3. MISSIONARY MENTALITY

Christian Missionaries came to India imbibed with a certain set of ideas about the indigenous religion, society and people among whom they had chosen to work. At the same time it may be said that the missionaries were themselves groomed in a manner, which allowed them to function in an alien environment whereby a set of values that were held collectively and individually by them determined the course of their activities. The Church had a well devised system of training the missionaries in order to equip them with knowledge and skills required for their work.

The values held by them were systematized in a complex of ethics and morality, which shaped their mentality too. The missionaries naturally viewed the indigenous issues related with culture, religion, tradition, and society in the context of the values and ideas that shaped their mentality. It may be said that the subjectivity in understanding and interpretation of the missionaries was highly influenced by their conscience and mentality. An understanding of missionary mentality through their responses in Indian environment may enable us to better comprehend their activities, aims and objectives.

The Jesuits had a firm belief in the Church being a vehicle in the salvation of the mankind. Church was supposed to bring about
unification and unity of the entire mankind in time and space, through the Holy Ghost living in Humanity in Christ, to the father. They believed in a plan of the Christ seeking to unify the human race under his grace."All unification of mankind outside the grace and faith of Christ is illegitimate and ineffective" and therefore, "All unification of mankind outside the visible Church is equally illegitimate and inefficacious"—they claimed. According to them, "the Church is essentially a growth, a progress, a dynamic propulsion, developing under the impulse of Christ, according to double and rhythemic movement of extension and comprehension, prospection and concentration, multiplication and internal consolidation."

The Church was understood to be divinely ordained to bring about salvation of the mankind. To deviate from the Church was for the Jesuits not only deviation from one's duty, deviation from the commandment of God and was considered highly immoral. The Church's authority was in a sense also moral wherein the clergy and laity were guided by a divine will that was attributed to the missionary organization through their association with Church. Perhaps, such a conscience and mentality gave the missionaries the zeal, dedication and dynamism which made them to create a niche for Christianity in alien lands.

214 Bauwens, M; Salvation of the Infidels and the Mission; Academy Records; Typed; 1938; p.03
215 Ibid; p.04
216 Ibid.
MISSIONARY ASSUMPTIONS

The missionaries were intellectually groomed in environment in the west, which characterized its colonies in a manner so as to justify the entire process of colonization under the theories of 'White Men's burden' and the 'civilizing' mission. The missionaries therefore believed that the Hindu in his present environments was incapable of self-government. He had a trial of three thousand years. The reason of failure was not to be looked for in any physical or mental incapacity, but in disastrous religious system, which had overshadowed the nation. According to them the caste-system strikes at the root of national cohesion and unity, while priestly craft and arrogance in seeking to aggrandize them, deprive patriotism of its loftiest and purest inspiration. They even advanced the argument that, "If the administration of the country were placed in the hands of the Hindu today, the land would be torn with factions and anarchy, and the supreme power would be in the market at the command of the deepest craft and most subtle cunning."\(^{217}\)

The missionaries had similar kind of understanding about other rulers of India as well. The system of governance practiced in India was considered to be backward and retrogressive. The rule under Delhi Sultanate and Mughal period was considered to be similar to the one practiced by the Hindus. They believed that, "The Mahomedan usurper has equally demonstrated his incapability to govern India. A selfish sensuality makes his sceptre nerveless and

\(^{217}\) Osborne, Dennis; India and its Millions; Chapter III, Practical Hinduism; p.127; Grant & Faires; pub.1884
unstable. From Mamud of Ghazni to the last relic of the Mughal empire, the course of the Mahomedan invader has been to sacrifice the country to his own base and selfish interests. 

For them, the inauguration and extension of British rule in India, was manifestly in accordance with the line of Divine providence, and therefore on the whole in the best interests of the governed. According to them the British did not captured the scepter from the lawful rulers of India, but from unprincipled and sordid usurpers, and this only when no alternative remained, but to push forward to conquest. This extension of rule and power, however, was to be looked upon as the opportunity, divinely vouschafed, for the elevation of the great nation, in material and spiritual good. If this end were not fulfilled, then is the mission of England, with all its grand possibilities, utterly thwarted and defeated.

According to the missionaries, under the suzerainty of the British crown, native prince and potentate dwelt securely. Those directly subject to English rule enjoyed the blessing of good and safe government. Each man may dwell securely under his own vine and fog tree, and eat of the labours of his hand. A just and vigorous administration guarded his life, liberty and possessions, while culture and progress spread untold opportunities before him.

---

218 Ibid
219 Kennedy, James; Christianity and the Religions of India; Orphan School Press, Mirzapore; Pp. 04-07; Pub. 1874
INDIAN RELIGION IN MISSIONARY PERCEPTION

In India, the missionaries found themselves in a world having different notions of religion. The existence of numerous socio-cultural practices sanctioned mostly in the name of religion appeared in the eyes of missionary-an unorganized, confused and non-systematized arrangement lacking cohesion and harmony. The absence of a central principle governing the entire arrangement at the micro and macro levels appeared to missionaries something chaotic and contradictory in itself. The diverse forms of beliefs and practices, customs and traditions and even rituals and religious rites were alien to the missionary mind reared in western-Christian milieu.

For the missionaries, the indigenous customs, traditions and rituals appeared to be contrary to the religious prescriptions and therefore not considered to be divinely ordained by them. As outside observers they were often bewildered by the dazzling and endless array of Hindu deities, myths, rituals, symbols and sects. It was also attempted to interpret and understand the indigenous Indian practices, social or religious, in the context of Christianity and understood as anti-thesis of the Christian practices. The indigenous practices were portrayed in derogatory terms and an urgent need was felt to initiate corrective measures. It was proclaimed that, "there are among certain nations customs that directly interfere with the love we owe to God; idolatry, superstition, ritual murder, ritual prostitution, willful adherence to false dogmas or false philosophy."220 A claim was made to see a process initiated wherein

---

220 Dandoy G, SJ (ed); Catholicism and National Custom; The Light of the East; No.3, Dec.1922; P.1
there was no space for tolerance to a system characterized by the practices non-Christian thus barbaric in nature. The distaste for such practices was even boldly asserted by the missionaries calling for strict adherence to the Christian principles and non-tolerance to deviation from the same. Father Dandoy writes, "The Catholic Church objects to customs that interfere with the worship of the One True God. This means that Catholicism cannot and will not tolerate in its adherents that clash with the law promulgated by Christ".221

The missionaries also tried to refute the claim of divinity to any other religion except Christianity. The Christianity's claim to divinity was based on Bible, which they considered was a proof in itself owing to its excellence. They considered that the "Bible throughout is entirely free from naturalism, pantheism and polytheism which for the main features of religion men has framed for himself."222 For the missionaries, real test of divinity apparently lay in the factors which kept a religion away from certain discrepancies which they named as naturalism, pantheism, polytheism etc. A further reading into the comparison portrays the attempts that the missionaries understood to be distinct in relation to the religion which they propagated:

"They have everything essential in religion. They believe in God as well as we do, although they worship him in different fashion. Their religion, like ours, condemns lying, stealing, drunkenness and other sins. They believe that the wicked will be punished, and righteous rewarded in another state. They believe in miracles but according to their taste their miracles are much more

221 Ibid
222 Kennedy, James; Christianity and the Religions of India; P. 158; Orphan School Press; Mirzapore; 1874
marvelous than ours. They hold a doctrine of a Trinity in the Godhead. They receive with us the doctrine of incarnation, though after their manner they have ten incarnations, while we have only one. Why then should we disturb them? They have a religion with true elements in it and our heavenly father will pardon their unavoidable mistakes.”

The missionaries conceded that there were similarities between Indian religions and Christianity but those similarities could not make them at par with Christianity for these similarities were not essential but superficial. They even thought that the Veda to which the Hindus sweared belonged to a people of different stock hence the present Hinduism couldn't make a rightful claim to its traditions and divinity. Moreover, Christianity is a religion whose historicity was a proven fact while the other religions cannot make such claims as they were ahistorical and mythological. Moreover these indigenous systems were morally defective and even the religious rites were motivated by mundane matters and not aimed at something spiritually higher.

The missionaries also considered Christianity as a scientific system and understood Indian religions as unscientific system based on obscurantism. The Indian religions had also no conception of “Sin” as they even worshipped demon gods out of fear and the notion of righteousness was unknown to them. All the parallel that could have been drawn between Indian religions, more particularly Hinduism, were according to the missionaries superficial and

223 Ibid; p. 161
224 Ibid; Pp 141-168
circumstantial and these similarities could not be taken for real or essential in any manner.\textsuperscript{225}

While on the one hand, the missionaries attempt to demolish the claims of other religions as legitimate systems; they often took recourse to the authorities in other religions to substantiate their own claims of divinity. The writings of the authorities belonging to other religions were even quoted and interpreted to appeal the indigenous conscience. Sometime such claims also made interesting readings as the one that follows:

"Manika Vachakar and Tulsi Das realised that the incarnate One in His compassion and love would suffer for the sake of men; Jesus fulfilled their thought on the Cross of Calvary. Every student of the gospels realizes that in his death Jesus laid down his life deliberately, voluntarily, in full obedience of His Father's will, realising that the Cross was needed to secure our emancipation from the chains of sin. His blood was the only possible ransom. It was shed for us."\textsuperscript{226}

The missionaries also understood the Indian society and culture in terms of caste, family, rituals, superstitions and idolatry. They considered these factors to be detrimental to the development of Indians and particularly the Hindus. The question of morality and ethics were also cited as main reason for the kind of disapproval that the missionaries attached to them. They highly disapproved the customs like taking bath in Ganges for which Farquhar says for instance, "take the crude custom of bathing in the Ganges to wash

\textsuperscript{225} Ibid
\textsuperscript{226} Farquhar, JN; Chapter- God With Us; P.444; The Crown of Hinduism; OUP; Pub.1919
away sin. The custom is not only absurd, but seriously immoral.\textsuperscript{227} He further states, "Our analysis of the family, karma, caste and idolatry has conclusively shown that this reasoning is altogether mistaken. It is the character of the Hindu system itself that is at fault. It is the very laws of Hindu family that required to be laid aside. It is karma itself that has weakened Hindu theology. The basal conception of caste system is to be repudiated if Hindu society is to become healthy. The whole system of idolatry is essentially polytheistic and pagan.\textsuperscript{228}

Missionaries also sometime tried to argue from the standpoint of being a Christian and not as westerner as they were understood to be. They sought for a comparison not on the ground of western-Indian categories but on Hindu-Christian framework for they felt that the discrepancies in Christianity was not in theory but in practice and the practices were not Christian but western in nature." But our scale of values not final nor fully Christian, and to attempt to compare the relative achievement of character of India and the west would not be only futile, it could easily become unjust and even offensive.\textsuperscript{229} It appears that the missionaries were even motivated by their claim of a religion which was bereft of any discrepancies, and if any such discrepancies were found it was supposedly due to the context in which the religion was practiced.

Moreover, the Indian religions to the missionaries appeared to be pessimistic and lacking the lively spirit necessary for life.

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid; p.46  
\textsuperscript{228} Ibid; P456  
\textsuperscript{229} Cave, Sydney; Chpter-Ethics hindus and Christian; p.165; A study in the distinctiveness of the Christian Message; The Haskell Lectures given in the graduate school of Theology; Obesline College; hodder and Stoughton Ltd; 1939
"Hinduism also has been branded as pessimistic, and as we shall see later, it is indeed pessimistic when compared, say to Islam or to Christianity. But Hinduism is certainly not wholly pessimistic, and compared to Buddhism for example, it shines as light by the side of utter darkness."\textsuperscript{230} The missionaries also considered the Indian religions a bundle of contradictions and having accumulated large number of superstitions, and unnecessary rituals that made them competently retrogressive and backward. They also felt that the masses required economic solutions first and to engage them spiritually was of no use. They felt, "The Indian masses are soaked in superstition, and they are cruelly hungry for bread of rice to fulfill their empty stomach."\textsuperscript{231} They further felt that they could be attracted more towards Christianity by offering them bread rather than sermonizing them. "What makes the pulse of average Indian beat faster...Tell him that this year he will get extra seer of rice for rupee and that will help him to believe in providence".\textsuperscript{232}

PRIESTLY FORMATION AND MISSIONARY MENTALITY

The history of the Christian priesthood begins with Jesus Christ and his disciples, in other words, with the first teacher and the first Samaritans. Right from the inception, the idea of the priesthood was marked by evangelizing conscience nurtured through tradition of Jesus exhorting his followers to become fishers of men. The tradition

\textsuperscript{230} Dandoy, G, SJ (ed); Pessimism in Religion; The Light of the East; No.7, April 1930; P.1

\textsuperscript{231} Macnicol, Nicol; Chapter-II, The Illeterate Masses; P.79; India in the Dark Wood; London Edinbergh House Press; Pub.1930

\textsuperscript{232} Ibid
of priestly training dates back to 400AD when St. Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo established a special seminary for training the future priests around the year. Pope Eugene II (527-531) is said to have contemplated starting houses for clerical training attached to each cathedral.

Priestly formation in India first started in Kerala, with the clergy of Malabar Church but it was not at all systematically organized institution which we see today. The candidate for the priesthood stayed with the parish priest or with an elderly priest who gave some instructions in syriac, mostly based on the catechetical principles, commonly known as Malpan system. It slowly disappeared with the opening of religious seminaries by Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans and Carmelites. In 1541, Frey Vincente de Lagos, a Franciscan from Portugal founded a seminary at Crangnore in 1541, which was one of earliest in India. In 1574, another seminary was founded at Salsette, which was moved to Rachol in 1610. In 1833, Thomas Palackal, a former Malpan, was the first Indian to establish a seminary at Mannanam. The seminaries may be practically defined as ecclesiastically approved place where students are trained and educated for the priesthood.

Almost all the seminaries founded in India by Europeans were attached to religious houses and monasteries. The missionaries were reluctant to accept candidates from India. None of these seminaries were under the guidance of the local bishops. Formation in a systematic and organized manner began with the advent of Portuguese missionaries, and instructions were based mainly on liturgy and scriptures. The whole formation programme had a western orientation. The priestly class was mainly trained to impute
western cultural elements in the Indian local environment. These seminaries trained the priesthood in their vocation and taught them the principles of simplicity, submission, brotherhood, prayer, devotion, obedience, study and work so much so that Lee comments, "the worst thing for seminarians is to make the seminary an atmosphere of submissiveness, of hyper docility, of anti-initiative."\(^{235}\)

The missionaries were trained in the seminaries to take initiatives with regard to India, which was portrayed, as a country waiting to be 'liberated' by the intervention of the Christianity. They believed,

"A national uneasiness and unrest, broken here and there by kindlings of positive hostility, lie beneath, unknown and unsuspected. If the match of religious fanaticism kindled this inflammable temper before, is there any certain security that it might not kindle it again? Culture, education, conciliation are alike unavailing to neutralize the inflammability of this temper. There are but two remedies for this, the steel bayonet, or the sword of the Spirit. Military force may over-awe and keep this unruly spirit in subjection; but the gospel of Christ alone, when received and obeyed, can transform the natural hostility of India to foreign rule, into true and lasting loyalty. And now after nearly forty centuries of changeful history, during which the people have gone steadily backward, until today, India sits at the feet of the nations; after numerous foreign dominations and usurpations impoverishing her resources and

\(^{233}\) Vallapalam, Mathew M; Priestly Formation in the Changing Society in India – A Sociological Investigation in the Major Seminaries of India; Pp.12-17; St. Paul Publication; Pub. 1989
\(^{234}\) Christa Prema Seva Sangha Publication; Vidyajyoti Library; Undated
\(^{235}\) Quoted in Vallapalam's "Priestly Formation in the Changing Society in India – A Sociological Investigation in the Major Seminaries of India"; P.26
desolating her beauty, after a hundred years of governmental probation, neglected and unimproved, the door of duty and opportunity opens before the Christian people and crown of England. Shall they have the wisdom, the faith and the courage to enter it, is the STUPENDOUS QUESTION OF THE HOUR AND THE NATION! "

CHHOTNAGPUR: SOME FAMOUS MISSIONARIES AT WORK

The missionary work in Chhotanagpur bears the imprint of many Jesuit Fathers who toiled hard to establish and consolidate their mission. Lutherans were the first to establish their mission in the region who came to Chhotanagpur in 1844. "The first Jesuit missionary from the Society of Jesus who arrived in Chotanagour in November 24, 1868 in the midst of the trouble that threatened Lutheran mission. His name was Stockman and he had been sent to investigate the possibility of starting a mission station in the area." Father Stockman's journey to Chaibasa in Chhotangpur is described in details in which his travails in this difficult terrain are accounted for. Between 1868 and 1885 were the years full of troubles in which competition with the Lutheran mission even tended to turn into the level of physical engagement. In such difficult times the mission work was carried forward by Fr. Augustus Stockman, Fr. Sapar, Fr. Fierens, Fr. Mullender, Fr. Desmet, Fr. Motet, Fr. Decock and

---

236 Osborne, Dennis; India and its Millions; Chapter III, Practical Hinduism; p.129; Grant & Faires; pub.1884
237 The Society of Jesus, the largest Roman Catholic religious order, whose members are called Jesuits, was founded by Saint Ignatius Loyola. Noted for its discipline, based on the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius, and for its lengthy training period of as much as 15 years, the society is governed by a general who lives in Rome. Jesuits do not wear a special habit and are not subject to local ecclesiastical authority. Professed members are bound by a vow of obedience to the pope.
238 Fidelis de Sa; Crisis in Chhotanagpur; A Redemptorist Publication, Bangalore; 1975; Pp. 116-117
Fr. Lauchwitze. Thereafter the period of Father Lievens started heralding an era of large scale conversions. In this period Father Grosjean, Father Lievens, Father Hoffmann, Father Cardon and Father Oscar Severin among others played very important roles. A brief summary of the biographies of some of them are given below:

Father Mullender, S.J. (1849-1890)

Mullender worked for nine years in Chhotanagpur and established missions in Sarwada, Dolda and reached Maranghda\(^{239}\). He was one of the earliest missionary who was assigned mission’s work in Chhotanagpur. He is said to have worked relentlessly since his appointment in 1881 in the region experimenting and carrying forward mission’s work. He is known more as an activist who prepared the ground for his successors to work upon.

On his arrival to Chhotanagpur, he found that the Catholics did not attend the Church and there was no cohesion among the catholic community. Agreeing to Mgr. Goethals who said “One should not scatter the mission, with Christians everywhere and a Mission nowhere” he added “Let us first of all form a good Christian community, a solid core: out-station can always be thought of later.”\(^{240}\) He was not happy with Buruma where he was assigned to work, he always kept looking for a better location where he could establish mission works on more secure footing. This search brought him to Sarwada where he started a small mission school. About helping the Catholics against zemindars, he was clear, “I can’t help

\(^{239}\) Sarwada, Maranghda and Dolda are villages in Chhotanagpur region.

\(^{240}\) Ponette, P, S.J.; The Dawn of Ranchi Mission 1869-1885; Printed at Catholic Press, Ranchi; Undated; P.41
them”, he also wrote to his Superior Father Grosjean, “I am not the man to launch out things, and I am sorry that you have deceived yourself by entertaining about me, at the beginning, a too good opinion of me.”

Mullender had also learnt Mundari speech which helped him in establishing rapport with the tribals. Wherever he went in the region he was greeted as “Hakim” (British Officer) and his Mundari speech always elated them. The tribals used to say, “He is the first Hakim who speaks in Mundari. Whatever you say but for us he is an officer.”

Finding that Mundas dreaded the Manki of Tarai and Raja of Tamar, he even visited the Manki hoping to convert him to Christianity. The Manki received him well in his court and assured all help in opening schools and even allotted a plot of land but declined to convert saying he was a worshipper of Ram. On Mullender’s departure he was offered Rs.12/- in gift. It is said that this highly enhanced his prestige among Mundas. Though in the beginning he desisted from helping the converts, later he started to plead for them before the authorities in a very limited manner. In doing so he is even said to have anticipated Lievens methods. In 1884 he records his progress in his diary, “On my arrival here, in January 1882, their number has risen to 94; on the 1st August 1883, it was reaching 300; and today, 31st July 1884, I have actually 551 baptized Catholics.” Mullender had so far obtained the best result in Chhotanagpur.

---

241 Letter from 13th November. 1885, in Vermiere Documentation, p. 34; Quoted in Ponette, P, S.J.; The Dawn of Ranchi Mission 1869-1885; Printed at Catholic Press, Ranchi; Undated; P 43
242 Toppo, James, S.J.; Naya Sabera, Pratham Bhag – Chotangpur ki kalisiya ka Itihas; Hindi; Dharmik Sahitya Samiti, Ranchi; 1979; Translation my own
243 Traditional head of Mundas.
244 Ponette, P, S.J.; The Dawn of Ranchi Mission 1869-1885; Printed at Catholic Press, Ranchi; Undated; Pp. 53-54
245 Prec. Hist. 1884, p. 579; Quoted in Ponette, P, S.J.; The Dawn of Ranchi Mission 1869-1885; Printed at Catholic Press, Ranchi; Undated; P.62
Fr. Mullender died in 1890 in Kandy enroute to Belgium as a
dying man at the age of 41.

**Fr. Sylvain Grosjean, S.J. (1846-1915)**

Fr. Sylvain Grosjean was born on 4\(^{th}\) March 1846 at Martilly-
Straitmont, Luxemburg in Belgium. His father was a revenue officer
and he was eldest among his four siblings. He lost his parents only
when he was 9 years of age. He developed an interest into religion
during his schooling in the village school and in the Minor Seminary
at Bastoge. In 1964, he joined the Belgian Jesuit Province Society of
Jesus and developed interest in Bengal Mission. He arrived in
Calcutta on December 1880.

Grosjean is remembered for devising novel methods for
Chhotangpur mission and also for selecting Lievens to head the
activities there. In his tour to Chhotanagpur early in 1883 he had
realized that religious approach was inadequate to attract the tribals
and wanted the missionaries to probe into the human and social
problems of Chhtanagpur. He did not want to remain satisfied with
few conversions; his idea was to create a mass movement towards
the Church. Grosjean wrote to Mullender, “I am of the opinon that
we should accept all who come, at any distance from the
missionaries’ residences at the risk of leaving them without a priest
even for a year. One has to hurry up with the work, even if you have
to instruct later.”\(^{246}\)

\(^{246}\) Jasson, op. cit. II, p. 159; Quoted in Ponette, P, S.J.; The Dawn of Ranchi Mission 1869-1885;
Printed at Catholic Press, Ranchi; Undated; p 50
He is also known for his fund raising capacity. In Chhotanagpur, after Lievens started gaining converts he needed church, village chapels, catechists to instruct the catechumens, teachers to educate children etc. for which finances were required. It was due to the efforts of Grosjean that two-third to even three-fourth of the financial assistance came from Belgium.

Grosjean extended his active support to Lieven’s work. Once, the British officials alarmed by mission’s activities tried to quell the dissatisfaction against the zemindars by sending Mr. Renny, Deputy Commissioner to the area, who after constituting a tribunal heard cases against the converted tribals and handed down prison sentences to them. This seriously eroded the reputation of Lievens in the area and converted tribals started to revert back to their old religion. Grosjean took initiatives and contracted an eminent Calcutta lawyer to plead the appeals in favour of the jailed tribals and paid for the fees and conveyance of the lawyer, as a result many of the sentences were either reduced or quashed. He also emphasized on the social works and laid the foundation of St. John’s School to consolidate the Church.

Grosjean is described as a shy person who felt himself awkward in face to face contact with the people. He also had tendency to prove himself and known for writing persuasive letters which have become good documents of recorded history of his times. Many traits of his character are attributed to his orphaned childhood. He breathed his last in 1915.

247 Tete, Peter, S.J.; To Chotanagpur with Love and Service; Ignatian Commemoration Volume; Ranchi Jesuit Society; Catholic Press Ranchi; 199, Pp.10-11
Fr. Constant Lievens, S.J. (1856-1893)

Father Constant Lievens is held as role model by the Jesuits and known for most illustrious career in Chhotanagpur. He is credited with large scale conversions among the tribals by working among them in the face of adversity. He is held a one of the most charismatic missionary who toiled very hard and within a short span of his life did wonders for the mission. He is described as a gifted man, with an alert and versatile mind, a versatile mind with solid peasant common sense and a natural leader. It is estimated that he was able to convert around 1,00,000 tribal among who he baptized 25,000.

He was born on April 11, 1856, in Moorslede, a village of West Flanders in Belgium. He was born in a farmer’s family and brought up as seventh of the eleven children of his parents. He started his instructions to become a diocesan priest but later changed his mind to join Society of Jesus in 1878. After his two years instructions, he was assigned to the Bengal mission and he reached Calcutta on December 2, 1880. At the end of January 1881, Lievens arrived at Asansol to begin 2\textsuperscript{nd} year theology. Apart from the course in Theology, he also learned English, Hindi and Bengali languages. He was finally ordained as Priest in Calcutta in 1883.

Lievens was to show his talents as missionary in Chhotanagpur. The Catholics in Chhotanagpur were left far behind by the Lutheran, Anglican and Protestant missions.\textsuperscript{248} Constant Lievens was commissioned to Chhotanagpur by the Superior of Bengal Mission, Fr. Sylvain Grosjean. Lievens arrived at Dorunda

\textsuperscript{248} Vermeire, M, S.J.; Fr. Lievens and His Missionary Methods; Manuscript; Academy Records; Pp. 139-140; 1914
near Ranchi on 19th March 1885. At the time when Lievens arrived in Chhotanagpur, “the official statistics of the mission for Aug, 1884 gave 1449 Christians” while Lutheran counted around 6,000, Anglicans around the same number and Protestants claimed 40,000 to 50,000 converts. Lievens on arriving in Ranchi spent around eight months touring the area getting with closer contact with the people, their conditions, customs and language. The difficult situation and the demand for more and more resources are explained by Lievens in following terms:

“Since long this country has become a citadel of Lutherans. I foresee very great difficulty but I hope. For the moment, I have nothing but a poor hut, which the rains have just overthrown. I possess neither house, nor furniture, no money and I have in view only 25 rupies per month from Calcutta....Saturday 2nd August. I made an excursion during which I had to pass on foot river; there fell a continuous rain drenched to the bones and tired of march of more than 20 hours. I was happy to be able to offer these offering s to my Lord.”

Lievens is credited for having devised a method of conversion that was not directly linked with theological instructions. “It was Father Lievens' friend, the police officer at Torpa (a Hindu) who not only gave him the key of a room to live in, but also the key to his future success, ‘If you want to make Christians then take upon yourself the defence of the Mundas, chiefly in question of land rent and forced labour’. Father Lievens is said to have followed the advice and consequently reaped the success. He is said to have

249 Ibid; P. 139
250 Ibid; P. 142
251 Tete, Peter, S.J.; To Chotanagpur with Love and Service; Ignatian Commemoration Volume; Ranchi Jesuit Society; Catholic Press Ranchi; 199, p.40.
studied the agrarian laws and after gaining expertise in it he started assisting the local tribals in their law suits against the local zamindars (landlords) and sahu (money lenders). For this he even became a "muktar" (recognized legal aid, less qualified than an advocate) in the Ranchi court. Although he assisted the tribals in their lawsuit unlike the Protestants he never incited them to violence252, instead he formulated the following instructions:

"1. Pay only the legal amount of rent.
2. Exact a receipt of every payment in cash or kind.
3. No begari or forced service above the lawful amount
4. If the zemindar or his people are unjust, vex or abuse you, prosecute them in court
5. Refuse to pay or give anything to police; if you are abused bring them before the magistrate."253

The instructions of Lievens were aimed at respecting the law and not to antagonize the government. Perhaps he was aware of the sensitive nature of the tribal population who often revolted when incited as the case was with the Protestants. He operated within the existing legal framework and even advised his adherents not to disobey the law and tried to guide them in the nature of safeguards that were available to them against illegal exactions of zemindars, sahus and police. There are also incidents cited in the missionary literature that the Police and zemindars joined hands to put obstacle in the path of Lievens works. Such obstacles had dampening impact on the converted tribals. In Biru (a place in Chhotanagpur), a tribunal was constituted by Mr. Renny the newly appointed Police Commissioner who turned down all the cases of the tribals against

252 Moens, Th., S.J.; Lievens and the Mass Conversions in Chhotanagpur; Typed; Academy Records; 1935; p. 296
253 Ibid.
zemindars by handing down prison sentences to them. This greatly eroded the prestige of Lievens and the number of converts dwindled with thousands reverting back to their old religion. The situation was changed with the intervention of the Governor of Bengal and the Archbishop. The following description gives an insight into the happenings:

“This change was the result of the open letter of Fr. Lievens to the Archbishop of Calcutta, a letter which eventually reached the Governor of Bengal and refuted all the accusations of Mr. Renny. It was also due to the fact that the Archbishop and Lievens toured C.N. (Chhotanagpur) to encourage both the Fathers and the people, consoling everybody and defending the prosecuted. Shortly before this F. Huyghe and Dehon had been attacked by a band of men; Herodian cruelties had been committed by the men of Gangu Bisun, the landlord of Panari, and others. All this was duly taken note of by the visitors: and for a time at least zemindars and police became prudent, all the more so that the big case got up by mission in favour of Christians was won at this time before Mr. Crowley, the judicial Commissioner.”\(^{254}\)

Hence, Lievens acting on behalf of the tribals only emphasized on the malpractices by the zemindars and tried to bring relief to the tribals through his knowledge of the legal system and the colonial laws. In that his high connection in the Church, his ability to reach the higher authorities and his position as a missionary provided him the needed assistance. The local tribals were apparently attracted for their belief that Lievens had the power to dispel their agrarian distress and the time they realized that Lievens was powerless before

\(^{254}\)Moens, Th., S.J.; Lievens and the Mass Conversions in Chhotanagpur; Typed; Academy Records; 1935; p. 298
the tribunal they tended to leave him by reverting back to their old religion.

Lievens was aware of the need to institutionalize the missionary work in Chhotanagpur. He continuously appealed to his Superior Fr. Grojsean for more resources in the form of church, chapel, bungalow, provisions for an army of catechists and many other expenses, at his disposal. His methods are described in following terms:

“But until now he had not said much about religion; he had first to win the hearts. Once he was sure of his position, he boldly declared that henceforth he would help only those who wanted to become Christians. To this dangerous step, the unanimous reply was: ‘we all want to become Christians’.”

He appears to have been fired with zeal of achieving something extraordinary. He had trained many catechists whom he instructed, “St Michel with all his angels must fight for us against Lucifer and his gang – And to stir up the catechists, he would tell them: That & that village too must come; put fire to it.” (aag lagao)”

The catechists selected from among the local tribals would bring sometime even the entire village to him for conversions. His Barway (a place in Ranchi) expedition is described in detail in the manner of the movement of a military contingent. He is said to have been assisted by local korwas tribals who were even armed. Saying

255 Vermeire, M, S.J.; Fr. Lievens and His Missionary Methods; Manuscript; Academy Records; 1914; P. 147.
256 Ibid.
257 Ibid; p.148
that "Everybody is very afraid of us". Father Cardon describes the expedition of Barway in following words:

"His intention was to relieve the country from the oppression of the people by the Rajah and zemindars. With a posse of Korwas from Jashpur as body-guards he went across the whole country. Rajah and zemindar got into a terrible fright, and cattle goats and lands were given back to their owners wherever the father appeared. It was on this occasion that the Korwas besieged the Rajah house. The above, I fear is not fit for publication."

Last days of Lievens were mired with controversies. As Father Grojsean handed over the Superiorate to Fr. Theo Bodson, Lievens lost the required support for his experiments in the mission. It is said that contrary to the opinion of his Religious Superior Fr. Haghenbeeck, Lievens led an expedition (last one) to Barway which was highly disapproved. The result of the controversy is noted in the following words:

"When the former (Lievens) returned from the Barway, he received a penance, an octuduum and a culpa in the refectory. Lievens, though he could have justified himself, submitted. Thus far only Lievens was concerned; what follows will concern his work. A consultation took place between the Archbishop, the new Superior and Fr. Haghenbeeck. What was said there we don't know of course, but the result was disastrous for the mission. The policy was changed and the Lieven's method virtually condemned: for this were the orders given to the missionaries:
“No expansion... in other words defense to open new 
religions or make conversions.
Defense to baptize without ceremonies.
No material help any more to the people.
Suppression of the Ranchi Dera. No advice for court 
cases.”

Lievens died at a young age of 37 years. After his return from 
Barway expedition he resigned as District Superior but continued to 
work till August 1893. In the face of his illness, he had to leave for 
Belgium on 26th of August 1893 and he died at Louvain on 7th 
November 1893.

**Fr. J.B. Hoffmann S.J. (1857-1928)**

John Baptist Hoffmann was born on 21st June 1857 at 
Wallendorf, a small village of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg in 
Germany. He did his schooling in his village and his High School 
studies in Luxemburg. After finishing his High school studies he 
joined Belgian Province Society of Jesus in 1877 at the age of 
twenty. The Belgian Province Society of Jesus was in charge of 
Bengal Mission hence Hoffmann was sent to India in December 
1877 where he started his career as a missionary. In 1891, he was 
ordained as Priest.

Hoffmann is known for his intellect and as a gifted linguist. 
All along his Jesuit formation he had mastered Latin, French, English 
all of which he spoke and wrote with ease in Greek and Hindi. He 
also studied Mundari, a tribal language considered to be very

---

260 Moens, Th., S.J.; Lievens and the Mass Conversions in Chhotanagpur; Typed; Academy 
Records; 1935; p. 299
difficult to learn. He is credited to have written Mundari Grammar and a magnum opus work, Encyclopedia Mundarica\textsuperscript{261}. He was a scholar of Theology and studied Indian philosophy and culture.

In 1892, Hoffmann was assigned to Bandgaon and then in 1895 he was asked to work in Sarvada. He was sent at the request of Fr. Lievens who was asking for more and more missionaries to cope up with the growing mission works. Hoffmann had to face the brunt of Birsa movement in the area during the 1990s. Hoffmann is said to have escaped two deadly assaults on him in the course of the movement. The situation then was described as follows:

"Birsa, a somewhat educated young Lutheran apostate, was at the head of the League, passing for prophet, leader of the Munda Race, and wonder worker. F.H. (Hoffmann) twice missed martyrdom at the hands of his followers. The first time Birsa with 6,000 followers was preparing swoop down on Sarvada where F. H. was stationed. Luckily the very night appointed for the assault the leader was surprised by an English police Superintendent. The next morning saw the Prophet being carried to jail on the back of an elephant. He was unfortunately released at Queen Victoria’s jubilee. A second occasion was thus offered to F.H. to miss the palm of martyrdom. On Christmas night (1899, at Sarvada) arrows whistled past his head and legs, an arrow struck F. Stanislaus Carberry, his companion, on the chest luckily protected by a thick overcoat Birsa had sent his followers to bum the Christian villages and to shoot arrows in their houses\textsuperscript{262}"

\textsuperscript{261} The Encyclopedia Mundarica is a monumental work in 15 volumes containing 5000 pages describing whole culture and civilization of the tribe.

\textsuperscript{262} Moens, Th., S.J.;Lievens and the Mass Conversions in Chhotanagpur; Typed; Academy Records; 1935; p. 306
Hoffmann was instructed by Lievens to somehow create some kind of understanding with the British officials. The Commissioner of Chhotanagpur sought his help in addressing the real cause behind the repeated uprising among the tribals of the area. As Hoffmann knew English, he seized the opportunity to bring Belgian Mission and the British officials closer and proposed amendment in the agrarian law which were suppressive of the tribal rights. He suggested to accurately measure and mark the lands of the tribals by giving legal recognition to their customary rights. Consequently the law was revised and Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908 was passed restoring many customary rights of the tribals.

Hoffmann is also credited with starting a co-operative society in Chhotanagpur. In his booklet entitled, “Social Works in Chota Nagpur” he wrote that co-operative society was needed to stop tribal emigration to tea plantations of Assam in the face of agrarian distress. He further wrote that, “If the Mission were to grow and become self supporting it had to prove that ‘the Catholic Church is both able and willing to give them that which they still lack and without which they cannot be saved as a race, viz. sound economic organization raising them above their present abject poverty, enabling them not only to live decently in their country, but also to take all the resources of their country into their hands, instead of leaving them to unsympathetic aliens’.” In 1909, Chota Nagpur Catholic Co-operative Credit Society was registered and in 1913 Co-operative Stores were started. Catholic Co-operative Credit Society was highly successful and Hoffmann was awarded the Kaiser-i- Hind silver medal in the name of King Emperor for the services rendered to the government.

263 Tete, Peter, S.J.; To Chotanagpur with Love and Service; Ignatian Commemoration Volume; Ranchi Jesuit Society; Catholic Press Ranchi; 199, Pp. 58-59
264 Ibid; P. 59
With the declaration of the First World War, the German missionaries were not allowed to stay in India. Hoffmann was repatriated from India in 1915. He died in November 1928 at Trier in Germany.

Fr. Louis Cardon, S.J. (1857-1946)

Father Louis Cardon was born at Mechin, Belgium on December 25, 1857. In 1876, he joined the Society of Jesus and was sent to India in 1884. As a missionary he was assigned his first task in Chhotanagpur in a small village Tetra. He is described as one of Father Lievens “most valued lieutenant, traveling throughout the length and breadth of Chhotanagpur, preaching, baptising, gaining new villages, confirming the waverers, defending the oppressed, even battling for the cause of Christ.”265 Cardon was one of those missionaries who continued with the mission works after Lievens left the scene.

Cardon is credit for having founded the mission at Biru. Lievens exit from the region had emboldened the Lutherans who were trying to win over the Catholics in the region. The controversy in which Mr. Renny tried many Catholic tribals under a tribunal (already mentioned) had severely jolted the mission’s reputation. The relief which these convicted tribals got from Ranchi court after Father Grojsen’s and Begal’s Lieutenant Governors intervention somewhat restored the position of mission in the eyes of the tribals. But bitter competition between Lutherans and Catholics continued

265 Tete, Peter, S.J.; To Chotanagpur with Love and Service; Ignatian Commemoration Volume; Ranchi Jesuit Society; Catholic Press Ranchi; 199, P. 71
and zamindars were being accused of conspiring against the Catholics with the help of Lutherans and the local police. Cardon was able to continue his mission work in such circumstances. He elaborates the region as to why Lutherans were weakened in the following terms:

"Several villages of the Lutheran persuasion had lost big lawsuits because of the foolish advice of their pastors. Besides, in some circumstances they did not receive any help. On the other hand, the Catholic missionaries were ready to give material help to the people in their difficulties and they had means to that. The people of Biru had not forgotten the days of terror perpetrated on them by the zamindars and police in the years 1889-1890. Now those same Catholic missionaries had come to stay with them and were helping them still more. Seeing this, those fallen away from the Catholic Church sought readmission."

It was mainly due to the efforts of Cardon that the entire Biru-Gangpur Mission was made a separate unit in the mission and he was appointed the first Superior in 1909. He also promoted the work of Catholic Cooperative Society started by Hoffmann. He also organized dharma school where religious instructions were given. Apart from having knowledge of four European languages he was well versed in tribal languages and customs. He admired the tribal life and objected to their being called backwards. "Give them a chance" he said, "and they will make good. They do not lack grit, but have in them the makings of a highly cultured and prosperous people." For his services to the tribals of Chhotanagpur, Cardon

266 Tete, Peter, S.J.; The Khrias and the History of Catholic Church in Biru; St. Albert's College, Faculty of Theology, Ranchi; P. 94
267 Tete, Peter, S.J.; To Chotanagpur with Love and Service; Ignatian Commemoration Volume; Ranchi Jesuit Society; Catholic Press Ranchi; 199, P. 77
was presented the second class Kaiser-i-Hind medal in the name of the King-Emperor. He expired at Samtoli, a village in Chhotanagpur on February 11, 1946.

MISSIONARIES IN CHHOTANAGPUR: TRIBAL SOCIETY AND CULTURE

On their arrival in Chhotanagpur, the missionaries had to adjust to the local language, culture, religious practices, life style, social institutions and political system. The forested terrain of Chhotanagpur where the tribals had sheltered themselves in small villages had evolved cultures, institutions, traditions, and socio-political mechanisms etc. compatible with their environment. The missionaries appeared to them strangers, hence making it difficult for them to win converts. As it is already known that the Lutheran, the first missionaries had to wait for four long years to get their first convert, it became imperative for the missionaries to lay solid foundation for their future work by pursuing strategies fit to enlarge their scope. The local conditions, too, required a mode of functioning which made them relevant and an important component of the tribals. The first batch of Lutherans who felt badly discouraged in the beginning and asked Fr. Gossner to assign some other place for their work were advised, “if the people do not receive the words for their salvation then preach for them their condemnation.”

The missionaries paid special attention to chastity, marriage and sin and upheld a system which they considered moral and ethical. The tribal tradition and custom appeared to them immoral and sinful. Sanctified monogamous marriage was considered to be

\[268\] Sahay, KN; Under the Shadow of the Cross; p.44
ideal by them. Divorce was always frowned upon and illegitimacy and sex outside wedlock was condemned. Tribal tradition on the other hand could accommodate premarital sex and pregnancy was treated with certain amount of tolerance. The missionaries tended to be horrified by what they perceived as tribal permissiveness with regard to matter concerning sex. Santhal norms permitted divorce and polygyny. A Child born out of marriage could be socially reinstated by the following means:

"When a child is born to a Santhal girl out of wedlock, the girl's father and household are semi-outcasted (Pante-Begar) and they can only return to the tribe by arranging a father for the child. This can be done in two ways. First, if a person is proved to be the genitor, whether he accepts the paternity or not, he either has to marry the girl or pay for the 'bought' husband. Second, if the village cannot prove who the real father is, then a substitute father is arranged. In both instances, the Nim Dak Mandi (naming ceremony) removes all traces of illegitimacy and the child takes the bongas (ancestral spirit) of his father."²⁶⁹

Divorce was also customarily allowed among many tribal groups. Among the Santhals, divorce could be granted on the grounds of adultery, sterility or barrenness or the suspicion that the wife practiced the witchcraft. Either the man or the woman could ask for a divorce. A man could seek divorce on the grounds that his wife was too extravagant and wasted money family resources, that she was lazy or constantly ill. A woman could ask for a divorce if her husband could not supply her with all her needs or if he wanted to marry a second wife against her will. The guilty person would have

²⁶⁹ Troisi, Joseph; Tribal Religion: Religious Beliefs and Practices among the Santhals;P.163; Manohar; Delhi; Pub.1979
to pay a fine called “chadaodi” or divorce money. If the husband is
the one seeking divorce, he would have to pay a fine called
“chadaodi” and could not claim back the bride price he had paid. If
the wife is at fault his father would have to return the bride price paid
to him at the time of marriage. 270

The missionaries opposed the Santhal practice of marriage by
‘buying’ a husband, just as they opposed divorce and premarital sex
wherever these were customarily found. For them polyandry and
polygamy was appalling and they were even opposed to the youth
dormitory system among the tribal groups.

The missionaries attempted to evolve a mechanism of social
control so as to make broader space for evangelisation and
proselytisation. To gain legitimacy for missionary project and to
impute a sense of self-pride for being a Christian, the tribal culture
and society was required to be despised and condemned. The
’superiority’ of the Christian culture had to be established only by
pushing the tribal tradition and custom on the defense.

The Catholic mission sought to organize the catholic tribals
through a number of catholic sabhas. These catholic sabhas
functioned as modern voluntary associations and they had their
written rules and regulations, registered in accordance with the law
of the land. 271 These catholic sabhas also functioned as local
panchayats and attempted to control and regulate the lives of the
catholic converts.

270 Ibid
271 Nishkalanka; Vol.XII; No.02; February 1932; Pp.40-44
The missionaries appeared to be completely opposed to the tribal dance, fairs and festivals, their preference for drinks especially, "Hanria" (a local liquor), their 'licentiousness' etc. It seems that the attraction for the traditional dance and festivals proved an impediment for the missionaries in retaining their hold over the tribals. The local traditions and customs tended to revert the converted tribals to their original indigenous cultural practices and beliefs. The cultural challenge posed by the tribal society may be understood from the following account:

"What do we see in Chhota Nagpur? Everyone has received the message of the true religion of Lord Christ. But what do we see? Many people are not ready to accept this religion and want to remain fundamentalists and worldly persons. Some people have given themselves to be Christian, but neither they learnt religion, nor got baptized, nor do they pray; it seems their hearts have dried. They do nothing to get into heaven. Some people have learnt the religion, got themselves baptized but thereafter owing to problems in their marriages or due to fascination towards the world, have left the religion. They have become bastards."272

It may not be inappropriate to say that the indigenous tribal culture posed a serious challenge to the aspirations of the missionaries. A process of retroversion was to be arrested and any tendency towards its proliferation was to be checked so as to rescue the converted tribals from the danger of being co-opted within the indigenous tribal culture. A mechanism of the social control was sought to be evolved. Drinking "Hanria", Akhra dance, other games and dances like Jadur Karma, Jatra, Bhatanga, 'worldly' songs etc.

272 Ibid; Vol. XI, No.06; June 1931; "Sahayak Kripa", p.136 (Translation my own)
were strongly disapproved. Any converted tribal found participating in these 'lowly' and 'worldly' activities was to be fined in accordance with the decision of the catholic sabha. The missionaries also sought to control the institution of marriage, which had hitherto functioned in accordance with the tribal customs and traditions wherein the bride and groom enjoyed considerable amount of independence in choosing their life partners. The rules and regulations conducting marriage among the converted tribals were so framed that the missionaries assumed controlling position in this private domain of the converts. The distaste for the tribal dances was so strong that the missionaries did not hesitate to approve the use of force. Wherever they were in a position to do so, in stopping these tribal dance and local celebrations. Intensive propagandas were resorted to against these dance celebrations, customs and beliefs. One such example is as follows:

“What is this shameless dance? In answer to this question, religious scholars have said – It is a shit of lechery! What is this shameless dance? – It is circle at the center of which there is Satan and his slaves go round in his steps! What is this shameless dance? It is a market of impurity, a school of impurity! What is this shameless dance? It is a stone that smashes sinlessness and a grave of shame! Who can remain pure by dancing the whole night! No one!”

The Christian missionaries sought to create a mechanism of social control so as to keep the converted tribals within their fold. It required the establishment of the superiority of the Christian values and beliefs vis-à-vis that of the tribals. In doing so it became

---

273 Ibid; Vol.I, No.-10; November; Pp.107-108
274 Ibid
275 Ibid; “Shadi Ke Vishaya Me”(Regarding Marriage)
276 Ibid; Vol.II, N0. -07; July 1922
277 Ibid; Vol.XI, No.-01; January 1931; p.17 (Translation my own)
necessary for them to portray the tribal practices, traditions and customs inferior and incompatible with their socio-economic and political advancement as the missionaries conceived it.

CONCLUSION

A narrative of the mentality of the Christian missionaries takes us almost imperceptibly into the realm of perceptions that the missionaries had with regard to Indian circumstances and in the context of their western experience, seminary education and religious background. "We are in India. We are here to convert the Hindus to the Truth"\textsuperscript{278} was the general understanding among the missionaries regarding their aims and objectives in India. For them, India was a country torn by successive invasions and its socio-cultural setup was awaiting the message of the Christ for its restoration and regeneration. The Indians were considered incapable to rule themselves and British Empire was supposed to rescue the people from chaos and disorder and from the clutches of the self seeking, immoral ruling class.

The missionaries had their own idea about the Indian society and culture. They criticized the socio-cultural pattern for its caste based patterns and also disapproved the belief system which was diverse and plural in nature. They were opposed to idolatry, polytheism, and many other social practices which appeared to them to be superstitious and even barbaric. To them, the Indian religious system was based on mythologies and badly lacked historical

\textsuperscript{278} Balam, ML, SJ; The Hindu Priesthood; P.249; Typed; Academy Records; 1934
elements to substantiate its claim to divinity and a true religion. According to them the Truth supported Christianity and not the Indian religions. Kennedy writes:

"Truth cannot conflict with truth, while lies are in conflict with each other, as well as with truth. We require however to be continually reminded, that truth is many sided, that it is a sphere, rather than plane, that truth are often opposite though not opposed, and that the link of connexion is often beyond our power to discern. We ought to remember, that there is a great difference between truth and our conception of truth." 279

The missionaries were appalled to see the rituals and social practices among the tribals. For them, the tribal culture reflected a highly immoral system defying 'civilized' code of behaviour. Their main objections were related to marriage practices, sex, drunkenness, 'devil' worship etc. among the tribals. The missionaries tried to organize the tribals in opposition to these practices and even resorted to coercive measures wherever possible. Although, they found it difficult to alter the tribal practices, nevertheless they continued to abhor them and disapprove them.

The rivalry between missions of different denominations many a times turned bitter. The Catholics wanted to surpass Lutherans in gaining converts and engaged themselves in inter-denominational conversions. The challenge before the Jesuit Fathers was not only to gain converts but also to retain them. The task was difficult and the terrain according to them was hostile. The

279 Kennedy, James; Christianity and the Religions of India; Pp- 116-117; Orphan School Press; Mirzapore; 1874
missionary accounts are full of the details of the travails which they had to undergo while establishing a mission station.

The missionaries saw themselves as liberators and mission a vehicle of change and 'development'. The zamindar, moneylenders and even the local police were portrayed as operating in tandem and exploiting the tribals. In their formulation the blame lay with the local system and not with the colonial state. The entire system was also sought to be explained in terms of Hindu penetration and domination of the tribal lands. For the missionaries, the zamindars and moneylenders were aliens who exploited the tribals. The missionaries presented the entire scenario in following terms:

"Prior to the arrival of the missionaries the zamindars, thikadars and moneylenders had treated the tribes of Chotanagpur as dirt. These aliens (dikus) had dispossessed them of their lands. To this, the tribals reacted violently in several insurrections which were put down with the help of the British. After the coming of the Lutheran missionaries in 1845 and then after the arrival of the Jesuit missionaries in Chotanagpur in 1869, they gained courage and began to assert their rights which were based on the local land system of khuntkati and bhuinhari."\(^{280}\)

Lievens' success was based on his ability to plead lawsuits on behalf of the tribals but he took care not to act contrary to the colonial laws. The missionaries often explained themselves as

\(^{280}\) Tete, Peter, S.J.; The Kharias and the History of Catholic Church in Biru; St. Albert's College, Faculty of Theology, Ranchi; P. 76
pleading on behalf of the Christians and thus defending the rights legally granted to them. Hoffmann believed that only social work was the way to form a Christian community which could be retained intact for a longer time. His idea of starting Catholic Cooperative Credit Society and schools was probably aimed at creating a self-sufficient Catholic society which would be able to resist the temptations from missions of other denominations or from falling back to their old religion.

It may be noted that in the period under study the missionaries of different denominations appear to be competing among themselves in Chhotanagpur. The coming of the Jesuits in the region was itself necessitated due to the Lutherans and Protestants gaining good number of converts in the region. Probably the missionaries in the region were not in face to face with any organised indigenous challenge which allowed them to establish their missions unhindered. The missionaries were seen as “Hakims” or the white British officers which placed them in a position of authority in the eyes of the people. Their knowledge of the colonial laws and ability to plead on behalf of the tribals locked them in power struggle with the local zamindars, Rajahs and the moneylenders. While the missionaries of different denominations competed among themselves, they also negotiated their position with the local powers and the colonial state to secure themselves against their adversaries and to promote their mission works.

The missionaries of nineteenth and first half of twentieth century were part of that western society where the modern ethos had acquired sacrosanct position. At the same time they believed in the Church as divinely ordained vehicle for the salvation of mankind and also followed the idioms and beliefs of modernity. They considered
themselves to be scientific, rational, historical and modern. At the same time they saw that by being rational, scientific and historical, they were also monotheist, organized, opposed to idolatry and superstition and so on. It may be said that while imbibing the secular-modern post-enlightenment discourse of the west, the missionaries saw the final culmination of this discourse in the Church and thereby in the Christianity.

**********************************************************************************