

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT OF MADRAS PRESIDENCY UNDER O.P. RAMASAMY

REDDIAR

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ABSTRACT

Many children were brought to school under compulsory elementary education. Basic Education was the declared policy of the Government regarding elementary education. O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar's Government had set up committees to re-organise the secondary education on the basis of acceptance of basic education for elementary schools. Regional language is the first language and English as the Second language in Secondary Schools. The teaching of English in Standards I to V of secondary schools was abolished. In order to remove illiteracy among the adults, the Government started in 1948-1949 a scheme of Adult Education. The Government invited authors to present continuation of reading books in Tamil and Telugu for the use of new literates. Compulsory elementary education and the policy of Basic Education in the elementary education were great success. More children were enrolled under compulsory education. Basic Education could help the progress of agriculture, industry and trade.

The Government took up the reorganisation of Education in right earnest. In the post-war development scheme, the Government made provision for the introduction of compulsory elementary education in the province, upto Vth Standard. To start with, the scheme was introduced in selected villages, but it was later extended to some more villages. More children were brought to school under compulsory elementary education. The scheme aimed at the reorganization and extension of education to suit the national ideas and needs of a free India. The Government had been trying to spread compulsory elementary education in the various areas of the province in a progressive manner.

The reorganization of education was taken up as an urgent problem. A well planned questionnaire was issued for eliciting public opinion on the reforms to be initiated in elementary as well as in secondary education. After ascertaining public opinion, O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar Government had accepted the scheme of basic education and compulsion for 5 years as a practical measure.

A provincial Advisory Board of Education and a Provincial Basic Education Board were constituted to Advise Government on general matter of education pertaining to their spheres.

KEYWORDS: *Madras Presidency, O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar, Education Development, Elementary Education*

INTRODUCTION

Basic Education

Basic Education was the declared policy of the Government regarding elementary education. Education in basic schools was given not only through craft but also through various other activities consistent with the surroundings of the schools. The Government was planning to convert all the training schools into basic training schools. Ten teachers of training

schools were sent to Wardha for training in the Basic Education. Later arrangements were made to retrain the staff of training schools in the province itself. O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar said in his address at the convocation held to distribute certificates to the first batch of 20 women Basic Education Teachers in Gandhigram.

I am convinced that the only way of promoting permanent constructive work among our people is by taking up basic education. All the great movements of constructive work started by Mahatma Gandhi are comprehended by and in the revolutionary scheme of Basic Education. Basic Education was the last and the greatest gift of Mahatma Gandhi to the nation and O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar solicited the cooperation of all in bringing the effect of this last message of the great leader.

A basic teacher inherited the whole of the constructive programme of Gandhiji. According to O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar, the existing system of education produced only a job hunting class of persons. If this situation was to change, the education given must be of a kind that would help the progress of agriculture, trade and industry. Hence, he stressed on Basic Education.

Secondary Education

Reorganisation of secondary education had been engaging, the minds of the educationalists of the Province for more than two decades. But, nothing much had been done till the time of O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar Government. O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar's Government had set up committees to re-organise secondary education on the basis of acceptance of basic education for elementary schools. The reorganisation of education was aimed to suit the national ideas and needs of a free India. The Provincial Advisory Board of Education discussed the question of reorganisation of secondary education based on the proposals submitted by the Secondary Education Board. It accepted the recommendations with certain changes. Under Bifurcation of Courses, the post-III Form courses were divided as shown in the Appendix-III.

During the past several years before, O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar's administration educational leaders were decidedly against the use of a foreign medium in our schools and urged a change to the mother tongue chiefly on educational grounds. Inspecting Officers and the Public Service Commission were of the view that the pupils could make no rapid progress in the knowledge subjects since their attention was devoted more to the language aspect. The foreign medium had also been found to be a wasteful process. The changing condition and the needs of the time called for a definite policy in the interest of the largest number receiving education in public institutions. In view of all, the Government decided to make the medium of regional language obligatory.

In order to implement the policy of making regional language as the medium of instruction in secondary schools, the Government ordered that the regional language should be regarded as the first language and English as the Second language in Secondary Schools. The teaching of English in Standards I to V of secondary schools was abolished. The study of English began only in Form I of Secondary schools. In secondary schools and in Standards VI, VII, VIII of Higher Elementary Schools the regional language was made the medium of instruction. The O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar's Government approved the adoption of Tamil as the medium of instruction for the III Group subjects in the Intermediate Course in the Government Arts College, Coimbatore and the Municipal College, Salem. The Government appointed a committee to evolve equivalents in the various South Indian Languages for the scientific and technical terms, used in the college Courses and was looking forward to the time when instruction in Colleges also, in all subjects would be through the medium of regional language.

Adult Education

In order to remove illiteracy among the adults, the Government started in 1948–1949 a scheme of Adult Education. With adult sufferage as the basis of the constitution, it was necessary to take up seriously the education of the masses. There had been no planned activity or considered scheme of Adult Education in the province till the time of O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar. Ever since the ministry assumed office, it had been one of their major tasks to devise ways and means for liquidating the widespread illiteracy in the province and also for improving the knowledge previously by adults through education centres, libraries, cinemas and other media of visual education. The Government's efforts in this direction had crystallised and they had prepared a scheme for adult education.

The Government conceived the Adult Education in three parts. Adult Literacy Schools Institutions for Adult Education and The organisation of a Library system. The main features of the scheme are Adult Literacy Schemes for liquidating illiteracy among Adults Training of staff for adult literacy work Rural Colleges for giving higher educational training for persons who had some school education already Training Camp for social service workers Training Camps for citizenship and youth workers and Visual Instruction.

As part of the literacy campaign, the Government invited authors to present continuation of reading books in Tamil and Telugu for the use of new literates. The best of the series of 10 books in each language were printed and supplied at cheap cost to adult literacy centres as Government publication. The theme of the books was such as to be highly appealing to adults and the language at once simple and idiomatic.

Apart from starting of Adult Literacy Schools, they have also taken up the task of training workers for adult literacy work. Teachers and others were given instruction of literacy work in camps, lasting for six weeks. In view of the great importance of adult education for women the Omanduar's Government had created a Department of Women's Welfare.

The film and the radio was also utilised for adult education purposes. As regards visual education sanction had been accorded by the Government for the purchase of projectors and films for the districts.

The Government developed a well knit library organisation throughout the province as one of the main instruments of the adult education. The Madras Public Libraries Act was passed, providing for the establishment of public libraries in the province and the organisation of a comprehensive urban and Rural library service. A provincial Library Committee was constituted by the Government for the purpose of advising them on such matters relating to libraries. Local Library Authorities were constituted, one for the city of Madras and one for each of the Districts. Director of Public Libraries was appointed to superintend the libraries and the various Local Library Authorities and to report to the Government annually about the working.

A Five day Conference was held in March 19149 at Madras under the joint auspices of the Christian Council and the South Indian Adult Education Association. O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar gave theses bodies a very generous support and full cooperation. Delegates and Visitors discussed with Dr. LAUBACH, F.C., Special Councillor, World Literacy Committee, New York how quickly and efficiently the people of this land could be made literate.

Indian Medicine

O.P.Ramasamy Reddiar started a college of Indian Medicine with 50 students, by raising the status of the school of Indian Medicine. The school of Indian Medicine continued to be run alongside with the college i.e., the L.I.M. Course was also run in addition to the College course. He sanctioned Rs. 50,000/- for the construction of temporary buildings for the college of Indian Medicine and another Rs. 50,000/- for temporary buildings for the Hospital of Indian Medicine.

By the measures taken by him, there was much advancement in the field of education. Compulsory elementary education and the policy of Basic Education in the elementary education had great success. More children were enrolled under compulsory education. Basic Education could help the progress of agriculture, industry and trade. The reorganisation of secondary education resulted in the Bifurcation of courses and also provided the rightful place for the regional language, which was made the medium of instruction stage by stage from elementary to collegiate level. Adult Education Programmes were very comprehensive. The rural approach of these programmes gave basic grounding for rural folk. The programmes also resulted in the development of a well knit library system throughout the province. In short, O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar's Government was able to make the people literate quickly and efficiently through its adult literary programmes.

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