CHAPTER V

IMPACT OF RELIGION ON OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

Introduction

This chapter deals with the impact of Christianity on the Ao culture in general and occupational mobility in particular. It will observe how the Ao social life has been undergoing a rapid transformation as a result of introduction of a new way of life by Christianity. It will also study the influence of Christianity on individual, social, religious life and the resultant occupational mobility.

During the early part of nineteenth century some of the British colonial administrators such as T. C. Hudson (1911), J. H. Hutton (1921) and J. P. Mills (1926) made the first ethnographical account on the Naga society. Philip (1976:200) states that “Many anthropologists were shedding ‘crocodile tears’ over disrupting the age-old tribal way of life and its foundations. Probably they wanted to keep Nagaland as an anthropological ‘museum’”.

J. P. Mills studied the Ao Naga tribe and recorded their traditional way of life in origin as minutely as possible in 1926. In the Mokokchung District Gazetteers, Ghosh (1979) recorded the changes of occupational pattern of Aos from the traditional one to other modern industrial one is a significant transformation in the occupational culture among the Aos. Owing to the advent of modern education and Christianity such a tremendous change on occupation has taken place among the tribe. This account provides us the traditional way of life of
the Ao people the change has been taken place. A rapid change of culture among the Aos begins from the time when they had come into contact with the British and Missionaries in the earlier time and with the various development opportunities in the post-independence period at later stage.

Many scholars and British social anthropologists had already written about the changes that took place upon the life of the Aos from different angles and perspectives. All these writers admitted that these changes were brought by the coming of Christianity. These changes were to be noticed in every social life of the Aos. Thus the impact of Christianity on Ao culture is tremendous on individual, social and religious levels.

**Christianity**

The word ‘religion’ derives from the teachings of Jesus Christ is called Christianity. St. Thomas, one of the disciples of Jesus, was believed to have come to India in 52 A.D. and established churches in the Malabar Coast in South India.

In the 16th century, Martin Luther, a German Monk, revolted against the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and he started the protestant movement in Europe. Gradually due to doctrinal and other differences, Christianity was split into more than fifty denominations, often contradictory to one another.

In India, religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam had been flourishing long before. Other countries like China, Tibet,
Japan, Burma and South-East Asian countries also came under the influence of Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism. But the primitive tribes in Assam province who professed Animism remained untouched by any of the major Indian religions.

Missionary contact with North Eastern part of India

The nineteenth century witnessed an amazing growth of Christianity in Asia. The Khasi tribe in Assam had the privilege of being the first to hear the word of God in North East India. Philip (1973: 46) records that, “In 1812 the glorious message of salvation was brought to this people of Krishna Chandra Pal, an evangelist of William Carey, and the first fruit of Baptist missionary work in India. He was able to convert two Khasis”.

Missionary contact with the Assam

Assam became a part of the British dominion at the close of the Burman War in 1826. It was from a political officer that the idea of mission in Assam sprang up. Major Jenkins, Commissioner General of Assam was interested in missionary work among the people of Singpo and Khamti tribes in Upper Assam. He invited missionaries from Calcutta to work among the tribals of Assam. The Rev. Nathan Brown and O. T. Cutter were the first American Baptist missionaries to enter Assam. They set out from Calcutta and reached Sadiya on March 23, 1836. They planned to open school for education of native children through whom the Gospel would be propagated. More missionaries from America arrived at Sadiya for the same purpose. But due to a
tragic massacre committed by the tribals against British force at Sadiya, the Mission Centre was shifted to Jaipur.

From Jaipur the mission was shifted to Sibsagar in 1841. All the missionaries were then engaged in printing and publishing books in Assamese. At Sibsagar, two Naga boys were baptized in 1846. However, in 1858, it was once proposed to close the mission in Assam on the ground that is, was not fruitful as despite 25 years work by many missionaries there were only fifty Assamese Christians in three small churches. But Mr. Brownson persuaded the Home Board of American Baptist Mission not to withdraw mission work.

Missionary contact with the Nagas

Earlier Brownson had made a couple of tours among the Nagas. He visited them for the second time on December 21, 1839. He found them to be responsive. He decided to establish a mission among them. He moved his family to the hills on March 13, 1840 and commenced his work among the Nagas at Namsang (a village in the Tirap Frontier Division). No one was converted during his work at Namsang, though a few Nagas were converted from time to time in the Assam plains. The first convert was a Konyak Naga, named Hube, the second Naga was Longjanglepzu, an Ao from Merangkong village. These two Nagas were members of the Baptist Church at Sibsagar. The third Naga to receive baptism was Yahukonsi Sarah Caldwell and she became a member of the Nowgong Church.

Later, in 1855, two more Konyak men namely Aklong and Amali of Namsang were baptized at Sibsagar by Dr. Brown. These men
returned to their village preaching the Gospel of God. The leaders of
the village thought that the new religious teaching would create
confusion in the minds of the people and turn the village ‘upside down’.
Therefore, they exterminated the two men in order to maintain peace in
the village. Thus the Christian work among the Nagas did not progress
much at that time.

**Missionary contact with the Aos**

According to Imchen (2000: 53), Christianity was introduced
among the Aos from the plain of Assam. Several American Baptist
Mission Centres like Sadiya, Noagaon, Guwahati and Sibsagar had
been established since 1839. Sibsagar centre lies at the foot of Ao Naga
hills that, from there, the Christianity was introduced among the Aos.

In 1869, Rev. E. W. Clark came to Sibsagar to be the Missionary
of Assam and was working in the printing press and school at Sibsagar.
In the same year, he saw some Naga traders going to and coming from
Rongpur. One day a person named Subongmeren along with some
others from Dekahaimong (Molungyimchen) were seen in Rongpur and
roaming around the house of the missionary and near the school
building. Since that day Clark at once determined to go to Naga Hills
with the message of God.

In October 1871, Clark sent Godhula to Dekahaimong in order to
preach the message of God. In 1872, Godhula took with him 9 (nine)
persons down to the Dikhu river where on the 11th of November 1872,
Clark baptized them and they became the members of the Church in
Sibsagar.
On 18th December 1872, Dr. E. W. Clark made his first appearance in the hills of the Naga head-hunters. He came from Sibsagar and arrived at Molungyimchen village to exhort the people to give up the worship of their old deities, head-hunting practices and individual prowess for riches, status etc. Some leading persons feared that their prestige and honour would be vanished by the preachings of the new religion. So these persons began to oppose about the activities of the missionary at the beginning.

On 23rd December 1872, 15 persons were baptized in Molung village. This was the first foundation of a church in the soil of Naga Hills. Tajen (1984: 38) states that, "The foundation of a new Christian village at Molung was the beginning of the American Baptist Christian Mission in the fertile soil of the Nagas and this had marked the end of the old ancient era and definitely the beginning of a new era of civilization in Nagaland".

The Growth and Development of Christianity in Ao area

The Ao church was formed in 1872 at Molung village Ghosh (1979: 58). From Molung, Yajang village was established in 1885 and a church was set up in 1888. Some Christians from Molung also established Wameken in 1893.

Dr. Clark planned to locate his mission in a central place to be accessible to all the places. He purchased a land from the landowners of Mopungchuhet village. Dr. Clark transferred his headquarters from Molung to Impur in Mopungchuket. At that time five churches at the following places namely Molung, Merangkong, Yajong, Dekahaimong
and Wameken were functioning under Dr. Clark. At Impur a mission school for training of students from the Ao tribe was established. Textbooks, papers, slates, pencils etc., were distributed to the students at free of cost. At the school, the students wear dhoti and Assamese mekhela. After the classes, the students were engaged in manual works in developing the mission centre for which they were paid nominal wages.

The very first year of Godhula’s work among the Aos was blessed with success. Philip (1976: 53-54) states that, “well begun is half done is the saying. This is true of the Naga churches as a whole. But as far as the Ao church was concerned, the work was almost complete. Now there are only 1102 non-Christians among the Aos out of a total population of 59,859. God is doing mighty deeds among Nagas. This ‘people movement’, ‘group movement’, ‘village movement’ or ‘tribal movement’ among the Aos paved the way for further expansion of Christianity in Nagaland.”

A school was also started at Mopongchukei in March 1875 but it had closed down due to lack of funds. By 1888, things began to change. The church maintained weekly prayer meetings and Sunday services. The churches at Molung, Merangkong and Yajang were beginning to grow. Eight day schools were operating in different villages. The Assamese teachers incharge of these schools were actively involved in the proclamation of the Gospel. The literature work was efficiently carried out by Clark. He had mastered the Ao language, before leaving.
for America in 1885, he left a written dictionary, an Ao Primer, a hymn book and translation of the Gospels of Mathew and John.

After great difficulty and untiring labour the new mission was established. Impur, as a Christian centre, began to show its light to the Ao tribe and to over half a dozen other tribes. The church started growing. The first Association of the Ao Naga church was held at Molung on March 12 and 13, 1897.

Impact of Christianity on Ao Culture

The impact of Christianity on the Ao culture is tremendous on individual, social, economic and religious levels. The Ao people accepted Christianity as a basis of their progress. When Christ came into the lives of the individual Aos, they were completely changed. Their lives were transformed into a newer and richer life. The Ao people no more took interest in drinking rice beer. War and head-hunting disappeared. Instead of hunting heads they became people searching souls. Health and hygiene were marvelously improved. Christianity taught them about personal cleanliness. They learned a new standard of clothing instead of nakedness or scanty dress.

Christianity and education are the two sides of the same coin. The formal education and cultural contacts from the outside world caused many changes in Ao culture. Within a few years a good number of students were trained up well from the mission schools at Impur and Jorhat became the pastors, teachers, officers among the Aos. The advent of Christianity affected not only the people's perception of the world, but also brought changes in all aspects of life. Literature and
education were the main instruments to bring about this change. The most important mode of modernization of the Ao society was through the development of literature. Formerly, students were taught through gesture language and direct presentation of objects. Missionaries transcribed the Ao dialects to writing by introducing the Roman script. This was followed by the composition of some hymns, translation of the Lord’s prayer, scripture including Bible stories to be read in schools, dictionary etc. Today all the Ao people can read and write in their own language. The education is highly valued and the literacy is being increased among the Aos. Parents are now realized the value of education and send their children to school in and outside Nagaland. The superstitions and tribal festivals are replaced by Christian faith and Christian festivals. The traditional occupation is given up and people migrate to the urban areas in search of government jobs and business. Thus Christianity brought overall changes in the social life of the Ao people.

Many Aos identified the idea of progress with Christianity. Christianity was understood to be a civilized way of life compared to their former life. Missionaries began the schools in the Ao area and many of the students became Christians. Christians were the first educated ones among their people. They were employed in government services or business. Many were raised to higher positions and better opportunities, better facilities and economic development. Thus, prosperity was attached to Christianity and Ao Christians were found to be placed in high positions in different jobs.
Before the introduction of modern administration and Christianity to Ao culture the people were animist. They used to offer gifts and sacrifices to the spirits of the jungle, both benevolent and malevolent. The practice was similar to many other primitive tribes of South East Asia. Then come Christianity to these people which made many converts.

The introduction of Christianity affected the life of the Ao people in almost every aspect. Initially the village elders were totally against Christianity because they viewed this new religion as a threat to their age-old values of their forefathers. This belief was true because the Christian religion was against all beliefs and practices of the traditional religion. The traditional society of the Aos were lived in isolation for decades and was characterized by jhum cultivation and head-hunting. Every activity whether social, economic or religious of the people was regulated by the age-old beliefs and practices.

The traditional system of occupation for the Aos was agriculture (shifting cultivation). Agriculture was the main occupation for them though there were some people who besides cultivation engaged themselves in blacksmith, carpentry masonry, timber and cane works etc., as side occupation. The newly converted Christians gave up the traditional system of occupation and completely stopped some of the traditional religious practices and social activities such as head-hunting, Morung system, tattooing, tabooing, Disposal of dead body, hair cut style, genna, worshipping of gods and deities etc. It not only changed
the religious beliefs of the converts but also affected the social set up of the village.

It is true that the missionaries brought civilization, education and medicine, they also taught the people the value of education which encourage them to realize the importance of educating children. The result could be seen from the various occupations taken up by them. The children in the village are not restricted to the home or village. They have the freedom to venture out of the village in search of jobs, education and trade. They (missionaries) taught the people to live and work in the civilized ways and styles which are called modern style.

Tajen (1984: 44) states that, “Many Aos went to France as labour corps of the imperial government during the first great war 1917 and there they saw the outside world with the mighty civilization. The civilization which they had amazingly seen had increased the horizon of their vision wider and greater. After they returned home, they liked to live and do in civilized ways and manners. Many of them started sending their children to the schools in the village and Impur as well. In short the situation immediately following the great war worked in favour of effective evangelization among the people; the people came to know that it was the Christian religion which alone could increase the standard of comfort and living. In short it worked as a change of the new way of life to a new society of life.”

Next attempt will be made to observe the impact of Christianity on occupational mobility among the four generations.
### Table 12 – Grandfathers’ Occupation and Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Non-Christian</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional &amp; Administrative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial &amp; Executive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspec. Sup. (Higher)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9 (1.50)</td>
<td>9 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspec. Sup. (Lower)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9 (1.50)</td>
<td>9 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9 (1.50)</td>
<td>9 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi &amp; Unskilled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9 (1.50)</td>
<td>9 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>553(92.17)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>553(92.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Occupation</td>
<td>553(92.17)</td>
<td>47(7.83)</td>
<td>600(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 12, it is shown that out of 600 (six hundred respondents’ grandfathers. 553 (92.17%) of them were non-Christian and engaged in traditional occupation (shifting cultivation). There were 35 (5.83%) grandfathers, engaged in other type of occupations as pastor, missionary and gaonbura (village interpreter). There were 3 (0.50%) of them engaged in semi and unskilled type of jobs as carpentry, security guard, labour etc. there were 9 (1.50%) of the grandfathers were Christian and engaged in inspectional supervisory lower type of occupations as school teacher. It is shown from the table that majority 553 (92.17%) of the grandfathers were non-Christian and only 47 (7.83%) of them were Christian and engaged besides traditional occupations.
Table 13 – Fathers occupation and Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Non-Christian</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional &amp; Administrative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3(0.50)</td>
<td>3(0.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial &amp; Executive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46(7.67)</td>
<td>46(7.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insp. Sup. (Higher)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>136(22.67)</td>
<td>136(22.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insp. Sup. (Lower)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>98(16.33)</td>
<td>98(16.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53(8.83)</td>
<td>53(8.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi &amp; Unskilled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60(10.00)</td>
<td>60(10.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>109(18.17)</td>
<td>3(0.50)</td>
<td>112(18.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other occupations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>92(15.33)</td>
<td>92(15.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109(18.17)</td>
<td>491(81.83)</td>
<td>600(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 13, it is clearly shown that, there were still 109 (18.17%) of the fathers engaged in traditional occupation as their main occupation and they were non-Christian. There were 491 (81.83%) of the fathers were already converted and engaged in different types of jobs besides agriculture. Of these, 3 (0.50%) of them were engaged in professional and administrative type of occupation as doctor, engineers, lecturers etc. and 46 (7.67%) of them were engaged in managerial and executive type of occupation as managers, and section officers. There were 136 (22.67%) of the fathers were engaged in inspectional, supervisory higher type of occupations as inspector, supervisor, cashiers, etc., and 98 (16.33%) of them were engaged in lower category of occupation as typist, clerk, police constable, teacher, etc. There were 53 (8.83%) of the fathers were Christian and engaged in skilled type of jobs as mechanics, pharmacist, driver etc., and there were 60 (10.00%) of them engaged in semi and unskilled type of occupations. Among the 491 (81.83%) fathers who were already converted engaged in
traditional occupation as agriculturist and there were 92 (15.33%) of the fathers engaged in other type of occupations as pastor, gaonbura, etc. It may be observed that from the fathers’ generation, most of the Ao people were already converted as Christian and placed in other types of jobs other than agriculture.

Table 14 – Respondents Occupation and Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Non-Christian</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional &amp; Administrative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10(1.67)</td>
<td>10(1.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial &amp; Executive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>98(16.33)</td>
<td>98(16.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insp. Sup. (Higher)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>112(18.67)</td>
<td>112(18.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insp. Sup. (Lower)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>87(14.50)</td>
<td>87(14.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>93(15.50)</td>
<td>93(15.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi &amp; Unskilled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>56(9.33)</td>
<td>56(9.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40(6.67)</td>
<td>40(6.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Occupations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>104(17.33)</td>
<td>104(17.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>600(100)</td>
<td>600(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 14, with regard to the respondents occupation and religion, it is clearly shown that, all the 600 (six hundred) respondents were found to be Christians and engaged in different types of occupations. Out of 600 (six hundred) respondents, there were 10 (1.67%) of them engaged in professional and administrative type of occupation as doctor, lawyer, engineer and director in various institutions. There were 98 (16.33%) of the respondents engaged in 2nd type of category, 112 (18.67%) of them in 3rd type of category and 87 (14.50%) of the respondents were engaged in 4th type of category. There were 93 (15.50%) of them were engaged in 5th type of category as operators, electrician, lineman, laboratorian, etc. During the
grandfathers and fathers generation, when most of the people were non-Christian and illiterate they mainly depend on agriculture for their livelihood and does not require specialization and training. But these days different occupations are being transformed into professions demanding skill and standard. It may be observed that the forces of Christianity among the Aos opened new channels for occupational mobility. It is also observed that norms like personal achievement, equality of opportunities, competition, educational standard, skill, etc., have emerged in the society. There were 56 (9.33%) of the respondents engaged as semi and unskilled worker. It may be pointed out that from the respondents generation almost all the people engaged in farming are not doing the shifting cultivation (traditional occupation) but diverted to modern type of farming as piggery, poultry, fishery, vegetable, fruits farming etc. There were 104 (17.33%) respondents engaged in other type of occupation as pastor, businessmen, political leader, etc.

**Table 15 – Children occupation and Religion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Non-Christian</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional &amp; Admin-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17(13.70)</td>
<td>17(13.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>istrative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial &amp; Executive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8(6.45)</td>
<td>8(6.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspt. Sup. (Higher)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27(21.77)</td>
<td>27(21.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspt. Sup. (Lower)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11(8.87)</td>
<td>11(8.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12(9.67)</td>
<td>12(9.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi &amp; Unskilled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11(8.87)</td>
<td>11(8.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6(4.83)</td>
<td>6(4.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other occupations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>124(99.96)</td>
<td>124(99.96)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 15, in regard to the children occupation and religion it is shown that, all the 124 (99.96%) children recorded in the table are
Christians. Of these, 17 (13.70%) of them engaged professional and administrative type of occupation. 8 (6.45%) of them were engaged in managerial and executive type of occupation as manager, sectional officer etc. There were 27 (21.77%) of the children engaged in inspectional, supervisory, non-manual higher grade type of occupation as supervisor, inspector, accountant, cashier, foreman, etc. There were 11 (8.87%) of the children engaged in semi and unskilled type of occupations as peon, attendant, labour, helpers, watchmen, etc. It may also be observed that 6 (4.83%) children were engaged in different kinds of farming type of occupation such as fruits farming, piggery, farming, poultry farming etc. Majority 32 (25.80%) of the children were found to be engaged in other types of occupation besides government jobs.

Formerly there was no unemployment problem in the area because there was less educated people or those illiterate forefathers hesitate to abandon the traditional pattern of cultivation in the village. But now-a-days due to the introduction of Christianity and to the swift acculturation the educated youths, even the highly educated persons are not getting clerical jobs.

It may be mentioned here that the Aos are the most educated of all the Naga tribes and they are great in number in all the government jobs of the state and many are working outside the state. However, the problem of unemployment of educated youth is being felt gradually. Of the 32 (25.80%) Aos children engaged in other types of occupations. Majority of them have shown their desire to be employed in
government services of any kind. Only few of them wanted to do the same types of occupations. What emerges from the attitude of these workers is that none of them wants to feel insecure without a job, even if its private one and at the same time they don’t want to go back to their forefathers traditional type of occupation which is considered to be a lower occupation than their present job.

As the missionaries were carrying out their educational programme at its full swing the British government in the meantime, came to see the necessity of starting their own schools, partly for purpose of offering secular education to children, and mainly for drawing men from them for employment in their various departments. With the consent and advice of the missionaries the boys who had studied in mission schools were absorbed as pandits (teachers) in the Government Lower Primary Schools which were started in the Government Headquarters and in a few bigger villages.

From the grandfathers occupation and religion, it is clear seen that, majority of them were non-Christian and engaged in agriculture. They were mostly belong to rural agriculture based people. Due to lack of education and exposure to Christianity they continued with the agriculture only which is treated as traditional occupations in the modern society. It is also observed that, those who are converted found to be employed as school pandits, pastor, gaonbura (village interpreter) etc., but very less in number.

When observe clearly it is seen that there was a gradual but slow mobility from traditional occupations to those of modern and secular
occupations. It is seen from the fathers generation that they have slowly moved into higher position of occupational categories which were totally absent or very less in number in the grandfathers generation. From the fathers generation it could be seen that majority of them were Christian and engaged in better placed position of occupational categories comparing to their parents.

It is more than one hundred years that Christianity has been introduced in Ao area and this is the area where Christianity has been first introduced in Nagaland, rather the then Naga Hills. In this hundred years Christianity has been accepted by majority of the Aos and it has exerted a tremendous influence on them. Many of them have given up traditional beliefs and practices and have accepted education as a must. As a result of these two factors the Aos have become educationally far advanced than other tribes of Nagaland and they entered in all government departments in the state.

From the respondents generation it is clearly seen that, almost all the people are Christians and majority of them engaged in non-manual type of occupations. It is also observed that, from the respondents generation, none of the sample recorded in the present study engaged in traditional occupation as their main occupation. Thus it may be observed that there is a marked degree of increase in the rate of shift from traditional to that of modern occupations.

Christianity not only helped spread of education but also greatly reduced the habit of the people of drinking rice beer and it indirectly helped progress of education. As a result of this, the Aos have
progressed much in the sphere of education and they have occupied many high posts of the Government of Nagaland.

Conclusion

When the Aos became Christian, the Christian missionaries and the newly converted local Christian leaders wanted to bring a marked change in the Christian society. Now to distinguish themselves from the non-Christian community, the Christian leader wholeheartedly devoted themselves for the upliftment of the people. It was through their hard work and sacrificing spirit that their aims and visions were fulfilled to a great extent.

In order to spread the Gospel of Christ the Christian leader took all the converted Christian men and women, and preached the Gospel in words and in deed. In those days as the number of newly converted Christians was very few, it was difficult for them to construct their church building by themselves. The Christian leaders with the help of all the newly converted Christian, irrespective of their village, status and position, unitedly struggled for the spread of Christianity and extended their mission. This attracted the attention of all sections of the people and as a result of which the spread of Christianity was so rapid that within a short span of time majority of the people became Christians. With the coming of Christianity there is a tremendous change in the Ao society. The way of life of the Ao people, while adopting itself to a new environment, has resulted in a steady emergence of a new social pattern.
It may be observed that, before the advent of Christianity the Aos were cent per cent illiterate and moreover there was no written language of their own. In order to sow the seed of education in the midst of darkness, the most devoted missionary, Dr. Clark left behind him an Ao English Dictionary and a few books in the Ao language for use in the school. Thus the indigenous system of communicating their views through oral communication was replaced by the written form through the sincere efforts of the Christian missionary. The formal education in the Ao society thus came into existence.

The utmost sincerity and sacrifice of the missionaries have increased the literacy standard among the Aos. It may be mentioned that today, many Aos have gone to different parts of India and abroad for various other higher studies such as Engineering, Medicines, Theology, etc. It is observed that the Aos now have become very much interested in the diversified fields of education. Today the Aos are the most educated of all the Naga tribes and they are most numerous in all the government jobs of the state. Besides, there are many Ao contractors and businessmen. Their incentive to this grown through the efforts of the missionaries who dedicated for the removal of mass ignorance.

In the pre-Christian era the dormitory system played an important role in the Ao society. Dormitory system was closely associated with the traditional way of life. Thus, till the grandfathers generation, most of the Ao people were illiterate and engaged in agriculture. But with the coming of formal education and Christianity the importance of this
system has become almost non-existent. Today the Christian organizations like the church, the school and the hostel have become the substitutes for the traditional dormitory system.

In the past the Aos were known as a head-hunting tribe. In the midst of inter-village feuds the one who could take the enemy’s head was regarded as a capable and brave man. But with the coming of Christianity this habit became extinct. Due to preaching of the Gospel of Christ the people changed their minds and that removed the deep rooted traditional practice.

Drinking of rice beer was considered as one of the unavoidable items in all the affairs and events – beginning from day-to-day life up to all the important feasts, festivals and ceremonies. But with the coming of Christianity drinking of rice beer was forbidden. The church strictly prohibited alcoholic drinks, and tea was introduced as a substitute for rice beer. The Aos had many indigenous feasts and festivals, almost every month. But with the coming of Christianity many traditional festivals have given up and now they are observing Christmas and New Year along with the traditional festivals like Moatsu and Tsungremmong.

Before their conversion into Christianity their belief and faith were connected with sacrifices and rituals and these were generally followed by a series of feasts. Those beliefs and practices, sacrifices and costly feasts etc., had been abolished by the people themselves after their conversion into Christianity.
Most of the traditional forms of economic activities which created reciprocal relationship between the group of neighbours or kins are now dying out step by step. The practice of locally made artifacts such as pots and hoes, obtained from craftsman is increasingly being replaced by purchase of machine made kitchen and agricultural implements from the market place for cash.

The traditional society of the Aos were lived in isolation for centuries and was characterized by jhum cultivation. Agriculture was the main occupation during the grandfathers generation and they were tied to its village origin. But it is clearly seen that, from the respondents generation, almost all the people are highly educated, converted and employed in high placed jobs. Thus the data presented in the preceding tables it is evident that Ao culture of today is much different from what it was only half a century ago. Within this period almost the whole of the Ao population has become Christians.

It has already been stated that the most important factors triggering in change in the Ao society are Christianity, formal education, contact with the outside world, particularly after the first great war in 1917 (many Aos went to France as labour corps of the imperial Government) and saw the outside world with mighty civilization.

Thus, it is observed that the introduction of Christianity among the Aos has changed the traditional system of Ao culture. Many Ao people shift from rural areas to urban areas and giving up of the traditional profession and search of employment and other occupation.