

SOCIAL ACTION

A Quarterly Review of Social Trends

Christian Contribution to Nation-building in India

- ❑ Re-Discovering South India through its Languages: Reflections on the Linguistic Studies of Christian Missionaries
John S.P.
- ❑ Deepening Democracy and Composite Culture through Inclusive Nationalism: Role of Christian Community in Nation-building in India
Nachiketa Singh & Leslie Keerthi Kumar SM
- ❑ The Legal Ownership of Tribal lands in Chotanagpur – Enlightening Interventions of the Christian Missionaries
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- ❑ Prefiguring the Indian Nation: A Study of Pandita Ramabai's Indian Christian Feminist Theology in Operation at the Mukti Mission
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Rumi Roy
- ❑ Impact of Christianity on Maram Nagas
Kangdhi Jeremy
- ❑ Christian Educational Contribution to Nation-building in North East India
Frangle B.R.

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Christian Contribution to Nation-building in India

Christianity came to India from the first century. It is believed that St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, came to the southern part of India and established the first Church. In the following centuries, different forms and versions of Christianity entered India at different time periods through diverse channels resulting in increasing differences among Christian denominations and Churches in customs, ritual traditions and theological perceptions. In the first few centuries of the first millennium, the early Christian settlements in India maintained close links to the West Asian Churches of Persia and Christian merchants from Persia regularly visited India. As European colonialism began to spread all over the world from the late fifteenth century, European missionaries belonging to the Catholic and Protestant Churches began to spread Christianity in their colonies, including India. In the early sixteenth century, the Portuguese introduced the European school system in Cochin and Goa, where elementary teaching was carried out. Later, over the last five centuries, hundreds of schools and higher educational institutions were established by Christians in different parts of the country. This has been the foundation of the educational system that prevails in post-Independent India. In the pre-Independence era, Christians participated in the freedom struggle against the British colonial rule. At the dawn of Independence, there were six Christians in the Constituent Assembly that deliberated on the future of the Indian nation and approved the Constitution of India. In the post-Independence era, Christians have made significant contributions to India in almost every field in spite of remaining a small minority of 2.3 per cent of the population of India for the last seven decades. In the field of social services, Christians have played a significant role in the social development of the people of India. Several Christian social organisations were established in order to serve the poor and marginalized communities, which played an important role in poverty alleviation throughout the country. The Christian community is well known for their service to the physically disabled, mentally challenged, destitutes, orphans, elderly and the sick. There has also been some pioneering work done by Christians, many of them foreign missionaries, that shaped the social development landscape throughout the country. In the field of education, Christian schools, colleges, Universities and other educational institutions are the best in the country. It is estimated that Christian institutions provide 25 per cent of the educational service

in India. Christian missionaries have developed several Indian languages, and have written their grammar books and dictionaries. Christian hospitals, medical colleges and nursing colleges provide quality healthcare to the people of the country and train thousands of health professionals to ensure health and well-being of the people of the country. Even now, 35 per cent of the nursing graduates belong to the Christian community and the service rendered by them in dispensaries in rural areas and hospitals in towns and cities is commendable. Christians have excelled in their service in the Armed forces, para-military and the police. Christian men in uniform have served the nation in various capacities, including that of Chief of Naval Staff, Chief of the Indian Airforce and Chief of Army Staff. They have also contributed to the nation in the field of politics, language, culture, judiciary, business and other professional services as well.

At a time when Christian service and contribution are being maligned as a ploy for 'conversion' or proselytization, this issue of Social Action attempts to highlight the immense contribution of Christians to nation-building in India in the pre-independence era as well as after Independence. The first article by John S.P. titled "Re-discovering South India through its Languages: Reflections on the Linguistic Studies of Christian Missionaries" reflects on the contribution of Christian missionaries to south Indian languages, namely Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu and Tulu. He argues that through their linguistic studies, Christian missionaries established the commonality among south Indian languages, which was instrumental in Dravidian cultural formation and re-discovering Dravidian identities. Nachiketa Singh and Leslie Kumar situates the contribution of Christians to nation-building from the perspective of India being a plural, multi-cultural liberal democracy with a composite culture in their article titled "Deepening Democracy and Composite Culture through Inclusive Nationalism: Role of Christian Community in Nation-building in India". The authors present the contributions of Christians in diverse fields and gives a critical analysis of some of the challenges they face in recent times. Shalini Sahoo's article on "The Legal Ownership of Tribal Lands in Chotanagpur – Enlightening Interventions of the Christian Missionaries" deals with the role of Christian missionaries in helping out the tribals get their land entitlements in Chotanagpur. The author argues that at a time when tribals were exploited by landlords, Christian missionaries helped in defending the land rights of tribals in the local courts, that were alien to the tribal worldview, and helped the government draft laws that protected tribal land rights. The article on "Nation-building through Education and Social Reform: Contributions of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara" by Mariamma

Mathew outlines the contribution of the social reformer, Saint Chavara, particularly in the socio-cultural, educational and literary fields in Kerala. The author argues that his interventions in promoting education, women's empowerment, poverty eradication, printing and service to marginalized sections of society contributed immensely to the transformation of the 19th century Kerala society and has helped Kerala to achieve a high level of socio-cultural development. The article by Roopa Rathnam on "Prefiguring the Indian Nation: A Study of Pandita Ramabai's Indian Christian Feminist Theology in Operation at the Mukti Mission" examines the work of Pandita Ramabai's work within the Mukti Mission in Khedgaon, Maharashtra, between the years 1900 and 1922. The author argues that her activities in the Mukti Mission reflected the values of the Preamble of the Constitution of India that was adopted half a century later. Rumi Roy's article on "Christianity in the North East Region: Challenges and Prospects of Nation-building in Assam" examines the role of Christian missionaries in the process of nation-building in Assam and reflects on the positive and negative implications of it in the North East region. The author argues that the work of Christian missionaries has brought about an awakening and political consciousness among the people which is shaping the politics of the region. The article on "Impact of Christianity on Maram Nagas" by Kangdhi Jeremy deals with the impact of Christianity on the socio-cultural and political fabric of the Maram Naga tribe, which is the only Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Manipur. The author argues that though some of the socio-cultural changes were progressive, other changes were regressive and were causing conflicts within the community. Frangle B.R. deals with the Christian educational contributions to nation-building in North East India in his article titled "Christian Educational Contribution to Nation-building in North East India". The author highlights the contributions of Christian educational institutions in North East India and analyses its impact on the social and economic development of the indigenous people of the region.

All the articles of this issue of Social Action highlight the contribution of Christians in the process of nation-building before Independence and after Independence. It is hoped that these articles from Christian and non-Christian authors help in appreciating the immense contribution of Christians to the development and progress of India. □

Denzil Fernandes

Re-Discovering South India through its Languages: Reflections on the Linguistic Studies of Christian Missionaries

John S.P.*

Abstract

A language is a principal tool for shaping collective identities. Linguistic identities are, often 'discovered' to build communities, nations, and other collectivities. Linguistic studies, particularly on the evolution of languages, often serve this means. The present paper tries to reflect on the linguistic and literary discourses of Christian missionaries, through their studies of important south Indian languages. The paper focuses primarily on the texts of the missionaries rather than its interpretations, hence frequently quotes from the authors thereby directly engages with the theme. Through their linguistic studies and comparative analysis, Christian missionaries established the commonality of south Indian languages and proved its independence from Sanskrit. Their studies are instrumental in the later inquiries on Dravidian cultural formation. Thus, the present paper tries to focus on the way in which the Dravidian identities are 're-discovered' through the linguistic studies of Christian missionaries.

Keywords: Dravidian Identity, South Indian Languages, Christian Missionaries, Linguistic Studies

Introduction

The notion of 'Dravidian or South Indian family of languages' and the 'establishment of the autonomy of Dravidian languages from Sanskrit' are the fundamental aspects of identity formation in South India. These 'discoveries' are the result of linguistic discourses carried out primarily by the Christian missionaries. These are part of their grand engagements with the native life and culture of 'new fields' in south India. The missionary's way of understanding the newly discovered fields generally follows three stages. First was geographical, in which they tried to understand the geographical location, features, and its importance in shaping the native locality. Every missionary account on the 'new field' consisted of beautiful narrations of their travel through the inlands with peculiarities of geography,

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climate, local amenities, and so on. The second is demographic, in which they tried to understand the distribution of the local population and their organisation of life and culture. In both these stages, the missionaries are detached external observers of the native life. The third was linguistic, in which they tried to learn the native people's languages, primarily aimed to interact with them to propagate the word of God. It allows them to re-position themselves from a mere external observer to an interactive participator, who is equipped with a tool of language. It was the stage that allows them to understand the roots of native life and culture. Thus, linguistic studies were one of the focuses of missionary activity, and it is quite evident in their engagements with the linguistic studies on south Indian languages. At that time there was no uniformly standard language in these areas, perhaps this is one of the reasons, which prompted them to study and analyse the language.

The path-breaking research in the field of Dravidian linguistic analysis was presented by Robert Caldwell, a missionary of London Missionary Society. Through his work, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* published in 1856, he well-established the 'commonality of Dravidian languages'. Through this comparative study, Caldwell enjoyed a pivotal position as the founder of comparative Dravidian linguistics. (The notion of a 'South Indian family of languages', which became known as the Dravidian family was initially conceived and proposed by Francis Whyte Ellis, Collector of Madras and senior member of the College of Fort St. George in 1816. See his "Note to the Introduction" prefacing Campbell. For a discussion on Ellis work, See Trautmann, 2006). In the introductory part, Caldwell clearly states that the objective of the work is "to examine and compare the grammatical principles and forms of the various Dravidian languages, in the hope of contributing to a more thorough knowledge of their primitive structure and distinctive character." (p.1) Caldwell locates the geographical and linguistic boundaries of the South as:

The idioms which are included in this word under the general term 'Dravidian,' constitute the vernacular speech of the great majority of the inhabitants of Southern India. With the exception of Orissa, and those districts of Western India and the Dekhan in which Gujarati and Marathi are spoken, the whole of the peninsular portion of India, from the Vindhya mountains and the river Nerbudda (Narmada) to Cape Comorin (Kumari), is peopled, and from the earliest period appears to have been peopled, by different branches of one and the

same race, speaking different dialects of one and the same language — the language to which the term ' Dravidian ' is here applied. (Caldwell, 1856, p.1)

Caldwell justifies the use of the term Dravidian by referring previous studies from both native and European scholars. He writes:

‘Dravidian’ is a term, however, which has already been used more or less distinctively by Sanskrit philologists, as a generic appellation for the South Indian peoples and their languages, and it is the only single term they seem ever to have used in this manner. I have, therefore, no doubt of the propriety of adopting it. (Caldwell, 1856, p.5)

In his *Comparative Grammar*, he conducted a thorough analysis of six cultivated dialects – (1) Tamil (2) Malayalam (3) Telugu (4) Canarese (5) Tulu, and (6) Kudagu or Coorg; and six uncultivated dialects – (1) Tuda (2) Kota (3) Gond (4) Khond or Ku (5) Oraon, and (6) Rajmahal with its geographical, demographical, historical and political linkages. He critiqued the ascribed notion of the derivation of Dravidian languages from Sanskrit and argued that:

It was supposed by the Sanskrit Pandits (by whom everything with which they were acquainted was referred to a Brahmanical origin), and too hastily taken for granted by the earlier European scholars, that the Dravidian languages, though differing in many particulars from the North Indian idioms, were equally with them derived from the Sanskrit. (Caldwell, 1856, p.45)

Through a comparison of the grammatical structure of languages, he established that “Of all evidences of identity or diversity of languages the most conclusive are those which are furnished by a comparison of their grammatical structure; and by such a comparison the independence of the Dravidian languages of Sanskrit will satisfactorily and conclusively be established.” (Caldwell, 1856, p.52) Caldwell pointed out thirteen essential differences in point of grammatical structure between the Dravidian languages and Sanskrit, and, thus, proved that:

Dravidian languages evidently differ so considerably from the languages of the Indo-European family, and in particular from Sanskrit (notwithstanding the predominance for so many ages of the social and religious influence of the Sanskrit-speaking race), that it can scarcely be doubted that they belong to a totally different family of tongues. They are neither derived from Sanskrit, nor are capable of being affiliated to it: and it cannot have escaped the

notice of the student, that in every one of those particulars in which the grammatical structure of the Dravidian languages differs from Sanskrit, it agrees with the structure of the Scythian languages, or the languages of Central and Northern Asia. (Caldwell, 1856, p.52-55)

Hence, he distinguished the linguistic roots of south from the north. Further, in his work, he used the term 'Dravidian Civilisation' to delineate from the Brahminical Civilisation. Caldwell's magisterial comparative study of the Dravidian family has become a classic, and it is still in print. It is a great work of scholarship and a landmark in its field, wholly deserving of the high esteem in which it continues to be held. (Trautmann, 2006, p.74) The Christian missionaries conducted numerous studies on the linguistic and literary aspects of different Dravidian languages of south India, which contributed to the Dravidian linguistic development and its reflections are quite evident in the South Indian languages - Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Tulu, and so on.

Tamil

Tamil is probably the earliest cultivated, and most highly developed, of the Dravidian languages. The earliest Grammars in Tamil were published by Rev. Father Beschius, of which there are two, one of the common dialects - *Kotun-Tamil* and the other is the poetical - *Shen-Tamil*. They were written in Latin. Beschi's *A Grammar of the Common Dialect of the Tamil Language, called Kotun-Tamil*, was translated from the original Latin by George William Mahon, and printed in 1831, at the Press of the Christian Knowledge Society at Vepery. In its preface Beschi wrote:

In this region there are two dialects of the Tamul Language: I would call one *the High*, the other *the Common*. Some not very correctly call that which differs from *the Common*, *the Poetical* dialect. But since we see the Tamulians use that dialect, not so much in those writings which have the trammels of metre, as in all others which by the old authors skilled in this tongue are composed in prose also, which is especially to be seen in the commentaries of the poets, that dialect will be better named the *more elegant*, or *high*, than *the poetic*. The Tamulians however call this high dialect *Shen-Tamil*, and the common *Kotun-Tamil*: as if they would call that the *elegant* Tamil dialect, this, the *rough*. (Translation of Authors Preface in Mahon, 1831, p. 2)

No one can be considered thoroughly versed in the Tamil language, who is

not skilled in both the dialects into which it is distinguished. A knowledge of the common Tamil is, indeed, sufficient for the conduct of all ordinary business, in our intercourse with the Natives; but to those who aspire to read their works of science, or to explore their systems of morality, an acquaintance with the Shen Tamil, or polished dialect, in which all their valuable books are written, and all their learning is contained, is quite indispensable. It is not, by any means, pretended, that the studies of all who learn the language should be extended to this dialect. The requisite proficiency could not be attained, but at the expense of much time and labour, which might in general be directed to more useful acquirements. But that there should be some, who may be capable of examining the qualifications of those who teach, as well as of those who learn the language, and of ascertaining the merits of native works of science, appears to be requisite, inasmuch as the improvement of the people should be an object of solicitude.

Beschi presented his *Grammar* in five chapters, including Orthography, Noun and Pronouns, Verbs, Rules of Syntax and Numerals. It provides details on number and form of Tamil letters, of the power of letters, variations in pronouncing, variations in the figure of the letters, augmentation of letters, and so on. Beschi's, *A Grammar of the High Dialect of the Tamil Language termed Shen-Tamil to which is added an Introduction to Tamil Poetry*, was translated from original Latin by Benjamin Guy Babington and printed at the College Press, Madras in 1822. In this work, Beschi gives a lengthy account on the native scholar's contributions in the field of Tamil language and literature. In the Translator's Preface, Beschi's works are appreciated:

Beschi seems to have had a more perfect acquaintance with Tamil literature, than any foreigner who ever undertook the study: perhaps, than any native of modern times. His voluminous works, both in prose and poetry, composed in Tamil, as well as his translations from it, are held in great esteem; and it is a singular fact, that one of the best original grammars of that language now extant, is the production of his pen. (Babington, 1822, p.ii)

Rev. Charles Theophilus Ewald Rhenius in his book *A Grammar of the Tamil Language with an Appendix* published in 1853 states the necessity of Beschi's work to learn his grammar:

It is not a Grammar of the high, or rather the poetical, Tamil language; in order to study this, the learned Beschius' second work will still be necessary; but it is a Grammar of the vernacular Tamil, as it is spoken and written by well-bred Tamulians, yet so as to avoid

the errors against Grammar which are found among them. (Rhenius, 1853, p. vi)

Further, Missionary, C H Graul D.D., Director of the Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission Institution, in his work, *Outline of Tamil Grammar, Accompanied by Specimens of Tamil Structure and Comparative Tables of the Flexional System in other Dravida Dialects*, published in 1855 assessed that,

The three principal dialects of Tamil (Canarese, Telugu, and Malayalam) have invented characters of their own for the whole of Sanskrit sounds. Tamil, the most distinguished member of the Dravida family, has, by its prevailing tendency to naturalise the Sanskrit words imported, in a far higher degree preserved the original phonetic system of the Dravida languages. (Graul, 1855, p. 3)

G.U. Pope was along with Joseph Constantius Beschi and Bishop Robert Caldwell, one of the significant scholars on Tamil. His *Tamil Handbook or Full Introduction to the Common Dialect of that Language* was designed for the use of foreigners learning Tamil, and of Tamilians learning English. The book offers with copious vocabularies (Tamil-English, and English-Tamil), appendices containing reading lessons, analysis of letters, deeds, complaints, official documents. (Pope, 1867, Cover page) In his introduction, G U Pope gives an account on the early missionary and other European's efforts in contributing to the linguistic development of Tamil, and also accounts the contributions of native scholars. Pope briefly reports the Dravidian linguistic debate:

The origin and affinities of the South Indian group of languages have been much discussed. On the one hand, the more deeply they are studied the more close will their affinity to Sanskrit be seen to be, and the more evident will it appear that they possess a primitive and very near relationship to the languages of the Indo-European group. Yet, they are certainly not mere Prakrits, or corruptions of Sanskrit. Some have supposed that their place is among the members of the last mentioned family, and that they are probably "disjecta membra" of a language coeval with Sanskrit, and having the same origin with it. They certainly contain many traces of a close connection with the Greek, the Gothic, the Persian and other languages of the same family, in points even where Sanskrit presents no parallel. On the other hand, Professor Bask, Mr. Norris, and more recently Dr. Caldwell, have shown that the original language of the nomadic tribes from whom the races of South India have sprung was probably what

they term “Scythian” that is, a member of that group of tongues in which are included the "Finnish, Turkish, Mongolian, and Tungusian families. (Pope, 1867, p. 6)

G.U. Pope’s *A Larger Grammar of the Tamil Language in both Dialects, with the Nannul and other Native Authorities*, was published in 1857. As the author writes:

This work is designed to be a complete Grammar of the Tamil language in both its dialects. It is hoped that nothing of importance has been omitted. It is divided into two parts, the first being a full exposition in question and answer, of the Grammar of the language, with copious examples so arranged as to form a series of reading lessons. The second part consists of the Native authorities, to which appeal is commonly made in doubtful cases. A Grammatical Vocabulary has been added. The work is intended for private Students, Indian and European, as well as for the highest Classes in Colleges and Schools.” (Pope, 1857, p.i)

Telugu

The next influential contributions of Missionaries in the field of linguistic studies came out from Telugu. *Progressive Grammar of the Telugu Language with Copious Examples and Exercises*, written by Rev. A. H. Arden, missionary of the C.M.S, Masulipatam, was one of the most important linguistic contributions in Telugu language. The book was published and sold by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Madras in 1873. This book is presented in three parts. The first provides an introduction, on the alphabets and orthography, outline grammar and model sentences. The second part gives a complete grammar of the colloquial dialect. Second part concludes with a chapter containing General Exercises, in the form of Conversations, Letters and Stories, which illustrate the foregoing rules, and form useful models for imitation. This chapter, if carefully studied, provides the student with a considerable amount of useful reading. The third part deals with the grammatical dialect used in books. About the problem of understanding the language, Arden writes:

In Telugu, the dialect used in *ordinary conversation* differs so much from that used in *grammatically written books*, that thousands of Natives who use the language as the only medium of conversation, cannot read a grammatically written book, or understand it, when read to them. For the same reason, a Foreigner may be able to read and understand a Telugu book, but at the same time may be

unable to converse with the Natives, or understand what they say to him. Owing to this great difference between the colloquial and the grammatical dialect, in the present work the former has been kept entirely distinct from the later. (Arden, 1873, p.iv)

The author mentions the previous studies conducted by the European scholars on Telugu language which helped in the preparation of his book namely, *A Grammar of the Telugu Language* by A D Campbell, *A Grammar of Gento Language* by William Brown and *A Grammar of the Telugu Language* by C P Brown. Throughout the book, the great effort of the author has been, to lead the student on step by step, giving such information only as is positively required, at the stage at which the student has arrived. The special feature, therefore, of the book is intended to be its progressive character. The endeavour to make the book essentially progressive, whilst it greatly accelerates the acquisition of the language, must at the same time, be pleaded as an excuse for any peculiarity of arrangement, which may at first sight strike the reader as somewhat complicated. (Arden, 1873, p.i) The depth of research is evident from author's observation that:

Whilst the language used in poetry is uniform, local dialects of Telugu vary. For instance, there is a certain amount of difference between the Telugu spoken in Rajahmundry, and that spoken in the Cuddapa district. The language is spoken in the greatest purity in the Northern Circars. The present work is arranged so as to suit, as far as possible, all dialects, and where any differences exist, they are pointed out. (Arden, 1873, pp. 2-3)

The chief value of the book consists of the considerable portion of examples and exercises which are supplied by the native, and are consequently thoroughly idiomatic and colloquial.

Kannada

The missionaries also explored the linguistic field of Kannada. Thomas Hudson, Wesleyan missionary and Rev. Dr. F. Kittel, Basel missionary are two pivotal figures, who contributed to the linguistic studies on Canarese or Kannada language. *An Elementary Grammar of the Kannada, or Canarese Language* by Thomas Hudson, Wesleyan missionary, published in 1859 wrote directly to support the missionary and administrative activism. It is given in the preface as "To the servants of the Government in the Civil, Judicial and Educational Departments, as well as to Missionaries, a knowledge of this language is absolutely necessary in order to a right

discharge of their respective duties.” (Hudson, 1859, p.i). Rev. Dr. F. Kittel, in his work, *A Grammar of the Kannada Language in English Comprising the three dialects of the language (Ancient, Medieval and Modern)*, published in 1903, analysed different forms of the letters used for the Kannada inscriptions that appear at different periods – from old Canarese to its development in the modern period. (Kittel, 1903, pp. 2-3) Through his analysis, he established that:

The so-called Dravidian languages have borrowed a great many words from Sanskrita, especially such as to express abstract ideas of philosophy, science, and religion, together with the technical terms of the more elegant arts, etc.; but their non-Sanskrita portion is considerable, and once was sufficient for ordinary conversation. Chiefly, by a comparison of their grammatical structure with that of Sanskrita, the essential independence of the Dravidian languages of Sanskrita can satisfactorily and conclusively be established. (Kittel, 1903, p.1)

Kettle extensively quotes from the native scholars and inscriptional evidences. He also prepared *Kannada-English Dictionary* (1894)

Malayalam

Missionary efforts in the linguistic studies of Malayalam are also quite appreciable. *A Grammar of the Malayalam Language*, 1860 (Second Edition) written by Rev. Joseph Peet of the Christian Missionary Society, was an important linguistic contribution in the language. About the readability of the book, the author writes:

These writings are, for the most part made up of Provincialisms, mixed with words, ideas and illustrations from Sanskrit, Tamil and their Cognate languages; so that without an interpreter, they are a dead letter, even to a native reader. Indeed, they were partly composed upon the ancient Brahminical principle “Amuse but Impose”. (Peet, 1860, p.ii)

A Grammar of Malayalam in the Language itself by Rev. George Matthan of CMS, a native missionary, written in Malayalam as *Malayazhmayude Vyakaranam* in 1868, is a notable contribution. But the most important contribution to the linguistic studies in Malayalam was given by Dr. Herman Gundert. His *Malayalam Grammar* was the most appreciated work on grammar in Malayalam. This was the first scientific work on grammar in the language. It was in 1851, the partial version of Gundert’s *Malayala*

Bhashavyakaranam came out. Later its full version was published from Basel Mission Press in 1868. It was written in Malayalam. It was his studious effort of more than 20 years of hard work. It is based on both, literary language and spoken dialect. Dr Gundert, in his Introduction to "Malayalam Dictionary", considered Tamil and Malayalam to be very nearly related, and appears to be unwilling to consider Malayalam as an offshoot of Tamil. (Caldwell, 1856, p.24) Caldwell considered that "Dr Gundert's truly scientific "Dictionary of Malayalam" has given a fresh stimulus to Dravidian philology." (Caldwell, 1856, p.vii) He also produced the *Malayalam – English Dictionary* in 1872. The writer has throughout endeavoured to trace the origin of each word; and particular attention has been paid to the comparison of the cognate Dravidian languages. (Gundert, 1872, p. iii) It has been found difficult to draw the line of demarcation between Malayalam and Tamil words. These two languages of old differed rather as dialects of the same member of the Dravidian family, than as separate languages.... (Gundert, 1872, p. iii)

Tulu

The Tulu language, one of the languages of the Dravidian families, was also an interesting plot of analysis for the missionaries. In the preface to the *Tulu-English Dictionary* (1886) Rev. A Manner writes:

Until recently there was no literature in this language, except some legends written on palm-leaves in the Malayalam character, in the possession of Brahman families. It was only after the arrival of the Basel Missionaries in this district (1834) that some books were written and printed in the Basel Mission Press. (Manner, 1886, p. iii)

The most important in the field of grammar was *A Grammar of Tulu Language* by Rev. J. Brigel, a Basel missionary, in 1872, which offered to the public this first attempt at treating the Tulu Language grammatically. About the alphabet, the author writes, "The Tulu language has no alphabet of its own. Those who formerly wrote in Tulu used to employ Malayalam characters; but more recently the Canarese alphabet has been adopted both in writing and printing; so the latter may now be considered as the modern Tulu alphabet." (Brigel, 1872, p.1)

Conclusion

Language is the first necessity to interact with people, and it is the fundamental tool to approach a social group and understand their culture. The functionality of language in framing collectiveness is crucial in shaping

national and sub-national identities. As a symbolic marker and index of individual and group identity, language has the potential to function as an important boundary device, separating distinct sub-populations from neighbouring others with different, possibly unintelligible language habits, and binding the former together with shared feelings of identity and group self-interest. (Simpson, 2007, p.1) Thus, understanding the language of the native people is a process of re-discovering their identity, conflicts, and progress. “The meeting between people from any unknown, discovered, or rediscovered culture is, or should be, based on the knowledge and understanding of language.” (Frykenberg, 2008, p.62) This is quite evident in the Christian missionary’s linguistic contributions to south India. Christian missionaries positively received the notion that “Grammar, though a difficult study, is absolutely necessary for the search after philosophical truth... and is no less necessary in the most important questions concerning religion and civil society,” (Henry Took Quoted in Pope, 1857, Cover page) and engaged in genuine scholarly research work on the structures and compositions of south Indian languages. Their linguistic studies generally included the themes such as Phonology, Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, Colloquial Usages, Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, Prosody, and Rhetoric, Tamil Orthography treats the form, names, sound, number, and division of letters; also of their transmutation, omission, augmentation, and Useful Appendices. Through their intellectual discourses in the linguistic and literary fields, they established the independence of south Indian languages and thereby contributed to the later studies on Dravidian cultural formations. Comparative studies on Indian languages, particularly the discoveries of the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian families of languages, are major constituting narratives in the cultural history of India. Moreover, their linguistic studies contributed to the process of the standardization of south Indian languages. □

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