

TECHNICAL EDUCATION UNDER SALVATION ARMY IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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The Salvation Army came to India with a goal of servicing the poor people. They wanted to eradicate the caste and creed systems which were followed in India¹. They came to know about the position between people on the basis of caste by the European sailors who came for trade. As they know, "Education is the most powerful weapon used to change the world", they decided to provide people proper education so that they will be put out of such superstitious beliefs. They provided tailoring courses and computer courses and started a number of vocational training course.

Early Stage:

"Education is not preparation for life; Education is life itself".

The Salvation Army saw the downtrodden people of India sleeping down the London bridge in that frozen cold without any proper safety blankets to protect their body². At that moments, They decided to develop compassionate children of integrity and character with relevant skills, knowledge and understanding by rendering technical education. They decided to make the downtrodden people skilled.

Technical Education:

Technical Education is a general term applied to schools, colleges or any other institutions which provides specialized training in some fields for technical or business trading. This is known as vocational education. In the beginning as it prepares people to work in vocational fields.³

1. Tailoring Course:

The Tailoring course was introduced for the benefit of the handicapped children at the thirty years age. The duration of the course is six months. Due to the shortage of handicapped children, other students are also admitted. The students are paying two hundred rupees per month as tuition fee. A qualified teacher is serving as Instructor. At present there are twenty students for this training. Course certificate is given after the training is over.⁴

The women who stayed in the home without any work were taught basic tailoring. The period of this course was about two years. The women and interested girls were also admitted in this course. The trainers provided food as well as accommodation for the women who came to learn this course.⁵ These were provided without any cost. The women were given both practical and theoretical training. Each month every trainee will be given some cash for their personal expenses.⁶ They should make use of it for their medical needs or any other emergencies.

Tailoring Institute, Moolakarai Patti was started on 11th February, 1992 by the then Territorial Commander, Col. Girubadhas opened this institute. At that time ten students joined that institute and Two teaching Staffs were working.⁷

The Salvation Army encouraged students to learn the art of weaving. Hand needle work was turned to women and they earned their livelihoods through their needle work. Many other Tailoring Institutes were opened during this period⁸. In Kulasekharam, Vadasery and Chemparuthivilai Tailoring Institutions have been started.

2. Secretarial Training School:

It is started in order to help the physically handicapped people to get employment opportunities. Here, the physically handicapped people were appointed as the staff or the instructors. It was started in the year 1976. The aim of this course is to produce stenographers and secretaries.⁹ The training is involved typewriting classes both for Tamil and English; Shorthand for Tamil and English apart from this accountancy and general English were also Provided. Like the tailoring course, the duration of this course is also two years. The school send the students to technical examinations after training them in specific field.

3. Vocational Training Centre for the Physically Handicapped at Aramboly:

The great vision of Lt.Col. Dr. Harry Williams was to start an institution for the leprosy patients and the disabled to make them to stand on their own legs as respectable members of the community.¹⁰

General Frederick Coutts, an International Leader of the Salvation Army visited Aramboly to commemorate the occasion. He declared open the new venture on 5th December 1968.¹¹ Dr. Harry Williams pointed out that the work was the promise of God, and expressed the confidence that it would continue to grow.

For the past two years, the work was going on under the leadership of Major George Scott, Mr. Sunder Egbert and many officers.¹² More than five thousands Leprosy Patients were cured and disabled persons were found consoling from the Lord through this Institution and many trainees received various training and now they are in Government jobs, private companies and conducting their own worships in various parts of south India.¹³

Both the State and Central government, were showing compassion to the V.T.C Aramboly and exempted sales tax and income tax and appreciated their work too be human under privileged people. From January 2008 onwards, the work was going in a critical situation and facing many difficulties and losses.

Their manufacturing items are steel furnitures and Hospital Furnitures and the following items are coming under the steel furniture.

a). **Hospital furniture:** Hospital bed, attenders cot, fowler position cot, trolliers, stretcher on trolley, labourtable, wheel chairs, examination tables, besides locker, baby cot, baby cradle with stand, phototherapy unit etc.¹⁴

b). **Steel furniture:** Steel cupboard, glass door cupboard, library cup board, library book self, filling cabinet, various type racks, various type tables, desk, bench style chair revolving chairs, steel etc.¹⁵

c). **Various activities:** They were approaching various new hospitals, Engineering colleges, and individuals especially Loyola College, Hindu College, George Hospital, Muthu Kumar Hospital, ValliammalAchi Hospital, C.S.I. Hospital Neyyoor and C.S.I. Hospital Nagercoil for getting orders and supply good items.¹⁶ The sheet bending machine, drilling machine, pipe machine sheet cutting machine, hand drilling machine and grinder, welding machine and generator are very old and in condemned condition. Moreover, the hospitals and engineering colleges wanted to have their now items on modern techniques.

4. Industrial School of Aramboly:

This school was started with the aim of giving training to the poor, backward children of the villages.¹⁷ The employment and the state council vocational training accorded recognition to the institution from the year 2004.¹⁸ The successful candidates, certificates are issued and they serve in Government, private sectors and abroad.¹⁹

5. Computer Training:

The Salvation Army Vocational Training Centre for physically handicapped for women was started during the year 1970.²⁰ with the objective of providing training and rehabilitation for the handicapped. The skill development training programmer conducted in the centre, includes tailoring, type – writing and short- hand. In addition to this, computer training was started during the year 1977. There were more than hundred handicapped women. Twenty one more women had undergone training and most of them are working in various area.²¹

Thus “Service beyond self” was the ultimate aim of the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army took care of the upliftment of Kaniyakumari District without any hesitation. Due to their contributions, a number of technical institutions were launched and they were functioning properly.

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