This study is an attempt to examine and evaluate the missionary movement in Manipur and Lushai hills during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century from the colonial perspective. For the missionary movement followed closely on the heels of colonial expansion both into the two hill countries which succumbed to the onslaught of British imperialism in 1891. Strangely enough, it was the British officer, Mr A. Ponteous, who, as acting political agent in Manipur for some time and later on as superintendent in Lushai hills did initiate the missionary entry into both the countries in 1894. It was again the same Arthington Aborigines Foreign Mission Society (a private mission society named after Mr Robert Arthington at Leeds) which, after having laid the enduring foundation works in both Manipur and Lushai hills simultaneously, withdrew later on handing over the two fields to other missions. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists' Foreign Mission Society (WCMFMS) with its headquarters at Liverpool stepped into the North Lushai hills; the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in collaboration with the London Missionary Society (LMS), took over the South Lushai hills, while the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS), occupied the Manipur field. Later on, an independent and undenominational Welsh missionary who had then made Aizawl, the capital of
North Lushai hills, as the base of his operation, had made an inroad into the South-West of Manipur hills having a common boundary with Lushai hills, with the help of new converts from Lushai hills and established the North East India General Mission with its headquarter at London and branch office at Philadelphia. For historical reasons, the missionary movements in the two regions were thus closely interlinked. It is for this reason that this study covers the two regions.

The official policy towards the Christian missions had been to afford the latter carte blanche to work among the people unless or until a breach of peace threatened. This does not mean that the missionaries had no independent status of their own. In fact, the missionaries had been subjected to the wishes of their home directorates. For their selection, recruitment, training and even furlough were regulated by the home directorates. While initiatives and reports always came from the mission field, it was ultimately the home directorates who decided and formulated the mission policies.

Almost in all the cases, the response to the missionary call came from the middle-class background. This was so because the religious revival movements which swept Britain and USA in the latter part of the eighteenth century and of the nineteenth century were essentially 'middle-class' in character. Reoriented both in secular
and theological trainings, this middle class tended to look upon missionary work in a foreign country with a romantic spiritual vision and adventurism. Asked to state the reasons for their preferences for the work of a missionary abroad, the bulk of the missionaries replied that "the needs of the heathen cry aloud unto us who enjoy more or less of the privileges of the Gospel and Christian civilization". Therefore, they regarded their call to be the great mission of Christian church without making any wise distinction between the Christian civilization and the western civilization.

Basing the whole study on the basic premise that Christian missions and colonial movements followed upon each other during the historical period, the missionary movement in Manipur and Lushai hills is analysed within the framework of colonial structure. The significance of Christian missions and the important contribution made by the missionaries towards the pacification of the turbulent people in these parts of the country seem to justify this approach.

The first chapter intends to give an analysis of the modes of interaction, both positive and negative, between the Christian missions and colonialism in the context of what happened in Africa and Asia during the nineteenth century. It is within this broad theoretical framework that the relation between the East India Company
and the missionaries in India, 1793-1813 is briefly discussed. With the passing of the Charter Act of 1813 by the British Parliament, the restrictions on missionary movements were at last removed and this facilitated the speedy growth of missionaries' activities in North-East India.

Chapter two describes the various mission societies, the beginnings of their work and expansion in Manipur and Lushai hills. Chapter three deals with the conflicts and cooperation within or between various mission societies and the further expansion of missionary frontier. It also seeks to highlight the causes of constraints and implications of mission-government collaborations. The last chapter attempts to provide an account of the motivating forces which informed the missionary movement, its method of work and its impact on the tribal society.