CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Colonialism, independence and Christian mission have had great influence on the people of North East India. Among these, however, the key factor paved way for the transformation of the region and the tribal society is the Christian mission. Socio, political, cultural, economic and educational revolution of the region began with the establishment of churches, schools, colleges, technical schools, charitable institutions and many others. Quality education by the mission is solely responsible for the enlightenment of the people without which the history of the people could not have been altered. The introduction of Christianity helped to develop a common identity among the people and brought a qualitative change in the relationship of the people. In the words of Pugh (1992), “Christianity spread rapidly in the region particularly among the hill tribes as educational, social and economic advancement came to the adherent of this new religion” (p. 51). Today North East India marches toward progress due to the invaluable contributions of the Catholic Church and other churches and it is not much behind other Indian states in terms of developments, facilities, and opportunities. In this way the churches’ contribution in making a new India in this region cannot be ignored.

The Treaty of Yandaboo signed between the British and the Burmese in 1826 was the turning point toward Christianization of North East India. Even though the Catholic Church set foot first in the region she could not take roots because of her failed Tibet mission. The Arrival of William Carey in 1793 at Calcutta and the founding of the Serampore Mission were the beginning of the Baptist mission in the North East. The Charter Act of 1813 permitted the missionaries to preach the gospel in India. Making use of the opportunity the Serampore Mission started sending missionaries to the Khasi Hills,
in Meghalaya. After the establishment of a mission centre at Cherrapunjee, they opened another mission centre and a school at Guwahati in 1829 at the request of Davis Scott, the Commissioner of Assam. In 1838 their mission was handed over to the American Baptist Mission.

The foundation of Protestantism in England had its manifestation in the policy of the East India Company which came to India for trade but eventually took over the political administration of the country. Their policy regarding religion always directed against the Catholics all over, especially in India as they entrusted school education to the Presbyterians and the Baptists in the North East. This has reinforced the resources of these missions, and so they launched their missionary programme in India with fresh favour. Due to this selective policy, the Catholic Church was on her own in India receiving no favours from them in the days of the missionary advance in the 19th century, even though she arrived long before the Presbyterians and the Baptists. The British agenda included permitting only one mission to work in each hill districts. That is one of the reasons why the Catholics could not venture into Nagaland prior to the independence of India. With the annexation of Assam, few Catholics from different parts of India tried their fortune in the North East and gradually a small but a significant group of people got settled in different areas. Priests from Bengal looked after the spiritual needs of these people occasionally. Later on the Assam mission was entrusted with the Salvatorians. During the First World War, the Salvatorians were asked to quit the country as they were Germans and considered as enemies of Britain. The mission was then entrusted with Jesuits who left the mission after seven years of service from 1915 to 1922, citing lack of personnel. In 1922 finally the Salesians were given charge of the Assam mission. The turning point in the history of the Catholic Church in North East India came with the creation of the first diocese of Shillong in 1934.
Kottupallil (1993) quotes F. S. Downs, an eminent historian on Christianity in North East India, “without question, the most important post-war development has been the rapid expansion of the Roman Catholic Church” (p. 53). Both numerically and demographically Catholic Church is a significant presence in North East India. The church actively immersed in various activities which include health care, higher education, economy and livelihood, preservation and promotion of language, translation in the vernaculars, use of cultural symbols in worship, studies and researches in indigenous cultures, promotion of gender equality, care for the environment, development works, social justice, creation of socio-political consciousness etc.

Missionary influence was a major force in bringing about fundamental changes in the Naga ways of life. It is Christianity that led the Nagas from a traditional and animistic way of life to a new religious experience and modern way of life and thinking. Edward Winter Clark, his wife Mary Mead and Godhula Rufus Brown were the pioneer Baptist missionaries to Nagaland from the Assam mission of the American Baptists since early 1870. They were followed by missionaries like C. D. King to the Angamis, W. E. Witter to the Lothas and Dickson to the Semas. Through the untiring works of these missionaries many Nagas embraced Christian faith. Conversion to Baptist Christianity was a mass movement in many parts of Nagaland and as such there was strong opposition to the missionary activities from the non-Christians. The first real growth of the Christian community (in Ao and Sema areas) alarmed the custodians of the old ways and serious persecutions followed. For example in the Sema areas the first Christians (Baptists) were severely persecuted but the church grew steadily (Downs, 1983). As in the case of earlier Baptists, the Catholics faced stiff opposition from the latter in the past; and even now occasional intimidation and door to door campaign against them is being carried out in some quarters. The God of Christianity was easily got rooted into the belief system of the Nagas because he was presented with qualitative attributes like love,
mercy, pardon, forgiveness, acceptance, and mutual service. In the words of Barpujari (1982), “Christianity has struck its roots deep in the Naga soil,...prior to their conversion they were ‘lost souls’; they have now learnt the value of peace, toleration and coexistence with their own men and neighbours in the plains” (p. 3).

Catholic Church in Nagaland had its first official contact with the Nagas towards the end of 1940, when Akbar Hydari, the Governor of Assam requested the Bishop of Shillong to send Sisters to look after the newly built Naga hospital, at Kohima, a war gift to the Nagas for their unflinching support to the British during the World War II. Sisters Margarita Cifre and Guadalupe with the chaplain Mgr. Emmanuel Bars arrived at Kohima on 31 December 1948. Mission work began among the Angami and Lotha tribes from early 1950s. In the Angami area, Fr. Marocchino initiated the mission work while among the Lothas it began from Catholic mission, Golaghat. In the midst of strong opposition from the Baptists, Catholic Church began her journey forward with a vision and mission to offer maximum service to the people in all possible ways, particularly in religious, educational, medical and social fields. Although the Catholic Church was accused of being an intruder into the Naga society by some because of the reason that the Baptist Church came into the Hills earlier than the Catholic Church, it has been disagreed by the majority respondents and interviewees that the latter was an intruder. Another claim by some people that the presence of the Catholic Church would disturb the existing peaceful situation in the society and create division if she was invited or allowed to establish herself, too has been disagreed by the respondents. Majority of the people expressed their view that the Church did not divide the society because of the fact, as it is mentioned in the text, whichever places in the state the Church has been established, it was done with prior invitation extended by the people of the area. Even though the church has been receiving moral support from the general public, politicians, bureaucrats and administrators, still there are some Baptist leaders vociferously object to the
presence of the Catholic Church today. Reasons like jealousy, prejudice, wrong teachings and false information, lack of tolerance and open mindedness, fear of dominance etc are some of the reasons for the objection. Catholics face hostility in the form of threatening letters, abusive words and curses from Baptist leaders, students union and tribal apex body in Mon district and in some parts of the state. In the recent past even the church structures have been pulled down at Phokhungri under Phek district and at Anatongre under Kiphire district and Catholics from Phokhungri have been sent out from their village.

In the beginning, many Catholics felt humiliated and became helpless as they were ridiculed at for being from the lower strata of the society. Besides that they didn’t have many educated people and public leaders in their fold to defend them. This had added injury to the already existing prejudices against the Catholics. T. J. Chacko says, “the Catholics are the latecomers in the area and often made up of the leftovers from the Baptists in many areas and so they are looked down upon as inferior. Hence it is a need to improve quality of life of those Catholics” (personal communication, November 3, 2007). In order to raise up the status of the Catholics the church makes attempt to educate every Catholic child in the schools and provide other socio-economic assistance, because of which majority of those who have been educated are doing well in the society.

The workforce of the church consisted of priests, nuns, catechists and church elders work hard to drive home the message and activities of the church to the people. The vision and mission of the church is to offer maximum service to raise up the dignity of each individual to lead a happy life. People have mightily started enjoying the fruits of the works and experiencing the change. The church’s interactions with the people and various humanitarian works undertaken have helped remove many misconceptions about the Church. In spite of several mission centres in the state and the investment of vast
human resources at the service of the people, the church growth understood in terms of numbers may not be as exceptional as elsewhere in the North East. Today out of more than 1500 villages in Nagaland Catholic communities are found only in little more than 200 villages and the Catholics are about 60000 out of a total population of 1,980,602 as per 2011 census. It is evident from this statistics that there is absolutely no forceful conversion to the Catholic Church nor any incentives offered to become Catholics. All those who became Catholics in the state are those at their own free will decided to be so. Among all the works of the church, educational services, welfare schemes and health care brought great benefits to the people. Besides these the church also renders yeomen service to humanity through, pastoral care, bible apostolate, youth apostolate, catechetical works, technical education, fight against drug abuse, care for the poor and orphans and many other social works.

Nagaland has been described as a ‘land of festivals’ because of varieties of dances, music and songs that are rich in meaning. Religion and culture are intimately linked as the former provides the base for the latter. But attempts had been made in the past by the earlier missionaries to discourage and exploit these cultures in the name of religion as they believed ancient culture of the people was incompatible with the new religion. Their argument was that observances of dance, music, festivals etc would deter one from the true spirit of Christianity; therefore, refraining from them would make one free from ‘satanic practices.’

The traditional belief of the people, rests on the foundations of fear, fear of unknown forces or spirits even that of the dead relatives, who could do them harm. In order to get protected from them one has to appease them with sacrifices. It is true when the Nagas got converted to the new faith the missionaries asked them to give up their traditional beliefs, practices and customs. It is said that they discouraged even the style of dressing because they believed everything revolved around headhunting. Bishop
Ferrando of Shillong also wrote that the Baptist missionaries had suppressed songs, dances and festivals, celebrations connected with cultivation, construction of houses, founding of villages etc of the people which were dear to them. But the missionaries failed to comprehend the significance of ancient old customs or practices as they provided foundation of their cultural life. Kunnunkal (2003) wrote, ‘whether art or architecture, music or dance, literature secular or sacred, its depth and complexity, the strength for the pursuit of the highest level of existence, these come from the meaning, vision and world views that religion or faith provides (p. 211). Catholic Church teaches that there cannot be a gap between the culture of the people and the gospel. So the church appreciates many of the customs of the people and tries to understand its role in theology and worship. Life cannot be uprooted from the culture of the people and so she inculculturates tribal architecture, music, art, symbols and myths to a great extent. “If Christian faith demanded the abandonment of many traditional religious rituals, Catholicism did not leave the people in the lurch and empty handed. It accompanied them from birth to death with rituals that breathed hope and confidence” (Jala, 1993, p. 385). But today there have been attempts from the side of the Baptists too to encourage tribal customs and values. It is also evident through the publication of a journal from Jorhat Theological College, Assam, ‘Review on Tribal theology.’ “If we cannot understand the culture of other people, we also cannot translate the language of one culture into the language of another culture because translation always presupposed understanding” (Pal, 2005, p. 241). The church has a formidable task before the people who accuse her for destroying the culture to prove to them that church is not a destroyer but preserver and promoter of culture. She has incorporated songs, dances, signs and symbols, rituals and ceremonies into liturgy and worship and people could experience them in line with the Christian values and therefore, they are not alienated from their roots. It has been found in the survey that almost 50% of the respondents are of the opinion that Catholic Church has encouraged indigenous songs, music and symbols and
suggested that they are meaningful and important to incorporate. 33% of them feel it is rarely important or meaningful to incorporate. As there had been a lot of accusations against Christianity for destroying the age-old culture of the people, it was very necessary to prove that the Catholic Church preserved and promoted the same.

Ecumenical dialogue promotes better knowledge and communication between the participants. It is a meeting of heart and mind between followers of various denominations. The relationship between the Baptists and the Catholics of Nagaland had been tense in the past. Their attitude to each other has been tainted with suspicion and the work of evangelization has been carried out on a competitive basis (Puthenpurakal, 1983). But today a small beginning has been made; even though there are doctrinal differences both churches come together for discussion and planning for the common good.

The role of education is to bring about all round development in man by infusing positive energy and doing away with negative influence. “Education brings about awareness, insight, a cultural transformation, offers opportunities for a better standard of life, and scope for creativity” (Farias, 1999, p. 120). The people in general associate good education with the Catholic Church. The biggest impact the church has had on the state is school education from the 1960s and college education from the 1980s being imparted. “The Catholic Church in India knows that through her many schools, she has been making and will continue to make a handsome contribution to the nation at considerable sacrifice of personnel and resources” (Pastoral Plan, 1994, p. 13). All the activities of the church are centered on these institutions. And so, evaluation of the role of the church on development of Nagaland is essentially an evaluation of the kind of education, the church is imparting. One question we need to ask ourselves: ‘Is our education relevant to the present situation?’ The progress and quality of education under Catholic mission has been truly remarkable. So much has been achieved, but so much
more remains to be done. Through a wide network of primary, middle, secondary and higher secondary education the Catholic schools have raised the academic standard of the state and helped increase the literacy rate of the state above national average. Quality education imparted at an affordable rate throughout Nagaland is indeed a notable achievement. The number of economically backward students, passed out from these educational institutions is uncountable. In the words of F. Solo, “Uplift of the North East is attributed to the Catholic Church. They made quality education available to all at affordable rate. Church should identify areas that are favourable to us and launch more schools and colleges (Solo, personal communication, July 28, 2012). Holistic education imparted by the church has been one of the most important agents of social change in the state. It has helped many to lead a transformed life based on the acquired knowledge. Socio-cultural transformation among the people in Nagaland could not have taken place without education. But a very special effort the church ought to make is to make education more relevant to the situation and life of the people as it is evident from the survey. Of course the church has made to raise the academic standard but in terms of relevance the survey shows that only 8% agreed it has made it relevant. According to National Policy on Education, there should be systematic programme of non-formal education for school drop-outs, for children from habitations without schools, working children and girls who cannot attend whole-day schools. Non-formal education facility is offered at St. Paul’s Phesama, Holy Cross Dimapur and Assisi, Dimapur where hundreds of students have studied and passed out. But in the recent past the number of students enrolled in the programme is very low as the government through its Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan (SSA) programme has opened many schools in different parts of the state especially in the rural areas. Added to this many poor children admitted into our own schools are either given free education or charged a nominal fee.
Establishment of schools and colleges in the hills and plains of the state brought together students from different villages and non-Naga community; and teachers from outside the state to study and serve. For example in these institutions in the earlier days one frequently found teachers from South India. Of recently most of our teachers are from the state itself while some subject experts are from outside. Catholic institutions have, therefore, fostered better relationship with people from outside the state through knowledge exchange.

At a time when the world is loosing the eternal values and man is not given his due respect it is important to teach personal, social, community, moral and spiritual and behavioural values to children in the school. Jeyaseelan (2004) wrote, “the world today is trying to forge ahead stampeding on time-tested societal values. On the one hand - corruption, oppression of the underprivileged, violence, terrorism, looting and arson, religious fundamentalism, unequal distribution of benefits have become very attractive values” (p. 161). It is very essential to make our students to know that education they acquire is not just meant only for government job or self-employment but for ‘life.’ It has been felt that the church ought to venture into imparting quality education both in the national and international level so that the illiterate will follow the literate and the uneducated will follow the educated. The essential role of education must be seen as giving people the freedom of thought, judgment, feeling and imagination they need in order to develop their talents and remain in as much control as possible of their own lives.

The indicators of development are never exhaustive. However, in a popular sense, the improvements in standards of education, economic, political and social spheres, in health care, housing facilities, status and dignity of women, social protection, social consciousness, etc., are some of the most common indicators of development. In the social field the benefits rendered by the church have been satisfactory. The church has
been able to establish good relationship with others, created conducive atmosphere in many families which led to the transformation of many families, many women are empowered etc. The children are better looked after in areas where schools have been run by the church. The empowerment of women through SHGs have raised the living standard of the people especially, women. The church works hard to maintain stability and indissolubility of the marriage among Christians. This has helped to reduce the divorce rate among the Catholics in the state.

The dispensaries or health centres in each centre or parish looked after by a trained nurse sister who is often the sole hope of an entire area in times of emergency have not only saved lives, but have contributed much to building up a healthy society. Conscientizing the villagers about health, hygiene, good diet etc could not be done better by others especially in the beginning stage of the mission. Together with health services these sisters have tried to improve the status of hundreds of women in the locality. In order to empower the women in general the church follows the principle, ‘educate a woman, save a family.’ In all her efforts she does give equal importance to both the sexes. The role these heroic women play in breaking down superstitions related to health cannot be underestimated. But the greatest contribution that the women religious have made to North East India is to give a great boost to the dignity and role of women (Kottuppallil, 1991). Health care is extended to hundreds of people through the service of the sister nurses and CRS food programmes on regular basis. The health scenario of the state needs improvement particularly in the rural areas where the performance and working conditions of government hospitals and dispensaries are below satisfactory even though they are fully equipped with manpower. As a major contributor in the health sector in all over the world, the church should involve more into it by by being a close collaborator with the government and public.
Catholic Church is a provider of direct and indirect employment to many people in the state through her educational services. More than 80% of the respondents agreed to this view. This in turn has improved the living standard of the people and enhanced the economy of the state. The economy of the state got a facelift with the establishment of trade and other business activities in the vicinity of the institutions.

Many a time while noticing the fast development of a Catholic centre some tends to interpret the activities of the Catholic Church parallel with the ‘state government.’ Schools, colleges, dispensaries and other social projects have been great and it is graded above that of many other institutions and organizations. Some think of ‘unknown source of money’ available to the Catholic Church. The truth of the matter is that it is not the availability of the abundance of money, but it is the ‘responsible management’ of the limited available resources that is the key to the success of the Catholic Church (Yimso, 2012, July, 8).

Nagaland has a democratic village set up. The church in no way has interfered with the democratic structure and functioning of their system nor destroyed the system. On the other hand she only enhanced the system by adopting their model in her functioning by empowering various organizations and associations in the parish through their involvement in all the activities of the parish. The contribution of the Catholic Church in the general political sphere of the state, so far is not commendable. In the sixty member Assembly there isn’t any Catholic MLA nor in the state do we find very influential political leaders. One reason for not representing people in the Assembly and not influential in the political arena of the state is the minority status of the community in the state and the nature of politics in the state. Nevertheless, the Church needs to conscientise people on clean politics, common good and common welfare. It has been found in the survey that the Catholic Church makes effort in creating better political consciousness among the people. For most people the essence of religion is morality.
Low political ideals lead to selfishness and this in turn lead to corruption. Had there been a little realization that money obtained through unjust ways and means would lead to destruction; there would not have been so much injustice and corruption in the state. The Supreme Court of India, has termed corruption as human rights violation. All churches have failed to convince their members and deter them from earning money through illegal means. Time has come to educate people not to donate the blood stained money to the church treasury. A beginning has to be made. Even though Catholic Church is a minority community in the state, like the yeast in the dough, she must promote values of justice, truth, equality and honesty and work for the total transformation of the society and common good of the people. Otherwise, Mahatma Gandhi’s caution to a Christian missionary will continue to haunt: “I love Christ. It’s just that so many of you Christians are so unlike Christ. If Christians would really live according to the teachings of Christ, as found in the Gospels, all of India would be Christian today (Raj, 2012).

On the one hand Nagas as a whole are proud to profess themselves as Christians irrespective of denominations but on the on the other hand, an introspection to know how deep the true spirit of Christianity will definitely make some sense. In the words of Jamir, “Nagas consider themselves as a Christian state; covenanted Nagaland for Christ,…we have miserably and shamefully failed to uphold the principles of Christian way of life (“The Christian state of Nagaland: Is it theocratic or secular?” 2008, February 24). A religion is not simply to be observed but to be lived according to its teachings. The spirit of Christianity should go into the heart and mind of the people and that should be reflected in the day to day life. Rampant corruption and lack of work culture in the state may be a sign of shallow Christian ethics. Most probably the churches have been busy in the past to get as many members to their fold while forgetting the obligation to give the message of Christianity. So the churches have failed to make them real ‘Christians.’ Padinjarekuttu (2006) wrote, “the crisis of credibility touches the
whole evangelization enterprise: words do not match action, the received teachings do not change the life of the believers, rituals do not energize life, and Christian values do not seem to transform; there is no honesty, fidelity, justice and compassion” (p. 171). It is time to evaluate the role of the church in the real life situations of the people whom we serve. Does the church come closer to the people or is she still distant from the people? In most cases the church is away from the people and if she does make willful attempts to change the life of the people then can there be meeting between the two.

With the arrival of the Catholic Church, the state of Nagaland has witnessed development in many fields. She is a major player in the social and economic development of the state. Her contribution in these fields is immeasurable and outstanding compared to other religious denominations in the state. In the spiritual realm she has done much but many more to achieve. Multiplicity of language is definitely a great hindrance to communicate teachings of the Church and to increase the faith of the people. Harassment and intimidation meted out to the Catholics in the past and now cannot just be ignored as nothing. However, all these have inspired her to face challenges and she has contributed to the wellbeing of the people in all possible ways, may not be much but what she has achieved is significant in terms of the minority status and commitment. The church has been planted in this soil and the benefits people enjoy are due to the unwavering support rendered by a good number of faithful lay leaders, people in public office like politicians, bureaucrats and administrators; parents, teachers, students, benefactors in India and abroad, education department, etc besides a band of committed priests, sisters and catechists. The vision and mission of the missionaries have been to offer maximum service to the people so as to bring in all round development by bearing untold sufferings and sacrificing their life. They share the fruits of their sacrifice in a spirit of ‘giving for the sake of others’. The goal, ‘wellbeing of persons’ enables her to build up presbyteries and mission houses, parish churches, schools, colleges, boarding
houses, formation houses, dispensaries, convents and other human resource centres. The Church has led from the front and showed a way for the people of the state to embark on a journey of peace and prosperity with renewed hope and confidence in the future. Through her works, she has managed to clear some of the misconceptions people had of her, primarily she came to disturb peace and divide the society. However, by enjoying the fruits of the labour of the church most people in the state realized that she has only ‘good service’ to deliver. In the words of Bishop Robert Kerketta, “Recognition must be given to the missionaries of yesterday for the work they have done notwithstanding their human failures and mistakes,…recognition implies respect” (Kerketta, 1998, p. 281). If Catholic Church had not come into Nagaland, people would have still been in the dark. But many don’t acknowledge this fact (V. Yambemo, personal communication, May 5, 2012).

Absence of vocational education in the state is a major setback for the students who otherwise will have to look for white-color jobs. It will only add up numbers to the already existing unemployment in the state and will be a burden on the government. “Skill-based job-oriented vocational training facilities should be made available to the youth so that youth are given enough options and opportunities to either opt for higher studies or vocational training for self employment and their livelihood” (Rume, 2012, November 6, p. 7). Vocational educational programmes are crucial to prepare students for identified occupations. They are meant to enhance individual employability and to provide an alternative for those pursuing higher education without particular interest or purpose. It should be introduced in the schools especially from higher classes to equip children for all round development or else schools and colleges will be sending out thousands of children every year with certificate based on marks obtained on theoretical knowledge. Vocational curses based on agriculture, marketing and social services etc can be very useful for students. Establishment of vocational courses should be a priority for
the Catholic schools since they are in the forefront of imparting education. It is also the responsibility of the government as well as public and private enterprise. Implementation of this programme will bring about quality in our students and definitely bring down the unemployment rate in the state. “No country can improve its quality of life and standards of living, unless its human resources are wedded to its natural resources (“Seminar on development through social justice”, 1982, p. 5). With unemployment staring in the face of the ever growing number of educated youth in Nagaland, Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has said that the “critical gaps” in the state’s education system was largely responsible for educated Naga youth unable to find gainful employment or suitable placement in the job market. “Although, Nagaland has already achieved a reasonably high rate of literacy, much above the national level, yet, there are still critical gaps in our education system, mostly due to the syllabus not being adequately updated to suit the ever changing job requirements,” (Critical gaps in state’s education system: Rio”, 2008, October 15, p. 1).

The current phenomenon is that modern development programmes have brought in a new influential minority growing rich day by day as a consequence the majority poor are at the mercy of this minority. The church is, therefore, now called to go beyond institutions to integrate rural development by modernizing agriculture, generating rural employment and strengthening people’s organization. People in the state still follow the old method of cultivation and most of them are unaware of the cultivation of cash crops. Agriculture needs to be made an attraction for all including educated youth. It is important to empower women, especially in the rural areas of the state like Kiphire, Longleng, Mon and Tuensang districts through SHGs and animation programmes to make their families self-sufficient. For a healthier and happier life the church needs to reach out to people in the remote areas through medical help. It has been found that medical help is still unreachable for many people in the villages. She can achieve this by
collaborating with and strengthening the existing government medical facilities available in the village or town.

It is also a felt need to strengthen the existing institutions so as to produce better results. Our educational institutions need to be modernized to compete with prestigious and standard institutions in the country and abroad. Establishment of schools in the villages and opportunities for technical education will be another contribution from the side of the church to uplift the people. Church should extend more assistance to educate more poor children in the state irrespective of caste or creed. The only way to remove backwardness of the state is education. Through this the rural youth can be brought at par with the youth of the town to reduce disparity in education, employment opportunities and distribution of wealth and above all poverty can be minimized or completely annihilated. Training the youth for tomorrow to take up leadership and face challenges is a task before the church. The church, therefore, needs to invest more for the promotion of human resource development. Initiatives to promote better understanding and cooperation among various denominations in the state to avoid misunderstanding and overcome trust deficit is an area the church needs to look into.

The church is actively involved in the development of this small hill state especially empowering the rural poor by enhancing educational facilities through the commitment of her personnel and investment of material resources. Today our educational institutions engage more than 75%, if not more, of our resources in terms of religious personnel (priests and nuns), money and time for the service of education to equip children to begin the process of changes this state is in need of. Over 70000 students studying in our institutions carry the service of love, peace and charity to at least 25000 families. Besides a number of educational institutions including formal and non-formal, vocational training centres meant for dropouts and illiterate women etc are run by the sisters equip more unfortunate ones in the state.
On the whole Catholic Church has been able to make a healthy combination of evangelization and socio-economic developmental activities from its inception to this day and thus making positive change in the state and contributing much towards the welfare of its people. She is an agent of change and a contributor for the growth and prosperity of the present and future generations. She has just started her work; she has miles to travel, yet the impact of her services is felt positively throughout the state. This study has proved that within a short span of time the church has reached out to all the tribes of the state though not comprehensively; and responded positively to the demands and wishes of the people for which she has been established.