

## CHAPTER - 5

### CONTRIBUTION OF CATHOLIC MISSION EDUCATION IN THE STATE

The Catholic Church in Manipur is just a quarter century old, but it would appear to have been here much longer, for it has struck firm roots, deep into the soil. From the very inception of the Church in Manipur, the Catholic missionaries have worked tirelessly and zealously, to spread education in the state. The Catholic Church 'is wanted, is accepted, is tolerated,' because of the educational activities, say the missionaries themselves. It is definitely true that they are wanted and have been accepted in great measure, because of their educational activities. This is apparent if one glances at the list of Catholic schools, and the number of children in each school, the queues of waiting candidates at the time when admission is opened.

F.S.Downs, the Protestant historian had remarked, that the key to Roman Catholic success was its educational policy. And there can be no doubt on that score, as concerns the state of Manipur. An enormous amount of personnel, means and efforts have been put into this task. From a small beginning at a

rented house at Imphal, the Catholic mission has spread to all parts of the state and now numbers at least 29 educational establishments, with continuing growth and expansion. Catholic institutions enjoy an enviable reputation for discipline, academic excellence, and for the all round formation that they give to the students.

The greatest contribution that Catholic Mission Education makes to the state of Manipur, is without doubt, the sound character formation, they give to their children, instilling in them, a sense of purpose, of value in life. These same values instilled in the students by the missionaries remains with them through life and for life, and acts as a continuous yardstick, by which to measure their successes and failures. It instils in children, a sense of human dignity, so often forgot in the hurly and burly of the modern world, where strife and dissension are on the increase, because one forgets to respect the dignity of the human person. Many parents have so many multifarious duties to carry out each day, that they have little or no time to spare, to fulfil their role as co-educators of their own children. On the contrary, they feel very confident and secure, when their children are away from home, and studying in a Catholic institution. They are certain that here their offspring are well looked

after, that they are taught to study and study well, educated in what is right, and what is wrong, and properly disciplined. They have no fear and anxiety when the children are at school. But if children are out elsewhere, with friends, neighbours, at a movie, out shopping and so on, their minds are not relaxed and they do worry, that their offspring might have taken up with undersirable company or habits, or may have yielded to some form of temptation. However, the missionaries impart a strong character foundation to the children in their schools, and so the products of Catholic schools are not that easily lead astray. And when they are riddled with doubts and anxieties, the missionaries are always there with an attentive ear, to give them good advice and counselling. A concrete form of assistance to youth suffering from some disability, and established in recent times, is N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous), established by the Salesian Fathers of Don Bosco, Imphal to help eradicate drug addiction, so rampant among the young, especially school learning and college going persons in Manipur. It is interesting to note, that rarely is a drug addict to be found within the portals of a Catholic school. This is because of the character training given to the children by the missionaries, which enables them to sidestep or resist such dangers and

pitfalls. The children, on the other hand are taught to co-operate with others, in the prevention of drug abuse. The co-operation follows quite naturally on the heels of the training they receive in school, training in responsibility to God, to others and themselves. Great stress is laid on the moral, character formation of a child. He is taught love, respect, obedience, humility, compassion, forgiveness, honesty, punctuality, and all other qualities that are required in the perfect man. Not that anybody can achieve perfection; what is important is to strive towards the attainment of that goal. The missionaries identify themselves very closely with their students in daily life, and because of the informal, family atmosphere in their institutions, the students easily absorb, the character training imparted by their teachers. The missionaries like what their children like, leading on the reverse sign of the coin, to acceptance by the students, of the principles the missionaries project before them. They remain disciplined, not from fear of punishment, but because of the affection and respect they have for their teachers. Obedience follows quite naturally on the heels of love, and all children are cognisant of the

fact, that the missionaries love them, and care for them in a very special way. In the same manner that God cares in a special manner for innocent children, so also the missionaries imitate his example, in their special care and attention for the well-being of the children, entrusted to their care. And the missionaries find that the students feel more at ease, more relaxed and comfortable, with the religious staff in a Catholic institution, than with the non-religious staff, and also prefer to be taught by them.

By the integral education they give, the missionaries prepare their students to take their place in society, as parents, as wageearners, as members who make a living contribution to society, and to the community among whom they reside. This is especially necessary, as many parents feel that as they are feeding, clothing and educating their children in good schools, their duties are over. The missionaries thus have a dual role to play, to fulfil their own duties as educators of the children entrusted to their keeping, and to fulfil the role of parents in educating their own offspring. It is indeed fortunate then, that the missionaries do not discriminate between one child and another, but treat all with the same kindness and affection.

"The Catholic Church has always carried in its wake, education. In fact, it was the Church that carried on education for many centuries in Europe. Monasteries and Cathedrals were the centres of learning. During the Dark Ages, when the barbarians over-ran Europe and destroyed everything on their path, it was the monks in the monasteries who preserved learning, and copies of old, ancient texts. The famous ancient universities of Europe, like Paris, Oxford, Louvain, were established by the Church. Many of the terms in common use today, in centres of higher learning and in universities, like 'Rector', 'Curriculum,' 'faculty,' etc. were coined in these early centres of education. And the ceremonies at a convocation bear many similarities to the ceremonies of a priestly ordination.

Why does the Church labor so much to further the growth of education. Because, she considers the removal of ignorance, as one of her primary duties. Knowledge brings light to the mind, while ignorance keeps one in darkness. Ignorance and superstition go hand in hand to enslave men. True knowledge on the other hand liberates. Therefore, wherever the Church goes, she carries with it the torch of

knowledge. It is difficult to find a Parish Church being established, without immediately establishing a school. And Manipur is no exception!<sup>1</sup>

It is possible for a person resident in Manipur, to see the steady growth, progress and development of the state in recent years. And growth, progress and development are irrevocably bound up with education. It is the educated sector of the population, which plans and effects this development. Catholic missionaries have left their stamp on this development, for it has educated thousands of children each year, increasing the literacy in the states by an appreciable margin, literacy which stood at a very low average when the missionaries first set up their establishments at Manipur. So this increase in literacy in the state is in great measure, the contribution of the Catholic missionaries to Manipur; missionaries who have established schools through the length and breadth of the state. Education is not merely academic and theoretical, but practical as well, especially in the rural areas where there are Catholic missions, and the children are taught cleanliness, personal hygiene, means to avoid common ailments, remedies for them, to avoid teenage pregnancies after early

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1. Principal of a Catholic School, Imphal.

marriage are contracted, the necessity for proper sanitation etc. Through both word and example, the missionaries make a real contribution to raising the standard of living, especially among the less privileged, and those who have no easy access into towns and centres of learning, and are therefore isolated and occupational in their outlook. All over the state youths and adults, who are past pupils of Catholic schools, pay great attention to cleanliness, hygiene and their environment, and make their houses, homes to be proud of, to which they will have no hesitation in inviting friends, relatives, colleagues or associates. Upto a decade ago, many local families even the affluent, hesitated to invite people to their homes on informal occasions. Of course on ceremonial occasions, mats and carpets are laid out in the courtyard of the house for guests and invitees to sit upon. But normally any person thought twice before inviting a person into his house for just an informal chat or gathering, or to pass a bit of time, Bedsteads usually occupy a central position in practically all the rooms of a house, and very often there is no sitting room. But increasingly today, the people are changing their attitudes and more freely invite people to their homes and offer warm hospitality whenever visitors chance to drop by. It would



seem that many of the local population are hesitant about inviting visitors into their homes, because of lack of material possessions, inadequate seating arrangements, no proper bathroom, and other such reasons. But education has brought a change in that the educated realise that they are accepted for themselves, and not because of material goods, or the lack of them. Many of the educated youth exhibit great talent and taste in the decorations of their houses, especially young couples just setting up their own homes. This pride in their homes has come because of education, especially as the children are continuously aware how neat, clean and attractive their schools and its surrounding compound are, and automatically follow the example set, within their own homes and surroundings.

Greater respect is also shown to the environment around. Less and less people indiscriminately dispose of the garbage from their homes. It was a common sight to see people dump garbage anywhere, and a favorite spot seemed to be the rivers or streams in the neighbourhood. But this leads to pollution of water, destroys fish life, and gives rise to infection and disease, especially as the same rivers and streams

are frequently used for bathing, washing of utensils and clothes, swimming etc. Water is a great carrier of disease, and educated persons realise the necessity of keeping water clean. As it is so many people in the state suffer from stomach ailments, because of the use of impure and polluted water. The missionaries have been continuously emphasising the necessity for filtering of water, and have taught the people in the villages how to filter it in earthenware jars. A conspicuous and necessary item of the household goods that accompany today's bride to the groom's house, is a water filter.

In order to fulfil their mission of caring for the poor and needy, the missionaries have established themselves in many under-developed parts of the state, where they have set up boarding schools, for the students to receive both academic and vocational education, which is of great use in their daily lives; they learn to plant paddy, to transplant it, to harvest it, to care for domestic livestock, to sew, to make small articles of wood, etc. The Catholic missionaries come to the assistance of those in need of medical assistance, and many of the rural schools have dispensaries attached, which render yeoman service not only to the students, but also to their

parents, and those around who require such assistance. Under the leadership of Fr. K.C. George, the Manipur branch of NECHA (North East Catholic Hospitals Association), is rendering continuous medical help and is engaged in social development programmes, among the less educated or more backward people. Of course there are many Grahany schools which impart adult education in a non-formal way, especially to girls who learn practical crafts like house-keeping, sewing, tailoring, cooking etc. and are each given a sewing machine on completion of the course, to enable them to make a start in the business of supporting themselves and earning their own living. Then there are the Salesian Fathers of Don Bosco Imphal, who have heeded the need of the hour to do what they can to remove drug addiction among the youth of Manipur. In fact, in all Catholic Schools, children are taught to beware falling under the influence of these pernicious drugs, and have received lectures from reformed drug addicts on the evils of this malady too. "From the very outset, we have tried to reach out to the poor and needy, through various works of charity, relieving them of their suffering, and making them more conscious of their human and Christian dignity. Our work of evangelisation, was always integrated with that of human

promotion!<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Church, here as indeed all over the world, stands for evangelisation "Today, evangelisation means renewal of a society in Jesus Christ, it means bringing the Good News of total salvation to every strata of a given society, and transforming it from within its individual and collective consciences and lives."<sup>2</sup>

A principal of one of the popular Catholic schools at Imphal put it this way: "In Manipur, the missionary schools are now fulfilling an unfortunate vacuum that has been created by the political situation in the state. This can be noticed from the results that our schools produce in the examinations. And also by the demand for our schools among the public. Majority of our schools are located in the rural areas, mainly in the tribal belts on the hills, and in the backward areas. A large number of children, who would otherwise have been deprived of the chance of going to a good school, benefit from them. They are established and run at great sacrifice, and they render yeomen service to the poor tribals. In the town of Imphal too, our schools are very much appreciated. Though people have to pay for education, they are certain that their money

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1. The F.M.A. and their Contribution to the Missions in North-East India (1923-1982).
  2. S. Karotemprel, Salesian Contribution to Evangelisation in North-East India.

is not wasted. Heretoo, the Church makes great sacrifice single-handedly, in establishing them. They fulfil to a great extent, the aspiration of the people, to give good education to their children."

A state government official similarly observed: "Catholic mission educationists have opened schools in far-flung areas, which is of great service to the local people. They have done excellent work among the backward people, like the Lois, by giving them the light of education, thereby bringing them into the mainstream of their more advanced brothers and sisters." Expansion of educational facilities has also caused an increase in the desire to be educated, not as in former years, when the missionaries in the rural areas had to persuade and cajole parents into letting their offspring attend school. This was only natural at a time when the parents were illiterate, and did not understand the necessity for education. Moreover, children were an essential part of farm labour and could not be spared daily to go and study in school, for how would academic learning be of use to them in ploughing their fields, harvesting crops, etc. Agriculture was then, as it still is, the chief occupation of the population in the rural areas. But today, people living in such areas where Catholic

schools have been established, do not think twice about the necessity for giving a good education to their children, and voluntarily and happily send them to study, for they learn so much, that can be practically put to use in their lives, homes, professions, etc. In this manner, the Catholic Church fulfills its duty to "proclaim the liberty of millions of human beings, the duty of assisting the birth of liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete<sup>1</sup>. By means of its educational policy, it tries to influence the organisation of society, and the distribution of wealth in such a way, as to promote the common good of all. This is why subjects like agricultural farming, care of livestock and so on, form an essential part of the school curriculum in the Catholic schools in rural areas, and to a lesser extent in the urban schools. (Here the boarders only learn these useful crafts). Simultaneously, it is trying to continually monitor the value system in admission, examination, rewards and activities, for education enables people to see their own reality, and speak for themselves, to liberate them into fully developed people.

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1. Archbishp D. Ryan, The World Church taking Shape, Synod of Bishops, Catholicus, vol. 73, May-June, 1986.

The outlook and attitude of the educated differs greatly from that of the uneducated masses. It is the educated sector of the population, that initiates changes which transform and revitalise society. Education is put to use in manifold ways, through programmes for social uplift and development, by applying new, scientific technology to agriculture, industry, business etc. by bringing new ideas to bear upon the body politics, implementing plans to better the state and society. The Bishop has established a Pastoral Audio-Visual Centre at Imphal, to act as a centre for the promotion of self-help work, to train in leadership, and for religious, social and cultural studies. The objective is to motivate the people to help themselves, to teach the rudiments of scientific agriculture, animal husbandary etc. The courses are designed to be crash courses, for a duration of three months. For those unable to attend and who would like to learn, cassettes and slides on these aspects of vocational education will be soon made available. As also cassettes and films on the rich culture of Manipur. By providing this initial encouragement and managerial assistance, to persons willing to be entrepreneurs in different fields, but especially in agriculture, the main livelihood of the vast majority

of the people, people learn to help themselves, and to make good use of the natural resources available in the state. "Many successful career business people, will be found to have availed of Catholic Missionary Education facilities.<sup>1</sup>"

In their educational policy the missionaries stress human dignity, especially the dignity of labour. They themselves have set a good example of manual labour, by themselves engaging in cultivation, terrace-farming, construction of dams, care of livestock, poultry farming, etc. The precedent set by them is followed not only by the students, but by their neighbours, especially in rural areas, practically seen, in the improvement in cultivation of crops, terracing, planting of trees and saplings, and other co-related activities in the villages surrounding Catholic mission centres.

The missionaries are locked in a continuous battle to eradicate the major preventable causes of disabilities, viz, poverty and inadequate parental care. They are constantly trying to ease some of the pain, to allow for the enjoyment of the unique potential of each individual. They have been to a great extent, pioneers in the modern educational system in the

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1. An Officer, Manipur Government.



state, and have not only spread Western knowledge through the medium of English, but have given due attention to indigenous forms of education, and have actively promoted the further development of Manipur's culture, so that the students can have the best of both worlds. This broadens the outlook of the student. The missionaries "bring the diverse cultures of the East into more intimate contact with one another, approach the science and culture of the West, from the standpoint of unity, realise in common fellowship and humanitarian activity, the concord of the East and West, which leads to world harmony. A mere expansion of the apparatus of education is not necessarily synonymous with progress. To be educationists in the true sense of the term, a missionary has to possess the imagination to realise the goals of educational reconstruction, sensitive enough to know the needs and demands of the people, competent enough to plan and implement satisfactory programmes of educational reconstruction, and able enough to function as the friends, philosophers, and guides of teachers, who extend a similar service to parents and students<sup>1</sup>. The expansion of Catholic educational institutions is both horizontal and vertical, the numbers increase and also the quality and content of education.

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1. Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, A History of Education in India, pp.421-422.

The Catholic missionaries with their long experience in teaching, and in education, their prolonged stay in Manipur, their constant missionary tours to different parts of the state, are aptly able to gauge the kind of education required, the necessity to branch into different fields of education to fulfil local needs (as for example, vocational education in agriculture taught at all rural mission establishments, typing at Keihao, carpentry at Senapati, and so on), and they utilise whatever resources they have to achieve these ends. (Each missionary makes do with the resources, personnel, and means available to him, in his own missionary establishment). Moreover, the missionaries do possess the flair and imagination to bring their educational plans to fruition, to expand the educational apparatus as, and when necessary, in different areas. They identify themselves closely with their staff and students, in the manner of one big, vast family. And because of the nature of their religious profession, they identify themselves with the people and their needs. Promotion of literacy makes a qualitative difference to society, a society that is constantly changing, and where it becomes incumbent for the educated too, to continually re-educate themselves. The missionaries to keep abreast of modern techniques

and developments in education, attend refresher and orientation courses in new subjects, upgrade their methods of education in consonance with the changing pattern of education, attend seminars, talks, utilise audio-visual aids, computers etc. This in turn enables them to improve the quality of their schools, and to implement plans for further growth and expansion. They are trying to achieve literacy of the whole personality, where the students use both their minds and their hands in some constructive labour, and so try to bring into existence, a more co-operative social order. True culture comes not from second-hand book knowledge, unsupplemented by experience, but through socially useful, productive work, honestly, intelligently and spontaneously performed. And S.U.P.W. is effectively translated into action in all the Catholic schools, and no compulsion is required to make the students perform socially, useful, productive work.

To the Indian Catholics in 1972, on the occasion of the centenaries of St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Francis Xavier, Pope Pius XII wrote; "It is hardly necessary for us to remind you that the Catholic Church demands of no one to give up one's native ways and customs, forces no one to adopt foreign ways of living. The Church belongs to the East as

well as the West. She is bounded to no particular culture, she is at home with all who respect the commands of Good. What is consonant with man's God given nature, the Church permits, furthers, ennobles and sanctifies. This once made clear, beloved sons and daughters, it is for you to be conscious of your duty to your country and your people." In the early days of our Independence, diplomatic relations between the Indian Government and the Holy See were established, as an important factor of goodwill between the Church and the State in India. Such relations were based on principles common to the parties concerned, India's programme of Social Uplift and justice for the masses, the great moral ideal of Mahatma Gandhi, the supremacy of the moral law in international intercourse. It links up with the message entrusted more than 600 years ago, to Bishop Jordan de Severac by Pope John XXII for the then ruler of Delhi. The sending by the Government of India of its representative to the Vatican was India's official reply to the Pontifical message of more than six centuries ago, and it is consoling proof of the Church's ascendancy in the modern world, notwithstanding widespread secularism and today's conflict of ideologies. In his understanding love for our nation, Pope Pius XII realised what Independence meant for India and its

significance to our country, when in his letter to the Indian Hierarchy, he wrote in 1948, "Your country has reached a turning point in its history, a new era has dawned, the flaming torch of liberty with justice has warmed the hearts and fired the minds of your beloved people, and in the burning fire of newly-won national independence, the destiny of your great nation is being shaped." And there could not have been a more heartening assurance for the Christian Community in India, than when a Minister of State stated categorically in Parliament at a debate that Christian missionaries had been carrying on the service of Christ so far as service to mankind was concerned, and that such work was one of the greatest contributions to its welfare. This is then the contribution of Catholic missionaries to Manipur.<sup>1</sup>

Another contribution that Catholic Mission Education is continually engaged in, is its attempts to create a better, just and noble society. This they are doing by the education of the whole person, emphasising in a special manner the inherent nobility and dignity of man, man created in the likeness of God. This point is hammered home at every opportunity, in the classroom, on the playfield, when performing some

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1. Cardinal Gracias Speaks, p.786.

small task, when discoursing with the students, and when they are addressed by some prominent personality or speaker at a school function. It is apparent in the missionary work directed towards eradicating hunger and disease, when teaching the people self-help, when motivating them to perform tasks in which their talent and inclination lies, by teaching them the preventive system, imparting health education, through the immunisation programme, and similar works. "The Catholic Church is the world's largest health organisation. It continues to play a similar role in India too." In these words, Shri S. Krishna Kumar, Union Deputy Minister of Health and Family Welfare, had inaugurated the 42nd National Convention of the Catholic Hospitals Association of India on 11th November, 1985. Former President Zail Singh too, when welcoming the visit of Pope John Paul II to India, said 'the best hospitals in the country, are run by them (the Catholic missionaries), to mitigate the sufferings of the poor and the sick.' Although the Catholic Church in Manipur has just started the construction of its missionary hospital at Imphal, it was right from the start of its existence in the state, rendered medical relief to the poor and needy, and taught health care. In some of the outlying villages, where government ambulances are not available on the spot, to convey a seriously ill patient

to the nearest hospital or dispensary, it has been the Catholic missionaries who with their ambulances or jeeps have rendered the necessary medical assistance in time, or have given medical relief to the patient. This is all part of the Apostolic mission of the Catholic Church in Manipur, and so it is continuously performed. Many dispensaries have been also established in Catholic mission centres.

Catholicism professes to cater for every need of man, to every phase of his existence, to every circumstance of his life. To all in man, the system gives the true position, their proper meaning, their full beauty and glory. In such a system there is due confidence in the illuminating power of reason, golden truths found in all knowledge are found fruitful, the seeds of truth from uncorrupted source of nature wherever they may be found, are redeemed, purified and ennobled. The church sets up no barrier against non-christian culture and no barrier against antiquity. She sets up her barrier only against sin. The Church alone says Cardinal Newman, "has succeeded in rejecting evil without sacrificing the good, and in holding together in one, things which elsewhere are incompatible. It is the spirit of Revelation living in the church, the vitality and consistency of Catholic thought, that active tradition as the schoolmen call it, which

prevents an injury to the Catholic whole, and ever restores its massive unity and inward harmony. It is the same living spirit of Revelation, manifested in the teaching authority, which gives the church its flexibility and power of expansion, and enables it to adapt itself to every age, to every civilisation, and to every mental outlook<sup>1</sup>. And so the Catholic missionaries have been able to adapt to the civilisation and mental outlook of the people of Manipur.

The Church from the beginning has always followed this wise practice; let not the Gospel on being introduced into the new lands destroy or extinguish whatever its people possess that is naturally good, just or beautiful. For the Church when she calls her people to a higher cultural and better way of life, under the inspiration of the Christian religion, does not act like one, who recklessly cuts down and uproots the thriving forest. No, she grafts the good scion upon the wild stock that it may bear a crop of delicious fruit. This is the reason why the Catholic Church has neither scorned or rejected, the pagan philosophies. Instead, preserving them from all error and contamination she has perfected and completed them by Christian Revelation.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Cardinal Gracias Speaks, p.715.

2. Ibid, pp.722-723, citing Pope Pius XII.



Three decades ago, when the representatives of some distinguished Christian educational institutions of higher learning gathered in a conference at Agra, and reviewed the educational scene, they came to the conclusion that "in view of the rapid changes taking place in India, and of the new factors that are at work, it would be disastrous folly if the leaders of the Indian Church and of the missionary enterprise, neglected to take stock of the situation, and to reconsider both their methods, and the distribution of their forces. The position is critical, and far-sighted strategy is imperatively needed." (Report of the Lindsey Commission on Christian Higher Education in India, p.5). Speaking of the failure of the Sargent Commission, Mr. J.P. Naik, Secretary of the Kothari Commission, considers in his book, 'Educational planning in India,' the lessons to be learnt from these failures. The first, he says is that educational planning cannot be done in a vacuum. The second lesson we learn, is that 'educational planning needs a large volume of educational, demographic, economic, occupational and other data,' and that whatever agency desires to plan its education in earnest, 'must immediately set up appropriate agencies to collect all the data needed for successful planning.'<sup>1</sup>

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1. Cardinal Gracias Speaks, cited from J.P. Naik, Educational Planning in India, p.9.

In his monograph, 'The Role of Private Enterprise in the Development of Education in India,' Mr. J.P. Naik, pays a generous tribute to the work of Christian missionaries. "When the East India Company was unwilling to accept a direct responsibility for the education of the Indian people, the Christian missions came forward as pioneers, and established the first modern schools and colleges. Later on, the company did accept responsibility for education. But the expansion of the direct governmental enterprise was so slow, that till 1854, the needs of educational expansion were largely met by missionary enterprise. After the report of the Indian Education Commission of 1882, "the missions gave up plans for expansion, and decided to maintain a few institutions in as high a state of efficiency as possible."

The Sadler Commission has this to say of Christian higher education in Bengal; "The influence which had been extended by the missionary colleges upon the development of education in Bengal, has been of the highest value and importance. No colleges wield a deeper influence over the minds of their students. None have a stronger corporate spirit. The strength of the mission colleges is very largely due to the fact that they can command the services of a group of men of ability and devotion, who have given themselves

up for a long term of years specifically to the service of their colleges, and who unlike the teachers in the government colleges, are for the most part, not liable to be transferred to other spheres of work. The missionary teacher may not always be a man of the highest academic qualifications, though in point of fact, some of those whose influence is, and has been greatest in university affairs, belong to this class, but for all those aspects of university life, which are outside of, but are no less important than, the formal studies of the curricular, the missionary teachers have as a body, exceptional qualifications. It is they who have labored with the greatest earnestness, the most marked success, to cultivate the humaner side of student life, to provide the students with healthy conditions of living, with moral guidance, and with the opportunities for physical training. The influence of the missionary teachers over the minds of their students is doubtless, further deepened by the fact that they have obviously undertaken their work from no motives of self-interest. Even though they represent a foreign faith, and must be for that reason in some degree suspect, they approach more nearly to the spirit of the old Hindu guru than many college teachers in modern Bengal."

Naturally, the Catholic missionaries do not make education plans in a vacuum. They try to co-relate it with the needs of the people of the state and with the necessity to increase the percentage of literacy appreciably in all parts of Manipur. What the Sadler Commission had to say of the early Christian missionaries in Bengal, holds true of the Catholic Missionaries in Manipur, for they are not motivated by self-interest in their teaching mission; rather they are dedicated persons, who although might not possess high academic qualifications, are proficient in the art of teaching, and pursue this vocation with great earnestness and singlemindedness, with no profit-oriented motivation. And they do all that they can, to develop the whole personality of the children under their care, and are ever attentive to their needs, wants and aspirations. They voluntarily opted to work in Manipur, and so they devote all their energies, to their primary mission of 'teaching and healing.'

Recognising and simultaneously doing something about the right of every individual to education, the missionaries have aided the cause of education in the state by means of the primary, middle and high schools they have established among different sections of the population, and in different parts of the state,

especially among those to whom the benefits of education had not yet reached, and who suffer from grave financial disabilities. All Catholic schools, more so, those in the hill areas give financial concessions, scholarships and freeships to the deserving. An analysis of the boarding inmates of a Catholic school would be a proof of this. A vast majority of our countrymen are illiterate, either due to a lack of understanding of the value of education, or because it is beyond their reach. But it is precisely to these people that the missionaries stretch out their hands, and beckon them to avail themselves of the benefits of a good education.

In some parts of the interior, the missionaries have to cut roads before they can establish schools, for example, for Razai to Chingjaroi, and in the approach to Machin so that the village people can easily send their children traversing over these roads on foot to the Catholic schools, put up for their benefit. The Bishop too has walked a distance of at least ten kilometres in the first mentioned area, to supervise the cutting and building of the road, which was later taken up by the state government. Easy facilities for transport and communication

at as catalysts in spreading education in the state. There are also adult literacy programmes held in such areas.

The missionary Church is where the poor and the needy are, in the hill and rural parts of the state. Missionaries love the people as their own. But what does love imply, is it possession of the person? No, it means, granting him gladly the full right to his unique humanhood. Erich From puts it this way: "To love a person implies caring for, and feeling responsible for his life, for the growth and development of all his human power." Love does not depend on the attributes of the love object, but upon the individual's ability to love. This ability to love must be cultivated. The only way to teach love is by example. By cultivating our own capacity to love, we teach those around us to love. Children must receive love, in order, later, to give it, We do not love our children simply because we protect and provide for them. The discovery of love has shown that self-love is good, we must love ourselves if we expect to be able to love others. Dr. Robert Felix offers this definition of self love; 'One has a feeling of dignity, of belonging, of worthwhileness, a feeling of adequacy, yet a sense of humility.'

Our global future depends upon the number of mature individuals we can produce, people capable of love, capable of approaching the problems of a changing world, as love people not hate people!

There can be no doubt that the missionaries love the people in Manipur among whom they work, and in a special manner children, and parents gladly send children to Catholic schools because they are secure in the knowledge that the missionaries love their children as they themselves do, and they show this love by word and example. The children feel a sense of belonging, of pride, of Adequacy in Catholic schools, and most children happily welcome the start of the academic year, for they are glad to be back in schools after their vacations, where they are well cared for and content. The missionaries are continuously channelling the talents and energies of children into constructive channels, especially since the number of unemployed on the Register of the Employment Exchange Imphal, rose from 20,000 in 1974 to over 2 lakhs in June 1985. And not all unemployed persons register themselves.

Education is the best and most effective means of eliciting a permanent change. Education may be a slow

process, but it motivates an individual towards permanent change. It also gives the individual a dignity and self pride which will enable him to persist despite setbacks.<sup>1</sup> While India is proud of its cultural heritage on the one hand, it is challenged on the other, by the reality of grinding poverty, and its vast system of legitimized social oppression. Nearly half the population lives below the subsistence level. The Church in India (and that includes Manipur), is playing its role to transform Indian society according to the vision of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

All the subjects taught in an Indian High School have to do with the training of the mind. Man's hands and the tools he made for them to use, have built the material civilisation and progress of mankind. Any system of education that neglects the training of the hand, that has played such a great part in the civilisation of man, must be considered defective. Man's interest is towards making things. Educationists like Pestaloozi long ago, and Foerster, have insisted on the general educational values of such training. It trains youth in the control of the body and strengthening of will, it brings about union of mental with physical activity, the mastery of the will

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1. The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society, cited from Thomas Jefferson.
  2. S.M. Michael SVD, Analysis of Society at the Micro-level, p.125.



over the body and its members. Manual work has been used in the education of delinquent youth. Intellectual education itself is promoted by such moral training. Regard for the concrete, the real, for things, as opposed to words, is taught by this training. It will also be a form of physical exercise for the development and growth of the body, in addition to, or as an alternative to organised games. There is too much dependence placed by teachers and students on books. Books store knowledge of things. But there is so much knowledge not to be found in books. Such knowledge can only be acquired by observation, by using one's eyes, looking at things, and asking questions about them from parents and teachers. Youth must be taught the art of observation. Science classes could be made more interesting by direct observation of trees, plants, etc. with experiments done by the pupils themselves. Libraries ought to afford reading to pupils in subjects, other than those contained in their text books.<sup>1</sup> The missionaries teach both the use of the mind and hand. The latter is widely used in the practical application of S.U.P.W. (socially, useful, productive works) in all Catholic schools in Manipur. Audio visual aids as also linguaphones

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1. M. Ruthnaswamy, Agenda for India, The Core of Indian Education, pp. 172-176.

etc. are also used as aids to teaching, so that children learn through observation, and also learn to speak correctly and with a good accent. Children are taught manual labor, through practical learning of agriculture, gardening, sewing, carpentry etc. Catholic education places emphasis on moral, intellectual as also physical education of the children in its schools.

Catholic missionaries are people moved by faith, who live, sacrifice their lives, and die for the people entrusted to their care. The Catholic Church is catholic in its outlook, and follows a liberal policy of education in the state. Pope John Paul II expressed the ethos of Catholic communities in these words; "Our communities are called to be an anticipation of the civilisation of love, i.e. they must attain social structures conceived according to the demands of brotherhood, a way of relating, shaped by the spirit of peace and mutual self-giving, a solidarity that heals the social body, a community spiritual life, capable of joining love of God, with love of neighbour."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. A non-Christian state government employee has commented; "Catholic institutions generally maintain

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1. Pope John Paul II, Make Yourself Builders of Communities.

a standard which is higher than the run of the mill institutions. It is still necessary to have horizontal expansion. Quality will come with some effort, and should be gauged by reviewing the status of past students in their professions etc. If improving existing institutions are considered at the expense of increasing the number of institutions, it would be like attempting to beautify an oasis in the desert, instead of making efforts to turn more of the desert green."

Catholic Mission Education is expanding both vertically and horizontally. It is simultaneously improving the quality education in its schools, as also increasing the number of its educational establishments, in order to meet the growing demand of an increasing population for good education. The missionaries always bear in mind their responsibilities towards the children under their care. The Polish priest Fr. Kovoloski aptly expressed the work of all Catholic Missionaries in India: "I can assure you that the work of the vast majority of the missionaries in this country (India),... has been an action to better the lot of the people. Whats more, you know for a fact, that when people here talk of a missionary spirit, it is often to draw the

attention to the work of someone, who in truth, devoted himself to others, who has given only love to his Indian brothers.<sup>1</sup> The Catholic schools in Manipur have done much to dispel ignorance and illiteracy and raise the standard of living. They are contributing towards integration, unity, modernisation of society, without at the same time, losing all that is intrinsic to the culture and spiritual heritage of the people of Manipur; at social transformation, greater efficiency and productivity in different sectors like social service, medical relief, agriculture etc., and the complete development of the human person in a community. The C.B.C.I. (Catholic Bishops Conference of India) assessed the work of Catholic educational institutions, and this assessment holds true of Manipur. "The Church in India is heavily engaged in education. Much of her resources human and material are deployed in this field, which shows the importance she attaches to this apostolate.

The greatest contribution of the Catholic Mission in Manipur is introduction of modern education, particularly to the tribal population. It has radically transformed the life of people. Those people who

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1. Dominique Lapicrre, City of Joy, p.210.

were living in primitive age have been modernised to a great extent. The Catholic Mission Education has its impact on other sections of the people of the state. The model of Mission education has inspired people to promote education and social development in the state.