CHAPTER - 3

Primary aims of Catholic Mission Education

The Church in India is engaged in a massive education apostolate through a vast network of schools and colleges. In the eyes of many it is almost an expression of her identity. Besides, the humanitarian services, education would be the one area where she had contributed most to the nation. It is also true that many a time her educational institutions have become a symbol of her minority identity, and hence a means of self-assertion. By now her educational apostolate has grown into a vast structure with more than 6,600 primary and middle schools, 1,570 high schools, 132 colleges (junior and degree), and 428 vocation training institutions. More than 59,300 lay staff, and 14,750 religious priest staff are catering to the needs of more than thirty and a half lakh students in its institutions. It is an undeniable fact that she has contributed very much to the growth of education in India.

The Christian schools offer the students a good intellectual formation. We find in these schools an ethos of fellowship where class and caste

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1. *Catholic Dictionary, 1981*
distinctions are not glaring. Just like the general educational system of India, the Church has quality schools catering to the needs of the well-do-do, and ordinary schools for the common people. The former tend to perpetuate the inegalitarian structures of society and hence promote structural injustice. The latter schools, chiefly in the rural areas, contribute much to the eradication of illiteracy. But the Church is known more through her elite schools than the vast network of her primary and middle schools. A seasoned educationalist, Fr. Thomas Kunnunkal, while granting the need for English for education and job opportunities, comments "sticking to English medium, apart from being educationally retrogressive will surely put serious constraints on our mission and aim of catering for the poorer classes." It is not the Church's concern for the poor that is in disrepute, but the quality of her service to the poor, in view of the needed social changes which would remove the conditions causing inequality. The Church has contributed to increasing literacy through the schools by scholarships to the poor and other such amenities for them. She could more articulately spell out her commitment to promote social justice through a transformation of the ideologies supportive of unjust structures. There seems to be an ideological link between the educational apostolate and the
social apostolate of the Church.

The method and the schools environment qualify the value content of education. They affect the formation of the students either as agents of social change or as agents of social stratification. The formal objectives of the education system as a social institution need not correspond to the actual attainment in terms of habits, social beliefs and commitments.

Banking concept of education presupposes a number of elements which would perpetuate the value system of an unjust society. Hence it becomes a tool in the hands of those in power for their self-preservation. Historically and ideologically it is linked to the colonial methods of education. As the Indian society, and for that matter the Church itself did not go through any radical social changes or ideological upheavals as a result of the struggle for independence, new ideology of education could not have emerged from such national experiences. Hence the Church's methods remain basically the same as before independence.

The banking system of education presupposes a particular type of relationship between the teacher
and the students. Education is not considered as a process of enquiry, in which the teacher and the students are participants. The students are supposed to be recipients. The teachers are supposed to be a reservoir of knowledge from which they impart knowledge to the students. But true education is a process of liberation for the teacher and the students, mediated by the world. Both contribute to this process.

The content of textbooks skilfully hide from the students the unjust social conditions of the Indian masses, and the causes which create them. But then text books at least in Manipur, for all recognized schools for the Board Exam, are prescribed by the Government and deviation is not permitted. The Church unconsciously through the banking system of education, is reinforcing the status quo of society, and thus serving the interests of the privileged section. One of the characteristics of the ideology of oppression is a desire to keep people submissive and contented, through imparting selective knowledge. If the world becomes an object of inquiry through 'problem centred education,' then their perception may change and they may demand more substantial social changes, therefore, religious education must uphold that effecting changes in an unjust society is an authentic form of love.
It is true that many of the Catholic schools have successful social awareness programmes. The students could be helped to a much deeper awareness of the social situation, more could be done to create a sharper sensitivity to human problems. Ways could be devised to solicit more effective response to the demands of brotherhood.

The value system behind the spirit of competition is linked to the philosophy of liberalism. Equal access to school does not mean equal opportunity for acquiring academic excellence, because children from richer cultural backgrounds are in advantageous positions. Hence competition to outdo others would only perpetuate inequality. Yet ways of exploring human potentialities to the full is a goal of good education. Competition should be understood as the dynamism to do the best that one is capable of, or to outdo one's own past achievements by stretching one's capacity to the maximum extent in every area of human endeavour. In a society like ours it is essential that everyone is made development minded and motivated to work intensely for it on the basis of highest priority. Students must be helped to see the people of other cultures and

1. Fr. Joseph Vellamrunnel, s.j.- 'Church's Educational Services in the struggle for a new society,' The Indian Church in the struggle for a new society, pp. 205-222, ed. by D.S. Malorgavaddas.
nations not as economic or social threats or abstractions, but as concrete human beings with their joys and sufferings. They must be helped to discover the common humanity in different peoples. The Christian schools should definitely take pride in the fact of being in the forefront of education which introduces students to the modern changes and scientific mentality. The Christian institutions have definitely a duty to foster positive values of human body, the beauty of created things, modern cultural values offered by technology, and above all the ultimate meaning of science and progress. Education is a process of self creation through dialogue with the material world in all its beauty and utility. At the same time it is an exploration into the mysterious depths of other human beings and God himself. The Indian Church is committed to the service of the people of this country. She has a definite role to play in the creation of a new society.¹

¹ Fr. Joseph Vellamkunnel, s.j., op. cit. pp.205-222.
institution where young people gradually learn to open themselves up to life as it is and to create in themselves a definite attitude to life as it should be. When seen in this light, a school is not only a place where one is given a choice of intellectual values, but a place where one is presented an array of values which are actively lived.¹

Thomas Macaulay, the renowned British historian and statesman (1800–1859) described in no uncertain terms, the long, uninterrupted and enduring nature of the Catholic Church and Papacy in the following words, "There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy, so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that joins together the two great ages of human civilisation. No other institution is left standing, which carries the mind back to the time when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when tigers and leopards bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century, to the Pope who crowned Pepin

¹ Sr. Helen Mendonca F.M., op.cit., p.464
'Women in the struggle for a just society.'
in the eighth, and far beyond the time of Pepin, the august dynasty extends till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The Republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the Republic of Venice has gone, and the Papacy still remains, not in decay, as a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigour. The Catholic Church is still sending forth, to the furthest ends of the world, missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine, and still confronting Kings with the same spirit, with which she confronted Attila. The number of her children is greater than at any former age.... She was great and respected before the Saxon set foot in Britain, before the Frank had crossed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished in Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigour, when some traveller from New Zealand, shall in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge, to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

India has the second largest Catholic population in Asia and the fifteenth in the world. The world's Catholic population is slightly more than 84,10,00,000 according to the latest church estimates. Catholics are almost 13% of the world's population. There are

1 Publicity and Media Committee, Papal Visit, Shillong, 1986
2 Catholic Readings, Don Bosco, Imphal, 20.4.1936, vol 5, No.9.
about 12,000,000 Catholics, constituting 1.7% of the population of India. The church is engaged in a big way in educational activity, she runs premier educational institutions in the big cities, and reaches out to the remotest villages with schools for primary education. She runs over 12,000 educational institutions, ranging from primary schools to colleges. She reaches out in every sphere for genuine human upliftment and promotion. The primary aim of Catholic Mission Education is evangelisation, which constitutes the essential mission of the Catholic Church. But there is no compulsion to become a Catholic, and certainly force is never used to gain adherents, and education in Catholic schools in Manipur is not directed to gain converts to Catholicism. What does evangelisation constitute in practice? It includes a variety of activities. Besides its primary aim of proclamation of the Gospel, evangelisation also means literacy, medical care, humanisation, dialogue, presence, liberation, and everything else that can help to bring about a renewal of humanity. Pope John Paul, in his speech to the Indian Ambassador to the Vatican in 1974, voiced his admiration "for the deep-rooted spiritual outlook of the Indian people." India is blessed with many precious elements in her ancient living tradition. I, therefore look to her with

1 Publicity and Media Committee, op.cit., No. 1.
confidence in the contribution she is to make to peace, to progress, and to respect for the spiritual dignity of man. The Church is at home in every culture, without exclusively appropriating any particular culture. A Christian will joyously collaborate in promoting true culture, because he knows that the good news of Christ, reinforces in man, the spiritual values, that are at the heart of the culture of every people and every historical period."¹ Evangelisation is important in that it teaches love, a love that takes the form of forgiveness when extended towards one's enemies. This is important in Societies whose ethnic identity remains strong and is fiercely perpetuated, the logic of the blood feud remains, and it is infinitely harder to forgive, or even to think of forgiveness. But forgiveness revives man, turns tragedies into events of grace.² Pope John Paul entreats to open up new doors to peace and to do everything in one's power to make the way of dialogue prevail over that of force. The leaders of the nations and the international organisations have to learn to find a new language, a language of peace, which by its very self, creates new rooms for peace, to help children and young people to experience peace in

¹ Publicity and Media Committee, op. cit., n. 1
² Ibid.
the thousands of everyday actions, that are within their capacity at home, at school, at play, with their friends, in team work, in competition, sport, and in the many ways in which friendship can be established and restored.

North-East-India has ahead of it a very long distance to walk on the road of integral development. There is a low rate of literacy, approaching 4 to 25% in various regions. The large majority of the population is dependent on primitive methods of agriculture for their livelihood. The great resources of the region remain largely untapped. One witnesses further, a growing rift between an affluence in the urban population, and a stagnating poverty in the rural areas. Health care reaches a very low percentage of the population. The Catholic Church and the various Governments, have made commendable efforts towards eradicating poverty, sickness and illiteracy. In Manipur, the expectations of the Catholic priests as also other Catholic missionaries in the state has been (a) Evangelisation should be adapted to the needs of the times. (b) It should meet the needs of the different tribes and cultures. (c) Priests and religious should acquaint themselves with the whole literature of Manipur. (d) They should be

1 Ibid, No.8.
ever ready to seek new avenues of evangelisation. And (e) Make an indepth study of the prevailing situations (socio, economic and political)! Of course such expectations are difficult to achieve, but gradually the missionaries worked towards converting these expectations into practical reality. But missionaries at work in remote villages of Manipur, often hard pressed for time and money, have little or no time to analyse or reappraise themselves of changing trends in the society and state of Manipur, and to gain an intimate knowledge of the history and literature of the people. Yet, by remaining in close, intimate contact with the Meiteis and the different tribes that comprise the population of Manipur, the missionaries, acquire a first-hand knowledge of the life, traditions, customs and beliefs of the people, and so they successfully able to carry out their chosen vocation.

In 1928, the Jerusalem Conference of International Missionary Council stated; "Christians ought to have an open mind regarding non-Christian forms of worship with a view to adapting them to Christianity, and expressing through them oriental instincts and ideals." Catholic missionaries in Manipur also try to act on this premise. Fr. Joseph Hattam, the first Indian Diocesan priest, and now Chancellor of the

1 Mary Immaculate Church, Imphal
Catholic Diocese of Imphal, Manipur, who arrived here in 1958 says that the main aim of Catholic Mission Education here in Manipur, "is to raise the level of literacy (which was appalingly low in 1953), to effect an all round improvement and development of a person, to inculcate habits of cleanliness, a hygienic mode of living, proper sanitation, better housing habits, a balanced, nutritional diet, teach preventives from disease, and rid the populace of ignorance and superstition (for e.g. the belief of some of the tribal population that death is caused by evil spirits and so these must be propitiated at any cost), and to preserve, nurture and enhance the unique culture of this beautiful land." It is for this reason that Catholic missionaries in Manipur devote their lives and efforts to achieve that goal, especially so the Bishop of Manipur, Fr. Rev Joseph Mittathany.

Vatican 2 has stated in its decree on christian education: "Since every man of whatever dignity of a person, he has an inalienable right to education corresponding to his proper destiny, and suited to his native talents, his sex, his cultural background, and his ancestral heritage. At the same time this education should pave the way to brotherly
association with other people, so that genuine unity and peace on earth may be promoted. For a true education aims at the formation of the human person, with respect to his ultimate goal, and simultaneously with respect to the good of these societies, of which as a man he is a member, and in whose responsibilities as an adult he will share. "And although it is the state that determines the aim, curriculum, content and method of education, Catholic missionary educational institutions concentrate their efforts on character formation, wholesome development of personality, affording correct guidance, and inculcating the right values in youth and following the decree of Vatican 2. There is a need for moral and spiritual values in education and for combining harmoniously traditions proper to our race which we have inherited through the centuries, with the claims and demands of modern progress, especially scientific, technological and commercial.

India noted for centuries for the spiritual vein of its civilisation and culture, is fast losing its hold on moral and spiritual values, tempted to sell its birth right for a mess of pottage. In the past there was every reason to take pride in the spiritual vein of Indian civilisation, and speaking generally, spiritual sensibility is not completely stifled even
among those who openly confess their aversion or indifference to religion, yet there is a spiritual vacuum. Modern India shares with the whole world the new faith that technology had implanted in the hearts of men. It is faith in man's capacity to solve his own problems. If religion is not positively rejected, it is relegated to the background, and has no part to play in the planning of the new society. Theological faith and hope find no place in national or international programmes of world peace. This is the religious crisis of the modern world, a crisis that has its manifestations in modern India also. Obviously there are many causes why religious beliefs are being shaken, but one of the main causes is the fact of indiscriminate and injudicious reading prevalent among the youth. The special danger of the age is one which springs more from thought, than from passion, and conduct flows from creed. It lies in the rivalry of new ideas fighting old ones, it lies in the circulation of new ideas claiming to be true, and at the same time destructive of the old. Relevant to this consideration are the words of Lord Halifax, "If our social order today shows signs of disintegration, this is, I believe, less through the destruction of war, than through the slow attrition of its religious and cultural foundations, which have created a vacuum, without themselves
having the capacity to fill it." The East, smarting under growing pains, accused of inertia and lack of enterprise, has entered feverishly the fierce competition with the west, and in the process is running the risk of losing its soul. The result is that among the cultured, orthodoxy has given way to vagueness in belief; indiscipline and restlessness prevail among the youth, there is much corruption, the life of the family is being desecrated, and changing norms of morals are adopted!

Among the common people, traditional morality is fast losing ground. A spate of immoral books, magazines and films have been let loose in the country, with the consequence that the age old reserve between the sexes is breaking down. The depletion of the countryside and the drift to the town and the consequent overcrowding, has led to a host of problems that will not be easily overcome. Modern man is tempted to so live in sensation, that all his personality has run to seed, he is as a man who can only read his news in headlines. "There are plenty of people who are dead without knowing it," said an Irishman. "Yes, "said his friend, "only they haven't the sense to lie down." Modern

1 Cardinal Gracias Speaks
man is dead without knowing it, Normally the best agency for the formation of character and for the appreciation of moral and spiritual values, by precept and example, on the part of those who direct it, is the home. Many educationists today are exercising their brains as to how they might give to their students a sufficient grounding in ethics or in doctrinal foundations so as to provide the much needed asset of appreciating moral and spiritual values. Man does not live by bread alone, and India will not live on bread alone or on foreign exchange. It is in need of God more than of gold. The report of the Kothari Commission is a remarkably comprehensive document, ranging over almost every aspect of Indian education, from the liquidation of illiteracy to the elevation of major universities of international standard. It has taken cognisance of to-day's craze for scientific and technical advance, but it has also borne courageous witness to today's even greater need of training in Moral and spiritual values.

Ancient traditions, in the name of modern progress, are being seriously interfered with. History proves that there is no revolution that has not been a reconstruction. All men who have done anything for the future have had their eyes fixed on the past.
Pope Pius XII, when he set down the Five Peace Points, made this reflection: "The maxims of human wisdom require that in any reorganisation of life all parties should learn from the failures and difficulties of the past. "The first freedom therefore, that we should claim for any country in the world if it is to progress healthily, is the freedom to restore, to take count of the past, in other words to appreciate the value of tradition. Did not Jawaharlal Nehru, tell us that a country, especially one with an old civilisation, has deep roots in the past, which cannot be pulled down without great harm, even though many weeds, in the form of harmful and out of date customs and institutions, can and should be pulled put. There is wisdom therefore in hastening slowly, and in a healthy conservatism, in Progress with the background of pure tradition, there is courage in biding one's time, there is strength in patience, in patience with our selves, even more than with others!  

The recently concluded Vatican Council in Rome, the gathering of all the Bishops of the Catholic Church in the world, said that: 'in every group or nation there is an ever increasing number of men and women who are conscious that they themselves are the

1  Cardinal Gracias Speaks
artisan and authors of the culture of their community. For example Jawaharlal Nehru, a man of two cultures and one world; for Nehru was certainly the embodiment of resurgent India. Nehru appreciated perhaps, as few modern Indians could, the greatness and the splendour that was India. He was no inco­clast. He warned his people of the need of hastening slowly. Change is essential, but continuity is also necessary. Yet for all that, he realised that the future greatness of India lay in a harmonious fusion with all that was best in the modern civilisation introduced by the West to India. Already in 1935, he wrote in his autobiography 'I must say, that those Hindu and Muslims who are always looking backwards, always clutching at things which are slipping away from their grasp, are a singularly pathetic sight. The real struggle today is not between Hindu culture and Muslim culture, but between these two and the conquering scientific culture of modern civilisation.

"For not through Eastern windows only When daylight comes, comes in the light; In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly But westward look, the land is bright." 1

There is no greater and nobler mission in a country than that of forming the rising generation.

1 Cardinal Gracias Speaks.
Teachers are the channels whereby the heritage of civilisation is transmitted to the young, whose ideals and way of life will determine the course of the national and world future. They are in a position to set a pattern of good behaviour with their personal example and influence on thousands of students. This is particularly so, when a Christian teacher is teaching non-christians students in a non-Christian country. When we bear in mind that in India, among the millions there is such a large school going population, ever on the increase and deservedly so, it is not difficult to appreciate the urgency and treatness of Catholic educational effort in the country. The Catholic school, has been the great destroyer of prejudices. Where it flourishes, where it has created a name for itself as a great institution, a healthy influence, a force in the training of youth, one meets less of those extremist tendencies that are distorting the fair face of India. The Catholic institution must not be viewed only in relation to the milieu to which it caters, it is an extension of the Church, and when the Church is a missionary Church, the acclaim that accrues to her is a solid gain, reflecting both the spirit that animates the Church, and the
technical efficiency at her command. Without the formative influence and the protective care of our schools, the Catholics in India would be a sorry lot, weak, unstable, ineffective, producing none of the fine fruits to be seen today. It would be difficult to overstress the fact that in India, the Catholic Church stands or falls by her educational institutions. If her power and influence today is out of proportion to her small numbers, it is due primarily to her schools and colleges.\(^1\) And this is especially true of the work of the Catholic schools in Manipur: the Catholics are a very small minority, the Catholic missionaries are few in relation to the population, but Catholic schools enjoy an enviable reputation for all-round excellence, in the state.

**FACTORS INFLUENCING CATHOLIC MISSION EDUCATION**

It is no easy task to gauge the influence of various factors on Catholic Mission Education, since there is no reliable yardstick to measure much influence. Education means and includes, development of the individual from infancy to maturity. But

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education is effected by the interplay of social, economic, political and religious factors, and it would be beneficial to review, the social, economic, religious and political condition of Manipur in the 20th century. The terrain and the physical features of Manipur also play their part in the growth and spread of Catholic Mission Education.

The tiny state of Manipur is of strategic importance, bounded as it is by the Angami Naga country and the hills overlooking Assam on the north, the country inhabited by the Lushai Kuki tribes on the south in the west by Cachar, and on the east by the Kubo valley and part of Upper Burma. Its unique geopolitical situation is due to its contiguity with the hilly borders of upper Burma, and the Kubo valley, through which the Chinese and the Burmese used to come to Manipur in ancient times, and is now frequently used by extremist elements in north east India, who frequent foreign countries bordering the north east, for subversive training and supply of ammunition. During the 19th century the British Govt. in India were desirous of having Manipur as an independent, formable state, in order to secure the North-East frontier from hostile invasions, or degradations of the Burmese. As Lieut. Gordon, one of the two
British officers who equipped and disciplined a levy of 3,000 soldiers of the Manipur Raja Gambhir Singh in 1834 remarked; "The establishment of an independent Govt. of Manipur in alliance with us, would undoubtedly prove the most powerful and effective check against the Burmese Govt." This attitude of the British of retaining Manipur as a bulwark both against the Burmese as also the Nagas, changed after the Anglo-Manipur war 1891, when the British placed their own nominee, Churachand Singh, a minor, on the throne of Manipur on the 29th April, 1892.

During this short period of colonial rule in Manipur there began an awakening in different spheres of the people of Manipur.

Manipur's population is comprised of two major groups based on geographical divisions. The state comprised the valley surrounded by ranges of hills. The ruling group or the Meiteis, lived in the Imphal valley, whereas the Naga and Kuki-Chin tribes inhabited the surrounding hills, the former professing Hinduism and the latter mainly Christianity. There was, and is in addition, a growing community of

1. S.K. Barpujari, British relations with Manipur vis-à-vis the Naga Hills during the 19th century, [Seminar on Pre-Colonial and Colonial History of Manipur, Department of History, M.U., 20.31 Oct., 1984]
Muslims professing Islam. The Hindu religion however, could not totally replace the traditional Meitei religion, but the most interesting feature of the 'Sanskritization' of Manipur, is in the social organisation. The Meiteis were divided into 7 clans known as salais. Under these clans oligarchies there existed a feudal social system; there were two distinct social classes, the royal aristocracy and the commoners, including the slaves. And Manipuri Vaishnavism included worship of indigenous gods and goddesses. Manipuri Vaishnavism is not purely a brand imported from Bengal, but adapted to suit the local tastes and ideas. The process of 'Sanskritisation' of Manipur, which is sometimes called by some scholars, as Aryanisation, continued up to the middle of the 20th century.

The absolutists rule of the monarchy, and its feudal social and economic system had resultant evils. Slavery was a social evil of pre-British Manipur. There were two kinds, hereditary slaves, and sold or mortgaged slaves called minai (slave) channaba and minai asanba respectively. When the BRITISH conquered Manipur in 1891, Major Maxwell, the first Political Agent, announced the abolition of slavery. But it continued to exist in the rural areas throughout the period of British Paramountcy in the state (1891-1947).

Lallup was a feudal service, rendered by the adult subject to the king, for 10 days out of every 40 days. This service might be in the form of military duties, or developmental or economic work, like the construction of roads, working in the king's estate etc. And those who rendered Lallup service did not pay revenue. Lallup was originally a military organisation (lallup means war organisation), which gradually was called on to play a role in the economic life of the country. Thus in the 19th century, lallup became a socio-political, economic organisation, and Johnstone's observations are worth quoting; "Lallup extended to every class in the community. Women are naturally exempted but among men, the blacksmith, goldsmith carpenter etc. pursued their own different crafts in the Raja's workshop for the stated time, while the bulk of the population in fact, executed, great public works for the state. The system was a good one and when not carried to excess, pressed heavily on nobody." It was also abolished in April 1892, and in the long run, the king's absolutist control over the masses through his favourite officials who formed an upper social strata had ended.

A high social status was always accorded to women in Manipur, who till today play a very active role in the economic life of the state. In the beginning of the 20th century, the Muslim self-consciousness also began. Some Manipuri Muslims were sent to Northern India for undergoing religious training as Maulvis. It is said that the first trained Manipuri, Muslim Maulvi, returned to Manipur in 1910 only, and then started the Islamic Revivalism in Manipur. However, they did not suffer from any social and religious persecution from the Hindu ruling families and the Hindu subjects.

During the Kuki rebellion (1917-1919), Christian mission work was suspended, but in the 1920's, especially in 1923, there was a great revivalist upsurge among the Christians of Manipur. This made Christianity popular among the hill people, though the popularity was short-lived. There were constant clashes between the adherents of traditional tribal beliefs and the new Christians, extending to the Christian pastors and the traditional village priests. However, after 1950, Christianity made great progress, and churches of different religious denominations sprang up; the Roman Catholic, the

1. Ibid, p.13.
Welsh Presbyterian, Baptist Mid-Mission, Salvation
Army, Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal Church, Free
Apostolic Church of Christ Mission, etc.¹

Just as Hinduism revolutionised the lives of
the Meiteis who embraced it, so also Christianity
affected great changes among the tribal population
of Manipur. The Christian missionaries diffused western
education in the hills of Manipur, changing radically
the outlook of the people, by broadening it, and
bringing them into contact with other peoples and
other cultures. "Religion always plays an important
role in the life of a people, and Christianity with
its liberating force has uplifted the hill men, from
their old world, to that of the 20th century." The
Christian Churches are seriously committed to social
services and development among the people of north­
east India. Such work, Christians believe is a parti­
cipation in the creative and recreative work of
God in the universe.² Christian missionaries facili­
tated the spread of western ideas, and this impact on
the hills of Manipur, has been wholesome, good and
benefical, bringing about a radical social and

1. Ibid, p.16.
2. G.Kabai, *The Thinker Quarterly*, vol.12, 1974,
Kohima.
3. S. Karotemprej, (ed.), *The Tribes of North­
East India*.
religious change. These western educational facilities were made available to all the population of Manipur, once the ban on Catholic missionaries working among the Meiteis was removed.

Kaja Churachand Singh was sent by the British in Manipur to be educated at Mayo College, Ajmer. On his return, he gave encouragement to many young Manipuris to get higher education from British India. Maharaja Churachand was a shrewd politician, who wanted to lead the social, political and religious activities of the state. Under the traditional Manipuri system, the king was both the temporary and ecclesiastical head of the state. In the 1920's he was encouraged by some Brahmins to take up some Hindu proselytising works among the tribal people. A society known as 'Gaur Dharma Pracharini Sabha,' was established in Imphal in 1924, by late Lalita Madhab Sharma to spread Hinduism in Manipur, especially in the hills. They toured the hills and went to Mandalay in Burma. They tried to establish schools, and encouraged the learning of Sanskrit. But the Sabha could not achieve much. Hindu orthodoxy was very strong at the time. The political consciousness of the people was indirectly aroused by the King himself, when the Akhil Manipuri Hindu Mahasabha was founded in 1934. The Maharaja himself took the
leading educated elite of the state, through the Sabha. But the religious and social oppressions carried out by the Brahma Sabha on the common people were unbearable. Brahma Sabha was the highest authority on Hindu religious affairs in Manipur, presided over by the king. They used to ostracise a family or village at will. And when the ostracised persons paid some amount, they would be declared clean, and re-admitted within Hindu society. Hundreds and thousands of poor people suffered under this outrageous action, known as the Mangba Sengba controversy (unclean and clean). ¹ This was appropriately termed as the 'Plague' by the President, Manipur State Darbar, Macdonald.²

To be re-admitted into Hindu society, a fine of $50 to be paid if ostracism was ordered by an official, $83.3 annas, and 3 pies, if ordered by the Brahma Sabha, and $500 if ordered by the King. These fines were a great financial burden upon the masses. But there were many other levies imposed on the common people, for example, Chandan Senkhai (A tax for putting the chandan mark on the forehead and nose as a sign of Vaishnavism), Pothang (Forced

labour to carry the luggage of touring officials), etc.

some prominent leaders of the Mahasabha started to
move against these excesses, aided by the fact that
there now came into existence 'the first generation
of educated Manipuri.' The leader of this group was
Hijam Irabot Singh, the Vice President of the Mahasabha,
son-in-law of the King's own brother, a member
of the state durbar and the Cheirap Panchayat. Another
organisation, known as Manipur Krishak Sammelani was
established in 1936 at Nambol, for the same purpose.
With Irabot Singh taking up an anti-monarchical
stand, the King gradually withdrew from the Mahasabha,
which in the Chinga session of 1938, was renamed as
'Akhil Manipur Mahasabha,' by dropping the word
'Hindu'. The Mahasabha was against the religious
exploitation and social persecution carried out by the
Brahmins and the King. This Chinga session demanded a
full, responsible Govt. for Manipur. At the same
time, inspired by Gandhi's Harijan uplift programme,
some Brahmin leaders tried to uplift some outcaste
Hindu. The Mahasabha led by Irabot, led the great
Women's agitation of 1939. However on this issue
the Mahasabha was split. A group led by Irabot called
Praja Sammealini, was formed to press for constituti-

1. Ibid, p.2.
evils of the people could not be redressed. A non-co-operation movement was started as a result of which the religious levies and other unnecessary taxes were abolished, or they ceased to be imposed. The Maharaja ordered all the official members and the government servants to withdraw their membership from the Mahasabha. By the start of 1939, the Mahasabha manipulated 356 signatories to submit a petition to the Maharaja, demanding the establishment of a Legislative Council, a unicameral legislature with 100 members, out of which 80 were to be elected and 20 nominated. After the Nupi Lan broke out in 1939, the Maharaja did advocate constitutional reform, but he died before it could be realised in 1941. Then the second world war intervened and constitutional reform had to be shelved until 1946, when once again they were advocated by Irabot Singh. Finally a constitution making committee was formed on 10th May, 1947. But being insufficient, the Congress launched a satyagraha in November 1947, and on one of their resolutions stated: "The Manipur State Congress demands the establishment of responsible government within 48 hours, and it should be operated before 1948, in order to fulfil the grievances of the people."  

2. S. Mangi Singh, op. cit.,
By the Manipur State Constitution Act of 1947 however, the Maharaja remained the single most important person in the political system of the state, and no responsible government came into existence, although people gained the right to participate in the state's administration, and were provided with certain fundamental rights, guaranteed by Chapter 10 of the constitution.

Manipur became a part of the Dominion of India in 1947. Maharaja Churachand Singh had received the Instrument of Accession and the Stand Steel Agreement as early as 1936, through the Political Agent in Manipur, "In view of the stand of the Congress members who played a key role in the interim Govt. of India, Manipur had no alternative, but to join the Dominion of India, because of her position, being surrounded by the former British Indian provinces." At the same time, separate, independent existence of Manipur was far from probable. Manipur being a small state with limited resources, it was considered that it would be difficult to face foreign aggression. Even the Maharaja suggested that the Govt. of India, take the responsibility for the defence of Manipur by keeping Indian troops in the state. The Manipur State Durbar (later Manipur State Council), also

1. Kh. Ibochou Singh, Merger Agreement. Cited in File No. 8, Memo No. 2225, p.2-1 dated 14th May, 1947 from the Maharaja to the Political Agent.
observed that it would be improbable of Manipur to maintain a separate, independent existence, and expressed their wish to join India.

Manipur was unable to get a separate seat in the Constituent Assembly of India, because of her scanty population. So, Mr. G.S. Guha representative of Tripura, Sikkim and the Khasi States, also became the representative of Manipur, with M.K. Priyobrata Singh as advisor on 22nd August 1947, and in an announcement, Shri M.K. Priyobrata Singh, the Chief Minister stated that 'Manipur had acceded to the Dominion of India.'

Because of the strategic position of Manipur as a border state of India the Defence Ministry and the Ministry of States of the Govt. of India, had been taking special care to check infiltration of the communists, specially from Burma. Under instructions from the Defence Minister a Deputy Director of the intelligence Bureau of Assam, Mr. B.N. Mullick, was sent to Manipur. The intelligence reports stated that certain areas of Manipur like Nambol, Utlou, Pungdongbam, Sekta, etc. were being declared as the 'red areas.' A red flag inscribed 'Freedom, Peace and

2. Ibid., Cited in Ministry of States file No. 43-P 147. Announcement made by the Chief Minister and Dominion Agent, Manipur, dated 25.11.1947.
Progress,' was hoisted at a meeting of the students federations at Imphal on the 6th July 1949, and shouted anti-Indian slogans. The Manipur State Congress, the party in opposition in 1948, alleged that the Maharaja was keeping links with the anti-social elements, and was trying to perpetuate autocracy. They therefore demanded abolition of the Gaddi, and taking over of the state administration by the centre. Major General Rawai Amar Singh, the Dewan of Manipur, also recommended merger of the state administration with the central government. The Governor of Assam was instructed by the Govt. of India to draft an agreement to this effect, and the historic Merger Agreement was signed by the Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh and the Governor of Assam (on behalf of the Govt. of India) on 21st September, 1947, giving effect from 15th October, 1949. The agreement provided for, among others, transfer of the Manipur State administration to the Govt. of India. Further, the Maharaja was to retire from political power on payment of a privy purse amounting to Rs. 3 lakhs a year. Consequent upon the transfer, the state constitution, state council and state assembly were all dissolved, and Manipur in common parlance was merged with India in 1949 instead of 1947.

The Sanskritization of Manipur, at least outwardly, had blurred the racial and cultural identity and self-consciousness of the Manipuris. The adoption of the Bengal school of Vaishnavism, and replacement of ancient Manipuri scripts by Bengali scripts, had facilitated the promotion of cultural impact of Bengal over Manipur. The irrational exactions of the Brahmins on the common people had made their life quite miserable. Such a feeling was first expressed by a young Meitei from Cachar, named Naoria Phullo. In order to investigate the ancient religion and culture of the Meiteis he founded the Apoka Marup in 1930. However the Sanamahi movement took a definite shape when the Meitei Phump was established on 14th May, 1945, to revive the cultural heritage of the Meitei people, to do research in the ancient history and the other literature, to revive the Meitei script, to worship and chant religious hymns in the mothertongue. The fundamental basis of the Sanamahi Movement is to revive the Sanamahi cult, the indigenous religion of the Meiteis, they believe in Attya Guru Sidaba, the supreme god Pakhangba, Leimaren, Sanamahi, and a host of Umanlais (forest gods or local deities). Sanamahi is a household God, which in Manipur, every family, Hindu or Meitei, even Manipur Brahmins worship. The Hindu Manipuris worship all the local deities! 

Manipur has and has an agrarian economy, land being the main source of livelihood for the people of the region. The present yield of agricultural production in Manipur is about 1207 kgs. per hectare, as against 1280 kgs. per hectare for the country as a whole. But agriculture fettered by backward forms of land ownership and land use, has difficulty in keeping pace with the rapid demographic growth, meeting only minimal home needs. The rural population, specially the weaker sections, show signs of proletarianisation and impoverishment, indicated for instance by the rise of agricultural labourers in Manipur, from 2184 in 1961, to 18,613 in 1981, more than ten fold increase over a period of 20 years. The growth of agricultural labourers is a symptom of impoverishment of the poor section of the rural population, since it implies dispossession of landed property, the most productive assets of the rural community. This is also a symptom of proletarianisation of the poor workers by the capitalist farmers. Manipur valley was the home of household industries, silk reeling, handlooms, bell metal industries, pottery, handicrafts, etc. But these

industries are dying out under the impact of the growth of modern industries in the rest of India, but not in the region itself. (North-East India) This has resulted in the loss of employment and income to a large section of the rural population, and the consequent impoverishment of their living standards. The decline in the proportion of the population engaged in household industries in Manipur is from 10.2% in 1961 to 4.54% in 1981. There is a large percentage of the rural population below the poverty line, in 1976, it was 30.54% in Manipur. Although Manipur has no homeless population, the State Planning department puts the figure of 1% of the population below the poverty line at above 75, in view of the fact that there are no modern industries in the state, and the prices of most articles are higher here. A whole sale market forms the most important part of the agricultural market structure, the peasants rarely establish commodity relations, with the consumers of his products.

Infrastructures of economic development have not been at par with the rest of the country. Even what little has been done, is frequently the result of organised pressure by indigenous people. The per capita income and the extent of availability of

1. M.Ibotin Singh, Rural Poverty in North Eastern India, Need for a strong political will, pp.1-6.
some of the social services, do not compare favourably with the rest of the country. Resources of the region have been extracted in a manner as to cause ecological imbalance in some areas, and economic pauperisation in others, without providing enough employment opportunities and ancillary benefits to the indigenous population. Investments by financial institutions for stimulating rapid economic and social development, have been disproportionately low, compared to the rest of the country. While on the one hand, this region, (north-east India) is beset with stagnation of economic growth, on the other, one of the highest growth rates in the population of the country, has also become a persistent pattern. In some areas of the Imphal valley, there is a feeling of indigenous cultural forms being checked by massive cultural impasts from other parts of the country. In the process of the indigenous population coming out of the shells of primitive technology and localised social organisation, Catholic Mission Education has a great role to play so as "to envisage multifocal development of the indigenous population and their articulation in the wider social milieu as a distinct identity".

1. B.K. Roy Burman, Priorities for Social Science Research in North-East India, (Key note paper, National Seminar on 'Priorities for social science Research in North-East India), p.3.
Another factor which affected the growth and spread of Catholic Mission Education in Manipur, was the lack of means of communication. The navigable rivers in the valley were confined to Imphal and Nambol rivers only. Road development was far from adequate. When the missionaries first came, there were probably only three roads connecting Imphal town with the outside world; (a) That over the Naga hills to the railhead at Dimapur. (b) another to Cachar via Bishenpur and Jiribam, and the third (c) Thoubal to Tamu and across the Kubo valley into that of the Chindwin. The roads however were not maintained properly, and during the rainy season, became impossible to traverse. Even slight rain caused damage to roads in the interior, making journeying an almost impossible feet, as attested to by Bishop Marengo and Fr. Ravalico. And yet it is the road connecting the capital to other parts of the state that serves as a catalyst in spreading the modern cultures and values generated in a town.¹

Immediately after India gained Independence, in the approach to the tribals, a great emphasis was given on improving their conditions of life. This

¹ D.N.Majumdar, *The Tribes of North-East India*, p.329.
covered health, education, and some aspects of economic life. The Roman Catholic Church which entered Manipur a few years after it joined the Indian Union, was admirably suited to achieving revolutionary changes in education and to a lesser extent in health. The Catholic missionaries have been making rapid and continuous progress in evangelic, humanitarian and educational services. It has struck deep into the soil and not been content with merely scratching the surface. The arms of the missionaries have stretched out to include every facet of the life of the people. The missionaries have established churches, schools, boarding houses and dispensaries for the material and moral welfare of the people. There is no doubt that Catholic education has reached into the far interior of Manipur into places as distant from one another as for example Chingjeroi (1980), Churachandpur (1969), Hundung (1965), Imphal (North) (1957), Imphal (South) (1975), Keihao (1974), Nungbi (1975), Pallel (Liwachangning) (1973), Punanmei (Mao) (1969), Senapati (1979), Singngat (1978), Sugnu (1965), Tamenglong (1972), Thanlon (1975), Paomata centre (Tunjoy) (1981), and Ukhrul (1978). This is the date of the formal

establishment of the mission centres, the Catholic missionaries had earlier already visited these regions and established centres there, at different times in earlier years. (Refer to chapt.2). And new missions have been established after 1981 for e.g. Yairipok, etc. This Catholic education has brought about a change in social outlook and also economic status in many parts of Manipur.

The attitude and way of life of the people of Manipur towards Catholic missionaries would also influence their educational policy. As regards the local government, when the missionaries first came, the Maharaja still wielding some power, permitted the missionaries to preach and propagate the faith only among the tribals. The Catholic missionaries first went to the Tangkhul region, and the missionaries running a school there at Ukhrul, expressed their reception in these words; "We are warmly welcomed and encouraged by the local government." The first Catholic mission like the Protestant before it, was also established at Ukhrul. In general, the tribal population were happy to welcome the Catholic missionaries, many for the sake of the schools they were going to establish. The Catholic missionaries had come to Manipur, in fact at the invitation of a section of the tribal people. However, since the area where they first started their missionary work...
was essentially Protestant, the Catholic missionary found himself late in the field, whereas the Protestant missionaries looked askance at these intruders. Mr. Brock, the resident Baptist Pastor at Ukhrul in 1953, was extremely hostile towards the entry of the Catholic missionaries, and would have liked to thwart their missionary endeavours, but Mr. Thiankham, the S.D.O. of Ukhrul prevented this occurrence. In some villages, the Catholic missionaries met with a hostile reception, and their path was blocked by banners on which hung the words "Forbidden to Roman Catholics." The Catholic missionaries took it all in their stride, for the villagers they knew were simple, good people who had been influenced by some Baptist pastors to react in this manner. There sometimes arose a confusion as to what was the 'True Church'. But this soon disappeared as the population came to appreciate the endeavours of the Catholic missionaries for the people of Manipur. As far as the Meiteis were concerned, even if they were initially suspicious or wary of the Catholic missionaries because of being foreigners and belonging to the religion of the 'Hao', they never placed any

1. Mr. T.C. Thiankham, I.A.S. (Retd)
2. Catholic Missionary in Manipur.
hindrance in the way of the missionaries, and soon welcomed them actively, especially as they wanted to benefit from the education imparted through Catholic schools, in particular, the first two urban schools established at Imphal, viz. the Don Bosco School for boys established at Chingmeirong, and the Little Flower school for girls, then located in a place at the heart of the town, where the present Mirma Bas School, another leading Catholic school for girls now stands. This phenomena of the local population intent on securing education for their offspring in Catholic schools has increased, despite the establishment of a public school, a Central School, and a veritable host of private schools. In order to meet the growing demand for Catholic schools, three new schools with modern buildings have been constructed by Bishop Mittatuny, St. Joseph's school for boys, near the Little Flower school, St. George's school (the new St. George's) behind the Maharaja's palace, and the Catholic school at Canchipur. The demand for admission in all Catholic schools especially in Imphal is so great that the Principals are literally inundated with applications for admissions of children in their schools. To these schools come children from all over Manipur, to be channeled and guided in the
right direction. It is interesting to note that 25 years after their entry into the state, Catholic missionaries unlike any other missionaries who set foot in Manipur, are renowned for their prowess in the educational field, and the popularity of Catholic schools is so much, that many especially at Imphal are seriously overcrowded, and although parents are aware of this phenomena, they still pressurise Catholic schools to admit within their portals, more and yet more students. Trying to limit the admissions on a first come, first-served basis or by means of a lottery system cannot be successful, as long as politicians, bureaucrats and the educated elite, continue to seek admission in Catholic schools, when the vacant seats for an academic year have already been filled up. Because of the growing popularity of Catholic schools, which owe their success to the single minded devotion and hard work of the missionaries, Catholic schools cannot keep pace with a growing population's demand for education in its institutes.

REACTION OF THE CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES TO MANIPURI CULTURE

For a missionary working in Manipur, it is essential to understand the region, mentality and psychology of the people who inhabit the state.
Then only can his efforts bear fruit and be successful. Catholic missionaries at work in Manipur have sacrificed what was dear and familiar to them in the states in India and countries abroad from which they hail, in order to come and work and spend their lives among the people of Manipur. Of course there are now quite a few Catholic missionaries who hail from the state of Manipur itself, and their vocation has in a great measure been brought about by the Catholic missionaries who were already at work in Manipur, and bears witness to the fact, that the Catholic missionaries do make every endeavour to become one of the local population, the best way to adapt themselves to Manipur which they have made their home. Initially, the arrival of the Catholic missionaries in the state had created fear and anxiety among some sections of the people, but despite the false propaganda spread against the missionaries by others, especially some Protestant pastors, the early Catholic missionaries proved themselves through their dedicated and selfless work for the people of Manipur. To this end Fr. Mathew Planthottam, who contributed perhaps the most of the pioneer Catholic missionaries, to the establishment of the Catholic Church in the Tangkhul area, spared no efforts in his endeavour to evangelise and
educate the Tangkhul tribe. "No village was too remote for him to visit, and his reaction to Manipuri culture was so positive, that he shared the lifestyle of the common people, and so won by his actions more believers than could be won by words. Actions always speak louder than words, and at Yairipok, one of the more recent mission centres, the chapel, school and small boarding house has been constructed in the traditional Meitei style, and blends harmoniously with the environment. What more positive reaction can there be to Manipuri culture, than to love and accept its people in the spirit of one great family, and tirelessly dedicate oneself to their all round development. This was, and is the active, positive response of the Catholic missionaries to Manipur culture, missionaries who not only come from different states of India, where language, customs and habit, etc. are very different, but also from different countries, where they grew up with completely different cultural traditions, as for example, the two indefatigable foreign missionaries in Manipur today, Fr. Bianchi (Maram) and Fr. Med (Senapati). The missionaries are continuously discovering new opportunities for growth, removing prejudices, inspiring confidence, and building up the community among which they work. They work hard
to get a good grasp of the cultural patterns of the people, and afford patronage and encouragement to local dances, music, song, drama etc. characteristic of the religion, in their educational institutions, and at every school function many of the items on the programme illustrate the rich cultural heritage of the state. They in fact nurture the inherent talent of the children in this respect. And so it is, that Fr. Mattam, the first Indian Catholic missionary in Manipur, now the Chancellor of the Catholic Diocese of Manipur, is remembered by people, even in the interior villages of South Manipur, for his command of the Manipuri language, and his tireless tours on foot or on Motorbike.¹ Rt. Rev. Joseph Mittathany, D.D., the first Catholic Bishop of Manipur (installed in 1980), is fully conscious of his mission among the people of the state, and within a week of his installation in April 1980, he started out on his first trip to Thanlon and Singhat, which are among the more remote centres of the diocese. The pace he set for himself in those first few weeks, he has ever since maintained, and perhaps intensified in the course of the years. Whether it be a parish or regional congress, a youth rally, a student's convention,

a women's conference, a refresher course for catechists, a parish function, a church dedication or a school day, if the Bishop is in the diocese he is only to happy to attend the function, and to boost the morale and inspire confidence among the youth, children and the elders too. Certainly 85% of his time in the diocese is spent outside Imphal, in the various Catholic mission centres scattered through the length and breadth of Manipur, and it is a common sight to see him in his cream and chocolate coloured jeep travelling around the state. His appeal to the people is evident in the fact that some Meitei Hindus of the plains have voluntarily embraced Catholicism. He opened a new educational centre at Bishenpur, run by the Jesuits, an order of Catholic priests well known in the country for their high standard of education. He has also established mission centres at Tungjoy and Chingjaroi, and a sub-centre at Khoupum. The Clarist Sisters are working at the remote mission centre of Chingjaroi, and the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of St. Joseph's at Imphal, the Sacred Heart Sisters at Singhat. The Bishop has not forgotten the facilities needed by his collaborators and his people. Besides constructing priests quarters at various centres, school buildings have been renovated,
extended or newly constructed at Ukhrul, Sugnu, Senapati, Dilli Village, Maram, Imphal, Keihao, Canchipur, Singhat, Yairipok, Andro, Bishenpur, Thanlon and Hundung. New schools have been opened at Imphal, Canchipur, Andro, Bishenpur, Yairipok, Iroishemba and Sajaoba, new hostels have been built for the girls at Keihao, Tuibuang, and Pallel, and a hostel for the boys at Thanlon. The hostel for girls at Churachandpur was renovated. Additional facilities have been provided at the hospital at Hundung. A dispensary was newly constructed at Mungbi. Bishop Mittathany is greatly conscious of the shortness of time and urgency of his work. ... he does not count cost in money, time or his personal energies, he balks at no sacrifice.  

The Catholic missionaries not only love the people without reservation, but make no distinction, giving whole hearted support to the needy, becoming saviours to those in distress. (For example Bishop Mittathany in July, 1980, to the Sisters at Tuibuang Churachandpur, who had the frightening experience of being threatened and looted). They also become multilingualists in order to grapple with the multifarious

2. Ibid.
dialects in use in Manipur. Little Flower School, Imphai as also other Catholic centres do a great job with their Grahany girls, coming from backward, remote villages in Manipur, neither knowing Manipuri or English when they join the Grahany section of the school. (A Grahany school is meant for girls in remote, interior villages who are illiterate or very partly literate, to teach them now to manage a house and some practical skills, like stitching, gardening, poultry care, weaving, knitting, cooking, etc. so that they can earn a livelihood through the utilisation of the crafts taught. Sisters and other Catholic missionaries who run these Grahany schools teach the girls to make articles through which they can earn some money, as for example, the Grahany girls in Little Flower, Imphai, stitch the uniforms for the boarders, and with the money they earn, they are able to buy their own sewing machines or knitting machines, so that when they complete the course in the school, they can return to their villages, and start up their own independent business.) The girls for instance, admitted in the Grahany section of Little Flower speak different dialects when admitted. The Sisters have to tirelessly dedicate themselves, not only to first
teaching them Manipuri, so that some media of communication might be established, but their efforts have to be directed to teaching these girls, basic habits of cleanliness and a hygienic mode of living. If the sisters had not become part and parcel of Manipur, they would not expend so much labour on the underprivileged sections coming from the more backward parts of the state. Manipur, the land of jewels is a place of hopes and aspirations, capable of achievement in diverse fields, and the missionaries work together, in a spirit of love, unity and zeal. They spare time at any cost to relate to the people and their problems, and do whatever they can to alleviate their distress or to improve their mode of life. In order to make a success of their mission, they study the way of life, culture etc. of the people, and publish articles on their studies and observations. We have the instance of Fr. P. Bianchi, known to so many youth in particular, contributing articles to the chronicles maintained by the missionaries as also to journals and magazines abroad. In a graphic account of some Mao Naga feasts and ceremonials, he writes: "The Saleni, or feast of the month of July, closes the rice-plantation season. After the feast, rice-planting is taboo. The feast lasts five days, the last three days of the
Sale Kho (July) and the first two days of Koli (August); 
Note that the Mao Nagas regulate their months according 
to the moon. As of most pagan feasts among the Nagas, 
the most important aim of Salei is the use of plenty 
of meat and drink, but several religious performances 
are also connected with it. Particularly the second 
day of the feast and the last day. On the second day, 
'Rakhe Kho' is performed, morning and evening in each 
family. This consists in offering to the God, rice, 
meat, salt and wine (lidzu), mixed with 'inghi' (a 
sharp blade of grass), and 'Kholo,' another sacred 
grass. On the last day called 'Aleiju,' all males 
will wash their bodies with holy water (Kodzu) pro-
nouncing some sacred formulas. Again the 'Rakhe Ko' 
will be performed, and on this day males cook and 
eat apart from the women. The feast will end with 
the 'adzy Kofra' or the throwing out of all that 
is left over of the five day feast. Of the Maram 
Nagas he writes: "The Maram Nagas are in all 
probability, an offshoot of the Mao Nagas,' 1 The number some 8,000 souls, inhabiting over a dozen 
villages. They are more backward than the Mao Nagas 
and contrariwise to the custom prevailing among 
other tribes, pork meat is taboo to them. Pigs are 
only kept for sale. At Maram village it is not even

allowed to rear them in the village. This must be done on the outskirts... Our catechist who contravened the rule, was fined, and had to part with a hen!

A proper understanding of the customs, habits and way of life in Manipur has always been essential for the Catholic missionaries, who make education a practical reality in their institutions. The early missionaries even partook of Keibei worms and larvae of bee-hives, served as delicacies to them at New Maram, Fr. Bianchi sent an account of the experience to the 'Popoloc Liberto' in Italy. Fr. Venturoli, a pioneer missionary of Don Bosco, Imphal right at the start of his sojourn, busied himself preparing the operetta 'Requiem Peccatorum' in Manipuri, with the intention of staging it later in the best theatre in town. And on Dec., 20th 1959, at the Don Bosco, Imphal prize distribution day, when the school orchestra surpassed expectations, Mr. J. Kaina, Chief Commissioner, Manipur, congratulated the Don Bosco Fathers, for the wonderful transformation they made 'with the raw hill lads he saw at the beginning of the Year.'

Such examples over the years are too numerous to relate, suffice it to say that if the Catholic

missionaries would not have responded positively to the Manipuri culture there would not have been a stampede for admission to the Catholic schools, a stampede that is becoming increasingly difficult to control, as the pressure of numbers mounts so rapidly, despite the mushrooming growth of many non-Catholic schools in the state, both government and private, and the adoption of Catholic saints names for private schools, so as to give the impression to the public that they too are an offshoot of the Catholic missionary schools.

In March, 1960, in a published book on Manipur on General knowledge, there was a question which read 'What do you know about the Don Bosco institutions?' Such a question could not have been asked if there had been a negative response of the missionaries to Manipuri culture. There are instances of situations in which the Youth Centre (Don Bosco) was full to overflowing. The missionaries were compelled to make room by raising a second story to Savio Home. When no seats were available, there came a big boy who asked to be admitted. Fr. Ravalico told him to come in April, when it was hoped that there would be more room. "I come from a far away village Father, have mercy on me," the boy would repeat. "Never mind, you are big and

1. Ibid, p.51.
strong, and you can walk back," repeated Father. The boy went out, but squatted on the ground, and went to a hunger strike. After two days Father had to admit him, room or no room! This is another example illustrating the fact that even children want to gain entry into Catholic institutes, because they know that the missionaries will educate them in the true sense of the term. And this occurred just when the Don Bosco institution was just opened at Imphal. The phenomena of witnessing hordes of people, especially parents, haunting the precincts of Catholic schools in the state, especially in Imphal at the time of admission, to secure at all cost, the entry of their offspring to the schools, is a common place sight. Parents come armed with letters of recommendation from leading persons in the state, others come with gifts etc. hoping thereby to gain the necessary admission into the school for their children. Parents are aware that the Catholic schools at Imphal are usually already full to the seams. There are no reserved seats, and many of the schools have resorted to a lottery system where the new applicants are admitted on the basis of a lucky draw. But this causes great dissatisfaction among the unsuccessful parents or guardians, and many feel, increasingly today, that Catholic students

1. Ibid, p. 55.
are getting preference over other candidates. But they would have to, for there are only about 35,000 Catholics in the entire state of Manipur which has a population of over 14 lakhs. Moreover the rights of a minority community are guaranteed by the Constitution.

When the city bus service was inaugurated at the Manipur State Transport headquarters about the year 1960 one of its buses had its starting point at Don Bosco and its final stop at Little Flower. In this way Mission Schools became part and parcel of this capital city, Imphal, which only a few years back did not know them. Manipur means the 'Land of Jewels.' The Jewels' discovered were the poor and abandoned boys and girls gathered up in the hills of Manipur from among some 20 different tribes.

Of Fr. Mattam, an indefatigable missionary, Fr. Bianchi wrote in July 1961; "Fr. Mattam has started since some months a three page full publication in Zoute, the language spoken by the Catholics on the Burma border. This brings them some news,

1. *Don Bosco Chronicle, Imphal Feb., 1961*, p. 70
and a kindly light amidst the encircling gloom."

Of the lay Missionaries the name of Dominic Shomi stands out, being himself a Tangkhul it was easy for him to work with true missionary zeal for he understood the nature and the ways of the people. His example should inspire present Catholic missionaries in Manipur, both religious as also the lay people. "The Church today calls upon all religious to a dynamic fidelity. Such dynamic fidelity must look to the actual needs of the people and the church... This calls for a creative fidelity by sharing in the actual mission of the Church, and meeting today's needs of the people and not yesterday's mission, and the traditional needs of the religious congregation." The early Catholic missionaries in Manipur adapted themselves very easily to the needs of the people and in fact shared their life style. But unfortunately today, the missionaries are in the main so busy with running their educational institutions, that they have little time to learn the language and culture of the people for whom they work so tirelessly, and to inculturate themselves, by

1. Ibid, p. 85.
2. Fr. Karotemprel, Evangelisation in Manipur, Yesterday, today and Tommorrow" (Seminar on Evangelisation Diocese of Imphal, 5, 6, 7, May, 1982), p. 47.
identifying themselves completely with the people and their concerns. They have to reorient themselves with the history and culture of Manipur, and this could be done through the medium of books, journals, lectures by eminent persons on different aspects of life in Manipur, seminars, etc. and above all by continuously meeting the people in their own home environments, learning to speak their languages, sharing their problems, in short becoming one with them. It is not sufficient to only encourage Manipuri culture indirectly, for example by including traditional songs and folk dances in the school programmes. The missionaries themselves could study the art of music, drama and dance in Manipur, and so contribute through their own efforts to enriching the rich, cultural heritage of the state. In honour of the visit by the Internuncio (Papal representative to India), a unique manifestation of folklore and faith was held at Don Bosco, Imphal, depicting the rich, varied culture of Manipur, the bamboo dance, characteristic of the south district of Manipur, the ploughing harvesting dance, characteristic of Mao-Maram, the handkerchief dance, characteristic of Sugnu and Shington, all-in-all, "a colourful potpourrie of characteristic dances, such as only Manipur can
afford to present." And yet today, the Catholics in Manipur feel that the missionaries must make greater efforts to master the local languages and to become inculturated. This would imply that the reaction of the Catholic missionaries to Manipuri culture is definitely not as positive as in the years gone by, and it is time for the missionaries to come closer to the people by making a much greater effort to understand them and to once again share their simple life style, and to evaluate and analyse their efforts, so that their work and zeal may bear forth more fruit in future years. They have a fairly good grasp of tribal patterns and cultural ways, but a very sketchy knowledge of the Meiteis, who constitute 60% of the population of Manipur, a state which the missionaries have adopted as their own.

EDUCATION A PRACTICAL REALITY IN CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONS - ITS PRIMARY AND SECONDARY AIMS

The objects of school education has been explained in following words by the Catholic mission. "School is one of the explanations for

1. Don Bosco Chronicle, Imphal
2. Seminar on Evangelisation (Diocese of Imphal, 7 May, 1982, Resume of the reports from the regional seminars), pp. 71-72.
our missionaries existence before the non-Christian world. The influence of the church in the field of education is shown in a special manner by the Catholic school. No less than other schools does the Catholic school, pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth. Through the schools and hospitals as well as other social institutions we herald ourselves in society. But we have to upkeep these institutions with missionary spirit, despite formalities and expenditures. Since therefore, the Catholic school can be such an aid to the fulfillment of the mission of the people of God, and to the fostering of dialogue between the Church and mankind, to the benefit of both, it retains even in our present circumstances, the utmost importance. ¹

Our schools or educational institutions should and do maintain the academic standard according to the curriculum prescribed by the state government, because it is the pedagogic and didactic aspect of it, expected of any educational institution. Our religious duty of teaching binds us. Man has to be taught in his totality, i.e. in his relation to God, (Religion), and in relation to the world (secular sciences). ²

2. Ibid, pp. 69-70.
How does education become a practical reality in the Catholic schools of Manipur? "There comes to us behind every child, an entire family with its problems, its privations and its anxieties, all of which call for our practical interest. Let us ponder over the need for collaboration between school and family, in order to understand their duties as educators of their own children, and to make them aware of their duty."

The Founder (Don Bosco), of the order of F.M.A. (Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice or Mary Help of Christians, popularly referred to as the Little Flower Sisters in Imphal), had laid down the system of education to be followed in schools, "Religion and reason are the two sectors of the instrument of my method of education; Religion which is true and sincere, and which dominates the actions of the young, reason which correctly applies the code of action required by these holy precepts, this is a few words is the compendium of the preventive system I use." But not only the Salesians but all Catholic missionary educators of youth in Manipur, use the preventive system in their educational work - a system based

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2. Ibid.
on religion, reason and loving kindness. This does not imply that the missionaries force their pupils to accept the Catholic faith. The missionaries direct their efforts towards human advancement, especially among the poor and abandoned youth, and their aim is not merely to give fish to the hungry, but to teach them how to fish. Mother Angela Vespa, the fifth Superior General of the R.M.A. (158-1969) rightly pointed out "Young people love all that is beautiful and great. Let us help them to discover it, and to reject all the would spoil it and lessen friendship with God." The Catholic missionaries are ever alert to new forms of culture and make use of these new means for educating the youth. This education enables the youth to form an upright conscience, and so to attain to the true freedom which renders them capable of making a correct and responsible choice in life. They endeavour to see that the noble and ancient art of drama serves the moral and cultural betterment of audiences.

Education includes development from infancy to maturity. Education is for life and through life. It is an integrated growth, a balanced growth, and development of body, mind and spirit. It is life, and life is a chain of continuous

1. Ibid., Circular Letters.
growth. "It is the mental, physical and character
development of a child." Education aims at the
intellectual formation of children in various
fields of interest, together with the moral forma-
tion that guides them to choose the good values
of life. It aims at the overall development of a
person, enabling him to also raise his standard
of living. Catholic institutions endeavour to
realise the aim of education through intellectual
formation, and by catering the needed moral
instruction, based on Christian principles. In
practice, the missionaries together with the
subjects to be taught by the prescribed syllabi,
try to impart sound moral principles, faith in
God and social virtues. The example of love and
concern of a dedicated staff has a great influence on
the minds of the young. This can be practically
seen in the attachment of the children to their
teachers. Catholic education aims at the develop-
ment of personality, to enable a child to bear
responsibilities correctly, in the way of life,
he or she chooses. This end is achieved through
the discipline a child acquires, by the regular
fulfilment of his or her duties in the school. By
education we mean academic, elementary education

given in the schools, and education of the masses through preaching and instructions of the missionaries in socio-religious matters. Education also means raising the level of literacy in the state. The following table indicates the trend of literacy in Manipur in the twentieth century:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION</th>
<th>LITERATE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>2,84,465</td>
<td>2,658</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>3,46,222</td>
<td>7,106</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>3,84,016</td>
<td>14,687</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>4,45,606</td>
<td>14,495</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>5,12,069</td>
<td>25,933</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>5,77,635</td>
<td>65,895</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>7,80,037</td>
<td>2,37,276</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>10,72,753</td>
<td>3,53,090</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>14,11,375</td>
<td>5,36,036</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Males - 3,76,997)  
(Females - 2,09,039)

The population of Manipur has increased with each decade, but a noticeable increase in literacy first occurred in the 1950's after Manipur become a part of independent India, and because now that the

1. Catholic Missionary, Manipur  
British Protestants no longer had the monopoly of only their Christian doctrine in Manipur, the Catholic missionaries could at last be free to come here and establish their own missions and standardised, modern, educational institutions in the state, an urgent necessity for not only are the Catholic missionaries dedicated educationists, but the Maharajas of Manipur as also the British resident in Manipur before India became independent, made extremely inadequate arrangements for the education of the populace in the 20th century, in Manipur. The Catholic missionaries established their foothold only in the state during the closing years of the 1950's decade, and yet there was a frantic rush to their newly established schools in Imphal, viz. Don Bosco and the Little Flower School. The Catholic missionaries had to respond to the demand of the people of Manipur to expand their educational facilities, and as they did this, the number of children in their schools rose all too rapidly, resulting in a corresponding increase in the percentage of literacy in Manipur. The state Government had also established several schools, colleges and a university, and there are now many private schools honeycombing the state. Nevertheless
one cannot but appreciate the efforts of the Catholic missionaries in the field of education, dedicated, selfless people, who were pioneers in initiating a mass movement towards modern education in Manipur. They work hard and long at their task as educators of youth establishing schools, both of quality and standard, and continuing to expand their educational institutions, in order to meet the needs of a growing population in the state. The head of the Catholic community in Manipur is fully cognisant of the need and expectations of the people in the field of education, and Bishop Mittathany responds to these needs in a positive manner. Now that the focus and scope of education is changing and expanding, the Catholic schools are endeavouring to raise their standards so that their students are on a par with students in the rest of the country, who have had in the main, better and earlier opportunities for a good education. There can be no doubt that education is a practical reality in the Catholic institutions here in Manipur, and this is why on Teacher's Day every year, the state government of Manipur gives awards to Principals and teachers of many Catholic schools, awards for excellence in teaching.
The following table will give a picture of the practical reality of Catholic schools in Manipur (1985-86).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the school</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Don Bosco, Senapati</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. St. Anthony's, Machi</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Morning Star, Singhat</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Risen Christ, Keihao</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sacred Heart, Yairipok</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Don Bosco, Maran</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Christ King, Chingjaroi</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. St. Thomas, Hundung</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. St. Xavier's, Thanlon</td>
<td>891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. St. Joseph's, Sugnu</td>
<td>876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Catholic School, Canchipur</td>
<td>968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Holy Spirit, Mungbi</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. St. Paul's, Pailel</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. St. George's, Moreh</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. St. Peter's, Chandel</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Savio School, Paomata</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. St. Mary's, Tuibuang</td>
<td>1135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Savio School, Ukhrul</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Don Bosco, Churachandpur</td>
<td>2360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Sacred Heart, Hundung</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the school</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Don Bosco, Mao</td>
<td>2471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Don Bosco, Kapuom Valley</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Loyola, Bishenpur</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Don Bosco, Tamenglong</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Don Bosco, Imphal</td>
<td>2250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. St. George's, Imphal</td>
<td>1175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. St. Joseph's, Imphal</td>
<td>1050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Mirmala Bas, Imphal</td>
<td>1675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Little Flower, Imphal</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are the Catholic schools which render selfless service in education as also in the socio-economic uplift of the poor and downtrodden in Manipur. The institutions carry on the gigantic task of education with the resources made available through fees, although there are also many free-ships given to needy and deserving children in the different Catholic schools. The state government although recognising the work done by the Catholic schools, does not give any grants in aid to the schools, although the Catholic missionaries are few, and the total strength of the Catholic community in Manipur is only 35,000.
The primary aim is naturally to impart as much intellectual knowledge as the students can absorb. This includes knowledge in various disciplines. The interest of students in different disciplines is thereby aroused. To this end, sufficient care is taken to enable the students to develop their inherent talent to the fullest possible extent. Spreading of good, Christian principles, which are nothing but guidelines for a right living, removing of ignorance, and formation of the child, these are the primary aims. Secondary aim would be preparing the students to face job opportunities. It trains them to become efficient and inculcates in them a sense of responsibility, self reliance, and makes them vocation oriented, a necessity in a state where families are by large, comprised of many members, some of whom live like parasites and contribute nothing to the expenses of the household, even though they are eminently capable of doing so. These family members, who live like parasites are usually the educated youth who possess the knowledge, the ability as also good health, and so have no excuse to just sit back at home, and do nothing, and very often these idle youth create more problems for their families, especially in recent times, when the evil of drug
imbibing as also drug peddling has become all too common. It is these kinds of pitfalls that Catholic education is directed towards avoiding. This is why one of the leading Catholic schools, viz. Don Bosco Imphal, is gradually building a fully equipped computer section for the boys in the school, so as to give the boys who show aptitude in this line, the opportunity to develop their talent, and so better their job opportunities later on in life.

Similarly Little Flower School, Imphal, St. Joseph's, Imphal, and the newly established school at Canchipur (Catholic School), are also taking the initiative in teaching the students the use of a computer, right from showing a child in the nursery class how to spell his name by use of the computer. The thrill of seeing one's name flash on to the computer display screen not only excites the child, but also stimulates the desire in him to master the art of working a computer, which on leaving school, college or university can be an invaluable asset to him, in finding a good, satisfying job or in starting his own business with the knowledge thus gained. Education is also directed towards teaching cleanliness and hygiene, improving housing conditions, inculcating better, healthier, nutritional
food habits, eradicating disease caused by ignorance, neglect, unsanitary housing conditions etc., teaching remedies for common ailments as for example, cold, cough, or fever, ridding the populace of superstitions caused by ignorance, eg. that death is caused by evil spirits and to propiate such spirits animal sacrifices are to be offered. This kind of education is especially necessary in the Granany schools, run by the Catholic missionaries to serve the needs of the more backward and poorer sections of the population. The primary and secondary aims of the missionaries are clearcut. Moreover Catholic schools act as a model for other educational institutions, in the state, whether run by the government or by private bodies, and above all, they are desired and wanted by all sections and classes of people, inclusive of the ministers, bureaucrats, politicians, the elite, and others at the helm of administration in the state.

The Educational Despatch of 1854 explicitly stated that "the instruction in secondary schools should be practically useful to the people of India in their different spheres of life," so that the new schools "provide more opportunities than now exist, for the acquisition of such an improved
education, as will make those who possess it, more useful members of society in every condition of life." Catholic missionary education is undoubtedly directed towards equipping a child with a better education, so as to fulfill the objective of making each child a useful member of society, as also a good citizen of India. Catholic schools are in constant demand because they provide a sound education, their managing bodies are properly constituted so as to ensure that the proper subjects as prescribed by the Board of Education in the state, are taught up to the metric or high school leaving level, and proper attention is afforded to moral instruction, health, cleanliness, recreation and discipline of pupils, and due care taken to see that the teachers employed are suitable as regards character, numbers and qualifications. Teaching is so designed as to discourage students from exclusive relying on memory, developing in them a capacity for reasoning from observed facts, broadening their knowledge of their own culture and heritage, without simultaneously rejecting what is true and useful in the culture of others. To Catholic missionaries largely belongs the credit of bringing the modern educational system of India.

to Manipur. This education would undoubtedly have come after Manipur joined the Indian Union. But it spread faster and over many more parts of the state, because of the efforts of the Catholic missionaries. "The western education which had become very popular in Manipur, through the medium of English, has made changes in the habits and life of the people of Manipur. This has also led to change in all aspects of life, including food, drink, living, dress and all." It is however important to realise that the Catholic missionaries are not spreading western knowledge through the medium of English, in a blind desire to ape western civilisation. Rather, they are adapting the best of western civilisation to the study of Manipuri history, culture, literature and of course the language, although they could do much better in the latter, if they themselves became more conversant with the history, literature, language and culture of Manipur, particularly that of the Meiteis. The teaching of the Manipuri language is a must in the Catholic schools, and so when in 1985, some groups of tribal students went around

visiting the Catholic educational institutions in the state, demanding that there should be no compulsion on tribal students to study the Manipuri language as it was not their mother tongue. The Catholic missionaries patiently explained to these students the necessity of a lingua-franca, i.e. Manipuri, as in any case there were so many tribal dialects spoken in the state by the different tribes resident in Manipur, that it was difficult for the missionaries to communicate for e.g. with the granitey students, as they all spoke different dialects and were ignorant in both Manipuri as also English. So a common media or language of communication was a necessity. Moreover dropping Manipuri in school would lead to a practical difficulty, i.e. the tribal students would then have to opt for alternative English in place of Manipuri for the Board Exam., and alternative english is not a subject in which the majority of the tribal students could hope to secure a high aggregate, and especially as, the evaluation is quite strict and rigid. There is no doubt that a common lingua-franca gives a people a sense of oneness and unity and binds them together. And interestingly enough, when this
protest against studying Manipuri for the Board exam. was launched, the protestors were emphasizing their points to the missionaries in Manipuri, as they were more fluent in Manipuri than in the English language.

In the Indian way of thinking, a human being is a positive asset and a precious national resource which needs to be cherished, nurtured and developed with tenderness and care, coupled with dynamism. Each individual's growth presents a different range of problems and requirements, at every stage from the womb to the tomb. The catalytic action of education in this complex and dynamic growth process needs to be planned meticulously and executed with great sensitivity. In our national perception education is essentially for all. The Catholic missionaries do possess the necessary sensitivity to plan systematically the all round development of students in their charge, and Catholic schools afford equal opportunities to all. Catholics are undoubtedly a minority community in Manipur, and so they are entitled to enjoy the rights guaranteed to them in the constitution in the running and

management of their schools, in the state. Education has an acculturating role. It refines sensitivities and perception that contribute to national cohesion, a scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit thus furthering the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy enshrined in our Constitution. Education develops manpower for different levels of the economy. It is also the substrata on which research and development flourish, being the ultimate guarantee of national self reliance. In sum, education is a unique investment in the present and the future. And it is this national policy of education that Catholic missionaries keep before themselves so that they can achieve the goals set forth in the national policy of the country.

However missionaries keep certain considerations in mind in their educational policy with regard to teachers; 'Teachers say nowadays, that they know and are convinced of the greatness of their calling, so they have taken up teaching work.' But they stress, and with good reason, that they should have the right to enjoy a good salary, there is a

1. Ibid, pp.4-5.
need for a better recognition of their status, and
a need to be more closely and honorably associated
with the school management. The process of respect
for the teacher should begin with the students. Teac­
chers should realise that theirs is not just a
profession, but a mission charged with the task
of raising a generation which will do honour to
the teachers, to themselves and to the country.
Teachers have to refresh their minds with the funda­
mental considerations already known them. For nowadays,
perhaps in spite of themselves, teachers are drawn into
spheres eg. political, even Church politics, or are
drawn into movements which bring no honour to the
teaching profession, or are not over particular
regarding the validity of the saying, that example
is better than precept, on the realisation of which
the respect due to them depends.

The problems of individual attention to students
is indeed very real and acute and closely inter­
related to the aims of education yet so very much
in the educational process depends on that require­
ment. The problem is how to ensure this individual
attention when Catholic educational institutions,
and especially here in Manipur, have to grapple
with unmanageable numbers. Perhaps the only cases in which individual attention is secured or ensured is when teachers are giving tuitions, and it is being freely said, perhaps with some element of truth, that tuitions have become a racket, that tuitions are an ugly phase of the evil of corruption.

Not many boys and girls of today, remember affectionately and gratefully their teachers. Obviously because the contact between them and the teachers is, in the very nature of things, not been as intimate as in the days of old; when on the one hand the numbers were smaller, the curriculum was less heavy, and on the other hand, teachers went out of their way, even out of school hours, to give an evidence of their personal interest in the boys and girls entrusted to their care, when teachers even followed up with a certain sense of pride, the career of the boys and girls who had passed through their hands. It is one thing to have knowledge, it is quite another to put it across. The intelligent student is never slow to discover which teacher can put across the matter he deals with.
While in the Catholic system of education, in the home and in the school, due emphasis is to be laid on the natural, as such emphasis as possible must be laid on the supernatural. Missionaries are making their best endeavour to provide scientifically, the best courses in religious instruction. Mr. Nehru had written on August 9th, 1954, "A secular state does not mean a state where religion, as such, is discouraged. It means freedom of religion and conscience." And again to Parliament he declared "the term 'secular' does not mean that religion ceases to be an important factor in the private life of an individual. It means that the state and religion are not tied together. It means the cardinal doctrine of modern practice, separation of the state from religion, and the full protection of every religion."¹

The need of any nation today in a special way of India is a cadre of honest men, men of strong character, men of vision, men who will not sacrifice the interests of the country for the sake of smaller groups, who will rise above prejudices born of communal, caste, political,

¹. Cardinal Gacias Speaks.
provincial, language differences; men who do not make it a habit of judging the value of life primarily in terms of money, pleasure and comfort. But above everything, the need is of men given to hard, unremitting conscientious toil. India still suffers from economic backwardness, centuries old and almost incurable and easy manner of life, concentration on surface embellishments rather than on sterling qualities, deep rooted prejudices and prepossessions, social levels fostered by false notions of family prestige, and of what is known as 'Western Culture'. Unless the youth in addition to their education and special training, are urged to put their shoulders to the wheel, to work both with their hands and head, they can not as a community, maintain their position in society. In 1951, Mr. Nehru urged the youth "Whether we work with our hands and feet or through machines, it is unremitting toil that will lead the country to progress and prosperity." Relevant and heartening is Stanley Jepson's words in the issue of 'The Times of India,' 29th August, 1967, Commenting on 'know your India,' '20 Years of Progress.' he wrote: "I often think of India as a great elephant beset by minor wounds from natural enemies in the forests, and many
minor elephantine tribulations of climate and disease, yet through the years continuing to march forward with majestic steps and a dignity and skill which this wisest of creatures reveals."

Catholic schools here are trying to instil in the youth this idea of consecutious, unremitting toil.¹

At present the mistake is being made of neglecting fundamental truths. One of the great dangers of the times is the spirit of compromise which we breathe heavily in the atmosphere in which we live, and move, and have our being. It may pass off in politics and we call it diplomacy, it may pass off in business and we call it the tricks of the trade, it may pass off in society and we call it social convention. Not all compromise is objectionable. Genuine compromise is not a violation of principles, is not a compromise with principles, but with reality. Lord Moreley defined its nature. in his essay 'compromise,' he states, that the basic question really involved in compromise, is not one of principle against principle, but one that turns upon a placing of the boundary that divides wise suspense in forming opinions,

¹. Ibid.
wise reserve in expressing them, and wise tardiness in trying to realise them from unavowed disingenousness, from disillusion, from voluntary dissimulation, ignorance and pusillanimity. But when it is a question of first principles there can be no compromise, Truth will never flirt with it. Truth will never bend before the pressure of public opinion. Truth will never sell itself at a reduction as things are sold at a clearance sale. Because the world in every age is converted by him who contradicts it most.

"There is no human effectiveness without a grasp of truth." says Jacques Maritain. When any truth bearing on one’s environment is known with confidence it is difficult to remain inactive. For leadership, moral qualities are also necessary and of the utmost importance unselhishness, humility, patience, readiness to work, determination and perseverance. For real leadership is more a work of influence than of authority. And Catholic education focus is on truth.

Catholicism, in the words of Karl Adam is "the affirmation of values along the while line, a most comprehensive and noblest accessibility to all good."
a union of nature with grace, of art with religion, of knowledge with faith. So that God may be all in all." 

Catholic educational institutions in Manipur are making every endeavour to achieve both their primary and secondary aims by instilling the right qualities and values in the children studying in their institutions, and single-mindedly pursuing their objectives.

1. Ibid.