Land Reforms. These two Acts enraged the vested interests in the fields of Education and land ownership and led to the emergence of a mighty liberation struggle which finally succeeded in throwing out the Communist Ministry from power. The Education Act was prepared with a view to put an end to the growth of corruption in the appointment of teachers, admission of students and management of schools in the private sector. It will be interesting to examine in some detail the major provisions of the Act.^{43/} They included the following:

- the government may regulate the primary and other stages of education in government and private schools,
- the government may constitute a State Education Advisory Board,
- Managers of private educational institutions should send to government lists of all school properties,

^{42/} The change of the nomenclature from 'class' and 'form' to 'standard' was made with effect from 1957-58, following the formation of the Kerala State. The nomenclature of 'standard' had been in vogue in the Malabar district.

^{43/} The Kerala Education Act, 1958 (Act 6 of 1959). (Superintendent, Government Press, Trivandrum, 1960).

- all fees collected should be deposited with the government,
- the government shall pay the salaries of all teachers in aided schools direct or through the headmasters of the schools concerned,
- the government will prescribe the number of non-teaching establishment in aided schools and their salary will be paid by the government,
- the government may pay maintenance grant to the manager at prescribed rates,
- the government may make grants-in-aid for the purchase, improvement and repairs of any land building or equipment of an aided school,
- the Public Service Commission shall select candidates for appointment as teachers in government and aided schools (section 11),
- the conditions of service relating to scales of pay applicable to teachers of government schools shall apply to all teachers of aided schools,
- no teacher of an aided school shall be dismissed removed or reduced in rank or suspended by the Manager without the previous sanction of the officer authorised by the government in this behalf,
- the government may take over or acquire the management of private school on reasons of mismanagement, or in public interest, on payment of rent or payment of compensation,
- the rules shall not apply to minority schools; and no property of schools shall acquired by government which is used for religious purposes,
- the government may appoint local education authorities who will (1) assess the educational needs of the local area, prepare schemes for educational development and submit them to government, (2) supervise the implementation of the scheme of noon-day feeding of school children and (3) promote conferences, exhibitions and other matters calculated to create among the people an interest in education,
- the government shall provide for free and compulsory education of children throughout the state within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Act,

- the government shall appoint for each area of compulsion or any portion of the area of compulsion, a Local Education Committee, whose duties would be to implement the provisions of the Act in regard to attendance of schools and to ensure that the employment, if any, of children does not interfere with their attendance in schools,
- in every area of compulsion, the guardian of every child shall cause such child to attend a school and once a child has been so caused the child shall be compelled to complete the full course of primary education or the child shall be compelled to attend school till it reaches the age of fourteen,
- in case of failure, the parent of the child shall be punished,
- it shall be the duty of the government to see that noon-day meals, clothing, books, and writing materials are provided for pupils free of cost.

Consequent on the agitations waged against the Act and the fall of the Ministry that it led to, Section 11 of the original Act was amended in 1960 to read ".....nothing in the said Section 11 or in the Kerala Education Rules 1959,.....shall come into operation or shall be deemed to have come into operation until the first day of January 1961".^{44/} Again the following section was substituted for the original section 11 regarding the appointment of teachers in aided schools.".....teachers of aided schools shall be appointed by the managers of such schools from such persons who possess the qualifications prescribed....." Section 12 regarding the conditions of service of

^{44/} The Kerala Education (Amendment) Act, Act 8 of 1960, Kerala Gazette dated 8.7.1960.



aided school teachers was also partially amended and it was laid down that the manager is empowered to suspend teachers for a continuous period not exceeding 15 days.^{45/} Thus the right to make appointment of teachers, which was a source of 'donations' or an opportunity to appoint 'own men', for a large majority of private managements was restored in tact.

At the time of the formation of the Kerala State in 1956, wide disparities existed in the levels of educational development between the Travancore-Cochin region and the Malabar region, the latter lagging behind, at all the stages, particularly in school education. An educational survey conducted by the Department of Education in 1957, threw light on the relative position of the different regions.

In a passing reference to the progress of compulsory education, the Report mentioned that there existed in 1957-58, 1015 compulsory primary schools in the Travancore-Cochin region and 715 compulsory primary schools in Malabar. The compulsory education scheme was not extended in the former region since 1952 and in the latter region since 1956. In view of the number of schools at the primary, middle and secondary stages, Malabar was not behind the rest of the region; however in terms of enrolment it definitely was. A summary Table which gives conclusions at the three stages of school education in the two regions for 1956-57, will make this point clear.

45/ The Kerala Education (Second Amendment) Act, Act 35 of 1956.

46/ Educational Survey of India. State Report for Kerala, 1956-57. (Superintendent, Government Press, Trivandrum) p.52.

Table 3.3

Percentage of Enrolment in School Education to Total Population,
Malabar and Travancore-Cochin, 1956-57

Region	Lower Primary			Upper Primary (Middle)			High (Secondary)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Travancore- Cochin	8.3	7.4	15.6	2.2	1.8	4.0	2.1	1.4	3.5
Malabar	5.8	4.7	10.6	2.1	1.3	3.5	0.8	0.3	1.2

(for calculation of the percentage, 1951 Census population has been taken)

The figures suggest the following observations:

- (a) the enrolment ratio at the lower primary stage in Malabar accounted for only about two-thirds of that in Travancore-Cochin region;
- (b) the enrolment of girls at the lower primary stage was high in the both the regions, but it was higher in the Travancore-Cochin region. In Malabar girls formed about 80 per cent of the boys; while the corresponding proportion in Travancore-Cochin was nearly 90 per cent;
- (c) the middle school stage in Malabar was almost as developed as that in Travancore-Cochin, the only significant difference between them being the ratio of enrolment of girls, which was much lower in the former;
- (d) the development of the high school stage of education in Malabar remained far behind that in Travancore Cochin, both in terms of the enrolment of boys and girls. The enrolment of girls formed only two-thirds of that of boys even in the more advanced region of Travancore-Cochin.

The educational backwardness of Malabar was a common theme of the debates in the Legislative Assembly, policy statement of Ministers and the propoganda machinery of political parties for several years since the

formation of the Kerala State in 1956. Special attention has been devoted by the Government to the narrowing down of educational disparities among the regions during the past quarter of a century and much of the gap has in fact been reduced. The growth in enrolment is reflected in the proportion of the population enrolled in the two regions, see Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

Enrolment at the Lower Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary Stages of School Education, 1979-80

Region	Percentage of Enrolment to total population in		
	Lower Primary School	Upper Primary School	Secondary School
Travancore-Cochin	9.9	6.9	5.8
Malabar	11.3	6.0	3.8

(for calculation of the percentages, Population taken from 1981 Census).

The difference between the percentages in Travancore-Cochin and Malabar, with Malabar showing higher figure, may apparently be surprising. It seems that the difference is due to the lower percentage in total population of children in the school-going age in the former region due to the more intensive effect experienced due to family limitation. As we shall show presently, the enrolment in class I in the entire state of Kerala has remained stagnant, if not slightly falling, since 1972-73. However, as between the two regions, a difference is observed. While in

the Malabar the number has been slightly increasing, there has been a fall in the Travancore-Cochin region. Thus the lower percentage share at the lower primary level for Travancore-Cochin area does not necessarily indicate a lower enrolment ratio.

However, if we compare the percentage of enrolment at the Upper primary and the Secondary stages to enrolment at the primary stages, we find that Malabar is even today behind Travancore-Cochin as is shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Percentage of Enrolment at the Upper Primary and Secondary Stages to Enrolment at the Lower Primary Stage, 1979-80

Region	Enrolment at the Upper Primary stage as per cent of Enrolment at the lower primary stage	Enrolment at the secondary school stage as per cent of enrolment at the lower primary stage
Travancore-Cochin	70.4	58.4
Malabar	53.1	33.5

The enrolment of girls has almost caught up with that boys and it formed in 1982-83 48.8 per cent at the lower primary, 48.1 per cent in the Upper primary and 48.9 per cent at the secondary stages to total enrolment. The same high per centages are observed at the various stages of collegiate education as well, as may be seen from Table 3.6.

Table 3.6
Enrolment in Selected Disciplines at the Higher Stages of
Education in Kerala, 1981-82

Category of colleges	Govt.		Private		Total	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Arts and Sciences colleges	25,763	20,512	110,832	110,532	136,595	131,044
Training colleges	249	412	551	1,580	800	1,992
Engineering colleges	2,781	570	1,882	506	4,663	1,076
Medical colleges (MBBS only)	2,217	1,517	-	-	2,217	1,517
Ayurveda colleges	219	212	164	128	385	340
Law colleges	986	190	341	74	1,327	264

(Economic Review, 1982, op.cit.)

We indicated earlier about the near-stagnation or small decline in standard I in the state during the past ten years due to the fall in the number of children reaching the school-going age each year. The data on enrolment in class I, by districts for a few years since 1972-73 is shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

Enrolment in standard I by Districts, Kerala, 1972-73 to 1979-80

(enrolment in thousand)

Region	Districts	1972- 73	1973- 74	1974- 75	1975- 76	1976- 77	1977- 78	1979- 80
Travancore - Cochin	Trivandrum	63.9	59.5	62.1	61.2	63.6	65.8	58.4
	Quilon	71.8	68.6	69.0	69.4	69.6	71.7	64.0
	Alleppey	59.6	57.0	55.6	53.7	52.8	55.2	50.5
	Kottayam	139.3	133.9	86.6	45.8	44.9	45.7	40.9
	Idukki			19.2	20.3	20.9	23.9	21.7
	Ernakulam			65.6	66.3	65.3	64.5	57.0
	Trichur	76.0	76.2	70.9	72.5	74.5	75.2	65.9
	Total	410.6	395.2	389.0	389.2	391.6	402.0	358.4
Malabar	Palghat	195.9	180.8	52.7	51.4	54.6	58.0	60.2
	Malappuram			69.4	67.0	75.3	75.2	73.3
	Kozhikode	79.4	70.2	74.0	71.9	73.9	74.5	76.3
	Cannanore			74.3	74.7	81.2	84.5	86.5
	Total			275.3	251.0	270.4	265.0	285.0
Kerala		685.9	646.2	659.4	654.1	676.5	694.1	654.7

(Government of Kerala, Statistics for Planning, 1980, State Planning Board Trivandrum, 1980).

After 1979-80, the declining trend in total enrolment in Standard I has continued; for instance in 1980-81, it was 626.0 thousand, in 1981-82, 644.9 thousand and in 1982-83, 626.0 thousand. The year 1972-73 has been taken as the first year in the Table since it was in that year that the government of Kerala followed a policy

of wholesale promotion of pupils every year from standard I to standard II. This policy was followed in the other standards of the school system also with an allowance of about 10 per cent of the strength in a standard as the maximum proportion of pupils who may be denied promotion to the next higher standard.

The enrolment for the years from 1972-73 onwards therefore may be taken to calculate the drop out rates, since grade repetition rates are negligible. The following Table shows the drop out rates calculated on the basis of the progress over the succeeding years of a grade-cohort in standard I in 1972-73.

Table 3.8

Progress of a Cohort in standard I in 1972-73 during the Succeeding years, Kerala

	Pupils (thousand)	No. of drop outs (thous- and)	Rate of drop out from each class (per cent)
Enrolment in Standard I in 1972-73	685.9	-	Not known*
" " II in 1973-74	725.3	20.7	2.95
" " III in 1974-75	704.6	9.8	2.85
" " IV in 1975-76	695.8	69.7	7.93
" " V in 1976-77	626.7	44.7	7.13
" " VI in 1977-78	582.0	13.9	3.25
" " VII in 1978-79	563.1	59.6	10.58
" " VIII in 1979-80	503.5	36.1	7.17
" " IX in 1980-81	467.4	100.9	21.37
" " X in 1981-82	366.5		

(* Enrolment figures are as on the sixth working day each school year. Since admissions are made in standard I during mid-year, within the 15 working days after the Pooja (Dasra) holidays, the enrolment in standard I at the end of the year would be higher than that at the beginning of the year. Figures are not available on the enrolment on the closing date. The excess of enrolment in standard II over that in standard I shown in the Table is due to the mid-year admission in standard I. From these figures it is not possible to find out the number of drop outs from standard I. The rate of drop out from standard I is therefore not shown in the Table. For calculation of the drop out rates in class II to IX the denominator is taken to be enrolment in the respective class.)

From the above figures (and taking enrolment in standard II as the denominator) we find that the total drop outs in standard I to III come to about 4 per cent. There is a heavier order of drop out after completing four years of schooling, and only 86.4 per cent reach standard V; from standard V and VI the drop out rates are again low. Again at the transition from middle school to secondary school (that is from standard VII to standard VIII) there occurs a heavy order of drop out, only about 69 per cent of the original enrolment reaching standard VIII. The magnitude of drop out, from standard VIII is low, but from the following, IX standard, a large number drop out and only about 50 per cent of the original enrolment of 725.3 thousand enter standard X. An earlier study made about the education system in Kerala had shown that at the end of the 1960's out of 100 pupils admitted in standard I, 19.2 per cent of the boys and 10.8 per cent of the girls dropped out before completing standard IV and 45.9 per cent of the boys and 48.4 of the girls dropped out before completing standard VII.^{47/} The drop out rates in the first three years do not seem have come down perceptibly since then; however, the drop out rates including the middle school standard of V and VI have fallen significantly from the levels which existed during the late 1960's. As against more than 40 per cent during the late 1960's, figures furnished in Table 3.8 show that the rate is not more than 11 per cent.

As a result of the rapid expansion of the education system combined with the liberal policies of granting freeships, scholarships and lump sum

^{47/} P.R.Gopinathan Nair, Primary Education, Population Growth and Socio-Economic Change, Allied Publishers Private Ltd, New Delhi, 1981, p.97.

grants to the backward sections of the population, the educational disparities among communities have considerably declined. Similarly the inter-district differences have also been narrowing down quite rapidly in the past few decades. The enthusiastic response to the growing educational facilities received from the weaker sections of the society must also have been due to the implementation of progressive measures which tended to reduce the deprivation of such communities, such as the land reforms. However, the relative contributions made by the forces of demand for and the supply of educational facilities in Kerala cannot be estimated due to want of the required information.

There has been in general a tendency in both the educationally backward and the educationally advanced districts not only to reduce their variations from the all-Kerala average rates of literacy, but also literacy rates of men and women taken separately.

The difference in the literacy rates as between males and females has come down significantly due to the higher order of growth of literacy among females. Table 3.9 shows the rates of literacy among males and females and the inter-sex difference in the rates for the years 1971 and 1981 as well as the growth (in percentage points) during the decade 1971 to 1981.

Table 3.5

District-wise rates of literacy for Males and Females, Kerala
1971 and 1981

State/District	1971			1981			Growth of literacy rate (1971-1981)		
	Literacy rate		Difference in literacy rate between the sexes (percentage points)	Literacy rate		Difference in literacy rate between the sexes (percentage points)	Male	Female	
	Male	Female		Male	Female				
<u>Kerala</u>	<u>66.6</u>	<u>54.3</u>	<u>12.3</u>	<u>75.3</u>	<u>65.7</u>	<u>9.6</u>	<u>6.7</u>	<u>11.4</u>	
Malabar region	Cannanore	63.7	47.1	16.6	72.2	59.5	12.7	8.5	12.1
	Wynad	55.0	39.1	15.9	64.8	51.5	13.3	9.8	12.1
	Kozhikode	67.7	49.9	17.8	76.6	63.8	12.8	8.9	13.0
	Malappuram	55.3	40.8	14.5	65.9	55.3	10.6	10.6	14.5
	Palghat	54.6	39.2	15.4	64.8	51.6	13.2	10.2	12.4
Travencore Cochin region	Trichur	66.4	57.2	9.2	77.3	70.2	7.1	10.9	13.6
	Ernakulam	70.5	60.2	10.3	80.8	72.8	8.0	10.3	12.6
	Idukki	62.2	50.3	11.9	72.2	62.6	9.6	10.0	12.6
	Kottayan	76.2	69.6	6.6	84.0	79.4	4.6	7.8	5.7
	Alleppey	75.2	65.8	9.4	82.1	75.1	7.0	6.9	5.3
	Quilon	70.1	59.8	10.3	78.1	70.2	7.9	8.0	10.4
Trivandrum	68.6	56.5	12.1	75.3	65.9	9.4	8.7	9.4	

Source: Census of India, Series 10, Kerala, Paper 3 of 1981, Final Population Tables, p.36.

We find from the Table that the difference in the literacy rates between males and females is higher among the historically more backward districts of Malabar than in Travencore-Cochin. In absolute terms, again, the literacy rates are higher, particularly among women, in the latter region. Not only the inter-sex difference but also the rural-urban difference in literacy rates has come down sharply; the difference at the state level being only 7 percentage points.

However, the differences are higher for some of the educationally more backward regions, see Table 3.10.

Table 3.10
District-wise Rural - Urban Literacy Rates, Kerala, 1981

State/District	Total			Males			Females			
	Rural	Urban	Differ- ence	Rural	Urban	Differ- ence	Rural	Urban	Differ- ence	
<u>Kerala</u>	<u>69.1</u>	<u>76.1</u>	<u>7.0</u>	<u>74.1</u>	<u>80.1</u>	<u>6.0</u>	<u>64.3</u>	<u>72.2</u>	<u>7.9</u>	
Malabar region	Cannanore	62.9	75.1	12.2	70.0	79.6	9.6	56.0	70.9	14.9
	Wynaad	58.3	-	-	64.8	-	-	51.5	-	-
	Kozhikode	65.9	74.2	8.3	75.6	79.2	3.6	61.8	69.3	7.5
	Malappuram	60.3	62.5	2.2	65.8	67.5	1.7	55.2	57.7	2.5
	Palghat	65.5	71.0	15.5	63.5	76.4	12.9	50.0	65.8	15.8
Travan- pre- cochin region	Trichur	72.2	78.9	6.7	76.0	82.1	6.1	68.7	76.0	7.3
	Kannakulam	75.3	79.2	3.9	79.5	82.7	3.2	71.1	75.6	4.5
	Idukki	67.1	75.1	8.0	71.8	78.5	6.7	62.1	71.5	9.4
	Kottayam	81.5	83.0	1.5	83.8	85.1	1.3	79.2	81.0	1.8
	Alleppey	78.5	78.8	0.3	82.0	82.6	0.6	75.1	75.2	0.1
	Quilon	74.2	73.8(-)	0.4	78.2	77.5(-)	0.7	70.2	70.1(-)	0.1
	Trivandrum	68.8	75.4	6.6	73.9	74.4	0.5	63.9	71.5	7.6

(Census of India, Series 10, Kerala, Paper 3 of 1981), p.36.

Except in Wynaad district which is entirely a rural area, and in Malappuram district in which the literacy rates of both the sexes have risen at comparable rates, the difference between the rural areas and the urban areas in literacy rates is in general higher in the Malabar region. There is in the Travancore Cochin region a district in which levels of literacy are higher, though only marginally, in the rural areas than in the urban areas, a phenomenon unheard of anywhere else in the country. This is another indication of the coverage that the educational system has throughout

the entire area of the state and the little difference that exists between the two areas in terms of the popular ^{demand} for and utilisation of educational opportunities.

Apart from the differences in literacy rates as between men and women, between rural and urban areas and between the Malabar and the Travancore-Cochin regions, another kind of difference is that which exists among the different castes and communities. These differences have also been fast declining. For an example we shall observe the literacy rates among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; see Table 3.11.

Table 3.11
Literacy Rates among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by Districts, Kerala, 1981

State/District	General population			Scheduled Castes			Scheduled Tribes		
	Male	Female	Difference (Percentage points)	Male	Female	Differ- ence (Percen- tage points)	Male	Female	Diff- erence (Per- cent- age points)
Kerala	75.3	65.7	9.6	65.3	49.7	15.6	37.5	26.0	11.5
Cannanore	72.2	59.5	12.7	53.8	40.3	13.5	43.0	23.0	20.0
Wynaad	64.8	51.5	13.3	55.7	40.0	15.7	27.3	14.2	13.1
Kozhikode	76.6	63.8	12.8	69.3	55.4	13.9	26.0	16.9	9.1
Malappuram	65.9	55.3	10.6	54.2	41.5	12.7	19.9	12.9	7.0
Palghat	64.8	51.6	13.2	49.9	34.3	15.6	16.0	8.0	8.0
Trichur	77.3	70.2	7.1	63.5	53.0	12.5	34.3	25.2	9.1
Ernakulam	80.8	72.8	8.0	68.9	57.3	11.6	55.7	49.3	6.4
Idukki	72.2	62.6	9.6	57.8	39.7	28.1	47.2	39.3	7.9
Kottayam	84.0	79.4	4.6	76.3	67.2	9.1	75.7	71.8	3.9
Alleppey	82.1	75.1	7.0	73.7	62.3	11.4	58.7	48.8	9.9
Quilon	78.1	70.2	7.9	63.7	51.8	11.9	53.5	47.0	6.5
Trivandrum	75.3	65.9	9.4	64.4	53.8	10.6	62.9	53.4	9.5

(Census of India, 1981, Series 10, Kerala, Paper 4 of 1981), p.19.

Literacy rates among scheduled castes are not far behind the general rates, both for men and women, but in respect of the scheduled tribes the position is much worse; in the Travancore-Cochin region (except Trichur) the rates are much higher than in the Malabar region. It is to be expected that the scheduled castes would bridge the gap between themselves and the general population in another decade or so; for the scheduled tribes to come up educationally, it may take a much longer time and the process itself may be highly difficult. The relative share of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in total population and school enrolment, for the year 1981, are shown in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12

Percentage of Enrolment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
in Schools to Total Enrolment in Schools, 1981

District	Percentage of SC and ST population to total population		Percentage of SC and ST children enrolled in schools to total school enrolment	
	S.C.	S.T.	S.C.	S.T.
Cannanore Wynaad Kozhikode	5.9	14.2	6.1	1.7
Malappuram	8.7	0.3	8.7	0.2
Palghat	18.4	1.4	13.8	0.5
Trichur	12.4	0.1	12.2	0.1
Ernakulam	8.5	0.1	10.5	0.1
Idukki	13.7	4.0	17.9	4.0
Kottayam	7.0	0.9	11.2	0.9
Alleppey	10.0	0.1	13.3	0.1
Quilon	12.4	0.3	16.0	0.2
Trivandrum	11.0	0.5	14.7	0.6
Kerala	10.0	1.0	11.4	0.7

(Calculated from the Enrolment figures and the population data of the 1981 Census).

The representation of the scheduled tribes is however still lower than their shares in total population; further, their shares fall steeply at the collegiate level. The shares of both Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes progressively decline as one goes from the lower to the higher stages of collegiate education, as will be evident from Table 3.13.

Table 3.13

Proportion of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students at each stage of Collegiate Education, Kerala, 1981

Stage of Education	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe
Pre-degree	9.2	0.5
Degree	4.0	0.3
Post-graduate	3.8	0.3

(Economic Review, 1982, Kerala, State Planning Board, Trivandrum, 1985).

The present education system in Kerala which started in a small way about more than a century and a half ago, has by now developed into a gigantic structure with nearly 7000 lower primary schools, 3000 upper primary schools, 2000 high schools, more than 200 colleges, and half a dozen universities. Teachers in lower primary schools number nearly 75 thousand, in upper primary schools nearly 58 thousand and in high schools around 11 thousand. In colleges, there were about 6.4 thousand teachers in the Arts and Science Colleges alone during 1978-79. Enrolment

at the school stage remains at 56 lakhs of pupils. Annually about 2 lakhs students pass the SSLC examination. Enrolment in Arts and Science Colleges runs into nearly three lakhs. Professional education at the collegiate level also has developed very rapidly during the past three decades.

At all the stages in School and collegiate education (except in the case of professional colleges), the private sector owns and manages the majority of institutions, the entire cost of running the private educational institutions being borne by the government (excluding a few unrecognised and some unaided recognised schools.) See Table 3.14.

Table 3.14
Private
Percentage Distribution of Institutions, Teachers and Enrolment

Schools	Institutions	Teachers	Enrolment
<u>Schools</u>			
Lower Primary	59.2 (1979-80)	74.3 (1979-80)	57.2 (1981-82)
Upper Primary	67.4 (")	64.8 (")	64.7 (")
High Schools	64.5 (")	62.6 (")	61.1 (")
<u>Colleges</u>	73.6 (1982-83)	33.3 (1979-80)	80.6 (1981-82)

- (1. Statistics for Planning, 1980, State Planning Board,
2. Economic Review 1982, Kerala, State Planning Board).

The expenditure on education made by the government has crossed all rational limits; See Table 3.15 for growth in expenditure on education. Fortunately there has been a stagnation in the number of children joining the first year of school. The government could have used this period of respite in the growth of enrolment to cry a halt to the multiplication of institutions at the lower primary level and devoted more attention to the qualitative

improvement of the education system. This however was not to be. The spree of opening hundreds of schools and scores of colleges and raising the stages of and courses of study in colleges, runs unbridled. Most of the institutions sanctioned to be opened happen to be in the private sector. The hold of the private sector on the management of the educational system of the State has become all too powerful. There was a time when the rulers of Travancore had in mind the idea of eliminating the private sector at least from the field of primary education and initiated policies towards the fulfilment of such an idea. It is likely that if the present trend continues several governmental institutions may be wiped out from existence by the private sector, particularly since it is allegedly the more 'efficient'.



Table 3.15

Expenditure on Education, Kerala, 1961-62 to 1982-83

(Selected years)

Year	Population (Lakhs)	Govt. Expenditure on School Education (Rs. crores)	Govt. Expenditure on Education (Rs. crores)	Expenditure on Education per capita (Rs.)	Govt. expenditure per pupil at the	
					Primary stage (Rs.)	Secondary stage (Rs.)
1961-62	173.02	16.82	18.55	10.72	NA	NA
1965-66	189.88	25.23	28.37	14.94	49.30	90.37
1970-71	212.80	52.53	60.12	28.25	85.91	178.23
1975-76	234.80	105.69	128.97	54.93	170.02	361.32
1980-81	253.84	179.66	210.99	83.12	265.24	454.25
1981-82	254.03	207.44 (RE)	246.55 (RE)	97.06	310.31	504.97
1982-83	259.49	226.18 (BE)	267.49 (BE)	103.00	338.38	557.79

NA = Not Available

RE = Revised Estimates

BE = Budget Estimates

Source: Govt. of Kerala, Economic Review, 1982, (State Planning Board, Trivandrum, 1983), P.228.

Chapter 4

Content, Quality and Medium of Education: Some Current Problems

In this chapter, we may make a few observations about the conditions of the educational sector in Kerala in terms of the content, quality and medium of instruction. There exists a widespread belief among educationists and social reform agencies in this state that the educational sector is at present facing a severe crisis of confidence. In general, the education system in Kerala, as perhaps in most other States of India, suffers from serious shortcomings such as the following: the purely literary and general character of the entire school education and most of collegiate education, the introduction of English as the medium of instruction at all stages of school education through the opening of recognised, but unaided, English medium schools, which invariably cater to the elitist sections of society, the policy of the government being followed in recent years of discouraging the opening of government schools and encouraging the opening of private schools, and the reintroduction of the policy of detention of pupils in each year of the school by failing them in annual examinations avowedly to promote the performance level of students. At a time when the government is short of funds for financing education and the education system has already become top heavy, the state is engaged in the opening of new colleges to teach general subjects and in the opening of new universities.

The question of the generalised and literary character of school and a large proportion of collegiate education had attracted the attention

of the educationalists and policy makers in this part of the country right from the early decades of the present century. The problem of educated unemployment had become serious already by 1931. The Travancore Economic Depression Enquiry Committee remarked that with regard to educated unemployment, "not only is it very acute, but it is more acute than in the provinces of British India in which the problem has been investigated". However, it was also held that "Education in itself is not responsible for unemployment. There are a large number of basic conditions not directly connected with education which are responsible for unemployment. The ability of the country suitably and profitably to absorb its educated men and women into the organised professions, industrial and agricultural life of the country, naturally depends mainly on the economic conditions prevailing in the country." ^{47/} The belief seems to have been that when economic conditions improved, the educated unemployed would be readily absorbed into employment. The question of their employability in occupations which required professional skills and training was not considered a serious handicap. The magnitude of unemployment in the State has been rising quite rapidly in the past several decades. According to the latest figures available of the registrants with the Employment Exchanges of Kerala, more than 22 lakhs are unemployed of whom more than 50 per cent possess qualifications of matriculation and above. Kerala has not yet taken up the question of orienting its higher stages of education to suit the manpower requirements of the economy of the state.

A disturbing phenomenon of the recent years in Kerala has been the growth of English medium schools. The government gives permission to private

47/ T.K.Velu Pillai, Travancore State Manual, op.cit. Vol.II, p.63

agencies to open such schools and run them as unaided schools. Enormous amounts are being collected from parents of pupils admitted to such schools by way of 'donations' (which are of course enforced), collected for purposes of constructing school buildings and improving the facilities in schools such as furniture, library, laboratory, etc. Besides, these schools levy prohibitive rates of fees as well. Obviously such schools cater to the education of the better-off sections of society only. In 1979-80, there existed 55 lower primary, 26 upper primary and 57 high schools under this unaided, but unrecognised category. In addition, there were a large number of other unaided, unrecognised schools, awaiting recognition. The growth of such elitist schools, has led to the existence of a dual system of education - one which is generally accessible to all sections of the population and in which instruction is carried out in the Malayalam medium and the other, accessible to only a choice section of the population and in which instruction is made in the English language. In the latter category of schools, education is considered to be more 'efficient' and the pupils in them have in general an edge over the others particularly when it comes to collegiate education, and later entry into jobs. This policy of supporting the English medium, unaided schools runs counter to all the declared policy objectives of the state and the country as a whole.

Kerala has witnessed during the current year the pronouncement by the government withdrawing the sanctioning of about two-hundred schools made a year ago and granting permission to the private managements to open more than two hundred schools. This policy, to the extent it reflects the thinking of the government, is a retrograde step since the objective

that it was supposedly following in the past has been that of strengthening the government sector in the field of education. This stand taken by the government is particularly disturbing since it is well known that for appointments made in private schools and colleges, most managements receive 'donations' which run into several thousands of rupees in each case.

As we had noticed earlier, the education department of Kerala has been following a policy of promoting almost all the pupils in each standard to the next higher standard from the year 1972-73 onwards. This policy has led to the opening to the final year (X standard) of the school system large numbers of pupils who do not possess the educational standard expected of them. The result has been the failure of the majority of pupils appearing for the SSLC examination. It has been reported in the press that the actual pass percentage of pupils who appeared in the SSLC examination in March 1993 was less than 10, and that even with liberal 'moderation' it was not possible to raise the percentage of pass to even as much as 30 per cent. As a remedy to this mass failure at the end of the school system, the government is currently thinking of reintroducing the policy of failing students in each earlier standard, allowing only the really 'deserving' to get promoted. If a decision is made along this line, it is again setting the clock back. One would have expected the government to introduce, instead, arrangements to tone up the teaching in each standard and to arrange for special encouragement to the educationally backward among the pupils.

In order to improve the quality of education in schools, a comprehensive revision of syllabi was introduced in 1977-78 which led to the enormous growth of the learning load of pupils at all levels of school education, particularly at the lower levels. There exists a general complaint against these new syllabi among pupils, parents and teachers. While teachers find it difficult to teach and complete the syllabus within the prescribed time, the students find their load unbearable. The parents have to spend sleepless nights with their wards in helping them with their home work. The system is turning the pupils into a cheerless lot whose faculties get stunted by the enormous work of mugging up. Fortunately the government has decided this year to reduce the work load by revising the syllabi appropriately.

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