Chapter IV

The Basel German Evangelical Missionary Society: Scholastic and Humanitarian Concerns

The Basel Mission which came to the Nilgiris, with the avowed aim of Christianisation of the tribals, could not achieve the degree of success it wanted. But, its labours produced far-reaching results in other walks of life. The impact of their work, in areas of education, social protection, preservation and protection of native art forms and creative output and public health, is of great magnitude. Every aspect of the Basel work is to be dealt with at length in this chapter. But what strikes one at the outset is the variegated and comprehensive nature of the Basel Mission’s social work. After seven decades of service starting from 1846, the Basel Mission left behind more than 35 schools, two orphanages, a voluminous compendium on tribal music, a dispensary and much more — all these for a tribal population which reached a maximum of 40,000 only.

Motivation for Scholastic and Humanitarian Work

This prompts questions of motivation. Why did the German Missionaries, whose purpose was Christianization, embark on so much of sustained non-religious activity?

Most of their non-religious work was concerned with the establishment of different kinds of schools. A perusal of the Mission records shows that the motive for such stupendous non-religious work was discernibly religious.

Before the advent of the Missionaries, the towns and even villages of the plains of India had schools of rudimentary types which gave effective training to their pupils and made them master the three ‘R’s. But there was no such school of corresponding nature anywhere on the Hills. The people of the Hills remained outside of every available mode of imparting of
education. To such a land, the Missionaries came with the intention of spreading the Word. They found to their dismay that they had to rely solely on conversation for preaching the Gospel. They began to feel the need for creation of literates among the tribals, so that the propaganda work could be very effectively carried on amongst the Hill people.

It appears there were contradictory views on promoting education among Indians. As the Basel Mission Report shows how level-headed the decision-makers were:

"Being convinced that preaching is necessary, and teaching should not be neglected, we neither belong to those who think that the Mission has no business to establish schools nor to those who believe that India should be chiefly evangelized by means of educational establishments".

Having made a decision to combine the two, to educate and to Christianize, a wide range of schools was established throughout the district. They were schools for Academic Education and Institutions for Religious Education. The main stream schools for Academic Education was of two strands one for non-Christians and the other for Christians. The Institutions for religious education were meant only for the Christians. In all the schools regular religious instruction was carried out. A catechist visited the schools for imparting Bible lessons. The day's work invariably began with a Christian prayer.

**Schools for Academic Education**

The mainstream education given by the Basel Mission took two streams: one for non-Christians and the other for Christians. The very year the Mission landed on the Nilgiris, 1846, without wasting any time it started two mainstream schools, one at Kateri and the other at Sogathorai, both divided by a distance of five kilometres. Both the schools had a

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combined strength of 28, an impressive figure for those times. It must be mentioned that these two schools were started 12 years before the first Badaga would embrace Christianity.

Such schools as these were nevertheless called Vernacular schools, the implication being that they catered to all the tribal and non-Christianized pupils. But after about three to four decades of service, the Basel Mission created Christian congregations here and there. From now on a bifocal approach governs the Mission's academic work. Besides the well-entrenched Vernacular schools for all a new type of schools is started – the Parochial schools – for the Christians. However, there was no rigidity in terms of admission. Even the so-called Parochial schools took in Hindu boys, if there was no Vernacular school in their area. The same was true of Vernacular schools which were set up only for Hindu children.

**Vernacular Schools for Badagas**

The most significant strand of the Basel Mission's scholastic service was the elementary education given by them to the non-Christian Badagas. The significance of this part of the Basel Mission work can be seen in the fact, the Mission took off from an academic void on the Hills. As already noted, while the plains had rudimentary schools, the Hills had no means whatsoever of receiving even the simplest education. But in seventy years of Basel Mission's work, it created as many schools for the Badagas. When this number – forty schools – is seen in terms of ratio with the population it served, the work of the Basel Mission gets highly commended. This is clearly an achievement when seen in the backdrop of the Indian State's failure in making primary education available to all.

The Basel Mission made no bones about their motives in going for such extensive and massive work in the field of education:
"Our Mission has always looked up schools for non-Christians as a most important factor in the evangelization of India. They open the houses and the hearts of the Heathen population for the message of the Gospel apart from direct work of evangelization which is carried out by our Missionaries among them"\(^2\).

All the schools established for the non-Christian Badagas were up to elementary level only and were known as Vernacular schools. Besides these day schools, night schools – to be elaborated subsequently – were also run at several centres. As mentioned earlier the first two schools were started at Kateri and Sogathorai in 1846 by Rev. Weigle, the first German Missionary on the Hills. Besides running those two, he had to superintend the school set up earlier by Casamajor. The English East India Company’s Government did not take any measure to make education available to them and when approached asked the Basel Mission to take the initiative and promised it help. After three years of work, an immensely satisfied Weigle said, "Boys were making pleasing progress notwithstanding the novelty of thing, for reading and writing was a thing unheard of among the Badagas"\(^3\).

Ten years later, the Company’s Government, on the insistence of the Court of Directors, established four schools for the Badagas in 1857. By that time, the Basel Mission had several schools for the Badagas and requested the Government to hand over its schools to the Mission. The Mission gave the following grounds for requesting the transfer: 1. the district was too thinly populated to follow two educational schemes; 2. for eleven years they had been maintaining schools in various parts of the district; 3. the Missionaries had won the confidence of the Badagas and would not be met with objections from the natives\(^4\).

The Missionaries were apprehensive that the establishment of Government schools would deprive them of the monopoly over education and thereby prevent them from directly propagating the Gospel. The Missionaries were quick to realize that wherever they had set up

\(^3\) B.G.E.M.S. Report 1849, p. 44.
\(^4\) H.B. Grigg, op. cit., p. 423.
schools they were warmly welcomed by the Hindus. The Government acceding to their request, made over the four schools to the Mission. It also gave Rs. 40 p.m. as grant-in-aid on conditions that they should expend an equal sum every month from their own resources for the education of the Badagas and one of the Missionaries was to superintend them. The Tamil teachers and Tamil books introduced by the Government were retained by the Mission. In April 1859, Col. A.C. Pears, Inspector of the Schools reported that the German Missionaries had more than fulfilled the conditions under which the schools were made over to them⁵.

Most of the Badagas, yet to realize the value of education, did not send their wards to the schools. Hence the Missionaries made every attempt to win them over. They succeeded partially. On the request of a Missionary named Rev. Muller, the then Collector of the Nilgiris, Tremenhere summoned all the 'Maniyagars' (official headmen of the village) and warned them that here in after illiterate Badagas would not be appointed as 'Maniyagar'. The post of Maniyagar was the height of Badaga's ambition in those days. So the Badagas began to evince keen interest in education. But very soon the Badagas got interested by themselves. So they requested the Missionaries to open schools in their villages. Many Badaga headmen built schools in their villages and handed them over to the Missionaries⁶. In the year 1885 alone five such schools were built by the Badagas⁷.

Nothing daunted the Missionaries in their work of spreading education. Where there were no buildings, they conducted classes in cow sheds Secondly, when the District Board pleaded inability to start new schools on grounds of financial crunch, the Mission stepped in⁸.

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⁵. R.P.I 1858 - 59, p. 54.
Some Challenges

The Missionaries had to face a lot of teething difficulties in those days, as any pioneering force does. Reading and writing were looked upon as unnecessary by the Badagas. The introduction of plantation crops demanded a lot of labour which rendered valuable the work of every young child even. The fickle mindedness of teachers, the harsh and trying climate, the frequent change in the personnel of the Missionaries — those who originated and took interest in them being transferred to other Stations and the want of teachers caused many difficulties in running the schools. Hence the labours of the Missionaries were not rewarded with the desired success. Government started playing the truant and its support in the form of grants stopped wholly for a decade. The Nilgiri Local Fund Board insisted on an average attendance of 15 pupils for eligibility to the grants. Nevertheless, the Government began to give grants by a combination of ‘salary grant system’ and ‘result grant system’. Another great difficulty in the way of educational work was the variety of languages used on the Hills. While the academic lessons were taught in Tamil and English, the religious lessons were taught in Canarese for the Badagas. Further the Badaga children were lured away by the rivals — the Roman Catholic Mission schools.

A particular difficulty rose from the very motive of the Missionaries — conversions. The Basel Mission made it clear that acceptance of Bible as an integral part of the curriculum was condition precedent for the starting of a school in a Badaga village. From a reading of the Mission’s annual reports, it becomes clear that the teaching of Bible was well tolerated by the

Badagas. However, trouble arose when conversions were attempted. When a conversion of a Badaga boy took place at Milidenu near Kotagiri, the Badagas demanded that the Bible lessons should not be taught. But on being told that with the Bible lessons the school too would be given up, the Badagas withdrew their demand. Although attendance in the Vernacular schools grew exceedingly well, they fell down considerably whenever conversions were attempted or occurred.

Undaunted, the Missionaries carried on with their work in the Vernacular day schools for the Badagas. A large number of Badagas were thus given basic education. The Missionaries were able to rouse the interest of Badagas and made them evince interest in education. The Government Inspector of Schools reported that the education of all the Badagas was almost entirely in the hands of the German Missionaries. So the Government also appreciated the progress made by the Missions schools in the diffusion of elementary education among the Badagas. The Mission did not think on technical education since the Government had strictly ruled that there was “no justification for such experiment and insisted on the provision of general education by primary standards”.

15. See Appendix III, table 1 for the combined strength Vernacular and Parochial schools in p. 218.
However, one aspect of the Basel Mission’s work in mainstream education strikes a jarring note. There was a phenomenal rise in the number of pupils completing primary education in the Vernacular schools—from a mere 48 in the year 1874, it rose to 1785 in the year 1912. From 1897 onwards, the schools were sending out every year around 1000 pupils with elementary education. The Basel Mission did not terminate imparting of education to Badaga Christians at the end of primary level. It sent them unfailingly and tenaciously for further education to High Schools either at Ketti on the Hills or even to the distant Mangalore. But no high school education was contemplated for the Badaga pupils who passed out of the Vernacular schools year after year. The onus was clearly on the Hindu Badagas, to demand further education from those who could have given it. But this was a period of historic slumber and they woke up after half-a-century and in 1947 demanded a High school from the Wesleyan Missionaries who had taken over the Basel Mission. Chapter V discusses the development following the demand made after a historic delay.

**Education of the Todas, Kotas and Irulas**

Though concentrating on the education of the Badagas, the Basel mission had not neglected the education of the other inhabitants of the Hills such as the Todas, Kotas and Irulas—all of them tribals. As early as 1839, the Court of Directors of the East India Company asked the Government of Madras to make provision for the education of the Todas. Why the English rulers worried themselves over the education of only the Todas, and not of the Badagas, is not clear and could not be ascertained. Neither the Collector of Coimbatore nor the Collector Malabar took any concrete measure in that direction. The Government felt that there was no possibility of introducing school among the Todas because of their migratory nature. The Government thus left the field clear for Missionary initiative.

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One of the Missionaries (whose name is not specified) took three Toda families into his house in 1858 and maintained them in idleness in order to bring their children under some instruction. But it did not succeed. There was a long lull of three decades, for the initial rebuff must have been very discouraging. Probably, the long and steady work of the Missionaries paid dividends and the Toda willingness to be educated in some elementary fashion demonstrated itself in 1885. Sixteen Toda boys and four Toda girls, in the most heterogenous grouping—they varied from six to sixteen years of age—were assembled together in the first standard of the first ever Toda school. It functioned at Tarnadu Mund near Paikara. For such an assembly, the acquiring of learning was remarkable. An Inspector of Schools found them to have a neat hand in Tamil, and capable of counting up to 100 in the ascending and descending order. Encouraged, in 1886 the Basel Mission started another school at Kollimalai with 14 Toda boys. Both schools were unaided.

These two schools could continue only till 1892. The year 1890 saw the arrival of one more Mission—the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society—into the midst of the Todas. The role of this new Mission is discussed at length in chapter VI. The sole Zenana Missionary Miss. C.F. Ling had a better understanding of the life and needs of the Todas. She set up two schools to suit their migratory nature. The new Mission made primary education wholly free, gave clothes to the pupils and all accessories necessary for primary learning in those days. All those factors led to the thinning of attendance in the Basel-run schools for Todas and their eventual closure. Besides, the Basel Mission saw in the new Mission an allied force and hence left the Toda space wholly to be negotiated by the Zenana Missionaries.

21. Ibid.,
Educating the Kotas

The Basel Mission established a Vernacular school for the Kotas in 1858. However, by Mission and Government records, it is gathered that the attempt to raise “a class so despised” was met with stiff opposition from the Badagas. As a result, the Basel Mission had to shut down its school for the Kotas in 1859 the very next year of its inception. However, after a gap of 25 years matters improved and the Kotas requested the Basel Missionary Rev. Muller to open a day school for them. Though several teachers declined to work in the Kota school on account of various factors, the Missionary was successful in employing a teacher in August 1884 for the Kota school.

The school functioned at a Kota settlement called Kollimalai. It was the only school for the Kotas. The tiled building was given by the Kotas themselves. Tamil was the medium of instruction. As Tamil was understood imperfectly, the Tamil Christian teacher who was not conversant with the Kota dialect gave explanations by signs. The Kotas were amused at pantomime performance. Reading, writing and arithmetic were taught. Singing was common. Many Kota women and girls for whom education was a novelty listened from outside the school and picked a Badaga hymn about the Good Shepherd. At the end of the fourth year, of the seven Kota boys, five passed the primary examination held at Ootacamund. It was for the first time that the boys of the Kota tribe appeared for the public examination. Like the schools for the Todas, this school too remained unaided by the Government and survived solely on Basel Mission’s support. The Kotas were under a tribal obligation to provide music in Badaga funerals and festivals. This led to frequent interruptions in the schooling of Kota children, leading to a temporary shut down from 1889.

But six years later, in 1905, the Mission revived the schools for the Kotas and two schools now aided by the District Board were started. In 1908, a third school was also set up at Sholur. These day schools were run by the Missionaries till their internment in 1915.

Educating the Irulas

The Irulas present a picture of refreshing contrast. They were perhaps the only tribals on the Hills to petition the Mission for proper schooling and education. As early as 1851 itself, the headman of the Irulas asked for a school for their community. But the Mission was unable to concede their demand chiefly owing to the want of a school master. The Mission made a belated attempt in 1912 and opened a school exclusively for the Irulas at Kaisur with 15 boys. No details of education of the Irulas before 1912 are available.

Of the five tribes, the only unfortunate tribe was the Kummbas towards whom neither the Government nor the Missionaries showed any interest. It must be noted that the Kummbas out numbered the Todas substantially and still they had neither school nor education given to the Todas consistently by many Missionaries.

Night Schools

The complete absence of any system of education, reduced an entire district into the mire of illiteracy and the Basel Mission realized that it had a stupendous challenge before it.

31. B.G.E.M.S. Report 1851, p. 34.
32. G.O.No. 1262, Sep. 6, 1912, Local and Municipal Department.
seen earlier, the mainstream schools took care of the basic academic needs of the children of
the Hills. But the adults and the aged had to be given a minimum of functional literacy. Hence,
the Missionaries attempted to educate at least some sections of the illiterate masses by launching
night schools. Such night schools were run by the Basel Mission for the benefit of the Badagas,
Kotas and the immigrant Dalits of the district. Separate night schools were run for each tribal
group and there was no intermixing of the tribals in them. These schools began at sunset and
carried on till ten or eleven o'clock at night. Normally the day school buildings served as night
schools.

Night School for Badagas

The whole lot of the Badagas remained uneducated. Further grown up Badaga boys
were employed in the plantations as soon as they were able to assist their parents. The
Government felt that adult education would broaden the mental horizon of the Badagas. The
Nilgiri District Board too recognized the importance of the night schools in a purely agricultural
district like the Nilgiris and contributed to its growth. As in the running of mainstream schools,
here too, the Basel Mission had its own motives. For the Missionaries, the hope of conversion
rested more upon the night schools than the day schools. For one thing, the night schools were
well attended and popular. Night schools were run at several centres like Sullugudu,
Kannerimukku, Naduhatti, Achinakkallu, Yedakkadu, Dimhatti, Ketti and Sogathorai. Grown
up Badagas and even Badaga headmen attended the school. The popularity of these schools
could be gauged from the fact that the Badagas attending the schools defrayed the expenses of
the teachers from their own purse, whenever Government assistance failed. The Government
too played its part by offering grants subject to the availability of funds.

33. B.G.E.M.S. Report 1847, p. 49 ; 1859, p. 68 ; 1882, p. 72, 1883, p. 84 ; 1894, p. 90.
Initially, the night schools were over crowded. But as days passed, the attendance had gradually lessened. The chief cause was the fear of tigers and other wild animals whose numbers were considerable and on the increase in the Nilgiris. Further, majority of the Badagas stopped coming to school after attaining functional literacy and basic arithmetic.

Night Schools for Kotas

The Kota’s motivation and initiatives in the matter of night schools, is as commendable as it is with the mainstream schools. Here too, unlike in the case of Badagas, education did not go to the Kotas; they went to it. Once again they knocked loudly on the doors of the Basel Mission praying for the establishment of a night school. The Kotas’ passion for education made them build a night school with zeal and devotion. The Missionaries stepped in and the school came about in 1853, in one of the dirtiest Kota houses, whose floor was smoothed and covered with sand by the eager Kotas. The Kotas began learning in good earnest in this school at Kollimalai. But this enthusiasm was never allowed to last by the calling of the Kotas. As mentioned earlier, tribal culture put shackles on them. Like other tribals on the Hills, the Kotas too had their own festivals. Further the role of the Kotas in Badaga ritual was an important one. They had to provide music at Badaga funerals, weddings and certain festivals. The interruption thus caused to the Kota pursuit of education could be understood only by a reference to the population figures. A mere 484 Kotas, living in just seven villages, had to render the services mentioned above, to 13,352 Badagas and 316 Todas in 1856, when the night school had to be closed.

But Kota enthusiasm surfaced again. After a lapse of 30 years, they again requested the Missionaries to provide education to them. Accordingly, two night schools — one at Kotagiri and another at Kollimalai — were started for them in 1886\textsuperscript{37}. The Inspector of the Schools who examined the Kota schools reported that they were making good progress. The Government too encouraged the Mission by offering ‘fixed and salary’ grants for this purpose. The Government’s aim was to make them better workmen than their predecessors\textsuperscript{38}.

The Night schools for the Kotas progressed. However, quite inexplicably the Kotas were evicted from Kotagiri, as becomes evident from two Government Orders\textsuperscript{39}. The orders are silent as to the reasons for the eviction. Sustained efforts by the researcher to unearth them also were of no avail. Decently placed and moderately educated Kota descendents, living in the Hills are surprised to know that their ancestors were evicted from Kotagiri. Any way, the adverse fall out of the eviction led to the closure of the night school at Kotagiri in 1911. The night school at Kollimalai was also given up due to lack of attendance in 1912\textsuperscript{40}.

Night School for Dalits

The Mission which cared for the education of the aborigines of the district realized the need for educating the immigrants also. As mentioned earlier, Dalits formed the major component of the immigrants and majority of the adults remained illiterate. Hence, a school for “Panchamas”

\textsuperscript{37} G.O.No. 1181 L.F. Sep. 24, 1886. Financial Department.
\textsuperscript{38} G.O.No. 2290 L. Sep. 8, 1890, Local and Municipal Department; G.O.No. 1232 M, Aug. 7, 1891, Local and Municipal Department; Proceeding of the Nilgiri District Board, Ootacamund dated Aug. 17, 1903; G.O.No. 1049, Aug. 25, 1904, Local and Municipal Department; G.O.No.833 L. Aug. 5, 1905, Local and Municipal Department; G.O.No. 1112, Sep. 11, 1906, Local and Municipal Department.
\textsuperscript{39} G.O.No. 1236 L, Sep. 19, 1911, Local and Municipal Department; G.O.No. 1262 L, Sep. 6, 1912, Local and Municipal Department.
\textsuperscript{40} G.O.No. 1547 L, Sep. 13, 1913, Local and Municipal Department.
(place not known) was started in 1910. Dalits adults attended the school. Unlike the Kota schools, this night school survived till the expulsion of its founders.

By the combination of day and night Vernacular schools, a large number of Badagas and a reasonable number of Kotas, Todas and Irulas were educated. Education for the first time was made available to a previously non-literate population. The results were exhilarating. For the first time, Tamil and Canarese books were read not only in the schools but also in the houses of the Badagas.

The schools also had another salutary effect. The families which sent boys to the schools enjoyed respect and looked cleaner. As a result, a feeling of social awareness arose in the minds of the educated Badagas and they tried to reform their outmoded ceremonies, particularly those relating to marriage and death ceremonies.

As far as the Mission was concerned, it was able to reap the harvest of the educational network. The Missionaries’ calculations did not go wrong and their steady work through the schools was rewarded, on the lines they desired. School going Badaga boys and girls came to know more and more of Christianity. The young men who had embraced Christianity were the products of these schools. Further, cases of students declaring to their parents that they would no longer worship the idols and acting accordingly or dying Badaga boys confessing their faith in Jesus before their distressed parents were frequently reported by the Missionaries.

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41. G.O.No. 1236 L, Sep. 19, 1911. Local and Municipal Department.
Another concomitant effect was the marked increase over previous figures in the sale of books, tracts and Bible portions among the Badagas\textsuperscript{45}. The cause of social sciences too received a boost by the academic ventures of the Basel Mission, in that most natives who were competent and helped the Western anthropologists working on the Nilgiris, received their competence, capability and motivation from the Mission's schools only.

Additionally, the natives had an excellent opportunity to see what educational administration meant in practical terms. A Missionary was earmarked for superintending all the schools. He worked meticulously on the functioning of the schools and superintended all schools for non-Christians and Christians. He gathered all the school masters every month for a class of instruction to equip and reinvigorate them better for the work. The educational Missionary of the Basel mission functioned as the Chairman, Board of Primary School Examination at various points of time\textsuperscript{46}.

**SCHOOLS FOR CHRISTIANS**

Having discussed the schools started for the non-Christians, the other strand of the Mission's work — Schools for Christians is now taken up. As mentioned earlier, the Basel Mission had created Christian congregations here and there since 1858. From now on a bifocal approach was followed by the Mission. A new type of schools, called Parochial School, was started for the education of the Christians.

**Parochial Schools**

The elementary schools for Christian children were known as Parochial Schools. These school were opened wherever a minimum of half a dozen Christian pupils could be gathered.

\textsuperscript{45} B.G.E.M.S. Report 1889, p. 73.

\textsuperscript{46} The Nilgiri District Gazette mid monthly sheet, dated Jul. 16, 1892 and Mar. 1, 1892.
By giving education to the converts, the Mission made them read and understand Bible in their own mother tongue and discharge their secular duties as well. So in all stations and outstations the Parochial schools were run. Christian parents who did not send their wards to the schools were admonished. Reading, writing, knowledge of arithmetic, singing and above all Bible instruction were imparted in these schools. The Parochial schools, as against the Vernacular schools, had a more vigorous Christian instruction. Its curriculum was heavier on Bible.

Realizing the importance of primary education, even if it be from a Christian religious point of view, the Basel Mission did commendable work. It seized every available opportunity to drive home the need for sending children, specially Christian children to school, for only that would enable the bringing up of these children in “the nature and admonition of Lord” all Christian parents were asked to send their children between six and fourteen years of age to school, without fail. Combining threats with sop, it was made clear that no child would be admitted into full membership of the church unless it was able to read and write.

Historically speaking, it was the very early period of English rule and the subdued natives could be intelligent. The Basel Mission minute reads, the natives should, by learning to read and write “become intelligent members of the Church”.

To start with, the Mission had to bear the entire expenditure of running these schools. After a decade of service, the Basel Mission won Government recognition, when the first flow of State grants came in 1868. The Parochial schools continued their impressive march till the very last days of their founders’ work on the Hills. They got amalgamated into the mainstream schools in 1919 when the entire work of the Basel Mission was handed over to the Wesleyan Methodists. From primary education, the Basel Mission extended its activities to the realm of higher education.

High School for Christians

As an extension of the Parochial schools, the Mission established a high school for Badaga Christians at Ketti in 1894. Prior to this, there were High Schools only for the children of Europeans. The children of Europeans were given education up to high school level in such prestigious schools as Lawrence Asylum at Lovedale, Ootacamund and Hebron School at Ootacamund. So the school started at Ketti in 1894 takes the credit for being the ‘First Indian High School’ on the Hills. It took in both boys and girls.

The purpose of higher education was to train the Mission agents. The Mission went to the extent of ignoring such views which dissuaded it from educating ‘indiscriminately’ all those converts who did not intend to enter into Mission service. Students from Ootacamund, Coonoor, Kotagiri and other places were admitted into this school. After completion of high school studies, those students who wished to become catechist entered the seminary and those that wanted to become teachers went to the normal school. The ‘normal’ school was only a teacher training school and of this more is said in the following pages. The Ketti High School included other institutions like the Catechist Seminary, Teacher Training School and a Boys Orphanage. All these institutions functioned from the school and were under the headship of one Principal.

Some of the lessons taught in the high school were: Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra, Universal History, History of India, Sacred History, Catechism Bible lessons besides popular and practical explanations of Holy Scripture. Tamil, Kannada and English were the media used in the school. The school sent batches of students for the matriculation examination only.

twice. A student named Timothy Mulley of Kotagiri who became the first Badaga Christian
graduate hailed from this institution51.

The school had to be downgraded to a lower secondary school in 1907 for economic
reasons. To support a few student in the High school sections, a heavy sum had to be spent52.
Thereafter Christian aspirants for high school education were sent to Pasumalai, Udipi and
Mangalore.

**Teacher Training School**

One important facet of the mainstream education for Christian pupils, was the starting
of a teacher training school. Curiously, it was known as the Normal School. The Basel
Mission established a large number of primary schools. The primary schools were very dear
to the Basel Missionaries, for they alone transformed the illiterate converts into “intelligent
converts” who can read understand and write about the Gospels. But running the schools
presented certain difficulties, foremost of which was getting suitable teachers. To begin with,
teachers from the plains were appointed for want of Badaga teachers. As they were found to
be inefficient, the Missionaries started training the Badaga youths in an informal way with a
view to replacing the Tamil speaking teachers53. Such informal training was given in the school
set up by G.J. Casamajor and five of the teachers thus trained were employed in different
villages54.

51. Ibid., p. 2.
52. B.G.E.M.S. Report 1907, p. 37. See Appendix III Table 2 for the enrolment in the
High school in p. 31 9.
of the South India Missionary Conference, Held at Ootacamund April 19th - May
The informally trained teachers proved to be just a shade better than their counterparts from the plains. However after inspections, the realization came that a full-fledged, regular teacher training school was essential. Besides the Government laid down that only such primary schools as had trained teachers alone were eligible for sanction of grants. So the Mission started a teacher training school in 1887 so as to make such schools eligible for Government grants. The Government of Madras also felt that the formation of a training school by the Basel Mission would materially advance the spread of education by providing suitable teachers. Accordingly, the Normal School was recognized by the Director of Public Instruction on July 4, 1888 as a primary institution for training the elementary school teachers. The Normal School which had ten trainees in 1889 did not present them for the ‘special primary examination’ conducted in that year.

The District Board Normal School, opened in 1884 languished for sometime and was closed in December 1890 due to heavy expenditure and poor result. It trained only five teachers at a cost of Rs. 8,566. Thereafter the Government offered liberal grants to the Mission’s Normal School as its own venture failed. Initially admission to Normal School was restricted to Christian Badagas only. Later on several non-Christian Badagas were also trained since it was the only training school in the entire district at that time.

Although the Government stipulated one year of training, the trainees underwent additional course of instruction to equip themselves for service at Mission schools. After passing the examination or even during training, they received special course on the methods of

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57. B.G.E.M.S. Report 1888, p. 84.
59. R.P.I. for 1890 - 91, p. 94.
60. G.O.No. 2290 L. Sep. 8, 1890, Local and Municipal Department.
teaching religious subjects in the congregational and Mission schools\textsuperscript{62}. In this way, the Badagabos were given opportunities for studying beyond schooling and qualifying themselves as teachers of their own tribes. All the trained teachers and even those who had not passed the examination were engaged in teaching\textsuperscript{63}. But the school had to be closed for want of pupils in 1906. Thereon, Badaga Christian boys who desired to become teachers were sent to Pasumalai and Coimbatore.

The teacher training school, during its existence of 19 years, trained more than 100 teachers and thus rendered yeoman service to the development of education in the District. The teachers trained here, went on to man both parochial and other mainstream schools open for all.

**Institutions for Ecclesiastical Education**

Besides the various kinds of schools as mentioned previously, the Mission established another kind of school for ecclesiastical purposes for the Badaga Christians. The ecclesiastical institutions consisted of a Catechist Seminary and Sunday schools.

**Catechist Seminary**

The need for a strong, reliable and purposeful native agency was acutely felt by the Missionaries for making an effective breakthrough and subsequent consolidation. To build up such an agency, they brought into play two types of religious institutions: Catechist Seminary and Sunday Schools. The raising of a trained auxiliary force — a matter of significance — was accomplished with the help of Catechist Seminary, as elaborated here. With this view,


\textsuperscript{63} R.P.I. for 1892 - 93, p. 62. See Appendix III, Table 3 for the enrolment in the Normal School in p. 219.
untrained Badaga converts were consecrated as catechist. Abraham, the first to be converted, was made a catechist in 1864, six years after his conversion. Thereafter, during the three decades that followed a steady wave of conversions increased the strength of the congregation. This called for greater work in meeting the spiritual needs of a growing flock. Besides, the outstations had to be manned by trained, competent and committed Gospel workers. Those Christian boys who consented to become catechists and discharge the new religious duty had to be sent to distant Tellicherry or more distant Mangalore which alone had seminaries that trained the converts for the job. Both the places are on the West Coast of India and confronted the zealous hill men with a hostile weather—a phenomenon hitherto not met. The long stay in such a situation and terrain damaged their health. So it was decided to open a small catechist seminary at Ketti itself.

Accordingly, a seminary came into existence there in 1894. The students of seminary received their general education at the high school at Ketti and were attached to the Boys Boarding School. At the end of some general education, they received their religious training for one year. The curriculum here included, among other things: explanation of several books of Old and New Testaments, doctrines of faith, preaching exercises, catechistic exercises, English, Kannada, Hinduism and music. However, the seminary did not have large attendance as the Badaga Christian boys opting for catechist training were only a few. The Missionaries failed to motivate the natives to take up the job a catechist. Though both the jobs of a catechist and school master were pensionable, the native converts preferred to work as a teacher rather than as a catechist. The Mission was compelled to close the seminary in 1903 due to the escalation of cost to train the few who came forward. Once again, the Badaga boys who wanted to pursue religious education were sent to Mangalore.

64. B.G.E.M.S. Report 1865, p. 70.
66. See Appendix III, Table 4 for enrolment in catechist seminary in p. 220.
Though the Catechist Seminary folded up even before it could complete a decade of work, its success should not be measured in quantitative terms. It is true that it trained about only 29 catechist in all—but these 29 penetrated into the thick of as many regions or more, and advanced the cause of the Missionaries.

Sunday Schools

A dose of religious instruction to the young boys and girls of the Badaga converts was considered essential to familiarize them with Christian tenets. So the Mission ran Sunday Schools for them in all stations and out stations. Besides the Christian children, several “heathen Badaga children” also reportedly received religious instruction in these school68. The Missionaries, school teachers and students of the catechist seminary and teacher training school conducted Sunday school for Badaga children. The Sunday school must have kept up the religious tempo and served as physical symbols of a theology that was trying hard to carve out a niche for itself.

By giving education to the converts, the Mission made them worthy members of the church. The intensive education received at the High school, Teachers training school and catechist seminary helped them secure jobs not only within the Mission but also outside the Mission. Many converts got employed in various Government offices in various calling. Several worked as writers in numerous coffee and tea plantations spread through out the District. Thus the Mission advanced the material status of the converts and placed them ahead of the traditional Badagas in terms of mobility and modernization.

The concerns of the Basel Mission were wide ranging and extended beyond the establishment and maintenance of schools. They included care for orphans, famine relief and other forms of humanitarian concerns. The Mission established orphanages with the intention of educating and protecting some of the poor children of the district. These orphanages, one for boys at Ketti and one for girls at Kotagiri, were in the nature of a boarding school. Apart from feeding and clothing the orphan boys and girls, they gave them education in the schools which were on the same campus.

An 1872 Report, speaking on the need for such an institution explains who were considered orphans. Besides poor Christians “who would be utterly destitute and abandoned to physical and moral ruin” but for the refuge it included “others who are either too poor or normally unfit to give their children anything like education. Others again have come from heathenism and have found a refuge in these institutions” 69.

An orphanage, the first of its kind on the Nilgiris, was started in 1870 when Rev. J.F. Metz gathered six Badaga boys and girls 70. The Mission expected to gather destitute children from the hill tribes. But the natives had rather preferred to see their orphans and destitute begging from house to house than give them over to a Christian orphanage 71. Nevertheless a few did come to the orphanage. The Mission records claim that boys and girls of the orphanage were baptized after “proper instruction” in Gospel. Every single entrant was baptized.

70. B.G.E.M.S. Report 1870, p. 49.
Boys Orphanage

Initially, the orphanage was located at Ketti and catered to both sexes. Since there had been a few children only, it was considered not advisable to separate the boys and girls. But the severe famine of 1878 brought in a number of orphans. Twelve orphans were made over to the Mission by a Committee of Wynaad Planters in Devala. Some others came from other quarters. With 50 children, of both sexes, the orphanage was very crowded. So it was decided to house the girls at Kotagiri and retain the boys at Ketti itself.

The boarders of the boys orphanage were exposed to all kinds of manual labour and agricultural experiences. All mates were expected to wash clothes, sew them, grind corn, pound rice and milk cows. They also grew vegetables for which lands were made over to the orphanage. Thus the curricular plan for the orphanage was so devised that the institution could economically sustain itself. Barring a few desertions in the beginning, the boys generally got attached to their 'home'.

All the brilliant orphans who showed a promise of fitness for Mission service were sent to higher studies at Mangalore and Udipi. They were either trained as teachers or catechists. The other boys who had technical bent were given vocational training. Several of them were taught weaving and carpentry to earn their livelihood. With the help of Sir. W. Denison, a European loom was constructed at Ketti. The Badaga boys who were taught to weave, produced good fabric which were eagerly bought by the natives. Some of the

74. H.B. Grigg, op.cit., p. 422.
75. The South of India Observer Almanac and Neilgherry Guide and Directory 1872, p. 111.
inmates were sent to Calicut and apprenticed as carpenters\textsuperscript{76}. The less gifted were sent to Mangalore to work in the tile factories. Thus the boys in the orphanage were trained in various trades. Once admitted into the Protestant orphanage, the children remained well protected and left with a means of subsistence\textsuperscript{77}. Even a blind Badaga orphan was taken into the orphanage in 1898. He was subsequently sent to the Palayamkottai school for the handicapped run by the Zenana Missionaries\textsuperscript{78}.

Some of the Mission teachers and catechist too sent their children to the boarding school and contributed towards their maintenance. For other orphans, gifts and donations flowed from England and Germany. The Provincial as well as Central Governments also extended liberal aid to the orphanage\textsuperscript{79}.

A considerable number of the inmates later turned out to be worthy members of the church. Many of them became school teachers, catechist, artisans and Government servants. The orphanage became an important factor in supplying native agents to the Mission organization.

**Girls Orphanage**

As mentioned earlier, the increase in the combined orphanage at Ketti, necessitated the opening of a separate orphanage for girls. Accordingly, an orphanage for girls was started at Kotagiri in 1880. As the Home Committee was unable to support the construction of the orphanage, Rev. Buhrer made a collection in and around Kotagiri to the tune of Rs. 300/-. The Government of Madras too contributed to the building of the orphanage. It gave a grant

\textsuperscript{76} B.G.E.M.S. Report 1884, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{77} C.R.S.M.E. 1887, p. 192.
\textsuperscript{78} B.G.E.M.S. Report 1898, p. 58 ; 1900, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{79} Proceeding of the Board of Revenue No: 3339, Sep. 24, 1884; C.R.S.M.E. 1887, p. 192.
of Rs. 1000/-80. Tragically, the same reason that gave birth to the girls' orphanage — famine — made a savage comeback and led to its expansion. The next famine of 1900 brought in more number of girls, leading to the Basel Mission to enlarge the orphanage by building new rooms81. From a mere three children in 1870, the figure in 1902 reached an all-time high of 38.

In the orphanage, the girls were educated and were also taught all the work necessary to run a successful household. They were taught thrift, needlework, gardening etc. The Basel Mission records speak of “troublesome girls” being “chastised and disciplined” 82. After rising at 5.30 a.m., the girls had a short prayer in private and followed cleaning and tidying up their sleeping rooms and the whole house. After breakfast, the little ones collected firewood, the elder girls pounded and cleaned their daily supply of corn and rice. The school hours were from 9.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. with an interval from 12.00 to 12.30 for lunch. The senior girls cooked their food daily and repaired their clothing once a week. After meals, they attended evening service. They cleaned the Church every Saturday. On Sundays, they went to service at 11.00 a.m. and catechism classes at 2.00 p.m. Between or after services, they learned to sing hymns, and stage plays. Twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the girls went to the Mission house for needlework. Needlework was taught by the Missionary lady, the matron or the school mistress. Plain and fancy needleworks such as patching and darning old clothes neatly, making articles like a bag, sock or scarf were also taught. This was the routine life of the inmates of the girls' orphanage at Kotagiri83.

Government support was regular and unfailing84. Donations were also received from several quarters including gifts from Switzerland. After higher elementary education, the girls

who had relatives returned to them, while others stayed on in the orphanage till they got married or went to serve as maid servants. Some of the studious girls were sent to the teacher training school run by the Catholic Sisters at Ootacamund. Many of the elder girls found service with the Missionaries and other European families on the Hills and were reported to be good and faithful servants. The Missionaries also arranged for the marriage of the destitute girls.

Thus the orphanages provided shelter to a number of destitute natives as well as immigrants. Since the orphans were converted to Christianity, they helped the Mission in increasing the numbers of converts. However, it also materially advanced the status of the inmates.

**Basel Contribution to Native Art and Literature**

The Basel Mission pressed about 30 Missionaries into its service on the Hills. These Missionaries, were men of varied tastes and had a variety of interests. Some of them kept themselves engaged in the realms of native languages, art and culture and contributed substantially to their preservation. Some of the Missionaries Rev. Kittel, Rev. Gundert, and Rev. Moegling contributed so much to Kannada, Malayalam, and Tulu literatures that these three were given Doctorate Degrees in honour of their services to these languages.

Rev. C. Moericke was the first Basel Missionary to appreciate the richness of the Badaga epics and he documented four of them — Bala, Sivana, Bela and Mada. He had also

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87. In 1901, three girls were married to a farmer, to a common labourer and the third to a school teacher Ref. B.G.E.M.S. Report 1910, p. 38.
88. See Appendix III, Table 5 for combined strength of orphanages in p.220.
noted that the Badaga proverbs helped the Missionaries understand “the present day relationship among the people”\(^89\).

No narrative of the contribution of the Missionaries to the social and cultural life of Badagas would be complete, unless mention is made of J.F. Metz, at least in brief. Alone of all Missionaries, it was only Metz who totally identified himself with the Todas. A defective olfactory sense was invaluable help to him in carrying on with Missionary work amongst the Todas, who bore the stench of dairy products liberally dashed on cracking skins as a protective measure. A bachelor, Metz devoted 26 years of labour among the tribes between 1848 and 1874.

Metz was a polyglot and knew the Dravidian languages. He was the only Missionary and in probability the first European and first non-tribal to speak the obscure Toda, Kota and Badaga dialects\(^90\). A scholar, Metz made an anthropological study of the ‘Nilgiri tribes’. In 1856, he published anonymously the earliest account of the subdivisions and customs of the Badagas under the title ‘The Tribes Inhabiting the Neilgherry Hills’ from the rough notes of a German Missionary, Madras 1856 in ‘The Madras Christian Herald’\(^91\). H.B. Grigg’s ‘A Manual of the Nilagiri District in the Madras Presidency’ and J. Shortt’s ‘An Account of the Tribes on the Neilgherries’ had borrowed freely from Metz’s articles\(^92\). Later, Metz published the book entitled “The Tribes Inhabiting the Neilgherry Hills: Their Social Customs and Religious Rites” at the Mission’s press at Mangalore in 1864. An account of all the five tribes and their interdependence and relationship have been extensively dealt in this work.

\(^{89}\) "Von den Blauen Bergen", Evangelische Heiden bote, 1848, pp. 29 -30.
\(^{91}\) R. Baikie, The Neilgherris; Including an Account of their Topography, Climate, Soil and Production; and of the Effects of the Climate on the European Constitution, (Calcutta : Baptist Mission Press, 1857), p. IXXXVI.
\(^{92}\) W. Francis, op.cit., p. 130.
The name of Metz would go down in history as a great contributor to tribal culture. He was struck by Badaga ballads, which are admirable not only for their music but also for the tribal history that they deftly interweave into the songs. So impressed was Metz that he set down to translate them all. This led to his compiling them in the first place. When the work was completed, it was a massive two volume compendium wholly translated into German. It is a pity that they are yet to be published.93

Metz could fluently speak the Toda and Kota dialects and published two scholarly paper on them in the Madras Journal of Literature and Science.94 He also assisted several studies on the tribes of the Hills. When Marshall made ‘a strict enquiry into the condition of the Todas’, Metz became his sole associate in all his expeditions save one or two.95 Metz also assisted Breeks, the first Commissioner of Ootacamund who under the direction of the Government made a thorough examination of the antiquities of the Hills.96


95. William E. Marshall, op.cit., p. V.

Metz, thus brought to the notice of the western world the existence of these tribes. His pioneering works gave a fillip to the anthropologists and linguists to undertake a plethora of studies later. Influenced by Metz, Rev. W. Stokes, another Basel Missionary made a collection of Badaga proverbs and prepared short Badaga grammar also.

**Bible Translations**

Having successfully taught Tamil, Kannada and English to the Badagas, the Missionaries now grew bold and embarked on bolder ventures. They set to render the Bible in the Badaga tongue which had no script of its own. As mentioned in the Chapter I, all the tribes spoke only dialects and no tribal group had a language with script. The Missionaries were shown the way by the person who invited them – Casamajor. He translated eight chapters of St. Luke in Badaga dialect, using a Kannada script. The task left unfinished by Casamajor – death intervened – was taken up by the Basel Mission. The rest of the work was done by Rev. C. Moericke all the Basel Mission. Isiah Konga of Maniyagar challenge fame, a teacher in the Mission school assisted Rev. Moericke in translating the rest of the Gospel. It was lithographed in Moericke’s own hand writing and was carried through the press in 1852.

One finds the reference to the impact of the translation work on the Kannada language: “While printing the Gospel, the Missionaries were obliged to substitute several old Kannada characters which were not in use at that time.”

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The Gospel of Luke was the first ever printed book in the native dialect of the hill tribes on the Nilgiris and was a great accession of strength to the Missionaries. They felt that succeeding generations would get more accustomed to pure Kannada, but the then adult population could be effectively reached only through Badaga dialect\textsuperscript{101}.

Thirty five years after the appearance of the lithographed text, Rev. J. Knoblock, the then Chairman of the Basel Mission in India, directed the Missionaries to revise it. Rev. Lutze, the resident Missionary at Ketti undertook this task with the help of Badaga Catechist John Philip, Jesaias and Badaga Pastor Rev. Jacob Kanaka\textsuperscript{102}. It was published in 1889 and was greatly useful to the steadily increasing number of Badaga converts. Such renewed effort was an outcome of the Mission’s unabated interest in the Badagas possessing the scripture, no matter how small their number was, in their own language. Hand bills of Christian hymns in Badaga were printed and distributed all over the district. In many Badaga houses these Christian songs were sung. ‘The Heavenly Paradise’ and ‘The only way to Salvation’ were popular among the Badagas\textsuperscript{103}. Though this was service to religion, still the work enriched both local dialect and native music.

The translations into Badaga dialect stopped, when Badagas were drawn into the mainstream of Tamil which now became the official language and the medium of instruction in the schools\textsuperscript{104}. Some religious texts were published in Tamil. The Basel Mission acquired a Tamil printing press at Mangalore in 1880 itself. Rev. W. Sikemier’s ‘Mark’ which was published in 1893 was transliterated into Tamil with special diacritical marks. Rev. Jacob Kanaka,

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\textsuperscript{101} B.G.E.M.S. Report 1853, p. 37. \\
\textsuperscript{102} B.G.E.M.S. Report 1889, p. 70. \\
\textsuperscript{103} B.G.E.M.S. Report 1913, p. 52. \\
\textsuperscript{104} Nevertheless, ‘the Indian Bible Translators’ recently released a New Testament in Badaga using Tamil script at C.S.I. Wesley Church, Ootacamund on 9.5.1999 which made Badaga Christians nostalgic.
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a Badaga pastor helped Sikemier in the transliteration and his version of 'Jonah' was published in 1902\textsuperscript{105}. Thus, the Mission patronized the indigenous initiatives and efforts in scripture translations.

**Health Services**

Like education, health too was seen by the Basel Mission as offering them fine preparatory ground for its religious work. Encouraged by the rewards given to them, in terms of number of converts, by the work done by them in the field of education, the Missionaries were encouraged by 1914, to spend their energies in the field of public health and hygiene. Unlike in education, the tribals had their own hereditary herbal therapy besides unscientific and harmful branding which they considered curative. While physical illness responded to herbal therapy, the mental illness went undiagnosed and Kurumba witchcraft was sought to heal them. Fatal diseases like cholera and typhoid were considered visitations of divine fury. Into this scenario the German Missionaries entered with some medical knowledge.

They introduced both the homoepathic and allopathic medicines and changed the health scenario of the district. The Missionaries were endowed with the knowledge of both the systems of Western medicine. They were invariably equipped with their personal supplies of first aid drugs and other remedies which were periodically replenished from the Mission centres. They doled out medicines wherever they went as part of their itinerant work. The Missionaries introduced on the Hills inoculation against smallpox.

As soon as the Mission centre was established at Ketti, the Missionaries had fervently embarked upon their nonprofessional medical endeavours. Rev. Weigle, the first Missionary on the Hills, vaccinated about seven hundred Badagas, adults as well as children, in 1846 in

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order to save them against the frequent and deplorable ravages of smallpox. Such vaccination was carried on in the succeeding years also.

It was the practice among Badagas, during the out break of an epidemic, to desert their villages leaving the dead, dying and the sick to themselves. The Missionaries viewed "such epidemics as new opportunities to touch the hearts of the poor Badaga". In 1854, an attack of typhus fever took a toll of more than 500 Badagas. The Missionaries, particularly Rev. Metz, visited the sick and distributed medicine to all. The treatment of the sick was in many cases blessed with success. In a village where the disease had been ravaging, not a single person died after distribution of medicine by Metz. Similarly when smallpox broke out in 1855, the sick were as usual deserted by their villagers. The Missionaries rose to the occasion and treated the Badagas afflicted by smallpox. The Missionaries who were yet to open their account on Badaga conversion were eagerly hopeful that at least a few Badagas would come to the Mission to ask for baptism. The sick people who received a new lease of life belied their expectations.

The Missionaries were commonly sought out whenever Badaga therapy failed. The Badagas addressed them that they were their 'Padre' (Priest) and a look or touch by them would relieve them of their ailments. For their part, the Missionaries never challenged the herbal therapy and continued with their work.

The Missionaries came across several cases of suicides too. The mode was by an excessive intake of opium. On one such occasion, Rev. Metz succeeded in rescuing five

Badaga women by speedy administration of a suitable antidote. Regarding the medical work of the Basel Missionaries Rev. George W. Sawday, a Methodist Missionary from Mysore who visited Ketti in 1884, reported thus:

“It is evident that the villagers know when their friend the Missionary is resident in the place, for during the whole time we were there, they kept on coming for medicine.... All who came were doctored, some according to allopathy, and some with homoeopathic remedies; and we scarcely knew which to admire the most, the loving spirit of the Missionary or the simple trust of the villagers.”

Prior to 1914, the resident and itinerant Missionaries gave away medicines to the needy. However, whenever Medical Missionaries of the Basel Mission from Calicut and Mangalore came to the Nilgiris for vacation, they treated the sick. In the absence of a hospital, Badagas needing professional treatment were sent to Mission hospital at Calicut. Only towards the end of their occupancy, did the Missionaries realize the dependence of the natives on them and accordingly set up a hospital at Ketti in 1914. It was called the Ketti Medical Mission.

Whenever epidemics broke out, the Missionaries gained access to the Badagas and spread the tenets of Christianity among them. But the healing Ministry did not bring in as many converts as the schools did. The internment of the Missionaries restricted the functioning and success of the Ketti Medical Mission. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society continued the work after the Basels.

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113. Chenni, a cripple at Ketti, got her leg set straight by Dr. Price. Ref: Ketti Baptismal Register, Entry No. 220, dated Mar. 3, 1880. Later on she took baptism and converted to Christianity.
Famine Relief Works

The Missionaries were never wholly altruistic and never failed to capitalise on the calamities that struck the Badagas. On one occasion of drought on the Nilgiris in 1859, the Missionaries blamed the disaster on the continuing worship of idols by the Badagas. Rev. Metz reported that the famines might have helped to awaken in many Badagas a fear of the wrath of God and experienced a feeling of “a Saviour in need”. Then the Missionary considered it “quite refreshing” when the Badagas showed an eagerness to hear the Gospel and ask questions about it. Interestingly, the Badagas gave the same medicine to the Missionaries. An epidemic that broke out in 1873 was attributed to Jesus, because the Missionaries “had been preaching that not a hair, not a bird can fall to the ground without Jesus’ express will and His sovereign command.”

Whenever intense famines afflicted the Nilgiris, Badagas turned towards the Mission for succour. The Missionaries also never failed to mitigate their distress. During the famine of 1877, Rev. W. Stokes carried out relief measures in his capacity as the Member of the Neilgherry Famine Relief Committee and Agencies. Further a large number of people went to the Mission house at Ketti. The enormity of the task of feeding all the people fell on the Missionaries. But after some time the Missionaries restricted their alms giving to the old and sick, established some relief work for Christians and distributed rice to them. As Prof. G.A. Oddie

points out, the message was clear. “If you are starving and need food and other assistance, join the Christians”\textsuperscript{120}. Surprisingly, there was no upsurge of interest in joining the Mission as it had happened elsewhere in India. Only a handful of indigent and starving Badagas and particularly the relatives of former converts came forward to forsake Hinduism. For them, their idols had been of no use in that calamity and so they would follow the God of the Christians\textsuperscript{121}.

When another famine ravaged the Hills in 1900, The Basel Mission undertook relief works. They roped in help from Germany and the editor of the Bombay Guardian\textsuperscript{122}. Unlike the medical works, the Missionaries were happy to see some of the beneficiaries joining the Church. It is a fact that every famine — the famines of 1856 - 59, 1877 - 79 and 1900 — helped in the increase of the strength of the congregations to some extent.

**Temperance Movement**

Before the advent of the Europeans, use of alcohol and drunkenness were unknown to the tribals. After colonization, several breweries were set up on the Hills using the hill barley for the use of the Europeans\textsuperscript{123}. The beer and arrack intended for the Europeans on the Nilgiris became available to the Badagas also who had been formerly taking opium. Alcoholism was a British blessing to the tribals. The Basel Mission was concerned about the addiction of Badagas to opium and alcohol and made attempts to break the habits. The Badagas who


\textsuperscript{121} B.G.E.M.S, Report 1877, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{122} B.G.E.M.S, Report 1900, p. 106.

\textsuperscript{123} W. Francis, op.cit., pp. 289 - 290.
wished to become Christians were baptized only on giving up opium-eating. A Missionary named Rev. Lutze felt the need for an asylum for the opium eaters since the addicts had no means of getting better nourishment and proper cure\textsuperscript{124}. Such a venture was impossible chiefly owing to lack of funds.

In order to wean away the Badaga drunkards, the Mission did not start a temperance society as such, but the Young Men's Association performed such functions\textsuperscript{125}. They preached about the evils of drunkenness among the Badagas. The Church disciplined the members who took to drink by resorting to excommunication\textsuperscript{126}. Inspite of the sincere efforts of the Mission, drunkenness continued to increase.

**Some Omissions : An analysis**

The same Basel Mission based in Malabar and South Canara undertook a number of economic activities for the welfare of the converts. They included training in weaving and tile making. This increased the social and economic status of the converts which in turn created a favourable climate for conversion\textsuperscript{127}. While all the industrial activities of the Mission were confined to the coastal areas, the Nilgiris as such had been neglected by the Mission in this regard. No policy declaration is available on the part of the Mission to explain such omissions. Plausible explanations could be: absence of a sizeable number of converts needing rehabilitation; absence of raw materials and transport facilities; and the inclement weather.

\textsuperscript{124} B.G.E.M.S. Report 1886, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{125} B.G.E.M.S. Report 1898, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{126} B.G.E.M.S. Report 1892, p. 73.
Nevertheless, the Mission Trading Company established a sales depot at Ootacamund to supply all kinds of materials for Mission stations and Europeans. Various kinds of tiles like ridge tiles, both plane and ornamental, skylights and ventilators, ridge and hip terminals, finials of various kinds, grooved spire tiles, hanging wall tiles, ceiling wall tiles of various designs, ceiling slabs, common and ornamental clay flooring tiles, chimney bricks, salt glazed stones, earthenware drainage pipes, flower pots and terra-cotta wares manufactured at Mangalore and Calicut found their way to the Nilgiris. The natives also availed of the Mission's shop at Ootacamund. The natives who had earlier had their roofs thatched with leaves and straw replaced them with the tiles which were stronger, long lasting and very protective. The village of Ketti where the head quarters of the Mission was housed was found with tiled houses in 1882. The introduction of tiles was a major gift to the Hills.

The Mission tiles which were far superior in quality were largely used all over India. The Mission supplied over two million tiles of various kinds for the construction of the cordite factory at Aruvankadu. It is one of the ironies of history that the cordite factory which was roofed by the Basel labour, eventually forced the Mission's irreversible exit from the Hills. The building of the factory began in May 1900 and manufacture of explosives started in July 1904. Such a vast and massive tiled structure had a pervasive effect on the natives to go in for tiles however small their houses might be. Thus the Mission was responsible for the introduction of tiles which were unknown to the natives.

Eradication of Social Evils

The Missionaries strove to remove some social evils prevalent among the tribes. The Missionaries considered them impediments for their work. The Badagas used to hold periodic fire walking ceremonies throughout the Nilgiris. The Missionaries wanted to do away with that and drew the attention of the Government. Prompted by them the Government issued a ban on fire walking in 1855\textsuperscript{133}. The Mission was not successful in its propaganda against the female infanticide and polyandry of the Todas, but was able to influence the Government to curb the sacrifice of herds of buffaloes at Toda funeral ceremonies. Accordingly the Government limited them to a minimum of two animals\textsuperscript{134}. In the same way the sacrifice at Kota funeral was also restricted\textsuperscript{135}.

Summing up

The Basel Mission sought acceptance among the tribals by employing various service activities. All their methods were strategically programmed to win adherents to their fold. They used education as one of the most powerful vehicles for the speedy transmission and transplantation of Christian ideals. Hence it resulted in the establishment of various types of schools, leading to some educational advancement of the Badagas. At the same time education of minorities like Todas, Kotas and Irulas were also taken care of. Though one might tend to point out the ulterior motive behind their educational policy, it can not be denied that education, for the first time, was provided to them only by the Missionaries. The determination of Missionaries should be congratulated, since they were far ahead of the government in popularizing education among the tribals. Many schools started by the Mission have grown

\textsuperscript{133} Paul Hockings, \textit{Ancient Hindu Refugees}, p. 186.
\textsuperscript{134} G.O.No. 1995 A, Oct. 27, 1874, Judicial Department.
\textsuperscript{135} G.O.No. 834, Mar. 30, 1886, Judicial Department.
into middle school, high schools and even higher secondary schools; several have completed a century and more. Most of the schools continue the function till date in bringing enlightenment to the children of the district. The lamp lit by the Basel Mission glows on.

By their ecclesiastical institutions, the Mission was able to raise a trained native agency to carry on evangelization at the grass root level. The selfless and yeoman service rendered by the Missionaries in caring for the orphans, providing succour to the needy during famines and treating the sick had gone a long way in accepting the presence of the Mission among the Badagas. After having analyzed the Basel Mission's work, the thesis now takes up the Wesleyan work for a similar study in the next chapter.