RELIGION OF THE BOROS
AND
THEIR SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSITION

CHAPTER III
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IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE BOROS

The Christian missionaries made a unique contribution towards the early creation of written Boro language and pave the way for its growth and development in the subsequent years. In the early part of 19th century the Christian missionaries came among the Boros to preach Christian religion and undertook some benevolent works for the elevation of humanity with a view to attract people towards Christianity. The missionaries also played a significant role in the backward tribal societies by bringing about changes in their socio-economic and cultural lives.

Towards the close of 18th century the East India Company having established itself as a paramount power in India, followed a policy of neutrality, as “in the matter of religion the natives of India were peculiarly sensitive.” So, William Carey, the first British missionary was prohibited from preaching when he arrived in Calcutta for the purpose. He was compelled to make Serampur his head quarter under the Danish flag. The Charter Act of India, 1813, permitted the missionaries to reside in the Company’s territories under certain conditions. This resulted in the advent of the missionaries in India from England and America.
SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY:

On request of the Magistrate of Sylhet William Carey deputed Krishna Pal, his earliest convert to North East India for the spread of gospel. Krishna Pal started his missionary work in Goalpara and Kamrup. In 1829 James Rae set up a branch of the mission at Gauhati, under the patronage of David Scott, Agent to the Governor General, North East Frontier. In 1834 soon after the assumption of the agent to the Governor General, Francis Jenkins wanted to pacify the Kamties and Singphos who continued to disturb the tranquility of the frontier, by spread of gospel. On his invitation to American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Rev. Nathan Brown and Oliver T. Cutter reached Sadiya with their families and with a printing press on 23rd March 1836. In 1841 Nidhi Ram, the first Assamese, was converted to Christianity at Jaipur and he was followed by Bati Ram, Ramsing and Kalibar. In 1838 they brought Gauhati mission in their hand. In 1914 Rev. G.K. Campor was deputed to Darrang district to work for the American Baptist Mission. It was felt that it would be easier to preach the gospel among the Boro Kocharies at the foot of the Bhutan hills in the northern tract of Brahmaputra valley. The simplicity of their behaviour and lifestyle, and also the bulk of their population attracted the missionaries to work among the Boro Kocharies of this tract.

"Freed from religious prejudices, the Kocharies at the foot of the hills north of Kamrup and Darrang were found apparently ready for receipt of the gospel. Barkar is reported to have made several
excursion among this tribes and had discussion on the subject with those who came to Gauhati church.”

Rev. E.W. Clark writes, “I note first a large body of Cacharies or Kocharies who constitute an important element of the population of the north side of the Brahmaputra River in Assam and said to extend nearly Darjeeling. The Kocharies are allied to Garos in language and belong to the aboriginal races of India, which have been found much easier to Christianize than the Hindu, Mohommedan, or Buddhist. Where Cachari community lived many years alongside of Assamese Hindu and mingled with them, they frequently take on something Hindu faith and caste also acquire a limited use of the Assamese language. Though ruder and less cleanly in customs and dress than Assamese they are said to be more truthful and honest. I understand that in the later years a few of this people have been baptized into the membership of the Gauhati Baptist Church. Possibly these conversion are an intimation from the lord that we should enter the field and cultivate it.”

The activities of the Christian missionaries among the Boro Kocharies have significance in the social development of Boros. But no enquiry has been made into the attitude of the missionaries towards Boros, among whom they worked. So answers to some important questions have to be found out. With what object in view did the missionaries come to the Boros? Were they successful in their mission? How far were the missionaries responsible for the transition in the Boro society? These are some important point to be examined.
ROLE OF MISSIONARIES:

Various denominations of Christian missionaries came among the Boros with missionary zeal. The various missionary denominations, which came among the Boros, are as follows.

The American Baptist Missionaries were the first to come into contact with the Boro Kocharies. After the establishment of a centre at Gauhati in 1843 they started a Boarding school in the year 1846, where a few number of Boro pupils were admitted. Out of them a people named Apentha from the Jhargaon village of North Kamrup was baptized in 1849 at Gauhati Church. However, the American Baptist mission was concentrated mainly on the Garos and in 1965 they entrusted the Australian Baptist Missionary society to work among the Boros. The Australian Baptist Mission in turn handed over the task to local management and since than the Boro Baptist mission in Goalpara has been known as the Goalpara Baptist Church Union. The villages like Bamungaon (1917), Tukrajhar (1929), Haraputa and some more villages came under this mission.

The Anglican Church. Mr. Hessel Mayor who belongs to Anglican Church came to Tezpur for the spread of gospel and established the S.P.G. society. The S.P.G. worked among the Boro Kocharies in and around Tejpur. Rev. Sidney Endle was deputed by the society for the propagation of gospel and he arrived at Tejpur in the year 1864. By that time a number of Boros had already been converted to
Christianity. Rev. Endle was successful in establishing a full-fledged Church at Bengnabari near Harisinga. The Mission was established in 1841. “In 1881 Rev. J.P. Smitheman and S. Endle were the missionaries assisted by three preachers, ten Christian teachers and ten non-Christian teachers. The native Christians numbered three in 1851; seventy in 1861; one hundred and thirty in 1871; and two hundred and ten in 1881. In the latter years there were thirty five communicants, four adult baptism and two congregations.”

The Indian Home Mission Society: Lutheran Missionaries: The Indian Home Mission Society had established a colony in Goalpara district and did most interesting and prosperous work among the Santals. In 1863 Rev. L. Skrefsruds arrived in India and dedicated his work among the Santals. In 1880 an agricultural colony or Christian settlement was established in dingdinga area of Western Assam, by emmigrating quite a number of Santal families from Bengal. It became successful. The colony contain several hundred Christians and a Church was built to accommodate one thousand people and schools were opened.

The missionaries also came into contact with neighbouring Boro villages and invited them to the Church. As early as 1887 a good number of Boros accepted gospel and came to the Church. By 1922 the number of converts among the Boros increased and centers were opened at Gaurang (near Kokrajhar), Bongaigaon and Parkijuli in Kamrup.
Rev. Holger Winding, a missionary from Denmark working for Santal mission to the Northern Churches (S.M.N.C.), was joined by Rev. Aksel Khristiansena, who came to India in 1927. Then Holger Windings independently worked on Santal mission and Aksel Khristiansena took independent charge to run the Boro Church. As a result the Gaurang district was formed in 1929, and after the arrival of Norwegian missionaries Andres Malme and his wife Else Malme Gaurang district was divided into two districts- Bongaigaon and Gaurang. And in 1958 they were named as Northern Lutheran Church.

The Presbyterian Church of Scotland: The Scottish Presbyterian Church, which began its work among the Nepalis of Darjeeling, by 1870, gradually extended its service to the Boros of Duar areas. They entered among the Boros, learned Boro language and propagated the gospel. They established a centre at Panbari to carry out the missionary work. They did extensive work among the Boros of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal and initiated a number of them to their religion. “The names to be remembered for their pioneering work among the Boros of Jalpaiguri district are Ranglal Narzari and Rev. Jitnal Narzinari.”

The Roman Catholic Church: Though late the Roman Catholic missionaries began their work in Assam under the initiative of two catholic priests Fr. Stepen Cacella and Fr. John Gabral in the year 1893. Initially they concentrated their work on the hills tribes and could not pay attention to the plains of Assam due to lack of
personnel. By 1928 Fr. Piaseski was invited to Udalguri by some Boros, where he baptized them. From 1933 two missionaries Fr. Alessi and Fr. Ravalico carried out their work among the Boros of Darrang district. It was by that time that Beha Basti of Kamrup and a few families of Kumarikatha came to the Catholic faith.

In Kokrajhar district first Catholic community was established at Nandorbari village. At the invitation of Phulsing, a Boro leader, Fr. Scunderi visited them and received them and received them into the Catholic Church. An orphan young man, named Gendra Champramari of Bengtol was sent by Phulsing to Guwahati, where he was baptized. Then he was given training at Tezpur (1934-45). After that he became main instrument of Fr. Morengo (new Bishop, Morengo) in pursuing evangelical work among the Boros. The villages, Digholdong, Ranisundri, Patgaon, Jolaigaon, Dangdupur and in Kamrup, Kalajhar, Bogriguri etc. received the Catholic faith.

Barpeta was detached from Guwahati and a new centre was opened at Barpeta in 1936, and a Boarding school was opened at Barpeta to train in Christianity. New missions were opened in 1966 and at Saraibil in 1972, and then followed by Gossaigaon, Dotma, Basbari, Bongaigaon, Ballamguri and Kokrajhar.

In Darrang district the Parish of Tangla was opened in 1951 and mission was established at Udalguri in 1966. Today they have also centers at Mongoldoi, Ambagaon, Rowta, Dimakuchi and Masbat.\footnote{11}

The relationship between the missionaries of different denominations seems to be close outwardly, but all of them are
independent and have very little co-ordination among themselves. Very often they do not hesitate to criticize one another in the matter of functioning. The differences between denominations prevent the Christian missionaries from acting as united force in Kokrajhar region. The denominational difference, especially between the Protestant groups and the Catholic faith, is reflected even in school administration. The students of other sect of Christianity in missionary schools do not enjoy the concessions, which are enjoyed by the students of the same denomination, which runs the school.

MISSIONARY OBJECT:

"Christianity is a life. God alone is its author. Its birth and its development however are subject to the condition depending largely upon the will and the activity of man."\textsuperscript{12}

The missionaries believed that Christianity is the only way to enter heavenly kingdom of god. The religious belief and practice of the Indians were responsible for their degradation. Therefore, the simple remedy was that the Indians should be converted into Christianity, which, to the missionaries, was the only true religion of the world.

The missionaries were destined to succeed in propagating what they believe as the part of a divine plan. It was not a question of belief to them but fulfillment of divine duty.\textsuperscript{13}
To achieve the goal they adopted certain method of mission work. The first and foremost among this method was that of preaching.

METHODS OR GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF MISSION WORK.

1. **Preaching**: The first and chief aim of the missionaries was to spread the gospel to every man and woman. The proclamation of the good news of salvation was their first duty. They were to show the way of escape from sin and its resultant death to life to every creature man or woman. They first approached the high rich and wise people as they felt that if these men with all their position, wealth and abilities could be converted, it would be more fruitful than the conversion of many ignorant mass people. They were however determined to preach Christianity everywhere in towns, along the river's banks, in villages, in the hamlets, on the hills and in the valleys of mountains, to a few or to many as they had opportunity.

2. **Persuasion**: The missionaries would neither argue nor dispute. In his younger missionaries days Dr. Clough used to argue much to prove the absurdities of the Hindu *Shastras*, but the result was reverse. He succeeded in making many of them very angry. They realized that argumentative preaching would not convert. So missionaries started to hold up Christ in all his beauty and loveliness. They persuaded people by showing love.
When people tried to escape from sin or misery missionaries were their friends and they wished to do them good.

3. **Charities**: By the principle of charitable relief and care for the sick the missionaries tried to gain the attention, sympathy and good will of the people. Good hospitals do not fail to have respectable influence. So each missionary, more or less embarks on charitable work.

4. **Teaching**: Along with the work of conversion to Christianity, the missionaries planned to teach the people for different professions. They were to instruct all grades and talents, all kind of gifts. They wanted to train them, not simply to be a preacher of the gospel but also as schoolteachers, translators, printers, proof readers, carpenters, tailors, cooks etc. They also trained for other important works, necessary in every walk of life for their service. And for that Missionaries needed patience and perseverance.

5. **Character**: One of the most important principles of the mission work was to cultivate a blameless and harmless character. “Character speaks louder than sermons and far shines the highest education.” So they were to be too careful to control themselves under all circumstances and to show in all their conduct a Christ like love.

**Sunday Schools**:\(^{15}\) The missionaries took very active part to impart education among the converts. They opened Sunday schools and taught to go to Church and to learn etiquettes, manner etc. related to
Church and prayer. Sunday school boards were constituted to run Sunday school. A body to inspect the function of school board was formed.

The missionaries believed that the Christianity would become a self-developing force. So they tried to educate their converts who in turn convert their fellowmen. Besides, with a view to attract all section of people towards them, missionaries opened educational institutions to impart the best education. The missionary schools of Gaurang (now provincialised), Tukrajhar (now provincialised), Bengtol, Gossaigaon, Dotma and Kokrajhar stand among the best educational institutions in Kokrajhar district.

IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON BODO LANGUAGE:

Boro language is the most important of the languages of the Tibeto-Burmese language group in Assam. This language is spoken in the Brahmaputra valley, Cachar district and in the Jalpaiguri district of west Bengal. Apart from the area mentioned above a small group of Boros are also found in other localities, e.g. Nepal, Bhutan, Garo Hills, even in Pakistan (Bangladesh). It was thought that the Boro Language prior to the arrival of the missionaries would gradually disintegrate and fall into disuse under the impact of dominating Aryan language. By that time a substantial adoption had been taking place. The adult male population of the tribe was wholly bi-lingual and it not only had impact on the Boro language but many terms from Hindi, Bengali, Assamese languages were being
adopted and partly assimilated according to the phonetic rules of the languages. Even the structure of the language had slowly been changing under the influence of the dominating medium of speech. Apart from that many had given up their mother tongue completely. As a result, local variation in Bodo dialects became wider due to the influence of other languages.

In such a state of affairs some missionaries came forward to have scientific study on Boro language along with the spread of gospel. Whatever motive might be there behind such noble purpose, it cannot be denied that the Christian missionaries had unique contribution in consolidating the very foundation of Boro language and literature. Now, whether or not the creation of written Boro language and literature by the missionaries was connected with their main object of conversion or the conversion of the Boros to Christianity, as there sole occupation needs to be examined.

MISSIONARY URGE FOR LITERARY WORK:

"Assam Mission Paper: We regard it as fundamental rule that all classes must hear their own tongue the wonderful work of god. We see no reason to the Assamese on exception."

In case of Hills and Plains tribes they adopted the same principle. The principle was that, gospel must be preached in their own tongue. But in order to check the multiplication of language the missionaries avoided work on less important dialects. But it was found that they had paid special attention to great tribes such as
Nagas, Kookies or Kocharies, those who gave special promise of receiving gospel. So it became necessary for missionaries to learn and develop the local dialect in a scientific way in order to make it suitable for spreading the gospel and also for the Bible translation work.

According to Bronson “Kocharies in the Bhutan frontier have become less trained with Hindu superstitions. Moreover, a number of Kochari chiefs, living on the Bhutan frontier, had been to Tezpur, and requested missionaries to established schools among them. For that reason the missionaries undertook to learn and develop Boro Kochari Language, which is spoken by a large population in the northern tract of Brahmaputra Valley on the foothill of Bhutan and also in a part of Jalpaiguri district of North Bengal. According to H. Halvorsrud, “Boro Kochary is the most important of the languages of the Bodo sub-divisions of the Tibeto-Burmese language group. The number of people speaking this tribal tongue in the Brahmaputra valley and Cachar district and in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal are estimated at about 3,00,000 possibly 4,00,000. Apart from the area mentioned, small group of Boros are found in other localities e.g. Nepal, Bhutan, Garo Hills etc. and even in Pakistan”(present Bangladesh). But the actual figure might be more than the estimated figure in the year 1959. Secondly, through the Kocharies Darrang district the missionaries wanted to have an access to Bhutan hills for gospel work. Because, thousands of Bhutanese came down to those Kochari villages for trade, in the cold season. Rev. E.W.Clark expressed, “The Bhutanese are pretty stiff Buddhist and might be slow to receive gospel, yet it
should be faithfully presented to them. Christ has made it duty of his disciples to preach the good news of his kingdom to every creature."^{20} 

Thirdly, physical structure of the Boro Kocharies attracted the Europeans to use them as labourer in tea gardens. E.T. Dalton writes about the Kocharies, "They are in comparison with the average run of the people of the plains, their neighbours, a fine athletic race, industrious and thriving of light olive complexion and rather strongly marked Mongolian feature."^{21} According to Capt. Butler, "The Kocharies who resides at the foot of the hills are the most useful and industrious as well as the most athletic man in Assam and allowed to be the best cultivators." The fact is supported by Endle's remark in the preface of the *An Outline Grammar of Kochari language*, "A further reason for at once publishing the Outline Grammar, in spite of many short comings, is supplied by the desire to have a manual of this kind for the use of managers of tea factories etc."^{22} He further said, "If they are not to be easily driven, they can be easily led; and undoubtedly one of the most powerful influences which employer can bring to bear upon them is to be found in a command of their national form of speech to which they are strongly attached."^{23} Thus it cannot be denied that the missionary urged of the study of Boro language was the outcome of their necessity.

MISSIONARY WORK ON BORO LANGUAGE:

In 1884 Rev. Sidney Endle pioneered the creation of written Boro language by his book *An Outline Grammar of Kochari*
Language: as spoken in the district of Darrang. As a result, the Boro language got written form for the first time and paved the way for giving shape to the present Boro language and literature. *An Outline of Grammar of Kochari Language* was confined to the dialects of the Boros of Darrang district only and the book also contained a few Boro folk tales and stories both in English and Boro language. Thus it is regarded as a book grammar as well as of literature.

After Endle, Rev. L.O. Skrefsrud wrote *A Short Grammar of the Mech or Boro Language* in 1889. The book studied the Boro dialects comprising several localities and gave them grammatical forms.

Besides that some great works such as, Specimens of Languages of India by Sir G. Cambell, Linguistic Survey of India by Grierson and the Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal by Dalton extended good contribution towards the study of Boro language, culture and history.

But the British and Foreign Bible Society of Calcutta made a great effort to translate the Bible in pure Boro language. The remarkable point of this book was that only pure Boro words were used in writing that book. (In the cover page of the Book it was written British aro Baibel Sosaitinifrai: 23 November, Saurangi Road, Ongkharbai 1913 and in the second page the gospel according to St. Luke in Kochari-Mech Boro First Edition 1000, 1913.)

The missionaries also tried to introduce Boro textbook in the primary level of school. With this aim in view they published books viz, Gothoni Lekha in 1951; Boroni Phopraigra Bijab (for class I) and Foraiganoi Bijab (for class II), in 1952. But it failed to draw the attention of mass Boro people. So reading of those books was confined in the Sunday schools and adult school of the missionaries. From 1890 to 1830 most of these schools used Roman script as medium of writing but latter on it was replaced by Assamese and Bengali script.25

Now it is obvious that demand for the introduction of Boro language as medium of instruction in primary and secondary level in 1960’s and Roman script movement in 1970’s were not the new origin, but the missionaries had sawn the seeds some decades ago. The missionary activities directly or indirectly encouraged the
enlighten Boro people of that time to work for the uplift of their language and culture. And a section of people became a strong supporter of using Roman script for Boro language and literature, which gained momentum since 1970’s with the support of young generation.

EXTENT OF MISSIONARIES SUCCESS:

If we judge from the viewpoint of their main object of conversion, the missionaries could not make much headway with Boro mission. The Christian missionaries who achieve grand success on hills tribes of North East India, in conversion work, could not accomplish much on the Boros. They were successful to convert only a small minority of the bulk Boro population. According to census report of 2001 the total number of Christians in Kokrajhar district are 90413 persons only (including Santal, Boros, Ravas and other tribes). The reasons of their failure on Boro mission are obviously clear:

I. Long before the advent of missionaries the Boros had come into close contact with Hinduism. The traditional Bathou religion of the Boros had gradually been influenced and came closer to Hindu Religion. The Hindu belief was so deep rooted among the Boros that it was not easy to change their mindset.

II. Since 19th century the Vaisnavite movement, inaugurated by Sri Sri Sankardev, converted different tribes like
Boros, Chutias, Mikirs, Rabhas etc. into *Ek Saran Nam Dharam* of Hinduism. When the missionaries arrived in Assam, the process was still going on. Many from the indigenous tribes of Assam became *Sarania* after accepting the religion and merged with mainstream Assamese.

III. Since the beginning of 20th century Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma had been preaching *Brahma dharma* among the Boros and brought many reforms in the Boro society. The spread of Brahma dharma stood not only as barrier for missionaries, but some newly converted Christians came back to Brahma religion.27

IV. One of the most striking factors of not accepting Christian religion, even today, is the matter of beef eating. Under the influence of Hinduism the Boros regard cow as holy creature. So eating beef is considered as committing sin.

V. The missionaries came to the Boros when the Brahma religious movement gained momentum among the Boros. Christianity could not make much headway as it was considered an alien religion.

Under such circumstances the Christian missionaries had to remain satisfied with their moderate success. But they did not give up the work of gospel and the missionary works are still carried on. New
missionary schools, Churches have come into existence within last few years in the Boro dominated areas.

IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE BORO SOCIETY:

Although the missionaries gained very little success in spreading Christianity among the Boros, their activities made an impact, which was felt throughout 20th century. The amount of energy and resources, which was spent for the service of humanity, was much higher than their success. The period was marked as enlightened awakening and zeal for creative activities among the Boros.

As a result of the spreading of Christianity among the Boros, the Boro Christians came out of the traditional Boro society and found the formation of new Boro-Christian society. The Christians gave up old customs and rituals without changing the basic norms and values. This division of society, though not very strong, stood as barrier in between two societies in the matter of matrimonial relation and socio religious activities. But despite the barrier felling of nationality remain the same in both the societies.

The Christian Villages: The socio-religious network in the Christian villages has considerably changed even though they still retain some of their old character. Most of the Christian villages have their own Church or Girja but where the member of converts is small they go to some neighbouring villages for their Sunday Church prayer. The Church is the smallest unit of religious and social administration
headed by a pastor. He conducts the Church prayer on Sunday and other religious activities. He is also regarded as leader of the village in social, religious functions and other affairs in a Christian village. Besides the Pastor a Christian village has its own village council or *Affat* where elderly persons meet to settle disputes and discuss the various problems of the village to find out device for solution. However, organization and mode of function slightly differ from one denomination to other.

**Christian Beliefs:** The Christians believe in Trinity; God the father, God the son, manifested in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The Catholics believe and offer prayer to Virgin Mary and a number of Saints who are gifted with different type of power. The converts are taught scripture from the Bible, Prayer books etc. and literal model if the socio-religious conduct and behaviour. A child of the convert Christian family is encouraged to learn and stories of the Bible from the very childhood and right from then he participates in the rituals like confession and holy communication, prayers and Bible reading etc. In protestant groups a child is not allowed to have sacrament until he comes of age for confirmation.

**Festivals and Religious Observances:** The Boro Christians have abandoned all traditional festivals, like religious, seasonal and agricultural. Not to speak the religious festivals like *Kherai puja* and *Garja puja* but they have also abandoned the popular seasonal festival *Baisagu* (spring festival) and the important agricultural festival
Domashi, the harvest festival of the traditional Boro society. On the other hand, they, with special pomp and grandeur observed Christian festivals like Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, etc. conforming to the universal Christian faith.

It may be referred the tribal Christian of Banswara in South Rajasthan still observe some of their indigenous festivals, in modified form to suit the Christian needs. They observe Orwani (ploughing the field), Katni (harvest festival), Gayon Ka Tiyor (cattle festival) by arranging special Church session instead of offering prayer to indigenous deity. On Diwali festival converts colour their cattles and decorate them with flower. But unlike the tribal Christian of Banswara, Boro Christian do not observe indigenous festivals except offering general prayer in the church.

**Institution of Christian Marriage:** The Christianity brought about a significant change in the institution of Boro marriage. The religion plays more important role in a Christian marriage than the social customs. A Christian marriage takes place in the church because it is considered as religious union of the two persons and cannot be dissolved unless either of the two dies. In the catholic sect of Boro Christians a pre-marriage counseling is arranged for two weeks, the boy or the girl does not posses adequate knowledge about the significance of conjugal life in Christian faith. After that a catholic father conducts the marriage in the Church. In other denominations like Baptist or Lutheran Pastor or Bishop performs the function of marriage in the Church.
Unlike the traditional marriage where the choice of the parents and relatives is given priority, in Christian marriage the individual choice or consent is must. Before they get married in the Church the girl and the boy are required to give their consent before the religious priest that they will marry each other. But in practice it is also seen that at times Boro parents or relatives force their boy or girl to give consent against his or her will. Christianity does not allow the practice of polygamy or polyandry. The Boro Christian marriage leaves very little scope for the social practices and other obligations except the wedding ritual. Though Boro converts still follow some of the pre and post marriage customs of traditional society in modified manner, they are neither significant nor compulsory. 30

**Contribution to Boro Society:** The spread of Christianity among the Boros has brought some remarkable changes in their pattern of living, custom and belief and values. It was through Boro Christian society that some of the western values and culture came among the Boros, which enabled them to evaluate their own culture and society. It also resulted to the transition of Boro society from tradition to modernity to some extent.

The activities of missionaries directly or indirectly freed the indigenous people from certain superstitious beliefs and practices. As for example, when epidemic disease broke out in a village it was thought to be the act of an evil spirit and they tried to propitiate the spirit by sacrificing chicken or goat. But with the arrival of missionary doctors, people could realize the cause of diseases and gave up blind
The missionaries established dispensaries and provided medical treatment to the backward people. The Boro converts were taught how to maintain cleanliness, health and hygiene and were encouraged to pursue western education and to become self-reliant. These activities of the Christian missionaries made an impact on the Boro society as a whole.

The missionaries' contribution in the field of education cannot be underestimated. They erected schools and imparted education in backward Boro areas, when there were hardly any institutions even in the, so called, developing Boro areas. Although liquor or other intoxicating things are being used by the Christians of some other parts of North East India, the missionaries prohibited their use in the Boro Christian society, either at home or in ceremonies.

SUMMARY:

Judging the facts, it can be stated that in spite of failure of the missionaries, in their effort to Christianize the Boros as a whole, they made a lasting contribution towards the social development of the Boros. Along with the gospel the missionaries also initiated a broad based programme by setting up educational institution, hospitals and by undertaking some welfare measures.

The contribution of the missionaries to the Boro language and literature is worth mentioning. They showed a new direction to the already disintegrating Boro language in the early part of 20th century.
The missionaries penetrated into such interior place where no government’s welfare measures had ever reached.

Though European missionaries are no more in this land, yet various Christian organizations are still active among the Boros with Benevolent programme like imparting modern education, helping the needy persons through hospitals and other services including the work for spreading the gospel. The process of conversion to Christianity is still going on in Boro areas although in snail’s pace.
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