Nature of Sanskrit education in Kerala during nineteenth century

Hari Vasu
Research Scholar, Department of Sanskrit Nyaya
Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit Kalady, Kerala

Abstract: Kerala has a long educational history relates to Sanskrit. Ancient educational institutions like Sala and Gurukulas operated to impart Sanskrit education in ancient and Medieval Kerala. Sanskrit dominated educational sector of Kerala until nineteenth century. Foreign inventors like Portuguese, Dutch and British changed the political, social, cultural and educational sector of Kerala with beginning of nineteenth century. This paper is aimed to describe the nature of Sanskrit education and how introduction of Western education put an end to the domination of Sanskrit education in Kerala during nineteenth century.

Key words: Sanskrit education in nineteenth century.

Introduction
Kerala is a State in Southern India, officially formed on November 1956. It is the most literate state in India. Kerala has a long educational history. It is not possible to prepare the educational history of Kerala without mentioning Sanskrit education. Vedas, Sanskrit Darsanas like Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Vyakaranam, Mimamsa, Vedanta, Astronomy, Ayurveda, Puranas, Itihasas, Sanskrit Kavyas and Natakas etc were taught in Kerala. Sanskrit and Sanskrit related subjects were the only method used to instruct students till the period of nineteenth century in Kerala.

Sanskrit education in Kerala
Salas were the ancient educational institution of Kerala. This educational institution is the oldest form of institutionalised learning centre. First information about Salas is available from the period of Eighth century C.E. Salas were functioned from Eighth century to Twelfth century C.E. They operated to give Sanskrit education to Brahmin youth of Kerala. Kanthallur Sala, Parthivapuram Sala, Muzhikulam Sala were the Sala operated in ancient Kerala to give Sanskrit education. Various Darsanas like Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Vyakaranam, Mimamsa, Vedanta, Lokayukta, Buddhism, Vedas were taught in Sala. Hundreds of students were educated in Salas.

Gurukulas, Kalari, Sabhamattas, residence of rich people and rulers were make arrangements for students to learn Sanskrit. They are medieval educational institutions. Information about these educational institutions is available from fifteenth century C.E. Kudallur Gurukulam, Desamangalath Varjyam, Uracheri Gurukulam, Kodugallur Gurukulam, are some of the important Gurukulam operated in medieval Kerala and disintegrated by nineteenth century C.E. Various Sanskrit Darsanas, Sanskrit Kavyas, Natakas, Ayurvedas were Jyotisham, are taught in Gurukulas. Period of Gurukula system of education was fifteenth century and nineteenth century C.E. Sabhamattas established by Adi Sankaracharya, were given Sanskrit education to Students. There were four Sabhamattam in Trissur, Kerala. Vedas, Upánisad, Mimamsa, and Vyakaranam were taught in Sabhamattas.

Zamorins of Calicut Payur Bhatta family, Cochin Royal family, Travancore Royal Family, Royal families like Calicut and Cochin conducted annual debates on Sanskrit Darssanas. There were number of Kahari functioned in Kerala. Kalari is called as Asan School in Kerala. This school is run by a single teacher, opened for both boys and girls. They offer classes in Amarokosam, Siddharupam, Ramayanam, Bhagavatam, Sanskrit Kavyas, Natakas, Vyakaranam, Vaidyhasastram, Sasyasastram, Tarkasastram, Jyotism, Dharmasastram, Martial arts and some games. The school operated and focused on training for martial arts are also called as Kalari. History says that such Kalari were also given basic Sanskrit classes.

Nature of Sanskrit education in Kerala in nineteenth century
Old educational institutions imparted Sanskrit educations began to disintegrate after eighteenth century C.E. Ashan schools successfully worked till the beginning of twentieth Century, despite the new trends in educational sector formed on nineteenth century. Many students reached Asan schools and continue to learn Sanskrit. Asan School gave instructions on basics of Sanskrit like Siddharupam, Amarokosam, Purana and Itihas. Most of the students stopped their schooling after completing this course in Asan School. Those who are interested in higher studies find a teacher themselves, called Guru and continued to learn Sanskrit Darssanas. Learning Darsanas were only available option in higher studies. Rich people and those who are expert in Dsarsanas make arrangements at their home to learn Darsanas.

Only a few people were received higher educational because of the lack of easy access to find a Guru. Asan schools, Kalari, Gurukula and all other educational institutions run by individuals were not organised during that period. They did not follow uniform syllabus or teaching method. Time period and duration of course were not fixed in old schools. Lack of higher educational institution and trained teachers were drawback of old schools. Local rulers did not interfere in public education. They believed that it is not
their duty to make policies and arrangements for public education. Colonial administration established in Kerala with the beginning of eighteenth century C.E. They introduced colonial Western education to Kerala during nineteenth century.

Being Madras as centre, they reorganised educational Activities in Kerala. They introduced systematic and effective educational institutions. Government introduced many education policies like educational policy of Canal Mandro in 1818 and Woods Despatch in 1854, aimed to change educational system. Nineteenth century is noticed for many changes in educational activities. English schools, Vernacular schools for local languages, and Colleges were formed. Introduction of uniform Syllabus, book committees, trained teachers, introduction of multiple subjects like English, History, Geography, Mathematics, Malayalam etc, grand in aid system, Education for all without any discrimination based on caste and gender and better job opportunity were the main attraction of English education. Gradually traditional Sanskrit schools slowly disappeared. Sanskrit collages like Pattambi Sanskrit College and Sanskrit College at Travancore were formed as part of modernisation of Educational sector during nineteenth century. Vernacular schools, Sanskrit Schools and English schools were the modern schools operated in Nineteenth century to give elementary education. They were supported by the Government. Vernacular school functioned to taught Malayalam, History, Sanskrit and Arithmetic. Travancore education code of 1909 recommended Sanskrit as an optional subject. ‘Statham committee report of 1933 disintegrated Vernacular Schools.

Conclusion
Kerala has strong Sanskrit educational tradition. Sala was the ancient educational institution. Gurukulas, Kalari, Sabhamatt, residence of rulers were medieval educational institution. Asan Schools, English School, Vernacular Schools, Colleges were the educational institution of nineteenth Century. Type of Educational institution that focused on Sanskrit education during nineteenth Century was Asan School, residence of rich people and scholars in Dsarsanas. Introduction of Modern Western education and drawbacks of traditional schools cause a slight decline in Sanskrit education. Today Sanskrit is rare subject in schools and higher educational institution. The trend for this decline was started in nineteenth century.

References
5. The Travancore Education Code, Thiruvananthapuram, 1941, p 83