

## “Role of Christian Missionaries in Jammu and Kashmir”

Arshad Ahmad Bandh & Dr. Jyotsanha Agarwal

\*Research Scholar, Department of History, Barkatullah Vishwavidyalaya Bhopal

\*\*Head and Professor, Department of History, Sarojini Naidu College - Bhopal

Email Id: Arshadhistory123@gmail.com

### Abstract

*When the Dogra's became the rulers of Kashmir, Christian Missionaries were attracted to it, Kashmir's salubrious climate, its beauty and location promised it to become a great Christian centre amid China, Tibet, Samarkand, Afghanistan, Turkistan and Bukhara. Missionaries held the prejudice that people of Kashmir would be converted easily, as they had first converted from Hinduism to Buddhism and vice versa and finally to Islam in 14th century. These missionaries knew the deplorable condition of the people of Kashmir, their mass illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, diseases and their oppressed and tortured condition. The missionary cherished the hope that if the people of Kashmir were converted to Christianity. The arrival of Christian missionaries has heavily contributed. The present paper raises a good number of such queries as how the Christian missionaries played any significant role in the state Jammu and Kashmir.*

**Keywords: Missionary, Role, Activities, Contribution, Jammu and Kashmir.**

### Introduction

Christianity has been defined as, The Religion that traces its origin to Jesus of Nazareth, whom it affirms to be the chosen one (Christ) one God<sup>1</sup>. This definition of Christianity is very brief. Alfred A. Garvie has amplified this definition, as he writes as, “We may define Christianity as the Ethical, Historical, Universal, Monotheistic and Redemptive Religion, in which the relation of God and man is mediated by the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>2</sup>. Christianity is a missionary religion like Islam. Christianity and Islam are both known as Abrahamic religions because of their common origin through Abraham. Muslims consider Ismail the first born son of Abraham to be the father of the Arabs and Abraham's second son Ishaq is called father of the Hebrews. Christians are considered

the people of the Book. Believing in the Injil (The New Testament or the original Gospel of Jesus), although Muslims view the current Gospel as distorted form of the original. Christianity is an historical religion of the world. There are two major sects of Christians i.e., Catholic and Protestants. Missionary is a person or a group of people dedicated to teach or invite people towards their own religion .Christianity became common to all of Europe and became world's largest religion. It is only because of their missionary activities. The first person who played the role of missionary activity was Paul<sup>3</sup>.

### **Objectives**

Some of the explicit objectives of the study related to Indian Economy are as under:

- To study the impact of Christian missionaries on academic education of Kashmir.
- To study the impact of Christian missionaries on moral education of Kashmir.
- To study the impact of Christian missionaries on culture and religious beliefs of Kashmir.

### **Research Methodology**

The secondary source of data has been used in the study from various published and un-published sources. Further various published research papers, books, periodicals, reports, magazines, newspapers, and websites have also been used for the study.

### **Role of Christian Missionaries in Jammu and Kashmir**

The first person who played the role of missionary in India was Francis Xavier (1506-1552)<sup>4</sup> and Kashmir was an autonomous princely state at that time and that is why these missionaries entered Kashmir very late. After the Dogra's became the rulers of Kashmir, Missionaries were attracted to it. Kashmir's salubrious climate, its beauty and location promised it to become a great Christian centre amid China, Tibet, Marquand, Samarkand, Afghanistan, Turkistan and Bukhara. Missionaries held the prejudice that people of Kashmir would be converted easily, as they had first converted from Hinduism to Buddhism and vice versa and finally to

Islam in 14th century. These missionaries knew the deplorable condition of the people of Kashmir, their mass illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, diseases and their oppressed and tortured condition<sup>5</sup>. The missionary cherished the hope that if the people of Kashmir were converted to Christianity, they might become great evangelists in Asia. Moorcroft expressed the same view when he visited the valley in the early 19th century. He observed: "I am convinced that there is no part of India where the pure religion of the gospel might be introduced with a fairer prospect of success than in the Kashmir"<sup>6</sup>. Last but not the least, the sweltering heat of many parts of India was very distressing for many Missionaries, so Kashmir was regarded as the best place for Missionary personal to recuperate.

On 18th April, 1864, the Christians opened a school in Srinagar despite the opposition of the authorities<sup>7</sup>. It was an important event in the history of Kashmir. Such parents who sent their children to missionary school received domiciliary visits from the police. They were told if their children's went to school, they would be banished to Gilgit. The missionary

appointed Dr Elms lie and he worked for eight years, and died in 1872 B.C., on his way out of Kashmir<sup>8</sup>. And after the Rev. T. R. Wad worked with him, and did excellent work in the early days of medical mission. The society then sent out Dr. Theodore Maxwell to whom, because he happened to be the nephew of General John Nicholson<sup>9</sup>, the hero of Delhi, the Maharaja granted a site for the mission hospital, on a hill called Rustum Gary, which lies below and is a continuation of the tacit – suliamani<sup>10</sup>. It is a splendid position overlooking the Dal or city lake. The state government constructed a building at this place at its own expense. The hospital was known as Drugjan hospital. The state also gave a yearly donation to the mission hospital including free electric light. Never could any hospital in the Srinagar earn such reputation as did the Drugan hospital. It was a boon to the poverty – stricken people of the valley. No doubt, Dr. Arther Neve (1882-1920) describes it as a second pilgrimage centre the first being Hazratbal<sup>11</sup>. Dr. Maxwell remained until- 1876<sup>12</sup>, when ill health compelled him to retire, owing to continual worries. Another hospital, exclusively for women, was established at Rainawari, by the Church of

England zenana Missionary society<sup>13</sup>. Among the lady missionaries whose dedication to the cause of women's health earned approbation were, Miss Butler a lady doctor, Miss Irinie Petrie and Miss Robinson<sup>14</sup>, trained nurses, " who laid down their lives on duty in the valley." Miss Kate Knowles was yet another noble doctor who earned deep affection for her service to the women of Srinagar.

The medical Missionaries also did a great deal of work during famines of 1877-80, 1888, 1892, 1900. Credit goes to missionaries for saving thousands of people who would have otherwise died. The people of Kashmir are fortunate in having much medical assistance, besides the two well –equipped state hospitals in Srinagar, the one for the general public and the hospital for women, there are dispensaries in all the important centers<sup>15</sup>. At Anantnag there is a well run hospital, founded by Mrs. Bishop bitterly known as traveler and writer, she established it in 1902 B.C. There was not a single school in Kashmir, where the right type of education could be imported. Maharaja established a school in 1874<sup>16</sup>, and it was the only state school but here the

medium of instruction were Sanskrit and Persian. The proposal of Christian missionaries to found schools in Kashmir was approved by the C.M.S .in London. The founder of the modern school in Srinagar was Rev. J.H. Knowles<sup>17</sup>. It was in 1880 that Knowles laid the foundation of the C.M.S school on the hospital premises in Srinagar. In 1880 there were only five pupils reading in the C.M.S school<sup>18</sup>. To remove the obstacle Of accommodation the missionaries obtained in 1883 a building at Sheikh Bagh. This act is said to have given rise to opposition and suspicion. It is clear that in the beginning the attitude of the state authorities towards the missionaries was hostile. But it was in 1890 that the government permitted the C.M.S to shift the school down to the city, and it was moved from the hospital premises to a large house and compound on the river bank in the middle of the city (Fatah Kadal). As a result of this, the number of students increased to about 200 in 1890. Mr. Knowles had to undertake ten years spade work in laying the foundation of the C.M.S .school. He was assisted by C.L.E .Burges, A. B. Tyndale and also by some kashmiri teachers in the work of building up the school .The first

step taken by Biscoe, was to insist upon punctual attendance by the students. For this purpose he introduces regular hours of instruction. Also holidays were arranged on the western pattern. Thus started the processes of westernization in mission school<sup>19</sup>.

At the beginning these measures were opposed by the pupil. To discourage absenteeism among the boys, the practice of fine was introduced. This was not enough. Sometimes the boys did not come to school and pretended to be sick. To check this tendency Biscoe hit on a novel scheme of visiting the houses of the boys. The success of missionaries in both medical and the educational fields encouraged them to take up the cause of the women education in Kashmir. To the missionaries the education of girls was of utmost importance for the girls would be the mothers of the future generation. Accordingly, the missionaries started a girl's school at Fateh Kadal, in 1895. The people of Srinagar fearing that the character of the girls will be spoiled revolted. The principal of the school invited some of the European ladies to Srinagar city for the prize day of the school. the hope was

that this would be encouragement for the girls and their parents, in 1914 the number of girl's schools rose to 3 in the city. As Miss Mallinson joined as the principal of school (1922 - 1961), the C.M.S girl's school underwent a radical transformation. She was instrumental in bringing about enough educational and cultural advancement among the women of Srinagar. She introduced swimming, dancing, drill, picnics, camping and mountaineering. Some vocational skills like basket making, embroidery and Cushions were also taught<sup>20</sup>. Also, Laundry and cooking received much attention. It is also said that the girls learnt to weave some woolen bags and mats. In spite of the noble work of the Christian missionary.

### **Conclusion**

It can be concluded from the above study that the Christian missionaries have done the perfect job in Kashmir no doubt their aim was to preach the doctrines of Jesus Christ and wants to convert people towards their own religion. They know that the Kashmir is a central place of Asia and they are thinking that when we will convert people of Kashmir towards Christianity this

will become the bridge for us to reach other parts of the Asia. Their aim was to win the hearts of the Kashmiri towards their own religion and for that purpose they established hospitals, schools. They worked on social grounds they helped people and they got victory in Kashmir they converted many people to Christianity. However they opens the hearts of people towards their religion but they also opened the people's eyes and minds towards modern education and in response of that many Muslim organizations have opened the schools on modern lines.

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