

Impact of Christian Educational Enterprises on the Natives of Darjeeling Hills

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Abstract

Clad in multi-missionary garbs with a polychromatic appearance, the entire Christian educational enterprise in the Darjeeling hills can be broadly categorized under two headings: the Protestant educational enterprise and the Roman Catholic educational enterprise. The genesis of modern western education in Darjeeling can be traced back to the advent of the Protestant Christian missionaries in 1841 followed by the Roman Catholic missionaries in 1846. Notwithstanding pedagogical disparities their methods were based on some common indispensable Christian principles. Striving for quality and excellence it aimed at the integral formation of a personality, character building, dissemination of Gospel and ethical values and the liberation of a person as a whole. Christian educational enterprise based on the love of God and faith in God was inclusive that aimed at the creation of a balanced and refined society. Educational impact of Christianity generated other impacts leading to such a dynamic change which Darjeeling had never witnessed before.

Keywords: Darjeeling Hills, Christian Missionaries, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Education Impact.

The decisive assertion of Macaulay's Minutes (1835) established English as the medium of instruction which paved a strong basis for the spread of English education in India. Such an education was introduced in the Darjeeling hills by the missionaries, a missionary educational enterprise indeed. A 'missionary' in the Christian context means a person who is sent to a foreign land to teach people about Christianity. W. B. Jackson's report of 1854 on Darjeeling states that there was no school in Darjeeling and no place of education within the reach of its inhabitants.¹ However, when Rev. William Start came to Darjeeling in 1841 he had opened a school at Takvar for the Lepchas.² Nevertheless many of the early missionary schools were opened for the Europeans and Anglo-Indians. This shows the interest of the foreigners in education which was yet to be developed

¹ Dick Dewan, *Education in the Darjeeling Hills – An Historical Survey 1835-1985*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1991, p. 306.

² Cindy L. Perry, *Nepali Around the World: Emphasizing Nepali Christian of the Himalayas*, Kathmandu, Ekta Books, 1997, p. 31.

among the natives of the Darjeeling hills, which was originally a part of Sikkim and now a part of West Bengal, India. As time passed by, the natives too got opportunity to study in these schools which made them more literate broadening their minds and worldviews. Educational impact of Christianity brought a chain of impacts intricately interwoven resulting in a great paradigm shift. It brought a dynamic change which Darjeeling had not witnessed before. The rationale of this paper is to accentuate such a phenomenon of impact transported by Christian educational enterprises. Qualitative method has been followed keeping review of literature as the main source to determine the edu-historical data and significant impact parameters. The paper will not deal with the establishment of various educational institutions in detail. Further, it seeks to present just the noteworthy educational impacts of Christian education in Darjeeling hills.

Christian Educational Enterprises in Darjeeling

The entire Christian educational enterprises that began in the Darjeeling hills can be broadly categorized under two headings: the Protestant educational enterprise and the Roman Catholic educational enterprise. We shall deal with these two respectively. The Protestant Educational Enterprise began in 1841 in Darjeeling. According to O'Malley (1907) William Start, a Moravian missionary was the first Christian missionary to come to Darjeeling in 1841. William Start retired to England in 1852 and his job was taken over by Niebel until his death on October 9, 1865.³ William Start brought twenty German missionaries in Darjeeling and began a school at Takvar.⁴ A real education in the Darjeeling hills began with the arrival of William Macfarlane of the Church of Scotland mission. It was from Darjeeling that the Protestant mission and educational enterprise spread in Kalimpong and Kurseong sub-divisions. After his death Rev. Sutherland carried on with the work. He was an exceptional educationist and by 1889 nine schools had been established in the vicinity of Kalimpong. Another veteran missionary and educationist was Dr. John Anderson Graham belonging to the Young Men's Guild formed in Scotland in 1881. He is the one who began St. Andrew's Colonial Homes in 1900 which came to be known as Dr. Graham's Homes later. The Scottish missionaries have done a great deal of work in the field of education for the girls and women of Kalimpong.⁵

When William Macfarlane arrived in 1869 he began a systematic plan of vernacular education. He persuaded the government to offer scholarship to the students. When Hindi was declared the court language on September 19, 1873 by the government of Bengal, Macfarlane found that Nepali language was akin to Hindi and he could use many Hindi text-books as a means of instruction. He noticed that even the others like

³ Dewan, p. 78.

⁴ Terence Mukhia, *Origin and Development of Catholicism in the Darjeeling Hills* (Unpublished M. Phil. Thesis), Chennai: Madras University, p. 11.

⁵ Alina Pradhan, A Study of the Work of the Scottish Mission and Its Impact in the Development of Kalimpong, in George Thadathil (Ed.), *Christianity and Indian Culture: Proceedings of the National Level Workshop on Christianity and Indian Culture*, 1-4 August 2013, Siliguri, Sonada: Salesian College, pp. 172-175.

Lepchas and Bhootias (Bhutias) could quickly adapt to Nepali. Thus we find Nepali language getting gradual recognition as a vernacular in Christian missionary schools from 1880s. The Christian missionaries were the first to introduce Nepali language as the medium of instruction. They have also significantly contributed to the development of Nepali literature.⁶ Macfarlane knew pretty well that the Lepchas and Nepalese responded well to the Christian preaching. He found education a very important basis for the acceptance of Christian faith. He said that the Bible and tracts would be useless if the natives could not read them. So he urged the missionaries to set up schools for educating people. There were twenty-five primary schools with 650 boys and girls by the year 1873.⁷ The most extensive educational work during the last three decades was done by the Church of Scotland Missionary Society in the Darjeeling district of the Bengal Presidency followed by the Roman Catholic Mission.⁸

There were 25 primary schools with 615 boys and girls in 1873.⁹ By 31st March 1876 there were 25 primary schools in the Darjeeling district out of which one was a girls' school and one was a normal school. All these schools were under Rev. Macfarlane who was receiving a monthly allowance of Rs. 175/- only. These schools had a total of 613 pupils, 557 boys and 56 girls. The medium of teaching were Bengali, Hindi, Urdu in the Roman Character and Lepcha. From 1856-57 till 1860-61 the only school in the district receiving government aid was the English school at the station. It was only in 1870-71 we find 19 schools receiving the government aid out of which one was a Government English School, two were aided English schools and 16 were aided vernacular schools. Thus vernacular schools could be seen under the government since 1870-71 only. St. Paul's school, a Protestant enterprise, initially established in 1845 at Kolkata was meant for Europeans and Anglo-Indians. It was shifted to Darjeeling in 1864 and was receiving a government grant in aid of Rs. 238/- only a month.¹⁰

An Anglo-Hindi school was established, in 1886, in Kalimpong which later came to be known as Scottish Universities Mission Institution (SUMI). There was just one high school in Darjeeling (Government High School) that time. The Anglo-Hindi School, the second of its type in the district, became a full-fledged high school in 1922 and was recognized by the Calcutta University. An account of Dr. Sutherland given in February 1914 tells us that there were 57 students in the training schools out of which 25 were the Lepchas and 22 were the Nepalese. Whereas there were 238 pupils in the Middle English School out of which 36 were Lepchas and 153 were Nepalese. Out of 299 primary schools for boys and 19 for girls (total 318) in 1994 there were 120 lower

⁶ Jahar Sen, *Darjeeling: A Favoured Retreat*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing House, 1989, pp. 86-87.

⁷ Perry, p. 40.

⁸ Dewan, p. 99.

⁹ R. K. Sprigg, *Macfarlane and the Macfarlane Memorial Church*, In D. K. Khaling, *Macfarlane Memorial Church Kalimpong: Centenary Souvenir*, Kalimpong: H. D. Subba, 1991, p. 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 171-178.

and upper primary schools and middle schools to the credit of Scots Mission alone.¹¹

The Roman Catholic enterprise began in the three sub-divisions of the Darjeeling hills by different religious congregations. According to Henrichs (1943) *The Annals of Loreto Convent Darjeeling* (1946) contains the first original account of the advent of first batch of Roman Catholics. The Loreto nuns who arrived in 1846 were the first Catholics to establish a school for the European girls.¹² The Loreto sisters reached Darjeeling on October 10, 1846. The annals of the convent describe the first community as:

Mother Mary Teresa Mons, Superioress, Mother Mary de Chantal Kelly, 2 Lay Sisters, Novices. There went with them the Chaplain, Rev. John McGirr, and an orphan girl.¹³

Henrichs (1943) traces the beginning of Roman Catholic mission in Kurseong to 1889 when the Jesuits established a house in a small village (St. Mary's) near Kurseong. He deals with the establishment of several educational institutions by the Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries. A Jesuit house was established in St. Mary's in 1889 and was blessed by Fr. Grosjean.¹⁴ The Belgian Jesuits began St. Mary's Training College and by 1922 there were seven priests, 44 theological students and three brothers to look after the temporal affairs of the institution.¹⁵ The Daughters of the Cross who came to Kurseong in 1890 completed St. Helen's Technical school in 1900 for girls, where training in culinary, tailoring, nursing, stenography, book binding, music, painting etc. were given.¹⁶ The missionaries belonging to Parish Foreign Mission Society of France (Missions Etrangeres de Paris, MEP), destined for South Tibet Mission, arrived at Pedong in 1880. They started a mission with a school there in 1882 when they failed in their attempt to enter Tibet. They became pioneers in the field of education in Pedong area. Many primary schools were established in the surrounding areas like Kashyong, Maria Basti, Chiangsing, Lingse, Duka, and so on. Canon Regulars of St. Maurice (CR), commonly known as Swiss Fathers, opened a mission station and a school at Kalimpong. Belgian Jesuits arrived at Darjeeling in 1887 and established St. Joseph's seminary at Sunny Bank which later developed into today's St. Joseph's College. This college, opened in 1888 was shifted to the present North Point site in December 28, 1891.¹⁷ The Canadian Jesuits arrived in 1947. They established schools in various places in Darjeeling. Salesians of

¹¹ Dewan, pp. 155-157 & 160.

¹² J. Henrichs, *The Catholic Mission of Darjeeling and Kurseong (Up to 1942)*, Unpublished Manuscript, St. Mary's, Kurseong, 1943, p. 10.

¹³ *Annals of Loreto Convent Darjeeling (1846-1896)*, Darjeeling: Loreto Convent, p. 12.

¹⁴ Henrichs, p. 11.

¹⁵ E. C. Dozey, *A Concise History of the Darjeeling District since 1835 with a Complete Itinerary of Tours in Sikkim and the District*, Calcutta: Jetson Publishing House, 1989, pp. 113-114.

¹⁶ George Kottuppallil, "The First Phase of Roman Catholic Presence in the District of Darjeeling (1846-1900)", in Tanka Bahadur Subba & Karubaki Datta (Eds.), *Religion and Society in the Himalayas*, New Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1991, p.111.

¹⁷ Terence Mukhia, (2011). *Origin and Development of Catholicism in Darjeeling (1846-2002)*. In Terence Mukhia (Ed.), *Darjeeling: A Multi-disciplinary Perusal* (pp. 1-14). Sonada: Kalpa-Griha Publications, p. 5.

Don Bosco arrived in 1937 and they are running a college, youth centres, three primary schools in the locality of Sonada, a high school in Mirik and a technical institute in Kalimpong. Similarly many other men and women Catholic religious congregations stepped in the Darjeeling District and established educational institutions in various nooks and corners of the Darjeeling hills.

The Roman Catholic branch of Christianity has contributed extensively to the education of both men and women in the Darjeeling district. Credit goes to the Capuchin priests, the French missionaries (MEP), Canons Regular of St. Maurice of Abbey (CR), Belgian and Canadian priests and religious of the Society of Jesus (SJ), Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) and the diocesan brothers and priests, Irish Christian Brothers, and different religious women congregations who came to various parts of Darjeeling and established their convents which always had schools or at least dispensaries attached to them. Though these nuns were assisting the priests in the process of evangelization yet they were also engaged in the field of education, health and sanitation. Hard work of dedicated native and foreign missionaries resulted into qualitative educational institutions both for boys and girls. There were 5 colleges, 11 higher secondary schools, 12 high schools, 45 primary schools, 5 training schools, 19 dispensaries, 40 mother and child health care centres, 3 crèches, 3 home for the aged, 13 hostel for boys and 14 hostel for girls, 3 orphanages run by the Roman Catholics within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Darjeeling by 1999.¹⁸

Some Significant Educational Impacts of Christianity

The immediate impact of Christian education was the gradual rise in literacy rate of Darjeeling hills which was to experience a revolution soon. If Darjeeling boasts of 76 per cent literacy rate today credit goes largely to the Christian missionaries, the priests, religious and lay persons. Another immediate educational impact of Christianity was the growth in the number of Christians. Loving educational ambience created a filial bond between the missionaries and the people. Catechism, Bible classes, value and moral education imparted, led the natives to respond to Christianity. Thus three types of the first generation Christians appeared in the Darjeeling hills: Christians by education, Christians by will and Christians by baptism. Such a growth gave a distinct degree of visibility to the Lepchas and Nepalese in a special way. However, the growth rate by baptism was very-very slow. As years passed by another demographic change was the emergence of second and third generation Christians. They were not converts but born Christians. According to Hunter (2012) there were 544 Christians, 307 males and 237 females in Darjeeling Sadar division in 1872. It formed 1.2 percent of the sub-divisional population of 29,129.¹⁹ According to the census 2011 the Darjeeling district has the total of 141,848 (7.68 per cent) Christians. There are 658,618 (0.72 per cent) Christians in West Bengal.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁹ Hunter, p. 180.

²⁰ URL: <http://www.census2011.co.in/>

Christian education resulted in the creation of an educated group or 'New Elite' in the Darjeeling district. Such educated natives were models for imitation and they acted as agents of socio-cultural change. The 'New Elite' created by Christianity developed an ambivalent attitude towards both western and Indian culture. There is a difference between 'New Elite' (Spear's Middle Class and Yogendra's Westernized Sub-culture) and 'the converts'. Srinivas (2006, reprint) considers converts more as an object of missionary humanitarianism than as a significant creator of change (pp. 262-263).²¹ Contrary to the opinion of Srinivas the native converts of the Darjeeling hills became the significant agents of change and development within the Darjeeling district and beyond.

According to Webster (1976) economic forces are primarily responsible for changing societies. He opines that Christianity played virtually no role at all in changing the economic structure of North India. Small number of people was given the skills necessary to improve their economic position.²² If we consider the case of Darjeeling the number of people who were imparted skills may not be more but not less significant. The British government had the direct impact upon the economic structure through their political and administrative power. Christian missionaries could not do like the political authorities. However they did their best to elevate the economic condition of the people through education. That is why we can consider the link between Christianity and Economy of the people in Darjeeling from another perspective, that is, by linking the two with education. Actually it was through education a change came indirectly in the area of economy. The educated missionaries were also the visionaries and they did not want the future of the people to be at crossroads. They were aware of the modernization that was devouring the world. Prior to the advent of the missionaries the natives of Darjeeling were either agriculturists or tea garden workers. They lacked knowledge on modern means of agriculture and farming. Eventually, the literate natives could go beyond agricultural lands and tea gardens. The educated natives even started practicing modern means of agriculture and cultivation. This contributed positively to their economy. Christian education taught people to be self reliant. Further, Christian educational institutes led to the emergence of qualified man power required in diverse fields.

According to Raignoux (2010) Fr. Douenel was the first missionary to start a Co-operative Bank at Pedong where the people could get loans on low interest. This saved them from the clutches of money-lenders. Seeing his ability the British government kept him in-charge of seventy co-operative banks in the whole of Kalimpong sub-division.²³ A grateful tribal remarks, "The roles of missionaries for the economic upliftment on Lepchas are no doubt has gained appreciation. The educated Lepchas are serving the

²¹ M. N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, New Delhi: Orient Longman Private Limited, 2006, pp. 262-263.

²² John C. B. Webster, *The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century North India*, Delhi: Macmillan Company of India Ltd, 1976, p. 266.

²³ Remy Raignoux, *History of Maria Busty 1891-1936*, Kalimpong: by the Author, 2010, p. 13.

church and as civil servants in government department.”²⁴ Today, the Roman Catholic diocese of Darjeeling has begun Religious tourism and home stay programmes. This is helping the ordinary people of the villages and the tea gardens financially. Rt. Rev. Stephen Lepcha, the Bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of Darjeeling says, “Pilgrimage Tourism and Home Stay is not evil. I see in it a modern way of eradicating the financial crisis of the poor people. I have seen it working and therefore we should go for it” (Talk given by Bishop Stephen Lepcha, Sonada, 27 November 2014). The Bishop exhorts the Catholic colleges in Darjeeling to make such tourism a part of the curriculum in higher education.

In the huge British capitalistic network the natives of Darjeeling were poor and many of them were workers in the tea garden run by the British or agriculturalists. It appears that they were not really interested in the education of the natives as the educated ones would not do the work of a labourer. Christian missionaries, with the powerful tool of education, played the role of an important westernizing influence or agency through which western ideas and values reached the natives of Darjeeling. Both the natives and the missionaries then worked out their synthesis between native and the so called western. According to Webster (1976) “Christian missions did pioneer work in spreading western education, including education for women. Western education was, in turn, one of the factors responsible for the crusades against the caste system, against untouchability, for the emancipation of women, and for the freedom of India.”²⁵ Christian educational enterprises helped in the control of some social evils. According to D’Souza (2009) Christians were the first ones to start an anti-slavery movement. Such a movement first began in Britain in the late eighteenth century and spread to other parts of the world. William Wilberforce spearheaded anti-slavery movement in England. He eventually succeeded when slavery was outlawed in England in 1833.²⁶ When the British settled in Darjeeling few years later in 1838 they knew that slavery was an offence. The anti-slavery attitude of the British as well as the missionaries had an impact on the natives of the Darjeeling hills as well. According to Lepcha (2013) “It was the missionaries who saved the Lepchas from the bonded labour system. For Lepchas were to work under different communities for the repayment of dues used during the sickness or death and marriage.”²⁷ Some scholars opine that costly lamaistic rituals led many Lepchas to embrace Christianity. One of the impacts of Christianity was the awareness that excessive consumption of liquor was injurious to physical health and could lead to crimes and sins. According to Lepcha (2013) the excessive habit of drinking

²⁴ Denis Lepcha, “Christian Influence on Indian Culture with Special Focus on Lepcha Culture”, in George Thadathil (Ed.), *Christianity and Indian Culture: Proceedings of the National Level Workshop on Christianity and Indian Culture*, 1-4 August 2013, Siliguri, Sonada: Salesian College, p. 199.

²⁵ John C. B. Webster, *The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century North India*, Delhi: Macmillan Company of India Ltd, 1976, p. 262.

²⁶ Dinesh D’Souza, *What’s so Great about Christianity*, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2009, p. 71.

²⁷ Lepcha, 2013, p. 198.

had made the Lepchas physically and psychologically weak and economically in debt.²⁸ Situation was no better in case of other natives as well. Christian education helped in the control of alcohol consumption to some extent. The Kripa Centre of Darjeeling, which is a rehabilitation centre for drug addicts and alcoholics, has been rendering a very good service to the people. Caste system was prevalent among the non-tribal Hindu society. Many ethnic communities of Darjeeling were also following such a system due to the impact of Hinduism. Christianity played a significant role in making people aware of the evils of caste system through education. Further, many natives of Darjeeling indulged themselves in gambling and were wasting both time and money. Christian education disposed the illness of gambling habits, wasting of time and showed how these were detrimental to family and society at large. There were systems of early marriages among the natives of the Darjeeling district. The Christian education imparted by the missionaries helped people to understand the disadvantages of early marriage. Further, marriage by eloping was against Christian norms. Christianity favoured arranged marriage which was highly favoured by the parents and guardians.

Christian educational enterprises were instrumental in conscientizing people about the importance of sanitation, health and hygiene. Result of ignorance and negligence of health and hygiene could be seen not only in sicknesses but also in high infant mortality rate and many women breathing their last during or after child birth. Not only the educational institutions but the dispensaries established in various corners of Darjeeling helped in disseminating the importance of precautionary measures, health and hygiene. There were just two charitable dispensaries in the district, in Darjeeling and Kurseong established in 1864 and 1872 respectively. After the establishment of Macfarlane Memorial Church at Kalimpong under the direct supervision of Sitling schools, hospitals and dispensaries were established in many places.²⁹ Roman Catholic missionaries had dispensaries practically in every village where they worked. As a result health and hygiene improved, infant and women mortality rate came down.

Though the missionaries were the pioneers in the vocational-technical education in Darjeeling it was imparted initially to the Europeans and the Anglo-Indians only. The vocational-technical education for the natives of Darjeeling was the neglected area till independence. Among the Protestant missionaries the Scots Mission have contributed significantly in this area. They established Scottish Universities Mission Institute in 1887. Mrs. Catherine Graham established Central Lace School for girls in 1897 which was a technical cum training school. It came to be known as Kalimpong Industrial School for girls. Mrs. Katherine Graham was teaching lace-making to the girls. Rev. J. A. Graham founded St. Andrew's Colonial Homes and Kalimpong Industrial School for boys. Later even wool-dyeing and wool-weaving were introduced. The government extended grant-in-aid in 1907. By 1917 Kalimpong Central Lace School had 5 branch schools under it. There was also the Kalimpong Embroidery School with two branches: wool-

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Sen, p. 87.

dyeing and weaving school, and the General Industrial School which was imparting lessons in tailoring, knitting and other trades. Contribution of Roman Catholics was noteworthy in this area. St. Helen's School, Kurseong started vocational classes in gardening, needle-work, nursing, cooking, dress-making and house management for domiciled European and Anglo-Indian girls. The Christian Brothers of Ireland began technical education in the Goethal's Memorial Orphanage at Kurseong for the Anglo-Indian orphans. St. Joseph's School, Darjeeling too started industrial training classes in 1890. Victoria Boys' School began sub-overseer's course for Europeans and Eurasians in 1904. St. Alphonsus School, Kurseong was imparting classes in carpentry, basket-making and tailoring in 1926. However, these facilities were not for the natives. Till the time of independence there was hardly any provision of technical education for the natives in Darjeeling.³⁰ Number of commissions beginning with the University Education Commission appointed in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan brought a drastic change in the educative arena in India which also influenced Darjeeling in the post-independence period.

According to Webster (1992), "Schools, medical work, and especially work among women were the means by which the missions played their role. Thus, to use one illustration, Christian missions by their precepts and example presented a new conception of womanhood which was accepted and taken over by the Indian reformers; in this way Christian missions were largely responsible for the 'women's movement' in India."³¹ Christian missionaries were the pioneers of women education in Darjeeling. According to Pradhan (2013) Mrs. Katherine Graham's plea for a lady teacher to start a formal school for girls did not go unheeded. The Church of Scotland Guild Mission sent Ms. Lucy Higginson, the first lady teacher in 1889. There was just one girls' school in 1891 which rose to six in 1901.³² The Industrial school for girls in Kalimpong and Boarding School for girls in Darjeeling established by the Scottish mission became the nucleus for girls' education from 1905 till the year of independence. Initially the school in Kalimpong was held in a building just below the Macfarlane Memorial Church. The school in Kalimpong though popularly known as Industrial School was also known as Lace School since training was imparted in lace making. Later the school came to be known as Girls' High School which began preparing students for the school leaving examination of the University of Calcutta. The Boarding School of Darjeeling was upgraded to high school in 1942 and came to be known as Nepali Girls' High School.³³ When the Loreto nuns arrived in Darjeeling in 1841 their first mission was to begin a school for the European girls. Similarly, St. Joseph's of Cluny established St. Philomena's School in 1932 and St. Joseph's Convent School in Kalimpong. Daughters of the Cross established St. Helen's, Kurseong for the European girls in 1938. It was upgraded into high school in 1944. St. Teresa's School was established by the Loreto

³⁰ Dewan, pp. 194-197.

³¹ Webster, p. 261.

³² Pradhan, p. 175.

³³ Dewan, pp. 159-160.

Sisters in Darjeeling in 1923.³⁴ Eventually the local girls were lucky to get admission in these institutions. Besides the school for girls the missionaries fostered co-education. Subba (2011) opines that Darjeeling owes a lot to the Roman Catholic nuns as far as the educational development is concerned. She has given an elaborate presentation on the socio-educational contribution of twelve different Roman Catholic women religious congregations in Darjeeling hills.³⁵

A working printing press, translations of great books, print literature and text books in the native languages, promotion of language and culture are the signs of educational development of a place. Credit goes to the Christian missionaries for the introduction of printing press in Darjeeling. Macfarlane bought a printing press in 1842 and began printing books in vernacular. In 1877 a monthly Hindi semi-religious paper titled *Masik Patrika* was in circulation.³⁶ According to Bailey, there was a busy mission press which printed a monthly newspaper in Hindi and English.³⁷ Fr. Desgodins, a French missionary of the Parish Foreign Mission Society (MEP) bought a hand press in Calcutta and brought it to Darjeeling in February 1882.³⁸ He was busy printing his Tibetan manuscript. He shifted the press at Pedong in the month of May 1882. The French missionaries translated gospels into native languages, printed prayers, skits, hymns etc. in native languages. The Christian missionaries who were also educationists gave a lead in the establishment of press and print in the Darjeeling hills. Christian missionaries helped in preserving language and literature to a great extent. The printing of religious literature in the native languages also helped in the promotion of local languages. However it is true that only the influential languages used by the majority were given importance by the missionaries. The Serampore missionaries were the first to translate the New Testament into Nepali in 1821. Translation of the Bible into Nepali began in 1869 by Macfarlane who was assisted by Gangaprasad Pradhan, a native pastor. It was completed in 1914 under Macleish who admits that the greatest credit goes to Gangaprasad Pradhan. Gangaprasad Pradhan³⁹ was also the pioneer in the task of writing and publishing text books in Nepali for the common people in Darjeeling. He was also the first to begin a Nepali newspaper titled *Gorkhe Khabar Kagat* (The Gorkha Newspaper) in 1901 which continued upto 1932.⁴⁰

The various missionary groups followed their own educational pedagogies. Macfarlane, who laid the foundation of primary school in the Darjeeling hills started a

³⁴ Ibid., 162.

³⁵ Sushna Subba, *Catholic Nuns and their Socio-educational Contribution in the Darjeeling Hills – The History Re-visited*, in Terence Mukhia, Sonada, Darjeeling: Kalpa-Griha Publication, 2011, pp. 29-39.

³⁶ Perry, pp. 40-41.

³⁷ W. C. Bailey, *Glimpses at the Indian Mission Field and Leper Asylums*, London: John F. Shaw and Co, 1887, p. 96.

³⁸ Raignoux, pp. 5 & 8.

³⁹ Sen, p. 88.

⁴⁰ Kumar Pradhan, *Pahilo Pahar (The First Stage)*, Kathmandu, Nepal: Sajha Prakashan, 2010, 2nd ed., pp. 50-51.

Normal school in his residence at Lochanager in 1870 for the training of primary school teachers. He was following 'Lancastrian System' or 'Bell System' of education prevalent in Britain by which it could achieve expansion of primary education at a low cost between 1801 and 1845.⁴¹ Loreto nuns (IBVM) and Jesuits (SJ) had a common Ignatian spirituality and their pedagogy was based on the teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola. The Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) followed a Salesian spirituality of St. John Bosco and they followed the 'Preventive System of Education'. Similarly, various other groups had their own spiritualities and their own pedagogies accordingly. Nevertheless there were similarities since their pedagogies were backed up by basic Christian philosophical and theological thinking. A meeting point was that the Christian education had foundation in the love of God and faith in God with a proper mission and vision. It aimed at the integral formation of a personality and the liberation of a person as a whole. It aimed at Character building with due emphasis on core gospel and ethical values such as love, charity, justice, truth, respect, responsibility, honesty, etc. manifested in the Bible. Christian educational enterprise was inclusive. It aimed at creating a balanced and refined society. Striving for quality and excellence were the two major characteristics of Christian education in Darjeeling.

One of the major changes in the Christian circle during the post independence period was the institutional growth. The new millennium witnessed the promotion of research and development. Salesian College Sonada run by the Salesians of Don Bosco and St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling run by the Society of Jesus have begun Research Centres. The native cultures and languages have found major considerations. Salesian College even went on to include Lepcha language in the curriculum. Further, the emphasis on social inclusion has given the poor, neglected and the backwards to come to the limelight. Need based courses were established and drop-outs were considered. D. B. Tech, a Salesian educative venture with its base at Bangalore opened three months hospitality management course in Kalimpong in 2013 and Sonada in 2014. Three months of training is imparted in hospitality management and immediate placement is given. This has partially helped the drop-outs in the locality to tackle unemployment problems. Further, some other technical courses have been introduced. With the dawning of the computer age the agents of Christianity have been making use of modern means of education. St. Joseph's school, North Point, Darjeeling, became the first school in the district to make use of smart board (computer education) system of education in every class room from primary level upto class twelve since November 2011. Salesian College Sonada computerised the entire library by 2010 and even established digital library system by 2013. Practically every Christian high schools, higher secondary schools and colleges have well equipped computer labs to impart computer education today.

⁴¹ Dewan, pp. 103-105.

Conclusion

Christian educational enterprise in the Darjeeling hills was a collective venture of the early missionaries who were pastors, priests, religious and also lay persons. Even the teachers and educators belonging to other religions have helped in fostering Christian educational enterprise. Though negligible, the role of British political authorities cannot be denied. The British officials and the missionaries were concerned with the natives of Darjeeling in their own ways. The former had political and economic motives whereas the latter was moved by the religious motive. The former treated them as labourers but not as slaves or bonded labourers. The latter had the motive of liberating them from the bondage of slavery to sin. The natives were receiving for their bodies and for their souls differently from the government officials and the missionaries who were both Christians. The earlier missionaries mostly focussed on conversion and education keeping in mind an overall development and liberation as a whole. The educated generation, the new elite, became the educators in turn. They were modern pastors, priests, religious, and lay people who treading on the footsteps of their ancestors gave priority to Christian education and all round development of a personality. The natives were fortunate to have access to such education. Perceived from the socio-educational perspective the impact was seen in the eradication of illiteracy, their becoming respectable communities, removal of social evils, and change in various aspects of their lives. Thus the aspect of social inclusion seems to have found an important place in Christian education. Philosophically speaking Christian education helped the natives to broaden their world-view and they became open to a much larger societies. Education made them open to the international society. Economic impact was seen in the improvement of the living conditions through education, better opportunities, good living conditions, and even financial assistance but not at the cost of losing self reliance. The psychological impact was seen in the development of self esteem and confidence, even superiority complex to some extent and ability to manage stress and suffering. Christian education taught them not to work for the removal of suffering in toto but to accept it and live with it. Thus they were mentally ready to face challenges of daily living. There was the bargain of both loss and gain when they received Christian education. Christian education had impact on the various native cultures and traditions and eroding of certain elements of native culture and tradition cannot be denied. However change was initiated without destroying native culture and tradition. In fact the Christian priests and religious always appreciated native cultures, indigenous system of education and took several steps to preserve and promote them. The Christian educational institutions have brought prestige to the Church in Darjeeling. They have rendered valuable service to the natives in the Darjeeling hills. Their quality, standards of efficiency and discipline are highly valued by the people. The Christian educational enterprises brought light to the people of Darjeeling though they were not living in darkness prior to the advent of Christianity.