CHAPTER V

THE MISSION SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)

a. Social Service
b. Contribution of Teachers.
Social Service Programme

The Mission School Movement was a challenge to the existing social situation of Kashmir. The school had to affiliate itself to the environment and in that it had to become a part of the total system. There was one way to make it practicable, and that was by starting a scientific programme of social service, unheard of in the days of yore. The school became a symbol of social service, particularly for a community which was predominantly of two classes, viz., the elite and the miserably poor. Although both the sections of the community were subjected to the orthodox, a stage was reached when the appalling conditions could not be tolerated any more. The elite group could not compromise with the idea of love and dignity of labour, and the poor could not afford it. It was a bold step on the part of the missionaries to have inculcated the spirit of work with the community and for the community which was still living in semi-darkness as far as social change was concerned. It seems that the missionaries had sufficiently realised the psychology of the people and also were convinced that the stage was set for putting into practice the subtle idea of humanising
and socializing the people so that they could aspire to live, think and act independently and with dignity. It will not be out of place to mention that the missionaries went out of their way in involving themselves, the students and the teachers with endeavours which had a healthy purpose. It thus became necessary to review the programme of social service as an experiment with the ultimate purpose of emancipating the people.

The activities and programmes of Mission School in Kashmir grew out of the needs of the society and the need for a social change. Social service also grew out of a need for assistance to the Kashmiri society and served as an instrument for building the characters of the pupils in the Mission School. The early missionaries attributed lethargy and social evils in the society to the oppression and cruelty of invaders of this beautiful valley. Canon Bisbee writes "Kashmir has been conquered and reconquered by invaders who have murdered the life and heart out of them so that their better selves have been crushed. It is quite

1. A Neve: Beyond Pir Panjal, p. 121.
possible that if we Britishers had to undergo what the Kashmiris have suffered, we might have lost our manhood.²

The first challenge came from the conditions of the students who joined the Mission School. Lyndale Bissoo describes his first day in the Mission School when Rev. Knowles, the founder of the School, took him to introduce his first pupils: "We climbed to the hall on the third story where there were 200 bundles on the floor. As I entered, the stench almost knocked me backwards. It was winter, therefore, all the lattice windows covered with paper were closed. Every boy was covered up in a dirty blanket and under the blanket, a fire-pot (Kangri) so that the hot air passed through the filthy blanket, damp from snow or rain. In the winter, bathing was at a discount so you can probably realise something of the atmosphere which greeted us. Mr. Knowles introduced me to the bundles so I was able to study their faces. In the front row I saw many beards and whiskers, for practically all were married and some of them fathers."³

² Lyndale Bissoo, C.E.: Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p. 79.
³ Lyndale Bissoo: Autobiography; p 49 (This is one of several descriptions recorded in the school logs and other primary sources for this study).
Eric Tyndale Biscoe writes, "Nearly every boy had the itch or laves or both. Yet if by chance one of the European staff should touch them, they would squirm at such defilement." The influence of parents, social customs and public opinion were the factors responsible for the physical and moral dirt.

Having combated this problem in the school, the missionaries diverted their attention to the source of this malady - the society and the environment. This effort of the missionaries brought them out of the four walls of the school and turned their work into that of social reformers more than teachers. It was not so easy for the missionaries to take up and continue these reforms. They met with constant criticism and even hostility both from the Indian leaders and from their own church and political leaders. Canon Biscoe records, "Certain missionaries had been upbraiding me ... because, instead of preaching in the bazaar, I was filling my days out of school hours with all sorts of "goings-on", calling out my boys at night as well as in the day.

4. Tyndale Biscoe, M.D.: Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 10
5. Ibid., p. 11.
to fight fires and above all, teaching the school staff and the boys to use their fists and what not." These "goings-on" had reached the ears of the then bishop of Lahore, and he came to Kashmir to turn me out ... When accounts of my "goings-on" reached Salisbury Square, I received a strong letter from the CMS Secretary, especially about my teaching boxing which, he said, led to public-house drinking and prize-fighting. Bisoe and his colleagues survived this strong criticism which would have resulted in their withdrawal from Kashmir and a lot that was done would have been left undone.

The inspiration for social action was derived from the faith of these missionaries in Christianity. Canon Bisoe writes, "However, persuasive the preaching, or holy the book, duty to our neighbours and duty towards God is most certainly learnt practically through mouth and ear only. Faith must be shown by works ... We, who live in this country, have opportunities pretty well every day to stir the

7. CMS Archives, London (copy of the letter ) "Letters from Cashmere": section.
blood and a man conscience to the life of
service for our fellow-men, to which God calls all
those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. 9

Street Cleaning

"Perhaps the most difficult piece of
social work the school tackled in the early days
was sanitation. It very nearly smashed the school,
for public opinion became so incensed. 10 The only
other way to keep the place clean was to get a
sweeper to do it which used to be a costly proposition.
Thus, as a result of this neglect the streets in the
city, especially the compounds of houses, and even
the houses themselves used to be filthy. Siric Bisceo
writes, "If it were not those untiring, unpaid,
unserved-for and despised municipal officers, the
pariah dogs, Brinigar would long ago have become a
buried city. Now naturally, the result of all this
filth is that all sorts of diseases flourish and
take a huge toil of life continually." 11 The 'sanitation
corps' of the school was born as a result of the death
of three Mission School masters who, one after the
other, contracted typhoid and died. The Principal

9. Ibid., J. W. Hyndale Bisceo, Kashmir in Sunlight
and Shade, p. 216.
10. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 55.
11. Ibid., p. 56.
spoke to the British Resident about the dirt and
filth around the school building. The plan of the
'sanitation corps' was to get boys and masters to
volunteer for that work to persuade citizens to allow
the corps to visit their homes, clean their compounds,
and fill the cesspits with sand from the river bed.
Edio Lyndale bisue beautifully narrates the first
day of this great effort. He writes, "A day had been
fixed for the corps to start its work by visiting
the Mission ladies' dispensary, which neighbours were
using as a dumping ground for their refuse. The
Principal came down to school in a boat, in which were
shovels and picks. As soon as he entered he saw some­
thing was wrong. He called for volunteers. One
Muhammadan came and stood at his right side. With a
little hesitation, a Brahman came and stood at his
left. Then, as if with a concerted move, the whole
school, masters and boys covering their faces with
blankets, rose up and bolted. In a few minutes, the
Principal and his two faithful attendants stood alone

12. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.56.
in an empty school. The secret workers had done their job thoroughly ... They got into the boat and set off for their destination. On each bridge there was a crowd of howling citizens; the three men in the boat therefore, stood up and gave their audience three cheers before proceeding ... For the rest of that day this first brave band set to work with a will. As a result of this attempt, the whole city began to bum. A public meeting was called in school where the famous missionary had beloved Dr. Arthur Neve tried to explain to the people that it was to save the lives of the people and had nothing to do with the religion. This argument was turned down and on a later occasion when municipal workers made an attempt to clean the streets, people lay down on the banks to hinder the operation.

in the face of this tough opposition, the only support Canon Bischof had was the brave action of

---

Canon J. W. Lyndall Bischof gives a first hand description of the first day of 'sanitary corps' in the streets. The priests and other religious leaders had successfully stopped the attempts of the municipal workers who wanted to clean the streets. They laid down on the dirty streets and prevented their efforts. Mission School teachers were sent to tell them that they were only attacking the filth and not their religion. On the other hand, the directives of these priests prevailed upon the students and masters of the Mission School.
15. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, pp. 56-57.
the Brahman Feniyladar or Chief City Magistrate whose only son was a student of the Mission School. He came to see Mr.iscoe and said 'In order to show the city that I am on your side and that the Feniyladar is not ashamed to use a spade, will you please give orders that my son always carries a spade across his shoulder when he rides home from school'. This courageous Feniyladar borrowed tools from the school and he himself and his servants drained out his compound. Thus, the whole city learned that their chief Magistrate who by caste was a Brahman, was not ashamed to do this manual job."

This first effort of the missionaries although supported by the Chief Magistrate, did not subside the hostility and opposition of Kashmiri society. This incident was widely reported and many of the Indian and local newspapers published a story of this attempt out with a bit of a twisted report. One of the titles that attracted and appealed to Mr.iscoe’s creative mind was as follows:

"Mriscoe, Principal of Church Mission"

19. The Tribune - "Lahore"
   The Amrit Bazar Patrika.
School in Srinagar, makes his Brahman boys drag dead dogs through the city”.

This resulted in a humorous action. In the Principal's own words, "This 'spicy' bit of news took our fancy ... We possessed an obedient dog, a spaniel, who was in the habit of dying for his friends. When required to do so, the rest was easy ... the obedient spaniel died, and remained dead while we tied a rope to its hind leg and placed the boy in position on the rope for the photographer to snap. 

But this controversy and fight against the attitude of the citizens towards Mr. Annie Besant, who had left Britain and had settled in South India. She had heard and seen published in forty different papers, the story of the "dragging of the dead dog". She came to Srinagar in 1901 to establish a parallel school to the Mission School. Before coming to Kashmir, she had got in touch with a number of teachers of the Mission School.

20. Ibid. School Log: 'Men in the Making', p. 15
    Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 56
21. Ibid., p. 56.
The staff continued and over three hundred boys left in a fortnight to join the school that Mrs. Besant had opened opposite the Mission School.

As a result, only half a dozen boys and a few faithful members of staff were left in the Mission School.

Later, Mrs. Besant left Kasmir and the School she had started was taken over by the Government (the present E.P School). Many of the old boys returned to the Mission School and accepted the punishments imposed by it.

The efforts of the Mission School were crowned with success when in 1923, the Srinagar Municipality decided to give the Maharaja a novel birthday present of a clean city. The staff and students of the School fully co-operated and worked for a fortnight to clean and beautify the city.

The students were expected to keep their classes clean. They were expected and taught to clean the School compound and its surrounding areas.

22. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.56. (The fight took place in 1901. As a result of these tensions, the health of Canon Sydah's niece broke down. The doctors of the Mission hospital attended upon him. He was asked to go on a long leave to the U.K. so that he could fully recover).

23. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 56.

Help to the Weak and Needy

The first experiences of the missionaries made them decide that in order to make education effective and useful, they had to relate it to the day to day life of the student. There should not be a gulf between what a student learns and what he actually does in practice. To bridge this difference, emphasis was first laid on practical demonstrations and experiences. The first section of society that attracted the attention of the missionaries and teachers were the women. They held the existing education pattern responsible for this. J. Nonn writes, "It seems strange to me that after all the educational authorities have done, they have not found a more suitable education for Indians. It has created a class which continues to despise manual labour, and panders to their desire for government employment, in which there are not enough collets to satisfy them. Therefore, the country is crowded with discontented half-educated men who give trouble to the government which has given them their education at schools and colleges practically

for nothing. Still, that spirit which I found in the boys and parents of the boys and which I have been trying to fight ever since, still remains, so until I can find anything better, we are going in hard for 'social service' to teach the youth of this country their duty towards their country and fellow citizens'.

The first accounts of the plight of women in the Kashmiri society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as narrated by these missionaries are very pathetic. They lived a life of degradation and rejection. Canon Bissoo writes, "... it is women who have to give way to men in streets; it is women who have to fetch and carry water in their heavy earthen pots; it is women who are down continually because they are only women". Eric Lyndale Bissoo writes, "being weaker than men, they (women) have been driven to the wall. It is still a common sight to see women literally going to the wall to make way for men, by treading into the deep snow so that the lords of creation

27. Ibid., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p.281
26. A. N. ; Daughters of Vithala, p.16
29. Ibid., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p.269.
may pass ... Another common sight in those days were the struggles of the women in carrying the heavy water - pots". Brio biscos describes an actual incident of such a struggle when a woman holding her child and her 'sangri' under her pheron and balancing a heavy earthen pot on her head, slipped on the steps of the river bank. The fire-pot upset inside the woman's pheron, scattering live charcoal all over her and the child. The woman was helpless as her arms were entangled in her pheron. A number of men were on the bank smoking or taking snuff. "One glance to see what all the screaming was about was all the notice they took of the incident."

There were many such incidents that sowed the seeds from which sprouted the social service system of the school. The beginnings of this system were made by formation of the 'Knights Errant Society.' The members of this group were the masters and students who promised to be 'onivalrous towards women'.

---
20. Ibid. Fifty Years Against the Stream, pp 72-73.
21. An earthen pot full of live charcoal used for warming up.
22. The loose gowm usually worn by the Kashmiri women.
23. Ibid, Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.72.
School logs Against the Current, p. 11
24. Ibid. Fifty years Against the Stream, p.72.
It was not easy to start the good work of helping the needy women in those days. One of the great difficulties of would-be knights errant were the horrible insinuations against their good name which they had to bear. No one could understand any man speaking to a woman, let alone helping her. The women, too, were naturally suspicious.

The teachers and students of the Mission School slowly began to be accepted by the needy women. These knights errant had learnt to carry loads for women. They would carry bags of rice, loads of firewood, or even babies, but not the water-pot. "Water-pot carrying is, par excellence, women's work and it is very degrading for a man to do such a thing; in such the same way as an English boy would be ashamed to be seen doing the darning or mending," writes Eric Sydale Price. But within a few more years, the boys became brave enough to carry the water-pots for the women. The annals of school logs and other accounts are full of brave and kind deeds of these knights errant. A few are quoted as follows.

35. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.74.
36. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.73.
"A little girl was walking along with a water-pot on her head. As 'lads of the village', indulging in horse-play, bumped into her so that she was upset and her pitcher was smashed. One of our boys witnessed this scene, so he called some companions, with whose aid he was able to give the horse-players a lesson in manners. Meanwhile, the little girl was standing amidst the broken pottery wailing, so the boy 'took the hat round' to the neighbouring shopkeepers, and collected enough to buy her a new pot and send her on her way rejoicing."

Eric Tynale also narrated an interesting and stern yet brave incident of the deed of the knight errant during their early campaigns. "A class was in progress, when outside in the street, someone began to scream. The Principal went to the window, and there he saw a young man kicking a woman on the shin with his heavy wooden clog. 'Come here,' said the principal to the boys. When they, too, had reached the window, he pointed to the scene below. 'Do you think that is a pretty sight?'

37. School Boy's Pile Driving in Kashmir: p.11
'Oh, he is only kicking his mother,' they said. 'Within a very short time, staff and boys had been ordered out in to the street.

'Seize that man,' the Principal said to a lusty young master, 'and make him apologise to his mother.' The young man refused to apologise. 'Into the river with him then.' The young master clasped the youth round the middle and jumped with him into the river. 'How, will you apologise?' 'No,' said the youth. 'Duck him then.'

After a few moments, the head was allowed up, and again he was asked to apologise to his mother. Again, he refused. Again, he went down. At last after several ducking, he came out weeping and had to put his head between his mother's feet and apologise in the true eastern fashion.

Needless to say, his mother had been clutching the Principal firmly by the ankles and imploring forgiveness for her son from the very moment he had been seized. Since then, all young men who wished to kick their mothers have taken care to do it out of sight and hearing of our school.

38. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 74
Many such incidents are on record. The usual help rendered to the women was carrying loads and doing odd jobs for them. One other help the boys and masters of the Mission School rendered was the provision of joy-rides for sick ladies in the school boats. A number of Mission Hospital doctors had suggested that outings in the fresh air would both refresh and cheer the patients in the hospitals, especially the women folk. So, the Knights Errant Society adopted a programme of taking out the sick women for joy-rides in the school boats. Eros Lyndale Biscoe records that 'the women trust our boys to take them out from hospitals for joy-rides in their boats. Over one thousand women have been entertained in that way in one year.'

The Fight Against the Immoral Traffic

Another area in which the boys and teachers of the Mission School rendered a useful service to the women, was the fight against immorality and the flesh trade in Kashmir. Prostitution was common during the

39. Dave, Fifty Years in Kashmir, p. 193
40. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 75.
Dogra rule¹¹ and during Maharaja Kambir Singh's time, the Government used to charge a licence fee of 100 minhaz rupees for the purchase of a girl for this purpose. In 1650, the Maharaja received 1.5 - 2% per cent of the earnings of the licensed prostitutes. It was this known enemy that the night's errant decided to attack. The first attempts of these brave teachers and students were to prevent and rescue the young girls from the clutches of the flesh traders. Eric Lyndale Birch writes, "Girls are often kidnapped and carried off, to become the stock-in-trade of those devils who go in for the business ... On one occasion, the parents of a girl came to us to help them in saving their little girl who had been kidnapped in this way. With the aid of the police, the house was raided and the little girl returned to her parents".⁴⁴

The real battle against this human traffic was spearheaded in 1937 by a conscientious and brave, though insignificant looking, barber who lived in a street in Srinagar where many houses of ill fame

---

¹² Ibid., Chap. IV, p. 35.
¹³ N.I. Foreign Sec. 2 March 1633 No. 66
¹⁴ Ibid. Fifty years Against the Stream p. 75
(Many such instances are on the records of the School. The School logs are full of such description. Some of these instances can also be found in the Kashmir Government records in Srinagar.

¹⁵ Ibid., C. J. Lyndale Birch Autobiography p. 25.)
were situated (now Maizama, near Amira Kadal). He was continually disturbed at night by the cries of anguish from the unfortunate women and the wranglings of men and this prompted him to action. He wrote and distributed pamphlets on this cruel traffic among the citizens of Srinagar. He would stand and preach in the streets and with some friends would picket these houses of ill-fame with the result that the keepers of these houses soon involved him in law cases and almost ruined him. But the Mission School came to his rescue and saved this gallant man, by employing him to cut the hair of the hostel students. He was not disheartened by these court cases and went on with his campaign.

One night he and his friends were picketing a certain house of ill fame when a young police officer, a son of a high official of Kashmir entered the house against the barber's requests not to do so. He informed the father, who begged the barber to keep it a secret and offered hush money. This brave man said, "I do not ask for money, but if you wish me to keep the matter quiet regarding your son, you must have all this traffic stopped". The official agreed, and all such places were removed.

46. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 250
From the municipal areas of Srinagar. A little later, he rescued a girl who had been sold for Rs. 400 with the help of the police, which then had a number of Mission School old boys as officers, who had fought against these and many other social evils.

Eric Tyndale Biscoe records the heroic deed of a Mission School boy who was paddling his boat in the Dal Lake, when he heard the cries of three girls who had paid the boatman for their return journey but were being kidnapped by the boatman. This young boy paddled and saved these girls and seized the paddles from the boatman. These paddles are one of the many such trophies won by the Knights Errants in their fair fight for women.

**Human Rights for Women**

Another social evil of those times was the child marriage which resulted in early widowhood.

---

47. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 260.
48. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 261
    School log: Hewing Timber in Kashmir, p. 11.
49. Ibid. Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 76
    (Many such accounts are recorded in the School logs. These paddles still hang as a trophy in the Hall of Tyndale Biscoe School, Srinagar). Also
    School log: Amphibious scouts in Kashmir, p. 3.)
The Brahman widows in Kashmir were not permitted to remarry and thus they were forced to lead the lives of social outcasts—a life worse than animals. Canon Lyndale Biscoe was extremely disturbed when he learnt more and more of such stories of unending misery. He wrote, "A few years ago, my soul was so stirred within me, from the revelations brought to my notice in this matter of devilish customs done in the name of religion. The first thing he did was to make a provision for widows of the Mission School masters. He further writes... so there and then, we started a pension fund for the widows of the school staff. Every master had to pay a portion (5 percent of the salary) into this fund and I promised that a like sum would be paid monthly from the school treasury... The Dixon Fund, called after Mr. John Dixon of Pitalochry, who started it with a gift of £50, grew year by year until it totalled Rs. 1,25,000. Today it is helping thirty widows. But this effort of the Mission School was only a drop in the ocean."

---

52. Dixon Fund was merged with the Provident Fund of the School. The old widows were looked after from the income of poor fund. The widows of the School masters get regular pension i.e. the widow of Mr. Anka Koul, who was drowned in the sea tragedy of Wular Lake on April 14, 1923 still (April, 1963) gets her.
53. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 97.
The local teachers and students kept some distance between the missionaries and their personal family lives. The educational missionaries could never ascertain the factual position of a Kashmiri family until the medical missionaries made some revelation. Canon Syndale Bisoe writes, "For on my daily journeys up and down the river by boat to the schools, I was continually passing baby corpses in various stages of decomposition. ... and when one of my old pupils was in charge of lowering the river barrage every month. I heard from him how many baby corpses he had to clear out. But it was not until Dr. Kate Knowles joined our school staff in order to visit the sick female relations of our staff and boys that I learnt the terrible truth of the unhappy lives the young widows were forced to live. The missionaries decided to take immediate steps to combat the tragic situation. A meeting of the members of the school staff was called and the entire matter was discussed with strong determination. Canon Syndale Bisoe writes, "I told them that they had

54. Ibid., Autobiography, p.96
Similar accounts are also recorded in Heve; Arthur; Thirty Years in Kashmir, p.166
Heve; Arthur; Beyond Peer Panjal, p. 59
Lawrence Walter, R. The Valley of Kashmir", p.237.
thrown dust in my eyes and we had lost fifteen valuable years (since he had come in 1890)
union might have been used in fighting this great evil. The first step that he took was to seek
the enactment of a law raising the marriage age of girls and the second was the remarriage of
Brahman widows. 56

The pathetic condition of very young girls moved the medical missionaries to ask Canon
Bisbee and other missionaries in Kashmir to do something to better the lot of women in Kashmir. Canon
Syndale Bisbee records, "when you think of little girls of 11 or 12 years dying in child birth, you
will perhaps realize why we sometimes, 'see red' in this matter." Further writing about the involve-
ment of the mission school in fighting this malady of early marriages, he records. Our staff with a
few nobler spirits among the citizens, are fighting most bravely this devilish practice, and have
succeeded here and there, and in so doing added 58 to them unpopularity." As usual the missionaries
first enforced a strict rule in all mission schools

56. School logs: A school in Action in Kashmir, p.10
57. School logs: A school in Action, p.16.
58. Icid., A school in Action, p.16.
that married school boys could pay double tuition fees with the result that the number of married boys, which was nearly half the number on the rolls in the beginning of the century came down to two and a half percent in 1926. Canon Tyndale Biscoe and the missionaries fully used their influence and diplomatic competence in getting a law on the marriage age enacted. Mr. Shankar Koul, the famous Headmaster of Mission School, and some old boys of the School were anxiously trying to raise the marriage age in Kashmir. A certain Englishman Mr. G.C.G. Wakefield, who was strong but kind hearted was appointed by the Maharaja to help him in "state matters. He sponsored a deputation of the Mission School staff and old boys led by Mr. Shankar Koul to see the Maharaja with the result that their request was granted up to a certain point. "The marriage age of girls was raised to fourteen". But the law did not stop the practice of early marriage. A regular check had to be kept on this practice till the masses learnt the demerits of early marriage. The teachers of Mission Schools

59. School log : Crusading in Kashmir, p. 10
60. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 21.
very often were instrumental in avoiding unequal marriages. Following is one such incident that is recorded in the school logs.

"A healthy old widower of sixty or so went a wooing. A family with an eye on his money bags offered him their daughter, as a suitable match. She may have been sixteen, she was certainly not more. The widower agreed and all was settled, and would have gone according to plan, except that the girl was related to one of our masters. He first tried to persuade the family to call it off; but persuasion having failed, he had recourse to tactics. On the wedding morning, he and a party of his colleagues went early to the house of the bride and carried her away and hid her with some relations in another part of the city. The bride, groom and the guests arrived later on, only to be told that the wedding could not take place for lack of bride".

But perhaps the second great social reform i.e. the remarriage of brahman widow in Kashmir was no less an achievement than abolishing of 'Satti' by the British Government helped by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. 63

Any attempt to interfere with this age old custom of inhuman cruelty inflicted by the Kashmiri Brahman Society on its widows, was to invite a certain expulsion from Kashmir. But these missionaries were men and women of strong determination and action. Once assured of the correctness of their aims, the actions followed quickly. "The most difficult social service and the most needful is that for the sake of women, and the breaking off of the shackles with which they are bound." writes Canon Lyndale Biscoe who was the leader of these social reformers. The first unsuccessful attempt to remarry a widow was made in 1922. Canon Lyndale Biscoe described, "One of our old students bravely came forward to offer himself for public execration by marrying a widow. A widow was found, and after much search, two priests were produced who promised to perform the marriage ceremony, and our spirits rose high, but at the last moment the widow gave way, under the pressure of the orthodox and so our first attempt failed".

In the meanwhile the official and non official Europeans and Kashmiris formed the Women Welfare Association. The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir started

64. School Log: A School in Action, p. 16.
65. School Log: A School in Action, p.16
this society with a generous gift of Rs. 10,000 for the uplift of the women in Kashmir. Finally the first Brahman widow remarriage was celebrated on May 16, 1926 in Srinagar and thus history was created. Following is the description of this first Brahman widow remarriage.

"Our headmaster, Mr. Shankar Koul, and school staff, who have been striving for years to help widows, at last managed to bring off the first marriage of Brahman widow in Srinagar.

The preliminary part had been carefully and laboriously carried out, two men had been found and two widows, willing to face the music and go contrary to orthodoxy. So on May 16, 1926, 500 or more Brahman guests marched to a certain house to fetch the bridegrooms and brought them to two willing brides at 6.00 a.m. But when the ceremony should have begun it was discovered that the priests had run away. However, one of our Sanskrit teacher is a priest, so he came to the rescue and performed the ceremony, for which heinous sin he is

67. Ibid. Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 79.
Some of the Brahman Guests who dared to be photographed at the historic marriage on May 16, 1928. Several of our School Staff are in the picture, four of whom may be seen standing on the extreme left.
the target for the poisonous darts of the enraged priesthood.

We hear that there are now a number of Brahman widows and bridegrooms ready and wishing to be married; so the chain has been cracked, if not broken. And this day, May 16th, 1926, will ever be a day of rejoicing for the Kashmiri Brahman widows.66

As was expected, this marriage caused a great uproar in the city. A sadhu fasted for forty days and nights to cause the death of Shankar Koul, but when he failed to achieve his aim, he concluded that he had made a mistake and himself arranged for the remarriage of a widow.69 A huge meeting was called in a temple to condemn this interference with the local religion and to excommunicate the mission school staff from the Brahman community.70 That meeting and later such meetings could not be held because of the official intervention of some state officers who happened to be either old boys of the school or people with progressive thoughts.71 The local press brought out articles against this act.

69. Ibid., Autobiography, pp 97-98.
70. Ibid., Crusading in Kashmir, p. 11.
The following are excerpts of one such appeal.

"Hindu and Muhammadan brethren of Kashmir;"

Just ponder over your condition for the sake of God, shake off your slumberous lethargy, open your eyes and see how the very roots of your community are being watered - apparently with water, but in reality with carbolic acid.

'Gentlemen, at present there is perhaps not a single Kashmiri, Hindu or Muhammadan, who does not know how the Christian Schools have been busily engaged in pulling down the walls of our national honour, morale, and religion . . . . we feel, however, no necessity to repeat such matters here. Of course, we shall discuss them at some other time, but, smarting under the wound caused by the fresh illegality done by the Manager, Mission High School, I cannot but submit of few of my impressions to my brethren, with the hope that the Srinagar public, irrespective of religion and creed, will, within constitutional and peaceful limits, raise their voices unanimously and implore their benignant ruler to adequately punish this missionary, who is a "wolf in the guise of a sheep."
The greatest fear that missionaries had, was, the indifferent and even hostile attitude the Maharaja might have on the first widow remarriage. A few days after the first widow remarriage, the Maharaja made his state entry into the city. "For the first time in history, the Rani was seated beside the Maharaja, thus giving the lead to his subjects to allow their womenfolk freedom." After his state entry, in his first public pronouncement, the Maharaja formally recognized the legality of Hindu widow remarriage. Concluding the accounts on this great social reform, Canon Sydelle Sinico writes, "I never expected in my lifetime to witness this miracle. I have for fifty years witnessed the results of the cruelties perpetrated on Hindu widows and also the wonderful acts of chivalry performed by our school staff and old students."

**Fight against Caste Prejudices and Superstition**

When the missionaries came in the nineteenth century, their first problem was that of accessibility into the social set up of the

---

73. School log: Pile Driving in Kashmir, p. 8
74. Ibid., p. 8.
social set up of the Kashmiri homes because of strict caste barriers which were strictly defined on religion and in one religious group on the basis of clans and sub-castes into which a person is born. The caste system was strictly practiced on pain of exposure and hard punishment for those who broke the rules and regulations. Writing about the Brahman in particular, J. R. F. D. Robeson writes, "They were twice born, so they told me ... to start with, they could not eat with any person who was not twice-born; they could not even eat with their Maharaja, should he be kind enough to invite him to do so, for he was of a lower caste being of Kashtali or soldier caste. They only eat food cooked by a Brahman, and the cook must not wear trousers when he prepares their food. Then the place where the food is cooked must first of all be spread with cow dung." The famine, flood and ondara epidemics provided the first access to the Kashmiri households. The mission school teachers and missionaries used to be the first to reach affected people who very often used to be on their death beds and where the saving of lives was more important than saving the caste. In normal times, 

76. A detailed description is recorded in Chapter II of this study.
77. Op. Cit., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p.255. Walter Lawrence, Robert Clark and many other early visitors to the Kashmir valley give similar description in their narratives of social set up of Kashmir.
it was not possible at all. Canon Lyndale Bisgeor writes about his early encounters with castes hazards. He writes, "In the days of my apprenticeship I learnt that I must not touch my pupils for fear of defiling them. For in a forgetful moment I would pat them on the back or head to cheer them up, at which they would squirm as if I were a leper, or one of the untouchables."79

One effective way of fighting untouchability was to bring the students close to one another. So all games and activities that infused comradeship were introduced and promoted. In the class room, they were encouraged, even forced, to mix up with each other inspite of great resistance from the boys and their parents. Erio Lyndale Bisgeo records "on one occasion, the boys in a class would not allow a fellow Brahman of lower sub-caste to sit down with them. He was given a push and landed in the lap of one of the high caste objectors. The two boys were then seized by the heads and their heads well rubbed together, so that the low caste of one went into the high caste of the other and vice-versa. From that day to this, there has never been any

79 Ibid., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p. 257.
80 School logs: Steeple Chasing in Kashmir, p. 16
question of high caste, low caste, Hindu, Muhammadan, Christian, Sikh or Parsi—all sitting together, playing together, or even boxing together." But this does not imply that the results were achieved without any resistance. Many interesting correspondences are recorded in the annals of the school which give the details of the resistance and angry mood of the Kashmiri society on the interference with what they termed as 'religion'. Canon Lyndale Price writes, 'Most of these ideas of theirs as to the food and abstinence were of little consequence to school discipline until it came to the matter of their belief in the unholiness of leather; for that mocked out boxing gloves, football and even rowing, for the leather on the oar they jibbed at, although I said they were not to touch the leather button, but simply grasp the oar and pull.' The worst public onslaught the missionaries and Mission School.

---

51. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 10.
52. One such application for discharge certificate is as follows:

To
The Vice-Principal,
Central Mission School, Srinagar.

Sir,
Yesterday in the recreation period which means the period for recreating the body after several hours mental work, not the period for nearly killing someone, the upper school was engaged in snow fighting. I being ignorant of the dangers of this game remained stationary at a place. A Muhammadan boy, whom I may call a Guana [Hooligan] from the mode in which he fell upon me and nearly would have strangled me, had not a teacher came to save me. This Musalman regardless of the consideration of religion threw his hand in my mouth. I seeing myself so ill-treated, could not help weeping. At that time my sight began to fail under the observance of Brahminism. I am bound to keep fasting for several days.
programme faced was the severe criticism of the
public led by Mrs. Annie Besant, who was given some
**64** twisted reports that the Principal of the Mission
School was making his Brahman staff and boys do Sweeper’s
work in the city and thus they lose their caste. This
almost ruined the Mission School, as a number of
teachers and boys left the School to join the Theosophical
School that Mrs. Besant had started, but within
two years the number of students in Mission Schools
doubled.

Superstition was an integral part of the
social life and spiritual beliefs in those days.
Spiritual men and astrologers had acquired an important
position in the society and they exerted great influence
on the personal and corporate life of the masses in
**67**. During the epidemics, the superstitions and
beliefs in ‘tillahmanas’ and ‘holy suit’ took a big toll
of human lives. Canon Bischof describes one such epidemic

"The epidemic of 1902 was my first experience of this
terrible visitation. The people were terribly scared;
offices and schools were closed, and the people sat in

Therefore, I solicit the favour of yours kindly
granting me a discharge certificate, because if
such a fate shall again fall upon me, I would not
help leaving my studies for ever also.

Yours etc., Copi Math Lst 4th High School

63. Ibid., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p. 287.
64. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 76.
their houses, as they said, waiting to die. They would only take medicine of their 'Hakims' i.e.,
the native doctors - or trust to the prayers and incantations of the priests. The priests would
write some sacred words on pieces of paper which the patient would swallow. They would take no
precautions for they did not believe they were of any use ... It was useless remonstrating, for your
words had no meaning to them ... Ten thousand deaths were reported in the city, but there must have been
hundreds more unreported. During this epidemic, the missionaries rendered great service to the citizens
of Kashmir. The medical missionaries and Indian doctors working in Mission hospital worked so hard that a
few of them caught germs and an Indian Doctor Thomas died. The School staff and boys were supplied with
the medicines and they went from house to house distrib-buting it. In one such epidemic they saved over seventy
lives. Canon Tyndale Biscoe writes: "I am thankful to say that superstition and ignorance on this matter
is giving way before education, so much so that our masters and boys are welcomed in the houses of the
stricken, and they will take from us the medicine of the West, so that in the last epidemic our staff and

88. Ibid., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p.306.
89. Ibid., Autobiography, p.61.
90. Ibid. Autobiography, p.60.
Dr. E.J. Tyndale Biscoe: Annual letter : Oct.26, 1901
Microfilms (CMS Archives, London).
boy saved seventy three lives out of hundred and three cases they took up.

Apart from such emergencies, the common day to day lives of the people were controlled and guided by superstition and magic. In spite of the fact that Kashmir valley is the valley of rivers and lakes, the inhabitants would never go into a river or lake or learn swimming. Eric Lyndale Bissoo writes, "Kashmir believed that lakes and waters were inhabited by malign spirits, who would certainly pull you under even if you could swim. Especially is the Wular lake at the end of the valley, dreaded because of its ghostly inhabitants." 

One summer's day a Pandit was doing his ceremonial washing on the river bank, when his foot slipped and he sat down on a piece of broken pottery. He hastily got up and began to head for home with blood dripping from the gash of his seat." This was reported as an

---

91. Ibid., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p. 206.
92. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 25.
93. Ibid., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p. 254.
The winner of Lord Hardinge's medal for the pluckiest deed of the year, is standing in the centre of the back row.
attack of a crocodile or a jinn, and for months, no-one dared to go near the river. Canon Tyndale Bisbee fought this 'terrible beast' in his usual unique way. He describes this fight, '...no one had bathed in the river for a month from fear of this new beast, so I asked the boys if they would like to kill it. They answered in the affirmative, so I called upon them to meet me at the Amira Kadal Bridge (the first bridge on Riverhelum) at three O'clock to swim right through the city, a distance of three miles, to the seventh bridge, Banja Kadal, so that this terrible beast might burst itself with swallowing so many boys and thus, they would save their city. At three p.m. punctually, 250 boys leaped into the river. The bridges and name and roofs of the houses were crowded with people to see what would happen. Of course nothing did happen, and next day the city was itself once more, for the bogey was gone. This incident may not seem to be very thrilling or exciting from today's standards, but in those days when superstition and fear of supernatural beings was a part of daily life, it must have been a great victory and a very brave deed.

94. Ibid., Qamar in Sunlight and Shade, pp 167 - 168.
The material on which we had to commence Pegging Away
Mountains were another taboo. It was a general belief that mountains are the abode of gods. It was at one of the Wular lake camp that the boys, accompanied by the Principal and his brother were first persuaded to climb a mountain. The boys were full of fear when they nearly reached the summit. So it was decided to divide the party into two groups, one led by the Principal and the other by his brother and that they should go round and trap the gods. The two groups set off in opposite directions only to be met by the other group and time the fear of the mountains was over come. Later a climb to Sahadev peak 15300 ft. became an annual affair of the school and even the girls used to climb this peak during the annual Sahadev climb. The parents unsuccessfully resisted the games and other exercises on the basis of advice given by astrologers and others who had control over the society.

95. Ibid. Fifty Year Against the Stream, p. 26. (Witchcraft was used in games often; Canon F.I.B. writes: At first witchcraft was used, in which art Kashmiris thoroughly believed and practiced, when we were playing against the other schools in the yearly tournament our opponents would bring a priest to exercise our goal." Ibid., Autobiography, p. 132.

96. Ibid. Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p. 29.

97. School logs Character building in Kashmir, p. 8

98. School logs: Still Pegging Away in Kashmir, p. 14. "The following is one of the various such letters received by the Principal of Mission School. Respected Sir,
I most humbly and respectfully beg to bring
Fight Against Immorality

The mission school provided a base for moral re-arrangement of Kashmiri society. The missionaries, fully aware of their goals and aims were prepared to rub shoulders with the evil forces that they discovered. It was by chance, that the Principal discovered that the boys crowded together were trying to see something which was in the centre of the group. "It was a book, a manuscript illustrated with the filthiest pictures I had ever seen," writes the Principal. The first action he took on discovery of the pornographic book was to make the owner eat that book before the School assembly after having consulted Dr. Arthur Heve of Mission Hospital. After this incident no boy ever brought such a book to the School. But this was not a complete fight against the evil of pornographic material that was sold in the market. Canon Lyndale Biscon went to the Chief Judge and showed him one such book and asked him to take action against this evil, and sought his permission to raid such shops with the help of the police.

\[100\] Ibid., Autobiography, p. 57.
\[101\] Ibid., Autobiography, p. 54.
A mission school master was instructed to go to such a shop and purchase one such book and remain in the shop till the police and the Principal raised it. The shop was raised and a large number of such books were recovered. Then the other shops were raided and a lot of this filthy material was recovered. The shopkeepers were arrested but were later let off with small fines. But not content with the stoppage of the sale of pornographic material, the Principal and the masters of the Mission School decided to stop this evil at its source where such material was written and printed. They soon discovered the house where these were made and prepared for marketing. After the search the culprits were brought before the court of law which gave light punishments. "Union Syndale picnic writes," although I failed to get adequate punishment for these rascals, never to my knowledge have these books been on sale again in the bazaars.

The reading books and material available in the market was purified and cleansed. It was a remarkable achievement.

103. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 67.
104. Ibid., Autobiography, p.67.

Similar accounts are recorded in Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, Fifty Years Against the Stream, C.R.E. Intelligence and School logs.
because in those days the number of publications for school boys available in the market were less than one percent of what they are now, and of which a sizeable quantity was on pornography.

Another social malady was sodomy. It was practiced in a very organized manner. Canon Tyndale Biscoe's first encounter and almost discovery was as follows: "One day a party of hooligans came on to the football ground and attempted to catch and carry off good looking boys. In the fight that ensued, the leader of the gang was knocked down and a cock was taken from him which proved to be a minute book of the Srinagar Sodomy Club in which were written the names of the officers of the Club, President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc. and of 140 pretty boys with their addresses and other particulars. I compared this list with our School roll and discovered that about half these boys were in our School and the rest in the State School". This discovery called for an immediate action and Mission School teachers prepared for this important combat. Canon Tyndale Biscoe writes, "I realized that a small army would be needed for the campaign. The police were in with

105. Ibid., Autobiography, p.50.
the devils, so until my staff and decent elder boys became handy with their fists, not much could be attempted". This need resulted in the introduction of boxing as one of the games in the Mission School. The main purpose of teaching boxing was self defence and defence of those who call for help. But the unforeseen difficulty same in the way; the boxing gloves were made of leather which the brahman must not touch. Canon Biscoe writes, "but by a lucky chance I was able to jump this obstacle (I made the boys box wearing cloth gloves) and boxing became a part of the school curriculum." Introduction of this rough game invited severe criticism both from the Kashmiri society and missionary circles in Britain. A number of reports and complaints against Canon Tyndale Biscoe and other missionaries were sent abroad. One such complaint read, "Mr. Biscoe should be told to stop teaching his boys to box, for it will only lead to prize-fighting and frequenting of public houses." Without worrying much about these

106. Ibid. Autobiography, p. 50. Similar account is given in school logs, Men in the Making in Kashmir, p. 9; CBS Gleaner, 1920, p. 232 and in several other sources.

107. Ibid. Autobiography, p. 50


opinions the Mission School masters went on with their plans and boxing became a sport as well as an instrument for self defence. To fight the evil of sodomy, maps of the city were made and the houses of strong boys were marked as 'cities of refuge' so that when boys were attacked after dark they would know where to call for help. The President of this wicked club was caught time and again till at last, missionaries could secure a sentence of two years in prison from the court in Kashmir. This sentence changed the man and on his release, he became one of the helpers of the boys and for that he had to suffer another prison term of six months without trial till Canon Lyndale bishop succeeded in securing his release. Such was the impact of moral rearmament of Mission Schools in Kashmir.

Fight against Cruelty to Animals

One of the earliest experiences of the missionaries was that what Kashmiri youth needed was not books or talks, but action, and the guiding ideal

110. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 51
111. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 54.
behind this derivation was Christ's words: 'Faith must be shown by works.' "We began by tackling cruelty to animals", writes the Principal of Mission Schools. One day when it was winter, with one to two feet of snow in the bazaar, there was an emaciated starving cow, fallen in snow, with parish dogs tearing at its hinder part and hungry crows at its eyes. The distressed animal was trying to shake off the birds. There was this ghastly sight in full view of all present—by no one took any notice of it, as it was a common sight... so I arranged that this dying cow should be saved from further torture from the dogs and crows, by putting on three guards at a time changed every three hours, until, in the morning, it panted out of its misery." This was the first act of kindness that Mission School boys in the very early days of the School, and since then hundreds of animals were rescued from pain by the boys of the mission schools. Eric Fynnie bicose writes, "Though dogs are utterly unclean to both communities, yet no one thinks of killing a mad dog. In fact one of our Brahman writers, who was the first men to take up this work (and brave work it was, too, to tackle a mad dog and kill it with only one stick)."

112. The Epistle of James Chapter II, vs. 18.
was boycotted by his neighbours.  

The first attempts in this direction were of finding starving animals and feeding them. The next step was to persuade the owners of ponies and donkeys to reduce the loads on the animals. Sometimes the boys and masters forced the owners to free the animals when gentle persuasion failed. On many occasions, little boys, unable to persuade the owner to free the animals, shared the load with the animals. Eric Tyndale writes, "Once it was started, however, the idea of kindness to animals soon spread. We find many cases where Muhammadan boys have taken the bones out of dogs' throats. This needs considerable pluck, when one remembers that these dogs are practically wild and in pain."  

The big achievement in this effort to fight cruelty to animals was that the mission school boys and staff almost forced the State Government to enact a law against cruelty to animals. The story of this confrontation and achievement in Jammu Tyndale.

114. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.70.
117. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.70.
Mrs. Cox's words, it as follows: One winter, which was an especially hard one, our guests (animals) all through the winter numbered 100. When the spring came the owners came to claim them, but we would not give them up until the owners had paid two annas per day for their lodging. To this they objected, but as possession is nine-tenths of the law we stood our grounds, and when they brought the law to bear upon us we said that we were willing to go to prison as a protest against this continued cruelty. Later on, the State added to their statute book a law to prevent cruelty to animals and appointed an inspector to see the law carried out. So quickly did the law take effect that for the last year or two, our boys have had no donkeys or other animals to feed in winter. But staff and students of mission school kept up their vigil on the condition of animals around them and reported cases of cruelty to the State authorities.

Fire Fighting and Life Saving

The other practical lesson that the missionaries taught the teachers and pupils was not

reading their books only but being available for
any help that people around them were in need of,
especially in emergencies like fire. There was
no shortage of opportunities to fight fires in
the city of Srinagar, at that time. There was no
fire station or any arrangement to fight the flames. 120
For a number of people it used to be an entertainment
for which they had to pay nothing. J. Lyonale Bisoe
describes his first experience of fire near the
School. He writes, "I was teaching my class in the
top room overhangin. the river, when I heard a
bugle call and looking up, saw a figure on the roof
of a house about half a mile away. I asked the boys
what that meant. They answered that he must be a
policeman, blowing a bugle to warn the people that
a house was on fire. The boys not being interested
went on with their writing. Within a few minutes I
saw a flame and smoke rising from the place where
the policeman was standing. I ordered the boys
to stop writing and come with me to help at the
fire, but they said that it had nothing to do with
them. They were not ' coolies' but ' safed pasha',
in other words high-ored gentlemen and they wished
to continue their lesson .... At the double, I

119. Ibid., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p.281.
120. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.57.
Disposing of the Felled Tree.

Social Service at Islamabad. Teachers and Boys Cutting and Carrying Grass.

Tree Felling by Boys at the C.M.S. High School, Islamabad.

Social Service at Islamabad. Helping in House Building.
herded them with my stick to the fire". They saw a woman who was begging five strong men to help her and to fetch water from the nearby river and save her belongings as her husband was away at that time. These men took no notice in spite of the money offered to them. For every part of water (there were no buckets in the city of Srinagar in those days 122) the man ordered his boys to fetch as many earthen pots as possible. The boys found a boat full of earthen pots. The boat was siezed and twice the cost of pots was paid to the boat man. The pots were put into service and boys carried pots full of water to the burning houses as quickly as they could. This was the first organized and corporate effort to fight fire in the Kashmir Valley. 123 Canon Biscoe writes: "This was my first experience of a conflagration in Srinagar, hence it has been indelibly written on my memory." 124.

Once the beginning was made, fire fighting and guarding the property of the fire victim became part of social service programme of the school.

121. Ibid., Autobiography, pp 57-58.
122. Ibid., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p.282.
123. Ibid., Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p.56.
The first ever fire fighting squad was formed in the Mission School. "A small manual pump and fire buckets were installed in the school and at every alarm, people used to come running to the school, for it was the only fire brigade in the city built largely of wood, with one hundred and thirty thousand inhabitants." The citizens of Anantnag bought a fire engine with their subscriptions and handed it over to the Mission School in Anantnag. For a very long time, that was the only fire engine and the school boys were the only "fire men" in Anantnag. Commenting about the attitude of the public and specially of those who suffered from the fires, Eric Lyndale Bisoe writes, "It is interesting and illuminating to note that, in all the years in which our boys have helped at fires, only once has any owner of a house offered the boys a reward. Over and over again, the boys have soiled and ruined their clothes in saving a rich man's house, and when the rich man has been asked if he would care to help the boys in renewing their clothes, he has always answered, "Most certainly not". On many occasions, our boys and masters have been insulted on the very next day, by men whose

125. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.59.
126. School log: School in Action, p.11.
houses and property they have been striving all
night to save. But the poor people who have
been helped have often expressed their gratitude
and thanks for the help that they received from
the staff and students at the time of their distress.

Canon Lyndale-Biscoe and his close
colleagues were often criticised for their revolutionary
methods of reformation. Canon Lyndale-Biscoe has once

127. ibid. Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.55.

To the Principal, CHS High School,
Srinagar 28th Feb., 1921.

Dear Sir,

I am heartily grateful to your staff
for the timely and voluntary help rendered
by them yesterday at the critical time while
my house had caught fire. The tried their
best and did splendid work whole heartedly,
which resulted in saving both of my buildings
etc., etc., Darvand Baina.

School log: Riding the storms in Kashmir, p.15.
To, The Principal,
CHS School Srinagar 17th Dec., 1932.

respected Sir

Yesterday at about 11 O’clock a fire
broke out in the centre of the town where
the population is very dense. Had the fire
been allowed to ravage continually for some
more time, there was every likelihood that
great damage would have been done to the
people and their property. I along with Sahir
Fahib were on the spot, where we became
extremely glad to see the well-disciplined
school - CHS High School, Anantnag(Islamabad),
and its boys and masters working whole heartedly
in putting out the fire, etc.
ours etc., etc.,
Faisal, Anantnag, Kashmir.
returning home after fighting a fire at a distance of two miles from his home when an elderly missionary met him and said, "Steele; where have you been?"

Mr. Steele replied, "I have been at a fire." "Did not you know," said he, "that Friday is the day for the prayer meeting?" Mr. Steele did not answer him but thought: 'suppose, my dear man, your house was on fire, and I was passing and you called for help and I had answered; 'sorry sir, but I am off to a prayer meeting.' On another occasion a leading missionary said to Mr. Steele, "Do you think that it is the duty of a Padre to go to fire? Why at the Great Fire of London the Padres went into their churches and read the Litany."

So these Christian reformers, not only had to work hard to inspire the ideals of brotherhood and fellow feeling among the citizens of Kasimir but had to struggle with some of their own co-workers who in the early twentieth century lived in the age of the Great Fire of London.

Another common tragedy in the early days of mission schools was a number of drowning incidents.

129. Ibid., Autobiography, pp. 59-60.
130. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 61.
all over the Kashmir province but particularly
in the city of Srinagar. Swimming was despised and
looked down upon as a characteristic of Danjies
(a low caste) in Srinagar by the affluent society
of Pandits and Muslims. Swimming was therefore, made
compulsory and a part of the curriculum for the
Mission Schools. Apart from a safety measure it
was to be a great means of saving life. Every year
the masters and students of mission school used to
save a number of precious lives from drowning. The
average number of lives saved by the mission school
staff and boys used to vary between six and twelve,
but in 1914 a record number of fifteen lives were
saved. But this number gradually increased. Life
savers used to be awarded a medal for their heroic
deed and the bravest of the year's list used to be
commended. Writing about one such instance the
writer of the School log for the year 1928 records
"Out of these (the life savings through the year)
is chosen the head of Ama Khar as being the bravest,
for no twice lived under a house-boat to save the boy
who was smashed out of a 'shikara' as it swung under
the prow of the house-boat. The second time Ama Khar was

successful. How many Britishers would care to live
under a house boat to save a stranger, as this boy did? 133

Mission School lays Foundations of
State Food Department

Famines were another big natural calamity
in Kashmir in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Historians record nineteen great famines 134. One famine
that was caused in 1678 because of heavy rains, resulted
in heavy loss of life. One authority has stated that
the population of Srinagar was reduced to two-fifths
of its previous size by the end of this famine 135. The
medical missionaries did a great deal of work during
it 136. The school that was started by Rev. Robert Clark
had to be closed down because of this famine till it
was again started by Rev. Boxey in 1878 in a casual
manner. He along with Mr. Wade and Dr. Daines, had
turned the school into an orphanage where 150 destitute
children were kept 137.

After these famines of the last century,
the next famine visited Kashmir in 1917 and dragged on

133. School log: Crusading in Kashmir, p. 11.
134. Ibid., The Valley of Kashmir, p. 215.
135. Ibid., The Valley of Kashmir, p. 215.
136. Reves Dr. Arthur: Thirty Years in Kashmir,
p. 302.
137. Church Missionary Intelligencer, 1876, p. 134.
for about three years. In 1916, owing to a poor harvest, the price of rice went up and thus all the prices went up. The rice and food grain trade was in the hands of private merchants who got an opportunity of making money. Writing about this man-made famine, Eric Tyndale Biscoe writes, "To give some idea of the price of commodities, rice rose to eight times its normal value, and the rice is the staple diet of Kashmiris; in fact, one might say that ninety five percent of Kashmiri food is rice. For the poor folk in the city this, of course, meant starvation. For various reasons, the State was powerless to put a stop to this terrible state of affairs. During the height of this scandal a strong Governor was appointed to the city. He really wished to put things right, but had no one on whom he could rely to carry out his instructions. It was then that the School and staff put themselves at his disposal.

Thus, the present Food and Supplies Department of Jammu and Kashmir was born out of the struggle against the man-made famine of 1917. It is worthwhile to record the details of the help and service that school masters and boys rendered to their newly appointed Governor of

138. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.61.
139. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.61.
Kashmir. Writing the school log, Canon Tyndale Birce narrates the whole incident as follows:

"In 1917 a Daniel appeared on the scene as Governor in the shape of Pt. Harinder Nath Koul, B.A., a Kashmiri who was as honest as brave... Harinder Nath Koul had come with a great scheme and that was to create a great Citizen Co-operative Society which should purchase grain from the farmers, cut out the middleman and distribute this store to the city people at a fair price.

This society was formed at once with a board of 16 directors. A Managing Committee was formed with Mr. C.K. Nadow as their President, Shankar Koul, our Headmaster, was elected on this Committee. Our old friend Mr. H. Phillips was put in as Manager of the Stores and Mr. Samuel Saxal was taken from the School staff as Executive Officer. And so this excellent scheme started, and has been going strong for the last three months, to the great relief and happiness of the citizens of Srinagar for they can purchase 'smali' (Unhulled rice) at Re. 5 Annas 8 per 'kharwar' i.e., 160 lbs., which previously was anything from Re. 16 to Re. 22 per 'kharwar'."  

Continuing the

story further Eric Lyndale Bisoe narrates, "The schools were closed. The staff were sent off to scour the valley for hidden rice barges, and compel the boatmen to bring them in. As soon as the boats began to come in the frenzied citizens fell upon them, and tore and trampled each other to get at the grain. It was therefore, necessary to tie the boats in midstream and to bring one or two purchasers at a time in small boats.

A system of ration tickets was instituted, so that no one could buy more than his needs. On one occasion the crowd at one of these rice depots was astonished to see one of our masters hold up a good silver rupee, and pitch it into the river with the remark, 'See this man? He offers me a rupee if I will give him a double ration'.

Meanwhile the Governor was taking a firm line with the profiteers. One of his punishments was to shave off half the beards of those he caught, and placing them on a donkey, facing the tail, to parade them round the city. Finally, the State took over the whole of the rice supply, buying it from the
villagers and selling it from central granaries at a fair price to the people of the city. This system of ration distribution is still in force in Srinagar. Although the masters of the Mission School rendered such a great service to the citizens of Srinagar, yet the provision store keepers and profiteers did not spare them. The common remark for the Mission School masters after this service used to be "There go the hounds of hell, let loose upon this city by Pai re Bis cose" but for this great service, the British India Government awarded Canon Lyndale Biscoe the Kaiser-i-Hind medal 1st class. He made it clear that he was receiving the medal only on behalf of the masters and students of the mission schools who had rendered such services to their fellow citizens.

Conclusion

The observations made by the great missionary Canon Lyndale Biscoe and his colleagues reflect the position which may not be termed as degrading but definitely pathetic, to which he did not look with pity or remorse but associated himself with various groups to render service to the community in

141. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 62.
142. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 62.

the name of humanity. What else could be expected of a missionary, other than touching the grass roots and attempting to eradicate the malaise that the community suffered from. If there is anything other than instruction, that can be considered as a contribution of the Mission School movement, it is both the appreciation and application of scientific methods to help the poor and ignorant common people.

THE STAFF:

When the school was started after the cholera epidemic was over in 1860, Rev. J. A. Knowles with the help of a few part-time CMS missionaries were the only members on the staff. But as the enrolment increased and subjects like Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit were included in the syllabus, the need to recruit the local Kashmiri staff was felt and a number of local teachers were taken on the staff of the first school which was started at Drugjan Mission Hospital, till it was shifted to Pateh Kadal. In the early days, it was not possible to bring any changes among the staff that joined.

143. Lyndle Bisope B.D., "Fifty Years Against the Stream", p. 1.
144. Ibid., p. 1.
the school in the beginning. But slowly and steadily, it became a practice to replace the retiring teachers by old boys who had learnt the aims and objectives of mission school education as students of the school. This practice of recruitment policy became fairly routine. Reviewing the staff after fifty years of the existence of the Mission School, Eric Lyndle Bissoo writes, 'Now, practically every member of the staff is an old boy, and it is owing to this that the school runs on oiled wheels'.

The members of the local staff were as a part and parcel of the mission school system as the students and missionaries were. They certainly joined the school to earn their livelihood but within years, they had become an integral part of the school system itself.

The only instance when the members of the staff ever revolted was when Mrs. Besant opened her school. Canon Lyndale Bissoo records '.... the next thing that happened was a mutiny in our school. Three of our staff left suddenly, taking with them three hundred boys'. But this was an

145. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 45.
146. Ibid. Autobiography, p. 77.
early stage of the mission schools in Srinagar.
During these early years of mission schools, it was customary to appoint headmasters from outside Kashmir. These teachers and the headmasters used to be converts from Hindus or Muslims and usually University graduates. Appreciating the work of the Mission School Headmaster Canon Tyndale Biscoe writes, "Our headmaster K.P. Sarcar, who was converted from Hinduism when at Calcutta University, has got all the internal workings into excellent order. No time is wasted and the masters are no longer able to take a nap even on hot days." This recruitment of senior teachers from outside Kashmir was done in order to bring in qualified teachers and those who were converts to the Christian faith so that they might be able to teach scriptures and take part in other evangelistic pursuits. But by the turn of the century, it appears that these new converts to the Christian faith and usually with University degrees from Indian Universities could not get along well with missionaries and especially with Canon Tyndale Biscoe, Canon Tyndale

Biscoe writes, 'We have not been fortunate in our school with regard to native Christians. The Headmaster who was here when I arrived eighteen years ago left my first team to join Arya Samaj. The second man, nearly worried me to death by his insulting behaviour, as I tried to act towards him as a Christian brother and he principal of the school as well. He was a Bengali Babu. The third fought with the Principal, the fifth I turned out for immorality - he was a Pathan Christian - and this last was my sixth '. It is surprising that the missionaries could not get along well or transform the Christian staff from outside Kashmir who were qualified teachers. In another instance Canon Lyndale Biscoe put a strange advertisement in the 'Civil and Military Gazette' for the post of a headmaster. The advertisement read: wanted - a headmaster for C.S. Schools in Kashmir; no one with a proud look or high stomach need apply to the Rev. C.S. Lyndale Biscoe '. This naturally upset the missionaries and Church leaders in Delhi and the Head of the Cambridge Mission in Delhi wrote a

146. Annual Letter of Rev. C.S. Lyndale Biscoe to the C.S. London, Nov.28, 1904 (Microfilm).
149. Ibid., Autobiography, p.39. Also Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p.44.
postcard to Mr. Nissee about it. But the fact remains that the missionaries could not work with Christian teachers from outside Kashmir with the result that the leadership and policy making functions remained in the hands of British Missionaries and the Mission School always had to depend for leadership on foreign missionaries. So much so that at the time of partition of the country, when the number of CMS missionaries suddenly dropped, a number of mission schools in Srinagar had to be closed down. Although the mission schools developed emancipated and enlightened leaders for the State they did not develop any locals who could be the heads of Mission School. This was the greatest drawback of the mission schools in Kashmir.

The local members of the staff were mostly old boys who used to join the School after their Matriculation. A highly qualified team of missionaries was there to teach high classes. The local members of staff who had never been to a College, with the exception of Mr. Shankar Koul, a B.A. of Punjab University, were a band of highly

150. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 35.
151. Ibid., 'Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade', p. 272.
dedicated teachers and workers. It was because of them that all social service programmes and the social reforms were attempted. There are hundreds of records in the annals of the Mission School where the teachers risked their lives for the good of the people of the city. It was through the efforts of the masters led by Mr. Shanker Koul that the first Brahman widow was remarried in 1928. After that, over a hundred widow remarriages were arranged and solemnised. Three teachers themselves married widows.

The missionaries looked after the local staff very well in spite of casual differences. Sometimes the Principal had to punish them. Such punishments were taken with a good spirit and with a sense of responsibility. Canon Tyndale Bisbee writes, "In England, headmasters punish members of the staff by dismissing them, but I found it more profitable to keep my teachers and train them to be honest and trustworthy, rather than to bring in new men who would probably be worse than those."

152. Ibid. Autobiography, p. 93.
153. School logs Crusading in Kashmir, p. 13
    A description of Pt. Nanak Chand Koul, risking his life during floods for saving trapped women and children.
dismiss. Canon Bruce sometimes imposed very strange punishments on the members of his staff. In one instance, he writes, 'When the Chastisement was over, I told the teacher that he must suffer more than the other two on account of his position. He was to march to Gilgit, a military station on the frontier 236 miles distance and carry such a weight on his back as I thought fit, so that he would have time to think over his sin and repent'.

The Mission School had made a number of provisions for the benefits of the masters. A loan fund was started in the School to help the teachers draw loans to meet their domestic needs. It was by chance that the Principal discovered that a master was being harassed by a money-lender who had been demanding his money back immediately or else he would snatch the masters house and garden. In this situation, the principal sanctioned a school loan to the teacher so that he might pay back his debts and he thus saved the teacher from the clutches of a money lender. Mr. F.C. Lucy writes in his Annual

156. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 74.
157. Ibid., Autobiography, p. 75
letter, "... there is a Loan Fund which has several thousand rupees out on loan, and which is run in order to save victims from the clutches of money lenders". Writing further, Fr. Lucy, writes, "There is the Benevolent Fund, into which all Masters have to pay a certain percentage of their wages with the benefit of drawing from the fund in cases of sickness or death, and thus rescuing them often from the life of infamy". Another Fund, the Dixon Benevolent Fund, was started in the school when the Principal learnt about the sad plight of Brahman widows. The teachers had to pay 5 percent of their salaries and the school contributed a like amount. This fund was meant for the widows of the teachers who had to lead a hard life after the death of their husbands. This fund was later turned into the staff provident fund.

The teachers had to do practically every thing in the school. "There were no subject specialists". Eric Lyndale Diseoe writes, "Every master has to be a drill instructor, he has to attend games to see that the boys are playing, and above all, each master

is a tutor of about twenty five boys whom he
must get to know thoroughly by visiting them at
home and by watching the kind of company they keep.

Paying his tributes to the members of
the staff for their cooperation and role in making
the mission school an agency of social change and
a beacon for future educators, Canon Tynadle Biscoe
writes, "Whatever we Westerners may have accomplished
could not have been done without the willing coopera-
tion of the Kashmiri staff, numbering now seventy five,
who of course know the lives and characters of the
students of the school in a way that we cannot ...Practically all the staff are old students, so we
are like a large family, bound together with many
ties. We have been in travail together, we have
fought together, we have comforted one another
in defeats, and rejoiced together in our victories
and in our joys. Hence we might choose for our motto
with truth that of the old P and O Company, "Qui
separabit" (who can separate us?).

162. Ibid., Fifty Years Against the Stream, p. 45.
163. Ibid. Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p. 262.