CHAPTER IV

MODUS OPERANDI OF MISSIONS
CHAPTER XV

MODUS OPERANDI OF MISSIONS AND THE IMPACT

The basic objective of missionary movement was, first of all, to secure converts through evangelization, education, literary and medical work - and then mould those converts through training into a team of medical cadre groups who would actually carry out the evangelizing and other related activities at the grassroots. Their small number, combined with the inaccessibility of the country, had a fundamental pact in dictating such mission policy. To determine why the missionary proceeded along a certain course in his attempt to convert the native people, it is necessary to discuss the concept of conversion and the missionary's view on it.

4.1 Process of Conversion

Conversion has been the subject of considerable theorizing. It has ever been and still is defined in terms of ideological, philosophical or other predispositions. Some, for example, see conversion as a consequence of persuasion, as the cognitive act or commitments of a free will, which usually calls for total transformation of one's world view, value system and behaviour.¹ For

others, conversion is understood to be a miraculous, supernatural event - an act of divine "grace" performed by a creative or redeemptive supreme being and experienced by a single individual person or group of persons, totally transforming or beginning to totally transform the personality (mind, emotions, self-perceptions, etc.) of that person(s) and thereby producing a different understanding of ultimate reality, alone with new beliefs, new doctrines, new principles, new behaviours, and new norms of conduct.  

Having faced the intellectual difficulties relating to the formation of definition sufficiently accurate, precise and workable, R.H. Frykenberg has put forward the following statement as working definition: "Conversion is a change (either an event or a process) from one view or way of life to another; from set of beliefs or opinions to another".  

What has emerged from the above definitions is that conversion is the inner experience of either one single individual person or group of persons (i) involving changes in beliefs, group identifications and characteristics of personality; and (ii) leading to complete reorganization and reorientation in a person's or persons' emotional condition and intellectual outlook.

2 Ibid., p.129.
3 Ibid., p.129.
From the Christian (missionary) point of view, conversion is of three kinds: religious, psychological and spiritual. Religious conversion is a process by which one migrates from one religion to another religion, involving merely outward identification with the new religious community. Psychological conversion was deeper than religious conversion. It often came upon a person's or persons' deep appreciation of the doctrines or teachings of a particular religion by rejecting the other. What was most striking and what the missionary emphatically stressed was the spiritual conversion in which one underwent a mental anguish resulting from conviction of sin and then came to accept Jesus Christ as his saviour and master.4 In terms of distinctions in scale pertaining to substance and intensity, Frykenberg has listed, among a number of such categories, the following: (1) radicality - as distinct from status quo (complete, drastic, extreme and thorough change to something entirely new and different), (2) totality - as distinct from partiality (a movement's comprehensive and pervasive courage and power to command all spheres of life - emotional, intellectual, social, 

4 The spiritual conversion is after all the experience of 'being born-again' which constitutes one of the key foundations of Christian teaching. See for example, Christian Missionary Review, November-December 1954, p.197.
economic, political and ritual, as well as 'religious' (perse); (3) externality - as distinct from internality (coming from outside, alien or wholly different environment); and (4) continuity - as distinct from discontinuity, both in time (sequence) and in space (in a movement's contagious contacts and its expansion).  

While conversion was essentially a religious issue, it encompassed the whole aspect of one's or community's life. Therefore, the missionary view about the process of conversion itself ultimately amounted to a whole theory of social change. Their view about the tribal's mentality, custom and the structure of the tribal society led them along certain lines of missionizing.

Having touched briefly upon the different typologies of conversion, the question naturally arises: what influenced the speed and ease of conversion? And why was it that Christianity, despite its newness, came to secure a firmer hold in the minds of the people? It should be noted that Christianity and for that matter any religion could not be applied or propagated in a vacuum. It had to be related to the reality of the objective situations - existential situations of the people in their cultural milieu - might be in terms of individuals, communities.

5 Frykenberg, op.cit., p.131.
or tribes. In order to understand the ways members of a society act or behave, one should begin with an understanding of the basic cosmological structure of the indigenous religion which in course of time evolved the basic conceptions: the concept of lesser spirit (khuovang) and the concept of one supreme being (pethien), a god of all humanity and goodness. The lesser spirits underpinned events and processes in the microcosm of the local community and its environment, whilst the Supreme Being underpinned events and processes in the macrocosm, i.e., in the world as a whole. Since the microcosm formed part of the macrocosm, so the lesser spirits were thought of either as manifestations of the Supreme Being, or as entities ultimately deriving their power from Him.

Where the traditional life was dominated by subsistence economy, the social relations of the people of a particular area were likely to be largely confined by the boundaries of their microcosm. They would be aware


8 Robin Horton has adopted this intellectualist theory for the study of the problem of conversion in African situation. As this approach gives some insight into the problem, it is used here. See for example, his article "On the Rationality of Conversion" in *Africa* (Journal of the International African Institute, vol.45, no.3, 1975, pp.219-220.

9 Ibid., p.220.
of the wider world; but they would be aware of it as an arena which did not directly concern them. Given the assumption of the basic cosmology about the respective spheres of concern of lesser spirits and Supreme Being, it follows that there would be two situations which were likely to affect the process of conversion. In the first situation where microcosmic boundaries were still strong and where attention to the lesser spirits consequently overshadowed attention paid to the supreme being, such exposure was unlikely to be followed by any dramatic changes. Contrariwise, in the second situation where microcosmic boundaries were weakening as a result of the introduction of communication and trade, exposure was likely to have some positive sequels. 10

As has been pointed out, the indigenous religion of the people was animistic in character. Although they believed in the existence of a supreme being all their worships and sacrifices were in most cases offered to the lesser spirits within the local microcosmic boundaries. 11 The rituals, involving among others, killing of pigs, fowls, etc., could be performed by the priests (thiempu) only. This is what briefly the traditional belief system in the pre-colonial period. However, the

10 Ibid., p.220.

11 For instance, the spirit of ancestors were believed to be the guarantors of prosperity, order and authority.
introduction of colonial rule accompanied inevitably by improved communications gradually weakened the microcosmic boundaries and the people were exposed to the life outside the limited local microcosmic boundaries. It became clear to them that life in the 'modern' world would involve a multiplicity of relationships that transcended the boundaries of the microcosm. True to the premises of a cosmology in which all events that already transcended the boundaries of local groups were considered to be the direct of the supreme being. Perhaps through the inspiration of such supreme being (pathien) that Darphawka, a man living in the far south of Lushai hills, had a dream about eighty years earlier before the advent of the missionaries in Lushai hills, preaching the new religion. When the missionaries came, the whole family of Darphawka soon became converted. Thus, the people tended to see the establishment of colonial rule and the coming of the missionaries into the north eastern hills as the manifestation of divine work. 

---


14 The first converts and even theologians among the tribal Christians looked upon colonialism as a matter of providence. Zairema, *op.cit.*, p.3, and V. Hawla, *op.cit.*, pp.5-6.
Christian ideas of supreme God as referring to the supreme being of their animistic religion. In fact, the Christian God and the supreme being of their traditional religion were addressed by the same name 'pathien'. There was thus an indigenous concept of the supreme being which was continuous in its essentials with the Christian concept.

But the cognitive readiness of the tribal people to accept Christianity could not be explained wholly by an understanding of the basic tribal cosmology. There were other factors which might have been as crucial and perhaps more persuasive. In the minds of the converts, there was a close association between the specificity of their new faith and the 'modern' world from which it came, including education, technology, material well-being and eventually material consciousness.\(^{15}\) They saw in the new religion elements of radicalism often demanding "personal involvement which was essentially voluntaristic, producing a continuous chain reaction of personal conversion, personal commitment, and personal recruitment of disciples who, in turn, would be volunteers who became converted, then committed and finally active recruiters of more personal volunteers".\(^{16}\) This was one of the inner forces which contributed to the dynamics of mission expansion.

\(^{15}\) K.E. Frykenberg, op.cit., p.136.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p.131.
during and after the mission period. Almost all of the first converts of the first generation in the hills were recruited in the evangelizing movement. The missionaries themselves duly acknowledged and admitted the fact that 'it was the testimony of native evangelists themselves far more than by their preaching that converts had been won. 17

Equally significant, the new religion also offered to the people a millenarian expectation and a new hope for future - a future which would culminate in the creation of 'new heaven on new earth', 'new Jerusalem' where all would live in harmony, happiness, peace and plenty, and in short, 'no more tears'. On the contrary, the traditional religion offered no hope of this kind and the picture was just the opposite. For instance, only a few people who were declared "thangsuu", were eligible for entry into "pielral" (something like paradise). 18 Thus, there was no hope whatsoever for the rest of the people.

When the new gospel embodying the essentials of a transforming vision of the possibilities for a utopian life in the immediate future, was presented in such a

17 David Kyles, op.cit., p. 37.

18 Thangsuu is a title given to a man who has killed a certain number of animals in the chase or to one who has performed feast of merits. See J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge, A Grammar and Dictionary of Lushai Language (Tribal Research Institute, Mizawal, Mizoram, 1898). Reprinted 1976, p. 190.
psychologically critical situation for all people irrespective of their status and positions in a society, it was bound to motivate enthusiastic acceptance or even dynamic conversion. It was this hope for a 'blissful future' that enabled the converts to face persecutions and social ostracizations. Sinister opposition usually came from the ruling chiefs because of the fear for loss of their control over the new converts. So when the new converts stopped preparing rice-beer for sacrificial and traditional functions, the chiefs took it as a direct challenge to their authority and resorted to beating up or driving out the converts from their homes. Some were driven out of the village and their properties confiscated by the chiefs and his elders (councillors). Ironically, the growing conversion had been successful when threatened by sinister opposition or counter-movements because the adherents of a new faith were oriented in such a manner as to look upon the opposing forces as the 'satanic power' to fight and to crush.

The process of conversion should also be seen in terms of the technology the missionaries had evolved.

20 Ibid., p.38.
21 Frykenberg, op.cit., p.131.
The technology of conversion was the means through which a new convert was won by providing a material well-being. It can be seen as the technology of social communication and therefore of social mobilization. The accuracy and speed of this technology and the effectiveness, rapidity and radicality in generating the process of conversion should, therefore, be correlated. Among a number of western technologies, the two levels of technology which were effectively used by the missionaries during the mission period were: Level one was the spoken word which was used in personal conversation and public preaching. This was a two-way process, involving the missionary to study the native language and urging the native people to study the language of the missionary. Personal conversation and public preaching were done with a view to evangelizing the people. Level two was the written word. Obviously, the missionary reduced the language he studied to writing which, in fact, carried revolutions in communication. This immediately served the needs of the new education which the missionary introduced and also enriched the literature of the people. These two levels were again supplemented by the medical works. Thus, the material comfort and advancement which the new religion had brought with it were really crucial in the minds of the native people.

22 Ibid., p.131.
4.2 Education

The missionaries and to be more specific, the Protestant missionaries often exalted the Bible as the ultimate source of authority and made it as a condition that if an individual had to worship God aright, he must be able to read. This is how education and evangelism were interlinked and the former constituted the basis for *preparatia evanglica*. Therefore, the involvement of missionaries in educational programmes was to be viewed as supplementary to the primary task of communicating the 'spiritual' message to the people. The interest of colonial officials in such mission's educational programmes was not necessarily religious. It was both paternalistic and imperialistic. They understood that the education imparted by the missionaries was not only effective in 'civilizing' the natives, but also in making them 'peaceful and loyal subjects.' Closely intermingling with the main currents of colonial expansion, western education tended to make colonial occupation beneficial in the eyes of the subject people. The position of government was thus compromised by the delegation of all educational and other philanthropic works to the Christian missions because the latter could undertake


such works more cheaply and efficiently than government could. In the process, the missionaries were placed almost in the position of official educationists. They, of course, submitted to government inspection and such measure of control as might be needed to satisfy government that its money was properly spent. Government, on the other hand, explicitly abstained from all interference with religious instruction. Certainly the government realised that the most effective influence on the subject people must be that was exercised by such unofficial body to which both the spiritual and the educational works were entrusted. Their strategy was thus to secure the cooperation of missionaries in implementing any measure which they would wish to apply. Inevitably, there would be changed but these changes were to be carefully regulated to suit the interest of government thereby directly or indirectly stabilizing their control over the subject people. Thus, while the officials looked at the introduction of western education as a legitimizing

25 R.J. Williams, Secretary, WCMFI. to B.C. Allen, Officiating Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Shillong, 5 March 1911.
26 Ibid.
27 McCall, p.200.
process of colonial rule, the missionaries used it as a vehicle for communicating the Christian message to the subject people.28

The missionaries considered the three Rs' as the most effective means for winning converts and also for enabling them to learn the basic tenets of the Christian faith. According to them, educational institutions served double purposes: first, a means of teaching the Christian truth, and secondly, as a means for recruitment or training of future native workers.29 Naturally, therefore, the missionaries gave priority to the study of local vernaculars as the basis for the formulation of their educational programmes. It hardly mattered even if it would take them a long time to master them. Because the native vernacular was the most effective and direct medium of communication, whether through preaching or education.30 Even before their entry into Manipur and Lushai Hills, the Arthington missionaries, Messrs William Pettigrew, J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge started learning the languages of the respective countries at their camp in Cachar.31

28 J. Shakespeare, Lushai Hills, to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Aizawl, June 1898.
30 Zairema, op. cit., p. 22.
31 William Pettigrew studied Meiteiron from Meiteis in Cachar and Messrs Lorrain and Savidge learned Lushai from Lushai traders.
Equipped with basic spoken-Meiteiron, Pettigrew immediately made necessary preparations for advancing western education among the Meiteis by opening a school at Imphal on 6 February 1894 with full patronage from A. Porteous, the acting political agent of Manipur. In consultation with the state officials and obviously with financial assistance from them, Pettigrew began to formulate the educational policy for the state. Impressed by his moral influence and expertise, Maxwell, the political agent (who succeeded A. Porteous) had appointed him as honorary Inspector of Schools by entrusting him with the power to draw up the whole educational budget for the entire state. It was not the intention of the missionary to impart secular education for its own sake, because he wanted to exploit the situation and his own position for furthering the cause of Christianity through the teaching of scripture, catechism, Christian hymns and choruses which he himself prepared. The schools were practically state-sponsored schools, every piece of expenditure being paid by the state. In so far as the hill people were concerned, the government...

32 Foreign Department Pros., January 1895, nos.24-28.
33 Ibid.
did not raise any objection to Christian truth being taught in the schools. The knowledge of Christ's life gleaned from the textbooks, the missionary expected, would prepare the way for doctrinal truths which had been taught them from the catechism. But the 'bad' influences, however, which the new converts necessarily met with in their villages, tended to counteract the solemnity of the truths expounded to them. This made the missionary really down-hearted.

At times, Pettigrew felt that he was waging a real battle against sin and ignorance and gross superstition to bring the Christian message of freedom from the power of evil spirits, freedom from the blind belief and efficacy of monthly and annual feasts almost approaching the fatalism of the converted Hindus of the plains. On the other hand, the people became suspicious and disliked very much to have their children taught in schools because of a firm belief that the missionary was attempting to prepare the way for a wholesale removal of all their young men to the outside world with no prospect of seeing them again.

35 Minutes and Resolutions of Historical Reports of the ARMC, Gauhati, 1900, p.44.
37 Ibid., p.4.
Maxwell, on his way to Somra (in Burma) happened to visit Ukhrul and on being sounded of the unresponsive attitude of the people, he was said to have warned the ruling Naga chiefs and elders that if their boys were found absent from school again he would have them severely caned or sent to jail. The warning was later on issued as government order. But the next political agent who succeeded Maxwell took no interest and saw no reason why ignorance should be dispelled, had passed certain orders which virtually prevented any further extension of educating the masses in Manipur. It is not surprising that education under the present political agent had received a check, and Pettigrew feared that it was likely to suffer more in future.

At one stage, Pettigrew was put in a cruel dilemma as to whether the mission should continue to conduct schools or leave the school work to the government. The fact that the mission allied to the state seemed to him to be the main drawback to mission work as an evangelistic agency because the teaching or propagation of Christianity had been forbidden within school hours later on. The inadequate response to missionary efforts for the acceptance

38 T. Luikham, op.cit., p.15
40 Minutes of ABMC, 1910, p.81.
of the gospel was attributed to the state durbar's interference in the management of schools. As a result, he felt it absolutely necessary to immediately make a beginning in the station school at Ukhrul to free the mission from the control of the state durbar, save on the matter of the grant-in-aid for scholarships. Faced with this attitude, it was reason enough for Pettigrew to ask the Vice-President (British official) of the durbar to have this novel scheme put into operation as early as possible.

Basically, the missions entered into a policy of cooperation with the state just to safeguard their monoplastic control over education. Once this was threatened, they preferred to delinking their dependence upon the state grant or financial assistance. But the situation was reversed when J. Shakespeare, who was known for his pro-mission attitude, took over the political agency. With his help and encouragement, village schools were reorganised on a three years basis in about a dozen villages in the Tangkhul Naga areas. These schools were manned by newly recruited young men from the earlier school, whose salaries were paid by the state. Along with this scheme, another important arrangement was made with the

41 Ibid., p.81.
42 Ibid., p.10.
political agent, viz. the bringing in to the control (station) school (at Ukhrul) two boys from each village where no village school had been established. They were to have a three years course, with the proviso that if any of them were inclined to remain on for further study, they could do so, and also the boys from village schools who desired further knowledge would be allowed after their three years course to attend this central school.\textsuperscript{44} 

The station school served as the recruiting base for the village schools. The school and church records show that quite 95 per cent of the scholars who had passed through this school for either short or long periods had become Christians. Rev. Pettigrew felt that his effort was amply rewarded.

One significant development was that the Kuki Christians who attended the mission school at Ukhrul volunteered themselves to tell the new message to their own people scattered all over the state. From 1914 onwards, both the voluntary workers and paid mission workers travelled in all parts proclaiming the truth. Teba Christian, head clerk, Longk Hobel second clerk, Sheijalut, third clerk in the sub-divisional office at Ukhrul and

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p.8.
Ngulhao, an influential Thado-Kuki, trained and taught at mission schools, were among others the pioneer workers who spearheaded the new mission movement among the Kukis and Analis.\textsuperscript{45} It was this movement which led the missionaries to petition for a more central station for the mission work in Manipur. However, only after the close of the Kuki rebellion that the scheme for this central station at Kangpokpi was eventually approved by the Assam Conference in 1920 at Gauhati and by the Board of Managers in New York city.\textsuperscript{46}

The schools also served the secular needs of the colonial establishment in two ways. First, when the missionary was made as the Superintendent of census operations in 1911, about one hundred mission workers and students were engaged either as supervisors or enumerators. Secondly, when the state decided to divide up the hill country of the state into sub-divisions, with direct official supervision at close quarters, the difficulty of manning their offices with clerks, their peon services with lambas, and their road mahorsis and supervisors, their vaccinators and compounders for their respective dispensaries and hospitals, the mission schools supplied the men in almost every instance.\textsuperscript{47} Thus, the missionary directly

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.13.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., pp.28-29.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p.20.
or indirectly, met the demands and requirements of the colonial administrators. Often, he acted as mediator between the colonial administration and the population.

So far the mission's stress on education was limited to the elementary level only. According to Pettigrew, the people's ignorance coupled with gross superstition and the fatalistic beliefs in their animistic worship, the environment of shutoffness and shut-upness of the country from the outside world were the compelling reasons for stressing on a policy of an elementary education. However, the steady development of mission schools and the energetic involvement of trained native workers seemed to invalidate Pettigrew's view. In fact, the conference at Gauhati in November 1920 seriously considered the question of opening mission high school and Bible college at Kohima for the Naga hills and Manipur. Having failed to come to a consensus, the issue was referred back to the educational committee and property committee for early action and reply to the Assam mission board for their consideration.

The missions saw little need for education beyond primary level. Pettigrew, the man at the helm of education, was not convinced that "it is necessary for such people as we have to deal with, to have anything higher

48 Ibid., p.21.
49 Minutes of the ABMC, 1920, p.5.
than a middle English school grade. The great majority will, for many years to come, be content with an education that will enable them to read and write in their own vernacular. But at the same time, they tended to see in the rising 'educated' groups a self-propagating, self-supporting and self-administering body of men and women in their evangelistic and elementary education work, freed from the supervision and control of the missionaries.

While the working pattern of the missionaries in Lushai hills was not very different from that of their counterparts in Manipur, there was a marked closer relationship between the missionaries and the officials in their handling of spiritual and educational instruction. From the very outset, the government had entrusted the educational needs of the Lushai people to the missionaries, assisting them, chiefly by making grants-in-aid of rather small dimension. On the whole, the Welsh mission had about eight or nine missionaries, including two hospital sisters, in the North Lushai hills, while the London Baptist Mission employed about the same

---

50 Pettigrew's pamphlet, p.22.
52 McCall, op.cit., p.203.
number of missionaries in the south Lushai hills. The cost incurred by the government on the education was just minimum. The expenditure had never exceeded three half-pence per head of population per year, with the first forty years of colonial administration.53 This is to say that whatever progress made was chiefly due to the Christian missions and their own funds.

In view of almost unsurmountable communication problem, the missionaries were compelled to tackle their approach through the Lushai employees who would work in the far-flung areas on their behalf. At least at the initial stage the working basis of the school system centred on the concept of pupil-teacher. The idea was that the moment a pupil could show some aptitude, he was to be sent out to teach others.54 Teaching and preaching naturally became a central function of the mission stations where a Christian boarding school was compulsarily established and conducted on the model of an English public school.55 Being vernacularists by background, the missionaries gave emphasis on very elementary subjects simply learning to read and write Lushai. Few, however, took

53 Ibid., p.203.
54 David Kyles, op.cit., pp.21-22.
some advanced subjects, Lushai composition, geography, arithmetic, English. The Lushai composition consisted in writing the history of their native religion—demons, gods, etc., which benefited more the missionary-teachers than the taught. Religious teaching in the form of scripture lessons, catechism, tonic solfa constituted the most important part of the curriculum. The necessity for an educated native leadership could not but lead to an emphasis on the training of a native agency in sound theological doctrines and ecclesiastical principles. In fact, the initial step in the establishment of the theological school was taken by D.E. Jones, when he formed a training class for converts who desired to become full-time evangelists or pastors.

One significant development on the non-theological schools was the inclusion of some practical works such as basket-weaving and manual work in the curriculum. But the main problem with which the missionaries were confronted was: how to make education both practical and spiritual at the same time? This question arose because certain ideas had already laid hold on the native mind, for instance, that education existed to secure a post that should release

its holder from manual toil. In order to combat this particular idea, E.L. Mendus virtually forced his students in Aizawl to work three periods a week at digging a playground out of a hill and also working in the school garden. When the Governor of Assam visited the school, he gave some money with part of which Mendus bought some carpentry tools so as to emphasise the practical side of education and manual work. In all these moves, the basic concept of the missionaries was to fashion the youths— to fashion them in the likeness of Jesus Christ, and the church by her intercession might discharge education here with a spirit that would make education no longer a menace of a thing to be afraid of but a magnificent interpreter and translator of the truth, and an adornment of the gospel, and an inspiration to labour and service. Thus the idealization of the goal of education tended to become the spiritualization of education and in this the missionaries failed to achieve a balance between the two.

The practical side of education was perhaps more elaborately stamped on female education to break the great prejudice against girls' education which was very strong amongst the majority of the people. If this was

59 Ibid., p.39.
60 Ibid., pp.39-40.
to succeed, it was evident that the school must be made very attractive and at the same time the education imparted must be such as to make the girls an asset in their community. The emphasis on the practical work in female education also aimed at establishing the principle of making some contribution to the cost of girls' education. Therefore, the lady missionaries trained in such arts, formulated the curriculum whereby the girls could give of their time to work which would be educational and at the same time profitable financially. The practical work which the girls were made to do in addition to their normal subjects included the fellowships which were self-revealing:

(1) Weaving including all processes in the preparation of cotton from seed and some dyeing.
(2) Needle work including simple cutting out.
(3) Basket work in bamboo and cane.
(4) Simple pottery using local clay.
(5) Baby welfare, infant care, first aid and home nursing including invalid cookery.

---

62 Ibid., p.3.
(6) Knitting and crochet work with home-grown cotton, and bamboo implements made by the girls themselves.

(7) Gardening, including experiments with seeds and plants.

(8) Farm work including (a) care and breeding of cow, goats, pigs, fowls, pigeons, ducks, (b) the milking of cows and goats, (c) the making of cream and butter with such implements as could be secured and used in any village.

(9) Household management including: cookery and laundry work.

(10) Clay modelling including maps.

(11) Other handiwork, including drawing, painting, crayon work, and inset fittings, etc.

(12) Singing and tonic solfa.

(13) Dramatisation.

(14) Drill, games and simple dances.63

The whole scheme was an extraordinary combination of project system and Dutton plan. During the first term when the weather was continually fine, to weaving, the farm and garden provided the enthralling project. During the second term when monsoon started, children were made to confine to the school.64 This was a reflection of the

---

63 Ibid., p.5.
64 Ibid., p.6.
type of vocation-oriented education through which the pupils were taught independence and self help in every possible way. In all these undertakings, the religious purpose was never lost sight of and the missionaries felt justified only in so far as their education equipped the native people 'to serve their fellows and to help in making their country as true part of the kingdom of God'.

The principle and practice of missionary education laid down that its religious character and purpose should under no circumstances be hidden from the people and also the government of the country in which it worked, whatever methods it employed, whether medical, industrial or educational. In content and purpose, it was essentially a religious organisation which derived all its resources and sustained all its energy from pure devotion to God.

Therefore, the missionary who preached the gospel could not be distinguished from the missionary who taught in educational institutions. Operating within the limits of colonial structure, the Christian missions all the time made it clear that they did nothing subversive of the highest national interests. At the same time, they took it that it was one of the primary duties of government in every land to secure that the best possible

---

65 Ibid., p.8.

education was brought within the reach of all its subjects; and that no education was permitted which was found to be subversive.\textsuperscript{67} Thus, the Christian missions acted as a means for lightening the task of government in the work of education and on the other hand, the government also soon recognised that the missionaries were the 'men who had the means through the power of the gospel, of changing a tribe that was a liability of the government into an asset.\textsuperscript{68}

However, the change of official policy consequent upon the passing of Assam Bill of Education of 1946 which sought to centralise all education and to do away with the aided, system, threatened the missions' monopolistic control over education in Lushai hills. According to this bill, there was to be a central board at Shillong for the whole province and the district board at Aizawl which would be responsible for education.\textsuperscript{69} The question before the missionaries was: what was mission policy likely to be - to have separate schools maintained by mission and church funds or to relinquish all education to government? The missionaries, were, of course, convinced that the schools had a Christian foundation - with strong Christians

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p.7.
\textsuperscript{68} Missionary Herald (1935), p.268.
\textsuperscript{69} Basil E. Zones' Report, 1946, p.1.
at the key positions and a Christian syllabus. Even if and when the time comes when we shall have to give them up; we shall have the consolation of knowing that they have been impregnated with the Christian spirits. 70 But feeling a bit insecure, the missionaries felt all the more the necessity of calling in a number of Lushai Christian leaders at this point for consultation. Arising out of this consultation was the formation for the future a joint advisory committee, comprising the Welsh mission representatives as well as the Baptist mission staff and the educated native leaders to consult on matters of educational and general policy. 71 The success of missionaries depended on the ability to harness the inspirations of the people with whom they identified themselves, and among whom they lived.

4.3 Evangelization and the Role of Indigenous Leadership.

The latter part of the nineteenth century witnessed a great revival and expansion of missionary work in different parts of the world. A great evangelical spirit swept particularly the Protestant sects both in Britain and the United States. Born and brought up in such atmosphere, the missionaries gave primary importance to

70 Ibid., p.1.

71 Williams, H.R., Report of a Secretarial Visit to China, India and Ceylon, with recommendations on the work in all the fields (London, 1946), p.75.
the question of evangelization which was in fact a vehicle for the expansion of the missionary frontier. Evangelization involved, in simple terms, in preaching the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ to others by a direct assault in their mind. This is to say that evangelization was a consuming earnestness and conviction, born of a transfiguring religious experience. This experience was the experience of conversion, of 'being born again'. It was an experience actually felt physically and mentally first in the anguish and terror of sin and secondly, in the estatic joy of rebirth. 72 Eric Stokes, a noted British historian, has succinctly described thus: "The experience of being saved was one of a sudden illumination coming after the consciousness and repentance of sin, and its fruit was the gift of true self-government, the power of resting on one's own centre and consciously choosing the course of life instead of remaining a slave to outward circumstance and custom. It made the path of duty plain. That path lays firstly, in the preservation of the soul in its state of grace through prayer and work, and secondly, in the mission to evangelize." 73 Therefore, the missionary who preached and the missionary who taught at schools could

---


73 Ibid., pp.29-30.
not be differentiated because they had the same goal before them. They concentrated on providing a minimum standard of education as a prerequisite for conversion, at least sufficient for a person to read and understand the Bible. With this in mind the missionaries worked and tried to infuse this concept into the minds of the medial cadre groups.

Having thus explained the concept and methods of evangelization which informed the missionary movements, it is necessary to analyse the relationship between the missionaries with the medial cadre groups at the institutional or structural level. The manner in which mission stations and church organisations were controlled, paralleled the colonial-bureaucratic structure. Colonial societies always acted as the model of a pyramid in which a minority at the top controlled large numbers at the base, with the aid of a medial cadre groups which manifested characteristics of both rulers and ruled. For example, if the colonial administrators governed through a native authority (tribal chieftainship), the missionaries also operated through a native cadre of teachers, evangelists, pastors and others. As the missions became more firmly established, the evangelizing

74 Ibid., p.30.
75 See, T.O. Beidelman, op.cit., p.247.
Responsibilities were handed over to these medial cadre groups with the long-term goal of creating self-supporting and self-governing indigenous churches.

Coincidentally, the early years of the twentieth century also marked the beginning of energizing involvement of the native workers, who were trained and recruited in mission stations which inculcated new habits and customs, in mass evangelization among their own tribes. The actual evangelization was done better by the cadre groups than the missionaries could hope to do themselves. This was so because of the realization of the fact that (1) the native workers were more skilled on the use of their own language; (2) they were more accustomed to the geography and climate; (3) they were better fitted to their own people about their own personal experience; and (4) they could live on a very much smaller pay than a missionary from a more materialistic culture. They were utilized in various ways by the missions: some taught at mission stations and others taught only religion (simple doctrinal concepts) through open air preaching, house-to-house visitation persuading people to believe in Jesus Christ.

---

The situation in Manipur was slightly different. Known for their antipathy to missionary work, the Manipur state durbar even thought in terms of checking any further increase in the number of converts through legislation because of the pressure from the tribal chiefs who owed their allegiance to the maharaja. Accordingly, the chiefs and elders were empowered to turn out any evangelists or refuse them to preach or have any interaction with the new converts.\(^{78}\) To solve the conflict, the American Baptists resorted, in most cases, to the separation of Christians from the adherents of traditional animism and secluded them in a separate village by careful control of the social atmosphere and prevention of external contamination.\(^{79}\) London Baptists and the Welsh missionaries did not follow the same line of action even when their converts faced more or less the same persecution at the hands of the chiefs and the elders. According to them, the new converts were to organise themselves as a nucleus of local church to evangelize the whole village, however hostile might be the situation.\(^{80}\)

\(^{78}\) Annual Reports of ABEMS, 23 November-1 December 1927, p.59.

\(^{79}\) Ibid., p.59.

If persecution acted as a restraining factor, the frequent outburst of revival movements contributed to the speedy mass movements towards Christianity. The Welsh revival of 1904-1905 under Evan Roberts gave rise to frequent revival movements in Khasia Hills, Lushai Hills and Manipur. These revivals were characterised by deep solemnity and actasy of joy accompanied by confession of sin often leading to emotional outburst of praise and thanksgiving.81 This sort of revival often provided a cheap, speedy mode of dramatic conversion which often became a handy propagandistic display. For instance, the Tangkhul Nagas made a public demonstration against the evils of Zu by gathering together their Zu pots, pans and utensils for distilling the liquor in a conspicuous place, burning them all in the presence of their heathen neighbours.82 Some missionaries were entirely unprepared for such kind of experiences and became sceptical. G.G. Crozier, the American Baptist in Manipur denounced it as the occasion in which the devil had caused many mock imitations of the work of the Holy Spirit. Despite the excesses and sometimes moral lapses, revivalism was a factor for mass movement towards Christianity and also a rejuvenating device for the old converts.

81 Annual Report of AFEMS, 1924, p.139.
82 Ibid., p.139.
Although Crozier was assigned to itinerate among the Zeliangwong Nagas in the West of Manipur, he had little or no direct contact with the people because he devoted himself most of the time among the Kukis. It was only in 1930 the first contact was made and that too with the help of the local pastors and evangelists who had been working since 1919. All he could do was to depend solely upon the native evangelists for information on which to formulate and carry out policies. Therefore, the mission movement among the Zeliangwong Nagas had never witnessed a smooth sailing from the very outset. Unlike in other regions, it faced its fiercest challenge and opposition from what is popularly known as the Zeliangwong Raj movement which was spearheaded by Jadonang of Kam-biron of south Tamanglong. The movement was primarily anti-British because it aimed at the establishment of 'Zeliangrong kingdom' in place of the British rule. Partly it was anti-Christian because Jadonang and his followers undertook to reviving their traditional religion which, they felt, was being threatened by the inroad of Christianity. There was an element of millenarism in the movement in that Jadonang promised his followers that

83 M.P. Namthiurei, op.cit., p.19.
84 Ibid., p.32.
with the establishment of the Naga raj there could be peace and prosperity for all "who eat from the wooden platter". This, in fact, became a handy propagandist device for mobilization of a considerable section of a largely illiterate community. But when they were confronted with famine and starvation, the people soon found that the new movement was nothing but a myth.

Confronted with such movement, the district officials had realised the fallacy of their unfriendly attitude towards the Christian converts. They started literally recruiting the evangelists into the government services. C.B. Booth who succeeded Shaw as the sub-divisional officer of Tamenglong, went to the extent of assuring that the punishment of recalcitrant villages could be connived at if they embraced Christianity. At the same time, the divisive 'tribe-against tribe' policy was clearly manifested. The officials mobilized the Nagas for the suppression of the Kuki rebellion of 1917-19 by enlisting them in the Kuki punitive measures. This time they used the Kukis against the Nagas.

On the whole, the increase of converts was much more phenomenal in Lushai hills than in Manipur. The return of government census, for instance, in 1921 showed

86 Namthiurei, op.cit., p.36.
87 Ibid., pp.36-37.
that the Lushai hills contained no fewer than 27,791 Christians almost a third of the entire Lushai population. Of these 22,108 belonged to the Welsh mission and about 5,593 to the Baptist mission and the rest to the Lakher Pioneer Mission. The census authority in Assam was so greatly taken aback at such immense increase of 26,462 Christians in the short space of ten years, it suspected of a possible manipulation of the census figure by 'Christian' enumerators by enrolling large numbers as of their own religious persuasion. Their integrity being in question, the enumerators cited one family where all the members were entered as Christians except a little boy of some five years. To this query, it was replied that the little boy was so hungry at meal times that he would begin eating without first saying grace and this leaving the reason for putting him down as an animist.

The reason for this phenomenal increase of converts could be attributed partly to the structure of the church policy which united all the scattered Christians at the village level under what is known as the church presbytery and also partly to the unified efforts of

88 The Herald (BMS), 1924, p.207.
89 Ibid., p.207.
90 Ibid., p.207.
the missionaries both in the north and south Lushai hills.\textsuperscript{91} The presbyterian form of government both under the Welsh mission and the Baptists had not only given the native workers maximum pastoralization but also encouraged Lushai independence and leadership thereby uniting the forces of the church in both north and south so that the aim of a thorough evangelism of the whole Lushai tribe was kept prominently before the Lushai church as an enterprise it could itself accomplish.\textsuperscript{92}

The whole area under the Welsh mission was broadly divided into three districts - northwest, southeast and west, each of them being allotted to a district missionary for his general superintendence or surveillance. Whereas the south Lushai hills under Baptist mission was divided into eleven districts, the presbytery was just a representative body, members and delegates being chosen by the district church councils in proportion to the number of church members in each district.\textsuperscript{93}

Below the districts, there would be at least ten localized village churches each under the pastoral care with the support of an evangelist.

\textsuperscript{91} Report of a Visit to the South Lushai Hills Mission, 16th November 1921, p.3.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p.3.

\textsuperscript{93} David Kyles, \textit{op. cit.}, p.37.
There was, however, a tendency among the missionaries to overplay the significance of the so-called experiment in church union. As a matter of fact, there was no such coordinative cooperation at the grassroot level and the interaction between the two churches of the north and of the south was confined to the presbyterian council level only. They might appreciate and recognise the teachings of each other; but there is no denying the fact that each strictly adhered to its own distinctive teaching in the matter of doctrine. Therefore, under the cover of the church union, there always existed deep-seated doctrinal differences which was a clear reflection of the denominational divisions in the western countries. The long-term objective of the whole experiment was to enable the Lushai church to stand alone as a united indigenous church, if and when the two missions withdrew.

Theoretically, the indigenous church was to be independent of the mission both in the matter of control and support. But in reality, the missionaries continued to exercise paternalistic control over the development of churches and the evangelistic works in particular. This was inevitable because as a rule the native workers had more trust in European missionaries than in the native

94 Ibid., p.36.
95 Ibid., p.36.
themselves. Rightly or wrongly, the missionaries also looked upon these native people as 'sheep' who needed the 'European shepherd'. Naturally, there was a general concern for reorientation of the evangelists and pastors who were required sometimes to do refresher courses at mission stations. They were not only with the missionaries in school hours, but were their constant friends and companions in their leisure hours too. The steady growth and development of the embryonic indigenous church was due to keen evangelistic zeal of these workers. Having thus prepared the native workers for the initial task of self-propagating programme, the missionaries began to think in terms of proper channelization of the zeal for evangelization to other secular works. Because they now realised the fact that they had, growing under their hands, an indigenous church that was creating a demand for education in order to safeguard its own existence, for better food and economic conditions to sustain the new sense of the value of human life; for better social conditions; for sanitation and more hygienic personal habits. Sensing the great magnitude of the mission responsibility, Homells,

96 Mendus' Report (MSS), 1922, p.51.
late missionary of Serampore, was reported to have forewarned that the missionaries in Lushai hills would have the birth of a nation as well as a church in their hands.\textsuperscript{99} One basic drawback was, however, that the churches were never represented on the station (mission) committee. As a result, there was no genuine sharing of authority.\textsuperscript{100} Feeling also the impact of nationalist movement in the country, the missionaries thought that it would be a healthy move in bringing a clear relationship between the foreign mission and the indigenous Christian church. Keeping this object in view, the missionaries adopted a gradualistic approach to give frank and cordial recognition to the indigenous church life and leadership in all efforts for evangelizing and participating in the policy-making process.

4.4 Medical Works

The rationale for missionary's involvement in medical work was not merely a humanitarian motivation - a desire to help needy people. Nineteenth and twentieth century missionaries who established hospitals and schools saw these institutions as aids in saving souls for Christianity.\textsuperscript{101} The experience and force of circumstances made

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., p.70.

\textsuperscript{100} H.R. Williamson, \textit{Reports of a Secretarial Visit to China, India and Ceylon with Recommendations on the Work in all our Fields} (London, 1946), p.73.

\textsuperscript{101} George M. Foster, \textit{Traditional Societies and Technological Change} (Allied Publishers; New Delhi, 1973), p.247.
the missionaries realize more and more that the saving of souls must be accompanied by the saving of bodies. Medical work was also one of the most effective means of destroying the traditional worldview and belief system which was essentially supernaturalistic. For instance, the traditional view attributed sickness or misfortunes to malignant and hostile spirit.\(^{102}\) The village priest was supposed to know which spirit was causing the trouble and what form of sacrifice would appease it. On the contrary, the missionaries were pervators of a naturalistic worldview as opposed to this supernaturalistic one. In other words, the naturalistic beliefs formed the organising basis for the missionary’s comprehension of the vast majority of day-to-day events and experience.\(^{103}\) Of course, the missionary also taught that a supernatural being created and controlled the universe, but it was a Copernican universe which he conceptualized, based upon physical laws and natural cause and effect relationship. Thus, the missionary’s understanding of illness involved making proper diagnosis (which in turn depended upon proper training) and obtaining the required remedies.\(^{104}\)

---

104 Ibid., p.20.
The primitive mind in that age did/could not comprehend that germs caused sickness by moving more or less predictably in humans. With the advance of a technology to their own advantage, the missionaries worked with a highly naturalistic view of disease and medicine which accelerated the breakdown of traditional animistic world view thereby acting, directly or indirectly, as an effective agent for conversion. Given the basic conceptual difference of disease between naturalistic and supernaturalistic, the role of missionaries in breaking down the traditional resistance to medical aids, by bringing the sick to hospital and by insisting upon the proper use of prescribed remedies, is to be analysed while keeping in view how all these helped to facilitate the process of Christianization.

In his annual reports, Edwin Rowlands writes thus: "The medicine dispensed in the village is eagerly taken, and they tell each other of the cures effected. This is supplanting the sacrificing demons. Once a village priest near Aijal, having been stung by a poisonous centipede, came to us for treatment, though a few days previously he had been warning a village not to take our medicine". 105

This report is indeed revealing. It testified the magical change which the medicine had wrought in the

105 Report of Foreign Missions (CMFMS), (1899), p.LVIII.
primitive mind and belief system. To work among them, the missionary (if not a medical missionary), was therefore usually equipped, apart from theology, with basic pharmaceutical knowledge. Whenever and wherever he was on an itinerating tour, he carried with him tablets and liquid mixtures. Once the effectiveness of even a small tablet was experienced, it became a great factor in winning the hearts of the people.\textsuperscript{106} The choice was thus between their traditional form of remedy, that is, killing of pigs, fowls, etc. for sacrifice, and the missionary's remedy through administering of liquid medicine or tablet. Even though, the missionary's action was determined by naturalistic world-view, he would inevitably invoke divine help by saying prayer which gave the impression that God was acting through human agency and medicines.\textsuperscript{107} Since the Lushais did not have bottles, those who came for liquid medicine were provided with bamboo cups with Bible verses or pictorials prominently inserted over them.\textsuperscript{108} But in many cases, the mission hospitals failed to cater the needs of the poor masses. Because in order to receive treatment, they had to pay and also to carry their own rice.\textsuperscript{109}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{106} Report of the BMS (London, 1904), p.37.
  \item \textsuperscript{107} Elmer E. Miller, op.cit., pp.20-21.
  \item \textsuperscript{108} Salaithanga, op.cit., p.38.
\end{itemize}
Gwladys Evans, in charge of the Durtlang hospital had to report thus: "Many are too poor to pay, and just do not come. I saw many such patients on tour and was ashamed to think that we had not enough money these poor people had suffered, while we had the power to heal them." Their failures and weaknesses were, however, duly re-compensated by their dedication and selfless services that endeared themselves to everyone amongst whom they worked and lived.

4.5 Translation and Literacy Works

All said and done, the missionary never lost sight of the importance of translation and literary works because these were considered *sine quo non* for the spread of the knowledge of Christianity and for the foundation of the future prosperity of church in any country. Such pursuits sometimes forced them to delve deep into linguistic studies and in the process helped them to command, whether he liked it or not, a degree of respect and reverence both from the subject people and the colonial officials. After all, language is the primary means of communication and no pioneer missionary could carry on his work very long unless he communicated in the language of the people to whom he was sent.

110 Ibid., p.37.
After two years of their settlement at Aizawl, Messrs Lorrain and Savidge published a Lushai primer, catechism, hymn-book, grammar, dictionary and translation of the Gospel, of St Luke, St John and the Acts of Apostles. While the school textbooks were published by the government of Assam, the scriptures were published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. The need to prepare more textbooks and the need to make the gospel known were so pressing that Lorrain even thought of devoting the remaining of his missionary career to the literary works. Through the joint efforts between the missionaries and the leading native Christians, the books of Psalms, the Epistles to the Romans, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, 1-2 Peter and 1-2 John were translated. Having thus covered almost the major part of the New Testament, the missionaries felt all the more the urgency of the need for translation of the Bible (New Testament) so that the translation of old Testament could also follow suit. For the missionaries firmly believed that a church had to be founded and had to grow to a large dimension on the basis of the New Testament alone. While the New Testament

112 Herbert Anderson, op.cit., p.16.
113 Ibid., p.16.
was translated by the Baptist Mission in the south, the translation of Old Testament was divided between the two mission societies, the Baptist Mission translating the first part and the Welsh Mission doing the second part.114

Most of the vernacular and literary works aimed at improving the morals of the country and deepening the spiritual experience of the people.115 In so far as publication of scriptures were concerned, the Welsh Mission was forging ahead of the Baptist Mission because of the early installation of the Loch Printing Press at Aizawl, a gift from G.H. Loch, the political officer of the North Lushai hills.116 The dissemination of the Gospel was intensified with the publication of a monthly organ of Kristian Tlangau (Christian Herald) which was primarily devoted to the Christian teaching.

Unlike the Welsh missionaries and the British Baptist missionaries, W. Pettigrew was actively engaged from the very beginning in the preparation of religious as well as secular literature. The key-position he held in the management of state education was perhaps the compelling reason for prompting him to do so. Unable to preach among the

114 E.L. Mendus' Report, p.10.  
116 Salaiithanga, op.cit., pp.19 and 44.
Manipuri Hindus, he wanted to reach them at least through the distribution of the Gospel of St John. In fact, in 1896, that is, two years after his arrival at Imphal, he put the Gospel of St. John in Manipuri through the press and five hundred copies were distributed among the Manipuris in the valley.\(^{117}\) Along with a host of textbooks which invariably contained the life of Jesus Christ and catechism, the Gospel of St Luke was printed in 1898. While the translation of the Gospel of St Matthew, St. Mark, the Epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians were done by arrangements with the British and Foreign Bible Society, the cost of literature provided for the schools both in the valley and hills were borne by the state.\(^{118}\)

Convinced of the effectiveness of presenting the Gospel in local dialect, Pettigrew soon mastered the Tangkhul language and undertook the translation of New Testament in that language by an arrangement with the Bible Society. Inability to reach the Thado-Kukis either through the medium of Manipuri or Tangkhul language had again drawn Pettigrew to the study of the Thado-Kuki language.\(^{119}\)

\(^{117}\) W. Pettigrew's Report from the Tangkhul Naga Field, ABMC, Dibrugarh, February 1899, p.53.

\(^{118}\) Minutes of Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of 1910, Gauhati, p.78.

\(^{119}\) W. Pettigrew's pamphlet, "Twenty-Five Years, 1897-1922, Ukhrul Mission School", p.16. (Altogether there were about 29 tribes in Manipur hills speaking different dialects. The long term goal of the Bible Society was to print Bible in all languages of the world).
In 1929 in recognition of his scripture translation work in Manipuri, Tangkhul Naga and Thado-Kuki, Pettigrew was made an honorary member of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Single-handed, yet undaunted, his insatiable thirst for knowledge drew him even beyond the horizon of his missionary vision. In addition to the mission work, Pettigrew vigorously applied himself to linguistic studies and research in Manipuri language. When in 1923 George Grierson, the director of the Linguistic Survey of India suggested that materials be collected and a monograph be published in archaic Manipuri, the political agent in Manipur had to ask Pettigrew to supervise this research work. A vocabulary of nearly 1000 words of the old language (Manipur), a grammar of about 50 pages and the translation of the two selected scripts - one from the historical and another from the linguistic point of view - were prepared. In appreciation of his research in the languages of Manipur and archaic Manipuri in particular, Pettigrew got elevated to membership in the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1930. Later, the General Secretary

---

121 Ibid., p.63.
of the Society, in his letter in September 22, 1933, had to write that how much value they attached to Pettigrew's work, adding that 'it would be a loss to philological science if it were not to be completed and published'.\textsuperscript{122} Lushai Language, the fruit of forty years' research also drew the attention of the Asiatic Society and the book was eventually published in 1940. These were the few but remarkable testimonies to the fact that the missionary linguistic studies and their systematization through publication of grammars, dictionaries, etc., however imperfect they might be, formed a solid foundation for literary development and linguistic research.

4.6 \textbf{Emergence of Elite Groups and the Genesis of Political Movements}

The colonial policy throughout the period under study had been to consistently legitimise and uphold the authority of the traditional chiefs. Whereas the missionary work, basing on the theory of cultural selectivity, contributed to the disruption of order in the traditional society. Inevitably, tension arose between the traditional elites and the emerging modern elites.\textsuperscript{123} While the traditional elite consisted of the chiefs, the priests and the thangysang. Success in tribal war, performance of feast of merit, etc., contributed to the emergence of these traditional elites. The modern elites include the blackcoutists (church leaders and white-collar job holders) and the new intelligentsia.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p.41.

\textsuperscript{123} The traditional elites consist of the chiefs, the priests and the thangysang. Success in tribal war, performance of feast of merit, etc., contributed to the emergence of these traditional elites. The modern elites include the blackcoutists (church leaders and white-collar job holders) and the new intelligentsia.
elites solidly stood behind the officials, the modern elites rallied behind the missionaries. Obviously the loyalty of the new elites to the traditional authority became gradually loosened and the chiefs rightly saw in them a potential danger.

The moment the new elites became Christians they abandoned their national ahri-style, wore European dresses and also received a small salary either from the mission or the government. What was more crucial here was the change in their mental outlook. They began to look with disgust at their traditional values through the glasses of their new masters. They acted and even preached that their ancestors were 'savages', 'head-hunters' so as to make their fellow tribesmen ashamed of their past. In this way they began to uncritically imitate new pro-western values. This is not to say that they were completely cut off from their traditional mores. Rather they were caught in a contradictory situation - the simultaneous adaptation to two contraposing elements: one 'traditional' and the other 'western'. Such being the case, they were in the continuous process of denationalisation. The concept of denationalisation may be defined as a process of change.

124 Lal Dena, "Patterns of Leadership in a Changing Hmar (Nizo) Society", in Cultural and Biological Adaptability of Man with Reference to N.E. India (Dibrugarh, Assam, 1976), pp.88-89.
in mental attitude that tended to despise one's national traits or traditional ethos in preference to other cultures and then to imitate rather than to create.\(^{128}\)

Exposed to new western ideas coming in the wake of successful missionary activity and colonial domination, the modern elites became more and more vocal in their attack on the traditional rights and privileges of the chiefs. Under the system of indirect rule, the people coming into contact more with the ruling chiefs in the day-to-day administration, naturally looked upon the latter as a symbol of exploitation and oppression. In fact, there was a sort of mild exploitation with some elements of feudal characteristics in a traditional tribal society. For instance, the ruling chiefs were entitled to get:

1. **sadar (sachhish)** - a traditional practice of compulsory payment of the front leg of any animal killed or trapped to the chief, failing which a person was liable to get punishment (**salem**); 2. **busung (fathang)** - compulsory payment to the chief a certain fixed quantity of paddy annually by every household within the chiefdom.\(^{126}\)


\(^{126}\) S.T. Ngaihte, *op.cit.*, pp.95-96.
In addition to these taxes or tributes, the chiefs had traditional rights such as (1) right to order capital punishment, (2) right to seize food stores and property of villagers who changed their allegiance, (3) proprietary rights over lands, (4) right to tax traders within the chief's jurisdiction, (5) right to help and then own those bawis who were, by custom, not open to redemption, and (6) right to attach the property of their villagers when they wished or deemed fit, with or without fault on the part of the villagers. Of course, in order to meet exigencies of the emerging situations, many of these abuses were extinguished. But the forced coolie (pothang), one of the worst evils, was almost limitlessly enforced through the chiefs. The pothang was of two kinds: pothang bekari and pothang senkhai. According to pothang bekari, the people were forced to carry willy-nilly the goods, luggages or sometimes the touring officials in a palanquin. Under the system of pothang senkhai, each household in a village was to subscribe money or sometimes chicken, eggs, etc., to feed the touring officials. Since these pothangas were enforced through the institution of chieftainship, the chiefs

128 I got this information from some of the chiefs and leaders of the movement whom I interviewed.
were looked upon as the arms of colonial authority and preservers of anachronistic tradition. All these practices were surely oppressive and almost led to virtual enslavement of the people. It is against this background that a new political movement had sprung up designed initially to curtail the chief’s powers and rights under the leadership of the new emerging elites.

The concept of freedom coming to a people who had never known any measure of political power before had undoubtedly led to a certain amount of licence.129 Beyond the attempt to curtail the chief’s powers, the new leadership failed to spell out any clear-cut political goal. Even when the eclipse of colonial power was so eminent, the best course they could visualise was to remain under colonial rule for another three to five years during which, they hoped, they would learn how to run their own government and the chiefs, ruling under some constitution, would no longer be a burden for the common people.130

It was at this confusing state of affairs that the new intelligentsia, the first university graduates, took hold of the situation. By accepting the principles implicit


in colonial administration, they rejected the foreign personnel and their collaborators, the ruling chiefs and put forth the argument that since the hill areas had no such sound financial resources, the best course was to join the Indian Union.\(^\text{131}\) Opinions were sharply divided and endless conflicts ensued among the rival elite groups.

It is often argued that the conversion of these people to a major religion (Christianity) different from that of their neighbours hindered their integration into the political and cultural life of the country following independence.\(^\text{132}\) It cannot be denied that Christianity and western education brought the emerging elites into contact with the liberal ideas of the west and in the process helped directly or indirectly, the growth of political movements in North India. But it would be wrong to attribute the genesis of the separatist movements to the work of Christian missionaries. It may not be out of place to mention here that the Hinduised Meiteis, who had successfully resisted the proselytising work of Christian missionaries among them during the whole period under study and even after, were not only denouncing Vaishnavite


Hinduism on the grounds of 'cultural imperialism' but were also championing a parochial 'Meitei nationalism'. The crux of the problem seemed to be that the concept of India as a nation coming upon the emerging elites all of a sudden on the eve of independence was too recent a phenomenon. This recentness linking up with ethnic, cultural, linguistic and economic exclusivity resulting from the secluded policy of colonial rulers were perhaps the roots of the separatist movements in North-East India.