

History of Education in Tamil Nadu -A Historiographical Prespective

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Abstract

Education plays a vital role in the development of any society. One of the biggest challenges that the State of Tamil Nadu faces today is the growing pressure on higher education. Better economic opportunities and upward social mobility are the two reasons which make more number of youngsters in Tamil Nadu to enter the institutions of higher education. The principle of reservation by the Government of Tamil Nadu, gives an ample chance for the students, particularly of the lower strata of the society, to swarm the portals of the higher educational institutions in large number. Studies show that Gurukulams, Patasalas and Ghatikas were the educational institutions which flourished in Tamil Nadu during ancient period. The First Five Year Plan aimed to promote rapid and balance economic development. Social infrastructure through education was planned to produce a determined influence on the rate of economic growth of the country. Therefore in the Second Five Year Plan the emphasis was laid on basic education, elementary education, diversification of secondary education, improvement of standards of college and university education, extension facilities for technical and vocational education, cultural education, implementation of social education and cultural development programmes. Under the British and later independent India, the objective of higher education institutions were to raise the moral and intellectual tone of the Indian society and to supply the administrative manpower required for the colonial Government. So many leaders contributed to develop our educational system, but the major role played by K. Kamaraj's preference for an increase in reservation for backward classes in government services and higher educational institutions propelled the emergence of strong educated classes in the 1970's. Reservation at large enabled various sections to have access to higher education. This was not lost upon the policy makers in free India.

Keyword: education, higher education, economic development