CHAPTER-V
MISSIONARIES' VERNACULAR EDUCATION¹ AND PEOPLE'S REACTION

The close association between religion and education has been a common phenomenon in all societies, until the predominance of secularisation in modern ones. The corresponding affinity between these two sub-systems of society and even the dependence of the educational one on the religious is not surprising. The earliest teachers in society were first the medicine-men, later education became more formalised with Brahmins and monks being teachers and eventually education was institutionalised in ashrams and monasteries.² Similarly, education formed an essential part of the missionary programme, and for the most of the colonial period the missions were almost the only agency for education among the depressed classes and tribes. The effect of this educational activity is reflected in the contrast between literacy and educational programmes among Christians as opposed to non-Christian members of these communities³.

Although it has frequently been argued by historians that the missionary policy throughout the period under study has been confined strictly to proselytisation or conversion; missionaries' pioneering effort in the growth of printing technology, literature, education, Tamil culture, its society and religion etc., need to be re-located within the broader historical discourse. Undoubtedly, initiatives made by the missionaries in this endeavour opened up new vistas for a considerable change in the

¹ John Murdoch, a missionary scholar observed that: “Next to the care of religion, the thorough acquisition of native language is, perhaps, the most important duty of a missionary. His great commission is to preach the gospel. It is evident that it would be sheer mockery to address in English a crowd of villages who know nothing but Tamil. It would be little better to speak to them professedly in their own language.” See John Murdoch, The Indian Missionary Manual, Oxford University Press, 1864, p.55; According to Miron Winslow, a missionary writer: “Since 1842, the gospel has been directly preached in Tamil by converted Hindus to their country men, steadily at Madras, and periodically at all the out stations of the missions....” See Miron Winslow, Hints on Missions to India, M. W. Dodd Publication, 1856, p. 130. However, Samuel Jayakumar, a missionary scholar opined that: “Right from the outset conversion depended upon preaching gospel in the language of the natives. Then the missionaries had to promote vernacular literacy among the depressed classes by establishing Schools and translating and printing books, pamphlets and Bibles so that they could read them.” See Samuel Jayakumar, Missionary Reader, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, London, 2002, p. 225.


lives of the people in colonial Tamil Nadu. Missionaries' writings were on the cultural past of common people in the vernacular language viz., Tamil, instead of writing on kings, queens, warriors, and battles, etc. They turned their attention towards the depressed classes and studied their way of life, culture, behaviour, religion, standard of life, and society.

The beginnings of Protestant missions to India in the eighteenth century were indeed small and not effectively supported by the East India Company, when not actively opposed by it. In due course, missions' attitude was against government policies particularly economic policies and religious neutrality etc., and thus led to the British East India Company's refusal to tolerate missionary activity for a considerable period of time. This was mainly due to their suspicion that the missions held radical political views.

Missionary writings on the components of traditional society such as sati, widow system, child marriage, infanticide, devadasi system, 'slavery' and traditional education system etc., not only kindled the people's desire to adopt missions' anti-traditional approach but also motivated them to assimilate these ideas into various other socio-economic and politico-cultural struggles. Thus their attack on the traditional chiefs such as priests, 'native' kings, feudal lords, and officials of 'native' kings and even the colonial government, sharpened the edges of anti-colonial sentiments.

The missionary education, both vernacular and English, played a crucial role in the emergence of people's liberal thought, intellectual movements, rational philosophy, revolutionary concepts, and constant critiques. Hence, the seeds of anti-colonial movement as a part of a social and intellectual and moral revolution, characterised the aspirations to democracy and personal freedom, were sown in the very beginning of

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4 Ibid., p. 2334.
6 The European missionaries like Ringletaube were working among the Nadars, who offered them not only the gospel of a new religion but the possibility of 'secular salvation' in their release from the fetters of feudal lords who had for centuries burdened them with social disabilities and economic dependence. The earliest movement among the Nadar community came in their response to the efforts of the London Missionary Society in southern Travancore. See Robert Hardgrave, The Nadars of Tamilnad, op. cit., pp.146-147.
the nineteenth century in Tamil Nadu. Thus the Protestant missions laid the foundation for the transition from moral to ideological level and from ideological to political. In due course, this transition gained momentum with the introduction of education.

According to David Walters, a missionary historian, "The people in the villages of India are utterly devoid of any education. They can neither read nor write. The children go out into the fields to work. They lived in mud huts. They have lived in these conditions for generations. It is difficult to get a new idea into their heads. Unless they are taken in hand when converted and given some of the rudiments of education, there can be little growth in knowledge." On the other hand, the government had recognised that the social condition of the depressed classes was pathetic particularly in terms of education.

1. Early Initiatives

The progression from Protestantism to literacy via the vernacular Bible is common place in historical literature. Most scholars seemed to have concluded, or assume, that the Reformation greatly advanced literacy because Protestantism, much more than Catholicism, was the religion of the Word, and therefore of reading, and because it insisted on every individual's rights. Reading was promoted. Bibles were made available and schools established. And all this happened first in Germany where Martin Luther turned Scripture into colloquial German, where a flood of Bibles issued from the presses, where elementary schools were founded, and where the reformers encouraged men and women to seek God's Word directly in Holy Writ, thus creating a condition of general literacy in the population.

On account of the poor social plight of the depressed classes, the Protestant missionaries who came to Tamil Nadu in the first few decades of the eighteenth century, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Grundler, resumed their efforts to promote

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7 David Walters, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
education. Under the auspices of the S.P.C.K. in July 1717 they opened a school at Cuddalore for the Tamil and Portuguese children. This was soon followed by another at Madras, which they established at the request of the Governor and chaplain of Fort St. George, who rendered them all the aid they required. This was the first initiative on the part of the British authorities in India to enlighten the multitudes under their sway.\textsuperscript{10} In the year seventeen seventy five the total number of scholars in mission schools increased to four hundred. After having received a legacy of twelve hundred pounds, from a foreigner, Isaac Hollis, the missionaries proposed to put their scholastic establishment upon an improved footing.\textsuperscript{11}

A.C. Thompson argues that: "The Germans are almost constitutionally educators and the Lutheran church is eminently an educating church". It is evident that Ziegenbalg in his writing in 1706 observed that: "Truly the training up of children will be of the greatest consequence in this affair, if we were but able to purchase and maintain a good many of them. We must buy such children, sometimes at a high price, from their parents."\textsuperscript{12} Similarly his successor Christian Frederick Schwartz had spread a network of vernacular schools.\textsuperscript{13}

The schools according to Robert Caldwell during the mid-nineteenth century were in a very poor condition. The attendance of boys was small and very irregular, and in general no girls thought of attending without being bribed to attend. The instruction given was very rudimentary. English was not taught anywhere in the district of Tinnevelly (Tirunelveli) and similarly neither geography, nor grammar, nor arithmetic. However, shortly after Caldwell's arrival, he opened a school for girls, the only one of its kind in the district.\textsuperscript{14} Caldwell also observed that: "The native Christians of Tirunelveli are generally very poor on the whole than any other Christians of the country. There is no district in the Madras Presidency in which there is such a strong desire for the higher education. The S.P.C.K. is always ready to avail


\textsuperscript{11} James Hough, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 332.

\textsuperscript{12} A. C. Thompson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 214-215.


\textsuperscript{14} J. L. Wyatt, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 89-90.
itself of every opening for promoting Christian knowledge, by means of schools and colleges. In addition, one of the remarkable missionaries in Tirunelveli mission history, especially in connection with education, is George Uglow Pope, the founder of the Sawyerpuram Institution in Tirunelveli. He taught not only classical Tamil but also Greek, Latin and Hebrew. As early as 1842 he published (in Tamil) his *First Catechism of Tamil Grammar*. His reputation is due to his critical editions of three classical works of the Tamil literature: *Tirukural* (The Sacred Poem), *The Naldives*, and *Tiruvvasagam*. These as well as some of his other works such as, *A Tamil Prose Reader*, *A Hand Book of the Tamil Language* and *A Compendious Tamil English Dictionary*, are noteworthy. His works are still considered authoritative in the study of Dravidian culture. His motto was “Nalla saapaadu, nalla padippu, nalla adippu” “(Good food, good education and good thrashing).”

It was during the tenure of C.T.E. Rhenius, a C.M.S. missionary that there began changes in the nature and course of missionary schools in Tirunelveli. These schools at first were in the majority conducted by the Vellalas and in some few instances by Brahmins. But later on Christian converts were appointed by missionaries as school teachers. He had acquired a greatly improved style, and both his translation and the tracts which he frequently put forth were better relished by the people generally than the earlier writings of the ‘native’ Tamil missionaries. In the mission compound in Palamkottah (Palayamkottai), Rhenius had his Preparandi-class, where the most promising of the young male converts were trained in theology and pastoral duties, knowledge of scripture, composition of sermons, chiefly through their mother-tongue,

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15 Ibid., pp. 176-177.
16 George Uglow Pope was the founder of the Sawyerpuram institution. Pope, who came to Madras in connection with the Wesleyan Mission Society about the year 1839, arrived at Tirunelveli in 1842, in connection with the Society for the Propagation of Gospel. He set himself with characteristic zeal to the dual work of founding congregations and schools in the various districts north of Tamraparni river, and taught his students not only classical Tamil but also Greek, Latin and Hebrew. Lead and inspired by William Carey of Serampore, he had laid the foundation of vernacular education, a vernacular press, and a vernacular prose literature in Tamil Nadu and Bengal. They had built and endowed a college and set up the first steam printing press in India. See J. L. Wyatt, Reminiscences of Bishop Caldwell, op. cit., pp. 58-59; Arthur Mayhew, Christianity and Government of India, op. cit., pp. 112-113.
17 Ibid., pp. 58-59.
which Rhenius at this time could write, converse, or preach in, as readily as he could in German or English. 20 The teachers in the schools were generally Christians. 21 Missionaries were keen on educating the young in order that they prepare them for future work in the mission. 22

In missionary schools, object lessons 23 were meant to wean Hindu children from their idolatrous practices, marking a shift from heathenism to the truth of Protestant Christianity. 24 As a matter of fact, with the advent of Protestant missionaries a new era began in southern Tamil Nadu. As the major aim of the missionaries was the propagation of the gospel, they had to teach Tamil, which was difficult for the Europeans because of its complexity. They used a palmyra leaf which was used in the region for writing purposes. The early missionaries sat on the ground along with the children, traced the letters, syllables and words on the ground and learnt to write and pronounce Tamil. 25

They were the first to learn the various vernaculars, in many cases the first to commit them to writing and to lay the foundations of a future literature. 26 However, the importance of education as a means of spreading the gospel among the Hindus had been deeply felt by many who had taken part in the work of evangelising India. At the commencement of Protestant missions in India, Ziegenbalg and Plutschau established schools for Tamil Hindu children where the children could collect for the purpose of obtaining a Christian education - such schools were considered to facilitate conversion. 27

Over a period of time, missionary societies involved themselves in the cause of education, as a part of their larger evangelisation process. Missionaries came up with ‘innovative’ ideas and programmes in this endeavour. They even debated and

23 The object lessons were drawn from many of the high philosophical traditions of Enlightenment (Empiricism, Romanticism and Rationalism).
26 D. Julius Richter, op. cit., p. 176; John Murdoch, op. cit., p. 79.
discussed the importance of education in their larger formal gatherings. Many a times they shared their views and suggestions in their religious conventions and submitted their reports, results and memorandums. It was in this context that the following resolution on missionary education was submitted to the South Indian Missionary Conference, held at Ootacamund on 23rd April, 1858 and after much discussion was adopted in the following form: "That all the educational operations connected with our missions must be based on the words of God, and made subservient to the inculcation of the truths of principles, and indeed must be strikingly marked by the earnest and fearless teaching of the great essentials of the Christian faith with a special view to the salvation of the souls of the pupils. That for the masses of the people well conducted vernacular day schools are the most suitable instrumentality for both higher and middle class people. No heathen (Hindu) books, taken in their integrity are fit to be used in mission schools. Well qualified Christians should be appointed as teachers in mission schools."  

Similarly, a resolution of the same sort on higher education was passed by the South India Conference at Bangalore in 1879. It stated that: "The missionaries who are engaged in vernacular work should deserve especially to bear testimony to the powerful effect in favour of Christianity, which these institutions are exercising throughout the country for the educational work on the necessary part of the work of Christian church."  

Missionary education had always been explicit in its aims and objectives. Emphasis had shifted from time to time but, educational policies had persisted unchanged in its essentials through the whole period of modern missions. The commission on education in relation to the Christianisation of national life presented to the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 considers that education is for "Evangelistic purpose, edificatory, leavening and philanthropic purposes."  

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28 Ibid., pp. 189-191.  
29 S. Sathanathan, "Missionary Work in India," The Harvest Field, September, 1887, p. 192.  

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2. New Era in Education

English literature came to India, howsoever imperceptibly, with the passing of the Charter Act of 1813. This Charter Act, which renewed the East India Company’s Charter for commercial operations in India, produced two major changes in Britain’s role with respect to its Indian subjects: one was the assumption of a new responsibility towards ‘native’ education, and the other was a relaxation of controls over missionary work in India.\textsuperscript{31}

As a matter of fact, some of the most prestigious institutions in higher education are Protestant ones: Madras Christian College, 1839, St. John’s, Agra, 1850, Sarah Tucker College at Palayamkottai, 1866, St. John’s, Palayamkottai, 1878, St. Stephen’s, Delhi, 1881, Christian Medical Colleges at Ludhiana, 1894, and at Vellore, 1918. By 1931, the Lindsay Commission found that for the most part of the nineteenth century, Christian institutions dominated the Indian educational scene, not merely in regard to the magnitude of their educational enterprise but also in regard to the ideas and values inculcated through education. Even more importantly, from the 1870s the Protestant missions were seriously trying to influence the intellectual, religious and political awakening of the educated Indian on the assumption that winning over the intelligentsia was the surest method to bring about the eventual conversion of India as a whole.\textsuperscript{32}

The Portuguese were the first to bring Western education to India establishing schools in their settlements at Goa, Daman, Diu, Cochin and on the Hooghly. It was originally begun to promote the training of priests but its scope was very soon extended as in most Jesuit institutions of the time, to other students as well. The French too had begun elementary schools at Pondicherry, Mahe, Chandernagore and Yeman.\textsuperscript{33}


\textsuperscript{32} Rudolf C. Heredia, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 2334-2335.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 2332-2333.
Apart from the first two Protestant missionaries namely, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Henry Plutschau, who were sent to India by Frederick IV, the king of Denmark, and arrived at Tranquebar region of Tanjore district in Tamil Nadu in 1706, two other German missionaries, namely, Benjamin Schultze and Christian Frederick Schwartz were sent to Tamil Nadu. Their primary objective of preaching the gospel and the pathetic socio-economic conditions of the depressed classes of their adopted region led them to concentrate on various issues.

Meanwhile, in a world that was torn asunder by conflicting intolerance, communal clashes, economic exploitation, and corruption at all levels and high handedness in every dealing, the writers and publishers and missionaries had an onerous task to perform. In fact, they had commitment to a cause and an historic role to play in combating forces of status quo which blocked change. Further, by patronising books, magazines which carried progressive ideas, they could successfully sow the

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34 The Portuguese were the first Europeans to come to Tamil Nadu. A seafaring adventurer, named Covilhas, from Lisbon, arrived in Calicut in the year 1487. However, a few years later, the famous Portuguese, Vas Coda Gama reached Calicut on 9.5.1498. Thus, the South Indian West coast city, Calicut opened the gates to Europeans as early as 1487 itself. Following the Portuguese, the Dutch from Holland, arrived in Tamil Nadu. The Dutch East India Company was founded in the year 1602. In 1612 a Trading Association was founded in Copenhagen, the capital city of Denmark. The Danish East India Company as it came to be called, acquired a small territory in Tranquebar, Tanjore district of Tamil Nadu, for an annual rent of Rs. 3111/- under a grant from the Nayaka Raja, Ragunatlah Nayaka. Thus a Royal Decree dated 19.11.1620 enabled this Danish Company to hoist the Danish flag over Tranquebar. See C. S. Mohanavelu, *German Tamilology: German Contributions to Tamil Language and Culture During the Period 1707-1945*, Saiva Siddhanta, Madras, 1993, p. 1.

35 He observes that, "The distinction of castes makes a difficulty to us. Those who are not Pariahs will not allow the children of Pariahs to eat with them or to sit among them; for they require not only instruction, but education..." See Benjamin Schultze, *Notices of Madras and Cuddalore: In the last century, from the Journals and the Lectures of the Earliest Missionaries Principally Benjamin Schultze of the Society for the Propagation of the Christian Knowledge*, Longman, and co., 1858, p. 88.


37 The Tamil writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are classified as pious Saivaite and the Catholic missionaries' period. The Catholic missionaries particularly Beschi, not only wrote Tamil prose of the highest excellence, but he also composed a great religious epic in classical Tamil which has won for him a conspicuous rank among Dravidian poets. His work, the Tembavani, gives a Tamil adaptation of the narrative and even of the geography of the Bible, suited to the Hindu taste of the eighteenth century. Since the introduction of printing, the Tamil press has been prolific. A catalogue of Tamil printed books, issued in Madras up to 1865, enumerated 1409 works. In the single year 1882, not less than 558 works were printed in the vernacular in Madras, the great proportion of them being in Tamil. See William Earnest Hacking, *Re-thinking Missions: A Lay Man's Inquiry After one Hundred Years*, Read Books, 2007, pp. 112-121.

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seeds of revolution in education which in turn slowly and steadily paved the way for social reorganisation.\textsuperscript{38}

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the Scottish school system, especially the network of the parish and Norman schools, was considered more progressive than the English system. Evidence of Scottish educational achievement was found not only in Edinburgh and Glasgow, but in the British Empire as well. Meanwhile, colonial Bengal, the British bridgehead, was one of the earliest areas of British missionary proselytising and educational effort. Early missionaries, critical of the East India Company's indifference towards educating Indians as well as the 'backward' status of indigenous schools (Padashalas), set up competing primary schools. The most widespread rural education was provided by Padashalas which taught rudimentary reading, writing and accounting.\textsuperscript{39}

The nature of education in the mid sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Tamil Nadu was quite different from that in Europe. James Smith, a missionary scholar, states that: "We, in India, particularly in Tamil Nadu, have traditional educational system, venerable and hoary. These may be characterised in a word as devices for cramping the intellect and preventing people from thinking. I refer to such indigenous schools as Vedashala and Padashala. No ray of light, civilization or knowledge shines in the home, the street, the field or the town."\textsuperscript{40}

Similarly, Livingston, a missionary writer observed that in Tamil Nadu there were three kinds of schools. According to him: "The highest rank and far removed, indeed, from all other 'native' institutions in their efficiency, are the few Sanskrit colleges, where learned pundits or Brahmins devote their lives to the work of education, with a patience and industry beyond all praise. But they are very thinly scattered over the country. These well known schools are not designed for the education of common people. The other extreme in the scale is the lowest rank of schools. Class room is the verandah of the temple and of the houses of some of the comfortable inhabitants

\textsuperscript{38} S. Manickam, Studies in Mission History, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 143-144.
\textsuperscript{39} Parna Sengupta, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 117.
of a town or village. The students are taught rhymes to be familiar in the lowest form of Hinduism. Reading and writing of the vernacular is the order of the day. The third category of schools, most difficult to represent, is meant for the instruction of the wealthier and middle classes.41

Studies were carried on in most occasions without school room, without books, without paper, ink etc. The students sat on the ground in the open air, either under a tree or the thatch of a hut and they learnt their letters by writing with their finger on the sand, afterwards with a style on the "old" palmyra leaf. On the condition of Roman Catholic schools in the early sixteenth century, Andrews, a missionary writer observes: "In the provinces, particularly Travancore aimed at producing good officials, and the officials whom they sent forth in crowds were corrupt, insolent, and incapable. They aimed at producing poets, historians, orators and men of letters. Yet the more they project their system, the more did art and letters decline. What was wanted was a literature of the people. There were plenty of men who might have written it, but they were condemned to silence by tyranny of this windy, vapouring, and rhetoric."42 Gradually the local padashalas were replaced by parish schools throughout the colonial territories and churches replaced temples as centres of learning in the wake of conversion to Christianity.43

Hence in this context, the necessity for a printing press was very crucial. The invention of printing technology by Johann Guttenberg, who produced the first printed book in the Western hemisphere - the 42-line Gutenberg Bible, marked a historical beginning. Indeed it is believed that the invention of printing brought books and knowledge within the reach of many and ushered the West into the Renaissance.44

43 Rudolf C. Heredia, op. cit., p. 2333.
3. Introducing Printing Technology

The state of writing prior to the introduction of printing technology was rudimentary\textsuperscript{45} in its form and style. Ziegenbalg was of the opinion that: “Neither paper nor leather, neither ink nor pen was used by ‘natives’ at all, but the characters are by iron tools imposed on a sort of leaves of a certain tree, which is much like a palm tree. At the end of every leaf a hole is made, and through the hole a string drawn, whereby the whole set of leaves is kept together but then they must be united or loosened, whenever the prints of the characters shall appear and be read.”\textsuperscript{46}

As a matter of fact, until the beginning of the sixteenth century, India did not witness printing. The appearance of earliest printing press in India dates back to the days of Henrique de Henrique (1520-1600), a Jesuit missionary, who established the printing press first in Goa and then in Quilon.\textsuperscript{47} It is believed that before the introduction of printing press in Tamil Nadu, Tamil people did not like paper because they assumed that the paper made by Europeans or Muslims, contained animal fat and that would ritually pollute them. Therefore they avoided writing on a paper and preferred to write on palm leaves instead. However, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, being a Lutheran focused on the importance of the printing press which he believed would not only help in quick and systematic spread of religious information among people, but also promote their education in general and betterment. Another reason for Ziegenbalg’s desire was his interest in Tamil literature; his interest to learn more about Tamil

\textsuperscript{45} The Schools according to Robert Caldwell in 1850-1890, were as might be expected, in very backward conditions. He says that, “When I first knew Tinnevelly (Tirunelveli), in1850s, the first rudiments of higher education were unknown, or was of the most rudimentary type. See J. L. Wyatt, Reminiscences of Bishop Caldwell, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

\textsuperscript{46} David Packiamuthu, op. cit., pp. 18-21.

\textsuperscript{47} Quoted in Daniel Jeyaraj, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg: The Father of Modern Protestant Missions an Indian Assessment, Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2006, New Delhi. Muthaiah in his article “When Tamil Showed the Way,” presented at the Printers Federation Awards for printed materials and the valedictory session of the Institute of Printing Technologies Platinum Jubilee Celebration Commemoration, attention was drawn by several speakers to the fact that Tamil was the first Indian language type to be developed after printing arrived in India in 1556, a little over 100 years after Gutenberg’s path breaking contribution to moveable type. See Daniel Jeyaraj, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, op. cit., p. 185
literary heritage, their deities, cosmology, social life etc. In due course, he openly made a request to King Fredrick IV on September 19, 1707 to help him to set up a printing press in Tranquebar.\textsuperscript{48} Thus a printing press, donated by the S.P.G. London, reached Tranquebar in August 1712 and was handed over to Danish missionaries. Ziegenbalg was able to print and publish a \textit{Tamil New Testament} in A.D. 1714. So it was Ziegenbalg who made it possible for the poor and the rich to get the printed books.\textsuperscript{49}

The introduction of printed books was one of the crucial factors which made a great impact on the Tamil society. The Lutheran element in Ziegenbalg’s thought was the principal cause for his constant emphasis on the importance of books. His attempt to build up a library, establishment of printing press, his work for promotion of education and his opening of schools, thus made an indelible mark on the history of Protestant missions. To him, the reason why the invention of printing press in Europe made the Reformation possible, explains why Christianity and books were together; books provided knowledge, and followed by dissemination of Western ideas started spreading in the length and breadth of the Tamil society.\textsuperscript{50}

However, the early German missionaries had learned Tamil under very difficult and different conditions. As a result, they felt that this language should be taught in German universities so that, later German missionaries could become more successful in their missionary duties at Tranquebar. The extreme importance these early German missionaries attached to Tamil learning is now clear from a passage of Arno Lehman’s\textsuperscript{51} article, which runs thus: “J.E. Grundler in his letter dated 15.1.1715 wrote about this Tamil, the most important of all the Dravidian languages and which has the richest collection of literature and that this language is worthy of being taught in the European Universities.”\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{48} Daniel Jeyaraj, \textit{op. cit.}, pp 184-186.
\textsuperscript{49} David Packiamuthu, “Ziegenbalg and Tamil,” Paper presented at the 8\textsuperscript{th} World Tamil Conference, held at Tanjore, 5 January, 1995, pp. 2-4.
\textsuperscript{50} Brijraj Singh, \textit{The First Protestant Missionary to India: Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, 1683-1719}, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 120-121.
\textsuperscript{51} Arno Lehman was a missionary scholar.
\textsuperscript{52} C. S. Mohanavelu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 3.
Notwithstanding their commission from the King of Denmark, the missionaries, instead of being kindly received, were opposed by Danish authorities in India. Despite various difficulties that the missionaries encountered, they without delay set on the goal of arduous understanding. Their first object was to acquire the knowledge of the Portuguese language, which, from its introduction two centuries earlier, was now generally understood by ‘natives,’ and then of the Tamil, the vernacular language of the country in the south, and the greater part of the extremity of the Peninsula, and of the north of Ceylon. Such was their zeal and diligence, that in the course of a few months, they had acquired a sufficient knowledge of both languages, to enable them to catechise the ‘native’ children in the schools which they had established, and which they supported out of their own funds. Ziegenbalg particularly devoted himself to the study of Tamil and such was his proficiency that he not only acquired a very extensive acquaintance with the books written in that language on Hindu mythology and history but soon began to converse fluently with the ‘natives’ on moral and religious objects.53

A missionary was of the opinion: “Tamil language, like the Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek, is an original and perfect language and is in itself highly worthy of cultivation. The Puranas and all the more common sacred books are to be found translated into high Tamil, in which they are read, in the temples. Those who are set for the defence, or employed in the propagation of gospel, should be made to read and understand these texts. This would give to ‘native’ preachers here in a degree, the same advantage which the knowledge of Sanskrit gives them in Bengal; and would also bring into their service those poetic productions which are written in opposition to the prevailing idolatry and thus assist their attempts to destroy it.54 In due course, missionaries began to read, write and research in the Tamil language. It is to be noted here that the first Indian people to master German language were the Tamil people and the first Indian to set foot on the German soil was a Tamil scholar, Malaippan. It was here in Tamil Nadu, that the first German Protestant missionary Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg arrived

54 The Missionary Herald, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Published by Samuel T. Armstrong, 1825, pp. 117-118.
with the Royal Danish order to propagate the gospel among the “Malabarians”, the Tamil people, as early as 1706.

Thus German Indology, had its firm origin in Tamil Nadu and German Tamology\textsuperscript{55}, to be more specific had served as the ignition point of the Indo-German cultural, religious and academic interactions.\textsuperscript{56} Commenting on the earlier German missionaries and their passion for knowledge, Erich Beyreuther, a missionary scholar opines that: “As strong and emphatic as Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg was emotionally through his life just so composed and clear in thinking. His intellect was as keen and sound as steel. Emotions and intellect-both had power over him and as a faithful child of his time, he paid a tribute to the frame of mind of enlightenment with its basic conviction of worldwide importance of reason.\textsuperscript{57}

Missionaries like Ziegenbalg and others, apart from their evangelisation, focused their attention on social issues like: the caste discrimination in the church, the education of women, widow system and the transformation of the whole marriage system and so on and so forth.\textsuperscript{58} The importance of education as a means of spreading the gospel among the Hindus had been deeply felt by many who had taken part in the work of evangelising India. Meanwhile, at the commencement of Protestant missions in India, Ziegenbalg and Plutschau established schools for Tamil Hindu children for the purpose of giving them Christian education. Schools had always formed a part of each Indian mission for both men and women and thus clearly showing the importance which experience has attached to this mode of missionary operation.\textsuperscript{59} Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg’s untiring effort towards women’s amelioration made him start schools for

\textsuperscript{55} German Indology in general and German Tamilology in particular, are today three centuries old. The suffix “...ology,” for instance, Tamilology from Tamil, Sanscritology from Sanscrit and when this mode of nomenclature is extended to other Indian languages, then we get Kannadology from Kannadam, Malayalamology from Malayalam, Telugology from Telugu and so on. These nomenclatures though sound a bit unique, can be accepted as official usages for academic purposes. This mode of bifurcating the studies and interactions of the Germans, with respect to the languages, will help us to group German scholars, who had rendered academic or a social service to a particular area. This is to say, such of those German missionaries and German Indologists, whom are dealt with in this chapter, are called “German Tamilologists.” See C. S. Mohanavelu, German Tamilology, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 2-10.

\textsuperscript{56} The Missionary Herald, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{57} Erich Beyreuther, \textit{Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg: A Biography of the Protestant Missionary to India}, Madras, 1956, pp. 4-5.


\textsuperscript{59} Proceedings of the South India Missionary Conference, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 178-179.
women. He himself had pioneered the setting up of a girl’s school at Tranquebar in 1707, to liberate them from different forms of bondage.\textsuperscript{60}

To him, knowing and writing of Hinduism was like achieving his target. His scholarly understanding and writings on various subjects and issues of his adopted region in one way or other helped the ‘native’ Malabarians to know their cultural past. Ziegenbalg, in addition to a number of smaller tracts, pamphlets and letters, wrote at least three and possibly four major books on Hinduism. His last work \textit{The Genealogy of the South Indian Gods}, which is dated 31 May, 1713 was considered to be rich and informative in its contents. Another treatise on Hinduism was called \textit{General Description of South India Heathenism}. It was originally written in the German language, called \textit{Malabarisches Heidenthum} (Malabarian Heathenism), which was completed in 1711. This book contains information of a theological, religious, cultural, sociological and anthropological nature.\textsuperscript{61} It also discusses various issues pertaining to the Hindu gods; their origin, form and nature; their many names, families, offices and functions; and their glorious appearances, attributes and dwellings. It is to be noted here that his purpose of writing these books was to dispel the wrong notions of Europeans about Malabarians, their culture and religion.\textsuperscript{62}

Early European sailors and traders considered that Malabarians\textsuperscript{63} are barbarians. Mohanavelu argues that this concept, “Malabarians are barbarians,” is a wrong notion, which comes out of total ignorance of the Tamil people, their language and culture.” Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg’s first impression of the Tamil people among whom he came to spread Western ideas is: “Most Christians in Europe,” says Ziegenbalg,” suppose the Malabarians to be a very barbarous people, but this arises from the Europeans who have been amongst them not understanding their language, so that they have not been able to read their books, but drawn their conclusions from outward

\textsuperscript{60} Chandran, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 15-18.

\textsuperscript{61} Brijraj Singh, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 106-107.

\textsuperscript{62} David Packiamuthu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{63} Mohanavelu opines that Ziegenbalg and other German missionaries knew very well that, “Malabaric” and Tamil were synonymous like “Malabar” and Tamil Nadu.” Even before these German missionaries, other Europeans called Tamil Nadu by the name “Malabar.” It should however be noted in this context that the later German Tamilologists refrained from using the term “Malabar,” for “Tamil Nadu,” Carl Theophrus Edwald Rhenius (1790-1838) wrote a Grammar on Tamil Language and not of “Malabaric” Language. See Mohanavelu, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 4-5.
appearances. I must acknowledge that when I first came amongst them I could not imagine that their language had proper rules, or that their life had the laws of civil order, and took up all sorts of false ideas on their actions as if they had neither civil nor a moral law, but as soon as I gained a little acquaintance with their language and could talk to them on various subjects, I began to have a much better opinion of them and when, at last I was able to read their books, I found that the Malabarians discussed the same philosophical subject on the savants of Europe. This surprised me extremely. 64

As soon as Ziegenbalg understood that Malabarians were not barbarous, he started writing to his beloved Europe, to erase the wrong notion that Malabarians were not reasonable, sensible, and clever but wild untamed and coarse folk, whom one could never bring under human order, let alone Christianity. Hence, Tamil society owes gratitude to Ziegenbalg for having changed this wrong notion, especially when he was sent on the very mission to condemn their alien civilization. 65

4. Education in Southern Tamil Nadu

Similarly his initiatives in the field of education for the Malabarians made an indelible mark in the history of Tranquebar. The establishment of two schools at Madras; one for the Portuguese in the English town, and another for Malabarian Hindus, ‘slave’ and other ‘native’ children 66 was considered remarkable. Initially he got acquainted with the language by his rigorous practice. Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg used to sit on the ground with the Tamil children and learnt Tamil alphabets by writing on the sand with his finger. He worked out a schedule for himself to study the Tamil language. In a letter dated August 22, 1708 he gives the details: “From seven to eight I repeat my Malabaric vocabulary, and the phrases gathered in the language. From eight to twelve I am entirely employed about reading such Malabar books as I have never read before: a Malabaric poet and writer being present at the same time to assist. The poet is to give me a fuller insight into all the circumstances of early stories recorded in the

64 Ibid., pp. 6-8.
65 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
books, and clear up the more dark and intricate passages of the poetry."\(^{67}\) Hence, his understanding of a wide range of issues slowly and steadily attracted the attention of the depressed classes of Tamil region. Ziegenbalg was considered as an educator because he was the one who focused more on the importance of books, reading and writing. He understood that the Reformation which spread through Europe largely as a result of the spread of printing, and teaching, would lead to the same consequences in India too. The result was that his schools became places where children learned not only Christianity but also reading, writing, poetry, geography, languages, music, mathematics, logic and argumentation in a world of literary skills and critical thinking.\(^{68}\)

While the S.P.C.K. was active in South India, a curious book was published at Halle in Germany in 1750, consisting of a series of dialogues bearing on the mode of the life of Europeans and ‘natives’ in Madras. Originally written in Telugu, probably between 1740 and 1745, in connection with the Danish Mission, which employed workers, like Schultze\(^{69}\) and Fabricius, who were graduates of Halle, it was translated into both German and English. But the English translation was not very competently made. The dialogues, however, contain some crucial information, and few extracts were accordingly given. The full title of the work is:

"The Large and Renowned Town of the English Nation in the East Indies Upon the Coast of Coromandel, MADRAS or Fort St. George, representing the Genius, the Manners, the Carriage, the Behaviour, and the very Character of the Natives; likewise their Trade and Housekeeping; the Product of the Country and Usefulness of the Gardens, by Way of Thirty familiar Dialogues.\(^{70}\) Written originally in Waruga\(^{71}\) or Gentou language, but afterwards translated into English Tongue for the Benefit of some curious Readers". The first dialogue was between one gentleman that had been

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68 Brijraj Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.
69 He says that, "My leisure hours I have employed in reading Tamil books, and a Tamil Lexicon. By the former, I enlarge my knowledge, as well as prepare myself for the compilation of the Lexicon, thereby acquainting myself with the doctrines, ethics, and customs of the nation; so that they may not be able to object to us, when we converse with them." See Benjamin Schultze, *Notices of Madras and Cuddalore*, Longman and co., 1858, p. 143.
71 Waruga, Vadugu or Telugu.
a good while ago in this country, and the other that came newly hither, meeting one another....

‘Charles. What is the Name of your Ship?
Jack. Our Ship’s name is called King George.
C. Who is your Captain?
J. The Commander on our Board is Townlord....
J. How many Houses are in the black Town?
Ch. Sir, In the black Town are eight thousand seven hundred Houses.
J. But how many Houses are in the white Town?
Ch. Sir, in the white Town are eighty- five houses.
J. How many Streets are in the black Town?
Ch. Together with the lanes there are three hundred sixty six Streets....’

‘The Second Dialogue. The same two gentlemen take a Walk abroad, and view everywhere the Town....
Charles. Through what gate shall we pass?
Jack. We will go through the Bridge-Gate....’

Even though these dialogues were much related to trade and related issues, such as the commercial relationship of the English with Fort St. George, its implications for other crucial things like, language, literature, and civilization of the people of their adopted land, Tamil Nadu, are significant.

Missionary societies, to be more specific the S.P.C.K. in Tamil Nadu, believed that education was a tool for social change. They not only raised their voice against the predominance of the dominant caste groups but also against colonial officials’ anti-people policies and programmes with a view to create a new vista in the socio-economic life of the people. Christian Frederick Schwartz a, successor of Ziegenbalg tried to undertake creative work for the betterment of the depressed and oppressed sections of the society. Schwartz believed that education would lead to the much needed social change. He adopted the strong educational traditions of earlier missionaries like Ziegenbalg and founded schools named “provincial schools” in

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72 Bridge Gate was the customary designation of the Armenian Gate on the west side of Black Town, but in the text the Water Gate of the White Town is evidently indicated. See H. Love, op. cit., p. 329.
many villages of Tanjore, Ramanathapuram and Madurai in Tamil Nadu. Subjects were taught both in English and Tamil to disseminate Western ideas.\(^{73}\)

It was during the later part of the eighteenth century that Tamil Nadu was undergoing a political transformation. The struggle for political supremacy between the English and the French was at its feverish height. Hyder Ali of Mysore and later his son Tipu Sultan, supported by the French, kept invading Madras and penetrating further south with their armies and the English had to fight them tooth and nail, thus creating panic, poverty and famine among the people.\(^{74}\) In fact, most of the missions never failed to make critical comments on the overall policies of both East India Company and ‘native’ kings. One among them was Christian Frederick Schwartz. Commenting upon the king and his officials he observes: “The poor king sits as it were in a prison. His officers deceive him and the whole country.” Comments made in the open platforms by Schwartz against the very essence of Company’s economic policies including repressive taxes\(^{75}\) and his attitude and approach towards colonial government not only earned reputation among people but made the people question the repressive policies of the government. Mentioning the qualities and characters of Schwartz, Raja Shivaji says that, “Though indeed a faithful, he was the one who did promise....moral improvement of his fellow creatures whether ‘native’ or Europeans. His virtues and qualifications either as a clergy man or a politician or an educationist exercised at a time when there existed very little encouragement, must ever remain


\(^{75}\) The Part played by Ringletaube for the abolition of taxes through his constant writings to Colonel Munro is noteworthy indeed. In 1816, many taxes which were levied on depressed class people like Manjakuliyan Panam, Kettikakam and Iraiylili, etc were declared abolished. In fact the tax abolition gave relief to some extent to the following communities: “Shanars, Elavars, Vannars, Mukkurars, Pariahs, Pulayars, Ilavaraniyars, Tholvanigar, Kalachettiyar, Pattrakarar, Panan, Vinnar, Uppalavar, and Paravar, etc., who were some of the beneficiaries. While attacking vehemently the anti-peoples attitude of the East India Company missionaries like, Christian Frederick Schwartz, state that: “The East India Company officers do not have any concern for the people at all. They wanted to oppress and exploit for the people in all possible ways to earn more money and leave the country. He was troubled by this irresponsible way of rule. Meanwhile, he was convinced that the British would not survive in this country any longer if they would not change their government policy towards the good of India. Otherwise they would soon be thrown away like ‘filth’. See Daniel Jeyaraj, “Christian Frederick Schwartz and His Social Concern,” in Daniel Jeyaraj (ed.), Christian Frederick Schwartz and His Contributions to South India, by Daniel Jeyaraj, Lutheran Archives Series-2, Chennai, 1999, p. 8.
Christian Frederich Schwartz also criticised through his writings the anti-people attitude of the government in the following lines: "The procedure of the British is irresponsible. Those who are the leaders think only how they could accumulate wealth. No one looks after the welfare of this country. If everything is lost, the rich goes to the ships. Others might watch how they could help themselves." 77

In his writings, he also made a scathing attack on the mal-administration and injustice of the region. In his address to the government of Tanjore he says that: "Permit me to address you on behalf of this country of which you are constituted guardians and defenders and in whose prosperity and distress you are concerned. Every government is to be supported by a rational administration of justice without which both rulers and subject cannot prosper. These propositions need no proof being self evident that all nations confirm at least in theory. Experiences from history give us the strongest proof that a country without justice is a ruined country." 78 Thus through their writings mainly in vernacular, missionaries were able to sow the seed of anti-colonial feelings among the general public 79.

Even though missionaries through their ameliorative measures opened up new gates for education, the British Raj continued to pay much of its attention to its ‘local’ issues. The East India Company, during the early days of its rule in India made no attempt to introduce Western learning. It was Warren Hastings’s policy to interfere as little as possible with the customs and manners of the people. But in 1813, in renewing the Company’s Charters, the Parliament ordered the Company to devote a lakh of rupees for “The renewal and improvement of literature, the encouragement of

79 The moral character of Schwartz was so commanding that all classes, both native and foreign, held him in the highest esteem and even reverence. On the occasion of a formidable native uprising under Hyder Ali, that potentate refused to deal with an English embassy, but said, “Send me Christian Frederich Schwartz. He will not deceive me.” The Raja of Tanjore made Schwartz the guardian of his adopted son and heir, Serfogee. The slab in the chapel over his grave says, in part, “His natural vivacity won the affection, as his unsptotted probity of life like commanded the reverence, of the Christian, Mohammedan and Hindu.” See Lemuel Call Barnes, Two Thousand Years of Missions Before Carey, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 2000, p. 106.
the learned people of India, and the introduction and promotion of knowledge of sciences among the inhabitants of British India."80

Even after making provisions for the establishment of schools through the Charter Act of 1813, missions continued their criticism against ‘native’ governments and their policies. Bellerby, a British social historian argues that: “Again in the native states of India the governments though subject to the British Government were essentially heathen, as is the case of Travancore and no education whatever is provided for the lower castes. In such districts it is absolutely necessary for the missions to maintain their own schools and give the poor, the out-caste, the pariah, an equal share of education.”81 As the governments, both ‘native’ and English, were not willing to initiate programmes and policies to establish vernacular education, missionaries started establishing schools in various villages as a part of their social programme. Over a period of time, missions had established one third of all their vernacular education schools in India. More than half of all the vernacular pupils under the missions were under the Madras Presidency. Missions taught thousands to read their own language who would perhaps, otherwise have remained in ignorance.82 This was the largest scale of all missionary efforts, which took place in Madras Presidency compared to any other Presidencies.83 Thus the Madras Presidency was considered as the ‘most enlightened Presidency’ in India.84

The introduction of Western ideas and values through English education had a great impact on Indian society in various fields.85 The mission education not only kindled the spirit of reformation and regeneration but led to the emergence of a middle class intelligentsia.86 For the spread of social reform, progress of education, growth of

80 Clifford Manshardt, Christianity in a Changing India, Bombay, 1932, p. 138.
86 Birj Kishore Dayal, Development of Educational System in India, Dominant Publication, New Delhi, 2005, pp. 18-19.
press and journalism and development of language and literature are essentials.\(^\text{87}\) In certain respects, the influences created in the intellectual, cultural and ideological spheres as a result of Western ideas and values were deeper than the changes introduced in the political and administrative spheres.\(^\text{88}\) The study of the philosophy of Western thinkers like Mill, Bentham, etc., had aroused a new spirit of enquiry and a sense of opposition to all kinds of injustice, superstition, bigotry etc. In the meantime the problem of the backwardness of the people - socially, economically, and otherwise had convinced them of the need for social reforms, individual liberty and democracy, etc. Hence, thereafter they subjected every institution of society to the test of reason and through that, fostered ideas of change and development.\(^\text{89}\)

5. Dissemination of Western Ideas

With the emergence of a national educational system in nineteenth century Europe, the state began to control the dissemination of knowledge. It had a strong interest in creating a hegemonic culture that could marginalise local, regional as well as subaltern ways of life, knowledge systems, ethics and knowledge. Meanwhile, the situation in India was different. As a colonised country India and its population after the eighteenth century were subject to various manifestations of power and suppression; they not only suffered from economic exploitation but were also deprived of political and socio-cultural autonomy. With British rule and the establishment of administrative structures, Indians lost control over their own affairs and any effort to transform and reconstruct or develop new indigenous institutions was severely restricted. It is in this context that the arrival of missions in India is to be seen. Missions left an impact on India, and, in our case, on the people of Tamil Nadu, in terms of their coding, writing, literary skills, critical thinking etc.\(^\text{90}\)

\(^{87}\) Bipan Sarma, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 94-95.  
\(^{88}\) A. Mathew, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 2-3.  
\(^{89}\) Binasarma, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 26-27.  
The history of the development of English education in the Madras Presidency during British rule in India would not be complete without reference to the Christian missions in general, and the Protestant missions in particular. For most part of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they dominated the Indian educational scene. Apart from spreading their ideas and values, the Protestant missions tried to influence the intellectual, religious and political awakening of the educated Indians in the assumption that winning over the intelligentsia was the surest method of bringing about the essential change of India as a whole. Thus, the missionary involvement in education, and their efforts to influence the intelligentsia during the last three decades of the nineteenth century form an integral part of Indian history.91

Around the first half of the nineteenth century a number of mission educational institutions including colleges for higher education were opened in many states of India. In these institutions liberal Western ideas began to spread under the impact of modern education. History as well as literature that were taught in these schools and colleges not only dealt with the past cultural heritage but also with liberal thought, intellectual movements, rational philosophy and many revolutionary concepts of the West. The study of Western liberalism, freedom of thought, reason and all other modern characteristics was taken up.92 English education infused some nationalist spirit as well. It helped people to transcend all linguistic, religious, communal and other barriers and bound the people across the land into a common endeavor to achieve freedom. The pioneers of anti-colonial struggle in Tamil Nadu were greatly inspired by European leaders like Mazzini. They often borrowed political slogans and techniques of propaganda and agitation from the West and thus could be said to be the products of Western education in a certain sense.93

However, the Indian society in the nineteenth century was caught in a vicious web created by religious superstitions and social obscurantism. Hinduism, as Max Weber observed, had become a compound of magic animism and superstition and

91 A. Mathew, op. cit., pp. 1-3.
92 Bina Sharma, op. cit., pp. 93-94.
abominable rituals like animal sacrifice and physical torture had replaced the worship
of god. The priest often exercised an overwhelming influence on the minds of the
people. Idolatry and polytheism helped to reinforce their position. 94

It has frequently been argued that, nobody in the early stages of the development of
Indian languages paid greater attention to the study of ‘native’ languages more than
the missions. 95 The emphasis of missions was on the formation of faith and character
over acquisition of skills in reading, writing, arithmetic and appreciation of law. The
universal offer of education regardless of caste, religion, and sex was linked with an
attempt to make the government responsible for that universality of education. 96
Meanwhile, Alexander Duff, a Scottish missionary was determined that the school he
founded would teach every variety of useful knowledge and planned that it would
ultimately embrace the most advanced and improved studies in history, literature,
logic, mental ability and moral philosophy, mathematics in all departments with
natural history, natural philosophy and other sciences. 97 Further, Garfield Williams
opines: “That there is a new learning surging in, destroying ancient faith and practice
undermining the old foundations of morality and of Indian society, producing an
eager, restless, throbbing mass of student life, pushing onward amid a ferment of new
ideas. 98 Similarly Robert Caldwell also reflects almost the same view. He states that:
“Protestant missions have given the people higher ideas of their capabilities and
duties, even with respect to their present life; they have taught them self-respect and
some degree of self-reliance.” 99 Benedict, a missionary of C.M.S., too urges that,

94 Bipan Sarma, op. cit., pp. 84-85.
95 A. Selvaraj, Christianity and Social Transformation, Indian Christian Research Organization,
Trivandrum, p. 83. See also M.A. Sherring, The History of Protestant Missions: From their
Commencement in 1706 to 1881, London, 1884.
96 Chandran, The Fruits of the Christian Missions in the Southern part of Tamil Nadu including the
State of Travancore, paper presented at the consultation of History and Heritage of Christianity in
97 Max Warren, Social History and Christian Missions, Student Christian Movement Press, London,
1967.
Education, 1914, p. 50.
99 Robert Caldwell, Lectures on the Tinnevelly Missions, op. cit., p. 117.
indifference to all religions, missionaries must engage more boldly and hopefully than ever in the great revolution of education. 100

6. Literary Awakening

Thus, to spread the Western Protestant ideas in the hearts and minds of the 'natives,' missionary organisations opened up printing presses and publishing agencies in and around their missionary stations. 101 In 1820 a printing press was set up in Travancore by Ringletaube, a Protestant missionary. It was originally brought from Tanjore. The Missionary Gleaner the first periodical as published in 1841. The Children's Camp, The Glad News of Children etc. were the magazines published for children. The Temperance Herald, the Vathiyar Vilakku (Teachers Light) etc., are some of the publications from the missions for adults. 102 Besides, Ulaa Saritra Malai (A Chronology of Universal History) of Schmid, Stephen Hobbs's Purathana Sarittra (Ancient History) in 1851 and Edward Sargeant's Poorveeka Sarithram (Original History) etc., are pioneering works in the study of political history of India in general and Tamil Nadu in particular, which made the people read and recollect their past history. 103

Even though it has frequently been argued that conversion is the primary objective of the missionaries, their contribution to literary growth seems to be either forgotten or unrecognised. Robert Caldwell's remark is however, worth while to be mentioned here. He says, "I set on foot as I was anxious to see the country, and get acquainted with the people, and their ideas, manners, 104 Indian philosophy, ethnology and

101 It was through the missionary societies that the Tamil journals were first published. A monthly journal by name Tamil News Paper (1831) was published by the Madras Religious Tracts' Society. Evangelical Explanation (1840) and Good Teachings (1840) came out every month from Nagercoil and Palayamkottai respectively. People's Friend (1841) was published as bi-monthly from Madras. In 1847 Dravida Deepigai came out. Morning Star (1841) was a monthly published by American Mission at Jaffna. Neyoor Mission Society published the Country's Helper (1861) with illustrations. Children's Friend (1849) and Young One's Friend (1859) were the children's magazines published from Palayamkottai and Jaffna respectively. Bala Deepigai (1852) was a quarterly from Nagercoil. In 1863, a Tamil monthly by name Arunodhayam was started by the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Missions. See D.I. Jesu Doss, Tamil Through the Tranquebar Mission, Christian Sishya Sanga Publication, Coimbatore, 1939, pp. 2-8.
102 S.I. evaraj, Christianity and Social Transformation, op. cit., pp. 89-90.
103 J. Manuel, op. cit., p. 7.
One of the contributions made by Robert Caldwell was his writing on Tamil Grammar, The Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages. The objective of this work is to support a desideratum which has long been felt in comparative philology, viz., an investigation of the Dravidian languages or South Indian Languages. He, in this seminal work, examines and compares the grammatical principles and forms of the various South Indian languages. He was of the opinion that Tamil and Telugu are the most highly cultivated and best known and he hoped to contribute to a more thorough knowledge of their distinctive characteristics. In doing so, it is also his endeavour to categorise the principal families of groups into which the languages of Asia and Europe have been divided. Though it is a book on grammar and literature, it forms part of the culture of the Tamils. Nicholas B. Dirks observes that: "Small wonder, then, that Robert Caldwell's writings particularly on grammar were influential, given that they were written in a spirit of praise and respect both for the Tamil language and for the cultural inheritance of the South."

Writings of this kind opened up new vistas for the lower and under privileged sections of the Tamil society in general and women folk in particular. Missions' opposition to the traditional laws including dress laws and what came to be known as the "upper

105 Ibid., pp. 175-176.
106 According to native tradition, Tamil was the first cultivated by the Sage Agastya. Many works, besides a grammar and treatises on philosophy and science, are ascribed to him. His name seemed indeed as a centre around which Tamil compositions of widely separated periods. The oldest Tamil grammar, The Tolkappiam, is assigned to one of his disciples, Tolkappiar. But the rise of a continuous Tamil literature belongs to a later period. See William Wilson Hunter, The Indian Empire: Its People, History and Products, Tuner & Co, London, 1886, pp. 322-323; J. L. Wyatt opines that, "It is however, as the investigator of the South Indian Family of Languages that Bishop Caldwell was widely known. His work Comparative Study of Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages is originally published in 1856 was a revelation to Western philologers and it remained in the form of second edition (1875), the standard authority on the subject, without a rival or successor. Dr. Caldwell's intimate personal acquaintance with the people and their dialects, his study of their past (in History of Tinnevelly and Tinnevelly Shanars) enabled him to accumulate a mass of carefully verified and original materials such no other European scholar has ever amassed in India." See, J. L. Wyatt, Reminiscences of Bishop Caldwell, op. cit., p. 192. Also see William L. Wonderly and Eugene A. Nida, Anthropological Linguistics, vol. 5, no. 1, January, 1963, pp. 122-123.
109 Nicholas B. Dirks, op. cit., pp. 142-143.
cloth revolt\(^1\) in 1822 in southern Tamil Nadu, their influence on the representatives of the British Government regarding the practice of ‘slavery’ and their attitude towards social liberation movements\(^2\) not only made an indelible impact on the Tamil people but made them struggle against oppressions of any kind.

Robert Caldwell gives an account of the conditions of women. He says that, “When we first began to teach girls to read and to write, some men would ask us sarcastically, ‘Are you going to teach cows next?’”\(^3\) Such was the ‘narrow’ mentality even among the so-called educationists in Tamil Nadu. However, the missions’ constant engagement through their writings with all these issues created a new chapter in women’s history viz., burning of widows and female infanticide was put down, the remarriage of widows was legalised, and women’s education was encouraged.\(^4\) Meanwhile, their approach towards one of the traditional practices, the ‘slavery’ system, was reduced to some extent.

\(^{1}\) By tradition in Travancore, the breast was bared in defence to those of higher status of respect. In the elaborate hierarchy of caste ranking, the Nairs, for example, bared their breasts before the Nambudri Brahmins, and the Brahmins did so only before the deity. The Nadars like other low castes were categorically forbidden to cover their breasts at any time. See Robert Hardgrave, The Nadars of Tamilnad, op. cit., p. 151. For a further discussion see chapter IV. 6.


\(^{3}\) Ibid., pp. 107-108.

\(^{4}\) Robert Caldwell, Lectures on the Tinnevelly Missions, op. cit., p. 5.
In due course, in their endeavour to win ‘souls,’ missionaries intensified their policies and programmes pertaining to education. Missionary societies like the C.M.S., S.P.G., and others followed different strategies albeit with the same objective. Andrews, a C.M.S. missionary states that: “The objective of missionary education is to give the gospel as the regulating principle of men’s lives and to give a secular and scientific education as a preparation for the reception of the gospel as a label upon missionary education. Such education has provided for all who come, whether Christians, Mohammadans, Brahmins or Pariahs.” Mathew Clement states that: “The natives of India asked Alexander Duff for instruction and he gave them Christian education.” The first service performed by him therefore was that he confirmed the alliance between education and religion. Thus he associated his interest in education with an interest in Christian truth.

9. Education and Religion

Dr. Alexander Duff was the first to declare it as a fundamental rule of missionary procedure in this land, that the superior education of the young men of India, under Christian directives, is a duty equally obligatory and prudent with the preaching of the gospel to the masses, and the free circulation of the scriptures in the vernacular languages. David Walters another missionary from the C.M.S. opines that: “In India education is one of the most effective instruments of Christian propaganda and of social regeneration.” He recommended, “The evangelisation of the children by teaching them the scriptures and the message of the gospel and by cultivating their minds to understand it.”

115 After the example of Ziegenbalg some of the missionaries of Church Missionary Society became so proficient in Tamil language that they produced lexicons and grammar books of a very high quality. His ‘Tamil Grammar an Essay on the Principles of Translating the Holy Scriptures in Reference to the Tamil Language’ is still usable. The subsequent contributions of Tirunelveli Anglican S.P.G. missionaries such as, Irion, Brotherton, Bower, Kohlhoff, Caemmerer and Kennet are also significant. See Samuel Jayakumar, Missionary Reader, op. cit., p. 226.


117 Mathew Clement, “Memorial to Dr. Duff,” The Harvest Field, February, 1864, pp. 74-76.

118 Ibid., p. 73.

The primary objective\textsuperscript{120} was "The training of the Indian Christian (such that he) may become more useful member of society and of the church." Missionaries considered that the definitive training of Indian Christians for services such as: teachers, catechists, evangelists, pastors and Bible women was the Christian contribution towards the social uplifting of Indian people. David, a missionary writer observes that, "There is no doubt that it has greatly contributed to the social upliftment of India, by awakening the government to the value of education. There was little chance of education for the youth of India a generation or two ago, except through the missionary schools. Our business is to make our educational institutions thoroughly efficient, so that our contribution to the Indian church and the Indian nation may be the best we can give. Efficiency in our schools as educational institutions, can alone secure their efficiency as evangelistic instruments. That is the start by which our course must be guided."\textsuperscript{121}

From the commencement of the American Madura Mission in the year 1834, some attention was paid to vernacular education. But in 1836, on the arrival of the Reverend Poor, a missionary from Jaffna, the mission greatly enlarged its operations in this direction. Besides the primary studies of reading, writing and arithmetic, constant attention was paid to Christian catechism and the scriptures. No heathen books were allowed in the mission schools. The children within a distance of three or four miles were expected with their masters to attend religious service.\textsuperscript{122}

It appears that the intention of the missionaries was to radically change the character of heathendom and build up a national Christian church. Every element of national distinction is to be left untouched; but the sanctions of life are to be different; the individual, the home, the village, the city, the state, are to realise a new motive and a new power. "To save the individual was the first step, but the objective for which the campaign must be ordered from the first is the Christianising of the nation", observes

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\textsuperscript{120} One of the objectives of higher education is to train up a well educated clergy, who would not only be competent to do work of their congregation and schools, but be fit to stand forth as teachers of Christianity among non-Christians of the higher classes." See J. L. Wyatt, Reminiscences of Bishop Caldwell, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 176-177.
\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 35-40.
\end{flushleft}
a missionary. It should be noted here that vernacular schools according to missionaries were a cheap and effective means of disarming prejudice, and diffusing knowledge of the Christianity. Teachers in these vernacular schools were necessarily Hindus. Wherever Christian congregations were formed, the establishment of vernacular schools for the instruction of the children became one of the duties of the missionary. Hence the fact of the matter is that the religious teachings in the form of scripture lessons and catechism constituted the most important part of the curriculum.

Robert Caldwell, a missionary-cum-bishop of the S.P.G. understood the importance of education for the dissemination of the gospel. He contributed substantially to its growth, development and its universalisation in Tirunelveli district. This was done with the chief aim of making Christians, especially the youth read the Bible, take active part in religious services and later become the mainstream of the Indian churches. The schools according to the missionaries formed the future pillars of the Indian church. Ten thousand children, of whom 7,000 were children of Christian parents (nearly 4000 of them boys, and upwards of 3000 girls), were receiving benefits of Christian education in mission schools in 1840s. Boarding schools, training schools and educational institutions of various kinds had also been set up for the training of ‘native’ school masters and catechists.

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123 Ecumenical Missionary Conference, op. cit., pp. 6-10.
125 Lal Dena, op. cit., p. 96.
126 Caldwell says that, “My progress in the Tamil language is such as enables me to discourse on religious subjects as to be understood. Elegance, fluency, and eloquence, I have not obtained. Moreover, I found it very difficult to understand the natives, partly from their speaking incorrectly, uncouthly, principally and partly from the rapidity of their elocution.” See Robert Caldwell’s Records of the Early History of Tinnevelly Mission of the Society of the Propagation of the Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, op. cit., p. 165.
127 According to Robert Caldwell, one object he had in view in building or establishing schools, as far as possible in every village, was that he might not only instruct the children of the places, but that he might have a convenient place in each village which he could call his own, over which he had authority, to which he could invite people of the neighborhood to come and to listen at their leisure to his addresses. See J. L. Wyatt, Reminiscences of Bishop Caldwell, op. cit., p. 123.
128 J. Manuel, op. cit., p. 32.
Missionary education had always been explicit in its aims, objectives and motives. Emphasis had shifted from time to time, but educational policy had persisted unchanged in its essentials through the whole period of modern missions. A paper presented to the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 focused upon the following statements on the subject of missionary education:

"The functions which education may fill in the work of Christian missions may be summarised under the following heads:

(a) Education may be conducted primarily with an evangelistic purpose being viewed either as an alternative force to bring the youth under the influence of Christianity or as itself an evangelising agency.

(b) Education may be leavening, in so far as through it, the life of the nation is gradually permeated with the principles of truth.

(c) Education may be primarily edificatory, in so far as the school has for its object the development of the Christian community through the enlightenment and training of its members.

(d) The motive of missionary education may include the philanthropic desire to promote the general welfare of the people."

Similarly, the following was the resolution on higher education which was passed by the South India Conference at Bangalore in 1879: "This conference desires to express its full appreciation of the value of higher class Christian education as a missionary agency, and its hope that the friends of Indian missions will sympathise with this equally with other branches of evangelistic work in the country. The 'native' church in India needs at present, and will still more need in the future, men of superior education to occupy positions of trust and responsibility as pastors, evangelists and leading members of the community, such as can only be supplied by our high class Christian institutions. The missions who are engaged in vernacular work desire especially to bear testimony to the powerful effect in favour of Christianity which

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130 The elementary schools had a two fold purpose, first and chiefly to educate the children of Christians, and, secondly, to serve the non-Christian villagers." See J. A. Sharrock, *South Indian Missions*, op. cit., p. 221.

these institutions are exercising throughout the country and to record their high regard for the educational work as a necessary part of the work of the Christian church.”

Similarly the following resolution on missionary education was submitted to the South India Missionary Conference held at Ootacamund on 23 April, 1858, which, after much discussion, was adopted in the following form:

“That all the educational operations connected with our missions must be based upon the Word of God, and made subservient to the inculcation of its truths and principles, and indeed must be strikingly marked by the earnest and fearless teaching of the great essentials of the Christian faith, with a special view to the salvation of the souls of the pupils and not merely their intellectual and moral improvement.

1. That for the masses of the people well conducted vernacular day schools are the most suitable instruments, while for the higher classes, and for many belonging to the middle classes of the people, especially in the great centres of population and social and political influence, a system of superior Anglo-vernacular education is proved to be peculiarly suitable and indeed has already achieved an encouraging amount of success.

2. That no heathen books, taken in their integrity, are fit to be used in the mission schools, and that no vigilance should be spared to keep them out although judicious selections from some of them might be introduced with advantage.

3. That in the employment of teachers in mission schools, every effort should be made to secure well qualified and earnest Christian men, as such men alone can really sympathise with their main object, and rightly divide the word of truth to the pupils.”

Their ‘gospel oriented’ educational programme was further strengthened by various missionary societies. John Murdoch in his Missionary Manual says that, “All missionaries should acquire the vernacular, even those engaged in English institutions.” He also concludes that, “Religious instruction comes nearest to the heart

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through the mother tongue. By means of it, a missionary may also be useful to all, whereas, otherwise he can communicate with only a small population of the people". Regarding his experience with the Church Missionary Society he observes: "The C.M.S. acts wisely. Every missionary, even though he may be appointed to the Presidency itself, is on his arrival sent up-country to the station where he may best acquire the vernacular, and he is not put in charge of a district till he has passed a specified examination. Thus every facility is afforded to missionary with every inducement to effect."\(^{134}\)

When the modern missionary movement was born at the end of the eighteenth century its objectives were clear and definite. It was an outflow of the widespread religious awakening in Europe and America near the middle of that century. This movement, commonly called the "Evangelical Awakening" put its chief emphasis on individual salvation. Under its stimulus men felt impelled to go to the ends of the earth to save souls and bring them into the church. In order to proclaim their message they were obliged to master languages, translate the scriptures, and produce literature in those languages. Almost from the beginning of their work, there were missionaries who saw that a scheme of education was a necessity, if enlightened leaders and pastors were to be developed.\(^{135}\)

In between the years 1890 and 1895, nearly 42 missions were engaged in promoting education. Some educational institutions were very large whereas others were limited. Some missionary societies had large English institutions while others had only vernacular schools. Some missionaries were engaged only in vernacular preaching, whereas, a few were in charge of theological institutions. The older societies like S.P.C.K. had large and important schools. The most successful missionary societies had chiefly elementary schools, though they had some high class institutions as well.\(^{136}\)

\(^{134}\) John Murdoch, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.


When a young missionary takes charge of a district, his first duty with reference to the schools is to visit them and ascertain, as nearly as possible, their exact condition. The following aspects were frequently inquired into by the head of the missionary society:

"Are the pupils sufficiently provided with books, slates, and writing materials?
- Are the books purchased by the children?
- Are the lessons properly explained?
- Are lessons prescribed monthly?
- Are there periodical reviews of lessons?
- If there is a Sunday school connected with the week-day school; what proportion of week-day scholars attend Sunday school?
- What is the amount of fees paid monthly by the pupils?
- How many children do not pay fees?
- How are the fees appropriated?
- What is the monthly income of the teacher and from what sources?
- Does the school receive a Government grant?
- What is the state of the general discipline of the school?
- What punishments are used?
- What circumstances specially hinder the progress of the school?
- What improvements or changes are considered desirable?\(^{137}\)

In most of the missionary schools subjects such as Tamil, Arithmetic, Geography, Natural History, Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, and Evidences of Christianity etc., were taught. *The Bible* was considered as the text book of the colleges established by missionaries.\(^{138}\) Even though schools of various grades were gradually started both in Calcutta and in several other parts of the chief cities of both North and South India, no attempts were made in the first instance to impart Christian teaching in those small schools. But the idea was to kindle a desire for knowledge, through which the gospel should afterwards spread far and wide. Of the first school opened at Kidderpore, a

\(^{137}\) John Murdoch, *op. cit.*, pp. 421-422.

suburb of Calcutta, the Committee of Public Instruction stated in the report of 1817: "It is under the care of the missionaries, but the school master is not a Christian." But in the year 1822, the report observed: "The gospels are now read in all the schools. Missionaries could have expected a year ago to see a thousand Hindu children rendering the gospel." It is a matter of historical fact that more converts from Hinduism had been gathered into the Christian church either through direct or indirect influence of schools than by any other single instrument.\textsuperscript{139}

The attempt to impart Christian truth to the young by means of the Tamil language constitutes one of the earliest efforts of Protestant missions. For many years such schools continued to receive an increasing amount of attention and labour. The progress of Christianity in 1860s in the Madras Presidency due to the efforts of the ‘native’ agencies and the spread of vernacular education is greater than in any other parts of India. The following table establishing the fact deserves careful observation:

\textbf{Table for the year 1862}\textsuperscript{140}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Missionaries</th>
<th>Native Missions</th>
<th>Native Catechists</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Communicants</th>
<th>Scholars</th>
<th>Native Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>110257</td>
<td>20218</td>
<td>44089</td>
<td>75370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>20774</td>
<td>4719</td>
<td>14611</td>
<td>7872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2231</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>5432</td>
<td>1798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>5301</td>
<td>1488</td>
<td>12538</td>
<td>8398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceylon</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>15273</td>
<td>3859</td>
<td>14036</td>
<td>37150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this table it may be observed that in the departments of ‘native’ agencies and education, in the number of converts and amount of support derived from churches, Madras is far ahead than the rest of India.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{140} J. S. Billigraham, “Mission Progress in India,” \textit{The Harvest Field}, May, 1863, pp. 142-143.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
The educational work of missionaries was highly recognised by both the British government and Brahmin officials in princely states. The following extract from the Travancore Census Report by a Brahmin official testifies:

"By the unceasing efforts and self-denying earnestness of the learned body of the Christian missionaries in the country the 'native' community of 'native' Christians is rapidly advancing in their moral, intellectual and material condition. But for these missionaries these humble orders of Hindu society will for ever remain unraised. Their material condition, I dare say, will have improved with the increased wages; improved market, better laws, and more generous treatment from an enlightened government like ours; but to the Christian missionaries belong the credit of having gone to their humble dwellings and awakened them to a sense of a better earthly existence. This action of the missionaries was not a mere improvement upon ancient history, a kind of polishing and refining of an existing model, but an entirely original idea, conceived and carried out with commendable zeal and oftentimes in the teeth of opposition and persecution. The heroism of raising the low from the slough of degradation and debasement was an element of civilization unknown to ancient India. The Brahmin community of Southern India is not doing to the lower classes what the casteless Britisher is doing to them. I do not mean that our cultured Brahmins are a whit less sympathetic to them than the most refined or the most kind hearted Englishman of the day. But what I mean is that our organisation, as the chief caste of Hindu community does not provide systematic help, or means of relief to them. We have regular institutions all over India, for instance, for doing charity to Brahmins, but none such either inculcated in books are practiced by recent ancestors to the Chandalas. This is an undoubted defect. The credit of this philanthropy of going to the houses of the low, the distressed and dirty, and putting a shoulder to the wheel of depraved humanity, belongs to the Englishman. I do not think the Brahmins or even the high caste non Brahmins can claim this credit. It is a glory reserved to this century
of human progress—the epoch of the happy commingling of the civilization of the West with that of the East.”

Despite all this approbation, it is also observed that Indian education continued to be a colonial appendage to the British system. In this the contribution of missionaries and the role of various agencies was involved, Catholic or Protestant, government or private, nationalist or communal. India remained a colony, intellectually, culturally and even spiritually subordinate to the West and England.

Nevertheless, missionaries’ intervention in Tamils’ social lives had not only brought Christianity to this part of the world, but also substantially altered and reshaped the intellectual and cultural life of the Tamil society in the period. The Tamil language, the great legacy of its people, gained its true recognition and identity through the zeal and efforts of the missionary enterprise. The cultural self-sufficiency and the linguistic salience of Tamil civilization was aptly brought to the fore by the indefatigable efforts of Catholic and Protestant missions across European and American continents. Robert Caldwell’s seminal contribution to the advancement of the Tamil language indeed heralded an intellectual re-awakening. According to Irshick the intellectual background of the Tamil identity question should be linked to the contribution of missionaries’ effort through which the Tamil language managed to recover its respectable position in the world of languages in general and among the classical languages of India in particular. The Tamil renaissance and its revivalist enterprise partly came into existence with the resurgence of interest induced by missionaries, through whom Tamil gained the privilege of being the first Indian language to enter into the portals of print media.

143 Rudolf C. Heredia, op. cit., p. 2337.