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## PROGRESS IN WOMEN'S EDUCATION

### MADRAS UNIVERSITY'S ACHIEVEMENT

MADRAS, March 7.

An appeal to philanthropists to help in the establishment of at least one First Grade Women's College in each district of Madras State, was urged by Dr. Sir A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University, presiding over the College Day celebrations of the Stella Maris College in San Thome last evening. A distinguished gathering was present on the occasion.

At the outset, a short sports programme, including an interesting basket-ball match, was gone through. Afterwards, tea and light refreshments were served to the guests on the terrace of the college building commanding view of the sea.

Rev. Mother Lillian, Principal of the College, presented the report of the working of the college since its inception on August 15, 1947. The very Rev. Mother Mary Margaret of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in Rome had decided to found this college to which she gave a significant name "Stella Maris"—"Star of the Sea." The College made a beginning with 33 students in 1947-48 and it had since then gradually developed. In July 1949, on the quiet Palace Road the new college premises had been installed.

Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, Vice-Chancellor, said that he had been following with keen interest the progress of the College. As a member of the Board of the University Commission, he had inspected many Colleges, but here in the Stella Maris College, he could say "that a miracle has been accomplished." All unnoticed as it were a monumental building had sprung up. He could personally say that when he first saw the new building, he gaped and gazed at it for a long time, but then recovering his equanimity had said to the Principal, "This is very fine. How did you do it?" That was more than two months ago.

Proceeding, the Vice-Chancellor said that our unfortunate dependence upon examination results for assessing students "has led us to forget the true significance and function of education and college life." He referred to this because there had been a great deal of comment that the Madras University had not encouraged women's education for the simple reason that it had not found it possible to permit women to appear privately for university examinations whereas other Universities had found it possible to do so.

Explaining the Madras University's position in this matter, the Vice-Chancellor said that they would be interested to know that there were 12 women's Colleges in the University area out of which no less than 10 were managed by missionary agencies, the other two colleges being the Queen Mary's and the Ethiraj College for Women which was formerly a Government institution. Out of a total of 3,400 women students in these colleges, 2,530 were in missionary institutions. What was more significant was that in the last five years the University had got the co-operation of at least five managements to open women's colleges in different parts of the Province, including Madras, Madura, Coimbatore, and in the West Coast. He was perfectly sure that these women's colleges would be serving the needs of women of these districts and a larger area around, in an increasing measure.

### NEED FOR MORE COLLEGES

"My own ambition is that there should be at least one women's college in every district—if not in the district headquarters, at least in the most prominent town—and I appeal to philanthropists to come to the rescue and found these colleges, for I feel that even with the best will in the world the Government may not be in a position to undertake the starting of new colleges for women."

Apart from that, in men's colleges, co-education had come to play a prominent part and a large number of women students received education there. The number of women students in the arts and professional colleges was a little over 6,000. "If you show me another University in India which has got a third of this strength and where private study offers a passport for university examination, I shall be glad to change my idea as to the best method of encouraging women's education," the Vice-Chancellor said.

"We want our young girls, our daughters and sisters, not to pass examinations but to get that high training, that cosmopolitan life, that contact with persons of their own age, that can only come with college life, that personal touch and the moral influence which you and the staff are exercising to an appreciable extent in the moulding of the character of future citizens of India; and I claim without any hesitation whatsoever that the Madras University has not been running on wrong lines with reference to the development of women's education in this part of the country."

Continuing, the Vice-Chancellor said, the Principal had told him how by talking extra care they had enabled a backward student to become one of the best students of the college. "There is an example for the teaching profession," he said. If a student failed, the teacher must realise that he himself had failed. So long as the teacher did not realise that fundamental obligation of the profession he would be a misfit. "There are no such people as failures among children failures among young men and women. Failures are among the elder generation who do not know how to mould their character and how to guide them along the appropriate path", he said.

Referring to sports the Vice-Chancellor said, it would interest them to know that the University was contemplating in the next academic year a regional contest and an inter-collegiate contest for all women's colleges and all women students of the University area just as there was for the boys. The Madras University made no distinction between boys and girls and there should be no sort of discrimination on the grounds of sex. That was one of the reasons why they hesitated to offer private methods of appearing for examinations, he concluded.

Mrs. Iswaraiah proposed a vote of thanks. There was a variety of entertainment, including songs, dances and a play in five acts, Anarkali.