

Educational Perspectives In Tamil Nadu Under Karunanithi

Bindhu M.

Ph.D. Research Scholar (Reg. No. 18113161082009)
Department of History and Research Centre
Scott Christian College (Autonomous), Nagercoil – 629 003.
*Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli – 627 012,
Tamil Nadu, India.*

Dr. N. Amutha Kumari

Assistant Professor (Research Supervisor)
Department of History and Research Centre
Scott Christian College (Autonomous), Nagercoil – 629 003.
*Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli – 627 012,
Tamil Nadu, India.*

Abstract

In 1967 Kalaingar Karunanithi became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Since his inception to power he was very particular that educational developments should come to the forefront to highlight the growth of Tamil Nadu. From the primary level upto the collegiate level he concentrated his attentions to bring about progress. He provided free education and large number of schools and colleges were started. Women's education was given priority and backward class communities were given proper representation in admissions. He introduced a new educational policy known as 'Samacheer Kalvi' and was very particular that Tamil Nadu should started first in educational advancements

Keywords: Education, Development, Backward Class, Samacheer Kalvi

Introduction

After the unexpected and premature demise of Arignar Anna, Karunanithi became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1967. As soon as he became the Chief Minister he wanted to improve the quality of the educational standards in Tamil Nadu. As a first step he concentrated his attention in starting many schools. Government funds were sanctioned in large amounts. Karunanithi was much interested in starting schools in villages. Accordingly more schools were started and education was given priority.

Educational Progress

When Karunanithi took up office as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, the educational standard of the people were very low. Though Kamaraj took efforts to improve the quality of education yet the people did not fully cooperate with him. In each and every family in Tamil Nadu, the poor people had their hand to mouth living. The

wages of the workers were very low and full meal could be dreamt of by them only when all the members of the family work.

So the head of the family sent their children to workspots. Many children had to be employed in industries and match factories. If the children did not go to the workspots they had to starve that day. So they had to go to the workspots. In certain villages, the landlords had full control over the villages and they did not even permit the schools to function because if students attended the schools the owners would not get sufficient child labour. If the children were employed it was enough if they were paid low wages. Because of the child labour there were drop outs in schools. Hence many schools remained closed. Education was not available to the poor children. Under these circumstances, Karunanithi assumed charge as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

Karunanithi wanted that in schools drop outs should be completely put an end to. He was very particular that the schools of the students should be located within three miles from the houses of the students. Accordingly in almost all the villages schools were constructed. The students found it easy to attend the schools. The Midday Meal scheme was developed into nutrition meal scheme and nutritive food like eggs were supplied to the students.

Students who did not have anything to eat now got food and hence without any absence whatsoever they attended the schools. The purpose of the government was thus fulfilled. The government gave another concession to the students. Children who are studying in schools are also supplied with free books. Free uniform has also been sanctioned.

Karunanithi followed the two language formula. He insisted that Tamil and English should be compulsorily studied by all the students. English should be the link language between the centre and states. Tamil should be the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. He gave much importance to Tamil language. During his period Tamil was introduced as medium of instruction in colleges. Those students who opt for Tamil medium are given stipend. Thus by providing stipend Tamil medium has been encouraged. He was deadly against the introduction of Hindi in schools and colleges. His aim was if Hindi was introduced in colleges, gradually Hindi would replace Tamil and Tamil would lose its importance.

Young children who are coming to the schools far away from the locations of the schools found it very difficult to walk all the way long to the schools. So Karunanithi introduced a scheme of providing cycles to all the school going children.

In colleges poor children found it very difficult to pay the college fees. Hence Karunanithi permitted fee concession. Those students who belonged to the Backward Classes were allowed half fee concession and those students who belonged in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were provided with full fee concessions. Many poor children had to come a long way from their houses. For such children hostels were built by the government. Adi Dravida Hostels had been organized throughout Tamil Nadu and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students are accommodated free of cost.

In admissions also backward class students were given 32 per cent and scheduled and scheduled tribes have been allotted 19 per cent and the rest is allotted for open competition. In appointment also this kind of reservation has been followed.

The government has started a teacher recruiting Board known as Tamil Nadu Recruitment Board. The Board conducts examinations and highly qualified teachers are appointed.

Women students have also been given importance. Free education has been provided to the women students. The first born if not a graduate, full consideration and financial assistance have been permitted.

Karunanithi was not only interested in the development of school education alone but he was also much interested in the development of University education as well. As a first measure he started a law University. In the law University he was very particular to admit both women and men. For a long time low caste people especially women were to be admitted. The law University which was started by him came to be known as Dr. Ambedkar University. This University is the first of its kind.

There was a demand from the people that a University should be started. In order to fulfil the expectations of the people Karunanithi took steps to start a University. Accordingly he started the Periyar University. He was much interested in the development of Urdu language also. For the development of Urdu language he started an academy known as Urdu Academy.

He was much interested in the smooth career of the students of Tamil Nadu. For providing proper guidance to the students he started a new scheme. This new scheme organized by Karunanithi came to be known as "Vazhvoli Thittam". This organization was much particular about guiding the future of the students. Students were given the chance of planning their future. In addition to this computer was also imparted to the students. Computer experts were appointed in schools and colleges to give training to the students in computer applications. As a consequence the future of the students have been highly developed.

The appreciable reform which Karunanithi introduced was to provide justice at easy access. For a long time the people had experienced hardships over getting judgments. For a long time the State had the High Court only at Madras. People of the Southern districts of Tamil Nadu found it very difficult to go to Chennai to approach the High Court. It was a hard task for the poor people to get their grievances redressed. So there was a constant demand that a branch of the Madras High court should be started at Madurai. Accordingly Karunanithi organized a branch of the Madras High Court at Madurai. Because of the starting of the branch of the Madras High Court poor people can have easy access to justice. This was the prominent step taken by Karunanithi to redress the grievances of the poor people.

Karunanithi was very particular that low caste people should be employed in government services. So he brought in the gradation system on the basis of the backward class. Thus he was championing the cause of the backward class students also.

The low caste people had poor income, so they were unable to educate their children beyond graduate level. In order to encourage the high level education to the low caste people, Karunanithi was interested in providing financial assistance to the people. The Government was much interested in developing the Harijan Welfare Department. Loans to the poor children in schools and colleges were advanced only through the Harijan Welfare Department. The students who were in need of money for higher studies were advanced loans. In certain cases loans advanced by the Government had to be paid in easy instalments. In certain cases if the children were found to be more deplorable, the entire loan were specified not to be refunded.

In addition to this, through Harijan Welfare Department, scholarships have been advanced. The scholarships are beneficial to the students to pay off their college fees and to buy books. There is still another system of providing scholarships to the poor students who are staying in the hostels.

Many students who are coming from the villages do find it very difficult to go to school. So they seek admissions in hostels. The Harijan Welfare Department provides scholarships to these poor children and students in colleges staying in the hostels. The poor children are thus benefitted in two ways. The Harijan Welfare Department provides scholarships and at the same time the Government has organized free hostels. Thus the poor children become financially sound when they undergo their education. In addition to the scholarships to the poor children, the Adivasi children are also benefitted. They have fee concession, they are provided with books and they have free accommodation in hostels. Through these processes, Karunanithi had encouraged the depressed classes to undergo higher education. Because of the encouragement given by Karunanithi, poor children, low caste people and Adivasi children are educated and placed at very high levels.

Thus Karunanithi had been enhancing educational system in various ways. Recently he introduced a scheme known as “Samacheer Kalvi” which means equal education to all. There would not be any discrimination in the syllabi of the Matriculation schools and Government Higher secondary education. Best before any they could be achieved Karunanithi passed away.

Conclusion

The educational system in Tamil Nadu was highly developed during the period of Karunanithi. Equal representations was given to all to continue their studies. Poor and neglected pupils also got the chance of undergoing education. Women who were in early stages not permitted to go to the schools, now attended the schools in large numbers. Thus Karunanithi championed the cause of education in Tamil Nadu. Today Tamil Nadu stands first in educational standards. The credit of enhancing the state on educational lines goes to Chief Minister Kalam Karunanithi.

During the early period low caste people were not considered either for education or for employment. Karunanithi was very particular that low caste people should be employed in high posts. For this purpose he introduced free education to the low caste people and they were made fit to compete the public service commission examinations

and in due course a sizeable section of the low caste people were employed in high posts. Hence Karunanithi is acclaimed as the guardian of the low caste people.

REFERENCES

1. Rajayan, K., *History of Tamil Nadu*, Madurai, 1982, p.302.
2. Vijayalekshmi, E., “Introduction of Western Education and its Impact on Tamil Society”, Paper presented to the Tamil Nadu History Congress, August 7, 2017, p.211.
3. Lawrence, V., *History of Catholic Church in Kanyakumari District*, Nagercoil, 2002, p.172.
4. Tamil Nadu State Administrative Report 1967-1968, Madras, 1969, p.209.
5. Saraswathy, S., *Minorities in Madras State*, Chennai, 1974, p.10.