

THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES TO EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF TRIBALS IN JHARKHAND

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In this article we seek to show that the work of Christian missionaries in various parts of India has been effective without any negative intention. Wherever missionaries are active, the people are found to be educationally developed, especially among the deprived, the poor, the exploited and those excluded from mainstream society. These missionaries gave hope to these people they have been trying to help educationally, socially, economically and politically.

This research, based on the empirical studies of two villages, namely Itki and Bhagwanpur, in the Ranchi and Deoghar districts in Jharkhand State, concerning the role of missionary schools in tribal education, found many issues of relevance. The data was collected during 2006 – 2007 from students in the age group 6 – 14 years. However, the data also included the views of other groups of people, such as NGOs Representatives, tribal and non-tribals, local leaders, administrators and elected representatives.

It tries to concentrate on unexplored areas of study. The paper constitutes the first kind study to focus on the empirical investigation of the role of Christian missionaries in educational development in the State of Jharkhand in India. This study has policy implications for understanding the various forms of their contribution to educating the tribals of Jharkhand. This study also confirmed that in Bhagwanpur village, the education level among the tribals was very much lower in comparison to Itki, because in this village, only a government school was present there.

Keywords: tribal education, Christian missionaries, pragmatic work, Itki village, Jharkhand

Introduction

Christian missionaries have been working in almost all fields of tribal life, especially in education and health.¹ They also introduced modern life and culture side by side with preserving the existing culture. The pattern of their work for tribal people is very innovative as they engage through dedicated and highly trained personnel by means of whom they gain confidence and willing cooperation and most importantly they do their work by considering it as service. Fuchs (2005), in this regard, observes that the welfare work carried out among tribal communities by Christian missionaries seems to have been much more successful and impressive than that of the government agencies. They work wholeheartedly as insiders thanks to which they have developed a community feeling with the local population. However, it is also true that missionaries offered this community education in missionary schools, primarily teaching Christian scriptures to make them loyal subjects. Missionaries propagated Christianity widely, distributing tracts and condemning Hindu practices through speeches in bazars and public places.²

Jharkhand is one of the predominantly tribal states, in which 26.3% habitants are tribals and Jharkhand contributes 8.4% of the Scheduled Tribes population to the total ST population of India.³ It is also a land with many primitive tribes. The State has had a history of missionary welfare activities since the 19th Century, especially in the Chotanagpur region.⁴ Chotanagpur is a large area of

¹ MOJUMDAR, K. *Changing Tribal Life in British Orissa*; SANATE, C. Christianity-Its Impact Among the Hmars in North East India. In *International Journal of Advancements in Research & Technology*, 2013, Vol. 2, No. 12, pp. 18–27; FAROOQ, M. The Aims and Objectives of Missionary Education in the Colonial Era in India. In *Pakistan Vision*, 2014, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 118–142; NAIK, R. Role of Missionaries in Social Change of Orissa. In *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 2014, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 41–51; DHANARAJU, V. Contribution of Missionary Education in Colonial Andhra: Social Change among the Depressed Classes. In *Research Journal of Educational Sciences*, 2015, Vol. 3, No. 7, pp. 7–15.

² DOSS, M. Indian Christian and the Making of Composite Culture in South India. In *South Asia Research*, 2018, Vol. 38, No. 3, p. 7.

³ ROY, D. Socio-Economic Status of Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand. In *Indian Journal of Spatial Science*, 2012, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 26.

⁴ BARA, J. Colonialism, Christianity and the Tribes of Chhota Nagpur in East India, 1845 – 1890. In *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 2007, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 195–222.

Jharkhand state where the maximum number of inhabitants are tribals.⁵ The major findings are that wherever the missionaries are active the socio-economic and educational status of tribals is found to be high and they also have a higher degree of social capital. Social capital is a collaborative process in which different groups of people are engaged in the development of something or some specified group of people. The concept was first used by the Hanifan (1916) but was developed systematically and sociologically by Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1995).

Background

The role of Christian missionaries has been extensive and highly visible in almost all areas of tribal development but education is one area in which it has given particular momentum to development.⁶ Its importance can be recognized from the words of Dominic Jala (2007), “If there is one field in which missionaries among the tribals have contributed in a very tangible way, it is education. It opened for the tribal people immediate access to ways of coping with a fast developing world”.⁷ The Christian missionaries believe in the principle of maintaining the status quo of egalitarian society in which they involve themselves by looking at everybody as equal in society. In a speech delivered at the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe Area Conference in 1952, India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, observed: “The Christian missionaries went to various tribal areas and some of them spent practically all

⁵ Census of India [cit. 21 September 2018]. Available from <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/population_enumeration.html>

⁶ BARA, J. Colonialism, Christianity and the Tribes of Chhota Nagpur in East India, 1845 – 1890. In *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 2007, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 195–222; SARWAR, F. Christian Missionaries and Female Education in Bengal during East India Company’s Rule: A Discourse between Christianised Colonial Domination versus Women Emancipation. In *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2012, Vol. 4, No. 10, pp. 37–47; REDDEPPA, S. The Role of Christian Missionaries in Madras Presidency: A Historical Study. In *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 2014, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 4–6; FAROOQ, M. The Aims and Objectives of Missionary Education in the Colonial Era in India. In *Pakistan Vision*, 2014, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 118–142; SINGH, A. The Role of Missionaries in Abolition of Sati Custom in India with Special Reference to Serampore Missionary. In *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2015, Vol. 20, No. 10, pp. 52–55.

⁷ GURU, G. How Egalitarian Are the Social Sciences in India? In *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2002, Vol. 37, No. 50, pp. 311–312.

their lives there...I do not find many instances of the people from the plains going to the tribal areas ...Missionaries did very good work there and I am full of praise".⁸

The contribution of the Christian missionaries towards the education of the Adivasis (tribals) of Chotanagpur has been praised by many educationists. In the words of the anthropologist Sachchidananda (1967), who is very familiar with the work of the missionaries in the area, "the Christian missionaries have been pioneers in the field of tribal education. They have a rare sense of dedication to the cause. Their teachers learn the tribal language of the area...They gain the confidence of the villagers. The amount of labour they put in is very much greater than other teachers. They create in the heart of the tribals the zest for education. All these qualities must be emulated by teachers employed by other educational agencies".⁹

Even a staunch critic of Christianization in India, the historian Pannikar (1963) honestly admitted: "the work of the missionaries among the aboriginal tribes may be said to have created a tradition of social service which modern India has inherited. If the Indian Constitution included special provisions for the welfare of the tribal communities, and Adivasis, and if the Centre and the State are making concentrated efforts to bring them up to the general level of India, much of the credit for such activities must be given to the missionaries".¹⁰

A distinction needs to be made here between the church-related school and Christian education. A church related school is constrained to operate within the educational system and Christian education that reaches out beyond, to the least and last members of the marginalized communities who are waiting to be conscientized and liberated.¹¹

⁸ KANJAMALA, A. Conversions and the Church: A Socio-Historical Perspective, In KANJAMALA, A. (ed.). *Integral Mission Dynamics: An Interdisciplinary Study of the Catholic Church in India*, p. 339.

⁹ SACHCHIDANANDA. Tribal Education. In GORE, M. S., DESAI, I. P., SUMA, C. (eds.). *The Sociology of Education in India*, pp. 99–108.

¹⁰ PANIKKAR, K. *The Foundations of New India*. George, p. 53.

¹¹ KALAPURA, J. Church in Chotanagpur: Mediating Change Through Education. In BENNI, A., EKKA, S. J., SINGH, H. K., SHARAN, V. P., PRASAD, A. (eds.). *The Catholic Church in Jharkhand: A Mediator of Change*, p. 213.

Conditions of Tribals before the Arrival of Christian Missionaries

Before the arrival of the Christian missionaries, the social and economic conditions of the tribals, the original settlers of the land, were ones of great distress. Their life was almost like that of slaves, a situation imposed by the King, landlords, moneylenders and tax collectors. Through force and fraud most of the land was unjustly taken away from the peasants and a number of armed rebellions took place but were suppressed by political force. The Christian missionaries, under the charismatic leadership of Constant Lievens, Sylvain Grosjean, Baptist Hoffman, and the like, skillfully used the frustrations of the Adivasis to win their confidence by helping them save themselves from such oppressive conditions.¹² The result was mass conversion among the Adivasis to Christianity, which considerably changed the power relations in the society. It was a social revolution which brought about many more changes, in addition to religious change.¹³

It may be noted that education did not come as the sole offer from the missionaries but rather it came with acceptance of membership of the Church. But this does not mean that only those who converted were educated; instead it opened up education to all, irrespective of caste, class, colour and religious affiliations. However, preferential treatment was given to those who converted to Christianity. Most importantly, the different studies on missionary education have confirmed that those who benefitted most from Christian education were non-Christians.¹⁴

The Contribution of Christian Missionaries to Education in India

Despite having a small percentage of Christian population in India and it being a country with a larger concentration of Hindus, Christians' involvement was very deeply rooted in all parts of the country. The only reason was that the educational institutions were meant only for the upper caste of the Hindu hierarchical system or only for twice-born castes under the Varna system, especially in Ancient India. Historically, the lower castes and tribals were

¹² RAZA, A. *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act: A Handbook on Tenancy Law in Jharkhand*.

¹³ De SA, F. *Crisis in Chota Nagpur*.

¹⁴ KALAPURA, J. Church in Chotanagpur: Mediating Change Through Education. In BENNI, A., EKKA, S. J., SINGH, H. K., SHARAN, V. P., PRASAD, A. (eds.). *The Catholic Church in Jharkhand: A Mediator of Change*, p. 209.

marginalized, exploited and deprived of educational opportunity.¹⁵ In this way, these people were socially excluded from all walks of life. And hence the Christian missionaries experienced and recognized this system of hierarchy prevalent in Indian society and found their way to providing service for these people.¹⁶ However, when they started serving these people, other sections of the population also benefitted even more than them.

The contribution of the Christian missions in pioneering modern education in India has been both qualitative as well as quantitative. The Christian educational institutions were among the best organized and managed in the country. These missionaries helped the tribals to proceed from savagery to modernity and thereby took off a heavy load from the shoulders of the government of India.¹⁷ Enormous work has been done by the Christian missionaries in educating the youth of India. Christian missionaries take especial care of the youth of the country, irrespective of sex, creed, colour, and caste and have built for them numerous elementary, secondary and higher educational institutions. It was St. Francis Xavier who led the way in elementary education by exhorting his companions to build a school in every village. St. Francis Xavier was the first Jesuit to come to India and started the Indian mission in 1542.¹⁸ These schools were the pioneers of the modern system of primary education.¹⁹ Looking back, the earliest conversion in India took place among the Parvars of South India. These people were harassed by Arab

¹⁵ CHOUDHARY, S. Higher Education in India: A Socio-historical Journey from Ancient Period to 2006 – 2007. In *The Journal of Educational Enquiry*, 2008, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 50–72.

¹⁶ NAIK, R. Christian Missionaries and Their Impact on Socio-Cultural Development: Undivided Koraput District a Study. In *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2012, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 1–5; NAIK, R. Role of Missionaries in Social Change of Orissa. In *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 2014, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 41–51; DHANARAJU, V. Contribution of Missionary Education in Colonial Andhra: Social Change among the Depressed Classes. In *Research Journal of Educational Sciences*, 2015, Vol. 3, No. 7, pp. 7–15; ROUT, N. Contemporary Study: The Problems and Issues of Education of Tribal Children in Kandhamal District of Orissa. In *International Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 2015, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 70–74.

¹⁷ D'SILVA, L. *The Christian Community and the National Mainstream*.

¹⁸ KALAPURA, J. The Legacy of Francis Xavier: Jesuit Education in India, 16th – 18th Centuries. In IGNACIO, A., CARLOS, M. I. (eds.). *St Francis Xavier and the Jesuit Missionary Enterprise, Assimilations between Cultures*, p. 91.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

pirates and powerful Hindus and ultimately protected by the Portuguese at the cost of adopting Christianity and the whole caste was baptised.²⁰

A number of schools and colleges were established by the missionaries. Many Christian colleges existed in Goa, Angamalle, Cochin, Vaipin, Cranganore and Bassein from as early as the 16th century.²¹ Jesuits founded several educational institutions in India and engaged in scholarly pursuits following the legacy of St Francis Xavier during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.²²

Gradually many colleges were established in different parts of the country. The idea of teacher training schools was firstly established by the Christian missionary as early as the 16th century. The system of boarding school was also firstly initiated by Jesuits in India. The missionaries were also pioneer of vocational education. Not only that but Christian missionaries also worked enormously for the education of Indian women. It was the Christian missionaries who first realized that no sound community could be created under conditions in which women were incompetent to teach the young and heal the sick.²³ Thus, it is not surprising that the three major needs of Indian women, for teachers, doctors and nurses, were met at first almost entirely by Christian women.²⁴

It is also necessary here to see the link between the Christian missionaries and the British rule in India.²⁵ The Christian missionaries were the first to come forward. The Baptist missionary William Carey came to India in the year 1793 A.D and he along with his friends established a Baptist mission in Serampore

²⁰ FORRESTER, D. B. The Depressed Classes and Conversion to Christianity 1860 – 1960. In ODDIE, G. A. (ed.), *Religion in South Asia: Religious Conversion and Revival Movements in South Asia in Medieval and Modern Times*, p. 80.

²¹ KALAPURA, J. The Legacy of Francis Xavier: Jesuit Education in India, 16th – 18th Centuries. In IGNACIO, A., CARLOS, M. I. (eds.), *St Francis Xavier and the Jesuit Missionary Enterprise, Assimilations between Cultures*, p. 93.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 91–92.

²³ LANKINA, T., GETACHEW, L. Competitive Religious Entrepreneurs: Christian Missionaries and Female Education in Colonial and Post-Colonial India. In *British Journal of Political Science*, 2013, Vol. 43. No. 1, pp. 103–131.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 103–131.

²⁵ FAROOQ, M. The Aims and Objectives of Missionary Education in the Colonial Era in India. In *Pakistan Vision*, 2014, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 118 –142; WHITEHEAD, C. The Christian Missions and the Origins of the Indian Education Commission 1882 – 1883. In *Education Research and Perspectives*, 2004, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp.120 – 136.

(1800 A.D.)²⁶ and established many primary schools nearby the Baptist Mission. They even opened a printing press and started printing booklets in Bengali. Carey translated the Ramayana into English (1800 A.D.).²⁷ Under his inspiration the Bible was translated into different Indian languages and a new edition of Halhead's Bengali Grammar was published. By their zeal an English school was established in Serampore in 1818 A.D., which is now known as Serampore College.²⁸ Before the Charter Act 1813, the British rulers agreed not to interfere via missionaries activities and even sometimes opposed them. This was because of the fear that missionary education in English might offend the Hindus on the subject of religious conversion and in that way cause unrest among the Hindus and finally lead to problems for the Company.

The Charter Act of 1813, under British Rule, emphasized the advancement of education in India and finally a missionary clause was attached to Charter Act 1813 passed by Parliament. The Charter Act of 1813 granted permission to those wishing to go to India for promoting moral and religious improvement, which meant Christian missionaries to spread the use of English and propagate their religion.²⁹ In addition to this an important clause in the act allocated a sum of not less than 1 Lakh rupees each year for the revival and importance of literature, for encouraging the learned natives of India, and also for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India. But the act was not clear about ways in which the money was to be spent for educational development.³⁰ The Charter Act of 1813 is also known as the East India Company Act 1813. It is an Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom which renewed the charter issued to the British East India Company, and continued the Company's rule in India. The Charter act of 1833 laid down regulation about the permanent presence of missionaries of other countries also to carry out their educational work in India and increased the educational grant from 10,000 pounds per annum to 100,000 pounds per annum. The Government of India Act, 1833, appointed Lord

²⁶ FAROOQ, M. The Aims and Objectives of Missionary Education in the Colonial Era in India. In *Pakistan Vision*, 2014, Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 119.

²⁷ BROCKINGTON, J. L. William Carey's Significance as an Indologist. In *IT*, 1994, Vol. 7, No. 8 (1991 – 1992), pp. 81–102.

²⁸ SAHU, D. Serampore Then and Now. In *Indian Journal of Theology*, 1993, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 9–11.

²⁹ WEBSTER, A. The Political Economy of Trade Liberalization: The East India Company Charter Act of 1813. In *The Economic History Review*, 1990, Vol. 43, No. 3, pp. 404–419.

³⁰ KINGDOM, G., MUZAMMIL, M. *The Political economy of Education: Teacher Politics in Uttar Pradesh*, p. 46.

Macaulay as the first Law Member of the Governor General's Council. He played an important role in building the foundations of bilingual colonial India, by influencing the Governor General, to adopt English as the medium of instruction from the 6th year of schooling onward, rather than Sanskrit or Arabic that was then used in the institutions supported by the East India Company.³¹ In his minute dated February 2, 1835, Macaulay insisted that the government should not withhold from Indians Western learning. As mass education was neither feasible nor desirable, Macaulay insisted that the best policy would be to "do our best to form a class (of persons) who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect".³²

Another major development in education under the colonial regime was the educational dispatch of 1854, popularly called Wood dispatch. It is considered as the Magna Carta of English education in India, as it emphasized mass education, female education and the improvement of the vernaculars, and favoured secularism in Education. The dispatch emphasized improving knowledge of the arts, the sciences and the literature of Europe, and insisted on English as the medium of higher education. But it was not to replace the vernaculars. The dispatch replaced the provincial boards and councils of education by creating departments of public instruction in each of the five provinces into which the territory of company was divided at the time: Bengal, Madras, Bombay, the North-Western province, and the Punjab.³³ By 1854, only 36,000 pupils were educated in government elementary schools, the missionary schools were instructing almost twice the number. Therefore, the education dispatch of 1854 had rightly encouraged the spread of mass education through a grant-in-aid system.³⁴

With few exceptions, Indian Christianity had enjoyed a favourable relationship with the colonial government and often used this 'special status' to engage in 'aggressive proselytisation'.³⁵

³¹ MAYHEW, A. *The Education of India: A Study of British Educational Policy in India, 1835 – 1920, and of its Bearing on National Life and Problems in India To-Day.*

³² DOBBIN, C. *Basic Documents in the Development of Modern India and Pakistan, 1835 – 1947*, p. 18.

³³ RICHEY, J. *Selections from Educational Records 1840 – 59.*

³⁴ VENKATANARAYANAN, S. Tracing the Genealogy of Elementary Education Policy in India till Independence. In *SAGE Open*, 2013, October–December, p. 30.

³⁵ COX, J. *Imperial Fault Lines, Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818 – 1940*, p. 81.

It was, in fact, the Hocking Report of 1932 which furnished adequate evidence of the development of Christian missionary institutions in India, given below in Table No. 1.

Table 1. Status of Educational Institutions in India³⁶

| Types of Educational Institutions | Missionary Institutions | Percentage (Government and Non-government) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Women's Colleges | 13 | 50 |
| Teachers' Training Schools | 67 | 50 |
| Girls' High Schools | 101 | 45 |
| Girls' Middle Schools | 197 | 30 |

The Report indicates that more than 50 percent of educational institutions were in the hands of missionaries before 1932. The most significant features of the Christian contribution to Indian education was that the Christian schools and colleges had the reputation of being first-rate educational institutions which had been of great service to the nation in the advancement and dissemination of knowledge. The colonial era provided the freedom for missions to operate.

But after Indian Independence, the foreign missionaries began to decline in the context of the end of British rule in India in 1947. "Missionaries had a protected position in this subcontinent since at least 1813 when they were first permitted into territories controlled by the BCI Co. British imperial power had a protective shelter for their work."³⁷ By the beginning of the 1960s all missionaries who required visas had been withdrawn. Following the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, the final loophole was closed and all foreign missionaries were effectively withdrawn. These days, a transitional phase has occurred in the history of missionaries in India and hence Indian Christians have found their place in the missionaries' activities by striking a balance between limited internal resources and foreign support. Table No. 2 gives details about the growth of missionaries from 1972 to 1997. The Friends

³⁶ HOCKING, W. E. *Rethinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry After One Hundred Years*, p. 124.

³⁷ STANLEY, B. *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, p. 111.

Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB) and Indian Evangelical Mission (IEM) had 800 and 463 missionaries respectively.³⁸

The FMPB was formed from amongst the newly empowered Dalit communities in Tamil Nadu, and the IEM drawing on similar resource centres. The FMPB started their work as a small prayer group among university students in 1967 but has now grown into a group of 1800 missionaries and 800 field workers who work in 130 different locations in India.³⁹ They work mainly among the tribal and lower caste people (Dalits) in the country. It includes Malto, Santal in Bihar (Jharkhand), Lambari, Gond in Tamil Nadu, Chamar in Uttar Pradesh, Mazabi and Roya Sikhs in Punjab, Kuknas, Basawa, Gamit and Bhil in Gujarat, Worli, Pora and Wagi in Maharashtra, Kho, Munda and Kalang in Chhattisgarh.⁴⁰

The IEM had a very different origin than the FMPB. IEM was the outcome of the Lausanne International meetings in 1965. The follow-up meeting held at Devalali in India resulted in a move amongst Indian leaders to form their own missionary group dependent on India resources rather than foreign funding and support. The first action was to appoint the Rev. Theodore William as the Secretary. He was a bible college teacher in Bangarapet. He started to support the existing Indian missionaries in the Andaman Islands.⁴¹

Table 2. Growth of Missionaries (1972 – 1997)⁴²

| Year | Cross Cultural Missionaries | Domestic or Local Missionaries | Total |
|------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1972 | 543 | NA | 543 |
| 1980 | 2208 | NA | 2208 |
| 1983 | 3369 | NA | 3369 |
| 1988 | 10243 | NA | 10243 |
| 1994 | 12000 | NA | 12000 |
| 1997 | 15000 | 5000 | 20000 |

³⁸ BLAIR, C. *Christian Mission in India: Contribution of Some Missions to Social Change*, p. 50. [cit. 12 October 2018]. Available from < <http://www.google.co.kr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwito-DNtq7iAhUGGKYKHSRpAo0QFjABegQIAxAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fsummit.sfu.ca%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2Ffiritems%2F9287%2Fetd4275.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1kecE4j8uGqVYVb6Lp42ao> >

³⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

⁴¹ WILLIAM, E. *Sacrifice or Investment*, p. 17.

⁴² RAJENDRAN, K. *Which Way Forward Indian Missions? A Critique of Twenty-Five Years, 1972 – 1997*.

The other most important fact in relation to the missionaries' activities in various parts of the country can be seen in Table 3. These Christian missionaries were active in almost all parts of the country, especially where the tribals and Dalits were marginalized and excluded from the basic necessities of life. These churches worked especially in the fields of education, health, developmental activities and even in politics.

Table 3. Activities of Indian Missionaries in Education⁴³

| Location | Year | People Group | Ministry | Province | Active Churches |
|----------|------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Andamans | 1999 | Jarawa Tribe | Clinic School | | |
| Araku | 1988 | Kotia | Clinic School | Andhra Pradesh | 10 churches 100 members |
| Dang | 1980 | Kukani, Bhil | Medical education, Hostel | Gujarat | 13 churches 1500 members |
| Ho | 1986 | Ho, Santhal, Munda | Education, Development | Orissa | 8 churches 200 members |
| Nasik | 1984 | Bhil, Kukna | Education | Maharashtra | Few churches |
| Sirohi | 1978 | Garasi, Wagari | Literacy, Medical | Rajasthan | |

It is clear that the primary concern of missions in India was the spread of the Gospel and the growth of Churches. This was not true for all Christian missionaries. For instance, John Martin Sahajananda, the religious director of Shantivanam, was very much interested in inter-faith dialogue, particularly between Hinduism and Christianity. He teaches "Indian-Christian Spirituality" to visitors to the ashram. It is a form of spirituality, which shows the unifying elements among religions and also the uniqueness of each spiritual tradition. But it also opens up to a spirituality that goes beyond religious boundaries.⁴⁴ At this point, Sahajananda again argues: "Can we experience union with God

⁴³ BLAIR, F. *Christian Mission in India: Contribution of Some Missions to Social Change*, pp. 53–54.

⁴⁴ SAHAJANANDA, J. *What is Truth?*

without belonging to any formal religion? Yes, it is possible to enter into a union with God without belonging to any formal religion. There is only one way to God or to a union with God. This one way is not a religion, not a person, not a scripture, not a technique, but the purification of our ego. It is the purification of our ego that unites with God. This purification can take place outside any formal religion or spiritual practices. To be without an ego means to have an experience of unity with God, with creation and with the whole of humanity. It is possible that formal religions, scriptures, great spiritual masters, and spiritual techniques create a subtle ego in the name of religions, spiritual masters, scriptures and techniques and thus create divisions among the people. And they can become an obstacle for the unity of mankind. Hence it is possible to purify our ego without belonging to any formal religion or practice. Our goal should be very clear. It is unity. We need to transcend or renounce or outgrow or expand our limited identities that divide us for the sake of divine identity that unites us.”⁴⁵

This statement makes it clear that Sahjananda gives more emphasis to “mission without conversion” and there is need to purify our ego without belonging to any formal religion or practice. Another example in the Indian context, is the Ananda Marga movement and the work of Sarkar’s sect. The Ananda Marga movement may be an echo of the 19th-century messianic movements of the primitive tribes such as the Mundas and the Santals of Chotanagpur in north-eastern Madhya Pradesh (central provinces of India), the Oraons and the Gonds of Nagpur in eastern Madhya Pradesh (central provinces), and the Lusheis and the Kacha Nagas of Assam and the northeast frontier provinces.⁴⁶ More importantly, the tradition of Hindu revivalism of the late 19th century provided a direct inspiration and template for Sarkar’s sect. Hindu revivalists such as Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902), Balgangadhar Tilak (1856 – 1920), Sri Aurobindo (1872 – 1950), Bipinchandra Pal (1858 – 1932), or Sahajananda Swami (Swaminarayan, 1781 – 1830) had attempted ‘to blend religious with socio-economic values to foster a revived sense of community and ultimately to espouse nationalism’.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ KARÁSEK, M. *Christian Sannyasis at the Edge between (Religious) Minority and Majority in India: Contested Minorities of the Middle East and Asia*, p. 63.

⁴⁶ FUCHS, S. Messianic Movements in Primitive India. In *Asian Folklore Studies*, 1965, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 11–62.

⁴⁷ SIL, N. The Odyssey of the Ananda Marga: A Comparative Study. In *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 2012, Vol. 48, No. 2, p. 232.

The Contribution of Christian Missionaries to Education in Jharkhand

In Jharkhand, significant changes in society have occurred since the first arrival of Christian missionaries in 1845. The first Christian missionaries (Lutherans) came from Germany under the leadership of Rev. Gossner to the region in 1845. Catholic missionaries came in 1868 and became well established after the arrival, in 1885, of the Jesuit missionary Constant Lievens, honoured as the Apostle of Chotanagpur.⁴⁸ Most interestingly in 1857, the year of India's First War of Independence, there were only three middle schools, i.e. the English School of Kishenpur (now Zila School of Ranchi) founded in 1834 by the British government, a Lutheran Middle School for Boys, and the Bethesda Middle School for girls. The latter two were run by the Lutheran missionaries for the children of new converts.⁴⁹ There has been a sizeable investment especially by the Catholic Church, in terms of infrastructure and personnel dedicated to educating the poor and the rural youth. The network of educational institutions that exists today is the fruit of the early initiatives taken by missionaries, especially after the founding of the Catholic Church in Jharkhand.

In fact, the Christian missionaries felt the need for social transformation which is always associated with education of the masses. That is why Lievens settled down in Ranchi and thought of starting a school for the tribals, so that they could safeguard their rights over their property and liberate themselves from the dikus. German Evangelical Lutheran schools were initially used for inculcating biblical knowledge first and foremost, whereas the Catholic missionaries saw general education as the gateway to social change.⁵⁰

Education for tribals was meant to restore their lost human dignity and restore their dignity as human beings. Therefore these schools developed a curriculum which was suited to them and their curriculum incorporated animal care, local herbal medicine, land measurement in its ramified form, carpentry, blacksmithing, weaving along with reading, writing, maths, history, geography, physics and religion. The learning of Hindi and English was given special emphasis in order to make tribals stand on a par with others.⁵¹

⁴⁸ MAHTO, S. *Hundred Years of Christian Missions in Chotanagpur Since 1845*.

⁴⁹ TOPPO, J. Christian Missions in Chotanagpur and Their Contributions to Educating the Indigenous People. In BENI, A., EKKA, S., SINGH, H., SHARAN, V., PRASAD, A. (eds.). *The Catholic Church in Jharkhand: A Mediator of Change*, p. 168.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁵¹ TOPPO, J. Christian Missions in Chotanagpur and Their Contributions to Educating the Indigenous People. In BENI, A., EKKA, S., SINGH, H., SHARAN, V., PRASAD, A. (eds.). *The Catholic Church in Jharkhand: A Mediator of Change*, p. 168.

The Catholic missionaries began to build schools in the villages from 1885 onwards. Formal education was hardly known here before the arrival of the Lutheran missionaries. Within one year the Jesuit missionaries opened 30 schools. By 1887, the number of schools had risen to 70 with 2400 boys and 70 girls.⁵² The development of education can be seen in the Table 4 below.

Table 4. Development of Education in Jharkhand between 1857 and 1914⁵³

| Year | Total No. of Schools | No. of Students | No. of Schools under Churches |
|---------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| By 1857 | 3 | 165 | 2 |
| By 1869 | 5 | 208 | 4 |
| By 1872 | 22 | 986 | |
| By 1881 | 492 | 12,569 | 19 |
| 1891 | 524 | 16,282 | 26 |
| 1901 | 796 | 20,503 | 86 |
| 1914 | 1307 | 39,967 | 138 |

From the above table, it is clear that Christian missionaries have done tremendous work in the field of education. In fact, government's main effort was centred more on establishing schools in urban and semi-urban areas or big market centres, whereas the missionaries opted for villages and rural areas. They even started schools in the middle of deep and inaccessible forests. In the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century, the Catholic Church began to take the lead in the race to start schools. It was at this time that schools in places like Katkahi, and Tetra, Bendora and Khunti, Dighia and Rengarih, Kurdeg and Noadih, godforsaken places like Tumbaktu, began to teem with youngsters due to the school-going children, most of whom were boarders.⁵⁴

The period between 1872 and 1914 can rightly be called the period of educational awakening of the Christian tribals as is shown in the Survey Report of 1911 which is given below in Table 5.

⁵² TOPPO, S. *Dynamics of Educational Development in Tribal India*, pp. 94–95.

⁵³ TOPPO, J. Christian Missions in Chotanagpur and Their Contributions to Educating the Indigenous People. In BENI, A., EKKA, S., SINGH, H., SHARAN, V., PRASAD, A. (eds.). *The Catholic Church in Jharkhand: A Mediator of Change*, pp. 171–172.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 171–173.

Table 5. Status of Education of Ranchi District⁵⁵

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Total Population of Ranchi District | 785,295 |
| Among these, Christian numbered | 177,473 |
| Others | 6,07,820 |
| Literates among Christians | 10,436 (5.9%) |
| Literates among the others | 4,385 (0.73%) |
| Ratio of literates in the District | 57 out of 1000 males |

The performance of Christian tribals was high as the survey report indicates that in 1911 out of 607,820 non-Christians in the district only 4,385 were literate, whereas among the Christian tribals who numbered only 177,473 the number of literates had risen to 10, 436.⁵⁶ This trend continued for many more decades. It was only during the last decade of the 20th century that Non-Christian tribals took to education in a big way.⁵⁷

In 1949, the Catholic diocese of Ranchi alone was running 841 primary schools, 51 middle schools, 15 high schools, 2 academic colleges, 1 theological college, 6 teacher training colleges, 18 industrial training schools and 16 hostels, to cater for some 10,317 students (The Catholic Directory of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon).

The expansion of the Church's educational and other missionary service institutions up until 1998 in the different districts of Jharkhand can be seen from the following data given below in Table 6.

⁵⁵ KUMAR, N. *Ranchi District Gazetteer*, p. 469.

⁵⁶ KUMAR, N. *Ranchi District Gazetteer*, 167.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Table 6. Catholic Institutions and Services in Jharkhand, 1998⁵⁸

| Dioceses | Educational Institutions | | | | | Hos- tels | Voca- tional Education | Non- formal Education |
|------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | High School | Middle School | Primary School | K.G/ Nur | Colle- ges | | | |
| Ranchi | 33 | 61 | | | 6 | | 6 | |
| Daltonganj | 8 | 17 | 41 | 20 | 1 | 23 | 1 | 2 |
| Dumka | 10 | 30 | 29 | 50 | | 48 | | |
| Gumla | 22 | | | | 1 | | 4 | 1 |
| Hazaribagh | 15 | 20 | 21 | | | 15 | | 2 |
| Jamshedpur | 39 | | | | 7 | 17 | 16 | |
| Khunti | 13 | 24 | 68 | | 1 | | 4 | 1 |
| Simdega | 26 | 36 | 122 | | 1 | | 2 | |
| Total | 166 | 188 | 281 | 70 | 17 | 103 | 33 | 6 |

Other data indicate that the Catholic Church administratively divided into eight units (dioceses) within the ecclesiastical province of Ranchi Archdiocese was running 70 kindergartens/nursery schools. 705 schools, 103 hostels, 33 vocational training centres, and 17 colleges besides the institutions for health care (18 hospitals, 147 primary health care centres/dispensaries, social and humanitarian institutions 912 old age homes, 9 leprosy centres, 11 orphanages, 24 centres for disabled persons) (Catholic Directory of India, 1998).

Empirical Findings on the Role of Missionary Schools in Tribal Education

This research is based on the empirical studies of two villages, namely Itki and Bhagwanpur, of Ranchi and Deoghar districts respectively in Jharkhand State on the role of missionary schools in tribal education and found many issues of relevance. The data was collected during 2006 – 2007 from the students of the age group 6 – 14 years through the interview schedule technique. The data was collected through the random sampling method on 200 students. The data, in fact, collected from the students was verified against the views of other groups of people present in these areas. These groups are NGO representatives, tribal

⁵⁸ KALAPURA, J. Church in Chotanagpur: Mediating Change Through Education. In BENI, A., EKKA, J., SINGH, K., SHARAN, P., PRASAD, A. (eds.). *The Catholic Church in Jharkhand: A Mediator of Change*, p. 220.

and non-tribals, local leaders, administrators and elected officials with the help of focussed group discussion, personal interviews and ethnomethodological investigation.⁵⁹

This study confirms that the Christian missionaries have contributed greatly to the improvement of the lives of the tribal people, especially in the field of education. The larger impact of the Christian missionaries could be seen in the Ranchi district itself. The missionaries have been involved, at mass scale, in the entire Chhotanagpur region. They have also opened a number of schools and a few colleges. Due to this impact, the village of Itki has a high literacy rate of 79.30 per cent, which is even more than many developed towns and cities in India. Thus, the findings of this study show that the missionaries have played a key role in imparting education to the tribal students as is evident from the village of Itki. In the village of Itki, the Christian missionaries work, via their school teachers, with the tribals, particularly in enrolling their children and motivating them to further their education. It is also evident that missionaries have been involved in other activities also, such as health, making the tribals aware of various issues and providing hygiene and sanitation.

The first and foremost issue that comes up in the analysis of the missionaries' contribution is whether the tribal children join the missionary schools directly or before joining them they study in some other school (s). In this regard, most of the tribal students (65%), in the village of Itki joined the missionary-run schools directly without attending another type of school. However, it has also been noted that out of 35 per cent, 24 and 11 per cent of tribal students in the missionary schools have joined these schools after their study in the government and private schools respectively. The main reasons for leaving government schools as pointed out by the students were the non-availability of schools with higher classes in the nearby area, schools for higher classes located at a greater distance from their home, and lack of motivation among teachers concerning their education in the government schools. It has also been observed that the teachers from the government schools are not student-friendly, especially when it comes to the tribal students, and these students themselves feel alienated from other groups of students. So, it can be argued that they are forced to join the missionary schools, as they do not feel government schools to be a suitable place to study. Similarly, the main reasons given by the tribal students for their leaving a private school were: they had to pay fees to study in the private schools and there were no provisions for other

⁵⁹ CHOUDHARY, S. *NGOs, Education and Social Capital: A Micro Study of Tribals*.

educational facilities such as scholarships, text books, etc.⁶⁰ The second issue concerns the problem of boarding facilities, which is closely linked with the schooling of students. In this regard, it is found that there has been lack of boarding facilities in all types of school, including missionary-run schools in the villages studied. In fact, the study did not find a single boarding facility attached to any school in the villages studied. This indicates that the government and civil society organizations have failed to provide hostels to the students from the disadvantaged sections of society, though there is provision, in the government scheme, for providing boarding facilities for such students.⁶¹

Satisfaction with the Working Pattern of the School

There is no doubt that missionary schools have been working satisfactorily since pre-Independence days for the deprived sections of the community, especially for the tribals of India. So far as their working pattern is concerned, the maximum number of respondents (95% of tribal students) have been satisfied with the missionaries' schools in the village of Itki. This is because teachers were fully committed to teaching and also cooperative with the students in all respects. It has been found that the teachers have visited their homes frequently and met their parents. In the missionary schools also, facilities such as scholarships, mid-day meals and text books have been provided to the tribal students under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) scheme, a centrally sponsored scheme of the government of India. It was also supported by the statement of Robert F. Manuel (Headmaster of the Modern English School, a private school, Itki), who has stated that "Here the tribals have been developing in all aspects, whether it is educational or economic, because now they are getting education at all levels and have become more conscious about it. In all that, the Christian missionary has worked a lot for their advancement" (Based on the interview, conducted on 2 September 2006). In fact, missionary schools by becoming as "insiders" and engaging themselves in a participatory manner see the day-to-day problems of tribal students. Such a strategy is quite effective and fruitful because it is easy to locate their problems and try to solve them in a practical way.⁶² This finding was also confirmed by the very fact that this was only present in the village of Itki but not in the other. It was very obvious that

⁶⁰ CHOUDHARY, S. *NGOs, Education and Social Capital: A Micro Study of Tribals*, p. 128.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 129.

most tribal people of this village follow Christianity because they have very positive views with regard to missionary schools. Secondly, most of the teachers in these schools are from their own community and hence they pay special attention to the tribal students. In this way, the missionary schools have been functioning better than the government schools.

As mentioned above, the mid-day meal, scholarships and text books are provided in the missionary schools by the government through the SSA scheme. However, it is interesting to note that all the provisions under the SSA have not been implemented to date. Moreover, almost all the tribal students have complained of not getting mid-day meals regularly one way or the other. Some of the tribal students, including their parents, pointed out that they were asked to pay some money while benefiting from the different schemes of SSA especially in the government schools but not in the case of missionary-run schools.

Conclusion

The contributions of Christian missionaries in the tribal areas have made an everlasting impact on the educational development among the tribals of India in general and in Jharkhand in particular. There are, in fact, many types of missionaries who worked or have been working in different parts of the country for the holistic development of tribals and Dalits, who are deprived of equality of opportunity. This article has discussed the various forms of their contribution in educating the tribals of Jharkhand either directly or indirectly but in most of the cases it has been found that they have been directly involved with their day-to-day activities and hence also their education. The approach of missionaries work seems to be very pragmatic as they work as an insider by looking at people's problems and then acting accordingly. The researchers' own study has also found that the missionaries have played a key role in education among tribes, as was seen in the case of the village of Itki. This study also confirmed that in the village of Bhagwanpur, the educational level among the tribals was much lower in comparison to Itki, because in this village, only a government school was present there. In this way, it can be said that the contribution of Christian missionaries is enormous in the life of tribals.

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