

Educational and Welfare Initiatives for the Depressed Classes in Madras Presidency (1920–1947): A Historical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The educational and welfare schemes introduced during the colonial period for the Depressed Classes of the Madras Presidency were an important step in lifting the marginalized communities. The Labour Department, in association with the Provincial Government and social reformers, introduced schemes like 'Labour Schools,' hostels, scholarships, and mid-day meal schemes to promote education amongst Scheduled Castes, Aborigines, and other backward communities. It is important to understand that despite facing rigid caste discrimination and social biases, there has been an impact of these schemes upon the enrollment, retention, and overall educational development of the Depressed Classes during the period of 1920-1947. The essay will investigate and discuss how these efforts and results affect the realm of social reform and human development.

KEYWORDS: Depressed Classes, Madras Presidency, Labour Schools, Education, Hostels, Scholarships, Mid-day Meals, Social Welfare, Colonial India, Scheduled Castes.

INTRODUCTION

In the whole Madras Presidency, the pupils belonging to the Depressed classes were suffering from lack of education. Education is considered as a light to lead humanity. It can also be said that education perhaps shapes the personality in accordance with societal value structure reflected in the knowledge context. Poverty, ignorance and illiteracy were neglected in the society. Since the colonial rule English education inculcated many things to the indigenous people. Knowingly or unknowingly the neglected group got impetus by the birth of the Labour Department. Though this department's ameliorative work was carried on to the Depressed communities it was listed for the communities eligible for help through the Labour Department. After listing it, education became much important and was offered to them with the amenities such as Mid-day meals, Hostel facilities, grant of Scholarships and also by opening separate schools for the Depressed Classes namely "Labour Schools".

Labour Schools

Primary Schools were started to educate the pupils belonging to the Depressed Classes. They were called as “Labour Schools” and were managed by the Labour Department. Gradually the number of the schools were increased to educate them. Educational segregation of these classes marked with the new social wing as the Depressed Classes. Besides, the Labour Department helped the pupils of the Depressed Classes to get admission in the public schools. Casteism was deeply rooted in the minds of High Caste Hindus. They never allowed their children to sit and study with low caste boys and girls. This social diversion deeply hurted the feeling of the Depressed Classes.

Since 1920, the Commissioner of Labour was put in-charge of the special duty for educating the Depressed Classes. To avoid casteism, he suggested and appealed to the Government for starting separate schools for the Depressed classes. Additional schools were started for them, in the place of refusal to the boys of Depressed Classes. Denial of education to the Depressed Classes was condemned by the Government. The Provincial Government of Madras was interested to ensure the admission of boys and girls of depressed classes. All the educational institutions, whether it was aided or supported were genuinely accessible to all classes of pupils. Local bodies were warned that subsidies paid on behalf of the schools under their management would be withdrawn, if they were situated in places inaccessible to the Depressed Classes.¹ The special schools especially for the Scheduled Castes, Criminal Tribes and Aboriginal were managed by the Labour Department.

Few Private institutions like the Pachaiyappa’s College in Madras, Zamorines College, Calicut and a High School in Triplicane did not admit the Scheduled Castes till 1919. The general causes given to excluding them were as follows:

- Prejudice on the part of the High Castes.
- Location of schools in inaccessible places like Agraharas, Chavadis, Temples or Caste Hindu Quarters,
- Objection of the owners of buildings rented for schools’ purpose,
- Unsympathetic attitude of the landlords in certain districts towards education of the Scheduled Caste children, and
- The reluctance of the Scheduled Castes to assert themselves.²

These features revealed the attitudes of the High Caste Hindus towards the Depressed Classes. The Government issued an order to admit all the Depressed Class Pupils in the educational institutions. Besides, if the Hindu children were withdrawn as a protest against the admission of the Depressed Classes, the vacancies were filled by the other Scheduled Castes.³ The Madras Elementary Education Act of 1920,

Section 41(2) was meant for enforcing admission to the pupils of all castes and communities. Since then, the Panchayat Schools were opened to all classes or rented suitable building for that purpose.⁴

Even though the Provincial Government had passed many orders, amendments and taken legal measures for the enhancement of the Depressed Classes, it resulted with hardly any success. For instance, in North Arcot District, caste prejudices were strong. High Caste people pulled down a school shed which was put for the Scheduled Caste and in another place of the president, a Taluk Board was forced to discontinue the employment of two Scheduled Caste teachers in Caste Hindu Schools, due to their ill treatment by the Caste Hindu students.⁵ Hence, the Government through the Labour Department tried to open segregated schools and the common schools for the pupils of the Depressed Classes. As one among the Depressed Communities namely, the Scheduled Castes due to their socio-economic condition seemed to be the cording layer in the social ulcer of untouchability. For the refinement and for access of the untouchables in the society, the Government, the Public, the Private Organisations and Social reformers were aiming for casteless society, which could be solved only by imparting education. To remove untouchability, proper measure of education had to be taken in different angles. The Government strongly protested to the private institutions for the segregational imparting of education to all the castes in the Madras Presidency. After the careful vigilance over the local bodies, it warned them to stop if they were not started in place accessible to the Depressed Classes, especially the Scheduled Castes. Further, the Government order that permission should not be accorded to separate schools unless a local body could show that it was impossible despite to the persistent propaganda to persuade the Caste Hindus to admit the pupils of Depressed Classes into the Caste Hindu Schools.⁶ The Government tried its best to convince the orthodox Hindus. Yet, the phenomenon of casteism prevailed in the society.

Since 1919, the condition of the Depressed Classes was well understood by the British Government. In the same year, on the 1st of March 1919 there were 1,48,954 pupils reading in 5,242 public institutions of which 14 were under Government and 657 under Municipalities or Local Boards. Special Privileges were given to the Harijan by exempting them from payment of fees in Secondary Schools under Public Management.⁷ Until 1920, Elementary Education was left to Local Boards, Municipal Councils, Mission and non-Mission Agencies. To accelerate the primary education, it imperatively necessitated to place the elementary education on a statutory basis and to set the financial position on a stable footing, secure from the conflicting claims of other administrative needs, hence Madras Elementary Education Act VIII of 1920 was passed.⁸ This further facilitated the opening of more schools for the Depressed Communities. From 1920-'47 the Labour Department's primary concern was to educate the Depressed Classes and it took the following steps:

- ✓ Taking steps through the Educational Department to get Depressed Pupils admitted to existing Local Board or aided schools and, where this is not practicable, opening separate elementary schools in consultation with the District Educational Officers.
- ✓ Maintaining hostels for them by paying boarding grants,
- ✓ Sanctioning of Scholarships and Stipends, and
- ✓ Granting subsidies of philanthropic bodies working for the educational uplift of the Depressed Classes by starting schools or hostels.

With these objectives, the department carried on its work in the field of primary education. For the educational development the number of public institutions were chiefly intended for Panchamas. Their strength rose from 480 to 6,438 thereafter from 9,776 to 174,782.⁹ The Labour Department served the total interests of the Depressed Classes. In 1920-'21, the total number of schools were 109 with 3,037 pupils while at the end of 1930-'31 and their strength from 193,260 to 354,248.¹⁰ Nearly, one decade's progress of education for the Depressed Classes was satisfactory. The total number of pupils in the public schools rose from 140,652 in 1920-1921 to 301,917 in 1930-1931.¹¹ The development of labour schools was short listed in the below Table.

TABLE-1

LABOUR SCHOOLS WITH STRENGTH OF PUPILS

Year	Number of Schools	Boys	Girls	Number of Scholarship
1920-21	109	-	-	3,037
1921-22	164	1,179	123	1,302
1922-23	254	-	-	9,069
1923-24	469	12,886	1,608	14,494
1924-25	656	19,774	2,440	22,214
1925-26	723	22,417	3,189	25,606
1926-27	926	29,239	4,679	33,918
1927-28	1,178	36,885	5,914	42,779
1928-29	1,583	47,262	9,274	56,536
1929-30	1,784	52,858	10,746	63,604

During the period 1931-1934, in the rural areas the schools imparting education were strictly opposed to the spread of education among the Depressed Classes. All the Taluk Board and Aided Schools were denied admission for the pupils of the Depressed Classes.¹² In the schools, the practice of untouchability

prevailed. Both the Education and Labour Department was working for the removal of untouchability. Yet, its black scar was in the minds of the children and the Caste Hindus. In 1934 more than ten schools were apex in the feeling of casteism. The Caste Hindus withdraw their children from the common educational institutions, because the Scheduled Caste children were also allowed to study there. This discrimination was brought to the knowledge of the Government. To free themselves from their opposition in the common schools, the Government issued an order in 1935, for the admission of Depressed Class students. The actual provision of the order was stated below:

GOVERNMENT ORDER OF 1935

- (a) Recognition shall not be granted to any school situated in a locality which is inaccessible to members of any class or community,
- (b) Recognition may be withdrawn from any school under public or private management which refuses admission to any pupil merely on the ground of the caste or community to which he belongs. If no pupil belonging to the Harijan community is actually attending a school, it will be deemed to refuse admission to such pupils, within the meaning of this rule unless the management of the schools shows that no such pupils are residing within a distance of one mile from the school or due to other satisfactory reasons for the absence of such pupils from the schools, and
- (c) No grants shall be paid to any institution:
 - (1) Which is situated in a locality which is inaccessible to the member of any caste or community,
 - (2) Which refuse admission to any pupil merely on the ground of the caste or community to which he belongs.¹³

Thus, the Government Order ensured the further enrolment of the students in the schools. The Government was stiff against the segregated institutions. The Government was stiff against the segregated institutions. If any educational institution was inaccessible to any class or community, stopped Grant-in-Aid to schools which refuse admission to any student on ground of caste or community.¹⁴ During the year 1935-1936, a sum of Rs.4,31,800 was incurred by the Labour schools. The annual strength of the boys and girls were 39,555 and 7,916 respectively. Totally, 38,471 students studied in the labour schools.¹⁵ Every year the enrolment of the students in the schools increased with the additionally opened new schools. For instance, in the year of 1940-1941 a total of 192 schools were opened in addition to the existing schools of 10,000 in 1935-1936.¹⁶ The progress of education of the Depressed Communities is a tribute to the Labour Department. The Commissioner of Labour was much interested and organized any number of schools for the elevation. During the year 1940-1941, eleven labour elementary schools were started. Schools were classified as day schools, night schools and combined day and night schools. A sum of 6,14,859 was incurred on the total number of 1,198 schools to educate the pupils 38,848 boys and 13,229 girls.¹⁷ In Trichinopoly District there were three schools run by the Labour Department with 109 pupils. While, the North Arcot District had no school teachers, due to the malarial spread, the teachers declined to join their duties in the schools.¹⁸ Hence, ten schools were newly started in the Madras Presidency and 39 were closed. At the outset 1,125 schools were working at the end of the year 1942, of these 1,121 were day schools, 2

night schools and 2 were day and night schools.¹⁹ Besides, a sum of Rs.9,10,20 was incurred to educate the total strength of 37,652 boys and 18,518 girls.²⁰ For the Kallar children in Madurai District 247 schools were opened with 9 more kallar girls schools in 1944. The total strength of the kallar pupils was 14,701. The total strength of the teachers was 489. In the same year, Ramnad District also facilitated with two schools with 163 pupils on the rolls of whom 47 were non-kallar.²¹

Every year, few districts were preferred in the opening of new schools. Sometimes, the old schools happened to be closed. Whatever be the Government rule, the part played by the Labour Department was much appreciable. It never rested or happened to stop its ameliorative measures especially, in the provision of schools. In 1945-1946, there were 1,112 labour schools which imparted education for 68,845.²² During the Independent period, there were 1,119 labour schools which imparted education in strength of 77,674. At the end of 1946-1947, a sum of Rs.14,44.245 was incurred for education. Since 1931 to 1947, the annual progress of the Labour Schools is shown below:

TABLE-2

Year	Number of Schools	Number of Children	Expenditure Schools	School Buildings
1931-32	1,760	44,305	,40,533	17,191
1932-33	866	32,157	3,52,073	11,111
1933-34	987	38,002	3,65,500	11,847
1934-35	991	38,471	4,07,900	19,583
1935-36	1,009	39,144	4,31,800	20,062
1936-37	978	39,926	4,35,436	21,073
1937-38	1,190	48,203	4,99,67	32,655
1938-39	1,178	48,947	5,51,619	33,066
1939-40	1,198	52,077	6,00,916	30,833
1940-41	1,154	52,684	6,14,859	20,195
1941-42	1,125	56,170	6,34,212	23,819
1942-43	1,105	54,536	7,30,877	34,318
1943-44	1,085	51,532	8,56,714	47,109
1944-45	1,082	55,310	9,49,641	63,860
1945-46	1112	68,84	11,21,327	85,621
1946-47	1,119	77,674	14,44,245	83,885

Source: Report of Harijan Welfare Committee, Madras, 1948.

Mid-day Meals

The pupils among the Depressed Classes were not attending the schools regularly. Few schools were running with the poor strength. To increase their strength a survey was taken. The result of the survey was that there was poverty-stricken life of the parents. They were expecting and surviving with their earning children. Whereas the Aboriginal and Hill Tribes were bound to their traditional bindings. As they never thought of their children's education. The Ultimate result of these Depressed Classes is that they were socially and economically backward.

The importance of the Depressed Classes was felt by the Government survey. So, to attract these parents, it adopted a new method of introducing mid-day meals in the schools. Even private organizations provided mid-day meals to the children of their schools at Periamet and New Town in Madras. The Government of India sanctioned in 1918 a recurring grant of Rs.3,000 for the provision of free meals. The Government of Madras was benefitted by the Central Assistance. The system of providing mid-day meals was first introduced by the Madras Corporation successfully in three schools at Chetput, Thousand Lights and Mirsahipet in 1923. Since then, many schools were attached with the provision of mid-day meals. This also helped for the regular attendance of the pupils.²³

As a social leader, M.C. Rajah was often pleaded for the welfare of the Depressed Classes. He demanded in the Legislative council for the mid-day meals in 1923. The Government did not share the grievances of the Depressed Classes. Despite its indifferent approach, M.C. Rajah brought a resolution to increase the number of scholarships. After a long process the supply of mid-day meals was urged and materialized with the provision of Rs.45 lakhs.²⁴ This huge sum was not borne by the Government. At the most the Government felt that the financial burden was heavy to execute the provision of mid-day meals. In 1928, a resolution was passed in the Legislative Council and recommended for the mid-day meals for the different regions and to maintain it. To implement the scheme as inter-dining among the pupils of Depressed Classes it would create another black scar in the social order.²⁵ Diversities within the caste, clan and tribe posed a lot of problem like, not allowing their children to dine with other pupils. When the Criminal Tribe Settlement Elevation School at Aziznagar came under it this created a lot of difficulty to the school management. The pupils of the Tribes attended the school very early by 8.00 a.m. and returned home late evening. The whole day they were without food. Sometimes, they were slowly drifting from the schools. To ensure their study, the school managing authorities requested the Government and received the aid from the Government. Since 1927, this school had its development in imparting education and for the provision of mid-day meals. Besides, the Government had granted a meager amount of Rs.240 per month in 1929.²⁶ By the aid of the Government, the progress of education was accelerated with the private organization. The Adi-Dravida Mahajana Sabha passed the resolution of mid-day meals to poor Adi-Dravida in the primary schools, secondary schools and colleges.²⁷ As the member, T.J. Ramaswamy Iyer pleaded in the Legislative

Assembly on 19.3.1930 and brought a budget motion to that effect and urged for the mid-day meals to the pupils of poor children.²⁸ The impact of the mid-day meals is that a large number of pupils attended and studied. As an experiment, the Government introduced the scheme of mid-day meals in Tanjore and East Godavari Districts. To extend this scheme in other places few social stalwarts like Swami Sahajananda, Rao Sahib Abdul Hameed Khan, P. Sundram Chetti, V.G. Vasudeva Pillai and C. Basudev frequently stressed the need and importance of mid-day meals to the pupils of Depressed Classes. They brought a resolution lapsed due to the prorogation of the Council.²⁹ Because of their persistent demand the mid-day meals got impetus in 1940. After 20 years of demand, mid-day meals were provided in eight labour schools in five districts.³⁰ Provision of mid-day meals helped to increase the regular attendance of the children who looked more cheerful and took a greater interest in their study. In the end of the year 1940-1941, a sum of Rs.8,57,789 was incurred on education.³¹ Gradually, the mid-day meal scheme was introduced in other parts of the Presidency. This scheme was covered in 14 districts and extended to 600 selected schools. The special labour staff worked on a Five-Year Programme at a total cost of Rs.5,38,450.³² In the beginning of the Five-Year Term, eligible communities were listed. In the first year it covered 20 per cent of the schools at a cost of Rs.1,09,0000.³³ Financial assistance was raised by closing down single teacher owned schools and ill managed schools.³⁴ To strengthen and to improve the pupil's education sufficient measures were introduced in the way of free meals and clothing. In 1943, there were 360 schools which provided mid-day meals to 15,000 pupils. For this scheme in the province a sum of 2 lakhs was incurred.³⁵ Sequential progress was maintained in the provision of mid-day meals. A sum of Rs.8.04 lakhs was incurred to feed the pupils of the Depressed communities in 1944. The total number of children benefited were 64,000 in 760 schools. Since 1941, the school attending children strength was increased.³⁶ The parents of the poor pupils sent their children with the aim of getting one free meal. This made a sufficient number of children to attend the schools. For the supply of mid-day meals, the private contractors were required. The schools which were running with ten children were left out from the scheme.³⁷ Moreover the private contractors were not interested to feed these centers. To inspect and to report the condition of labour schools a Revenue Inspector was appointed. The school was supervised by a Revenue Inspector with a jurisdiction of 50 schools under his control. His inspection helped the uniform activities of the Labour Schools. Though its initial ambition was aimed towards the education of the Depressed classes, later it resulted in the free meals providing centres. On the whole, these free meals programme helped to educate more pupils among the Depressed Classes. The impact of the scheme is that there was increase in the pupil's attendance.

During the year 1946-1947 a sum of Rs.10.49 lakhs was incurred in 781 schools and provided mid-day meals to the strength of 71,541 children.³⁸ This provision was never affiliated to the amelioration works of the Harijan Welfare Department in 1949. After 1947, the supply of mid-day meals was carried on by the private contractors and the Government.³⁹

Hostels

Labour schools were started with the moderate scheme of providing mid-day meals. Since 1920, the strength of the pupils increased annually. Few schools were situated in the semi-urban areas and towns. The pupils among the Depressed Classes were not well enough to bear the expenditure for education. To initiate and to encourage them, free hostels were opened and provided with three times meals and free accommodation. By providing hostel facility poor residents of the villages had benefited and freed their children to reside and study.

During the year 1921-1922, 383 hostels were for boys and 154 for girls with total strength of 29,191 boarders. As usual the majority of these residents were Indian Christians.⁴⁰ This data reflects the position in the whole Presidency of Madras. Special consideration to the pupils of Depressed Classes was felt in 1923. The first hostel for the Depressed Classes was started by the Government in Madras from 1.12.1923 with 34 pupils.⁴¹ For the admission, all the eligible Depressed Communities were preferred. Three hostels were opened for the pupils of the Depressed Classes. The places of the hostel were at Madras, Masulipatnam and Calicut which was maintained at the cost of Government and the strength of the pupils were 55,50 and 12 in 1928-1929.⁴² The Commissioner of Labour was the sole authority for the ameliorative works. He vested the power to form the hostel committee⁴⁶. The hostels run by the Government were assisted and guided by Advisory Committee for each hostel. The Committee was a suggestive body than executive. The committee was deputed and asked to report the condition of each hostel. Different hostels served the pupils of different communities, for instance, the hostel for Brahmins, non-Brahmins and the Christians. These marks of segregation remained as an incorrigible feature. Without the caste feeling social order ends with as an indefinite feature. Fortunately, the Ministry of Dr.P. Subbarayan welcomed the innovative step for the opening of common hostels.⁴⁴ With the emergence of Harijan Sevak Sangh, hostels were opened and run by the Sangh for the benefit of Scheduled Castes.⁴⁵

The Slater Hostel, Madras

This hostel was intended for Depressed Class boys serving as apprentices or undergoing industrial training in the city of Madras. In 1937, the total strength of the hostel was twenty-five. In the academic year 1937-1938, there were five new admissions and eleven withdrawals. Hence, an expenditure of Rs.3,551-12-2 was incurred on the hostel in the year.⁴⁶

In January 1938, the hostel was shifted to a rented building in Purasawakkam. The same hostel was later administered by the Madras Branch of Harijan Sevak Sangh. The Government also consented on 1.4.1938 and agreed to pay a grant for the maintenance.

The Paddison Hostel, Madras

This was maintained for the poor students belonging to the Depressed Classes. The hostel was under the control of the Labour Commissioner. During the year 1937-1938. Mr. T. Foulger, the Principal of Wesley High School at Royapettah served as the Superintendent of the hostel. The total strength of the hostel was 49. Among them 30 were old boarders and 19 students were newly admitted. Annual expenditure on the maintenance was a sum of Rs.9,145-4-3⁴⁷. Those who passed in S.S.L.C. were admitted in the College hostel. Sometimes, shifting of the inmates from one hostel to another was practiced.⁴⁸

The Sundaracharlu Hostel, Salem

During the year, 29 students out of 30 stayed in the hostel. A sum of Rs.2,824-3-0 was incurred on the hostel welfare. The general health and progress of the inmates were satisfactory.⁴⁹ For the benefit of the girls among the Depressed Classes hostels were also started for them. For instance, the girl's hostel, at Chakkilipalayam, Perambur, Madras. In 1937-1938, a sum of Rs.720 was sanctioned at the rate of Rs.6 per mensum per girl for 20 Hindu Depressed Class girls for six months from 1.10.1937 to 31.3.1938 to the girls.⁵⁰ Besides, annually the Provincial Government sanctioned finance to the various hostels. To support the works of private organizations the Government sanctioned a sum of Rs.10,950 to the Harijan Sevak Sangh in Madras and the present district of Andhra. Totally 219 Hindu Depressed Class pupils were maintained by the Sangh. In the Tamil Country, the districts of Salem, Coimbatore, North Arcot and Madura were benefited at the rate of Rs.350,800, 250,600 and 300 respectively. Thus, the sum of Rs.2,300 alone was incurred in the Tamil Country.⁵¹ The rest of the huge sum was incurred in the District of Andhra Pradesh, For the financial allocation, each District Collector with the respective Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh was authorized. Among the Depressed Classes, the privacy of the Aboriginal and Hill Tribes were also considered for boarding grants. Annually boarding grants were given for the Todas, Koravas and the Badagas.

The Badaga of the Nilgiris

The Badaga hostel at Ootacamund was continued to be run by the Municipality with the help of an Advisory Committee. The hostel continued in "Ooklands" on a monthly rent Rs.75. The total strength of the hostel was 20 in 1938.⁵² Another hostel for the Badagas served at Hoobathalai with a strength of 30 inmates. A sum of Rs.4,554 was incurred for the hostel welfare in 1938. Every year, the Department of Labour and the private organization like the Harijan Sevak Sangh jointly or separately worked to board the pupils and to start the new hostels in place of the needy. The Commissioner of Labour Keenly observed and got the detailed reports of each amelioration work. If any hostel did not serve the deputed purpose, it was closed and the same fund was used for other purpose. For instance, in 1940, the Paddison Hostel was closed for the purpose of arts and professional students' accommodation. Nearly 30 boarders were allotted with the value

of Rs.200 per head in the Madras and the moffusil.⁵³ The students among the Kallars were also admitted in the respective hostels. In the District of Madura, Special measures were taken for the Kallar students. For them a total of 1,358 boarding grants were sanctioned. Besides this, two Government Kallar Boarding Homes with 375 boarders were run by the Labour Department.⁵⁴ Additionally, an instructor was sanctioned and attached to the Uthamapalayam Boarding Home. In 1945, eight labour hostels were run by the Labour Department and a sum of Rs.62,600 was allotted for the students of Depressed Classes.⁵⁵ In the same year, 2,050 boarding grants were sanctioned at the rate of Rs.10 or 12 per mensem for each student. To assist the inmates in purchasing of books and clothes a sum of Rs.11,300 was allotted.⁵⁶ The Labour Department possibly served well in the provision of hostel facilities. Since 1937, accommodation of the hostel was considered as one among the elevation measures for the Depressed Classes. In the year 1937, a sum of Rs.2 lakhs had been allotted for the hostel facilities.⁵⁷ Since then upon 1947 major step were taken to fill the hostel and to sanction the Grant-in-Aid to other hostels. For instance, in 1946, all hostels having a minimum strength of 10 boarders belonging to the eligible communities were declared as the eligible boarders for further stay and the cost borne by the Government through the sanctioned grant.⁵⁸ In 1947, major changes were introduced in the hostel administration. The post of a resident Tutor-cum-Warden with B.Ed. qualification was sanctioned for each of the hostels at Salem, Kozhikode, Masulipatnam and Chidambaram. Besides, one new hostel at Kotagiri was constructed for the Hill Tribes. The cost for the permanent building was sanctioned for a sum of Rs.34,500. Moreover, 148 hostels were subsidized by the Government and the amount of Jump sum boarding grants was Rs.5.48 lakhs for 3,620 pupils.⁵⁹ After 1949, the Department of Harijan Welfare has shouldered all the responsibilities of the Labour Department, especially for the Harijan Welfare.

Scholarship

To encourage the pupils in their study, financial assistance was given in the form of Scholarships. During the period of 1920-1947 large number of Scholarships were provided to the students. In 1919, 16 Scholarships were provided and made fee remissions to the boys of Harijans, Aborigines and other eligible communities.⁶⁰ For the Harijan Converts Scholarships were never given by the Labour Department.⁶¹ The Scholarship and fee remission were sanctioned by the Government for the benefit of Panchamas and other Depressed boys. In the Madras Presidency as a whole the total number of pupils belonging to the Aboriginal Classes was 9,096 s against 8,755 in the previous year.⁶² The Provincial Government awarded any number of Scholarships by the recommendation of the Labour Commissioner. From 1923-1924 a comprehensive scheme for granting Scholarships was worked out. The Scholarships for College Students, industrial Scholarships, Commercial Scholarships, Scholarship for motor mechanic training, teachers training.⁶³ While providing the Scholarships, the residential Scholarships were considered to boarders of the hostels. Usually, the non-residential Scholarships were provided to the regular students. During the year 1924-1925, 385

Scholarships were sanctioned as against the 281 Scholarships in 1923.⁶⁴ Educational concessions to the converts was given by the Education Department. The Commissioner of Labour was not responsible for it.⁶⁵ Anyhow, his suggestions and recommendations were considered in the following year for the provision of Scholarships. Further, a sum of Rs.61,380 was incurred to provide the Scholarship to 1457 pupils in 1929-1930. Annually, the number of Scholarships had been increased. Educational amenities were provided to all the pupils in the Madras Presidency. To improve the pupils of Depressed Classes, both the residential and non-residential Scholarships were given.

In 1932-1933, 48 residential Scholarships were granted to pupils of the Depressed Classes.⁶⁶ The value of Scholarships was Rs.18 per month for the school and Rs.25 for College Courses. There were in addition 1,278 ordinary Scholarships for general education and 6 for the College education.⁶⁷ Professional, technical and the commercial Scholarships were also sanctioned in the total number of 190 Scholarships.⁶⁸ Special consideration was offered to the Kallar Community also. Elementary education was supplemented in some cases by industrial training which was generally imparted in the schools maintained for them. The education was usually free and in some cases the pupils were also supplied free food, clothings and school accessories.⁶⁹ Succeeding, in 1935-1936, 51 residential Scholarships were granted in the revised rates between Rs.12 and Rs.30.⁷⁰ The Commissioner of Labour recommended the Scholarships in higher education. His approval for the Scholarships was final. During the year 1,588 ordinary Scholarships were awarded for the general education. Besides, 7 Collegiate Scholarships, 153 for industrial Scholarships and 12 for the trainees.⁷¹ In the training period of 12 Scholarship holders were given bonus to the extent of Rs.522 to enable them to start life as artisans.⁷² For the whole Depressed Classes, fee exemption was allowed for the payment of examination fees. For the Kallar boys, 152 ordinary, 5 residential and 12 industrial Scholarships were sanctioned for the district of Madras.⁷³ Through the Scholarships the pupil's education gradually increased. The number of increasing Scholarships asserted their continuous attendance in the institutions. During the academic year of 1939-1940, 4,935 Scholarships were provided.⁷⁴ To avail of the Scholarship, rules were relaxed and it was stated that income certificates should be produced even after the Scholarships were granted.⁷⁵

In the educational institution fee concessions were also offered to the eligible communities. In special cases Government helped the students to pay the fees for the Indian Civil Service Examination etc., Mr. G. Ganesamurthi, a Scheduled Caste Student of Pachiappa College availed of such fee concession from the Labour Department.⁷⁶ During the year 1940-1941, 65 residential Scholarships, 5,484 non-residential Scholarships for general education, 30 for professional and commercial courses and 110 industrial Scholarships were awarded.⁷⁷ In 1944-1945, 166 Scholarships were awarded for the pupils belonging to the Kallar community. For their higher study a sum of Rs.350 was sanctioned for period of two years to a kallar boys to prosecute his post-graduate study.⁷⁸ Additionally, 15 kallar girls and 7 boys were given boarding grant for the vocational institution.⁷⁹ In 1945, for the ordinary Scholarship 6,473 was sanctioned with 369

Scholarship had granted for arts and professional courses. Though their participation was very less in the higher education, privileges and concessions were promptly offered to the pupils by the Government. Every year, new type or new field was chosen to improve the trainees and to substantiate them with the aid like Scholarships, stipend and meals free of cost. In the same year 31 Scholarships for mid-waferly trainees and two for the agricultural students were sanctioned.⁸⁰

The Commissioner of Labour was empowered to grant 10 Scholarships for compounder trainees, 6 for Sericultural and 3 for Bachelor of teacher.⁸¹ From 1920 to 1930 the amount granted for Scholarship did not reach even one lakh rupees. After 1930, it gradually increased and reached the apex of 2 lakhs of rupees for the award of Scholarships to the Depressed Classes.⁸² To encourage the students of the Law Course, each year ten Scholarships were awarded to the communities of Yerulula, Yenadi and other Aboriginal Tribes.⁸³ After 1947, a sum of Rs.2.70 lakhs was allotted for Harijan and other eligible communities and Rs.55,600 for the converts for the provision of 7,474 Scholarships. A sum of Rs.6,200 was provided as fee exemption and Rs.6,500 for the purchase of books and clothes to the pupils of the Harijans and other eligible communities.⁸⁴

CONCLUSION

The social and educational activities organised by the Labour Department in the Madras Presidency had a large impact on the upliftment of the Depressed Classes. The establishment of the Labour Schools/Hostels, Mid-Day Meal Schemes, and Scholarships dealt with the socio-economic and cultural factors that acted as impediments to education. Caste prejudices had still persisted, but these programmes have resulted in an improved literacy rate and paved the way for an uninterrupted drift towards an integrated education system. The Government, Social Reformers, and Private Initiatives had devised a carefully thought-out programme of consistent effort to bring about an egalitarian education and welfare system, thereby proving that social inequality brought about through history could be reduced through specific targeted intervention.

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