CHAPTER - IV
Chapter IV

The Role of Christian Missionaries in the Socio-Cultural Life of Orissa

(a) Advent of Missionaries in Orissa

The Renaissance and Reformation movements in Europe (during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) prompted the "Jesuits" to embark upon missionary activities in foreign lands and especially in the Asiatic region. With such objectives, the European Jesuits approached Emperor Akbar but failed to persuade the Mughal ruler in this regard. It was only after the English occupation of Bengal in 1757 that a fresh initiative "for spreading Christianity" was launched by an erstwhile British official "Charles Grant" in 1792. But such initiative got deadlocked due to the Sepoy Mutiny in 1806 at Vellore "near Madras". Analyzing the reasons for the mutiny, the Company government found out that the forcible conversion to Christianity contributed to the eruption of the crisis at Vellore. But it was the Evangelical movement in England "spearheaded by Edmund Burke", which eventually pressurized the British government to permit missionary activities "in India" beginning in 1813. As far as Orissa was concerned the missionary operations, however, commenced nine years later in 1822.
To begin with, the Company government was unwilling to allow such activities as they apprehended that these might create an impression in the minds of Indians that the British wanted to convert them all to the Christian faith. It was feared that the missionaries would disturb the religious equilibrium in India by propagating their progressive ideas. These, in turn, might lead to social revolution and chaos, which ultimately would culminate in the termination of British rule in India. In fact, such an approach was highlighted during discussion prior to their military operation of Orissa beginning in 1803. For instance, the English army under the command of Colonel Harcourt proceeding from Ganjam was instructed that upon his arrival at Puri, "he should follow every possible precautions to preserve due respect to the Great Hindu 'Pagoda' and also to the religious prejudices of the Brahmins". The argument behind such a policy was to provide assurances to the natives of Orissa with regard to their tolerant attitude as well as to elicit a helping hand from high caste native population against their targetted chief enemy namely, the Marathas.

Against such a background, the British in 1812 refused the request of Baptist Missionaries to set up their religious institutions in Orissa.\(^{152}\)

Such a response, was immediately criticized by the Evangelicals and the missionaries of England. They accused the Company government for providing protection to idolatrous

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social habits, which they sought to wipeout from the Indian soil. But such views did not find much favour initially with the Board of Control in London. But without losing heart, they persisted with their efforts and succeeded in persuading the Company government in 1813 to provide them with a license to work in India. As regards developments in Orissa, it was the imagination and enthusiasm of William Carey which became instrumental in the establishment of the Orissa Mission on 12 February 1822. As for the missionaries, they made their initial application to the British government in this regard as early as in 1812. But their request was turned down as the British followed a policy of non-interference vis-a-vis the socio-religious aspects of the natives.

The first Mission commenced under the leadership of Rev. J. J. Peggs and William Bampton who landed on the coast of Orissa on 12 February 1822. From there they shifted their headquarters to the capital of the Province namely, at Cuttack. They started their operations from there and gradually moved over towards Puri, the religious centre of the province. They also proceeded towards the southern and northern parts of Orissa. But the timing of their arrival was not appropriate, as they faced a lot of highly hostile problems. For instance, the

153. For details see N. R. Patnaik, op. cit., p. 47.
people were not responsive and that there were many organisational problems awaiting them. Also the climate was not suitable for them as some of them fell sick. To their greatest misfortune there was no adequate medical facilities available for them. In the process some of them lost their families and near and dear ones. In utter despair some of them returned back to their homeland in England. It may be observed further that while some of the missionaries performed their jobs properly, others', however, did not behave in a moderate fashion. In the process long six years passed away, but the missionaries could not achieve anything concrete in religious terms. But, without losing heart, the missionaries continued working hard by "hoping against hopes". 156

Preaching, teaching and distributing pamphlets were the three different methods followed by the missionaries. In simple but emotional language, they used to preach and emphasize the logic behind the acceptance of Christianity. Preaching was mainly done in Oriya, the local language, which the missionaries learnt. In order to influence the people they studied local history and mythology and many a times used local anecdotes in their preaching. 157

It was not possible during this period to reach all the destination places due to lack of proper communication. To avoid such hindrance, they adopted a new method of preaching.

For instance, they printed all their ideas and distributed them to people belonging to different areas. They also tried to take advantage of local gatherings on different festival days, particularly during the Car Festival of Lord Jagannath at Puri. As stated by Sutton: "A Missionary's chief business is to preach the Gospel to the Natives, and every other department of missionary labour should be attended as subordinate to this". In order to spread Christianity, the Missionaries laboured hard and concentrated their preaching to highly populous areas. At times, they even preached in jails and hospitals. In fact, almost all the missionaries belonging to both Orissa Bengal used to congregate at the Car Festival of Jagannath in Puri to preach Christianity.

In order to attract the attention of people, the missionaries resorted to singing in Oriya language at different cross roads. In fact, when people started gathering around them, they started preaching. But while preaching, the missionaries attacked the Hindu gods, goddesses rather violently. The major intention behind such attempts was to convince the Hindu people that their religious gods were totally incapable of delivering anything good for them. They made repeated claims that it was Jesus Christ only who could give salvation to the mankind, and that his followers could become free from all sins and misdeeds.

158. Amos Sutton, Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Mission at Orissa (Boston, 1833), p.458.
159. For details see Sutton, Orissa and Evangelization, op.cit., pp.114-115.
160. For details see Ibid, p.97.
As regards the reaction to missionary activities in tribal and feudatory states, it was mainly of two kinds. Either the Rajas or the tribal chiefs showed extremely hostile response towards the missionaries or they remained either indifferent or non-co-operative in some other states. For instance, at Arada, the Zamindar ordered the imposition of a fine of one hundred rupees to any people attending the preaching place. At some other places the chiefs ordered the people not to receive the pamphlets as distributed by the missionaries and imposed a fine of rupees five in case of any violation of royal instructions. At some other places, however, the Zamindar used to secretly kill those who embraced Christianity. 161

Besides preaching, the missionaries used to distribute pamphlets and scriptures. These pamphlets were either sold at very low prices or distributed free of cost. The Oriya pamphlets were classified into two types namely, one consisting of translations from English and Bengali and other consisting of pamphlets written in Vernacular language either by the missionaries or by the Indian Christian converts. It may be mentioned that Charles Lacey, was one among the early missionaries who engaged some Pandits and Christian converts to write and copy some pamphlets on palm leaves. Another technique followed by the missionaries was to provide a better type of medical facility to the Oriya people. For instance, the missionary

physicians were asked to perform a two-fold duty. Firstly, they helped the poor patients in relieving them of their physical pains; secondly the missionaries preached the Gospel to such physically affected patient. This method was found more successful than the other three techniques followed by them earlier namely, preaching, teaching and distributing sacred literatures. In fact, such a combination of medical work and religious services proved to be the most effective evangelizing factor for converting the Oriya people to Christianity. It also helped to ward off several old prejudices and superstitions prevailing among poor people in Oriya society.

It may be mentioned that the Christian Missionaries scored their first major victory on 23 March 1828 when they converted one Oriya Brahmin namely, Gangadhar Sarangi to Christianity. Such a victory was considered significant as they were able to convert a person hailing from a respectable upper caste Brahmin family. Such success encouraged them to work harder to baptise more Oriya people. It may be pointed out that Gangadhar Sarangi, after being baptised, was deputed to become a native preacher with a salary of rupees seven per month. The next person who was baptised in Orissa, was one Ramchandra of Cuttack in May 1830. Gradually, within a period of few years as many as twenty person were converted all of whom belonged to upper caste Hindu Society. It may be mentioned that all such converts who discarded their ancestral faith did not do so out of much emotion. Some of them, in fact, had carefully read the

Christian scriptures and compared them with Hindu Code of Law before deciding to change their religion. But such converts, were later on subjected to a series of social boycotts and public humiliations. The religious conversion further cost them both social standing and an accustomed economic position. They were forcibly ostracised in the society. Sometimes even their own children deserted them. In the process, conversion resulted in the breakup of the family life. For the new converts, however, Christianity became not only a religion embracing an emotional attachment, but also one with deep feelings of involvement, sacrifice and hardship. 163

As for the missionaries, they were well aware of the fact that the new converts would function as better Missionaries than the original preachers. For instance, the new-converts criticized the traditional values and condemned the Hindu gods and goddesses as "worthless idols". They also criticised the Hindu society in the native language. All these castigations undoubtedly began to convince the local people better than the speeches delivered by the white Missionaries. In fact, through talking in the native language, they were able to impress upon the Oriya people concerning the dark side of the superstitious Hindu customs such as; "Sati", "Infanticide" and "Meriah". 164

As a result of such sincere efforts fifteen more Oriyas were converted to Christianity by 1840. Out of them some were

163. For details see B.S. Das, Life and Culture in Orissa, op. cit., p.111.
immediately to perform pastoral duties. It may be highlighted that all of them were well conversant with the Sanskrit language and the Hindu Sastras. Such wide knowledge helped them to argue with the Brahmins and to lessen their influences on Oriya society. Further, the Oriya converts, apart from spreading Christianity, also worked hard for sowing the seeds of "liberalism" in the minds of Oriya people.165

But with the increase of new converts, a new class emerged in the society whose life and behaviour was quite different from ordinary Oriya people. For instance, their life became more disciplined and systematic and their social behaviour also took a new look. They not only became more soft-spoken, but wore neat and new dresses. Their food habits also changed considerably. All these changes brought their impact on Oriya society.166 Further, the marriage system in the converted Christian community also brought about changes in the age-old Hindu caste system. Such changes were clearly perceptible when, for instance, a converted Hindu widower married a tribal girl or that a high caste Brahmin married an untouchable girl.167 James Peggs made a mention of such a ceremony which he personally attended in November 1833 at which a native Christian got married to a low caste girl.168 Thus, an atmosphere congenial for social change took place in Orissa.

166. Ibid, p.50.
167. Ibid.
The Missionaries also sought to purify the character of converted Christians so as to make them exemplary characters for the present and future generations. They imbibed in them virtues like honesty, benevolence, decency, regard for truth and chastity. Further, the Missionaries taught the native christians the spirit of mutual help and to promote community feelings. In the process the community spirit was fostered in Orissa.

To conclude, the hard work put forth by the new converts resulted in attracting a large number of Oriya to the Christian fold. Also, the impact of Missionaries and converts brought about some socio-cultural changes in Orissa.

(b) The Famine of 1866 and The Role of Missionaries

Natural calamities were a frequent feature in the history of Orissa. But the famine of 1866, known as, the Great Orissa Famine, was the most disastrous natural calamity engulfed the province to virtually destroy the backbone of Orissan economy. Its ferocity was so shattering that about one million people, nearly one third of the total population of the province, met their death during the course of the famine. The calamity was at its most intense fury in the districts of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore as well as in the feudatory states of

Orissa. In fact, the history of Orissa presents a painful record of several natural calamities like cyclone, floods and famines. As described by Hunter, "the floods and famines in Orissa loomed out like giant spectres from the dim panorama of the past." The devastating nature of the calamity, however, demonstrated the serious drawbacks in the Bengal administration and its lamentable neglect concerning the vital problems of economic development in Orissa. Such aspect was conceded to by the Secretary of State for India, Stafford North Cotte who stated:

"... This catastrophe must always remain a monument of our failure, a humiliation to the people of this country, and to those of our Indian officials of whom we had been perhaps a little too proud ..." 173

While scanty rainfall was the chief reason behind the outbreak of famine, a high degree of irresponsibility on the part of government officials, was also attributed for such vast devastations in Orissa. It may be mentioned that the government officials failed to visualize that such a devastation would at all take place. For instance, even when the first signs of the famine was clearly visible in the state, the government, however, did not take any measures to stop the heavy export of rice from Orissa to Calcutta and Ganjam. Further, when the situation demanded sterner measures on the part of government to check the exportation of rice, they followed, a non-interference

policy in respect of food grain trade. Instead of feeling apologetic about their wrong policy, instead they began to defend the policy of exportation on the ground that there was sufficient food grains available with the grain-holders. But the grain-holders contemplated major economic gains for themselves through a major hike in prices of food grains during the period of such natural calamities. As stated by Cecil Beadon, the Governor of Bengal:

"... Take my word for it, these grain holders are just waiting till the price has reached the figure they expect; then they will open their stores and you will hear no more want of rice ..." 175

Further, when the people agitated for cutting down the food prices he observed:

"... If I were to attempt this, I should consider myself no better than a dacoit or thief, who plunders his neighbour's property for his own use ..." 176

After watching such callous attitude on the part of government, the Christian Missionaries in Orissa sprung into action by playing an active role to check its disastrous effects as far as possible. They were the first people who sought to draw the government's attention concerning the gravity of the situation through a note of warning. Such a note, however, clearly proved their sense of anticipation and mental determination to tackle the crisis. In fact, they played an exemplary role during the Famine of 1866. 177

174. For details see D. Swaro, op. cit., p.162.
175. As cited in Ibid, p.164.
176. Ibid.
177. Ibid.
To begin with, the Missionaries raised funds, organised relief operations for the poor people and took care of the orphans. They strongly criticised the government's inaction and helped the distressed people without perhaps keeping any motive behind such philanthropic activities. Sheer public service, benevolence and ideals of philanthropy seemed to be the major motivation behind their role during the famine. Further, to highlight the issue, they published a newspaper called the Friend of India which provided a vivid picture of the situation as prevalent in Orissa. They also made a general appeal for public contributions towards a relief fund for the destitutes. Such an appeal, worked immediately as contributions, flowed from different parts of India as well as from England. For instance, from England alone rupees eighteen thousand was collected and sent to India for the Famine. As regards response in other parts of India, the Missionaries received both moral and monetary help particularly from Bengal where they organised several public meetings at different places. Through such meetings they aroused social awareness and a sense of commitment from the elite section in Bengal. Infact, the missionaries received great sympathy and support from the Bengali population towards the Crisis in Orissa.

178. For details see P. Mukherji, "The Orissa Famine of 1866", Orissa Historical Research Journal, (Bhubaneswar) vol. VI, April 1957, p. 91.
It may be observed that until 21 May 1866 the government did not resort to any concrete measures of prevention in terms of providing relief to the people. It was only the missionaries who made their own personal efforts in trying to tackle the situation. They distributed boiled rice, paddy and sometimes money to the famine victims depending upon the economic standard and the situation as warranted for the concerned person. They also provided physical work to the able bodied persons and paid wages to them for services such as the construction of roads and canals. But it was after May 1866 that the government felt the urgent need to provide help to the destitutes. So a grant of rupees ten thousand was made in favour of each of the three districts of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore where the Famine was in its most devastating fashion. They also distributed food free of cost in the three districts of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore as mentioned earlier. As for the Missionaries, they maintained a close monitoring and observation of relief activities in all centres of distribution. Following such observations, they reported back to the British government about the prevailing conditions of the famine-affected people. 179

While the Missionaries cooperated actively with the government, yet they also criticised its policies several times. Their criticism mainly centred around the problems of inadequacy of relief measures and its defective policies with regard to the

eradication of the Famine. For instance, at a time when the prices of rice was rising rather high in the market, the government paid scanty wages to the labourers who faced severe hardship on that account. Also, the government did not take into account the number of dependents each labourer was having while fixing their wages. Further, the labourers were paid in weekly rates without considering the fact as to how they would meet the hunger (for themselves and their family) on any particular day.\(^{180}\)

It may be observed that at a time when the famine reached its peak, other natural disasters like cyclones and floods also swept Orissa. To begin with, due to storms and heavy rains the condition of people in Puri became worst. The people left their homes in search of food from the relief centres, but found no adequate shelter facilities there. In cold and rain many people lost their lives. The death rate also increased further due to another reason. For instance, when people were quite hungry, the government provided them raw rice, which they devoured immediately to quench their hunger. But after devouring such raw food, many of them met their death. Infact, from Puri alone the death rate was quite high as 2,10,866. Thus, the intensity of famine was felt most in Puri district.\(^{181}\)

\(^{180}\). For details see Ibid, pp.168-169.

In such a period of natural devastations, the Missionaries undertook the great task of rescuing the distressed people. Discovering that the governmental help was hardly forth-coming in this regard, the Missionaries collected large funds and distributed them among the distressed persons. In this context it may be mentioned that while at Jellasore and Santipore relief centres were opened and that people congregated for taking food, but no grain was supplied by the government. Finding such a precarious situation, Reverend Phillips, who was kept in-charge of one of the relief centres, decided to distribute among the destitutes what ever was available with him. Further, Missionaries like Lady Crawford and Rev.Brooks decided to take direct charge of different construction works as assigned to them by the relief committees. Such developments prompted A.Miller, another Christian Missionary, to severely criticise the negligence of the government to provide adequate supplies of rice and money to the relief centres during the months of July and August 1867.182

After a long period of ordeal, however, the situation improved to a great extent by December 1867 as people became somewhat self-sufficient and a normal social set up was witnessed all over the province. Despite such improving situations, however, the activities of the Missionaries did not come to an end as they faced new problems. To begin with, they found a

182. For details see Swaro, op.cit., p.170.
large number of destitute children without parents who wandered from place to place. Thus, it became their first task to take charge of these orphans. The government also provided some help to the Missionaries by fixing an amount of rupees two for each orphan as monthly allowance until the attainment of the seventeenth year [for the boys] and sixteenth year [for the girls]. The Missionaries also provided vocational training to the destitute children. While the boys were trained as carpenter, blacksmith, tailors, cooks etc, the girls received training in house-wifery, knitting and needle work. In the process, the orphans became self-sufficient and good human beings. While some became Christians, others took to evangelical works with great interest. The missionaries also undertook to share a part of the burden of the marriage expenses for the orphan girls by spending a sum of rupees twenty in the form of "bride money" for each girl at time of her nuptial ceremony. As for the orphans, they enjoyed a new lease of life as the missionaries trained them adequately to earn their livelihood. All these undoubtedly proved beneficial in the long run.

To conclude, the Missionaries played a significant role during the Orissa Famine as their services were quite invaluable. Their activities, in fact brought a new dimension [in terms of their social status] among the Oriya people who considered them as friends and benefactors.

183. For details see W.W. Hunter, Orissa, op.cit., pp.142-143.
Apart from these contributions during the Famine, the Missionaries played a significant role in the areas of socio-cultural activities such as the spread of Western education and the eradication of social evils. To begin with, such activities contributed towards the process of mental change for social reforms in Orissa. Further, through the Missionaries, the educated elites of the province became exposed to the British pattern of life, for which they developed some kind of fascination in course of time. Such fascination prompted them to persuade the Oriya people in favour of social changes to keep themselves abreast of the present times. In the process, a sort of cultural awakening took place in the second half of the nineteenth century.

To elaborate, the Missionaries played a pioneering role for spreading Western education in Orissa. According to them, such an education was highly essential for improving the Hindu society, which was bedevilled by superstitious and blind beliefs. They were well-aware of the fact that without English education, no body could read the pamphlets as disseminated by the Missionaries. They took up the issue of imparting western education as the chief weapon for gradual destruction of Hinduism and spreading Christianity in its place. They believed rather strongly that it was through such a process that the Christianity could be spread far and wide in the province. In fact, they highlighted on elementary, secondary and female
education and mixed these with their religious institutions in Orissa. 185

It may be highlighted that along with the Evangelicals, the Missionaries also urged on the British government for the spread of Western education in India. It was under their pressures that the Charter Act of 1813 suggested for annual budgetary provision of rupees one lakh for the development of education and literature. The Preamble of the Act stated:

"... It is the duty of this country to promote the interest and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British Dominions in India, and such measures ought to be adopted as may tend to the introduction among them of useful knowledge and of religious and moral improvements and in furtherance of the above subjects sufficient facilities ought to be afforded by law to persons desirous of accomplishing these benevolent designs ..." 186

It was only after the advent of Lord William Bentinck effective steps were taken by the British government for the promotion of education in India. As a result, another Act was implemented described as the "Wood's Despatch of 1854". Under this provisions were made for the system of grants-in-aid for schools which were opened and organized by private institutions. As the government began to take interest in the field of education (after Despatch of 1854), the Missionaries began to withdraw themselves from any further efforts at opening new schools. Instead they began to hand over the educational institutions under their control to the government. In the

185. For details see Swaro, op. cit., p.180.
process, their interest in the field of education began to decline in the second half of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{187}

It may be observed further that the Missionary societies held differing views with regard to spreading education. For instance, while the Baptist Missionary Society considered education as the best technique for the propagation of Christianity, the General Baptist Missionary Society on the other hand opened new schools with a view to introduce the scriptures. As for the Roman Catholics and the American Freewill Baptist Missionaries, they calculated rather cleverly that through education they would infuse the Christian ideas among children who would later on transmit these ideas to others.\textsuperscript{188}

The Missionaries operated four types of educational institutions in Orissa. Firstly, there was Boys' Schools where English, Oriya, Geography, Arithmetic, History and various religious scriptures (including Bible) were taught. Such educational institutions covered all aspects of learning. The second type of missionary institutions were orphanages and boarding houses where the children were taught apart from traditional pattern of education various types of vocational training to make them self-sufficient. A third type was the Girls' School. As the society was highly conservative, many guardians did not like to send their daughters to such institutions where girls read along with boys. To meet such

\textsuperscript{187} Ibid, p.68.
\textsuperscript{188} For details see H. Hosten, Catholic Herald of India (London, 1910), pp.511-512.
feelings, the Missionaries started separate educational institutions for Girls. These, however, did not quite succeed as only orphan girls and daughters of the converts as well as some low caste people attended such schools. The fourth, type of institution was co-education schools where both boys and girls studied together. But due to social stigma attached to them the number of such schools was rather few. In such schools, however, both Christians and non-Christians were imparted teaching in their own native languages.

As for the General Baptist Missionary Society, it opened three boys' and girls' school and one school for adults beginning in 1822. In the space next one year, however, they established fifteen native schools with 305 boys and 63 girls in their roll. By 1832, the Baptist Missionaries established another twelve schools with four hundred students. Further, they opened one Anglo-Vernacular School at Cuttack and a co-education school at Pipli in 1845. Likewise, the American Freewill Baptist Missionaries in 1845 opened a school for Santal boys at Jellasore, with forty students on its roll by 1854. Also, they opened three Bazar Schools to which eighty-eight pupils got admitted, in 1855.

190. For details see A. Sutton, Narratives, op. cit., pp. 37-38.
191. P. K. Patro, Odissare Baptist Mandalira Karya (Cuttack, 1943) in Oriya, p. 73.
As for the Boarding schools, "established by the Missionaries", they were of two types. The first type was for the European boys and girls and the other was for the natives. The orphanages or "asylums" did have boarding facilities, where the natives sometimes resided. Following the disastrous Famine of 1866, however, the orphanages were filled with orphans and the destitutes. The Missionaries undertook the task of giving education to them by opening new schools. They imparted both traditional education as well as vocational trainings to the destitutes and in the process many people were converted to Christianity. The government officials also showered praises on the Missionaries for opening such orphanages.\footnote{192 Such a perspective however, was contested to rather bitterly by the \textit{Friend of India} as follows:}

"... The great danger which besets all such establishments in the hands of the Missionaries is that of their being over done; of their encouraging expensive habits, and extra-ovagant hopes, and making the lads Baboos to such an extent as to lay the foundation for much anxiety and disappointment ..."\footnote{193}

As regards developments of asylums and orphanages, in Orissa such type of boarding schools were first established at Cuttack in 1829 with twelve boys and girls. Such schools, however, were financed by local bodies and kind hearted persons.\footnote{194}

In order to popularise female education, different Missionary societies established several girls' schools for the education of christian converts only. A major initiative in

\footnote{192. For details see Swaro, op.cit., p.183.}
\footnote{193. "Friend of India" as cited in Swaro, op.cit., pp.183-184.}
\footnote{194. A.Sutton, Narrative, op.cit., p.399.}
this regard, however, was taken up by the "Society For Promoting Female Education in the East" established in 1834. The Society sent prominent English ladies like Packer and Guignard to superintend the schools as established by the Missionaries. The chief motive of the Society, however, was to spread education based on the Holy scriptures among the Eastern Females of rank, and classes either in their own homes or in the Missionary Schools. It may be mentioned further that in most of these schools elementary education was imparted. In fact, students were taught to write or read in their own languages and some amount of accounting as well. But the chief motive of the Missionaries was that the students should sing "Hymns" or scripture songs and to write "Scripture" portion for exercise. The missionaries, awarded prizes to those who performed well in singing hymns relating to the Christ. Further, the Missionaries also imparted education to females inside aristocratic houses of Orissa. They sent lady teachers to educate the housewives which was popularly known as the "Zenana" system of education.

The American Freewill Baptists were the pioneers in the field of opening Medical Schools in Orissa. In the Medical schools, teaching was imparted in the Oriya medium and that the Missionaries wrote several medical books in Oriya for the pupils. Such students received professional training in

196. Ibid, p.189.
three hospitals namely, at Balasore, Jellasore and Piplee. These schools, however, were run entirely with the subscriptions from European gentlemen as well as from the Mission funds. 197

Besides these basic educational institutions, the Missionaries also established some special schools to impart training with regard to different industrial techniques. The government also established Normal Schools to provide trained teachers for primary or village schools. It encouraged the Missionaries to follow up such efforts. The American Baptist Mission thereafter opened a Normal School at Shantipur, six miles from Jellasore. Other Christian Missions like the Baptists of Cuttack opened such a School in 1893. 198

It may be observed that while the Missionaries tried their best to promote education in Orissa the natives, however, did not support them whole-heartedly in such a venture. A serious hindrance in this direction was found in the form of irregular attendance of Oriya students. Several reasons could be attributed behind such irregularity. To begin with, the upper class people and the Bengalees apprehended that their children would become Christians if they studied in such institutions. Secondly, superstitions played an important role for causing a decrease of girl students in such schools. Thirdly, irregularity in attendance was due to poverty of parents to send

197. For details see A. Sutton, Evangelization, op. cit., pp. 314-315.
198. For details see Swaro, op. cit., pp. 192-193.
the children to schools. Fourthly, some high caste Hindus did not want that their children should read together with the Christians as well as minority community students. 199

Despite these handicaps, it may be concluded that the Missionaries played a pioneering role in the field of promoting education in Orissa.

Apart from spreading education, the Missionaries played a significant role in undertaking efforts at eradicating social evils embracing the Hindu community. In such endeavours, they were helped to a great extent by the newly-converted Christians. In fact, as events unfolded in Orissa, they became better preachers than the European Missionaries who had converted them to Christianity. It has been mentioned earlier that these converts did have quite a good grasp about their own society, people and the language and that they could convince the native Oriyas in their own language as to how they could lead a better life in a new social order. They could impress upon the natives by demonstrating their own examples of success in the new social order. In fact, they began to make the Oriya people conscious as to the urgent needs of attacking the decadent Hindu society where flagrant and abominable customs such as "Sati", "Infanticide" and "Moriah" were widely prevalent. 200 Furthermore, the energetic efforts in the field of education, as spearheaded by the Missionaries, not only widened the frontier of knowledge

199. For details see Swaro, op.cit., pp.195-197.
but turned the people's attention away from superstitious customs as prevalent in Orissa. 201

To begin with, the converted Christian community worked for the removal of age-old caste customs in marriage ceremonies. For instance, in all the social gatherings, the Europeans (consisting of the Portuguese and the Americans) and low-caste Hindus as well as the converted Christians sat together to take food and drinks from the same table. In the process a congenial atmosphere for social change did take place. 202

Several types of social evils and superstitious practices were deeply rooted in the minds of people and in the Oriya society. Lack of education and communication made the situation more complex. Among such practices, "Meriah" or human sacrifice was one which was largely practised in the tribal areas of Orissa. The "Kutia" Khonds usually practised such inhuman practice on the basis of a firm native belief that by giving human blood they could satisfy the Earth Goddess who always provided them food. It was the Missionaries who raised their voice against such evil practices. But the British Government did not initially evince much interest on the problem because the political situation in Orissa was quite tense. But later on when the missionaries strongly criticised these social evils, the government took strong measures to eradicate them. In fact, many Missionaries moved over to the

201. For details see N.R.Patnaik, op.cit., p.20.
202. For details see Ibid, p.22.
Khond areas by crossing the difficult mountainous paths. Further, constant preachings by the missionaries as well as governmental prohibitions resulted in the wiping out of the hated practices. Also the missionaries reached the spot where the practice of Meriah was conducted and rescued the victims. Further, they established schools and boarding houses for the rescued Meriahs. In this regard the efforts of the Missionaries such as Mr. and Mrs. Stubbins, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson and Mrs. and Mr. Buckley were most commendable. John Campbell in his report provided a vivid description concerning the pioneering role of the Missionaries in eradicating the evil Meriah practices.203

The activities of the Missionaries relating to tribal areas were also praiseworthy. For instance, the Missionaries made an entry into the areas dominated by the Khonds, who were the chief culprits pursing the horrid practices like Meriah and Infanticide. The Missionaries sought to civilize and educate the Khonds so that, their minds could be liberated from such superstitious faiths. Further, the American Mission at Jaleswar worked hard to bring the tribal children (mostly Santals) to the fold of education.204

203. For details see N.R. Patnaik, op.cit., pp.188-193.
204. A. Sutton, Evangelization, op.cit., p.239.
The Missionaries also engaged themselves in fighting other social evils such as "sati". They used to explain to the Hindus by referring to the contents of their sacred texts that nowhere the practice of "self-immolation" was sanctified. They also sought to explode the myth relating to the cruel practice of "self-immolation" under the wheels of Lord Jagannath. In fact, they rescued a poor and "wretched woman" from the burning pit at Puri.205

The Missionaries also made some efforts at removing the caste prejudices as prevalent in Hindu society. Since the caste system was highly antagonistic to the Christians the missionaries made vigorous efforts at highlighting the evil effects of the caste system. Further, they severely criticised the caste prejudices such as its rigidity and restrictions as well as notion concerning superiority of the Brahmins. In fact, the low caste people who were humiliated by the high caste community for ages decided to accept Christianity as their religion. As a result caste prejudice were minimised. Thus, Missionaries succeeded in changing the social outlook of the people.206

There were several brands of Missionaries working in Orissa namely, the Roman Catholics Freewill Baptists and the General Baptists. A cordial relationship, however, was

206. For details see Hunter, Orissa, op.cit., pp.141-142.
maintained within the Baptist denomination as locality of operation was divided between them through friendly arrangements. Further, School books, translations of the scriptures and religious works as prepared by individual missions were used in common. 207

In order to spread Christianity, the Missionaries followed certain clear strategies. For instance, they used to preach in simple but emotional languages, emphasizing on the logic behind the adoption of Christianity. Teaching the holy Gospel of Christianity was their second instrument for mass communication. Thirdly, as they were unable to reach all the areas because of lack of communications, the missionaries started the practice of distributing the holy pamphlets wherever they found a gathering. They also helped the poor and the distressed at the time of need and provided free medical facilities to them. 208

It may be observed that the high mysteries surrounding the Christian religion, as propagated by the Missionaries, however, did not influence the Oriya people greatly. But their constant condemnation of both Hinduism and Islam created a great impact on the native population. For instance, the missionnaires not only attacked the Hindu Gods and Goddesses but condemned evil practices such as idolatry, pilgrimages, and the caste system. They strongly deplored the

207. For details see D.Swaro, op.cit., p.219.
208. For details see Ibid, p.223.
government's social policy and urged upon the Oriya people to remove flagrant social evils such as "Sati", "Female Infanticide", "Human Sacrifices" and "Self Immolation" as mentioned earlier.

The missionaries were not only excellent preachers and educators, but they took an active part in literary activities of Orissa during the nineteenth century. In fact, they began to play a vital role in the field of new literary movement. To start with Carey, Marshman and Ward of Serampore began the translation work of religious scriptures and the Bible in Oriya. They translated the Bible and Hebrew poems into Oriya language from Serampore Mission Press in 1814. The Serampore Missionaries also published an Oriya-English dictionary with the help of one Mohan Thakur in 1811. Besides these, a pamphlet on the Futility of Worship of Jagannath was published from Serampore. The General Baptist Missionaries of Orissa also wrote volumes of books for the use of schools and offices. For instance, A. Sutton, produced several works as Oriya-English Grammar (1831), History of Orissa (1839), Oriya Dictionary (1841), Oriya Grammar and Oriya Geography (1839), Geeta Govinda (1840), Amar Kosha (1845), Batish Singhasan (1850). He also edited Nitikatha in 1840. The Calcutta School Book Society published the Oriya Primer and Padartha Vidyasara in 1845. He also translated the Old Testament in three volumes. As for W.C. Lacey,
he wrote Oriya Grammar (1855) and edited Njhikatha (1855) and Hitopadesh (1855). As for J. Phillips he wrote the Geography of Orissa in 1845.209

The Missionaries also pioneered the movement in the field of journalism. To begin with, the first printing press was established at Cuttack in 1837 to print the Christian literature, geography and science in the Oriya language. It facilitated the path for the spread of Vernacular education in Orissa. In this context it may be highlighted that while the urban middle class in Orissa sought to spread Western education through the medium of the English language, the missionaries resorted to the propagation of the "New Learning" through Vernacular literature. The missionaries also edited and published several newspapers and periodicals during the nineteenth century. These included, the Gyanaruna, Arunodaya, Prabodhachandrika, Aguvani Dhambodhini, Taraka and Christian Mitra. The Roman Catholics edited and published two periodicals known as Christaraja and Prabha. The government also took the help of Missionaries to translate the legal documents into Oriya for official use. Finally, it was Sadhusundar Das who circulated a weekly manuscript in Palmleaf called Kujibar Patra in which he discussed on themes relating to socio-religious and administrative matters. Such a circulation from Padampur near Cuttack, however, came to an end with the death of Sadhusundar in 1838. Also, with the help of the Missionaries, the government

209. For details see Swaro, op.cit., pp.
edited the Oriya Gazette. It was Sutton who became the first editor of Oriya Gazette and he was succeeded by Charles Lacey. After the departure of Lacey, however, the editorship of the Gazettee went in favour of his son William Carey Lacey in 1853.

To conclude, the missionaries played a pioneering role in the field of socio-cultural activities. This has been most succinctly put by David B. Smith who observed:

"... The Missionaries ... are not only apostles of evangelization and education - though such is certainly the chief end of their ambition - but they are the friends of sanitation, the dispenses of medicine to the seek, the clothes of the naked, the feeders of the hungry, the shelterer of the exposed, the guardians of friendless widows and orphans. They have an intimate knowledge of the people, their language, their modes of thought, and their everyday want. They had rescued many children from poverty, prostitution and immolation ..."

Highlighting further, Smith extolled their role as follows:

"... Stimulated by the noblest motives, their zeal tempered by good judgement, these are men to whom, in my opinion, the Government might entrust more money and resources for the counteraction of much physical degradation and misery ever present in Orissa ..."

Thus, the Missionaries through their exemplary activities sought to introduce socio-religious reforms and reconstruction programmes by taking into account the socio-cultural needs of Oriya people.

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211. As cited in N.R. Patnaik, op.cit., p.56.
212. As cited in Ibid, p.56.