



# Missionary Education and Marginalization of Indigenous System of Education in India

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**Abstract :** In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the discoveries of new sea routes enabled the Europeans to travel to far-off places all over the world. To expand their empire, they travelled to countries in Asia and Africa and tried to establish their supremacy. Those events and activities were known as the 'Age of Discovery and Expansion'. With the European travellers and businessmen Christian missionaries also began to travel worldwide for evangelization and proselytism purposes. Among them, the Portuguese, the French, the Dutch and the British missionaries started to venture into the territory of vanquished countries. There were various branches of missionaries from European countries: Protestant, Catholic, Lutheran and Baptist. All of these started their mission in the age of discovery and expansion. The major objectives of missionaries were proselytizing the natives using education, health services and welfare activities. Jesuit was a major school of thought for Christian missionaries. The Jesuit congregation was working in the field of Catholicism. Christian missionaries have been active in India since the fifteenth century. These missionaries have been converting people by holding out promises of the betterment of their social and spiritual life. They act in an indirect way through welfare and philanthropic activities. In colonial India, there were three main agencies of education: the Christian missionaries, the British Indian government and individual Indians. These agencies had their own respective goals of education and the main debate and issues revolved around Government versus private, indigenous versus western and imperial versus nationalist. And the core idea behind all these things was to not only anglicise Indian education but the whole country. One can see a glimpse of the roadmap of the British idea of the Indian education system in 'Wood's Despatch of 1854' because after its release the Colonial Government implemented the majority of its recommendations.

**Keywords-** Missionary, Conversion, colonial, Marginalization, Indigenous, Education.

The objective of this paper is to discuss the role of Christian missionaries in promoting missionary education, the reason behind its successful propagation among the indigenous population, indigenous<sup>1</sup> education in India before the advent of missionaries, and the impact of missionary education after its expansion in India. Apart from this, it also discusses the propagation of Christian ethos and values, through the curriculum of missionary schools, how the Colonial Government helped the missionaries by its decision to implement English education in India, the result produced in the field of education and knowledge by them, and whether the idea of supporting the Christian missionaries by the colonial government was motivated by the idea of religious conversion etc.

**History of Modern Education in India** - The history of modern education in India or you can say the direct involvement of the colonial government in Indian education begins with the Charter Act of 1813, when for the first time, the British East India Company accepted the responsibility for public education and made provision of spending Rs. One lakh per year on it (but the fact is that it was never followed), apart from this, the government officially permeated the Christian missionaries to open schools and propagate modern education in India. The clause (43) related to investment in education in India was proposed before the parliament in Calcutta and passed after some modification.<sup>2</sup> Clause 43 of the Charter Act of 1813 states,

“It shall be lawful for the Governor General-in-Council to direct that out of any surplus which may remain of the rents, revenues, and profits arising from the said territorial acquisition, after framing the expenses of the military, civil and commercial establishment and paying the interest of the debt, in the manner hereinafter provided, a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the science among the inhabitations of the British territories in India.”

This clause was a milestone in the field of development of education in India under the British East India Company. Even some allocation of this charter could not be implemented by 1820. Even though a commission was set up to look into the matter earlier despite Company showed reluctance to accept educational affairs. The early missionaries, who entered India before the enactment of the Charter Act of 1813, had started their educational propagation among the lower classes. These missionaries started spreading education by adopting vernacular as a medium of learning and chiefly worked in the sector of elementary education. Even they moved their attention from elementary to secondary and higher education after the enactment of the Charter Act of 1813. They also changed their medium of instruction from native languages to the English language.<sup>3</sup> After the Charter Act of 1813, different agencies started working separately in the field of education. The joint effort of these agencies, Missionary education departments, private enterprises and Government enterprises could not do something concrete for the betterment of education. This could not be possible due to the tussle

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous word in this paper simply denotes the fundamental roots of Indian civilization and fundamental trails of native people and their education system.

<sup>2</sup> Suresh C. Ghosh, History of Education in India, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Purkait, Biswa Ranjan, Milestones in Modern Indian Education, 2002.

on the issue of the medium of instruction. The process of implementation of modern education in India made ground for the formation of groups called the Orientalists and the Anglicists. Orientalists favoured the provision of education in the medium of classical languages i.e. in Sanskrit entitled to Hindus and in Persian entitled Muslims. The other was Anglicists who batted for providing higher education through the medium of the English language.<sup>4</sup> This tussle between the two groups put immense pressure on the agencies which were working for the development of education. The missionaries, on the other hand, had a completely different logic to support the introduction of English education in India. The intention was to get access to indigenous society through education that would facilitate the propagation of new doctrine and, in turn, help them to convert the masses to Christianity.

Later, Wood's Despatch, which was formed to assess the educational development since the first charter act, and provide suggestions for further development, also followed the idea that missionaries were trying to implement, whether it was replacing the medium of instruction in schools with English, and propagating Christianity.<sup>5</sup> But they did not do it all at once, initially, they implemented the vernacular at the primary level, Anglo-vernacular at the secondary level, and English at the collegiate level. So, they made it mandatory, that whoever in India wished to go for higher education they will have to learn English. As paragraph no. 11 of the 'Wood's Despatch' mentioned: "A knowledge of English will always be essential to those natives of India who aspire to a higher order of education."<sup>6</sup>

The Company government began to establish their political power on Indian soil during the 17<sup>th</sup> century and by the 19<sup>th</sup> century expanded it over a large part of the Indian subcontinent. Initially, the colonial ruler did not focus, much on social or educational reform, because their main motive was trade, yet they did not shy away from proselytizing activities. (Firth, 2005).

Earlier, the Company could not assert their commitment to trade and commerce and had to follow the directions and guidelines of the British Crown. 'It was their earnest desire by all possible means to spread Christianity among the people of Indians and allowed missionary to embark on their ship'. (Naik and Syed, 1974). In 1698, the British parliament discussed a special missionary clause under the company's charter. This clause instructed the company to maintain a "Minister of Religion" at the factories. After the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Company put some restrictions on missionaries, taking into consideration political and economic advantages.<sup>7</sup> The British official, through their education policy, promoted the spread of the English language and attempted to weaken the importance of the native languages. They also promoted an anglicized cultural tradition to dominate people, which was based on the "Single Way of Life" (Monotheistic). In the course of

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. C.P.S. Chauhan, Modern Indian Education: Policies, Progress and Problem, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> The Despatch of 1854 on General Education India, paragraph no. 11-14 and 84

<sup>6</sup> The Despatch of 1854 on General Education India, p. 8

<sup>7</sup> Mr Pynhunlang NM Shullai, Colonialism, Christianity and Mission Activities in India: A Postcolonial Perspectives, 2017, p. 5.

this process, they undermined the Indian tradition, customs and practices. They sought to create such an atmosphere where the masses become so self-critical that they begin to criticize their way of life. They tried to demonize the whole grand narrative of India, such as theology, rituals, educational curriculum and lifestyle. They prescribed the Western and occidental way of life as an alternative to that.<sup>8</sup>

In the course of the development of educational institutions by the company, some important institutions were established. The prominent among them were the Calcutta Madrasa (1781) by Warren Hastings, Benares Sanskrit College (1791) by Jonathan Duncan and the Asiatic Society (1784) by William Jones. Some Jesuit mission colleges that were started to promote catholic education were: St. Joseph's College, founded at Nagapatnam in 1844, but in 1882 it was transferred to Tiruchirappalli; St Xavier's College, Calcutta in 1862; St Xavier's College, Bombay in 1869; St Aloysius College, Mangalore in 1880 and St Joseph college Darjeeling in 1888.<sup>9</sup> These were the institutions based on the missionaries' system of education.

These Colonial educational institutions were opened in the name of imparting modern and secular education, whereas it has been observed that the Colonialists propagated Christianity and the English language simultaneously, ignoring the Indian literature and indigenous languages. They eulogized the English language and Christianity in every aspect of social life. They also promoted partiality among the people to spread English education and created an elite class based on learning the English language. This process has resulted in the "English Stratification" of Indian society. On the other hand, the colonialists also endeavoured for the survival of the English language promoting secular education in the English education system. That provided legitimacy to what they were doing in the name of English education. Colonial institutions have also been endorsed by the process of secularization.<sup>10</sup>

The Minutes of Macaulay has brought another shift in the history of education in India. Governor General Lord William Bentinck decided to make a policy document on education. He announced on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 1835, relying on Macaulay's Minutes that "the objective of the state to aid education would promote the study of European literature and science, thus the financial assistance would be allocated to the spread of English education".<sup>11</sup> This legislation insists on the decline of the traditional education system. Finally, the tussle between the Anglicists and the Orientalists disappeared with the favoured decision of the government. The resolution passed by Governor General Bentinck in 1835 comprised some strict rules and regulations regarding English education. The major purpose of the British government was to promote European literature and sciences among the indigenous people of India. Therefore, the entire government fund was to be used only for English education. The Oriental institution was to be abolished. Nothing would be paid for printing books in

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<sup>8</sup> Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*, 1989 p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> *An Account of the Mutinies in Oudh and the Siege of the Lucknow Residency*, Richard Bentley, 1858, pp. 89-90,

<sup>10</sup> Gauri, Viswanathan, *Op. cit.* pp. 108-109

<sup>11</sup> J.P. Banerjee, *Education in India, Past, Present and Future*, 2010, p.73.

the oriental languages. All government funds were utilized to impart the corpus of European literature and sciences among the natives of India through the medium of English.<sup>12</sup>

Macaulay wanted to tame Indians through English education. His policy was to make Indians ignorant of their knowledge systems. They could not speak anything about their philosophy and epistemology due to the handicap imposed through the English language. Indians would be wordless on their own land they would not utter a single word on their glorious history. This had been envisaged by Lord Macaulay to establish English supremacy. "He believed that education from the upper classes would filter down to the masses, so through English education, he wanted to create a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in the testes, in opinion, in moral and in intellect."<sup>13</sup>

Harding's resolution was the other factor responsible for discontinuing the indigenous education system of India. According to this resolution 'in any case priority in the appointment for public employment would be given to those members who have been educated in the centre of English education.'<sup>14</sup> These resolutions decreased the importance of regional languages and schools. Macaulay and Harding's reformation became a decisive landmark in the domain of modern education in India. In 1844, the Bengal government determined to open 101 regional language schools in villages which would be under the supervision of a collector. By 1844, this move was effective to some extent in Bhagalpur in Bihar and Cuttack in Orissa. But turnout was very low in these colleges due to the presence of missionary schools, because they had registered a large number of students.<sup>15</sup> Through those resolutions, the British played a 'double game'; on the one hand, they debarred people from government jobs by laying down the parameters of English education and on the other hand they promoted missionary schools. This factor was the major reason behind low enrolment in the indigenous institution.

"On the other side, North Western Province was separated from Bengal in 1842, where a new educational policy was required for the new province. Under the new educational policy, it was mentioned, that the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue and the main objective of the policy was the education of the masses. James Thompson was appointed as Lieutenant Governor of the new province in the year 1843. That region achieves massive development in the field of education under his command, in number and necessary materials for educational development purposes also. He gave more importance to elementary education and because of his efforts made for the development of elementary education he is still regarded as the Father of Elementary Education in India."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Purkait Ranjan Biswas, Op. cit. p. 43.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>14</sup> Dr. C. P. S. Chahan, Op. cit. p. 26.

<sup>15</sup> Suresh C. Ghosh, Op. cit., p. 327.

<sup>16</sup> Amita, Gupta. Early Childhood, Education, Postcolonial Theory and Teaching. Practices in India, 2006.

After Macaulay, the history of education in India revolved around Sir Charles Wood. He became the president of the “Board of Control” in 1854 after the enactment of the Company’s Charter Act of 1853. When the government needed a substantial and stable education policy, he made recommendations to create a Director of Public Instruction, provision for adequate aid for education and development of elementary education in India. He further dealt with the issue of “Medium of Instruction”. He was not only in favour of English as the medium of instruction but also approved of regional languages.<sup>17</sup> At the primary level, the local language was permitted to be used as a “Medium of Instruction” and modern Indian languages became a medium of dissemination at the secondary level.<sup>18</sup>

### **Salient features of the pre-Colonial Education System in India**

Education is considered to be the best remedy to end all structural and basic inequalities among the people. It was the vision of the indigenous education system of India in the pre-British era. The records related to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century indigenous education system give a very rough idea in this regard. These were educational institutions: Gurukul, Pathsala, Madrasas, Maktab and Vihar as learning centres. Hindi, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit and Prakrit were the dominant languages. Persian was the official language and was used in the court. The Hindus went to Pathsala and Gurukuls, and the Muslims to Madrasa for learning. Those educational institutions were run through the contribution of the Zamindars and local rich people. And at some places, they were supported by the parents of students. In the absence of the printing press, memory and oral tradition became the basis for transforming knowledge and information. The manuscript was the only medium to document knowledge and events. The state had no role in school educational affairs.<sup>19</sup> Only the King patronized people famous for their learning. There were some elementary schools run by zamindars and local elites. Those schools used to teach basic literacy and arithmetic to meet day-to-day life events and queries.

Before introducing their formal education system, the British conducted an education survey in different presidencies. A survey conducted by the British East India Company displayed the nature of indigenous education in the Early British period. British government conducted surveys in Bombay, Madras, Bihar and Bengal to assess the contemporary status of indigenous education in early modern India. The survey was conducted between 1820 and 1830 in the Bombay presidency and between 1823 and 1826 in the Madras presidency. A minor survey was also conducted in the Bengal presidency and its report was published by W. Adam; former Baptist Missionary findings were published in 1853 entitled “A Report on the State of Education in Bengal”. The report of the survey made public by the Collector in 1826 revealed: that there were 12498 schools imparting education to 188650 students under Madras presidency. In Bombay, there were 1750 schools providing education to 35143 pupils in 1829, out of which the government controlled only 25 schools with a total enrolment of 1315 students. The rest of the schools were situated in rural areas in which the total

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<sup>17</sup> But it was temporary, because on higher education level English was mandatory. Initially they allow vernacular mainly at primary level. See Wood’s Despatch, paragraph no. 11-14.

<sup>18</sup> Purkait Biswa Ranjan. Op. cit. pp. 50-52

<sup>19</sup> B.D. Basu, History of Education in India, 1989.

enrolment was 33828. Finally, in Bihar and Bengal, there were 100000 “Village Schools” by 1835 AD.<sup>20</sup> The report of the educational survey displayed the rich condition of village education even under the British government in India. However, the intervention of private enterprises in the education section changed the condition. To spread Christianity through the missionaries was the main factor that led to the dismantling of the indigenous education system in India. These missionary enterprises started to alter the nature and structure of the indigenous education system by the end of the eighteenth century. The missionaries provided secular and scientific education that attracted the landlords and other well-off classes toward missionary education. These landlords and elites were the major financial basis of indigenous education.

The main characteristics of Hindu schools teaching and imparting indigenous skills and knowledge were: the single teacher/guru, the local language or Sanskrit language as the medium of instruction and based on the financial support of kings, nobles or parents of students.<sup>21</sup> Often teachers were drawn from the priests of the local temples. There were quite flexible rules for admission in the school and courses and curriculum. It was based on practical life, children used to learn skills essential for life in the open atmosphere and they used to put into practice the whole life what they had learnt. Indigenous education was imparted in the premises of temples, houses of teachers or common sheds in the locality of the region. The teacher generally belonged to the Brahmin community and imparted education to pupils depending on their socio-economic background and the importance of such education and training in their future lives. The major activities of the education were memorizing ‘sacred’ and religious texts. Upon completion of it, a task was provided by the teacher to assess children’s ability, accomplishment and cognitive potential. In this process, children acquired Qualities, Merits, virtues and values which were known as the cultural capital. These acquired and ingrained capitals were used by children, in their later lives for their survival and earning name and fame in the society. These were the peculiar structures and visions of indigenous education.

A masterwork on the Indigenous Education System of India by Dharmapal<sup>22</sup> broadly narrated the Indigenous education and knowledge system of India. He has given factual as well as theoretical details of the indigenous education system during early modern India. British strategically worked to strengthen their hold on the Indians by undermining the indigenous education system. British did not focus on individuals to serve their ends. On the other hand, they concentrated on dismantling ancient Indian texts, thereby serving their vested interests. Missionaries persuaded people against following the tenets of their social and spiritual life as directed by their ancient texts. They attempted to propagate their interpretation of ancient texts. Then they tried to Christianize people who were submissive to such conversion. Partha Chatterjee has absorbed in the same way in his “Politics of Governed”:

“When Europeans went overseas to found their empires, they were of course scarcely concerned about whether they were violating the sovereignty of the conquered countries. In many cases, they would

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<sup>20</sup> Dr. C. P. S. Chahan, Op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> P.M. Sarangapani, Indigenous Education in British India: A Profile, 1990.

<sup>22</sup> Dharampal, The Beautiful Tree: Indigenous Education in Eighteenth Century, 1983.

declare blatantly that in those uncivilized parts of the world, there was no international law; the only law that prevailed here was the law of force and conquest” (Chatterjee, 2009: 93).

There is a myth prevailing about the indigenous education system, that there was no place for the ‘Shudra’ in the indigenous education system and that they were debarred from schools and higher learning institutions. Dharampal argued that there were sufficient numbers of lower castes in the school system. He presents some data from Madras presidency and we quote, “the number of boy and girl receiving education at their home was equally pertinent. In comparison to those who are being educated in a school in Madras, this number is 4.73 times. Though half of these tutored were indeed from amongst the Brahmins and the Vaishyas, still those from the Shudras form 28.7% of this number and from the other castes 13 present” (Dharampal, 1983)<sup>23</sup>. The colonial document on indigenous education did not talk about the indigenous mode of learning. It only focuses on oriental science, for example, Law, Logic, Philosophy, Medicine, Astronomy and Astrology but there were no talks on the Indian modes of learning such as Dance, Music and Folks. W. Adam’s report broadly emphasized the indigenous education system in India.<sup>24</sup> Adam has underlined various issues in the indigenous system of education in India. He pointed out the inadequate composition of students and teachers in school from different sections. Dharampal has replied that teachers belong to the castes of Kayashthas, Brahmins, Sadgop and Aguri. And some other caste comprises this group such as Chndals and six others. This was also part of the characteristics of indigenous education, which is hardly documented in modern social sciences literature. Early Missionaries have also given the account of schools in pre-colonial periods. Abbe J.A. Dubois said in 1820 that there was not a single village where one or more schools were not found. These schools were owned by the villagers where teaching, learning and writing were going on smoothly.<sup>25</sup>

#### **The Missionary Forage into Indigenous Education of India**

The indigenous education system was withering away, having been subjected to the onslaught of missionary education and colonial education policies. The Portuguese were the first to introduce Missionary education in India; they started school in their arrangement in Goa, Daman & Diu, Cochin and Hooghly in 1543.<sup>26</sup> Jesuits opened other colleges in Goa to provide for the training of priests. Later, they expanded the scope of the Jesuit institution and opened it to other students.<sup>27</sup> In this order, French missionaries too began elementary school at Mahe, Yanam, Pondicherry and Chandernagore.<sup>28</sup> Besides these developments, Clause (43) of Charter Act

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<sup>23</sup> Dharampal, Op. cit. pp. 41-42

<sup>24</sup> Adam’s Report on Vernacular Education in Bengal and Bihar, 1868.

<sup>25</sup> Abbe, Dubois, Hindu Manner, Customs and Ceremonies, 1815.

<sup>26</sup> T.N., Sequeira, The Education of India: History and Problems, Oxford University Press, London, 1939, p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> J. Velinkar., Jesuit Educational Style in Sixteenth Century Goa, Itidica. Vol. 21, No 1. March 1984, pp 17-27.

<sup>28</sup> T.N. Saquria, Op. cit. pp.27.



1813, Macaulay's Minutes and Charles Wood's Despatch played a major role in replacing the indigenous education system of India.

To propagate their religious ethos, Christian missionaries started working in the fields of Education, Medicine and other social welfare activities. So, in the name of help, they could influence the beneficiaries. But their primary motives were to westernize Indians in every manner. To accomplish these tasks missionaries began to advance the policy of the British government and in return British government used missionaries as "civilizing allies" (Furuquhar, J.N.). Around 1840, education policies and missionaries' goals were working cooperatively to "civilize the barbaric natives." The main objective of missionaries was to use Schools as an instrument for preaching Christianity. They started abusing the worship of idols and tried to establish knowledge of one true God which was Jesus Christ.<sup>29</sup> The Bible was introduced in government institutions.<sup>30</sup> Those schools were run through government aid and were guided by the clergymen based on Christian doctrine. The evils and abusive portraits of native religion were displayed in very lurid colours while the divine nature of Christianity was showcased in a very pleasant manner. Schools' pupils were attracted by the 'salvation' in Christian theology. Abuse of Hindu Gods and Goddesses was the central theme of public preaching and propaganda of missionaries. Civil and Military officers under British India helped the missionaries in preaching doctrine openly in temples and mosques. Farquhar describes the impact of "new education policy" in the following words:

"The new educational policy of the Government created during these years the modern class of India. These are men who think and speak English habitually, who are proud of their citizenship in the British Empire, who are devoted to English literature and whose intellectual life is almost entirely formed by the thought of the West. Large numbers of them enter government services, while the rest practice law, medicine or teaching, or take to journalism or business. We must also note that the powerful excitement which has sufficed to create the religious movements we have to deal with is almost confined to those who have had an English education"<sup>31</sup>

Farquhar had reacted to Macaulay's model of education; and Missionary based English education, which transformed the Indian minds. The impact of Macaulay's education policy during the twentieth century was very high. It was visible in Indian university graduates during the general conversation. The mindset of the Indian graduates in the light of Western and missionary education was such that: on asking about ideals of Mahabharata, he would quickly reply knowledge of Shakespeare, ask him about Religious Philosophy you will know that "he is an atheist from a generation" and he would not only show religious ignorance but also little philosophical knowledge same as an average English man. And on asking about Indian music he would talk about modern instruments of music and would show his arrogance towards Indian music too. Asking about Indian dress and Jewellery, he would tell you that "they are uncivilized and barbaric." He can't tell you

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<sup>29</sup> Calcutta Journal, March 11, 1822.

<sup>30</sup> *The Despatch of 1854*, Paragraph No. 84

<sup>31</sup> Farquhar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movement in India*. 1915.

anything about Indian art, and this would be new for him as it exists. He does not know how to translate “a letter written in his mother tongue.” He becomes a stranger in his own land.<sup>32</sup>

These people used to be described by the term coconut like people, because like coconut “they are brown on the outer surface but white inside.” Hence, it could be said that the British education system in India worked like an architect, who applied their method to produce ‘Coconut like Indians’. Premium missionaries of Bengal, Benares and Punjab also designed their syllabus to achieve this object. Lord Macaulay wanted to “create a class of person who may be Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinion, in moral and in intellect.” There were many prominent missionaries, who were involved in preparing favourable ground for evangelism. Some prominent ones were William Carey (1767-1837), William Hodge Mill (1792-1853) and John Muir (1810-1882) who were pioneer missionaries and main strategists in the field of evangelism. Alexander Duff (1806-1876) and William Miller (1838-1923) were some other prominent missionaries. They claimed to be experts in the Sanskrit language and had translated some Christian theological works into Sanskrit and vice-versa. William Carey was a Baptist Missionary who laid the foundation of Serampore College in 1818. Later, he renamed it as ‘Christian Benares’ and the syllabus was changed accordingly. Carey was interested in Indian languages because he thought that the Sanskrit language was the central force in stabilizing and uniting people and it had an unorganized dialect which could not deciphered by an evangelist. He wanted to oppose Brahmanical hegemony, which had a great hold on the Sanskrit language.<sup>33</sup> His intention was openly aggressive and he wanted to set counter discourse against Hindu literature through the Gospel. According to him, this task would be complete only when evangelists would be aware of both religions. Although they were very ethnocentric in nature, they still attempted to read and rewrite Indian Vedic literature, just because of their commitment to Evangelism.

But missionaries could not become experts in the Sanskrit language, because of its diverse roots. It was very different from the European languages. Missionaries faced the challenge of deciphering the various usage of a single word. There were 64 words for ‘water’ in ordinary conversation.<sup>34</sup> The words in the Hindu philosophical corpus had seven different meanings at the same time. This was a formidable challenge for the Christian missionaries and their evangelists. Fortunately, the diverse and complex nature of India became advantageous. A single text could be interpreted at lower, high philosophical levels and many intermediate levels in between too. It was very easy for a clever person to convince a layman by using and uttering only the lowest possible meanings of a word.

Carey himself made his “state of mind” clear in the following words,

“To gain the ear of those who are thus deceived they must believe (wrongly) that the speaker has a superior knowledge of the subject. In these circumstances knowledge of Sanskrit is valuable. As the

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<sup>32</sup> Anand K., Coomarswamy. Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art. 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Fox Young, Resistant Hinduism: Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth- Century India, 1981, p.33

<sup>34</sup> Dr. V.V. Bedekar, V.Y.Sardesa, How British Reined India, p. 15

person is thus misled, perhaps a Brahmin, deem this the most important part of knowledge. If the advocate of truth be deficient therein, he labours against the hill, resumption is altogether against him.”<sup>35</sup>

Bishop's College, Calcutta established under the supervision of William Hodge Mill by the Society for Propagation of Gospel (London). He had been designated as the principal of the college. To spread Christianity in India he and H.H. Wilson translate all evangelical tracts in Sanskrit language. Mills also reacted to the Indian corpus that Hinduism consisted of “Sublime precepts of spiritual abstraction” overlaid with “Monstrous and demoralizing legends” and this view was endorsed by some Indians who suffered from the Max Muller theory about India. They criticized traditional Hinduism and accepted and popularized these notions. John Muir landed in Calcutta approximately 1827-1828. He was an ardent evangelist. He also claimed to be a Sanskrit scholar. He served in the East India Company variously in the North-West Frontier Province. He had also worked in the prestigious Benares College. The chief aim of Muir was the manipulation of Indian philosophy to undermine and distort the Darshans (six different schools of Indian Philosophy). He had attempted to force Pandits to give up their traditional way of teaching (Fox, Richard). In other parts of India, Sanskrit scholars (missionaries) from different presidencies ventured into educational activities to directly and indirectly spread Christianity in India. Alexander Duff was the founder of the Scottish church college in Calcutta. He thought that ‘he was laying a mine which would eventually explode and blow Hinduism in pieces.’<sup>36</sup> William Miller was the Free Church Mission Society of Scotland. He changed his approach from direct evangelism to ‘Prearatio Evangelica’ ‘to prepare the minds to receptive Christian principle’. Where the education would be imparted in Christian format to demonize Hinduism which would expand ‘Christ to India.’<sup>37</sup> The objective of the earliest missionary was:

“First, education of Christians themselves in a Christian atmosphere so that they could be good members of their church and occupy important positions in secular society; secondly, to render service to Indian youth at large; thirdly, to build evangelical bridges towards the country's intelligentsia and thus pave the way for an acceptance of the faith”<sup>38</sup>

There was encouragement and motivation in England for proselytizing activities in India. They envisaged that the East India Company and the Christian missionaries through their activities would Christianize the Indian subcontinent. For this project, they provided every means and relaxation in rules and regulations. One senior official in the East India Company once said in the House of Commons: “Providence has entrusted in the extensive empire of Hinduism in England so that the Banner of Christ should wave triumphant from one end

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<sup>35</sup> William Carey, On Encouraging the Cultivation of Sanskrit among the Natives of India, 1822.

<sup>36</sup> Newbigin, Leslie, 'The Secular - Apostolic Dilemma' in T A Mathias (ed.), Not without a Compass, 1977.

<sup>37</sup> A. Mathew, Christian Missions. Education and Nationalism: From Dominance to Compromise, 1988, pp.55-56

<sup>38</sup> Thophane A Mathsia, Christian Education in India of Today, 1971, p. 204.

of India to another. Everyone must exert all his strength that there may be dilatoriness on any account in continuing the grand work of all Indians making Christians.” The Company had additional revenue to pay for the missionary infrastructure (Churches, Schools and hospitals) from England. Since the enactment of the Charter Act of 1813, there was a Bishop in every presidency; the Calcutta bishop was the senior most among them.<sup>39</sup>

Indians were enthusiastic towards education for social and economic development, but the missionaries tried to inculcate Christian morals and ethics into Indians. Some schools under the Christian mission were found indulged in the process of religious conversion. People were found to be murmuring about the Christian mission and their pedagogy which was loaded with Christian ethos. Some people were also caught talking about the threats and consequences of Baptist mission schools. “In the spring of 1891 at Ramsay College, Almora, one Brahmin student converted and headmaster Edward Oakley has an open rebellion on this hand”.<sup>40</sup> Another student publicly embraced Christianity, this led to the turn of the school for some time. The conversion process was witnessed in hostels at Allahabad in North-Western Province. Students of Oxford and Cambridge hostels were found disturbed because of these activities. This also led to a hostel halt and boys managed to spy on the hall to reinstall lectures and self-study.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, teachers and college staff had to come forward to say that the conversion process had adversely affected the school atmosphere. Wilson has described the milieu of the period in the following words:

“One man, educated at a Mission school, stood outside the schools serving as a recruiter: ‘Why do you not send your daughter to this school? Are you afraid of the Christian teaching that is given here? Do you think your daughter will become a Christian?’<sup>42</sup>

Christian missionary education was a tactical tool of the British government to tame the Indian people. Religion was the cardinal force behind the missionary education. Proselytizing into Christianity was the chief task of the missionary schools therefore most people distanced themselves from the missionary schools during the initial phases. Once, the Bishop of Lahore spoke on ‘The Reasonableness of Divine Incarnation’ and tried to draw a similarity between Jesus and Krishna. One can imagine the differences in the time and space between Jesus and Krishna! They manipulated theological debate under the curricula of missionary education. Through the above-mentioned comparison, missionaries tried to show the early influence of Christianity on Hinduism. Missionaries initiated this kind of debate because they wanted to establish the perception that Christian traits are found in Hinduism. Hemchandra Raychaudhuri contested this notion which missionaries wanted to impose. Having the expertise of Gita, Bible and other religious canon, he refuted the claims of missionaries. He gave references to devotional cults of the early Indo-Greek tradition. In this regard, he also

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<sup>39</sup> Brian Gardner, *The East India Company-A History*, 1971, p. 251.

<sup>40</sup> Bellenait, J.A. Hayden. *Education, Religion and knowledge in India*. c. 1880-1995. p. 372.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> R. S. Wilson. *The Indirect Effects of Christian Missions in India*, 1928, pp. 143-4.

gave the reference to Ashoka's Rock Edict No. 13. The devotional ideas have been portrayed in edicts and represented in the second century B.C. scenario. Raychaudhuri also cited the *Ghosunda* and *Bisanagar* inscriptions which depicted Krishna's divinity instead of Christian traits or Jesus' divinity. This has also depicted the divinity of Lord Krishna, which proves the indigenesness of India.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the divinity of Lord Krishna had its indigenous origin in India and did not belong to the mythical narratives of Christendom. Missionary education was not considered sacrosanct in India at all. Students and guardians were very reluctant to missionary education. Indians did accept Christian education and its morality in a very obvious manner. The students of missionary schools utilized Christian 'Logic', and 'Reason' in Indian mode as well. "Some students also complained that when most of the students accepted Christian morality, missionaries still wanted to convert them" (Bellenoit, 2007). Other students applied the Indian mode of thinking to debunk the missionary education model. One student was designated 'Chief Justice' after the profound 'Multiplicity of God'. He argued with an Evangelist that overall, there is no such difference between us; "you are converted when you find God in Christ. We Hindus are converted when we founded God in ourselves"<sup>44</sup> At the Gorakhpur CMS school students made the situation more complicated by offering prayers to "Rama, Krishna and Jesus and claimed they all are different manifestations of the same God." Girls also replied in school that the notion of repentance is not new in India. Rather, it is already practised through the performing rituals of Kali. Another student of St. Stephens expressed his obligation to his teacher by making the point that "thanking for the lesson of the Bible he claimed that it helped him return to the Vedas, where he found the same teaching".<sup>45</sup> The purpose of missionary education was never to transform the Indian education system from the "superstitious state to the 'modern' and 'rational' stage by propagating modern science but to establish Christian superiority. The whole curriculum of education was predominated by Western science and technology. Some used science and Christianity as synonyms. Indian tales and stories were undermined and rejected as being full of superstition. Western 'logic' and 'reason' became the parameters to determine the Indian way of life and convention. The 'Proof of Superiority' has been propagated through Christianity and modern science. This kind of approach undermined the indigenous way of life in India. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee contested Western science and Christian hegemony. He did not accept the symmetry of Western science and Christianity. He argued that "the worship of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the chief figure in Hinduism, was more in tune with science and natural science and that nature followed the same principle as that in Hinduism, of Creation, Preservation and Destruction." Therefore, the Hindu *paddhati* (way of life) and worship pattern are more logical and scientific. "An omnipotent, all-loving and merciful Deity was therefore contrary to science and nature: Nature, with the rule of the jungle, created by God and inherently endowed with logic and reason, was certainly not compassion." (Chatterjee,1986). The other examples of the shallowness of Christian hegemony and superiority are common people who had embraced Christianity and

<sup>43</sup> H.C. Raichadhory, Material for the Study of the Early History of the Vaishnava Sect, 1926.

<sup>44</sup> W.E.S. Holland. The Goal of India. London 1917. pp. 209-10.

<sup>45</sup> F. F. Monk, 'Evangelistic Work in Indian Mission Colleges', The East and the West, 1915, p. 78

who later criticized and debunked the idea of superiority. Nemeniah Goreh, who had converted to Christianity earlier, first applied Western rationalism to debunk Hinduism and Brahmanical hegemony. Later he confessed that “Christianity could not be supported and propagated by reason and logic. Most Gospel tenets, such as vicarious redemption for sin, were themselves illogical and baffling.”<sup>46</sup> The major purpose of missionary education was to convert indigenous people to Christianity. Therefore, most of the schools and colleges were affiliated with the Churches and missionary institutions.<sup>47</sup>

B. N Seal also contested the hegemony of Western science and Christian symmetry. He shed light on the Western education network engaged mostly in the origin of reason, logic and superiority. He argued that whatever Indians learned from “Western scientific canon was only practical rather than a theoretical application”.<sup>48</sup> Indians encountered the Eurocentric and Christian-centric superiority of Christianity. Missionary education uses human relations rather than pedagogical factors to influence the students. Epistemology, metaphysics and logic were used in the long term under the curriculum to prove Christian superiority, withering away after some time. These processes, intended to establish the superiority of Christianity, adversely affected the pedagogical and curricular aspects of education and this approach marginalized indigenous pedagogy and content of education (Bellenoit, 2007). Christian life and theology became an important aspect of missionary education. Missionaries also admitted that “their faith is based on ‘Irrational’ and ‘Illogical’ premise.” Missionary education and its conversion policies were not sacrosanct in the views of Indians as well as Europeans. William Holland stated that “the history of educational mission has shown that no syllabus, however perfect, can be counted on to compass the conversion of India’s students.”<sup>49</sup> Mission school’s curriculum and exam pattern was Bible centric. Schools spend a large amount of time preparing students for a Bible lesson. Later this convention was given up because of rising consciousness in people. Jay Narayan College in Benaras omitted Bible lessons from the examination pattern.<sup>50</sup>

#### **The adverse impact of Missionary activity on indigenous Education in India**

“The spiritual motive dominates life in India. Indian philosophy has its interest in the haunts of men and not in supra-lunar solitudes. It takes its origin in life and enters back into life after passing through the schools. The great works of Indian philosophy do not have that ex-cathedra character which is so prominent a feature of the latter criticisms and commentaries. The Gita and the Upanishads are not remote from popular belief. They are the great literature of the country and at the same time vehicles of great systems of thought. The

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<sup>46</sup> N. Goresh, A later to the Brahmos from a converted of Benares. (Allahabad) 1838. p.37

<sup>47</sup> Chauhan, op. cit. pp. 11

<sup>48</sup> Seal, Brajendranath, The Positive Science of the Ancient Hindus. London 1915. pp. 78-80

<sup>49</sup> W.E.S. Holland, ‘Mission Hostel in India’, The east and the West, 1908, p. 276.

<sup>50</sup> Proceedings of CMS. 1912-13, p. 130

Puranas contain the truth dressed up in myths and stories, to suit the weak understanding of the majority. The hard task of interesting the multitude in metaphysics is achieved in India” (Radhakrishnan, 1999: 25)

As we have discussed earlier, the indigenous system of knowledge began to decay when the British and missionaries arrived in India. One of the major reasons was the establishment of colonial rule over India, which made the indigenous system of education in India marginalized under the weight of the missionary schools and colleges.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, Christian missionaries entered into plains, hills and forests, and started school all across. Indigenous education coded with the very culture, ethos and values of Indian civilization started losing ground from Indian soil.<sup>52</sup> In 1648, to promote Portugal’s hold over Goa, Konkani was banned by the Vice-regal Decree in June and parish teachers and school masters were directed to teach only in colonial languages. So, by this time, it became common to use colonial languages and there was little use of mother tongues.<sup>53</sup>

The teachers of the indigenous schools were very idealistic and the schools were established on public financial support. The schools were endowed with rent-free land and monetary assistance. However, in the British era, these privileges were drastically curtailed. Dharmpal had shown the data of land expended in the name of public institutions (schools, temples and police) was sometimes 35 per cent and later increased by 50 per cent of total land. In this regard, the Collector of Bellary District said "There is no doubt that in former times especially under the Hindu Government very large grants both in money and in land were issued for the sake of learning." When the British started controlling education and promoting modern education, that land grant was curtailed. The old schools supported by the local elites were stopped. Adam’s report underlined that a village named Nattore, Thane, where there were only 2 or 3 schools, had once possessed 10 or 11 schools. (Ram Swarup, 2000).

By the early phase of twenty Christian missionaries had established infrastructure for evangelism and proselytizing. Since the official activation (Charter Act-1813) missionaries worked at large scale. At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, there was sufficient presence of missionary schools. There was most of the schools in rural and urban centres were running under the Baptist mission. According to the estimated 70 per cent of schools were running under Christian missionaries in North-Western Province.<sup>54</sup> What was the situation of Vernacular schools against 70 per cent of missionary schools? One can imagine the contemporary status of Indigenous schools.

Most critiques came from those sections that supported indigenous education because they thought children and youth must be educated under their own culture as it contained indigenous languages and cultural

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<sup>51</sup> Proceedings of CMS. 1912-13, p. 130.

<sup>52</sup> K Sujatha, Education of India’s Scheduled Tribes: A Study of Community Schools in the district of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, 2000.

<sup>53</sup> Heredia C Rudolf, Education and Mission: School as Tools of Evangelism, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> General Report on Public Instruction in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1912.

symbols. The adherent of indigenous education argued that modern education not only changed the content and pedagogy of education but also that the indigenous community is eliminated from any participation in designing the courses.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, modern education was biased in favour of urban regions, neglecting rural needs. The youth of the indigenous communities were alienated from their base. The modern education system made education a commodity by making it the gateway to employment, which changed the nature of education and it became more and more textbook-centric where there was little or no place for 'experience-based education' which was the hallmark of the indigenous mode of education.<sup>56</sup>

At this juncture, the structural transformation from the old model to the new model brought about some novel reforms in education. People reacted to this change as a matter of concern. Indigenous Vedantic philosophy and its practices were adhered to by Swami Vivekananda for personality development. Rabindranath Tagore also reacted to these changes and argued that the modern education system alienated youth from their own culture. He has stressed upon indigenous education system with an emphasis on Arts and Crafts.<sup>57</sup>

Subject to the onslaught of Christian missionaries, local Pathshalas were replaced by parish schools throughout the colonial territory and Churches replaced the temple as the centre of learning. Christian missionary schools were maintained at the coast of the village community which paid school masters for teaching the song of gaunkars.<sup>58</sup> After Macaulay's minute of 1835, English replaced Persian as the official and court language in 1837. The creation of a new class and the consequent class biases were inevitable. As has already been argued, English as a medium of instruction destroyed the old indigenous model of education and the new western model of education was beyond the reach and grasp of the masses.<sup>59</sup> What aggravated things further were the resolution of Lord Harding, which directed that English would be preferred as a qualification for any government services and the Wood's Dispatch of 1854, which directed the government to not favour any Indian languages.<sup>60</sup>

The new Western system of education dismantled the old indigenous education system and pushed back the vernacular literacy. The new model was also unable to meet the needs of an industrial and egalitarian society. The importance was given to liberals despite technical education wherein purpose was high but the impact was null. Lord Curzon himself admitted it:

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<sup>55</sup> P.M. Sarangapani, Op. cit.

<sup>56</sup> P.M. Sarangapani, Op. cit.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> De Souza, op. cit. p. 95.

<sup>59</sup> Heredia, C Rudolf, Education and Mission: school as Agent of Evangelism. p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.



“The plant of technical education in India subsisted mainly on platitudes in vice-regal and gubernatorial speeches." In sum "the low rate of literacy neglect of mass education. as well as of technical and vocational education. And the methods of teaching were all handicaps in the path of development.”<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, higher education was very elite wherein only some set of people participated. On the contrary, the indigenous system of education was accessible and affordable to the masses. There was no hierarchy such as higher and elementary and categories like vocational, professional and technical. People used to go to Pathshala and Gurukul to learn about the miseries and troubles of day-to-day life. The Guru, Master and teacher solved their problems through the teachings of Vedas, Puranas, Upanishad etc. (Dharmapal, 1982). Therefore, missionary schools were started to impart Western science and knowledge and prepare an intellectual elite who would tame Indians using the Western value system. Partha Chatterjee accepted that the British East India Company and missionaries like the Bengali language became the language of bureaucracy and influenced the Bengali elite. (Partha Chatterjee, 1993)

Missionaries were very tactical in promoting Christianity at the pan-India level. They linked Christian education with economic activity and employment. Through it, they tried to prove that there is no question of religion in missionary education. In these circumstances, people went for missionary education and became English in Manner, Moral and Intellect. It opened up an economic opportunity not out of any religious preference. Due to the subversion of domestic cottage industries, there were not enough means of livelihood. For survival and subsistence, people had to join modern schools. “The concept of citizenship underlying under the vision of the educated man in colonial India is examined in its ideological roots.”<sup>62</sup>

The indigenous model of education was very peculiar. Paolino Da Bartolomeo, an Austrian missionary who spent almost fourteen years (1776-1789) in India recalled that whatever Megasthenese wrote in his account: the approaches, methods and practices of learning and teachings introduced before Christ; he still found those in practice. He said, "No people, perhaps, on earth have adhered as much to their ancient usage and customs as the Indians." (Ram, Swarup, 2000). Alexander Walker, Brigadier-General in East India Company, who served between 1780 and 1810 admired the indigenous system of education and said that Hindus gave more importance to their mode of instruction than others, they can sacrifice all their privileges and prestige in return for a good education for their children. He also found that the love of learning was not exclusive attributes of Brahmins but it was possessed by all the Hindus. He further added that the spirit of inquiry and liberty has also been influenced by the Soodros, who had a large participation in the body of the population. And they had sufficient possession of the major property and authority.

Indigenous education severed the needs of local people in every aspect of life such as economic, cultural and religious. However, under the missionary system, education was cut off from all these cardinal needs. One government report says regarding this, "If a boy learns arithmetic in our schools, he is of little use for the shop because he finds there a different system of accounts, and the meanest Banya can cast up the intricacies of the

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<sup>61</sup> Aparna Basu, Essay in the History of Education in India, 1982, p. 21.

<sup>62</sup> Krishna Kumar, op. cit. p. 16.

grain-trade accounts by a mental process far more rapidly than if he had taken honours in Mathematics at the Calcutta University."<sup>63</sup> Under the indigenous system of education, elementary education was taught in local languages. However, the British Government introduced Urdu language as a medium of instruction across the North Indian schools. This model of education excluded all Hindu artisan classes, agricultural classes and priestly classes and is documented in the testimony of Brahma Samaj. This excluded folks from learning religious texts who were enthusiastic towards this. But Urdu could not enable them in this regard.

Under the indigenous system, Hindu schools often closed on *Poornima* every month and on the occasion of Hindu festivals. Under missionary education, Sunday becomes the new Holiday of every week. In this process, the indigenous calendar became outdated and the memories associated with History, religious order and convention also became extinct. This situation caused to come into being, as Macaulay had dreamt, a class of people Indian in blood, but English in taste, manner and intellect, a class of barbarian but European, and Missionaries tried to "eliminate everything Indian in general and Hindu in particular."

The missionary education system was been established based on "Civilizing Responsibility" or "White man's burden". They adopted the European method and pedagogy and took an ethnocentric view in India to disseminate education among heathen people. Missionary practice and manner as part of the curriculum were inserted into the indigenous education system and implemented firmly. This approach does not work under the Indian cultural and social climate. As a result, native and vernacular modes of teaching and approach could not sustain the influence of missionary education. Steadily, indigenous masses conceive indigenous modes as outdated modes. In this circumstance, missionary schools flourished and their pedagogy was adopted by the local people immensely. The most consequent impact of missionary education is indigenous education mode and vernacular languages. Missionary education impacts the human mind because people behave and act as Missionaries, Evangelism and Anglicism have envisaged.

We have seen that Christian missionaries, who came to the Indian subcontinent with the purpose of conversion of pagans through missionary education, undermined the indigenous system of education to establish Christendom. For this, missionaries promoted missionary education, literature and Western science. Mahatma Gandhi once addressed at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London on 20 October 1931 that literacy had declined in India in the last

50 to 100 years.<sup>64</sup> They did not recognize the agony of indigenous people in their quest to establish European supremacy. Alexander Duff openly declared to undermine the indigenous education system to serve their interest. Many vernacular languages could not survive this onslaught. Indigenous pedagogy was undermined which led to their extinction. There was a beautiful indigenous system of education in pre-colonial India. This could not survive under the influence of European Expansion and Missionaries Proselytization, which led to the alienation of people from their techniques, methods and ways of learning and teaching. Consequently, in this process, the indigenous system of education in India fell victim.

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<sup>63</sup> Ram Swarup, On Hindism, 2000, In *Education System Pre-British Day*.

<sup>64</sup> Dharampal, Op. cit. p. 3.

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