

Educational System

of the

Ancient Tamils

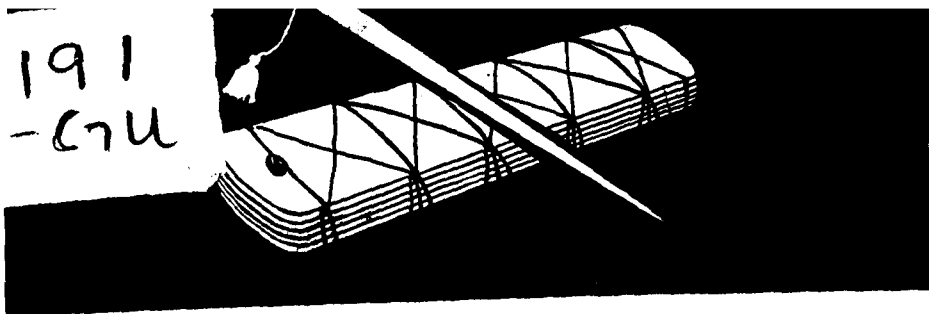
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EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



THE ANCIENT
TAMILS

JAYA KOTHAIR PILLAI

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Educational System of The Ancient Tamils



BY

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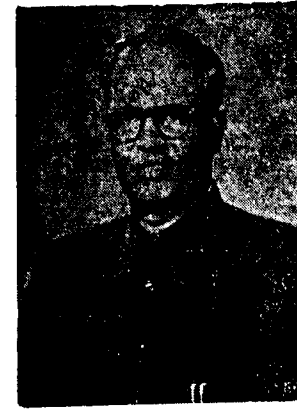
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Foreword

The ancient Tamils had many cultural, social and political institutions. There are many evidences in Tamil literature to show the interest evinced by the ancient society in the educational field. The author, Mrs. J. K. Pillai, M.A., M.Ed., has culled all these evidences and presented them herein in a very interesting form. She has clearly brought out the aims and the ideals of the ancient Tamils and has given all the available particulars in regard to their conceptions and curriculum. A separate chapter has been devoted to women's status and their education. The author has aptly shown how in those times temples served as formal educational agencies and as centres of mass media. Her approach to the subject is scientific and the treatment scholarly. I hope this valuable work will serve as a source of inspiration to all interested in education.

M. Varadarajan,
16-11-'72.

Appar Achakam, Madras-1.(I/2)

Preface

Quite a number of books have been written on 'Education in Ancient India' by eminent scholars like Altekar, Das, Bokil and Keay. It is only Keay who has given some space to 'Education in South India'. He mentions "There was in ancient times in South India a system of education connected with Tamil Culture as distinguished from the Aryan Culture which come from North India.....But what forms such educational system had, how widespread they were and what classes they influenced has not yet been ascertained. This is a subject which awaits investigation by careful Tamil Scholars" (F. E. Keay-A History of Education in India and Pakistan, 1959. p. 179)

This statement, while as a student of History of education inspired me to inquire and study all material—literary and religious - available both in Tamil and in English translation.

In the following pages, an attempt has been made to give an authentic picture of the educational system of the ancient Tamils—its philosophy, aims, ideals, agencies, curriculum, teachers, students and merits.

The history is traced upto about the 13th century and, how this system remained unchanged till the advent of the British rule, is shown.

I hope this book would be useful to all students of education of the Southern Universities as well as to the general reader interested in education.

The author is indebted to the many scholars whose works have been referred to, both in original and in translation.

I am very much encouraged by the foreword to this publication from Dr. M. Varadarajan, Vice-Chancellor, Madurai University.

The author wishes to record here, her appreciation of the valuable suggestions and great cooperation extended by the publishers.

MEKOSA
Furz Bank
Kodaikanal.

J. K. PILLAI (Mrs.)
29—11—'72

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

(Indus Valley Culture - Antiquity of The Tamils)

Thousands of years ago, most probably during the 4th and 3rd millenium B. C. a skilled colourful civilization bustled in the Indus river basin. From the archaeological evidences of the twin centres of the Indus civilization, Harappa and Mohenjodaro, we find that the inhabitants could write; but what little of their writings have been found, we have not been able to decipher yet. The physical remains of the towns and the artifacts that have been excavated reveal that a well ordered highly civilized people lived there, with all amenities of life, like substantial homes with bath rooms, wide streets, efficient drainage, graceful potteries, precious personal jewellery, abundant beautiful toys for their children and household tools of copper and bronze. Cotton and wheat were grown and a lively trade flourished; seals exquisitely carved with figurines were used for business and probably religious purposes.

The conventional scripts and numerals, standard weights and measures, decorative art of squares and circles intersecting each other—all these prove the very high development of knowledge of mathematics. The elaborate techniques of glazing and use of alloys for household tools point to their knowledge of chemistry. Cotton weaving, use

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of baked bricks, boats and sails, carts with solid wheels, the high level of public and private sanitation as shown in the drainage and sewage system—all these confirm the very efficient planning and control of some powerful central authority and the high development of arts and crafts. The seals proving Mother Goddess worship, Siva cult, Tree worship, Snake cult point to their development in religious sphere. The conclusion is that a prosperous, resourceful, cultured people lived over a few thousand years ago in the northern regions of our land.

Who were the authors of this civilization? What connection did they have with the contemporary Sumerian and Egyptian civilization? Was the decay of this civilization due to natural causes like floods and fire or the Aryan invasion? Were these people the Pre-Aryan inhabitants of our Land? Were they the Dravidians who retreated southwards into Tamilnadu in the face of the onslaught of the Aryans? The skeletal remains discovered in the streets of Mohenjodaro during its last phase reveal a close affinity on one hand with certain skulls from Ur and Kish in Mesopotamia and on the other hand, with skulls from the ancient cemetery at Adichanallur in South India and with the Veddas in Ceylon. The anthropological evidences are inadequate and meagre to prove conclusively that the Indus valley people were the predecessors of the people of Tamilnadu. But there seems to be a marked similarity in several important facts of life between the authors of Indus valley culture and the ancient Tamils. The worship of the Lingam, the Siva cult, Mother Goddess worship, Tree worship, presence of the 'Spear' or 'Vel' in abundance, importance given to the bull, the sea-faring nature of the people—all these common features, as distinct from the Aryan culture lead us to believe that the people of Indus valley must have retreated southwards and settled in what is today known as

Tamilnadu. That they left notable marks in the course of their migration, is established by the survival of Dravidian vocables in the place names of North India and the preservation of Dravidian speech and culture left in the north among the Bruhais of Baluchistan, Mal and Sauria-paharis in Rajmahal hills, Oraons of Chota Nagpur and Gonds and Khonds of Orissa. The recent findings by research workers like Pentti Aalto and Asko Parpola of the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies trying to interpret the Indus inscriptions on the basis of traditional Tamil astronomy, where the pictograph fish is used to mean both fish and stars and planets, may in the near future, conclusively confirm the link between the Indus valley people and the ancient Tamils.

Antiquity of the Tamils :

Whether the Tamils migrated from the Indus valley to the south or whether they were the original inhabitants of South India which extended southwards to include a big land space called Lemuria, whether they were of Mediterranean stock who came into India from some original homeland in the islands of Aegean Sea, we do not know and conclusive evidence is awaited still.

But, what has been proved by archaeological excavations and confirmed by internal as well as foreign evidences is that long before the Christian era, in South India, lived a highly cultured sea-faring people having trade connections with the rest of the world, with established kingdoms, a highly developed literature and much artistic skill.

That the Tamils had a very powerful commercial intercourse with Egypt and Babylon by way of sea sometimes during the 3rd millenium B. C. is proved by the detection of products like indigo, tamarind, teak and muslin

in the tombs of Egypt. The king of Egypt Sesostris, in 2000 B. C. refers to the building of a canal to connect the Nile with the Red Sea so that the ships of the Pandyas could go as far as the Nile. We are told that the booty which the Pharaoh carried in his vessel to Egypt included elephant's teeth, gold, precious stones, sandal wood, ivory, ebony, peacock, monkeys and spices.

In the Bible, there is evidence of Indian trade in the mention of articles like ivory, ebony, peacock which formed part of the merchandise carried by Solomon's ship about 1000 B. C. These specifically Indian products, rice, peacock and sandal wood were known to the Greeks and Arabs by their Tamil names, rice or arisi known as oryza, peacock or thokai referred to as 'toki' in the Hebrew Bible, and sandal wood or ahil mentioned as 'ahalim' and 'almug' by the Greek author Sophocles in the 5th century B. C.²

The later South Indian trade with Rome, which developed between the times of Augustus and Nero had its chief centres at the Chola capital 'Pumpuhar' and Pandya capital 'Korkai'. Strabo, an Asiatic Greek in his 'Geographica' of 1st century A.D. mentions an embassy which was sent to Augustus on his accession by the Pandya king.³

Pliny the elder in 77 A.D. in his encyclopedic Natural History describes the port 'Baraka' the Tamil 'Korkai' as the centre of pearl trade. Ptolemy's Mathematical Geography of 150 A.D. which determined the latitude and

1. A. D. Pusalkar - The Cultural Heritage of India - Vol I p. 155. (Cultural inter relation between India and the outside world before Asoka). 1958.

2. Ibid., p. 149.

3. K. A. Nilakanta; Shastri - History of South India p. 26, p. 112.

longitude of various places has included 'Miziris' of the Chera kingdom, Puhar of the Cholas and Madurai and Cape Comerin of the Pandyas.¹ Thus there is enough evidence to prove that trade between the Tamil kings and the Mediterranean countries, Greece and Rome continued to thrive during the early Christian era. The references in Sangam literature to Yavana Greeks and Roman palace guards² has now been confirmed conclusively by the Roman coins found at the sites.

Connections with North India :

That the fame of the Tamil kings was recognised in the north of the Vindhya is proved by various references in Sanskrit literature. Valmiki in his Ramayana refers to the ancient Pandya capital 'Kapadapuram' as Kavadam. In Vyasa's Mahabharatha, there is mention of Chera, Chola and Pandya kings among the kings who attended the 'Raja Suyas Yaga' of Dharmaputra. According to the Tamil classic Purananooru, the Chera king 'Neduncheralathan' fed the armies of the Bharatha war. In Kautilya's Artha Sastra, of 4th century B.C. there is mention of the quality of pearls traded by the Pandyas at 'Kavadam'. We have references to the Cholas in Panini's works of 400 B.C. and to the Pandyas in Katyayana's Vyakarna. Patanjali refers to Kanchipuram and its fame in his Sutra of 150 B.C.³

Asokan inscription of 200 B.C. recognises the independent kingdoms of Chera, Chola and Pandya and says that missionaries were sent to Tamilnadu for the spread of Buddhism.

1. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai - History of Tamil Language and Literature.

2. Purananooru, Silappathikaram.

3. M. R. Adaikalasamy (1960) - Tamil Ilakkiya Varalara pp. 2 - 3.

Bishop Caldwell proves that the cultural world presented by the Tamil linguistic palaeontology gives a fairly high background of civilization which can be compared with what has been unearthed at Mohenjodaro by giving a sketch from words in use among the early Tamil land:

"The Tamils had a 'Ko' = King; they lived in 'Kottai' = forts. They had 'Pulavar' = Poets who recited 'Seyyul' = Verses at Thiruvizha = functions. They acknowledged existence of God Ko = the big King, and they created in His honour, 'Koil' = God's house. They had Urs = towns, 'pettai' = county and 'thoni, padaku, Ootum, 'Kappal' = small canoes to big ships. They had 'palli' = school and all arts of life as 'neythal' = weaving, 'nool' = spinning thread, 'niram' = dying existed among them. They were well acquainted with 'Velanmai' = agriculture. They wrote their scripts 'eluthu' = alphabets on 'olai' = palm leaves and they called this 'edu' = manuscript. They delighted in wars with Vel = spear, Vil = bow, 'ambu' = arrow and Val = sword. They were acquainted with all planets. They associated the various planets with their colours; the bright star Venus was called Velli min or Silver star, Red star Mars was called 'Cey min'. Black star Saturn was called meymen and Golden star Jupiter, Pon-min.¹

Learned scholars like S. K. Chatterjee² and R. K. Mukerji³ have pointed out how the ancient culture

1. P. T. Srinivasa Ayengar - Pre - Aryan Tamil Culture (1924) quoted from Caldwell's A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian languages 1913. pp. 113-4.

2. S. K. Chatterjee - 'Contributions from Different Language groups. The Cultural Heritage of India 1959 Vol II pp. 83-84.

3. R. K. Mukerji - Hindu Civilization.

of the Tamils had contributed a great many elements of paramount importance in the evolution of Hindu Civilization in the religious, ideological, linguistic and material spheres.

F. E. Keay¹ says "There was, in ancient times in South India a system of education connected with Tamil culture as distinguished from the Aryan culture which came from North India. This is emphasised by the existence in early days of Tamil Geometrical works and highly developed poetry and other evidences of cultural activities".

We shall now see this system of education which contributed to the culture of the Tamils from the available literary sources.

1. F. E. Keay - A History of Education in India and Pakistan 1959. pp. 179.

CHAPTER II

A Survey of the Literary Sources

Sangam literature	300 B.C.	Saiva literature	600 A.D.
Epic literature	600 A.D.	Vaishnava literature	1000 A.D.
		Commentaries, grammar books	

Literature is usually said to be the autobiography of mankind; the life, thought and aspirations of the people are portrayed in the literature they produce. The literature of Sangam age portrays a real, true, vivid pen picture of the life of the people. The earliest extant literature available today is the ancient Tamil Grammar called the 'Tholkappiam' generally assigned to 3rd century B.C. According to popular belief, academies later called Sangams, were established by Pandya kings more than 3000 years ago, which consisted of learned scholars whose function was to set standards for Tamil literature and scrutinize and approve of new works produced by scholars. The third and the last Sangam is said to have been in existence till 300 A.D. Tholkappiam, the grammar book is assigned to the middle or second Sangam, all the other earlier works of 1st and 2nd Sangam having been lost by fire, floods and ravages of time. According to Bishop Caldwell¹

1. Bishop Caldwell - A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages - 1918. pp. 113 - 4.

"whatever antiquity may be attributed to Tholkappiam, it must have been preceded by many centuries of literary culture". That a conscious literary tradition, the highest stage in the development of literature, had already been achieved by the time of Tholkappiam, proves that many centuries developing this literary culture must have preceded. The reference of the author of Tholkappiam to previous treatises is clear when he says 'scholars before me have said so'.¹ The later commentaries have referred to many works by Sage Agastya, some names of works like Paripadal, Mudu Kuruku, Mudu Narai as belonging to first Sangam and 'Kali' 'Kuruku, Vendalai' as belonging to 2nd Sangam confirm that much of Tamil literature previous to Tholkappiam have been lost.

Tholkappiam :

This earliest Grammar book is in three parts; the first part dealing with orthography and phonetics, second dealing with etymology and morphology and the third with the subject matter of poetry, prose and rhetoric. This book lays down rules of different kinds of poetic compositions which must have been deduced from examples furnished by the best authors whose works were in existence. The third section, Porulathikaram which lays down rules for literary composition gives us a very good insight into the land, life and customs of the ancient Tamils.

Pathuppattu, Ettuththogai :

The main bulk of what is known as Sangam literature comprises the collections of the Ten Idylls known as Pathuppattu and the eight anthologies known as Ettuththogai.

The songs included in the ten idylls are:—

1. Tholkappiam - 'தொல் காப்பியம்'.

¹ Thirumuruhatruppadai	Pattinappalai
Porunaratrappadai	Kurinjippattu
Sirupanatrappadai	Mullaippattu
Perumpanatrappadai	Nedunalvada
Malaipadukadam	and Maduraikkanchi

The anthologies collected in Ettu Thogai² are

Ainkurunooru	Kaliththogai
Kurunthogai	Purananooru
Natrinnai	Pathitru Pathu
Ahananooru	and Paripadal

In all Sangam literature, we find two broad divisions, namely Aham and Puram. Aham treats of the theme of love and Puram, the theme of war. The songs dealing with Aham tell us about the pleasanter aspects of the life of the people, the flora, fauna, occupational, recreational, aesthetic habits of the people and the love life of the people. The Puram division is a perfect mine of information regarding the political and social aspects of life; life of kings, princes, the chieftains, their administration, military traditions and arts of war.

Pathinen Kilkkannakku: The eighteen minor works so called because they are comparatively small in size and in Sutra like short poetic aphorism. They belong to different dates and they mostly emphasize moral virtues and

1. திருமுருகாற்றுப் படை	சிறுபாணாற்றுப் படை
பொருநராற்றுப் படை	பெரும்பாணாற்றுப் படை
மலைபடு கடாம்	முல்லைப் பாட்டு
பட்டினப்பாலை	நெடுநல் வாடை
குறிஞ்சிப் பாட்டு	மதுரைக் காஞ்சி
2. ஐங்குறுநூறு	கலித்தொகை
குறுந்தொகை	புறநானூறு
நற்றிணை	பதிற்றுப்பத்து
அகநானூறு	பரிபாடல்

ethical maxims. The giant literary work and the earliest of this collection is the sacred Kural called Thirukkural.

Thirukkural: It is a code of morals expressed in poetical aphorisms. It has been referred to as the typical Tamil common scripture and generally placed in the 1st century B.C. Rev. Pope says about this Kural "One of the highest and purest expressions of human thought. Its author addresses himself without regard to castes, peoples or beliefs, to the whole community of mankind. The greatest Tamil classic author who has sung of so many topics touching all things with poetic grace. Kural is the perfect and most elaborate work of one master"¹

Some other works belonging to the eighteen minor works which throw light on the life and culture of the people are Naladi, Thirikadugam, Yeladi, Pazhamozhi, Sirupanchamoolam, Iniyavai Narpadu, Mudumozhikkanchi etc.² All these works seem to have been composed in the next five hundred years since Valluvar's time.

Epic Literature:

As the influence of Buddhism and Jainism increased in the early Christian era, and as the monks established monasteries and spread their religions, and as royal patronage was extended to their activities, we find literature being produced in epic style. The first epic 'Silappathikaram'³ glorifies chastity and this work gives us a very

1. Sami Chidambaranar - Valluvar Vazhnda Tamilakam as quoted from Rev. Dr. G.U.Pope's preface to 'The Kural'.

2. நாலடி	சிறுபஞ்ச மூலம்
திரிகடுகம்	இனியவை காற்பது
ஏலாதி	முதுமொழிக் காஞ்சி.

பழமொழி

3. சிலப்பதிகாரம்

good picture of people's customs, habits, religion and fine arts of the time.

The second epic 'Manimekhalai'¹ presents the ideal of renunciation through a heroine who embraces Buddhism. This epic deals with the philosophical doctrines of Buddhism. Both these epics are ascribed to any time between 200 A.D. to 500 A.D.

Bhakti Literature: 500—1,200 A.D.

In the period that followed, there was a struggle for supremacy between Jains and Buddhists on one hand and Saivaites and Vaishnavaites on the other and this resulted in the devotional hymns of the Nayanmars and the Alvars. The outstanding characteristics of the literature is that all these works, in easy Tamil, set to music, brought religion and education to the door of this common man. The language was enriched by the assimilation of more Sanskrit words, lost its archaic character and truly a renaissance in religion as well as literature was brought about.

The Jains of this period composed works called minor epics, Jivaka Chinthamani² Choolamani³ and Neela Kesi⁴. Poetess Avvai's crisp wise sayings of Athi Choodi, Kontrai Vendan, Nalvazhi and Muthurai of the 9th century express in simple language, the ethical and social conventions of the time.

Sanskrit epics came to be translated as continuation of the Bhakti cult and the monumental work of Kambar's 'Kamba Ramayanam' was composed.

Grammar books like Divakaram⁵, Neminatham⁶, and Nannul⁷ were written; Nannul is a very informative

1. மணிமேகலை 2. சிவக சிந்தாமணி 3. சூலாமணி
4. நீலகேசி 5. திவாகரம் 6. நேமிநாதம் 7. நன்னூல்

work regarding education, teachers, teaching and qualities of students.

Commentaries on Tholkappiam, collected works of the poetess Avvai, historical accounts of Chola Kings like Raja Raja Cholan Ula¹, Vikrama Cholan Ula² Kulothunga Cholan Ula³, war songs like Kalingathu Parani⁴ written during this period give us some information regarding the life of the Tamils during the Chola reign.

1. ராஜ ராஜ சோழனுலா 2. விக்ரம சோழனுலா
3. குலோத்துங்க சோழனுலா 4. கலிங்கத்துப் பரணி

CHAPTER III

Life and Philosophy of the Ancient Tamils

(Aims - Virtues - Ideals - Land - Occupation)

"The general impression given by the early Sangam literature is one of social harmony, general contentment and happiness."¹ There seems to be an abundance of the necessities of life and a brisk inland and maritime trade. The life of the people seems to be simple but by no means devoid of joy and happiness.

The country was divided into four main regions; pastoral region called Mullai, hilly region called Kurinji, arable land called Marutham and the coastal belt, Neydal. The dreary waste called Palai seems to have been added later. Each one of the five-fold region had its own occupation, fauna, flora, music and arts. The Mullai people were engaged mainly in cattle breeding and tapping of other forest wealth. The Kurinji inhabitants were essentially hunters who also accumulated hill wealth. The Marutham people were primarily agriculturists who were also engaged in weaving. The Neydal people living near the coasts concentrated on fishing, boat-building, salt-breeding and trade. Thus we find division of society was on the basis of occupation, very similar to the Greek Society of those days.

1. A Comprehensive History of India II p. 59
(Orient Longmans)

Each land had its own chieftains and in course of time, the chief of the most fertile Marutham land conquered the rest and brought them into a kingdom. We hear of three main kingdoms besides the many hill chieftains. The Cholas ruled in the eastern region, the Cheras in the west and the Pandyas in the south. The limits of Tamilnadu as quoted in the Sangam classics are Vengadam in the north, Kumari in the south and the east and west bound by the seas.

The principal occupation of the people became agriculture. Several poets have sung on the nobility of the agricultural profession. Thiruvalluvar in his Kural, has devoted an entire chapter to the glories of agriculture as occupation and virtues of independence and hospitality of the cultivator. Cattle breeding, weaving, spinning, carpentry and other skilled arts were all well developed during the Sangam age.

We come across a number of references in Sangam literature to wandering minstrels called 'Panar', 'Porunar' and the women dancers called 'Viraliyar' who were frequent visitors at the courts of kings and chieftains.

We mentioned that generally, people were grouped according to the regional and occupational basis; but we can easily see that even during the age of Tholkappiam, the basic beginning of the four-fold caste system of the Aryans with inherent superior, inferior status and untouchable unapproachable characteristics creeping into society. In the Sangam literature, we see the conflicts, the fights the learned Tamil poets were putting up against the division of mankind into various categories and emphasising the universality of the educated men. The striking message by the Mathematician poet, Kanlan Pungunranar in Purananooru

"To us all towns are one
All men our kins

Life's good comes not from others' gifts
Nor ill, men's Pains and Pains' relief
Are from within "1

clearly depicts the social philosophy—the concept of universal brotherhood of the ancient Tamils.

Valluvar in his Kural also echoes the same idea when he says that equal all are in birth; distinction is achieved by men's own deeds.

"All men that live are one in circumstances of birth
Diversities of works give each his special worth "2

Poet Nakkirar in Purananooru confirms the same philosophy of universalism when he asks that, when all we need to survive as human beings is a measure of rice and two pieces of cloth, where is the need for differences in birth?3

Pazhamozhi of eighteen minor works, says that wherever an educated person goes, he will not find the new country strange and the countries also would not hesitate to accept him; so where is the need to take his provisions with him.4

1. Puram 192 Translation by Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope
"யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர்
திதும் நன்றும் பிறிதர வாரா
தேர்தலும் தணிதலும் அவற்றோ ரன்ன
சாதலும் புதுவது அன்றே"—கணியன் பூங்குன்றனார்
2. Kural 972
"பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா உயிர்க்கும் சிறப்பொவ்வா
செய்தொழில் வேற்றுமை யான்."
3. Puram 189 : 5
"உண்பது நாழி உடுப்பவை பிரண்டே
பிறவும் எல்லாம் ஓரொக் கும்மே."
4. Pazhamozhi 117
"ஆற்றவும் கற்றார் அறிவுடையார்; அக்துடையார்
காற்றிசையும் செல்லாத நாடிக்கை; அக்தாடு
வேற்று நாடாகா; தமவே யாம். ஆயினால்
ஆற்றணு வேண்டுவ தில்."

That an educated person is above all differences and narrow prejudices and education is a valuable means to bring about universal brotherhood is brought out in almost all the literature from Sangam age to present day. Valluvar asks why is it that people do not take to life long study when it is known that an educated person would be welcome in any town in any land.1

Appar, the learned Nayanar who lived during the 7th century A.D. warns the people against caste, creed and religious differences and exhorts them to become one with God.2

Avvai in her Nalvazhi of about 900 A.D. reiterates the futility of division of society into the four-fold caste system. She says that there are only two castes; "noble are those who give and low are those who give not."3

She continues to say that an educated man would be honoured not only in his land but wherever he goes; so when you compare the learned with the king the learned rises higher than the king as the king is a king but in his

1. Kural 397
"யாதானும் நாடாமால் ஊராமால் என்னொருவன்
சாந்துணையும் கல்லாத வாறு."
2. Thevaram, Appar 5 : 604
சாத்தி ரம்பல பேசும் சழக்கர்காள்
கோத்திர மும்குல மும் காண்டு என்செய்விர்
பாத்தி ரம்சிவம் என்று பணிதி ரீரல்
மாத்தி ரைக்குள் அருளும்மாற் பேரரே.
3. Nalvazhi 2
சாதி இரண்டொழிய வேறில்லை சாற்றுங்கால்
நீதி வழுவா நெறிமுறையின்—மேதனியில்
இட்டான் பெரியோர் இடர்தார் இழிகுலத்தோர்
பட்டாங்கில் உள்ள படி.

land whereas the wise commands honour from all the other lands.¹

Thus we find that socialistic aspect of life, concept of living harmoniously relegating minor differences of caste, creed and religion to the background is emphasised as the philosophy of life.

Religion :

We have already seen how the land was divided into five main regions and each region had its own peculiar food, occupation, music, arts and worship. The hilly people worshipped the ever youthful handsome Murugan, the pastoral region honoured the Sky God 'Vinnu' Sanskritized as Vishnu, the coastal people worshipped the Rain God Varuna, the people of fertile land bent on expanding their kingdom worshipped the War God 'Indira' and mother Goddess 'Kotravai' worship mainly in Palai but was known everywhere. Besides these, great importance was given to honouring the Fallen soldiers by installing Memorial stones or Hero stones and worshipping them, there was the cult of snake worship, lingam worship, worship of a stump of wood called 'Kandu' and worship of nature in the form of rivers, hills, trees, Sun and Moon. We hear of idol worship, puja performed in temples as well as performance of Yagas and sacrifices performed to Gods. Sanctity of the lamp is recognised and worshipping of the lamp at dusk is also mentioned.

There were Jain Pallis and Buddhist Chaityas. With all these it is very significant that Tholkappiam speaks of

1. Moothurai 26

மன்னனும் மாசறக் கற்றோனும் சீர்தூக்கின்
மன்னனிற கற்றோன் சிறப்புடையன்—மன்னனுக்குத்
தந்தை மல்லாற் சிறப்பில்லை, கற்றோர்க்குத்
சென்றவிட மெல்லாஞ் சிறப்பு.

'Kadavul' signifying a supreme force, transcendental being pervading all universe. So a mature conception of monotheism had already emerged during the Sangam age, at the same time, various types of religious worship co-existed side by side.

The aim of life was to attain God's feet thus achieving the state of birthlessness. Kural says,

" They only pass of all who swim
The sea of birth who cleave to Him "¹

To attain this state of birthlessness, Valluvar says one has to lead a life of self control; learning would lead to God's feet as God is supreme knowledge.

" No boasted greatness is so high
As those who self, by rule, deny."²

" The learning's vain that does not fall
At his good feet; who knowest all "³

Realization of God through self realization is the ultimate aim of life and education. Self realization would lead to 'birthlessness'.⁴

1. Kural 10.

பிறவிப் பெருங்கடல் நீந்துவர் நீந்தார்
இறைவ னடிசேரா தார்.

2. Ibid., 21.

ஒழுக்கத்து நீந்தார் பெருமை விழுப்பத்து
வேண்டும் பனுவல் துணிபு.

3. Ibid., 2.

கற்றதனா லாய பயனென்கொல் வாலறிவன்
கற்றான் தொழாஅ ரெனின்.

4. Ibid., 356

கற்றின்று மெய்ப்பொருள் கண்டார் தலைப்படுவர்
மற்றின்று வாரா நெறி.

According to the Tamils, self-realization is possible, goal of life can be achieved, in and through living an ordinary life of a householder, facing trials and tribulations and yet enjoying the pleasures of family life.

We have a very pleasing pen picture of a house-holder enjoying the charm of domestic life surrounded by his wife and children, the prattle of the children being sweeter than the music of the Panars' 'Yal' in Ainkurunooru, one of the eighteen minor works.¹ The Tamils believed in enjoying life, yearned for wealth, health, love, children, stable family life, guided, regulated and controlled by the principles of 'Aram' or Justice.

The three objectives of life as depicted in the Sangam literature are aram, porul, inbam corresponding to Dharma, Artha and Kama of Sanskrit. One is expected to earn, acquire worldly prosperity, enjoy and satisfy his desires within the precincts prescribed by justice and by living such a life, one would be able to realize one's self and attain 'Veedu' or Moksha, the eternal bliss.

The two main virtues that stand out in almost all ancient Tamil literature are generosity and valour.² A marked virtue, an essential duty of householders is said to be hospitality; looking after the guests was a sacred duty of an ideal house wife. Charity in the form of public feeding especially the poor was enjoined on all people. The extra-ordinary generosity of some of the hill chieftains glorified in literature as 'Vallals' is worth mentioning. King Pari, not bearing to see the suffering of a jasmine-creeper without an object to creep on, left his chariot for the creeper and walked back to his palace. The hill chief

1. Ainkurunooru 410

2. கௌட, வீரம்.

Pegan offered a trembling peacock, his own toga; king Kumanan, in exile offered to a poet who came to him for some award, his own head, for which a price was put up by his brother. King Adigaman, offered the life giving Nelli fruit to his friend poetess Avvai so that society would benefit more by her living longer. Thus we find men of real generosity lived during Sangam age, and were held examples for the posterity.

The code of valour which the Tamils followed gives a very good insight into their high culture. A soldier getting wounded on his back, proving retreat, was considered most derogatory. Death in the battlefield was considered the most glorious end of life. Unflinching courage was instilled into the sons by the mother. Purananooru tells us of a mother who felt proud when she saw her son dead in the battlefield with a wound on his chest¹. The soldiers were required not to kill the cattle, women, children, religious leaders, people suffering from illness and unarmed persons while advancing into enemy's territory after victory.

True love, appreciation of beauty, justice, fidelity, loyalty, devotion, compassion and equanimity are some of the other virtues extolled in Sangam literature. True love and partnership between husband and wife are praised greatly. The attachment between husband and wife is compared to that of body and soul². According to Kural, the five pillars of virtue are love, modesty, beneficence, benignant grace and truth.³ Aranericharam,

1. Puram 278.

2. Aham 339.

3. Kural 983.

அன்புநா னெப்புரவு, கண்ணோட்டம் வாய்க்கையென
ஐந்துரைப் பூன்றிய தூன்.

compiled by a Jain monk in the 13th century A.D. enumerates ten virtues:¹

Truthfulness, patience, nobility, austerity, self-control, uprightness, non possession of wealth, asceticism, adherence to the path of rectitude - these ten virtues make up all nobility.

Both men and women were expected to lead a moral life and chastity or 'karpu' was considered an essential virtue for women. The epic Silappathikaram glorifies chastity and the heroine is elevated to a goddess.

The picture of a self sufficient village life, with all their disputes being settled by the village elders in the public or common place called 'Aram Valangum Manram' or 'Podiyil', the same manram serving as a venue of public amusement for music and dancing, physical feats like wrestling, cock fights and ram fights as well as public festivals like Krithikai, Onam and Indira Vizha indicate the happy, contended, regulated life of the Tamils in the early Christian era.

We know that philosophy results in a certain way of life and ideals, values and ends of life are provided by the leaders of thought or philosophers. The practical means of realizing the ideals of life is education. In the next chapters, we shall see how the philosophy of the ancient Tamils helped formulation of aims in education, the choice of studies, text books and methods of teaching.

1. Aranericharam 12 - Translation of T. B. Krishnaswami
மெய்ம்மை, பொறையுடைமை மேன்மை தவமடத்தம்
செய்மை யொன்றின்மை துறவுடைமை—நன்மை
திறம்பா விரதத் தரித்தலோ டின்ன
அறம்பத்தும் ஆன்ற குணம்.
2. அறம் வழங்கும் மன்றம், பொருளிக்.

CHAPTER IV

Educational System

Aims, Conceptions, Organisation - agencies -
curriculum - Teachers.

Importance of Education :

From the earliest Sangam literature, down the ages, we find the Tamils attached very great importance to learning and knowledge.

The great Pandya king Nedunchezhan a learned scholar, advises all his subjects to realise the importance of learning. He says it is worth encountering any amount of difficulties, spending any amount of money to get the benefits of education. The Pandya king continues to say that he would invite educated men to become his advisors and not necessarily the older men¹.

The illustrious Thiruvalluvar devotes five entire chapters to education and learning. He says that learned alone are said to possess eyes, while in respect of unlettered, the eyes are but sores. The real eyes, according to him,

1. Puram 183.

"உற்றுழி உதவியும் உறுபொருள் கொடுத்தும்
பிறற்றைநில முனியாது கற்றல் நன்றே."

"ஒருகுடிப் பிறந்த பல்லோருள்ளும்—மூத்தோன்
வருக என்னுது. அவருள் அறிவுடையோன்
ஆறு அரசும் செல்லும்."

only the educated have, as education alone gives insight and illumination¹. He goes on to ask, why is it that people do not take to learning till they die when they all know, that learned are honoured not only in their own native land but all over the world².

One of the eighteen minor works, 'Iniyavai Narpadu' or 'Forty sweet verses', confirms this idea when it says "It is good to learn even if you have to take to begging"³. It continues to say that there is nothing sweeter in life than to go tirelessly for many days to other countries if you can learn the eminent works of learned scholars⁴.

Respect for learned Scholars:

As learning was considered very important in life, the learned were respected greatly. It is remarkable, the way the poets commanded the respect of kings, chieftains and all leading persons in society. We hear of many kings vying with each other to honour the learned poets and to make the learned men part of their court. The life-long friendship and devotion of certain kings to some poets are worth mentioning. The chieftain Athigaman who offered the life giving 'Nellikani', gooseberry fruit to his great friend, poetess Avvai, so that she would live longer

1. Kural, 393.

கல்னுடையர் எல்பவர் கற்றோர் முகத்திரைநடு
புன்னுடையர் கல்லா தவர்.

2. Ibid., 397.

யாதானும் நாடாமால் ஊராமால் என்னொருவன்
சாந்துணையும் கல்லாத வாறு.

3. Iniyavai Narpadu 2.

பிச்சை புக்காயினும் கற்றல் இனிதே.

4. Ibid., 2.

"பற்பல நாடும் பழுதின்றிப் பாய்ந்துண்ட
கற்றலின் காழ்இனியது இவ்.

and serve society; the poet Kapilar who adopted king Pari's daughters as his own when Pari died and faced many difficulties to get them married; the Chola king Kopperuncholan who waited for his friend poet Pisiranthayar so that both of them would die together—all are examples of worthy friendship between kings and poets. We find that the kings confided in the learned scholars and poets, sought their advice and service in matters of administration.

Popularity of Education:

The awareness of the importance of education in the Sangam age indicates that education must have had a very wide popularity. We find parents attached great importance to the education of their children. A poem in Puram states that it is the duty of the father to educate his son so that he will become virtuous¹. The same idea is repeated by Thiruvalluvar when he says that the best inheritance a father can provide for his son is an education that will fit him to take an honoured place among cultured men². We find Thiruvalluvar advocating education for all people; he says, even the high born, if they are ignorant, sink low in the scale, while the learned even of humble birth are exalted³. That education must have been widely popular and that education was not a privilege restricted to any group in Sangam age is proved by the fact that the

1. Puram 312.

சான்றோ னுக்குதல் தக்கதக்குக் கடனே.

2. Kural 67.

தக்கதை மகற்காற்றும் நன்றி அவையத்து
முந்தி யிருப்பச் செயல்.

3. Ibid., 409.

மேற்பிறந்தார் ஆயினும் கல்லாதார் மேற்பிறக்கும்
கற்றார் அரினத்திலர் பாடு.

Sangam poets were drawn from all places of Tamil Nadu and from all classes of society. There were poets belonging to different religious persuasions, different occupations and both the sexes. Among the 192 Sangam poets, we find there were 13 kings, 29 brahmins, 57 vellalas, 36 women, 17 hillmen, 13 foresters, 7 vanigars, 7 artisans, 1 shepherd, 1 potter etc. From this we can conclude that education was open to all classes of people but the working class was not able to take as much advantage as the other classes.

Education - a Life Long Process :

Education was considered as a life long process. Valluvar advocates perpetual acquisition of knowledge ; he is intrigued that why people are not given to learning till they die¹.

Just as water springs more and more in the well as water is drawn out, he says knowledge develops more only when it is used and spread to other people². According to him, 'learning' is the only imperishable wealth³.

In Naladi all these ideas are expressed in one stanza when it says that in the whole world, there is no other medicine like 'learning' for removing the delusions of sense ; 'learning' yields fruit in this life itself ; it does not grow

1. Kural 397.

'என் ஒருவன் சாக் துணையும் கல்வாதவாறு.'

2. Ibid., 396.

"தொட்டினைத்து ஊறும் மணற்கேணி மாந்தர்க்குக் கற்றனைத்து ஊறும் அறிவு."

3. Ibid., 398.

ஒருமைக்கண் தான்கற்ற கல்வி ஒருவற்கு எழுமையும் ஏமாப்பு உடைத்து.

less as you give it to others ; it makes men illustrious ; it does not perish as long as one lives.¹

Education is Life and Life is Education :

The ultimate end of life and education, according to Valluvar, is attainment of the feet of God and the state of birthlessness². He says, if learning does not lead to the feet of Him who is pure knowledge, then this learning is useless³.

Knowledge is that which would help the individual to adjust to the society⁴ ; it is that which would give him a capacity to anticipate and foresee⁵. Knowledge is the weapon which saves one from evil ; it forms a rampart which cannot be destroyed by the foe⁶. Real knowledge,

1. Naladi 132

இம்மை பயக்குமால், ஈயக் குறைவின்னால்
தம்மை விளக்குமால் தாம்உணராக் கேட்கின்றால்
எம்மை உலகத்தும் யாங்கானேம் கல்விபோல்
மம்மர் அறுக்கு மருந்து.

2. Kural 356.

கற்றுசண்டு மெய்ப்பொருள் கண்டார் தலைப்படுவர்
மற்றுசண்டு வாரா நெறி.

3. Ibid., 2.

கற்றதனா லாய பயனென்கொல் வாலறிவன்
கற்றான் தொழாஅ ரெனின்.

4. Ibid., 426.

எவ்வது உறைவது உலகம் உலகத்தோடு
அவ்வது உறைவது அறிவு.

5. Ibid., 427.

அறிவுடையார் ஆவது அறிவார் அறிவிலார்
அக்துஅறி கல்லா தவர்.

6. Ibid., 423.

எப்பொருள் யார்யார்வாய்க் கேட்பினும் அப்பொருள்
மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்பு தறிவு.

is that which is crystallized by one's own thought, understanding and reflection. So, advises Valluvar, whatever you learn, learn without any fault and live according to the lessons learnt¹.

The same idea is expressed in Naladi:²

"Learning has no bounds, the learner's days are few
If you think calmly, diseases many wait round
With clear discrimination, learn what is meet
for you like the
Swan that, leaving the water drinks the milk."

Sirupanchamoolam emphasized the cultivation of disciplined mind—"A learned man of disciplined mind is Ambrosia".³

Thus we find by education is meant a development of capacity to understand, think and reflect and learning is related to conduct and conduct to virtues which would lead to the attainment of goal of life.

System of Education :

The questions that arise at this context are; what was the curriculum? What were the methods of learning? Who were the teachers? Who were the students? What was the agency of education?

1. Kural 391.

கற்க கசடறக் கற்பவை கற்றபின்
கிற்க அதற்குத் தக.

2. Naladi 135 - Translation by Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope

கல்வி கரையில கற்பவர் நாள்சில
மெல்ல கிணக்கிற் பிணிபல—தென்னிதின்
ஆராய்ந்தமை வுடைய கற்பவே கிர்ஓழியடி
பாலுடன் குருகிற் றெறித்து.

3. Sirupanchamoolam.

கற்று அடங்கினான் அமிர்து.

The answers to these questions, unfortunately, are not given explicitly in any literature and as such, we have to make deductions from the available references and examples.

The two broad divisions of knowledge we come across in the entire literature are, 'En' and 'Eluthu'; literally translated they would mean 'numbers' and 'letters'. But we find 'En' includes all sciences especially that of measurement and 'Eluthu' includes all arts especially language and literature. We find these two words being used to denote the branches of knowledge since Sangam age down today.

Valluvar says that both these branches of knowledge are as necessary as the two eyes to life¹. Appar, in his Thevaram of about 700 A.D. says that these two branches of knowledge are God Himself; he says God is 'En', God is 'Eluthu' and God is sweet music too²! The general understanding of 'En' or Mathematics is that it is the science of cognition, insight and understanding—"Ariviyal" and 'Eluthu' or language and literature is that of conation and affect, i.e., that branch which will help the individual to feel and therefore act.

Vernacular Education :

In the early ages, Tamil, the mother tongue, the spoken, living language of the people, was the subject of study as well as the medium of instruction. We do find even

1. Kural 392.

என்னென்ப ஏனை எழுத்தென்ப இவ்விரண்டும்
கன்னென்ப வாழுந் உயிர்க்கு.

2. Thevaram, Appar 6—485

"என் அவன் காண் எழுத்தவன் காண்
இன்பக் கேள்வி இசையவன் காண்."

during the days of Tholkappiam, there is mention of Brahmins and Vedic studies; but this must have been a very minor percentage and with infiltration of more and more Jains, Buddhists and Brahmins from the north, by the Pallava period, in 6th century A.D. there was more of Vedic learning than of Tamil learning.

Tholkappiam refers to the three broad divisions of Tamil study, namely 'Muttamil' of 'Iyal' 'Isai' and 'Natakam'; i.e., prose, poetry, and drama.

Techniques of Teaching:

Knowledge received through the ear was considered superior to book learning. Thiruvalluvar stresses the value of acquiring knowledge through listening to the wise when he says 'Though denied of learning, let one fill one's ears with knowledge; it is his support in his hour of gloom'. Oral instruction as the method of teaching played an important part and training of memory was given more scope. But we also find writing was started along with reading. Writing was done on seasoned palmyra leaves with the aid of a pointed iron style. The beginners started with tracing of letters on sand or rice and then the seasoned banana leaves were used for children of tender age. The script used at the early period seems to be Brahmi as confirmed by the inscription discovered in the extreme south and later, Vatteluthu; which script was the forerunner of the present form, what relationship the Indus script has to these scripts await research scholars' conclusive evidence.

1. Kural 414.

கற்றிலன் ஆயினும் கேட்க அக்துஒருவற்கு
ஒற்கத்தின் ஊற்றும் ஊண்.

2. Naladi 397.

Several leaves of palmyra containing material on one particular subject were held together by a cord strung together through holes in the left hand corner of the palmyra leaves and this was called 'Suvadi' or 'Nul' corresponding to the modern book.

The importance of commencing education at an early age was recognised by the ancient Tamils. Avvai in her Athichoodi gives pointed advice as follows:

'Learn while young'¹.

'Letter and number claim esteem'².

'Avoid ignorance'³.

'Covet to be versed in knowledge'⁴.

'Learn all sciences'⁵.

'Cease not to learn'⁶.

In Jivaka Chinthamani a Jain work of about 9th century A.D. we come across the fact that Jivaka's sons started their education at the age of five. This seems to be a long established tradition.

A basic rudimentary knowledge of language and arithmetic seems to have been taught to all children of the village from the age of five years in the schools called 'Pyal Schools' or 'Thinnai Palli'. The schools were conducted in the 'Kanakayar' or teacher's verandah or pyal, a projection in front of the house.

Athichoodi.

1. இளமையில் கல்.
2. எண்ணெழுத்து இகழேல்.
3. பேதமை யகற்று.
4. வித்தை விரும்பு.
5. நூல்பல கல்.
6. ஓதுவ தொழியேல்.

Memorising the crisp concisely expressed verses, Grammar rules and arithmetic tables was the important activity of learning. We find that some fees was paid to the teacher or services were rendered to the teacher, from what the Pandyan king Nedunchezhian says in Puram¹. We also hear that sometimes books, iron styles, food and clothes were given as gifts to pupils².

It is amazing that the picture presented here is corroborated by the findings of the enquiry made by Sir. Thomas Munroe, Governor of Madras in 1822. Wanting to find out the extent and state of indigenous system of education, Sir. Thomas Munroe asked his collectors to make a survey. The consolidated picture is as follows:

The Pyal schools were single teacher institutions, open to male children of the village; rudimentary knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic were taught; practical arithmetic tables of fractions useful for all vocations and daily transactions were learnt by heart; materials of education were simple, locally available and inexpensive like sea-weeds, banana leaves, palmyra leaves, charcoal paste and white chalk; a monitorial system of pairing advanced pupils to less advanced ones so that one teacher would be able to handle many students of all ages and stages in one room, was followed; we find this system was introduced into England by Andrew Bell. Usually the teacher was a modest person, knowing little more than what he taught; he was mostly paid in kind; sometimes, a nominal fee of rupees six to seven was paid to him³.

1. Puram 183.

2. Eladi 63.

3. Nurullah and Naik—History of Education in India (1851) PP 6—8.

It is really amazing how this system of education had continued through so many centuries without a change; it also proves the vitality and popularity of such a system to have survived for so many centuries.

Study of 'EN' or Sciences:

We saw how in the Pyal schools, a good grounding in numerical notations was given; how practical arithmetic including tables of fractions was taught. We find references to kani¹, mundiri², immi³ and anu to denote very small fractions and large numbers in terms of kodi⁴ or crore.

Sangu⁵ = Kodi²

Vindam⁶ = Kodi³

Ambal⁷ = Kodi⁴

Thamarai⁸ = Kodi⁵

Kuvalai⁹ = Kodi⁶

Neydal¹⁰ = Kodi⁷

Vellam¹¹ = Kodi⁸

There are also references to volume measurements in terms like 'nali', 'padakku' which continue till today in

1. Pazhamozhi 32:4.
2. Naladi 346:3.
3. Naladi 94:1.
4. Kural 337.
5. Paripadal 2:13.
6. Paripadal 2:13.
7. Paripadal 2:13.
8. Thirumurukatruppadai 164.
9. Paripadal 2:13—4.
10. Paripadal 2:13.
11. Maduraikkanchi 22.

some parts of Pandya nadu; the terms for linear measurements were 'kadam' and 'yojanai'; the seasons had six stages namely kar, kuthir, munpani, pinpani, ilavenil, and muduvenil i.e., rainy season, cold windy season, early winter, later winter, spring and summer.

The day was divided into six portions as malai, yamam, vaikarai, kalai, nanpagal, erpadu i.e., evening, midnight, early morning, morning, noon and afternoon. The day was divided into sixty naligai, each naligai of twenty four minutes¹. A water clock called Naligai Vattil is referred to in Kurunthogai².

Knowledge of stars, planets and their movements seems to have been developed in the very early ages. Stars were called 'minkal' and planets 'kol'. In Purananooru³ Mudukannan Sattanar of Uraiyur refers to the gravitational power of the sun, the atmosphere round the earth, how the sun attracts the earth and therefore the earth revolves round the sun. It is very interesting to observe that all the words used by the poet to refer to the relation between sun, earth and atmosphere are pure Tamil words which confirms that astronomy as a branch of science of measurement was developed quite early by the Tamils. Thus we find what was rediscovered by Copernicus in the 15th century in the west, was known to the Tamils 2000 years before.

1. Vellaivaranam—Sanga Kala Tamilar pp. 112—13.

2. Kurunthogai 261.

3. Puram 30.

செஞ்ஞா யிறுந் செவயும்அஞ்ஞா யிறுந்
பரிப்பும் பரிப்புச் சூழ்க்கமன் டிவரும்
வளிதிரிதரு திசையும்
வறிது லீலிஇய வாயமு மென்றிவை
சென்றன் தறித்தோர் போல மென்றும்
இளைத்தென் போரும் உரைநே.

There is reference in Tholkappiam to Vuyir nool, Thavara nool and Payir nool i.e., biological sciences, botony and agricultural sciences. There is reference to 'Porul Puri nool' i.e., economics, Maruthuva nool—medical sciences, Silpa nool—science of architecture, Oviya nool—science of painting, Isai nool—science of music and Nattiya nannool—science of dancing which we will discuss in our chapter on vocational and aesthetic education.

Purananooru gives a very good picture about the knowledge of geography among the Tamils¹. Reference to 'porkottimayam'² literally translated into Sanskrit as 'Kanchanasringa'³ which is called 'Kanchanjunga' in English, and 'pani padu nedu varai' meaning the long range of mountains covered with snow i.e., the Himalayas, show us that they know the northern boundary of the India. The reference 'karai poru thodu kadal'⁴ to the Bay of Bengal meaning the sea which was dug and 'kudaathu thonru mudir pouvam'⁵ meaning the very ancient water space to Arabian Sea is very interesting as it denotes that the Arabian Sea is considerably more ancient than the Bay of Bengal. The Tamils named places according to the land in which they were situated or according to the reasons they were famous for. The towns near the shores and ports usually end as Pattinam—Kaveripoompattinam, Naga-pattinam etc; the towns where battles had taken place were called Thalalanganam, Thirupor etc., the places of Samadi were called Pallis like Sina Palli, Ilaventhigai Palli and holy places and important trading centres and capitals ending

1. Puram 6:1.

2. பொற்கோட் டிமயம்.

3. பனி படு நெடு வரை.

4. கரை பொரு தொடு கடல்.

5. குடாஅது தொன்று முதிர் பெளவம்.

in 'Ur' and 'Puram', like Uraiur, Thanjavur, Kabadapuram, Thiruvanchipuram etc.

Teachers :

Tirikadugam, one of the eighteen minor works compares a village without a teacher to an assembly without scholars and a people not given to hospitality, thus recognising the importance of each village, having a teacher¹. The teacher was usually called 'Kanakayar'² most probably because even 'Eluthu' was known as 'nedun kanakku' i.e., 'longer arithmetic'. The other terms which have been used to refer to teachers are Palasiriyar³ Ilampalasiriyar⁴, Uvattiyar⁵, Asiriyar⁶ Asan⁷ and Kulapathi⁸. The designation most probably indicates the distinction between teacher of young children and teacher of higher learning. Kulapathi most probably refers to the teacher of the royal household.

In Sirupanchamoolam, the author Kari Asan says that the beauty of words, and suitability of expression used by

1. Tirikadugam 10.

கணக்காயர் இல்லாத ஊரும் பிணக்கறுக்கும்
முத்தோரை இல்லா அவைக்களனும்—பாத்துள் ளும்.
தன்மை விலாநர் அயலிருப்பும் இம்மூன்றும்
நன்மை பயத்தல் இல.

2. Puram 56.

3. Aham 172, 102.

4. Aham 348.

5. Acharakkovai 16:1.

6. Aham 43.

7. Manimekhalai 42.

8. Kurunthogai 252.

teachers while explaining a book are more appealing than mere physical beauty¹.

Though there is some mention of some poets having disciples we do not come across the celebrated Gurukula system of the north. We do not hear of any solemn ceremony like Upanayana or Bramhacharyahood the institution of begging. On the other hand, we hear of married scholars being separated from their wives, called 'Othal Pirivu'², for continuation or refreshing their education, proving that education was a life long process.

Sangam :

There is ample reference in the literary tradition about the institution called 'Sangam' which would correspond to our modern 'academies', or something very similar to the 'Parishads' we hear in the North Indian educational system. As regards the nature, chronology and number of Sangams there is still some controversy. But a literary academy did exist in the Pandyan capital in early Christian era has been referred to in Sangam literature as well as by Appar³ and Thirumangai Alvar⁴ and confirmed by the Sinnamanur plates⁵.

1. Sirupanchamoolam 37.

மயிர்வனப்பும் கண்கவர் மார்பின் வனப்பும்
உகிர்வனப்பும் காதின் வனப்பும்—செயிர் தீர்க்கத்
பல்லின் வனப்பும் வனப்பல்ல நூற்குஇயைந்த
சொல்லின் வனப்பே வனப்பு.

2. Aham 28.

ஓதல் பகையே தூது இவை பிரிவே.

3. Thevaram 6:75.

"நன்பாட்டுப் புலவனைச் சங்கமேற்றி"

4. Periya Thirumozhi 3.4:10.

'சங்க முத்தமிழ்'

5. Sinnamanur plates, line 29.

That the first Sangam at South Madurai with Siva himself presiding over it flourished for 4,440 years, and that the second Sangam at Kabadapuram with Sage Agastya, and Tholkappianar existed for 3,700 years, as stated by the commentator Iraiyanar, are not trustworthy especially in their details. But sea erosions and deluges did happen from time to time and the shifting of the capital might account for the loss of all information regarding the two earlier Sangams. Tholkappiam says that due to a famine of twelve years the scholars of the academy were sent away by the Pandyan king and after the 12 year period many works could not be traced.

In the early literature this academy is referred to as 'Kudal' meeting place of poets or 'avai'. The Sanskrit word Sangam most probably was introduced by the Jain scholar Vajranandi who founded a 'Dramila Sangha' in 470 A.D.

To this academy or 'Kudal' at Pandyan capital, learned scholars were summoned by the ruling king to set standards for Tamil and to give approval to new works after examining them, has been established by tradition. So we can conclude that there were academies in the Pandyan capital which functioned as an institution of higher learning, corresponding to the research centres of our Universities scrutinising and standardising literary works.

We also hear of literary tournaments, scholars putting up flags, challenging other learned scholars and shouting 'Navalo Naval'. Pattinappalai says 'among the many flags over the town, those of the famous scholars, great authorities in knowledge and learning have raised awe inspiring flags as a challenge for debates'.

1. Pattinappalai 169 - 171

‘பக்கைவித் துறைபோயிய

தொல்புனை நகர்புரிபுள்

உமிழ்நுதித்து எடுத்த உருகெழு கொடியும்

After the first Sangam period i.e., after 300 A.D., especially during the Pallava rule, Sanskrit learning was given royal patronage, vedic schools called Ghatikas¹ were established, endowments called 'Brahama Thayam'² were set up in centres called 'Brahma Puris, agrahara towns for Brahmin scholars sprang up with the patronage of the kings, religious mutts and temple colleges began spreading vedic learning and Sanskrit studies and towns like Kanchipuram, Mukkudal, Thiruvotriyur, Ennayiram, Tanjore and Kumbakonam became strong holds of vedic learning. There is very little mention of Tamil colleges. But this does not mean that Tamil education died out; most probably it continued to co-exist in a quiet manner. We find an impetus to Tamil learning with the revivalist movement of Saivism and Vaishnavism, the Bhakti cult introduced by the Nayanmars and Alvars. The devotional, lyrical utterances of the Saiva and Vaishnava saints in simple language brought religion and education to the common man.

Explanations of the ancient literature in the form of commentaries and treatises on grammar and translation of the Sanskrit works into Tamil came to be written during the next period; Ilampuranar, Senavaraiyar, Parimelalagar and Nachinarkkiniyar wrote commentaries on Tholkappiam; Parimelalagar wrote on Thirukkural, Adiyarkkunallar on Silappadikaram. Kamban wrote the Ramayana inspired by the Valmiki's epic.

A number of grammar works came to be compiled and the Nannul written by Pavanandi Adigal is very significant to us as it gives us a lot of information regarding education.

1. கடிக்கை.

2. பிரமதாயம்.

CHAPTER V

Teachers, Students and Teaching in Nannul**Good teachers—Good teaching—Teaching methods—Students**

Nannul is an authoritative book of Tamil grammar written by a Jain Tamil scholar, Pavanandi Munivar, and accepted in the court of Siya Ganga of the Ganga country during the 13th century A.D. We come across in this book, a lot of information regarding the characteristics of 'good books', good teachers, good students and good methods of teaching. It is so amazing that what we consider as 'modern progressive' methods of teaching today, have already been in vogue those days, proving that we are only in the process of re-discovering some of these facts.

Good Book :

The work 'Nannul' itself means 'good book' and according to the author a good book must have an introduction, which should consist of a short account of the book, account of the author and an account of the students.

The ten errors to be avoided in a good book, according to Nannul (12) are:—inadequate explanation, exaggeration, repetition, inconsistency, inappropriate words, ambiguous words, irrelevant words, diversion, uninteresting development and meaningless words.

As against these, the ten good characteristics of a good book are:—concise presentation, clear explanation, knowledge interesting to the students, inclusion of choice words, inclusion of sweet sounding words, words with ripe meaning, logical development, practical real knowledge in tune with social order and explanation with adequate examples.

Good Teacher :

A good teacher, Nannul (26) says, would come from a good family, should have good character, faith in God and practical knowledge of the world. He should be well read, and should have the ability to impart his knowledge in an orderly manner so that it would be easily understood by the student. A good teacher, the author says can be compared to a good land, a mountain, a balance or a flower.

Good Land :

Just as the good land bears with patience all the load of men and women and still gives them the fruit of their labour, the good teacher puts up with the ignorance of his pupils with patience and gives the fruit of education when they put in some efforts to study.

Mountain :

Just as the mountain is high, strong, steadfast, and generous, the good teacher has a high standard of sound knowledge, is steadfast in getting more and more knowledge and generously gives it to the students without any expectations of return.

Balance :

Just as the balance decides without any doubt, is impartial and just, the good teacher gives proper explanation.

nations clearing all doubts, is fair and just and objective in his judgements.

Flower :

Just as the flower is used for all auspicious occasions, appreciated and admired by all people for its beauty, good smell and other characteristics, the good teacher is indispensable for all good occasions, is respected, loved and admired by all people for his good characteristics.

Students :

Nannul (38) discusses the characteristics of good students, who is an average student and what makes a bad student.

The author compares a good student to a swan or a cow. Just as a swan separates the milk from water and drinks only the milk, the good student separates facts from faults, truth from untruth and acquires true knowledge. A cow, when she finds ample grass, eats to her fill and then chews it little by little at her leisure ; the same way a good student, when he comes across a learned scholar, hears from him whatever he can and then takes his time to reflect on what he has heard and makes it his own.

An average student is compared to the soil and a parrot. Just as the soil gives in return, production according to the efforts put out by the farmer, the average student is able to grasp only what the teacher very painstakingly teaches him and is able to repeat, word by word, parrot like. An average student is not able to read on his own and contribute his thoughts.

A bad student, the author says, is like a leaking jug or a goat or a buffalo. Just as a leaking jug does not hold any water, the bad student forgets whatever is taught to

him and so holds nothing. As the goat goes from plant to plant for its food, the bad student is not able to appreciate a good scholar as his teacher but goes from teacher to teacher and learns nothing in the end. Just as a buffalo muddles the tank water and drinks the muddy water, the bad student confuses the teacher as well himself.

According to Nannul, the students who should not be eligible for learning are the lazy, arrogant, given to thieving, lecherous and affected by ill health. Nannul continues and prescribes rules and regulations to be followed while teaching. The study should start at pleasant cool hours in the morning after prayers; the teacher must concentrate and be clear in his own mind as to what he is going to teach and should teach the students according to their abilities and capabilities ; while teaching, he should control his temper.

Steps in Teaching :

Nannul (41—45) prescribes five steps: listening, questioning; answering, investigating and narrating. Though not exactly the same as our famous Herbartian steps, we can see how logical the steps are. It is said that hearing a lecture is only one quarter of learning; the rest of the three quarters are fulfilled by discussion with other students, asking questions and answering questions.

Thus we can see, in Tamil Nadu, as early as the 12th century A.D., scholars had anticipated all the most modern theories of teaching-learning process, had insisted on thinking, understanding, asking questions and discussing as techniques of teaching, demanded high moral character for the teachers, and use of well written text books.

CHAPTER VI

Women's Education

(Women's status—Position—Deterioration—Causes)

There are many evidences to show that women in the ancient Tamil Nadu had a much higher status than what they came to have in later times. A large number of Sangam poems dealing with 'Aham' discuss what is known as 'Kalaviyal',¹ meaning the pre-marital secret love and courtship that existed between boys and girls during those days. This proves that there was equality of sexes; the girls were not forced into early marriage or arranged partners; they were given a certain independence in their choice of their mates and that they were allowed to attain certain maturity of mind before they were ready to marry.

Once the choice was made, we are told that 'Kalavu' or pre-marital love led invariably to 'Karpu' or chaste marriage; fidelity to the lover was never broken. The most important virtue of a girl was 'chastity'. The epic Silappadikaram glorifies 'chastity' and elevates the chaste heroine Kannagi to the status of a Goddess. The author observes that the land in which chaste women live will ever be prosperous as the rains will never fail and crops will ever be bountiful.²

1. களவியல்.

2. Silappadikaram.

பத்தினிப் பெண்டிர் இருந்தாடு காலமழை பொய்த்தறியாது. வினாவு குறைந்து வளம் பிழைத்தலை அறியாது.

The importance attached to ideal love and true partnership between husband and wife is reflected in all 'aham' classics of the Sangam age. Both partners were expected to lead a moral life and live as attached as body and soul¹. The selfless devotion of the wife to the husband amounting to dedication to God, has been referred to by Thiruvalluvar and he says such a woman can even command rain².

The 'Illal' or housewife of the Sangam age enjoyed a respectable status in society. She was considered as the luminary or light of the house³. Modesty and hospitality were considered as fundamental assets of a well-bred housewife. Modesty did not mean inhibition or prudery. We find women enjoyed freedom, they played games in the open, they took part in pastimes and amusements, sported and bathed in ponds, went to temples to offer worship, attended royal assemblies, in short they enjoyed equal status with men⁴. We do not hear of seclusion of girls or purdah system in the early classics. Free mixing of lady scholars is amply illustrated in the friendship Avvai had to the chieftain Adigaman. In Natrinai, the author advises the parents not to restrain girls from playing with their mates in out-door games⁵.

Valour and courage, the girls looked for in the men they wanted to marry. In the mullai region, we are told,

1. Aham 339.

2. Kural 55.

தெய்வம் தொழாஅன் கொழுநற் றெழும்தெழுவான்
பெய்யெனப் பெய்யும் மழை.

3. Puram 314.

மனைக்கு விளக்காகிய வானுதல்

4. Perumbanarrupadai 387—8 311—2.

5. Natrinai 68.

there was the practice of the man winning his bride by proving his valour by fighting and controlling ferocious bulls¹. The birth of a son was keenly welcomed, more because, every woman wanted to be the mother of a valiant hero; many examples of mothers instilling unflinching courage into their sons and sending even the only son to the battlefield are provided in Puram literature. We do not come across in Sangam classics, the Aryan conception that son is needed to deliver the parents from the hell called 'Puth'.

The virtue of utter dedication of women to their husbands, and not wanting to outlive them is portrayed in all classics. The example of how the Pandya queen, Kopperunthevi² died as though in pursuit of her husband's life is given in the epic Silappadikaram. The practice of voluntary self immolation by women soon after the death of their husbands is evident from the example of Perunkoppendu³, the wife of Puda Pandyan⁴. There was no system of 'Sati' as such i.e., requiring a woman to die on the funeral pyre of her husband as a duty. We do hear that women who survived their husbands, lived on to look after the children, taking up spinning as their vocation and living a very regulated life observing 'Kaimmai Nonbu'⁵; these women are referred to as 'Paruthi Pendi'.⁶

Education of Girls :

Many Sangam poems are attributed to women scholars. We hear of as many as 37 lady poets. Some of them

1. Kalithogai 103.
2. கோப்பெருந்தேவி.
3. பெருங்கோப் பெண்டு.
4. பூதப் பாண்டியன்.
5. கைம்மை நோன்பு.
6. பருத்திப் பெண்டிர்.

famous for their works are Avvaiyar, Adi Mandiyar, Kakkai Padiniyar, Nachellayar, Okkur Masathiar, Perungoppendu and others¹.

In Naladi, we come across a very good prescription regarding the beauty of girls. The author says physical beauty, the cosmetics on a girl's face, the beautiful hair styles or the splendid clothes she wears, do not make her beautiful but learning which would make her virtuous, good hearted and free from prejudice would make her a real beauty². From this one can clearly discern that girls had the privilege of education equal to boys. Though they took to studies of all branches of Tamil, we find, training in music or Isai Tamil was considered an important asset to girls. We hear how girls with their melodious voice tamed wild animals as well as birds. In Ahananooru, we hear of a girl from Kurinji region, singing a Kurinji song and able to tame a wild elephant. We hear in Purananooru how a wife by her music made her husband forget his pain.³ The mention of 'Viraliyar' the girls who were adept in dancing appropriate to the songs sung by the Panar proves that girls specialized in the third branch of Tamil studies namely 'Natakam'. We hear of many dances called 'Kuthu' girls used to indulge as pastime. The

1. அவ்வையார், ஆதிமந்தியார், காக்கை பாடினியார், நச்சென்னையார், ஒக்கர் மாசாத்தியார், பெருங்கோப்பெண்டு.

2. Naladi.

குஞ்சியழகும் கொடுத்தா னைக்கோட்டழகும்
மஞ்சளழகும் அழகல்ல—நெஞ்சத்து
நல்லம் யாமெனும் நடுவு நிலைமையால்
கல்வி யழகே அழகு.

3. Puram 281.

Kuravai Kuthu¹ in Silappadikaram, 'Thellenam Kottal'² referred to in Thiruvacakam are some examples.

The long tradition of Avvai indicates that women's education continued to flourish till the medieval times. We hear of one Avvai during the early Sangam age, the friend of Athigaman³; second Avvai during the Pallava period, a contemporary of Sundaramurthi Nayanar⁴ and a third one during the Chola period, a colleague of Kambar. This shows that eminent lady scholars were referred to as 'Avvai' and such scholars continued to exist from early Sangam age till the end of Chola reign. Examples of Karaikkal ammayar the learned Saivite scholar⁵ and Andal⁶ the famous Vaishnavite scholar prove that learning traditions of lady scholars was continuous.

We cannot deny the influence of some of the Dharma Sastras of the north gaining ground since the time of Tholkappiam in Tamil Nadu. Controversies as to whether 'Kalavu' type of marriage is wrong and ritualistic marriage should be adopted, whether parents should settle the marriage and give bride prices, and whether the girls should remain secluded after attainment of puberty, we find, are reflected in some classics.

By the time of Sirupanchamoolam we can detect the deterioration in the position of women setting in. This book prescribes that women should show implicit obedience to their husbands.⁷ That women could be considered as

1. குரவைக் கூத்து.
2. தென்னோணம் கொட்டல்.
3. அதிகமான்.
4. சுந்தரமூர்த்தி நாயனார்.
5. காரைக்கால் அம்மையார்.
6. ஆண்டாள்.
7. Sirupanchamoolam-53

possessions of men was gaining ground. Tirikadugam (3) refers to the thrashing of the wife by the husband.

Though both the partners were required to observe moral codes, the reference to men visiting the Parathaiyar or harlots and the wives putting up with this evil proves how fidelity was required only by the wife and not really enforced on the husband. We do find poets condemning the practice but it seems that it continued to exist.

The influence of Jainism and Buddhism which believed that woman was a source of distraction from piety seems to have been another reason for despising the women and women being looked down upon¹.

As women came to be considered as inferior, regarded as men's possessions, secluded in the inner quarters, not only did they lose their independence, equality and freedom, the greatest loss was that they lost their privilege of education. Even the traditions of Isai Tamil was lost to them as music and dancing came to be more and more associated with the Parathaiyar, the women of disrepute. In course of time, women of Tamil Nadu became completely illiterate and entirely dependant on men—father, husband or son. By the beginning of the 19th century, hardly one woman in a hundred could read in Madras Presidency².

1. Iniyavai Narpadu 37.
2. Report of the Madras Provincial Committee p. 5.

CHAPTER VII

Vocational and Aesthetic Education

It was discussed in an earlier chapter as to how the Sangam poets were drawn from all classes of society; there were farmers and labourers, merchants and soldiers; kings and priests, hillmen, foresters, shepherds, potters and all types of artisans. This shows that a general education of language and literature was pursued by all classes of people and that there was no antithesis between vocational education and general education.

We also saw how the society was divided into various regions and people of every region followed the peculiar occupations suitable to the regions they lived in and also took up cultivation of suitable products and how agriculture was the chief occupation of most of the people in the fertile region of Marutham. Agriculture carried a respectable status and the nobility of the profession and the virtue of the cultivator have been praised greatly by Thiruvalluvar¹.

The farmers of these days had a good knowledge of the intricacies of profitable farming; the advantages of deep ploughing, manuring, changing of crops, transplantation of seedlings, weeding and importance of irrigation are discussed in Thirukkural. The precepts given by

1. Kural Chapter 104.

Valluvar are—If the ploughed soil is let to dry to a fourth of its bulk, there will be plentiful crop even without a handful of manure¹. More important than ploughing is manuring; then after weeding the field, more important than watering is the guarding of the crop². Thiruvalluvar also warns that if you do not look after your field well, if you do not bestow personal attention on the field, like a neglected wife, it will turn its face away³.

Pathitruppathu gives us an idea of the artificial irrigation employed by the people by construction of dams, sluices and shutters to regulate the flow of the water⁴. Ahananooru refers to the watchmen employed by the local authorities to guard the tanks and reservoirs and regulating the water flowing into the fields⁵.

We find that services of women and children were used in transplanting and weeding. An usual picture portrayed in the Aham classics is that of the girl watching the field from a raised platform and singing folk songs which eventually becomes the meeting place with her lover.

The art of weaving both silk and cotton cloth had achieved a very high standard these days. The cloth

1. Kural 1037.

தொடிப்புழுதி கசிசா உணக்கின் பிடித்தெரு
வேண்டாது சாலப் படும்.

2. Ibid., 1038.

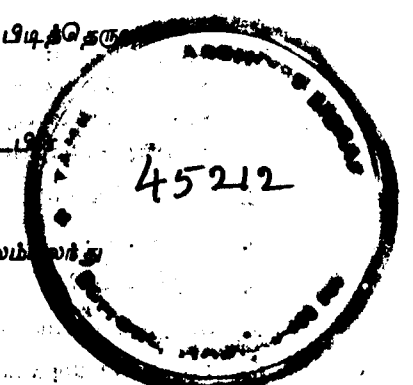
எரினும் நன்றால் எருடுதெல் கட்டி
சீரினும் நன்றதன் காப்பு.

3. Ibid., 1039.

செல்லாள் கழுவன் இருப்பின் சிலம் வந்து
இல்லாளின் ஊடி விடும்.

4. Pathitruppathu 27 : 9.

5. Aham 252 : 13.



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produced was of a quality of very high order is evident from the comparisons the poets use. It is said that the cloth was as light as smoke, as smooth as snake's skin, and as light as flowers¹. The epic Silappadikaram refers to some 32 varieties of cotton cloth². The art of skilful dyeing was also known. Besides cotton, silk and wool, cloth from wood fibres and bark of trees also were made. The skilled weavers were called 'karukar'³ and the street where the cloth used to be sold was called the 'Aruvai vidi'⁴. By the epic time the mention of 'Thunnagar' or tailors as a sub sect of weavers is made.⁵

Besides agriculture and weaving, the other important vocations referred to are cattle breeding, carpentry, smithy, metallurgy and trade. The people of Mullai region were expert cattle breeders and sellers of milk products like milk, curds, butter and ghee. In Porunaratrappadai, the practical economics of a milkmaid is referred to when it is mentioned that with the profits she made by selling milk, she did not buy gold but bought more buffaloes so that she could increase her trade⁶.

There is reference to toy making, plough share manufacturing; boat building, chariot making and construction of palaces.

1. Pathuppattu:
"ஆவியன்ன அவிநூற் கலிங்கம்." (Perumpan-469)
"அரவுரி யன்ன அறுவை." (Porunar-83)
"காம்பு செலிந்தன்ன அறுவை." (Sirupan-236).
2. Silappadikaram VI: 85.
3. கருகர்.
4. அறுவை வீதி.
5. Silappadikaram V: 7.
6. Porunaratrappadai 156:68.

There is mention of 'Kattida nool'—science of building and 'Silpa nool'—science of architecture in 'Nedunalvadai', proving the high standard of wood work and stone work.

The smiths working with iron were called "Kollar"; those engaged in making gold ornaments were called 'Porkollar'; working with copper were called 'Sembu kottigal'; the bronze makers were called 'Kaanchakarakar'. The high standard of metallurgy is evident from these specializations.

The people who indulged in trade were called Vanigar and Chetties. There was simple bartering as well as big wholesale business with foreign lands. While describing the Chola capital Poompuhar, the author of Pattinappalai says that "Swift erect horses arrived by the sea, bags of pepper in carts, gems and gold from the northern mountains, sandal and ahil from the western hills, articles produced in the valley of Ganges and Cauvery, food stuffs from Ceylon and articles of luxury from Burma gathered there in such abundance as to make the earth bend under their weight".¹

There are references to other professionals like the warriors, teachers, brahmins, potters, painters pearl stringers, sculptors and a host of other minor occupations of the lower section of society.

It seems, even during the time of Tholkappiam, vocations had tended to become hereditary and rise of new occupations led to the formation of sub sections in society. This was the time the influence of the four fold caste system of the Aryans was being felt and a combination of both systems led to an emergence of a peculiar form of caste system with distinctions and superior and inferior status.

The brahmins enjoyed a social pre-eminence, were highly esteemed by kings and served as advisors to kings.

1. Pattinappalai 185 - 93.

During the Sangam age, there were quite a few brahmin poets, Kapilar and Parinar being the most famous. There are many controversies as to whether the 'anthanar' and 'papar'-the two designations for brahmins-were one and the same, whether only those who continued with Vedic studies and conducting of Yaghas were called 'anthanar' or whether all the holy ascetics whichever caste they might have belonged to, if they followed the path of 'aram' or dharma, were of high noble character, never intended any harm for others and never uttered any falsehood were referred to as 'anthanar'¹.

Whichever theory is correct, what stands out is that, in those days, the brahmins were men of very high character, who generally devoted themselves to religious and literary pursuits and stood outside the race for wealth and power. The six fold functions of the brahmins enunciated by Tholkappiam are:-study of the Vedas, teaching of the Vedas, conducting Vedic sacrifices, officiating as priests, giving gifts to others and receiving gifts. The brahmins resided in separate quarters set apart for them called Parpanacheris and certain villages were exclusively occupied by brahmins alone.

There is ample evidence to prove the tendency for the occupational groups to become sub-castes and live together in separate parts of the village even during the Sangam age; and by the time of Pazhamozhi Nannooru, we find references to 'kollar seri' the quarters in which iron smiths lived and 'Por kollar theru' the street in which the goldsmiths lived².

1. Kural 30.

அந்தனர் என்போர் அறவோர்மற்று எவ்வுயிர்க்கும்
செத்தன்மை பூண்டோடுக லாள்.

2. Pazhamozhi 50 : 3

கொல்லச்சேரி, பொற்கொல்லர் தெரு

Purananooru refers to some of the professions like 'Pulaiyar' burning—ghat watchers as of low birth¹. In Silappadikaram, we have the example of the gold-smith walking a few paces behind the hero Kovalan.² All these prove that even by the epoch of the third Sangam, ideas of unapproachability and untouchability had set in.

The villages were the strongholds of the traditional arts and crafts. Those of the craftsmen who lived in towns lived in separate quarters and we do hear of 'vaniga gramam' or 'merchant guilds' in early South Indian inscriptions. The 'Ainnutruvar' or the five hundred swamis of Aihole inscription were the most celebrated of the South Indian merchant guilds; they had their own flag, their own 'Sasanas' or deeds and noted through out the world for their daring enterprises. These guilds of merchants or guilds of craftsmen, protected their members, served as an agency to standardize and control the quality of the products and indulged in charities³.

Whether these guilds catered for the training of the members in the respective profession is not very clear. As vocations and professions had become strictly hereditary, training was given by domestic apprenticeship. A knowledge of reading, writing and general arithmetic which was required for all crafts was given to all in the village schools and the preparation for vocation was given by the individual masters of craft. This type of training helped in the unconscious imbibing of the essence of craftsmanship of the leader by the younger and thus the dexterity and skill of

1. Puram 170 : 5

இழி குலத்தோர்

2. Silappadikaram XVI 107

3. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri—A History of South India

each particular trade was handed down from generation to generation.

Military Education:

The threefold functions of men, according to Sangam classics are, earning money, waging war and defending one's country¹. All Sangam classics refer to the fact that all young men, whatever occupational group they might belong to, took up arms in times of war as the most important duty was defending one's land. So, besides the general education, the young men were trained in the arts of war; Purananooru refers to the 'Poravai'² or the military training centres established all over the kingdom even in small towns by Perunal killi³. In these centres, all young men were given training in wrestling and use of all weapons like vil, vel, val i.e., bow and arrow, spear and sword. There used to be 'Por vizha' military tournaments every year, when young men used to demonstrate their skill in military arts. The poetess Nakkannayar⁴ refers to one such tournament she witnessed, in the Puram songs. These celebrations have been referred to as 'Punthodai Vizha'⁵ and such centres as 'Muran Kalari'⁶ in Pattinappalai.

Young men were encouraged to indulge in recreational activities like swimming, diving, wrestling, boxing and physical exercises to make them strong, brave, courageous,

1. பொருளிட்டல், போர் செய்தல், நாடுகாத்தல்
2. பொருளே.
3. பொருத்தினி.
4. நக்கண்ணையார்.
5. புத்தொடை விழா. Puram 85
6. முரண்கலரி.

ambitious and adventurous. The physical exercises¹ referred to in Eladi is comparable to any of the physical education manuals we have today.

All the warriors were instructed in a code of conduct and rules were prescribed for their behaviour. Thiruvalluvar deals with military tactics, army and valour in his Kural. He says bravery, military pride, tradition of chivalry and trustworthiness are the four qualities necessary to make a regiment of soldiers invincible². He says that soldier's virtue in battle is to be pitiless; but kindness to a foe in distress will cut him to the quick³.

The soldiers were required not to kill unarmed people, brahmins, women, children, old feeble people and people without children while advancing into enemy territory.

Kings and Ministers:

Thirukkural gives us a very clear account of the qualities a king should possess, art of good administration, qualifications needed to become ministers and wise counsellors and education of princes.

1. Eladi 69

எடுத்தல் முடக்கல் நீமிர்த்தல் நீலியே
படுத்தலோ டாடல் பகரின்—அடுத்துழிர்
ஆறு தொழிலென் நறைந்தார் உலர்ந்தவர்
வேறு தொழிலாய் விரித்து.

2. Kural 766.

மறமானம் மாண்ட வழிச்செலவு தேற்றம்
எனநான்கே ஏமம் படைக்கு.

3. Ibid., 773.

பேரான்மையும் அன்பு நுழைந்தான் துறந்தான்
ஊரான்மை மற்று அதன் எக்கு.

The three necessary characteristics of a good ruler are diligence, learning and courage¹. The duties of the ruler are production of wealth, conservation of resources, defence of the state and right distribution of wealth.² The king, Valluvar says, should listen to the advice of the minister even when it is unpleasant. But, the king is warned, that before appointing the minister, he should be tested for loyalty, discrimination, clarity and freedom from love of property; after appointing a proper person, the king should accept his service without distrust. Uprightness and just rule, Valluvar emphasises in a ruler³.

A minister, Valluvar says, should be resolute in action, have the welfare of the people at heart, possess learning and be ever active⁴. He should have both natural intellect and learning on the subject of state craft⁵.

To be a good counsellor, Valluvar emphasises the art of persuasive speech as a necessary qualification. A convincing style, good memory, absence of nervousness and confusion during debate, orderly coherence, brief accurate speech and sweetness of expression would be

1. Kural 383.

தூங்காமை கல்வி துணிவுடைமை இம்மூன்றும்
நீங்கா நிலன் ஆள் பவர்க்கு.

2. Ibid., 385

இயற்றலும் ஈட்டலும் காத்தலும் காத்த
வகுத்தலும் வல்லது அரசு.

3. Ibid., Chapters 51 and 52.

4. Ibid., 632.

வன்கன் குடி காத்தல் கற்றறிதல் ஆள்வினையோடு
ஐந்துடன் மாண்டது அமைச்சு.

5. Ibid., 636.

மதிதுட்பம் தூரோடு உடையார்க்கு அறிதுட்பம்
யாவுள முன்நீர் பவை.

necessary to convince the assembly. Thus we find the art of public speaking as an essential qualification is greatly lauded¹; learning in Political Science persuasiveness in speech, resourcefulness, ready wit and fearlessness are said to be the qualifications essential for a successful envoy².

Resoluteness in carrying out the plans, efficiency in action and avoiding dilatoriness are the principles to be observed by the ministers and rulers.

How the princes were trained, in military tactics and strategy is explained in the chapter on fortification, tactics, valour, army and exchequer. The importance of courage of the men, defensive fortification, choosing an advantageous place, advantage of operating in the native ground and favourable time for attack are discussed in the chapter on tactics³.

Importance of good natural defences, plenty of food resources and scope for attacking the enemy from inside are stressed in the chapter on fortification⁴. The importance of money as an effective munition of war is dealt with in the chapter on exchequer⁵.

The whole section on 'aram' clearly brings out how the king, princes, ministers and nobles have a duty towards the society in protecting the weak and thus uphold Dharma.

1. Kural Ch. 65.

2. Ibid., 686.

கற்றுக்கள் அஞ்சாள் செலச்செலவிக் காலத்தால்
தக்கது அறிவதாம் தூது.

3. Ibid., Ch. 50.

4. Ibid., Ch. 75.

5. Ibid., Ch. 76.

From the above discussion, we can easily see how the science of politics had developed and the considerable interest shown in the training of the princes. The details of princely education are quite vague, but from examples available, we can conclude that private preceptors called Acharya or Asiriyar had the charge of general and professional education of the princes.

Aesthetic Education :

That the Tamils had attained a notably high level of culture is shown in the development of Isai and Natakam, i.e. music, dance and drama. Reference to porunar and viraliyar getting purses of gold and ornaments from the kings and hill chieftains for their skill and music are ample in the classics of Pathuppattu and Ettuththogai. The panar were the roving poets of talent who used to compose and sing in praise of their patrons. The porunar used to accompany the kings to battlefields to cheer up the kings and soldiers by their music and recitations. The viraliyar were the women dancers who used to accompany the panar and depict in dance drama form the meaning of the songs.

A very large variety of instruments seems to have been used in Sangam Age. A collection of musical instruments was known as Palliyam¹. The pure Tamil words designating the various musical instruments like 'malavu' 'ellari', 'mattalam', 'sakoda yal', 'periyal', 'kuzhal', thambam etc., show the development of indigenous style of music long before the Aryan influence. The epic Silappadikaram is a mine of information regarding the high classical music and scientific dancing that had developed by that time. About 108 different patterns of musical instruments are mentioned.

1. Puram : 64

It refers to the different wind instruments, the various types of drums used as accompaniments to dramas and dances and the string instruments which formed a class by themselves.

Besides the classical music of very high order, there are many references to folk music in Sangam and epic literature. Separate tunes appropriate to the lands they lived in had developed. 'Errapattu' of the farmers while they were irrigating their lands, 'nadukai patu' which the women sang while transplanting the seedlings, 'erkala pattu' while harvesting, 'kurathi pattu' of the kurinji women, the songs that girls accompanied with while playing ammanai, 'thalattu', with which the women put their infants to sleep, 'parani', the martial songs sung by the soldiers while they marched to the battlefield are some examples. The influence of sweet music on beasts was recognised. A poet of Purananooru tells us how a girl was able to tame wild beasts from her land by her music and drive away the birds by her songs.

Dancing :

Tholkappiam mentions the various types of dancing 'kuthu' and 'attams'. 'Valli kuthu' in honour of Valli, the consort of Lord Muruga, velanadal or veriyadal in honour of Lord Muruga were famous dances in the Kurinji land. In the Mullai region the 'kuravai kuthu' in honour of Lord Krishna was danced by the ayar girls, we are told in Silappadikaram. The dance of the viraliyar is referred to in all the three kings' courts.

By the epic time, a high degree of excellence in classical dancing had been attained. From the description of the classical solo dance by Madhavi in arangattu—kathai this is evident. The epic mentions that Madhavi was

trained for 7 years from the age of 5 systematically according to the prescribed rules by famous Asans. The teaching team consisted of the dance master, music master, composer of songs and experts who accompanied in the various instruments like yal, flute and drum. Thirty three patterns of hand pose and the variety of expressions needed for the dancer is referred to. Silappadikaram also refers to the association of Siva with dancing and a famous Siva dance 'Kodukotti' is described¹.

Drama :

The term 'kuthu' denoted both dance and drama and was intimately connected with dance and music.

Maduraikkanchi refers to the permanent stage that was built in palaces for the enactment of drama ; different kinds of curtains called 'Elini' are mentioned in Silappadikaram². The dramatic works that have been referred to in Tholkappiam have been lost and so we have no knowledge of the quality of drama of those days. From the commentaries of Tholkappiam we find that the artists were trained systematically to represent the nine emotions- heroism, fear, contempt, surprise, love, anger, sorrow, mirth and self-possession. It is very significant that there was some formal training and systematic instruction for the art of dramatization.

Painting :

The early Sangam classic Paripadal refers to an 'eluthezil ambalam'-a hall with the walls decorated with paintings in Thirupparangunram, one of the famous Muruga

1. Silappadikaram XXVIII: 67

2. Ibid., III 109-110

temples near the Pandya capital Madurai¹. Paripadal also refers to some treatises on paintings which are lost.

Pattinappalai refers to pictures on the walls of the temple in the Chola capital Kaveripoompattinam². The epic Manimekhalai refers to Oviya nool, the science of painting. Buddhist and Jain sources mention the paintings on the life of Buddha depicted on the walls of the monasteries in Kanchi. Maduraikkanchi refers to the painting on the walls of the Jain monastries in Madurai. Thus we find practice of adorning the walls with painting in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain temples existed those days and must have served as visual aids to promote the cause of religious education.

During the Pallava period, we find that sculptures and paintings of the various poses of dancing decorated the pillars of the mandapams in the temples greatly helped the art of dancing.

The painters were known as 'kannul vinaignar' as they were able to attract and captivate the onlookers by their art. How the paints were indigenously prepared by the artists themselves from the local coloured stones and plants are referred to in some Buddhist literature. Training for this art was by the apprenticeship system, the young disciple starting by helping the master and gradually learning the art by direct observation and instruction.

1. Paripadal : 18-27-29

2. Pattinappalai : 49-50

CHAPTER VIII

Temple Colleges of South India

Temples as formal educational agencies—Temples as centres of Culture and mass media

The period between 300 A.D. and 600 A.D. is usually called as the dark ages in the history of Tamil Nadu. With the advent of the foreign uncultured tribes called the Kalabhras and the routing of the Pandya kings, Tamil academies were no more heard of. With the royal patronage dwindling there was very little impetus for Tamil studies. With the increasing infiltration of Jains, Buddhists and the brahmins from North India, the language and culture was being Sanskritized and during the Pallava period, Sanskrit studies became well established in famous centres of learning called, 'ghatikas'. We hear of famous ghatikas at Kanchi, the capital of the Pallavas where Vedic studies were pursued exclusively by brahmins. Famous Sanskrit poets like Bharavai and Dandi were patronized by the Pallava king. The Pallava king Mahendravarman was a famous Sanskrit scholar who wrote 'Mattavilasam'. The connections between Kanchi and Nalanda, the famous international Buddhist University of Magada are referred to by the famous Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang. Scholars like Dinnaga and Dharma Pala from Kanchi, went to teach at Nalanda.

Besides Ghatikas, endowments called 'Brahma Dayam' were given to brahmins to learn and teach Vedas and Artha Sastra and such centres were known as 'Brahma Puris'.

The 'Kuram' inscription and 'Kasakkudi' copper plates mention how a number of brahmin families were settled in some places like Kudanthai and Nagapattinam; lands and houses were assigned to them for spread of Vedic learning by the Pallava kings. Such agrahar villages became great centres of Sanskrit learning in course of time.

From the temples, lands were assigned to certain brahmin families for reciting Vedas, Ithikasas and Puranas during festival time.

Residences of certain saints called 'Mutts' which started as dharmasalas to provide food and lodging to the wandering ascetics gradually became residences of learned scholars and to such scholars were attracted students and thus the 'mutts' became centres of learning; these mutts provided the basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter and education free to Sanskrit scholars. These mutts were very similar to the tapovanas and ashrams of the north. Besides functioning as centres of higher education, the Gurus of the mutts, constantly on the move, kept in touch with the people and gave popular discourses. Sankara's mutt at Kanchipuram, continues till today as a notable centre of Sanskrit and Vedic studies. Modelled on these mutts, some mutts took up Tamil studies and some of them flourishing as centres of Tamil studies to date are Dharmat puram, Thiruvavaduthurai and Thiruppanandal. The libraries of these famous mutts served as treasure houses of ancient wisdom.

The whole of Tamil Nadu was studded with temples and many temple authorities organised Sanskrit schools

and colleges; there are epigraphical evidences of many such temple colleges that existed from about 900 A.D. onwards in Tamil Nadu.

Ennayiram Temple College¹ :

In South Arcot District there existed a famous Sanskrit college which offered free tuition, boarding and lodging to 340 students. The college was provided with an endowment of about 45 Velis of land equal to about 300 acres by the local village community. Fixed number of seats were offered for each subject².

75	Seats for	Rig Veda
75	„ „	Yajur Veda—Krishna
20	„ „	Sama Veda—Chandogya
20	„ „	Sama Veda—Talavechara
20	„ „	Yajurveda—Sukla
10	„ „	Atharva Veda
10	„ „	Grihya Sastra—Budhayayena
40	„ „	Rupavatara
35	„ „	Grammar
35	„ „	Mimamsa
10	„ „	Vedanta

Students received individual attention, each teacher was not allotted more than 25 students. Every Vedic student received an allowance of six nalis or measures of paddy per day and half a Kalanju of gold per year for other expenses. Students of Grammar and Philosophy were offered an allowance of 66 per cent higher than that of the Vedic students as the subjects were considered difficult and mature student took up such studies.

1. SIER for 1918 P. 145 Inscription No. 333 of 1917.
2. A. S. Altekar—Education in Ancient India p. 285.

The inscription gives us a very detailed and interesting picture about salaries of teachers. The normal allowance for a teacher was 96 measures of paddy per day and half a Kalanju of gold per year. The Vedanta teachers received an extra allowance of 25 percent. There were 13 teachers in all. The teachers were neither rolling in riches nor in abject poverty. What they received as allowance was just sufficient for their family responsibilities.

Thirumukkudal¹ :

The Perumal Temple at Thirumukkudal in Chingleput district had a college, hostel and a hospital attached to it. This college catered for 60 students and studies in Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Grammar and Pancharatra were pursued. The teacher's salaries were lower than that of Ennayiram; the teachers received only 16 measures of paddy per day and four Kasus of gold per year. Most probably this temple did not have a rich endowment as Ennayiram.

Thiruvottiyur² :

The college was attached to the Siva Temple. This temple had an endowment of 60 Velis of land, richer than Ennayiram. About 450 students and 20 to 25 teachers must have resided there.

Such detailed information is not available for the other temples all over the land. But a record of various grants for the salaries of teachers and boarding of students studying in different temple colleges in Chola country, Pandya country and the whole of Deccan are available³.

1. EI XXI No. 185 of SIER 1915.
2. Annual Report of Epigraphy No. 201 of 1912
3. South Indian Inscription 604, 667, 671, 695 of 1916

The inscriptions reveal that the village of Salotgi in Bijapur district, Malkapuram in Guntur district, Hebbal in Dharwar district, Tavangare in Karnatak, Mangoli in Belgaum district, Talgund in Shikarpur district and Punnavayil in Tanjore district had temple colleges similar to the ones described from 10th century A.D. down to 18th century.

Temples as Centres of Culture :

The temples were places where sacred hymns were recited, discourses and lectures in epic and puranas were given besides being the predominant symbols of Bhakti. Started as stone excavations during Pallava rule, became huge establishments dominating the Centre locality during the golden age of the Cholas. There was no village without a temple. With the daily worship and celebration of festivals these temples developed a religious fervour among the people and festival times served as suitable occasions for religious and literary discourses. Even when people became unlettered they were never uninformed or uncultured. Direct communication of essential knowledge helped people to be imbued with effective culture. 'Kelvi' or that which is heard from wise men, was considered as an effective medium of communication from very early age. All the Kings of Tamilnadu, Pallavas, Cholas and the later Pandyas, the Epigraph tells us set aside endowments for discourses in epics and puranas to vast congregation of people. 'ambalam' or halls with high stages were assigned in the temples for such recitations and expositions of religious works.

Patronised by Pallava kings, Nayanmars and Alvars went from place to place, singing their devotional hymns to the deities at several shrines and spread the gospel of

devotion to the people. Special endowments were instituted by the Pallavas as well as Chola kings for the recital of these 'Saints' works, Thevaram, Thiruvaimozhi, Thiruppavai and Thiruvembavai.

Sculpture and Painting :

The temples were important informal agencies of learning. Symbolic representations of entire mythologies and copies of paintings and sculptures in temples were very informative visual aids to the unlettered. This gave great impetus to the learning of fine arts as well.

Dance and Drama :

A number of epigraphs mention that during the time of the great Raja Raja Chola in the temples of Tanjore and Thiruvottiyur, songstresses and dancers called 'Devradiyar' were commissioned to sing the hymns of Thevaram and give dance recitals. We hear that religious dramas were systematically put up in temples during the Chola's time. 'Sakkai Kuthu' and 'Arya Kuthu' were performed during 'Rajaraja's and Rajendra Chola's time.¹ Besides serving as vehicles of religious education, these dance dramas were artistically very inspiring. Jivakachintamani and Perunkathai allude to the dramatic presentations put up in the temples.

Devotional recitals of Thiruppavai in the Vishnu temples and Thiruvembavai in the Siva temples during the month of 'Margazhi' which continue till today, serve to evoke devotion among the people. Conducting of Bhajan sessions on certain holy days and festival days, instill a sense of unity among the participants.

1. South Indian Inscription No. 65 of 1914
No 120 of 1925

Harikatha Kalakshepams, expositions of religious stories with musical and dramatic touches, a kind of a mini drama is another popular medium of religious and general cultural instruction.

Thus, we find, a general cultural education was provided to all people by numerous ways direct and indirect; patronage of learning and learned scholars was recognised as a sacred duty by all the kings and they were instruments of spreading of culture.

CHAPTER IX

Some General Conclusions

Main achievements—Comparison with North Indian System

In the foregoing chapters, an attempt was made to give an account of the different aspects of education in Tamil Nadu since the Sangam Age till the mediaeval period. The literature we have surveyed as sources of the educational systems are the products of the educational system which they reveal. Summarizing the main features, we can start with the remark that in some aspects, the educational system sounds so modern.

1. The value and importance of education was realized very well and great importance was attached to knowledge. Knowledge did not mean mere book learning but a power of discrimination. So education was considered as a training of the mind, to acquire knowledge. The highest knowledge was self-realization which would lead to attainment of liberation.

2. Education was considered as life and therefore life long education was prescribed. Education as life, very naturally included education as a process of preparation for life; so we find a combination of general and vocational education being prescribed for all children of all people.

3. Education was open to all sections of society and teachers were drawn from all classes of people. Education

was not an exclusive prestige to any section of society. Girls were entitled for education and as there was no system of early marriage, girls had the opportunities to take to learning; we come across a number of lady scholars continuously throughout the period we survey. All these point out that literacy must have been very high and the general cultural level was naturally of a high standard.

4. Respect to teachers, respect to seniors with senior boys acting as monitors assisting the teacher in instruction, apprenticeship in vocational education—all these were realities; we find the monitorial system was introduced into England by Andrew Bell in early 19th century A.D. very successfully, achieving the most amount of expansion in inexpensive education.

5. Listening to wise men, 'Kelvi' was considered as a very effective method of instruction; understanding and reflecting on what is heard and read would lead to true knowledge. Writing was equally important and inexpensive, and locally available materials were used for writing.

6. Education was entirely a private affair, left to private agencies, though kings, chieftains and nobles extended patronage to learned scholars. Avai or Kudal or Sangam were the institutions of advanced instruction, where scholars were required to prove their worth. Courts of chieftains and kings, where learned men assembled also served as institutions to recognise the merit of scholars.

Buddhist monasteries and Jain Pallis catered for the education of the converted population. During the later period, when Sanskrit studies were introduced, Vedic colleges attached to famous temples functioned as centres of religious education. These centres catered for the education of the brahmin scholars exclusively.

Tamil studies, professional and vocational education, Buddhist monasteries, Jain Pallis and Sanskrit colleges continued to exist side by side for a long time. There was no conflict, no disparity between class education and mass education or higher religious education and lower vernacular education, or liberal education and vocational education in the early stages.

But as royal patronage started being more partial to Sanskrit studies importance of Tamil studies was minimised. With the rigidity of caste system, indigenous Tamil education was neglected and illiteracy increased. A general culture was kept up by the informal agencies of discourses, exposition and musical dramatic presentations of religious works at the various temples.

Training for vocations and professions was mostly by apprenticeship system. A very high standard of arts and crafts which had already been achieved was maintained by a few families.

That the very same values, concepts and aims of education continued during the next few centuries is amply illustrated by some of the works of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries.

The Pandya king Athiviraramapandyan in his Vetri-
vetalai of 15th century A.D., sets down some precepts in simple words—

"The teachers of letter is equal to God"¹

"Faultless speech is an essential of good learning"²

1. எழுத்தறிதலவர் இறைவனாகும்.

2. எவ்விதமற சொல் நன்முதிதல்.

"Self-control after study and thought, is the virtue of the wise"¹

"Even a king will long for the company of the learned"²

In Nithineri Vilakkam of the 17th century, Kumarakurupara Swamigal stresses the importance of understanding and application of knowledge.

"However many subjects learning may be concerned with
If there be not understanding to employ it on the
right place

It is profitless! Though thus employed if power of
speech be wanting

What good is it? If this too be present, it is as if a
golden

Flower were to possess fragrance too".³

Comparing this system with the educational systems of North India, we find that there were quite a few similarities as well as differences. In both systems religion was inseparable from life and therefore ideals and values for education were provided by religion. The aims and objectives of life, and therefore of education according to both the systems were formation of character, training of the mind to acquire discrimination and wisdom, development of personality for social efficiency and instilling piety and religiousness among the people. Both the systems realized the importance of learning, paid great respect to the teachers and stressed the oral traditions of learning.

1. அறிஞர்க் கழகு கற்றுணர்க் தடங்கல்.
2. அறிவுடை பொருவனை அரசனும் விரும்பும்.
3. எத்தனைய வாயினும் கல்வி யிடமறித்து
உய்த்துணர் வில்லெனி விலவாகு—முய்த்துணர்க் துஞ்
சொல்வன்மை யிவ்றெனி னென்னு மக்துண்டேற்
பென்மலர் நாற்ற முடைத்து.

The most glaring difference is that education in Tamil Nadu was open to all groups of society at the time of Tholkappiam, about 300 B.C., by which time, in the north, education was more or less the exclusive privilege of the Dvijas, the first three castes; the teachers in the North Indian system were only the priestly class, whereas in the south we find teachers drawn from all classes of people.

In Tamil Nadu the subject of study and the medium of instruction has been the language of the people, Tamil, which had a tradition of creative writing for a very long time. Whereas in the north, the classical language Sanskrit had become quite different to Prakrit, the spoken language of the people and Sanskrit continued to be the major medium of literary expression inspite of the efforts made by the Buddhists and Jains to develop Pali and Ardha Maghadi and so education was restricted to the upper classes only.

In Tamil Nadu there was no canonization of literature as sacred; no solemnity as such was associated with the process of education and therefore we do not hear of any ceremony corresponding to the initiation ceremony, Upanayana or the concluding ceremony 'Sama Vardhana' of the North Indian systems. In the Tamil system, we do not hear of teachers living away from the towns in forests or pupils residing with their teachers compulsorily. We do come across some teachers having disciples but the famous 'Gurukula' system of the north was not compulsory.

Education was not free as such in the ancient Tamil Nadu. The pupils were required to either pay fees or offer their services to the teachers. The institution or begging of the Gurukula system is absent in the Tamil system. In Tamil system, we find equal importance to

writing being given and writing was started simultaneously with reading since the age of five.

Women in South India seem to have had more independent status, entitlement to education and in the matter of choosing their life partners.

The Varanashrama Dharma of the north was not adhered to in the south. The division of society in Tamil Nadu was more based on the regions and occupations and there was no rigidity of division till very late. So a combination of general education of Tamil language and literature and different types of vocational education as preparation for living was in vogue for all.

The theory of Karma, the theory of transmigration of souls, and the theory of three debts of the Northern beliefs though referred in some Tamil classics of later period, did not really have much influence on the educational system. More importance was given to overcoming of fate by industriousness, resoluteness and fortitude.

Today, Tamil Nadu stands foremost among the states of India in the facilities offered to the people in the educational sphere. The value of education, the importance of education and need for education are realized.

Education is free to all children of all people till University stage. Free education includes free meals, free medical services and free uniforms; these are being provided to all needy children. A system of scholarship operates for the so called backward communities and scheduled castes and tribes and thus equalization of educational opportunity is very much evident. Merit cum means scholarship offers help for the meritorious, deserving talented scholars. Teachers' position and status are on the

way up with increase in their remuneration and better conditions of service. Importance of understanding is stressed and so use of vernacular as medium of instruction at all stages is encouraged. Private agencies are recognised and government patronage is extended to them through grants in aid. Thus both voluntary and Governmental efforts co-operate in the field of education.

Awards for learned scholars, good teachers, talented artists, skilled artisans and brave children have been instituted.

In short, we can see, that all salient features of the ancient system are being re-introduced and we can hope to look forward to a future as bright as the past.

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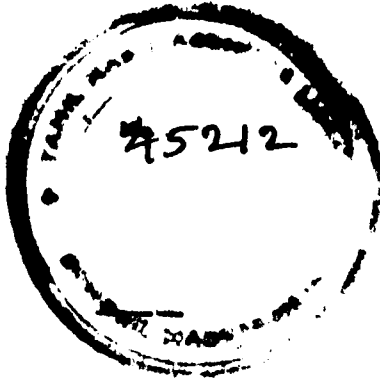
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