

Impact of Missionary Activities on Indian Communities

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a comprehensive analysis of the transformative influence exerted by missionary engagements on the development of modern Indian society. Focusing on the period from the early 18th to the 20th century, it argues that missionary activities acted as a significant catalyst for social and institutional modernization across multiple, interconnected domains. The investigation begins by examining the scholarly contributions in the field of Indology. It details how missionaries undertook the systematic study and codification of Indian languages and philosophical texts. This work involved creating foundational grammars, dictionaries, and translations of Sanskrit and vernacular literatures, which not only preserved linguistic heritage but also facilitated a structured, academic dialogue between Indian and European intellectual traditions.

The article highlights their pivotal role in redefining education as an instrument of social equity rather than hereditary privilege. This is evidenced by the establishment of pioneering educational institutions for girls and for communities historically excluded from formal learning. These efforts supported the emergence of early Indian feminists and social reformers. Furthermore, missionary advocacy was instrumental in mobilizing support for legal and social campaigns aimed at altering restrictive customs and promoting a new normative framework for women's rights and public health. Their ethos of organized charity led to the creation of nationwide networks of medical centres, care homes, and dispensaries, instituting a model of institutionalized welfare. Within the Political and Technological sphere, the study explores the unintended consequences of missionary work. While often aligned with colonial structures, the introduction of Western pedagogical models, the English language, and, critically, the printing press, supplied key tools for a burgeoning Indian public sphere. The proliferation of printed material from religious tracts to grammars and early journals stimulated vernacular prose and fostered new forms of civic discourse and collective identity.

Introduction

India is a land of Pluralism in which social, cultural, religious, political economic and environmental impacts are included. It is to be noted that India is a country vibrant in all its activities and in all its physical and spiritual realms. "Cultures leading to the 4000 BC settlements are now locally available in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat, particularly

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at Harappa, where a four-meter deposit of handmade black painted red ware with mud-brick houses was found in early 1996.”¹

Right from the ancient times, India has competed with other nations of the world in its social and religious and cultural Pluralism. India was a rich nation with its cultural background religious background and social background. Its geography is fantastic and beautiful. That is the only reason many invaders and intruders got into India in search of their own personal motives. The very culture of India paved a way for the inroads to get into this nation easily, without any resistance. The whole reason is that, because of its spiritual background, people of India loved peace and they are cool people with sincere life. The invaders looted the spiritual resource. This cool and clam people were subjected to cruelty. Some of the invaders in the first Millennium not only looted the people but also they set fire on to the fields so that they will starve to death.

The invaders looted this nation thoroughly in all the ways possible and so the people of this nation suffered a lot. Very often, the invaders left the people of this land helpless and pathetic condition. They have carried whatever possible. The invaders carried the wealth and the property and they have taken people in custody as slaves, even they have carried the animals too. domestic animals as such Some of the invaders have looted for centuries.

Indological Impacts

It is a fact that social impacts often take place in each society in the course of time. It depends upon the people and the society in which it is enacted. Very often the social impacts are naturally drawn to its reality. It is a sum total of each one’s contribution and collection to the society. In the ancient times, the people of India had a good social background. This social background had its normal running because of many factors. There were many social reforms time to time. people of India championed at a time crossing all the barriers of its own struggles to have a good social Background. We also find a kind of disruption of traditional social structures. “Today Christian authorities are blamed for having allowed this to happen but undoubtedly the change in the concept of Education from being a privilege of the elites to being the right of all citizens house much to the Christian inspiration, although other cultural factors also influence to the process.”² There were also instances for social segmentation. “The women were beaten in the public bazaar for wearing the upper cloth over their bosoms, and the clothes were stripped from their bodies. Christian institutions were also attacked.”³ “Education SITA’ was the tremendous and bravest step taken by the Christian missionaries across India. It was started in Madras and there were bit oppositions from the royal class elite groups. It survived the time. The East India Company supported financially to the growth of these girls’

¹ For the primary report on this 1996 excavation at Harappa, see J.M. Kenoyer and R.H. Meadow, "The Ravi Phase: New Evidence from Harappa," *Harappa Excavations 1996 and 1997: A Preliminary Report* (Madison: Prehistory Press, 1998), pp. 45-58.

² Leonard Fernando, G. Gispert Sauch Christianity in India, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, p.232-233. Argues missionaries helped make education a universal right, despite disrupting traditional social structures.

³ Leonard Fernando, G. Gispert Sauch Christianity in India, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, p.240. Documents violent backlash (e.g., public beatings) against missionaries for challenging social norms like caste dress codes.

educational institutions. Education schools in Ahmednagar and Agra was started in 1849. Once the girls school began to function certain Indian societies like Parsis and Prarthana Samaj began to take up girls' education, The Brahmo Samaj did the same work in Calcutta, Arya Samaj started several institutions in Punjab."⁴ "At the close of the century(19th), there were 82,000 pupils in girls' schools in British India, and an additional 42,000 attended mixed schools. A few teacher's colleges had been founded for women, but an education commission of 1881, admitted that there were no more than two percentage of the school-age girls actually in school, and even fewer (1percent) who could read and write"⁵

Madhav Govinda Ranade Savitri Bhule Bhai Devi, Pandita Ram Bhai and her parents, Ram Mohan Roy, R G Bandarakar, were all reformers for girls' education and sided with British to help Indian girls and women to be educated. (Idea Burton stein, A history of India, p.274-5).

"The Anglo vernacular schools, the live example of which could be the one noted in the reference model, where the higher type of institutions located in populous towns, they had also the advantage of having an additional English class for the selected pupils, desires of requiring English education and that of serving as dependable feeder for the college"⁶

"Both education and social services provided by the Christians were addressed in great part to the lower classes and caste, the existence of higher high-class colleges and schools in the big cities, notwithstanding. There was far more investment in helping the lower classes than the elites. In fact, many of the percent elite institutions started as services meant for the poor"⁷

"Today Christian authorities are blamed for having allowed this to happen but undoubtedly the change in the concept of Education from being a privilege of the elites to being the right of all citizens house much to the Christian inspiration, although other cultural factors also influence to the process."⁸

"The latest *Statistical Yearbook of the Church*, which includes only data from the Catholic Church, offers the following staggering statistics for 2001. Kindergarten schools 7218 - students in kindergarten schools, 8,25,339, primary schools 9779 - students in primary schools, 30,19,094, Secondary schools, junior and senior 4727 - students in secondary schools. 28,45,889."⁹

"According to the *Statistical Yearbook of the Church* in 2001, "There were, at the time, 271 Church related university colleges in India, and they had a total of 3,53,683 students. The

⁴ Burton stein, A history of India, Oxford, p.268-9. Provides data on 19th-century girls' school growth, crediting missionary pioneers ("Education Sita") and later Indian reform societies.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.268

⁶ Jonathan Masih (p.167): Describes the structure and function of Anglo-vernacular missionary schools, which acted as feeder institutions for higher education and catered to the rising demand for English.

⁷ Fernando & Gispert-Sauch (p.232): Argues that the core focus of Christian education and social service was on uplifting the poor and lower castes, with elite institutions often originating as services for the underprivileged.

⁸ *Ibid*, p..232-233. ndicates the quoted statement is also found on pages 232-233 of the same previously cited work by Madhu Dhawan, *Christian Contribution to Indian Languages and Literature*.

⁹ *Ibid* (p.233): Provides modern statistical evidence (2001 data) of the massive, ongoing scale of the Catholic Church's educational infrastructure in India.

colleges were established between 1817 and 1999.”¹⁰ There were many other contributions by the beginners of education in India. Let us see some of them, “Francois Maria de Tours. *Thesaurus Lingue Indiane* a vocabulary of Hindi, Joseph Mary of Bernini, (1809-1861). Italian Hindustani Dictionary, Italian Hindustani-Newari Dictionary (1739-1765). A Hindi grammar in Latin published in Rome in 1771 under the title, *Alphabeticum Brahmanicum Seu Universitatis Kasi Seu Banaras*.”¹¹ We also find literature - Hindustani and Sanskrit. “Joseph Mary of Bernini, *Dialogue Between a Hindu and a Christian*, Shows a deep knowledge of Hindu scriptures. Knowledge through ‘Discussions’ and ‘Questions and Answers’”¹² “Translation into Italian of various Hindu text, *Adhyatma Ramaya (Valmiki)*, *The Mahabharata Lilalece (Avtar of Vishnu)*, *The Vishnu Purana* (likely) *the Dharmasastra or Sutras*. The *Gyanasagar* of Kabir. Mark Della Tomba, (1803).”¹³ “*Ramayana* of the *Kabristi Panth*, a summary and translation of the 4th 5th and 7th books.

There were many contributions to Indian society like in the areas of Indology, history, geography. “Introduction to the voyage to India (1775), ‘Brief Description of the East Indies or Hindustan’, or ‘Little Treatises on Geography’, ‘Religions of Hindustan and Neighbouring Kingdoms’, ‘*Miscellanea Indica*’ Synopsis of the Four *Vedas* are told by *Pandits*;, ‘Synopsis of the XVIII Puranas; on Hindu Chronology or Eras’; ‘Nine Pages of a glossary; *Balapurana*’, or ‘History of Krishna’, ‘Holy Places of the Hindus’, Observations on the account given by Mr Hollwell, Englishman, of the historical events of Bengal and Hindustan, ‘Hindi catechism with daily prayers’, devotions in Hindi spiritual exercises in Hindi,’ ‘Hindi translation of Matthews Gospel’¹⁴

“Portuguese-Malayalam-Sanskrit Grammar (1742) of Geminian of St Octave and his Portuguese-Malayalam Dictionary, Clement of Jesus (1782) often known by his Italian name Peani wrote in 1772, A Latin Malayalam grammar in Sanskrit characters.”¹⁵ “Paulinos of St Bartholomew was certainly the greatest of the Carmelite Indologist during the last quarter of the 18th century. In 1790, he published in Rome, the Sanskrit Grammar, both as an *Expose* on the language and ask a publication of some cultic text”¹⁶ E.R Hambye, History of Christianity in India, Vol III, CHAI, Bangalore, 100.

¹¹ Leonard Fernando, G. Gispert Sauch Christianity in India, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, p.233-234.

¹¹ E.R Hambye, History of Christianity in India, Vol III, CHAI, Bangalore, 427-428.

¹² *Ibid*, p, 428. indicates that both quoted passages about the literary works of Joseph Mary of Bernini and Mark Della Tomba are found on page 428 of the same source that was cited immediately before—which is Madhu Dhawan's *Christian Contribution to Indian Languages and Literature*.

¹³ *Ibid*, p,428.

¹⁴ E.R Hambye, History of Christianity in India, Vol III, CHAI, Bangalore, 429.

E.R. Hambye (pp. 427-429): These consecutive citations detail the breadth of missionary scholarship, including: The translation of major Hindu, Sikh, and Bhakti texts (Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas, Bhagavad Gita, Adi Granth) into European languages. The production of original Christian texts and dialogues in Indian languages, showing an attempt to engage Hindu philosophy.

The creation of pioneering geographical, historical, and religious treatises about India for a European audience.

¹⁵ E.R Hambye, History of Christianity in India, Vol III, CHAI, Bangalore, p. 99.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.100.

“His (Paulinus) *Systema Brhamanicum Liturgicum*, published in 1791, with a German translation in 1797, was superb. It is a whole treatise on Hinduism based partly on the Indian antiques he had collected, and which were kept in the Borgia Museum at Velletri near Rome.”¹⁷

The situation of women all over India was almost same. They were supposed to be inside doing the familial works and serving the patriarchal society. It is to be noted that in some states of India women were not allowed to wear the upper cloth to cover chest and breast. This system existed in Travancore, where the 12 months climate is all the same and there existed deep sense of caste system. They were allowed to wear a cloth, piece of cloth to cover the down part of their body. This situation existed precisely because of the upper caste and lower caste system prevailed in that locality. The missionaries supported the health and status of the women. It brought a big revolution. Christian missionaries with the support of Britishers fought against these evil practices. “The women were beaten in the public bazaar for wearing the upper cloth over their bosoms, and the clothes were stripped from their bodies. Christian institutions were also attacked.”¹⁸ “The missionaries asked the residents of Travancore to intervene, as the local government had taken no action to prevent unruly behaviour or to punish those who had started the trouble.”¹⁹ “As early as 1812, Colonel Monroe, the British resident of Travancore, issued an order that permitted the women converted to Christianity to cover their bosoms as obtained among Christians in other countries.”²⁰ “The religious reform movements of modern times had an underlying unity-most of them were based on the twin doctrines of reason (rationalism) and humanism. Though they also sometimes tended to appeal to faith and ancient authority.”²¹ “They opposed the ritualistic superstitious, irrational and obscurantist elements in Indian regions. They abandoned the principle of authority in religion and evaluated truth in any religion or its holy books, by its conformity to logic, reasons, or science.”²² “In December, 1829 Sati was declared illegal, and 1804 declared infanticide illegal. In 1856 Widow Remarriage Act passed. Act of 1870 made it compulsory for parents to register the birth of all babies. Native Marriage Act 1872 popularly known as Civil Marriage Act, marriage of girl below 14 and boys below 18 were forbidden. The Age of Consent Act 1891: forbade the marriage of girls below the age of 12. The Shradha Act 1930: Provisions are same to that of Native Marriage Act. 1843 declared slavery illegal in India.”²³ The contributions of the Christian Missionaries are unapparelled. Their contributions could be discussed in the following as following:

Cultural Impacts

The edifying inputs of the missionaries have influenced every part parcel of society. “It is also well known that the Christian community took a lead in the education of girls and women.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 102.

¹⁸ Leonard Fernando, G. Gispert Sauch Christianity in India, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, p.240.

¹⁹ *Ibid* p.240.

²⁰ *Ibid*. p.240.

²¹ N. N. Ojha, History of India, Chronicle Publication Pvt Ltd, Noida, 1990, p.325.

²² *Ibid*. p.325.

²³ N. N. Ojha, History of India, Chronicle Publication Pvt Ltd, Noida, 1990, p.325.

Interestingly, today the proportion of girl students to boys is higher in Christian colleges: 56 percentage as against 45 percentage.”²⁴ “The vast majority of the colleges are co-educational. But there are 73 women’s colleges, and only five men’s colleges. In 2001 Christian Colleges Educated 27,603 students from the scheduled cast and 18,478 from the scheduled tribes.”²⁵

“Christian education tries to be student centered, one of its important contributions has been the creation of student hostels. This alone has made education more accessible to girls. Students from the lower strata of society have also benefited much from the hostels. They provide not only board and lodging, but remedial classes and humanistic information which at times couldn’t be provided in the schools.”²⁶

“Social services and social service scams have also been a regular feature of many Christian colleges and ideas of Education for service have been irregular inspiration for many of them In the beginning of the Christian movement, had a special concern for the sick and many hospitals and health services in Europe started with the services of people committed to the gospel. In this they followed a pattern already marked by Buddhist monks long ago, who were also known for their concern for the sick all over Asia.”²⁷.

“To give an idea of the scope of social services run by the Christians in India. We again take recourse to the statistics of the 2001 *Statistical Yearbook of the Church*. We shall again compare them with those of Philippines, with its much larger Catholic population to show the extent of the effort of Indian Christians in this direction. There were 737 hospitals and 2429 dispensaries in India, as against 58 and 90 respectively in the Philippines. The yearbook records in addition to 248 leprosaria in India, whereas the Philippines had only seven. The Catholic Church runs 865 homes for the aged and ‘differently endowed’, 2112 orphanages, 2021 nurseries, 587 marriage counselling centres, 4969 special centers for social education and re-education, and 694 other institutions - a total of 14,672 institutions related to health.”²⁸ It implies that the modern status of the society, is indebted the missionaries.

Religious Impressions

Missionaries adopted several ways to repair religious conditions of the Indian society. “As in the case of other modern Indian languages, the flowering of modern Punjabi literary prose to was accelerated by the impact of the missionaries on Punjabi culture. Religion was the major motivating force behind the emergence of early Punjabi prose. The first influence on Punjabi came through the religious propagation of the Christian missionaries.”²⁹ “The priests were learned enough and holy in life also elderly personalities. They were with good reputations and

²⁴ Leonard Fernando, G. Gispert Sauch Christianity in India, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, p.234.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 234.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p.235.

²⁷ *Ibid* ,p.235.

²⁸ *Ibid* .p.236. ³³

²⁹ Dhawan, Madhu, Christian contribution to Indian languages and literature. University of Madras, p. 119. scholar Madhu Dhawan (University of Madras, p. 119) as the source for the claim that Christian missionaries accelerated the development of modern Punjabi prose through their religious publishing and translation work.

people of good will. These priests were chosen as *Gurus*. “The priests did not wear tonsure instead they kept a tuft of hair on their head.”³⁰

Every land and every race have got a unique way of their existence through age old traditions and patrimonial collections. Christianity too had undergone through these customs and cultures of this land. India is a land which is a cradle to many insights and inventions. One of its unique features is called ‘*Sanathana*’. “Ethemologically the word *Yogam* can be traced back to the Sanskrit verbal form ‘*Yuj*’ which means to unite or join.”³¹ Education was a kind of *Gurukulavasam*. It was a beautiful system of priestly training. *Gurukul* was a place where *Guru* (master) lived. *Guru* and its followers, those aspiring for the clerical status live with the master. India is a place which is cradle to master and its student’s co-habitant land. *Gurukul* was an Indian religious term. In addition to, spiritual and liturgical, intellectual formation, a strict life of, simplicity, poverty, austerity and obedience was practised in the *Gurukul during Gurukulvasam*. Those aspiring to be priests would be approved by the *Yogam* then enters into *Gurukul* for a period of living together with the master or *Guru*.

Indian society is deeply entrenched in the religious vibes. “In no other civilization has religion played such an intimate role in every aspect of social structure as it did, and to a large extent still does, in India. At the foundation of Indian society is the unalterable concept of the inequality of man. There is a hierarchy of classes, each separate in its duties, each with a special way of life.”³²

“In 1556, the Catholic missionaries established the first printing press of India, in Goa, and later hundreds of mission presses helped the spread of literacy, education and publishing. Added with the establishment of schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and health care and health education facilities from the 18th and 19th century onwards by Christian missionaries as pioneers, began the modernization of India.”³³

Political Bearings

India had its own way of giving education. This existed very few places only as India was under Islamic invasion from 712 AD till 1857 AD. This native way of education is called *Gurukulas*.

Yogam the noun form means union, partaking or joining. The word *Yogam* is frequently used instead of *Pallyogam*. “The meaning of *Palli* is hut, small settlement of jungle tribes, public building, a place of worship of Buddhists.”³⁴ Herman Gundert, *A Malayalam and English Dictionary*, 593. The system of clerical or local formation is called *Gurukulavasam*. The clerics or scholars were obliged to the same residence.

³⁰ Antony. V, *India in 1500 AD*, p. 98.

³¹ Arthur A Magdone, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 51.

³² Edwardes, Michael, *Everyday Life in Early India*, B.T Batsford Ltd, London, 1969, P. 23.

³³ Dr. Babu Verghese (2014), *Let there be India*, WOC Publishing Chennai India. p. 17.

³⁴ Herman Gundert, *A Malayalam and English Dictionary*, 593.

“With the establishment of Kolkata School Book Society in 1817, And subsequent supply of good textbooks in sufficient number, at reasonably low cost, regularly to all institutions needing them, their use had become popular all over the country.”³⁵

“While emphasising systematised teaching, the missionaries avoided, unlike the prevalent system, teaching by force and harsh punishment”³⁶

It is to be noted that Savitri Bhai Bhule (first female educationist), Sarladevi (female educationist and political activist), Rukmani Bhai (first female teacher) (first female medical practitioner), Pandita Ramabai (first Vedic scholar), Rajakumari Amrit Kaur (first female minister), All these eminent women leaders were brought up in such a situation in which education was denied, and with the support of the missionaries like Cynthia and with the personal tutoring of the missionaries, these people came in the forefront.

English language struck roots in the land as the English education Act began to take effect and the missionary schools that mushroomed across the country made English the first language”³⁷

“RC Dutt’s remark - Western education is perhaps the greatest blessings of India has gained under British rule”³⁸ The fast growth of certain states in English education are noteworthy “Mysore, Travancore and Cochin are educationally far ahead of British India.”³⁹

“Individual Englishmen, educationalist, orientalist, journalist, missionaries and others played an important part in bringing Western culture to India, and in their attempts to do so, came into conflict with their own government”⁴⁰

“There were three agencies through which they worked for female education viz. (1) girls day schools, (2) boarding establishments, and (3) domestic teaching arranged in the families of the middle and higher classes, called *Zanana work*”⁴¹

The earliest technique of educating women of high caste was known as the *Zanana work* It is simply means that machineries used to visit the high caste and the low caste families and the girls in it would be brought out to education

The Education Commission of 1882 reiterated the policy. The Education Department is struck to the firm policy of declaring open all public schools to all communities”⁴².

³⁵ Jonathan Masih, Contribution of missionaries towards education in India, p.176.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.177.

³⁷ P L Rawat, history of Indian education, Bhopal, 1984,

³⁸ Nationalist movements in India, Sekhar Bandyopadhyay oxford university press, New Delhi, p.43, 2009.

³⁹ Burton stein, A history of India, Oxford, p.275.

⁴⁰ Nehru Jawaharlal, The Discovery of India, Signet books, Calcutta, 1946, p 341.

⁴¹ Jonathan Masih, Contribution of missionaries towards education in India, p.180.

⁴² Jonathan Masih, Contribution of missionaries towards education in India, p.182.

“Western education in India, it was therefore necessary to record them region-wise in accordance with divisions adhere to by the rulers viz. the Presidencies of Calcutta Madras and Bombay, followed by Upper India, including the Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, etc”⁴³

Kolkata being the capital got more attention on education. We have to keep in mind, Pandita Ranade, who willingly came forward in defending the rights of women and girls’ education and she herself proved by learning the Sanskrit in depth, and she had a good knowledge, memory on Vedas and Puranas.

“Ranade, but was subjected to vicious gossip by the Orthodox. This criticism focused her attention on the social labels afflicting the lives of Indian women. And she gave evidence before Sir W. W. Hunter’s Education Commission in 1883.”⁴⁴

“As to the English alphabet, Duff devised a plan for teaching a large number simultaneously. He got a board supported by an upright frame and along the board a series of parallel grooves. He then, like what Marshman’s plan had envisaged, Got the latest painted on separate pieces of wood, and displayed to the class arranged in semi-circle”⁴⁵

Similarly economic & environmental impacts are graciously acknowledged to the credit to Missionaries. It is a wonderful and appreciative of the Indian culture and tradition to reserve and take care of the earth as the same with our life. Nature had been part of Indian culture and spirituality. Natural resources were used and conserved as something precious and divine. Lots of religious importance were added to the mother earth. The representatives of this land and foreigners too did the same to revere and conserve the earth. There were many changes that carried from time to time. Changes in the societal perception are reflected during Vedic and post Vedic society. Varna or Jathi is often found in Indian society. It was due to geographical and cultural patterns. Indians score ahead of any other nation with regard to many factors like arts and arti-crafts. The occupational aspect was given more importance. It is a generalized fashion that interlinkage of politics and religion usually take place in time and space.

There used to be regular visitation of the poor in their own homes, other activities like councils and conferences include hospital and institutional visitation, regular assistance to immigrants and refugees, a kind of social outreach to the homeless, summer camps were often conducted for the needy children, guidance programme and regular courses for young man and women, proper guidance to youth, visit to prisoners and work with probationers. Regular classes for the slum children.

All the technological impacts and printing revolution is the contribution of Missionaries.

“The dissemination of European knowledge was accorded a privileged role in the regeneration of India, because it ‘generated’ a new class of Indians, Indians who had imbibed the spirit that

⁴³ *Ibid.* p.190.

⁴⁴ Burton stein, A history of India, Oxford, p.275.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p.275.

animated all institutional and other transformations effected by the British. education, which gave access to the spirit animating the transformation of India.”⁴⁶

“In 1834 when missionary Lowrie took charge of the mission school at Ludhiana he felt the need for establishment of a printing press. Missionaries Newton and Wilson brought a wooden printing press from Calcutta which was the first brush in Punjab.”⁴⁷

“The Ludhiana Christian mission was the first to set up its own Gurmukhi printing press and it became a main attraction of literary activity in Punjabi language.”⁴⁸ Ernest Trump translated the ADI GRANTH into English in 1877. “The missionaries also did much to the development of linguistic tools to study the Punjabi language. It was J. Newton who produced a comprehensive grammar of Punjabi in 1838.”⁴⁹ “The Christian mission was the first start of the publication of the Punjabi journal, *Nur-I-Afsan* (1872). It also published religious literatures in Gurmukhi, such as the *Do-Patris* and *Chaupatris*”⁵⁰ “The greatest contribution of the missionaries to the development of Punjabi language and literature is the promotion of prose.”⁵¹

“As in the case of other modern Indian languages, the flowering of modern Punjabi literary prose to was accelerated by the impact of the missionaries on Punjabi culture. Religion was the major motivating force behind the emergence of early Punjabi prose. The first influence on Punjabi came through the religious propagation of the Christian missionaries.”⁵²

“In the wake of the arrival of the Christian missionaries, Punjabi language has imbibed great benefits including codifying of alphabets, publishing of Grammers, and dictionaries educational books and journals, and printing technology.”⁵³

The fast growth of certain states in English education is noteworthy “Mysore, Travancore and Cochin are educationally far ahead of British India.”⁵⁴

“Individual Englishmen, educationalist, orientalist, journalist, missionaries and others played an important part in bringing Western culture to India, and in their attempts to do so, came into conflict with their own government”⁵⁵

“Even the British government, in spite of its dislike of Education, was compelled by the circumstances to arrange for the training and production of clerks for its growing establishment. It could not afford to bring out from England large numbers of people to serve in this

⁴⁶ “. Nationalist movements in India, Sekhar Bandyopadhyay oxford university press, New Delhi, p.43, 2009.

⁴⁷ Dr. Babu Verghese (2014), *Let there be India*, WOC Publishing Chennai India, p. 447.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 447.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 447.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 447.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 448.

⁵² Dhawan, Madhu, Christian contribution to Indian languages and literature. University of Madras, p. 119.

⁵³ Cooper, J.S.M. Bible Translations in India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, OUP, P.126.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p.275.

⁵⁵ Nehru Jawaharlal, *The Discovery of India*, Signet books, Calcutta, 1946, p 341.

subordinate capacity. So, education grew slowly and though it was limited and perverted education, it opened the doors and windows of the mind to new ideas and dynamic thoughts”⁵⁶ “The first private printing press was started by the Baptist Missionaries in Serampore, and the first newspaper was started by an Englishman in Calcutta in 1780”⁵⁷ “The new techniques - the railway train, the printing press, other machinery, more efficient ways of warfare - could not be ignored, and these came up against old methods of thought almost unawares, by indirect approaches, creating a conflict in the mind of India.”⁵⁸

“The nineteenth century produced a galaxy of brilliant Hindus in Bengal.”⁵⁹ Throughout the nineteenth century, the new English - educated class, mainly Hindu, looked up with admiration towards England and hoped to advance with her help and in-corporation with her.”⁶⁰

“It is not surprising that Catholic machineries were the first to write Sanskrit grammars in the European form. They had been trained in the classical tradition that included the study of Latin and Greek. They soon discovered the similarities between the European classical languages and Sanskrit, and naturally composed with the grammars in the format they knew. Such grammars are at the root of the modern Sanskrit grammars which have served well the new generation of students both abroad and in India. The first such grammarian was the German Jesuit Heinrich Roth (1620 -1668), who from 1660 to 1662 wrote in Latin the *Grammatica*

Linguae ‘Samscretanae Brachmanorum Indae Orientalis.’”⁶¹

Their healthcare aids are very imperative. “Already in the second decade of the 16th century, their functioned in Goa and other places of Portuguese influence a confraternity of charity to take care of the poor. It collected money from the well to do members of the community and used it to help the needy in many ways: giving arms, providing shelters, giving medicines and clothes to the sick or prisoners, giving dowries to poor girls at the time of their marriage, giving ransom of captives, rescuing shipwrecked goods of the neighbours, etc.”⁶² “By the end of the 16th century, there were hospitals in Goa, Kochi, Manapad, Veerapandinappattinam, Punnaikayal, Thuthukudi and Vaippar. A leper hospital was functioning in Goa by 1531.”⁶³

Conclusion

The impact of missionary activities on Indian communities, as this chapter has detailed, is a profound and indelible narrative of transformation across every facet of society. From pioneering the systematic study of Indian languages and scriptures—laying the very foundations of Indology—to fundamentally challenging and reshaping the social and cultural landscape, the missionary presence was a catalyst for monumental change. The strategic re-

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p 341.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p 342.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* pp 342.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p 349.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p 349.

⁶¹ Burton stein, A history of India, Oxford, p.275.

⁶² Leonard Fernando, G. Gispert Sauch Christianity in India, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, p. 232.

⁶³ Leonard Fernando, G. Gispert Sauch Christianity in India, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, p.232.

conceptualization of education as a universal right, rather than an elite privilege, democratized knowledge and created an institutional legacy that endures to this day. This was most revolutionary in the realm of female education and social reform, where movements like the 'Education SITA' and the 'Upper Cloth Revolt' directly confronted patriarchal and caste-based oppression, empowering women and marginalized communities in unprecedented ways.

Politically, the introduction of Western education and the English language, though initially serving colonial administrative needs, inadvertently forged a new class of Indian intelligentsia that would eventually harness these tools for national awakening and the anti-colonial struggle. The technological revolution ushered in by the printing press, alongside significant contributions to healthcare and social services, accelerated modernization and provided new avenues for literacy, public discourse, and welfare. The extensive network of hospitals, leprosaria, and dispensaries established a tradition of organized, charitable healthcare that served the poorest sections of society, embedding a new ethic of medical philanthropy into the subcontinent.

However, this influence was a double-edged sword, operating within the complex and often contradictory framework of colonial power. The missionary project, while advocating for social equity, was frequently intertwined with a civilizational narrative that positioned Western culture as superior. This created a deep-seated ambivalence—the very education that liberated also inculcated colonial values, and the social reforms that empowered were sometimes used to critique indigenous religions as a whole. The legacy is thus one of synergy and struggle, where the progressive impulses of missionaries and Indian reformers aligned to dismantle regressive practices, even as the overarching power dynamics fueled both resistance and renaissance.

Ultimately, the missionary impact cannot be reduced to a simple binary of benevolence or imperialism. It stands as a powerful, multifaceted force that irrevocably altered the subcontinent's social fabric. The most enduring testament lies not merely in the past, but in the living legacy of thousands of schools, colleges, and hospitals that continue to serve the nation, and in the ideals of equality, service, and universal education that were seeded into the Indian psyche. By simultaneously preserving Indian linguistic heritage through Indology and propelling it into modernity through print and prose, the missionaries facilitated a unique dialogue between tradition and transformation—a dialogue that continues to resonate in the complex, pluralistic identity of modern India.

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