

EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTION OF BISHOP PETER REMIGIUS - A HISTORICAL STUDY

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to highlight the educational contribution of Bishop Peter Remigius in Kottar diocese and Kumbakonam diocese. One of the primary Catholic churches in South India is St. Xavier's Church in Kottar. Devasahayam's mortal remains were interred in the St. Francis Xavier Church, which was later transformed in 1930 into the Cathedral of the Diocese of Kottar. The Kottar Diocese held a significant position for Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism. The diocese of Kottar was established on October 5, 1930. New Kottar Bishop Rev. Lawrence Pereira was installed in office. Between 2007 and 2017, Bishop Peter Remigius, who is the fifth Bishop of Kottar, was installed. Prior to that, from 1990 to 2007, he served as the bishop of Kumbakonam. On June 30, 2007, he was transferred to Kottar.¹

Key words

Bishop Peter Remigius, Kottar diocese, Kumbakonam diocese, Kottar Social Service Society.

Introduction

The study evaluates the contributions made by Bishop Peter Remigius in the areas of education, socio-economics, and religion during his time in Kumbakonam and Kottar. Peter Remigius' efforts, several schools were upgraded and new structures were constructed. He placed a high value on children's education and awareness, and he founded numerous schools and colleges for underprivileged kids in the dioceses of Kumbakonam and Kottar. He also created technical schools and B.Ed. colleges.

Kottar Diocese

On May 30, 1930, the Diocese of Kottar was built in the Kanniyakumari district. Kottar was given its own diocese by the Pope, with St. Francis Xavier as its patron. The Kottar St. Xavier Church was designated as the Cathedral.² The first bishop was Most Rev. Lawrence Pereira, who was replaced by Most Revs. T.R. Agniswamy, Marianus Arokiasamy, and Leon A. Tharmaraj. When Bishop Leon A. Tharmaraj passed away and the Sea of Kottar became vacant, Most Rev. Peter Remigius was elected as its fifth bishop.³

Bishop Peter Remigius's life

On May 20, 1939, in Melmanakudi, Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, Kottar Diocese, Bishop Peter Remigius was born.⁴ His mother was Mrs. Clara, and his father was Mr. Peter, an accountant for St. Andrew Church in Manakudi. He was his parents' oldest son.

He attended St. Andrew's Primary School in Manakudy for his elementary education and⁵ London Mission Puthalam Church (L.M.P.C.) High School in Puthalam for his secondary education (it is now a Hr.Sec.School). Remigius' parents wanted him to go in college, but he decided to enlist in the Serninary to become a priest instead. He initially enrolled in Nagercoil's St. Aloysius Minor Seminary. He was transferred to the Sacred Heart major Seminary, Poonamallee, in Chennai after completing his two years of training there. He spent three years studying philosophy and four years studying theology before being ordained as a priest on April 18, 1966,⁶ by the Most Reverend Arulappa, Archbishop of Chennai-Mylapore.⁷ He arrived in Manakudy a week later and could only celebrate his Thanksgiving Eucharist in his home parish on April 26, 1966. Three days later, he received a request to travel to Saral due to Fr. Augustine Fernando's failing eyesight. Fr. Augustine Fernando underwent eye surgery in America. Although he was the de facto parish priest of Saral for three years, Fr. Remigius was the de jure assistant. He served as the Kottar Social Service Society's project director while he was living in Saral and served as the organization's diocesan director in 1966, 1967, and 1968. At Palliyadi, he was later named Assistant Parish Priest (1969- 1970). He stayed there for a year and a half. He was thereafter named Fr. James Tomber's assistant in Parakuntru (1970-1973). Fr. James Tomber spent his sabbatical vacations in Belgium. After his trip to Belgium, he was moved to the Melpalai parish. Bishop M. Arokiasamy appointed Fr. Remigius as the parish priest in Parakuntru.

As the Bishop of Kumbakonam and Kottar, Msgr. Peter Remigius

The dioceses of Kumbakonam and Kottar were established on September 1st, 1899, and October 5th, 1930, respectively. Bishops of Kumbakonam include Bishop Hugo M. Bottero, Bishop Marie Augustine Chapuis, Bishop Peter Francis R., Paul Arulswamy, Bishop Peter Remigius, and Bishop Francis Antonisamy. As the diocese administrator after Msgr. D. Paul Arulsamy's resignation was accepted on August 16, 1989, Msgr. M. Antony David carried on the outgoing Bishop's duties until the appointment of the next Bishop. On December 2, 1989, Msgr. Peter Remigius, a priest from the Kottar diocese, was named the next bishop of Kumbakonam. On January 3, 1990, he was named Bishop of Kumbakonam.

With the assent of the Holy See, the Shrine of Our Lady of Miraculous Mother of Poondi was elevated to the status of Mariam Minor Basilica.⁸ His missionary pastoral effort was highlighted on September 1, 1999, during the diocese of Kumbakonam's centennial jubilee.⁹ On June 30, 2007, he was appointed Bishop of Kottar after being relocated from Kumbakonam. The Bishops of the Kottar Diocese are Bishop Lawrence Pereira, Bishop Thomas RochAgniswamy, Bishop MarianusArockiasamy, Bishop Leon A.Tharmaraj, Bishop Peter Remigius, and Bishop NagareneSoosai.¹⁰ His executive abilities are well-known both domestically and abroad. He views his two eyes as his spiritual and social activities. He is well-traveled and is known for his administrative prowess. He currently resides in a residence on the Bishop's House grounds.

On August 24, 2007, Bishop Peter Remigius assumed leadership of his diocese. In the bulk of the substations, he constructed chapels. He placed a high value on children's education and awareness.¹¹ The Bishop's tireless work resulted in the renovation of numerous schools and the construction of new facilities with the assistance of benefactors. He has a strong interest in the professional and higher education of the students of the Kumbakonam and Kottar dioceses in addition to continuing to improve education. He created numerous

schools and colleges for underprivileged students in Kumbakonam and Kottar during his time in office.

Contribution of Bishop Peter Remigius to Education

The District of Kanyakumari, in the State of Tamil Nadu, is part of the southernmost diocese in India, Kottar. One of Jesus' apostles, Saint Thomas, helped spread Christianity to this region of Kottar Diocese in the early decades of the Christian era. In the 16th century A.D., Saint Francis Xavier, a famous Jesuit missionary, taught Christianity in this region. Despite having a tiny area, the Kottar Diocese is very populous.

On May 26, 1930, Pope Pius XI created the new and distinct Diocese of Kottar, which is now governed by Saint Francis Xavier. The Taluks of Vilavancode, Kalkulam, Thoivalai, and Agastheeswaram made up the new Diocese. Bishop Lawrence Pereira was appointed as the new Bishop of the new Diocese. The fifth bishop of the Kottar Diocese was Bishop Peter Remigius.¹²

Bishop Peter Remigius has a strong interest in promoting educational institutions in Kumbakonam and Kottar, much like Bishop Leon A. Tharmaraj. In 2009, he opened an M.Ed. college in Muttom, and in 2010 he opened a community college and a teachers training college in Marthandam. 60 primary schools, 28 middle schools, 23 high schools, 20 higher secondary schools, one polytechnic college, one engineering college, one nursing college, one B.Ed. college, and one M.Ed. college are the educational institutions currently in operation in the Kottar diocese.¹³

Bishop Peter Remigius has performed this duty admirably. When he served as the bishop of Kumbakonam from 1990 to 2007, he opened a number of schools in that diocese. From 2007 to 2017, he opened a number of schools in his own diocese of Kottar after Bishop Leon A. Tharmaraj's passing. He worked arduously to convince people that all individuals are equal, despite the fact that they may come from various castes and religions, when he served as the bishop of Kumbakonam. For Bishop Remigius and, really, for all the bishops of Tamilnadu, casteism even among Catholics was a major issue. Through informal education that takes place outside of a classroom, this could be gradually eliminated.

Bishop Peter Remigius also put a lot of effort into his formal studies. He personally attended to the educational establishments in the Kottar and Kumbakonam Diocese. Bishop Remigius SCBSE School, St. Joseph's matriculation Higher Secondary School, Bishop Agniswamy B.Ed College, the Community College, St. Xavier's Teacher Training Institute, Lawrence Technical Institute, St. Antony's Nursing College, Bishop Agniswamy B.Ed College, and Xavier's Catholic College of Engineering, Morning Star Polytechnic, Nanjil College of Arts and Sciences, Chithrancode CBSE School.

School of Bishop Remigius

The R. C. Diocese of Kottar, Nagercoil, Tamilnadu, is a Christian minority organisation that runs Bishop Peter Remigius School. As a memento of Most Rev. Dr. Peter Remigius' Episcopal Silver Jubilee as the Bishop of Kottar, this school was established. Students from all religions, particularly those from the Christian Minority, are educated at this institution. Although we oversee a large number of government-aided and independently funded schools, this area does not have any CBSE schools. The R.C. Diocese of Kottar established this school as its first CBSE institution. The Kanniyakumari District's administrative centre, Nagercoil Town, is where this school is located. The need for a CBSE

school in this area has been voiced repeatedly by the local populace. Despite the fact that there are persons employed by the Central Government, it is crucial to emphasise that the number of people in such positions is extremely low. We require a central school to satisfy the aspirations of the residents of this area, so that they can enrol in prestigious institutions like the IIT, IIM, NIT, AIIMS, or any other Higher Educational Institutions owned by the Central Government. We need to equip pupils for today's difficulties since the world is growing more and more competitive. This school, which is associated with the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi, was established with this goal in mind.

The Most Reverend Dr. Nazaran Soosai, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Kottar (BRC DK) and Chairman of the School, Rev. Fr. Aloysius M. Benzigar, the Financial Administrator, and Rev. Fr. Stanley Sahaya Seelan, the Correspondent, are in charge of the tasks listed above. The adage "Real education brings you more than a job" is quite wise. It imparts life lessons. It is impossible to quantify in any concrete sense. Their presence brings about much happiness and joy. We will give thanks to the All-Powerful Lord for his unending favours and assistance. We are proud of the hard work our instructors and students put out to meet the standards. The pupils' overall growth is the main priority. Academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular accomplishments are strong.¹⁴

¹⁵Success in any subject, but particularly in the realm of education, depends on being current. Our teachers always make an effort to stay current by participating in workshops and other training sessions. ¹⁶To educate language teachers on cutting-edge classroom teaching strategies, numerous subject-specific seminars were offered. Additionally, teachers received instruction in smart classes, classroom management, and practising their handwriting. Teachers attending the CBSE-CCE Training on scholastic skills offered by the CBSE Centre of Excellence at Tuticorin have been funded by the school.

Our teachers have received critical thinking and problem-solving training from Scholastic India. Analytical skills were taught in training by Next Education. For KG teachers, Oxford India has held workshops on phonetics, rhyme recitation, and storytelling. Additionally, the school has paid for two teachers to attend a counselling certificate programme offered by the Animation Center at the Bishop House in Nagercoil. All of the math and science teachers at Nagercoil's Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan participated in the Olab online course.

The school had a celebration on Kamarajar Day. The main guest was Rev. Fr. Gaspar, the parish priest of Kurumbanai. The audience was entertained by students. Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Kottar and Chairman of Schools, Most Rev. Dr. Nazaran Soosai, paid a kind visit to the school.¹⁷ He interacted with all of the school's non-teaching employees as well as the kids and teachers. On that occasion, the newly appointed bishop blessed the new prayer hall. On that day, holy mass was celebrated. We want our kids to be aware of our long-standing Tamil culture and customs. Our school put on Thole Paavai Koothu, a traditional folk play, to make it more impactful.¹⁸

Every year, people celebrate Independence Day. The main guest was Dr. Albert, the principal of DMI Engineering College in Aralvoimoli. The chief guest raised the Indian flag and spoke about the significance of India's independence. He also emphasised the importance of picking the correct career. ¹⁹Every year on September 5, 2018, a celebration of teachers' day was held. Children from different classes, including Dr. Jasmine Sheila Berney, delighted

the audience with songs and dances. The kids presented flowers to the teachers in appreciation. On behalf of the Management, the Correspondent presented gifts to all the teachers. On Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's birthday, India celebrates Children's Day as a day of joy and celebration. The event was overseen by Bishop Emeritus Most Rev. Dr. Peter Remigius.²⁰

The Bishop stressed the significance of the day in his speech on raising responsible kids. He also sang inspiring songs to the kids to keep them engaged. There was a variety show that featured both teachers and kids.²¹

Christmas, a religious and cultural holiday celebrated by billions of people worldwide on December 25, honours the birth of Jesus Christ. In our school, a Christmas celebration was held. Rt. Rev. Dr. Hilarius, Vicar General, served as the event's chief guest. It was fun to watch the students, professors, and parents perform a variety show. The CBSE also observes Sports Day. The youngsters delivered an entertaining variety show emphasising the value of physical education. Medals and trophies were presented to winners in recognition of their exceptional efforts. The parents gave the programme a lot of praise. On January 26, there is a Republic Day event on the school's grounds. The chief guest addresses the group while hoisting the national flag. On that occasion, sweets are given out.

Students bring honour to the school by taking first place in competitions held at the District, Zonal, and State levels as well as the Science Olympiad Foundation's Olympiad exams.²² Open Day, also known as Parent-Teacher Conferences, is a crucial component of the school's curriculum.²³ These open days give parents a chance to speak with the principal, correspondent, and teachers to learn about their children's academic and extracurricular success. For each assessment, the management has held open days. These gatherings aid in putting into practise the recommendations made by the parents for improving the school.

It uses the most recent smart class technologies. The Next Education Team frequently conducts teacher training programmes on smart class instruction. A house system develops.²⁴ Prefects are chosen from among students who serve as role models for others in terms of behaviour, academic performance, athletics, and extracurricular and co-curricular activities.²⁵ Our school holds an investiture ceremony for the prefects. The extracurricular activities will intensify the process of mental strengthening. These exercises help develop professional abilities that a classroom setting alone may not always be able to cultivate. Students are taught soft skills for two reasons: to expand their knowledge, comprehension, values, and skills, as well as to produce quality human capital.²⁶

Only when the needs of one's bodily, mental, and spiritual growth are met is education complete in one's life. The school offers many opportunities for physical development, including dancing, karate, entertaining games, and meditation.

School Committee Like the illiterate "King Maker" Kamarajar, the new bishop Peter Remigius focused on education in the Kumbakonam diocese first. He started the education committee in the diocese of Kumbakonam. Peter Remigius, a bishop, served as its chairman. Seven priests, a member who had been nominated, and thirteen secretaries were also present. This committee offers strategies for altering the status of politics, influence, and caste.

Kumbakonam Diocese: Scholarship Program for Students Bishop Peter Remigius established the Diocesan District Educational Scholarship Program while he was in Kumbakonam.²⁷ Three lacks scholarships are awarded each year. From 1991 to the present,

6320 students received scholarships totaling \$19,62,050 under this programme, while 1024 economically disadvantaged Christian students received scholarships totalling \$4,28,900 with the assistance of the Tamilnadu Bishop Conference.

Conclusion

The Kottar diocese's educational system was substantially shaped by influences from Christian missionaries, Brahmin-nationalists, non-Brahmin regionalists, and Bishop Peter Remigius. The rise and development of education and educational spending at the national and state levels. The research above makes clear that we have made significant advancements in the sphere of education. Bishop Peter Remigius worked to advance education in the Kottar Diocese's villages in Kanniyakumari during his tenure there. Bishop Peter Remigius' services to the Christian educational institutions of the Kottar Dioceses help the students in a variety of ways.

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