Chapter VI

Missionary Contribution towards Education in MANIPUR

The people of Manipur were of the same Mongoloid-stock and yet due to their professed religion they were differentiated as the people of the valley areas (the Meiteis, Lois and the Muslims) whereas in the Hill areas were inhabited by the Nagas and the Kuki-chins whose chief religion was 'Animism' before the advent of Christianity into the area.

Thus religious setting before the invasion of Christianity into Manipur was that - in the valley areas the early Meiteis worshipped their ancestors and chief among them being 'Pakhangba' and 'Sanamahi'. But with the coming of Hindu Vaishnavism in the valley especially in the Royal Court of Manipur, it became the chief religion. Originally it is said that the Meiteis migrated from the Hills and they were having good relations with the Hill peoples till the emergence of Hinduism as the principal religion of the Meiteis by a Royal Edict in 1705.\(^1\) With that Hindu Vaishnavism was introduced by Shanti Das from Bengal to the valley of Manipur.\(^{1A}\) And with this

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2. Ibid. (a) Refer also - N. Tombi Singh, *MANIPUR : A Study* P. 33.
religion the Bengali script also arrived into the land of Manipur. In course of time this script was introduced in all administrative purposes and schools in the form of 'Meitei Language in Bengali script'. And it is still being used in the State as the official language to date (1987).

Therefore when Hinduism entered into Manipur it undoubtedly began to earn wide popularity since 'the time of Gharib Niwaz when Ramanandi Vaishnavism was first introduced. However 'religious dissent was treated with the ruthless severity as was meted out to the political opponents and wholesale banishments and execution, drove the people into acceptance of the tenets of Hinduism. As a matter of fact the long reign of Chandra Kirti Singh witnessed the consolidation of Hinduism which had lost much of its hold on the people during the said times of the Burmese occupation. Yet the Monarch's power to impose Vaishnavism on the masses was proof of the people's unwillingness to accept it at the initial stage. Further with this new religion a new dawn of orthodoxy and conservatism

2 R. Constantine, *Manipur, Maid of the Mountains*, P. 179. At present Meiteis are found to be the followers of Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

arose in the valley of Manipur. The society began to be based not on merit or talent, but on 'the hierarchical order of Castes and dominant among them was the Kshatriya to which the bulk of the Meiteis professed to belong.' The Rajkumars, Bishnupriya Manipuris and Brahmins belonged to the upper classes. The Lois, Yaithibis were considered as lower caste, but here it could not be equated to that of India's untouchables. Since the Scheduled Castes in Manipur were not a born Scheduled Caste but created by the Maharaja of Manipur due to their staunch support for the earlier religion (Sanamahi Cult). So in order to punish them, they were placed outside the Hindu Caste system. Other instance was that if any person committed grave mistakes or failed to comply with the Maharaja then he was reduced to a Loi/Yaithibi status. 'Prima facie, the Caste system in Manipur seemed to be rigid. But in reality, it was the opposite, for instance, the inhabitants of a village could be elevated en masse to that of Hindus of pure Caste'. provided if the Raja chose any person who could at any time receive the Sacred thread of the twice born Castes and on payments of a small sum of money be admitted as a Hindu and thereforth called Kshatriya.

5 James Johnstone, 'Manipur and Naga Hills', P.84.
6 Ibid, P.84.
A striking fact was that the 'Meiteis do not accept the supremacy of the Brahmins', who were generally at the apex of the Caste ridden Hindu society. Consequently in Manipur the Hindu Mongoloid had a kind of democratic equality regarding the Caste system. Begging system was not prevailed, unheard of or even the 'Shudra' class was unknown to the people of Manipur. May be for that reason and even today almost all the manual jobs like Dhobis, Cobbler and other manual workers are from outside the State. Every household was efficient by themselves.

With the coming of the British Rule into the State, the difference was given a prominent stamp through their policy of 'Divide and Rule'. It is needless to point out as to how much the British Govt. through their policies as well as through the conduct of individual officers encouraged sectarianism and orthodoxy in the State of Manipur. It became a powerful instrument for keeping the population (Hill and valley) divided at the roots. A contrasting picture of societies were presented between the Hill areas and the Central valley areas. As a result of this artificial


8 In the valley areas, the Meitei Society consisted of Hindus, the Sanamahi cult-worshippers and the Meitei Muslims etc. Whereas in the Hill areas the society consisted of Christianity and Animist followers. This sort of religious arrangement is prevalent still in the 1980s too. Surprisingly, enough a very strange thing is that 'Hinduism' did not make any inroad into the Tribal society in this part of the country since time immemorial. Similarly on the other hand Christianity was unsuccessful among the Meiteis of the valley. However a slight improvement could be seen during the late 70s and 80s.
difference/division in their social set-up, the people tended to form social incommunicability around themselves. The Meiteis of the Valley began to adopt 'a holier than thou' attitude towards their hill brethren which naturally embittered their social relations. Considered themselves with a new hypocritical and superiority complex over their Hillmen. In fact in the earlier days, the only difference between them was that of language and facilities of communication and agriculture. There was understanding and tolerance in spite of their differences. So during the colonial days on any slight pretext the administrators magnified the 'Isms' to push the peoples poles apart. 'To worsen the situation, the British intensified their administration and ran the Hill territory on different lines from that of the valley'. But with India's freedom in 1947 and since Manipur joined the Union of India in 1949, freedom of religious practices prevailed in the State where every citizen were treated equally under the Democratic Constitution of India.

In the Hill areas, their common traditional religion was generally known as 'Animsim'.

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10 Foreign and Political Department Proceedings, April, 1908, Extl. A. Nos. 2-5.

11 The concept of primitive religion has been used for tribal religion in the literature of Anthropology and history of religion. Thus tribal religion has been described as animism and animitism or spiritism in most available literature. The tribal religion has its own distinct character, its philosophy is often simple and intelligible.
'Animism' is not a unified religion but a mass of primitive beliefs and practices found in various parts of the world, which mainly include ancestor worship, spirit worship and nature worship, they do not have any fixed place of worship and never worship idols. Offerings and sacrifices were made at any place. Taboos were observed and ceremonies were performed; omens and dreams were interpreted on all important occasions and sacrifices were offered to appease the gods. Especially during the time of sowing seeds, harvesting and festival times and they believed in ghosts charms; witchcrafts etc. Thus magic, ancestor or nature worships were the bases of all religions for the animists. But on the very contrary and according to the Holy Bible, New Testament, in Romans Chapter I, verses 18-32, says that such beliefs have resulted from a turning away from the living God's clear revelation of Himself.

Therefore many or almost all hillmen were nature worshippers until the coming of Christianity especially in the Hill areas. However, there were few animists even to-day too, who

12 Donna Strom, 'Wind through the Bamboo' P.20.
See also, (a) Sujata Miri; Religion and Society of North East India, Pp. 69-71. (b) W. Robinson, A descriptive account of Assam, to which is P. 395 added. A short account of Neighbouring Tribes; London, 1891.

who tried to maintain/preserve the traditional
culture of their ancestors.

Missionary entrance into Manipur:

The political weakness in Asia in the 19th century
gave way to the dominance of accidental power in Asia.
'Christianity' popularly known as the religion of Imperial
Britain was closely interlinked with colonialism both
in Asia and Africa. Thus the political and commercial
expansions were followed by the Missionary movements
and witnessed an amazing growth of Christianity in Asia.
Also it was a century of Missionary goal and expansion of
the Church. Thus Manipur with its inaccessibility and
great problems of communication was no exception.

For that reason Missionaries were to have zeal as
well as an adventurous spirit in their pioneering works
since they had to face untold sufferings and hardships sometimes threats of life from wild tribes or even prepare for
the worst.

Curiously enough in the first instance the initiative
for starting Missionary enterprise came from the govt.
officials especially in all the North East region. This

14 V. Shrivaram, Comparative Colonial Policy with special
reference to the American Colonial policy, P. 10.
See also, Metcalf, T.R., Aftermath of Revolt, India
1857-1870, P. 98.
was so because of the realisation of the futility of the policy of military expedition which later culminated in endless war of retaliation and revenge.\textsuperscript{15} Thus its introduction was seen to them to be sine-qua-non, for the upliftment of the tribes, a society which they considered to be not only backward but also uncivilised. Yet the reality of their motive was more complex. For example their real motive in the introduction of Christianity among the Hill-tribes (Nagas and Kuki-chins of Manipur Hill areas) inevitably formed a part of their territorial expansion. On the other hand colonial expansion was notably identified with commercial interest as well as the desire to spread the christian Gospel to the acquired colonies.\textsuperscript{16} Obviously the introduction of Christianity and the Imperial expansionist policy went hand in hand. The machinery of colonialism such as Christianity, education and other colonial administration assumed the role of Whiteman's burden in civilizing the backward peoples. They therefore expected that what could not be achieved by the military power could be gained permanently by the


\textsuperscript{16} Kumar Ghoshal, \textit{Peoples in the Colonies}, P. 32.
power of the Bible gospel. In order to achieve their objectives they reiterated the 'need for the spread of Christianity and education among the Hill people'.

Sir, James Johnstone, the Political Agent of Manipur also emphasised in terms of the stabilisation of the British Empire and regarded Christianisation of the people as the only effective means for mutually attacking them to the govt. He therefore concluded that a large number of Christian Hillmen between Assam and Burma would be a valuable crop to the British. Moreover the British first interest was stabilising North East Frontier politically, in order to protect their interest in Bengal.

On the other hand the British Evangelical movement which had pioneered in India in the late 18th and early 19th century in a way fired the evangelical zeal of the American Foreign Missionary Movement. Thus Missionary work

17 Refer to the followings:
(b) Alexander Mackenzie, History of the Relations of the Govt. with the Hill tribes of the North East Frontier of Bengal. Pp 253-54.

18 James Johnstone, Manipur and the Naga Hills, Pp. 43-44.
of Rev. William Carey in Bengal excited considerable interest in the Church circles of North America. In addition to this, the personal correspondence that William Carey had with certain Baptist Mission Ministers in New York and Boston, kept the desire of Missionary spirit burning in American hearts. Finally an invitation was extended to the British Baptist Mission Centre at Serampore, Bengal, by Francis Jenkins, the then Commissioner of Assam to come over to work among its tribesmen. Unfortunately the English Baptist gave away their opportunity to the American Baptist Missionaries in Burma to go which they readily responded to the call. Since it was in 1813 that the American Baptist Mission had sent out its first Christian Missionary to India. They stayed and worked in different parts of India in different fields under different circumstances too.


20 Though the Serampore Mission had been established by the Baptist Mission Society of England it operated independently of that Society from 1816-1838. See also F.S. Downs, Mighty works of God, A Brief History of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, The Mission period, 1836-1950. P. 10.

21a See (A) F.S. Downs, Ibid. Pp. 16-17.  

Yet surprisingly enough, the first American Baptist Mission's station in North East India was established for the purpose of evangelising the people of that frontier area but considered as strategic outposts in a campaign to evangelize the Shan tribes of Northern Burma and southern China. Thus the Associations known as the American Board of Commissioner for foreign Mission (A.B.C.F.M.) came to devise, adopt and prosecute ways and means for propagating the Bible Gospel among those who are destitute of any knowledge of Christianity.22 Inspite of their great efforts, their hopes were however shattered when the Chinese authorities vehemently opposed the influence of Christianity into their areas so they turned back to the North East India - region especially towards the Hill-tribes.

A landmark in the history of the North East India was the Treaty of Yandaboo (1826) which was concluded after the First Anglo - Burmesé war (1824 -26). Significantly since then petty states and principalities and the numerous tribes of North East India were brought into a recorded imperial history.

22 S.H. Pathak, American Missionaries and Hinduism : A study of their contacts from 1813-1910, P. 33
As part of their colonial imperialist strategy, the British desired to link its new found influence over the Princely states of Manipur which was considered a strategic importance during the colonial era and even so by Independent India too as it borders with international territories.

With that purpose in mind a survey party under Capt. Francis Jenkins and Capt. Pemberton led the first expeditionary force to pass through the Naga territory with the object of opening trade between Assam and Manipur.23 However they were seriously challenged in the Naga Hills and later on began frequent encounters with the civilized West represented by British Imperial power along with various Missionary organizations from Britain, Europe and America. Thus the primitive tribal people had become the standard encounter in North East India closely paralleling the sanguinary encounters between 'Dark' Africa and civilized Europe.24 Therefore expansion of Christianity in the area gave greater importance and emphasis to Missionary sacrifice but paid less attention to the social problems associated with the encounter of culture and the subsequent changes in the societies for these hill peoples or even North


24 Penelope Hetherington, British Paternalism and Africa (1920-40).
East region as a whole.  

The First Missionary who arrived to Manipur (Imphal) was Rev. William Pettigrew from the British Arthington Aborigines Mission Society on Feb 6, 1894. Permission for Pettigrew to enter Manipur as a Missionary was consented in 1894 by the then Acting Political Agent, Mr. Porteus. However in January 1896, Rev. William Pettigrew's application to be appointed as a Missionary of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society in Manipur was accepted. Meanwhile in the same month, the executive committee of the American Baptists in Boston, USA, decided to take over the work of Manipur which had been vacated by the Arthington


26 Pettigrew went out to INDIA under the Arthington Aborigines Mission late in 1890, For two years he worked in Bengal. See the followings: (A) T. Luikham; Golden Jubilee, A Short History of the Manipur Baptist Christian, P. 11. (B) F.S. Downs, The Mighty Works of God, Op.cit. P. 76 (C) J.M. Solo and K. Mahangthei, 40 years in Manipur and Assam; (An account of the work of Rev. & Mrs. William Pettigrew) P. 2

27 Foreign and Political Department Proceedings, Secret-E, January 1895, Nos. 25; P-2.

Aborigines' Mission. Thus immediately after reaching Imphal (Manipur) with permission from the State authorities, he opened a school so as to educate them and through which he hoped to Christianize the vast Hindu population in the valley. The school at Singjamei (Imphal) (now renamed as Pettigrew Junior High School) still functions. At the time of his arrival the system of education in the State was undesirable, medium of instruction was found to be Bengalee too which was quite foreign to the native people like Hindi and English or French languages etc.

For that purpose to remodify the educational system as found in Manipur valley he tried to introduce Western Education system. He wrote a Manipuri Primery Grammer and some Manipuri text books including an English-Bengalee-Manipuri Dictionary in order to speed up his educational activities. Therefore not only in matters of proselytization but also initially he laid the foundation stone for the growth of modern western education in Manipur. His contribution in the field of education was immense.

But his privilege of working among the valley populace was abruptly restricted due to his policy of conversion to Christianity, through education to the vast Hindu section

in the valley. However to Christian Missionaries western system of education formed preparation for Evangelism. But the Hindu Meiteis interpreted Rev. William Pettigrew's activities as a deliberate attempt to teach them the'Govt. Religion Christianity'.

Perhaps the British authorities not wishing to antagonise the orthodox Hindu Meiteis, consequently took an alarming view of the situation. And thus Major Maxwell, the then Political Agent of Manipur 'after returning from Furlough, considering the sentiments of the people and the Darbar, forbade Rev. William Pettigrew to preach the Gospel among the Hindu Meiteis of the Valley. Because the Meiteis held to the tenets of the Hindu religion almost to fanaticism. Since the peculiar position in which the British officials were put to administer the State on behalf of the minor Raja made them hesitant to interfere with the State religion which occupied so much of their (Meiteis) time and attention.

32 Foreign and Political Department, Proceedings Nos 24-28, January 1895, P. 3
33 Foreign and Political Department Proceedings, July 1894, Secret -E, No. 26, P. 3
See also - Baptist Mission Conference, Vol. XXVII, No. 7, July 1897, P. 325.
34 Foreign & Political Department Proceedings, July 1894, Secret-E, No. 26, P. 3.
In this connection, the social policy of British India towards the princely States after the revolt of 1857 (Sepoy Mutiny) particularly in matters of religion was, apparently 'non-interference' or 'strict neutrality.

Thus in so far as the Hindu Manipuris were concerned, the British decided to maintain the status quo and Major Maxwell, the Political Agent of Manipur, had to serve the ultimatum that either Pettigrew had to leave Imphal or stop his mission work.

On the other hand the Political Agent ordered the Missionary to work among the Hill-tribes if he was to remain in the State of Manipur. But with the understanding that 'the British Govt. cannot guarantee him - safe conduct owing to the unsettled state of affairs in which these tribes live.'

Thus in January 1896 he went to the Thagkhul Naga Hill areas (north east of the State of Manipur) and accordingly he established a Mission Station at

36 M.M. Clark, A Corner in India, P. 157.
Ukhrul.\textsuperscript{37} At that time two Missions were operating in areas adjoining Manipur State, namely (a) The American Baptist Mission at Kohima, Naga Hills (Nagaland) (b) Secondly, the Welsh Presbyterian Mission at Aijal (Mizoram) They greatly influenced the Manipur Hills adjacent to it.

Like the valley Hindu dominated area, he established a Mission Centre at Ukhrul and he began to establish there a school too. His chief objective in giving education to the Tribesmen was to propagate Christianity.\textsuperscript{38} As he emphasised that education could illuminate the mind of the individual which in turn would arouse conviction in the truth of the Gospel. Yet the people (Hillmen) were so superstitious and ignorant that no one responded and for that reason he faced a hard time to convince them the great

\textsuperscript{37} The reason why Pettigrew chose Ukhrul as the final Mission Centre among the Hill areas could be that there were some traditional versions such as : (A) According to one traditional version, Pettigrew went first to the Mao Naga Hill areas. He met one Govt. interpreter Mr. Sani Kapani and conveyed him of his wish for a Mission work there. Thereupon a village Council was held by all the Chiefs. Unfortunately the Chiefs objected to it and so Pettigrew left for Tangkhul area.

(B) Yet another version about his selection of the Tangkhul area at Ukhrul as the Centre for diffusion of the Gospel was that, Rev. Pettigrew went to a Kuki Village called SENVON in the Southern Hills of Manipur and asked the Chief's permission to work there. But again the request was turned down there too, so he left for Ukhrul. See for example, T. Luikham, \textit{Op.cit.}, P. 37 and F.S. Downs, also \textit{Op.cit.}, Pp.78-79, also, P.165.

\textsuperscript{38} T. Luikham, \textit{Op.cit.}, P. 15
value of education for their future generation. During such difficult situation the State Superintendent (Major Maxwell) was on his way to the Somra Tract in Burma and came to learn about the people's obstinate attitude towards education. He warned all the different Hill village Chiefs that if they failed to send their boys to school from their respectable villages then he would punish them severely on his return if found absent from school. Therefore due to fear of punishment from the govt. led them enrolled to Pettigrew's school which went upto 31 students during April 1896. Here the British policy on religious neutrality was a contrast one as practised in the valley area, leaving aside the hillmen's honour for their traditional customs and cultures and yet imposed western religion and culture. However a compromise was made through the introduction of formal education for the hillmen's benefit which the Britishers were quite clear in their conviction. To-day the hillmen thanked the Britishers for their valuable contribution towards the miserable tribes of yesterday although initially they did not understand the meaning of its introduction (education and Christianity) for their upliftment. With that there appeared constant and gradual progress in education as well as Christianity. Among the tribal society the new converts were mostly young people and naturally most of the earlier students belonged to the Baptist Mission school who in turn became teachers and evangelists. They carried the Gospel message to their own people and even beyond their frontiers. Due to
political reasons in many areas preaching of the white Missionaries were forbidden by the Govt. but at such places local evangelists and native workers were allowed to do the job without trouble. Such men included, e.g. in Manipur Naga Hills like, M.K. Shimray, Ruichumhao, T. Luikham and S. Karei etc. from the Tangkgul Naga tribe. Among the Mao-Naga Tribe men, like Messrs Hepuni Ashikho, Kholi Puni and M. Lorho were the pioneers and among the Rongmei Naga tribe was Mr. Namrijinporn.40

But among the Mao-Nagas, Hepuni Ashikho of Punanamai village was the main pillar for primary educational development and also helped the spread of Christianity. Because he was the first Church Pastor - cum School teacher of Punanamai Village, Mao, Manipur. Thus the Golden Jubilee was celebrated in February 1976, since the first Mao Naga Church was established in 1927 in this village. Both Kholi Puni and M. Lorho became evangelists.

In this connection, J.P. Mills, with native workers, when writing on the effects of Christianity on the Ao-Nagas, noted that 'the American Missionaries themselves have


40 Ibid. P. 20-22. See also, T. Luikham, Golden Jubilee P. 7.
their hands full with organizing and superintending the work and most of the actual teaching in the village has to be left in the hands of the native Pastors'.

Further Y.D. Gundevia also said 'in all this what has struck me as significant and important is the fact that most of the evangelical work was done by the local Christian themselves'.

The Manipur Maharaja and the Darbar were very firm on the resolution that no further Mission Station would be opened in the State. For this reason such similar resolution was affected on the Mao Naga area till 1927. In the form of white foreign Missionaries being forbidden to visit the area. Thus proselytization process in the area was done by the native evangelists both local as well as from the neighbouring Tangkhul Naga Hill areas. One of the clear reasons for obstructing missionary work in the Mao Naga area bordering the Naga Hills now Nagaland was considered as of strategic importance to the British govt. Thus the Mission was not free to choose its area of

42 Y.D. Gundevia, War and Peace in Nagaland, P.44.
of operation since the final decision lay with the British officials. Apart from that the Mao-Naga area was placed under the direct administration of the Darbar President and the Political Agent. Even vigilance was maintained so as to prevent any disturbance there.

The other Missionary named, V.M. Fox arrived in Ukhrul in 1911. His valuable contribution for the cause of hill education was also tremendous. He hopen the gate for higher education by encouraging the school boys to go for higher studies. For the first time Carpentry work was also introduced into the Hills. This new training enabled the simple villagers to make modern furnitures for various purposes for schools, churches and homes etc.

Ukhrul remained the Mission Centre till 1918. But a new consideration led to a search for Central location for the American Baptist Mission Centre in order to reach out to all hill tribes. Finally it shifted from Ukhrul to Kangpokpi in 1919, after the First World War. But Ukhrul was kept as a sub-station and the Middle English school there continued to receive Mission support. By this another eminent Mission worker was transferred to Manipur in 1918 from Tura, Garo Hills (Meghalaya) at the request

of Rev. William Pettigrew in need of Medical personnel and service at the Mission Centre. Thus Dr G.G. Crozier (a medical practitioner cum-evangelist) arrived at Kangpokpi in Nov. 1919 and was joined by Rev. Pettigrew in 1921.46

The two missionaries both Rev. William Pettigrew and Dr. Crozier, divided the Mission work for their administrative convenience in the hill areas especially the Naga areas, by making Pettigrew in-charge of education and mission evangelism in the Tangkhul and Sadar areas whereas Dr Crozier assumed the responsibility for the dispensary; the leper asylum and evangelism work in the Zeliangrong Naga areas.47 Thus with the establishment of this new Mission Centre at Kangpokpi, various tribes, e.g. Maos, Marams, Kukis, Thangal, Liangmeis, Rongmeis and Zemais etc. were greatly improved apart from the Tangkhul Nagas.

In fact this new Mission Centre began to grow gradually and today (1987) the two most important institutions, namely the Manipur Bible Institute and the Kangpokpi Christian Hospital of the Manipur Baptist Convention are located there.

47 R.R. Lolly, The Baptist Church in Manipur, P.54.
Another significant Missionary who entered Manipur south district in 1910 under the Welsh Presbyterian Mission was Rev. Robert Watkins. Despite the stress and strain, the pioneer Mission began to penetrate into the neighbouring regions such as North Cachar hills, Tammu (Burma) and Tripura. Thus in order to cope with this new Mission, Rev. Robert Watkins changed the Mission's name into North East India General Mission (NEIGM) in 1919. The purpose was to spread over the gospel message from Senvon to all North East India.

However internal conflicts developed between Robert Watkins and his Home Board especially with Coleman. During the legal battles in the court that ensued, Robert Watkins refused to make any statement in his defense before the court and this was taken to mean that Coleman was the undisputable owner of the NEIGM for in reality Robert Watkins wanted to save the Mission's money instead of squandering it in the Court.

Therefore Robert Watkins started a fresh Mission of his own called as Indo-Burma Pioneer Mission (IBPM) in 1928 but later on it was recognised as an Independent Church.


49. Foreign & Political Department, Political Branch (1930) Memo No. 2294, G.A. Imphal, 21st Nov. 1929. J.C. Higgins, Political Agent to H.K. Dohnuna a local Medical Practitioner -cum- Field Secretary and a Backbone to Robert Watkins' cause.
of INDIA (ICI) in 1930 in the South West of Manipur.

Thus in Manipur, pioneer missionaries like Rev. William Pettigrew and Rev. Robert Watkins played very enterprising and inspiring roles for a new social change through education and evangelism. Prior to their arrivals, none of the tribal dialects had any written scripts. But for the first time books in tribal languages were therefore started writing in Roman scripts with some phonetics for which special credit must be attributed to Rev. William Pettigrew. His main concern was for the newly converted Christians especially for the native Church leaders whom he selected. For that very purpose Sunday school education was conducted for more future native workers to witness Christ.

**Christian Movement in the Hills of Manipur:**

During the last decade of the 19th century, Missionary work by Protestant Mission began in the hill areas of Manipur which later on became an important Centre of the Christian movements both religious and educational movements.

When the Christian movement began to grow, persecution of Christians also followed by the non-christians say by the animists or traditional customary followers. But in the midst of difficulties and persecutions, the Church grew gradually. Thus there was a revival movement in the Church
in Manipur. T. Luikham (1948: 31, 33) says thus.
'spiritual christian movement resulted in a large number
of conversions. This was followed by persecution' -
Suddenly like wild fire the great revival swept over the
hills of Manipur. This new outburst of spiritual
awakening captivated the hearts of people. Thus
many proclaimed the gospel of Christ to their neighbouring
villages. They became courageous and fearless to speak about
Jesus. His teachings, the meaning of His death on the
cross, His resurrection and His Ascension to Heaven.
Lastly His promise to the Disciples that one day He will
come again (known in the Bible in the Book of Revelation
about the Second coming of Jesus Christ as King of Kings
to receive the just and the faithful/believers in Him,) to
their own people in Christ and to others. Besides that
they would undertake long fast with prayers dedicating
their lives to Christ.

On the other hand persecution also started as soon
as Christianity was introduced and preached and conversion
took place. Therefore the growth of Christianity was also
not a smooth pathway. It faced rough, difficult and hard-

50 T. Luikham, A short history of Manipur Baptist
See also, P.S. Vaiphei, Church Growth among the Hill Tribes
in Manipur, North East INDIA, P. 67.
ship times and even life was risked on the process of proselytization.

Persecution of new converts did not occur simultaneously but it occurred in different places at different times and in different ways. One thing which was common everywhere was that preaching of the Gospel was regarded as an encroachment on time honoured custom and an attack upon the old tradition ridden customary laws and usages of the Tribal animists. Great trouble arose when the non-Christians tried to force their social customs on the Christians. Naturally the Christians could not comply with the traditional ways such as the habit of drinking wine (tribal rice beer) and consuming meat which had been offered to evil spirits, worshipping of peculiar rocks and stones, trees, Sun, Moon (or say nature worship) and observing all the customs which the heathens/animists used to keep/observe. To top such great height of persecution was added by some of the State govt. officials who entered into conspiracy with the heathenic leaders (or village chiefs) in any way possible to persecute the Christians. 51 Persecution of converted Christians were carried out in various ways, such as, many were driven out from the parent villages, at one time even ex-communicated

by their fellowmen. The Church buildings were often destroyed and even the chief ordered the converts to leave their village forfeiting all their properties and in addition they were also heavily fined.\textsuperscript{52} For that reason many delayed their public confession of Christ because of persecution, intimidation and harassment. Some met tragic end too in order to let them drink rice beer (wine) by the heathen so as to give up their new faith, they were tortured both physically and mentally.

However determined Christians withstood the storms of life through their faith and belief in Jesus Christ whose name they witnessed unto others and even prayed to God to forgive to those who persecuted them and to save their lives from wrong doings. Thus, Christians instead of condemning their enemies or bring them to trial in a court of law but invited them (their heathen brethren) to Christ and extended to them to receive Christ's love and salvation through the Living Christ who is the same, yesterday, to-day and forever as mentioned in the Holy Bible, New Testament in Hebrew Chapter 13 : verse 8. Thus the Gospel message of Christ was spread over among the people

in all corners of Manipur. And despite stiff opposition the Christian movement in Manipur continued to gain momentum. Christian community had grown at a faster rate than in any other major area of the North Eastern region. It maintained its working process since Independence although a slight fall was seen during the great Second World War which severely affected untold miseries in all the Hill areas of Manipur.

In the decade between 1961-1971, the percentage of growth of the Christian community in Manipur was 83.66%.53 The Church membership in Manipur had grown from 14 in 1910 to more than 25,000 in 1950 and it rose to 1,52,043 in 1961 to 2,79,243 in 1971.54 This clearly indicated the rapid growth of the Christian Church members in Manipur.

According to the Annual Administration Report, Hill Area of Manipur, 1980-81, Table 51, P.113, the followings were the percentage/rate of Christian population in Manipur as found during the 1971 census.55

53 P.S. Downs, Christianity in North East INDIA, Historical perspective, P.
54 G.K. Gori, Changing phase of Tribal Area of Manipur, P. 113.
55 Ibid, P. 113.
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<th>Name of the District</th>
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<td>(i) East District</td>
<td>92.00%</td>
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<td>(ii) South District</td>
<td>89.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) West District</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Tengnoupal District</td>
<td>67.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) North District</td>
<td>56.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) Central (valley) District</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When India became Independent in 1947, Freedom of the Religion was included in the Constitution of India as one of the fundamental rights. Thus when Manipur joined with the Union of India in 1949, the right to religious freedom was extended to each and every citizen of the State of Manipur. Due to this reason the earlier restriction of Christian religion in the Hindu dominated valley areas was removed. Further restriction of Christian influence in some of the Hill areas was also widely open with the usher of Independence having a Democratic Constitution of India in the State of Manipur too.

Unfortunately for the valley area as soon as the Christian evangelisation started due to the constitutional provision for the open declaration of religion freedom for all, there no longer arose any fundamental right to oppose
for the spread of Christian religion. However Foreign Missionaries already left Manipur due to certain political and constitutional reasons but natives were free to exercise freedom of religious movements.

During such period a new dimension arose in the Hill areas where both the Nagas and Mizos underground activities for successionist policies started against the established government of India. That was why the spread of Christian movement were curbed to a great extent and the Govt. of India served immediate notice to all foreign Missionaries to leave the state of Manipur and other north eastern states and no fresh permits were issued to them to practice in the Hill areas of Manipur.

So in the post-Independence era almost all the preaching and evangelism process among the Meiteis were left in the hands of the native Churches and evangelists. However even in the Hill areas too, the Church works were continued through its native church workers alone.

The Council of Baptist Churches in North East India conducted its mission work among the Meiteis of the valley by about 1960. The work of the Presbyterian Church started from 1968 onwards and other various missions like the Catholic Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Mission etc. also
from the 1960s to date to expand their respective mission works.

Therefore in the plain areas of the State among the Hindus and Muslims, growth of Christianity was just a beginning and yet even in 1980s it was marginal and very slow indeed.

The expulsion of Foreign Missionaries from North East India was not only the policy of the Govt. of India alone but even the American Baptist Mission also seriously considered about the turning/handing over all its authorities/responsibilities to a local Church Organisation during the 1940s. Thus in a way both policies coincided.

By 1950 all the Christian Associations related to the American Baptist Mission of North East India jointly formed a new organisation called the 'Council of Baptist Churches in Assam' which was again reconstituted as the 'Council of Baptist Churches in Assam and MANIPUR' (CBCA renamed into CBCAM). Again it was further renamed in 1959 as 'Council of Baptist Churches in North East INDIA' (C.B.C.N.E.I.) 56 In this connection, F.S. Downs, describes that 1950 therefore marks the end of the Mission era and the beginning of the Church era. 57

56 R.R. Lolly, The Baptist Church in MANIPUR, p.67.
However practically the Baptist Churches in Manipur remained under the guidance of Missionaries as before, since it was considered as one of the youngest Mission fields in this area.

The last Missionaries to leave MANIPUR were Dr E.E. Brock and J.S. Anderson in early 1955. Thus with their departure, the year 1955 marked the real end of the American Baptist Mission era but the beginning of the Indigenous Baptist Church Era in MANIPUR. Since then no Foreign Missionary has been allowed to step into the soil of MANIPUR. But its Churches had developed and flourished continually under the guidance of the devoted native church leaders.

During the serious turmoils of the NAGA-uprising in the 1950s and '60s the responsibilities of Church leadership fell suddenly on the native Church leaders who were not fully trained or learned the main tenets of the Holy Bible from advanced and proper Theological Training Schools/colleges. But rather they took up the challenges and assumed responsibilities at such crucial period having faith and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the other hand since the 1950s, the political leadership in most of the North Eastern States went into the hands of the Christians, e.g. Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya
and Manipur too. However, in MANIPUR, the leadership went sometimes into the hands of a Christian leaders and sometimes in the hands of a Meitei Hindu or a Muslim Meitei. Thus after Independence almost everywhere political consciousness was aroused in the minds of the people. In fact separatist tendencies have erupted into violent activities and rebellions, thus jeopardised the security of an important border region of INDIA via MANIPUR.

In 1956 onwards, the Naga Underground movement went to the extreme of revolting against the Govt. of India. By the end of 1958 the Naga National Council (hostile-group) had penetrated into the Ukhrul, Mao and Tamenglong sub-divisions of MANIPUR State also. These areas were also then brought under the G.O.C. Kohima and the pattern of the trouble was the same as in Nagaland. 59 Similar to the Naga problem another armed rebel activity started by the Mizos. The two movements which originally erupted from Naga Hills and the Mizo Hills had greatly affected MANIPUR because Manipur-Hills were mostly inhabited by the Nagas in the North, East and West Districts of Manipur. Whereas the Kuki-Chin tribes inhabited the South District of Manipur. Kuki-Chins had close affinity with the Mizos of Mizoram. Thus to curb their extremist activities, the

59 B.N. Mullick, *My years with Jawaharlal Nehru, 1948-64.* P. 333
the Govt. of India often declared these areas as 'Disturbed areas' and thus deployed para-military forces for necessary operations into the areas without peaceful means of solution.

Therefore due to the presence of such situation the foreign Missionaries were banned from the area. Moreover, they were even suspected by the Govt. of India for instigating the tribes. Thus when heavy military operations started to curb these activities, the troubles and sufferings faced by the innocent people during those days were unspeakable. Free movement by civilians was extremely difficult. The Church leaders failed to continue their formal activities too. Regarding expulsion of foreign Missionaries from the area. Rev. Mangshaosat Kipgen argued in his paper (summary presentation of the problem of North East India at the seminar conducted by the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Madras on 2-4 Octo., 1980) said 'the unproven charges and accusation levelled against the Missionaries succeeding in weeding them out from the hill areas of the North East and restricting those few in the plains of

60 The Govt. of India's policy of excluding Foreign Missionaries from politically disturbed areas were directed mainly against the Protestants at least in the North East (Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram). Catholic Foreign Missionaries were permitted to work in Nagaland for instance whereas Protestant Missionaries were not, despite the fact that all but a few thousand of the Christians there were Protestant Christians. Besides the active political leaders belong to Protestant Church, so also the rebel underground army also. So in one way the Central Govt. have every right to be cautious of its religious policy.
This clearly indicates the govt.'s lack of knowledge about the people's cry for socio-economic development in the area. Moreover the people already got the idea of political freedom during the 2nd World War where the twin Battles were fought both at Kohima and Imphal.

To be perpetually obsessed with suspicion that any foreign Missionary from the West was engaged in anti-National activities was an unfortunate prejudice entertained by many in this country. The attitude only provoked further discontentment and fear in the minds of the tribal Christians fearing that their religious freedom may be destroyed one day.

A very peculiar political situation which prevailed in the hills of Manipur during the last two decades since the first Census was that all the politically active overground leaders were almost Christians and hence Christians played a leading role in political developments, such as participated in the State Assembly elections and national Parliament at the Centre for example the present (August, 1987) Chief Ministers of Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Meghalaya are Christians.

On the contrary the underground movements in the State

61 A. Arnold (Ed.) Crisis in North East INDIA, P.90.
of Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland were also mostly led by Christians who sometimes sought public sympathy and support for their movements by describing it as something akin to Christian crusades.

But then the 'Peace' movements operating from Naga Hills into all the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur and from Mizo-hills to all Mizo-Kuki inhabited areas of Manipur were also had been initiated by Christian Churches. 62

Therefore the Govt. of India drew chief suspicion on the foreign Missionaries' presence in the Hill-areas. Miscalculating that they might have instigated the hillmen against the Govt. of India. This was mainly projected by many writers without having basic knowledge of the people's identity crisis, geographical location and without trying to understand and solve the causes of discontentment of the socio-economic developments of the tribals. Whereas the foreign missionaries main concern was the propagation of the Gospel and also to help for the social upliftment of the people at large; having their own economic interest of the region.

The varied problems prevalent in Manipur in the post-Independent era on politico, socio-economic backwardness

62 The Peace Movement were sponsored by the official Church leaders who were opposed to violent rebellions. Violent activities were never officially supported by the Church in NAGALAND, MANIPUR or MIZORAM etc.
in the State were due to the misrule of the then British legacy. Therefore it would be best suited if the new Independent Indian govt. come to understand the real problems at the grassroot level and try to solve them through peaceful and democratic means rather than charging the then British policy which has now been regarded as the historical phenomenon in the British Empire. Therefore grudging against the white Missionaries or Christianity or to develop an allergic suspicion on seeing a white missionary in the region would be a wrong conclusion. But the political consciousness developed out of their own indigenous desire to be ruled by themselves and thus to-day certain ethnic crisis has been visible even among the dominant Hindu Meitei community in the valley of Manipur.

The Various Christian Mission Organisation that prevailed in Manipur since 1950 were the followings:

(1) The Manipur Baptist Mission which consisted of Associations and Conventions. Its headquarters was located at Imphal. The Manipur Baptist Convention continued its co-operation with the Council of Baptist Churches of North East INDIA (CBCNEI) as before during the time of the presence of Western Foreign Missionaries in the area;

(2) The Roman Catholic Church Mission (R.C.C.M.);

(3) The Seventh Day Adventist Mission (S.D.A.M.)
(4) The Salvation Army (S.A.) Mission, (only found in South Manipur);

(5) The North East India General Mission (N.E.I.G.M.)

Originally Rev. Robert Watkins was the founder of this Mission. However he left the Mission due to some disputes that arose in the Mission. The whole N.E.I.G.M. Churches in MANIPUR were divided into different Presbyteries according to the Hill-Tribal dialects which are as follows:

(a) The Evangelican Convention Church (E.C.C.) In 1950 the Paite Tribe of the N.E.I.G.M. formed an organisation of its own as the Manipur Christian Convention later on changed into Evangelical Convention Church (E.C.C.)

(b) The Manipur Christian Organization: In 1952, the Vaiphei Tribe of N.E.I.G.M. also formed an organisation of their own and named as the Manipur Christian Organization, (M.C.O.)

(c) The Kuki Christian Association: The Kukis of the N.E.I.G.M. formed a Presbyterian Organization known as the Kuki-Christian Association (KCA);

(d) The Evangelical Assembly Church: The Hmars of the N.E.I.G.M also formed their own Presbytery and named it as the Manipur Christian Assembly; later on

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P.S. Vaiphei, Church Growth among the Hill Tribes in Manipur, North East India, P. 106.
renamed it as the Evangelical Assembly Church (EAC)

(6) The Indo-Burma Pioneer Mission: This was formed in 1928 under Rev. Robert Watkins but renamed it as Independent Church of India (ICI) in 1930. During (1956-60) within the Independent Church of INDIA (ICI) a dispute arose in regard to the question of Mission Headquarters and because of disagreement for its location the two Tribes (Vaipheis and Hmars) were separated. The Sielmet Christian College was defunct due to this dispute. The Sielmet Christian College was maintained by the Indo-Burma Pioneer Mission and later by the Independent Church of India with Headquarters at Churachandpur. The Govt. of MANIPUR had also given ad-hoc-grant-in-aid to it about Rs. 22,000 in 1966-67. And this was stated in the Lok Sabha (Parliament) by the Union Minister of State in the Ministry of Education and Youth Services (Shri Bhakt Darshan) during debate hour.64A

The Vaiphei villages from the Independent Church of India had joined the Presbyterian Church. And the Hmars group under Rochunga Pudaite also withdrew from the Independent Church of India and formed a separate organisation known as the Evangelical Free Church of INDIA (E.F.C.I)

64A. Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. XXVIII, Fourth Series, 7th Session, No. 43, Friday, April 18, P.225, 1969.
in collaboration with the Partnership Mission Society (P.M.S.)^64^B This partnership Mission Society was the sponsoring Body of the Evangelical Free Church of India.

The Roman Catholic Church Mission in MANIPUR:

The coming of the Roman Catholic Church was the important factor without question in the development of Education in post-Independent era in MANIPUR. This Mission began to expand throughout the North East of India, and the cutting edge of their new thrust being an ever expanding network of Christian Educational Institutions. The first Catholic Church Missionaries who entered MANIPUR with the approval of the Maharaja of Manipur was in 1947.\^65\ They were Rev. Father, A. Colusi and Rev. Fr. O.Marengo, form Shillong and visited Ukhrul, Manipur. In 1952, Rev. Fr. Marochino, then the Chaplain of Kohima Hospital (Nagaland) arrived in Hunday,\^66\ (Tangkulu-Naga hill areas, North East of the State of MANIPUR). With that and for the first time in MANIPUR a Catholic Missionary Community was established.\^67\ In 1956, the Catholic Priests took up

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\^65\ Unpublished source material from the Catholic Mission Headquarters at Mughal. P.1

\^66\ Ibid., P.1

\^67\ However, prior to the arrival of the Catholic Missionaries, there were already Chin Catholics who migrated from Burma into Manipur during the Japanese war and finally located them in Sugnu area.
residence at Imphal in the central valley. And that was the beginning of its expansion in Christian Education in the State of MANIPUR. Since then many Catholic institutions have been established in many Hill areas of MANIPUR and with that education had improved by leaps and bounds in the State of MANIPUR.

The Manipur Baptist Convention (M.B.C.)

The Headquarters of the Manipur Baptist Convention was located at Imphal, the capital of MANIPUR. The whole Baptist area in Manipur has been divided into three (3) areas and each area has been organised an Association, namely:

1. The North East Baptist Association of Manipur (NEBAM),
2. The Sadar Baptist Association (consisted of North & South Sadar),
3. The North West Baptist Association.

Thus every three years, a gathering of these three Christian Associations was arranged and came to be known as the Convention, (the Manipur Baptist Convention). However, the Manipur Baptist Convention affiliated with the Council of the Baptist Churches of North East India (CBCNEI) and thus functions accordingly.

The North East Baptist Association of Manipur (NEBAM) was the original name of the newly formed Association called the Tangkhul Naga Baptist Convention (TNBC) which
came into existence in 1959. This Convention was again divided into four Circles, such as the Western Circle, the Northern Circle, the Southern Circle and the Eastern and Kuki Circle. In 1959 after the Kukis left and formed their new Association known as the North East Kuki Baptist Association of Manipur (N.E.K.B.A.M.). However the remaining Circles were again converted into four Associations, namely:–

(i) The Eastern Tangkhul Naga Baptist Association (ETNBA);
(ii) The Western Tangkhul Naga Baptist Association (WTNBA);
(iii) The Northern Tangkhul Naga Baptist Association (NTNBA); and
(iv) The Southern Tangkhul Naga Baptist Association (STNBA).

Thus the North East Baptist Association of Manipur (NEBAM) was renamed as the Tangkhul Naga Baptist Convention by converting four Circles into Autonomous Associations each with the right to affiliate individually to the MANIPUR Baptist Convention and the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (C.B.C.N.E.I).

The Sadar Baptist Association: This Association was formed in 1925. However in 1946 the Sadar Baptist

68 P.S. Vaiphei, Church Growth Among the Hill Tribes in Manipur, North East India, Pp. 75-76.
69 Ibid., 76. See also, R.R. Lolly, Op.cit., P.92
Association was divided into two Associations, namely North & South Associations. 70

The North Sadar Association: In 1956, the Manipur North Naga Baptist Association mainly by the Mao-Naga Baptist Association and the Maram Nagas got separated from the Sadar Association and formed the Manipur North Naga Baptist Association (MNNBA). 71 Again in 1958, a further change occurred as the MNNBA was divided into two Associations, namely the East and the West Associations having one Field Director each. But from 1959, they were re-united again into one Single Association having four Circles and the Administrative Centre was located at Tobufu. This Manipur North Naga Baptist Association is called as Manipur Baptist Association - No. 8.

The South Sadar Baptist Association was changed into as the South East Manipur Baptist Association (SE MBA) which came to be known as Manipur Baptist Association No. 2. (MBA No. 2) This Association has a multi-ethnic Association having atleast six different tribes, namely the Anal, the Chothe, the Lamkang, the Tarao, the Moyon and the Monsang etc.

Since Manipur consists of many tribes (29 tribes) and each tribe wanted to have a separate Association of its own. And therefore the KomRem Baptist Association (KRBA) has been called as MBA No. 7 which came into existence in 1956. Later on (KRBA) came to be known as KomRem Baptist Churches Association (KRBCA).

The North West Baptist Association:

The Kuki Christian Organization (KCO) was also within this Association. But in 1947 they separated from it and formed the Kuki Christian Association (KCA) which was later changed into Kuki Baptist Association. So when Manipur Baptist Convention was reorganised in 1955 the Kuki Baptist Association (KBA) came to be known as the Manipur Baptist Association No. 5 (MBA No. 5).

The remaining tribes of the North West Association which mainly consist of Nagas - like the Zemei, Liangmei and Rongmei Naga tribes and thus constituted the Zeliangrong Baptist Association (ZBA) known as the Manipur Baptist Association No. 4. Thus Christianity and Christian Education had far reaching consequences for the Hill-Tribal society.

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72 Ibid., P.73
73 Ibid., P.73
of Manipur.

In fact Christianity and Christian education functioned as the two-sides of the same academic 'Coin' for the purpose of disseminating Christian Religion in Manipur. In the earlier period at the behest of the Authorities, the Missionaries opened schools and those agencies functioned inseparably, each co-ordinating with the other in the promotion and performance of their respective roles. The Govt. during the colonial period in general adopted a policy of cultural Imperialism and by that means Western education brings people out of their ignorance and under-development into a condition of Enlightenment and civilization'. 74 Christianity as generally understood is a religious faith mainly concerned with spiritual welfare of the people. With this end in view, the Missionaries engaged themselves in all sorts of evangelical activities such as preaching of the Gospel of the Bible. Broadly speaking it had a much wider implications. Hand in hand with evangelisation and conversion naturally followed its social, educational, medical and economic welfare of the converts.

Even succeeding administrators were all convinced that only Christianity could change their primitive ways of

On the result of the amazing transforming power of the Gospel among the tribes, R. Pudaite (1963: 67-68) interestingly commented as follows: 'They had been savage and uncivilized people but now they were counted among the rank and file of civilized society of the Earth. They had been filled with fear and frustration but now with friendliness and assurance of life. Thus the Pioneer Missionaries sometimes at great personal risks and sacrifices, ventured into the wilds of Manipur Hills and established lone Mission Centres, In this way proselytization process was established. The simple folks were taught the ways of Heaven and Hell through the Bible which attracted the innocent tribals as they found easy reach for conversion to Christianity and to go to Heaven after their earthly life rather than remaining in their animistic ways of life and go to Hell after death according to the Bible. Every convert was required to learn and read the Bible its Gospel message and prayer. For that reason the necessity of learning process developed. But to introduce formal


76 R. Pudaite, Education of the Hmar People, Pp.67-68.
education, Missionaries had to begin from the lowest level. They selected a certain dialect (usually the dialect of the village or the tribe in which the Missionary had settled) by which they produced it, in written form, in Roman script/character. This being done, in Bible translations, stories from the Bible, religious tracts etc. were written in that dialect. It was taught in the schools when they opened within a known village or tribe.

This dialect began to cut across villages, boundaries and members of a tribe which had previously no common lingua-franca within the same tribe now began to accept the Mission's selected dialect in 'Roman Script' as the standard means of communication. Naturally the Missionaries gave priority to the study of local vernaculars as the basis for the formulation of their Christian educational programmes. Thus the native vernaculars were considered as the most direct and effective medium of communication, whether through preaching or education since they did not possess a script of their own.

Their concept of education lay in making an individual be self-reliant and independent in all spheres of life. In this way home education was made important as parents instructed their children in various skills and crafts but no formal education as such. But this was filled in by the Missionaries who founded native English medium primary schools with the
object of converting the backwardness hill people to christianity. 77

Unfortunately the tribal dialects (atleast 29 tribes in Manipur) had no any written script. Books were unknown to them. Therefore books in tribal languages were written in Roman scripts with some phonetics for which special credit should be attributed to the foreign Missionaries in the first instance. They even paid great efforts in translating the Bible and Christian Hymns into local languages.

Mission schools were aimed primarily at religious instructions or intensification of the propagation of Christianity. 'The people were taught the three 'R's in preparation of Bible reading and for their daily religious exercises'. 78 Further the aim of Mission school education was to prepare young men and women for services in the churches and society as indigenous preachers and teachers. 79 Consequently the general standard of knowledge remained quite low. Therefore education as such had double purposes namely, a means of teaching the 'Christian truth and a means for recruitment or training of future native workers.

77 Saroj Chakrabarty, The Upheaval Years in North East India, (1960-1983), P.93.
Literary was considered important for the nurturing of Christian faith. For without the Bible in the hands of the believers it was difficult to preach the word of God. As the Churches increased continually the need for Bible schools increased immensely and with that the need for the training of Church leaders too. So later on Missionaries realized the importance of Bible schools to biblically trained selective and dedicated persons for church work and for that purpose Dr E. Brock opened a Bible School in 1952 at Ukhrul Hill region. And in 1954 J.S. Anderson, one of the last Foreign Missionaries in MANIPUR abolished the existing Middle English School at the Kangpokpi Headquarters and in its place a vernacular Bible school in Manipuri medium was set up.

Because of the above reasons the Missionaries found it difficult to separate educational activities and Gospel works in the Hills. They felt that the purpose of the school was also evangelistic as the Missionaries started in reply to the Home authorities in America who emphasised that the Missionaries activities should be based on Gospel work and objected to their educational activities. They further opposed that educating the heathens/animists were no missionary work. The Home Board in America felt

that Missionaries ought to devote themselves principally and directly to christianizing the people. No Missionary at any time in the past had gone out with anything but the Gospel in his hands, Missionaries preached only the gospel message and did not lecture on arts and science subjects. They expounded the message of God's Love and forgiveness to mankind and not the text books of any university and so on. Their seat of instruction was to be the pulpit and their job was for preaching the Bible gospel message to the people. But the practical experiences of the Missionaries convinced them that they could not separate education from their proselytization activities.

The main reason for educating the people was that they could be made more capable of understanding and appreciating the facts and evidence, the doctrines and duties of the scriptures in the Bible.

Further the missionaries wanted to increase their influence with the people by communicating some advantage which they could appreciate and by showing that Christianity routed on an intelligent perception of its doctrines and contained reason for the performance of all its duties. Inspite of all criticism on them the missionaries continued to link education with conversion as they opined that ignorance and superstition went together. They felt this could be eradicated by the promotion of knowledge -
the establishment of a sound system of education. Further it was pointed out as 'we have often been pioneers in educational programmes and practices which have raised the standard of education not only in our own institutions but have stimulated others to raise theirs and gradually have induced govt. itself to introduce reforms'.

If it had not been for the missionaries the pace of the spread of modern education among the Hill-Tribal peoples might have been much slower than the present stage of education. No doubt their priority concern with education was so far as it subserves their chief purpose and the essential thing in all mission education was the creation of a christian atmosphere in its institutions.

Besides adding the number of christians through conversion the strategy of christian conversion included the starting of education institutions and medical facilities which serve a much larger number of people than merely the Christian converts. Mission schools provided general education and a better standard of normal life based on

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83 Anderson Whitehead, Christian Education in India, P. 7
84 Dr. L.P. Vidyarthi, Applied Anthropology in India (Principle, Problems and case studies), Allahabad, 1968, P. 296.
on the tenets of Christianity and/or this basis they could be judged as highly successful.

At first no matter how bitterly the Hill people disliked and opposed the Whiteman's presence in their area who had come to seize their traditional rights and yet they gradually realised the sincerity of the missionaries in their zeal to discipline and educate the native children.

Initially sending the children to school was feared but later on the native people considered education as a magic-craft to uplift children's position in society. Thus education benefitted to all in various ways.

Although there was no uniform pattern for the propagation of the Gospel, the Christian Missionaries followed certain strategic way of presenting the gospel to the tribes. One of them was to convert a village chief. Due to his status in the community having a determining influence, it was believed that a favourable impression would be created on the people through the conversion of the chiefs. The missionaries therefore, made initial contacts with the chiefs and convinced them to embrace the new religion. When this was successful the missionaries next tried to educate not only children but also adults as well so that education was used as an instrument of pacification as well as civilizing the Hill-tribes. In fact, 'the coloured races have benefitted immensely by the
improvements carried out in their countries by the missionaries. Further, the Missionaries or Tribal Christians would persuade a non-Christian village to have a school. A Christian school master would then be sent and the school begun. The school master (ideally a person trained at a mission middle school) would in addition to his normal educational duties undertake evangelistic work. When a Christian community came into existence the school master became its first pastor. Though this was not the only method of evangelism used it was certainly the most effective mechanism for proselytization process. In the minds of most hills-men, Christianity and education were synonymous terms.

Besides direct preaching and proselytization through Pastors, Evangelists and lay workers and women workers etc. were used in educational institutions as a nexus in public contacts through which they tried to convince people about Christianity. Most of the school teachers who served as local pastors in the villages were also earlier Mission school products. Because of this Mission school students could easily organize weekly

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meetings, such as Bible studies, prayer meetings apart from the usual Sunday Service worship hour. This type of Christian Youth Organization actively propagated the Gospel message to the neighbouring villages. And by such activities, indirectly educational development took place in the area.

The need for Church leadership led them to establish Middle School standard too. Thus in due course the missionaries not only influenced the students with the Gospel message but also appointed them as evangelists, teachers and church pastors. And also supplied to the govt. for lower administrative jobs by the local people.

The Christian missions in the field of education in the Asian region were enormous and it was generally acknowledged that development of modern education in those countries came about as a direct result of Missionary influence.86 Today, the Christian community is a force to be reckoned with not because of its numerical strength but because of its well established institutional network.87 It also succeeded in setting an excellent example for organized and disciplined activities in the interest of the


Nation. The Christian schools thus catered not only to the Christian children alone but also to that of the students belonging to other faiths. It provided education, also in the field of health, mass communication and a vast range of welfare and developmental activities etc. Therefore what decries to be understood and indeed to be emulated by others is their glorious record of performance and efficiency on every front, be it in organizing the faithfuls or in the management of educational and other social welfare institutions upon christians and non-christians alike.

Nevertheless education had been one of the biggest achievements of the Christian Missionaries even into the interior hilly areas of MANIPUR too. Education had not only resulted in literacy but served as a means of enlightenment in all aspects of life. Literacy was defined in the census of India as the mere ability to read and write in any script and in any language, whereas people having 'Education' were those who have passed any examination from the primary standard upwards.

From the year 1950 onwards literacy among the hill people were considerably high. But it was not possible

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88 Refer to: Kaj Baago, Recent Studies of Christianity in India. _Journal Religion and Society_, Vol. XIV, No. 4, December 1967, Pp.63-64.
still for the mission to impart higher education to the people. Since its vernacular literature needs to be improved and the standard of education needs to be raised. Further higher educational institutions were not established except one (Sielmet Christian College, MANIPUR) having Pre-University standard at the initial stage which was established in the South District of Manipur by the Presbyterian Mission (N.E.I.G.M.)

Therefore many tribal students had to go to Govt. colleges in the valley for higher education. At the lower level education also formed an integral part of the Missionary movement, in which teaching was held an important place in the public ministry for Christ and thus played a large role in the development of early Church growth. In the Post-Independent era, for decades the people of Manipur especially the hill tribes might have remained in darkness with little progress in the absence of the Christian Missions. This kind of similar situation prevalent in other parts of India was highlighted by Sachchidananda (N.C.E.R.T. 1967) as christian Missionaries have been pioneers in the field of dedication to the cause. Their teachers learn the tribal language of the area and visit the homes of their

89 J. Herbert Kane, Understanding Christian Mission. P. 318.
students of all the villages. 'The amount of labour they put in is greater than that of other teachers. This create in the heart of the tribal the zest for education.'

During the colonial period in MANIPUR the American Baptist Mission and an Independent Mission like the (N.E.I. G.M. and later the I.B.P.M.) which affiliated with the Presbyterian church of North East India by some of the N.E.I.G.M. and from the Independent church of India were predominant. But in the Post-Independent era apart from the above Missions, others like the Roman Catholic Church Mission, the Seventh Day Adventist Mission, the Salvation Army Mission etc. entered into MANIPUR. However from among all the missions the Roman Catholic Church Mission grew into prominence, especially in the field of Education. The Minister of Home Affairs and States (Dr Katju) confirmed during the debate session in the Lok-Sabha (Parliament) regarding the presence of Foreign Missionary Societies in MANIPUR during the year 1954 were, viz. (a) The North East Indian

Sachchidananda, Tribal Education in India. Report of the National Seminar on Tribal Education in India, Socio-economic Aspects of Tribal Education, Tribal Education Unit, Department of Adult Education (NCERT).

General Mission and (b) the American Baptist Foreign Mission.

Whereas for the Baptist Mission since 1954-55, with the withdrawal of all Foreign Missionaries from MANIPUR due to political disturbances prevalent in the Hill-areas especially in the Naga inhabited areas, Enterprise in the matter of educational facilities were reduced both in quality and quantity. Not only that even evangelisation and the spread of christianity were carried out by the native Christian workers themselves.

Fortunately due to the presence of different Mission Centres in MANIPUR, a number of christian educational institutions came into existence. Those schools (especially the Catholic Mission Schools) were found better in standard and the system of imparting education, no doubt accompanied with a high degree of school fees. Whereas it was given free of cost in the govt. schools yet this was due to the implementation of the new Govt. of India's policy as envisaged in the Constitution of INDIA on free and compulsory primary education for all children (from 6 - to 11 years age group).

However this was evident by the students performance at the State level examinations conducted under scholarships schemes at the end of classes - V and VIII respectively, so also at the High School Leaving Certificate examinations
Christian education had helped people to become 'Independent' socially and economically and even created new urges and aspirations but sometimes leading to a direct conflict between the generations. For example the younger generations were very much influenced by western ideas, values, music and dance etc. whereas the older generations wanted them to preserve their traditional identity and cultures etc.

Later on the educated tribals realized that with the change of time and values, modernization was inevitable in various aspects of life through contact with different cultures, expansion of science and technology and communications and thereby creating avenues for the entrance of various people in the area.

On the other hand Christianity has emerged as the strongest factor of modernization and development and gave the tribals as it had been done elsewhere as a strong sense of 'Living' identity. 'A cultural dimension: of political processes has been the phenomenal rise of Christianity in all North Eastern States of INDIA during the 1961-71 decade, as a symbol of tribal identity, as a marker of status in all states except Arunachal.'

91 K.S. Singh, Tribal Movement in India, Vol. I P. XI.
Education has given an impetus to the participation of people in the political areas apart from opening new opportunities for employment. Therefore increased education also brought about an awareness of right and self-interest.

The various Christian Missions operating in MANIPUR might not possess a large number of educational institutions and yet they tried to maintain a Mission School (either aided or un-aided) in almost every village. For example in the village of Khousabung\textsuperscript{92} in the Churachandpur subdivision, south district of Manipur, different schools were established and maintained by the North East India General Mission (N.E.I.G.M.) the Independent Church of India Mission (I.C.I.M.) and the Government as well as by the Villagers themselves.

Despite numerous number of primary schools a setback was that the objective of mission school education was mainly to prepare young men and women for service in the Church and society as preachers and school teachers.\textsuperscript{93} Further higher education was not encouraged with keen spirit by the Missions except for 'Theology course' leading to even


See also The Chothe (Purum) of Manipur some socio-cultural and demographic observations, Man in INDIA, Vol. 55 (3) July-Sept. 1975, P. 244.

Doctorate degree. That is why even in the 1980s we still come across that students were sponsored by the Missions mostly for higher course in Theology. While the Missionaries encouraged the spread of primary education on a large scale but encouraged higher education only to a limited extent. Thus higher education was catered by the govt. institutions which provided encouragements to a great extent. But the growth and development of education at the primary and middle standard, credit should be given to the Mission's contribution towards education. For it was the Missionaries who firstly tried to develop literacy for the people in the State. Further liberal education had been a great force behind conversion of the masses. So also reforming of social ills and curing of diseases too, the Missionaries were in the forefront. Therefore it would be wrong to conclude that the Christian Missionaries had replaced or displaced the tribal way of life. In fact they had played a great role for promoting cultural and socio-economic status of the tribal people in Manipur. Indeed they have unlocked and opened up the closed doors of these primitive people in the light of modern education.

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Propagation of Christianity was even extended into the valley areas of Manipur since the time of the introduction and implementation of the Constitution of India. By that a secular characteristic was adopted in India where freedom of religion was granted to all its citizens.

But due to the impact of Hindu-Vaishnavism in Manipur valley, during the colonial era where no Missionary activity took place or was discouraged by the Britishers, Christianity in the Manipur valley area could hardly make any progress in the post-Independence era, too. If it occurred, it was only with little success during the period, 1950-1970.

Yet surprisingly enough some of the best Mission Educational Institutions like the Baptist Mission School, from the Protestant side whereas both the Don Bosco Boys School and the Little Flower Girls school, from the Roman Catholic Mission side were all situated in the Valley - Hindu populated areas at Imphal instead of their location in the Tribal-Hill areas where the population of Christianity were more in the Hill areas. Thus a contrasting picture was that Mission educational activities flourished in the valley areas but little progress for conversion to Christianity, among the Hindu Meiteis. With the achievement
of India's Independence there developed certain drastic
d changes with the provisions of the Constitution of India,
having the Right to Education, Freedom of Religious practices
etc. The State Govt. now assumed responsibility for
education while grants continued for many Christian
schools, their impact was much reduced. The major
Protestant Missions and Churches gradually began to
withdraw financial support for the schools on the ground
that private Christian schools were no longer necessary
in the light of the Govt.'s assumption of educational
responsibility. Thus the new Govt.'s educational policy
was to provide free education and grant of stipends for
all the Hill-tribal students, whereas in the valley areas
free school education was provided but regarding stipend
only merit scholarship was awarded. Besides, in the Hill
areas some of the Mission Schools were taken over by
mission the Govt. thereby educational institutions decreased but
mass conversion was increased. Gospel expansion was carried
on more with zeal by the indigenous native Christian
preachers, to their brethren and neighbouring hill areas.
K.N. Sahay (1968 : 336-337) while praising the works of the
Christian Mission has observed, with conversion to
Christianity people have been provided with every sort of
educational facilities and now they take full advantage
of them by sending their children to the schools opened by a
Mission Church or in its absence to Govt. Schools.

A significant change found among the converts was that parents were keen to provide education to the boys and girls without any discrimination as was usually found among the non-Christians especially among the low socio-economic section of the society. The one thing which inspired the Christians to educate their girls were suitably explained in their broad outlook on life, that changed towards education and become progressive. Christian parents viewed their children's future scope which lead to education for all. To them sons and daughters that were equal and the least/they could offer their daughter was education. So that their daughters would remember what their parents had done at least one very important thing for them and that is Education.

On the whole literacy is the beginning of knowledge and higher education must follow suit. For the key progress of a Nation lies in the intelligent participation of women too.95 So there should be more education of girls than simply preparing them to be home makers and workers.96A


The (late) Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, in one of her public addresses on March 26, 1980 said on women that to be liberated woman should feel free to be herself, not in rivalry to man, but in the context of her own capacity woman should be more interested, more alive in the affairs of society. She felt that by excluding women from running the affairs of society, men were depriving themselves of a fuller emancipation and their own growth.

Medium of Instruction in the Mission Schools:

In the Hill areas the Mission Schools included 'Manipuri' language (with Bengali script/character) in its curriculum like all the general schools in the Hills.

Firstly hill vernaculars through the medium of hill and tribal text books were printed in the Roman script were taught along with English. However in its higher classes, especially from middle standard teaching of English and Hindi was included. Above all English was emphasised in the School atmosphere. Therefore the State was indebted to


96C Iravati Karme, Education and Social Change, (Journal) Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 3 (1-2) 1968; Annual Number, Pp-117-118. The acquisition of language made it possible to keep in touch with Western thought long after learning English in the School. We cannot think of modern India and the path it has treasured without education in English.
the Christian Missions for spreading western systems of education. On the other hand the system adopted was open to criticism which burdened young minds with many different languages and alphabets. For example the State govt. emphasised that all hill schools were to include in the curriculum the followings, namely,

(i) Hill Vernacular language (in Roman script). Each tribe could use their own respective tribal dialect in schools, so that there was no uniformity in regard to all tribal languages;

(ii) Manipuri (Meitei language with Bengali script) and

(iii) Hindi and English.

To have a common literature or Hill vernacular as medium of instruction in all the Hill schools for the different Hill-tribes of Manipur (according to the Constitution of INDIA) was definitely a difficult job for the Govt. as well as for the department of Education, Manipur. Since each different tribe has a distinct tribal dialect of its own and that was intelligible only to the particular tribe alone.

In the valley areas the medium of instruction in the Mission schools was mainly English but Manipuri and Hindi were also included in its curriculum. Emphasis on English
language in the School environment gave the Mission school standard better than the Govt. schools. This was indicated by the schools' performances at the Board examinations where top positions were usually gone to the students from Mission Schools.

Regarding the exact statistics on the number of Christian educational institutions, its enrolment of students and teachers were not traceable, in Manipur, due to the scarcity of source materials on it either through primary or secondary sources at least during the period from 1947 to 1970-71. One of the reasons could be blamed on many writers who tried to present Mission evangelism and its social activities mainly about the colonial era in the State. For that reason source materials in the post-independent period on the Christian Mission educational activities were limited and also due to scanty of publications.

However, when many of the Mission Centres in Manipur were approached for primary source materials on Educational statistics it was found that they were moved since written records on it were either misplaced or destroyed or not maintained etc. Thus a new development in regard to this question of sources become important and seriously took
note of it as a first and a priority basis for the Mission school authorities.

In fact Mission Schools were running with government support, and grant-in-aid which made it possible for them to operate many more schools than they otherwise could have closed down with their limited resources as well as meagre contributions from local Christian authorities.

Inspite of free education in the general schools by the Govt. many of the schools existed without proper teachers and school buildings. Teachers were also found irregular in attendance which make the villagers lost their confidence and interests to send their children in such type of schools.

The established churches set up schools so that they could educate the people and also to develop more competitive spirit between the general schools and the Mission English schools, running either by the local church or by the Associations etc.

In 1968, the Western Tangkhul Naga Baptist Association had established the 'Ruichumhao Memorial High School' at Sirarakhong Christian Centre but it was abolished in 1970 due to conflicts on its location.

In 1971, the Manipur Baptist Convention had established the Manipur Baptist Convention High School at Kangpokpi Mission Compound but it was shifted to Imphal-Valley in 1975.

Regarding the Presbyterian Missions through the (N.E.I.G.M.) and the (I.B.P.M.) a number of primary, middle
and high schools including a College known as Sielmat Christian College were established in the South District (Churanchandpur) of Manipur.

The Seventh Day Adventist Mission also maintained some primary schools at the initial stages, but due to lack of fund it almost discontinued.

In Manipur, the most significant post-war development, for the Missions activity was the rapid expansion of the Roman Catholic Mission Church. In part this was due to an extra-ordinary deployment of resources both in terms of money and Missionary personnel brought in from other parts of India as well as from abroad. 97 Therefore, the main response to the continuing demand for Christian schools, especially schools that serve the needs of the elite in the plains areas (IMPHAL) came from the Roman Catholic Church. 98 They expanded their educational operation in the region at an extra-ordinary rate. They achieved greater success in recent years than the Presbyterians and the Baptist Missions because of their special emphasis

97 B.P. Shukla, What ails India's North East, P. 43. In some measure it was due to the removal by the new Govt. of India, the restrictions the British had placed upon the number of Missions permitted to work in particular areas which in effect had given certain Protestant Missions a monopoly of the area during the British period.

98 F.S. Downs, Christianity in North East India (Historical Perspective), P. 276.
on education at all stages of developments of the growing
child. Roman Catholicism is also a worldwide religion
with broad and liberal outlook. The top hierarchy with
Headquarters in Rome, Italy, had a long term view of their
Catholic Mission.

The Roman Catholics in some ways were also less
puritanical and far more tolerant than the other two
such as in matters of drinking native made rice beer (wine).
Many other such attitudes of Roman Catholicism have made
it more attractive and perhaps easier for the tribes to
join it in large numbers in recent years. Thus the key
to Roman Catholic success in the area often at the expense
of established protestant groups from which they draw some
of their educational policy.

They established a large number of primary schools
including some high standard institutions with
residential facilities. Besides facilities at the lower
levels, the Protestants were unable to match the huge
sums of money expanded on construction of school buildings.
More important aspect was the high standard of teaching
supplied by the members of religious orders brought in
for the purpose by the Catholics.

According to available unpublished sources, a Junior
High School known as Don Bosco school for the Catholics was
established in 1956 at Hundung, Ukhrul District of East Manipur. And thus many primary schools were also opened at Sugnu, Ukhrul and Churachandpur as well.

Also in the same year, 1956, the Catholic Mission took a firm root at Imphal, capital of the State of Manipur and thus many schools were opened. It had expanded to High School level upto Class X standard. Those Catholic schools were well equipped and disciplined educational institutions as well. It may be noted that the main thrust of the Catholic Christian Mission work actually began only in the late 1960s and '70s but it bears faster and better fruits than expected.

Finally, the contributions of Christian Missionaries (both Catholic and Protestant Missions) to the shaping of the future of both Hill-tribes and Meiteis (valley areas) in modern times, have indeed been very impressive and fruit bearing. Apart from controversy on the question of proselytization they merit high appreciation as pioneers in the fields of education and medical relief works. They established institutions/hospitals etc. based on western model. They enlightened numerous reforms particularly the Tribal old society. Besides they have helped in the elevation of the status of WOMEN by giving the lead in female EDUCATION which prominently contributed for the rapid development of society in the State of MANIPUR.