



The Advent Of Scottish Mission In Kalimpong And Its Contribution In Education

Niyati Rekha Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Mahishadal Girls' College,
Mahishadal, India

Abstract: This article explores how, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Scottish missionaries contributed to India's notion of empire. To clarify the Scottish link with British imperial growth in India, the article first examines general historiographical interpretations that have been established in the earlier 19th century. With an emphasis on their engagement with the locals in the early nineteenth century, the article then delves further into the educational contributions made by Scottish Presbyterian missionaries of the Church of Scotland in the Kalimpong Hills. The present write-up highlights a thorough historical record of the Scottish missionary educational institution.

Key Words: Colonial, Christianity, Education, Scottish Missionary,

Introduction

The Indian subcontinent is considered a cradle of civilization, with different faiths and religions coexisting side by side with utmost tolerance and few clashes, conflicts, and historical confrontations. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and other adopted religions like Zoroastrianism, Islam, and Christianity are a few of the major religions that have made an impact in the country for a few centuries. No doubt it is due to the presence of many religions in different historical phases. India has experienced many changes of religious conversions, religious reforms, imposition of faith, religious conflicts, and so on. With the advent of the nineteenth century, India as a country welcomed the dawn of the modern era, accompanied with many changes and restructuring of all the micro and macro aspects of society. It began to witness the sweeping changes in socio-economic, cultural, and scientific spheres. Likewise, many of our intellectual predecessors had confirmed that religion the manifestation of 'false consciousness' would wither away. However, despite the prediction has been falsified, as paradoxically, even after more than three centuries of modernism, the social institution of religion has not only endured but has also had a significant contribution both in the private and public domains of people's lives.

Long before colonialism had taken centre stage in the Indian subcontinent, Christian missionaries of various denominations had come to this side of the globe to evangelize and provide their social environment with trading companies and commercial ventures. Through the adoption and execution of the 'civilizing mission,' the Charter Act of 1813 was introduced. Then after the doors were open for the Christian missionaries to

preach Christianity and inculcate the modern Western education in the Indian soil. Hence, the emancipation of the 'natives' from the superstitious beliefs and deplorable living conditions was considered adequate justification to rationalize efforts to govern the Indian subcontinent by the colonizers. (Majumdar, 1960; Laird, 1987; Panikkar, 2007). Accordingly, the contribution of Christian missionaries in Indian Society was a multifaceted phenomenon. It had a lasting impact in the various aspect like the social reforms, religious conversion, education, health care system and so on. Their legacy in the sub-continent is heavily entangled with the British colonizers and its history is deeply rooted with the dawn of modern India and the modern education system.

Voyage of Christian Missionaries to Indian Sub-continent till the early 19th century

St. Xavier and Robert De Nobilli are regarded as two of the earliest missionaries to land on Indian soil in the year 1542. The pivotal motto of the mission was to open/build a school in every village. It is believed that they were very enthusiastic and left no stone unturned to propagate their faith and gospel. This missionary was followed by the Dutch and the French in 1602 and 1644. The vacuum created by the earlier Portuguese with their withdrawal was filled by these missionaries in the field of education and other cultural development in India. In the beginning of the 18th century, the socio-political condition seemed favourable for effective educational development in India. Primary schools were set in the business centres. Eventually, secondary schools and colleges were established where a religious missionary who preached the religion was present; schools were also regarded as the main centres for conversion. Danish Missionaries were the first Protestant missionaries in the 17th century to be seen visibly in the territories of the East India Company. Since they had no political mission like the French, they had a friendly tie with the officials of the East India Company. The only motive they were seeking was in the sphere of religious and educational endeavours with greater impact in Indian society. Therefore, Dane's activities are directly connected with the consolidation of the British Empire in India. Their work is more prominently visible in the Province of Madras and a few in Bengal in the later half of the century. The mission work in Bengal was far less fortunate as they were deprived of financial assistance and protection from the company, like in the case of the South. The prior work in Calcutta was carried forward by Dr. William Carey, regarded as the representative of the Baptist Missionary Society. Carey was more an educationist than a missionary and was a linguist of the first order. In the year 1801, he translated and printed the Bible in several languages. Carey wrote a grammar in the Bengali language and compiled a dictionary too. The Baptist Mission is the important contributor to the development of the Bengali language (Purkait, 1992). The voyage of Scottish Mission primarily started in India during the early 19th century, when the British East India Company had started its rule over the subcontinent. This phase is marked by the rise in the activities of Protestant Mission, and it is believed that the Scottish Church played a crucial role in the British Government. The Scottish Mission movement is learned to have its lasting impact mostly in Bengal, as well as in other parts of South, Central, and North India.

Alexander Duff is the first missionary to be sent abroad by the Church of Scotland. His work is particularly notable in Bengal, where his establishment of schools and colleges, along with his personal connections with government officials, significantly contributed to the development of educational reform in India. He is an

important figure for the formulation of the modern education system in India, as his ideas had a long-lasting impact on the British education policy. The most important was the famous Minute of 1835 of Lord Macaulay, the Governor General of India. In this Minute, the English language was promoted as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. The main aim of the 1835 Minute was: 'We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions, whom we govern; to form a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, words, and intellect' (Basu, 1935: 87). Thus, fostering the formation of a new educated middle class that played a pivotal role in the social and cultural landscape of British Colonial India. Duff, who is an educator, had a strong advocacy for the English education with a curriculum emphasizing western science and literature, which would be ahead of the education system introduced by earlier missionaries, which was basically in the vernacular languages (Emmott, 1965; Ghosh, 2001).

Scottish Mission at Kalimpong

Kalimpong has a rich and varied cultural heritage because of its many political and cultural influences. Kalimpong was a part of Sikkim prior to 1641, and it was during this time that the Tibetans began to migrate towards Sikkim. Many Bhutanese armies began attacking and pillaging Kalimpong between 1700 and 1800. After the native Lepcha King was overthrown, the area was incorporated by Bhutan in 1785. Because of this, it was ruled by Bhutan for roughly 150 years. The British government was informed in 1862 of the Bhutanese's hostile actions on the frontier and their attempt to invade the British empire. In order to bridge the gap between the two states, the Bhutan Mission was sent out in 1863 under the immediate command of Sir Ashley Eden. The Bhutanese government rejected the plan. Then, in an effort to preserve the Duras region, a number of further modest missions were deployed. The Sir Ashley Eden Treaty was superseded by the new Sinchula Treaty in 1865. The entire Bhutanese territory, including the plain and hilly areas near the eastern side of the Teesta River, was thereafter annexed by the British Crown. Additionally, the entire area was incorporated under the Darjeeling district in 1866 (Dash, 2011; Jain, 2016).

The arrival of the Scottish Mission in 1870 is thought to have marked the beginning of more organized missionary activity. Since then, the Church of Scotland has taken the initiative to engage with the local Aboriginal population. Rev. Macfarlane is regarded as the forerunner of Christianity among the hill people. The Mission's four sections were dispersed among the Terai, Kalimong, Kurseong, Darjeeling, and Sikkim. This article will solely focus on the Guild Mission's Kalimpong and the Ladies Mission of the Kalimpong, whose work was evident among the girls and women of the hills, even though the mission work was expanded out on a greater scale. Both of which is covered under the Eastern Himalayan Mission (O'Malley, 1999). In the hills of Kalimpong and Darjeeling, they had already begun mission preaching and outreach operations with the local natives, mostly concentrating on health and education, which were, of course, in high demand at the time. To promote the mission activity at the grassroots level, catechists, teacher-training institutions, and schools received training. Although there are remnants of a Catholic mission in Kalimpong in addition to the Protestant mission, the latter was not initially given the upper hand over Kalimpong because of the rivalry

between the two denominations and government policy to prevent confrontation. They were restricted to the Pedong mission post (Dewan, 1991).

The Scottish Missionary's contribution is seen crucial in the evolution of Kalimpong as a hill station during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The mission operations in education, healthcare, and social reforms were deemed significant by the British Colonial Government, contributing to the growth of Kalimpong in the latter part of the 20th century. The proximity of Kalimpong to regions such as Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim were regarded as a strategic advantage for the Scottish Mission. Recognizing education as a crucial instrument for proselytization and cultural exchange, they concentrated on teaching both the local populace and Anglo-Indians by founding educational institutions in Kalimpong (Pradhan, 2017).

Scottish University Mission Institution

In 1868, Rev William Macfarlane was appointed by the Church of Scotland Mission Foreign Committee to serve in Gaya. Realizing the potential of missionary endeavours in Darjeeling, he solicited his superiors for a transfer to the hills. He arrived in Darjeeling on June 10, 1870, where he established a school in the rented house and enrolled Nepali and Lepcha students. He is the forerunner in initiating primary education in the mountainous regions for the populace. In 1873, he landed in Kalimpong and resumed the mission school he had previously established in Darjeeling. Subsequently, the mission commenced when he took the initiative to establish an institutional school for young men aspiring to become preachers and teachers. On April 19, 1886, a training institution was established with twelve students in a rented space, resulting in the complete closure of the former school in Darjeeling. A junior division institution was established on April 1, 1887, at Kalimpong. It was deemed mandatory for trainee instructors to engage in practice at the school. An elementary school for local pupils had been established in the same building for the identical purpose (Dewan, 1991: 108-109; Rai, 2011: 32-33; Perry, 1997: 40; Wanchuk, 2017). This institution plays a vital role in introducing modern education to the eastern Himalayas. This encompasses Nepal, the eastern region of Bihar, the entirety of North Bengal (including the eastern section of Doars), the western areas of Assam, Bhutan, and Sikkim. This institution served as a central hub for accessing the surrounding regions. SUMI has a longstanding historical connection with Bhutan, originating from the time when Kalimpong was part of Bhutan until 1865. One can observe the royal Bhutan palace around the 11th mile while proceeding towards Algarah. The inaugural cohort of students from Bhutan graduated from this university in 1914. Until 1922, students were required to travel to Calcutta to complete their final board examination. In 1922, it attained full status and recognized as a teacher training institution, and in 1923, it was granted the authority to hold matriculation examinations within the institution. In its formative years, SUMI attracted the attention of all the royal households in the region, as numerous prime ministers and dignitaries from Sikkim, Bhutan, and neighbouring territories have graduated from this institution (interview conducted with Nava Ratna Pradhan on 25.10.16).

Girls' High School: 1890

In India, the Scottish Mission is credited with being a pioneer in women's education. The effects of the Scottish Mission are still felt today, even at Kalimpong. In addition to making significant historical progress in basic education, the mission empowered the local women and young girls through skill-development initiatives that

helped them become somewhat economically independent. In 1890, Mrs. Katherine Graham took the lead in establishing the Girls' Ladies Mission of Scottish Mission School. "...the first institution for the education of the girl child," writes Bernard Brooks (Brook, 2014: 21). She had also started giving healthcare assistance to the locals by opening the Charteris Hospital in the year 1891. She is also one of the pioneers in Kalimpong, empowering women to initiate livelihood development programs through the establishment of small industries. As the school progressed, the Church of Scotland appointed Miss Higginson, an Anglo-Indian from Calcutta, as a teacher. As the school's student enrolment grew, Miss Lily Waugh, a trained teacher, took on the role of first lady teacher. Buddhimaya, one of the brightest students, also started assisting in the school. Later on, her dedication and effort resulted in the institution receiving full control (Manuel, 1914: 162). *On The Threshold of Three Closed Lands* (1905), Rev. J. A. Graham writes: "At Kalimpong, however, a hopeful beginning has been made with a girls' school under Miss Higginson, a devoted Eurasian teacher, who also visits the few Zenanas in the village. One or two of the girls are themselves being trained to be teachers, and indications are not wanting that the gender sex will play no unimportant part in the mission work of the immediate future." (Graham, 1905: 90-91). The social position of the women had gotten recognition due to the endeavors of the Ladies Mission School under the Scottish Mission. It was believed that a literate mother held greater intellectual and moral importance than a literate father. The school enrolled a total of 509 students in 1944, while the training institute accommodated five additional students. All the communities in the region, including Lepcha, Tibetan, and Nepali, as well as a few students from the plains and Chinese, were represented in these schools and training colleges under the Church of Scotland (Dash, 1947: 271; Dewan, 1991: 124-125).

Dr Graham's Homes

Founded by Dr. John Anderson Graham on the 24th of September, 1900, by the educationist, visionary, and enthusiast, Dr. Graham's Homes is considered one of the most significant educational institutions established by Scottish missionaries in India. He is also known as Graham the Builder due to his tireless efforts to completely transform Kalimpong's landscape during his six-year tenure in the mission field. He arrived at Kalimpong in 1889 as the first person from the Young Men's Guild Mission of the Eastern Himalayan Mission. The foremost task in the mission station was to build a Macfarlane Church in the year 1890. In 1894, he and his friend Katie opened the Charteris Hospital, Art and Craft Centre, and Leprosarium. By 1890, the four divisions of the Scottish Mission were under his supervision, including the mission field of the Foreign Mission Committee of Darjeeling, the SUMI of Kalimpong, and the Ladies Mission in both Darjeeling and Kalimpong. To gather support for the missionary work in his mission field, he went back to Scotland in the year 1895 and visited almost 214 villages and towns. Finally, after returning back, he started his new venture in the present sight among 'the lost tribes,' the Anglo-Indian Eurasian children at tea gardens who were destitute and orphan children born due to the illicit sexual affair between the British planting communities and the local women who were basically the bonded labour of the enclave tea gardens of Darjeeling, Duars, and Terai region. The primary objective was to give shelter, a home, and an education to these children. In the year with the six students, Daddy Graham started a home, 'St. Andrews Colonial Homes,' in the name of the patron saint of Scotland. The name 'Colonial' was chosen by Daddy Graham to urge the children to settle

in the British Empire's colonies. In the first twenty-five years, Daddy Graham had constructed a city that could accommodate 500 children. Homes began to open their doors to destitute children, those from broken households, and those who were victims of poverty (Brooks, 2014: 10-38; "Daddy Graham's Homes", 2000: 4-10; O'Malley, 1999:51). The name of St Andrew's Colonial Homes was changed to Dr. Graham's Homes on 1st October 1947, in honour of the contributions of Daddy Graham, who died on 15th May 1924. Subsequently, the enrolment of non-Anglo-Indian children in the school increased to 40% (Mainwaring, 2000). Dash writes, "Three thousand one hundred and ten children have been received into the Homes and old pupils are to be found in all part of the world..." Over 600 accommodation facilities for children were distributed across the hills in the form of cottages. Practical training was conducted in the cottage, where participants were required to perform all domestic chores. The community comprised eight school buildings, eighteen cottages, a hospital, a worker's clubhouse, a store, a swimming bath, and farms, among other facilities (Dash, 1947: 276-277)

Conclusion

The Colonialism and the Christian Missionaries and Scottish Mission in particular has historically contributed to shaping the cultural landscape and educational development in the hills of Kalimpong. The primary initiative of inculcating education by the missionaries to the indigenous and Anglo- Indian has led to the overall all cultural transformation in the region. The impact of its legacy is widely reflected in the town's distinctiveness and heritage. The social and cultural dynamics of the region due to the introduction of schools and educational institution by the Christian missionaries has led to the rich multi-layered identity. In addition to provide education, the school broke down social boundaries and promoted gender equality, which helped bring about social change in the hills. The missionary school became the melting pot of cultural exchange where assimilation of British colonial education along with Christianity, Nepali Hindu tradition and Buddhism led to the creation of the hybrid identity of the people.

Reference

- Basu, B.D., 1934. *History of Education in India under the rules of East India Company*. Calcutta: Manik C. Das Prabasi Press.
- Dash, A. J., 1947. *Bengal District gazetteer, Darjeeling*, Alipur: Bengal Government Press.
- Dewan, D.B., 1991. *Education Darjeeling Hills an Historical Survey: 1835 – 1985*. New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company.
- Emmott, D. H., 1965. 'Alexander Duff and the Foundation of Modern Education in India', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2:160-169
- Ghosh, A., 2001. 'The Impact of Missionary Education in Bengal: The Role of Alexander Duff', *Asian Education Studies*, Vol.12, No.1: 91-104.
- Graham, J. A., 1905. *On The Threshold of Three Closed Lands*. Edinburg: Edinburg R & R Clark Limited.
- Jain, S.C., 2016. *Kalimpong Viewed from the Four Pillar*, Kalimpong: Upama Publications

Laird, M. A., 1968. 'The Contribution of the Serampore Missionaries to Education in Bengal, 1793-1837', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 31, No.1:92-112

Manual, D. G., 1914. *The Gladdening River Twenty- five years' Guild influence among the Himalayas*. London: A. & C. Black, Limited.

O' Malley, L. S. S., 2011. *Bengal District Gazetteers*. Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.

Panikkar, K.N., 2007. *Colonialism, Culture, and Resistance*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Perry, C.L., 1997. *Neplai Around the World: Emphasising Nepali Christians of the Himalayas*. Kathmandu Nepal: Ekta Books.

Purkait, B. R., 1992. *Milestone in Modern Indian Education*. Kolkata: New Central Book Agency (P) Ltd.

Rai, J. S., 2011. "Scottish University' Mission Institution (1886 - 2011) A Compedium", *S.U.M. Institution SUMITE 125th ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR*, Vol. LIV

Mainwaring, S., 2000. *A Century of Children*. Kalimpong: Mani Printing Press.

Majumdar, R.C, 1960. *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (Vol VI), Bombay: Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan.

Pradhan, A., 2017. 'Impact of Scottish Mission in the Development of Kalimpong', *Salesian Journal of Humanaties and Social Science*, Vol.8, No, No.1: 114-126

"Daddy Graham's Homes", September 24, 1990-2000. Kathmandu: Union Press Pvt. Ltd.