6. CONCLUSION

The missionary interface with the non-Christian and non-European societies even made them to test the validity of their own theological positions. Such attempts by the missionaries presented a dilemma through which they tried to sort out the necessity of their mission and their proselytizing works. The missionary dilemma probably raised questions and doubts which were dealt rather vaguely and ambiguously. One of the nagging problems is given in following words:

"1/ If the mission are an absolute necessity, if they constitute an essential characteristic of the Church opus maxime catholicum, how can we hold that salvation outside the visible Church is possible?

2/ On the other hand, if it is possible for a pagan to be saved outside the visible Church, then what is the use, where lies the necessity of the mission?"\(^{281}\)

The dilemma stated above as "antimony" is sought to be resolved in the form of thesis, antithesis and synthesis as stated below:

"Thesis: The Missionary Church constitute an absolute necessity for the salvation of mankind.

Antithesis: on the other hand salvation outside the Church is not absolutely impossible.

Synthesis: can be formulated: if a pagan be saved outside the visible Church it will be because there are Missions, and because they are a success."\(^{282}\)

\(^{281}\) Bauwens, M; Salvation of Infidels and the Missioans; Typed; Academy Records; 1938; P.2
MISSION AND SALAVATION: MISSIONARY DILEMMA

The challenge to explain the necessity of mission, need for conversion and the concept of salvation through Church led to self doubts and dilemma among the missionaries. The perception about the Church that was built overtime in the minds of the non-Christian population was required to be addressed. Church appeared as a religious organization having western imperialistic tendencies which appeared exclusivist and sectarian for its attempt at proselytizing the non-Christian people appeared aggressive encroaching upon the dignity and right of self determination of every individual. Such perceptions seriously eroded the claims of the missionaries about Church being universal and unique organization. The explanation for the necessity of the Church/Mission is given by attributing to the 'plan' of Jesus to unify the whole human race into one. Bauwens writes:

"Unification, unity of the whole human race in time and space, through the Holy Ghost living in humanity in Christ, to the Father. This is the prayer, the ambition, the plan of Jesus, the full meaning of His Mission. A plan which will be achieved only at the end of times."^283

Again, the missionaries argue that, "All unification of mankind outside the grace and faith of Christ is illegitimate and ineffective."^284 Such claim is derived from the belief that Church was the only divinely ordained body to bring about unification of mankind in Jesus. The Church appeared to them a living organism deriving its strength from Jesus himself. Jesus was considered the head of Church therefore the Church had the internal dynamism, nature, apostolicity, unity sanctity and catholicity to express its overall dynamism. The Church is represented as ever growing, progressing and expanding organism under the impulse of Christ. Mission is explained as the manifestation of the dynamic

^282 Ibid
^283 Ibid; P.3
^284 Ibid
propulsion of Church in the form of the movement seeking to completely occupy the world. "The Missions are therefore essential to the life of the Church; not only in the sense that the Church would be unfaithful to its mission... but also and more formally in the sense that only through the work and the success of the Missions can and will the Church arrive at its plenitude of grace and faith... And, pray, realize the implications and responsibilities of these statements. Christ has redeemed the whole human race — and what redemption! — humanity is 'His' by right; and He sends us to gather in, to promulgate and as it were to impose His right."²⁸⁵

The missionaries while reinforcing their claim over the right to unify the humanity into one religious community they were also aware of the inherent problems associated with such activities. The Church which thought that the unification of the human race was achieved was surprised to see more and more new nations and societies coming to their knowledge in the wake of geographical discoveries of 16-17th centuries. The presence of numerous societies which were far away from the Christian fold were sought to be approached by the Church through its missions. The intervention of the Missions on behalf of the Church was considered to be a divinely ordained task for the missionaries who tried to convert them as a divine duty. Bauwens writes, "In a first spontaneous movement, the Church tends to suppress and conquer every religious society; for she alone has the right and the inalienable mission to unify humanity into one religious society; hence she provokes the opposition and the anger of these societies."²⁸⁶

The missionaries while contending with the new societies were also prone to be affected by the societies among whom they operated. They conceded, "On the other hand the assimilation is not achieved without a complementary movement: a vivification of Christianity itself. The extrinsic contact with

²⁸⁵ Ibid; P.6
²⁸⁶ Ibid; P. 9
Hinduism has not been without its secret influence on Christianity.\textsuperscript{287} The "secret influence" of Hinduism which they thought had an impact on their entire movement was even to certain extent changing the cultural contour of Christianity. The missionaries even apprehended that this "secret influence" may get transferred to other members of the Church and the "eastern mystical spirituality" may creep into Christianity as something internal and inherent part of Church. But it was also believed that these changes would be absorbed by the Church as one of its many expressions. It was later emphasized that therefore the necessity of Mission was much more required.

The missionaries while enquiring into the question whether salvation is possible outside the Church feel that it may be one of the possibilities. Bauwens writes, "Let us merely remember that if a pagan is saved he must possess sanctifying grace which already incorporates him in the mystical body of Christ; he must also have some kind of faith."\textsuperscript{288}

Such assumptions then again raises a question on the necessity of having Mission and Church as vehicle of salvation if it is available to pagan having some kind of faith. This dilemma is sought to be resolved by presupposing some kind of relationship between the pagan's faith and Church. This relationship is sought to be defined in following terms:

"But now we can determine this relation more closely; it is an ontological reality, and it operates without the knowledge of the subject in whom it exists. Let us add in order to foreshadow further solution, that this relation is not a static one, a predicamental relation, it is dynamic and transcendental, a desiderium and votum, a secret call inscribed in the soul of our pagan for an achievement, a fullness and plenitude without which, as all dynamic relations, it would be unintelligible and inefficacious."\textsuperscript{289}

\textsuperscript{287} Ibid; P. 10
\textsuperscript{288} Ibid; P. 12
\textsuperscript{289} Ibid; P. 13
The dilemma is further explained as a secret doubt, uneasiness, caused partly by the inability to answer satisfactorily some specious objections, but especially by the direct contact with peculiarly pathetic cases and circumstances. The Church claim as having monopoly over salvation and by virtue of being manifestation of Church, the Missions absolute claim over salvation probably lacked the required validity in its interface with non-Christian and non-European societies. The arguments implicitly-pointed towards the possibility of missionaries having developed a doubt over their own absolute claim over salvation and about Church having the sole monopoly over unification and salvation of human race. The argument that it was in the “Plan of God” to create Church as the vehicle of salvation had more to do with the belief rather than rationality.

The missionary dilemma regarding the role of mission and the salvation of non-Christians was sought to be resolved by invoking theological doctrines and faith. Most of the arguments substantiating the absolute claim of Mission were sought to be presented in circular manner rendering them vague and ambiguous. Perhaps, the missionaries were aware that it was difficult to substantiate the validity of the absolute claim of the Church within the framework of rational-scientific discourse. It may be argued that Bauwens’ “synthesis” sought to address the questions raised by his “thesis” and “antithesis” rather simplistically and even irrationally leaving the main issue unanswered.

CONVERTS AND MISSIONARY PREDICAMENT

“Difficulties have arisen since the Jesuits began work among the doms and santals. In Bhagalpur, for instance, the people of the town would never dream of becoming Catholics, ‘That is all right for Santhals and fools.’ Once, while taking a hundred or more Santhals through town to the railway station, I heard people remark that these boys were poor orphans gotten by the missionaries and, horrible
dictum, made Christians. It would be the joke of the season if a college student of the big college at Bhagalpur became a Catholic. What shall we do?"  

The doubts raised by Lyons above signify the dilemma that griped the missionaries about the futility of their proselytizing works. The question of somehow gaining converts from among the vulnerable sections of the society like tribals, doms and other castes and to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the society as a whole appeared something mutually contradictory. The attempt to attract educated and high caste Hindus could not result in their conversions. Explaining the failure in converting the educated Hindus, the missionaries argued, “their mind has been allowed to run riot among distorted historical books, immoral literature, agnostic and materialistic works. Add to this the awakening in them of unhealthy nationalism...It is also chiefly the educated who hate the Westerners and Westernism. It is an admitted fact that government colleges in India have been breeding vipers. How can you expect to convert them?”

So far the conversion from among the poorer and uneducated sections of the society was concerned the doubt remained about the loyalty of the converts. Earlier missionaries thought that by converting the educated and Brahmins, the conversion of the uneducated and poorer sections of the society would automatically take place. Later, while working among the tribals and poorer sections of the society the trends of retroversion, i.e. going back to former religion continued. The experience in Bettiah and Chuhari is recounted in the following words:

“There seems to have been practically no stable converts for fifty years, although in 1780 a large group of very low caste converts, musahars (rat-eaters)

290 Lyons, M, SJ; A Serial on Missionary Work and Missionary Methods in India; Typed; Academy Records; 1932; P. 385
291 Shanti, P, S.J.; The Problem of Conversion Among the Hindus in Northern India; Typed; Academy Records; 1932; P. 533
292 Missions in Bihar
catholics for a short time converted shortly before to escape their debtors, they escaped one fine night and we are told were never heard again.\(^{293}\)

The work of Father Westropp who was able to convert doms in Chuhari was also not taken seriously. Lyons writes:

“\textit{He made friends with the lowest of the low, with the Doms. These are great beggars and liars, and Father Westropp gave and trusted without end, knowing that he was a “fool” all the time. At Chuhari he told these friends of his that they had to be baptized and become Christians. They had no objections — anything Father Westropp said was law — and he baptized nine hundred in a short time. Bishop L. Van Hoeck soon refused to count the returns anymore, being skeptical about the reality of these conversions. Father Westropp was later put at different work, and his Dom converts were left largely to themselves.}^{294}\n
The missionaries were aware of the inherent problems that were present in the work of conversion. Not only the problem of gaining convert was supposed to be addressed, retained the converts in the fold of Christianity posed another big challenge for them. Another issue was the drive for conversions – missionaries considered conversions to be their divinely ordained duty and an issue of faith. Bauwens while justifying conversions writes, “\textit{Here is a bright young lad; his conversion will cause untold distress, misery, even despair in his family; yet we know that we are justified in trying to convert him: for there is no salvation but in the name of Jesus.}^{295}\n
The missionaries tried to explain their failure in retaining the converts by pointing out the paucity of the missionaries. Father Shanti writes, “\textit{If we leave out Chota Nagpore from consideration there remains only 450 priests working among

\(^{293}\) Lyons, M, SJ; A Serial on Missionary Work and Missionary Methods in India; Typed; Academy Records;1932; P.371
\(^{294}\) Ibid; P. 378
\(^{295}\) Bauwens, M; Salvation of Infidels and The Mission; 1938; P. 01
184,000,000 of inhabitants in the rest of Hindustan. What are 450 priests scattered over an area of 1,200,000 square miles of a country where so many people live?” He further says that due to paucity of the missionaries, the influence over the converted is also very little and therefore the problem of retaining them.

The missionaries while dealing with the converts had to address issues which were not theological or religious in nature. Most of the questions were related to socio-economic issues in which the converts expected to get help from the missionaries. In Chhotanagpur, for example Father Lievens was able to gain large number of converts because of his ability to address agrarian problems or Father Westropp in Chuhari was able to convert the Doms because he extended financial help to them. But in both the cases the converts tended to go back to the fold of their former religion once the help was withdrawn or the problem was addressed. Missionary records show that after Father Lievens left the scene, large numbers of converts were lost and the process of retroversion to earlier religion became strong.

CONCLUSION

It has been argued by certain scholars that “Hinduism” as a religion was constructed, imagined and invented by the missionaries and the orientalist scholars. The argument also postulates that there was no such collective consciousness among Indians in the pre-colonial era and “Hinduism” as a religion never existed. Such arguments have been challenged on the basis of the antiquity of the term “Hindu” and by questioning the supposedly process of construction of “Hinduism”. It has been argued that even the process of construction, if any, did not take place in isolation but the participation of the natives was evident in conceptualizing the understandings of the missionaries as well as European

296 Shanti, P, S.J.; The Problem of Conversion Among the Hindus in Northern India; Typed; Academy Records; 1932; P.525
scholars. The problem also lies in applying religion as a category too rigidly to the term “Hinduism”. The larger process of history has been apparently ignored while conceptualizing the construction theory to “Hinduism as a religion.

The missionary appeared perturbed for having finding difficulties in convincing the Hindus. They felt that a Hindu, for instance, should see that “Hinduism” was self contradictory and obscure. The Hindus should moreover examine the means that are used by Hindu priests to moralize people and consider whether their books, ceremonies, festivals and temples instead of being an incitement to repentance for sin are rather sources of temptations to bad actions and of disturbance to the mind. The missionaries also called upon the Hindus to consider whether the Hindu beliefs were based on undeniable historical facts and whether “Hinduism” from its nature was universal.

The missionaries wanted the Hindus to understand the tests of a ‘true religion’. The religion according to the missionaries should be internally corroborative and not contradictory and that there was no space for numerous paths but one and only one ‘right’ thus ‘divine’ path for salvation. The other important points that were repeatedly raised were that of ‘universality’ and ‘historical’ basis of a religion. By universality they meant one that is present everywhere and applicable to all races, nationality, intellectual ability and circumstances. They believed that religion should be historically verified so as to establish its claim of ‘truth’. ‘Morality’ was also considered an important aspect of a religion.

It was necessary for the missionaries to engage themselves at intellectual plane so that they might be able understand Indian philosophy, customs, rituals, traditions and society. By studying Indian philosophy they wanted to intellectually counter the higher section of the society as they were of the opinion that the lower section were ‘simple minded’ and were easy to convert. They rarely engaged
themselves in constructing arguments that could have proven superiority of Christian scholasticism; instead they repeatedly emphasised that the Indian philosophy contained errors and distortions and the missionaries had the responsibility to remove them so that it might be able to find its culmination in Christ.

The missionaries appear mild in their effort to compare and contrast the Indian schools of philosophy with scholasticis. They repeated question the historicity and divinity of the scriptures and pose moral issues to undermine the validity of the Indian philosophical discourse. For them, the question of morality is considered serious one and 'amorous' conduct of Indra and Krishna along with tantra practices are referred to. The manner in which the comparisons were drawn by Morris and Ballyntine is missing in the first half of the twentieth century. Unlike the works like that of Goreh, in the later phase, even in the case of representation of Indian philosophy; the missionaries offer simple narratives with little effort at deconstructing the framework. The missionaries repeatedly offer the same simple argument that the Indian philosophy is still to find its culmination in Christ.

For the missionaries, Veda was compiled over a period of time. It was the result of a process of evolution and accumulation of verses contributed by different seers. Such an understanding about the compilation of Vedas helped them to prove their position that Vedas were neither revealed nor divine. The notion of evolution also made it implicit that an understanding of such systems necessitates their location within the context of the discipline of History as conceptualized in the modern west. While on the one hand the process of evolution attributed to Vedas questioned its divinity, the 'incompatibility' of the Indian scriptures with the modern history also deprived them of their claim as a valid knowledge system. The argument was simple: since the historicity of divine incarnations of Rama and Krishna as held by the Hindus was doubtful, hence their
divinity was questioned. While on the one hand recognition of the evolutionary process questioned the divinity although it pointed towards a historical past, on the ground of being ahistorical again the divinity was denied. In their readings of the Indian philosophy and traditions, the missionaries referred to the academic works of the modern-western scholars and even the Indian ones that were primarily imbued with the thought that went into the making of the discourse of Orientalism. Therefore the missionary understanding was influenced by the Orientalist learning to the extent that they did not undermine their theological positions.

The missionaries acknowledged the reforms undertaken by socio-cultural reform movements like Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj, Ramkrishna Mission and the Theosophists. The social work undertaken by them were considered beneficial for the society. The missionaries described these movements as modern but at the same time they refused to agree to the theological positions of these movements. The overall framework of these movements failed to convince the missionaries of their being a valid religious system and appeared to them contradictory and repugnant.

The missionaries acquired hegemonic position vis-à-vis Indian philosophy and tradition by attempting to represent them and thereby interpreting them and reconstructing them. By doing so they sought to locate the entire Indian knowledge system within their own discourse that had evolved through a process of interaction between the Christian scholasticism and post-enlightenment modern west.

From the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century, the missionaries were found to be shifting their position with regard to their understanding of Indian philosophy and tradition. They took somewhat ambivalent position. It seems that they were not able to devise a strategy as to how to tackle the problems offered by Indian philosophy and diverse systems in which it was ingrained. For
them, the Indian philosophy with its numerous customs and traditions appeared a confused lot without having a central system of authority and validation. It was perhaps owing to their difficulty in locating the Indian philosophical systems within a meta-narrative, that a coherent position in this context appeared problematic and impractical. The missionaries seem to be obliquely referring to Indian philosophy and traditions apparently avoiding direct confrontation.

Some missionaries even appear to be displaying genuine academic interests in Indian to the study of Indian philosophy and traditions but it was difficult for them to dissociate themselves from the theological-intellectual grooming that they received in the west. The notion of 'divine' and divinity in religion was sought to be located within the framework of modern discourses wherein legitimacy of a system was to be tested. The concepts like historicity, unilinearity, uniformity, monotheism etc. were celebrated as virtues and diversity, polytheism, idolatry, monism etc. were disapproved and condemned. Lack of unanimity among different systems was represented as contradiction and dispute and agreement on certain issues was again shown as acceptance of errors thereby making them mutually invalid. The missionaries attempted to challenge the Indian philosophical and scriptural discourse by locating them within the modern discourses.

While trying to study the intellectual outputs of the missionaries of the 19th and 20th century their grooming in the modern intellectual ambience of Europe needs to be taken into account. As it has been already stated, the era Enlightenment in Europe made the Christian scholasticism to contend with the rationalization and secularization of the society and consequently there was a kind academic environment wherein the missionaries had to learn to adapt their discourse in accordance with the then prevailing modern discourse. On their arrival to India, the missionaries and the western scholars alike discovered an intellectual environment different from that of Europe. The Indian philosophical discourses had their own unique intellectual set up which missionaries sought to
understand and counter as for them it was having a style of reasoning different from post enlightenment rationality.

The missionaries were primarily concerned with gaining converts. For this they were engaged in finding out the ways and methods vis-à-vis the indigenous religion and culture in the initial years. Local environments required modes and strategies suitable to it. For this it was necessary that an engagement with the local culture and religion in which they were supposed to work cannot be avoided. The missionaries never confined themselves with theological preaching alone but they engaged themselves with the local socio-economic and even political questions as activists.

The missionaries in the beginning attempted to convert the Brahmins, other high caste Hindus and the educated class. Such attempts rarely yielded the desired results. Many a time missionaries lamented the indifference of the Hindus and even felt that they were confident about their religion and its philosophical foundation. The debate between De Nobili and Fernandeze indicates the intellectual churning which continued to haunt the missionaries for a long time. Such kind of intellectual-theological positioning apart, the missionaries had to contend and compete with their adversaries belonging to the missions of different denominations. We also find that these missionaries were locked in stiff competition among them and tried to win converts from each other camps. They also denounced the methods adopted by each other in an attempt to deny the success of their adversaries. Catholics desired to convert the Protestants who in turn never avoided any opportunity to convert a Catholic to Protestantism. 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 missionary accounts
are full of the details of the travails which they had to undergo while establishing a mission station.

Caste system appeared an impediment in the missionary works. Caste system was an age old practice and was deeply entrenched. It was organized in such a manner that interdependence and mutual relations were considered very important. It was a socially sanctified institution with well organized rules and customs. Caste held its sway over individuals and families belonging to it. Conversion not only meant change of religion but it practically effected the loss of caste for the converts. Since the entire society appeared structured and organised into caste, to convert an individual was very difficult given the deep roots the caste as an institution had developed in India.

As the missionaries arrived from Europe, they were seen as the agents of western civilization and colonialism. In the opinion of missionaries, such an understanding led to opposition from the indigenous people hampering the progress of conversion work. Many a time the local administrators, mostly Europeans took keen interest in the missionary works or expressed their respect for them created an impression in the minds of the indigenous people that the missionaries were in hand with hand with the colonial rulers.

The missionaries were also keen in taking funds and lands from the colonial government for starting and running schools, hospitals, cooperative societies etc. Such a relationship

Between the colonial rulers and the missionaries presented them in alliance to the local people.

Brahmins by virtue of being the intellectual leader of the society posed major impediment in the missionary works. The Brahmins as intellectual also dominated traditional knowledge centres and various religious and cultural institutions. These centers of knowledge used to serve as traditional institutions from where the challenges posed from time to time were met intellectually. The
pan Indian presence of Brahmins also posed serious challenge to the missionaries. The institution of family also presented another hurdle in the path of the missionaries. In the perception of the missionaries womenfolk dominated the family matters. Since the Hindu women were averse to conversion it was very difficult to convince the menfolk for conversion.

In Patna mission, the missionaries tried various methods to win converts. Capuchin method was one such example under which the missionaries attempted to waive off the rent in the Ma-Bap system so as to gain converts but it proved ultimately to be very costly. In Ghryee and missionary attempt to run industries and their experiments in banking proved to be very costly. The educational mission in Bettiah and conversions of doms were also learning experience for the missionaries. The attempt to gain converts by business activities or by giving financial facilities could not succeed owing to the tendency of switching back to former religion by the converts.

Father Lievens was able to achieve remarkable success in Chhotanagpur by attempting to address agrarian problem of the tribal people. After Father Lievens, Father Hoffman also carried forward his work owing to his knowledge of the agrarian system, which was established under the colonial rulers replacing the customary rights and obligations of the tribals. In exercising the knowledge of the modern-colonial agrarian system the missionaries were able to create a niche for mission work in the tribal area of Chhotanagpur who were struggling to come in terms with the colonial agrarian laws which had replaced their customary rights over the agricultural and forest lands.

Jashpur in present Chhattisgarh gives an example where the missionaries were to work in a princely state. The fortune of the mission swung in accordance to the whims and fancies of the Rajah who also relied on the Political Agent. The mission also sometimes acted in alliance with the Rajah when the local tribal movement like Tana Bhagat movement started assuming anti-colonial and anti-
Christian colours. In a princely state like Jashpur it was also a matter of convenience for the missionaries to take position against the Rajah when the local authorities tried to curb the missionary activities.

For the missionaries the tribal culture was full of abhorrent customs and practices. For them, the tribal culture reflected a highly immoral system defying 'civilized' code of behaviour. They felt appalled by 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. In the Chhotanagpur region they established Catholic Sabha, a kind of panchayat, to check tribal practices and to impose restrictions on them.

In the tribal regions, the missionaries saw themselves as liberators and mission a vehicle of change and 'development'. The zemindar, 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 zemindars and moneylenders were aliens who exploited the tribals.

Father Lievens was successful in gaining converts because of 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 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

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297 Panchayat is a traditional quasi judicial body which solves disputes among the contending parties.
sufficient Catholic society which would be able to resist the temptations from missions of other denominations or from falling back to their old religion.

Chhotanagpur provides an opportunity to study different denominations of missionaries competing among each other. The competition was so tough that the Jesuits could not afford to leave their missions unmanned and Lievens was compelled to rush back to the region even when he was advised rest by his physician in face of his acute illness. 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. It was also a region where organised resistance to the missionary work was minimal from outside. 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. Although the missionaries posed themselves as the emancipator of the tribals they also negotiated their position with the colonial and local rulers as and when required.

The post enlightenment western society with modern ethos had its influence in the missionary mentality. While the missionaries were influenced by modernity they were also having faith in their theological positions and 'divine origin' of the Church. So for the missionaries being scientific, rational, historical and modern along with being monotheist, organized, opposed to idolatry and superstition appeared same. So the missionaries while articulated themselves in the theological categories and exuded faith in the religious ethos upheld by the Church and also adapted themselves with the modern discourse.

The missionaries understood Indian society as a divided and disorganized house. The diversity and plurality inherent in Indian society was considered its weakness and reason for its 'backwardness'. They criticized the socio-cultural structure for its caste based patterns and also disapproved the belief system which
was diverse and plural in nature. For them idolatry, polytheism, and many other social practices appeared to be superstitious and even barbaric. They believed that the Indian religious system was based on mythologies and badly lacked historical elements to substantiate its claim of divinity and a true religion.

Missionaries also showed their adaptability to the local circumstances and some of them were the men of commitment who worked with indomitable zeal. Many of the missionaries had the drive for experimenting with their ideas and though such experiments mostly turned out to be failures, they were able to gain experience which was very much required in the initial phase. Their drive to experiment also gave continuity to the missionary works and helped missions to settle down and branch out for future works.

The missionaries were intellectually groomed in western milieu. To study their mentality their western background, their interface with post Enlightenment ideas, their training in seminaries and their understanding of the Indian society and circumstances are required to be taken into account. For them, India was a country torn by successive invasions and its socio-cultural set up 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. They considered themselves to be the emancipators and representatives of Church who were entrusted with the task of bringing salvation to the doors of Indians. In a way they were on “Civilizing mission" wherein the salvation lay in converting the people.

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