

# Tracing The Historical Developments In Higher Education: The Transformative Journey Of Tamil Nadu

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## Abstract

This article traces the historical developments in higher education in Tamil Nadu, India, and explores the transformative journey that has shaped the state's educational landscape. Beginning with the ancient gurukul system, where students received education in diverse disciplines, the article highlights the transition brought about by European colonization and the establishment of missionary schools and colleges. It delves into the impact of the Dravidian movement and subsequent educational reforms that aimed to democratize education and expand access to marginalized communities.

The post-independence era witnessed a significant expansion of higher education in Tamil Nadu, with the establishment of universities and colleges across the state. Technological advancements played a vital role, with the integration of computer education and the establishment of institutions specializing in information technology and engineering.

Furthermore, the article emphasizes the increasing focus on research and innovation in Tamil Nadu's higher education sector. The establishment of research institutions, collaborations with industry, and interdisciplinary studies have spurred scientific advancements, technological innovations, and entrepreneurial ventures.

Throughout the article, the transformative journey of Tamil Nadu's higher education system is explored, highlighting key milestones, policies, and initiatives that have shaped its evolution. The article reflects on the state's rich educational heritage while examining its current status as a hub of academic excellence. It also offers insights into the future of higher education in Tamil Nadu, addressing potential areas for improvement and emphasizing the importance of continued progress in the pursuit of knowledge and societal development.

## Introduction:

The history of higher education in Tamil Nadu, a southern state in India, is a fascinating narrative that has undergone significant transformations over the years. From its humble beginnings to becoming a hub of academic excellence, Tamil Nadu's educational journey has been shaped by various historical developments. This article aims to explore the transformative trajectory of higher education in Tamil Nadu, highlighting key milestones and their impact on the state's educational landscape.

Higher education plays a crucial role in shaping societies, empowering individuals, and driving economic growth. The state of Tamil Nadu, located in southern India, has a rich history of educational traditions that have undergone significant transformations over time. From its ancient roots in gurukuls to its current status as a hub of academic excellence, Tamil Nadu's higher education system has evolved through various historical developments, leaving an indelible mark on its educational landscape.

This article aims to trace the historical developments in higher education in Tamil Nadu, shedding light on the transformative journey that has propelled the state to the forefront of educational progress. By exploring the milestones, policies, and initiatives that have shaped the educational ecosystem, we can gain a deeper understanding of how Tamil Nadu has nurtured a vibrant and inclusive higher education sector.

The journey begins with the ancient gurukul system, where students received education in various disciplines, including philosophy, literature, and medicine. These centers of learning provided a strong foundation for knowledge acquisition and scholarship, shaping the intellectual landscape of Tamil Nadu.

With the arrival of European colonizers, particularly the British, in the 17th century, Tamil Nadu's educational landscape witnessed a significant shift. Missionary schools and colleges were established, introducing Western education and disciplines such as mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. Institutions like the Madras Christian College and the Presidency College emerged as pioneers during this period, imparting a new wave of education that blended traditional and modern knowledge.

The early 20th century saw the rise of the Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu, emphasizing social reform and equal access to education. In response to these demands, the government implemented progressive educational reforms, including reservation policies for marginalized communities and the expansion of educational infrastructure. These efforts aimed to democratize education and create opportunities for all segments of society.

The post-independence era witnessed a remarkable expansion of higher education in Tamil Nadu. The establishment of the University of Madras and subsequent state universities marked a significant phase, providing access to higher education for a larger number of students. The state government's commitment to investing in education led to the founding of numerous colleges and

universities, thereby increasing educational opportunities and raising the bar of academic excellence.

Tamil Nadu's higher education system has also embraced technological advancements. The integration of computer education, establishment of information technology and engineering institutions, and the presence of premier institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institutes of Management have positioned Tamil Nadu as a hub for technical education and research.

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on research and innovation in Tamil Nadu's higher education sector. The establishment of research institutions, collaborations with industry, and interdisciplinary studies have fostered scientific advancements, technological innovations, and entrepreneurial endeavors. Tamil Nadu's commitment to research and innovation has contributed to its recognition as a knowledge-driven economy.

As we embark on a journey to explore the historical developments in higher education in Tamil Nadu, it becomes evident that this transformative trajectory has not only shaped the state's educational landscape but also played a significant role in its overall development. The subsequent sections of this article will delve into specific milestones, reforms, and initiatives that have propelled Tamil Nadu's higher education system forward, paving the way for a brighter future of knowledge, empowerment, and progress.

### **Objective of this Study**

The objective of the article "Tracing the Historical Developments in Higher Education: The Transformative Journey of Tamil Nadu" is to provide a comprehensive overview of the historical milestones and transformations that have shaped the higher education system in Tamil Nadu. The article aims to:

**Document the evolution of higher education:** The article seeks to trace the development of higher education in Tamil Nadu from its early foundations, such as the gurukul system, to the present day. It aims to provide a chronological account of key events, reforms, and initiatives that have influenced the growth and transformation of the higher education sector in the state.

**Highlight significant historical milestones:** The article intends to highlight notable milestones in the history of higher education in Tamil Nadu. This could include the establishment of influential educational institutions, the introduction of significant policies or reforms, or any other significant events that have had a lasting impact on the state's educational landscape.

**Explore the impact of historical developments:** The article aims to examine the impact of historical developments on the higher education system in Tamil Nadu. It may delve into how these developments have shaped the accessibility, inclusivity, curriculum, infrastructure, and

overall quality of higher education in the state. The article may also explore the influence of social, cultural, and political factors on educational reforms and advancements.

**Present a narrative of transformation:** The article seeks to present a narrative that illustrates the transformative journey of higher education in Tamil Nadu. It aims to showcase the progression from traditional educational practices to the incorporation of modern disciplines, technological advancements, research focus, and innovation-driven approaches. The article may highlight success stories, achievements, and contributions of Tamil Nadu's higher education system to the state's socio-economic growth.

**Provide insights for future developments:** The article may conclude by offering insights or reflections on the future direction of higher education in Tamil Nadu. It may discuss potential areas for improvement, address challenges, and propose recommendations for further enhancing the educational landscape in the state.

Overall, the objective of the article is to present a comprehensive and informative account of the historical developments in higher education in Tamil Nadu, highlighting its transformative journey and the impact on the state's educational landscape.

### **Early Foundations:**

The origins of higher education in Tamil Nadu can be traced back to ancient times when centers of learning called "gurukuls" flourished. These gurukuls were residential schools where students received education in diverse subjects, including philosophy, literature, medicine, and astronomy. They played a crucial role in imparting knowledge and nurturing scholars who went on to become eminent intellectuals.

### **Colonial Influence:**

The arrival of European colonizers, particularly the British, in the 17th century brought significant changes to the educational system of Tamil Nadu. The establishment of missionary schools and colleges by Christian missionaries provided access to Western education, introducing new disciplines such as mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. The Madras Christian College (1837) and the Presidency College (1840) were among the pioneering institutions that emerged during this period.

### **Dravidian Movement and Education Reforms:**

The early 20th century witnessed the rise of the Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu, which sought to promote social reform and assert the cultural identity of the Dravidian people. The movement emphasized the need for education to be accessible to all sections of society. In response to these demands, the government implemented significant educational reforms, including the introduction of reservation policies for marginalized communities and the expansion of educational infrastructure.

### **Post-Independence Expansion:**

After India gained independence in 1947, the government of Tamil Nadu made substantial efforts to expand higher education. Numerous colleges and universities were established, ensuring increased access to education for the masses. The establishment of the University of Madras (1857) followed by Annamalai University in 1929 marked a significant phase in the state's educational development.

At the time of Independence, Tamil Nadu had two universities only i.e. University of Madras and Annamalai University. The Radhakrishnan Commission was appointed for the promotion of higher education in 1948 submitted its report in 1949. In this report, the commission recommended the quality of higher education, appointment of teachers with appropriate remuneration, establishment of organization to promote higher education in India. Based on the recommendations, University Grant Commission (UGC) was established in the year 1953. The UGC approved by the parliament in 1956. Now, the UGC played a prominent role to regulate higher education in India. In Tamil Nadu, various universities and colleges were established for the promotion of higher education.

In the year 1965 there was a university established in Madurai, it was approved by the Tamil Nadu Assembly in the year 1966, later this university named Madurai Kamaraj University. This university played a prominent role to access higher education to the people of southern part of Tamil Nadu.

In the early years of 1980s, two universities Bharathiar and Bharathidasan were established at Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli respectively. Tamil Nadu government took another initiative to promote higher education for women (Mother Teresa University at Kodaikanal established in the 1984). This was the first ever university in Tamil Nadu for women.

To promoting Tamil language in higher education, there was a university established in Tanjore named Tamil University in the year 1981. This university totally dedicated to Tamil and its classical literatures and culture.

In the mean time, there was a university established in Karaikudi named Alagappa University in 1985 followed by Periyar University in 1992 at Salem. The above mentioned universities concentrating higher education in general, arts and science subjects in particular. In the mean time, there were universities and colleges established to promote technical education and professional education like medical education, agriculture, and law. The above mentioned institutes ensured all round progress in higher education and also Tamil Nadu government took tireless efforts to promote higher education. Because of its efforts, the GER (Gross Enrollment Ratio) crossed 50 %.

### **University and Collegiate Education in Tamil Nadu Since 1947**

There were two universities in Tamil Nadu at the time of independence. The jurisdiction of Madras University extended to the territory of the Tamilnadu state excluding the area of jurisdiction of Annamalai university Madurai Kamaraj university, Bharathiar and Bharathidasan universities.<sup>i</sup>

Annamalai university was founded in 1929 with teaching facilities.

In 1948, the number of arts colleges for women increased to eight to the opening of a second grade college. Stella Mary College, Madras. The strength in all these colleges increased to 1773. The number of women reading in Arts college for men also increased to 1829. The number of women in the post graduate and honours classes was 62 and 191.

Seven new training colleges, 2 under government and 5 under private management were opened for the different linguistic areas of the state during the year. The output of male graduate trained teachers more than doubled during 1950-51.

There were 56 ordinary training schools for men and 72 ordinary training schools for women. Four schools for the number of teachers under instruction was 10,475 men and 7,443 women. There were 36 basic training schools for women. The teacher college of music, Royapetta, offered training for music teachers and 15 public were under instruction.

Excluding the departments directly managed by the universities, there were 65 college for general education for men ten(4) new college were opened in 1951-52.

The Seethalakshmi Ramaswami College for women, Tiruchirappalli, was newly opened during the year. The St. Mary's College and the Lady Doak College. Madurai were converted to first grade college during the year.

On the recommendations of the Southern Regional Committee of all India Council for Technical Education, the Madras university approved proposals for converting the year 1951-52 post-graduate course in chemical engineering and chemical technology into a four year integrated course. This course was to intermediate science level and led to the award of a degree in technology. The All India Council for Technical Education sanctioned certain grants for this conversion.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Annamalai University**

Annamalai University was of a residential and unitary type established in the year 1929.

The state government sanctioned grants for developing the biological station at Porto Nova and for starting a course in Geology for the B.Sc., degree. The Government of India sanctioned grants for the Engineering department for the construction of hostels, and for the implementation of schemes submitted under the first five year plan.<sup>iii</sup>

Diploma course in civil engineering mechanical engineering and electrical engineering in the Muthiah Polytechnics as an independent poly technique course was started.<sup>iv</sup>

### **Gandhigram Rural Institute**

The Gandhigram Rural Institute was founded in 1956 with faith and devotion to Mahatma Gandhiji's concept of "Nai Talim" and to implement the scheme to rural higher education on the patten recommended by Dr. R. Radakrishnan in his report.

The institute had introduced semester system for B.A. B.Sc., M.A., M.Sc., M.Phil., and other courses.

### **Evening College**

The evening which were started in 1965-66 in the Government Arts College, Madras and Coimbatore as well as Queen Mary's College, Madras had shown good progress.

The government permitted the opening of three more evening courses at Government college, Salem at the Rajah Sarafoji Government College, Thanjavur and at Sree Meenakshi Government College for women, Madurai.<sup>v</sup>

The government sanctioned the opening of three evening colleges for pre- university course in the following three government arts colleges, for two women and one men.

The rate of tuition assessed for the students of evening colleges was prescribed as Rs.25/- per term for 3 terms or Rs.75/- a year if paid in advance. No games fees were levied from the students of the evening colleges but other special fees such as college union, library, magazine etc., were levied as in the case concession was extended to evening college students. The principles of the respective evening colleges were empowered to select candidates for admission to the evening colleges in place of the ad-hoc committee appointed every year for regular colleges.<sup>vi</sup>

Under the second five year plan, the university grants commission has approved the following typical scales of pay for the different categories of teachers in the affiliated college and constituent colleges of the university.

### **Madurai Kamaraj University**

Madurai Kamaraj University was founded in 1966. In Tamilnadu the total number of universities from two to three, other two university or Madras Universities and Annamalai Universities. The establishment of Madurai University was a landmark in the history of the southern part of Tamil Nadu.

The general inspection commission of the university Madras 1955-58 in its report indicated the need for setting up of a university with department, teaching and a library.<sup>vii</sup> It was felt that the University centre had to be raised to the status of a university.

The government of Madras introduced a bill in the state legislature of Tamilnadu on July, 27, 1965 which was referred to a joint select committee. It was passed as the Madurai University Act. And received the assent of the Governor on December 7, 1965. The university was renamed as Madurai Kamaraj University in pursuance of Act No.38 of 1978.

The jurisdiction of the university extends to the area comprising the southern district of an Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari in the state of Tamilnadu. The university campus is 14 KM from the city on Madurai on Theni Road. The university has established Madurai, Palayamkottai and there information centres at Madurai, Madras and Nagercoil.

### **University of Agriculture :-**

The year 1970-1971 marked a turning point in the development of higher education in Tamil Nadu. Because on 1st June 1971 Tamil Nadu Government Act No. 8/1971 as per Tamil Nadu G.T. Naidu University was established. It was renamed as Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in May 1992.6 This university was established separately in Coimbatore district for agriculture in Tamil Nadu. In the early days, the university started functioning with a focus on Coimbatore and its surrounding areas.

Main objective. 1. To impart education in agriculture and science. Facilitate research by imparting higher education, 3. To impart agricultural knowledge to cooperatives and other related government departments and extension education to farmers. There are many departments running in this university which are Agricultural Engineering Agronomy, Fisheries Science, Veterinary Medicine etc. respectively. Also, the University has set up subsidiary institutes at places like Madurai, Chennai, Tuticorin and is conducting research through 60 Research Centers across Tamil Nadu and has established Agriculture and Rural Research Center.

### **Anna University :-**

The University was incorporated on September 4, 1978 through the Tamil Nadu Government Act. It was inaugurated on 20th July, 1978 by the President of the Indian University under the name Perarinar Anna University of Technology. It was briefly renamed as Anna University as per Act 26 of the Republic of Tamil Nadu in 1982.. The main objective of the university is to create opportunities for higher education, research and practical training in engineering and technology related fields. The University offers Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, Post Graduate Certificate.

Vocational and technical education is imparted here at various levels of research. Doctoral programs and professional programs are also available. Activities for Degree Research Institutes Water Resources in the University



Old fields such as exploration, orbiting, remote sensing, continuing education development, marine management, biotechnology, etc., and new fields such as printing, remote sensing, etc. are active. It is also the best center for vocational education, vocational training, science and technology research, and technical knowledge both nationally and abroad. Also in this university I.B.M. (30144) has a large computer center. The university plays a significant role in higher education especially in technical education. Although the branches of Anna University are located in various parts of Chennai like Crompton, Taramani, the central location is located in Guindy (Chennai). This university was set up to fulfill the needs of engineering technical education of the students, and all the engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu are conducted by this university to reserve seats based on their marks. This university is doing valuable work in the development of higher education.

### **Tamil University :**

Another turning point in the development of higher education in Tamil Nadu on 15 September 1981 was to increase research education in Tamil, and to promote Tamil teaching in higher education

Integrate culture and people, for the advancement of art, religion, philosophy, language of Tamils, Western subjects, song, dance, drama, agriculture, medicine, politics, etc. of Engineering, and was initiated under Tamil Nadu Government Act No. 9 of 1981 at Tanjore to provide Tamil University. It was the ninth university of Tamil Nadu.

### **Bharatiyar University, 1982 Coimbatore.**

The University was a graduate center of the University of Madras, operating in Coimbatore from October 1973, and became autonomous from 1977 until 1982. Bharatiyar University was established by the Government of Tamil Nadu Act (1982). This is 32 colleges were functioning in the districts of Coimbatore, Periyar and Nilgiris Acted as affiliated colleges. When this university was started, it had 99 departments. The various departments of the University conduct conferences, seminars, workshops and special lectures at the state and national level from time to time. Bharti Workshop is conducted and published every year to bring out the excellence of Bharti.

### **Bharathidasan University :-**

Bharathidasan University is located in Tiruchirappalli which is the heart of Tamil Nadu. It initially had 39 colleges under its jurisdiction in the three revenue districts of Trichy, Thanjavur and Pudukottai. This university was established in the name of Tamil scholar Bhavender Bharathidasan through the Act of Tamil Nadu Government in 1982.

The Departments of English, Economics, Mathematics and Research, which were functioning since 1976, became University Departments in 1982, with the addition of Department

of Tamil Studies (1987), Department of Geography (1987), Department of Sociology (1987) have been initiated.

Under the first ten-year vision plan of the university, educational institutes were established in the year 1982 in the industrial complex under the management of Bharathidasan and with the industrial support of Bharat Mikum as a benchmark for industrial linkages. In the same academic year, the Bharathidasan Shaktiology Center was established and the Higher Education Staff Training College established in 1987 with the help of the University Funding Committee to train college teachers is working in the field of higher education, which plays the role of the university for the development of the country along with practical studies. In the central part of Trichy, Kajamalai Campus, the offices of the University Headquarters, University Library, Central Computer Center etc., which were functioning till 1986, and the University Scientific Equipment Storage and Construction Center etc., which was completed in 1986, are functioning as the main campus of the University. Various social work programs and adult education programs are funded by the central and state governments and the university is playing its part in the welfare of the country.

### **Alagappa University**

Alagappa University is located at Karaikudi in Tamil Nadu is accessible from Madurai and Tiruchirappalli (Code : TRZ) airports within two hours. The **440 acre** green and lush campus houses all the academic activities. This University has emerged from the galaxy of institutions initially founded by the great philanthropist and educationist Dr. RM. Alagappa Chettiar during 1950's.

Alagappa University was brought into existence by a Special Act of the Government of Tamil Nadu in May 1985 with the objective of fostering research, development and dissemination of knowledge in various branches of learning. Alagappa University is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India. The University has **44 Departments, 9 Centres and 2 Constituent Colleges** on its campus. **46 Affiliated Colleges** located in the districts of Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram are part of the University. Of which one Autonomous College and one Alagappa University Model Constituent College of Arts and Science are located in Kilakkarai and Paramakudi respectively.

The University offers education through Regular, Week-end, Distance and Collaborative modes. Through all modes of education, the University caters to the needs of the student community of around **1.12 lakhs**.

As a member of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), as well as the member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), it has rewarding relations with other academic institutions, research laboratories and industrial establishments that promise a spectacular future.

The University is having International Collaborations with Universities / Institutions of Higher Learning in countries like U.S.A, UK, Australia, Singapore, China, Malaysia and South Korea. Innovative programmes are designed and offered at the University for the foreign students. The University's motto is "Excellence in Action" and the University keeps before it the vision of excellence in all spheres of its action.

### **Mother Teresa Women's University**

Mother Teresa Women's University (MTWU), the only Women's University of Tamil Nadu State Government is situated at Attuvampatti, Kodaikanal, the "Princess of Hill Stations" and the most popular multicultural tourist centre. The University, whose foundation stone was laid by the legendary Noble Laureate for peace, Mother Teresa, was established in 1984 under the Act 15 of Tamil Nadu with the lofty vision of "Empowering Women through Education". The University plays a catalytic role in women empowerment and building inclusive society. MTWU has its Research and Extension Centres at Chennai, Madurai, and Coimbatore, and a Centre for Women's Studies at Pallapatti, Dindigul for promoting women entrepreneurship. This University offers PG Programs (M.A., M.Com., M.Ed., M.B.A., M.Sc.) and Research programs (M.Phil. and Ph.D.) in Arts and Sciences. As an affiliating University, MTWU governs women's colleges in Dindigul and Theni districts.

The Tamil Nadu Common Wealth Mother Teresa Women's University International Centre is an additional credit to the University for cultivating competent women with relevance to global standard. The University has remarkable research and project records through MHRD, UGC, DST, TNSCST, TANSICHE, and ICSSR funded Departments with State of Art facilities. With potential infrastructure and committed staff and faculty, MTWU offers yeoman service for building intellectual, sustainable, and socially responsible young minds for the Nation.

### **The Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University**

The need to have a separate Medical University in Tamilnadu exclusively to deal with medical education and research at Under graduate, Post graduate and Doctoral level was keenly felt for over a period of years and was under consideration of the State Government since 1980. The State Government appointed a High Level Committee consisting of Dr. A. Venugopal, Dr. M. Natarajan and Dr. S. Kameswaran to go into all aspects of establishing a separate Medical University and make suitable recommendations to the State Government.

Apart from modern medicine, the Committee was also requested to examine and suggest improvements to be made in other traditional systems of Indian Medicine viz. Siddha, Ayurveda and Unani. The intension was that the Medical University to be established in Tamil Nadu should bring about co-ordination between various educational and training institutions of modern medicine as well as other Indian Systems of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, etc. and promote research. Based on the report of the Committee, the Medical University was established by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The Tamil Nadu Medical University Act, 1987 (Act No.37 of 1987) received the assent of the President of India on 24th September, 1987. By an Act No. 39 of 1991, it was amended that the Act may be called "The Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University, Chennai, Act, 1987. This affiliating University governed by the said Act started functioning from July 1988. The Students admitted to the various Medical and Paramedical courses after 1.3.1988 come under this Medical University as per Government notification issued in G.O.Ms.No.1628/Health, Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy and Family Welfare Department dated 23.08.1988.

### **Manonmaniam Sundaranar University**

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University (MSU) is a dynamic institution of higher learning, set in a rural milieu of southern Tamil Nadu, with a campus spread of 550 acres. The University was established by the Government of Tamil Nadu as a teaching-cum-affiliating University on 7th September, 1990 to cater to the long-felt needs of the people of the four southern most districts of Tamil Nadu viz., Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Tuticorin and Kanyakumari.

It is Named after the renowned Tamil Poet scholar, Professor P. Sundaram Pillai (1855-1897), the author of the famous verse drama Manonmaniam. It is his poem that has become "Tamil Thaaai Vazhthu" the official invocation song sung in all functions in Tamilnadu.

The main focus of the university is to produce individuals who have the expertise and intellectual curiosity to make a difference in their profession and the society and in conducting the research needed to meet the challenges facing the contemporary world.

Majority of the students of this University belong to rural and economically weaker sections of the society. Hence, this University imparts education at nominal and affordable cost. The curricula of the courses offered by this University are periodically updated and the University has resourceful teachers to deliver the same.

### **Periyar University**

The Government of Tamil Nadu established Periyar University in Salem on 17th September 1997 as per the provisions of the Periyar University Act, 1997. The University covers the area comprising four districts namely Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri, and Krishnagiri.

The University is named after the Great Social Reformer E.V. Ramasamy, affectionately called as "Thanthai Periyar". The University aims at developing knowledge in various fields to realize the maxim inscribed in the logo "Arival Vilayum Ulagu" (Wisdom Maketh the World). "Holistic development of the students" is the primary objective of the University.

Periyar University has taken the significant step of promoting interdisciplinary study and research. The Departments have been clustered into schools in order to identify and work on productive intersections between disciplines. The schools, departments, institutes, chairs, centers,

and cells contribute their best through various academic, research, and extension activities. The University is playing a paramount role in bringing multifaceted development for the country. It is consistently organizing innumerable academic activities to bring academicians and industrialists under one umbrella to discuss, deliberate and carve out time-demanding solutions to social problems.

### **The Tamil Nadu Open University**

"The Tamil Nadu Open University is the first University in the State introduced the Credit Based Self Learning Materials in print as early as 2003".

The Academic Programmes of TNOU are duly recognized by UGC-DEB, NCTE, RCI and AICTE. The University has been accorded with 12B Status of the UGC. The academic operations were commenced in 2003-04.

While the round the year admission policy with examination schedules conveniently arranged on weekends and the effective continuous assessment provision have sufficiently addressed the issue of quantity in the form of increasing higher education access, the University has been harnessing the advancement in ICT to continuously improve the quality of higher education.

The growth of the University during the past 20 years has been phenomenal. With a cumulative student strength of over one million in 234 Programmes of study across various disciplines and skills at different levels from Certificate to Post Graduate Programmes that are imparted through 11 Academic Schools, 5 Support Divisions, 1 Media Centre and a robust network of Learner Support Centres and the Community Colleges across the State. As per UGC-DEB approval, the TNOU started its M.Phil. and Ph.D. programme (in Regular Mode) in 2017.

In order to provide Skill Based Education and Training to the disadvantaged groups in Tamilnadu through Community Colleges, the TNOU has been identified and issued order by the Government of Tamilnadu in 2008 (G.O.M.s.No-163 dated 22-05-2008) to offer skill development programmes.

These Skill Education and Training Programmes are now offered at Short Term, Certificate, Vocational Diploma and Advanced Vocational Diploma levels in TNOU.

### **Technological Advancements:**

The turn of the 21st century witnessed the integration of technology into higher education in Tamil Nadu. The proliferation of computer education and the establishment of institutions specializing in information technology and engineering played a crucial role in positioning Tamil Nadu as a leading destination for technical education. The Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) have further contributed to the state's reputation for academic excellence.

### **Focus on Research and Innovation:**

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on research and innovation in Tamil Nadu's higher education sector. The establishment of research institutions, collaborations with industry, and the promotion of interdisciplinary studies have fueled advancements in scientific research, technological innovation, and entrepreneurial ventures. This shift has led to the state producing a substantial number of research publications and patents, strengthening its position as a knowledge-driven economy.

### **Conclusion:**

The journey of higher education in Tamil Nadu has been a transformative one, marked by historical developments that have shaped its present landscape. From its traditional roots in gurukuls to the modernization brought by colonial influences, social reforms, and technological advancements, Tamil Nadu's educational system has evolved to meet the changing needs of society. With a strong focus on research and innovation, Tamil Nadu continues to play a pivotal role in driving intellectual growth and contributing to the nation's development. As the state moves forward, it is essential to cherish its rich educational heritage while embracing new ideas and methodologies to ensure a brighter future for generations to come.

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