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An analytical study of the impact of Christian educational philosophy in the context of Mithilanchal

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Abstract

Education is the continuation of the creation of human beings enabling them to grow and really become human beings as the image of God. In the philosophy of Christian Education, therefore, the primary goal is to bring a child to the knowledge of God, leading to saving faith and then to help them grow in their trust in Christ and His good news. Christian Education refers to the teaching of the students' good morals and religious knowledge. It involves the concept of rearing, along with scriptural mandates. It is only through this that a real knowledge and relationship among all creatures can be achieved. It mandates the inclusion of parents who have primary responsibility to educate their children, alongside Christian religious educators. It is extremely important that parents understand the hidden dangers of the world's philosophy of education which is based on humanism, secular atheism, anti-God evolutionary teaching and a host of things contrary to Scripture. The contribution of the Christian missions in pioneering modern education in India has been both qualitative as well as quantitative. The Christian educational institutions were among the best organized and managed in the country. The contributions of Christian missionaries have made an everlasting impact on the educational development among the people of Bihar in general and in Mithilanchal in particular. There are in fact many types of missionaries who worked or have been working in different parts of the country for the holistic development of tribal's and Dalits, who are deprived of equality of opportunity.

Keywords: Christian education, ethical, moral, character, Christian missionaries

Introduction

Education is not merely the knowledge of facts and events, but of a deep understanding of the meaning and value of everything. Education is the molding of the totality of one's personality to walk in the way of truth and life. Education is the continuation of the creation of human beings enabling them to grow and become human beings as the image of God. Christian education addresses the areas of moral, ethical and character formation by following the example of Jesus. It affirms the radical goodness of the world 'charged with the grandeur of God' and it regards every element of creation as worthy of study and contemplation, capable of endless exploration. It probes the meaning of human life and is concerned with the total formation of each student as an individual who is personally loved by God. Christ is proposed as the model of human life. Everyone can draw inspiration and learn about commitment for the life and teaching of Jesus, who witnesses the love and forgiveness of God, lives in solidarity with all who suffer, and pours out his life in the service of others. In this, success is measured in terms of progress in the quality of life. The aim of Christian education is the formation of principled, value-oriented persons for others following the example of Jesus Christ. Intellectual formation includes a growing ability to reason reflectively, logically and critically. This enables each one to recognize and respond to the message of divine love; seeing God at work in his or her life; in the lives of others, and in all creation; then responding to this discovery through a commitment to service within the community. Christian institutions are engaged in reaching out to the weaker section of the Indian society mostly in rural and tribal areas.

In India Christianity is a minority religion. The Christian religion enlightened the Indian nation not only in the area of education but in all aspects of the people of India. Despite having a small percentage of Christian population in India and it being a country with a larger concentration of Hindus, 'Christians' involvement was very deeply rooted in all parts of the country. The only reason was that the educational institutions were meant only for the

upper caste of the Hindu hierarchical system or only for twice-born castes under the Varna system, especially in Ancient India. Historically, the lower castes and tribals were marginalized, exploited and deprived of educational opportunity.

In this way, these people were socially excluded from all walks of life. And hence the Christian missionaries experienced and recognized this system of hierarchy prevalent in Indian society and found their way to provide service for these people. However, when they started serving these people, other sections of the population also benefitted even more than them. The contribution of the Christian missions in pioneering modern education in India has been both qualitative as well as quantitative. The Christian educational institutions were among the best organized and managed in the country. These missionaries helped the tribals and lower section of the society to proceed from savagery to modernity and thereby took off a heavy load from the shoulders of the government of India. This status has not undermined its output in the society. It had always been the main instrument in building up the Indian nation through centuries in the field of economy, education, social services, health care, etc. The Christian religion enlightened the Indian nation not only in the area of spirituality but in all aspects of the people of India. Right from the beginning of the Christian presence in India, it offered a unique and profound impact on the society as a result of the compassionate care and preferential option that members demonstrated to the sick, suffering and the less privileged and marginalized of the society, imitating the life and teachings of the Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. During the period of Renaissance, there emerged a number of outstanding Hindu leaders who were strongly influenced by the teaching of Jesus Christ and they considered Jesus as the key to India's progress. Western liberal and the nationalistic ideas imparted through western education and the Christian social activities played an important role in the nineteenth century's Indian renaissance. Besides all these significant contributions, Christian contribution to Indian education has been marvelous and it paved the way for the eradication of all the social evils in India.

Enormous work has been done by the Christian missionaries in educating the youth of India. Christian missionaries take especial care of the youth of the country, irrespective of sex, creed, color, and caste and have built for them numerous elementary, secondary and higher educational institutions. It was St. Francis Xavier who led the way in elementary education by exhorting his companions to build a school in every village. St. Francis Xavier was the first Jesuit to come to India and started the Indian mission in 1542.

These schools were the pioneers of the modern system of primary education. Looking back, the earliest conversion in India took place among the Parvates of South India. These people were harassed by Arab pirates and powerful Hindus and ultimately protected by the Portuguese at the cost of adopting Christianity and the whole caste was baptized. A number of schools and colleges were established by the missionaries. Many Christian colleges existed in Goa, Angamaly, Cochin, Vypin, Cranganore and Bassein from as early as the 16th century. Jesuits founded several educational institutions in India and engaged in scholarly pursuits following the legacy of St Francis Xavier during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

Swami Vivekananda, an Indian thinker and a sage said that Education is 'man-molding'. It is shaping the whole person an all-round development of the body, mind and soul of the individual. The educational schema included under the broad heads of physical, culture, aesthetics, classics, language, religion, science and technology. It is with a purpose to learn, to understand and to live in a particular context and to make meaning to a wider society. This was the specific thrust of Christian education. Education consists of those experiences which enable an individual to bring forth one's every ability, skill and capacity to the fullest extent. It involves the whole man's effort in the harmonious development of the individual. Personal formation is a crucial importance in ministerial training.

Before the arrival of missionaries, there were schools in India but only a few and the quality of education was poor. The missionaries believed that the introduction of Christian education would be an effective means of change by inspiring Christian thought. Through a new system of education, they brought an entirely new system of thought and action. Christian education ministry had a powerful impact to modernize India.

The contributions of Christian missionaries have made an everlasting impact on the educational development among the people of Bihar in general and Mithilanchal in particular. There are in fact many types of missionaries who worked or have been working in different parts of the country for the holistic development of tribals and Dalits, who are deprived of equality of opportunity. Christian missionaries established many schools for the development of Christian education in Darbhanga District. These schools are Holy Cross School, Darbhanga; Holy Cross Pre-Primary School, Madarpur; Madonna English School, Darbhanga; Khrist Jyoti Vidyalaya, Darbhanga and Holy Cross Convent School, Ashapur. Present research work has discussed the various forms of their contribution in educating the people of Mithilanchal region either directly or indirectly but in most of the cases it has been found that they have been directly involved with their day-to-day activities and hence also their education. The approaches of missionary works seem to be very pragmatic as they work as an insider by looking at people's problems and then acting accordingly. The missionaries have played a key role in education among people of Mithilanchal. Present research work highlights the Impact of Educational Philosophy by establishing many schools in India. Moreover it explains how Christian educational institutions have played a great role in eradicating the social evils from the Indian traditional society.

In the philosophy of Christian Education, therefore, the primary goal is to bring a child to the knowledge of God, leading to saving faith and then to help them grow in their trust in Christ and His good news. The teaching of good character, qualities and moral principles provide a framework for successful life skills, social wellbeing and protection from certain behavioral consequences. True education, most simply stated, is teaching about God's creation and His providence. Each area of study like science, mathematics, religion, literature and history among others, leads us to a greater understanding of God's creative power, order, providential work in man and nations. Woven within the truths of each area of study is God's general revelation of Himself. God has given man the ability to gain knowledge through empirical observation, critical reason,

intuitive insight, and scientific observation. The Philosophy of Christian Education states that if we educate students to the exclusion of biblical truth, we have failed in true education. We educate not only to impart skills and information about how our world and culture works, but also to teach a worldview that includes God in everything with no separation between the secular and the spiritual. In view of this, students must recognize this truth; they will also have to recognize the worth God has placed on them and how they can live in a manner worthy of the gospel.

Conclusion

Present Paper concluded that the Christian education addresses the areas of moral, ethical and character formation by following the example of Jesus. Christian education helped to lay the foundations for a wider and deeper fraternity based on love, justice, forgiveness and solidarity. The Christian message has helped to unite the different peoples of the Indian Subcontinent, made them aware of their self-worth, opened up a wider horizon as large as the globe. Statistics reveal that 85 percent of the health care institutions run by Christian Church / Mission are in the villages. This is the real meaning of the Christian life and mission to be at the service of the least and the last. Indeed for the tribal and the lower section of the people, Christianity became a liberator from spiritual and social demons. One of the important things that the Christian missionaries emphasized was the humanization of life in all aspects of all people regardless of caste, religion, race and region. The contribution of the Christian missions in pioneering modern education in India has been both qualitative as well as quantitative.

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