CHAPTER – IX

THE IMPACT OF CBM CHURCH ON MASSES
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE:

Like other Protestant missionaries who came to Andhra earlier and established educational institutions, the Canadian Baptist Missionaries also realized the importance of education as an effective tool of communication in alien societies to achieve their goal of evangelism. Besides that, education to them is a powerful instrument to bring socio-economic and cultural change in the attitudes of the masses. Above all, education was a means and not an end as far as the activities of the Canadian Baptist missionaries are concerned. That is why the Canadian Baptist Missionaries entered this field on a large scale in order to realize their ultimate aim of converting the masses into Christianity in Northern Coastal Andhra. The prominent missionaries like John McLaurin, A.V. Timpany, Boggs, Churchill, Sanford, Armstrong, Gullison etc., played pivotal role in organizing educational institutions in Telugu land.

When the Canadian Baptist missionaries started educational activities in Northern Coastal Andhra, they found the existence of the vernacular schools in different places, which were imparting traditional system of education. The Brahmin pandits and priests were the teachers in the vernacular schools. The instruction was largely religious in character and was mostly confined to upper castes such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas and occasionally to Vaisyas. With the

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1 Kenneth Ingham, Reformers in India, 1793-1833, Cambridge University Press, 1956, p. 61.
2 Report, CBTM, 1923-24, p. XI – XII.
advent of the Canadian Baptist Missionaries, there came about a significant change in the educational field of Andhradesa in general and North Coastal Andhra in particular. Hence the CBM missionaries implemented the motto of "proselytisation through education". Whatever might have been the ultimate aim of the missionaries, the fact is that by introducing a new system of English education, the missionaries wanted to give rude shock to the traditional system of education, which was deeply rooted in Andhra in general and in the districts of Northern Coastal Andhra in particular. The concepts like regular schooling, teaching of English language as a medium of instruction and the introduction of subjects like History, Geography, Civics, Ethics, Arithematics and the teaching of the principles of Christianity in the missionary schools made the system of education quite different from that of the traditional system⁴.

The Canadian Baptist missionaries established schools ranging from elementary schools, secondary schools, caste girl schools and boarding schools in northern Coastal Andhra depending upon the availability of infrastructural, instructional facilities and financial resources⁵. They established nearly 500 village schools, which were upto 5th standard and managed by a single teacher and were mostly established in majority of the villages where Christian conversions took place and that too on demand from the villagers. The higher elementary schools, secondary schools were established wherein a sizeable school-going children were available depending upon the availability of trained

⁴ Ibid., p. 65.
⁵ Report CBTM, 1947, p. 129.
teachers and financial resources. In establishing schools, the missionaries did not hesitate to take Government grants and even though the governmental policy was secular education which was detrimental to their religious freedom, they allowed governmental supervision and control only with a view to reduce the huge financial burden and also to provide job opportunities to the students.

An important experiment of the Canadian Baptist missionaries like missionaries of other denominations in Andhra was the establishment of ten boarding schools for both the sexes. These boarding schools acted as the 'power houses' of the whole educational enterprise of Canadian Baptist Mission. The learning situation in the village was replaced by the compound life which exerted stronger educational influence on the student than the family and community life. Under strict control in an environment completely removed from family life, and traditional occupational atmosphere, the students were trained up in different subjects with scientific diction and that too completely isolated from the external influences for a longer duration. Besides this, the CB Missionaries considered these schools as foundaries to infuse in the minds the chosen material and prepare the borders for special work. These schools had limited enrolment, good discipline, good health, and good success. The students were given special training for service especially for evangelistic sunday schools. Consequent to the study in the Boarding Schools, the boys and girls lost interest in the traditional

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7 Report CBTM, 1932, p. 120.
8 Report CBTM, 1920-21, p. XV.
caste system and thus emerged as a new society. The students thus educated in the boarding schools were, in course of time, further trained up by the missionaries to be used as teachers, preachers, and also for other church works.

Further, in the boarding schools, admission was also given to non-Christian Day Scholars. This also paved the way for strengthening of bondage between upper castes and lower castes.

In the field of female education also, the missionaries were the fore-runners. They not only encouraged the girl children to attend the schools regularly but also provided incentives such as gifts, clothing and text books. At times depending upon the poverty of the parents, the missionaries either paid the school fee to the promising students from their own pockets or provided greater assistance from the church funds. This act of Baptist missionaries dispelled the fear among certain genuine poor female students who continued their further studies. Besides this, the missionary wives, who were interested in the female education, went round the parents and convinced them to send their children to schools, told them about the bad effects of child marriages and the child widowhood etc. They also encouraged them to send their children to the schools and convinced them about the benefits that occurred out of education.

Initially, the Canadian Baptist missionaries thought that education imparted to the high caste children would eventually percolate and filter down to the lower castes.

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10 Report CBTM, 1941, p. XVI.
11 Report CBTM, 1883, p. 42.
the lower strata as well. But experience belied their hope, for conversion amongst caste Hindus became a rare event. Even though the mission's educational institutions were not so effective as they were expected to be, as far as conversion of high caste children, it nevertheless proved to be a very powerful agency in effecting the thoughts of untouchable communities and through them their families and society at large.¹²

In this connection, it may be mentioned that the effect of the educational institutions started by C.B.M. in Andhra among the untouchable communities was very great indeed. Conversion to Christianity created in them initially remarkable eagerness to read Bible and understand the word of God personally, and it also created in them the awareness for education which in turn facilitated their entry into occupations such as teaching, preaching, administrative positions which were hitherto were closed to them. The introduction of educational opportunities in the untouchable communities has improved their economic status and social prestige as a whole.

In this context, it may be remembered that the education among the untouchable communities brought another purposeful and concerted attempt of social change. The Canadian Baptist Missionaries had a genuine sympathy for the sufferings of these communities. They tried to save every soul in the sacred name of Lord Jesus Christ. Naturally these communities who were poorest of poor in economic context and loathsome in the social aspect, were attracted to the

missionary activities. The cross became to them a symbol of self-reliance. The untouchables, who as Hindus were denied entry to the Temples and precluded even from hearing recitations from Vedic Scriptures, were happy to have Krishna in Christ, a Veda in the Bible and Mandir in the Church and happiness everywhere instead of tears and fears of their earlier existence\(^{13}\).

The children of the untouchable communities in course of time entered the mission schools and it has resulted, in what the late Dr. Stanely Jones, a well known American preacher called 'the mass movement of mind'\(^{14}\). Some of the children of these untouchable communities who passed all the examinations conducted by the Government agencies became teachers and taught the Brahmins in their strongholds in Northern Coastal Andhra. Brahmins once, considered to be the sole custodians of knowledge and learning, in course of time, sat at the feet of the Christians of untouchable background and learnt the words of wisdom. With the help of the missionaries and their institutions, the so called outcastes or the avarnas have achieved among various other things, the ability to impart learning to anyone belonging to either superior or inferior castes. By providing the education to all irrespective of caste, colour, creed, the Canadian Baptist missionaries tried to reform the caste prejudices and democratization of education. In so doing, they were successful in destroying the monopoly in

\(^{13}\) Murthy, B.S. Depressed and Oppressed: For ever in Agony, Chand & Co., New Delhi, pp. 16-18.

education enjoyed for ages by single privileged caste group namely the Brahmins. 

Because of the education, imparted by the missionaries, it became possible even for the untouchable communities to compete on equal grounds, occupy different occupations which were hitherto denied to them. An Adi Andhra or an Adi Dravida could become a high official in governmental offices. Thus the Christian missionaries in India in general and Canadian Baptist missionaries in Northern Coastal Andhra in particular brought a social revolution through education.

The distress of the women in general, and educational opportunities provided to them in particular, has profoundly moved the hearts of the missionary ladies and hence they planned to do something better to ameliorate their difficulties. Hence, they directed the Zenana workers to counteract the widespread misconception about women and combating their ignorance. Besides presenting Gospel to them, the Zenana workers made periodical visits to the orthodox Hindu and Muslim homes and taught the women folk about the reading, writing, arithmatics and sewing. They also started nineteen Caste girl schools at different places exclusively for the children of caste Hindus and

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15 Thurston, E. Castes and Tribes in Southern India, Madras Govt. Press, 1909, VI, p. 114.
encouraged their children to go to the school to understand various scientific and literary aspects, which are needed to them\textsuperscript{18}.

This new knowledge and vision imparted to the caste girl students have brought in them a new and alien system of thought and action which variously opposed the existing Hindu system of thought and action\textsuperscript{19}. This aspect has not only given prelude to wider appreciation for the female education not only in the orthodox families but also in the masses as well. It also planted seeds of distress of superstitious beliefs and paved the way to dispel the age old practices such as sati, widow remarriages etc. among the caste women and paved the way for the sprouts of new social order\textsuperscript{20}.

The modern Western education championed chiefly by the Canadian Baptist missionaries in Andhra played an extremely significant role in promoting social progress in the area under consideration. It brought the renaissance in Hinduism and regeneration of Hindu principles. The Canadian Baptist missionaries through their network of institutions such as village schools, lower primary and upper primary schools, secondary schools, technical schools, vocational schools, caste girls schools and boarding schools tried to bring among the depressed classes and orthodox Hindus, the feeling of oneness and thus tried to dispel the social evils which divided the society in the name of caste\textsuperscript{21}.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 25.
\textsuperscript{19} Kenneth Ingham, op.cit., p. 62.
\textsuperscript{20} Report of the South Indian Missionary Conferences, 1858, (Madras 1858), pp. 171-175.
\textsuperscript{21} Fishman, A.T. Culture change and the underprivileged, Madras, pp. 33-35.
Although their efforts attained partial success, it is a first step that started in that direction. There were several instances in which the upper caste students were withdrawn from the schools when the students belonging to untouchable communities were given admission in the schools and thus tried to defeat the very concept of missionary school education. But, however, the Baptist missionaries gave equal importance to the students of all castes in the schools and thus stood firm like a rock and tried to stick to their very aim of bringing universal brotherhood among all castes and communities through their schools.  

The initial problems the missionaries faced on caste issues were overcome by the missionaries with their strong will-power and in course of time, paved the way for social amalgamation wherein the class rooms were shared by upper, lower and untouchable communities alike. The class room not only became the symbol of universal brotherhood, but also became the common platform to ventilate one’s own feelings and intelligence. In other words, the Hindu framework of varnasrama dharma had been shaken by the impact of western thought and culture initiated in the missionary schools through systematic and prescribed syllabus.

Further, the new system of education through English in the schools organized by Canadian Baptist missionaries had two distinctive characteristics which deserve special mention. First, the missionaries heralded a shift in

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22 Ibid., p. 35.  
23 Ibid., p. 36.  
24 Kenneth Inghan, op.cit., p. 65.
emphasis from informal learning of the traditional type in the context of family and caste to a formal and systematic teaching of western knowledge by following a prescribed syllabus through the introduction of subjects like History, Culture, Ethics, Mathematics, English etc.\textsuperscript{25} Secondly they brought with them a new and alien system of thought and action which vigorously opposed the existing Hindu thought and action\textsuperscript{26}. The teaching of western sciences sharpened the critical acumen of the students, which in consequence weakened their age old superstitious beliefs and broke down age old beliefs and customs\textsuperscript{27}. The impact of Canadian Baptist missionary education and modern thought was so great on the native mind that some of the time honoured beliefs and customs of Hindus were seriously questioned and ridiculed even by the teachers and students of upper castes in their own schools and colleges\textsuperscript{28}.

**Medical Services and Social Change**

A.V.Timpany, one of the pioneering missionaries of the CBM remarked that besides preaching, he had more cases of sick to attend than an ordinary doctor\textsuperscript{29}. The missionaries always carried with them a 'surgical kit' and distributed medicines to the workers and treated their families in case of simple diseases. They made free use of medicines to the mission school boys and girls with their limited knowledge of medicine. They also used small tips to protect the

\textsuperscript{25} Syed Nurullaiah et al., op. cit., p. 62.  
\textsuperscript{26} Vaikuntam, Y., op.cit., p. 59.  
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 28.  
\textsuperscript{28} Firth, op.cit., p. 308.  
\textsuperscript{29} Orchard, Op.Cit., p.246.
Christians, for treating malaria, cholera and other small diseases from the beginning\(^{30}\).

This enthusiasm and commitment of the Canadian Baptist Missionaries led to the construction of several hospitals at different fields stations. These hospitals and asylums offered good opportunities for presenting the gospel message to the patients. The patients and their relatives of all ages gathered at the out patient department of hospitals waiting for their turn of examination. This provided an excellent opportunity to the medical missionaries and the Bible women to preach the message of Jesus Christ and his love for poor and suffering, his purpose and redemption of sins and the whole life style of Jesus Christ and his attitude towards sick and suffering to the waiting patients and their relatives\(^{31}\).

This opportunity was more efficiently utilized by some missionaries by distributing the tracts and the Bibles for very nominal prices. This brought considerable number of patients to the Christian way of life\(^{32}\).

**Women and Children Hospitals:**

Female mortality at the time of pregnancy and childbirth was more alarming than the epidemics, which were mostly seasonal\(^{33}\). Several types of diseases and ailments of women were rampant. But the Indian women, out of

\(^{30}\) Swaveley, V.H.(ed) "One Hundred years in the Andhra Country", Madras, the Diocesan Press, 1942, p. 279.

\(^{31}\) Orville E. Daniel, op.cit., p.129.


\(^{33}\) Kugler, op.cit., p.9.
modesty and inhibition, could not approach doctors, not even ventured to consult a male doctor for their disorders. Their lives were more uncertain under the prevailing inhygienic conditions and ignorant social customs. Hence, the CBM women missionaries with medical degrees and trained as nurses or midwives were enlisted in increasing numbers to work in India from the last quarter of the 19th century. They arrived and started dispensaries at a number of towns, especially for women and children where the mission stations were functioning, a few of them having been destined to grow as full-fledged hospitals.34

Several such hospitals in the course of time started training schools for nurses and midwives. In the beginning, the Indian women, especially from the Caste Hindus, showed apathy towards the nurse training. Hence most of the ladies from Christian communities and untouchable communities were given opportunities for training as Nurses and midwives35. This became a boon for the women of untouchable communities to seek employment as Nurses, and compounders not only in the C.B.M. hospitals but also in other mission and private hospitals and thereby improved their economic prospects and the standard of their living. Thus, the values of service and the art of healing were taught to the Indians in general and the Dalits and Christians in particular36. Bible women especially from among the widows and destitutes were appointed in the hospitals in order to take care of the spiritual needs of the patients and the visitors. Thus

the hospitals and the dispensaries became the places of preaching and worship as well. They also became centres of employment for Andhra women and also worship and proselytization.

SOCIAL EVILS:

The hospitals also became the centres to dispel from the minds of the patients the evil effects of social customs prevailing in the country. The public became aware of the evil effects of the child marriages, marriages among the kith and kin, and the supernatural beliefs. The patients were also taught that the causes of diseases such as malaria, cholera and smallpox were due to the result of germs visible or invisible to the naked eye, but not on account of the wrath of the village goddess who wished appeasement.

The vaccination was considered by certain people as a test of the British Government to identify among the public whether or not the vaccinated were friends of the British or foes of the Govt. But the counseling and the teaching of the CBM medical missionaries made the people realize the value of vaccination and its treatment process. Thus the ignorant beliefs were melted away and the people came voluntarily to the medical practitioners for vaccinations.

Child marriage was a social evil of the then society. This custom continued because of the Hindu beliefs, customs and practices prevalent in

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38 Fishman, A.T., 1941, op.cit, p.50.
Andhra Desa. Whenever a specific case was brought to the notice of the missionaries, they explained to the people the bad effects of this social evil. The people were also made to understand that the marriage practice within the kith and kin might lead to the deformities such as physical deformities, mental disorders in the children born out of such marriages. This aspect was highlighted by the medical missionaries while treating the patients suffering from physical and mental ailments.

**VEGETABLES:**

Due to the vitamin deficiency and poverty, blindness was widely prevalent among the poor people especially among the outcastes. The missionaries taught them the utility of cheap vegetables and fruits in order to keep the masses especially the dalits healthy. They were made to understand that the use of tomato would reduce the deficiency of vitamin ‘c’. The medicinal value of papaya and other fruits were also taught and the people were encouraged to eat them.  

**EATING THE FLESH OF DEAD ANIMALS:**

The poor and the wretched for want of cheap food, resorted to eating of rats, flying foxes and the flesh of the dead animal. This practice became more evident during the famine conditions. The CBM missionaries encouraged the masses to give up this practice because of the health hazards it created.

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39 Ibid., p.51.
40 Ibid., p.53
missionaries tried to give counseling to the converts that the eating of the flesh of the dead cow was hazardous to their health and tried to inculcate healthy eating practices among the masses especially the Madigas. The traditional, orthodox Hindus who considered the cow as a holy animal also wished to discourage eating of the flesh of cow whether alive or dead is a sin.\textsuperscript{41}

**DRINKING CONTAMINATED WATER**

Drinking of impure and contaminated water caused many stomach disorders and caused different types of diseases. Because of illiteracy, carelessness and poverty, people were ignorant of the connections between germs and diseases. The depressed classes did not understand the bad effects of contaminated water. With a view to provide pure drinking water, the CBM missionaries sunk wells in majority of hamlets inhabited by the Dalit communities to provide safe drinking water. Another important and valuable lesson taught by the missionaries was that the health hazards were due to public defecation, which spread filthborne diseases.\textsuperscript{42}

The physician with his knowledge of medicine, gained admittance to the homes of Caste Hindus and won the friendship and confidence of the people who were hitherto hostile to the missionaries and closed their minds to the Gospel Preaching. The practical Christianity of the medical missionaries routed out the prejudices and hatred of the people.


\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, p.265.
The Missionaries treated the ignorant Dalit communities with compassion and selfless service. The equal treatment of the untouchables and caste Hindus in the hospital wards in the beginning led to strong resentment among the caste Hindus, but in the course of time, they realised the importance of social equality. A few of the caste Hindus, realized that the untouchable communities were also human beings and were equally created by God as they themselves were created. This feeling in some traditional Hindus instigated a kind of social reform movement which swept in Andhra in the later period. Missionaries taught the people cleanliness and infused in them an element of health consciousness. The superstitious beliefs among the people that the diseases are on account of the curse of God for sins committed in the previous life were dispelled by the dedicated medical treatments given to the people.\footnote{Ibid, p.267.}

The missionaries permeated with the holy spirit, overcame all the hurdles and made tremendous effort to bring forth a new life for the masses and the depressed classes in the time of distress. The people slowly gave up their unshakable faith in the soothsayer and the quack. The educational and medical centres of the missionaries were cited by the Indian Govt: as ‘models’ to be followed by the native Indians.

The evangelistic work of the Bible women in the hospitals was invaluable. The Bible stories and the Christian songs learnt by the children in the schools and patients in the hospitals are quite often repeated. Pictures on the
Hospital walls illustrated the chief events in the life of Christ. The missionaries especially the Doctors and nurses, as they went among the patients from day to day, did much in the way of witnessing for Christ by their lives. The direct evangelistic teaching was an important event in the missionary routine and the morning prayers, prayers during the ‘Passion week’, and the special prayers created profound influence on the lives of the people. Sunday schools for women and children was conducted in all the C.B.M. Chapels every Sunday afternoon; special Bible teaching was carried on in the wards. Offerings collected in the hospitals were utilized for different purposes- Bible Society, eradication of leprosy programme etc. Several Hindu patients contributed regularly to these programmes. The Bible women appointed by the hospitals were part of Evangelistic work. The teaching of the Bible women in the wards was an important aspect of the evangelistic work. Patients were very fond of the lyrics or songs of the Bible women and also the Bible stories. Many listened reverently when prayers were offered. The Scripture texts were also taught by the Bible women. Most of the patients showed reverence to Christianity when they left the hospital and some of the patients used to visit the hospitals for Bible teaching and communion whenever they find time.

As a regular feature, the Bible women of the hospital went on tour to the adjacent villages, and in many of the villages they were welcomed by old patients. A number of people brought their children to be named and prayed for,
and for each child an offering was made. Many were baptized in the hospital both adult and infant, in the wards, and especially in the chapel.

WOMAN EMANCIPATION

The enthusiastic response of Canadian Baptist women to Timpany's call to "help their Telugu sisters" sprang more out of sympathy than solidarity on equal terms. Canadian Baptist women were aware of their male missionaries' inability to reach out to Telugu women. Amelia Muir, the founding secretary of the Baptist Women's Foreign Missionary Society in Eastern Ontario and Quebec, admitted that she did not share the same interest for Telugu men that she shared for Telugu women. She was certain that her male compatriots would and could minister only to Telugu men and boys. She declared that Baptist women's hearts "go out in sympathy for the Telugu women in their dark and barren homes." Characterized by sympathy, this solidarity was not based on equal terms.

Missionary wives were active in Kakinada even before these female missionary societies were formed. These women accompanied their husbands to the mission field with equal zeal and saw themselves sent as part of a missionary team. While men missionaries went on preaching tours and constructed buildings, women missionaries spent their time caring for their children and preaching to the Telugu with the translation help of native women. Having

44 Amelia Muir, "A Speech," The Canadian Baptist Missionary Link, 2, No. 12, December, 1878, p. 15.
45 Ibid.
identified needs, these women created a sphere of activity for themselves and incorporated native women into that sphere.

One female missionary, Mary McLaurin, walked in the "crooked" streets of Kakinada begging parents to send their daughters to her school. In her missionary tenure at the seminary in Samalkot, women regarded her as a "guide, friend and philosopher," not merely as the principal's wife. Roles such as hers were not assigned by the Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Society but were the roles women assumed.

The interaction of women missionaries with the native culture, their association with the native women, and their cultural immersion enlarged their sense of solidarity. Despite their enthusiasm to identify with the dominant sections in the society, natives identified women missionaries as "untouchables".

Matilda Churchill reporting from Bobbilli was shocked to realize that the Sudras, who were "least" in the Hindu hierarchy and were employed by her husband, refused to eat their food because her hat "happened to touch" their lunch pots. Women missionaries were allowed to enter the Hindu houses but only with much hesitancy. A woman missionary entering a house along with Dalit women saw the cooking pots turned upside down in the sun. The visitors were told not-to touch the pots, even with their skirts, because then the owner would have to break the pots, as defiled and unfit for use. Seeing the dogs going close to

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46 McLaurin, Mary Bates McLaurin, p. 236.
the pots, the missionary enquired if the dogs would not defile them. The spontaneous response was, "the dog was not born in caste, but it just does not count, while the missionary (sisters) do." The missionaries' birth out of Hindu society and their refusal to recognize the caste hierarchy may have been the reasons for the status assigned to them. Their low social status made eating and drinking in a missionary's house a definite act of defiance against the caste structure, and thus, the participation of natives in the Lord's Supper was seen as a protest against the status quo.

Single women missionaries and missionary wives began to knock at the doors of Hindu homes and thereby knocked down the caste barriers in women's assertion movements. In the past, Hindu women had not tolerated Dalit women visiting their homes or even walking down their streets; however, women missionaries ambitiously employed Dalit women to accompany them and to preach to their Hindu counterparts. Though unthinkable, doors were opened, and Dalit women began to tell the gospel story to their Hindu sisters.

The seminary at Samalkot proved to be a laboratory for organized efforts by women to help themselves. Missionary Mary McLaurin and her husband recruited both men and women as seminary students, aiming to train native pastors and evangelists. Yet, no women were seen as potential candidates for ordained ministry, and men usually outnumbered women in seminarians.

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48 Ibid., p. 292.
49 Orchard, op.cit., p. 108.
Mary McLaurin spent much of her time seeking to meet the educational needs of the students' wives. She organized a "Mutual Improvement Society", based on the premise that each woman had something to teach others and that she herself had much to learn from them. Katherine McLaurin, recalling her mother's "experiment", described it as "interracial cooperation". She noted that her Canadian mother learned from her Indian counterparts virtues such as being content in poverty.\footnote{McLaurin, op.cit., p. 90.}

The arrival of single women missionaries in India resulted in a war against the Telugu culture. The sight of such missionaries living without any kind of dependence on a man proved to be a subversive culture and "a deviation from rule"\footnote{Orchard, Enterprise, p. 225.}. Missionary M.L. Orchard called the presence of single women missionaries a "puzzle" to the Hindu Society.\footnote{Ibid, p. 220.} This "puzzle" fanned the self-confidence of native women to cross their village boundaries tours, which was unimaginable to the Telugu culture.

Many native women became known as Bible women, a label that implied that they had determined to start an independent life and were ready to jeopardize their eligibility to be married because potential in-laws would prefer a girl who had not ventured outside her family's village. Bible women deviated from the cultural propriety and challenged family restrictions.
Societies undertook the social and financial responsibility of these women. Married Canadian Baptist Missionaries, however, were quick to restrict the growing independence of Telugu women by encouraging Bible women to marry native male evangelists. Yet, many Bible women remained single, either because they chose to or because they could not find a spouse. Gaining access to Hindu homes was the basic motive of all missionaries, both married and single, and the creation of a subversive female culture was not on their agenda, but it was an eventual result.

Mary McLaurin was claimed to have realized that "home was not her only sphere of action." Visiting homes across the caste boundaries, touring beyond the village, preaching, and caring for the sick brought her into a sphere that was alien to Hindu women. The preaching of Dalit Bible women to their Brahmin counterparts defied the age-old prejudices that Dalit women were inferior in knowledge and nature. A Brahmin reportedly confessed that she was "galloped" by the "wonderful memory" and "magnetic personality" of Mariamma, whom she referred to as "black aunt," an identity given to Dalit women.

This new culture of solidarity of Telugu women included inter-dining of women of all communities. Hindu women joined this new order of the Bible women. Sayamma was the earliest Hindu Bible woman. Hailing from a Kshatriya caste in 1899, she "thankfully served" the cause. This thankful

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53 Orville Daniel, op.cit., p. 47.
54 Craig, op.cit., p. 243.
service would have certainly involved risks and challenges, given her caste and gender background. Another Bible woman, Adamma, a Sudra woman of Kapu caste, walked from Pithapuram to join her Dalit counterparts at Peddapuram. She felt that staying at home could hinder her zeal to preach, and thus, she journeyed seven miles and also journeyed through caste and gender restrictions, severing her dependence on the men of her family. John Craig reported that Adamma "broke caste by eating with the Christians" of Dalit origins\textsuperscript{55}. Such pilgrimages by women into the public sphere took the Christian gospel into the public sphere and brought the gospel back to "homes". The message of the gospel carried from home to home had an "evening-up" potential\textsuperscript{56}. Women missionaries aimed to employ the services of native women to transform Telugu Society as they saw the woman's potential to influence her family in matters of religion. Thus, native women, while serving the missionary's agenda, used the Christian gospel to elevate their status and to transform the Telugu culture.

The arrival in India of Sarah Simpson in 1888 opened up new possibilities of reaching out to Telugus and provided a new avenue for women to minister to the holistic needs of the Telugu society. Sarah, the first missionary nurse, blended the healing of soul and of body. She visited Hindu homes, rendering medical services and checking on the sick. She spent her morning, treating people on her verandah. A 1895 report boasted that this avenue of

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56} Orchard, op.cit., p. 291.
ministry "gained her an entrance" into five Hindu houses. This claim hints that medical ministry was seen as a pretext to gain entrance into hindu houses otherwise closed to Christians.

Matilda Churchill, another missionary, realized in 1876 while she was in Kakinada learning Telugu, that ministering to "the bodily ailments of the heathen women" would enable missionaries "to enter their homes" and "gain their gratitude and esteem". She described this healing aspect of ministry as "an entering wedge in the Canadian missionary enterprise". Dr. Everett Smith along with his sister, Dr. Pearl Chute a doctor opened the Star of Hope Hospital in Akidu, and her brother founded a hospital at Pithapuram. In 1896, Dr. Pearl Chute married and moved to Akidu. On the second night of her honeymoon, she heard a cry from her verandah asking for help. She responded to the cry and found a pregnant woman in labour. This event eventually led to the founding of medical missionary operations in the Akidu area and to the establishment of the Star of Hope Hospital in 1898.

A training institute, founded in 1910, for native nurses recruited Dalit girls who had been twice alienated due to community identity and gender. These Dalit trainees served in the hospitals as part of their internships and later were employed as nurses. The healing "touch" of these "untouchable Dalit girls became a channel of healing to the Hindu dominant classes. Their healing

57 Craig, op.cit., p. 206.
58 Churchill, op.cit, p. 65.
59 Ibid.
prowess reached beyond the body to heal social relationships between fragmented Telugu communities\textsuperscript{60}.

The treatment of Hindus and Muslims in Akidu in the same facility proved problematic. Hindus and Muslims accused missionaries of "upsetting the balance of society and raising the status of (Dalit) masses"\textsuperscript{61}. Dr. Pearl Chute had to reconsider her treatment methods and began caring for patients in their homes. This approach, however, was unique to the Star of Hope Hospital. yet, it reflected the attitude of Canadian Baptist Missionaries to the caste system and their willingness to accept it as a social institution but to reject the inequalities intrinsic to the system. Dr. Pearl Chute "recognized the caste system as an institution, even if she was not sympathetic to it"\textsuperscript{62}. All the hospitals founded by missionaries at this point were either intended to treat only women or had maternity wards. Women of all castes and creeds were cared for in the same dispensaries and wards.

The leprosy disease is chronic, mildly infectious malady capable of producing, when untreated, various deformities and disfigurements. The asylum at Ramachandrapuram illustrated the wholistic approach to healing. Isabel Hatch began work there among lepers in 1898 with the help of the Mission to Lepers in India and the East. Dr. Gertude Hulet arrived in 1900 to assist with the work. Lepers at the dawn of the century were considered cursed and untouchable in

\textsuperscript{60} Report, CBTM, 1932, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{61} Carlotta Hacker, \textit{The Indomitable}, Toronto, Clarke, Irwin & Company, 1974, p.120.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
Andhra. In some parts of India, lepers were burned to death in hopes of gaining for them a better body in the rebirth.\(^3\)

The act of treating lepers challenged the native belief system and social practices. Missionary doctors willingly touched lepers, who had not been touched even by their family members sometimes for years. As a result, some missionary doctors contacted leprosy, including John E. Davis. Dalit nurses spent their time administering the healing "touch" to the sick and also "narrating" Bible stories.\(^4\)

Prescription cards were printed with Scripture verses on one side while the name and date of the prescription were on the other side. Craig, writing his history of the mission, claimed that "the medicine for the soul went with that for the body."\(^5\) The healing ministry clearly sought to heal the body and to transform individuals and communities.

**EMPOWERING THROUGH LITERACY**

Canadian Baptist missionaries quickly identified the possibility of wholistic transformation of the Telugu society through education, and they found women to be potential agents of change. Missionary Mary McLaurin, in 1875, founded a school for boys and the next year founded one for girls. She was shocked when the parents questioned her plea to send girls to her school, asking...

\(^{3}\) Report, CBTM, 1901, p. 57.


her, "What did girls want with reading, anyhow? It was their business to cut grass for the buffaloes. Teach girls? Better go and teach the donkeys to read. Reading? No man would marry a girl that could read, she would read his letters and find out all his affairs"66.

The community identity of the parents that Ms. McLaurin approached for prospective students is unknown; however, her walks on "crooked" streets probably indicated that she was recruiting Dalit or Sudra girls67. Given their inability to feed their kids, Dalit parents sent their girls to cut grass and earn their food. Ms. McLaurin offered these families an education and free housing for their daughters. Despite the incentive of free food and education, she reported that several girls dropped out of school because their parents wanted them to earn money for the family's daily needs.

Besides founding boarding schools for girls in Akidu in 1883 and in Tuni in 1899, missionaries established a co-educational school in Samalkot in 1882. The basic purpose of these schools was to reach out to the parents of those who are unreached through their children and prepare a future generation of Christian teachers and preachers. This missionary ambition led to a tendency to view students as "potential proselytes". This attitude often crippled the transformative power of the Christian message of equality and freedom. Sensing the reluctance of Hindu parents to send their daughters to the schools where Dalit

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67 Ibid.
The missionaries never dared to dream of a casteless society but rather worked to establish a Christian society based on the principles of equality and unity. The caste rivalry within the Convention of Baptist Churches in North Circars, reluctance of caste-churches to associate with the Convention, and schisms in local churches on the basis of community identity owe their beginnings partially to the caste policy of the Canadian Baptist missionaries.

The aim of the missionaries that girl students would teach their mothers and eventually their entire family was fulfilled. Girls taught the Christian faith to their parents, but this proved to be culturally subversive in that the girls often internalized Christian values and challenged social restrictions. Orchard, quoting a report from 1892, exclaimed that one girl became a missionary in her family conducting family worship every evening for her mother, sister, and brothers. A girl in Akidu encouraged her mother to abandon work on Sunday, an act seen as social insolence.

The boarding school at Kakinada became a grooming place for religious and social change. Girls trained as Bible women in that same school

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68 Report, CBTM, 1893, p. 65.
69 Orchard, op.cit., p.207.
until a separate training school was founded in Palkonda in 1922. Agnes Baskerville, having realized the religious and social activism and potential of the girls, introduced an "extra class for the training of perspective Bible women and teachers" in 1890\textsuperscript{70}. Orville Daniel noted that Agnes plunged into "a venture quite alien to Indian women"\textsuperscript{71}. For Hindu society, women taking the Christian scriptures into homes was quite alien.

Literacy proved to be empowering for Dalit women, who had been denied the right to read for generations. With five decades, Dalits, who in 1875 had refused to send their daughters to school, began to plea for an education for their daughers.

The presence of single woman missionaries posed a challenge to the patriarchal society and also presented a possibility for native women to seek new ways of living dignified and independent lives. Native women seized the Bible and undertook preaching as their profession, a sphere prohibited to women in dominant religions like Hinduism and Islam. The evolution of new spheres and blurring of old spheres precipitated a new social order for Telugus and brought forth a distinct Telugu Baptist Christianity in which women continue to be an essential part. Healing and education provided native and missionary women the most effective avenue for ministry, allowing them to "even up" gender and caste inequalities and to proclaim the gospel\textsuperscript{72}.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Report, CBTM, 1923, p. 28.
COUNTER REACTION OF HINDU RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

Some attempts were made by the extreme left wing of Hinduism to counter the conversions to Christianity. These organizations include Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj.

BRAHMA SAMAJ

Brahma Samaj was a Hindu reform movement started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the first quarter of 19th Century. As else where in the country, it also championed the cause of unprivileged sections of the Andhra Desa. A large number of Dalits were the direct beneficiaries of the policy of the Brahma Samaj in the Coastal Andhra. Andhra leaders of Brahma Samaj looked at the practice of untouchability as heinous act and attempted to free the untouchables from the stigma of impurity based on caste in which they were born.

Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu of Kakinada, one of the foremost Brahmos of Andhra, made a fervent appeal to the high castes to outgrow the taboo of untouchability by identifying themselves with "the kith and kin, the flesh and blood of those who are called the Depressed Classes". He further stated that "it is not in a spirit of patronage, it is not from its necessity for the political advancement of the country, it is not even as an expression of social justice, it is wholly and essentially, on the basis of the righteous dispensation of God, which
treats all equal for His blessings"\(^73\). He also emphasized that untouchability should be eradicated.

Spurred by Venkataratnam Naidu's preachings, Brahmo leaders associated themselves heart and soul and tried to free the untouchables from the stigma of impurity. Kandukuri Veeresalingam of Rajahmundry, one of the foremost social reformers of Andhra, and his disciples like C.L. Narasimham participated in interdinings, with the untouchable communities, which act was considered an adventure by the then standards. Veeresalingam's wife Rajyalakshmi who was also an ardent promotor of the cause of untouchables has refused to attend marriage functions to which Adi-Andhras were not permitted to attend and interdine\(^74\).

Venkata Ratnam Naidu's catholicity manifested itself in various ways to give succour to the Adi Andhras, some times even going out of the way of the then existing castle rules. He not only reared several Panchama girls in his own house with affection, and got them educated and also saw to it one of the girls rose to become a doctor and the other an officer in the educational service\(^75\). Besides these things Naidu started an orphanage in Kakinada in 1909 which stood as a living monument of his indefatigable zeal for the uplift of the untouchable children.

\(^75\) Andhra Association of Delhi : Homage to Sri Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu : Birth Centenary Celebrations (Delhi, 1962), pp. 6, 7.
The orphanage had the good fortune of having the services of social reformers such as V.P. Raja Naidu, Pillarisetty Sitaramayya, Nabhi Jagannadha Rao, Akurati Chalamaiah and Maranki Janaki Ramaiah. They taught the inmates of the hostel to cultivate the virtues of equality and fraternity without looking at the caste-side.

This policy of mixing freely with the Panchamas and trying to elevate them was continued by the next generation of Brahma Samajists like Devulapalli Krishna Sastry, Gudipati Venkatachalam and other personages. Krishna Sastry, one of the prominent men of letters in Telugu, was closely associated with Adi-Andhra movement at Pithapuram. Similarly, Gudipati Venkatachalam's house in Kakinada was a popular haunt for the social reformers and Harijans. Chalam, during his transfers as teacher, used to reside in Harijanawada.

The Zamindar of Pithapuram who was an ardent Brahma Samajist, exhibited great zeal for the upliftment of untouchable communities in Kakinada, Pithapuram and Peddapuram. There were students, who stood benefited by his generous desposition, and rose to high positions in later-day-life. The Zamindar himself expressed satisfaction that his efforts bore fruit: "Iam delighted to find the Harijans of today getting properly educated and making good progress. They are rendering great service to their community. Some of them have secured

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decent employment and are well placed in life. We feel extremely delighted to see some of them adorning top positions in services.\textsuperscript{78}

The Pithapuram Zamindar's zeal to uplift Harijans also manifested itself in his handsome donation of Rs.70,000 for the construction and management of a school which admitted the Panchama boys, and gave them free education founded by Kandukuri Veeresalingam in Rajahmundry.\textsuperscript{79} Ch. Lakshminarasimha also took the task of educating Panchama boys by starting Ram Mohan School at Rajahmundry in February, 1909, with both English and Telugu as media of instruction. This institution offered free education to the Panchama children for thirteen years. Some citizens of Rajahmundry formed themselves into an association, and built up by years of quiet and hard work a network of schools in and around the town of Rajahmundry. These institutions were credited with turning out leaders of the next generation of reformers, who were imbued with a spirit of service.\textsuperscript{80}

Most of the educated Dalits became Brahmo Samajists and able crusaders against social inequality. It was to a large extent due to the zeal and interested services of Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu and his able lieutenants Peddada Ramaswami and Dr. Vemuri Ramakrishna Rao, who were considered able Principals of Pithapur Rajah's College, Kakinada. In fact, Pithapur Rajah's College gained fame as nursery of social reformers.

\textsuperscript{78} Shastipoorty Souvenir : Sri R.V.K.M. Surya Rao Bahadur : Maharaja of Pithapuram (Cocanada, 1945) p. 70, pp. 6 and 49-52.
\textsuperscript{80} B. Kesava Narayana, op.cit., pp. 272-273.
ARYA SAMAJ IN ANDHRA:

Another socio-religious reform movement of the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century was Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswathi in April, 1875. It was an outcome of reaction against attempts to westernize India and convert persons of untouchable castes to Christianity. The Samaj worked to revive Aryan religious and social life. It endeavoured to awaken self-respect for Indians of all castes. "Back to Vedas" was the battle-cry of Arya Samaj. It opposed the prevalent social taboos like child-marriages, polytheism, prohibition of sea-voyage etc. It also rejected idolatry and caste distinctions within its own membership. All adherents of the sect were permitted to interdine and inter marry without distinction of caste, but with regard to outsiders, the ordinary rules of caste were observed. It stirred up the youth of India to greater patriotism. It was said that it absorbed into itself a few members of depressed classes as well.

But, Arya Samaj did not make much headway in Andhra like Brahma Samaj, as Hinduism did not face a challenge in Andhra from the Christian Missionaries, as it had in the North. But its growth in Godavari districts in the later half of 19th Century was partly successful and hampered the activities of Canadian Baptist Missionaries to certain extent in Godavari districts. After Swami Sradhananda's visits to Andhra, Arya Samaj branches appeared in 1921 in

Tenali and Gudivada. It received more attention after 1930, and its branches appeared in many towns in Andhra districts.\(^{82}\)

Not only eradication of untouchability, but reconversion from Christianity and Islam to Hinduism through 'Suddhi movement' was on the agenda of Arya Samaj. Guntur was the main venue for this movement in Andhra. Kesava Deva Gnanaji, an Arya Samajist sent bands of workers in different directions to promote the ideal of social justice and to popularize the Suddhi movement. He succeeded in reconverting 30 Christian converts to the Hindu fold.\(^{83}\) Rayudu Gangaiah, another enthusiastic Arya Samajist, reconverted 7,000 Christians to Hinduism by 1926, emphasizing that there was no room for untouchability in Hinduism. His talking skills and organizational ability came to the fore in the villages of Chikkavaram, Muggulla, Maseedpadu and Kamavarapukota.\(^{84}\)

The Andhra Suddhi Samaj was inaugurated at Guntur on January 1, 1934 under the leadership of Venkata Punna Rao. It carried on vigorous Suddhi propaganda in the districts of Krishna and Guntur. Tripuraneni Rama Swami Choudhary and Thathwananda Swami of Tenali carried on vigorous campaign in favour of the Suddhi movement. Thathwananda Swami through pamphleteering won spontaneous response from villages like Eluru, Tummuluru, Kakarlamudi, Thotapalli and Santharavuru.\(^{85}\)

\(^{83}\) Krishna Patrika, (Telugu Journal), dated May 1, 1926.
\(^{84}\) Satyagrahi (Telugu journal), dated September, 1926.
\(^{85}\) Krishna Patrika (Telugu Journal), May, 26, 1934.