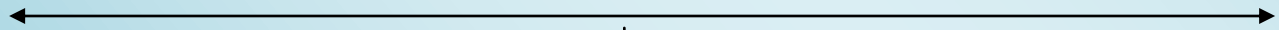


North Asian International Research Journal Consortium

*North Asian International Research Journal of
Social Science & Humanities*

Chief Editor

Dr Rama Singh



Publisher

Dr. Bilal Ahmad Malik

Associate Editor

Dr. Nagendra Mani Trapathi

Honorary

Dr. Ashak Hussain Malik

NAIRJC JOURNAL PUBLICATION

North Asian
International
Research Journal Consortium



Welcome to NAIRJC

ISSN NO: 2454 - 9827

North Asian International Research Journal Social Science and Humanities is a research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi, Urdu all research papers submitted to the journal will be double-blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial board. Readers will include investigator in Universities, Research Institutes Government and Industry with research interest in the general subjects

Editorial Board

J.Anil Kumar Head Geography University of Thirvanathpuram	Sanjuket Das Head Economics Samplpur University	Adgaonkar Ganesh Dept. of Commerce B.S.A.U, Aruganbad
Kiran Mishra Dept. of English,Ranchi University, Jharkhand	Somanath Reddy Dept. of Social Work, Gulbarga University.	Rajpal Choudhary Dept. Govt. Engg. College Bikaner Rajasthan
R.D. Sharma Head Commerce & Management Jammu University	R.P. Pandday Head Education Dr. C.V.Raman University	Moinuddin Khan Dept. of Botany SinghaniyaUniversity Rajasthan.
Manish Mishra Dept. of Engg, United College Ald.UPTU Lucknow	K.M Bhandarkar Praful Patel College of Education, Gondia	Ravi Kumar Pandey Director, H.I.M.T, Allahabad
Tihar Pandit Dept. of Environmental Science, University of Kashmir.	Simnani Dept. of Political Science, Govt. Degree College Pulwama, University of Kashmir.	Ashok D. Wagh Head PG. Dept. of Accountancy, B.N.N.College, Bhiwandi, Thane, Maharashtra.
Neelam Yaday Head Exam. Mat.K..M .Patel College Thakurli (E), Thane, Maharashtra	Nisar Hussain Dept. of Medicine A.I. Medical College (U.P) Kanpur University	M.C.P. Singh Head Information Technology Dr C.V. Rama University
Ashak Hussain Head Pol-Science G.B, PG College Ald. Kanpur University	Khagendra Nath Sethi Head Dept. of History Sambalpur University.	Rama Singh Dept. of Political Science A.K.D College, Ald.University of Allahabad

Address: - Dr. Ashak Hussain Malik House No. 221 Gangoo, Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, India - 192301, Cell: 09086405302, 09906662570, Ph. No: 01933-212815,

Email: nairjc5@gmail.com , nairjc@nairjc.com , info@nairjc.com Website: www.nairjc.com

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES CAUSED BY CHRISTIANITY IN TAMILNADU

:

A.FELCITTA*

*M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Research Scholar, PG and Research Department of History,
V.O. Chidambaram College, Thoothukudi-628008.

INTRODUCTION

It may be surmised that religion governs the sentiments and the culture of a society. It functions as a major source of law and polity of the society to which it belongs. This paper makes an attempt to throw light on the socio-political changes caused by Christianity in Tamilnadu during the effective rule of the British in India.

SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY:

Though Christianity came to India with St. Thomas, its impact was not realized in Tamilnadu until the seventeenth century. For a long time it remained the religion of Malabar coast and the arrival of the Europeans and the establishment of their politico-commercial activities inspired the expansion of Christianity to the other parts of South India.

The early Christians of India belong to the Eastern Church of West Asia. Around sixth century A.D., Christianity stood divided into five great Churches called Patriarchates and they functioned from Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.ⁱ The Christians of India were simply know as St. Thomas Christians.ⁱⁱ

The rise of Islam and the Arab conquest of Egypt and Syria, in the 7th century affected the prestige and power of the Churches of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Though the Crusades of 11th and 12th centuries provided a lifeline to West Asia, the churches of the region lost their popularity. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 heavily damaged the activities and authority of the Greek Orthodox Church that functioned from Constantinople.

Christianity entered Tamilnadu through the southern side. While the Tamil literature of Sixth and Seventh centuries A.D. mentioned the spread of Jainism and Buddhism, they never mentioned the intrusion of Christianity into the Tamil country. During this period literature of Saivism unfurled the 8'leelas' of Lord Siva to revive Hinduism (saivism) against the religions of the North.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Tamil saints, scholars and poets did not launch any such crusade against the Christians as they did against Buddhism and Jainism, because those religions provided Manimegalai, Naladiar and Seevaga Sinthamani and attracted the educated Tamils. Whereas, the early Christians did not make any literary ventures and this tendency continued till Veeramamunivar's Thembavani.

The invasion of Malik kafur in the early 14th century over Tamil country and the ruthless destructions of the Hindu temples changed the religious scenario of the region and the natives viewed Islam as the main threat to Hinduism. In the name of Hindu unity they accepted the Telugu rule of Vijayanagar and Madurai Naicks, and later the rule of the Marathas. Aurangzeb brought Moghul rule of Tamilnadu by capturing Gingee in 1696 A.D. Though the Moghul authority started declining from 1707 A.D. the political authority of the Muslims once again got established in the Carnatic regions with the Nawab of Arcot.

The entire eighteenth century witnessed an unprecedented political turmoil caused by the rival claims of Arcot and Hyderabad families. Meanwhile Christianity slowly spread over the coastal areas of Tamilnadu. While Islam and Sikhism exercised considerable influence in the Gangetic belt, the heart land of the Indian sub-continent, Christianity still remain a religion of South India and North-eastern States.

While Islam challenged and confronted with the elite of the country, Christianity avoided such direct conflicts and concentrated mainly on the down-trodden people of Tamilnadu. Those communities that were subject to social ill treatment and ostracism, found Christianity a refuge. The Nadars, Fishermen and the Scheduled Castes of Tamilnadu form the majority of Christians. The Scheduled Castes constitute 75 percent of the Indian Christians today.

CHANGES CAUSED BY CHRISTIANITY:

Christianity brought new values to India and far reaching changes occurred in the field of education, health, social life and the politics of Tamilnadu. The arrival of the English and the consolidation of their political authority intensified Christian missionary activities. The suppression of the political authority of the Muslims, in

the Carnatic by 1801 A.D. directed the Hindu aversion towards missionary activities. The Protestant Christianity began to make headway by 1810 A.D. i.e. Soon after the reduction of the Nawab of Arcot. The process was very live during 1860-1930. The protestant missionaries mainly came from the English speaking countries. However, there were handful of Germans and Scandinavians too.

In spite of the intensified activities of the Protestant organizations such as American Arcot Mission, Lutheran Church, Methodists, Presbyterians and Anglicans, more natives stood with Catholicism. On seeing the vigorous activities of the Protestants, the Catholics started the reorganization of their religion. Majority of the St. Thomas Christians associated themselves with home but with some autonomy. The reorganization was carried out during 1820-30 A.D. A number of socio-charitable institutions were established to strengthen Catholicism.

The Christians established a number of educational institutions during the Nineteenth century such as Sarah Tucker college (1895), Palayamkottai, Madras Christian College (1857), American College (1881) Madurai, St. Joseph's College (1868) Cuddalore, Scott Christian College^{iv} (1893), Nagercoil, Voorhees College, Vellore, Bishop Corrie High School (1834), Madras, Walter Scudder High School (1872) Tindivanam, St. Xavier College (1923), Veperiy, Bishop Heber's College Tiruchy, Christian Medical College, Vellore, Sacred Heart College, Tiruppattur (North Arcot District), Auxilium College, Vellore, Don Bosco High School, Madras are the other institutions of Christianity that render remarkable service to the cause of education. They established many hospitals in Tamilnadu and rendered very good medical and health services to the people of Tamilnadu.

The education provided by the English and other Christians created a protestant attitude among the Hindus and many of the western educated Indians started questioning the validity of the rituals and teaching of Hinduism. The educated elite demanded share in the administration. Some other frustrated elite demanded Hindu revivalism.

The British government also opened Colleges and Universities to provide higher education. Now men and women of all castes could get education without any restriction as revalied earlier. It created a new social awareness in the society that led to multiple reactions.

The people of Tamilnadu became emotional over the social and religious situation that existed. Tamilnadu witnessed several St. Pauls who established Churches as they liked. One arumai Nayagam Nadar of Tirunelveli district established a Hindu Church of Lord Jesus of Nazerath in 1857 A.D., that accepted the Hindu

caste laws.^v One S.Palani Andy founded National Church of India on September 12, 1886 to counter the anti-Christian sentiments generated by the Hindu religious movements such as Hindu Tract Society, Viputhy Sangam etc.^{vi}

While the Hindus of North India considered Islam as a threat, the natives of the South viewed Christianity as a challenge to the cultural identity of India. Though Islam demolished temples it did not disturb the Varnashramdharma and the traditional elite who benefited out of it. While Islam interacted with the Hindus through violent means, Christianity infiltrated with educational and medical services. When the Muslims were violent at times to spread Islam in India the Christians never involved in such violent means, but resorted to vigorous propaganda.

The Hindu society that remained inactive against Malik Kafur, now determined to retaliate missionary activities. The converted Christians refused to accept Manu's code and claimed their right against exploitation. In 1844 the government proposed Lex Loci Draft Act in response to the missionary demand for a uniform law in India. The enactment of the Indian Penal Code, based on the recommendations of the First Law Commission headed by Lord Maucaulay eradicated the inequalities and injustice prevailed in the domain of justice and treated all criminals alike.

In the social front, while the educated non-Brahmins intended to question the irrational ideologies and the existing inequalities in the native society, another section of the non-brahmins viewed Christian education and values as a challenge to Hindu solidarity. While the Muslims united the Hindus with their indiscriminate violence, the Christians divided the Hindus with their rational and secular education. They also highlighted Tamil language, Dravidian originality and Saiva Sidhantha. Resultantly, the most affected natives were the Brahmins. Now they had to wage a war in two fronts. On the one side, they had to eliminate the English rule which was responsible for the missionary activities and the consequent decline of the Brahmanical hold over the natives and the rise of Middle Class, mostly from Non-Brahmins. On the other hand they had to reiterate their hold over the natives.

In short, the rise of the non-Brahmins the awareness for Self-respect, secular outlook, improved life style etc., were the impact of Christianity on Tamilnadu.

REFERENCES:

-
- ⁱ . Collins Encyclopaedia, 386.
- ⁱⁱ . Chopra, R.N.India, p.75.
- ⁱⁱⁱ . P.T. Sreenivasa Iyengar, History of the Tamils, p.108.
- ^{iv} . Araskumar P.Kingsley, “The Social and cultural Impact of the Protestant Mission on the Tamil country,” unpublished Thesis, p. 202.
- ^v .Sixty ninth Report of the M.R.T.B.S for the year ending 30th September 1887, (Madras, 1888), p.3.
- ^{vi} . Pulney Andy, “Are not Hindus Christians? Madras Native Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1994 p.10.”